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Page No.: 1 - 26

Democratic Peace Theory in International Relations: Applicability, Criticisms and Challenges

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Abstract:

This study explores the challenges that democratic peace theory has faced in the changing landscape of the contemporary global world. It also analyses the theoretical explanations, its applicability to the world politics. In this paper, it becomes evident that democratic peace theory needs to be taken seriously in the establishment of international peace. This study also argues that political participation of citizens should be ensured so that a citizen can express his anger in a correct and non-violent manner. Through these steps, a democracy can become institutionally strong.

Introduction

From ancient times to the present, conscious humans have been searching for ways to build a lasting peaceful society on earth. A society in which justice will be established and the threats of war will be eliminated. Various religions have shown the way to this path of peace. However, at one point, violence began to emerge through the misuse of religion. To counter this violence, the concepts of human rights and love for humanity emerged during the Middle Ages. Treaties such as the Magna Carta in Europe and the rise of Sufism in the East advanced the evolution of peace theory during this time. Subsequently, the emergence of the nation-state and the theory of political realism introduced a different form of achieving peace, in which the necessity of military power in particular areas was emphasized. In these theories, human nature has been viewed from a pessimistic point of view. However, the liberal version of peace theory began

in the early modern age. Particularly, the philosophers of the Enlightenment era emphasized the role of the citizen in the governance of the country in social contract theory. At this stage, the idea of establishing peace through democracy emerged. Various philosophers have highlighted the importance of liberal democracy in their analyses and explain how it can build a stable and peaceful state and international system. The word "Democracy" comes from the Greek word "δημοκρατία" (demokratía), which translates to "the rule of the people" or "government by the people". The term "Democracy" is first found in use in the fifth century BC, referring primarily to the governance of Greek city-states. According to Lord Bryce, democracy is a system of government based on the will, welfare and well-being of the people, and where equality and liberty are prioritized (Bryce (Viscount), 1921). Primarily, basing on this public welfare-oriented feature of democracy, the theory of democratic peace has emerged.

In the field of research, the use of the Democratic Peace Theory is relatively new, although there have been some studies on this topic during the medieval and early modern periods. But it was Dean V. Babst's research published in the *Wisconsin Sociologist Journal* in 1964 that truly rekindled the democratic peace theory.

In his research, Dean V. Babst (1964) analyzed 116 wars; but, he did not find a single incident where there was a war between two democratic countries. Based on these findings, he concluded that in democratic states, peaceful public opinion inherently prevents conflicts. From this notion, the concept of democratic peace theory is born, whose fundamental proposition is that the likelihood of conflict between two democratic countries is very low. On the other hand, there is a possibility of conflict between a democratic and a non-democratic country. Therefore, establishing a peaceful world order necessitates the presence of democratic governance. The findings from Babst's research are reflected in the research conducted by Small and Singer (1976). They demonstrate that in all wars spanning from 1815 to 1965, non-democratic states were more frequently participants. Rudolph Rummel has been particularly successful in drawing the most attention to the democratic peace theory. His article was published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1983. He claims that liberalism has led to a decrease in violence in the international arena (Rummel, 1983). Following his assertion, Chan (1984) and Weede (1984) showed in their research that democratic peace plays a crucial role in reducing violence. In the following decades, various researches have shown that although democracies are not completely immune from war, the likelihood of war between the two democracies is exceedingly low (Rummel, 1995).

From the above discussion it becomes evident that democratic peace theory needs to be taken seriously in the establishment of international peace. In the context of current world politics, it is therefore necessary to delve deeply into the theory. From the discussion of this paper, the basics of democratic peace theory can be learned. At the same time, the current position of this theory in establishing world peace will also be known. As a result, it will serve as a vital guide for researchers and provide crucial insights for policymakers to maintain peaceful conditions both domestically and internationally. In the first section of this paper, the origin of democratic peace theory, its fundamental theoretical explanations, and its applicability to world politics and international relations have been discussed. The subsequent section has also explored the criticisms against this theory. Finally, in the concluding part of the paper, light has been shed on the challenges that democratic peace theory has faced in the changing landscape of the contemporary global world after the cold war.

The Rise of Democratic Peace Theory

Basically, the origin of Democratic Peace Theory is from Liberalism (Owen, 1994). Liberal theorists such as Locke, Rousseau, and Kant have all used the concept of the state of nature as their initial framework in their discussions. According to their perspective, in the state of nature, equality prevailed among all human beings, and pursuing one's self-interest did not necessarily lead to violence (Keeley, 1995). Rather, humans were seen as benevolent and they worked to achieve their desired goals through mutual cooperation. In this case, violence can only create barriers. Therefore, people will choose cooperation and peace in a rational way to protect their interests. Liberal theorists believe that nation states are also independent, egalitarian, and rational like humans (Owen, 1994). Just like humans, the state also has interests or goals. And to achieve this goal, the states will also choose the path of mutual cooperation instead of violence. However, liberals also believe that not all individuals or nations are free. For the attainment of independence, two elements are essential. Firstly, individuals or nations must be enlightened, conscious of their self-interest, and aware of how to safeguard it. Secondly, the populace must inevitably be under the governance of an enlightened political institution that will help to achieve their true self-interest through politics (Howard, 1978).

To put it specifically, the emergence of democratic peace theory can be traced back to the ideas of Immanuel Kant. In one of his best works, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795), Kant outlined how to create a peaceful environment at the state and international level. Kant presents several proposals for establishing peace at both the national and international levels. He proposed that all states should be republics, where the government

would be representative and the legislature and executive would function separately from each other.

