01

BORIS BARTH

The Democratic Peace Controversy

A Critical Survey

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ABSTRACT

The central idea of "democratic peace" theory (DP) is that democracies do not go to war with another. Since the 1960s this theory has been extremely popular among political scientists, but there are a number of methodological problems attached to the exploration of DP theory. Quantitative tests with few variables raise the question of validity. How to distinguish between war and peace, and how to define democracy are but a few of the problems "democratic peace" theorists must encounter. This study discusses several different concepts of democracy, showing that there has been a huge variety of more or less democratic systems through history; a point which is often lost when using cases spanning over a highly diversified universe in terms of space and time.

Another problematic aspect of the theory is that of democratisation as such. Democratisation has proven to be a potentially dangerous transformation process with the capacity of breeding lethal nationalism and intolerance. In spite of all these problems, there are regions in the world where democracies have been peaceful neighbours for decades. However, the idea of "democratic peace" does not satisfactorily explain these phenomena, and there is a need for further historical research into this field.

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THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE CONTROVERSY

THE PROBLEM[1]

The central idea of the "democratic peace" theory (DP) can be summed up in one sentence: Democracies do not go to war with one another, they have created a kind of separate peace.[2] This theory is extremely popular among some American political scientists and was taken over by several German and Scandinavian scholars during the 1990s. Two American Presidents, such different personalities as Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, have declared in public that they strongly favour the theory. Clinton called the expansion of democracy the "third pillar" of his foreign policy, and one can even talk about a Clinton doctrine. The President was convinced that democracies will not fight wars against each other, that they will trade freely, and that they will respect their citizen's human rights. On 5th February 1992, after the breakdown of the Soviet empire, James Baker, the American foreign secretary, perceived an opportunity to forge a democratic peace.[3] In 1994, Anthony Lake, the American national security adviser proclaimed that the spread of democracy serves American interests, because democracies "tend not to … wage war on one another". Also in 1994 the leaders of the G7 states discussed the proposal that the promotion of democratisation be made a central part of their security policy.[4] The administration of George W. Bush turned Clinton's doctrine of peace and security into a crusade for democracy.[5] During the 1990s one central maxim of American foreign policy was to promote global democratisation to secure peace.

Several American authors still treat the democratic peace theory not as a hypothesis, but as a law, because, they claim the empirical regularities cannot be ignored. Jack S. Levy formulated the often quoted sentence: "[…] in general, wars involving all or nearly all of the great powers, democratic states have never fought on opposite sides. This absence of war between democracies comes as

1 Thanks to Rolf Hobson for friendly support and many constructive debates.

2 Nils Peter Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace", *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 29 (1992): 369.

3 John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace", *International Security*, no. 19 (1994): 87 and 97; Charles W. Kegley and Margaret G. Hermann, "Military Intervention and the Democratic Peace", *International Interactions*, no. 21 (1995): 1; Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence. Democratization and nationalist conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000), p. 17.

4 Kegley and Hermann, "Military Intervention and the Democratic Peace": 79.

5 Thomas Schwartz and Kiron K. Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace", *Orbis*, no. 46 (2002): 159.

close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations."[6] However, paradoxically the 1990s were not only a period of democratisation, but also of chronic nationalist conflicts.[7]

Some of the arguments, which later were to become the democratic peace theory, were developed as early as the 1960s, when only a few democracies existed in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. In 1964, in a short article Dean V. Babst analysed 116 major wars and could not identify a single case of a war between two democracies. In his view the inherently peaceful public opinion in democracies plays the decisive role in preventing conflict, if the countries' borders are stable and secure.[8] With the exception of Rudolf J. Rummel and the COW project (Correlates of War) at the University of Michigan, very few authors showed any interest in the theory until the end of the 1980s, when a great number of publications followed.[9] Although this sudden popularity has not yet been analysed in a systematic way, the connection with the end of the cold war seems to be obvious. Since the end of the 1980s a new wave of democratisation also took place in countries which previously had few or no democratic or liberal traditions. The collapse of the Soviet Union gave rise in the West to the aspiration that all of the conflicts which had threatened the existence of mankind could be resolved and a new page in the book of history be opened. Democratisation of the former dictatorships and the liberalisation of strongly regulated economies seemed to provide adequate answers to the problems which had arisen at the end of the cold war. This naïve mood is reflected in Francis Fukuyamas book about the End of History which has often been criticised for its allegedly facile reductionism.[10]

6 Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War", in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, eds Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 88; for example quoted in: Sven Chojnacki, „Demokratien und Krieg. Das Konfliktverhalten demokratischer Staaten im internationalen System, 1946–2001" [Democracies and War. The Conflict Behaviour of Democratic States in the International System] in *Demokratien im Krieg* [Democracies at War], ed. Christine Schweitzer (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2004), p. 74; Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace": 87; James Lee Ray, "Does Democracy cause Peace?", in *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1998, p. 31; Jost Dülffer, "Internationale Geschichte und Historische Friedensforschung" [International History and Historical Peace Research], in *Internationale Geschichte. Themen – Ergebnisse – Aussichten* [International History: Themes, Conclusions, Prospects], eds Wilfried Loth and Jürgen Osterhammel (München: Oldenbourg, 2000), p. 253; with a very positive comment: Gustaaf Geeraerts and Patrick Stouthuysen, eds, "Democracy and the future European Peace", in *Democratic Peace. Myth or Reality for Europe*, Gustaaf Geeraerts and Patrick Stouthuysen (Brussels: VUB University Press, 1999), p. 11.

7 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, p. 15.

8 Dean V. Babst, "Elective Governments – a Force for Peace", *Wisconsin Sociologist*, no. 3 (1964): 9–14.

9 Rudolf J. Rummel, *Understanding conflict and War*, 5 vol. (New York: Halsted Press, 1976–1981).

10 See Francis Fukuyama, *End of History and the last Man* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992).

The theorists of DP in its earliest form were convinced that democracies were generally more peaceful than authoritarian states or dictatorships. However, several other authors have refused this hypothesis. Chan, for example, has tested the argument that "the more libertarian a state, the less its foreign violence". According to him, between 1816 and 1980, democracies have fought as many wars as non-democracies with the democratic states of Israel, India, France and Great Britain heading his ranking list. Relatively free societies also participated in extra-systemic wars to a very high degree.[11] Gleditsch and Hegre found additional empirical evidence that democracies were as much involved in wars as any other type of society, whereas other authors were unable to find any difference between democratic and non-democratic states with regard to the initiation of wars.[12] Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that also in the case of non-democratic regimes and dictatorships, peace is the regular condition and war the exception independent of the degree of internal oppression or terror.

Until recently the so-called "polity" sets, initiated by Tedd Gurr, have provided some of the most important data for democratic peace theorists. The Correlates of War project, another collection of data, starts in1816, but critical historians have pointed out that the concentration on the 19th and 20th centuries produces results that are too narrow to underpin a universal theory of war and peace. Comparable statistical material for contemporary developments can be found in the yearbooks of the Freedom House project. Only Spencer Weart has used the democratic peace model for the analysis of city republics in the renaissance and early modern Europe. In his view the numbers of conflicts fell drastically when early modern city republics developed republican constitutions.[13]

The vast majority of American political scientists, who are adherents of the democratic peace theory, use quantitative methods to a very high degree. Beneath both the COW and the polity sets, data from the United Nations General Assembly are used to test whether common democratic ideals are contributing to the democratic peace. Small and Singer have argued that not war itself, but the responsibility for its outbreak should be analysed to find out how warlike a system was.[14] However, from a historical point of view this methodology gives rise to other problems which can hardly be resolved by statistical methods alone. Small and Singer, for instance, place responsibility for the outbreak of the Prussian-French war of 1870 squarely on the French side.[15] This is partly true

11 Steve Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall … Are the freer countries more pacific?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no. 28 (1984): 620, 626ff and 638.
12 Niels Peter Gleditsch and Håvard Hegre, "Peace and Democracy. Three levels of analysis", *Journal of conflict resolution*, no. 41 (1997): 284; Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace": 373.
13 Spencer Weart, *Never at War. Why Democracies will not fight one another* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
14 Melvin Small and J. David Singer, "The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes", *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, no. 1 (1976): 53.
15 Ibid.: 57.

because France did declare war on Prussia, but it is impossible to understand the complicated mechanism of escalation which led up to the declaration of the war without also analysing Bismarck's intricate diplomatic game and the so called "Ems telegramme". In the border conflict of 1962, China attacked first, but India had annexed the territory in question previously and had refused to start diplomatic negotiations. Also during the American Vietnam War it is not clear who was responsible for the escalation and the beginning of the fighting. The COW project codes this war as a civil war although both North and South Vietnam were members of the international states system.[16] In 1899 the Transvaal declared war on Great Britain and Boer troops attacked South Africa, but for several years prior to this the Cape Colony and Britain had used every opportunity to destabilize and provoke the Boer republics, to the point that a military conflict seemed to be inevitable. It is doubtful whether it will ever be possible to analyse such a highly dynamic escalation process adequately in statistical terms.

