Democratic Peace

A theoretical discussion on Democratic Peace Theory and Historical Context Dependency

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Abstract

In this dissertation I take a closer look upon the theory of Democratic Peace. In what theoretical context is Democratic Peace analyzed and what kind of explanations are in use when democratic peace is being discussed? From this starting point, the mechanism that produces stable peace between liberal democracies is primarily concluded as an important feature in the analysis. This mechanism is discussed as a perception of a common liberal identity between democracies, which demands an identity formation within the dichotomy of non-democracy/democracy and liberal/non-liberal. Further on, conclusions are drawn upon this mechanism from a constructivistic perspective, since this approaches facilitates the treatment of concepts within perception mechanism from a point view where historical context dependency is of importance. In this context I have concluded that there are metavalues involved in defining state identity and the legitimate ground of statehood. In this light, I have argued that these metavalues which are dependent of historical contexts and defining for the international society of states, are valuable to the explanatory force of Democratic Peace theory.

Keywords: Democratic Peace, constructivism, fundamental institution, stable peace, historical context.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 3  
   1.1 Statement of Purpose ............................................................................................................. 3  
   1.2 Method and Material ............................................................................................................. 4  
   1.3 Theoretical Approach ............................................................................................................ 4  
   1.4 Outline of the Study............................................................................................................... 4  
2. Conceptualizations ..................................................................................................................... 6  
3. Democratic Peace Theory ....................................................................................................... 10  
   3.1 Historical Background ......................................................................................................... 10  
   3.2 The Liberal Connection ....................................................................................................... 11  
   3.3 Explaining the Democratic Peace ........................................................................................ 12  
      3.3:1 Structural/Institutional Explanation .................................................................................... 12  
      3.3:2 Normative/Cultural Explanation ...................................................................................... 13  
   3.4 Variants of the Democratic Peace ....................................................................................... 14  
      3.4:1 Monadic/Dyadic Levels...................................................................................................... 15  
      3.5 The Matrix ........................................................................................................................... 16  
      3.5:1 Dyadic/Structural ................................................................................................................. 16  
      3.5:2 Dyadic/Normative ............................................................................................................... 17  
      3.5:3 Monadic/Structural .............................................................................................................. 17  
      3.5:4 Monadic/Normative.............................................................................................................. 18  
4. Theoretical Framework .......................................................................................................... 19  
   4.1 Constructivism and Fundamental Institutions in Modern International Society .......... 19  
   4.2 Analytical Tools .................................................................................................................. 20  
      4.2:1 Complex of Metavalues ........................................................................................................ 20  
      4.2:2 Constitutional Structures...................................................................................................... 23  
      4.2:3 Fundamental Institutional Production and Reproduction ............................................... 24  
      4.2:4 The Purposive Foundations of International Society...................................................... 25  
5. Discussing Democratic Peace and Historical Context Dependency .................................... 27  
   5.1 The Fundamental Institutions of Modern International Society and DP .............. 27  
   5.2 Constitutional structures in Modern Society of States ................................................... 28  
   5.3 Fundamental Institutional Production and Reproduction in the Modern Society of States 30  
6. Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 31  
7. Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 33
1. Introduction

Though Democratic Peace theory (DP-theory) has today gained a wide recognition, it is not synonymous with universal acceptance. In fact, a dissenting minority of scholars, has contested the theory and qualified it as a theory that is build on vague and controversial theoretical foundations. Some of the criticism points out the methodological problems, like definition and measure problems with key terms, like peace, democracy etc, resulting in ad hoc measures or the relaxation of definitions to concord. (Russett et. al. 1995:180) Others discuss that the empirical evidence, that Democratic Peace theory is based upon, lacks of independence and is subjected to cultural bias when produced. Additionally, critics point out that the bulk of evidence in democratic peace favor comes from a historical epoch when liberal democracies emerged for the first time, which defines it as time-bound phenomena. Viewing this theory as an international law of behavior signifies that a time invariant connection must exist between liberal democracy, war and peace.

Although the critics of Democratic Peace theory are much broader and elaborated then here presented, I choose to delimit and not examine further in order to rest upon those above-mentioned. The reason for this choice is based on my subjective assumptions that call the theory’s theoretical base in question. It also leads me to a presentiment that the Democratic Peace theory contains under-conceptualized characters. Nobody can doubt that democracy and peace are goals that are to be sought in the world. However, how they are interlinked, or if they even are interlinked at all, seems to be more difficult to agree on between scholars. This contributes to my interest in the matter, and at the same time the awakening of an array of questions that has to do with this theory’s foundation.

1.1 Statement of Purpose

In this study, I have chosen to problematize the Democratic Peace theory. I undertake this task by first focusing on certain aspects of the DP-theorization that is; how is the Democratic Peace created? And what sort of peace is the Democratic Peace? Can we define the Democratic Peace as a stable peace? As I develop the theoretical discussion in this study, I incorporate a theoretical stance, which accords with the liberal rationalistic approach to the Democratic Peace. Hence, by assuming the liberal line of reasoning I make it possible to identify the core concepts within the theory’s source of explanation. As these concepts are put into light and I investigate closer the line of reasoning behind the occurrence of Democratic Peace. I attempt to problematize these results by using a constructivistic approach that allows me to include lines of reasoning on how historical and social aspects relate to states identities and their construction within DP: s theoretical discussion. By taking this approach I aim to make it possible to pinpoint the dependency of a specific historical context when the DP-theory seeks explanatory force. Finally, this paper does not have the ambition of giving a complete answer to the characteristics or the development of the specific historical context dependency, nor to put in question the theoretical relevance of the Democratic Peace theory. On a theoretical level my aim is to give some accurate insights to the relation between the DP-theory’s explanatory
force and historical contexts within international societies of states from a constructivist perspective.

1.2 Method and Material

The method applied in this study is of theoretical character, which obviously implies that the level of analysis lies on an abstract and exclusively theoretical level. Approaching the research area, a high level of analysis was the main imperative when choosing a method with a theoretical focus. Considering that my interest is rather concerned with the contested aspects of DP theory rather than a deeper understanding of its realistic account, an exclusively theoretical discussion seemed like a more appropriate method. In this way I could easily disregard any attempts to neither verify the theory per se, nor for that matter discuss the existence of Democratic Peace. Instead, this method created the opportunity to, on an abstract level; discuss the potential development of DP theory from a social constructive perspective. Discussing the theoretical perspectives from an analytical and deductive point of view, it also is a great concern of mine to be clear and explicit regarding the epistemology and ontology of the different theories applied in this study.

The secondary source material that is utilized in this study is merely selected with regard to its relevance to issues such as Democratic Peace and social constructivism.

1.3 Theoretical Approach

Concerning the theoretical analytical apparatus applied in this paper, it is firstly important to bear in mind that it is consistent of different theoretical schools in the form of liberal rationalistic on one side and constructivistic on the other. Firstly, I am aware of the variations that lie within these schools and how these variations would direct different lines of analysis and results. Secondly, there is within the academic field of international relations, an ongoing debate on the contribution of constructivism to international relations. Although I acknowledge these facts as important, it is not my intention to juxtapose any of these schools with the purpose of contributing to this debate. Rather, it is assumed that there is theoretical compatibility in between these approaches when it comes to discussing Democratic Peace. With this in mind, clarity in the presentation of different theories and theoretical concepts is obviously of great importance. Consequently, the theories are presented in separate sections and core concepts in the different theoretical stances are defined.

1.4 Outline of the Study

Following this introductory chapter, I will present methodological reflections in chapter two. This includes conceptualizations of core concepts that are vital for the analysis. Next chapter includes a presentation of the Democratic Peace theory, in which I outdraw the lines of reasoning when it comes to explaining Democratic Peace. Chapter four constitutes the incitements of the analysis in which I present DP variants and their respective peace types.
Given this, the theoretical framework of the study is presented together with an introductory discussion of constructivism in general. Finally in this chapter the analytical tools are presented. The fifth chapter constitutes the analysis process, offering clarity and conclusion in the discussion. In the final chapter I summarize the discussion in relation to this I propose a topic for further research.
2. Conceptualizations

In this section main theoretical concepts are presented in order to shed some light on what the theories applied are referring to. Differently put, a number of concepts are selected and defined with regards to their role as fundament components of the theoretical and analytical discussions.