His second proposal is to form a league or federation of independent states, where all states will abide by the same rules and laws. Kant's final proposal primarily focuses on universal hospitality and cosmopolitanism. According to him, every member of the world human community is equal in dignity (the dignity of all people is equal). He believed that every country should host foreign nationals on their soil for a limited period of time. As a result, when the citizens of different countries communicate, they will be able to spread the idea of republic and federation worldwide (Kant, 1983). Thus, Kant wanted to implement the concept of cosmopolitanism. In line with his proposal, the likelihood of wars among states would decrease, ultimately leading to the establishment of permanent global peace. Kant's ideas played a significant role in shaping the subsequent development of democratic peace theory (Barth, 2008).

To establish democratic peace as a theory, two liberal concepts play a significant role: one is liberal values in foreign policy, the other is internal democratic institutions (Owen, 1994). The liberal concept plays a crucial role in establishing a liberal ideology in the field foreign policy. Liberal democratic states maintain a tolerant foreign policy. In this context, the recognition of liberal values is as important as the role of domestic democratic institutions within a country. Liberal values basically prevent a democratic state from waging war against another liberal democracy; but sometimes provoke war against an undemocratic state. Democratic institutions, on the other hand, help these values to influence foreign policy and international relations (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993).

Liberal Foreign Policy

Liberalism gives rise to an ideology that differentiates states primarily according to the type of its governance system (Owen, 1994). In evaluating a state in this regard, it is first determined whether the country is a liberal democracy or not. When a liberal democratic state accepts another foreign state as a liberal democracy, it resolutely tries not to go to war with that state. In this case, liberals argue that it is better for a state not to engage in war because it is costly and dangerous (Doyle, 1983).

War can only be waged when it benefits liberals - that is, when it serves self-defense. This can only happen when the opposition does not practice liberal democracy. Liberal democratic states are considered rational, predictable, and trustworthy, because they are

governed by the genuine interests of their citizens, which aligns with the self-interest of citizens worldwide. Liberals believe that they understand the motives or intentions of foreign liberal democracies, and that those motives are not always harmful to other liberal democracies. In other words, liberals are inspired not only by justice but also by national self-interest, which they consider the most important factor (Schweller, 1992).

Democratic Institutions

By the term "democratic institutions," it is primarily understood that these are institutions that play a role in maintaining democracy within a country. In other words, an independent election commission, political parties, civil society, various organs of the government (the executive, the legislature and the judiciary), and the media which play a direct and indirect role in formulating the country's policies and ensuring the participation of the people in the management of institutions, are all democratic institutions (Owen, 1994). Democratic institutions are responsible for ensuring that individuals who uphold the values of liberal democratic principles are appointed to govern the country. This is important because those who adhere to these values are less likely to engage in war against another liberal democratic state. Generally, the general public of a state does not bother much about the foreign policy of that country, because it does not affect their daily life. It is mainly looked after by various elite representatives. However, when conflicts or matters as crucial as war arise, ordinary citizens also play a role in decision-making because the effects of war may impact their daily lives.

In other words, even in a liberal democratic state, war cannot be initiated without the consent of the people. In such cases, public opinion becomes essential. In many cases, various war-mongering leaders represent the opposing country as autocratic and strive to establish the legitimacy of starting a war. However, in the age of media, social media, and the internet, authentic information easily reaches the general public. Therefore, even with false or misleading information, it is not easy to initiate a war. Additionally, through protest campaigns, rallies, and gatherings, the people can stand against war. In such cases, maintaining public support is crucial, and rulers may not be enthusiastic about going to war (Van Evera, 1990).

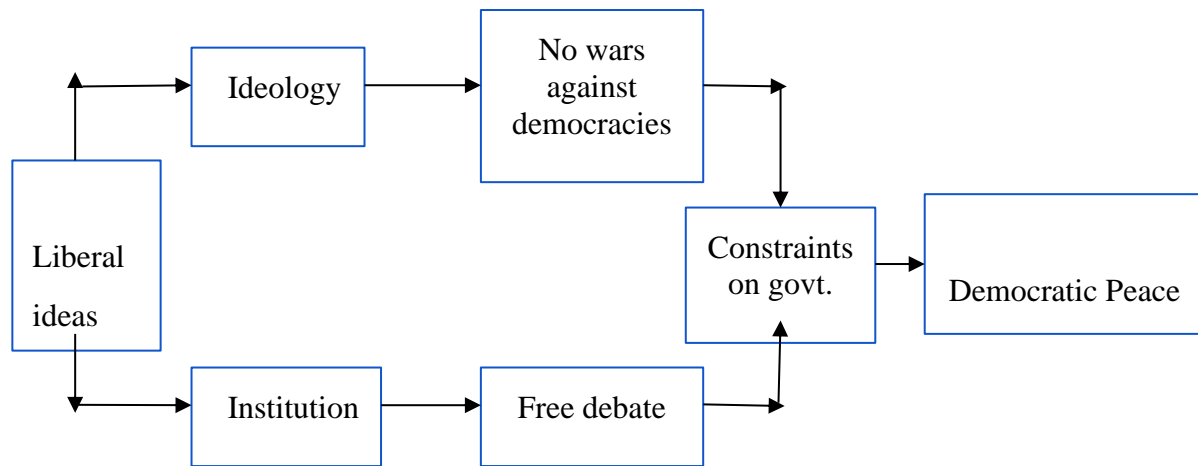


Figure 1- Causal Pathways of Liberal Democratic Peace (Owen, 1994).

Figure 1 shows how liberal values or ideologies derived from liberal ideas prevent two democracies from going to war. But sometimes creates the possibility of war with illiberal states (such as dictatorships). It has also shown that liberal ideas also give birth to democratic institutions. Democratic ideologies and institutions working together can take liberal democracy towards democratic peace.

