Hawks and doves. Democratic peace theory revisited

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Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Another research into the democratic peace

Democratic peace theory, in its quest to explain a phenomenon at system-level - democracies tend not to fight with other democracies-, are built on assumptions about individuals within democratic and non-democratic states. Democratic peace theory assumes that individuals – mass and elites alike (Russett, 1993b, p. 35)- who grow up within liberal democracies are intrinsically different from individuals that grow up within other regime-types because only the former are socialized with liberal norms and democratic practices, which would change them intrinsically into 'morally better people" (see for the core of these ideas e.g.: Kant, 1795/2013a, pp. 21-29; Rawls, 1999, p. 44). This socialization process would affect their willingness to go to war with another democracy because liberal democratic decision-makers would expect the same socialization effects to be present within the other state, which would subsequently decrease the threat of the conflict significantly. Conversely, it is assumed that individuals of other regimes could not adhere to liberal norms because they would have been socialized with the more violent and zero-sum norms that are common within non-democracies (Z. Maoz & Russett, 1993, p. 625; Russett, 1993b, pp. 31-32). These fundamental assumptions are used instrumentally by democratic peace theory and are thus not empirically tested.

Empirical testing is, however, crucial. These assumptions are an intrinsic part of the explanation for the democratic peace. If democratic peace theory would be right that decision-makers of liberal democracies are socialized with liberal norms – in contrast with decision-makers of other regime-types- and that socialization process would decrease the threat of a severe interstate conflict between two liberal democracies, then an empirical test would have to show significant differences between decision-makers of liberal democracies and decision-makers a of other regime-types. In that case, a significant difference should be at least visible in 1) The level of liberal norms, and 2) The willingness to attack a liberal-democracy.

The research question of this research was: *What influences decision-makers to decide to attack another country when on the brink of war?* Based on the logic of democratic peace theory, it was assumed that the perception of threat is decreased among decision-makers of liberal democracies when they are in conflict with other liberal democracies. If these decision-makers are, however, in conflict with a non-democratic opponent that threat was assumed to increase. This logic dictates that the factor democracy has a decreasing effect on the perception of threat of liberal democratic decision-makers and thus their willingness to attack. With the same logic, it could be expected that other factors might also influence decision-makers during their decision-making process. Thus, alongside the empirical testing of democratic peace theory, also alternative hypotheses were considered in the same theoretical framework. The overarching concept was the perception of threat of decision-makers during a long-lasting interstate conflict on the brink of war. The instrumental

assumption, used for the theoretical framework, was that a higher perceived threat would make decision-makers more likely to attack the opposing country during a severe interstate conflict.

Based on this theoretical framework, the following factors were expected to influence the perception of threat of decision-makers: the regime-type of the decision-makers, the regime-type of the opponent, the invasiveness of the opponent's behavior, the use of power the opponent would rely on, the balance of power between opponents, the level of liberal norms of the decision-makers, the hawkishness of the decision-makers and their gender.

A mixed method research design was used to test the hypotheses. The research design relied mainly on an experimental study, which was triangulated with a large-N survey study, and an interpretative case study. The core instrument of this research was a decision-making experiment, conducted on student samples of the liberal democracy US, hybrid regime Russia, and autocracy China. The experiment tested whether the willingness of decision-makers to attack the opponent (and several other foreign policy options) during a severe interstate conflict was influenced by the regime-type they were socialized in, the regime-type of the opponent, the invasive behavior and the use of power of the opponent, and the balance of power. Moreover, it was tested whether decision-makers were influenced by their level of liberal norms, their hawkishness, and their gender. The measurements for hawkishness and liberal norms were conducted through the use of a questionnaire that followed the experiment.

The large-N study used existing survey data from the World Values Survey (Wave 6: 2010-2014) to measure the level of liberal norms among representative samples of the US, Russia, and China. The aim of this study was to 1) Test the assumption whether liberal norms are only prevalent within liberal democracies, and 2) To see how the levels of liberal norms measured among the student samples would relate to the largely same measurement of liberal norms among representative samples of the same countries.

The case study analyzed the decision-making process of Margaret Thatcher during the conflict between the UK and Argentina that led to the Falklands War to illustrate the experimental findings.

8.2 Findings of this research

The overall results show that the actor-specific factor hawkishness is by far the strongest and most robust explanatory factor of why decision-makers decide to attack their opponent during a severe interstate conflict. The use of power by the opponents shows to be a less robust but significant factor of influence. The other hypothesized factors, including those that are posited by democratic peace theory, turn out to have no significant influence on the decision-making process when the option was to attack. Below, after a brief overview of the results a section follows that discusses the implications of these findings and how these relate to earlier studies.