(i) Peace

The concept of peace, from an international level, can be defined in two senses; a legal and more technical term, and a term that refers to a certain degree of benevolence and the absence of ill will within relations of all types. In the legal sense, peace refers to the formal status of non-violence relation between to two states. Meanwhile in the latter sense; the conception of peace is associated to a harmonic and tranquil condition not necessarily connecting it to the relation between states or the appearance of legal framework. However, the definition of peace presented above, although it serves to frame the concept, is lacking in depth when referring only to the non-violence/violence-dichotomy. The absence of negative charged phenomenon like inequality or exploitation etc. must be included when defining the conception of peace. It should go beyond the limited dichotomy linked to violence and include human needs, focusing on their fulfillment and quality (Ericson 2000:11).

Drawing from this line of argumentation and using the limited definition of peace within the international level - the absence of war- it designates a negative condition when referring to the relation between states. Since the relation of states is confined to either peace or war, and it fails to capture other meaning of peace - making it a negative peace. However, there are other concepts regarding peace that capture the dimension of expected tranquility and reciprocal benevolence when referring to the relation of states. Stable peace is that concept which captures this dimension and which is characterized by the expectations that neither military violence nor threats will be employed in the mutual relations between specific states (Ericson 2000:14).

(ii) War

To define peace on an international level, an equally understanding and comprehension of interstate war, is also required. Here, war is defined as state-organized military violence at a level of intensity and quantity that refers to a thousand battle fatalities. Further, the definition of “interstate” war, refers to war between sovereign “states”, that is internationally recognized as such by other states. Then term of interstate requisites a general recognition between states as having the attributes of statehood. Applying this definition may well display a Western cultural bias, yet it is appropriate to the behavior of states, which are defined as “democratic” by the admittedly Western standards (Russett 1993:14).

(iii) Democracy
The concept of democracy will be treated in this essay as equivalent to a democracy based on liberal ideology and consequently liberal structures. This form of conceptualization of course shades and hides the vast differences and mixed variant that the concept of democracy intrinsically contains when applying a cultural and historical perspective. However, since the starting point is from a DP-perspective I chose not to problematize the concept’s cultural and historical dependency.

Having clarified the link between liberalism and democracy, the next step will be the clarification of the concept itself, drawing from John M. Owen’s theorizing about liberal democracy. He defines liberal democracies as:

“(…) a state that instantiates liberal ideas, one where liberalism is the dominant ideology and citizen have leverage over war decisions. That is, liberal democracies are those states with a visible liberal presence, and that feature free speech and regular competitive elections of the officials empowered to declare war “(Owen 1994:89).

(iv) Sovereignty

The core of sovereignty is a notion of political authority as lying exclusively in the hands of spatially differentiated states, in the sense that it is an attribute of the state implying territorial property rights. Territorial control is only a “right”. However, if it is recognized by other states, sovereignty is regarded as an institution (Wendt 1994:388).

(v) Multilateralism

Multilateralism is an institutional practice that “coordinates behavior among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriated conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence.”(Reus-Smit 1999:132)

(vi) Modern International Institutions

One of the purposes of this essay is to problematize the conception of institutions within the Democratic Peace-theory from an alternative constructivist perspective. Thereof this section will contain both a liberal perspective on the definition of institutions, since the DP is linked to liberal theory. But I will start explaining the alternative constructivist conceptualization of this concept.

Starting from a broad definition of institutions, we find that institutions are seen as stable sets of norms, rules and principles that serve two functions in shaping social relations; they both constitute actors as knowledgeable social agents, but also regulate their behavior. However, the alternative constructivistic approach applied in this essay emphasizes the importance of institutions constitutive function, treating them as value complexes that define the meaning and identity of actors, without neglecting the importance of how institutions shape patterns of appropriated activity engaged in by actors (Reus-Smit 1999:13). Moreover, they clarify that fundamental institutions are poorly differentiated from other levels
of international institutions. Consequently, the definition applied here accentuates that institutions can operate at several levels of international society. Focus will be on three levels, with first constitutional structures (deeper international institutions) as foundational institutions, comprising the constitutive values that define legitimate statehood and rightful state action. Further on, occupying the middle strata are fundamental institutions, these encapsulate the basic rules of practice that structure how states solve cooperation problems. For a proper understanding of the occurrence of fundamental institutions, it is necessary to define international order in the society of states and the necessity of achieving and sustaining this order in the international society. Consequently, if international order is defined as a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary of goals of the society of states, then in this pursuit states will face sorts of cooperation problems, such as problems of collaboration or coordination etc. To overcome these problems, societies of states develop fundamental institutions. However, given the constructivistic perspective, the development of fundamental institutions is seen in the light of a mutually constitutive relationship that prevails between the terms fundamental institutions and basic institutional practice. That is, the institutions are produced and reproduced by basic institutional practices, and the meanings actors attach to such practices are defined by the fundamental institutional rules they embody (Reus-Smit 1999:14).

Drawing from that line of thought, in modern international society, states usually exhibit a variety of basic institutional practices like bilateralism, multilateralism, international law, diplomacy, and even war. The diversity of basic institutions has historically been present and relevant in other historical societies of states, since societies tend to privilege certain fundamental institutions over others, albeit different ones (Reus-Smit 1999:14). The last level presented refers to institutions as issue-specific regimes that enact basic institutional practices in particular realms of interstate relations (e.g. GATT), to overcome the obstacles to international cooperation (Reus-Smit 1999:20). Finally, there is a constitutive hierarchy between these three tiers of institutions with constitutional structures shaping fundamental institutions, and basic institutional practices conditioning issue-specific regimes. The institutions of modern international society thus take form at a deeper structural level since structures here have a causal priority. Meanwhile, institutions at a structural level closer to the surface take effect only within a context that is already ‘prestructured’ by the deeper levels (Reus-Smit 1999:15).

Contrary to the constructivist approach, liberal theory approaches the concept of institutions stressing the way in which institutions regulate activity and shape expectations in the modern society of states. However, they acknowledge that institutions also prescribe behavioral roles, thus defining the identities of social actors. Further, neoliberals emphasize on rational institutional selection, that is, they see rational, self-interested states creating institutions for practical purposes. Behind the association of states rests the nature and scope of institutional cooperation, which is determined by the array of state interests and strategic dilemmas that are posed by different cooperation problems. Neoliberals believe that states can overcome the obstacles to international cooperation by constructing issue-specific regimes. Neoliberals concentrate on issue-specific institutions, or regimes linking so the nature of particular institutions to the configuration of state interests and the incentives and constraints associated with cooperation in different issue-areas (Reus-Smit 1999:20).

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3. Democratic Peace Theory

In this section, I introduce and explain the theory of democratic peace. The first part of the section consists of a historical account of this theory’s origin and development within the context of international relations. Further on, I present an introduction to DP-theory’s ideological ancestry that establishes the framework of the democratic peace and exposes the fundamental connection between Liberalism and peace. Drawing from this line of thought, I undertake in the last part of this section the task of presenting the most general and potentially powerful explanations of the democratic peace, acknowledging that the presented explanations are fragments of the whole ongoing theoretical discussion about the Democratic Peace.

3.1 Historical Background

In the early 1990s, as the Cold War came to an end with the debacle of the Communist bloc, hopes were awakened that international relations would now be based and inspired by the ideals and values of democracy and rule of law grew within the Western liberal states. These hopes were soon embodied and developed to liberal political projects by Western administrations throughout the 90s, as theorist and proponents of liberal posture provided with intellectual arguments in favor of an expansion of liberal democracy, both within states and at the global level. This idea was and still is, as we later will see, based on a theoretical foundation that sees a causal connection between the promotion of liberal democracy through out the world and pacifying effects on the international relations between states. With a broad array of theoretical researches and arguments, liberal theorists pinpoint the fact that liberal democracies are least violence prone compare to other political systems and that they don’t wage wars against each other. They argue that the main determinants to the causal relation between liberal democracies and peace are in these democracies intrinsic structures and values. These are the main features of what constitute the present Democratic Peace theory.

