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Liberalism

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Liberalism is an expansive concept that carries a variety of meanings for students of politics. For Doyle (1997: 206), 'liberalism resembles a family portrait of principles and institutions, recognizable by certain characteristics – for example, individual freedom, political participation, private property, and equality of opportunity'. In the realm of International Relations (IR), students look to liberalism to explain how human reason, progress, individual rights and freedoms can give rise to more peaceful interstate relations. Liberals predict that stable democracies and economically interdependent states will behave differently in several respects. First and most importantly, democratic states are less likely to initiate and escalate conflicts with other states (also known as the 'democratic peace theory'). Second, democratic states are more likely to engage in international trade and investment, and the resultant interdependence will contribute to peace. Third, democratic states are more likely to seek cooperative solutions through international institutions. While there are significant differences between individual liberal thinkers, all have a general faith in the pacifying effects of political liberty, economic freedom, interdependence and international association.

Before proceeding, it is important to dispel one persistent myth that has clouded understandings of liberalism: the association between early forms of liberal internationalism and normative-laden versions of idealism. For example, Howard (1978: 11) defined 'liberals' as 'all those thinkers who believe the world to be profoundly other than it should be, and who have faith in the power of human reason and human action so to change it'. But liberal theory provides much more than imagining a world as it *should be*. Like realist theory, liberalism provides a relatively coherent set of principles and propositions that explain or predict interstate relations. By one recent account, quantitative studies testing liberal hypotheses in IR have come to outnumber realist studies (Walker and Morton 2005). Given the prevalence of empirically based liberal studies, liberalism cannot be characterized as a utopian project. Indeed, the worldwide spread of liberalism has been considered 'the defining feature of the late twentieth century' (Simmons et al. 2006: 781).

We begin this chapter by tracing the emergence of liberalism in IR to two leading thinkers of the Enlightenment: Thomas Paine and Immanuel Kant. The works of Paine

and Kant highlight all the core principles of liberalism and illustrate the variation (and tensions) within the liberal tradition. After our discussion of these two strands of classical liberalism, we turn to an assessment of recent empirical research that probes the claims articulated by Paine and Kant. Does history support the liberal claims that democratic institutions, economic interdependence and international institutions facilitate peace?

The roots: evolutionary and revolutionary liberalism

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of liberalism is the belief in a process by which human reason can promote a more prosperous, free and peaceful world. Keohane (2002: 45) noted how 'liberalism believes in at least the possibility of cumulative progress, whereas realism assumes that history is not progressive'. Although progress is not inevitable, or even easily achieved, it is possible, according to liberals. Moreover, we can empirically assess whether progress has occurred by examining evidence of increased human freedom (e.g. the percentage of humans living in democratic polities), economic prosperity (e.g. the percentage of humans suffering from malnourishment) and peace (e.g. the percentage of humans dying in interstate conflicts). Given this emphasis on progress and human reason, most liberal claims can be traced back to the Enlightenment.

In the previous chapter, Wohlforth presented variations of realist theory, including offensive, defensive and neoclassical realisms. Liberalism can also be categorized in a number of ways. Zacher and Matthew (1995: 121) present six strands of liberal international theory. Keohane (2002) and Moravcsik (1997) employ the more conventional categorization of ideational, commercial and republican liberalism. Drawing on Walker (2008), we divide the field into the evolutionary liberalism of Kant and the revolutionary liberalism of Paine. Revolutionary liberals such as Paine typically assume harmonious preferences that facilitate cooperation and progress. In contrast, evolutionary liberals such as Kant recognize a combination of shared and competing preferences that makes cooperation and progress far more difficult.

To organize this survey, we rely on a levels-of-analysis approach made popular by Waltz (1959). Waltz argued that the causes of conflict and cooperation between states can be identified along three levels of analysis: the individual, the state and the international system.

The individual level of analysis: human nature

While Waltz ultimately downplayed the importance of human nature arguments at the individual level of analysis, Lanyi and McWilliams (1966: 8) argued that '*human nature will remain, if not the basis, at least the starting point of all theories of politics*'. From game theoretic models to historical case studies, foundational assumptions about human nature inform any effort to understand politics. This is especially true for the theoretical frameworks of Paine and Kant. Different assumptions about human nature serve as the wedge that divides revolutionary from evolutionary liberalism. In *Rights of Man*, Paine (1791: 169) noted that 'man, were he not corrupted by [non-democratic] governments, is naturally the friend of man, and that human nature is not itself vicious'. Democratic revolution would free mankind from these corrupting influences and human reason would emerge quickly to transform the world. Paine (1791: 230) celebrated 'a morning of reason rising upon man on the subject of government, that has not appeared before'.

