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Democracy and Conflict Resolution

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Democratic political processes regulate competition among groups with conflicting preferences. Although much of the competition occurs peacefully within existing political institutions, democratic practices can also facilitate the resolution of intense conflict when the political system is challenged from within by groups fighting against the established government, and when it is challenged from without and on the brink of interstate war. This chapter provides an overview of the scholarly literature linking democracy to peace and conflict resolution, including pertinent theoretical propositions and the balance of evidence generated by empirical researchers. The promise of peace associated with civil liberty, political openness, and the foreign policies of democratic states has long figured into the writings of moral and political philosophers, perhaps most notably in Immanuel Kant's essay *Perpetual Peace*, published in 1795. But the burgeoning academic literature in recent decades is largely the product of social scientific research, much (but not all) of which is built upon the analysis of large quantitative data sets. Our primary focus, then, is what social science, and in particular political science, tells us about the relationship between democracy, conflict resolution, and peace between and within states.

DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT BETWEEN STATES

The realist school of thought in international relations, which greatly influenced both scholarship and policymaking during the cold war, maintains that state behavior is primarily driven by the balance of power among rivals in the international system (Morgenthau 1948; Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). Realists assume that states resemble unitary rational actors in pursuit of a single overriding objective: survival and security in an anarchic system. The strenuous demands of the international system lead all states to behave in a similar fashion regardless of their particular political institutions, economic structure, ideological orientation,

or leadership quality. Specifically, realists typically predict that states will balance power (e.g. increase defense spending or conclude alliances) against all stronger states because they represent a threat to the survival of the state. Under similar circumstances, democracies behave no differently than autocracies.

This realist position came under increasing scrutiny beginning in the 1980s. Doyle (1983, 1986), for example, compiled a list of liberal societies and interstate wars during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and found that no two democracies had engaged in a full-scale war. He concluded that "liberal states have created a separate peace, as Kant argued they would, and have also discovered liberal reasons for aggression, as he feared they might" (Doyle 1986: 1151). Rummel (1983, 1985) came to a similar conclusion after subjecting the proposition to somewhat more systematic testing. Path-breaking work by Doyle and Rummel triggered an avalanche of empirical and theoretical investigations into what is now referred to as the "democratic peace." According to Levy (1988), the democratic peace is the closest thing to an empirical law found in the study of international relations.

Some of the earliest research examined the characteristics of democratic governments and societies that shape the state's general foreign policy orientation and behavior. The argument that democratic states are more peaceful in their relations with all states, no matter how they are governed, is known as the *monadic* version of the democratic peace proposition. While there is empirical evidence to support this argument, it is not as robust as the evidence accumulated in support of the *dyadic* democratic peace proposition, which focuses on the interaction between two states. Most recently, scholars have begun to examine *systemic* versions of the democratic peace in which the proportion of democracies in the international system influences the perceived legitimacy of democratic institutions and the use of military force in international society.

Thus, scholars have attempted to explain democratic peace using a series of related arguments, which identify causal mechanisms operating at different levels of analysis. It has been difficult to distinguish the relative explanatory power of these competing arguments because data sets constructed to test arguments at one level of analysis are often not appropriate for testing arguments at other levels. However, progress in both theoretical development and empirical analysis has reduced this problem in recent years (e.g. Bennett and Stam 2000, 2004; Rousseau 2005). The following review of democratic peace theory and research is organized according to the main causal mechanisms identified in the academic literature.

Democratic norms and conflict resolution

Many explanations of democratic peace emphasize the socialization of political leaders within their domestic political environments (Dixon 1993, 1994; Maoz and Russett 1993; Russett 1993; Huth and Allee 2002). This argument has two parts. First, democratic political elites have risen to positions of leadership within a political system that emphasizes compromise and non-violence. Conflicts of interest in democracies are usually resolved through negotiation and log-rolling. Losing a political battle does not result in the loss of political rights or exclusion from future political competition. Moreover, coercion and violence are not considered legitimate means for resolving conflicts. Conversely, political leaders in nondemocratic states are socialized in an environment in which politics is more akin to a zero-sum game in which rivals and those on the losing end of political struggles are regularly removed from the game. Coercion and violence are more widely accepted as legitimate means for resolving political conflicts. In general, political leaders in autocracies are more likely to impose decisions rather than compromise when dealing with the opposition.

Second, the argument assumes that domestic political norms are externalized by

decision makers when they become embroiled in international disputes. Presidents and prime ministers approach conflicts of interest in the international environment in much the same way they approach conflicts in the domestic environment, and with conflict-resolution skills honed by their domestic political experiences. Compared to their counterparts in authoritarian regimes, democratic leaders are more likely to seek negotiation, mediation, or arbitration (Dixon 1994; Raymond 1994). Their approach to international conflict resolution reduces the likelihood that an international dispute will escalate into a militarized crisis and war.

