

THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE

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Abstract

The article focuses on the analysis of the theory of democratic peace - one of the most popular and influential ideas in international relations. The theory argues that democracies not enter into war against other democracies, but peacefully resolve existing contradictions. A world where exist as many as possible democratic states is a peaceful world. The theory encourages and supports democratization in the world, a policy practiced so great by Western powers and international organizations. Meanwhile, some researchers exposed the theory of democratic peace critically and talk about its crisis.

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Starting with the second half of the 1990s, different researchers that worked in the field of international relations, started to study the theory of democratic peace that lately become quite popular. Succinctly, the theory of democratic peace dispute that democracies do not make war with each other, but resolves the contradictions that exist exclusively in a peaceful way. Respectively, a world in which as many states have a democratic political system is a more peaceful world. In the West, this postulate generated a multitude of works in literature and deepened within the medium of liberal movement.

In opposition to realistic theory, in which the internal political order of the state is considered irrelevant for international security, the democratic peace theory is associated with the establishment and



international security. And we are not speaking only about the national system with geostrategic agreements, but we are speaking especially about the presence of liberal-democratic norms and institutions. [1]

The harbinger of the idea of democracy as a catalyst for universal peace is considered to be the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who in his essay *Zum ewige Frieden* (About Eternal Peace) appeared in 1795, laid the foundation of the theory of peace between what the philosopher calls „republics” [2]. According to Kant’s conception, democratic societies do not fight with each other.

The Romanian political scientist Ionel Nicu Sava identifies the main theses of the Kantian philosophy. These theses that can be applied to the international environment would create the premises for obtaining what the German philosopher termed perpetual peace: [3] no independent state, big or small, should not be under the domination of another state.; permanent armies must be abolished over time; no state have to intervene by force in the constitution or the government of other states; the civil constitution of all the states must be republican; the law of nations must be based on a federation of free states.

The instruments by which such an ideal would be realized in the international community were identified with „freedom within the state and arbitration (law) in the relationship between states” [4]. In other words, Kant considered that the evolution of society in accordance with the rule of law would create the premises for a condition of morality and fairness in the relationship between people. No government under the control of the people will enter the war unless it is forced to do so. The political experience in the system of international relations contradict this conception.

We should mention that Immanuel Kant was also realistic enough when he observed that eighteenth-century society was not prepared and could not achieve such a peace. Kant also believed that later times would be more appropriate for such security system [5]. The illustrious German philosopher was right from this point of view because later his conception was the basis of several philosophy schools that belonged to the liberal current. His philosophy has enriched the thinking and practice of international relations in the coming period. The supporters of this current have avoided seeing war as a way to regulate the problems between states with liberal democratic regimes. They stated that war is like a disease. “A serious illness, a cancer of the policy. It is a product



of the aggressive instincts of some unrepresentative elites.” [6] This did not mean that in an automatically way, the representatives of this current denied the possibility of occurrence of such a phenomenon. Even in regulating relations between democratic states, and speaking about their faith, it had to be a phenomenon that is expressed extremely rare [7].

The elimination of the war from the international life, according to the followers of the liberal current, can be achieved by following the next three points:

1. Building democratic political regimes.
2. By promoting the advantages of international trade.
3. By creating institutional mechanisms of international character that could manage peace and prosperity.

Security should not be left to the discretion of secret bilateral negotiations and beliefs in the balance of power. Politicians and diplomats are reasonably gifted and they can act rationally in diplomatic practice. This fact causes them to be united by the fundamental interest of creating a world community, based on a peace system, which can be accomplished under certain conditions.

It is essential to highlight this fundamental truth and the establishment of institutions, which will make order in international anarchy. Education will remove ignorance and prejudice, democracy will prevent war outbreak, and institutions that prevent violence at national level can also be expanded globally to peacefully resolve disputes. Increased economic interdependence and the benefits of international trade will cause the war to threaten the prosperity of both sides engaged in a conflict / war [8].