Perhaps most importantly, Paine (1791: 178) predicted that the transition to this 'morning of reason' would be swift. He was confident that Europe would be democratic and peaceful by the end of the eighteenth century. This extreme optimism remains the most distinctive characteristic of revolutionary liberal thought.

Turning to evolutionary liberals, we see a far more cautious view of human nature. Kant (1798: 181) depicted human nature as 'mixture of evil and goodness in unknown proportions'. But Kant remained optimistic about man's ability to evolve away from his crass beginnings and benefit through reason. In *Universal History*, Kant (1784: 42) argued that 'reason does not itself work instinctively, for it requires trial, practice, and instruction … one stage to the next'. Kant (1795: 112) looked to the careful formation of enlightened government to promote man's goodness and repress the bad: 'It only remains for men to create a good organization for the state … so that man, even if he is not morally good in himself, is nevertheless compelled to be a good citizen.' Thus, for Kant and evolutionary liberals, social forces and governmental institutions must work to compel individuals to be good. This can be a long and often arduous process.

The state-society level: democratic regimes

To best understand how liberalism influences Security Studies, we must turn to the state-society level, which examines the impact of governmental structure and society. Paine and Kant were among the first to articulate why democratic states may behave more peacefully. In *Common Sense*, Paine (1776: 80) pointed out that the republics (i.e. democracies) of the world tended to be peaceful: 'Holland and Swisserland [sic] are without wars, foreign or domestic.' According to Paine (1776: 95), this peace results from the democratic tendency to 'negotiate the mistake' rather than letting regal pride swell 'into a rupture with foreign powers'. Kant made a related claim that if

> the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise. For this would mean calling down on themselves all the miseries of war.
>
> (Kant 1795: 100)

Both Paine and Kant initiated the liberal claim that democracies will probably spend less on their militaries than authoritarian regimes. They shared the liberal suspicion that high levels of military spending are dangerous for both domestic and international politics. On the domestic front, they present the classic butter-or-guns dilemma while arguing in favour of butter. Kant (1784: 51) argued that as a result of high military spending, 'the world's present rulers have no money to spare for public educational institutions or indeed for anything which concerns the world's best interests (for everything has been calculated out in advance for the next war)'. To discourage deficit spending for military actions, two of Kant's (1795: 94f.) preliminary articles for perpetual peace sought to abolish standing armies and to ensure that 'no national debt shall be contracted in connection with external affairs of the state'. Paine (1791, 1807) made similar appeals to limit navies to coastal gunboats, rely on a small militia and then re-allocate resources to education and old age pensions.

The second liberal critique of high military spending warns of the dangers associated with increases in power, known widely as the 'spiral model' (Jervis 1976; Glaser 1992). This view maintains that efforts to increase security by increasing armaments may be

perceived as threatening by a neighbouring state. Paine (1787: 66) warned against Pitt's military build-ups because 'the sparks of ill will are afresh kindled up between nations, the fair prospects of lasting peace are vanished'. Paine's solution, and one endorsed by nearly all subsequent liberals, was arms reductions. In addition to arms control, Paine (1807) advocated the use of small gunboats that were incapable of straying far from the coastline. By emphasizing weapons that could not be used for offensive purposes, Paine was one of the pioneers of non-provocative defence (Jervis 1978; Galtung 1984).

Kant shared Paine's concerns with how increased military preparation may threaten neighbouring states. Armies, according to Kant (1795: 94), 'constantly threaten other states with war by the very fact that they are always prepared for it … the armies are them-selves the cause of wars'. Kant (1797: 168) later argued that any shift in power 'would create a threat to one state by augmenting the power of another'. Kant, however, was not so quick to endorse easy solutions like universal arms reductions. Kant (1795: 95, 1797: 167) warned that in an anarchical system with authoritarian regimes, states might be forced to either balance power or even launch 'preventative attacks' against those states undergoing rapid military build-ups. Again, Kant's evolutionary liberalism diverges from the optimism of Paine's revolutionary liberalism.