Theoretical explanation of democratic peace

The fundamental essence of democratic peace theory is that democratic governments are less prone to engage in war compared to autocratic ones. This tendency can be attributed to three main reasons. Firstly, in a democratic state, the government is elected by the people through their votes. Therefore, in a democratic system, the citizens are the primary stakeholders in any policy decision. In war and conflict, the impact of the devastation, cruelty, and terrible losses is the greatest on these ordinary people. In this case, since the democratic state holds the ruler accountable to the people, war cannot break out if the ruler wishes.

Secondly, in a democratic state, since the ruler comes to power with the consent of the people, he does not feel insecure about his acceptance. Often, undemocratic rulers use radical ideologies such as nationalism and basing on such ideologies they try to garner people's support after starting or ending a war. But it is not necessary for a democratic ruler to adopt such an approach to persist his rule. Thirdly, in democratic governance, political parties need to attain power through a specific political process. This process often involves various challenges. To overcome these challenges, political parties in democracies primarily rely on non-violent strategies. These political parties are particularly adept at dialogue. Therefore,

when they come to power, if any crisis related to national interest arises, they can potentially resolve it through non-violent strategies like dialogue. As a result, it is possible to avoid possible wars or conflicts.

Analyzing the assumptions of the democratic peace theory mentioned above, it can be seen that the theory is primarily built upon two pillars, one is the Normative Pillar and the other being the Institutional Pillar.

Normative Pillar

The theorists of normative pillar primarily emphasize the influence of democracy on various aspects of society and politics. According to them, a significant impact of democracy is that it motivates politicians and other elites of society to act in accordance with democratic ideals in every sphere (Rosato, 2003). As a result of such democratic socialization, political elites are more interested in how to resolve disputes in a non-violent manner. In this regard, the rulers of the two democracies practice absolute tolerance so that both sides can protect their national interests. Democratic leaders try to comply with these ideals, both nationally and internationally, because they are committed to democratic norms. In other words, if ever any conflict of interest arises between two democratic countries, they try to overcome that crisis by showing mutual respect and trust. Both countries share the same ideology on this concept, the feeling of mutual respect begins. As a result, they find every problem is solvable.

On the other hand, mutual trust arises from the expectation that a democratic country will refrain from using weapons against its fellow democratic country under any circumstances, showing respect to each other from the ideological place. Norm externalization and mutual trust are thus the two causal mechanisms that form the normative pillar of democratic peace theory, making it less likely that two democratic states will come into conflict with each other (Dixon, 1994).

This argument further explains why democratic states are often prepared to go to war with non-democratic states. Simply put, undemocratic power is neither credible nor respected. They are not respected because their internal systems are considered unfair, and they are not trusted because they do not respect the freedom of citizens, nor do they seek to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner. Therefore, large-scale violence can occur for any of these two reasons. First, democracies cannot respect non-democracies because they are perceived to be in a state of war against their own citizens. A democratic state can therefore go to war against an undemocratic state in order to liberate its people from authoritarian rule, to ensure human

rights, and to introduce democratic government (Rosato, 2003). Secondly, since democracies choose the peaceful path to resolve conflicts, non-democratic forces can take advantage of this by suddenly attacking or threatening to use force during any crisis. In such a situation, democracies must ensure their own self-defense or attack beforehand (Doyle, 1983).

Institutional Pillar

According to institutional logic, democratic institutions and processes hold a democratic state's governing rulers accountable to the general population and civil society. Consequently, under various circumstances, these stakeholders can oppose war. The democratic electoral system is the source of this responsibility (Lake, 1992). The leaders of the political parties that are in power in the country will always try to retain power. The opposition party, on the other hand, always tries to capitalize on relatively unpopular or controversial policies through various movements and struggles in order to mobilize public opinion in their favor and prepare to seize power (Schultz, 1998).

Therefore, if the ruling party does any work against the interests of the people, the opportunity to remove that ruling party due to the democratic system comes to the hands of the people regularly. Moreover, various features of democracy, such as freedom of speech and open political processes, make it fairly easy for voters to evaluate government performance (Owen, 1997).

Logic	Independent Variable		Causal Mechanisms		Dependent Variable
Normative	Democracy	→	Externalization	→	Trust and Respect → Peace
Institutional	Democracy	→	Accountability	→	Public Constraint → Peace
Institutional	Democracy	→	Accountability	→	Group Constraint → Peace
Institutional	Democracy	→	Accountability	→	Slow Mobilization → Peace
Institutional	Democracy	→	Accountability	→	No Surprise Attack → Peace
Institutional	Democracy	→	Accountability	→	Information → Peace

Figure 2 - The Implementation Process of Democratic Peace Theory (Rosato, 2003)

Primarily, the institutional pillar of democracy is constructed through five distinct forms (Rosato, 2003). These forms are determined through five causal mechanisms. The above picture shows the continuity of these processes, where each process starts from the politicians' responsibility towards the people. Each area outlines a different path to peace. Two of these types claim that democracies are often unwilling to use force in any international crisis.

According to the public constraint mechanism, leaders are reluctant to go to war because of the public's aversion to war. The group's constraint mechanism is also similar; democratic leaders do not go to war because they want to fulfill the desires of anti-war groups within their country. In this way, when two democracies get entangled in a crisis, both countries' leaders face significant opposition to violence from their respective populations and civil societies. They also realize that the leaders of the opposing country are facing a similar internal opposition. As a result, the likelihood of violence in democracies, no matter how significant the crisis, is much lower (de Mesquita & Lalman, 1992). On the other hand, two causal mechanisms emphasize the claim that democracies gradually decide to use military force.