Democratic peace theory

The core assumption of democratic peace theory that liberal norms are only present among individuals in liberal democracies does not find empirical support. The large-N study investigated the levels of liberal norms among representative samples of the US, Russia, and China. The study showed liberal norms are not absent within non-democratic political systems. The US sample scored on average, as expected by democratic peace theory, significantly higher than the Russian and Chinese samples. However, also the Russian and Chinese samples scored, on average, well above the midpoint of the liberal norms scale. In other words: on average, liberal norms prevailed in all three regime-types. Furthermore, all three representative samples showed to have similar patterns of variation, which in all three countries approached more or less normally distributed varying levels of liberal norms. The results indicate that the assumptions about liberal norms, as used by democratic peace theory, should not be used as has been done so far. Moreover, the results show that levels of liberal norms are individually based, rather than socialized by the super-structure of a political regime.

Democratic peace theory also assumes that liberal norms and democratic institutions affect liberal democratic decision-makers in such a way that they will be less willing to attack another liberal democracy over an autocracy. It is, moreover, assumed that this difference in willingness would show when liberal democratic decision-makers are compared with decision-makers of other regime-types. The latter decision-makers would be in any case be more willing to attack any state, no matter the regime, or so the assumption goes. These assumptions also do not find empirical support in this study. The experimental results show that the regime-type of the opponent does not influence the willingness to attack in any significant way. Neither the US decision-makers nor the Chinese and Russian decision-makers were affected by the regime-type of the opponent. A test whether the levels of liberal norms of liberal democratic decision-makers influences their willingness to attack another liberal democracy showed that there is no empirical evidence to support such a claim.

The experimental results, when tested for other policy options, showed to be robust. The influence of these factors on the willingness to negotiate was also measured. The willingness to negotiate is an outcome often considered as the diametrical opposite of the willingness to attack and thus a good robustness check. Regarding the influence of regime-type of the opponent and the regime-type decision-makers were socialized in, that held true: these factors were of no influence on the willingness to negotiate. Also, an interaction between liberal norms and regime-type was of no influence. Liberal norms did affect the willingness to negotiate on an individual-based level, but this was unrelated to the regime-type of any of the states.

The case-study illustrated that regime-type did not play an important role during Thatcher's decision-making process regarding the Falklands War. Regime-type did play a role differently though. Thatcher mentioned the regime-type of

opponent Argentina extensively while aiming to justify the war to the general public, a finding that is discussed more in depth below.

The results of this dissertation show that the hypotheses, generated from democratic peace theory, did not find support empirically. It indicates that the assumptions of democratic peace theory, which are used by other scholars as if these were empirical facts, should not be used instrumentally as such.

Hawkishness

The strongest and most influential factor that influenced decision-makers to attack the opponent was the level of their hawkishness. The more hawkish decision-makers were, the willing they were to attack the opposing state. That effect was alike for all decision-makers, it was by far the best explanation for the willingness to attack. The effect was indeed even stronger within the US sample: the US decision-makers – although scoring lower on hawkishness on average- were significantly more influenced by hawkishness than the Russian and Chinese decision-makers. Hawkishness showed to be a robust factor when tested for other, less threatening, policy options. In every instance, it showed that being a hawk (or a dove when decision-makers preferred to negotiate) mattered significantly for the willingness to resolve the interstate conflict. The strength of the explanatory power, as measured by the effect size, decreased for options that were of lesser threat, and increased for options with a higher threat. The case-study illustrated this relationship. It showed that the hawkishness of Thatcher had plausibly influenced her decision-making process that led to the Falklands War. All in all, hawkishness showed to be a clear and generalizable factor for the decision-making process during a severe interstate conflict.

Behavior of opposing state

The behavior of the other state, the use of an invasion and the use of power, was hypothesized to influence the willingness of decision-makers to attack the opponent. The results showed that only the use of power turned out to be of small but significant influence on the decision-making process. If the opponent used hard power over soft power, decision-makers were significantly more willing to attack. However, when tested for other, less threatening, foreign policy options, the influence of the use of power did not show a clear and easily generalizable pattern. It rather seemed as if contextual factors were used to inform the decision for more strategic options. The case-study illustrated this finding as well: Thatcher perceived a higher threat by the behavior of opponent Argentina.

8.3 Understanding the findings

Democratic peace theory

The findings of this study contribute in several ways to our understanding of democratic peace theory, the theory that lies at the core of this study. These theories assume that specific political structures, the formal and informal structures of liberal

democracy, influence decision-makers significantly and subsequently alter their behavior. However, these assumptions are normative and guided by a specific political philosophy rather than by empirical facts. Still, democratic peace theory uses these assumptions as if these are empirical facts and thereby explain why democracies do not fight with other democracies. This explanation is thus founded on normative pillars. This dissertation tested these assumptions, the actual foundations of democratic peace theory, and shows that these are empirically unsupported.

