The Spread of Democracy and International Security

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini menolak determinisme dari kaum realis. Politik dalam negeri atau sifat dasar rezim mempengaruhi politik luar negeri, diikuti kemungkinan perang, damai, dan keamanan internasional. Didukung oleh argumen kaum liberal, kaum realis percaya bahwa penyebaran demokrasi akan memberi kontribusi bagi promosi keamanan internasional. Argumen ini didasarkan tiga alasan utama:pertama, persuasi tesis "demokrasi damai", kedua, bukti kuat keberadaan perdamaian demokratis, dan ketiga, kesalahan kritik realis. Mengikuti logika tersebut, akan semakin banyak negara-negara di dunia menjadi demokratis, "zona damai" yang lebih luas akan muncul, dan jumlah konflik dan perang antarnegara semakin berkurang.

Kata Kunci:Collective security, konsep orthodox, paradigma realis

Abstract

This paper rejects the determinism of the realist position. Domestic politics or the nature of the regime does influence the foreign behavior of the states, and in turn, the probability of war, peace, and international security. In supporting the liberal argument, it will be argued that the spread of democracy will contribute to the promotion of international security. The argument is based on three main reasons:first, the persuasiveness of "democratic peace" thesis, secondly, the strong evidence of the existence of the democratic peace, and, thirdly, the failure of realist critique. Following the logic, the more the states in the world become democratic, the wider "the zone of peace" will emerge and the less the likely are conflicts and war among states.

Keywords:Collective security, orthodox concept, realist paradigm

INTRODUCTION

This essay discusses the relationship between democracy and international security. It tries to answer a question:*"Why does the spread of democracy contribute to the promotion of international security?"* In the study of international relations, to discus the question is to involve in the general debates between liberals and realists about how to promote international security. On one hand, liberals argue that economic interdependence, international institutions, collective security and *democracy* will produce international security. Realists, on the other hand, reject the claim and argue that it is the *balance of power* that makes stability and security. These differences emerge because both arguments are based on different assumptions about how the world works (Kegley, 1995:4-5).

This essay focuses only on one aspect of the liberal view:the relationship between democracy and international security. Unavoidably, discussing the relationship is also entering the debates between neo-realists and liberals about the nature of explanation in international relations:"the third image" versus "the second image" (Waltz, 1959) or using Walker's term, "outside-in" versus "inside-out" explanation (Walker, 1994). Neo-realists claim that the nature of domestic politics, whether authoritarian or democratic, has nothing to do with state's foreign behavior. States in international system behave similar in the anarchic world of international politics:seeking survival and security by increasing capability, power maximizing and power balancing. Systemic constraint i.e. the anarchical nature of international relations, *the third image*, will make the

behavior of units similarly (Walt, 1979). On the other hand, although liberals agree that the world politics remains anarchic, they argue that the nature of the regime, whether it is liberal democracy or not, does influence the foreign policy behavior and, in turn, the nature of international relations and international security (Doyle, 1995).

This essay rejects the determinism of the realist position. Domestic politics or the nature of regime does influence the foreign behavior of the states, and in turn, the probability of war, peace, and international security. In supporting the liberal argument, *it will be argued that the spread of democracy will contribute to the promotion of international security. The argument is based on three main reasons:first, the persuasiveness of "democratic peace" thesis, secondly, the strong evidence of the existence of the democratic peace, and, thirdly, the failure of realist critique.* Following the logic, the more the states in the world become democratic, the wider "the zone of peace" will emerge and the less the likely are conflicts and war among states.

The organization of this essay is as follows. The *first* section elaborates the concept of security used in this discussion. The *second* section explores the persuasiveness of democratic peace thesis:the logic and its empirical evidence. The *third* section demonstrates the failure of the realist critique. The *fourth* section evaluates the implication of the spread of democracy for the global security, followed by concluding remark.

ANALYSIS
THE CONCEPT OF "SECURITY"

What does "security" mean? Scholars never agree what it really means because it is a highly contested concept (Lipschutz, 1995). Especially after the end of the cold war, hot debates about the definition and the redefinition of the concept of security emerge. In general, the positions in the debates can be classified along one of three axes. The *first* is the attempts to *broaden* the narrow "orthodox concept" of security—the realist conception—to include wide of potential "threat," ranging from economic and environmental to human right or migration (e.g., Mathews, 1989). *The*

second is the attempt to *deepen* the agenda *beyond its state centric focus* by moving either down to the level of individual or human security, or up to the level of international or global security (e.g, Buzan, 1992). *The third* is the attempt to *maintain within a state-centric approach,* but deploy diverse terms as modifier to "security" in order to asses different multilateral forms of interstate security cooperation (e.g., Dewitt, 1994).