In this case, the decision to use military force is not solely in the hands of the ruler. They must gain support from the general public and anti-war groups. The process of obtaining this support is complex and time-consuming. Therefore, a democracy cannot launch a surprise attack. Thus, in a pure democratic environment where there is no possibility of a sudden attack, both sides have enough time to reach a peaceful resolution through mutual discussion (Russett et al., 1993).

Finally, in a democratic state, the information that democracy provides regularly in the process of information exchange helps to avoid war. Since democratic rulers are accountable to their citizens and on the other hand opposition parties oppose unpopular policies, rulers will not want to destabilize the country by declaring war. In fact, they will declare war only when they realize that their gains will outweigh their losses in the war, that the war will increase their popularity within the country, that their victory in the war is assured, and that they are fully prepared for war. If that's the case, the opposition will also have clear information that they are more likely to suffer in the war. As a result, the opposition is more prone to choose the path of peaceful resolution rather than bearing the risks and costs of war (Fearon, 1994).

Applicability of Democratic Peace

In Europe, democratic peace theory emerged, as did other major theories of international relations. The theoretical foundations of the form of democracy that we see today were laid by the scholars of the early modern period. The Petition of Right in Britain, the American Bill of Rights and the historic French Revolution played a special role in this regard. Although Immanuel Kant, the main proponent of this theory, did not directly mention democracy, modern researchers believe that the current democratic system is compatible with Kant's definition of a representative republic. In the 20th century, liberal democracy emerged all over the world through a series of significant events (waves of democracy) (Foa & Mounk, 2017).

It has contributed to wars, revolutions, the end of colonialism, and religious and economic conditions.

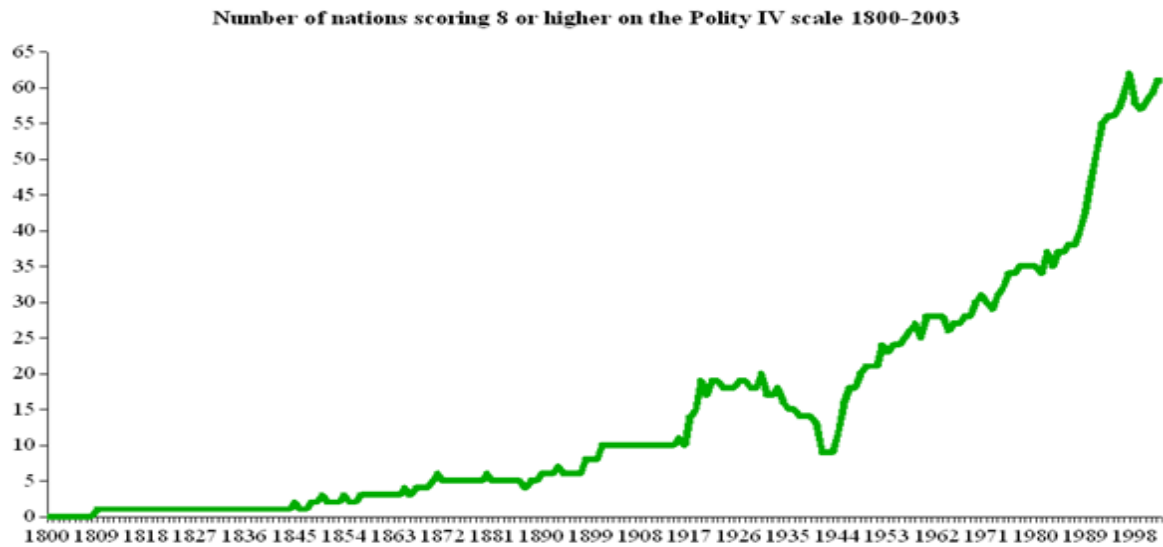


Figure 3- Rise of the Democratic State from 1800 to 2003 according to the Polity Dataset¹

It can be observed from Figure 3 that primarily after World War I, World War II, and the post-Cold War era, the number of states with democratic governance systems has increased gradually. After the end of World War I, the collapse of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires led to the birth of several new states, with many of them adopting democratic governance systems. On the other hand, after World War II, the majority of the world's states, including those under Soviet Union control, either partially or completely established democratic governance systems. Particularly in the post-colonial era, many states gained independence and subsequently adopted democratic governance systems. During this time, India, the world's largest democratic state, was born. After the end of the Cold War, former Soviet-controlled states also gradually began to adopt democratic governance systems (Diamond, 2015).

¹ Political data primarily constitute an information repository created for political science research to measure how effective democracy is in a country. This information repository's work began in the 1960s under the leadership of the renowned scholar Ted Robert Gurr. It has primarily established a range from -10 to 10. According to this information repository, if a country's score falls between -10 and -6, then its governance is considered autocratic. On the other hand, in countries where the score ranges from -5 to 5, their governance is categorized as anocracies, meaning a mixture of autocracy and democracy. And in countries where the score falls between 6 to 10, they are exclusively considered democratic states.

According to the information from the World Forum on Democracy, out of 192 countries in the world, 120 countries have elected democratic governance, and this system includes approximately 58.2% of the world's total population (World Forum on Democracy, 2013). Therefore, there is no doubt that democracy has been established as an effective form of governance, and the majority of countries in the world have accepted it. In this context, the importance of Democratic Peace in the field of research increased in the mid-eighties of the last century. American scholar Michael Doyle revived Kant's theory in his research. In this context, the importance of Democratic Peace in the field of research increased in the mid-eighties of the last century. American scholar Michael Doyle revived Kant's theory in his research. According to him, the world that Kant had dreamed of is going to become a reality today. This is because democracy is currently the most established form of governance in the world (Doyle, 1983). Especially after the Cold War, the popularity of democratic peace theory began to grow. The researchers tried to prove the applicability of this theory by using qualitative research method. The applicability of this theory can also be highlighted by discussing the emergence and evolution of the European Union as a case study.