Some scholars have problems with other aspects of the democratic peace argument. It makes little sense, for the purpose of classification, to distinguish only between war and peace, because qualitative aspects should also be taken into consideration. Brazil and the Soviet Union were both belligerents in the Second World War, but their participation was of a very different quality.[17] Randall L. Schweller's complicated diagrams analyzing the structure of Franco-German conflict in the 19th and 20th century might have benefited, had he been able to quote a single book or article in German or French. He is not even interested in reading the very good English historical literature on the topic.[18] Such a complete lack of historical knowledge combined with a highly developed sympathy for pure statistical models lead to results which a Frenchman no doubt would receive with a short "vraiement?", whereas most German historians would find Schweller's conclusions "außerordentlich erstaunlich" (extraordinarily astonishing).

The normal way to analyse the conflict structure in the international system by means of statistics is dyadic, i.e. certain periods are analysed with regard to types and numbers of conflicts between states. This methodology has also been strongly criticised. It leads to strange results if every year of peace between Great Britain and the USA is to be evaluated as a statistical victory for the democratic peace theory. In an average year probably 99 per cent of the states in the world have peaceful relations with each other.[19] Dülffer formulates two different critical aspects: Firstly, only in a very few cases does the dyadic concept fit the

16 Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall": 638.
17 Ibid.: 622.
18 Randall L. Schweller, "Domestic Structure and Preventive War. Are Democracies More Pacific", *World Politics*, no. 44 (1992): 253–261.
19 Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", pp. 37 and 41.

real conflict structures in a complex system of states. Secondly, if the absence of conflicts between Switzerland and Sweden or between Austria and Israel are counted as democratic dyads a very high "n" appears and a large number of years without conflict apparently support the democratic peace theory. It only makes sense to count those cases where real possibilities and real reasons for war existed.[20]

Maoz and Abdolali and other authors are convinced that political freedom can be measured statistically. They solve the huge methodological problems by the definition that democracy and political freedom are identical. For them, violent conflicts initiated by politically free states are less probable again by definition, but at the same time these free states are more likely to become victims of international aggression by non-free states.[21] The first part of the theory can be discussed with good reason, but there is not a single argument in favour of the second one. Why should dictators be more likely to attack democracies than they are to go to war with other forms of states?

Another possible variable, which has been used against the democratic peace theory, was identified in geography. Normally wars were fought by territorial neighbours and only a few democracies had common borders. Distance can play a role because it is expensive and difficult to engage armies in far-away regions of the world. With the COW-data and polity II, however, Gleditsch refutes the theory that geographical distance could be a possible third factor.[22] A detailed analysis for the period between 1950 and 1990 has shown that a little more than 30 per cent of all borders were disputed and that in the 129 cases of disputes nearly 50 per cent escalated to military confrontation, although the numbers of real wars were relatively small.[23]. Until today only very few states are able to conduct wars anywhere on the planet.[24] Once again the historical perspective does not provide clear evidence: in the 19th and 20th centuries, great powers did intervene all over the world if their respective governments believed their vital interests to be at stake. Great Britain started the Opium War against China in 1842 on the other side of the globe, without caring about the Chinese form of government, and provoked a war in South Africa in 1899 against the relatively democratic Boer republics over the Transvaal goldfields.

According to Benoit it is obvious that democracies have fewer conflicts with each other. However, a correlation between peace and gross domestic product shows the same statistical effect for the 1960s and 1970s. If this is the case,

20 Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", pp. 256f.
21 Zeev Maoz and Nasrin Abdolali, "Regime Types and International Conflict, 1816–1976", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no. 33 (1989): 4–7.
22 Niels Peter Gleditsch, "Geography, Democracy, and Peace", *International Interactions*, no. 20 (1995): 297ff and 316ff; Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace": 371f.
23 Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground. Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 34 and 69.
24 Gleditsch, "Geography, Democracy, and Peace": 301.

development rather than democracy could be the decisive factor. Benoit solves the problem by the argument that democracies are regularly more developed and development is a precondition for democracy. Thus it is not the economy but the type of regime that provides the explanation for peace.[25]

Neither the factor "war" nor the concept of "democracy" is easy to define. Automatically the danger of a tautology appears. Owen criticises that since the causal mechanisms behind democratic peace are less than clear, peace might as well be the by-product of other variables still unknown.[26] Ray shares the opinion that detailed future analysis could identify an unknown third factor.[27] For Gleditsch, however, it is an open question, why such a simple fact that democracies do not wage war on one another had not already been discovered in the great classical studies about wars. Why did it take more than thirty years until this simple rule gained widespread acceptance? According to Gleditsch one possible explanation is that the idea that a single variable was sufficient to explain such complicated questions as war and peace seemed to be ridiculously naïve. Gleditsch is sure that the search for a third variable will meet with little success. Most of the previous research into the conditions for war and peace in the modern world could now be thrown on the scrap-heap of history, and any analysis would have to start from a completely new basis.[28]

PERPETUAL PEACE AS A UTOPIAN CONSTRUCTION

The hope that war could be abolished is as old as mankind. From the early modern period onwards, several theorists of classical philosophy established the problem in political thought; they investigated whether a long-lasting peaceful order were possible in the anarchic international state system. The Duc de Sully, Abbé de Saint-Piérre, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and of course Hugo Grotius discussed the definitions of "just" and "unjust" wars and indirectly the additional matter of how and under which circumstances wars could be prevented. Very little research has been conducted into the Enlightenment's political philosophy and its understandings of war and peace. Most of the democratic peace theorists refer to Immanuel Kant's short text "Zum ewigen Frieden" [Perpetual Peace] as the first classical and relevant contribution to the problem. This is not the place to present Kant's ideas once more – this has been done very often and at a high

25 Kenneth Benoit, "Democracies Really Are More Pacific in General. Re-examining Regime Type and War Involvement", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no. 40 (1996): 651.
26 Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace": 87f.
27 Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", p. 36.
28 Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace": 370ff; Gleditsch and Hegre, "Peace and Democracy": 291.

level of analysis.[29] Until today, many authors disagree over the issue of whether Kant's concept of republics was identical with democracies. His text about the perpetual peace was strongly linked with another earlier article about "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht" [Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective], which is seldom quoted even today, but remains one of the most fascinating texts of German political philosophy. In this article, Kant constructs a perfect model for a republic, or constitutional monarchy based on reason and law and not on violence and force. A further aspect which has not been discussed in most English language studies, is the fact that Kant uses the German word "ewiger Friede", which in German means both, "perpetual" and "eternal peace". The German text has a much more utopian character than the English translations. For Kant and for his contemporary readers, it was clear that he wrote about a hypothetic, utopian world in a far away future, because at his time, only two (USA and Switzerland) republics or democracies existed, even if one could also adduce the first years of revolutionary France before the "terror" and the rise of Napoleon.

From a historical point of view, it is of further importance that Kant's text was not regarded as being of central importance among the Enlightenment philosophers. In his time it was in fact not often quoted. The rediscovery of Kant took place when democratic peace theorists were looking for past authorities to strengthen their arguments. At the end of the 18th century other thinkers were more important than Kant. James Madison, too, believed in 1792 that the more republics were created, the fewer wars would occur. The growing number of republics would cause a revolution in international diplomacy.[30] Other contemporaries did not share these optimistic views. The most radical critique was formulated by Alexander Hamilton.[31] In his "Federalist Papers", Hamilton found the idea of a republican peace simply ridiculous, because in the past, republics went to war as often as monarchies. Monarchies as well as republics were ruled by human beings. Parliaments were subject to the influence of anger, rivalry, hatred and other violent emotions. Ancient Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were republics, and even the trading republics Carthage and Athens were among the most warlike states in classical antiquity.[32]

29 For Kant and the literature on „Zum ewigen Frieden" Dieter Senghaas, *Zum irdischen Frieden* [On Earthly Peace] (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2004), p. 8; Ernst-Otto Czempiel, „Kants Theorem, oder: Warum sind die Demokratien (noch immer) nicht friedlich" [Kant's Theory, or: Why are Democracies (still) not peaceful?],: *Zeitschrift für internationale Beziehungen*, no. 3 (1996): 79–101.

