

1-1-2013

Democratic Peace Theory as Applied to Europe and the Middle East

Patrick G. Rear

Pepperdine University, patrick.rear@pepperdine.edu

Recommended Citation

Rear, Patrick G. (2013) "Democratic Peace Theory as Applied to Europe and the Middle East," *Global Tides*: Vol. 7, Article 4.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/globaltides/vol7/iss1/4>

This International Studies and Languages is brought to you for free and open access by the Seaver College at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Global Tides by an authorized administrator of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact Kevin.Miller3@pepperdine.edu.

Democratic Peace Theory as Applied to Europe and the Middle East

Patrick G. Rear

History is littered with wars since time immemorial, but now the question being asked is whether this is really how events will play out in the future? The greatest periods of peace in ancient history can often be attributed to a large hegemonic power after a series of victories, but the past century has featured a new phenomenon bringing about peace and prosperity. The rise of liberal democracies around the world coincided with a significant reduction in the number of wars between them involving aggressive military action, and greater economic prosperity among them. For these reasons it is valuable to inquire whether or not such results will continue. This paper will analyze to what extent democratic peace can be cited as the driving mechanism of peace in Europe over the past century, and to compare the European model with current developments in the Middle East. With this comparison, it will attempt to make an informed prediction as to whether the recent democratic revolutions there can be expected to have a similar result. To determine whether or not democracy has an effect on peace, it is necessary to define war and peace. This paper will use the definition offered by Bruce Russett in *Grasping the Democratic Peace* for war, which is a “large-scale institutionally organized lethal violence” using the threshold of “one thousand battle fatalities” between any pair of sovereign states with international recognition.¹

The foundations of democratic peace theory were laid in 1795 by Immanuel Kant in his essay *Perpetual Peace*, in which he predicted that if the world were populated

¹ Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 12-13.

only by constitutional republics, war would become a thing of the past.² The system of constitutional republic envisioned by Kant would accomplish this by requiring the consent of the governed to declare war. As the economic, physical, and emotional costs of a war would be borne by the citizens, Kant saw no reason why they would choose to declare war except in defending against external aggression.³ He then went on to describe the specific differences between democracy, which he equates with despotism and tyranny, and republicanism, which has a constitution and a system of separation of powers within the government.⁴ Kant's description of republican government is consistent with the modern definition of a liberal democracy, which is used for the purposes of democratic peace theory, the most widely accepted theory in international relations.⁵ While scholars do not agree on the specific mechanism that causes the democratic peace, there is consensus that democracies do not go to war against each other based upon the empirical evidence.⁶ The difficulty in defining the causal mechanism behind a democratic peace has motivated leading scholars to diversify their research on the topic to elements beyond strictly liberal democratic system of governance to include the other elements mentioned by Kant, economic interdependence and commerce, and the role played by international organizations.⁷ Expanding the scope of the theory enables more robust study of the topic, and a better predictive model by providing additional metrics of analysis.

² Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*. 3rd. Translated by M. Campbell Smith (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917), 120-121.

³ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, 121-123.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, 124-128.

⁵ Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 3-5.

⁶ Michael D. Ward and Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Democratizing for Peace," *The American Political Science Review*, 92, no. 1 (Mar., 1998): 51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2585928> (accessed November 9, 2012).

⁷ Bruce Russett, and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 35-39.

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

Any mention of liberal democracy begs the question of how an illiberal democracy would be defined, and whether there is any significant difference between how the two are treated under the theory. Scholars have defined liberal democracy as the combination of a representative form of government with values of constitutional liberalism. The resulting system has constitutional separation of powers, rule of law, protection of civil liberties and universal human rights, and elections which are free, fair, and competitive.⁸ As a result, an illiberal democracy is a state which may appear democratic on the basis of having elections or a constitution, but which fails to implement the liberal ideas of rule of law, separation of powers, or protection of its citizens' rights and liberties. Fareed Zakaria developed the theory of an illiberal democracy in order to explain this phenomenon of so-called democratic states which fail to create a system of decentralized authority and an emphasis on these liberal values.⁹

In examining the components of democratic peace theory, it is clear that illiberal democracies lack many of the fundamental structures necessary to bring about democratic peace, and therefore are more likely to have internal conflict and engage in external wars.¹⁰ As there is a gradient between autocracy and democracy, states fall somewhere between the two, and the pacific benefits of democracy can still be found to some degree even in states lacking the full liberal character. For example, more liberal

⁸ Bruce Russett, and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence*, 29.

⁹ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 17-21.

¹⁰ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 62-66

democracies grant the voting franchise to women, who historically have been a strong element in promoting peaceful resolution of disputes instead of war.¹¹

THE EFFECT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Democratic institutions interact in a state to promote peace with a combination of cultural and structural factors. Culturally, democracies share methods of peaceful dispute resolution and expectations of the behavior of other democracies. Structurally, leaders in liberal democracies are constrained from arbitrarily going to war by a system of separation of powers which forces the executive to receive legislative approval for a war, while the election of leaders holds them accountable to voters. As Kant noted, the population has a vested interest in maintaining peace, which influences their voting behavior. In war, the population must bear the risk of personal death or injury through military service or because of collateral damage.¹² Economic activity and commerce also slow down during wartime as the young men and women of the population leave the workforce to join the military. Lastly, war disrupts trade routes and shipping, making it more difficult for goods to get from producer to consumer and stifling economic growth.¹³ In light of these direct and indirect costs on the population, liberal democratic

¹¹ Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 98-99.

