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Problems of Democratic Control in European Security and Defense Politics – a View from Peace and Conflict Research[1]

Abstract

Since EU members have agreed to establish integrated military forces and to decide jointly on their deployment in European institutions, the EU's "democratic deficit" is no longer confined to issues of common market governance but also includes foreign, security and defense politics. Drawing on recent debates in peace and conflict research, I will argue that a democratic deficit in European security and defense politics is not only worrying for its own sake but also because a growing body of literature regards the democratic control of security and defense politics as the best guarantee to maintain peaceful and cooperative relations with other states.

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Introduction

The past fifteen years have witnessed a lively debate about the "democratic deficit" in European Union politics.[2] The rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in a Danish referendum in 1992 was instrumental in triggering this debate because it indicated the dwindling of the "permissive consensus" among the citizens of the member states that had accompanied the process of European integration for most of its existence. Since the 1992 referendum, politicians and scholars across Europe (and beyond) raised concerns about a loss of democratic accountability in European politics because national governments have pooled and delegated some of their sovereignty in and to supranational institutions. As a consequence, political decisions are no longer made exclusively by national parliaments or governments but also by Commission officials (as in competition politics), by complex expert networks (as in food safety) or by ministers negotiating complex package deals behind closed doors.

The debate on Europe's democratic deficit has had a clear focus on the politics of common market governance the impact of which citizens feel most directly. In contrast, the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defense Policy has been almost entirely absent from this debate. At first glance, the silence on the democratic control of security policy may not be surprising for two reasons. First, the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defense Policy has kept the supranational institutions at distance and instead remained firmly intergovernmental. As a consequence, the institutional features that fuel the democratic deficit in common market politics are, by and large, missing. Without Qualified Majority Voting and powerful supranational institutions, one could argue, there simply is no democratic deficit in security politics. Second, even if there was a democratic deficit, one may still question whether we should bother about it. After all, there has been a long and eminent tradition to measure foreign, security and defense politics against a lower standard of democratic accountability in most democracies because an effective security policy seemed to require a higher degree of secrecy and flexibility than other policies.

In this paper, I argue that both claims are flawed. In the next section, I will argue that the Europeanization of security and defense politics does lead to a democratic deficit because the growing integration of military forces increases the pressure on reluctant member states to contribute to military missions even in the absence of majority support at home. In the third section, I will draw on recent debates in peace and conflict research and point out that a democratic deficit in European security and defense politics is not only worrying for its own sake but also because a growing body of literature regards the democratic control of security and defense politics as the best guarantee to maintain peaceful and cooperative relations with other states. I will conclude with a few thoughts on how the democratic deficit in security and defense politics could be mitigated.

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[2] Cf. among many others Weiler et al. 1995; Moravcsik 2002; Føllesdal/Hix 2006.

1. The democratic deficit in European Security and Defense Politics

1.1 The establishment of a European Security and Defense Policy

The establishment of autonomous European military capabilities only began in the late 1990s but has proceeded at a remarkable pace ever since. The embarrassing failure to prevent war on the Balkans had boosted calls for a military arm in the EU's crisis management since the early 1990s. It took another crisis in Kosovo and a change of government in Britain, however, to launch a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The EU members pledged to become able to deploy up to 60.000 troops within 60 days for peace-keping and peace-enforcement missions ("Helsinki Headline Goal"). Only a few years later, they added the ambition to be able to deploy battalion-sized "battlegroups" within only ten days ("Headline Goal 2010", cf. Lindstrom 2007).

Based on a broad consensus to keep the EU's supranational institutions at bay, the institutional dimension of ESDP caused few problems. The member states upgraded the Political Committee (now Political and Security Committee (PSC)) to a permanent institution at ambassadors' level and placed a Military Committee (MC) and a Military Staff (MS) at their disposal. In 2004, a European Defense Agency was added to identify and manage joint armaments projects. In the event of a crisis, the foreign ministers in the Council would decide unanimously on whether to launch a military mission.[3]

The achievement of the military headline goals posed a greater challenge because most EU states had made only little progress in adapting their militaries to the post-cold war agenda. Many member states still commanded huge numbers of tanks and troops (often conscripts) but were short of personel for demanding peace support missions and the means to transport and equip them. Given the concomitant decrease in defense spending since the end of the cold war, Europeanization seemed a promising way to spend shrinking budgets more efficiently.[4] Overcoming wasteful double and triple development and production of armaments as well as parallel military infrastructures and command and control systems has thus been a key target of ESDP.

