

## **DEMOCRACIES AND PEACE:**

### **The Self-organizing Foundation for the Democratic Peace**

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Increasing attention is being paid to the fact that liberal democracies do not make war upon one another whereas the same cannot be said for other forms of government. (Russett, 1993; Moaz and Russett, 1993; Rummel, 1983, 1985; Doyle 1983a, 1987). These views appear to be replacing earlier arguments that democratic states acted like others, and that internal political characteristics had little impact upon international behavior (Weede, 1984, Waltz, 1979, Small and Singer, 1976, Rummel, 1968. ). Still being discussed is why democracies do not fight with each other, and it is to this debate that I hope to contribute.

Two kinds of explanations are commonly given for the democratic peace. One emphasizes cultural and normative factors. As Bruce Russett puts it, "By this hypothesis, the *culture, perceptions, and practices* that permit compromise and the peaceful resolution of conflicts . . . within countries come to apply across national boundaries toward other democratic countries" (Russett, 1993, p. 31). Alternatively, structural and institutional constraints such as the need to ensure popular support, difficulty of planning a surprise attack, and the need for different interests within government to agree all make war between democracies unlikely because no democracy will have reason to fear attack, particularly surprise attack, by another.

Neither view, by itself, seems fully adequate. On the one hand, liberal and democratic norms by themselves seem unable to explain peace between democratic states. They are not the only peaceful norms in human history, yet only democratic states have proven mutually peaceful. For example, Christianity and Buddhism, like liberalism, both extol peaceful relationships. Unlike liberal democratic beliefs, Christianity also emphasizes the primary importance of forgiveness and mercy while Buddhism teaches universal compassion. Yet the record of religious wars in both faiths is bloody, even between fellow devotees. Leninism also emphasized the importance of solidarity with fellow leninist states, particularly in the face of a common adversary. Yet every leninist state whose ruling party came to power independently and bordered on a similar state fought at least a serious border war with its neighbor. The Soviet Union fought China, China fought Vietnam, and Vietnam fought Kampuchea. The list is not long, but it includes all the samples. Apparently the human capacity to rationalize is almost infinite. I do not see anything in liberal or democratic beliefs which would prevent their being similarly rationalized.

On the other hand, Moaz and Russett show that while institutional restraints, as well as norms, have prevented war, the norms seem even more correlated with low conflict than the institutions (Moaz and Russett, 1993; Russett, 1993). So norms, which are easily rationalized away, appear more robust than institutional constraints in explaining the peaceful dimension of democratic politics. And both are equally correlated with the absence of war. How do these findings fit together?

#### International Anarchy and Self-Interest

Generally, international relations is considered a Hobbesian anarchy, where no common rules of behavior can be enforced upon the states which populate it. For

example, Kenneth Waltz argues that "Among states, the state of nature is a state of war" (1979, p. 102). Like Hobbes, Waltz's point is that states suffer from perpetual insecurity due to each polity's ability to decide for itself whether or not it wishes to go to war. Therefore no state can rationally allow any other to grow too powerful. Waltz is echoed by Richard Rosencrance, who contends that there is not "sufficient interdependence or division of labor among states to transform international relations into a social system akin to domestic affairs" (1992, p 64).

In an uncertain and dangerous world, states are compelled on pain of extinction to put survival considerations above others. Those failing to do so will not survive. Consequently, states are usually treated as unitary actors, more or less successfully pursuing their "rational self interest." Like people, states have purposes, specific interests, can feel insecurity, must calculate profit and loss, and otherwise (ideally) pursue rational behavior (Waltz, 1954, p. 220; 1979, pp. 112-113; Bueno de Mesquita, 1981, p. 159; James D. Morrow, 1986; Kissinger, 1969, p. 46; Sullivan, 1978, p. 328; Nettl, 1971, p. 56; Morgenthau, 1965, pp. 25-26, 76-77; Etzioni, 1965, p. 329). This way of speaking can be a convenient shorthand so long as it does not introduce significant analytical confusion. But in the field of international politics, this is not the case because under most circumstances democratic states cannot be understood as actors at all, rational or irrational.

### Self-Organizing and Hierarchical Systems

States considered as rational actors or instrumental organizations are hierarchies, and hierarchies are pyramids of power. Their elements are organized into subordinate levels of authority devoted to attaining some specifiable purpose. In this respect, undemocratic states are like corporations, labor unions, armies, political parties,

research organizations and public interest groups. In all these cases leadership seeks to order the organization's constituent parts so as better to attain their objectives. They may or may not be successful, but their objective gives them a specifiable goal and a concrete standard by which to measure success. In the case of hierarchical states, success is usually defined by the leadership's survival and by enhanced power and influence over other states. International politics is powered by states seeking power and influence for themselves while seeking to limit that of others they see as threats.

Obviously rank and file members of hierarchical organizations also have goals, sometimes at variance with those pursued by the leadership. But effective leadership depends upon either incorporating or co-opting members' subsidiary goals in service to the organization's overarching purposes, or, failing that, keeping antagonistic interests unorganized and ineffective. An ideally efficient organization is able to subject all relevant potential resources under its authority or power towards contributing to the most effective and least costly pursuit of its goals. In political terms such an organization is totalitarian.