European Union

World War II brought great devastation to Europe. The war took the lives of millions of people, destroyed the economy and left many important cities in the dust. In the post-war period, European leaders such as Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman sought to establish a new system based on political, economic and social factors in order to establish lasting peace and security in the region (Attia, 2016). According to them, the breakdown of democracy is the main reason for the destruction of peace in Europe. Therefore, they initially tried to establish stable democratic institutions to restore peace in Europe. The defeat of authoritarian regimes in World War II helped democratic European countries to realize their goals. Also, the institutional changes implemented in West Germany followed democratic principles, which played an essential role in the formation of the European Community. In line with this, the European Coal and Steel Community was established in 1952. This community brought together democratic states such as France, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany, integrating them into a single market through coal and steel industries (Lenz, 2013).

The harsh conditions that the people of East Germany faced as a result of dictatorial rule ended with the unification of both Germany in 1990. After that, Germany began to adhere to democratic and federal principles in order to unite within the European community. Thus,

Germany was integrated into the European Community in 1992 by applying and observing various democratic and federal principles that other member democratic states adhere to. As a result, Germany had the opportunity to develop peaceful and constructive relations with other members. This unification ended the security crisis between France and Germany, which was lasting for decades between them (Pinder, 2001). Germany's adaptation to this democratic principle contributed to the spread of peace and security in the European region at the time.

Based on the theory of democratic peace, the countries that started the European Community adopted certain collective norms that were effective and sufficient to bring peace and security to the region. They shared values of freedom of movement, corruption-free government, single market and strong respect for human rights. After this period, those countries began to spread these rules among other European countries, they succeeded in making the Eastern European countries that followed the Soviet dominance to transform their policies towards pluralistic democracy and change their economy from centralized communist to market economy.

By 1997, in the first wave of integration, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus had joined the European Union. In 2000, the second wave included Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Malta. Primarily through the European Coal and Steel Community, the initiation of the trend of European integration culminated in the establishment of the European Union (EU) among European countries. The latest development in this regard is the European Union (EU), which is founded on principles of political, economic, and social cooperation among European nations (Patapan, 2012). It currently has 28-member states. States cooperate with each other in various fields. They have established common customs policy, single market, common trade policy, common security system and defense policy among themselves. Based on the theory of democratic peace, it can be said that within democracies, this type of cooperation has reduced the likelihood of war and violence in Europe in both political and economic spheres.

Recent studies on public opinion and foreign policy show that there is a dialectical relationship between civil society, the general public, and policymakers. A number of studies indicate that public opinion changes before a policy change. That is, the change of policy is due to the change of public opinion. But a change in policy cannot affect public opinion that much. Furthermore, a recent study found that the biggest influence on the overall change in U.S. public opinion in the 1970s and 1980s was television news commentators and experts (Owen, 1994). For example, in 1969 during the Vietnam War and in 1974-75 and 1977-78 during the crises in the Middle East, television commentators clearly influenced public opinion.

These commentators often criticized and opposed government policies (Rosenau, 1961). From these research findings, it can be understood that, at least in the case of the United States, opinion elites², in cooperation with democratic institutions, play a role in determining the public's stance on an issue and similarly exert influence on foreign policy.

Criticism of Democratic Peace Theory

Like other international relations theories, the democratic peace theory also has certain limitations and criticisms. It claims that autocrats or dictators are more prone to being warmongers because there is no challenge to their decisions from any framework or institution within the state. They should be the first to use military force. However, if some international crises of this century are precisely observed, it becomes evident that these crises began with the leaders of democratic countries.

That is, belligerent leaders are also seen in democratic countries, and they also come to power with popularity. For example, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, two of the biggest representatives of so-called democracies, played a big role in the crisis that began in the world after 9/11. Their coordinated decision led to a military invasion of Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Similarly, attacks were carried out under Taliban rule in Afghanistan. On the other hand, according to the theory of democratic peace, citizens of democratic countries are also averse to war. So even if warmongering leaders want to go to war, they may be held back due to public opinion. However, the real-world consequences of this are not seen in the case of the United States' invasion of Iraq. Moreover, in the case of the United States, the popularity and acceptability of President George W. Bush increased through the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. On the other hand, failure in wars also generates opposite reactions towards leaders in democratic countries. From the above examples, it can be said that the theory of democratic peace, while presenting peace in a simple manner, is not so simple in reality.

²According to James Rosenau, opinion elites (leaders) are primarily formed by various aristocratic and representative groups. So, they are in a position where they are regularly able to influence opinions among unfamiliar individuals outside their local or national professional field. "Among them are government officials, prominent businessmen, civil servants, journalists, scholars, professional association leaders, and interest groups."

According to the liberal doctrine, in order for a liberal democracy to avoid going to war against another foreign state, it is essential that the foreign state also be considered as a liberal democracy (Owen, 1994). Most explanations of democratic peace suggest that democracies recognize each other and, based on that recognition, refrain from going to war with each other; however, researchers have rarely tested this assumption. In reality, in many cases, if two democracies are in conflict, most of them do not recognize each other as democracies. Democratic peace scholars often overlook cases that challenge the theory, which results in them not evaluating exceptional examples of this theory, such as the War of 1812, the American Civil War, or the Spanish-American War. Most Americans did not consider England a democracy in 1812 because England was a monarchy (Tucker & Hendrickson, 1992).