This vision inspired by the liberal paradigm and adopted by researchers and big politicians has marked a turning point in international relations. The optimistic view of liberalism on international politics is based on three fundamental beliefs that are common to almost all the theories in this paradigm. First of all, the Liberals consider that the states should not be the main actors of the international scene, but the institutions and organizations with the vocation of peace and security. Second of all, I argue that the attitude of states in relations with other actors plays an important role in internal political organization. From this point of view, there are “good” and democratic states, which will have a conduct dictated by the observance of the law and moral principles and “bad” states, which are authoritarian or dictatorial and will promote



force and politics in relations with other actors by force. And, finally, they say that peace and security can be achieved if the world that is populated with “good” states. This idea was promoted, among others, for example, by Woodrow Wilson, but this idea was shared by many scientists. His reputation as a promoter of the liberal vision was built on the model he proposed for the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War. It was stated even before the end of the conflagration in the famous Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson. [9]

The instrument aimed to achieved and maintained collective security was the League of Nations. It worked on the basis of a Convention negotiated by the Allied and Associated Powers in Paris. That was adopted during the Peace Conference on April 28, 1919.

This document stated the purpose of the Wisdom of Nations which essentially defined how to develop cooperation between nations, to guarantee peace and security, and to abolish war from interstate relations. The supporters of the League believed that such actions could maintain security by promoting political mechanisms such as conferences on disarmament or mediation of conflicts between states, or by building a system of institutions that elaborates norms and rules of conduct for all actors in the international environment, as well as control instruments to force the rules to be respected and observed. [10] These regulations were useful in the peaceful settlement of minor differences between states, such as border disputes, but they were minor in relation to the great dangers that were on the horizon. [11]

The ideas promoted by the followers of liberalism, however, have become embedded in the diplomatic practice during the two world wars, and this happened after the League of Nations has not passed the test of reality. Mircea Malita stated that the beginning of the destruction of this institution was marked by the failure of the disarmament conference of 1932. [12]

After the Second World War, the followers of peace that was achieved through a universal vocation institution felt that the methods that created the League of Nations had to be corrected urgently. This was the case on the UN international stage, an institution that incorporated all the hopes and illusions of the liberal school. Once again it was confirmed that in the construction of a global security architecture, the actors called to build it are not concerned, first of all, with the theoretical requirements of a certain model or ideology but with the state interests they have in



the short or long term and by the historical experience by which one actor or another had the benefit of promoting these interests.

Henry Kissinger very accurately captures this when he analysed the positions of the great victorious powers with regard to the future order of the world and, therefore, the mechanisms they consider viable to support. He concludes that “Each of the winners spoke in terms of their country’s historical experiences. Churchill wanted to rebuild the traditional balance of power in Europe. This meant the reconstruction of Britain, France and even Germany, so that, together with the United States, they were able to counterbalance the Soviet colossus from the east. Roosevelt envisioned a post-war order in which three winners, along with China, would act as a Council of World Directors to impose peace against any potential perpetrator, most likely after Germany - a vision that would be known as the law of “The Four Policemen”. Stalin’s way of looking at things reflected both his communist ideology and traditional Russian foreign policy. He endeavoured to speculate on his country’s victory by expanding Russian influence in Central Europe. Stalin has tried to transform the countries conquered by the Soviet armies into buffer zones to protect Russia from any future German aggression.” [13]

Nowadays, two of the most important names linked to the thesis of democratic pacifism are *Rudolf Joseph Rummel* and *Michael Doyle*. Their approaches correspond to the two major variants of democratic pacifism: *the monadic version* (which supports the idea of absolute peace between democracies) and *the dyadic version* (supports the idea of a separate peace between democracies, but maintaining the warlike character of democracies in relation to non-democracies).

Rudolf Rummel, Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii, exemplify in the paper *Power Kills: Democracy as a Method of Nonviolence* the thesis of democratic peace. In his vision, there are two versions of liberal peace: *the version of war*, according to which democracies never initiate wars between them and *the general version*, according to which democracy is a non-violent method of resolving conflicts of interest.