In enhancing efficiency, the integration of forces plays a key role, especially since governments hesitate to abolish barriers to trade in armaments and defense equipment. In the military realm, integration refers to the deliberate creation of interdependent relations among the armed forces of the member states. Governments may agree on varying degrees of military integration: At the minimalist end of the spectrum, they may merely coordinate force levels and structures with a view to a joint headline goal. Such a low degree of integration does not impact on a state's capacity to deploy its armed forces unilaterally. At the maximalist end, governments may come close to establishing a supranational army replacing national armed forces. In this case, a state is entirely bereft of any unilateral military capacity. Inbetween these extreme points, governments may agree to varying degrees of common procurement, role specialization and coordination of their armed forces. For example, the Helsinki Headline Goal reinforced efforts to define common standards for equipment and to address capability gaps (such as long-range airlift) jointly. Moreover, EU members reported what troops they could make available for the peace support tasks envisioned at Helsinki. Thus, the Helsinki Headline Goal only requires a limited degree of integration. In contrast, the ambition to

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[3] Denmark opted out of ESDP and does therefore not participate in military crisis management. Set-up and functioning of the institutions are described in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (2002).

[4] An often quoted figure was that European NATO members only obtained 10% of US capabilities although they spend about 60% of the US defense expenditure (Yost 2000: 99).

launch battalion-sized force packages within only ten days necessitates a higher level of integration. The short time horizon in particular is not compatible with the kind of force generation process frequently used for peacekeeping purposes. In order to ensure a rapid response capacity, EU governments have not only to indicate what troops they may contribute. They also have agreed on a binding schedule assigning six-months periods of training, high-readiness ("standby") and stand-down to a limited number of battlegroups. In the same vein, the short-time horizon does not allow for the ad-hoc composition of member state contributions. Instead, governments have either committed specific national or multinational forces. Such a "battlegroup roster" indicates a rather high degree of integration because member states significantly limit their unilateral freedom of manoeuvre for the sake of a European one.

Even though no battlegroup has thus far been sent on a mission, the EU has carried out a remarkable number of military operations. The deployment of some 7.000 troops to Bosnia in December 2004 ("EUFOR-Althea") is particularly worth highlighting. One decade after a humiliating diplomatic failure in the face of the Bosnian war, the EU is now using the entire foreign policy tool kit including armed forces.

1.2 The meaning of democracy in security and defense politics

In order to assess whether there is a democratic deficit in ESDP, we have to make clear what 'democratic control' refers to in the context of security and defense politics. This is everything but a trivial endeavor as 'democracy' means different things to different people, especially in the realm of security and defense politics.[5] In the following paragraphs, I will argue that the parliamentary control of deployment decisions is a key aspect of democratic control and may therefore serve as a proxy for the problem at large.

To be sure, security and defense politics impacts on citizens' lives in many ways: recruitment policy determines how much (if any) time young men must spend as conscripts, and the defense budget influences how much the government can dedicate to social policy, etc. The most tremendous impact, however, results from decisions on the actual deployment of troops in military missions because, in addition to their political and fiscal repercussions, citizens' lives are then put at risk. Since the end of the Cold War, the importance of deployment decisions has grown because 'peace support operations' have become more common as a number of violent conflicts have increased the demand for such missions. At the same time, the United Nations (UN) Security Council has been blocked less frequently by one of the veto powers. In 2003, the then fifteen member states of the EU had deployed some 55,000 troops in international peace support operations (Giegerich and Wallace 2004: 169). From the perspective of democratic control, deployment decisions can therefore be regarded as the most important aspect of contemporary security and defense policy.

For governmental decision-making concerning the use of force, parliaments are considered "the central locus of accountability" (Hänggi 2004: 11). As elected representatives of the people, the articulation of popular interests and concerns has been a prominent task of members of parliament. Hans Born and Heiner Hänggi have distinguished three dimensions of parliamentary power in security and defense politics: 'authority' refers to 'the power which Parliament uses to hold

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[5] A more comprehensive discussion of the manifold aspects of democratic control in security and defense politics can be found in Wagner 2005.

government accountable' and which is 'derived from the constitutional and legal framework as well as customary practices'. 'Ability' denotes the resources such as specialized committees, budget and staff which are necessary to make efficient use of the authority conferred upon parliament. Finally, 'attitude' refers to the 'willingness to hold the executive to account' which, among other things, depends on the extent to which legislative–executive relations are characterized by party discipline (all quotes from Born 2004: 209–11). Although each of these factors has had an influence on the effectiveness of parliamentary accountability, Born and Hänggi conclude that 'the strongest means of parliamentary oversight by far is …. the constitutional or legal right to approve or reject such use of force' (Hänggi 2004:14). In contrast, budget and staff are certainly indispensable to make use of legal authority but they reflect rather than cause legal powers. Therefore, in discussing the democratic control of security and defense policy, this paper focuses on parliament's control of deployment decisions.