Although one might think that this theoretical discussion is a modern phenomenon, its origins date back the 18th century, to the writings of Kant, de Montesquieu, John Stuart Mill and among others. Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” (1795), which is always mentioned in democratic peace-context, speaks of perpetual peace based on democratic institutions, free trade, and international law and institutions. Then, in the beginning of the twentieth century, President Woodrow Wilson expressed the same vision with his Fourteen Points, following World War I, creating so a precursor to the League of Nations. Yet as mentioned before, the theoretical foundations of the present Democratic Peace theory (developed since 1990, in relation to the explosion of scholarly interest for this ongoing theoretical discussion) started for more than two centuries ago.

Today, much because of an enormous array of literature in the field, the Democratic Peace theory has widely gained in reputation and status among international relations theorists. In fact, the theory has been so widely accepted that the common perception is of a consensus view in the field of international relations. A consensus view that is best summed up in the remark that the “absence of war between democratic states comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.” (Levy 1994)
Furthermore, this view has even passed into the political rhetoric with speeches that invoked or referred to elements of the Democratic Peace theory. In particularly, the latter American administrations have adopted this type of rhetoric through out the latest decades. Considering the United States position in the international system of states, it becomes obvious the significant impact and extent of this theory. To illustrate the above-mentioned, we can mention Bill Clinton’s State of the Union Address on January 25\textsuperscript{th} of 1994. Where he said the following words when he referred to the defense issues of the United States:

“Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don’t attack each other.”\textsuperscript{ii}

George W. Bush expressed similar thoughts at the White House Press Conference on November 12\textsuperscript{th} of 2004, when he said:

“And the reason why I’m so strong on democracy is democracies don’t go to war with each other. And the reason why is the people of most societies don’t like war, and they understand what war means (...). (...) I’ve got great faith in democracies to promote peace. And that’s why I’m such a strong believer that the way forward in the Middle East, the broader Middle East, is to promote democracy.”\textsuperscript{iii}

\section*{3.2 The Liberal Connection}

The Democratic Peace theory falls into the category of liberal political theories, which are strongly connected to hypothesis about peace. Therefore, to be able to analyze and get a better understanding of the conception of democratic peace, its first necessary to derive the liberal ideas which are the bases of the theory.

The basis for the connection between Liberalism and democratic peace originates from normative elements that start on an individual level within liberal theory. These normative elements emphasize the individual freedom and civil rights based on idea of political order of laissez-faire, but also the positive value of peace. Combined with rational assumption of the cost-benefit calculation of warfare, seems peace almost as a natural outcome (Ericson 2000:42). As this line of thought is inducted to an international politics level, liberal theory predicts that the liberal normative element still will count and have a prominent significance in creating peace. Professor John Owen refines the thought of the transition of liberal normative elements between levels of analysis and points out that the necessary condition of peace to achieve a state of freedom is rooted in the liberal principles:

“The domestic structures that translate liberal preferences into foreign policy are likewise a product of liberal ideas. Liberalism seeks to actualize the harmony of interests among individuals by insuring that the freedom of each is compatible with the freedom of all (…)” (Brown et. al. 2000:149)


\textsuperscript{iii} White House – website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/11/20041112-5.html)
As Liberalism identifies the state as the main unit or actor in the international system, liberal theorists perceive an absorption by the state of the normative elements. Giving so, the state has a pluralistic character, according to liberal theory. This pluralism leads to two central and fundamental consequences when it comes to the connection between Liberalism and democratic peace. First, it leads to the notion that a pluralist state assigns a causal role to the composition of the state and the weight of the different domestic interests to explain the state’s collective external behavior. Second, the basis to a general differentiation between types of states lays in the organization of the domestic political systems. (Ericson 2000:42) The perceptions of what type of processes and polities are the fundamental factors, which the differentiation rests upon.

To sum up, liberal theory expects that the pluralistic characteristic of a state combined with the liberal normative base, will lead to liberal policies in the organization, that is democratic and free, which in turn will seek liberal aims in their foreign relations, which is characterized by peace. (Ericson 2000:42) This theoretic line of argument is the foundation of the liberal connection between the Democratic Peace theory and Liberalism. Moreover, it speaks of a strong association between Liberalism and peace. Hence Democratic Peace is a liberal peace.

3.3 Explaining the Democratic Peace

J. M. Owen discusses in “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace” that the liberal ideas are the independent variable behind the peace among the democracies. This liberal connection to democratic system creates two variables; liberal ideology (normative) and domestic and democratic institutions (structural) which shape liberal democracies’ action and design (Brown et. al. 2000: 143). This distinction of variables renders in two sources of explanation when it comes to theorizing the Democratic Peace. However as Ericson insightfully comments, the structural and the normative explanations can be examined separately for the sake of simplifying the analysis, but in reality, these two explanations are often combined and connected in the explanation of the democratic peace. They both contribute to this peace between democracies; they are complementary and overlapping, since this two separated components have to be presented in some degree for the liberal Democratic Peace to occur among democracies (Ericson 2000:45)

3.3:1 Structural/Institutional Explanation

The first explanation of the democratic peace focuses on the importance how states are formally organized, that is the appearance of the states structures. Thus, to identify and define the states structures and institutions permits the differentiation of states regime types, which confirm what sort of behavior states will apply in times of conflict. This differentiation is accomplished through a dichotomization of democracy/autocracy, because the states propensity to resort to violence or peace fluctuates depending on the type of regime in the dichotomy.

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It is in the institutional processes of democracies and autocracies in times of international conflict that the structural/institutional explanation identifies the causal factors to the peace between liberal democracies.

Democracy is defined as a representative system containing political freedom and a system of check and balances that constraints the use of intra- or inter-state violence. Leaders must mobilize public opinion and a variety of institutions that make up the system of government, such as legislature, the political bureaucracies, and key interest groups to obtain legitimacy for their actions (Maoz & Russett 1993:626). This makes it hard for elites to go against the interest of the state as a whole (Ericson 2000:43). Thus, the process of national mobilization for large-scale violence, as war, in democracies is both complex and sluggish. The time required for a democratic state to prepare for war is far longer than for non-democracies. Thus, in a conflict between democracies, by the time the two states are militarily ready for war, diplomats have the opportunity to find a non-military solution to the conflict (Maoz & Russsett 1993:626). Furthermore, in the structures of democracies the liberal ideas of the public opinion implicitly rest, which express that *ceteris paribus* people are better off without war, because it is costly and dangerous (Brown et. al. 2000:145).

On the contrary, autocracies are based upon a system that grants elites such a power position and authority that they can disregard both from the cost associated with war and the will of the public opinion. Once the support of the key legitimizing groups is secured, the government can launch its policy with little regard to public opinion or for due political process (Maoz & Russett 1993:626). The non-democracies lack of structural constraints on the mobilization and escalation processes makes the dynamics in a conflict between a democracy and an autocracy considerable more hostile and war prone. Moreover, by the same token conflicts between non-democratic systems are likely to escalate and reach violent levels (Maoz & Russsett 1993:626).

### 3.3:2 Normative/Cultural Explanation

The second explanation of the occurrence of a democratic peace is in the normative/cultural explanation. This one focuses on the effects of norms of the political domestic behavior of states on international politics. It is in this second main components explanatory force, in which the source of explanation is found for the assertion that democracies are inherently more peaceful and that fellow democracies perceive this. It focuses on the system of powerful norms within democracies that originates from Liberalism. Theses norms cause democracies to a priori identify organized lethal violence as an illegitimate conflict resolution and an act of last resort. Creating so a normative restraint on violent behavior for democracies.

The basic norm in the democratic system is that disputes and conflicts can be resolved without recurring to force, and instead through democratic political processes that in some balance ensure both majority rule and minority rights (Russett 1993:31). Much more often than other states, they settle their disagreements by mediation, negotiation, or other forms of peaceful diplomacy (Russett et. al. 1995:172). The result is that democracies will incline to peaceful resolutions of conflicts internally, but this line of thoughts is also transferred to across-national boundaries-relations towards others democratic states. A “liberal zone of peace” is created among liberal democracies based on a mutual perception of
shared norms, which are based on liberal ideas of liberty of action, self-determination, democratic representation. These perceptions evoke a mutual recognition and respect of other liberal democracy’s rights to exercise political independence (Doyle 1983a:213). This implies that a conflict between liberal democracies will be resolve starting from the abovementioned foundations and violence is illegitimate.