The strong version of the norms argument holds that democratic leaders externalize peaceful practices of conflict resolution in their interactions with all types of regimes. In contrast to this monadic claim, those who emphasize the dyadic nature of democratic peace argue that although all decision makers are inclined to externalize domestic practices of dispute resolution when dealing with interstate conflicts, this externalization is *conditional* for democratic decision makers. Democratic leaders externalize their domestic norms only if they expect similar behavior from their foreign counterparts. Because democratic decision makers expect that choices by other democratic leaders are also shaped by norms of peaceful conflict resolution, there is little risk in an attempting to resolve their conflict in accordance with these shared norms. Conversely, because democracies expect nondemocratic states to externalize coercive and uncompromising norms of conflict resolution, they adopt similar strategies when dealing with these opponents. The argument therefore assumes that a democratic state's behavior is conditioned upon the expected behavior of its opponent and that the opponent's regime type informs this expectation.

A related argument highlights the importance of identity formation. Some have suggested that peace between democracies is a function of a common social identity (Risse-Kappen 1995; Hopf 1998, 2002; Kahl 1998/99). Social identities are bundles

of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and roles that are used to draw boundaries between in-group and out-groups. Members of one's own group are viewed as less threatening than members of other groups. If democratic polities use democratic values and norms to define the in-group, the actions and capabilities of other democracies are then viewed as less threatening. Their shared identity will reduce the likelihood that either party will resort to violence to resolve a political dispute. Although realists discount the importance of ideational factors in world politics, liberals and constructivists have long maintained that a shared sense of identity partly accounts for lower levels of international conflict. While liberals tend to focus on a shared liberal identity, constructivists believe that many types of shared identity may reduce interstate conflict. Risse-Kappen (1995), for example, argues that a shared sense of identity among democratic states, and not simply their concern with the balance of power, explains decision making within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Laboratory experiments have also demonstrated that shared cultural beliefs and experiences can decrease intersubjective threat perceptions (Mintz and Geva 1993; Rousseau 2006).

Explanations for both the monadic and dyadic versions of democratic peace imply that as the number of democracies in the international system increase, the number of interstate wars will fall. However, the literature also identifies causal processes operating at the systemic level. As democratic practices spread globally—that is, as they become internalized by more societies and are reflected in public policymaking—the international system is increasingly "saturated" with democratic culture and norms of peaceful conflict resolution. In an international society in which democratic practice is so commonly viewed as legitimate and effective, the methods of conflict resolution employed by democratic states have a greater probability of being reflected in the behavior of nondemocratic states

as well. When viewing the international system as a whole, then, we should observe fewer interstate conflicts. Testing arguments operating at the systemic level of analysis is difficult; a correlation between two variables at the systemic level (e.g. number of wars and the percentage of nondemocracies) may be expected even if the causal relationships are limited to those hypothesized for the monadic and dyadic versions of the democratic peace (Rousseau and Kim 2005; Gartzke and Weisiger 2006). Problems of inference notwithstanding, statistical analyses of the systemic normative argument have provided some support for the system-level claim (Gleditsch and Hegre 1997; Crescenzi and Enterline 1999; McLaughlin et al. 1999; Crescenzi et al. 2005).

Democratic institutions and restraint

Another class of explanations for democratic peace highlights the institutions of democratic governance, broadly defined, and the domestic political costs of using force (e.g. Morgan and Campbell 1991; Morgan and Schwebach 1992). Decisions to use military force are choices made by leaders based largely on calculations of political costs and benefits. Foreign policy decisions can have costly domestic political repercussions. The expenditure of resources and loss of human life often mobilize opposition groups or fracture ruling coalitions (Mueller 1973; Cotton 1987; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1994). Compared to leaders in other political systems, democratic decision makers are more sensitive to these potential domestic costs, and this constrains their behavior when interacting with nondemocratic states. The monadic version of the institutional argument posits that democratic institutional constraints make leaders less likely to initiate war regardless of the regime type of their opponent. Recent social scientific research has produced evidence supporting this stronger version of the democratic peace hypothesis (Huth and Allee 2002; Bennett and Stam 2004; Rousseau 2005).