1.3   ESDP and the Weakening of Parliamentary Control

In this section, I want to show *how* exactly the Europeanization of security and defense politics generates a democratic deficit. Because parliamentary control of deployment decisions has been identified as a suitable proxy for democratic control in the previous section, I will demonstrate in particular how effective parliamentary control is made more difficult by transferring decision-making from the national to the European level.

The causal mechanisms linking Europeanization to the emergence of a democratic deficit in security and defense politics are only partially familiar from the study of common market governance. Most obviously, the democratic deficit in security and defense politics does not result from an outvoting of governments in the Council because the treaties do not allow Qualified Majority Voting for decisions having military or defense implications.[6] Neither does the democratic deficit stem from the delegation of authority to supranational institutions such as the Commission or the European Central Bank which have been an obvious target of criticism in this respect. Indeed, as far as formal decision-making rules are concerned, the Europeanization of security and defense politics has left national systems of parliamentary control intact.

The work of Andrew Moravcsik and Klaus Dieter Wolf helps to identify those causal mechanisms that are at play even if decisions are taken unanimously and supranational institutions are only involved at the fringes. Both Moravcsik and Wolf have pointed to a "dark side of intergovernmental cooperation" (Wolf 1999: 334), namely that "international cooperation tends to redistribute domestic political resources toward executives" (Moravcsik 1994: 7). Andrew Moravcsik has suggested four causal mechanisms that cause a loss of control over the executive. In the realm of ESDP they can be found to varying degrees.

Most importantly, Moravcsik argues that once international agreement has been reached, it "may be costly, sometimes prohibitively so, for national parliaments, publics or officials to reject, amend or block ratification of and compliance with decisions reached by national executives in international for a" (Moravcsik 1994: 11). For military deployments, this effect is further exacerbated by the fact that even the ministers in the Council can no longer amend agreements previously reached between the conflicting parties or within the UN Security Council which form the bases of the military mission. Traditionally, states may still decide to refrain from participation or may add caveats as to

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[6] Cf. the explicit wording in Art. 23 (2) TEU-N.

their individual contributions. Precisely these options to bring a country's contribution in line with domestic preferences, however, are increasingly qualified by the integration of forces and role specialization. The battle group concept, for example, implies that in the event of a decision to launch a military mission, the battle group currently on stand-by has to be sent abroad lest the EU refrains from intervening at all. If forces have been integrated, any state's decision against its participation in a mission de facto frustrates the entire deployment because other states' forces cannot work effectively without the missing state's contribution. As a consequence, states whose forces have been integrated on an international level may come under heavy peer pressure from those states that advocate the use of joint forces. The same effect results from any elaborate scheme of role specialization: if capabilities are no longer held by all member states but by only a few or even a single one, the menu of choice for the member state concerned has been severely transformed: instead of deciding about its country's participation in a particular military mission, it de facto bears the burden of deciding about whether the EU may become involved at all since no other member state could replace the capability under consideration.

Equally important is another causal mechanism identified by Moravcsik according to which executives can impose an initial ideological 'frame' on an issue which is difficult for domestic groups to challenge. With a view to military missions, it is highly important whether an intervention is framed as a "humanitarian intervention" or as a self-interested campaign. Although the initial framing may be questioned by domestic audiences, the executive has a large influence on the initial parameters.

In addition, Moravcsik holds that international co-operation enhances the executive's control over the domestic agenda because the international agenda has been 'cartelized' between national leaders. In the realm of security and defense, this effect seems rather weak because the agenda is set in large parts by developments outside the EU and the control of member governments (cf. Wagner 2003). As a general rule, the possible deployment of armed forces will be discussed whenever an international conflict escalates and receives wide media coverage. However, governments can still decide on whether to have the EU, NATO, or the UN deal with a crisis.

Finally, Moravcsik argues that international co-operation gives executives privileged access to information about the political constraints of other governments and about the technical consequences of alternative policies.