By contrast, these restraints do not apply to non-democratic states, because they are perceived as governments that lack the liberal norms that respect the individual and its liberties. Furthermore, if these states contain non-liberal or democratic governments that are in a state of aggression with their own people, their foreign relations become for liberal governments deeply suspect (Doyle 1986:1161). This suspicion is drawn from the knowledge that political conflicts in non-democratic states are more likely to be conducted or resolved through violence or coercion (Maoz & Russett 1993:625). This could result in liberal democracies decision to wage war against these states to liberate and defend freedom (Doyle 1983a&b).

To best sum up DP-theory’s normative/cultural explanation let us see the remark of John Owen:

”Liberals believe that individuals everywhere are fundamentally the same, and are best off pursuing self-preservation and material well-being. Freedom is required for these pursuits, and peace is required for freedom; coercion and violence are counter-productive. Thus, all individuals share an interest in peace, and should want war only as an instrument to bring about peace. Liberals believe that democracies seek their own citizens’ true interests and that thus by definition, they are pacific and trustworthy. Non-democracies may be dangerous because they seek other ends, such as conquest or plunder. Liberals thus hold that the national interest calls accommodation of fellow democracies, but sometimes calls for war with non-democracies”. (Brown et. al. 2000:145)

3.4 Variants of the Democratic Peace

In this section, I try to problemize DP-theory’s conceptualization of peace resting on Magnus Ericson’s theoretical approach in “A Realist Stable Peace: Power, Threat, and The Development of A Shared Norwegian Swedish Democratic Security Identity 1905-1940”. The account for the peace, which DP-theory referred to the Democratic Peace, is implicitly as the facts point out the absence of war among democracies. However, the account for its quality and characteristics are not presented, leaving this conception open for definition within a broad array of types of peace.

The goal in this section is to pin down which prerequisites are necessary to be able to define the democratic peace as a stable peace. It will be approached by presenting two discussions; the first one refers to the level of analysis when seeking the causal logic to the occurrence of a democratic peace. The slicing of the DP-theory’s explanations into monadic/dyadic-categories is elucidatory during the identification process of peace type that arises among democracies. The second and last discussion in this section analysis to what extent and on which level this democratic peace can be define as a stable peace. This is accomplished by applying Magnus Ericson’s analytical tool⁵, yield as a two-by-two matrix,

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combining horizontally and vertically the structural/normative explanations with the monadic/dyadic level explanations.

### 3.4:1 Monadic/Dyadic Levels

As explained, the structural/institutional explanation’s main assertion is that the democratic peace occurs due to the domestic and democratic structures *within* liberal democracies (mostly monadic level). Meanwhile, the normative/cultural explanation asserts to the liberal and democratic norms that create a democratic context perceive in the relations *between* states (mostly dyadic level) (Ericson 2000:44). These assumptions demonstrate a difference on the level of analysis when seeking the explanatory source of the democratic peace.

The dyadic-level stress the requirement of a pair of democratic states to achieve a pacific outcome, a liberal zone of peace. It pinpoints the fact that the democratic peace comes into existence among democracies. Concluding so, that the level of analysis to the study of the occurrence of this liberal peace zone must be at least between two units, defined as liberal democracies. Meanwhile, the monadic level focuses on a unit, defined as a liberal democracy. The monadic-level exposes the fact that it is sufficient with just a liberal democracy to create democratic peace. The monadic-level facilitates the analysis of the importance of the ideological content of Liberalism and states intrinsic relationship towards the liberal norms. Summarizing, the monadic level focuses on just one unit, meaning in this context the interest in a liberal democracy’s intrinsic features. This level of analysis is characterized by the disregard of opposing states character in contrast to the dyadic-level’s regime type affinity.
3.5 The Matrix

Up to this point the theoretical account of the Democratic Peace in this thesis has lead us to the knowledge of the theoretical explanations behind the phenomenon, and the different focuses of level of analysis when identifying its sources of explanation. However, we still have not discussed the type of peace itself, that arises in the relations between democracies. Having defined the monadic/dyadic levels, I will now implement the analytical tool that combines the two sources of explanations (structural/normative) with the defined levels of analysis (monadic/dyadic). This will grant us a two-by-two matrix that produces a series of vertically and horizontally variants of the Democratic Peace that elucidates and nuance on which level the Democratic Peace can be defined as a stable peace.

3.5:1 Dyadic/Structural

The causal effect of this variant is found in the assumption that war between a pair of liberal democracies is a rarity, because the liberal democracies’ intrinsic constraints that prevent the elites or governments to chose war as a foreign policy alternative. Popularly elected leaders will experience tardiness in the processes of starting up a war, as they must persuade and gain public support through well-developed arguments based on rational calculations and liberal norms about the costs and benefits of war.

In addition, the domestic and democratic institutions serve as useful indicators on states reliability, legitimacy and trustworthiness and presumably, in conflicts between liberal democracies, they will point out the cost and the illegitimacy of waging war against fellow liberal democracies.

"In democracies, the constrains of checks and balances, division of power, and need for public debate to enlist widespread support will slow decisions to use large-scale violence and reduce the like hood that such decisions will be made.” (Russett 1993:40)

The dyadic/structural explanation shows that the liberal democracies will adapt a prudent foreign policy, which simultaneous leads to a considerable reduction of the risk of a conflict escalating to a state of war. Popularly elected leaders will contemplate fellow democracies as reluctant and tardy when it comes to use of violence since they know that respective democracies have similar institutional structures that constrain such intentions and acts. This implies a prediction that the parties concerned will have information about these similar domestic and democratic institutions and furthermore that they mutually acknowledge it, leading to an interstate- platform or zone for pacific conflict resolutions. Establishing this explanation results in the assumption that democracies will rarely or if ever go to war with each other (Russetts 1993:39).

To sum up, the dyadic/structural combination renders in a separated peace (negative peace), that is based on a rationalistic cost/benefit-calculcation (Ericson 2000:48), were neither democracy – ceteris paribus - will engage on a violent conflict resolution, since their domestic institutions will constrain this illegitimate acts.
3.5:2 Dyadic/Normative

This combination focuses also on the interstate-relations; however, the line of argument of the dyadic/normative explanation is that liberal democracies trust each other and do not wage war against fellow democracies because they share the same ideological foundation. The essence of this argument rests on the conception of perception of a common liberal foundation. The reciprocal positive perception between liberal democracies is based on the acknowledgment of their mutual liberal values and norms, but also institutions. The liberal and democratic values that permeate the democratic systems are externalized in norms of peaceful conflict resolutions on international politics. Democracies’ crisis management is based and formed by democratic norms of international conduct that emulate the democratic norms of domestic political conduct (Maoz & Russett 1993:625). This form of international conduct, that democracies adapt based upon perceptions, solves the problematic task of differentiating potential aggressors from fellow democracies (Elman 1997:12).

The dyadic/normative variant of the Democratic Peace establishes a separated stable peace created by a perceived common identity between democracies. This identity constitutes the key to a Democratic Peace defined as a stable peace, as all the ingredients are present; both the possibility of rationalistic calculations between democracies since they have the democratic structures, and both the shared identity of liberal democracies. In the words of Magnus Ericson (Ericson 2000:49):

“Hence, to explain Stable Peace in terms of liberal democracy, the argument necessitates that dyads are peaceful because of the mutual expectations of non-violence due to the of a shared set of norms. The parties’ respective form of domestic governance, and their mutual recognition of this predicate this expectation. It is hence not enough to value the other state’s choice of constitution: expectations of non-violence are at the heart of the proposition, and these expectations have to be strong (…)”

3.5:3 Monadic/Structural

This variant explains the occurrence of peace among democracies based on the theorization of domestic structures’ characteristics and processes within democracies. In a democratic system, popularly elected leaders will be force to be attentive towards the costs of warfare. Thus, their position within a democratic system can be a stake and this independent of opposing states type of regime. The monadic/structural explanation implies that if leaders of a democracy chose to pursue conflict as a mean to solve international disputes without the support of the variety of institutions, public support etc. and disregard the costs then leaders will risk losing next general elections missing out so on re-election. (Brown et. al. 2000:149-151)

The peace among democracies is maintained by the democratic structures. The democratic institutions created and formed by liberal ideology permit the public and citizens within a democracy to have influence on e.g. government decisions. These democratic institutions’ effects and processes occur also under the rule of illiberal leaders in a democracy. Democratic institutions that rest upon freedom of speech, regular free elections etc. give the
possibility for liberal elites and citizens to constrain the illiberal leaders in a democracy. When international disputes arise between democracies then these same liberal elites propagate for a peaceful solution and illiberal leadership will be constraint to follow the same line of policy. They will abandon violence as a mean of conflict resolution for the price of maintaining their political legitimacy within the democracy (Brown et. al. 2000:151). The basis of analysis for this monadic/structural explanation is that liberal democracies are less war prone and the pacifism is intrinsically. These characteristics that produce peaceful behaviour within democracies are detached from the idea that it is in relation to and based on the perception of external states’ types of regime that peace occur.

