

**BEYOND MONO-THEORETICAL APPROACHES: REALISM, LIBERALISM AND
THE EXPLANATORY CRISIS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY**

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that the enclosed work, entitled *Beyond mono-theoretical approaches: realism, liberalism and the explanatory crisis in the democratic peace theory*, is my own work and that I have acknowledged all my sources.

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Any scholarly contribution to the theory and practice of international relations is bound to be a response to, and engagement with, prior theoretical work on the forces and mechanisms, however conceived, for constructing the theoretical and practical landscape of International Relations (IR). Similarly, and as this study has endeavoured to illustrate, any intellectual endeavour dealing with the social world must be considered a product of time, place and circumstance. It is, after all, inconceivable for social scientists, engaging in the theorisation of some form or aspect of the social world, to construct their arguments in advance of prior recognition of the structural and/or social forces impacting upon their cognitive environment and the social world as a whole. In a sense, I have been rather fortunate being situated in an environment most congenial to the study and questioning of some of the most entrenched assumptions, both implicit and explicit, of IR theory, specifically with regard to its practical manifestation(s), and in which a keen interest in the theoretical landscape of IR is not only appreciated, but encouraged. I have my supervisor, Professor Heidi Hudson, to thank for constructing and maintaining this environment and for her encouragement, not only with regard to the completion of the dissertation, but also in fostering within me a disposition to critically question the (IR) realities we often take as self-evident. Without her assistance and academic insights this contribution would surely have failed to reach the theoretical depth and breadth I had initially envisioned. In no small measure, a special word of thanks is also due to my parents and my true north, Reoné. The completion of this project would surely have remained a distant dream had it not been for your persistent encouragement and support – in ways that you may sometimes be unaware of. A final word of thanks of a different order is to my Lord and Saviour: for it is only through His grace that this project was at all conceived, undertaken and, with a great sense of relief, completed.

CHAPTER ONE

DEMOCRACY, WAR AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction and Significance

The absence of war between (liberal) democracies – the central thesis of the democratic peace proposition¹ – has in recent years been a pervasive force in International Relations (IR) in that the logic underpinning this proposition, i.e., the existence of a scientifically grounded nexus between (liberal) democracy and peace, has acquired real-world significance. Precedent to the practical manifestation occasioned by the logic underpinning the democratic peace, has been an extensive and theoretically dichotomous tug-of-war between realist and liberal explanatory forces in accounting for, and explicating, the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace proposition (Lynn-Jones, 1996:ix). In this tug-of-war, liberal approaches to the democratic peace, if conceived on the basis of the theory-practice nexus, have ostensibly been the victor. Liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, most notably Doyle (1996a), have subsequently induced an optimistic outlook on the possibility of the Kantian vision of perpetual peace, with the incidence of war and its decline being inextricably linked to the diffusion and deepening of (liberal) democracy around the globe. In fact, whilst acknowledging the intricacies involved in mathematical and statistical projection, Doyle nevertheless envisions the actualisation of global peace to finally emerge by 2113 (Doyle, 1996a:57).²

¹ For an overview of the democratic peace literature, see for instance Doyle, 1986; 1996a; Russett, 1995; Owen, 1996; Cohen, 1994; Farber & Gowa, 1996; Layne, 1996a; Oren, 1996; Spiro, 1996; Rosato, 2003. It should be noted that whilst this study makes use of the term 'democratic peace theory', its focus is on the explication of the peace-inducing forces of the '*liberal* peace theory'. Strictly speaking, there is a difference between the 'democratic peace' and the 'liberal peace'. We will engage with this distinction in chapter three of this study. Given however that the term 'democratic peace theory' is more commonly used in the literature, this study will not deviate from this practice.

² This implies that the twenty-first century would need to be marked by sustained and accelerated efforts to bring forth an international system comprising of liberal democratic states – the basic precondition for peace as conceptualised by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace. However, the prospects of achieving this, if set against the backdrop of current events (notably the 2003 American invasion of Iraq), remain remarkably inauspicious. Indeed, there remain contextually real concerns about the transposition of liberal democracy, embedded as it is in Western philosophical traditions and concepts, to the non-Western world (Huntington, 1996). Similarly, as Braden (2005:6) points out, the notion of "perpetual peace", based on a projected sense of ideological uniformity, seems unlikely given the historical recognition of the changing nature of governments and the

Proceeding from this position, the probability of interstate war in the twenty-first century, and beyond, among the (liberal) democratic states of the world is therefore practically inconceivable and, were such an event to take place, it would be an aberration of history.