¹² Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 53-56.

¹³ Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 129-130.

states lack incentives to engage in offensive military action, creating a loop reinforcing peace.¹⁴

Elections and Deliberation

Regular elections in liberal democracies put the decisions and policies of leaders up to public scrutiny and allow discontent to be voiced by unseating an unpopular or ineffective leader, leading those in power to make decisions which reflect their constituents' opinions. Another pillar of liberal democracy to prevent war is political opposition, which makes declaring war a transparent process, reassuring other states that they will not be attacked by surprise. The population also joins in on this deliberation by contacting their representatives and making their desire for peace known.¹⁵ While making any decision, a calculus of the threat posed by the other state will be taken into account, including whether or not that it might act aggressively without warning, or if it will only defend itself following democratic peace theory. When the legislature decides, it is more likely to reflect the views of the populace, and as a result is less likely to be in favor of war.¹⁶

In addition to this, liberal democracies often have a stable, independent judiciary which peacefully arbitrates domestic disputes, ensures the separation of powers, and

¹⁴ Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 74-76.

¹⁵ Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 64

¹⁶ Ward and Gleditsch, "Democratizing for Peace," 52-53.

creates a culture of legal rather than violent recourse.¹⁷ An independent judiciary is also important for its protection of freedom of speech and the press, increased civil liberties, and a reliable way for citizens to engage legal avenues for changing state policies rather than inciting revolts that lead to violent crackdowns.¹⁸ When a liberal democracy is perceived as respecting the rights of its citizens, and providing avenues for them to shape policy and openly voice dissent against the government without fear of retribution, it removes any incentive for another liberal democracy to war against them.

19

International Engagement

As part of the process in developing a liberal democracy, states also create inter-governmental organizations which they use to avoid conflicts by a process of arbitration mirroring their own domestic judicial system. Organizations such as the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, United Nations, and the European Union have all been created with the explicit goal of increasing the rule of law, diplomacy, and international cooperation to and to decreasing the use of war; all of the principles of these organizations were based mainly on the preferences of liberal democratic states. The importance of these organizations in building peaceful relations is another key part

¹⁷ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 73.

¹⁸ Violaine Autheman, "Global Lessons Learned: Constitutional Courts, Judicial Independence and the Rule of Law," *International Foundation for Election Systems Rule of Law White Paper Series* (2004), http://www.ciaonet.org.lib.pepperdine.edu/wps/ifes007/CIAO_ifes007.pdf (accessed November 20, 2012).

¹⁹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 51-52.

of preventing war. By performing the function of domestic legislatures and judiciaries, they are capable of mediating conflicts between states, improving the exchange of information, as well as creating norms of peaceful resolution of conflict through internal mechanisms and diplomatic processes instead of military action.²⁰

In international diplomacy, as in other areas of society, states with shared values join together for defense against possible threats to their ideology and because they can more reliably predict how their allies will act and count on them to be trustworthy.²¹ The most prominent example of this phenomenon is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization created by the United States and its Western European allies following World War II to deter Soviet aggression. The predisposition of ideologically similar states to form alliances is not limited to liberal democracies, as the examples of the Warsaw Pact in opposition to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Triple Alliance of World War I, and the Axis Powers of World War II demonstrate. The dynamics of military alliances play a further role in eliminating any chance that liberal democracies will declare war upon each other.

Economics and Commerce

The element of democratic peace which is least appreciated by modern scholars is that of economic interdependence. It was also in use long before democracy ever

²⁰Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 162-166.

²¹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 59-60.

was widely implemented.²² The connections of trade and commerce build economic interdependence which increases the political and economic costs of war.²³ The technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution increased production and standards of living around the world as goods were produced cheaper and faster. The poor working conditions in early industrialized societies forced populations to become more active in demanding that government protect their rights and pushing for better working conditions and wages. Because economic and political power are linked in democracies, as citizens became more accustomed to their government being responsive to their demands, they became even more politically involved in pushing their states along the path to becoming a liberal democracy.²⁴ During the twentieth century as economies became more advanced, the increased political participation by citizens forced a corresponding increase in the number of democratic institutions, increasing the number of liberal democracies in the world.²⁵ As more states became liberal democracies, the benefits of free trade with ideologically similar states encouraged further economic liberalization.

In *The Future of Freedom*, Fareed Zakaria builds further on the importance of a strong liberalized economy in the development of stable liberal democracies. A more liberal economic system leads to the creation of an educated middle class as citizens outside of the traditional power structures of the state or the upper class develop wealth

²² Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 29-30.

²³ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 129-130.