Klaus Dieter Wolf's notion that executives may deliberately use international cooperation to gain leverage over domestic actors finds support in an empirical study by Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (2004). If the Europeanization of security politics is designed to enhance the executive's room of manoeuvre, Koenig-Archibugi argues, we should expect most support for a supranational security policy from those member governments whose freedom of action is most highly circumscribed domestically. Indeed, this new raison d'État-hypothesis is confirmed in a regression analysis.

1.4   Case study illustration: Germany and AWACS

Even though the EU has assumed responsibility for a growing number of military missions, the Council has not yet made a decision to deploy a battlegroup (after all, the battlegroups reached full operational capability only in January 2007). As a consequence, one could not yet observe how the ambitious aim to have two battlegroups available and to send one of them on a mission within only days works in practice and how the battlegroups' high level of integration conflicts with

parliamentary control in the contributing states. The case of Germany's participation in NATO's highly integrated AWACS fleet, however, may illustrate empirically the kind of tensions that any democracy experiences if it has committed troops to integrated military forces. Although different from the EU in some respects, NATO's integrated AWACS fleet is sufficiently similar to the EU's integrated battlegroups to demonstrate what EU members are likely to experience once they decide to use in practice what they have successfully copied from NATO.[7]

Germany is particularly suited to illustrate the conflicting demands of military integration and parliamentary control. As a consequence of two world wars and the atrocities of the Wehrmacht, Germany has been a champion of both multilateralism and antimilitarism (among many others, see Anderson and Goodman 1993; Berger 1998). Since the fierce debate over rearmament in the 1950s, a reluctance to use military force and a commitment to multilateralism became prime pillars of post-war German security policy. However, since the end of the Cold War and the growing number of peace support operations out of area, tensions between these two principles have mounted.

Right after the Cold War, a participation of the Bundeswehr in out of area missions was widely opposed in Germany. Indeed, the German government refrained from sending the Bundeswehr to the Persian Gulf in 1990–91. At the time of the Gulf crisis of 1990–91, German politicians were eager to demonstrate the country's peacefulness and were 'surprised that the USA and Israel, among others, condemned Germany for not contributing militarily against Iraq' (Philippi 2001: 51). German decision-makers had to realize that its NATO partners now expected Germany as an ally to make a substantial contribution to non-article 5 operations (Baumann 2001: 166). Moreover, they realized that 'similar behaviour in a future conflict would probably result in a crisis with its major allies' (Philippi 2001: 51). From then on, German governments aimed at overcoming the antimilitarist culture as an obstacle to the deployment of the Bundeswehr out of area. For this purpose, 'reliability as an ally' and 'alliance solidarity' became prominent arguments in the German debate over out of area missions (cf. Schwab-Trapp 2002). These arguments were buttressed by references to integrated force structures of which the Bundeswehr had been part. References to Germany's participation in NATO's AWACS illustrate this point: AWACS has been designed to recognize enemy aircraft over a given territory, most importantly in the event of an attack (defensive function). In addition, it may help to identify and select targets for air strikes (offensive function). In 1993, NATO offered its AWACS fleet to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia which the UN Security Council had agreed on. The German government's decision not to withdraw Bundeswehr personnel from AWACS met considerable criticism from the opposition and even from within the governing coalition. Thus, in early 1993, the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) had to give a preliminary ruling on whether the participation of the Bundeswehr violated the German constitution as the opposition argued. With a narrow margin of 5:3 votes, the FCC endorsed the government's decision to have the Bundeswehr participate in AWACS's mission over Bosnia. Concerns about alliance solidarity and reliability played a decisive role in the judgment. The Court noted that the Bundeswehr made up for around 30 per cent of AWACS's personnel. As a consequence, a withdrawal of German soldiers at the very moment of this mission would endanger the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia. Furthermore, "allies and European neighbours would inevitably lose trust in German policy; the resulting damage would be irreparable.'[8] Thus, the fact that the Bundeswehr participated in an

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[7] The most important difference between NATO and the EU concerns the dominant role of the US which retains a fully-fledged unilateral military capability. At the same time, however, both NATO and the EU have developed a strong sense of common identity and solidarity (Risse-Kappen 1995a; Risse 2001; Sjursen 2004) which lays the foundation for the integration of military forces.