Insofar as the democratic peace proposition remains essentially a project-in-process, and acknowledging the unpredictability of history (Huntington, 1989), any conjecture regarding the nexus between (liberal) democracy and global peace or, more extremely, any attempt based on utilising the democratic peace as the cornerstone of policy, should therefore, at the very least, entail a measured sense of rationality. Moreover, states in the twenty-first century will in all likelihood be forced to operate in a radically altered physical environment, brought on by the exactions of global warming (Hirst, 2001:101). In such a context the struggle for vital national resources (water, energy, and fertile land) may very well transcend the peace-inducing effects envisioned by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace. Similarly, there can be no certainty that the democracy-peace nexus postulated by liberal scholars of the democratic peace would persist in a world without the existence of a common ideological threat enforcing cooperation and compromise among liberal democratic states (Walt, 1999). It is possible, of course, that the progressive threat (real or perceived) of Islamic fundamentalism, and the specific challenges it holds for Western liberal democracies, could perhaps serve to fill this void. However, the contrary should also be deemed possible, viz., that differing Western responses to these threats could serve as the basis for an erosion of the mutual respect and trust afforded to each other by liberal states.

Questions regarding the likelihood of war between (liberal) democracies in a twenty-first century context and beyond are in any event premature in that the debate concerning the causal mechanism(s) driving the democratic peace remains incomplete.³ Contemporary democratic peace approaches, whether grounded in a

ideological positions they espouse. Kant himself saw perpetual peace as “realizable in approach rather than attainment” (Huntley, 1996:57).

³ This debate is, interestingly enough, not only inter-theoretical (realism versus liberalism) in nature, but also, to a certain extent, *intra*-theoretical (liberalism versus democracy). Both dimensions of the debate will be dealt with in chapter three of this study. Emphasising the incomplete nature of *causal* (as opposed to correlational) inquiry into the democratic peace phenomenon is, *inter alia*, Rosato (2005:471).

realist or liberal theory of international relations, have thus far only succeeded in partially explaining the complexity of the democratic peace. Both realist and liberal approaches have, in accordance with the mainstream (i.e., positivist) disciplinary tendency, produced theoretical attempts with their basis in the existence of, and emphasis on, mono-causal and context-independent accounts of the social world. This tendency, however, is deeply engrained within the disciplinary history of IR⁴ and has hitherto, with specific reference to the democratic peace proposition, virtually gone unnoticed. The attempt by various scholars, utilising a strictly positivist interpretation of science, to engender a social science discipline in the guise of the explanatory comprehensiveness of the natural sciences, has paradoxically only highlighted the limitations inherent in positivism and focused the attention on the need to critically reflect on, and engage in, the construction of an alternative account of science. Moreover, this has culminated in the increasing importance of ontological matters, i.e., questions regarding the nature of being, to social practice and with it “the emergence of an ontological debate that was claimed integral to all theoretical positions. This was the agent-structure problem.” (Wight, 2006:3. For an overview of, and engagement with, the agent-structure debate, see also Wendt, 1987; Dessler, 1989; Hollis & Smith, 1991; Carlsnaes, 1992).

The agent-structure problem is, as Wight (2006:62) carefully elaborates, grounded in the necessity for all scientists to conceptualise an object of inquiry. Its resolution (whether implicit or explicit) is premised on the extent to which social behaviour could be explained as the product of agents, however defined, within a given structure or, alternatively, the extent to which these outcomes are the product of the relations (read: structures) within which agents are embedded.⁵ Referring to the discipline of IR, this has meant that “for the purpose of explaining social behaviour, some conceptualization of the ontological and explanatory relationship between social actors or agents (in this case, states) and societal structures (in this case, the international system)” must precede all other considerations (Wendt, 1987:339). The attendant implications, if fully considered, are rife. Not only does this imply that all

⁴ The term ‘International Relations’ refers to the academic discipline of IR, whilst ‘international relations’ constitute the subject matter forming the inquisitive foundation of this discipline (Lawson, 2002:17). Given the state-centric nature of the democratic peace research programme the study will refrain from providing a more encompassing conceptualisation of the discipline of IR.

⁵ This issue will be dealt with more incisively in chapter two of this study.

theoretical positions and accounts of science presuppose a basic ontology, explicitly conceptualised in response to the agent-structure problem, but insofar as all social theories advance their own ontologically grounded solution to the agent-structure problem, it also remains essentially “a problem with no overarching and definitive solution” (Wight, 2006:4; see also Wendt, 1987:337; Carlsnaes, 1992:246).

The acknowledgement that all theoretical explanation, as well as all accounts of science, have their bases in ontologically grounded accounts of the social world, has received superficial theoretical acknowledgement only, since most IR scholars are still providing theoretical accounts of social phenomena that ignores the limitations of their theoretical accounts (see in this regard: Doyle, 1996a; Owen, 1996; Layne, 1996a; Russett, 1995; Waltz, 1993). Moreover, to the extent that all theoretical positions presuppose a basic ontology conceptualised in response to the agent-structure problem, those theoretical attempts reducing the complexity of the social world to the existence of mono-causal explanatory accounts, as well as those claiming law-like status, must be reductionist. This emphasis on theory-universality is grounded in an erroneous attempt to provide the social sciences, and by implication IR, with an equivalent degree of explanatory and predictive power as that of the natural sciences. It has as presupposition the notion that social scientists, engaging in the constant refinement of their hypotheses, will be equipped to fully understand and explain an ontologically complex world. It is this conception of simplicity – of the social world and social theorisation, and with its roots firmly embedded within a positivist theory/philosophy of science – that is at odds with the social ontology undergirding the theoretical argument to be advanced. Indeed, and endorsing Ish-Shalom’s (2008:684) observation, all social theories and accounts of the social world are at best “a probabilistic assertion rather than the manifestation of natural law”.

