

“Democratic War”: Democratic Peace Theory and the War in Former Yugoslavia

Miljenko Antić and Jadranka Vlahovec¹

Summary

This article analyses the democratic peace theory which holds that democracies do not fight each other. It tries to investigate whether the war in former Yugoslavia supports or rebukes this theory. The investigation of Mansfield and Snyder best explains the conflict in Yugoslavia. It was a conflict between democratizing states, which does not rebuke democratic peace theory, but it does challenge it because events in former Yugoslavia show that democratic elections – and they are *conditio sine qua non* of democracy – do not prevent wars.

Key words: democratic peace, Yugoslavia, war, elections, democratization.

“When will this democracy pass, so that we can live like human beings once again?” (graffiti in Sarajevo during the War)

Introduction

According to Levy (1989:88), the proposition that democracies seldom, if ever, go to war against one another is “the closest thing we have to an empirical law in the study of international relations”. Similarly, according to Muravchik (1991:8), “the more democratic the world, the more peaceful it is likely to be. Various researchers have shown that war between democracies has almost never occurred in the modern world”. If above statements are correct, the democratic peace theory has practical significance. If democracies never go to war with one another, then the best prescription for international peace may be to encourage the spread of democracy. Yet, the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia started just after the first democratic elections in the country. Was it by accident? Did democratization contribute to the outbreak of wars? Were the countries which were established on the territory of former Yugoslavia prior to the war

¹ Miljenko Antić izvanredni je profesor na Građevinskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu; Jadranka Vlahovec nastavnica je engleskog jezika pri XII. gimnaziji u Zagrebu.

democracies or not? Did people actually vote for war? Or was this a war for democracy against those who wanted to prevent democratization on the territory of former Yugoslavia? These are the main question that should be addressed in this article. In other words, this article should answer the following question: do events in the former Yugoslavia confirm or rebuke the theory of democratic peace?

Democratic Peace Theory

The democratic peace proposition is not new; in fact, it can be traced back as far as Immanuel Kant's famous essay "Perpetual Peace" (1795). What he essentially says is that people would never vote to go to war unless they had to defend themselves. Therefore, if all the nations were republics, there would be no war. According to Kant, there are three important elements crucial to lasting peace, and today they are interpreted as international institutions, democratic governance and international commerce. In order to make peace perpetual, all of the three elements must be in place.

Kant's theory was further developed in Dean Babst's work "A Force for Peace" (1972). He was the first person to carry out statistical research on this topic. After that there were many proponents of the theory of democratic peace. Most researchers support the dyadic peace, which means that democracies do not fight each other, as opposed to monadic peace, which simply claims that democracies are more peaceful in general.

A large number of studies find support for the existence of democratic peace.² Among those who were in favour of the democratic peace theory was Michael Doyle (1996), who in his article "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs" states that liberal states are likely to regard non-liberal states as possible aggressors because of their failure to uphold liberal principles at home and in major wars. Liberal states tend to fight on the same side. According to Doyle, republics are polities with market economies, the equality of citizens, and representative government with a separation of powers. States with republican constitutions find it more difficult to declare war than monarchies. Liberal states will only fight for liberal reasons. If war happens, it is often seen as a crusade to spread liberal values. Therefore the continuing spread of liberal regimes will bring global peace in the future.

Bruce Russett (1993, 1995) also argues that democratic culture affects the way leaders resolve different conflicts. Democratic leaders are accustomed to negotiation and compromise. He holds that these social norms emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century. According to him, democracies were not prone to fight each other, which was strengthened when democratic culture and the degree of democracy increased. Increasing democratic stability allowed partners in foreign affairs to perceive certain

2 See, for example, Bremmer (1992, 1992), Chan (1997), Dixon (1994), etc. The most important articles are presented below.

nations as reliable democracies. Furthermore, the alliances between democracies during the two world wars and the Cold War also strengthened democratic norms.