²⁴ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 131

²⁵ Ronald Inglehart, and Christian Welzel, "How Development Leads to Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, 88, no. 2 (2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64821/ronald-inglehart-and-christian-welzel/how-development-leads-to-democracy> (accessed November 11, 2012).

and influence which they can use to achieve political ends.²⁶ The role played by economic liberalization and advancement in the development of liberal democracies cannot be understated, as the level of economic development when a state democratizes can be directly linked to the survivability of that democracy. The higher a nation's per-capita GDP when it undergoes the transition to democracy, the greater its success rate. Zakaria reports on a study by Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi which found that if a democratic country has a per-capita GDP of below \$1,500, it will likely last only eight years. If its per-capita GDP is between \$1,500 and \$3,000 the democracy survived eighteen years on average, and if the per-capita GDP is above \$6,000 when the transition to democracy is made, the chances of failure drop to 1 in 500. Zakaria also finds that when adjusted for inflation, applying these numbers to democratic development in European countries accurately describes their successes and failures.²⁷

More open international markets and greater adoption of a system of free trade led to economic interdependence as more goods were imported, and businesses took advantage of international markets to export their products around the world.²⁸ States seek out secure trade agreements in order to secure a steady supply of the raw materials, manufactured goods, and services to keep their economy running. The best way to do this is with states sharing a similar background and characterized by stability.²⁹ Any incidence of war involving a state party to a trade agreement indirectly

²⁶ Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 71-72.

²⁷ Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 69-70.

²⁸ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 147-151.

²⁹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 136-137.

affects their trade partners, and provides a significant incentive for states to avoid wars at all costs in order to prevent the disruption to their economy that would result. The more advanced a state becomes, often evolving into a liberal democracy, the more economically interdependent it becomes and, by extension, the higher the cost of going to war is.³⁰

DEMOCRATIC PEACE IN EUROPE

Through the first half of the twentieth century, Europe was one of the most war-torn continents on earth, experiencing a major war every few years as a result of national rivalries and competing interests. European monarchs and leaders were able to pursue a policy of never-ending war and wanton destruction in the absence of significant liberal democratic institutions to check their authority. The spread of liberal democracy across the continent over the course of the twentieth century, especially among its largest and most powerful members, created the perfect laboratory for the study of democratic peace theory as war weary Europeans built up liberal democratic governing institutions, increased inter-state diplomatic dialogue to peacefully resolve problems, and made a concerted effort to bring about close economic integration and interdependence between what once were fiercely competing states.³¹ While Great Britain was the originator of many liberal democratic ideas, the conditions which led to the development of a liberal democracy there were unique to its history and events such

³⁰ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 279-280.

³¹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 158.

as the Industrial Revolution. Because Great Britain's specific circumstances are unlikely to arise again, France and Germany provide the best comparative model for the development of liberal democracy and its connection to democratic peace.³² To best demonstrate the model and provide comparative material for the Middle Eastern examples, this section will provide a historical background of the development of liberal democracy in France and Germany followed by an analysis of both states' interactions as liberal democracies, and the effects of the aforementioned democratic institutions in building peace.

In continental Europe, democratic governance developed without significant liberal traditions to draw upon, much as it has throughout most of the world. Therefore, the path to democracy for Germany and France lays out a blueprint which can be followed in predicting the challenges which the Middle East will go through in developing a liberal democratic system. Both states developed liberal democracy while within the per-capita GDP zone of transition, providing another relevant comparison. Furthermore, taking account of this historical example may produce a smoother transition and allow the Middle East to avoid the difficulties Europe experienced in the development of liberal democracy.

Liberal Democracy in France

³² Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 62-66.

For much of its history, France was ruled by a powerful monarchy which centralized all power in the state, leading King Louis XIV to remark “*L’Etat, c’est moi.*” – “I am the state.” It was only during the latter half of the eighteenth century as the revolutionary idea of republican government was spreading in the Anglo-American world leading to the American Revolution in 1776. In France, those ideas took form in the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” approved by the French National Constituent Assembly in 1789 in the initial stages of the French Revolution based upon the ideas of liberalism attempting to create a completely new social order.³³ The liberal proclamations of natural human rights and liberties at the beginning of the French Revolution set a high standard for the First French Republic, but very little structural planning was done with regard to how the new government would secure and defend those newly-identified rights.³⁴

In spite of its lofty goals, the government of the First French Republic quickly fell into disarray under Maximilien de Robespierre as the radical social change of the French Revolution turned into a reign of terror as political dissent was violently silenced and paranoia controlled the government. Instead of upholding the ideals in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, the government was able to act freely and with almost no restriction on its absolute power. It was in this political climate that Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power and crowned himself Emperor, once again establishing a formally autocratic government.³⁵ The greatest success of the French

³³ John Merryman, and Rogelio Perez-Perdomo, *The Civil Law Tradition*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007), 16-19.

³⁴ Giovanni Sartori, "Liberal Democracy in Western Europe," *A Prospect of Liberal Democracy*, ed. William S. Livingston (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1979), 201-204.

³⁵ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 117-118.

Revolution was in expanding the Enlightenment thinking of the time and creating a movement for liberal democracy in Europe which would eventually form into the system of today.