First of all, liberal norms exist not only in liberal democracies but also within other regime-types. The liberal democratic samples showed to have the highest level of liberal norms on average, as is expected by democratic peace theory, but the other regime-types also show to have, on average, positive levels of liberal norms. Liberal norms are thus not absent within other regime-types. The distribution of liberal norms within all three samples show to be varying in similar patterns which indicates that, within different regime-types, liberal norms fluctuate similarly. Furthermore, liberal norms do neither influence the willingness to attack of decision-makers of liberal democracies nor decision-makers of other regime-types. The only, rather small but significant, influence of higher levels of liberal norms (in all three countries alike) was on the willingness to *negotiate*.

These results indicate that the philosophical idea (Kant, 1795/2013a, pp. 21-29; Rawls, 1999, p. 44) that liberal democracy morally teaches its citizens to become better people does not find support in the empirical world. Liberal norms can exist and foster within people irrespective of the regime-type and its socialization processes. Liberal norms seem to be human norms that are open to growing among all people of all regime-types. The results indicate that it is the agent's self that internalizes liberal norms, rather than the structure of a political regime that imposes these on individuals. Therefore, liberal norms could better be called liberal values.

Earlier experimental studies of the democratic peace (Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Johns & Davies, 2012; Z. Maoz & Russett, 1993; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013) have instrumentally assumed liberal norms to be present and of influence within liberal democracies. They did not measure whether these were actually present, and they did not test whether they indeed influenced as hypothesized. Neither have they compared the levels and influence of liberal norms of liberal democracies with evidence from autocracies. If the results of the current study can suggest anything, it would be that the theoretical underpinnings of these earlier studies need a revisitation.

Secondly, regime-type showed to be of no influence on the willingness to attack, or the willingness for other relevant policy options, of decision-makers in all three samples alike. Regime-type did thus not influence decision-makers of liberal democracies significantly, as is expected by democratic peace theory. This non-finding is not in line with earlier micro-level studies. These studies showed that regime-type did influence the willingness to attack: individuals of liberal democracies were more willing to attack autocracies over democracies (Bakker, 2017; Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Johns & Davies, 2012; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013).

The question is how the findings of this study relate to the previous studies. An investigation of the results showed that the non-influence of regime-type was not an artifact of the research design. Participants received the treatment of regime-type as intended, which indicates that they incorporated the information about the regime-type of the opponent in their decision-making process. A comparison between the research designs of previous studies and this study shows to be more informative.

Four aspects might explain the differences in outcomes. Firstly, this study disconnected regime-type from the perception of threat by providing the information about the regime-type separate from other factors surrounding the conflict. Factors that might, in themselves, trigger a threat. As the studies of Johns and Davies (2012) and Geva and Hanson (1999) showed, it is hard to pinpoint the exact effect of regime-type when socio-cultural factors are part of the mix and might interact implicitly with regime-type. By separating between the behavior of the opponent (in this case: invasion and the use of power) from regime-type, the findings of this study might be showing that it was not regime-type that triggered participants in earlier studies, but another threat from the conflict itself.

Secondly, and related to the former point, is the measurement of regime-type. This study used a hypothetical scenario about hypothetical countries, to make sure that participants would not be influenced by their specific precognitions about real-world scenarios and countries. Most of the earlier studies (Bakker, 2017; Geva et al., 1993; Johns & Davies, 2012; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013) used non-hypothetical countries and, moreover, relied (to a higher or lesser degree) on plausible real-world conflicts in their scenarios. Their scenarios might have triggered responses based on real-world perceptions, not only about the regime-type of the countries but possibly also about other features of these countries.

Thirdly, another point of measurement. In this study, the regime-types were indicated by a neutral description of the practices of a liberal democracy and an autocracy, rather than by explicitly naming the regimes. No negative words were used to describe their practices to make sure that no possible bias was triggered that might enhance the threat. The participants showed to have perceived the regime-types as intended, which means that they got what type of regime was meant, although no negative wording or connotation was used. Most studies (Bakker, 2017; Geva et al., 1993; Geva & Hanson, 1999; Johns & Davies, 2012; Mintz & Geva, 1993; Rousseau, 2005; Tomz & Weeks, 2013) measured the regime-type of the opponent by explicit mentioning of the regime-type: democratic and autocratic/dictator, respectively. These words have strong and possibly negative connotations that might have triggered threat responses that are less connected with what a specific regime-type entails.

Lastly, the relevance of taking other explanatory factors within the design. This study built on a previous study (Bakker, 2017) in which the willingness to attack an autocracy over a democracy was tested and compared between the results of individuals of a liberal democracy with the results of individuals of an autocracy. This comparison showed to be fruitful:

> The democratic experimental group showed to be more peaceful towards other democracies, just like previous studies showed. However, the comparative perspective brought a new insight: because the autocratic citizens were overall more peaceful towards all regime-types the comparison showed that actually the democratic participants were not more peaceful towards other democracies, but rather more war-prone towards autocracies. These findings are important in the light of theoretical refinement, and show that we cannot simply assume autocratic individuals to be war-prone, as democratic peace theory does. (Bakker, 2017, p. 538)

However, multivariate analysis showed that the significant influence of regime-type on the liberal democratic individuals disappeared and did not have any explanatory value when it controlled for other factors. In other words: the influence of regime-type lost its salience and showed to be marginal and not significant because the multivariate analysis showed that the perception of threat of the conflict mattered, as well as actor-centric factors such as hawkishness (2017, p. 539).