Michael Mousseau in his two articles, "Market Prosperity, Democratic Consolidation, and Democratic Peace and Cooperation" (2000) and "Comparing New Theory with Prior Beliefs: Market Civilization and the Democratic Peace" (2005), argues that it is market-oriented development that creates the norms and values that explain both democracy and peace. In less developed countries individuals often depend on social networks that impose conformity to in-group norms and beliefs, and loyalty to group leaders. However, voters in marketplace democracies accept only impartial "liberal" governments, and constrain leaders to pursue their interests in securing equal access to global markets and in resisting those who distort such access with force. Thus marketplace democracies share common foreign policy interests. When disputes do originate between marketplace democracies, they are less likely than others to escalate to violence because both states perceive greater long-term interests in the supremacy of law over power politics. Therefore, market-oriented democracies support the democratic peace theory.

According to Ish-Shalom (2007-8), the democratic peace theory relies on political platform which consists of three major premises. Firstly, expanding democracy will enlarge the zone of peace and overcome the threats of civilization wars, global terrorism, and rogue states. Secondly, democracy should be understood structurally rather than culturally and morally. Thirdly, building the structures of democracy is also possible in civilizations whose cultures and moralities are incompatible with those of the democratic West. The three premises explain neoconservatives' preoccupation with promoting democracy abroad, particularly in the Middle East, even by force if necessary.

John M. Owen (1994) argues that liberal ideas cause liberal democracies to tend away from war with one another. Liberal democracies are those states with a visible liberal presence, which feature free speech and regular competitive elections. Individuals everywhere should have freedom, and wars should be fought in the cause of peace and freedom. Owen examines historical cases where perceptions question the democratic peace theory. If its peer states do not believe that one country is a liberal democracy, leaders may be pushed towards war. Thus illiberal states are viewed *prima facie* as unreasonable and potentially dangerous. For example, France did not consider Germany a fellow liberal democracy before World War I. Furthermore, in 1861, southern slavery prevented liberals in the Union from considering the Confederacy a liberal democracy. Liberals will trust states they consider liberal and mistrust states they consider illiberal. When liberals observe a foreign state becoming liberal by their own standards, they will expect pacific relations with it. Joseph Stalin became "Uncle Joe" when Americans needed to justify fighting alongside the Soviet Union against Germany in World War

II. Therefore, if leaders want war, they simply define the rival state as despotic; if they want peace, they define it as a friend. Owen concludes that the instances of threats by one liberal state against another do not invalidate the democratic peace proposition, because such threats are made when liberal states do not recognize each other, or when illiberal leaders are in power.

Supporters of realism are some of the greatest critics of the democratic peace theory. They generally argue that it is not democracy or the absence of, but considerations and evaluations of power, that cause peace or war. Layne (1999), Spiro (1996), Oren (1995), Farber and Gowa (1996) and Gowa (1999) jointly conclude that the relationship between democracy and peace is coincidental and, therefore, they argue against the democratic peace proposition. In “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace” Christopher Layne (1999) selects four crises in which democracies came close to war. His review of the historical record concludes that in those cases democracies avoided war, but there is no evidence that they did so because they shared democratic norms. The indicators that should have been present were absent. Instead, the democracies behaved in a manner predicted by realism: they acted on the basis of calculations of national interest and used threats when vital interests were at stake. Layne also argues that looking at cases where war was possible is a better way to test the democratic peace theory. Layne also questions whether there have been wars involving democracies. He classifies the War of 1812 and the U.S. Civil War as wars between democratic states. Furthermore, he claims that in 1914 Germany was as democratic as France and Britain, and that World War I should also be regarded as a war between democracies. From his empirical analysis, Layne cautions at making promotion of democracy an aim of U.S. foreign policy. If there is no empirical support for the democratic zone of peace, it would be a mistake to try to create a democratic world. Therefore, attempts to spread democracy to volatile regions would raise risks of war.