Over the next seventy years, France alternated between monarchy and empire with a short period of republican government after the 1848 democratic revolution. It was only after the defeat of France in 1870 in the Franco-Prussian War that the Third French Republic was established and lasted until World War II with constant political infighting between liberal and conservative forces.³⁶ Even though it was democratic, it was surrounded by autocratic states and was unable to enjoy most of the benefits of democratic peace until after World War II.³⁷ In the lead-up to World War II, democratic leaders in France and Britain attempted to negotiate with Adolf Hitler, but the authoritarian government in Germany did not respond to their diplomacy in the way a liberal democratic state would have, leading into World War II.³⁸

Following the short interlude of the Fourth Republic before it collapsed, the Fifth French Republic created by Charles de Gaulle finally managed to combine all the elements of liberal democracy with separation of powers, checks and balances, and defense of the rights and liberties of its citizens.³⁹ During the period of the Fourth and Fifth French Republics, the institutions of democratic peace theory began to be seen in France's foreign policy towards Germany, and the effects soon afterward.

³⁶ Maurice Larkin, *Religion, politics and preferment in France since 1890*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

³⁷ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 50.

³⁸ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 52.

³⁹ F.L. Morton, "Judicial Review in France: A Comparative Analysis," *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 36, no. 1 (1988): 89-110, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/840185> (accessed November 28, 2012).

Liberal Democracy in Germany

While the modern government of Germany provides an example of a functional liberal democracy, in Germany's history it has had periods of violent upheaval before liberal democracy was established. When Germany was founded in 1871, its government was set up to resemble a democracy, while retaining all the qualities of an autocracy. Developed by the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the German Empire had a weak parliament and near unlimited executive authority vested in the Emperor and the Chancellor. The party system and elections were tightly controlled, with heavy political repression used against Catholics, liberals, and socialists to keep them from power.⁴⁰ With the abdication of the monarchy following World War I, the parliament was left as the sole government of Germany with no significant experience in governing, or history of liberal democratic governance upon which it could draw to lead Germany out of the turmoil and chaos of the interwar period.⁴¹ The Weimar Republic which followed gave the President the power to rule by emergency decree when the parliament failed to pass legislation, or even form a stable government.⁴² In theory, the Weimar Constitution provided a blueprint for a democratic system of government

⁴⁰ Michael Bernhard, "The Leadership Secrets of Bismarck," *Foreign Affairs*, 90, no. 6 (2011), <http://www.ciaonet.org.lib.pepperdine.edu/journals/fa/v90i6/13.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

⁴¹ David Dyzenhaus, "Legal Theory in the Collapse of Weimar: Contemporary Lessons?," *The American Political Science Review*, 91, no. 1 (1997): 122-123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2952263> (accessed November 25, 2012).

⁴² Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics*, 49, no. 3 (April 1997): 402-403, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054008> (accessed November 25, 2012).

guaranteeing fundamental rights and the rule of law for its citizens, but in practice its weaknesses became apparent.⁴³

Following a period of economic depression, extremist parties such as the Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party came to power with ever larger majorities in parliament.⁴⁴ While Nazi control created a functioning parliamentary government, the party's anti-democratic platform undermined the fragile democratic system that existed, and in 1933 the Reichstag Fire Decree and Enabling Act gave absolute control to Adolf Hitler while suspending many of the civil rights which were granted in the constitution. No longer constrained by the minor restrictions of the Weimar Constitution, Hitler created a total dictatorship which quickly used military force and war as its primary instrument of foreign policy against states which were seen as obstacles to Germany's domination. World War II, as a direct result of the failed democracy in Germany, demonstrates the importance of democratic institutions and the ensuing effects in preventing war.

In the aftermath of World War II, however, the foundations for true liberal democracy were laid in Germany. After the French, British, and American zones of occupation were united into a single unit, the Allies turned to the fundamentals of democratic peace theory to rebuild Germany. A new German constitution was written including the liberal ideals of separation of powers, and strongly defined human rights.⁴⁵ With a united and functional Germany, the European Coal and Steel Community was created between Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to pool their markets for heavy industry. Combining their markets prevented Germany from

⁴³ Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," 409-419.

⁴⁴ Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," 419-424.

⁴⁵ Andrew Arato, *Constitution Making Under Occupation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 33-36.

using those resources to rearm itself and start a third world war, and also began the process of economic integration which has culminated in the European Union and the euro.⁴⁶ The last key decision in building democratic peace with Germany was included in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in order to build a stronger bond of cooperation on security issues.⁴⁷

After World War II and the decision to rebuild Germany along liberal democratic lines, the interactions between liberal institutions in France with those being constructed in Germany created a strong foundation for future peace which has endured longer than any other period of history between them. The European Coal and Steel Community began the process of economic interdependence by making it easier for French and German companies to access the entire community's markets, as well as building peaceful economic relations between citizens of all countries acting in the economic sphere rather than the military. Eventually, these developments led to the present European Union and a stable peace over the past fifty years.⁴⁸

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Similar to Europe during the middle of the twentieth century, the Middle East has been in a state of turmoil and war for years while under oppressive dictatorial regimes. In 2011, the Arab Spring protests and revolutions spread across the region as citizens

⁴⁶ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 24-26.