The monadic/structural variant renders in a separated (negative peace) peace since the foundation of this peace rests also upon a rationalistic cost/benefit-calculation (Ericson 2000:48). But the focus is on a single democracy’s domestic structures which indicate and constraint the war-proneness based on the calculation of high risks and expensive costs connected to this form of activity.

3.5:4 Monadic/Normative

This last combination explains that the peaceful relations between democracies depend on their overall pacifistic character. Moreover, the attention is paid to the democratic system’s ability to consolidate liberal norms within its political framework. The monadic/normative explanation overlooks the democracies’ international relations since these are not expected to influence or be the cause for peace among democracies, but instead identifies the source for peace in the domestic political norms of a state. Democracies reluctance to violence and war is due to the democratic norms of domestic political conduct that dictates these as illegitimate means to solve both domestic and international disputes, despite other states type of regime (Elman 2000:15). This last variant emphasizes the fact that it is the inherently pacific nature in a democracy that is the foundation for the occurrence of the Democratic Peace. A pacifism that resides both in norms, but also in the institutional framework of a liberal democracy.

Summing up, the former section has been an attempt to discuss the importance of defining what type of peace occurs among democracies. It is of a fundamental significance to the comprehension of DP-theory’s explanatory force. Since the Democratic Peace is seen as a durable and positive sort of peace. The result of the definition process of the type of peace that the DP-theory refers to in its theoretical discussion, gave us a broad spectrum of different types of peace that vary in their characteristics due to which level of analysis and source of explanation we combine and observe. However, we find that the prerequisite for a stable peace among democracies lies intrinsically in the relations between states, exposing in this way not just simply states’ aims or intentions in their foreign policies, but also the relations and perceptions among states. It is in the dyadic/normative variant of the Democratic Peace that stable peace occurs and is through a common identity between democracies that it is established. This leads me to present and adopt a theoretical framework that discusses how state identities emerge and are constructed.
4. Theoretical Framework

In order to bring the theoretical frame of this paper into light, I have chosen to divide it into two sections. In the first section, I summarize the specific constructivist background of the analytical features presented by Reus-Smit. My intention in this section lays in trying to elucidate the link between the core ontological concepts in the foundation of constructivism when theorizing about fundamental institutions and Reus-Smit analytical tools, striving so to give greater insight and pinpoint from which theoretical context this paper’s adopted analytical tools have their main point of departure. I am well aware of the vastness and complexity of constructivism and thereof the difficulty to synthesize accurately the core features and the necessity of prudence when taking on such a task. In addition, I acknowledge that Reus-Smit applies only certain main constructivist assumptions in his approach, questioning other constructivist assumptions’ theoretical accuracy. However, I repeat that the purpose is not to argue for the constructivist approach itself, but to clarify the link between this approach and the chosen theoretical approach in this paper. The last section consists of an account of the paper’s theoretical analytical tools; conceptual tools that helps me to limit and narrow down the theoretical interest area in this study. Therefore I will develop and explain these conceptual tools adopted from Reus-Smit’s constructivist theorizing, which I later apply to my analysis.

4.1 Constructivism and Fundamental Institutions in Modern International Society

Constructivism, unlike the traditional rationalistic theories like neorealism and neoliberalism, rejects the rationalist precepts and advances a sociological perspective on international politics. As such, it accepts the notion of an objective material reality; however, when studying the “real world”, that reality is not merely a physical one but also a socially constructed one too (Adler 1997:324). The assumption by necessity defines the social reality as malleable and establishes the fact that social reality will always be subject to change through continual construction (Ruggie 1998:879; Adler 1997:327). The two core insights that constructivism presents are that the ways we understand and describe the objective material reality, the ways we intersubjectively and thus socially construct reality are real, but reality is mouldable and subject to change (Adler 1997:332; Wendt 1995:75).

Constructivism as a perspective on international politics builds on the above insights but aims to develop more specified tools to analyze many traditional issues that rationalistic theories also focus on. Defined as a structural theory of the international system, the main constructivist current can be described as state-centric since they point out the state as the principal unit of analysis. Further, they define core structures in the state system as intersubjective, rather than material; and states identities and interests emerge from these structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics, as rationalistic theories imply (Wendt 1994:386).
Institutionalized (collective) meaning systems define the social identities of actors, which in turn constitute actors’ interest and shape their actions (Price & Reus-Smit 1998:266). The institutionalized meanings constitute the structure that organizes actors’ actions; furthermore, it is in the participation in such collective meanings that actors acquire their identities and thus consequently affect their interests (Wendt 1992:397-398). However, the intersubjective structures exist not independently of the knowledgeable practices and intersubjective understandings of social agents. From an ontological point of view, neither agents nor structures are reduced to the other; the ontology is one of mutual constitution. Moreover, it is in the processes between these two that the interest of actors emerges from and they are endogenous to interaction with structures (Checkel 1998:326; Price & Reus-Smit 1998:267). Hence, to understand the politics among nations it is important to pay attention to the intersubjective understandings which define actors to themselves and others (i.e., the nature and identity of different states), as well as the expectations actors have on the nature of their environment (its structural properties). Constructivists define these intersubjective understandings as international institutions, which comprise the constitutive values that define legitimate statehood and rightful state action. These institutions encapsulate the basic rules of practice that structure how states solve cooperation problems. So understanding how international institutions shape state identity is crucial, because social identities inform the interests that motivate state action (Wendt 1992:398). Constructivists argue that the foundational institution of sovereignty within international institutions. Sovereignty defines the social identity of the state, which in turn constitutes the basic institutional practices of international society.

4.2 Analytical Tools

The analytical tool of this essay will consist of Reus-Smit’s theoretical assumptions of the importance and constitutive value of the complex of metavalues in the construction of fundamental institutions, but also their action and practices. Further, it will consist of conceptualization of this complex of metavalues to constitutional structures, facilitating so systematic comparison across historical societies of states. Using Reus-Smit’s approach, I present three dissembled normative components that define the constitutional structures. This approach opens up the possibility of theorizing about fundamental institutions variation in the international society from a historical and cultural perspective. Thereof the analytical framework will also include a discussion about how distinctive institutions and practices are created within the societies of states, and the consequences on the characteristics of the foundations of international society.

4.2:1 Complex of Metavalues

Reus-Smit main purpose in his work is to elaborate and present an alternative constructivist explanation of how the international societies’ fundamental institutions are developed and how international societies are bound together by constitutional structures, which in turn define the social identity of the state and the basic parameters of rightful state action (Reus-
Smit 1999:26). Reus-Smit argues that the identity of the state is grounded in a larger complex values, then simply the organizing principle of sovereignty. However, these values not only define the terms of legitimate statehood within international society, but they also provide states with substantive reasons for action, which in turn exert a profound influence on institutional design and action. What is more, the values that ground sovereignty have varied from one society of states to another, generating contrasting rationales for state action, and different basic institutional practices (Reus-Smit 1999:30).