David Spiro’s “The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace” (1996) argues against the democratic peace theory by stating that the apparent absence of war between democracies is statistically insignificant. For most of international history before 1945, there were few democracies and little chance for them to fight each other. Spiro also suggests that institutional explanations of democratic peace are weak, because institutional constraints on a government’s ability to wage war would make democracies less war-prone. The data, however, reveal that democracies frequently go to war against non-democracies. Spiro also criticizes studies of democratic peace for failing to define democracy clearly. Moreover, he states that shifting definitions of war have also made democratic peace appear more significant than it is. Many supporters of the democratic peace exclude the U.S. Civil War, Spanish-American War of 1898, and Finland’s World War II alliance with the Axis powers against the Western democracies. Therefore, Spiro

suggests that the number of wars between democracies is higher than claimed by the proponents of democratic peace proposition.

Ido Oren's "The Subjectivity of the 'Democratic' Peace: Changing U.S. Perceptions of Imperial Germany" (1995) analyses how statesmen change their definitions of democracy. Oren holds that pairs of countries do not remain at peace because they regard one another as democracies. Instead, countries that have an interest in remaining at peace tend to define one another as democracies. Oren argues that American leaders have tried to interpret democracy to mean "countries like the U.S.". Oren criticizes the literature on democratic peace for overlooking how the meaning of democracy changed over the course of U.S. history. To support this argument, Oren focuses on how some prominent American scholars classified Imperial Germany. Before World War I they regarded Germany as "the most genuinely democratic" state. However, after the War they changed their view and referred to the pre-war Germany as an autocratic state. Oren briefly mentions two additional cases: Russia and Japan. He points out that the United States regarded them as more similar to the United States whenever U.S. interests called for a closer relationship with them.

In "Politics and Peace" Henry Faber and Joanne S. Gowa (1996) assess the analytical and empirical grounds of the democratic peace theory. They suggest that the primary norm identified in the literature on democratic peace is the norm of peaceful conflict resolution. However, this norm, they argue, is not unique to democracies. All types of states are likely to accept such a norm, because wars are costly ways of resolving disputes. Faber and Gowa also state that the democratic peace theory is undermined by the well-known propensity of democracies to wage wars against non-democratic states. Furthermore, they argue that there is a lack of a statistically significant difference in the probability of war between pairs of democracies and between pairs of other types of polities, except in the years since 1945. They claim that absence of war between democracies during that period reflects their common interest in allying against the Soviet Union. Therefore, they conclude that democratic peace seems to be an artefact of the Cold War.

In "Democratization and the Danger of War" Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (1995) argue that democratizing states become more likely to go to war. They do not dispute that democratic peace exists between mature, stable democracies, but they suggest that immature democracies are more war-prone. Mansfield and Snyder present data indicating that democratizing states are more likely to be involved in war in the years immediately after the start of their democratization. This increase becomes greater one, five and ten years after the beginning of democratization (i.e. inclusion of competitiveness of participation, executive constraints and openness of executive recruitment). They find that increases in these measures also increase the probability of

war. Compared to states that stay or become autocracies, states that make the transition from autocracy to democracy are more than twice as likely to be in war during the decade after democratization. Mansfield and Snyder also note that great powers have become more warlike as they have democratized.³ According to Mansfield and Snyder, there are several reasons why new democracies get into war, but the basic problem of democratizing states is that they lack stabilizing institutions of mature democracies.

The First Democratic Elections in Former Yugoslavia (1990) and the Outbreak of War

The war in ex-Yugoslavia is sometimes mentioned as an example where democratic states did fight each other.⁴ Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro held free elections before the war. Therefore, they fulfilled the first criterion for one country to be considered a democracy. However, proponents of democratic peace theory usually exclude Yugoslav Wars from the list of “democratic wars”, claiming that above mentioned countries (with exception of Slovenia) had authoritarian governments.⁵ In order to clarify whether countries of former Yugoslavia were democratic before the outbreak of war (and during the war), the next section provides a brief overview of the first democratic elections in countries which were involved in these wars.