This realisation, coupled with the acknowledgement that all theoretical explanations and constructions presuppose a preferred solution to the agent-structure problem, is still in large part inconsistent with the theoretical attempts of mainstream IR scholars in their explanation and analysis of certain domains of international political and social behaviour. Especially so, and in accordance with the well-perceived disciplinary tendency of explaining political outcomes through a structuralist *or* agential (individualist) prism, this duality has been manifest in attempts to provide an

all-encompassing explanatory account of what could be termed, in the author's view, the fifth great debate of IR, i.e., the democratic peace proposition.⁶ Despite the notion of the absence of war between (liberal) democracies being highly contentious, it has acquired the greatest policy relevance in Western liberal states and none more so than in the United States of America (USA). The use of the democratic peace theory as a *post hoc* justification by the Bush administration in its Iraq War (2003) did not only highlight the ease of theoretical manipulation by politicians, but more importantly was indicative of the dangers that accompany theoretical attempts which fail to take account of the inherent limitations in any attempt at theorisation of the social world.

This necessarily transposes the political manipulation of the democratic peace proposition, and IR theory in general, into the theoretical realm. Whilst the political manipulation of social theories has been duly noted within the democratic peace literature (see in this regard Ish-Shalom, 2007; 2008), its manifestation accrues from the mode of theorisation underpinning social theories. Accordingly, theoretical accounts of the empirical observation of no wars between (liberal) democracies, whether grounded in a structural *or* agential framework (alternatively phrased: (neo-) realism *or* liberalism), have proceeded on the basis of a theory-universal and context-independent account of the social world in which the efficacy and reality of mono-causal explanatory mechanisms (i.e., realist or liberal ideas as constitutive properties of democratic peace) are left unquestioned. As this study will endeavour to explicate, the failure of social theories to transcend the confines of mono-theoretical and context-independent explanatory accounts constitute, at the most basic level, a theoretical crisis.

Against this backdrop, the theoretical argument to be advanced – with its basis in a multitheoretical and context-dependent account of the social world – has implications that extend beyond the theoretical realm. Such an approach to the democratic peace would not only challenge the explanatory dualism inherent in contemporary democratic peace approaches, but would similarly transform the theory-practice nexus as occasioned by liberal interpretations of the democratic peace. This would

⁶ Such a debate, this study contends, should be deemed both substantive and methodological in nature.

mean, considered from a policy perspective, that any attempt at democratisation through military means, on the ground of the democracy-peace nexus, should be tempered by accounting for the centrality of military and strategic factors as a force of peace in the democratic peace. The broader practical manifestation is that any democratisation attempt, regardless of the means through which it proceeds, may have to contend with unintended consequences owing to a failure to appreciate the complexity of constructing and maintaining a (liberal) democratic peace. Also, the argument advanced would undermine the perceived rationality embedded in the liberally grounded democratic peace discourse in which the ideological and institutional framework of governments is perceived as the sole guide to the attainment and preservation of international security. Therefore, as will be argued, any attempt at utilising the democratic peace proposition as the basis for policy, embedded as it is in theory-universal and context-independent accounts of the social world, is – as the Iraqi case amply illustrates – bound to fail. Undergirding this claim is the conception and acknowledgement of the multifaceted and complex nature of the social world and, with specific reference to the theory-practice nexus of the democratic peace, the acceptance of Wight's (2006:27) argument that the existence of inconsistencies between the theoretical and practical realm is in most instances derivative of erroneous philosophical arguments. Prudence, then, becomes the watchword in any attempt to expand the liberal zone of peace, with the outcome being that realist and liberal forces – if properly accounted for within the confines of the democratic peace – function as “a check on the irrational exuberance” of the other (Snyder, 2004:61). The emphasis on a theoretical/explanatory crisis, then, extends beyond, and is simultaneously embedded in, the theory-practice nexus. Mono-theoretical approaches to the democratic peace only succeed in providing a partial explanation of the social reality, grounded in an ontologically specified (and limited) account of the nature and course of the social world. The theory-practice nexus should therefore, if properly conceived, necessitate prudence in policy formulation and implementation.

1.2 Theory, history and the democratic peace: framing the research problem

The overtly structural and agential explanatory attempts postulated by realist and liberal theories respectively have resulted in an impoverished account of

international political behaviour. This is the case specifically with reference to the democratic peace proposition, in which the structurally embedded theory of (neo-) realism and the agential (individualist) explanatory account of liberalism are portrayed as mutually exclusive.⁷ Following Wight's (2006:46) insistence that "science has to construct explanations of causation on several levels without always attempting to make reductions to lower levels", this study makes use of a multileveled and anti-reductionist conceptualisation of causation.⁸ Consequently, theoretical attempts underlying the democratic peace proposition have to be grounded in some form of domestic-international nexus in which both structural and agential forces, operating at the international and domestic levels respectively, are accounted for and explicated.