The nature of political institutions can have a bearing on the credibility of signals sent during an international crisis. Fearon (1994, 1995) argues that in a world of complete information, decision makers can determine each side's expected value for war—the ends sought and the likelihood of achieving them while suffering the costs of armed combat. In such a world, war would be rare; if each side's aims were known, along with the price each was willing to pay in blood and treasure, it would always be possible to strike a bargain acceptable to all without actually having to suffer the costs of war. Unfortunately, we live in a world of incomplete information. A government's willingness to use force is usually private information, and leaders may have an incentive to exaggerate or otherwise misrepresent their resolve in order to strike a better bargain. In this context of incomplete information, signals of resolve are more credible when leaders are likely to pay higher domestic audience costs for bluffing, and democracies are political systems in which audience costs are highest. Moreover, the openness of political debate in democracies provides information to foreign opponents. When the political opposition in a democracy lines up behind the executive during an international confrontation, this is a powerful signal that because the party in power will pay high political costs for backing down, the executive is probably not bluffing (Schultz 1998, 1999, 2001).

Another institutional argument derives from a game theoretic model of political survival developed by Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1999, 2003). Public policies, both domestic and foreign, yield a mix of public and private goods. Public goods, of course, are available to the entire society, whereas private goods can be allocated as leaders see fit. Political systems vary in terms of the proportion of society involved in the selection of political leaders (the selectorate), and the proportion of the selectorate whose support is required to maintain one's position of power or, in the case of a challenger, to unseat the current leader (the winning coalition). Democratic states have large selectorates and

large winning coalitions. Autocratic states may have large selectorates, too, when elections have high voter turnouts but are nevertheless rigged, but they always have small winning coalitions. Political survival in a democracy therefore requires that goods, public and private, be distributed among a larger winning coalition than is the case in an autocracy. Public goods serve that purpose well in a democracy because they go to all, while the value of private goods diminishes due to the larger number of recipients. In an autocracy, however, private goods are relatively more important to the leader's political survival because they are distributed among a smaller constituency.

Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues argue that successful public policies generate the public goods that democratic leaders need in order to stay in office. Autocratic leaders prefer that their policies succeed, but the consequences of policy failure for political survival are not dire as long as the leader has access to resources that can be distributed as private goods to a small winning coalition. What are the implications for democratic peace? With higher political costs of policy failure, democratic leaders avoid international contests unless they are confident of victory. And once they become involved in a crisis or war, democrats try harder to win. Contests with other democratic states of similar capabilities are to be avoided for this reason, but democratic states are not so disinclined to avoid confronting autocratic states, whose leaders have less to lose politically by backing down. The model does suggest, however, that stronger democracies also face fewer disincentives when confronting weaker democracies; the stronger state is likely to succeed no matter how hard the weaker one tries, and policy success is what counts for political survival.

Democratic political institutions often influence foreign policy decision making in particular ways regardless of the regime type of the opponent. But given a set of institutional constraints, the leaders of democratic states may well behave differently depending on whether or not their opponents are believed to be similarly constrained. For example, Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992) propose a three-part institutional explanation for dyadic democratic peace. First, the international system is assumed to consist of hawkish states (leaders are uncompromising and predisposed to use force to resolve disputes) and dovish states (leaders are prone to compromise and use strategies of reciprocation). At the same time, there is some uncertainty surrounding which strategy will be adopted by any particular state. Second, domestic institutional structures reduce (but do not eliminate) this uncertainty by signaling a state's most likely strategy. Due to the potential domestic costs of using force, decision makers believe that democracies are more likely than nondemocracies to adopt dovish strategies. Third, when a democracy confronts another democracy, each expects a negotiated outcome and the exercise of restraint when contemplating the use of force. But when an autocracy confronts a democracy, a hawkish leader expects to encounter a dovish one and is likely to exploit the situation. In such a situation, the dove feels compelled to adopt the aggressive strategy of the hawk and may initiate conflict in order to preempt an expected attack. The logic of the argument is dyadic: democratic states pursue strategies involving compromise and nonviolence only when dealing with other democratic states.

Another institutional explanation for the dyadic character of democratic peace focuses on the difficulty of mobilizing popular support for the use of force. According to Maoz and Russett (1993), the inclusiveness of democratic regimes hinders their ability to rapidly mobilize societal groups in support of military action. Authoritarian regimes, with constituencies spanning a much narrower range of the political spectrum, can more quickly reach the necessary consensus on the use of force. When a dispute emerges between two democratic states, the slow process of mobilization in both states creates opportunities for the resolution of the conflict through noncoercive means. However, when a conflict arises between a democratic state

and an authoritarian state, rapid mobilization by the latter forces democratic leaders to find ways to work around normal political processes. That is, the emergency situation encourages the democratic state to adopt the tactics of its nondemocratic opponent.