Many organizations fail. But that we can speak of them as failing at all demonstrates their necessarily teleological character. Since organizations, or at least their leadership, possess specifiable goals, and use their resources to attain those goals, it is appropriate to speak of organizations as acting more or less rationally. This is short hand for speaking of their power structure. International anarchy forces instrumental organizations to treat every significant player as potentially a resource or a threat or both.

Democracies are self-organizing systems, not hierarchies. They differ from all other states in this regard. Self-organizing systems are complex systems wherein the independently chosen projects of innumerable participants are coordinated in such a

way that more can make successful use of information of which they are unaware than could be the case if the system were consciously ordered. Self-organizing systems are quite common. Language, science and the market are all self-organizing systems. (On the market see Hayek, 1948,77-106; 1978, 179-190; Lachmann, 1986; on science see Ziman, 1968; Polanyi, 1969; Kitcher, 1982; Hull, 1988; on language see Chomsky, 1965; Habermas, 1979,pp. 1-68; McCarthy, 1981, pp. 169, 272-291).

A self-organizing system is not a hierarchy because it cannot be described in terms of power pyramids or pursuing specific goals. The units of a self-organizing system, or spontaneous order as it is also called, pursue independently chosen ends without being subject to any specifiable over arching purpose. An adaptive system arises because each participant pursues his or her goals within a framework of abstract and procedural rules applicable to all. They are abstract because they say nothing about the specific content of any purpose pursued within their framework. They are procedural because they only specify how goals will be pursued, not what the goals will be. They can apply to all equally because they say nothing about the concrete nature of the goals to be sought (Dobuzinskis, 1984, Hayek, 1973, Polanyi, 1951).

Over time self-organizing systems become increasingly complex. As increasing numbers of plans are pursued within their frameworks, each plan occasioning widening ripples of mutual adjustment insofar as it makes use of limited systemic resources. Since this capacity for mutual adjustment means that no one need understand the details of the whole in order for it to coordinate individual plans, there is theoretically no limit to how complicated such a system can become. In this sense a self-organizing system is complex.

Self-organizing systems are autonomous and open, maintaining themselves through continual interaction with their environment. Their boundaries are completely

open, for any influence which can make itself felt within the system of rules is allowed entry. Self-organizing systems generate their own internal structures, reproducing themselves in terms of their fundamental pattern of interaction, even though every particular element within the system may change. Only violations of procedural rules are completely extraneous to such a system.

At first glance, Kenneth Waltz's model of the anarchic international system appears to be self-organizing (1979). Its internal components are hierarchies existing together under conditions of uncertainty. Nevertheless, according to Waltz, a kind of order arises without anyone consciously intending it. These elements of Waltz's resemble self-organization, but the international system as described by Waltz lacks two key characteristics of self-organizing systems.

First, the rules ordering a social self-organizing system promote and reward cooperation. The rules of a self-organizing market make it easier for people to enter into complex economic transactions. The rules of grammar make communication easier. The rules structuring the scientific community make it easier for scientists to cooperate together and make use of one another's research. In a self-organizing system competition grows out of the lack of perfect coordination among cooperative endeavors. For example, when an entrepreneur sees an opportunity to enter into business, it is due to the lack of fit between others' knowledge, desires, and their environment. Entrepreneurship promotes equilibrium (Kirzner, 1973). At the same time, entrepreneurship promotes disequilibrium, for it disrupts the existing state of affairs and, while it increases coordination within a small sphere, also creates opportunities for new adjustments elsewhere within the system (Schumpeter, 1961, 64; 1950, 131; diZerega, 1989, 223-224). Cooperation is the fundamental relationship within such a system,

made possible by its procedural rules. Competition is derivative, arising out of the partial and uncertain character of people's knowledge.

The opposite holds in a Waltzian anarchy. Cooperation between states arises primarily out of fear of competition. They ally against a threat. The lack of rules hinders the depth of cooperation even among willing parties because there is no way reliably to predict that others' cooperative behavior will continue. For example, mutual allies are far more likely to fight than either is with a non-allied power (Bueno de Mesquita, 1981). Iraq's attack on Kuwait and the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia are two recent examples, as are the other wars between leninist states. Cooperation is guarded and limited under such conditions.

This brings us to a second difference. As I understand Waltz, the international system tends towards a state of dynamic equilibrium, that is, of stable balance between the various powers. Disruptions to that balance are external to the system itself, arising from such as unequal economic growth, technological breakthroughs, disease, and so forth. Each disruption creates renewed uncertainty and therefore compels weaker states to ally together in order to establish a new balance of power or suffer the risk of extinction.