Earlier micro-level studies did not compare the results of liberal democracies with the results of autocracies. They measured regime-type in several explicit ways that might have triggered different threat responses for which no control was implemented. Moreover, they did not disentangle regime-type from other potential threatening factors. Although these studies are valuable for our understanding of democratic peace theory, all in all, this dissertation shows that the factor regime-type as a reason for war should be reconsidered more carefully.

The data for this study were collected through the use of students samples. Besides practical arguments about the availability of convenience samples, and the feasibility of using real world (and autocratic) decision-makers within experiments, this study aims for theoretical clarification in the first place. Based on democratic peace theory, which assume an overall socialization effect within regime-types, the use of homogenous samples does not jeopardize the empirical test. Moreover, although the experimental results generated by student samples cannot be extrapolated to representative samples of their countries, a comparison between the levels of liberal norms of the student samples and the representative samples of their countries respectively showed, however, similar patterns of variation. That similarity could cautiously suggest that the student samples do not differ much from the representative population samples, which also reflects on the experimental results. A recent experimental study by Yarhi-Milo et al. (2016) investigated if there was a difference between foreign policy predispositions of political leaders and those of a representative sample of citizens supports this argument: they showed that there was no difference.

Also, the case study of this dissertation illustrated quite plausible that the by experiments detected mechanism of hawkishness was also underlying the decision-making process of a real-world decision-maker during a real-world severe interstate conflict, and that regime-type did not matter. It is prudent to take experimental results at their true value and understand them as a help for theoretical clarification. Having that said, if the findings of this study can bring anything, it is the suggestion

that democratic peace theory should be revisited. The assumptions of democratic peace theory about liberal norms do not find support in this study, nor does the expected influence of the factor regime-type. How the findings of this study relate to the empirical regularity of the democratic peace and how it can inform new research avenues will be discussed in the concluding section.

Hawkishness

This study found that the actor-centric factor hawkishness is a robust and strong explanatory factor. Most theories of international relations reject the influence of individual decision-makers. Democratic peace theory, e.g., and most other theories of international relations have a structure-based perspective. These theories assume that structures influence agents in their decisions. Their assumptions leave no room for the possibility that actors might influence structures, or for the possibility that an even more complex relationship between structure and agent might exist (see e.g. Archer, 1995; Giddens, 1984; Hay, 1995; Hay & Wincott, 1998). Theories of international relations, therefore, do not often acknowledge or incorporate theoretical insights of the individual level and work with the assumption that specific structures have a profound effect on leaders, who will subsequently respond to these structures homogeneously as anticipated. Of course, these scholars do not discard leaders as a factor of importance, but the influence of their personalities and beliefs is often understood as ad hoc rather than systematic and generalizable factors. For instance, scholars of international relations will admit that Hitler is of influence for the study of the Second World War, or Saddam Hussein for both Gulf Wars, however, they will also argue that these individuals were unique in their influence. However plausible that argument might sound, it is at the same time the best argument of why leaders should also be studied and considered. In all these 'unique' instances, leaders have mattered significantly; it was not the structures that steered them. Decision-makers in conflict situations should be studied more systematically, to come to clarification of how individual characteristics of leaders relate to structural theories.

This study shows that the role of the agents, the decision-makers, and the intrinsic beliefs they hold are of important influence. Hawkish beliefs are a stable indicator of foreign policy decisions. Hawkishness explains best the most threatening foreign policy options during a severe interstate conflict, and its influence shows to be very stable. Also, dovishness or reversed hawkishness, explains best why decision-makers are willing to negotiate. Doves, being the opposite of hawks, explain best why decision-makers are willing to negotiate. To understand what drives decision-makers to opt for war, structures matter less than has been theoretically assumed up to now, at least initially. The results of this study suggest that during a severe interstate conflict, the beliefs of decision-makers are the main directive for them to assess the threat and decide subsequently.