For the sake of the focus of discussion, without rejecting the significance of the attempts to broaden or to deepen the concept of security, this essay defines "security" in a very narrow, orthodox notion as *the safeguarding the state from threat to its core value that emanate from outside its border and are primarily military in nature.* Of course, it is inadequate definition of security, given the current nature of threat is not merely military dimension, but also economic, social, environmental dimensions (Buzan, 1998). But again, for the sake of analyzing the "democratic peace" thesis the very narrow, limited concept of security will be used in this essay. Borrowing Patrick Morgan (1992) words, "it is important to confine the concept of security to physical safety from deliberate physical harm inflicted internationally. i.e. across national border." For this state-centric realist conception, security refers to *the survival* (core value of security) of *the state* (reference of security) in the realm of international relations. In this very narrow conception, *international security is defined as the absence of war among states.*

Because the definition is purely under the realist tradition, it is important here to elaborate the political and security context of international security:*anarchy.* In this usage, anarchy means the absence of central government. States are the main actors, which claim sovereignty—the right to treat themselves as the ultimate force of governing authority within the territorial limit of their jurisdiction. The anarchic context set the elemental political conditions in which all meaning of international security to be constructed (Buzan, 1991:32). In the self-help anarchic world, states seek to preserve their own sovereignty and security and behave in such a way as to prevent threats from any expansionist center of power from

dominating the system:by increasing capability, maximizing power and power balancing. These power struggle create security dilemma, i.e. an effort of state A to increase its power—possibly for defensive purpose—is perceived by state B as a threat to its security and, in turn, "force" state B to increase its power. These create spiraling effect (arm race), which lead to possible miscalculation and the imminent possibility of war (see, Jervis, 1978). This is the basic context of security from the realist view.

THE "DEMOCRATIC PEACE" THESIS

What does democratic peace thesis claims concerning international security? First of all, democratic peace thesis *starts* from the realist conception of security:anarchy of the global politics and the possibility of war among states. However, it posits a very different view about the behavior of states and its prescription for enhancing security. Neo-realists claim that the behavior of states are *determined* by the structure of anarchy and distribution of capability; the characters of domestic politics or regimes is irrelevant because states will behave similarly regardless their domestic political regime. Democratic peace, on the other hand, seriously challenges the realist claim. It claims that democratic states behave differently toward other democratic states:"democracies almost never fight each other." The neo-realists never accept this proposition because it contradicts with the their basic logic.

So, what is the logic of the democratic peace thesis? Is the claim is persuasive? Is the realist critic persuasive? And what is the implication for the global security? The next sections address the questions.

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THE PERSUASIVENESS OF THE LOGIC

The claim of the democratic peace is generally referred to the seminal work of Michael Doyle (1983) "*Kant, Liberal Legacy, and Foreign Affairs.*" It is argued that states that adhere to liberal principle enjoy a separate peace among themselves, but are likely to wage war against non-liberal states. Both aspects of liberal practices are explained by *liberal principle*.

Doyle regards liberalism as "a distinct ideology and set of institutions." He points out that its essential principle is "the importance of the freedom of the individual" (1983:206). Three set of rights form the foundation of liberalism. *First,* freedom from arbitrary authority, which include freedom of speech, conscience, and the right to own and exchange private property; *Secondly*, the social and economic rights, including the right to equal opportunity in education, health care, and employment; and *thirdly*, the right of democratic participation. Liberalism is based on four *institutions*. *First,* juridical equality of citizens and freedom of religion and the press. *Secondly,* rule by representative legislatures. *Third,* private property. *Fourth,* a market economy. These institutions are shared by the tradition of laissez-faire "conservative" liberalism and social welfare "liberal" liberalism, although the two traditions differ in how much they emphasize each institution (Doyle, 1983:207).

Internationally, liberalism holds that liberal states should not intervene in the affairs of other liberal states (Doyle, 1983:213-24). State in which citizen enjoy liberty respect one another's rights to political independence. This mutual respect accounts for the fact that "constitutionally liberal states have yet to engage in war with one another." Such war may not be impossible, but Doyle argues that they are highly unlikely. He claims that there is liberal *zone of peace* whose members are unlikely to even threaten war against one another. Even when liberal states have had conflicting economic interests, they have resolves their differences short of war. And in major wars, liberal states have tended to fight in the same side.

Kant's "Perpetual Peace" provides the *basic explanation* of the liberal peace—and the tendency of liberal state to wage war against non-liberal states. The liberal peace is not the result of public control over foreign policy or economic interdependence. Instead, Doyle attributes it to the features of *republican regimes* (Doyle, 1983:225-32). Republics are polities with market economies, the legal equality of citizens, and representative governments with a separation of powers. States with republican constitution will find it more difficult

to declare war than absolute monarchies. Republics may still go to war, but they are more cautious than autocracy. Liberal states will only fight for liberal reasons. Republics can not justify war against other republics, which preserve liberal standards of domestic justice. In the longer run, commerce among republic bolsters the liberal peace, because not threatening other republics increase each republic benefits from economic ties. A liberal, open international economy further reduces incentive for war by removing many economic decisions from the direct realm of state policy.