⁴⁷ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 89.

⁴⁸ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 158.

rose up to demand government reforms, political representation, and protection of human rights. While the exact form of citizen involvement ranged from organized protests to civil war and the desired outcome from increased rights to total regime change, all were unified in the belief that the voice of the citizens should be heard.

To date, the regime changes that have taken place have led to democratic states, but whether they can be categorized as liberal democracies is still in question, and the attitude they will take toward each other in the coming years has yet to unfold as tensions in the region will remain high. In order to get a rough representation of the status of democracy and its effects on development across the Middle East, this paper will focus on a few specific examples in order to identify factors specific to their development of democracy, how it relates to the European model, and whether or not those developments could lead to peace and prosperity in the future instead of poverty and war. In examining these states, data from the CIA World Factbook and Freedom House will be used to compare them.

Egypt and Israel

Among the most high-profile successes of the Arab Spring movement was the ouster of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. The subsequent elections were the first free elections in Egypt in years, and all political developments have been closely followed by media and scholars because of Egypt's important position in the region as the most populous Arab state. Also important in any discussion of democratic peace in the Middle East is the state of Israel, the only functioning liberal democracy in the

region, which has been involved in repeated wars against its Arab neighbors. The two states have formally been at peace since 1979 when Egypt became the first Arab country to peacefully recognize Israel in the "Peace Agreement between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel", but relations have been cold during that period.⁴⁹ Similar to the development of democracy in Germany, Egypt is attempting to make the transition after a significant period of autocratic rule, with limited democratic experienced to draw upon, and difficult economic times. The similarity of these factors make the early construction of democratic norms a very important factor in creating democratic stability in order to avoid the rise of extremist leaders and a return to autocracy.

Israel already fits the earlier definition of a liberal democracy, so in order to predict whether democratization in Egypt will improve bilateral relations, it is important to identify Egypt's standing with regard to the development of the necessary democratic institutions, economic interdependence, and international connections. While the Freedom House rankings from January of 2012 rank Israel as "free" with a composite score of 1.5 on its scale of one (most free) to seven (least free),⁵⁰ Egypt was listed as "not free" with a composite score of 5.5 showing significant room for improvement.⁵¹ Many of the conflicts between Israel and Egypt stem from the status of Palestinian Arabs living in Israel, who Freedom House indicates are not offered equal opportunities in education, housing, or social services, and are not well represented politically.

⁴⁹ "Israel-Egypt: A Review of Bilateral Ties," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (January 1, 2003), <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign+Relations/Bilateral+relations/Israel-Egypt-+A+Review+of+Bilateral+Ties.htm> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁵⁰ "Freedom in the World – Israel," Freedom House, (2012), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/israel> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁵¹ "Freedom in the World - Egypt," Freedom House, (2012), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/egypt-0> (accessed November 22, 2012).

Egypt's transition to democracy has been incomplete, with the military retaining a high degree of control over the process, and the newly elected President Mohammad Morsi taking steps to establish sweeping presidential powers through a constitutional declaration while a new democratic constitution is being written.⁵² In spite of this, Egyptians have become increasingly involved politically, especially by continuing to protest the status quo of poor civil liberties and meager democratic reforms.⁵³ Their continued action pushing for reforms could lead to the establishment of a stable democratic state following the historical model, as Egypt's per-capita GDP of \$6,500 falls within the transitional range identified by Zakaria. With regard to trade, 12% of Egypt's GDP is made up of exports of raw materials and light industrial products such as textiles, while almost 24% is spent on importing advanced machinery and foodstuffs, making Egypt dependent upon international markets for many goods.⁵⁴

Interestingly, the state with the most difficulties adjusting to a democratizing Egypt is Israel, which was long reliant on the autocratic leadership of Mubarak being able to go against the wishes of Egyptians to strike deals with them. In addition to having to respond to the wishes of Arab democratic governments, Israel will also be forced to improve its relations with Palestinian Arabs within its borders as its

⁵² Associated Press, "Egypt reformist warns of Morsi decree turmoil," *CBS News*, (November 24, 2012), http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57553874/egypt-reformist-warns-of-morsi-decree-turmoil (accessed November 25, 2012).

⁵³ Joshua Stacher, "Countries at the Crossroads - Egypt," Freedom House, (last modified January 2012), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2012/egypt> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁵⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Egypt," *The World Factbook*, (last modified November 14, 2012), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html> (accessed November 22, 2012).

justifications for denying them democratic representation and governance become irrelevant as Arab democracies are formed.⁵⁵

For whatever difficulties Egypt has faced so far in creating domestic democratic institutions, its democratically elected President, Mohammad Morsi, has already made steps toward building peace internationally. The period of peace between Egypt and Israel under President Mubarak was resented by many Egyptians who wanted to take a more hardline policy against their neighbor, but in the aftermath of Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip most Egyptians feel that the path of peace and diplomatic engagement is the best option to resolve the issue.⁵⁶ In responding to the crisis, Morsi has defined the new Egyptian government as a diplomatic intermediary between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist organization which is in control of Gaza.⁵⁷ By staking out a middle ground of diplomatic action, he has taken the first step to reassuring other democracies around the world by establishing norms of democratic peace in Egypt, and has proven that the Muslim Brotherhood is capable of governing effectively.⁵⁸

Beyond navigating through present diplomatic challenges, the most important task for the Egyptian government is navigating the process to a new constitution which is agreeable to the many parties involved whose only uniting factor was their opposition to Mubarak. The conflict between liberals and Islamists to control the process of writing

⁵⁵ Daniel Levy, "Can Tahrir Square Come to Tel Aviv?," *The Nation*, (September 12, 2011), 36-38, (accessed November 12, 2012).