[8] BverfG E vol. 88, 173, II, p.183, author's translation.

integrated military structure played a decisive role in legitimizing Germany's first combat (in contrast to humanitarian or peace-keeping) mission out of area. Since then, the scope of Germany's contribution to out of area missions has grown continually (cf. for an overview Baumann and Hellmann 2001). In the main judgment of July 1994, the FCC affirmed the principle that any deployment of the Bundeswehr must obtain parliamentary approval in advance. According to the FCC, the use of the armed forces is not within the executive's sole discretion but as a 'parliamentary army' part of the democratic constitutional order. However, the principle of advance parliamentary approval is circumscribed in two cases: 'The participation of the Bundestag in a specific decision to deploy troops that constitutional law requires must not compromise Germany's ability to defend itself (Wehrfähigkeit) and to make alliance commitments (Bündnisfähigkeit)' (author's translation). Since the FCC's ruling, the Bundestag has dealt with more than thirty deployments of the Bundeswehr (including the prolongation and extension of missions) (Meyer 2004: 19–20). However, this practice has again come under pressure since NATO's Prague summit decided to set up a multinational 'Response Force' that could be deployed for the most demanding peace support missions within a few days. The deployment of the NATO Response Force (NRF) was simulated at an informal NATO summit in Colorado Springs in October 2003. It soon became clear that a rapid deployment could be endangered by the required advance approval of the German parliament. As with AWACS, German troops might play an essential role in the NRF. In contrast to AWACS, however, even a belated 'green light' would possibly cause problems. As a consequence, German Defence Minister Struck immediately launched a debate about a reform of Germany's parliamentary proviso. Struck's suggestion was supported by his American colleague, Donald Rumsfeld, who urged NATO members 'to bring NATO's decision-making structures up to date so that NATO military commanders can take decisive action against fast-moving threats in the 21st century'.[9] To be sure, the conflict between the democratic control of the armed forces and the demands of alliance politics is nowhere likely to be as intense as in Germany where both demanding standards of parliamentary control and multinational integration were designed to prevent a resurgence of militarism. However, similar though possibly less intense conflicts are likely to occur in other states with traditionally high levels of parliamentary control as well. Moreover, the EU might become the prime forum for such conflicts to the extent that the ESDP steps into NATO's footprints. In particular, the project of EU 'battle groups', i.e. small, integrated multinational forces to be deployed at short notice, is likely to result in conflicts very similar to those over the NRF.

2. Why bother? The "democratic turn" research in peace and conflict research

Even if one accepts the analysis in the previous section that there *is* an emerging democratic deficit in European security and defense politics one may still question whether this warrants particular concern. Students of European governance or democratic theory may argue that a democratic deficit in this issue area is indeed *less* troubling than in other issue areas because the commonly accepted standard of democratic control in security and defense politics has been low anyway. Historical legacies and functional requirements have both served as explanations - and justifications - for a rather low standard of democratic control. According to the historical argument, the level of democratic control is lower because security and defense politics has been a reserve of the executive. According to the functional argument, democratic control of security and defense policy has to be lower because an effective policy requires secrecy and flexibility.

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[9] US Department of Defense, News Transcript, Press Conference with Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson; Wednesday, 8 October 2003.

In this section I will draw on a growing body of literature in peace and conflict research to make the opposite claim, namely that a democratic deficit in security and defense politics is rather troubling. In contrast to students of European governance or democratic theory, students of peace and conflict research are not only concerned with the democratic legitimacy of politics *per se*. Over the last two decades or so, they have also devoted increasing attention to the *effects* of democratic governance on a wide range of security policies and, ultimately, on the prospects of peace.

Over the last two decades or so, there has been a "democratic turn" in peace and conflict research, i.e. the peculiar impact of democratic governance on a wide range of security issues has attracted more and more attention. Although the notion that democracy is a force for good has a long and eminent tradition, peace and conflict research has hardly pursued this line of thinking until Michael Doyle's famous piece on "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs" (Doyle 1983).[10] Doyle's article triggered the debate on the so-called 'democratic peace' which in turn gave rise to what John Owen called a "democratic distinctiveness programme" (Owen 2004: 605). Two and a half decades after the publication of Doyle's article, democracy has become the prime candidate for developing explanations for a growing number of puzzles in peace and conflict research. In the following paragraphs I will give an overview of the emergence and development of the "democratic distinctiveness programme". Since the story of the democratic peace debate has been told many times before (cf., among many others, Chan 1997; Owen 2004), I will focus on subsequent research linking democracy to a wide range of security-related policies.