The systemic level

At the systemic level, we examine how states interact with other states in the global system. The peaceful effect of trade remains central to the liberal research tradition. Paine was one of the first popular proponents of free trade as a means of promoting peace. In the widely circulated *Rights of Man*, Paine (1791: 234) asserted that free trade creates 'a pacific system, operating to cordialize mankind, by rendering nations, as well as indivi-duals, useful to each other … If commerce were permitted to act to the universal extent it is capable, it would extirpate the system of war.' Paine frequently pointed to how trade promotes international understandings, thereby working to 'cordialize' mankind. Eco-nomic interaction would work to acquaint nations with one another and reduce mis-understandings that might lead to conflict. Trade not only produces wealth, but also reduces conflict by promoting understanding and unveiling the harmony of interests between all nations.

While Kant also saw trade leading to peace, his reasoning was somewhat distinct from Paine's. A less utopian and more pragmatic Kant posited that trade may lead to peace because of the vested interests of international financiers and businessmen. Kant claimed that

> the *spirit of commerce* sooner or later takes hold of every people, and it cannot exist side by side with war. And of all the powers (or means) at the disposal of the power of the state, *financial power* can probably be relied on most.
>
> (Kant 1795: 114, emphasis in original)

Kant's 'financial powers' and business interests would reduce war throughout the world. To preserve wealth generated through trade, Kant argued,

> states find themselves compelled to promote the noble cause of peace, though not exactly from motives of morality. And wherever in the world there is a threat of war breaking out, they [trading states] will try to prevent it by mediation.
>
> (Kant 1795: 114)

Trade, according to Kant's logic, would only limit wars and those high-level conflicts threatening commerce. For Paine, trade would dampen all conflicts between trading states by bringing to light that natural harmony of interests that characterizes revolutionary liberalism.

On the issue of intervention, revolutionary liberals like Paine advocate military intervention to bring freedom to all people who suffer the injustices brought about by non-democratic governance. In his 1792 dedication of *Rights of Man: Part II*, Paine promised to join the French general Lafayette in 'the Spring Campaign' that will 'terminate in the extinction of German despotism, and in establishing the freedom of all Germany'. Paine's justification for a military intervention was clear: 'When France shall be surrounded with revolutions, she will be in peace and safety.' France's national security, Paine reasoned, depended upon extending political liberty to neighbouring states, even by force of arms.

Kant, on the other hand, issued a firm warning against interventions to shape domestic political institutions. In his *Preliminary Articles of a Perpetual Peace*, Kant (1795: 96) was explicit that 'No state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state.' Kant defended the principle on the grounds that

> interference of external powers would be a violation of the rights of an independent people which is merely struggling with its internal ills. Such interference would be an active offence and would make the autonomy of all other states insecure.
>
> (Kant 1795: 96)

Kant reiterated that even the most despotic states should be protected from outside interference. He (1795: 118) argued that 'no state can be required to relinquish its constitution, even if the latter is despotic'. Any governing constitution, Kant continued, is 'better than none at all, and the fate of premature reform would be anarchy'. As an extension of his cautious faith in democratic processes, Kant reasoned that a just society could not be imposed by forces outside the actual polity. Revolutionary liberals like Paine, however, see no virtue in patience when rights are being trodden upon.

These two variations of liberalism provide different views of international law and organization. For Paine (1801: 2), it was 'absolutely necessary that a *Law of Nations* be formed'. Towards this end, he advocated global governance complete with sanctions against any state violating freedom of the seas and generalized embargoes against belligerent powers. Kant's evolutionary liberalism was far less ambitious towards international law. Kant (1795: 113) harboured misgivings over global governance because 'laws progressively lose their impact as the government increases its range, and a soulless despotism … will finally lapse into anarchy'. However, Kant did have greater faith in the peace-promoting powers of a voluntary confederation of republican states (Kant 1795: 104). Kant does not envision a series of temporary alliances designed to deter war. Rather, he envisions a pacific league that abolishes all wars through the establishment of norms and rules that promote cooperation within the league and that defend the league from external aggression.