30 Kegley and Herrmann, "Military interventions and the Democratic Peace": 2.

31 Schwartz and Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace": 159.

32 Angela Adams and Willi Paul Adams, eds, *Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, Die Federalist-Artikel. Politische Theorie und Verfassungskommentar der amerikanischen Gründerväter* [The Federalist Papers. Political Theory and Constitutional Commentaries by the American Fathers of the Constitution] (Paderborn: Schöningh., 1994), pp. 24–31.

Gates argues that Kant is not well suited as a "tribal idol" of the democratic peace camp, because he never discussed democracies but republics. A much clearer contemporary theoretical basis for democratic principles was developed by Thomas Paine (1792) and by William Godwin in the "Enquiry Concerning Political Justice" (1793). Godwin was perhaps the first author who made a clear distinction between the concepts of democracy and republic and created a connection between democracy and peace. He proposed to replace the old militant, monarchical balance of power doctrine by an active policy of democratisation, because democracies were inherently peaceful. However, this peaceful nature would be difficult to prove at the very beginning, because democracies first had to fight and to go to war with monarchies.[33] Here, for the first time, an author came to the conclusion that democratisation and war are strongly linked with each other – we will come back to this point. It was Tocqueville who believed that – in modern terms – the external conflict behaviour of democracies, led, not by rationality but by instable feelings and sentiments, differs strongly from autocratic regimes. In spite of his considerable sympathy for the American people he was convinced that in foreign policy, a democratic government would be in a much weaker position than an aristocratic one, because democratic sentiments could lead to superfluous wars and unnecessary aggressions against other states.[34] Several typical aspects of the modern contemporary democratic peace controversy were obviously already the subject of discussion 200 years ago at the end of the 18th century – a topic worth further historical scrutiny in the future.

THE DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRACY

For Babst, Rummel, and the early versions of the COW project, the concept of democracy caused no problems, because they simply used the American model as it had developed since the early 18th century. For different observers "democracy", "intervention", and "war" mean different things, and no consensus exists on how to define a democracy. Most of the authors use the definition of "war", which has been introduced by the United Nations after long and controversial debates. War takes place if an armed clash occurs between two actors, at least one of them represented by a government, and if at least 1,000 soldiers are killed. This definition is used by the COW project and by the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP), but it causes several problems, especially if one deals with civil, guerrilla, or colonial wars.

It is much more difficult to define democracy. James Lee Ray points out that it is impossible to classify states in two categories such as "free" or "non-

33 Scott Gates, Torbjörn Knutsen, Jonathon W. Moses, "Democracy and Peace. A More Sceptical View", *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 33 (1996): 6.

34 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Über die Demokratie in Amerika* [Democracy in America] (München: DTV, 1976), pp. 263ff.

free". States can be democratic to a higher or lesser degree.[35] Aware of the problems, the "Freedom House Project" and other authors have decided to introduce the third category of "partly free states". The first item (political rights) identifies and classifies eleven categories; the second item (civil rights) also uses eleven categories.[36] However, these definitions give rise to the same problems, only on a much higher level of abstraction, and they do not solve the general question. As the democratic peace debate shows, clear definitions are one of the crucial points in peace research, whereas these definitions never reflect historical developments but our contemporary world views. Since when did democracies exist and which criteria must be fulfilled to classify a state as democratic? Even today our modern forms of well established democracies are not static, but highly dynamic societies in a permanent process of development.

Several authors suggest a huge variety of criteria to identify a democracy. Small and Singer propose four points: The fair representation of most social classes, the dominance of parliament or at least a partial parliamentary control of the executive, at least two parties, each of which has the right to criticise the other and a parliament which is elected by a fair section of the adult population. Small and Singer conclude that Britain did not fulfil the parliamentary criteria before the second reform bill of 1867, Italy not before the election reform of 1882 and the Netherlands not before 1887.[37] A problem in using these four criteria is caused by Germany, because it fulfilled all four points after 1871 and even a "partial control of the executive" occurred by means of by the parliamentary control over the budget.

Chan suggests the following aspects for the period between 1816 and 1945, which he states were necessary preconditions of a free society. The chief executive must be elected either directly by the people or indirectly by an elected assembly, and this assembly must have the full or partial right to control the executive. The legislators must be chosen directly or indirectly by popular vote, and legal elections for the parliament must take place at least every four years. For the time after 1945 an at least partial competitive process of election for the legislative must take place, and the political opposition may not be excluded from the election process, apart from some extremist parties.[38] Other aspects which are mentioned as central to a democracy are freedom of speech and thought, the balanced representation of different political opinions in the media and certain individual and collective rights.[39]

35 Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", pp. 32f.
36 Charles W. Kegley and Margaret G. Hermann, "Putting Military Intervention into the Democratic Peace. A research note", *Comparative Political Studies*, no. 30 (1997): 84.
37 Small and Singer, "War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes": 54f.
38 Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall": 630.
39 Kegley and Hermann, "Putting military intervention into the democratic peace": 84.

Another aspect is surprisingly rather seldom mentioned in the literature about the democratic peace, although it is central for the conflict behaviour of states: the political control of the armed forces. From today's perspective perhaps the weakest point of the German constitution of 1871 was the *de facto* autonomy of the army, which was only responsible to the emperor and not to any democratic or parliamentary institution. The lack of political control contributed to a very high degree to the fatal decisions which led to the escalation of the Balkan Crisis in July 1914 and to the attack on France via Belgium. It was not the degree of formal democratisation or mass participation in politics, which was rather high in Germany, that was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War, but the institutional weakness of the constitution's arrangement of military affairs. In 1914 the general staff and the leadership of the army could still act like a "state within the state". The Prussian construction of an independent army leadership, which was solely responsible to the emperor, was taken over by Japan in the famous Meji Constitution – with exactly the same deleterious consequences. In principle the Meji Constitution did provide an opening for an evolutionary development in a democratic direction, but this process failed in the long run. The autonomy of the Japanese army contributed to a very high degree to the militarization of society, to the rise of a military form of fascism and to the aggression of the 1930s. When the army decided to attack Manchuria in 1931, not a single civil politician or official in Tokyo was even informed.

One aspect which is crucial to the historical definition of a democracy is suffrage. In 1812–16, Great Britain was certainly no democracy since no more than three per cent of the population had the right to vote. Schweller and other authors identify states as democracies, if the suffrage extended to at least 30 per cent and if female suffrage was introduced at least one generation after the first demands for it were voiced. Further criteria are internal sovereignty over military affairs and the foreign policy as well as stability, i.e. the democratic form of government must exist for at least three years. Relevant are also individual civil rights, private property and a free enterprise economy.[40] Ray suggests a suffrage of 50 per cent and one peaceful transfer of executive power from one independent party to another. These conditions would exclude some doubtful cases of democratic wars like the war of 1812, the American Civil War and the Spanish-American War of 1898.[41] Other authors believe that a 10 per cent suffrage is sufficient to meet the democratic criterion.

The difficulty, if not impossibility, involved in elaborating objective criteria to distinguish between democratic and non-democratic societies can be demonstrated by the problem of suffrage. Undoubtedly, voting is central to the democratic process. Whether one uses criteria of 10 per cent, 30 per cent, or 50

40 Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace": 370.
41 Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", p. 33.

per cent, however, is highly arbitrary and depends only on the author's personal preference. It is impossible to read adequate criteria out of history or by interpreting the sources. More important than the purely quantitative are the qualitative aspects. Is female suffrage central to the concept of democracy? If this were the case, there would have been no democracies at all before World War I, France would only have become one after 1944 and some parts of Switzerland not before the 1980s. How can states be classified if a huge part of the population does not have even basic civil rights for ethnic or racist reasons? Is the type of a *Herrenvolk* democracy such as the Boer republics or many states of the USA before the Civil War really democratic? Historically, suffrage has developed independently in different ways and in different contexts.

Firstly, suffrage in European settler communities was widespread from the beginning and often every adult male citizen had the right to vote because of the lack of traditional aristocracies and authorities. Governmental and bureaucratic institutions were weak, as was state control of the society. Here, however, disputes arose over the criteria defining citizenship and over the question of who should be allowed to acquire it. Often, aggressive forms of racism and ethnic divisions were the result of such debates, an aspect which will be discussed later.

Secondly, other forms of European democracy were rooted in the early modern republics, where no royal central power existed or where royal authority was limited by a constitution, normally after heavy internal disputes or even civil wars. Early modern republics were ruled by parliaments which were dominated by a few aristocratic or upper-class families, such as early modern England, the Dutch Republic, Poland before the partitions, or the Renaissance city republics in Northern Italy. Governments and parliaments in North-Western Europe accepted conflicts among interest groups within the state and integrated them into institutions, but not by suppressing them. The building of strong state institutions later became a necessary precondition for the slow rise of liberal democratic or radical republican ideas. The slow extension of the suffrage from the early 19th century onwards became possible without serious crises or mass violence, because reforms did not touch the existing institutions and could be carried out within the stable framework of the already existing bureaucracy.