Critics of the democratic peace thesis

In addition to the studies discussed above, there is considerable additional social scientific research that supports one or more of the propositions contained in democratic peace theory, especially as concerns dyadic peace (see, for example, Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Bremer 1993; Rousseau et al. 1996; Rasler and Thompson 2001; Russett and Oneal 2001; Dixon and Senese 2002; Peceny et al. 2002). But despite the impressive body of evidence, the academic literature includes many studies that aim to refute the democratic peace proposition in part or in whole. Some of the most noteworthy research focuses on the purported risks to peace presented by democratizing states.

While acknowledging that mature democracies rarely fight each other, Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 2002a, 2002b) have argued that the process of democratic reform may actually increase the probability of war. Their empirical findings, based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses, have been read not only as partly refuting democratic peace theory, but also as calling into question the wisdom of efforts to promote democracy in other countries, a cornerstone of Western foreign policy following the end of the Cold War. If the *condition* of being democratic decreases the probability of violent conflict, how could the *process* of becoming more democratic have the opposite effect? Mansfield and Snyder propose that transitional regimes experiencing high level of political mobilization despite weak institution controls are often tempted to incite external conflict. The intense political competition ushered in by the disintegration of the previous authoritarian government leads elites and would-be leaders to identify issues that can be used to build broad popular coalitions.

The issues that tend to be exploited by elites, according to Mansfield and Snyder, are those that can become the basis for a "belligerent nationalist coalition." The old elite, including the military establishment, often seek to define themselves as the guardians of the nationalist cause, reminding the populace of the dangers they collectively face. Newly emerging interest groups are also inclined to seize on such issues as group leaders feel compelled to assert their nationalist credentials as a means of unifying the fragmented interests bubbling to the surface in an unstable political environment. While the masses may not be particularly war-prone at the start of this process, sustained appeals to nationalism from across the political spectrum can quickly create a belligerent popular mood. The intensification of this mood can trigger "blow-back," a situation in which the leadership feels compelled to behave aggressively having become trapped by their own demagoguery. In their initial research on wars during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 8) found "that democratizing states—those that have recently undergone regime change in a democratic direction—are much more war-prone than states that have undergone no regime change, and are somewhat more war-prone than those that have undergone a change in an autocratic direction."

Analyses by Mansfield and Snyder have been challenged on a number of methodological grounds (Enterline 1996, 1998; Weede 1996; Wolf 1996; Thompson and Tucker 1997), and other empirical investigations into the war-inducing effects of democratization report evidence at odds with theirs (Gleditsch and Ward 2000; Russett and Oneal 2001; Oneal, Russett, and Berbaum 2003; Bennett and Stam 2004; Rousseau 2005). Mansfield and Snyder have responded to these critiques in various ways, but their most recent work has included a closer examination of the position of transitioning states along the autocracy–democracy spectrum when they are at greatest risk of

becoming involved in militarized disputes or wars. They have generally concluded that the probability of conflict is increased when autocratic states make incomplete democratic transitions, but not when they make complete transitions. Nor do partially democratic regimes appear dangerous when they are undergoing transitions to full democracy (Mansfield and Snyder 2005).

In challenging some of the core assumptions and arguments of realist theory, it is not surprising that the democratic peace research program has itself come under attack from various angles. Gowa (1999), for instance, argues that democratic peace is spurious, that it is a function not of democratic governance and conflict resolution but security considerations within the Western alliance in its opposition to the Soviet bloc after World War II. Democratic peace researchers have responded to this and other criticisms on realist grounds by controlling for a number of factors that feature in realist explanations of war and peace, including geography, alliance, the balance of military capabilities, and nuclear armament. They have also controlled for other liberal factors, like wealth, trade, and participation in international organizations. Efforts to model the liberal determinants of peace alongside realist ones have demonstrated that evidence for the democratic peace is quite robust (e.g. Russett and Oneal 2001; Kinsella and Russett 2002; Kim and Rousseau 2005; Rousseau 2005).

Other critics point to the difficulties of measuring democracy, an exceedingly complex social scientific construct. These difficulties led early exploratory research to opt for dichotomous measures of regime type (e.g. Doyle 1986), but the majority of later studies have employed the democracy and autocracy scales developed by the Polity Project (see Marshall and Jaggers 2002). Although indices constructed from the Polity scales have a number of important strengths, they are rough measures and are often insensitive to small but important changes in domestic power configurations. Democratic peace researchers have typically responded to

such objections by modifying their measures and retesting their propositions. Rousseau (2005), for example, finds strong support for both the monadic and dyadic democratic peace propositions using new measures and data for institutional constraint.