Empirical tests of claims by Kant and Paine

The preceding discussion has exposed the philosophical roots of liberalism in International Relations by highlighting the works of Kant and Paine. Both authors make a series of claims about how the world actually works (rather than normative claims focusing on

how they would like it to work). The three most significant claims have become the vertices of the liberal triangle of peace: (1) democracy reduces military conflict, (2) economic interdependence reduces military conflict and (3) international institutions reduce military conflict (Russett and Oneal 2001: 35). Over the last quarter of acentury, these three liberal claims have come under intense scrutiny from sympathetic liberals and sceptical realists. The empirical tests have ranged from quantitative analysis (Huth and Allee 2002) and laboratory experiments (Geva and Hanson 1999) to historical case studies (Layne 1994) and computer simulations (Rousseau 2005). In the following three sub-sections, we examine the balance of findings for these three central claims. Overall, the empirical literature strongly supports the three central claims of Paine and Kant.

Claim #1: Democracy reduces military conflict

Are democratic states better able to resolve international disputes without resorting to military force than non-democratic states? For realists, the answer is no. Realists predict that states will balance (e.g. increase defence spending or establish alliances) against all stronger states because these powerful agents represent a threat to a state residing in anarchy. Thus, realists predict that democracies will behave just like autocracies: They will balance against the strong and use force if the situation calls for it.

Early empirical research on the behaviour of democracies seemed to confirm the realist predictions. Wright (1942: 841) concluded that regime type has little impact on the frequency of war because democracies possess attributes that both encourage and discourage war. In an early statistical analysis of the relationship between war and regime type, Small and Singer (1976: 67) concluded that democracies had not been noticeably peaceful over the 1816–1965 period. In the following decade, Chan (1984) and Weede (1984) reached a similar conclusion using quantitative analysis techniques and large cross-national times-series data sets. Although some evidence supporting the democratic peace emerged (Babst 1972; Rummel 1983), the realist position reflected the general consensus in the early 1980s.

The realist consensus came under attack with the publication of a series of articles by Doyle (1986). Doyle reframed the debate by looking at the characteristics of both the initiator of conflict and the target of conflict. After compiling a list of liberal societies from 1700–1982 and a list of interstate wars from 1816–1980, Doyle found that no two democracies had engaged in a full-scale war. He concluded that 'liberal states have created a separate peace, as Kant argued they would, and have also discovered liberal reasons for aggression, as he feared they might' (Doyle 1986: 1151). Doyle's groundbreaking work triggered an avalanche of studies that is now collectively referred to as 'the democratic peace theory'. According to Levy (1988), the democratic peace is the closest thing to an empirical law found in the study of International Relations.

In the decades since Doyle's publication, there has been an explosion of empirical studies of the democratic peace. Although there have been some critiques of the claim (e.g. Layne 1994; Gowa 1999; Oren 2003; Gartzke 2007), most of the empirical analysis has centred on the causal mechanisms: why do democracies behave differently? The most prominent explanation starts from the interstate level of analysis and predicts that democracies are only more peaceful when engaging other democracies (referred to as the 'dyadic' democratic peace). When a dispute erupts between two democracies, each side knows that the other faces domestic constraints on the use of force. This expectation limits bluffing, dampens spirals of hostility and slows the mobilization process. Extensive empirical

analysis has been produced for the dyadic democratic peace (Babst 1972; Doyle 1986; Maoz and Russett 1993; Huth and Allee 2002; Russett and Oneal 2001; Bennett and Stam 2004; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Rousseau 2005).

A second explanation starts from the state level of analysis and claims that democracies are more peaceful regardless of the opposition (referred to as the 'monadic' democratic peace). Here, the causal mechanism does not focus on expectations about the behaviour of the other party in the dispute. Rather, democracies are seen as less likely to initiate disputes and escalate crises because they are constrained by domestic institutions and norms of conflict resolution. The existence of domestic political opposition makes democratic leaders more risk-averse because foreign policy failures (and even costly successes) can be politically costly (Morgan and Campbell 1991; Morgan and Schwebach 1992; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995). Although the early research did not provide much support for this monadic argument, a number of more recent studies have produced strong statistical evidence in support of the hypothesis (Schultz 2001; Huth and Allee 2002; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Bennett and Stam 2004; Rousseau 2005). In sum, there is strong empirical evidence to support the claim by Kant and Paine that an expansion of political liberty reduces interstate conflict.