Furthermore, to the extent that both realist and liberal scholars of the democratic peace proposition, most notably Layne (1996a) and Owen (1996), have identified real forces involved in the construction of the democratic peace, this study postulates that the complexity of the democratic peace proposition needs to be addressed by accounting for both realist and liberal explanatory forces. Such an attempt would incorporate forces operating at the domestic and international level, whilst also stressing the import of contextual factors in driving theory-selection and – implementation. This has indeed been recognised in the literature, with Lynn-Jones (1996:xxxii) calling for the need for future research to integrate explanatory accounts based at both the national- and system-level. But these studies have been extremely rare on account of the fact "that many researchers set up a false dichotomy between systemic and unit-level explanations, *instead of considering how they can complement one another*" (Lynn-Jones, 1996:xxxii; emphasis added).

Explanatory accounts of the democratic peace have, accordingly, proceeded through an ontologically dichotomous framework in which the democratic peace is reduced to either structural or agential (individualist) accounts of international political

⁷ The nexus between an individualist social ontology and the specific form of liberal theory constitutive of such ontology will be put forth in chapter three.

⁸ As will be argued in the succeeding chapters, the causal laws/mechanisms identified at one level of reality do not provide an exhaustive account of, and cannot on their own provide an explanation for, the actions of agents located at differing levels of reality (see in this regard, Bhaskar, 2008:113). It is this notion of multilevel causation that drives and informs the theoretical argument advanced herein.

outcomes.⁹ Considered from a (neo-)realist perspective, this has meant that the complexity of the democratic peace proposition has been reduced to the structurally specific attributes of the international system, conceptualised in terms of an anarchical international system (i.e., the international absence of a political relation of super- and sub-ordination), in which the distribution and character of military power, coupled with the importance of strategic considerations, decisively influence the behaviour of all states (see in this regard Waltz, 1979; 1988; 1991; 1993; Mearsheimer, 1990; 2001; Layne, 1996a). Accordingly, the anarchical nature of the international system entails a self-help system in which all states, regardless of domestic ideological considerations, are *forced* to provide for their own security or, failing to do so, suffer the attendant consequences. This conception of the central causal factors impacting upon state behaviour affords virtually no room for the theorisation of international political outcomes as the product of domestic (ideological) factors and/or the intentional behaviour of the constitutive elements (states) comprising the system.

Against the overwhelmingly structural account of (neo-)realist theories, liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace have, similarly, provided a reductionist account of the democratic peace. From this position, the absence of war between liberal states is reduced to the product of the actions and/or properties of agents, in this instance *liberal* states, comprising the international system, with the corollary that these agents, unlike the structurally induced set of circumstances envisioned by neo-realist theory, construct the circumstances under which they operate (for an overview of the liberal argument see Doyle, 1986; 2005; Russett, 1995; Owen, 1996; 1997). This has meant, with specific reference to the democratic peace theory that, faced with a war-threatening crisis with each other, the intentional behaviour (action) of liberal states, accruing from the very properties constituting liberal states and/or decision makers, induces a transcendence of realist imperatives and provides a secure path to the attainment of an outcome short of war.¹⁰

⁹ This ontological dualism does not necessarily hold with regard to IR theory in general. Neoclassical realists, for example, have attempted to purge neo-realist theory of its overt structuralism by stressing the contributory influence of domestic factors as drivers of political outcomes (Snyder, 2006). This issue will be touched on in chapter four of this study.

¹⁰ A more thorough engagement with both theoretical positions, and their intersection with the democratic peace proposition, will necessarily follow and will fall within the purview of chapter three.

In the face of the theoretical (and ontological) dualism inherent in contemporary democratic peace approaches, some scholars, most notably Owen (1996:151), have focused attention on the possibility of a realist-liberal synthesis. Owen argues that both theoretical positions, encapsulating power politics and liberal ideas respectively, have historical bearing in international politics with the concomitant result that these two forces may plausibly, as occasioned by a given context, “sometimes push in different directions...yielding a weak effect in favor of one or the other” (Owen, 1996:151). This perspective is, *pace* Owen, incomplete. Whilst acknowledging the necessity for both liberal and realist explanatory forces in accounting for the complexity of the democratic peace proposition, and recognising that realist and liberal forces *sometimes* push in different directions, it should also be possible to conceive of a situation in which liberal and realist forces *work together* to produce a specific outcome. In fact, as this study will explicate and not without engaging with a critique of the theoretical tenability of the theoretical argument advanced¹¹, there exists a theoretically convincing nexus between realist and liberal forces working together in producing and explaining the democratic peace.