A more fundamental objection to the measurement of democracy in the democratic peace literature is leveled by Oren (1995, 2003). Polities can be measured along numerous dimensions, and social scientific practice at any given moment reflects the identity evaluation and threat perceptions prevailing during that historical period. Oren argues that in the case of social science research in the United States, the features of democracy considered most important are those that the American political system shares with the political systems of friendly states, while those features it shares with its enemies tend to be downplayed. Oren's claim, therefore, is that democratic peace is an artifact of a built-in bias of the social scientific community. This is a provocative critique to be sure, though one that has so far not prompted much reaction among democratic peace researchers.

The theoretical underpinnings of the democratic peace project have also been scrutinized. There is a lack of agreement within the research community regarding the exact causal mechanisms responsible for the empirical regularities that are routinely observed. While we know that democracies do not fight other democracies, we are not sure which of the many causal mechanisms is behind the pattern, or which have the most influence in different contexts. Others have examined the logic of both the normative and institutional explanations discussed above, arguing that those explanations imply even more pacific behavior on the part of democratic states than what democratic peace researchers are able to show (Rosato 2003). To some extent, these critiques replay earlier objections to the challenges posed to realist theory. What they have not done, however, is undermine the democratic peace proposition, the research program supporting it, or the implication that the spread of democratic

forms of governance enhance the prospects for the resolution of conflicts between states (Ray 2003; Chernoff 2004; Kinsella 2005).

DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT WITHIN STATES

In the political science literature, the term "democratic peace" almost always refers to the extraordinary infrequency of war and other forms of violent conflict between democratic states, as well as the body of theory and research explaining it. Much less extensive, but rapidly expanding in recent years, is the social scientific literature on civil war which addresses directly the relationship between democratic governance and the outbreak or resolution of violent domestic conflict. The role of democracy in mitigating (or possibly exacerbating) conflict within states needs to be understood against the backdrop of competing theories of rebellion and civil war (see Sambanis 2002).

Early work by political scientists derived from the fairly intuitive notion that people rebel when they feel deprived in some way. Deprivation and discontent breed anger, which may be combined with military means to provide the genesis for armed insurgency against the state. Feelings of deprivation are not necessarily based on objective conditions; they are relative to conditions that people believe they deserve but have been denied, due either to discrimination or incapacity on the part of the government (Davies 1962; Gurr 1970; Tilly 1978). Grievances against the government or other groups within society can be related to political conditions, economic conditions, or both.

More recent work, including research by economists, starts by observing that social discontent is seemingly ubiquitous and that demand-side explanations of civil war fail to account for the far less common occurrence of civil war. Among the many societies that are home to especially aggrieved groups, what distinguishes relatively stable societies from those experiencing civil war, according to this perspective, are the impediments to

collective action, which limit the supply of rebels willing to undertake the hardships and risks of armed insurgency (Lichbach 1995). The expected utility of rebellion is higher when poor economic circumstances reduce opportunity costs, when the reach of central government authority is constricted, and when geographic and economic conditions (like rough terrain and the availability of lootable resources) are conducive to armed insurgency (Ross 1999; Collier 2000; Reno 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

Grievance and political openness

The role of democracy figures most prominently in political theories of internal conflict. Democratic governments are less likely to curtail individual liberties and are more likely to grant equal protection under the law; the absence of such rights and freedoms is frequently a source of resentment on the part of disadvantaged groups within nondemocratic societies. Where grievances do exist in democratic societies, the openness of the political system allows group discontent to be expressed nonviolently, including by way of confrontational but nevertheless lawful means like strikes and protests (Eckstein and Gurr 1975; Diamond 1999). Disadvantaged and oppressed groups in nondemocratic societies have relatively few alternatives short of open rebellion against the state. The proposition that democracies are at lower risk of civil war and other forms of mass internal violence has received some empirical support (e.g. Rummel 1995; Gurr 2000), but this finding is not as robust as the evidence for democratic peace between states (Hegre and Sambanis 2006).

Supply-side explanations found in many economic theories of civil war tend to downplay the significance of democracy because political rights and freedoms are assumed to bear upon the degree of grievance and discontent found within societies, factors judged to be of secondary importance. However, the extent that political systems vary in terms of the inclusiveness of popular representation pertains also

to the opportunity cost of rebellion. The decision to pursue extralegal means to redress grievances is a decision to forego the opportunities available within the political system. Autocratic systems, of course, are not very inclusive and the interests of disaffected groups are less likely to be represented in the policymaking process. But even among democratic states, inclusiveness varies and there is some evidence to suggest that proportional representation systems, in which even disaffected groups may occupy seats in parliament, have a lower probability of experiencing civil war than majoritarian systems, which tend to marginalize smaller groups when their interests do not correspond to those of the median voter (Reynal-Querol 2002).