Thirdly, the oft-quoted case of early modern Switzerland, a very special mixture of city republics and peasant traditions of rural democracy can be neglected here, because it did not become an example for other states.

Fourthly, democracies could be the result of revolutionary developments, especially in the case of France or the Italian Risorgimento. Democratisation which occurred in the course of a revolutionary process never caused peace but invariably resulted in war.

Without going into details, it can be stated that the rise of democracies has nowhere occurred as the result of a planned development. Historically their roots differ very much from each other. Democratisation is a highly dynamic

and often violent process, and no general law exists for the ideal road to the perfect state. For methodological reasons the statistical approach has to reduce all these complicated and dynamic developments to static formulas.

Suffrage is easy to measure statistically, but "soft" factors such as mass participation in political decision making or the idea of a civilised society are perhaps even more important for the democratic development of a society and for the question as to whether it tends to seek warlike decisions. Gleditsch and Ward argue that not only participation in elections, but also the citizens' effective participation in decision making processes belongs to the democratic ideal.[42] Participation is difficult to measure. If one compares Great Britain with Imperial Germany before 1914, the political mobilisation of all social groups in Germany was probably much higher than in Britain because of the great number of political organisations in all of the different social milieus. The high degree of politicisation of public life had also reached the lowest classes. However, as many contemporary observers stated at the time, the high degree of political organisation did not correspond to a similar level of political responsibility. The results were very aggressive demands in foreign policy and the rise of demagogic right wing politicians.

There has hitherto been little debate over the question of which forms of democracies are more war-prone than others. Democratic constitutions with a strong executive may pursue an aggressive foreign policy because of the president's extraordinary position. The French or American presidents are in a much stronger position to take decisions on war or peace than – say – the leader of Switzerland. The complicated and slow decision making process in a direct democracy makes the preparation of a war nearly impossible and prevents bloodthirsty Swiss militia-men from attacking their neighbours. The American president Lyndon Johnson, however, was able to conduct the war in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war and the Nixon/Kissinger team even ordered heavy bombing attacks on neutral Cambodia. During the Vietnam War, Congress and the public were hardly informed by the government about backgrounds and developments. American governments often tried to expand their executive powers if they expected strong resistance against certain measures, as for example was revealed in Ronald Reagan's "Iran-Contra" affair.

Especially in times of a crisis presidential powers increased enormously and weakened parliamentary or bureaucratic control to the point where it almost ceased to exist. The theory that wars in democracies are unlikely because of the slow and transparent decision making process, does not really address

42 Kristian S. Gleditsch and Michael Ward, "A Re-examination of Democracy and Autocracy in Modern Politics", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no. 41 (1997): 362.

the central issue.[43] As history shows, democratic decisions are not necessarily slow.[44] During the Cuban crisis of 1962, the whole of the American executive power was concentrated in "ExCom", a group of 12 men under the leadership of President Kennedy, which was neither democratically elected nor subject to parliamentary control.

The question of the connection between democracy and peace strongly depends on definitions. If the threshold definition of democracy is high enough one will find very few of them before the era of the Cold War and logically also very few wars between them. But even during the Cold War, this fact is better explained by NATO and the bipolar stand-off than by the forms of the governments involved. If the threshold definition is set at a high level, Germany before 1914 was no democracy, but it is also doubtful whether the United States could be described as one and hence the democratic peace occurred in a vacuum: since there were no democracies, no wars could occur among them. If one lowers the threshold definition the case of Imperial Germany causes serious problems, because according to contemporary beliefs it could be classified as democratic, with the consequence that the First World War was fought between some democratic states.[45] For Layne the central question is not the general level of democratisation in a state, but the democratic or parliamentary influence on crucial decisions in foreign policy. According to him, before 1914, Wilhelmine Germany was as democratic as France or Great Britain. In all three countries an aristocratic or upper-class background and independent wealth were necessary preconditions for service in the diplomatic corps or in the respective foreign ministries. In all three countries far-reaching decisions in foreign policy were taken without the parliament being consulted or even informed.[46]

The democratic peace theory only works if all forms of non-western and non-contemporary democracies are excluded. Was Haiti in 1991 democratic and what did Bill Clinton mean exactly when he, in October 1993, asked Haiti to return to democracy? Does it really make sense to list Bolivia, Peru, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka – liberal regimes according to Michael Doyle – together with the Netherlands or Switzerland?[47] Democracy alone is a too vague concept to be used in an analysis of world history. Some democratic states are not liberal: Iran is a state with universal suffrage and fierce parliamentary debates but without

43 For this argument Harald Müller, Demokratien im Krieg. Antinomien des demokratischen Friedens [Democracies at War. The Contradictions of the Democratic Peace], in *Demokratien im Krieg* [Democracies at War], ed. Christine Schweitzer et.al. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005), p. 35. Har sendt mail til Boris

44 Schwartz and Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace": 168.

45 Ibid.: 160 and 164f.

46 Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant. The Myth of the Democratic Peace", *International Security*, no. 19 (1994): 42f.

47 Raymond Cohen, "Pacific Unions. A reappraisal of the theory that 'democracies do not go to war with each other'", *Review of International Studies*, no. 20 (1994): 208 and 212f.

liberal world views or religious tolerance. The Confederation in the American Civil War was a democracy but not liberal as well. Some states with liberal elements were undemocratic such as Great Britain before the great Reform Bill of 1832. In Owen's opinion, democracies do not avoid wars with other democracies, but only with states which are perceived as liberal.[48]

For Arend Lijphart and others no real democracies existed before the 20th century. Australia and New Zealand were the first states with a fully democratic regime, firm popular control of governmental institutions and universal adult suffrage. For 1980 he identifies 51 democracies, although some of them were without long established democratic institutions, which had survived serious crises. If one applies these criteria, Upper Volta and Surinam must be sorted out, while Spain passed the test in 1981. If the criterion of stability is added, the number is reduced to 21, and with the exception of Australia, India, Israel, Japan and New Zealand, all are in the Northern Atlantic and the Western European region.[49] Jost Dülffer shares the opinion that developed democratic systems are the product of the 20th century. Formal rules for democracy did exist in the 19th century, but the social and welfare state effected a qualitative transformation of the term in the 20th. The COW and polity data's interpretation prompt the sceptical question as to whether any use of the concept of democracy makes sense before 1918 or even before 1945.[50]

EXCEPTIONS AND POSSIBLE REASONS FOR DEMOCRATIC PEACE

Wars between democracies are very rare indeed, but it does not follow that none ever occurred. Some authors believe that a single exception to the rule would destroy the whole DP theory; others think that some exceptions could be accepted without giving up the broad concept of the democratic peace.[51] A great number of cases of wars between democracies have been discussed and it is not possible to list all of them here. Only some typical pro- and counter arguments will be mentioned. If the United States of America was a democracy in the middle of the 19th century, then the American Civil War was a war between two democracies, too.[52] Both states had established democratic governments with full control of a certain territory, and the constitutions were very similar. If the theory is right that democracies share common cultural values and norms, civil wars within an existing democracy would be impossible. The secession meant a break-up of the constitution, but it was made legitimate by the voters or the respective parliaments in a democratic or republican way.

48 Owen, "How Liberalism produces Democratic Peace": 98 and 102f.
49 Cohen, "Pacific Unions": 211.
50 Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", p. 256.
51 James Lee Ray, "Wars between Democracies: rare or nonexistent?", *International Interactions*, no. 18 (1993): 251–276; Schwartz and Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace": 161f.
52 Schwartz and Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace": 164.

Other wars which cause serious problems for the definitions of war and democracy are the Anglo-Boer War of 1899, the Spanish-American War of 1898, the French Ruhr occupation of 1923, Finland's participation in the Second World War on the Axis' side, the border war between Peru and Ecuador in 1995, the Kargil War between India and Pakistan in 1999 and a number of other conflicts. Palestine must also be considered a hypothetical case, a democratic government which would go to war with democratic Israel at once, if it had the necessary military force. Most of the possible exceptions were analysed by Spencer Weart, who came to the conclusion that they are either theoretically irrelevant or that they prove the rule.[53] Several authors doubt whether Spain was a real democracy in 1898[54], but as to the question of why the United States started the war, the perception of the other state's form of government was more important than its reality.