Claim #2: Economic interdependence reduces military conflict

Economic interdependence is traditionally defined as the degree to which two (or more) states are connected by flows of goods, services, capital, labour and technology. Although much of the empirical analysis of interdependence has tended to restrict its focus to the trade of goods and services (e.g. Russett and Oneal 2001: 139ff.), some researchers have emphasized the importance of including capital flows in the measure of interdependence after 1900 (e.g. Gartzke 2007). Regardless of the actual measure, realists argue that economic interdependence *increases* the probability of conflict by expanding the number of issue areas under competition (Waltz 1979: 138). For example, Gaddis (1986: 110) argues that the economic independence of the East and West, rather than interdependence, was a key element of the 'long peace' during the Cold War.

In contrast, liberals such as Paine, Kant and Cobden argue that economic interdependence decreases international conflict. There are several causal mechanisms that can explain this relationship. First, decision-makers contemplating whether to initiate a dispute or escalate a crisis must calculate the cost of such an action. If two states are highly interdependent and the leaders believe that initiation or escalation will undermine this relationship, they are less likely to use force. This does not mean that interdependence is a sufficient condition for peace. Rather, all other factors being constant (the nature of the dispute, the power of the states, etc.), a dispute between interdependent states is less likely to escalate compared with a dispute between two states with no economic ties. Second, as Kant emphasized, firms and workers with international ties (e.g. export-oriented firms or firms using imports in the production process) will pressure government representatives to de-escalate disputes that arise between trading partners. Although research has not decisively disentangled these distinct (but complementary) causal mechanisms, the empirical literature has provided significant evidence supporting the interdependence claim (Wallensteen 1973; Gasiorowski 1986; Polachek and McDonald 1992; Mansfield 1994; Russett and Oneal 2001).

Some scholars have qualified the liberal interdependence claim by specifying conditions that restrict the scope of the claim. For example, Keohane and Nye (1977: 10)

make a clear distinction between symmetrical interdependence (i.e. both states are equally dependent on each other) and asymmetrical interdependence (i.e. state A is very dependent on state B, but state B is not very dependent on state A). While symmetrical interdependence creates a mutual desire for continued trade and investment, asymmetrical interdependence invites attempts to exploit weakness and manipulate behaviour (see also Hirschman 1945). In a similar vein, Copeland (1996) argues that the expectation of continuing trade is the key conditional variable. Only if state leaders expect trade to continue (or increase) are they less likely to use force. Finally, Ripsman and Blanchard (1996/97) contend that interdependence will only inhibit conflict if the trade involves strategic goods (e.g. oil or nitrates) that cannot be supplied from alternative sources. If substitute goods or markets are readily available, the cost of disrupting the relationship can fall dramatically.

The claim that interdependence reduces conflict has been criticized from a number of perspectives. First, not all statistical analysis has produced strong support for the interdependence hypothesis. For example, Barbieri (1996) finds little evidence for the conflict-dampening impact of trade during the 1870–1938 period. Second, some authors believe that the empirical relationship between trade and conflict identified in some quantitative analysis may be spurious. For example, Gartzke (2007) provides statistical evidence that market openness, rather than trade interdependence (or democracy), has reduced violence in the post-Second World War era. Similarly, Kim and Rousseau (2005) find that the pacifying impact of trade evaporates when using several different measures of interdependence and a model of reciprocal causation (i.e. simultaneously testing two claims: 'military conflict decreases trade' AND 'trade decreases military conflict'). Third, the findings from qualitative case studies are often inconsistent with the general trends identified in the quantitative literature. For example, Ripsman and Blanchard (1996/97) find little concern for the costs of interdependence in their analysis of historical crises among great powers during the July Crisis in 1914 and the Remilitarization of the Rhineland Crisis in 1936. Thus, although there is significant empirical evidence for the 'interdependence causes peace' hypothesis, it is less robust than the 'democratic peace' claim, and scholars continue to investigate the conditions that might moderate the impact of trade and investment.

Claim #3: International institutions reduce military conflict

The third pillar of the liberal peace rests upon the impact of international institutions: liberals claim that international institutions decrease the probability of conflict and increase the probability of cooperation. In contrast, realists tend to view international institutions either as generally ineffective or as the instruments of powerful states (i.e. international institutions have no independent causal impact (Mearsheimer 1994/95; Organski 1968)). Although most realists and liberals would agree that the number of international institutions have grown exponentially over the last 100 years (e.g. Shanks et al. 1996), they disagree on the impact of this growth.