These claims are developed as Reus-Smit observes that main constructivist accounts about fundamental institutions are undermined, by several analytical oversimplifications (Reus-Smit 1999:26). He sees two emergent causes: first, main constructivist have failed to appreciate the full complexity of the deep constitutive values that define the social identity of state, as they direct almost all focus on the organizing principle of sovereignty as the primary institution of society and constitutor of social identities of states. Second, the inattentiveness towards the discursive mechanisms, by the constructivist, that link intersubjective understandings of legitimate statehood and rightful state action to the constitution of fundamental institutions. These two omissions preclude the possibility to explain the nature of basic institutional practices or institutional variations between societies of sovereign states (Reus-Smit 1999:26).

Regarding the discursive mechanisms and their importance in state patterns of fundamental institutional constructing, according to Reus-Smit, processes of communicative action occur when states in international societies engage in acts of formulating, maintaining, and redefining the fundamental institutional rules that facilitate international cooperation. These acts adopted by states occur within the context of preexisting values that define legitimate agency and action.

“That is, they debate how legitimate states should, or should not, act. Such debate does not occur in a vacuum; it takes place within the concept of pre-existing values that define legitimate agency and action. These values structure the debate, licensing some institutional propositions and proscribing others.” (Reus-Smit 1999:27)

Reus-Smit turns his attention to the intrinsic characteristics of these discursive mechanisms and finds that behind them, as an essential element, is the practical discourse mechanism. He gives three insights that elucidate this practical discourse mechanism function and constitutive value. However, he importantly mentions that the insights that are drawn in reference to the conditions of successful communicative action, if this is not the case, will deviate from them explained below. First, legitimate rules of conduct between actors are created through debate among all parties devolving around the merits of particular reason, further the stable agreement of these reason. This must be valid so parties’ later can advocated to them when they justify particular principles. Second, not all reasons have equal standing; the validity of certain reason depends on its connection to pre-existing and mutually recognized higher order values. Third, the reason defined, as the most valid in practical discourse, are those that appeal to deep-rooted, collectively shared ideas that define what constitutes a legitimate social agent.

The other omission that Reus-Smit addresses has to do with the appreciation of the full complexity of the deep constitutive values that define the social identity of state. As discussed, the conception of the principle of sovereignty is considered the primary identity value of the international ‘life world’, a principle that defines the social identity, which facilitates states, within a community, a mutual recognition of legitimacy. However, Reus-
Smit perceives these assumptions as problematic and underdeveloped, when one tries to understand the nature of social identities, and of the communicative practices surrounding their production and reproduction (Reus-Smit 1999:29). He explains that the social identity is defined as a set of meanings that enables all sorts of actors to operate in a world of complex social processes and practices. Furthermore, these social identities are defined by intersubjective, socially sanctioned, and institutionalized meanings that define the nature and purpose of agents and agency in a given social context (Reus-Smit 1999:29).

Within the nature and purpose of actors, provided by social identities, rests also actors’ primary reason of action in two senses. First, in a purposive sense, that is social identity inform an actor’s goals in a socially constructed reality, as well as the strategies these actors formulate to achieve their goals. Second, in a justificatory sense, which refers to social identities faculty of providing the basis on which action can be rationalized, social identities provide actors with a raison d’être - a reason of being and acting. Reus-Smit exemplifies the reasoning by describing a doctor’s social identity that implies certain forms of action, in a purposive sense, such as prescribing drugs and doing surgery, but also in a justificatory sense giving reason and meaning to those actions: “I am a doctor, that’s why I do such things.” (Reus-Smit 1999:29)

Reus-Smit problematizes the principle of sovereignty from this line of arguments presented. He argues that the principle of sovereignty has historically been treated as a self-referential value capable of providing the state with coherent social identity. However, he sees this as a clamorous error, argues that sovereignty is not a self-referential value, and unless this principle is not embedded within a wider complex of higher-order values, it cannot alone provide the state with a coherent social identity and is not capable of independently provide actors with substantive reasons for action. This conclusion can be made since the conception of sovereignty lacks a purposive content, as it cannot, without reference to some other higher-order values, independently inform plans of action or strategies to achieve them. Furthermore, it provides an inadequate justificatory basis for action, since:

“If I behave in a way that annoys, frustrates, or merely affects those around me, they are entitled to ask why I acted in such a fashion. Asserting my independence or liberty cannot provide an adequate response, as they can immediately ask why I am entitled to such freedoms. At this point, I must ground my claims to independence in some other deep, socially recognized identity values. Taken to an extreme, this would involve appealing to intersubjective values that define what it means to be a fully realized human being. Similarly, when states are forced internationally to justify their actions, there comes a point when they must reach beyond mere assertions of sovereignty to more primary and substantive values that warrant their status as centralized, autonomous political organizations.” (Reus-Smit 1999:30)

Reus-Smit concludes that this relation is a necessary feature of international communicative action, and historically it has entailed a common moral discourse that grounds sovereign rights in deeper values that define the social identity of the state. Different actors in history have claimed their right to possess and exercise sovereign rights because of their identity e.g. Renaissance city-states, modern liberal polities etc (Reus-Smit1999:30)
4.2:2 Constitutional Structures

As Reus-Smit argues in former section, fundamental institutions’ design and action must be explained in the light of the deep constitutive metavalues. These values comprise the normative foundations of international society. These complexes of metavalues are conceptualized, by Reus-Smit, as constitutional structures to allow systematic comparisons across historical societies of states. Consequently, his point of departure is that international societies are bound together by constitutional structures, which define the social identity of the state and the basic parameters of rightful state action and the assumptions of these structures sensitivity to the historical and cultural circumstances. These structures are “constitutional” because they incorporate the basic principles that define and shape international polities, and they are “structures” because they shape both institutional design and action. Furthermore, they not only mould and frame the organizational imaginations of institutional architects; they also structure the wider moral discourses surrounding institutional production and reproduction (Reus-Smit 1999:27).

Within these structures, Reus-Smit sees three deep incorporated constitutive values; a hegemonic belief about the moral purpose of centralized, autonomous political organization; an organizing principle of sovereignty; a norm of pure procedural justice.

Hegemonic beliefs about the moral purpose of the state represent the core of this normative complex, providing the justificatory foundations for the organizing principle of sovereignty and informing the norm of procedural justice. Together they form a coherent ensemble of metavalues, an ensemble that defines the terms of legitimate statehood and the broad parameters of rightful state action (Reus-Smit 1999:6). Further, Reus-Smit disassembles the three normative components and analyses each value’s intrinsic character separately.

First, there is a hegemonic belief about the moral purpose of the state, he argues:

“The term ‘purpose’ refers to the reasons that historical agents hold for organizing their political life into centralized, autonomous political units. Such purposes are ‘moral’ because they always entail a conception of the individual or social ‘good’ served by autonomous political organization. He refers to the moral purpose of the ‘state’ because such rationales are of a different category to the moral purpose of suzerain or heteronomous forms of political organization. Finally, the beliefs about moral purpose of the state that shape constitutional structures are ‘hegemonic’, not because they are the only conceptions of the moral purpose of the state propagated in a given historical context, but because they constitute the prevailing, socially sanctioned justification for sovereign rights” (Reus-Smit 1999:31).

The normative component of an organizing principle of sovereignty refers both to characteristics of constituent units organizing principles, which they are structured under, and to the capacity of these principles to define the mode of differentiation between constituent units. In societies of states, the organizing principle of sovereignty differentiates political unit based on particularity and exclusivity, creating a system of territorially demarcated, autonomous centers of political authority. In contrast to traditional perspectives, Reus-Smit treats the principle of sovereignty as a variable, arguing that its precise meaning and behavioral implications vary from one historical context to another. Historical analysis suggests that the greatest variations have occurred across societies of states. Historically
contingent beliefs about the moral purpose of the state have provided the justificatory foundations of sovereign rights, and as these beliefs have changed from one society of states to another, so too have meanings attached to sovereignty. (Reus-Smit 1999:32)

*Norms of pure procedural justice* specify the correct procedures that “legitimate” or “good” states employ, internally and externally, to formulate basic rules of international and external conduct, exerting so a profound influence on the nature of fundamental institutions. Reus-Smit explains that the prerequisite for domestic and international social relations characterized by coexistence and cooperation is the existence of a generally accepted norm of pure procedural justice. If this minimal and baseline agreement does not appear in international societies as well as domestic societies, it will consequently be no basis for collective action or the resolution of conflict, instead only the formulation of substantive principle of interstate justice (Reus-Smit 1999:33). Reus-Smit argues that the existence of these norms are a prerequisite, however, their appearance is not. Historical cases have showed the appearance of different conceptions of the moral purpose generating consequently different systemic norms of procedural justice.