⁵⁶ Michael Birnbaum, "Egyptians condemn Israeli attacks on Gaza, but most don't want to go to war over them." *Washington Post*, (November 18, 2012), http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egyptians-condemn-israeli-attacks-on-gaza-but-most-dont-want-to-go-to-war-over-them (accessed November 25, 2012).

⁵⁷ Abigail Hauslohner, "Conflict in Gaza tests Egypt's new president," *Washington Post*, (November 15, 2012), http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egyptian-delegation-to-visit-besieged-gaza-strip/2012/11/15/d059d6dc-2f4b-11e2-a30e-5ca76eeec857_story.html (accessed November 25, 2012).

⁵⁸ Mustafa Akyol, "The blessings of the new Islamist Egypt," *Al Arabiya News*, (November 25, 2012), <http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2012/11/25/251644.html> (accessed November 25, 2012).

a new constitution is the most significant factor in determining the character of the new Egyptian state, and whether it will be a liberal democracy or not.⁵⁹ In order to take full advantage of the benefits of democratic peace theory, Egypt needs to strike a balance between democracy and liberalism which will have a system of checks and balances to protect against abuses of power, and still reflect the views of most Egyptians.

Iraq and Iran

As the Bush administration's project in nation building for the purposes of democratic peace theory, Iraq is another key state which must be taken into account to study the effects of democratization in the Middle East. As predicted in reports prior to the United States-led invasion in March of 2003, an ambitious plan to establish a functioning parliament with free and competitive elections in Iraq was one of the top priorities of the Bush administration, in spite of the violence going on across the nation.⁶⁰ Similar to the policies undertaken in Germany following the Second World War barring former members of the Nazi Party from running for office in the new German state, members of the Baath Party which Saddam Hussein once led were barred from participating in elections as an attempt to remove the old power structures and create a liberal democratic system.⁶¹ This process of "de-Baathification" went much farther in

⁵⁹ Tarek Masoud, "Liberty, Democracy, and Discord in Egypt," *The Washington Quarterly*, 34, no. 4 (2011): 117-123, http://www.ciaonet.org.lib.pepperdine.edu/journals/twq/v34i4/f_0023557_19266.pdf (accessed November 18, 2012).

⁶⁰ Oxford Analytica Ltd, "US/MIDDLE EAST: After Saddam: Hopes and Realities," *OxResearch Daily Brief Service* (Mar., 2003), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/192330918?accountid=13159> (accessed November 11, 2012).

⁶¹ "Iraqi election commission bans 500 candidates," *BBC News*, last modified January 15, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8461275.stm> (accessed November 11, 2012).

disqualifying people from public service than “de-Nazification” did in Germany until it was scaled back to permit former Baathists to join the government and promote national unity since the majority of those disqualified were of the minority Sunni group.⁶²

During the process of receiving authority from the occupation forces, an interim Iraqi government was established, and a provisional constitution was put into effect under the advisement of United States and United Nations personnel known as the “Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period” or the “Transitional Administrative Law”. While the primary function of the Transitional Administrative Law was to lay out the conditions and process under which full sovereignty would be returned to the Iraqi people, some of its most important material is contained in Article 24 specifying the functional structure of the new Iraqi government by creating a democratic republic with separation of powers between three branches of government. Along with a strong judiciary with authority to balance out the legislative and executive branches, the Transitional Administrative Law included an extensive section guaranteeing “fundamental rights” which are similar to rights granted in most liberal democratic constitutions in the West such as freedom of speech, religion, and the press, equality before the law for all persons, and protections against unlawful arrest or detention, torture, and cruel or unusual punishment. It also explicitly rejects the policies of the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein which had stripped citizenship from many Iraqis based on racial and ethnic lines, and provides a method for them to return and participate in the new state’s democracy.⁶³

⁶² Sharon Otterman, "IRAQ: Debaathification," Council on Foreign Relations, (last modified April 7, 2005), <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/iraq-debaathification/p7853> (accessed on November 25, 2012).