It is not sufficient to analyse conflicts *between* democracies; peace research must first ask the question whether and why democracies go to war at all. The democratic peace theory must explain the paradoxical situation that democracies fight as many or even more wars than non-free societies, although they do not do so against each other. Democracies behave rather intolerantly, sometimes even belligerently towards autocratic regimes or dictatorial states. It is highly controversial how to interpret these findings, but they must be integrated into one theory. Chojnacki is sure that it speaks against a systematic connection between war and regime type of individual states. Additionally it is striking that the growing number of democracies since the early 1990s does not seem to have any effect on the degree of violence in the international system.[55]

Some authors even believe that democratic systems initiate and conduct wars and other military interventions with a higher probability than other types of regimes.[56] According to them, no external reasons are responsible for special forms of democratic violence, which can become extremely aggressive. The motivation stems from a specific democratic self-confidence, respect for human rights, open debates and the peaceful solution of internal conflicts. When dealing with non-democratic states this democratic self-understanding combined with the perception that democracies have reached already a higher level of civilisation, becomes the reason for aggression. Müller calls this paradox the antinomy

53 Weart, *Never at War*, pp. 297–318.
54 Gleditsch and Hegre, "Democracy and Peace": 288.
55 Chojnacki, „Demokratien und Krieg", p. 75; Christopher Daase, „Demokratischer Frieden – Demokratischer Krieg. Drei Gründe für die Unfriedlichkeit von Demokratien" [Democratic Peace – Democratic War. Three Reasons for the Belligerence of Democracies], in *Demokratien im Krieg*, ed. Christine Schweitzer, p. 53f.; similar: Benoit, "Democracies really are more Pacific …": 636.
56 Chojnacki, „Demokratien und Krieg", p. 75f.

of democratic peace.[57] Henderson goes so far as to claim that the democratic peace is nothing but an illusion: "The findings using an explicitly state level research design indicate not only that democracies are not more peaceful, but that they are in fact significantly more likely to become involved in – and initiate – interstate wars and militarized international disputes."[58] Risse argues that the aggressiveness of democratic states results from the fact that democracies to a large degree create their enemies and their friends by their own definitions.[59]

The same institutions which prevent democracies from going to war with one another promote an aggressive behaviour in conflicts with non-democracies. The same normative values which are shared by all democrats make wars with dictators more probable and more inexorable. An aggressive foreign policy can even be promoted by the special role of public opinion and interest groups, which are inseparable parts of an open society. Democratic wars tend to be more radical than wars between autocrats. The high degree of mass mobilisation, which is necessary in democracies to generate the consensus needed to go to war, makes it more difficult to arrive at a compromise peace. Conflicts with non-democracies tend to become basic decisions about liberty rights and forms of governments. This aspect of people's war was already discovered by Clausewitz.[60]

The normative theory neglects the level of perceptions. During the 19th century most Americans did not think in terms of democracies, but of republics confronted with monarchies. During the crisis of 1873 many Americans were against a war with Spain, because Spain was regarded as a republic, too. It is nearly impossible to analyse this aspect of perceptions with quantitative methods alone. In the USA during the 19th century, Britain, Spain, or France were sometimes regarded as republics – in which case the readiness to risk conflicts declined – and sometimes not. Even Stalin became "Uncle Joe" in the USA in the Second World War, when the alliance with the Soviet Union needed public justification.[61]

Bruno de Mesquita and other authors have put forward the institutional argument that democracies have to pay materially relatively big winning coalitions. A defeat in a war means at the same time the loss of power for the government, but democratic politicians wish to stay in office. Hence, they will only risk

57 Müller, „Demokratien im Krieg", p. 40f; Werner Ruf, „Wir und die anderen. Demokratischer Anspruch und hegemoniale Arroganz" [We and the Others. Democratic Claims and Hegemonic Arrogance], in *Demokratien im Krieg*, ed. Christine Schweitzer, p. 127.

58 Errol A. Henderson, *Democracy and War. The End of an Illusion?* (London: Eurospan, 2002), p. 17.

59 Thomas Risse, "Democratic Peace – Warlike Democracies? A Social Constructivist Interpretation of the Liberal Argument", in *Democratic Peace. Myth or Reality for Europe*, eds. Gustaaf Geeraerts and Patrick Stouthuysen (Brussels: VUB University Press, 1999), pp. 19f.

60 Daase, „Demokratischer Frieden …", pp. 54f and 60.

61 Owen, "How Liberalism produces Democratic Peace": 91–97.

a war if the chances for success are high enough.[62] The logic of this argument is not convincing. Empirical evidence shows that military dictatorships engage in few military adventures, because of their fragile internal power structure. With some very few exceptions, military dictators have been pacific in external relations.[63] The argument that it is easier for autocrats to stand losses in a war is only partly correct. All politicians – no matter whether democrats or dictators – normally wish to stay in office and avoid excessive risks in foreign policy.[64] Democratic leaders risk their jobs, whereas dictators risk their heads, and the personal risk for democrats is small compared with that of autocrats. The decision to enter a major war with potentially high losses is definitely more difficult in a democracy. But this may change if vital national interests, freedom, or an empire are at stake. If a consensus for a war has been found in a democratic society and is accepted by the opposition and the majority of the population, a democracy is even able to stand extreme difficulties without internal suppression. In 1916, British society accepted horrible casualties during the Somme disaster and Lloyd George refused to hold out any hope for peace by his famous "knock-out-blow" interview.

Another attempt to explain the empirical regularities of the democratic peace argues that in democracies politicians are used to search for compromise solutions. Their normative actions always take place within the framework of limited competition, and democratic procedures make unilateral action on the part of leaders impossible.[65] Common norms contribute to the development of positive perceptions of other democracies. The absence of such norms in non-democracies could explain the paradoxical fact that democracies conduct as many wars as non-democracies but seldom against each other.[66] In conflicts between democracies the option of sudden attacks is excluded. This contributes to peace in the international system, because leaders in other states are aware that they do not have to be afraid of surprise attack even during times of serious diplomatic disputes. It is not necessary to calculate the probability of preventive wars. The normative theory explains the solution of several conflicts as the result of rational political or economic deliberation. The explanatory power of this theory is, however, limited if – as in the 19th and early 20th centuries – irrational tendencies like nationalism tend to structure conflicts.

62 Bruce Bruno de Mesquita et. al. "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace", *American Political Science Review* no. 93 (1999): 793; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Testing Competing Institutional Explanations of the Democratic Peace. The case of dispute duration", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, no. 21 (2004): 255; Chojnacki, „Demokratien und Krieg", pp. 89f.

63 Stanislav Andreski, *Wars, Revolutions, Dictatorships. Studies of Historical and Contemporary Problems from a Comparative Viewpoint* (London: Cass, 1992), pp. 103–113; Gates et.al., "Democracy and Peace": 3.

64 Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", p. 41.

65 Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation …": 791ff.

66 Layne, "Kant or Cant": 9f.

The theories of interdependency explain the democratic peace with economic factors. According to this theoretical approach democracies have open markets and trade more than other political systems. Close economic ties between countries contribute to a higher potential for the resolution of conflicts, because channels of communication and structures of cooperation are created. International trade makes wars too costly and has a pacifying effect. Trade also creates common interests with other states.[67] This theory contains a high analytical potential, because close financial and economic ties between countries in principle do have a de-escalating effect: both sides have more to lose than they have to gain. In many respect the observation is correct, but for three reasons not in its universalistic form.

Firstly, if the theory of the pacifying effect of trade were always correct in history, the First World War could have not broken out. During the three decades before World War I, irrespective of the different forms of government, the world economy was integrating to a degree which had never occurred before in history. Many economic historians correctly speak of a first wave of globalisation which came to an end in 1914. Despite the many sources which document a growing trade rivalry between Germany and Great Britain, the two countries were each other's best customers. Before 1914 many German economists, scientists, and bankers were sure that because of these close ties a war between them would be impossible. They were not right. Close financial ties and trade may promote peace in many cases, but trade does not do so automatically.

Secondly, the idea that democracies have open markets is not correct in a historical perspective. The introduction of economic protection does not correspond with a particular form of government. Before the First World War the USA was one of the most protectionist states in the world with extremely high tariffs. At the same time the US government pressed successfully for the opening of Asian markets partly by using military force and the ideology of the "open door". Democratic France systematically closed its own markets and its colonial empire to foreign competitors. Although protectionist tariffs were also known in Imperial Germany – with the short exception of absolute free trade during the 1870s – before World War I, the economic policy of autocratic Germany was much more liberal than those of the democratic United States.