Croatia

A multiparty system was established in Croatia on February 5, 1990, when oppositional parties were legalized (Đurić et al., 1990). The first round of elections (based on majoritarian electoral law) was held in April, followed by a second round in May 1990. The winner of the election was the oppositional Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which received 40 per cent of votes (in the first round) and 58 per cent of seats. Former communists (SDP), together with SDP-backed joint candidates, received 28 per cent of votes and 30 per cent of mandates. The Coalition of People’s Accord received 11 per cent of votes and 6 per cent of seats. Finally, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) received 2 per cent of votes and 1 per cent of seats.⁶ It is important to stress that elections were completely free and fair, without major incidents, and that all parties had equal oppor-

3 They prove their hypothesis by the data gathered by Human Security Watch that represent the countries that have experienced international armed conflicts from 1946-2003.

4 See, for example, Schwartz and Skinner (2002:160) and Tarzi (2007).

5 See, for example, Lenhard (2010:5).

6 Source: Grdešić et al. (1991)

tunity to present their programmes. No one party challenged the results; the ruling former communists accepted the results and transferred the power to the winners of the election (HDZ). In a word, Croatia had completely free and fair elections before the outbreak of the war.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The first democratic elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on November 18, 1990. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) – supported mainly by Muslims – received 36 per cent of seats. The Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) received 30 per cent of seats and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) 18 per cent of seats. Communists – who received only 6 per cent of seats – accepted the electoral defeat and peacefully transferred power to the three above mentioned national parties (Tomić and Herceg, 1998:77). According to the authors, “the first democratic elections were very democratic on all election levels and were held in a very tolerant atmosphere” (p. 84).

Slovenia

The first democratic elections in Slovenia took place in April 1990. The electoral system was very complicated and combined plurality electoral law for the Chamber of Workers, majoritarian electoral law for the Chamber of Municipalities and proportional electoral law for the Chamber of Political Organizations. Former communist party lost the elections and the clear winner of the elections was Demos, a coalition of oppositional parties that received approximately 60 per cent of mandates (see Krivić, 1990). The Communist Party in this country also accepted electoral results and transferred power to the winners of the elections.

Serbia and Montenegro

Situation in Serbia and Montenegro was different than in other republics of former Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (and Macedonia) oppositional parties won the first democratic elections. However, the Serbian Communist Party (that only changed its name to Socialist Party) and its leader Milošević won not only the first elections but also continued to rule the country until the year 2000. This means that throughout the period of war the former communist party was in power. In the first multiparty elections (December 1990), the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won 46.1 per cent of votes and 77.6 per cent of mandates. Furthermore, the Socialist Party candidate, Milošević, handily won the elections in the first round with 65.3 per cent of votes (Goati, 2001:209-10).

Of course, one may claim that people in Serbia were not able to predict in advance that by voting for Milošević and his party they would actually support the war. However, they continued to support him even after Serbia attacked Slovenia, then Croatia and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the presidential election of December 1992, Milošević won in the first round with 53.24 per cent of votes. His party (SPS) also won in the 1993 elections receiving 36.7 per cent of votes and 49.2 per cent of seats (Goati, 2001:216-7). This means that the policy of “Great Serbia” had popular support. In a way, Milošević only fulfilled voters’ preferences. According to Goati (2001:90), “Slobodan Milošević received, in these elections, support for his policy... The support meant that the majority of citizens, implicitly, agreed with Serbian isolation from the international community.” Furthermore, oppositional parties also supported the policy of “Great Serbia”. According to Goati (2001:64), there was a consensus among all the main Serbian political parties that the borders between former republics (that became independent states) ought not be respected. Since other countries did not want to relinquish their territories and were willing to defend them, it was obvious that all the main political parties and voters who voted for the main parties actually supported the war. In addition, the civil society also supported the war policy. Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, in its Memorandum, wrote a pretext for Milošević’s policy. Serbian Orthodox Church was also in favour of the “all Serbs in one country” policy. Milošević received support from the most important Serbian intellectuals, including the greatest writers (for example, Dobrica Ćosić, who later even became the President of Yugoslavia). The spirit of these days was skilfully explained by Zakaria (1997:29):

On December 8, 1996, Jack Lang made a dramatic dash to Belgrade. The French celebrity politician, formerly minister of culture, had been inspired by the student demonstrations involving tens of thousands against Slobodan Milosevic... Lang wanted to lend his moral support to the Yugoslav opposition. The leaders of the movement received him in their offices ... only to boot him out, declare him ‘an enemy of the Serbs’, and order him to leave the country. It turned out that the students opposed Milosevic *not for starting the war but for failing to win.* (italics – M. A.)