⁶³ The Coalition Provisional Authority, "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period," *The Coalition Provisional Authority*, (March 8, 2004),

While the Transitional Administrative Law made bold steps toward forming a liberal democratic constitution, the most important step was the process of drafting and approving a new permanent constitution. The process required participation of Iraqis across the country and at all ends of the ideological spectrum, and significant compromises were made in order to bring both the minority Sunnis and the majority Shi'ites to the process such as allowing former Baathists to take part in the political system. The first draft of the constitution was approved by the Iraqi people in a referendum, followed by the first parliamentary election under the new constitution. As many Sunni Arabs had boycotted the previous elections but were represented in the first parliamentary election, several amendments were made to the constitution, which were then approved in a second referendum.⁶⁴ The new Iraqi constitution followed the basic blueprint of the Transitional Administrative Law, and set up a federal parliamentary republic with checks and balances and a strong system of separation of power. Lastly, it specifically protects a large number of rights and freedoms for Iraqis which had already been identified in the Transitional Administrative Law.⁶⁵

Unlike the example of Germany's rapid growth and success after World War II, Iraq has had limited but steady progress in establishing itself as a democracy. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of the new Iraqi constitution, Freedom House has improved its rating from the lowest score of 7 to its current score of 5.5. Though still classified as "not free," Iraq has improved its rating by making an effort to

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090423064920/http://www.cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

⁶⁴ "Iraq voters back new constitution," *BBC News*, last modified October 25, 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4374822.stm (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁶⁵ Transitional National Assembly Constitutional Committee, "Full Text of Iraqi Constitution," *The Washington Post*, (October 12, 2005), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

include women in the political process, and allowing Sunni Arabs who lost their jobs and were barred from government to return by softening some of the de-Baathification policies. The main factor which has prevented Iraq from improving its rating further is the ongoing sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia both in politics and in ongoing violence.⁶⁶ The years of sanctions placed on Iraq under Saddam Hussein and the fighting since the invasion by the United States in 2003 has limited economic activity and trade, but Iraq maintains a GDP per-capita of \$4,200 which places it in the middle of the zone of transition identified by Zakaria.⁶⁷ The primary barrier to developing Iraq's economy however is its reliance on oil revenues, which reduces overall economic development and the likelihood that an educated middle class will develop to build a stable society and democracy.⁶⁸

With regard to international relations, Iran with its Shi'ite majority has long been Iraq's rival ever since Saddam Hussein came to power and installed the Sunni minority in Iraq to the highest levels of authority. Iran has consistently acted against Sunni rule in Iraq, and has sought to intervene on behalf of the Shi'ite majority there. After Hussein was deposed, Iran has played an extensive role in supporting the Shia in Iraq as they gained power in the democracy created after the war. As part of this strategy, Iran has funded Shi'ite militants to fight against American forces, and has become one of Iraq's largest trading partners with over \$1.8 billion in trade.⁶⁹ While Iran's policies are likely

⁶⁶ "Freedom in the World - Iraq," Freedom House, (2012), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/iraq> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁶⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Iraq," *The World Factbook*, (last modified November 13, 2012), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁶⁸ Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 137-139.

⁶⁹ Lionel Beehner and Greg Bruno, "Iran's Involvement in Iraq," Council on Foreign Relations, (last modified March 3, 2008), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-involvement-iraq/p12521> (accessed on November 25, 2012).

intended to bring Iraq into its sphere of influence, it is unlikely that Iraq will respond in that manner since, aside from sharing common religious beliefs, the two states share very few common political or cultural institutions. It is possible that by opening its borders to Iraq as it democratizes, Iran has set itself along the path to democracy. Similar to Germany's transformation into a liberal democracy following World War II as France opened economic relations; there is a possibility for spillover from Iraq to Iran. Iran is a Middle Eastern country which may be receptive to democracy considering its extremely restricted society. The theocracy which rules in Iran has disillusioned many young men and women with its mismanagement of the economy and repressive political structure, while trade and cultural exchange with a democratic Iraq would demonstrate a successful Shi'ite state that could be extremely attractive to them.⁷⁰ Iran's rating of 6 from Freedom House can do little but improve⁷¹, and its per-capita GDP of \$13,200 is well above the zone of transition.⁷² It is even possible that the democratization effects from Iraq could overwhelm Iran's dependence on oil revenues because of the state of the Iranian economy under the sanctions placed on it.

CONCLUSIONS

By comparing the experience of Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century with that of the Middle East going into the twenty-first century, the results show that after the Arab Spring, there are reasonable prospects of democracy developing. The

⁷⁰ Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, 148-149

⁷¹ "Freedom in the World - Iran," Freedom House, (2012), <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/iran> (accessed November 22, 2012).

⁷² Central Intelligence Agency, "Iran," *The World Factbook*, (last modified November 13, 2012), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed November 22, 2012).

challenges confronting Egypt and Iraq in democratizing are significant, including internal strife, lack of prior history of liberal democracy, and poor economic forecasts. In order to overcome these hurdles, it is important that leaders establish and develop norms of constitutional governance, separation of powers, and civil liberties or risk becoming illiberal democracies and not benefitting fully from democratic peace theory. The historical example of France and Germany indicates several of the ways in which the process of democratization could fall short, and also a blueprint for how to speed it up and potentially access the spillover effect achieved in Europe. The Economist Intelligence Unit puts the chances of democracy prevailing across the region at only 20% while the possibility of partial democratic reforms is at 60% and they rank the chance that autocracy will reassert itself at 20%.⁷³ If development continues as it has been, it is likely that some degree of democratic peace theory will be applicable to Middle Eastern states.