Liberal principle may create a separate peace among liberal states, but Doyle (1983:219) recognizes that these same principles also cause liberal aggression against non-liberal states. Liberal states often fail to resolve their difference with autocracy peacefully; if war erupts, it often is waged as a "crusade" to spread liberal values. Liberal intervention in the internal affairs of weak states, however well intentioned, often fails to achieve their objectives and actually make matter worse.

To support Doyle arguments, Russett presents the *core argument* why peace among democratic states exists. *The first,* which he calls the *cultural/normative model,* democracy argues that decision makers in democracy follow norms of peaceful conflict resolution that reflect domestic experiences and values (Russett, 1993:31-8). Because democracies are biased against resolving domestic disputes violently, they try to resolve international disputes peacefully. Democracies also expect that other democracies will share similar preferences. No such expectations exist with regard to non-democracies. The norms of peaceful conflict resolution thus create a separate peace among democracy, but does not prevent democracy from fighting non-democracies.

The second explanation for how democracy causes a democratic peace is the *structural/institutional model.* It argues that domestic institutional constraints, including check and balance, separation of powers, and the need for public debates, will slow or constrain to go to war (Russett, 1993:38-42). Leader in democracies

will recognize that other democratic leaders are similarly constrained. As a result, democracy will have more time to resolve disputes peacefully and less fear of surprise attack.

To strengthen the democratic peace logic, lets look at the evidence of the existence of the democratic peace collated by R.J. Rummel (see, Peterson, 1996:101).

Data of Wars* 1816 - 1991

Belligerents	Dyad**
Democracies vs democracies	0
Democracies vs non-democracies	155
Non-democracies vs non-democracies	198

Total 353

Notes: *Any military action with at least 1000 battle deaths
**Pairings of belligerents

Source:Peterson (1996:101)

From the data, *it is empirically evident* that specific characters of liberal-democratic regime produce foreign policy behavior that deviate from the realist prediction. Although democracies behave on the logic of power politics toward non-democracy, they behave peacefully toward other fellow democracies. Consequently, it has great implication and prescription for creating global security. The more states in the world become liberal-democratic, the more "zone of peace" will emerge. Understandably, the realists reject the claim. But is the realist critic persuasive?

THE FAILURE OF THE REALIST CRITICS

Realists strongly reject the democratic peace thesis at hand. According to the realist logic, the permanent absence of war between mutually recognized liberal democracy is impossible. Liberal states, like other states, will base their foreign policy on the power politics logic. Realists' rejection based on number of claims. But it will be shown here that the realist claim is unpersuasive.

First, realist argues that if neither democratic

structures nor norms alone can explain the democratic peace, then there is no democratic peace (Layne, 1994:160-1). However, this criticism has a logical fallacy. As Owen (1996:119) points out, structure and norms work *in tandem*:Liberal ideas proscribe wars among democracy and democratic institutions ensure that this proscription is followed.

Secondly, realists argue that if there was democratic peace, then liberal democracy would never makes threat against one another. They argues that the logic of the democratic peace proposition implies that liberal democracies will never try to coerce one another. But of course, there is no inherent "logic" of democratic peace independent of an explicit argument about how it works. Owen (1996:120) rejects this claim. His argument is as follows:*First,* liberal democracies do not always consider each other liberal. For instance, what a scholar in 1999 considers democratic is not always what a statement in 1899 considered democratic. *Second,* liberal democracies are sometimes governed by illiberal leaders who are somewhat autonomous in implementing foreign policy. Such leader may make threat; they are simply unable to mobilize the nation for war, due to the constraints of democratic institutions.

Third, realist claim that if there were democraic peace, then public opinion in liberal democracy would never want war with a fellow liberal democracy. Like the previous claim, this one makes assumptions:that all citizens of liberal democracy are liberal and that they agree on which foreign states are also liberal. Neither is necessary for democratic peace to occur (Owen, 1996:121). All that is necessary for statesmen to be constrained is that they believe war would be too unpopular. For this, a nation's population need not all be liberal.

Fourth, realists note that Wilhelmine Germany was a democracy, and therefore democracy fought one another in world war I (Layne, 1994). This is wrong. Even before the war, most British and American saw Germany as undemocratic. And the counselor was responsible to the emperor William rather than the legislature (Owen, 1996).

