

Michael W. Doyle “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs”

Scholars continue to debate the existence of a “separate peace” among democratic states. However, in his article “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Doyle takes the reality of the democratic peace as a given and focuses on explaining why the peace exists. According to Doyle, the liberal principles and institutions of liberal states make a difference in the conduct of a liberal state’s foreign policy. Liberal principles and institutions not only make liberal states peaceable toward one another but they also lead liberal states to ally (when faced with an impending world war), despite historical, economic, and political factors that pressure their foreign policies in divergent directions. Doyle rejects Realist explanations for the liberal peace:

- (1) The liberal peace is not merely the result of prudent diplomacy. Preventive wars are often prudent and liberal states have not engaged in conflict.
- (2) Explanations based on differing military technologies are inadequate because it does not explain how the peace continued to exist during times when the military technologies thesis predicted conflict and why the peace persists only among liberal states.
- (3) Similar social structures and/or compatible values do not necessarily lead to peace. Feudal, communist, and fascist societies did not form a pacific union.
- (4) Specific regional attributes or historic alliances and friendships cannot account for the liberal peace because the peace extends only as far as liberal states (i.e. it does not include liberal states in a non-liberal region).
- (5) Hegemony of a liberal state is inadequate because the liberal peace has existed during times without a liberal hegemon and liberal hegemony has not always lead to a liberal peace.
- (6) Bi-polar and multi-polar systems also cannot account for peaceful relations because bi-polarity does not end wars among minor powers and multi-polarity encourages war for balancing purposes.
- (7) If the liberal peace is simply the absence of deep conflicts of interest among liberal states, that begs the question of why liberal states lack these fundamental conflicts of interest with one another and not with non-liberal states.

How Liberalism Influences Interstate Relations Among Liberal States

Liberal principles influence foreign policy because:

- (1) Since, under liberal principles, “morally autonomous citizens hold rights to liberty, the states that democratically represent them have the right to exercise political independence” (p. 213).
- (2) Accordingly, [liberal] states have the right to be free from foreign intervention.
- (3) When states have mutual respect for the right of non-intervention, individual citizen are free to build contacts across state borders free from state interference.
- (4) Interactions among citizens “create[s] a web of mutual advantages and commitments that bolsters sentiments of public respect” (p. 213).
- (5) Mutual respect serves as a cooperative foundation for relations among liberal states.

Doyle expands his explanation of the liberal peace by turning to Kant, who Doyle claims provides the best explanation of the liberal peace in Perpetual Peace. Doyle reviews Kant’s three “definitive articles” for perpetual peace and then discusses how these articles lead to peace among liberal states.

How the “definitive articles” lead to peaceful relations among liberal states:

- (1) GUARANTEE OF CAUTION -- Since in a republic (1st Article) the individuals who vote for a war also bare the costs of war, liberal states will exhibit more caution in their foreign policies.
- (2) GUARANTEE OF RESPECT -- “[D]omestically just republics, which rest on consent, presume foreign republics to be also consensual, just, and therefore deserving of accommodation” (p. 230). This mutual respect forms among the members of the pacific union (2nd Article).
- (3) The cosmopolitan law of the 3rd Article creates trade ties between states. States are thus compelled to promote peace and avoid war in order to further their economic welfare. Additionally, since the international market removes difficult production and distribution

decisions from the direct influence of state policy, a state does not appear directly responsible for market outcomes. Consequently, states are not pulled into conflict.