At the same time, this study cannot accept the validity of a realist-liberal synthesis. Insofar as this study is grounded in an attempt to transcend the theory-universal and context-independent nature of rational theories of IR, a theoretical synthesis cast in this manner would still be wedded to this tradition and therefore fail to acknowledge, and account for, the situational intricacies and complexities occasioned by various contexts. This study, therefore, propagates the need for a multitheoretical approach to the democratic peace that would incorporate, in the first instance, both realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace. Also, and perhaps more importantly, is the notion that the multitheoretical approach advanced is to be wedded to context-dependent (historically contingent) accounts of the social world in which different contexts provide – to a certain extent – different structural and agential powers.¹²

¹¹ Some scholars, notably Smith (2007:11), have questioned the theoretical tenability of a multitheoretical approach arguing that the “theories we use cannot simply be combined together so as to add up to different views of the same world of international relations; instead they actually see different worlds”. This issue will be dealt with in chapter four of this study. For now it would suffice to say that Smith’s position is, at the same time, derivative of an erroneous conception of the intersection between the theoretical world and the nature of decision making, and decision makers, within the confines of international relations.

¹² Given the emphasis on issues of time and space (hence context), one could ask: why then bother with theory? If everything is contextually determined, what room is there for theoretical engagement

Accordingly, this study does not postulate the existence of a realist-liberal synthesis, but rather the existence of, and explanatory necessity for, both realist and liberal theories. However, an important caveat should be entered, namely that a given context will often engender the theoretical primacy of either realist or liberal theories but, importantly, without negating the effect of the other theory (hence: the existence of primary versus secondary explanations).

This argument, emphasising the centrality of both realist and liberal explanatory forces, needs to inhere in a rigorous practical base. In this regard, this study, focusing on the intricacies and complexities of various historical contexts, whilst simultaneously rejecting the universality engendered by statistical approaches to the democratic peace (see in this regard Spiro, 1996), argues for the need for detailed historical case studies in order to confirm or reject the validity of the argument and theoretical framework advanced. Acknowledging the import of a theoretical framework stretching across time and space, this study will proceed on the basis of an analysis of two historical cases, notably Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96), as well as, contemporarily grounded, an analysis of Franco-American relations (2002-) in response to the United States' military invasion of Iraq (2003). Anglo-American relations, 1861-63, focusing on the diplomacy of the *Trent* affair and, more broadly, the question of British intervention in the American Civil War, has not only been a central battleground of divergent interpretations of the centrality of realist or liberal explanatory forces (Layne, 1996a; Owen, 1996), but, rejecting this theoretical dualism, has also highlighted the extent to which a multitheoretical approach, accounting for both realist and liberal explanatory forces, is theoretically tenable.¹³

with the democratic peace? The theory versus history dichotomy need not be, this study contends, an either/or question. Not only is all social action theory-dependent, but as will become evident the theoretical forces identified in this study have historical bearing, though not necessarily to the extent envisioned by their proponents.

¹³ Of significance in this regard perhaps and especially amidst the divergent theoretical and historical interpretations regarding the peace-inducing factors in Anglo-American diplomacy (1861-63), is Wight's (2006:52) observation that the basic deficiency in the advancement of social scientific knowledge is "the lack of independent validation of research results. Social scientists...simply do not carry out the reiterative validation of data that characterizes research in the natural sciences". Without this necessary criticality, theoretical conclusions must invariably be approached with caution.

Similarly, the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuelan boundary dispute, 1895-96, entailing British appeasement of the United States, was grounded, in part, in an unfavourable distribution of military capabilities, due to the wide-ranging and dispersed nature of British military engagements, *vis-à-vis* the United States (Kennedy, 1981:108). But, as Owen (1996:148) has shown, British appeasement was also grounded in the existence of liberal explanatory forces deeming any war against the (liberal) democratic United States as illegitimate and, therefore, unacceptable. The theoretical argument postulated will, furthermore, be bolstered by probing the peace-inducing effects concerned with Franco-American relations in response to the Iraq War, with French opposition to American attempts at global hegemony reaching an unprecedented level, coupled with a distinctive policy by which the French government *actively* sought to “oppose rather than fall in line behind US policy” (Ward & Hackett, 2003:1). That Franco-American relations were ever in any real danger of erupting into armed conflict (or even war) is, of course, beside the point. The argument, rather, will explicate the nexus between realist and liberal explanatory forces as mitigating factors in preventing the transformation from conflict to war, with the neo-realist emphasis on the peace-inducing effects of nuclear weapons (see in this regard Waltz, 1981; 1988; 1990b; 1993) *and* the peace-inducing effects of liberal values, fixing the range of acceptable outcomes.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This inquiry, proceeding on the basis of an attempt to transcend the theory-universal and context-independent nature of contemporary democratic peace approaches, has as its main aim the explication of the necessity for, and possibility of, a multitheoretical approach to the democratic peace proposition, grounded in the recognition of the explanatory significance of both realist and liberal theories (thus: structure and agency). At the same time, it stresses the necessity of being attentive of the extent to which different contexts engender the theoretical and explanatory primacy of one theory to the other *without necessarily negating the effect of the other*.