The starting point of the "democratic distinctiveness programme" is the finding that democracies have rarely if ever waged war against each other.[11] This finding introduced democracy as a cause of peace even though it only applied to the limited realm of relations between established democracies.[12] The subsequent success story of the democratic peace resulted from its defense against a large number of theoretical, methodological and empirical critiques from various viewpoints and from the significance of this debate for the realism/liberalism debate more broadly. Criticism of the democratic peace led to a refinement of statistical methods (cf. Spiro 1994, Russett 1995), the incorporation of control variables (cf. Bremer 1992; Maoz/Russett 1993) and a proliferation of case studies (most prominently Owen 1994 and 1997).

Democratic institutions have played a key role in developing an explanation for the democratic peace. Following Kant, democratic institutions have been regarded as making government policy responsive and accountable to a citizenry which is pictured as eager to preserve their lives and property and thus to abhor war.[13] In a more formal vocabulary, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James

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[10] A notable exception is Ernst-Otto Czempiel (1972; 1981) whose influence has been limited to the German-speaking political science community.

[11] The qualification „rarely" served to accommodate a number of contested cases such as democratic Finland in World War II (fighting against the Soviet Union and, by implication, against the Western allies as well) or the war of 1812 between the USA and a United Kingdom whose democratic quality has been questioned due to limited suffrage and vast executive freedom on foreign affairs.

[12] The related claim that democracies are less war-prone in general experienced a little renaissance in the late 1990s (cf. Benoit 1996) but did not carry the end of the day (for an overview cf. Macmillan 2003).

[13] An alternative account has emphasised democratic norms and culture instead of democratic institutions (cf. Doyle 1983; Russett 1993; Maoz/Russett 1993; Owen 1994; Weart 1998). From this perspective, decision-makers "will try to follow the same norms of conflict resolution as have been developed within and characterise their domestic political processes" (Russett 1993: 35). Since democracies are characterised by *peaceful* conflict resolution, they will prefer negotiation over the use of force in international politics as well. This pacifist preference, however, only translates into

Morrow, Randolph Siverson, and Alastair Smith have argued that democracies are characterized by large "selectorates" (the proportion of society selecting the leadership). Because political leaders' staying in power thus depends on a broad winning colation, they are better off providing public goods (such as peace and economic growth) instead of private goods (for an outline of the "selectorate theory" cf. Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003). An early wave of institutionalist theorizing also argued that "institutional constraints - a structure of division of powers, checks and balances - would make it difficult for democratic leaders to move their countries into war" (Russett 1003: 38). More recently, scholars have de-emphasized the constraining effects of domestic institutions and have instead highlighted that elections, open political competition and free media improve a government's ability to send credible signals of its resolve (Fearon 1994; Schultz 1999).

The success of the democratic peace inspired two closely interwoven developments in peace and conflict research. First, because Immanuel Kant was widely celebrated as the intellectual godfather of the democratic peace, scholars re-examined interdependence and international institutions as further conditions of peace as suggested in Kant's "Perpetual Peace" and thus re-vitalized two further traditions of liberal theorizing. Second, students of peace and conflict added more and more items to the list of what distinguishes democracies from other regimes in international (security) politics. These two developments were closely interwoven because the renaissance of commercial peace- and institutional peace-studies soon made a "democratic turn", i.e. democracy was identified as a favorable context condition. I will address these two developments in turn.

The commercial peace thesis has a long and well-known tradition[14] but did not figure prominently until the 1990s when it gained momentum from the renaissance of Kantian thinking following the democratic peace debate. Although several studies found support for the thesis that economically significant trade between states reduces the risk of armed conflict between them (e.g. Polachek 1980; Russett/Oneal 1997), a large number of scholars reported remaining doubts because the findings were vulnerable to changes in concepts, data measurement or time periods studied (Mansfiel/Pollins 2003: 21). As a consequence, scholars called for the identification of context conditions for the commercial peace (cf. Schneider/Barbieri/Gleditsch 2003).