A very similar situation was that in Montenegro, where the ruling communist party (Savez komunista Crne Gore) won the first multiparty elections winning 56.2 per cent of votes and 66.4 per cent of mandates. In addition, the party candidate, Momir Bulatović, was elected President of Montenegro with 76.1 per cent of votes (Goati, 2001:210, 212). Montenegro also participated in the aggression on Croatia in 1991, which means that both Montenegro and Croatia had democratically elected governments during the war.

From this analysis it is clear that all the countries held multiparty elections prior to the war. Furthermore, governments of these countries had electoral legitimacy. So, is

the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia proof that the “democratic peace” theory is wrong? The question will be answered in the next section.

Does the War in Former Yugoslavia Support or Rebuke the Theory of Democratic Peace?

There is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding criteria for the list of wars between democracies. Therefore, this section provides a short explanation of two basic terms – war and democracy.

According to Small and Singer (1982), “to be counted as participant, each state involved in an interstate war must have suffered at least 100 fatalities or sent at least 1,000 troops into active combat. States involved in wars against non-state actors must have sustained (in combination with any allies) at least 1,000 deaths in battle during each year of the conflict”. On the basis of this definition, conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were wars but that in Slovenia was not.⁷

The term democracy is derived from the Greek word *demokratia*, which actually means the rule of the people. Plato (1995:291) defined democracy as a form of government based on the power of the multitude. For Aristotle (1950:1279a), democracy represents sovereign power exercised by many. Modern definitions of democracy apply this term with elections and protection of civil liberties. According to Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán (2001:41), “without respect for the core civil liberties, traditionally associated with democracy, a regime is not democratic in today’s understanding of the word. Without protection of civil liberties, the electoral process itself is vitiated”. Therefore, the authors use their own definition. “We define democracy as a regime (1

7 Democratic peace theory deals with both interstate and intrastate wars. However, it might be important to clarify whether the war in Yugoslavia was a civil war or an interstate war. The claim that the war was a civil war – as the Republic of Croatia was not internationally recognized at the time of the outbreak of war – is very convincingly refuted by Srđa Popović (capital letters and italics as in the original): “The recognition of the other subjects of international law does not establish statehood, but accepts the *ALREADY EXISTING* legal fact (that is indicated in the word ‘recognition’) which *PRECEDES* the recognition. This recognition operates, therefore, *ex tunc*, i.e. backwards from the date of the occurrence of the state. Thus, the Republic of Croatia was an independent state at the time it was attacked because it declared its independence before the war. However, it is less known that Serbia had also declared its independence with its Constitution on September 28, 1990, a year before the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. Article 2 of the Constitution says, “The Republic of Serbia regulates and provides: sovereignty, *independence* [italics – M. A.], and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and its international position and relations with other countries and international organizations ... (and) the defence and security of the Republic of Serbia.” According to Article 8, ‘the armed forces in peace and war are managed by the President of the Republic of Serbia.” Thus, says Popović, “the international character of the conflict stems from the fact of the existence of a sovereign and independent Serbia from the very beginning of the conflict”. (*Feral Tribune*, May 21, 1994)

that sponsors free and fair competitive elections for legislature and the executive; (2) that allows for inclusive adult citizenship; (3) that protects civil liberties and political rights; and (4) in which the elected governments really govern and military is under civilian control.”