Self-organizing systems do not simply tend towards equilibrium. They are internally transformative. To be sure, they have equilibrating or (for the social sciences a better term) self-coordinating tendencies, for without such capacity no mutual adjustment could take place. But any tendency towards coordination disrupts other independently operating "equilibrating" processes, creating new disruptions in existing plans. Any failure of coordination creates a new opportunity for an actor to gain systemic resources by taking advantage of the lack of fit between others' expectations and the realities they confront. Self-organizing systems therefore incorporate ever more

complex information into their patterns of interaction. They learn. They are creative. In this sense, they grow.

Self-organizing systems necessarily exist far from equilibrium or perfect coordination, even if they are also far from disorder. They are the social equivalent of chaotic systems, differing only in that "entrepreneurial" creativity prevents them from being fully determined (Kellert 1993). They provide a continually adapting but reasonably stable environment for their participants, thereby enabling each to pursue more complex and drawn-out projects than they could otherwise manage. In systems theory terms, positive feedback, or destabilization, is as important as negative feedback, or stabilization, in maintaining self-organizing processes (Dobuzinskis, 52-3; Jantsch, 1980, 5, see also 1975, 37).

Because such processes make use of knowledge beyond what we can grasp ourselves, and because they are creative, prediction is different than would be the case were phenomena simply the outcome of rational action or mistakes. Hayek observes that in such systems we can make "mostly negative predictions that such and such things will not occur, and more especially that such and such phenomena will not occur together. These theories equip us with ready-made schemes which tell us that when we observe given patterns of phenomena, certain other patterns are to be expected but not some others." Compared to theories with more precise predictive power, such theories "are more uncertain only in the sense that they *leave* more uncertain because they say less about the phenomena, not in the sense that *what* they say is less certain" (1967, p. 17)

If democracies are self-organizing systems, we can predict that they will be extraordinarily unlikely to go to war with one another, similarly unlikely to group into competing blocs, not use nuclear deterrence against one another, and not rely upon a



central hegemon to keep the peace. *All these phenomena have been characteristic of international politics over several centuries.* In addition, the rigidity of borders will progressively diminish and the notion of national sovereignty weaken as both supranational entities peacefully obtain some sovereign authority and quite likely subnational authorities will also obtain some sovereign authority.<sup>1</sup> I think these are interesting enough predictions that a self-organizing model is worth considerable attention.

### Democracy as a Self-organizing System

To better demonstrate how democracies are self-organizing systems rather than instrumental organizations, I will compare them with science and the market which are commonly agreed not to be hierarchies. Two caveats are in order. First, democracy, science, and the market all influence one another. Nevertheless, the procedural rules which constitute each kind of system are very different and, in fact, in no case can the rules appropriate to one system be applied within either of the others. Thus, no matter

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<sup>1</sup>If international relations become thoroughly democratized, the self-organizing character of democratic systems, as defense concerns fade the nation state will become obsolete not to be replaced by world government, but by cities as fundamental units more amenable to both democratic and economic realities. Transnational institutions will also exist, but will not be sovereign. If this follows prediction from self-organizing theory, Hong Kong and Singapore become very important case studies on which to keep an eye. See Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (1984).

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, relations between democratic polities are not the only areas where self-organizing systems analysis sheds light on international relations. Giulio Gallarotti has developed a self-organizing analysis of the international gold standard, which lasted from about 1880 to World War I, without being the deliberately constructed policy of any state or group of states (1988).

how much they interpenetrate one another, as systems for coordinating knowledge and plans, they are distinct. Secondly, hierarchies exist within all three, but in no case do hierarchies either define or control the system within which they exist. In fact, it is these systems' capacity to encourage cooperation which makes it possible for hierarchies to themselves attain greater complexity than they could in the absence of such systems.

No scientist or group of scientists can comprehend scientific information as a whole. Nevertheless, there is a wide range of agreement among physical sciences as to what falls within the realm of science and what does not. Social scientists are more ambiguously placed primarily because of disagreement about to what extent and how far the cluster of criteria accepted within physical science can be applied to social science. However, the farther away a body of knowledge strays from the criteria for physical science, the less it qualifies as science, Mary Baker Eddy to the contrary notwithstanding. What is remarkable is the extent to which science as an enterprise hangs together solely due to the common consent of scientists to respect one another's work as science.

The market enables system-wide coordination of resource allocation far in excess of that possible by central planning. This coordination process arises out of people following procedural rules of contract and tort while doing whatever they wish. As with science, participants have only the most local and partial view of the whole. Like science, since no one can grasp the whole, the order which exists must grow out of people acting within frameworks of procedural rules which, taken as a whole, help the community to coordinate information "spontaneously."

Like science and the market, a democracy, needs to order scattered information, judgments, and preferences into coherent and usable patterns without the aid of an overarching authority. Nor is the Greek ideal of well informed citizens any aid in doing

so, for even relatively simple political issues are often so complex that no one can have any but the most superficial grasp of more than a few. Ideally democracies pursue coherent policies, science generates coherent theories and the market produces coherent prices. In each the coordination process is rooted in how information is created, disseminated, and evaluated. Within a democracy this process arises out of people following rules allowing for freedom of speech, press, and organization, and equality of voting. These rules are purely procedural.