One possible reason for divergent expectations regarding the role of democratic governance in reducing the probability of civil war is that theory and research on the question has not paid enough attention to the different types of civil wars and rebellions that societies experience. The factors explaining ethnic and nonethnic civil wars are not exactly the same. Ethnic civil wars pit ethnic communities against the state (and its supporters) and are fought over communal status within society. Nonethnic civil wars, like revolutionary wars, are fought over ideological or class-based disputes rather than identity issues. While economic theories of civil war see the opportunity costs of rebellion primarily in terms of economic opportunities, ethnicity and identity-based grievances are often unrelated to economic deprivation (see, for example, Rothchild 1997; Arnson and Zartman 2005). A distinguishing feature of ethnic civil war, according to Sambanis (2001), is resentment at the absence of civil rights and freedoms, discrimination in the adjudication of disputes between societal groups, and the lack of political representation or regional autonomy. These sorts of grievances emerge less often in democratic political systems, and Sambanis shows evidence that ethnic civil wars are indeed unlikely to occur in democratic societies. He also finds that if a state has

democratic neighbors, it is less likely to become embroiled in an internal ethnic conflict. Hostilities often spill over national borders and weak democratic institutions increase the risk that disaffected ethnic groups in adjacent states will take up arms against their own governments.

The suppression of dissent is a defining feature of closed political systems. Therefore, for any given level of grievance (and other factors contributing to armed rebellion), we would expect authoritarian states to experience fewer civil wars than states with more open political systems. That is, the most democratic societies face few rebellions because the level of grievance is generally lower; group conflict is more often resolved nonviolently, even if sometimes contentiously. But the most authoritarian societies may also face few rebellions, despite a higher level of grievance, because group conflict tends to be suppressed by the state. This parabolic relationship between political openness and civil war is one that has been repeatedly reported in the empirical literature (e.g. Muller and Weede 1990; Ellingsen 2000; Hegre et al. 2001).

Where does this leave partially democratic states? The literature does indeed suggest that these are the societies most likely to experience serious internal conflict. When political rights and freedoms are not fully respected, grievances emerge within disadvantaged groups. Although partially democratic systems, just like fully democratic systems, may permit the mobilization of groups whose interests are at odds with the policies pursued by the government, they are also quicker to repress protests, strikes, and other forms of civil disobedience, thereby inflaming discontent and resentment even as they close off opportunities for groups to redress their grievances. When a regime combines the permissive elements of democracy with the repressive elements of autocracy, the risks of violent domestic conflict are at their highest.

In many cases, partly free societies are also those undergoing political change. The argument linking civil violence to the

transition from authoritarian to democratic rule is associated with the work of Samuel Huntington (1968, 1991), among others, and is the starting point for the contention, discussed above, that democratizing states are more likely to become involved in interstate conflicts. The collapse of autocratic institutions encourages groups to mobilize and compete for control of government policy and positions of authority. Yet this surge in political activity is difficult to channel in constructive directions due to the weakness of participatory political institutions and the underdeveloped state of democratic norms. In this fluid environment, groups often turn against the fragile authority of the central government. Their resentments stoked further by opportunistic leaders, this group hostility can become violent to the point of armed rebellion (Snyder 2000; Kaufman 2001).

Hegre et al. (2001) show that both of these factors—the institutional inconsistencies characteristic of partially democratic political systems and the volatility and opportunism associated with political change—are correlated with a higher probability of civil war. They estimate that partially democratic societies are four times as likely to descend into civil war as are complete democracies. Societies undergoing a regime change, whether in the democratic or autocratic direction, are at higher risk of civil war than stable political systems, and remain at higher risk for five years after the regime change. Although the findings suggest civil war is more common in partially democratic societies than in societies with autocratic governments, other studies have shown that autocratic governments are more likely than democracies to experience regime transitions (e.g. Gates et al. 2006). Thus, while democratization may bring a greater risk of domestic conflict, if democratic political institutions are fully consolidated, the new regime is at the lowest risk of civil war, due both to its institutional features and to its durability as a political system.

The impact of political openness and political change on the occurrence of civil war is called into question by some researchers because they posit that economic opportunity costs are a more important consideration than either group grievances or the opportunity costs of redressing those grievances through democratic institutions. When controlling for the level of economic development, the residual effects of such political factors should be minimal (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Although the empirical evidence linking an increased risk of civil war to incomplete democratization is robust (Hegre and Sambanis 2006), more research is probably needed on economic development and democratic governance as mutually reinforcing mechanisms of domestic conflict resolution. Evidence suggests the peace between democratic states is strongest when those states are also economically developed (e.g. Mousseau 2000; Mousseau et al. 2003), and a similar dynamic may operate at the domestic level (Hegre 2003).