According to Przeworski, democracy is a regime “in which those who govern are selected through contested elections”. Furthermore, Przeworski uses another criterion for classification: “whenever in doubt, we classify as democracies only those systems in which incumbent parties actually did lose elections” (Przeworski et al., 2000:15, 18).

Vanhanen (1990, 1997) measures democracy on the basis of competition and participation. According to the author (1997:34), “we should try to formulate intersubjectively usable and reliable measures of democracy based on available quantitative data... Quantitative measure of democracy would be more useful for scientific purposes than various measures based on subjective evaluations”. In Vanhanen’s books, competition is measured by subtracting the largest parties’ share of the vote from 100 and participation is measured by voter turnout.

According to Przeworski’s definition, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina did fulfil, prior to the war, the main criterion for democracy – change in power as a result of elections. However, Serbia and Montenegro did not. Nevertheless, if Vanhanen’s criterion is used, there is no doubt that a dramatic change occurred in all countries of former Yugoslavia, including Serbia and Montenegro, where opposition also entered parliament for the first time after decades of communist dictatorship and communist monopole of power. In a word, there is no doubt that no one country of former Yugoslavia (especially not Serbia and Montenegro) established full-fledged, consolidated democracy after the first democratic elections. However, there is also no doubt that all of them made the crucial step towards democracy, enabling a multiparty system and enabling oppositional parties to run in the elections for all levels of government. Furthermore, as it was mentioned above, in 4 out of 6 republics oppositional parties won the elections and took power as a result of those elections. In addition, and this is very important to stress, *even in Serbia and Montenegro former communists won because of the will of the people rather than as a result of an electoral fraud*. In all republics of former Yugoslavia communists had an advantage over the opposition. Communists had monopoly of power for 45 years, a well-developed party infrastructure, abundant financial resources, control over media and control of all other state institutions. Therefore, the main question is not why former communist won the elections in Serbia and Montenegro but rather why they lost the elections in 4 out of 6 republics. The answer is simple – because in those four republics people wanted change in power. In Serbia and Montenegro they did not. According to Goati (2001:39):

Majority of experts and international observers concluded that the December 1990 elections in Serbia and Montenegro were 'free'. They concluded that it was not possible to eliminate totally, in such a short period, all the remnants of almost half a century of dominance of the communist parties. As a matter of fact, these remnants (abundant financial resources, cadres in media and electoral administration) were obvious in the elections in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. However, in these four republics former communist parties were defeated (in spite of all the advantages they had). Yet, they handily won in Serbia and Montenegro.

It might be useful to make a comparison between the elections in former Yugoslavia in 1990 and the presidential elections in the USA in 2000. According to Ó Tuathail (2006:123), "George W. Bush was elected president of the United States after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the termination of vote recounts in the state of Florida in December 2000 (if all votes had been counted, later analysis showed, the Democratic candidate Al Gore would have won Florida and thus the presidency)". In other words, during the period between 2001 and 2004 the USA did not fulfil the minimum requirement for democracy: that the government was elected in fair elections. Still, the USA was labelled a "free" country during this period. The main point is the following: in spite of some democratic deficits, people in former Yugoslavia elected political leaders in relatively free and fair elections. Furthermore, they freely expressed their political preferences. The policy of "Great Serbia" was not just a programme of political elites. According to a survey (quoted in Goati, 2001:64), just 18.3 per cent of supporters of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), 21.4 per cent of supporters of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and 28.1 per cent of supporters of DEPOS (democratic opposition) were in favour of the recognition of borders between republics as international borders between newly established countries. The changing of borders should have been made in favour of Serbia. In other words, a great majority of people in Serbia voted in favour of the policy of "Great Serbia." Since a great majority of people in other republics (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) did not want to give territories of their countries to Serbia and since Serbia was willing to achieve "Great Serbia" using force, the war was inevitable. In short, people in Serbia voted for the policy of "Great Serbia" and people in other republics voted for politicians who promised to protect the territorial integrity of their countries, even if that meant war. Consequently, the war in former Yugoslavia was a "democratic war", i.e., following preferences of their voters, politicians did not have a choice but to accept war. Politicians in Serbia who did not want to change the borders and who were against the aggression on other republics had very weak support among voters and politicians who were for the changing of borders, even by force, got overwhelming support. Similarly, only those politicians who promised to protect sovereignty and territorial integrity of attacked countries had chances to win elections in

Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (excluding the representatives of Serbs in the latter two countries). Briefly, people in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia voted, consciously or unconsciously, for war and this fact seriously challenges the theory of democratic peace.