Similarly, the American Civil War of 1861 can also be considered in the same light. The main cause of the war was the abolition of slavery. The economy of the southern states was largely slave-based. So naturally they did not want slavery to be abolished. The northern states, on the other hand, had largely overcome their dependence on slavery due to the Industrial

Revolution. Hence, the northern states were vocal in abolishing slavery. In this situation, when the eleven Southern states seceded to form the Confederate States of America, the Civil War began between the Northern (Union) and Southern states. In this case, the northern states could not accept the southern states as liberal democracies due to their pro-slavery stance (Foner, 1981). On the other hand, in the American-Spanish War of 1898, almost no Americans considered Spain a liberal democracy (Owen, 1994). To determine which states actually belong to liberal democracies, we must do more than merely examine their constitutions. It demands an analysis of how liberals themselves define democracy. On the other hand, it may not be the case that everyone in every liberal democracy holds liberal ideals. Some may instead be politically realist, believing that power is more important than freedom. Some may want to have good relations with economic stakeholders, in which case the governance of that partner state is not considered. When such illiberal rule liberal democracies, there is a possibility that they may come into conflict with other liberal democracies. They can do so because the general public pays little attention to day-to-day foreign policy.

According to democratic peace theory, war is justified against non-democratic states because they oppress their citizens and threaten the freedom of other democratic states. Democratic leaders believe that undemocratic states are unreliable and unreasonable. Thus, adherents of democratic peace theory argue that waging war against these states will promote and expand democratic values, making it easier to establish peace and sustain it. However, this assumption is also vague and there is no concrete evidence for it (Russett et al., 1993).

Democratic countries usually do not go to war with non-democratic countries, and even if they do go to war with non-democratic countries, they must be sure that they will win if they conduct such a war, otherwise they will not risk taking such action (Elman, 2001). On the other hand, the commercial peace theory claims that, although there is a difference in political culture between a democratic and an undemocratic state, through business and commercial relations, they can establish peaceful relations between each other.

Montesquieu, in his *Doux-commerce* thesis, claims that peace can be achieved through the spirit of law, trade and more mutually harmonious behavior (Patapan, 2012). According to his theory, instead of democracy, business-trade can play the most important role in ensuring a peaceful position in international relations. According to him, business-trade can prevent conflicts between democratic and non-democratic countries.

US-China Relations

The criticism of democratic peace theory can be proved by the example of the U.S.-China relations in business and trade. China has never been a democratic country, meaning there are significant differences in the political character and values between democratic America and China. However, instead of engaging in warfare, they have developed mutual economic relations. Dong mentions in his research that this type of relationship between the United States and China was established as early as 1971 when President Nixon announced his intention to establish relations with the People's Republic of China. Nixon stated that the two countries should set aside their enmity and seek to establish contact with China, a nation of 750 million talented and industrious people, as a way to engage with the Chinese people (Dong, 2010). In this regard, the United States considered it a dangerous thing not to deal and not to have relations with China, and this danger had nothing to do with the undemocratic principles that China adhered to, according to the theory of democratic peace. The relationship began to broaden in 1983, when the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Trade and Commerce was established, whose main purpose was to look after trade issues and to further expand the economic ties between the two countries. China, currently the world's second-largest economy after the United States, has proven the importance of this relationship (Attia, 2016). Currently, China is the largest trading partner of the United States. Over time, U.S.-China relations have become stronger. In 2009, China emerged as the third-largest consumer of American goods and services (currently, it is the largest consumer). On the other hand, the United States became China's second-largest export market (Dong, 2010). This trade relationship encompasses

various products and services, ranging from raw materials to advanced technologies, electronics, vehicles, clean energy, green technologies, and electrical equipment, etc.

Democratic Peace Theory and the Post-Cold War World

For almost fifty years after the World War II, a kind of inimical situation arose between the two superpowers of the world, which we call the Cold War. On one side of the Cold War was the liberal democracy of the United States and its allies, and on the other side was the socialism of the Soviet Union and its allies. It is mainly during this period that the amount of research on democratic peace began to increase. The Cold War finally ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, despite overcoming the crisis of the Cold War, different changes are being observed in the causes and patterns of violence in different parts of the world. In various places, ethnic riots, genocide, terrorism, and other crises have emerged. This aftermath of violence has naturally brought new challenges to democratic peace theory. These challenges are discussed in detail in this section of the chapter.

Democratic Peace and the Clash of Civilizations

In the post-Cold War period, researchers became more interested in cultural identity than political doctrine. Researchers continued to speculate that in the post-Cold War period, i.e. the 21st century, the role of culture and civilization will be significant in addition to political opinion in world politics and international affairs. In 1993, American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington proposed the theory of the Clash of Civilizations. "Conflict in the world to come will not be caused by political ideology or economics, but by culture and religion" (Huntington, 2011). His argument became mainstream after the twin tower attacks on 9/11.

Huntington divided the world into eight civilizations. These are Western Civilization, Sinic Civilization, Buddhist Civilization, Japanese Civilization, Hindu Civilization, Orthodox Civilization, Latin American Civilization, Islamic Civilization and African Civilization. Each of these civilizations has its own values and culture that are very sacred to them. Since the end of the Cold War, Western civilization has largely dominated the world, with the United States as its main architect. The influence of Western civilization is the greatest in every field - international economy, trade and commerce, information technology, entertainment. However, according to Huntington, these civilizations, especially those centered on religious values, emerged to fill the void created in international politics by the collapse of socialism. This new power could directly threaten Western secularism (Huntington, 2011).