Finally, constitutional structures are institutional attributes of societies of states, existing outside particular states, and they define the membership of international society, the boundaries of legitimate state action, and the nature of basic institutional practices. However, societies of states emerge in different historical and cultural contexts and thus develop different constitutional structures, resulting in establishment of different fundamental institutions and distinctive practices within the different societies of states. Therefore, the occurrence of constitutional structures within stable international societies is a precondition, but the appearance within the structures varies (Reus-Smit 1999:33).

### 4.2:3 Fundamental Institutional Production and Reproduction

Let us now pay attention to how distinctive institutions and practices are created within the societies of states, since they are fundamental for a wider understanding of the consequences of the discursive relation between historical and cultural contexts and the creation of different constitutional structures.

As discussed, the constitutional structure determines the nature of its basic institutional practices. Gathering information from the prevailing beliefs about the moral purpose of the state, the systemic norm of pure procedural justice shapes institutional choice, licensing some institutional solutions over others through two principal constitutive mechanisms. First, norms of pure procedural justice define the institutional imaginations of those political actors (institutional architects), engaged in producing and reproducing fundamental institutions making some practices appear mandatory and others unthinkable. Second, norms of pure procedural justice provide the metanorms that structure the process of communicative action that surrounds the production and reproduction of fundamental institutions. Fundamental institutions are sets of prescriptive norms, rules, and principles that specify how legitimate states “ought” to resolve their conflicts, coordinate their relations, and facilitate coexistence. The construction and maintenance of such institutions necessarily entails an ongoing moral dialogue between states about what these norms, rules, and principles should be (Reus-Smit 1999:35). More precisely, the process of reaching consensus on the values for institutional construction among all actors involved, is a process there actors
will enter with different values that they will try to justify referring to that their values are an
interpretation of higher ones, values that are right and true. The systemic norms of pure
procedural justice represent the salient high-order values in the moral dialogues on which
production and reproduction of fundamental institutions of international societies rest on.

As we have seen, these constitutive mechanisms are able to shape basic institutional
practices because a consensus exists among the majority of states about the nature and
validity of the prevailing systemic norm of pure procedural justice. However, Reus-Smit
emphasizes that this consensus does not mean that they agree on substantive principles of
justice, only that they recognize a set of procedural precepts that “civilized” states ought to
observe in resolving cooperation problems (Reus-Smit 1999:35)

4.2.4 The Purposive Foundations of International Society

This section will constitute the last piece of this paper’s analytical framework. Here I present
in a summarized version Reus-Smit’s discussion about the consequences of grounding basic
institutional practices and design in the conception of constitutional structures in the
international society. He observes, that in general rationalistic theories, the conception of
international society is defined within the idea and notion of a practical association between
states, and where their durable social relations rest on a common observance of authoritative
practices - even in the absence of shared goals and purposes. States are seen here as actors
that pursue diverse ends and are only bound together by the authoritative practices that
facilitate coexistence, as notably the fundamental institutions of international law and
diplomacy. Reus-Smit opposes the rational view of the conception of international society,
seeing it as historically misleading and heuristically limited, since reality is not so rational
(Reus-Smit 1999:37). He discusses that all historical societies of states have begun as
communities of states linked by common sentiment, experience, and identity – as
gemeinschaft societies – facts that are at odds with the rationalistic practical association
definition since in this perspective gesellschaft precedes gemeinschaft. From a holistic
constructivist’s view, the development of a set of historically contingent intersubjective
beliefs about what constitutes a legitimate state, preceded and shaped the construction of
practical institutions. Consequently, the constitution of states’ social identities thus provided
the foundations upon which authoritative fundamental institutions were constructed (Reus-
Smit 1999:37). Modern as well as ancient societies of states have all had purposive
foundations. However, this does not imply that modern international society is not a practical
association, but importantly and in an equally important sense, the modern international
society is informed by the institutional and organizational values of the constitutively prior
European (now Western) gemeinschaft society (Reus-Smit 1999:38)
5. Discussing Democratic Peace and Historical Context Dependency

Acknowledging, that there is a relationship between democracy and peace, I choose to assume the DP-theory’s operationalization of core concepts and causality assumptions. In accordance with the purpose of this paper, I reiterate that my intention is not to discuss the theoretical relevance in the observation that democracies do not go to war against each other, but instead to discuss the necessity of a specific historical context for the Democratic Peace to acquire meaning and explanatory force.

I start the discussion of the necessity of a historical context by observing on which level the source of explanation lays when discussing the dyadic/normative variant of the Democratic Peace. As the perception mechanism is an interstate process, it requires organizing principles that states are structured under. Further, these principles must also have capability to define the mode of differentiation between states. In other words, the process has a necessity of the organizing principle of sovereignty. Hence, the core concept of sovereignty presents us with a gateway from were to initiate the discussion about historical dependency and the DP-theory. In the following section I will give an account of the abovementioned line of reasoning, by applying the analytical tool as it offers the possibility of acquisition of a deeper understanding and a recurrence to a more complex explanation when theorizing about the Democratic Peace.

Finally, I try to discuss the Democratic Peace theory’s theoretical foundation from a metatheoretical point of view, by addressing the liberal rationalistic ontology regarding institutions and their role within the international society of states. I try to conclude what the consequences of the adopted ontology are for the rationality behind basic institutional practices and design within the conception of constitutional structures in the international society. This, since it informs us about values behind the moral purpose of the state and what constitutes a legitimate state.

5.1 The Fundamental Institutions of Modern International Society and DP

Acknowledging the complexity of the DP theory and the great variety of problematizations within the constructivistic field, specific limitations are made in order to facilitate my line of reasoning. I choose to initiate the discussion of the requiring historical context dependency of DP theory through the organizing principle of sovereignty.

As we have observed the dyadic/normative variant of the Democratic Peace establishes a separated stable peace through interstate relational perceptions between democratic states. A common perceived liberal identity, and structures, between democracies constitute the key to the Democratic Peace. Consequently, the ontological referent, that locates the occurrence and outcomes of DP, is the system level. It is through interstate relations that DP emerges, making so the term interstate a requisite that must have a general recognition between states as having the attributes of statehood (Russett 1993:14). DP demands the necessity of the organizing principle of sovereignty being distributed and
accepted amongst the units in an international system. Sovereignty structurally differentiates political units creating so a system of territorially demarcated and autonomous centers of political authority. Under the dyadic/normative variant of DP, the structural differentiation is based on the perception of similarity or difference in institutional arrangements and ideological foundations between self-governing political units (states). However, for the Democratic Peace to occur it also requisites that the sovereign units are functionally undifferentiated, that is a similarity and homogeneity in the characteristics of states when it comes to claiming the power to self-government.

Adopting the analytical tool to the abovementioned discussion results in the treatment of the principle of sovereignty as variable, where it’s meaning and implications vary depending on the historical context. This line of reasoning tells us that the perception mechanism in the dyadic/normative variant of DP is problematic since its law-like explanatory force is drawn and constructed from a society of states based on the principle of sovereignty in which the content varies since its dependency on the historical context. That is, the perception mechanism occurs within an arena that is in flux and constant redefinition. If the claims of supreme authority within certain territorial limits and the recognition of these claims’ legitimacy by their respective communities of states vary through history, then necessarily the functionality of the perception mechanism must be dependent on this relation. This since the mechanism takes place within that changeable context. The prerequisite for this mechanism to function is a specific historical context, where the self-governing sovereignty of political units is structurally differentiated on the dichotomies of liberal/illiberal and democracy/non-democracy, yet this has not always been the case. Thereof, to obtain a more complex and a deeper understanding of the Democratic Peace, we must go beyond the organizing principle of sovereignty. The adopted analytical tool facilitates this approach by reasoning that sovereignty is subordinated to a deeper constitutive value, the moral purpose of the state. As presented, the moral purpose of the state provides the justificatory foundations for the organizing principle of sovereignty and informing the norm of procedural justice. These constitutive metavalues compose the constitutional structures within societies of states, which emerge in different historical and cultural contexts, resulting in establishment of different fundamental institutions and distinctive practices within the different societies of states.