A self-organizing system tends to order information in such a way that any randomly selected participant will be able to discover the information most *relevant* to his or her purposes. There is no guarantee of such discovery, but it will be more likely than would be the case in either a centrally managed order or one characterized by disorder. This should hold true for any citizen, yet the specific characteristics of relevant information will vary from person to person. Since the total information within the system exceeds anyone's ability to comprehend, an information filtering process must take place. Any filtering of information introduces bias, and the challenge of a democratic system is to insure that information relevant to any unforeseeable purposes not inimical to the system itself is not filtered out .

This filtering process partly arises from the system of rules generating a particular order. The abstract rules of scientific procedure and evaluation generate different types of information from the rules of contract which generate a market and of democratic rights of participation which generate a democracy. In addition, different organizations existing within the order itself will also perform filtering tasks. The media in a democracy, advertising in the market, and scientific journals in science are examples of this (for the market, see Hayek, 1948, 92-106; 1978, pp. 179-190; Lachmann, 1986; for science see Hull, 1988, Ziman, 1968; for democracy, see diZerega, 1991, 1989).

Finally, participants are free to seek whatever information they desire, and utilize it for whatever purpose they desire, consonant with the structure of abstract rules within which they act. Scientists are in principle free to pursue what research they desire. Consumers, entrepreneurs, and workers are free to take advantage of any expectations they may have, so long as these are harmonious with the rules generating the market (Polanyi, 1951; 1969, pp. 49-72; Hayek 1973, pp. 35-71).

### Rules, Order and Biases in Democracies

Abstract rules capable of generating a self-organizing system must increase the capacity of unknown people to cooperate in attaining goals which cannot be foreseen with any specificity. They must make it possible for people successfully to benefit from knowledge they do not know but which is essential for them to achieve their ends. Such rules must promote reliability. The rules capable of generating a self-organizing system are also those capable of easing the problems standing in the way of freely given cooperation. Democracies arise out of citizens following the abstract rules of freedom of political speech and organization and equality of voting as they are institutionalized within a particular constitutional framework. All make political cooperation easier.

The more abstract the criteria for political membership and participation, the less those criteria can be linked with specifiable interests. A pure democracy employs the most abstract criteria for determining membership of any political system. The criteria for democratic citizenship and participation are completely divorced from citizens' substantive views and values. Age and birthplace tell us next to nothing about a person's specific views and values. The more closely a polity approaches these criteria, the more it can be considered a democracy.

The constitutional procedures by which citizens participate are also abstract. Political leaders are elected and measures voted on by balloting in which every citizen's vote counts equally, and in which purely procedural and reasonably open criteria determine who runs for office. Civil liberties safeguard an indefinite and unpredictable variety of political opinions and programs. Freedom of speech can be used either to support or to attack the leaders or its policies. This is true within both winner-take-all and proportional representative democracies. In all democracies the dominant political group can maintain its position only insofar as it can maintain the active support of a majority of the citizens choosing to participate.

In a democracy all specific goals are subordinated to democratic procedures, with the partial exception of wartime. Even here, any suspension of democratic procedures such as Britain's suspending elections during WWII is justified as necessary in order to win the war and *return to democratic procedures*. No general agreement as to the polity's specific goals (beyond survival) need exist. To phrase this point differently, the "goal" of a democracy is democratic politics, and its specific activities are solely determined by whatever policies arise out of the democratic political process. Those political scientists which seek to study democracies by lumping them with democratic instrumental organizations are making an error in logical typing (For example, Dahl, 1956 p. 63; Michels, 1961, p. 365; on logical typing see Bateson, 1979, pp. 127-140).

The central practical problem confronting a democracy is how coherent public policies may be formulated and pursued within a polity lacking any clearly ordered set of public policy requirements. How can political order arise out of citizens' unpredictable initiatives and beliefs? How might policy coordination take place without a policy coordinator? A satisfactory answer to this problem in its various aspects must be concerned with understanding how information is disseminated within a polity, and

with the types of institutions capable of molding this information into support or opposition to various policies.

### Information and Its Dissemination

Democracy is characterized by any participant's right to initiate discussion or cooperation with willing citizens concerning any subject, and thereby seek to influence public policy. Every qualified citizen therefore enjoys a formal equality in procedural rights. Information may thus enter into the democratic system at any time from any participant. We can not reliably predict in advance what this information will be, how useful it may or may not be, or whether or not it will be accepted by others.

As noted above, self-organizing systems require institutions which filter as well as disseminate information. Means must exist by which information relevant to particular citizens can be made available to them without their having to encounter most of the unnecessary (to their purposes) information which also is generated and which may be useful to others. This filtering task must be achieved even though no one can know what information will be useful to any particular participant.

Political knowledge is as volatile as knowledge about the market and as difficult to reduce to a single measure as scientific knowledge. Indeed, politically relevant knowledge incorporates knowledge about science and the market, and much more as well. It potentially includes everything relevant to the polity.