Settlement and peace-building

The conditions most conducive to preventing the outbreak of civil war are related to those most conducive to peace settlements and the reestablishment of political stability in the wake of civil war. The power of the central government must be consolidated, its legitimacy must be established or enhanced by allowing previously excluded groups access to the policymaking process, and sufficient economic resources must be mustered and allocated to support the peace-building process. The creation of each of these conditions may be assisted in various ways by external actors (Zartman 1995; Regan 2000). Intergovernmental organizations, for example, especially those composed mainly of democratic states, have been effective in facilitating peace-building processes within both member and nonmember states (Pevehouse 2005; Pevehouse and Russett 2006). In the case of extremely destructive civil wars, and especially those in which group hatreds are acute and communal violence never far below the surface, real peace may not be possible in the near term. Political stability may require the establishment of a

central government that rules with an iron fist rather than wide consent. However, draconian solutions of this sort fall outside the liberal paradigm guiding peace-building efforts since the end of the Cold War (Paris 1997).

Given the secondary role played by political practices and institutions in economic theories of civil war, relatively little attention has been devoted to questions of peace settlement and post-war reconstruction beyond highlighting the need to transform war economies (e.g. Pugh and Cooper 2004). An exception is Wantchekon's (2004) game theoretic analysis of "warlord democracy." Wantchekon considers an interaction involving three players: two warring factions (warlords) and the citizenry. Each warring faction seeks political power and the economic benefits that come with it. While the civil war is in progress, each expropriates the wealth of a subset of the citizenry they control as well as mineral wealth of the territory they occupy. The interests of the citizenry depend on their affiliation with the contending warlords. Those who support one or the other enjoy both the warlord's protection and the full economic benefit of their labors and investments. Those who support neither receive no protection and the return on their economic activities is subject to expropriation. A continued state of belligerency, with its continued expropriation of wealth, encourages unaffiliated citizens to invest less, which diminishes the warlords' take. Wantchekon suggests that both warlords may expect to do better by disarming and choosing democracy. In this case, each campaigns for the citizens' vote by proposing a tax rate, and the electoral competition brings promised tax rates down to the point where expected government revenue equals the warlord's take under conditions of continued belligerency. Because the legal tax rate is to be applied to the economic activities of the entire citizenry, it is lower than what is applied to the smaller population under each warring faction's control during belligerency. The winning faction's total take will be improved relative to the status quo, because citizens will now be investing more, and as long as both factions

estimate that they have a reasonable chance of winning forthcoming elections—which Wantchekon shows need not be greater than one-half—democracy is the rational choice (Wantchekon and Neeman 2002; see also Przeworski 1999).

This notion of warlord democracy stands in contrast to the argument that political order in the aftermath of social upheaval may require authoritarian rule, or at least a substantial measure of illiberalism (e.g. Huntington 1968; Zakaria 2003). Still, although even those who once profited from civil war may benefit from a system of democratic governance, getting there is rarely a simple matter. Several studies have pointed to the difficulty of post-civil war political reform and the fragility of democratic institutions when the wounds of communal conflict are fresh and the process of national reconciliation is in its infancy. Power-sharing arrangements can be essential elements in bringing warring factions to a settlement by assuring the representation of group interests in policymaking and state-building (Walter 2002; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003). But members of a governing cartel of group elites may resist the consolidation of more participatory political reforms as hard-won gains become jeopardized by the uncertainties of the democratic process (Rothchild and Roeder 2005). Majoritarian solutions have a mediocre track record in pluralistic societies plagued by suspicion and hostility; the absence of guarantees leave minorities understandably fearful of demagoguery and democratic tyranny.

In some post-conflict environments, there is such a thing as too much democracy too fast. Stable democracy provides mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of social conflict, but democratic governance (like market capitalism) is inherently competitive. Electoral competition, perhaps more than any other single institution, is emblematic of the democratic process, which is why the holding of elections after peace settlements have been reached is so often taken as an indication that a previously dysfunctional polity has made a successful political transition. In a pluralistic setting, however, electoral competition may

encourage candidates for office to distinguish the interests of their constituents from those of other groups, and even to exaggerate them, reinforcing the perceived group differences that fed the violent conflict from which society just emerged. This does not mean that elections should necessarily give way to other, less participatory forms of political representation, like power sharing, but it does mean that electoral rules need to be designed so that candidates are compelled to seek support from outside their own factions. Extremist appeals should not pay on election day. It may also mean that elections cannot be rushed, that they should be delayed until such time as violent passions have subsided, warring factions have been disarmed, and the social infrastructure has resumed its basic functions.