Similarly, the influence of radical nationalism and market-based communism is also gradually increasing. To be precise, the Sinic civilization (China, Korea, Vietnam, etc.) have posed a significant threat to Western civilization's economic influence. On the other hand, the current Orthodox civilization is the main barrier of Western civilization in terms of military. And the difference between Islamic civilization and Western civilization is probably the greatest in terms of values (Huntington, 1993). As a result, anti-Westernism is growing in the Muslim world, as is Islamophobia in the Western world (Johns & Davies, 2012).

It is not that this division did not exist during the Cold War, but it could not become focused because of the conflict of two ideologies. After the end of the Cold War, along with ethnic conflicts, the crisis of civilization also became an important part of international politics. (Russett et al., 1994). Whereas democratic peace is based largely on the political and cultural idealism of Woodrow Wilson, the clash of civilizations is considered a product of cultural realism - essentially a new version of Morgenthau's political realism (Russett et al., 2000). In a research regarding how much influence the theory of "Clash of Civilization" has comparing with the theory of democratic peace, it has been seen that the citizens of United Kingdom and United States perceive the Islamic states as a threat just as much the Dictatorial states and are in favor of using military force against them (Johns & Davies, 2012). In other words, the influence of the clash of civilizations is indeed real, and in the twenty-first century, it will pose an even greater challenge to the theory of democratic peace.

Democratic Peace and Ethnic Conflict

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of bipolar world politics, not only has a new crisis begun between civilizations located in different countries, but also between different ethnic groups living within a single state (B. Russett et al., 1994). As a result, the nature of the military conflict has also changed. In many parts of the world, including Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and parts of the former Soviet Union, issues such as religious fundamentalism, environmental degradation, the refugee crisis, radical nationalism, and ethnocentric issues began to influence world politics (Lake & Rothchild, 1996).

These new crises and conflicts introduced a new set of challenges for international and regional security. In today's world, conflicts are no longer about traditional borders or regions but are increasingly centered on values such as autonomy, ethnic self-determination, freedom, and ethnic identity (Hurrell, 2008). This kind of conflict primarily occurs in countries where

multiple ethnic groups coexist. As a result, the nature of conflict has transformed, leading to increased localization of conflicts (Connor, 1994). As a result, countries like Sudan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and others experienced or continued to experience various forms of conflict, posing significant challenges for thinkers, policymakers, and various international organizations in the field of conflict resolution. Over the past 20 years, researchers have tried to develop strategies in which conflict-ridden nations will avoid violence and find peaceful solutions as the best option (Chila, 2012). Social scientists have placed greater emphasis on identifying the origins of ethnic conflicts, particularly in cases where historical enmity or linguistic, cultural, racial, or religious differences are highlighted as the primary sources of such conflicts. Ethnic relations, shaped by past violence and animosity, often give rise to collective fear, mistrust, and suspicion, which can eventually manifest in violence. Moreover, if any ethnic group harbors uncertainty and fear about their future in society, it can also contribute to the creation of social divisions (Smith, 1991). In the evolution of the international framework since 1989, democratic values are considered an important remedy for conflict resolution. Following this logic, state authorities must be committed to fundamental human rights issues in order to ensure the building of institutions necessary for the establishment of internal stability and good governance in post-conflict societies.

If a state cannot ensure "democratic sovereignty" based on the rule of law and values of justice, then the consequences could endanger international peace and stability beyond its borders (Krasner, 2005). The key question here is whether democracy can actually bring peace back to these conflict-prone countries. The experiences from several incidents in the 1990s suggest that democracy has, in reality, failed to achieve its goal in such contexts. More specifically, political actions and elections resulting from pluralistic democracies can actually make existing social inequalities more pronounced. In this reality, rather than integrating a stable democratic system, ambitious political leaders seek to strengthen their position. Moreover, electoral activities may create expectations that cannot be met through existing political institutions (Chila, 2012).

Although democratic values have been well-accepted for its peaceful nature, democracy is not a simple process in society. Ethnic groups have to be aware of the benefits of resolving their difference of opinion peacefully. It involves a self-sustaining peace process that will establish a mature social and state structure through efficient institutions, rule of law, social justice and political participation. However, researchers, analysts and policymakers who envision democratic reform as the weapon for peace will be disappointed by the experience of the implementation of the democratic process in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda.

Democratic Peace and Terrorism

Research on the impact of democracy on terrorism supports two causal mechanisms. One is that democracy diminishes terrorism because it creates an environment where dissenters can pursue their interests through peaceful means. The other argument suggests that democracy encourages terrorism because the freedom of democratic societies allows terrorists to easily organize, recruit, and conduct operations (San-Akka, 2014). According to the first argument, the scope for peaceful political participation in an undemocratic society is very limited, which causes dissatisfaction and anger among the dissenters. As a result, dissidents are encouraged to join terrorist organizations (Crenshaw, 1981). On the other hand, in a democratic process, an unexpected and incompetent ruler can be removed from state power through free and fair elections, and the desired social change can be achieved through voting, so there is no need for violence. In this way, it is possible to reduce internal terrorism as well as inter-state terrorism by establishing democratic values (Li, 2005).