Democratic politics is always constituting and reconstituting the community. As with the market and science, it constitutes a never-ending process of discovery (Crick, 1964, p. 147). In the case of democracy, it is a process of determining the terms by which we shall live together (Pitkin, 1972, p. 332). For this process to work within a nation-state, multiple independent centers of political power and resources must exist.

This point has great importance for understanding democracies' peacefulness towards one another.

### Persuasion, Compromise and Agreement

A common feature of all social self-organizing systems is their reliance upon persuasion and agreement. Because the rules generating these orders are themselves free from concrete content, and because the rules apply equally to all participants, any systemic coordination which arises does so through participants agreeing as to what they believe or shall do.

Persuasion and agreement are fundamental to the democratic order. The democratic political process is different from analogous processes in science or the market, but is no less based upon persuasion. Unlike the market or science, in democracies citizens decide certain things collectively and at specific times, (although these decisions can always be challenged). In the market agreement is piecemeal and individual. The scientific ideal is collective agreement, but there is no need to arrive there all at once because time is no limitation. Democratic politics is oriented towards action, and operates within more demanding time constraints than science. Science is in no hurry. Democracies sometimes have to be. In addition, the range of political positions advocated is usually very broad while the criteria for preferring one over another are vague and sometimes contradictory.

These considerations suggest that in most cases political agreement over specific policies will be tentative and not universal. The necessity to decide something while facing strong constraints on clarity and definitiveness explains why a physically coercive element must exist in democratic politics but can be absent in science, which does not need to act, and the market, which does not require its participants to make

collective judgments (Tussman, 1960, pp. 25-27). Nevertheless, the essence of a democratic polity is to persuade citizens, not compel them (Aristotle, 1958, pp. 4-7; Crick, 1964, pp. 140-61; Pitkin, 1972, pp. 328-32). When democracy is conceived in majoritarian terms this insight is lost, for majority rule *is* hierarchical in essence. But majoritarian theories of democracy lead to contradictions and paradoxes or, in Robert Dahl's words, "dilemmas"(diZerega, 1988, Dahl, 1982).

The character of political persuasion helps explain why *compromise* is so central to democratic politics. The democratic coordinating process normally works through a continual balancing and accommodation of interests, both within and between political parties. Compromise, the discovery of a middle ground within which all parties can live, is the life blood of democratic politics. (Crick, 1964 p. 146) This fact has important implications for explaining why democracies do not make war upon one another.

#### State and Popular Sovereignty

A *sovereign* state is characterized by the *open ended* rule of a party, clique, faction, junta, clergy, or other identifiable group which organizes government to serve its perceived interests. The state is sovereign because no other social institution or group may legitimately (according to the state's leading officials) challenge its claim to be society's ultimate decision-making power or seek to join in governing without its permission (Weber, 1964, p. 156). Viewed in this way the state is an instrumental organization, and necessarily a hierarchy. Within this framework there can be a great variety of sovereign states, but democracy in the sense I am developing it is not one of them.



A democratic government is not sovereign in the same sense other states are because ultimate authority lies with the people through their voting and the influence of the organizations with which they are involved. This is different from passive popular obedience or approval which can be the case for undemocratic governments.

*Sovereignty is not institutionalized.* Here I use sovereignty in a sense deriving from Locke and the Founding Fathers (Locke, 1965. pp. 374-83, Madison, *Federalist* 39, 46 ; also 1981. pp. 361-2). Democratic principles, once given constitutional status, generate self-organizing systems which are radically different from other states.

The closest resemblance to a sovereign state within a democracy is the dominant governing party or coalition and the administrative apparatus over which it presides. In a more than rhetorical sense, however, sovereignty resides in the community of citizens as a whole, and not in the government (contrast with Huntington, 1968. pp. 105-106). This point is important for understanding why modern democracies do not wage war upon one another.

We may now see how democracies are systemically different from undemocratic states. The anthropomorphization of state behavior so common in the literature of international relations, and of political science generally, is radically misleading when applied to democratic polities.

#### Democracy and Peace: Internal Factors

The reasons for the democratic peace grow out of their basic character as self-organizing systems. *The self-organizing features characterizing internal democratic politics carry over into their external relations.* Therefore, in the international arena democracies will act in ways significantly different from undemocratic states. We would expect to find a readiness to compromise and a difficulty in pursuing unified

plans on the part of democratic governments. If compromise is unfeasible, they will tend to isolate their differences, so as not to allow these disagreements to poison the overall pattern of mutual involvement. This pattern of response will be different from that prevailing in states comprehensible as instrumental organizations, as is shown by Moaz and Russett (1993).

Comparing the crisis in U.S. - French relations when deGualle pulled France out of NATO and the development of the Sino-Soviet split demonstrates the strength of systemically rooted differences in democratic and undemocratic state relationships. While neither case eventuated in all-out war, both resulted in strong public challenges to the dominant member of opposed coalitions. Both occurred at about the same time. The Sino-Soviet dispute did result in violence. How each challenge was handled by both sides illustrates the ways in which internal systemic characteristics affect the capacity for states to manage conflict. In both the United States and France, according to Holsti and Sullivan, "multiple internal and external channels of communication, relative freedom of divergent interests to make political demands, and a limited ability of top leaders to mobilize all politically relevant groups and institutions in support of their policies" prevented the rupture from seriously undermining a wide variety of U.S. - French relations (Holsti and Sullivan, 1969, p. 158).