It is in light of these constitutional structures that I try to discuss the dependency of a precise historical context for the DP-theory to gain explanatory force. I am well aware of the difficulty and that I can only assist to a merely insight of the vast and highly complex historical context. Once again, I claim neither to elucidate “the whole picture” nor to revise the Democratic Peace theory per se, but instead to problematize the DP-theory by pinpointing the necessity of a specific historical context. With Reus-Smit’s thoughts as guiding light, I commence the discussion by trying to date historically the constitutional structures in modern society of states. Further on, I will study the metavalues that lay behind the structures and how these determine the nature of the basic institutional practices in modern society of states. Seeking to give an insight to the historical context in which the Democratic Peace theory is born and developed, but also where it gains its explanatory force.

5.2 Constitutional structures in Modern Society of States
In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Europe experienced many revolutionary changes in thought and practice that redefined the ideological and material foundations of how political units choose to organize their political life. Consequently, redefining an absolutist Europe (with the principles of monarchical patriarchy and divine right as social order) to one that was profoundly impacted and form by ideas of political and economical individualism. By the middle of the nineteenth century in the Western societies, these new constitutional values established a new form of legitimate statehood and rightful state action but also marked the birth of modern international society, providing the crucial catalyst for the development of the fundamental institutions of contractual international law and multilateralism (Reus-Smit 1999:122). The metavales that now define legitimate statehood and rightful state action in modern international society were based on an individualist social ontology. For that reason, legitimate states acquired the role of those that expressed and promoted the interests of their citizens, making them sovereign agents. This perspective defines individuals as morally and practically prior to the state; their rights constitute the baseline, the state is but a human artefact instituted to protect their liberties. Fulfilling this role, individuals can freely pursue their interests and maximize their potentials, with their rights guaranteed (Reus-Smit 1999:128).

Concluding, the moral purpose of state in modern society has increasingly been identified with the augmentation of individuals’ purposes and potentialities. The organizing principle of sovereignty located in the people, defining it as a liberal sovereignty, since the state with sovereign authority acquires the role to protect the individual freedom and civil rights. Further, this shift in the moral purpose of state undermined the foundations of absolutist rule, spawning not just a new rationale for state sovereignty as mentioned, but a new conception of procedural justice. The effects of this change were felt beyond state boundaries, having profound implications in the institutional structures of both national and international governance. The moral purpose of the modern state entailed a new principle of procedural justice – legislative justice. This sort of procedural justice implied two things: first, that only those subject to the rules have the right to define them and, second, that the rules of society must apply equally to all citizens, in all like cases (Reus-Smit 1999:129).
5.3 Fundamental Institutional Production and Reproduction in the Modern Society of States

As mentioned before, the modern constitutional metavales, as they took root slowly, gradually transformed the institutions and practices of national governance through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the legislative norm of procedural justice informed the paired evolution of the two principal institutions of contemporary international society: contractual international law, and multilateralism. The principle that social rules should be authored by those subject to them came to license multilateral forms of rule determination, while the precept that rules should be equally applicable to all subjects, in all like cases, warranted the formal codification of contractual international law, to ensure the universality and reciprocity of international regulations.

Under the legislative principle, the development of modern international law involves participation, negotiation, dialogue aimed at achieving mutually binding agreements, and multilateralism represents precisely such a process (Reus-Smit 1999:132). These practices were engaged in the producing and reproducing of fundamental institutions through out late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries leading to key institutional developments. However, historical analysis elucidates that during this period a number of major crises and wars broke out in the international system and the subsequent attempts by the states to re-establish order. Such upheavals are instructive because in the process of production and reproduction of fundamental institutions, usefully characterized in history as moments of negation, foundation, construction, and renovation, states are forced to address the systemic norms of pure procedural justice. (Reus-Smit 1999:134).

Summarizing, the historical context in Western societies (Europe and United States), from late eighteen century to present times, we see a development that starts with the emergence of a liberal-constitutionalist standard of civilization that decides the values and norms of what defines a legitimate statehood. Consequently, moulding and creating a legislative norm of procedural justice, which in turn shaped international institutional design and action, licensing the basic institutional practices of contractual international law and multilateralism. Analyzing the dyadic/normative variant of DP from this specific historical context, we see metavales, structures and fundamental institutions as constituent factors, establishing communities of states of mutual recognition that enables the possibility for the DP-perception mechanism to exist.

We see metavales based on an individualist social ontology, a liberal sovereignty and a legislative justice as principle of procedural justice that emphasize the individual freedom and civil rights based on idea of political order of laissez-faire. We even see the positive value of peace since the legislative principle formulates basic rules of international conduct and external conduct that fosters negotiation and dialogue with the goal of reaching mutually binding agreements between states members. These constitutional structures and fundamental institutions not only fix parameters within the discursive mechanism of interstate relations defining what is and what is not a legitimate statehood and rightful state action, but they create the system itself in which these mechanisms act. However, we have also learned that this has been a constant process of institutional production and reproduction through history hinting the necessity of historical development.
and process to achieve an international society of states in which the DP-perception mechanism can function properly in.

These line of reasoning, leads me to focus the attention on a metatheoretical discussion about the ontology adopted by liberal theory when it comes to the rationality behind institutional practices and design. This discussion has been in a direct way influencing throughout the whole analysis and argumentation, making it so an important insight when problematizing the Democratic Peace theory. The liberal perspective on the conception of international society is defined within the idea and notion of a practical association between states. In general rationalistic theories (including liberal theories), see the practical association based on an ontology of institutional rationality, where they disregard the intersubjective systems constituting the identities and interests of institutional agents. Instead, they adopt a purely strategic model of cognition and choice, were its defined in terms of efficiency. The institutional rationality is seen as the efficient pursuit of exogenously determined interests within the constraints of available information and the interests and strategies of other actors (Reus-Smit 1999:160; Adler 1997:331). Analyzing the DP-theory from this line of reasoning, we see that the Democratic Peace theory neglects the importance of the international context in which states seek to pursuit their interests. And that an understanding of that context is merely strategic, and not social. This leaves us with timeless, context-free rational actors, independent from the historical context and cultural values, “locking out” the DP-theory from gaining a deeper and broader explanatory force.

6. Conclusions

By discussing the Democratic Peace theory from a constructivist perspective, some conclusions on DP: s theoretical foundation and its historical context dependency are drawn.
As I have discussed in this study, the DP-theory draws its explanatory force for a stable peace between liberal democracies, based on a dyadic/normative variant. It is through the perception of a common identity between democracies that Democratic Peace is constituted. But, how do they recognize each other as liberal democracies? The perception mechanism demands that, in the international society of states, the spectra of what constitutes a legitimate state and what counts as appropriate state conduct must be formulated within the dichotomies of liberal/illiberal and democracy/non-democracy. The Democratic Peace theory assumes this fact but doesn’t offer an explanation on how this relation occurs and, that is how that following and specific identity formation is established in the society of states. Further, it neglects the necessity of a historical process to obtain such “recognition” system and process, it must somehow add that democratic states, over time, develop positive perceptions of others democracies but not of non-democracies.

By introducing the constructivistic analytical tool we open up the “black box” regarding states identity construction and its relation to the historical circumstances surrounding it. It also facilitates theorizing on the movement over time and historical process, referring to states identities, within the international society of states. It tells us that the intersubjective beliefs about the moral purpose of the state, the justificatory basis for sovereign rights and notions of international procedural justice (constitutional structures) constitute and constrain institutional design and action, leading states to embrace different institutional practice depending on the historical contexts. It is through the constitutional structures and their fundamental institutions that the society of states can create fully functional communities of mutual recognition. Overall the constructivistic perspective has proven to give an important contribution to the understanding of the Democratic Peace, since it points out the necessity of a historical consciousness.

In this light it would be interesting as further research to focus on the historical development of core states in Western societies as principal agents creating metavalues that shape what is considered legitimate statehood and state action.
7. Bibliography