Thirdly, even extremely liberal forms of a free trade policy can become very aggressive towards other states, too. The question of free trade and the freedom of the seas was responsible for the Anglo-American war of 1812. With good reason Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher used the paradoxical term of the

67 Erik Gartzke, "Kant We All Just Get Along? Opportunity, Willingness, and the Origins of the Democratic Peace", *American Journal of Political Science*, no. 42 (1998): 5; Ray, "Does Democracy Causes Peace?", p. 40; Müller, „Demokratien im Krieg", p. 35.

"Imperialism of Free Trade" in their famous article of 1953.[68] Since the early 19th century the British Empire expanded rapidly by using free trade and private chartered companies as central instruments of power. The economic policy of European democracies and autocracies during the inter-war period did not differ from each other, but was dictated by the predicaments and dilemmas caused by the outcome of the First World War and the Paris peace conferences. Democracies had no open markets – on the contrary. Even the European Union, the most successful democratic free trade project in recent history, uses protectionist measures and tariffs from time to time.

NATIONALISM, LIBERALISM, AND THE DANGERS OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Many authors claim that there is a direct connection between liberalism and peace. "Liberalism is universalistic and tolerant" – as Owen puts it.[69] John Keane shares the opinion that violence is inconsistent with the spirit and the substance of democracies. Contemporary democracies are based on civil societies which show a strong tendency to avoid violence.[70] The last observation may be correct, but the concept of "civil society" was not known in the 19th century. The modern forms of civil societies and welfare states have roots in the 1920s, but did not develop before the end of the Second World War. The liberal spirit may explain why, in the present day, wars between democracies are unlikely, but it contributes nothing to an historical explanation – on the contrary. The argument becomes tautological: a civil society is defined by the absence of violence, and if violence is not absent, it is no civil society.

Stable modern democracies do not appear overnight, but they develop during a long and often stormy transition period. During this process of transition, mass politics is often mixed up with traditional authoritarian elite policy, and foreign policy is only partly controlled by elected institutions. Democratising systems become – according to Mansfield and Snyder – more aggressive, not more peaceful.[71] The rise of the European 19th century liberal movements was closely linked to new forms of popular nationalism and to the rise of the aggressive national state. In the Italian Risorgimento, democratic, liberal, nationalistic, and expansionist ideas became parts of the same ideology. Before the rise of Napoleon in the German speaking countries, no common identities existed. The popular feeling of being part of one nation resulted directly from the French occupation and the wars of liberation. Anti-monarchic nationalist ideas could become extremely aggressive if they were able to influence foreign policy. In

68 Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", *Economic History Review*, no. 6 (1953): 1–15.
69 Owen, "How Liberalism produces Democratic Peace": 93.
70 John Keane, *Violence and Democracy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1 and 4.
71 Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War", *International Security*, no. 20 (1995): 5.

nearly all European states of the 19th century, liberalism and nationalism were two sides of the same coin, and nationalism went hand in hand with wars.

For the 19th century Henry Kissinger has pointed out that peace was guaranteed in an international order, which was accepted by all important participants as legitimate. If one of the main participants questioned this order, the order itself became revolutionary.[72] A careful analysis of the European conflict structure in the 19th century leads to a paradox which cannot be explained by the democratic peace theory. Rather often conservative monarchic or autocratic governments tried to avoid wars and to establish peace in the international system, whereas liberal and democratic movements, which often were strongly influenced by nationalist ideas, continually provoked international crisis. The French Revolution after 1791 promoted not only the idea of free republics but also of completely new forms of people's war. The restoration of the traditional autocratic order after 1815 produced a long period of stable peace in Europe, whereas the democratising trends during and after the revolution of 1848 became the cause of major international conflicts.

Since the Westphalian Peace of 1648, the principle of non-intervention in other state's internal affairs became the linchpin in the development of international law. This principle of non-intervention could only be respected within a stable international order without revolutionary movements. Each revolution threatened the fragile balance of power system, which was based on conservative and monarchical principles, and made interventions unavoidable. Democratic revolutions in the 19th century always provoked wars and did not create peace. This is one reason why the process of democratisation became dangerous by definition. Since the French Revolution, the earliest periods of the democratisation process led to the bloodiest nationalist conflicts. The probability of wars between the democratising state and its autocratic neighbours rose enormously because of the growth of nationalism, which is a necessary aspect of the emergence of a democratic national state.[73] Mansfield and Snyder analyse the period between 1811 and 1980 statistically and find that democratising states were much more war-prone than autocratic regimes. Democratisation of states increases the probability of every kind of war by between 15 per cent and 100 per cent, and of inter-state wars by between 35 per cent and 115 per cent compared with states which remained autocratic.[74] The probability of civil wars further increases if the process of democratisation does not result in full democratisation but remains in a state of irresolved instability.[75]

72 Quoted in: Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", p. 261.
73 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, pp. 16 and 20f; Chojnacki, „Demokratien und Krieg", p. 75; Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", p. 39.
74 Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War": 8 and 17.
75 Henderson, *Democracy and War*, p. 18.

During the process of democratisation, several social groups lose political or economic power, which is taken over by democratic institutions. If democratisation takes place in an autocratic state, the old elite's most threatened positions are often in the military sector. Social change, institutional weakness and threatened interests prevent the formation of stable political coalitions. Additionally, although democratisation does broaden the political spectrum, several groups have incompatible interests. Mansfield and Snyder mention the case of Great Britain before the Crimean War, where neither Whigs nor Tories could form lasting coalitions, because too many groups were not interested in stable political alliances.[76] Before the outbreak of the ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus in the 1990s, the partial democratisation of society began, and in most of the cases the democratising states were the aggressors, not the victims. This was true for other states, too: France, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan fought aggressive wars during the first period of democratisation, conflicts which were aggravated by popular nationalism.[77] None of those mechanisms which produce democratic peace in developed democracies, work in democratising states.

In democratising states, a huge gap often opens up between the formal institutions, which are established according to democratic standards, and informal practices, which still follow completely different procedures. In some of the democratising states since the 1990s, formal democratic criteria were observed, but the existing bureaucracies showed a certain resistance against democratic procedures. Leaders, after their election, do not behave in accordance with those transparent practices which are indispensable for democratic procedures. Often an uncontrollably high degree of corruption prevents stabilisation. Some of the new democracies tend to become hybrid regimes combining authoritarian and democratic elements.[78]

In an influential book, Jack Snyder distinguishes between four different ideal types of nationalism. *Ethnic nationalism* (Serbia) is based on common culture, language, religion, and history and these criteria are used to in- or exclude members in the respective national groups. *Bourgeois or citizen nationalism* appeals for loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions, which are regarded as being just and effective. *Revolutionary nationalism* (France in the 1790s) founds its appeal on a political revolution which institutes a new regime, rules in the name of the nation and excludes every person, who does not accept the changes. *Counter-revolutionary nationalism* (Germany before 1914) bases its appeal on the resistance against internal reforms and developments, which undermines the traditional institutions of the country. Every social class, religion, or cultural

76 Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War": 24–27.
77 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, pp. 28f.
78 Valerie Bunce, "Comparative Democratization. Big and Bounded Generalizations", *Comparative Political Studies*, no. 33 (2000): 713f.

group which formulates political ideologies against the imagined common nation is excluded.[79] One should add that beneath the counter-revolutionary nationalism in Germany, new forms of nationalist mass mobilisation appeared, visible for the first time during the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911. This mass mobilisation, which grew much stronger during World War I, could no longer be controlled by the old conservative elites, and became one of the decisive factors behind the rise of racist National-Socialism.

Democratisation, if it is founded on ethnic perceptions, can become one of the most dangerous threats to peace. Michael Mann points out that the transition to democracy is extremely dangerous and often results in ethnic wars or ethnic cleansing. The integrative power of the old state ceases, or it falls apart while a new state is still developing.[80] During the breakdown of the Soviet Union, democratising Serbia and Croatia as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war against each other.[81] According to Snyder, more ethnic democracy will not contribute to more peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[82] The case of Rwanda shows in the most horrific way how democratisation, the resistance of old elites and ethnic perceptions exploded in an outbreak of genocidal mass violence. Within only four months nearly one million people were killed, because some members of the old, partly military elites used the ethnic argument against the slow process of democratisation and started the genocide to restore their power position.[83]

Since Kant, many of the democratic peace theorists believe that public opinion in democracies is always peaceful. The democratic citizenship shares powerful norms which discourage the deployment of deadly force. However, this institutional theory has several weak points, too. The theory works well in debates about political or economic values, but its explanatory power is limited once nationalism or ethnicity appears as a force to be reckoned with. If democratic public opinion had this normative effect, democracies would always be peaceful and not only in their relations with other democracies. Lost lives and lost money are always the same, irrespective of whether a war is conducted against another democracy or an autocracy. Many historical examples show a striking contrast between a warlike mood in public opinion and a peaceful democratic government. In 1898, the McKinley administration wanted to avoid a conflict but was driven into the war with Spain by American public opinion