The openness of debate characterizing democratic polities influences their international behavior. Brzezinski and Huntington observed of the U.S. - French crisis that "The openness of the debate tended to inhibit sudden unilateral moves by either Washington or Paris, with their exacerbating effect." Indeed, when American and French executives did act unilaterally, as in the Kennedy - Macmillan Nassau agreement and deGualle's press conference excluding Great Britain from the Common

Market, the impact of their actions "had precisely that negative effect in the dispute" (Brzezinski and Huntington, 1963, p. 406).

French and American elites maintained many independent channels of communication and influence through their joint involvement in international and national organizations. "The structure of the Western international system requires reliance on many multilateral bodies with special common interests. These provide additional arenas for the articulation of one's point of view without precipitating a head-on confrontation" (p. 406). In both countries different elites through mutual involvement with other common interests that brought them together, were able to help isolate the dispute. Because these people had significant political influence in their own nations, their outlook had consequences in how the two governments interacted. Because these elites were largely independent from official policy, they served to undercut attempts by their nations' executives further to polarize relations between the two nations. Leaders of an instrumental organization can at least fantasize building a closed system, seeking to ensure that only factors compatible with their purposes influences internal conditions. As a self-organizing system, a democracy can never even approximate such a goal, for its citizens will often possess independent interests extending well beyond the polity's borders.

Elite and average citizens alike maintained independent economic, scientific, cultural, and social connections with their peers abroad. As attempts by American Presidents to eliminate private American trade and travel with Cuba, Nicaragua, Libya and other states in official disfavor suggest, these relationships can undercut the President's attempt to build and maintain a unified hostile front. Democratic citizens act as if their borders were porous, *and in so acting make them so*. It is an ambitious and pugnacious executive's nightmare, but it helps to maintain the peace.

Even within the executive power itself, the ability of democratic executives to mobilize and control their resources is generally more limited than in an undemocratic state. In democratic polities the bulk of public officials owe their positions in significant part to technical expertise rather than to political loyalty (Allison, 1971). Such officials occasionally operate at cross purposes to those of elected officials and, when in different bureaus, even independently from one another. Sometimes they are allied with the political opposition. They can build bases of support outside of the executive, either in other branches of government, or in society at large. Their actions add to the advantages of isolating or compromising international disagreements. Such independence within the executive branch also adds to the difficulties of mobilizing the nation to act in accordance with the executive's vision.

To a degree these circumstances hold for undemocratic systems as well, but in such instances the number and variety of powerful independent allies is *much* smaller. It is hard to leak information when no free press exists. "Pluralism" exists in any large organization, but there is a world of difference between pluralism in democratic societies and factionalism within undemocratic ones. In the leninist world the major interests to some extent separate from the party were the military and secret police, neither of which provided pressure for political freedom (Kamniski, 1992 compare Hough, 1977).

Internal political factors encouraging compromising and isolating conflicts are much weaker in undemocratic states. To the degree that they are organized to achieve specific ends, such states lack the internal safeguards which assist in maintaining international peace. Institutions enabling leaders to maintain their control by restricting or eliminating independent initiatives also restrict independent efforts towards defusing potential conflict. Channels of communication, both internal and external, are fewer

and more subject to executive domination. Independent political initiatives, demands, and criticisms are strongly circumscribed. Borders are less porous. Leaders' power to mobilize resources in pursuit of their aims is greater, as is the importance of political conformity. In the most thoroughly organized states, even independent initiatives which, taken in isolation, might please the leadership must be discouraged because their advocates could acquire independent political status, constituting a focus for potential future opposition. All these factors helped escalate the conflict between Mao and Khrushchev until both states were forced to invest huge amounts of resources in threatening and protecting against one another (Brzezinski & Huntington, 1963, pp. 405- 407; Holsti & Sullivan, 1969, pp. 160-61 ). Nor did future leaders on either side prove significantly more adept at defusing the tensions by which both parties were weakened. Indeed, ultimately serious border conflicts did break out between them.

Undemocratic states depend more than democratic states on the qualities of their leadership to maintain the peace. Since any international dispute can be perceived as a challenge to the leadership, this is a very risky safeguard. Leaders, democratic and undemocratic alike, do not like to back down. Additionally, leaders in most undemocratic states usually hold office for life, unless they are ousted in a coup. (Mexico is an unusual exception.) By contrast, democratic leadership is predictable in its duration and routine in its rotation. Since turnover in leadership makes new initiatives for good (or ill) more possible, democratic governments with serious disagreements among themselves can more patiently await a change in leadership than can undemocratic ones. Hoping for a future environment more congenial for negotiations can help defuse the immediacy of a crisis.