Among the context conditions suggested are the level of economic development (cf. Hegre 2003), the institutionalization of trade relations (cf. Mansfield/Pevehouse 2003) and – most significant in the context of this paper – the regime type of the states engaged in trade. Christopher Gelpi and Joseph Grieco in particular have argued that democracies "react to greater trade integration with a reduced propensity to initiate militarized disputes with their partners" (Gelpi/Grieco 2003: 2). Drawing on the selectorate theory, Gelpi/Grieco argue that democratic institutions entail incentives for leaders to provide public goods whereas for leaders in non-democracies it often appears rational to provide private benefits to members of a small winning coalition. Following the standard

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peaceful relations with other democracies. In conflicts with non-democracies, democracies are forced to resort to realist strategies lest they risk being attack (Risse-Kappen 1995b). Critics claim that the normative/cultural model fails to account for the numerous threats made by one democracy against another (Layne 1994: 13) as well as for colonial wars against states "that were about subjugation rather than self-protection" (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; Rosato 2003: 588).

[14] The works of Adam Smith, Richard Cobden, Norman Angell and Joseph Schumpeter may be regarded as milestones in that tradition (for an overview cf. Doyle 1997: 230-250).

economic argument about the effects of trade, Gelpi/Grieco maintain that leaders in democracies have particularly strong incentives to seek growth by fostering trade. Moreover, once a state has established high levels of trade with another country, democratic leaders can be expected to be vulnerable to possible interruptions of trade flows because missed growth opportunities may damage their prospects of being re-elected. As a consequence, democracies but not other regime types are expected to avoid armed conflict with states to which they have close economic relations. Gelpi/Grieco find robust support for this expectation for the period 1950-1992.

The commercial peace can also be expected to be particularly strong among democracies because democracies tend to trade disproportionately among themselves. Harry Bliss and Bruce Russett list several reasons for especially high levels of trade among democracies (cf. Bliss/Russett 1998: 1128f.): First of all, leaders in democracies "need be less concerned that a democratic trading partner will use gains from trade to endanger their security than when their country trades with a nondemocracy"; furthermore, firms will "prefer to trade with those in states with whom relations are reliably peaceful" and where the rule of law precludes expropriations. Finally, shared norms "help reduce trade interference from embargoes and boycotts". Further empirical studies found that democracies have a higher probability to conclude preferential trade agreements Mansfield/Milner/Rosendorff (2000; 2002) and that democratization in developing countries is associated with trade liberalization (Milner/Kubota 2005).

While there have always been countless studies on the contribution of a particular international institution to the management of a particular conflict, early large-n studies failed to show any significant effect of membership in international institutions on the level of conflict between states.[15] Again, the renaissance of Kantian thinking in the aftermath of the democratic peace debate re-initiated the systematic analysis of the "institutional peace". Notwithstanding a much later take-off than the commercial peace-debate, the courses of the two debates have shown striking similarities: Whereas several studies found evidence in support of an institutional peace, others failed to do so suggesting that the institutional peace thesis is vulnerable to changes in specification and measurement.[16] The subsequent search for context conditions again led to a "democratic turn", i.e. the regime type of the member states was identified as an important qualification of the institutional peace thesis.

Democracies have been considered to have both particular inclinations and capacities to establish and maintain international institutions. To a large extent, explanations for these particular features of democracies' foreign policies have drawn on causal mechanisms familiar from explanations for the democratic peace and the commercial peace. For example, the selectorate theory holds that democracies tend to establish and maintain international institutions for the same reasons that they tend to avoid costly wars or promote trade: because democratic leaders face incentives to provide public goods, they will establish and maintain international institutions which help to do so. From a constructivist point of view, in contrast, democracies tend to cooperate among themselves for the same reason they maintain peaceful relations and high levels of trade: A common set of values fosters trust and overcomes otherwise prominent relative gains concerns etc.

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[15] Cf. especially Singer/Wallace 1970. This corresponded to a reading of Kant according to which his "federation of free states" is rather a result of than a cause for peace (cf. Moravcsik 1996).

[16] Russett/Oneal/Davies 1998, Oneal/Russett/Berbaum 2003 found that there is a significant effect of international institutions on peace whereas Bennett/Stam 2004 and Gartzke/Li/Boehmer 2001 found no supporting evidence.

Democracies are not only considered to be especially *interested in* international cooperation; they are also regarded to be particularly *capable to* establish and maintain international institutions. Again, the causal mechanisms that make democracies "reliable partners" (Lipson 2003) are familiar from the democratic peace. Most importantly, the checks and balances, transparency and openness characteristic of decision-making in democracies also contribute to their capability to establish and maintain international institutions (Ikenberry 2001). Because entering into an international commitment requires the consent of parliaments, courts, interest groups etc., defection becomes less likely once such consent has been achieved (Cowhey 1993; Martin 2000).[17] Moreover, free media and a vital civil society make the detection of defection likely which in turn helps to mitigate problems of monitoring characteristic of collective action problems (cf. Zangl 1999). From a constructivist perspective, one may add that democracies' esteem for the rule of law extends to the honouring of international (legal) commitments (Gaubatz 1996).