More specifically, this study has the following objectives, namely to:

- Critically emphasise the inextricable nexus between social theorisation and ontological matters, and the centrality of the agent-structure debate in this regard;
- investigate the nature and scope of contemporary social theories, grounded in a positivist theory of science, and their link with realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace proposition;
- explicate the poverty of mono-theoretical approaches to the democratic peace proposition;
- provide a theoretical argument postulating the necessity for, and possibility of, a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach to the democratic peace proposition, grounded in a combination of historical and contemporary cases with the central focus being Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) and, of a more recent disposition, Franco-American relations (2002-); and
- challenge IR scholars to readdress the mono- versus multitheoretical dichotomy in IR theory.

1.4 Methodological considerations

This study, in its insistence that the absence of war between liberal states needs to be addressed by utilising a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach, will follow an explanatory research goal and, at the same time, will utilise, in part, a deductive approach in which the relevance of an inclusive conceptual framework, conceived in terms of the theoretical necessity of incorporating both realist and liberal theories in explaining the democratic peace, will guide the research. This study is also inductive for the reason that insights from the historical record informed a reconceptualisation of the theoretical frameworks constituting the democratic peace. An inductive approach refers to a system of logic in which the research process has as its point of departure the examination of observed data followed by the construction and postulation of a theoretical framework that explains the relationship between the objects perceived (Babbie, 2005:44). This study is, to a large extent, a critical literature study centred on meta- or third order theorising. Importantly though, the multitheoretical approach advanced in this study, whilst being more inclusive, would still be theoretically limited.

This recognition, based on the acknowledgement of the complexity of the social world, is grounded in the realisation that social theories, whatever their content, are after all a subjective (hence historically and socially produced) representation of reality. And these theories, directed as they are at the explication of some phenomena of the social world, always play themselves out within the realm of an open world where social outcomes are in most instances the product of, and constructed by, a diverse array of forces. It is this relation between social theory (and social knowledge) and the notion of their emergence within an open world that informs the demarcation of the practical value of the theoretical frameworks espoused by social scientists. Moreover, as Wight (2006:60) further explains the issue, referring to the work of the realist philosopher of science Roy Bhaskar, social science “cannot, in and of itself, determine or provide the sole justification for action, because it is always located in the space of ‘will, desire, sentiment, capacities, facilities, and opportunities as well as beliefs’. As a social practice scientific knowledge emerges in an open world and it is always a contingent matter whether its tendencies are actualised or not”.

Insofar as this study, furthermore, has taken issue with the theory-universal and context-independent nature of contemporary democratic peace approaches, including those approaches explicating the statistical (in)significance of the democratic peace (see Spiro, 1996), an argument will be made for the need to focus on the intricacies and complexities occasioned by various historical contexts. In this regard, prioritising the historical record and its manifestation within temporally and spatially demarcated settings will serve two interrelated functions. In the first instance, it stresses the importance of locating the democratic peace in time and space, or as Joseph Nye (2003:47) has explained, the necessity of explicating the democratic peace on the basis of “detailed case studies to look at what actually happened in particular instances”. This position is similarly advocated by Owen (1996) and Layne (1996a) in their analyses of the democratic peace (see also in this regard Cohen, 1995:325). Against this position, some democratic peace scholars, notably Slantchev, Alexandrova and Gartzke (2005:462), have provided an outright rejection of the validity of historical cases as an instrument to challenge the causal logic underpinning competing theoretical approaches to the democratic peace, grounding their argument in the notion that “any reasonably competent student of

history can interpret a given case in various ways to support contradictory hypotheses”. However, not only does the latter argument provide an unwarranted (post-modern) critique of the validity of historical studies, but, as Rosato (2005:471) has indicated, it also misses the point in that the virtue of historical cases is located in their ability to provide an empirical opening for the determination of “whether the logic actually operates as stipulated”, i.e., if the theoretical logic advanced is manifest in reality. Also, and following from this point, it probes the extent to which the explanatory depth and efficacy of structural and/or agential powers is the product of the context in which they are embedded.

A more scathing critique of the validity of historical cases would turn on the extent to which Great Britain and the United States could, if seen in the context of the nineteenth century political world, be conceived as liberal democratic. As will be argued in chapter five of this study, the practice of imposing contemporary definitions of the term “liberal democratic” on historical cases is unwarranted. In accordance with an ideographic research strategy, this study will be contextually grounded in that it will focus on three cases of interest, notably Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) as well as an analysis of Franco-American relations (2002-). This study is qualitative in nature due to the intersection and importance of, on the one hand, military capabilities to realist theories – and their qualitative impact on the decisional context of states’ leaders – and, on the other hand, the qualitative nature of the normative argument underpinning liberal approaches to the democratic peace.