However, is it possible to claim – since in two republics the communist retained power and in four of them the opposition won – that this was actually a war between non-democratic and democratic countries? There is no doubt that one of the reasons for war was an attempt of the old communist elite to prevent oppositional parties to take power. Since communists won the elections in Serbia and Montenegro, it was only logical that the members of the old nomenclature – especially the military establishment – gave their full support to Slobodan Milošević and Momir Bulatović, the only communists that won the elections. In addition, members of this old elite (mainly Serbs) supported the aggression on Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, hoping that military defeat of those republics might prevent the communists' loss of power even in those three countries. In addition, there is no doubt that communists manipulated the elections in Serbia, where the opposition did not have full access to the media and where some politicians and journalists were assassinated (Stambolić, Ćuruvia, Drašković). So, can we conclude that war in Yugoslavia was actually a civil war between communists on one side and oppositional parties that won elections in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other side?

The answer to this question cannot be affirmative because communists in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina gave their full support to new, democratically elected governments (with the exception of communists of Serbian nationality). Furthermore, oppositional parties in Serbia also supported the aggression on Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other words, the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia was a war between republics rather than a war between communists and the opposition.

Here we come to the main question of this chapter: do events in the former Yugoslavia confirm or rebuke the theory of democratic peace? Firstly, there is no doubt that the events in former Yugoslavia do not rebuke the claim that *consolidated* democracies do not fight each other. To put it simply, no one country became a consolidated democracy just after the first democratic elections and the war in former Yugoslavia erupted just a few months after the first multiparty elections. However, there is also no doubt that the war in former Yugoslavia *does* challenge some important elements of the democratic peace theory.

After analysing the first democratic elections in Yugoslavia we will now return to the “democratic peace theory” in order to check it once again. Immanuel Kant is usually considered father of democratic peace theory and overviews of this theory regularly start with his name. Kant argues (2010:13-4):

According to the Republican Constitution, the consent of the citizens as members of the State is required to determine at any time the question, 'Whether there shall be war or not?' Hence, nothing is more natural than that they should be very loath to enter upon so undesirable an undertaking; for in decreeing it, they would necessarily be resolving to bring upon themselves all the horrors of war. And, in their case, this implies such consequences as these: to have to fight in their own persons; to supply the costs of the war out of their own property; to have sorrowfully to repair the devastation which it leaves behind; and, as a crowning evil, to have to take upon themselves at the end a burden of debt which will go on embittering peace itself, and which will be impossible ever to pay off on account of the constant threatening of further impending wars.

From the above analysis it is clear that the events in former Yugoslavia rebuke Kant's prediction. People in Serbia were willing "to bring upon themselves all the horrors of war" and "to fight in their own persons" (even though many of them escaped drafting, a sufficient number of Serbian citizens were willing to participate in the aggression on Croatia). In addition, they were willing "to supply the costs of the war out of their own property". During the war, Serbia was under UN sanctions, inflation reached 16,500,000,000,000 per cent, salaries were (in 1993) around 21 DEM (Markovich, 2004:119). Still, people in Serbia continued to support Milošević and his party as well as oppositional parties that were in favour of the policy of "Great Serbia" (especially the Radical Party of Vojislav Šešelj, which was the strongest oppositional party in Serbia during the War). In other words, the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia shows that people are willing to pay the cost of war, even aggression on other countries.