This research resonates with recent studies that show that the systematic study of leaders within international relations matters. Saunders (2009, 2011) shows that causal beliefs leaders hold about the origin of a threat influence foreign policy outcomes. Moreover, she finds that these beliefs are quite stable over time. The

stability implies that when leaders in office interpret events through the lens of their beliefs. She distinguishes in her research between leaders who are more internally and externally focused and finds that the former are more likely than the latter to take military actions to resolve problems (Saunders, 2011, p. 223). Saunders also stresses that although structural factors such as the balance of power or domestic political institutions can be of importance for the decisions of leaders to go to war, these factors are not sufficient conditions to decide. Leaders' beliefs are the strongest explanatory factor (2011, p. 223). Saunders' findings are in line with Horowitz et al. (2015). They show that the beliefs, backgrounds, and upbringing of leaders matter significantly for the outcomes of their decisions because these have shaped their propensity to take risks or not, which has a subsequent effect on their willingness to use force. They conclude their research:

> Where systemic and institutional theories fail, we find rich explanations in the detail of biographies, and primary source documents. Individual leaders do matter; heads of state are not simply interchangeable or continuously overwhelmed by exogenous factors (p. 179).

Just like Saunders, Horowitz et al. acknowledge that leaders do not act in a vacuum and that contexts and surroundings have an influence. However, also they conclude that it seems that factors external to leaders are viewed through the lens of their individually held beliefs (2015, pp. 179-180). Dyson and Preston (2006) resonate with these findings. They showed that individual characteristics of leaders coincide with their reading of historical events, which subsequently influences their decisions.

Of course, many scholars have contended for years that leaders matter and need consideration within theories of international relations (see e.g. Barber, 1992; Beasley et al., 2001; Greenstein, 1967, 1992; Hermann, 1980, 2005; Hermann & Hagan, 1998; Hermann & Hermann, 1989; Hermann & Kegley, 1995; Hermann et al., 2001; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998; Kegley & Hermann, 1995; Kowert & Hermann, 1997; Post, 2004; Walker & Schafer, 2006). In the words of one of the leading scholars in this field, Margaret Hermann (with Charles Kegley):

> Whereas scholars have made a case for building explanations for the democratic peace parsimoniously by treating the leaders who make decisions exogenously, there is widespread consensus that the resulting explanations are not yet compelling. We believe that researchers may more meaningfully uncover the reasons for democracies' peaceful interactions with one another if they include in the explanatory equation the psychological forces that shape leaders' decisions. In effect, we need to confront the unassailable fact that it is leaders who make the final decisions about war and peace. In accounting for why governments go to war, we need to consider, alongside the impact of the institutional and cultural attributes of political systems, how leaders perceive, interpret, and respond to developments in their domestic environments and to other actors in their international environments (Hermann & Kegley, 1995, p. 529).

This dissertation powerfully reinforces Hermann c.s. and argues with them that the individual level needs to be considered systematically and more inclusive within conflict studies.

The results of this study offer a new research avenue. What is hawkishness? Is it a belief, or could it be a personality trait? What would be a theory of hawkishness? The latter question is initially of importance. At the start of this research, the anticipation was not that hawkishness would have such a strong and generalizable influence that would overrule most other factors. The study conceptualized hawkishness as the tendency to resolve conflict with the use of force, and dovishness as the tendency to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. To measure the concept of hawkishness, participants placed themselves in a position on (dis)agreeing with general statements about personal and interstate conflict resolution. This measure created a continuum hawks and doves. Although the conceptualization and measurement worked well for this study, the development of a clear and general theory of hawkishness is highly recommended.

Such a theory does not yet exist. The words "hawk" and "dove" are commonly used, often by media, and there is a common wisdom about what these words approximately mean. The media describe political leaders as hawks and doves in relation to (sometimes particular) policies. "Hillary the Hawk"[84], " Bill is a Dove, but Hillary is a Hawk"[85], "Reality Check: Yes, Obama is a Hawk"[86], "Why do liberals keep calling Trump a Dove?"[87], "Can France be a Hawk with a Dove budget?"[88], are a few media titles that relate to this common sense understanding. An aggressive position towards a specific policy is seen as hawkish; a cooperative, softer position would be dovish. However, the terminology is just as easily used to describe an economic position[89] or a position towards climate policies[90].

Within political science research, hawkishness is often examined within the context of a specific issue. Most of the research into hawkishness has focused upon beliefs about the resolution of specific conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict (Bar-Tal et al., 1994; Liebes, 1992; I. Maoz, 2003; I. Maoz & McCauley, 2005), or public support for the Vietnam War (Lau, Brown, & Sears, 1978; Verba & Brody, 1970). Measures of hawkishness in these studies are relying on positions on statements in relation to the specific conflict.