Early studies in this research programme tended to focus on formal 'international organizations' such as the UN. However, over time, the research programme has expanded beyond the analysis of rules, procedures and outcomes in formal institutions (e.g. UN voting patterns) towards 'international institutions' more generally and ultimately the broadest conceptualization of 'global governance'. For example, Lipson's analysis of the banking sector's response to the debt crisis in the 1980s emphasizes the 'informal' regime created by the banks seeking cooperation with each other (Lipson 1986). Following the

general lead of Mearsheimer (1994/95: 9), we can define international institutions simply and broadly as a set of rules that govern how actors should cooperate and compete with each other within an issue area (see Simmons and Martin 2002). These rules govern behaviour in formal institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and informal institutions such as the debt–crisis banking regime.

International institutions promote cooperation in a wide range of issue areas, from trade and the environment to human rights and gender equality. In the more restricted domain of peace and security, how do international institutions promote peace? First, collective security organizations and alliances can promote peace by deterring aggression or intervening to halt a conflict. Second, international and regional institutions can mediate disputes (e.g. the good offices of the UN Secretary General) or provide arbitration (e.g. the International Court of Justice). Third, international regimes can monitor compliance with agreements and reduce transactions costs for follow–up accords (Keohane 1984). Fourth, international institutions can promote conflict-reducing norms and alter identities and related interests (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Wendt and Duvall 1989). Fifth, international institutions can alter the perceived costs and benefits of military conflict by expanding areas of cooperation and establishing opportunities for repeated interaction across time to build confidence. Many international institutions reduce conflict through several of these mechanisms simultaneously. For example, the WTO and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) adjudicate disputes, monitor compliance, encourage norms (e.g. by promoting economic liberalism in the case of the WTO and by banning weapons of mass destruction in the case of the OPCW) and alter cost-benefit calculations (e.g. by increasing trade ties in the case of the WTO and by collectively punishing rule violators in the case of the OPCW).

There is extensive empirical evidence supporting Kant's and Paine's prediction that international institutions will reduce military conflict. Despite the intensity of the superpower conflict during the Cold War, new international institutions helped foster cooperation. In some cases, the link between international institutions and conflict was quite direct. For example, studies have highlighted the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in curtailing proliferation among rivals such as Brazil and Argentina (Cirincione et al. 2005). In other cases, the role of international institutions was indirect (Dorussen and Ward 2008). For example, most observers credit the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the WTO with contributing to the explosive growth in trade during the post-Second World War period (Held et al. 1999: 175); the literature reviewed in the preceding subsection links the expansion in trade to a decline in military conflict among dyads. In more general terms, Russett and Oneal (2001: 170f.) find that as two states increase their membership in international organizations, the probability of military conflict declines. Huth and Allee (2002: 278) find that common security ties (bilateral and multilateral) reduce the probability of violence. Mansfield and Pevehouse (2000) find that states that share membership in a preferential trading agreement are less likely to engage in military conflict. Although no liberal would claim that international institutions are a sufficient (or even necessary) cause of peace, these institutions appear to dampen a wide variety of conflicts.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a broad overview of liberalism in International Relations by linking the writings of classical liberals with the empirical research

of modern social scientists. In any brief overview, it is impossible to address all the causal claims falling within a broad school of thought such as liberalism. Several liberal claims that have sparked recent research have not been elaborated. For instance, evidence that democracies spend less on defence budgets than autocracies has been reported by Gold–smith (2003) and by Fordham and Walker (2005). Similarly, evidence that democracies are more likely to win wars because they are careful whom they fight has been elaborated by Reiter and Stam (2002).

In this review, we have attempted to show that there is strong and well–established empirical evidence for three central liberal claims: (1) democracy reduces conflict, (2) inter-dependence reduces conflict and (3) international institutions reduce conflict. Moreover, these three pillars of the liberal peace are interwoven. For example, democratic states are more likely to be interdependent (Mansfield et al. 2000). Similarly, democratic states are more likely to join international organizations (Russett and Oneal 2001: 170) and utilize international institutions for mediation and arbitration (Raymond 1994; Dixon 1994; Hasenclever and Weiffen 2006). Kant himself argued that only the combination of the three pillars acting in unison could provide a stable peace in the long term (Cederman 2001).

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