1.5 The structure of the study

Four issues, or key concerns, have thus far formed the backdrop of the study: the democratic peace proposition; its theorisation; the failure of contemporary democratic peace approaches to reflect on, and internalise, the ontological considerations presupposing their theoretical frameworks; and, contra the logic underpinning these approaches, the need for an alternative framework in addressing the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace. These issues will, to a greater or lesser extent, remain at the core of the argument advanced, and will function to structure the study. The study consists of six chapters and, as will become evident, is structured around the intersection of the issues identified above.

This research acknowledges and endorses the necessity for all forms of social theorisation (and empirical research) to engage with, and explicate, the ontological considerations presupposing their theoretical frameworks (Wight, 2002:26). Proceeding from this position, chapter 1 has already addressed this issue – although in an introductory compartment – by stressing the import of the agent-structure debate to all theoretical positions and attempts at theorisation of the social world.

Chapter 2 focuses on the centrality of the philosophy of science and, more particularly, the philosophically grounded domain of ontology – with specific reference to the agent-structure debate – to social theorisation. In essence, this chapter is concerned with the pervasive influence of a positivist theory/philosophy of science within the confines of the social sciences: its impact upon social theorisation in general, and IR theory in particular; and the importance of the agent-structure debate (hence ontological matters) to all philosophical positions, theoretical accounts and practical activities. As the argument advanced will illustrate, this implies that the epistemologically grounded positivist theory/philosophy of science is in and of itself a product of prior ontological considerations and, more importantly, that the theoretical frameworks resulting from it are marked by a similar fate. The philosophical assumptions underpinning the positivist theory/philosophy of science have, furthermore, an enduring legacy within IR theory and have markedly influenced the theoretical explication of the peace-inducing forces pertaining to the democratic peace.

Chapter 3 should be seen as a logical extension of the preceding chapter and is framed around the intersection between positivist theory, the agent-structure debate and the theoretical construction of the democratic peace. A conceptualisation of the (liberal) democracy-peace nexus – as advanced by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace – precedes this analysis. This discussion is followed by an examination of the ontological positions, conceived in terms of a response to the agent-structure problem, adopted by realist and liberal approaches to the democratic peace. The ontological positions upheld by realist and liberal approaches with regard to this problem, coupled with the adherence to a positivist theory of science, constitute a theoretical/explanatory crisis of which the implications thereof feed directly into the practical realm.

Contra contemporary democratic peace approaches, with their basis in mono-theoretical and context-independent accounts of the social world, chapter 4 sets out to provide an alternative (hence multitheoretical and context-dependent) explanatory account of the social world and, by implication, the democratic peace. It does so by offering a critique of realist and liberal interpretations of the democratic peace that is centred on two lines of attack. In the first instance, it utilises the agent-structure problem as an instrument of critique that endeavours to illustrate the fallacy of interpreting international political and social outcomes as the product of either individualist (agential) or structuralist accounts of the social world. As an extension of this argument, it will be contended that contemporary democratic peace approaches, and the theoretical frameworks they espouse, inhere in a fallacious account of the nature of the social world. As will become evident, there is simply more to the social world – and the social forces governing human behaviour – than that attributed to it by, respectively, realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace. This conception of the social world provides the framework for advancing a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach. Importantly though, it should be noted that it is *not* the contention of this chapter, or the study in general, that it will succeed in capturing the full spectrum of the theoretical (hence material and/or ideational) forces impacting upon the democratic peace phenomenon. On account of the open nature of the social world, this is in any event a goal beyond the reach of all social scientific inquiry.¹⁴ This does not mean, however, that the inclusion of, and emphasis on, realist and liberal explanatory forces in accounting for the democratic peace is strictly an analytical choice. Rather, their inclusion should be seen against the backdrop of their theoretical and practical relevance in accounting for the absence of war between liberal democracies.

Chapter 5 locates the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach within time and space, and is structured around the peace-inducing forces in Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) and Franco-American relations (2002-). The postulated theoretical framework, set against this backdrop, will refute and, at times, refine the theoretical conclusions drawn by, especially, the work of Christopher Layne (1996a) and John Owen (1996) in their analyses of the peace-inducing factors

¹⁴ As Wight (2006:xii) so aptly points out, “some part of the structural landscape we inhabit always escapes our view”.

involved in Anglo-American relations, 1861-63 and 1895-96. The chapter will thus provide an empirically grounded argument for the acceptance of, and necessity for, a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach by probing not only the situational intricacies involved in Anglo-American relations but also that of Franco-American relations (2002-) following the United States' decision to militarily invade Iraq. Following this reinterpretation of the historical record, whilst being cognisant of the theoretical framework advanced, chapter 6 will commence by inferring certain theoretical and practical implications from the intersection between the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach advanced and the situational intricacies occasioned by the historical record. On this basis, the chapter will both provide an overview of the key findings of the study and point to areas for future research regarding, *inter alia*, the intersection between IR theory, the agent-structure debate and the democratic peace.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AGENT-STRUCTURE DEBATE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY: A NECESSARY CONNECTION