As a more general concept, game theory used hawkishness to describe the positions of participants within a game, based on cooperation (see e.g. Morikawa, Hanley, & Orbell, 2002; Schultz, 2005). However, game theory is not very helpful for understanding this research. This research has a political psychological perspective

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[84] http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/hillary-the-hawk-a-history-clinton-2016-military-intervention-libya-iraq-syria/
[85] http://rare.us/story/bill-may-have-been-a-dove-but-hillary-is-a-hawk/
[86] http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/05/reality-check-yes-president-obama-is-a-hawk/256674/
[87] https://newrepublic.com/article/135775/liberals-keep-calling-donald-trump-dove
[88]http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_world_/2013/08/22/france_suggests_intervention_in_syria_can_it_still_afford_its_hawkish_foreign.html
[89] http://www.marketplace.org/2013/11/13/economy/economic-shorthand-hawks-and-doves
[90] https://thinkprogress.org/the-phrase-of-the-year-climate-hawk-2d3e252fff95#.snmog6fpb

that investigates individuals, while rational choice posits being a dove or a hawk as a strategic position, a deliberate and rational choice. This research argues that hawkishness is a belief system, something intrinsically tied to the decision-maker. In other words, being a hawk is not something a decision-maker opts for deliberately, the beliefs are much deeper entrenched in the decision-makers psyche. Even if he or she would want to be a dove, they could not if they do not believe in it.

The closest attempt to come to some kind of theory was by Kahneman and Renshon (2007, 2009). They argued that decision-makers who score high on several biases (such as positive illusions, the fundamental attribution error, risk seeking in losses, pseudo-certainty, the illusion of transparency) would be more hawkish. They do not develop a theory of hawkishness, nor conceptualize hawkishness (or dovishness), but rather argue that existing theories of psychology together form a category of hawkishness. In other words, they use existing theories and empirical results of psychological studies into individual decision-making processes to 'fill in' the media notion of hawkishness. They argue that understanding how decision-makers who score high on these biases might have the proclivity to take a more hawkish approach is the best they can do and that moreover, no theory of psychology could explain interstate conflict resolution (Kahneman & Renshon, 2009, p. 92). Their arguments are prudent, and they are right to argue that a theory of hawkishness could never explain all decision-making during interstate conflicts. Having that said, several studies show how beliefs affect decision-makers (Farnham, 2000, 2001, 2003; George, 1969; Holsti, 1970; Jervis, 1976, 2006; Kaarbo, 2003). Hermann (2005) has convincingly argued that the influence of the leadership style traits of leaders, including their beliefs, has to be studied in relation to their responsiveness to their environment. Some leaders are more receptive to external information, which might diffuse their individual beliefs and dispositions when they make decisions, where other leaders remain unshakably steady in their own beliefs (see e.g. Hermann, 2005, pp. 183-184; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998). She has also argued that the context of the decision-making unit matters: how many people decide, just the leader or are there more leaders involved, and what is their role (Hermann, 2001; Hermann & Preston, 1994)?

In other words: it is necessary to come to a better and general theory hawkishness, including a theoretically informed conceptualization. A theory that can answer many more questions, such as: What constitutes hawkishness? Is hawkishness a belief system, as is assumed in this study, or is it rather a personality trait? Moreover, if hawkishness rests on beliefs, how are these created? How do hawkish beliefs relate to other belief systems (such as developed by George, 1969; Holsti, 1962; Holsti & Rosenau, 1988)? Can hawkish beliefs be transformed, and if yes, how? Alternatively, if hawkishness is a personality trait, can we expect it to be stable? How does the hawkish trait relate to other traits, such as leadership traits and style (see: Hermann, 2005; Hermann et al., 2001; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998)? What triggers a hawk? What is the interaction between the structural factors of a conflict and hawkish beliefs, do these enforce each other or can structures constraint

hawkishness? How do hawks hold up face to face with other decision-makers and within group dynamics (Janis, 1982; Jervis, 1976)?

Thus, a new research avenue is to build a general theory of hawkishness. A theory that inspires and clarifies theories of interstate conflict resolutions. A theory that speaks to structure-based theories of conflict resolution. A theory that connects with micro-level theories, as well as structural theories of international relations. The first step is to clarify the concept of hawks and doves. The second step is to connect to the work on personality traits and the work on belief systems and distinguish to which field hawkishness relates best. When a clear understanding of hawkishness is developed theoretically, an investigation can start about its relationship to structural factors and decision-making processes.

8.4 What about the democratic peace?

An important remaining question is: how do the results of this research relate to the democratic peace? If the results of this study are correct and the core foundations of democratic peace theory do not hold up, does the democratic peace even exist? The answer is yes. The democratic peace, as an empirical regularity, exists. Democratic states tend not to fight with one another. This is a, by most political scientists generally accepted, empirical fact. The question that remains, though, is why? This study tested the theory that aim to explain the democratic peace, and the findings show that the theory do not find support and should thus be revisited.