On the other hand, according to the second argument, some research suggests that democracy can actually play a supportive role in the rise of terrorism. In other words, combating terrorism for the sake of democracy can be more challenging (San-Akca, 2014). Undemocratic regimes, such as those that encourage terrorism by limiting individual freedoms, on the other hand, limit the ways of spreading terrorism by establishing a highly controlled political framework. As a result, extremists find it difficult to easily disseminate their message. Simultaneously, the government's stringent measures and oppression can push them into a corner over time. Due to this unfavorable environment, terrorism declines (Ghatak et al., 2019). Moreover, when a democracy attempts to pass policies that are perceived as anti-terrorist, it often faces numerous obstacles. Such policies can spark intense debates about whether they infringe upon individual freedoms. Consequently, the necessary actions are delayed, providing opportunities for terrorism to proliferate across various strata of society. Additionally, due to the freedom of the media, terrorists can exploit it to disseminate their message and gain various interests (Li, 2005). That is, democracy is creating a conducive environment for the spread of terrorism. Identifying such complex situations, the researchers suggest that normally mature democracies can successfully deal with such challenges (Ghatak et al., 2019). Because the democratic institutions in these countries are strong, the electoral process is transparent, the rule of law is high, the people's rate of getting justice is high, and above all, the level of human rights violations in these countries is negligible. On the other hand, institutionalized weak or undeveloped democracies may constitutionally guarantee some political participation and

freedom of citizens, but failings in the rule of law, protection of minority populations, and widespread human rights violations contribute to the rise of terrorism (San-Akca, 2014). Feldmann and Perala showed in their research that the rise of militancy in post-Cold War Latin America is largely due to the institutional weakness of democracies in that region (Feldmann & Perla, 2004).

Conclusion

Democratic peace theory mainly emerged from liberal doctrine. According to this theory, democracy encourages political leaders to pursue non-violent means to resolve conflicts. The main argument of democratic peace theory is that democratic countries, sharing similar values and political cultures, are less likely to engage in war with each other. According to followers of this theory, democracy has played a significant role in promoting peace and examples like the formation of the European Union and the reunification of Germany proves its applicability. As a result, a prolonged war between France and Germany came to an end after several decades. On the other hand, non-democratic countries are perceived as a threat to internal and international security. Leaders of such countries are often identified as unreasonable rulers who violate the rights of citizens of their own country. Therefore, in order to safeguard their own security and protect the rights of the citizens of those countries, democratic states may engage in wars with non-democratic states.

However, this theory, which became popular during the Cold War, began to be criticized due to various developments in the post-Cold War world. In this context, the theory of commercial peace, which suggests that peace can be achieved through trade and economic relations, may also apply. It can even establish peaceful relations between democratic and non-democratic countries. China and the United States, with their economic interactions, serve as examples of this theory in action, many of the crises of the current century have started with the hands of the leaders of the so-called democratic countries. The world's major liberal democratic states can in no way escape responsibility for the unrest, especially in the Middle East. In case of a crisis, if a state is democratic, there is no guarantee that its opponent (another democratic state) will recognize that country as a democratic country. The definition of democracy can vary from country to country, as a result, uncertainty always remains.

On the other hand, after the Cold War, the nature of conflict in the world has also undergone a significant transformation. Now, conflicts are not only arising between two countries because of differences in political culture, but also for the value centric differences, there is a greater risk of conflicts between two civilizations. Huntington has divided the entire world into eight civilizations. Among these civilizations, Western civilization has been the most influential so

far. However, in the current perspective, other civilizations are also preparing to challenge Western civilization. Economically, the rise of the Sinic civilization, militarily, the role of Orthodox civilization, and culturally, the position of Islamic civilization, at least from these three aspects, have challenged Western civilization, which could lead to major conflicts in the near future. In this context, Western liberal democracy will also face challenges to avoid conflict. On the other hand, ethnic conflict has emerged as a new crisis in the post-Cold War world. Within the state itself, different ethnic groups are engaged in bloody conflicts with each other. The source of these conflicts is either historical enmity or linguistic, cultural, racial or religious differences. In many cases, the establishment of democracy has actually led to an increase in the intensity of these conflicts. Because in many cases, it has been seen that power has come through the vote of a party whose leaders are mostly from a particular ethnic group. As a result, other ethnic groups who are away from power begin to feel deprived. In addition, violence against minorities adds a different dimension to it. As a result, various armed insurgent organizations emerge from different ethnic groups at some point, which takes the country towards ethnic conflict or civil war.

At the same time, there has been a rise in terrorism. Especially after 9/11, terrorism has become a new threat all over the world. Some studies show that democracy is more helpful in some cases of its expansion. By abusing the freedoms that exist in a democratic society and taking advantage of long delays in policy making, terrorist organizations are able to easily get together and carry out their operations. Undeveloped democracies, which are not institutionally weak, are particularly at risk.

To overcome these challenges and regain the applicability of democratic peace theory, a country's democracy must first be strengthened institutionally. In this regard, ensuring free and fair elections from the outset has to be prioritized. In a country with multiple ethnic groups, it is essential to establish a government through elections that ensures adequate representation from all ethnic groups. Strong rule of law and easy access of citizens to justice has to be ensured. The security of minority ethnic groups has to be ensured. Also, issues related to the basic needs of the people, such as ensuring employment, food security, good medical treatment, religious freedom, etc. have to be ensured. Democracy has to play a special role in preventing the kind of divisions that are being created in the world today, especially on the basis of religion and caste. In this context, organizing regular dialogues and workshops among people of different castes or religious backgrounds within the country can ensure tolerance and social harmony. Additionally, it is also important to avoid direct confrontation with states that are economically and militarily strong, even if they are undemocratic in reality. Finally, the most important thing is to always strive to uphold the human rights of the citizens of the country.

Political participation of citizens should be ensured and political awareness should be raised so that a citizen can express his anger in a correct and non-violent manner. Through these steps, a democracy can become institutionally strong. It is hoped that with this institutional strength, democracy will be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century and establish peace.

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