Michael Doyle, a professor of International Affairs, Law and Political Science at Columbia University, emphasizes in two of his most important articles - *Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs (1983)* and *Liberalism and World Politics (1986)* - the thesis of democratic pacifism. He mentioned that states that adopt and respect



liberal principles such as - legal equality of citizens, freedom of religion and the press, government through representative legislatures, private property, market economy based on the principle of demand and supply - enjoy the benefits of a separate peace in relation to other democratic states, but they are willing to wage war against non-liberal states. Doyle argues that internationally, liberal democracies will avoid waging war against each other because public opinion will not accept this, given respect for others' right to political independence. Although he does not deny that the Democrats can break out, he considers them rather improbable, because of the multiple ways to peacefully resolve the differences between liberal democracies. [14]

Democracies do not fight each other; it is true, but they are constantly fighting with undemocratic states. As a result, democratic states cannot be called peaceful. Where are the guarantees that in the future they will not fight with each other?

Here are some points of view:

1. The leaders of the democratic states are responsible to the voters for the start of the wars, so they are stimulated to find alternatives;
2. Democratic leaders solve internal problems through negotiations, but not with weapons, proceeding in the same way in foreign policy;
3. The democratic states consider the non-democratic states as a threat and they fight with them because of those problems which, in the relations between the democracies, would be solved by peaceful means;
4. Democratic states are more prosperous than those which are non-democratic, therefore, they have what to lose. [15]

All these explanations are superficial they do not discover the essence of the new phenomenon for political science. Asking the question, "why do democratic regimes limit their military claims only to undemocratic opponents, and they do not fight each other?" - political scientist Joshua Goldstein noted bitterly: "In fact, nobody knows this." [16]

However, following increased efforts to popularize this idea, the theory of democratic peace has become one of the most important postulates of the doctrine of liberal interventionism in the United States. Since 1990, the model of the world order that corresponds to the expectations of the Western democracies after the end of the Cold War has been well expressed by the US president: "We have the vision of a new partnership of nations, which transcends the Cold War. A



partnership based on consultation, cooperation and collective action, especially through world and regional organizations. George Bush considers that the goals of the partnership created following the end of the Cold War are: 1. to increase democracy; 2. to increase prosperity; 3. to increase peace, 4. to reduce armament. [17]

In 1993, the US President Bill Clinton expressed the following option: "...in an era of danger and opportunity... our priority objective should be to broaden and strengthen the international community of democracies based on the economy of market. [17]

Analysing the two positions of former US presidents, it can be seen that Western powers viewed the new international post-Cold War international order as being based on their values, especially democracy. What was not taken into account were the axiological differences between Western democracies and other areas of the world. For example, if in relation to the Western system of values, a regime such as the one in Iran is considered unfair, discretionary and, consequently - immoral, "...for Muslims this organization is democratic and it would perform at its highest ideal of justice and social equity". [19]

As long as the state cannot be included in the category of liberal democracies, the intervention is not only justified, but also necessary. The philosophy of Immanuel Kant is valid only within the community of democratic states. Part of the agenda of the theory of democratic peace was transferred to the political agenda of Western democracies and officially accepted in American foreign policy. Doyle's concept of the peace and democracy area and the need to expand this area have become an important goal in US foreign policy. The State Department calls it the third pillar of American foreign policy. As a result, the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were possible, among other things, because of this policy. [20]

Speaking about the widening of the area of democracies on an international level, we believe that Giovanni Sartori was right, he stated that: "From a geographical point of view, the victory of democracy is confined to the modernized world (...) But, at the beginning of the 90s, the fact was that the victory of democracy largely stops at the borders of Africa, excludes much of the Asian continent (China is very large) and is hit by the rejection of Islamic countries, where politics and religion, spiritual and temporal are still. (...) The victory of democracy as a principle of legitimacy is more extensive and more important. On this



front there is no more resistance than Islam and the societies in which traditionalism has not yet been corroded”. [21]

Thus, the ideals that democracy would become a universally accepted value were in vain, because armed intervention in totalitarian states are forcefully expand to democratic values that runs counter to both the Kantian ideas and the liberal tradition. Moreover, the recent history of the Middle East in particular, has highlighted the significant risks that the failure of immature democracies causes the danger of the instability of the democratization process.

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