In another analogy to commercial peace-research, scholars of the institutional-peace have argued that democracies cooperate disproportionately among themselves and that "interdemocratic institutions" (i.e. international institutions composed of democracies) are particularly effective in reaping the pacifying effects of cooperation (Hasenclever/Weiffen 2006).

Empirical studies found evidence that „free states belonged on average to more IGOs than those that were partly free or unfree" (Shanks et al. 1996: 609), that democratizing states join IOs more frequently than other countries (Mansfield/Pevehouse 2006), that democratic states are less likely to violate alliance commitments (Leeds (2003) and that IGOs have the more pacifying effects the more democratic their member states are (Pevehouse/Russett 2006).

As these brief reviews of the state-of-the-art on the commercial and institutional peace show, both debates have made a "democratic turn" as democracy has been identified as a crucial context condition. Thus, these studies have not only revitalized the debates on trade, international institutions and peace but have also added to the notion of "democratic distinctiveness" more broadly.

The "democratic turn" in peace and conflict studies is further illustrated by the fact that critics frequently doubt the specific substance of but not the democratic distinctiveness *per se*. For example, Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004) argue that the peculiarities of democratic governance make democracies less reliable allies thereby accepting the distinct impact of democratic decision-making as a new common ground.

The treatment of "democratic violence" has developed along similar lines. To be sure, proponents of the democratic peace never claimed that democracies generally refrain from the use of military force.[18] With the notable exception of Michael Doyle, however, proponents of the democratic peace hardly analyzed the violence emanating from democratic states in terms of its democratic distinctiveness. If "democratic violence" surfaced at all, it was either presented as a challenge to the democratic peace proposition or treated as an un-democratic contaminant and pre-democratic relict.[19]

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[17] In the terminology suggested by James Fearon, the "audience costs" of defection are higher in democracies than in other regimes.

[18] Even the so called monadic version oft he democratic peace only claimed that democracies fight wars less frequently than other regimes but nevertheless do so regularly.

[19] David Forsythe's study on covert action (1992), Mansfield's and Snyder's work on democratization and violence (1995 et passim) presented their work as a challenge to the democratic peace (in addition see Rosato 2003 and the vast

Only more recently has democracies' use of force been treated as inherently democratic violence in the sense that the very same feature that are responsible for peace among democracies are to be held accountable for the specific use of force by democracies.[20] For example, the responsiveness and accountability of democratic leaders to the electorate has been used to explain why democracies tend to win the wars they fight (Reiter/Stam 2002), and why their armament policy aims at avoiding casualties (Schörnig 2007).

Of course, research on the economic, power-related or cultural causes of war has not been replaced by the democratic distinctiveness agenda. Nevertheless, for almost any puzzle in peace and conflict research, the distinct difference of democratic governance has become an obvious point of departure.

3. Conclusion

The review of recent peace and conflict research demonstrates that a growing number of issues has been (re-)examined with a view to the distinct impact of democratic governance. Put differently, the conjecture that democracies somehow behave differently from other regime types has become an obvious starting point in addressing whatever puzzle in peace and conflict research one is interested in.

Although there has been a growing consensus on the distinctiveness of democracies, the nature and the causes of this distinctiveness are still heavily contested. Despite a mounting number of studies, no finding can so far claim a similar degree of robustness as the democratic peace which triggered the democratic distinctiveness program in the first place. The better part of the evidence available, however, holds that democracies are indeed a force for good, i.e. they allow for higher degrees of interdependence (such as trade) and are better in establishing and maintaining international institutions, particularly among themselves.

In the face of such a distinct record in international (security) politics, the European challenge to democratic control warrants concern. To be sure, the cumulative findings of democratic distinctiveness program hardly allow for the expectation that the further Europeanization of security and defense politics will yield unreliable and aggressive member states. Nevertheless, scholars of peace and conflict studies may well alert their colleagues in European Union studies that an emerging democratic deficit in security and defense policy may not merely be deplored for the loss of self-determination but may, albeit gradually, change the very substance of security policies.

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literature on diversionary use of force) whereas Czempiel (1996) treated wars of democracies as evidence for incomplete democratization.
[20] Among many others cf. Geis/Brock/Müller 2006; Daase 2004.

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