What would, in the light of these findings, be a good way to go about revisiting democratic peace theory? A leading research question that incorporates these empirical findings could be: if we accept that leaders of both democracies and non-democracies are mainly influenced by their beliefs during deciding how to resolve a severe interstate conflict, how can we explain that democracies are unlikely to go to war with each other? The findings show that hawkish beliefs are unrelated to regime-type: the levels of hawkishness variate similarly in all three countries and show moreover an about normally distributed pattern of variation. Thus, we can not argue that individuals tend to be more hawkish within specific regime-types. If we accept that hawkishness is an actor-centric factor of significant and dominant influence on decision-making in general, and if we accept that democracies have not ended up at war with other democracies, the question arises: what constraints the hawks in democracies? The findings show that the (mutual) regime-type was not of influence; knowing that the other state was a democracy did not decrease the willingness to attack. What was it then? It might be that there is an interaction between the actor-specific hawkishness and a –to be specified- structure that causes the democratic peace. In other words, it might be that hawks find themselves more heavily constraint within liberal democracies than in non-democratic regimes.

A new research avenue into the democratic peace project might very well have a renewed focus on institutional processes. This study did not find support for the commonly used institutional explanation of the democratic peace that posits that restraints on decision-making lie within larger and general elective and legal

processes. As elaborated in chapter 2, this particular explanation rests, just like the other explanations, on assumptions that are exaggerated. Earlier empirical tests only focused on the presence of institutions, but did not test for the actual mechanism: 1) Did the institutions function as expected, and 2) Were the foundational assumptions of audience costs empirically supported? Regarding the first point, it is a myth that formal institutions function as they should since they are incrementally influenced and changed by the complexity of networks of social organization and exchange (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, pp. 342-346). Regarding the second point, there is simply not enough empirical evidence to support the assumptions of audience costs that argue that the mass is peaceful and the elite not in a generalizable fashion (Kertzer & Brutger, 2016). Moreover, this study found that the regime-type did not affect decision-makers in their decision, so separate from the mechanism that is posited by the institutional explanation, the institutional explanation does not find support in this study.

The findings of this research, however, do not rule out an alternative institutional explanation. Speculating along the theoretical lines of neo-institutionalism; an alternative institutional explanation might lie deeper within the specific and less formal institutional and organizational processes of liberal-democracies. Liberal democracies rely on a large variety of bureaucratic organizations and inherent decision-making processes. These organizations are often less centralized, in comparison to non-democratic institutional settings, and exist of multiple layers and bureaucratic processes. In that way, informal institutions are created, which are less visible and therefore harder to detect than formal institutions. The literature of neo-institutionalism argues that formal institutions do often not function as intended, due to the dynamics underlying the organizational processes of these formal institutions (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Immergut, 1998; March & Olsen, 1989; Scott, 2001). The organizational processes within the formal institutions create new, however informal, institutions. These informal institutions start to 'live a life of their own', which means that informal practices (partly) take over the formal practices (Powell, 1991, pp. 194-200). The norms of an institutional or bureaucratic environment can create a 'logic of appropriateness' (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 23) in which the actors behave according to specific expectations. Expectations inherently connected to the informal institution.

The informal institutions can be the result of a (maybe even dialectical) interaction between the structure of the institutions and the individual actors within these institutions. Such an interaction might be the mechanism by which a possible alternative institutional explanation for the democratic peace takes place. The different strands in the neo-institutionalist literature (see the seminal article of Hall & Taylor, 1996) are all, however diverse their views on the agent-structure debate might be, concerned with how individual preferences aggregate to collective decisions. Their focus lies, in particular, on how this process is influenced by the institutional settings that aim to facilitate these processes (Immergut, 1998, p. 25).

The neo-institutional take on decision-making processes connects with the field of foreign policy analysis. The work mentioned above by Margaret Hermann c.s.

(see e.g. Hermann, 1980, 2001, 2005; Hermann & Hagan, 1998; Hermann & Hermann, 1989; Hermann & Kegley, 1995; Hermann & Preston, 1994; Hermann et al., 2001; Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998) offers a clear theoretical framework of how hawks could be constraint by institutional arrangements, in relation to their receptivity to context. The relationship between regime-type and leadership style or beliefs has not yet been explored extensively (Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998; Keller, 2005; Schafer & Walker, 2006; Walker & Schafer, 2006) and to contribute to these studies might show to be productive. Likewise, bureaucratic politics model and the organizational process model (Allison et al., 1971) might be fruitful to explore based on the insights of this study.

The bureaucratic politics model (Allison et al., 1971; Allison & Halperin, 1972) argues that the power dynamics within bureaucracies that play between different bureaucratic agents with different interests and objectives are determining policy outcomes (Allison & Halperin, 1972). The decisions that are made often reflect compromises between the different actors that play a role before the decision-making process starts. Actors who are not per se the actual decision-makers. Also, these bureaucratic actors process the executive orders of decision-makers, a process that effectively can cause different outcomes (Allison & Halperin, 1972). The organizational process model rests on the notion that multiple organizations within a state are related to decision-making, and each of those has their own rules, defined in standard operating procedures, that can affect the outcomes of a decision (Allison, 1968, p. 186).