79 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, pp. 38 and 68f.
80 Michael Mann, *Die Dunkle Seite der Demokratie. Eine Theorie der ethnischen Säuberungen* [The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing] (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2007), p. 41.
81 Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War": 6.
82 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, pp. 352f.
83 Boris Barth, *Genozid. Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte, Theorien, Kontroversen* [Genocide in the 20th Century. History, Theory, and Controversies] (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2006), pp 112–127.

and by the relevant New York newspapers.[84] The patriotic mob, not only in autocratic Berlin, but also in democratic London and Paris, openly demanded war in August 1914.[85]

To understand the conflict behaviour of democracies, it is necessary to have a look at their "dark side", too. If, in democratising states or in early modern democratic settler colonies, nationalism converged with perceptions of race and democracy, very dangerous situations could arise for other ethnic groups or minorities. The American historian Michael Mann formulates the thesis that democratic ethnic cleansing is an integral part of our modernity. Cleansing very seldom happens in stable modern contemporary democracies, but many liberal democracies are deeply rooted in brutal ethnic cleansing.[86] Rummel's argument that people are always peace-loving once they can vote freely is unsupported by historical evidence. Since the 17th century, European settlers behaved much more murderously under constitutional than under authoritarian regimes. Of course, Mann does not plea for the abolition of democracy, but in many cases authoritarian regimes were able to put down ethnic tensions by oppressive means, while democratisation promoted the dramatic rise of ethnic violence.[87]

Defining a democratic nation means at the same time distinguishing between those people who have the right to become a citizen and participate in the democratic decision making processes and those who do not belong to the people. All white settler communities had to find criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Normally, the indigenous population was excluded at the outset, and the process of self-definition often went hand in hand with the development of racist ideas. For the generations which founded the USA it appeared self-evident that the country should be a white Protestant society and furious debates took place about whether a further Catholic immigration was acceptable. Against this background it is not surprising that ethnic or racist ideas normally became an integral part of European settler democracies from the very beginning.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC PEACE

Even if developed democracies do not go to war with one another, factors of *realpolitik* are more important for war and peace than the respective form of state, as some critics of democratic peace argue.[88] Some historians and political scientists believe that the democratic peace theory does not really describe the problem. Scott Gates doubts whether it is possible to create a simple causal correlation between democracy and peace.[89] Completely different factors are

84 Layne, "Kant or Cant": 12.
85 Gates et. al., "Democracy and Peace": 2.
86 Mann, *Dunkle Seite der Demokratie*, pp. 7 and 11–14.
87 Ibid., p. 40.
88 Zeev Maoz, "The Controversy over the Democratic Peace. Rearguard action or cracks in the wall", *International Security*, no. 22 (1997): 164.
89 Gates et. al., "Democracy and Peace": 1.

responsible for the fact that wars became rarer in some regions of the world than in others. It is not one factor, as Gleditsch believes, or even a possible third variable, which is responsible for war and peace, but perhaps 15 or 20 different variables, which differ according to time and place. The main problem is that the statistical analysis of such a great number of possible variables limits the use of quantitative methodology. Other internal and external factors which play a role in war and peace, are the level of development and the state of the economy, geographical distance, territorial border disputes, ethnic and nationalist self-definitions, racism, the creation and development of alliance systems and the respective perceptions of other states. Additionally, one has to take into account the disparities of wealth in a society, the social structures, collective mentalities, cultural differences, public and published opinion, the recruitment of elites, the degree of a government's authority over foreign policy, the role of interest groups, the existence and the strengths of a military-industrial complex, different levels of weapons technology, military traditions and the degree of a society's militarization, factors which can be completely independent from the form of state. It is easy to find examples in history in which each of these variables played a decisive role in the decision-making processes which led to the escalation of conflicts.

Some authors argue that it is not enough to analyse possible wars between democracies: peace research must rather ask whether and why democracies go to war at all. Raymond Cohen, Chan and others criticise the fact that the democratic peace literature is limited to international wars, while colonial, imperialist, or civil wars are ignored. Colonial wars were often not conducted against states in the European sense of the word but against political units with clear hierarchical power structures.[90] Some historians argue that completely different factors are responsible for the fact that in some regions of the world, more wars broke out than in others. Dynamic developments in the international system are defined away in DP literature: The transition from peace to war sometimes cannot be easily defined and there are stable and unstable situations of peace as well. Even a stable peace system can change rapidly, or it can block processes of necessary reforms, as in the European state system after 1815.[91] Hitherto, the democratic peace theory has completely neglected the motives that caused states to go to war.

Paradoxically, the American political theory of the democratic peace very often applies a Eurocentric perspective. The American Indian wars or the great British war in South Africa against the Zulus who had a high degree of state organisation, are not accepted as international wars. This perspective goes hand

90 Cohen, "Pacific Unions": 207–224; Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall": 619 and 625.

91 Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", p. 252.

in hand with Neo-Rankean interpretations of history, which most historians have given up as outdated for several decades, since the great historiographical debates of the 1960s and 70s. According to the Neo-Rankean world view, it is not human beings, governments, social groups or political parties that are the subject of history, but states as such. This premise has very far-reaching methodological consequences, because a great part of the democratic peace theory operates with concepts of state and war that were valid only in the late 19th century.

Even Maoz, who strongly defends the democratic peace theory, admits that democratic states have intervened secretly in other democracies like the USA did in Chile 1973. However, for him, this is the exception from the rule, and he believes that democracies involve themselves more seldom in covert operations than do authoritarian states.[92] One may be doubtful of this this claim: secret interventions do not depend on the formal structure of a single state, but more on the structure and the forms of international conflicts. Kegley and Hermann criticise the fact that all studies concerning the democratic peace concentrate solely on major wars while neglecting small wars and military interventions. They find 15 cases of military intervention between 1974 and 1988 in which free democratic states intervened in other democratic states' internal affairs with military means. 32 interventions took place against "partly free" states, and these interventions were comparable to the gunboat diplomacy of the 19th century.[93] However, gunboats are no longer necessary because modern great powers have different means of intervention. The ironical aspect of the Chilean intervention results from the fact that Chile was no autocracy and the decentralised and independent state institutions could be turned against the elected president.[94] The USA conducted several secret wars against other elected governments, too. Within a zone of democratic peace, a zone of dangers can exist, because democracies do not necessarily respect the doctrine of non-intervention in other states' internal affairs.[95]

Layne examines four big crises in which democracies nearly went to war with one another. He finds that the form of government had no significance for de-escalation. If the democratic peace theory were correct, then crises between democracies with serious threats of war should be impossible, too. He analyses the Trent Affair of 1861 between Great Britain and the USA, the Venezuelan crisis of 1895/96, France and Great Britain during the Fashoda Crisis of 1898 and France and Germany during the Ruhr Crisis of 1923. In all these conflicts, war was avoided because of reasons which had nothing to do with democratic

92 Maoz, "The Controversy over the Democratic Peace": 177ff.
93 Kegley and Hermann, "Putting military intervention into the democratic peace": 80f.
94 Cohen, "Pacific Unions": 218.
95 Kegley and Hermann, "Military interventions and the Democratic Peace": 5.

peace.[96] The Ruhr Crisis in particular shows that democratic peace does not work. A war was avoided simply because Germany was not able to conduct one, but French foreign policy did not in any way differentiate between an autocratic and a democratic Germany, neither did French public opinion or French elites. All four crises did not escalate into major wars because a minimum of realism prevailed. The causal logic of democratic peace has no explanatory power.[97] Dülffer et al. have arrived at a rather similar conclusion after the analysis of 33 cases, where wars were avoided. They can find no connection between internal forms of states and external behaviour in crises occurring between 1856 and 1914. Much more important for the successful resolution of international conflicts were cultural factors, strategic reasons and perceptions of future developments.[98]

More promising is the research into regional zones of peace. Another important historical aspect of long lasting periods of peace is often completely neglected by the democratic peace theory: the problem of empires. The establishment of an empire goes hand in hand with wars, conquest, and the fight against uprisings. However, after an empire is established, it normally creates a stable zone of peace, albeit at the price of a certain level of internal suppression. Shortly before the end of the 19th century, Cecil Rhodes put the topic on the table in the most cynical, but correct way: if the Anglo-Saxon race – including the USA – were to be united under British leadership and found a colonial empire from the Cape to Cairo, the greatest advantage of British world power would be to put an end to all wars.[99] One does not have to agree with Rhodes here, but empire and internal peace, or peace zones are nearly identical. The Pax Romana, i.e. Roman rule in the Mediterranean created a long period of peace for many peoples in classical antiquity. The concept of a Pax Britannica in the 19th century was partly propaganda, but between 1818, the end of the conquest of India and 1857, the year of the Sepoy uprising, no military conflicts occurred within the empire. Those peoples who were prepared to accept that their future lay under British rule, could benefit from the economic welfare and peace it promoted. All great early-modern multinational and multi-religious empires were regional zones of peace. In spite of autocratic rule and local repression, economic welfare, limited opportunities for social improvement and security for the individual were guaranteed, as long as he was willing to abjure separatist ideas. This was not only true for the British Empire, but also for Russia since

96 Layne, "Kant or Cant": 6f and 14f.
97 Ibid.: 36ff.
98 Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", p. 259.
99 Quoted in: Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ed., *Imperialismus. Seine geistigen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen. Ein Quellen- und Arbeitsbuch* [Imperialism. Its Cultural, Political and Economic Foundations] (Hamburg, Hoffmann Campe, 1977), pp 48f.