### The International Environment

To the extent that the international environment consists of relationships among democracies, it can not be analyzed in Hobbesian terms. Its constituent states are not rational actors, or even actors at all. A self-organizing system does not pursue an ordered hierarchy of ends. In addition relationships between democratic states are significantly influenced by the same self-organizing dynamics as is the case within them. Therefore, democracies do not have much pressure to act *as if* they were rational actors - as they have to do in the presence of powerful undemocratic states. Citizens do not usually define their interests solely, or perhaps even mostly, in terms of the "national interest." Political leaders may think of the polity as a unitary organization or machine to be used to achieve his or her aims. Citizens usually do not. Rather, citizens' conscious interests will spill across borders to include people and organizations in other polities.

For example, the boundaries of both the market and science spill far beyond any political boundary. These international interests come to influence the domestic political environment, thereby limiting and helping to define the international options available to an elected leader. *Processes of mutual accommodation are encouraged by the international environment itself*, indeed, increasingly a sharp distinction can no longer be drawn between the national and international environment. This is an example of how self-organizing systems are transformative. Democracies strengthen the influence of other self-organizing processes, such as the market and science. These systems in turn influence democratic politics, not least by strengthening relationships between citizens and others beyond the borders of the polity. Over time the rigidity of boundaries between political systems begins to dissolve, sometimes to the point that portions of formal political sovereignty itself will be freely given up, as is the case today in Western Europe. I believe that this accounts for the finding that democracies

are more predisposed towards ventures in international cooperation than are undemocratic states (Haas, 1965).

The more complex and extensive citizens' dealings with people in other democracies become, the more peacekeeping tendencies are strengthened. Accordingly, among democracies close economic, cultural, social, and scientific ties *increasingly* strengthen the bonds maintaining international peace. These happy consequences are not so assured among instrumentally organized states because economic, social, scientific, and cultural connections are subordinated to the leadership's policy goals, which may or may not be peaceful. For example, Wilhelmine Germany's extensive trade with Imperial Russia failed to keep peace between them in 1914. Substantial trade between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union continued up to the day of Hitler's invasion. In undemocratic polities the state is much more capable of controlling the system's boundaries, thereby subordinating extrasystemic influences to national policy. Unaware of the distinction between hierarchical and democratic polities, some analysts have used examples such as these to argue that trade does not promote peace. Actually, *in democracies* trade is a primary factor in blurring borders and thereby promoting peace.

Democratic states' predilection to seek to compromise conflicts away, or to isolate them, is arguably a mixed blessing in dealing with aggressive undemocratic states. The Rhineland capitulation is a famous example of democratic wishful thinking, but not the only one. On the other hand, these systemic predilections will be all the more valuable in dealing with nonaggressive states.

While democracies are not always peaceful, when *both* potential antagonists are democracies, the systemically generated impetus for peace has been powerful enough to prevent conflict. This does not mean that a war between two democracies is impossible.

Human folly, greed, vanity, and egoism are too extensive to allow such a forecast. But such a war would be very unlikely. Further, if my argument is valid, the more democracies there are, and the longer they interact, the less likely will warfare become. Should war break out between two democracies, it will probably be when one or both belligerents are new democracies with relatively little blurring of border between themselves and their antagonists and little internal democratization of the sort described above. Moreover, in such a hypothetical war, the international factors making for peace would keep other democracies neutral and offering to mediate, thereby isolating or compromising the conflict. Indeed, reliance on mediation is already a common pattern in disputes between democratic powers (Russett, 1993, 41; Dixon, 1993).

Since each democracy will have a complex network of relationships with others, the democratic international system serves to contain conflict if it ever did arise. In short, the democratic international system can probably function peacefully because it would possess a goodly and increasing measure of the same self-organizing dynamics that exist internally within democratic polities.<sup>2</sup>

### The Executive and War

The executive power is that democratic institution standing in the greatest tension with democracy's self-organizing structural characteristics. This is due to the executive's tendency to try and organize government and society to serve its interests. Were it ever to succeed, the democracy would be replaced by a hierarchy.

Domestically, in ideal terms but not always in practice, it is the executive's task to enforce the policies arrived at democratically. When policies change, the executive enforces the new as faithfully as s/he did the old. The executive organizes the state to accomplish these tasks.



As is well known, practice often differs. Agencies and officials charged with enforcing the law develop their own agendas, agendas not always in harmony with their mandated tasks. Sometimes they are called upon to make law as well. Further, these agencies often come to possess significant political resources of their own, giving them an increased measure of insulation from democratic processes. Often enforcing the law requires interpreting the law, and those wielding executive power, like everyone else, will seek to interpret the law to their own advantage. These deviations from the ideal need not seriously undermine the government's democratic character, especially in the realm of domestic politics, for usually the polity's self-organizing character limits and circumvents these executive initiatives.

However, even if popular checks and controls on a powerful executive are strong, (and especially if they are not) a problem exists relevant to our discussion of peace and war. It is in the realm of international politics that institutionalized checks on the executive power are weakest. Additionally, patriotism and the general sense that we need to stand together in the international arena helps create a relatively uncritical trust and support for the executive, especially in times of crisis. It is in the chief executive's political advantage to be in charge during times of international crisis, so long as s/he can appear to be "in charge" (Lowi, 1985).