References

Abd Rabou, Ahmed. "Egypt After Elections: Towards the Second Republic?" *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 3 (2012): 15-24.

Akyol, Mustafa. "The Blessings of the new Islamist Egypt." *Al Arabya News*, November 25, 2012.

⁷³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Spring Tide: Will the Arab risings yield democracy, dictatorship or disorder?* The Economist, 2011, 31-32.

Arato, Andrew. *Constitution Making Under Occupation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Associated Press. "Egypt reformist warns of Morsi decree turmoil." *CBS News*, November 24, 2012.

Beehner, Lionel, and Greg Bruno. "Iran's Involvement in Iraq." *Council on Foreign Relations*. March 3, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-involvement-iraq/p12521> (accessed November 25, 2012).

Berman, Sheri. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (April 1997): 401-429.

Bernhard, Michael. "The Leadership Secrets of Bismarck." *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 90, no. 6 (2011).

Betts, Richard K. "Conflict or Cooperation? Three Visions Revisited." *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (2010): 186.

Byman, Daniel. "Israel's Pessimistic View of the Arab Spring." *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2011: 123-136.

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> (accessed November 22, 2012).

Dessi, Andrea. *Israel and the Palestinians After the Arab Spring: No Time for Peace*. Working Paper, Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2012.

Dunne, Michele, Amr Hamzawy, and Nathan J Brown. *Egypt - Don't Give Up on Democracy Promotion*. Policy Brief, Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007.

Dyzenhaus, David. "Legal Theory in the Collapse of Weimar: Contemporary Lessons?" *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 1 (March 1997): 121-134.

Economist Intelligence Unit. *Spring Tide: Will the Arab risings yield democracy, dictatorship or disorder?* *The Economist*, 2011, 1-32.

Freedom House. *Freedom House*. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/> (accessed November 22, 2012).

Garfinkle, Adam. "The Impossible Imperative? Conjuring Arab Democracy." *The National Interest*, September 1, 2002.

George, Alexander L, and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005.

Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Making the World Safe for Partial Democracy?: Questioning the Premises of Democracy Promotion." *International Security* (MIT Press) 33, no. 2 (2008): 120-147.

Hamad, Mahmoud. "The Constitutional Challenges in Post-Mubarak Egypt." *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 1 (2012): 51-69.

Inbar, Efraim. "Israel's National Security Amidst Unrest in the Arab World." *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2012: 59-73.

Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. "How Development Leads to Democracy." *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (March 2009).

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Israel-Egypt: A Review of Bilateral Ties*. January 1, 2003.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign+Relations/Bilateral+relations/Israel%E2%80%93Egypt-A+Review+of+Bilateral+Ties.htm> (accessed November 22, 2012).

Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*. 3rd. Translated by M. Campbell Smith. New York City: The MacMillan Company, 1917.

Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York: Random House, 1987.

Larkin, Maurice. *Religion, politics and preferment in France since 1890*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Levy, Daniel. "Can Tahrir Square Come to Tel Aviv?" *The Nation*, September 12, 2011: 36-38.

Livingston, William S, ed. *A Prospect of Liberal Democracy*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979.

Mansfield, Edward D, and Jack L Snyder. "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War." *International Organization* (MIT Press) 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 297-337.

Masoud, Tarek. "Liberty, Democracy, and Discord in Egypt." *The Washington Quarterly*, Fall 2011: 117-129.

Morton, F. L. "Judicial Review in France: A Comparative Analysis." *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 1988: 89-110.

Mousseau, Michael. "The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace." *International Security*, Spring 2009: 52-86.

Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala, and Colm Campbell. "The Paradox of Transition in Conflicted Democracies." (Johns Hopkins University Press) 27, no. 1 (February 2005): 172-213.

Oneal, John R, and Bruce Russett. "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885-1992." *World Politics* (Johns Hopkins University Press) 52, no. 1 (1999).

Otterman, Sharon. "IRAQ: Debaathification." *Council on Foreign Relations*. April 7, 2005. <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/iraq-debaathification/p7853> (accessed November 25, 2012).

Owen, John M. "Iraq and the Democratic Peace." *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2005): 122.

Oxford Analytica. "US/MIDDLE EAST: After Saddam: hopes and realities." *OxResearch Daily Brief Service* (Oxford Analytica Ltd), March 2003: 1.

Russett, Bruce. *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Russett, Bruce, and John Oneal. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001.

Shlaim, Avi. "An Israeli spring?; Rejecting the prospect of greater democracy in the Arab world could put the Jewish state at risk." *The Spectator*, February 25, 2012: 18.

The Coalition Provisional Authority. "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period." *The Coalition Provisional Authority*. March 8, 2004.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090423064920/http://www.cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

Transitional National Assembly Constitutional Committee. "Full Text of Iraqi Constitution." *The Washington Post*. October 12, 2005.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html> (accessed November 12, 2012).

Tucker, Vanessa. *Divergence and Decline: The Middle East and the World after the Arab Spring*. Analysis of Countries at the Crossroads, Freedom House, 2012.

Zakaria, Fareed. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003.