Peter I., for Austria-Hungary and even for the Ottoman Empire, whose integrative power is often still underestimated.

There are other regional peace zones which cannot be explained by the democratic peace theory. Cohen believes that the biggest threat to the democratic peace theory comes from South America. During the last hundred years, the region was much more stable than Europe and most of the time all states avoided wars irrespective of the various regime types. North America was also a regional peace zone during the 20th century, but this fact should not be explained by Kant, but by the enormous power of the USA. The regional peace zone in Oceania seems to have nothing to do with democratic perceptions, either. A war between Papua New Guinea and Australia is more than unlikely; Australia and New Zealand are far away from each other and there is simply no reason for conflicts.[100]

Since the end of the Second World War, the formation of multinational organisations has promoted the establishment of regional zones of peace. Perhaps the most successful project of a permanent peace developed slowly among the Western European states after 1945. No general empirical law is necessary to understand this fact. The horrific consequences of two world wars and of extremist genocidal dictatorships have convinced the broad majority of the populations and elites of the need to create international structures for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The economic integration of Western Europe produced growing welfare – no one has anything to gain anymore by giving up peace. When the process of European unification started in the early 1950s, one aim was to promote the process of democratisation in the former fascist states of Germany and Italy. Another aim was to construct a peaceful Western Europe by controlling the respective German armament potential. If coal and steel, later the use of nuclear energy (Euratom) was administered by a common international bureaucracy, a secret armament programme became simply impossible.

The concepts of the OECD peace or the OECD world are often used in contemporary literature to mark these specific zones of peace and prosperity, which developed slowly after the end of the Second World War.[101] An OECD peace or a regional peace develops if several states perceive each other as peaceful. However, according to Dülffer it is impossible to find general laws for the conditions, which are necessary for the development of such perceptions.[102]

Another striking problem for peace research results from various facts which cannot be explained by the democratic peace theory, although the theory can contribute to the understanding of actual conflict behaviour. Since the end of the Second World War and again after the breakdown of the Soviet empire,

100 Cohen, "Pacific Unions": 215.
101 Senghaas, *Zum irdischen Frieden*, pp. 163ff.
102 Dülffer, „Internationale Geschichte …", p. 262.

only very few bilateral international wars have broken out, but the level of international violence has not declined despite the spread of democratisation worldwide. The typical conflict is the asymmetric war. This is not an argument against democratic peace, but it shows certain limits of the theory. If one of the parties in a conflict is an anti-colonial freedom movement or a group of guerrillas, no matter what their political aims are, a democratic government is by definition impossible. The DP theory has no explanatory power if one tries to analyse the question of warlike or peaceful decolonisation after 1945. How could partisans or guerrillas in Asia or Africa, fighting a war in the shadows, organise elections to a parliament or organise responsible government? Necessarily one party in an asymmetric conflict cannot be a democracy and must be organised in a strictly hierarchical manner. Additionally, the democratic peace theory does not take weapons technology into account. A major war between or against a nuclear power is impossible, whether democratic or not, if the aggressor wants to avoid suicide.

A completely different model to explain peace in the Western world was developed by Dieter Senghaas. Not democracy, which is difficult to define, but six different factors are responsible for the development of civil societies in the Western world, which perhaps can become more peaceful than other types of governments in the future. All six factors are mutually dependent in a highly dynamic way and if only one is weakened, a modern civil society will destabilise at once. The factors are:

1. the legitimate monopoly of state power,
2. the independent control of this state power under the rule of law,
3. individual and collective control of emotions and affects,
4. the democratic participation in the decision making processes in a society, and
5. continuous attempts to improve social justice
6. a political culture promoting the constructive resolution of conflicts.[103]

Such civil societies did not develop before the end of the Second World War, but the model explains much better the internal and external conflict behaviour of states than the democratic peace theory.

To sum up: towards the end of this paper, a final paradox should be mentioned. It is true that established and stable contemporary democracies do not wage war on one another. This has, however, nothing to do with the complicated democratic peace theory in its statistical version. The problem of the democratic peace theory is not that it states something completely wrong, but that its horizon is too narrow to integrate the many other factors which are also responsible

103 Senghaas, *Zum irdischen Frieden*, pp. 31–41.

for war and peace. The basic question remains: how, why and when democracies could have gone to war with one another? If one uses a strict definition of democracy, the number of democratic states in the 19th century was extremely small and consequently the probability of wars between them as well was very low. In a global historical perspective democracies were a very rare exception. Despite this fact, during the 19th century, wars between democracies were avoided only with great difficulty and often at the last moment. Spiro, too, is certain that the absence of war between democracies in the 19th century is statistically insignificant.[104]

In the 20th century, the situation was similar. The short wave of democratisation after the end of the First World War and after the breakdown of several European multi-ethnic empires ebbed within a very few years. By the middle of the 1930s, Czechoslovakia was the only remaining democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Spanish civil war, fascism reached Western Europe, too. The process of democratisation in Western Europe after 1945 took place in the shadow of the Cold War. Most democracies existed within the American zone of influence or – as minor allies – within the informal or formal American empire. At the same time, for a vast variety of reasons, the incidence of "classical" bilateral war between states or between great power alliances was drastically reduced, while that of other forms of asymmetric wars, military interventions or civil wars rose rapidly.

It makes little sense to explain war and peace during the Cold War by using the democratic peace theory alone. Bipolarity was responsible for peace in Europe and elsewhere. Every relevant state in the world was either allied with one of the superpowers and could not go to war alone, or it was neutralised by negotiations between the two blocs. As Schwartz and Skinner point out, two more factors explain the world's situation after 1945 much better than the democratic peace theory. Firstly, after the extreme destruction of World War II, no evident *casus belli* existed. The potential revanchist powers, Germany and Japan, were occupied by allied troops and only half-sovereign. The remaining Western colonial powers were so preoccupied with holding on to their colonies that they could not look for more. Secondly, most democratic states were united in NATO and had organised their armed forces in a common security organisation. The neutral democracies (Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Austria) were standing between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, whereas others (Costa Rica, India, Australia, New Zealand) were geographically far away from each other and for the remaining democracies (Ireland, San Marino), war was impossible.

104 David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace", *International Security*, no. 19 (1994): 68.

The confrontation between Greece and Turkey shows that war was very difficult within the security organisation of NATO.[105]

It is only since the early 1990s that the number of democracies has reached a significant and remarkable level worldwide. However, any classical definition of war, as it is still used in the COW project and by other comparable research projects, uses an unrealistic scenario for the time after 1945, or 1990 respectively. Any prognosis as to whether there will be wars between democracies or not is still beyond the ken of scholars and beyond serious analysis, although a general tendency – democracies behave more peacefully towards one another – is predictable. Certainly there will be more military interventions and asymmetric wars of many kinds, and there is no reason to believe that democracies will not take part in them. Despite a clear tendency towards the democratic peace, every threat to liberalism and civil society also means a threat to international peace. Democratic peace is no natural law, as some authors believe, and is not identical with Kant's idea of perpetual peace.[106]

One last question remains open. Because of its background in political science, the democratic peace debate was only interested in the 19th and 20th century – with one exception. Spencer Weart's analysis of the early modern republics should stimulate further historical research. Is it really true that these towns and developing small states automatically behaved more peacefully towards each other if they were ruled by republican elites? Is the republican form of state responsible for peace or are there other still unknown variables? Is it possible to bring together the idea of an early modern republican peace with the well known fact that "war made states and states made war" (Charles Tilly)? A new and fascinating field is still open for further historical research.

105 Schwartz and Skinner, "The Myth of the Democratic Peace": 165f.
106 Owen, "How Liberalism produces Democratic Peace": 90 and 125; with a similar tendency: Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?", p. 38.

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