All regimes rely on bureaucratic processes, also the non-democratic ones. Although there is little evidence from the bureaucratic practices of non-democratic regimes, it is reasonable to expect that similar dynamics can take place. What then would distinguish institutional influences on liberal democratic hawks compared to non-democratic hawks? The answer lies in the aims of these processes and institutions. Institutions and bureaucratic processes are created to coordinate and control complex relational networks and are founded on the principles of their state. Liberal democracies aim to build bureaucracies based on Weberian principles that strive for a rationalized best outcome that ensures equality for all clients. The bureaucratic processes aim for the creation of a public good. The bureaucratic structures that arise from liberal democratic principles encourage fairness among all members of the society. The organizational structures reflect these principles. Autocracies' bureaucracies, however, do not necessarily strive for the rationalized best outcome. The leaders of autocracies are less willing to invest higher costs to ensure the equality that leads democracies and are therefore more likely to implement policies that do not aim at the public good (Dixit, 2010).

Civil servants are often climbing a slow but steady career path. They can only climb this career ladder if they conform to the strict norms of these bureaucratic principles. Since civil servants often spend a lifetime within these strict and binding structures, their behavior might alter: they instill these norms (Merton, 1940) or at the least adhere strictly to these norms.

The question is whether or not liberal democratic bureaucratic processes might enhance specific norms of compromise among its members, thereby transforming hawkish beliefs into more dovish ones. Beliefs that then ultimately affect the decisions. Vice versa, the question is whether the bureaucratic processes of non-democracies are inherently different types of norms. Of course, these suggestions are mere speculations at this point. However, the speculations are informed by the empirical findings and inspired by a different strand of theories to formulate a direction for a research avenue into the explanations for the democratic peace.

Another, however completely different, research avenue suggested by the results of chapter 7 would be a study of the use of democratic peace theory by decision-makers as a justification for their foreign policy decisions. The case study showed that Thatcher was not affected by the regime-type of the opponent Argentina during the Falklands crisis. Within public statements that were aiming at finding public support, Thatcher used the regime-type of Argentina as a justification for the war. The finding is, however, anecdotal. It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate this finding systematically. This finding does resonate with earlier research that shows that politicians use democratic peace as conventional wisdom to please the crowd and get public support (Avtalyon-Bakker, 2013; Geis & Wagner, 2011; Hobson, Smith, Owen, Geis, & Ish-Shalom, 2011; Ish-Shalom, 2006, 2015; Ish-Shalom, 2008). The democratic peace is often called 'the closest thing political science has to an iron law' (Levy, 1988) and people seemingly believe that often. The politicization of a theory, which lacks empirical support for any of the explanations, creates a conventional wisdom (Hobson et al., 2011; Ish-Shalom, 2006, 2015; Ish-Shalom, 2008) that is used to get public support for wars. Western liberal democratic leaders try to 'sell' wars or conflicts from the ideological view on regime-types and use this as propaganda for their own means that might be different than what they argue (Morelli & De Neuter, 2003, pp. 94-96). The Falklands War case is a good example because it showed how the regime-type only played a role in the justification by Thatcher to go to war. With that understanding, it is indeed not so weird to suggest to investigate this mechanism more.

8.5 Conclusion

This study shows that while the democratic peace as an empirical regularity might still be valid, the theoretical arguments to explain why democracies do not fight with each other turn out to have been built on empirically unsupported foundations. The assumptions on which democratic peace theory rest, assumptions about the socialization with liberal norms and democratic practices from which democratic citizens were expected to morally learn and subsequently change their behavior towards other liberal democracies, cannot be used instrumentally as has been done up to now. Without empirical support for these assumptions, democratic peace

theory as these are formulated now simply cannot explain the empirical regularity of the democratic peace.

Moreover, this study shows that an actor-based approach towards decision-making processes within international relations will have to be considered and to be supplemented to the more structured-based approaches that are currently leading the way of international relations scholars. In other words: the individual matters! It is thereby not implied that only actors should be studied. In this study, also contextual factors showed to matter significantly. As the discussion above indicates, it is very plausible to expect interactions between structure and agency. The most important insight that this dissertation wants to convey is that the individual needs to be considered within theoretical frameworks that aim to explain outcomes in international relations.

The question with which this study started, *why do democracies not fight with each other*, has not been answered, yet. The insights of this study, however, do bring a bit closer to light what possible answers might be available to answer this important question that underlies the enormous research project of the democratic peace. Because the leading research question of this dissertation -*What influences decision-makers to decide to attack another country when they are on the brink of war*- is answered. The answer of this study shows that democratic peace theory, theory that aim to explain why democracies do not fight with each other, cannot be used as they have been up to now and should be revised. This insight brings scholars that are interested in the democratic peace a bit closer to a deeper understanding. And thereby, this study delivers a modest but important contribution to the growth of knowledge as Popper intended (1959/1992), a growth that is never-ending and ever expanding.

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