The danger, of course, is that the difficulties associated with peace-building and state-building will become a justification for delaying indefinitely democratic consolidation. In the contemporary scholarly literature, there is a near-consensus that democratic political reform is a necessary component of peace-building after civil war, at least once a modicum of post-conflict stabilization has been achieved. Those critical of prevailing practices of "liberal peace-building" usually do not question the ultimate aim, but rather the rate at which the political process is opened up to societal forces or the design of representative institutions in the near term (e.g. Paris 1997, 2004; Fukuyama 2005; Barnett 2006).

CONCLUSION: PUSHING DEMOCRACY TO ACHIEVE PEACE

Social science theory and research has established a strong connection between democracy and conflict resolution between and within states. As an empirical matter, the peace among democratically governed states is almost universally accepted. Although related claims and counterclaims—concerning, for example, the general peacefulness of democratic states or the dangers posed by democratizing states—continue to be debated, the core dyadic proposition remains beyond dispute. Democratic peace theory still has its detractors, primarily within the realist school of thought, but the theory continues to be developed and is becoming increasingly formalized within the rational choice framework. Empirical evidence linking democracy to civil peace and conflict resolution is not as robust, but it is accumulating. More research is also needed to help disentangle the pacifying effects of democracy from the effects of economic development, and to establish which types of democratic practices and institutions make for enduring peace and stability in the aftermath of civil war. The continued application of formal models will advance theory in this area as well.

Whatever questions remain, it is clear that democratic governance is generally conducive to the resolution of both civil and international conflict. The policy implications also seem clear: the spread of democracy is good for international society as a whole, for the security of democratic states in particular, and for the peoples residing in war-torn regions of the globe. It has, of course, been the policy of the democratic major powers, and especially the United States, to promote democratic reform worldwide—a policy that predates the recent accumulation of social scientific research linking democracy to domestic and international peace (e.g. Carothers 1999; Ikenberry 2000). Yet the end of the Cold War and the dissipation of the major ideological challenge to representative democracy and market capitalism brought with it a greater willingness to discuss the use of military force as a means of toppling authoritarian regimes, with the expectation that democratization, while good for those liberated from tyrannical rule, also generates positive externalities for regional and international security. Again, military intervention with the purpose (among others) of pushing democratic reform is not new, but in the United States at least, a renewed confidence in American power and the universality of

democratic aspirations has encouraged some to be more forthright in recommending the use of military means to accelerate the historical forces driving the spread of democracy (Fukuyama 2006).

As discussed above, most of the reservations in the scholarly literature concerning the connection between democracy and peaceful conflict resolution turn on the social upheaval sometimes associated with democratic transitions. There are other reservations, however. Aside from the irony that democracy, and therefore peace, might be promoted at gunpoint, the efficacy of "democratic imperialism" (Kristol and Kagan 2000; Kurtz 2003; has been called into question. Although there is some statistical evidence linking US military intervention to the democratization of target states (e.g. Meernik 1996; Peceny 1999), when looking at the specific cases of US interventions intended (wholly or in part) to contribute to the creation or consolidation of democratic regimes, fewer than half succeeded. And democratization was almost never the by-product of US interventions undertaken for purposes other than regime change (Russett 2005; Pickering and Peceny 2006). The success rate for military interventions by Britain and France is even worse. Furthermore, there is little evidence that imposing democratic reforms on a state in an otherwise nondemocratic region will serve to encourage democratization elsewhere in the region (Enterline and Greig 2005).

These and other studies of intervention recognize that the promotion of democracy is rarely the sole purpose of military action by the US or other democratic major powers. When democratic reforms prove difficult—usually they do—and threaten the intervener's other policy aims, the intervening government's own electoral survival normally dictates that democratization be abandoned altogether or that it be limited to mainly symbolic reforms, even rigged elections (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006). Multilateral operations like those mounted by the United Nations, the more forceful ones included, seem to have a better track record than unilateral interventions.

But peace-building and democratization are never easy, particularly after civil wars in societies divided along ethnic or religious lines (on the determinants of success, see Doyle and Sambanis 2006). And even when military intervention is likely to succeed in bringing about a democratic transition and stable peace, it must be weighed against the direct costs in blood and treasure, as well as the opportunity costs of foregoing alternative peaceful methods of conflict resolution.

NOTE

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