Finally, Christopher Layne (1994) also explores on the basis of four serious crises among democratic states (Franco-American relations 1976-78; Anglo-American relations 1803-12, 1861-63, and 1895-96), that theses did not escalate because of "realist" rather that "liberal" reasons. Other realist, David Spiro (1994), claim that the democratic peace findings are is not statistically significant, given that wars occur rarely and that democracies are also quite rare in the international system. Both attacks miss the mark. *First,* two of Layne's four cases have been thoroughly investigated by John Owen who insists that the lack of escalation in Anglo-American relations in 1861 (US Civil War) and in 1895-96 (venezuela crisis) had much to do *with mutual perception of them as liberal democracies* (Owen, 1993). As for the 1923 Ruhr crisis, another cases of Layne's "near misses," it is equally questionable whether the French public and elite's perceive Germany during the 1923 Ruhr crisis as a liberal democracy, given instability of Weimar republic at the time. Not a very persuasive database on which to challenge the "democratic peace" proposition. *Secondly*, as Spiro's (1994) claim about the statistical insignificance of the "democratic peace" finding, Bruce Russett rebuttal takes care of most points. If data are split into ever-smaller parts, it is mathematically impossible to find statistical significance. Russett then used Spiro method of year by year analysis with regard to the "militarized interstate dispute" data and confirm the democratic peace proposition in statistically significant way (Russett, 1995).

In sum, the challenge to the democratic peace proposition rests on rather dubious assumptions and equally doubtful empirical analysis. That's why the critics are really unpersuasive and flawed.

THE IMPLICATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Possibly, the realist view that the world politics remains anarchic is true. But it does not necessary mean that states should always rely on balance of power to gain security. In fact, the balance of power is too dangerous policy to rely on. As Rosecrance (1992:66-9) indicates history shows that it was too

risky and failed to create stable security. Liberals' claim that democracy never fights each other is very important finding in understanding and "crafting" international security in the anarchic world. Borrowing Russett (1990:123) words, "..this is one of the strongest nontrivial and non-tautological generalization that can be made about international relations." Democracies, it is argued, create *zone of peace* among themselves. The consequence of the logic is that the more states become democracies, the wider "the zone of peace" emerges and the stronger the foundation of international security. Of course, this does not necessary mean that democracy is the only mean to achieve international peace and security. Other factors such as international institutions, economic interdependence and international rules and norms works in tandem to produce international peace. But democracy is one of the important pillars of international security.

Given the persuasive argument of democratic peace, optimism that peace will break out has a strong foundation. The collapse of totalitarian in Eastern Europe and the retreat of authoritarian governments and the spread of democracy in the third world at the end of cold war give a promise that the wider zone of peace will emerge. Samuel Huntington's (1991) *The Third Wave* and Fukuyama's (1990) *The End of History* confirms the optimism. However, that is not the case. As Mansfield and Snyder (1996) strongly argue that *democratizing states* become more likely to go to war. They suggest that *immature democracies* are a force for war, not peace. Mansfield and Snyder point out four reasons why democratizing countries get into war. *First*, elite group from the old regime often uses appeals to nationalism as they compete for domestic power in new democratic political arena. *Second*, new elite found it necessary to resort to similar nationalistic appeals. *Third*, newly mobilized public is often hard to control. *Fourth*, if incipient democracy collapse, the return to autocracy increases the chance of going to war. The basic Problem of democratizing sates is that *they lack stabilizing institution of mature democracies*. This contributes to a political impasse in new democracies:it becomes hard to form stable coalition that can stay in power and pursue coherent policies. As a result, elite indulges a short-run thinking and reckless policy making that can lead to war.

Although, Mansfield and Snyder do not reject the democratic peace thesis—"that the *stable* democracy almost never fight one another," their findings restraint us to posit an extreme optimism given the security implication of unstable character of democratizing states at the end of cold war. The implication of the finding is that the spread of democracy will promote international security only after the new democracies become strong and stable. But during the transitional period, the new emerging, democratizing states posit the possibility of the war. In the policy level, international society (especially, strong liberal-democracies) should consistently promote the spread and the development of democracies around the world carefully and "prudently" by combining (or promoting) other factors that will minimise the possibility of instability during the "transition period:" the economic interdependence, international rules and norms, and stronger international institutions (Ruggie, 1992; Blechman, 1998).

CONCLUSION

There are two points from the discussions. *First,* rejecting the realist claims, this essay argues that there is strong foundation to support the democratic peace thesis:"democracies never fight each other." The support is based on three main reasons:*firstly,* the persuasiveness of the democratic peace logic, *secondly,* its strong empirical evidence and *thirdly*, the failure of the realist critique. Following the logic, the more states in the world turn to the democratic form of government, the wider the "zone of peace" will emerge and the stronger the foundation for international security. The end of the cold war gives a strong foundation for such optimism. International society should promote the spread of democracy.

Secondly, because of the danger of immature, *democratizing* states, the promotion of development of democracies around the world should be managed carefully and "prudently" by anchoring (promoting)

other factors that will minimise the possibility of instability during the "transition period:" the economic interdependence, international rules and norms, and stronger international institutions.

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