Similarly, Doyle (1996) was not right to claim that it is difficult for democratically elected leaders to start war. On the contrary, when tanks went from Belgrade towards Croatia a crowd of people in Serbia threw flowers at them. War had popular support in Serbia even when the United Nations imposed sanctions on new Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Furthermore, contrary to Russett's prediction (1993), the democratization of Yugoslavia, at least in the beginning, did not enhance political culture in the country. On the contrary, during the period of communism, communist elites were accustomed to making compromises. However, when democracy was established, "strong" leaders – who were not willing to make compromises – become popular, especially in Serbia (Milošević) and among Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Karadžić). Both leaders were later indicted for war crimes in The Hague.

Likewise, contrary to Owen's prediction (1994), freedom of speech did not decrease the likelihood of war. People who delivered inflammatory speeches (who promised that national goals will be achieved by all means) became popular. During the period of communism, many of them (Šešelj, Tuđman and Izetbegović, for example) were imprisoned because of their ideas. Simply saying, communism was a dictatorship. However,

democratization enabled their ideas to become popular. Šešelj wanted “Great Serbia”. Democracy gave him the opportunity to disseminate this idea that eventually caused war. Tuđman argued that Croatia should get a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸ It is not difficult to find a connection between his ideas, which become popular among Bosnian Croats, and Croatian aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina (in 1993). In short, the war in former Yugoslavia does not support the main theses of the democratic peace theory.

Realist theory actually better explains war in Yugoslavia than democratic peace theory. Indeed, in accordance with Layne (1999), the newly established democracies on the territory of former Yugoslavia behaved in a manner predicted by realism: they acted on the basis of calculations of national interests and used threats when vital interests were at stake. Furthermore, Oren’s analysis (1995) is also useful. After NATO’s bombing of Serbia, it was important to label Milošević a dictator even though he won several multiparty elections prior to the NATO intervention.

However, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (1995) are authors of a theory that best explains events in former Yugoslavia. Differentiation between new and old democracies is essential for the democratic peace theory. Empirical evidence suggests that consolidated democracies rarely, if ever, go to war against one another. Nevertheless, new democracies face even higher risk of going to war. Here, democracy by itself does not guarantee a peaceful solution of conflicts. In contrast, according to the authors, “democratizing states are much more war-prone than those that have undergone no regime change” (Mansfield and Snyder, 1995:224).

Indeed, if one thinks that democracy prevents war, one should answer the following question: does the fact that today both countries – the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Kosovo – have democratically elected governments make a sufficient guaranty that war between those two countries (without the presence of international troops) will not happen?

Conclusion

In Serbia, the process of democratization mobilized people who clearly supported the policy of “Great Serbia”. Only politicians who were in favour of this policy had a chance to gain seats in the parliament. In other words, Serbian people voted for war. People in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had three options: one, to abandon independence of their countries; two, to accept the occupation of huge parts of their territories; and three, to resist the Serbian policy militarily. They voted for politicians who were willing to resist the Serbian policy by all means, including war. In

8 See, for example, Tuđman’s interview for *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 31/12/1991.

other words, people in former Yugoslavia voted for war. As a result, the war in former Yugoslavia can be labelled a “democratic war” and this fact seriously challenges some of the main assumptions of the democratic peace theory.

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Sažetak

Članak analizira teoriju o demokratskom miru koja tvrdi da demokratske države ne ratuju međusobno i istražuje daje li rat na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije empirijsku potvrdu ili negaciju navedene teorije. Glavni zaključak rada jest da Mansfieldova i Snyderova teorija najbolje objašnjava rat na teritoriju bivše Jugoslavije: to je bio sukob između država u procesu demokratizacije. Drugim riječima, rat na prostoru Jugoslavije ne pobija u potpunosti teoriju o demokratskom miru, ali negira neke od njezinih temeljnih postavki jer pokazuje da demokratski izbori – koji su *conditio sine qua non* demokracije – ne sprečavaju izbivanje rata.

Ključne riječi: demokratski mir, Jugoslavija, rat, izbori, demokratizacija.

recenzije,
prikazi,
konferencije