In his analysis of American foreign policy Stephen D. Krasner observed that "Central decision-makers have been able to carry out their own policies over the opposition of private corporations [and other societal interests] *providing that policy implementation only required resources that were under the control of the executive branch*" (pp. 18, 89, my emphasis) . Those areas of American foreign policy which fit the italicized portion of Krasner's quote are relatively free from self-organizing pressures, especially American relations with small or unstable states who are therefore

vulnerable to covert or small scale overt military pressure. It is here that the executive's resources enable it to act relatively independently over the short run. It is also within this area of foreign policy that we find cases of violent intervention by the U. S. government into small quasi-democratic states, often with results fatal to their already weak democratic institutions. In 1954 under President Eisenhower's authority, the U.S. was involved in the violent overthrow of the constitutionally elected Guatemalan government, leading to years of dictatorship and civil war. President Johnson ordered the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 to prevent an elected President from taking office. In the early 1970s President Nixon encouraged the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile. These actions were not isolated, for executive inspired military actions also took place in Iran, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, and more recently in Grenada, Nicaragua, Iraq, Somalia and, as of this writing, perhaps Haiti. What distinguishes the Guatemalan, Dominican, and Chilean interventions was their contempt for democratic institutions and practices both at home and abroad.

Looked at closely, these apparent exceptions to my argument about democracies' peaceful relations with one another *support* my reasons for why democracies do not war with one another. The structural features of American government *farthest* removed from the basic self-organizing characteristics of democratic government are those most responsible for its belligerent behavior. *It is not democracy as such which creates peace, it is the systemic relationships within and between democracies generated by their self-organizing political processes which are conducive to lasting peace.* When these processes are weak, absent, or stifled, the record of democratic governments is no better than that of undemocratic governments. These examples suggest the inability of norms alone to suffice as the most powerful explanation for the democratic peace.

It is possible that these interventions against democratic or quasidemocratic governments would still have taken place had U.S. presidents been required to get specific congressional approval for their military adventures. However, the systemic factors which would have then been brought into play would decrease the likelihood of this happening. The fact that many actions were secret, and that the public and Congress were misled, suggests that these presidents felt there might be effective domestic opposition to their plans. President Reagan's difficulty in obtaining support for his destabilization campaign against Nicaragua and the present debates over Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti are all examples of the sort of barriers against precipitate action which democratic polities generate. This is an immense source of executive frustration, but it also is conducive to maintaining peace. Certainly the actions of Presidents Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush suggest that American executives have little compunction against deceiving elected representatives and using aggressive force when they believe it in their interest to do so. It seems that only the small size of their discretionary budgets limits the nature of their belligerence.

Michael Doyle (1983a, 1987) is one of the most effective proponents of the thesis that liberal democracies do not fight one another. However, he finds the reason for this more in liberal ideology than in the systemic characteristics of democratic polities. As a result, he advocates strengthening the independent role of the executive in order to increase further the peacefulness of democratic polities. If my analysis is correct, and the self-organizing character of the polity is more important than ideology for maintaining peace, at least for the long run, the policies Doyle advocates will undermine the ends he values.

### Conclusion

We can conclude that in their relations with one another democratic states do not exist under conditions of Hobbesian uncertainty, and so are not compelled to play balance of power politics. The system generated between democracies itself possesses strong self-organizing characteristics. Within such a system the uncertainties compelling self-interested behavior are not strong enough to compel democracies to act as if they were rational actors. We can expect the democratic peace to be mostly self-perpetuating, and for the polities existing within it to evolve further from traditional models of sovereign states..

We can return now to the question of whether norms or structures are most important in explaining the democratic peace. They cannot be separated. The rules which generate a democratic polity embody specific normative principles, including tolerance of differences and unwillingness to resort to force (Habermas has developed this line of thinking with regard to language, 1979; see also Jane Jacobs, 1993). Since all self-organizing systems depend upon facilitating voluntary cooperation and agreement, peaceful democratic norms are as implicit in democratic institutions as the concept health is implicit in life. A society without democratic norms will have a difficult time developing a democracy just as democratic norms will not be strengthened within a undemocratic polity - because norms and institutions are not mutually reinforcing. However, norms and institutions strengthen one another when constitutional rules are wisely designed. We can expect norms and institutions to mutually strengthen one another over time. The result is that the internal society of a democracy will be progressively transformed by that system.

Institutional and structural constraints guard against the rationalization of humane values in the service of inhumane causes, which has characterized many religions when united or allied with authoritarian polities. At the same time, humane norms help ensure

that temporary losers within a self-organizing system will still regard it as legitimate, for it expressed those norms in institutional form, and prevent winners from riding roughshod over losers. The causes of the democratic peace, then, have to do with the fundamentally different systemic character of democratic polities growing out of the mutual interaction of norms and institutions.

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