The most persistent error of modern educators and moralists is the assumption that our social difficulties are due to the failure of the social sciences to keep pace with the physical sciences...The invariable implication of this assumption is that, with a little more time, a little more adequate moral and social pedagogy and a generally higher development of human intelligence, our social problems will approach solution.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1960:xiii)

Lesser thinkers than Marx and Freud have looked, and continue to look, to the natural sciences as their ideal for the study of human activity. If anything, the idealization of the natural sciences has become more pronounced since Marx and Freud.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2001:27)

2.1 Introduction

For the most part of the history of the discipline, and especially since the behavioural turn in social scientific inquiry, IR has been structured around, and conceived as a response to, the quest for (a certain kind of) scientific validation and legitimacy. This period in the history of the discipline reached its most forceful point of departure during the 1960s and is indicative of a disciplinary quest for a natural-scientific justificatory framework (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003:46). It coincided with, and could be conceived as a response to, the propagation of the necessity for IR scholars to validate their theoretical frameworks and knowledge claims in developments within the philosophy of science (Wight, 2002:28). In an attempt to establish the (natural) scientific credentials of the discipline, the disciplinary incorporation of a positivist theory of science – itself emergent out of logical positivism (Smith, 1996:15) – forcefully emerged. With its inception it heralded an almost disciplinary-wide endorsement of the validity of a positivist theory of science. That these developments within the philosophy of science, at first instance entailing the

inextricable nexus between a positivist theory of science and *legitimate* social scientific inquiry, have had a profound impact upon the development of the discipline and theory-construction in particular, is by now a foregone conclusion. These developments also ignited a varied set of responses aimed at reversing the disciplinary conflation of positivism and science. Given, however, the dominance of positivistically grounded theories of science within the cadres of American political science (Waltz, 1997:913), and the geopolitical realities of the twentieth century indicative of American military, economic *and* scholarly (disciplinary) dominance, the pervasive influence of positivism has in the main remained at the core of the discipline and this notwithstanding the evolution of alternative conceptions of science. In essence, and as an elementary reading of the history of the discipline and positivist thought more specifically would attest to, the demarcation between the terms “positivism” and “science” became, for all intents and purposes, non-existent (see for example Jackson & Sørensen, 2003; Kurki & Wight, 2007; Smith, 1996; Wight, 2002; 2006).

Despite attempts to purge the discipline of its positivist bias, the utilisation and endorsement of a positivist theory of science within the confines of IR have markedly influenced the theoretical construction and explication of the IR landscape and the disciplinary practices forming the basis of theorisation into IR phenomena (see in this regard, *inter alia*, Waltz, 1979; 1990a; Mearsheimer, 1990; 2001; Russett, 1995; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999; Spiro, 1996). Whilst the recognition of the pervasive influence of a positivist theory of science on the disciplinary history and development of IR has saturated the discipline, fully-fledged attempts at constructing and incorporating an alternative (non-positivist) philosophical account for the *theorisation* of IR phenomena remain a relatively novel feature. More problematically, however, and as Smith (1996:32) set out to explain, a vast majority of IR theoreticians have unreflectively embedded their theoretical frameworks within a positivist theory of science, with the implication being that these theoreticians found themselves adopting “an unthinking positivism, and worked within a Kuhnian normal science thereby foreclosing debate or theoretical and philosophical self-consciousness”.

This situation is further compounded by the acknowledgement that the incorporation of the philosophy of science into IR, specifically pertaining to the emphasis on a

positivist theory of science, broadly coincided with alternate developments within the philosophy of (social) science in which the validity of positivism was rejected on the grounds of theory-practice inconsistencies. This meant that the actual practices upheld by *positivist* theoreticians/researchers (to wit, the recognition that the scientific enterprise embodies a search for phenomena transcending the realm of experience, an assumption atypical of positivist *theory*) had little bearing on the theoretical assumptions undergirding the model of science they dogmatically defended (Wight, 2002:29). Given however the instrumentalist treatment of these non-observable entities and phenomena (viz., ‘as if’ they exist) – a basic prerequisite for legitimate positivist theorisation – studies grounded within this mode of theorisation often did very little to address (or theorise) the realities on the ground.

The renewed interest in metaphysical (specifically: ontological) inquiry into IR phenomena during the 1980s challenged the fundamental assumptions undergirding the positivist approach to science and its disciplinary primacy, by stressing the importance of ontological matters, and specifically the agent-structure problem, to all philosophical positions, theoretical accounts and practical activities. Insofar as this concept (“ontology”) held definitive implications for positivist theories of science, and it has bearing on the argument advanced in this inquiry, an attempt at conceptualisation is a logical imperative. Thus, following Kurki and Wight (2007:14), ontology can be considered a philosophically grounded domain of activity concerned with the nature of being (existence) and reality, with questions relating to “what is the world made of?” and “what objects do we study?” taking intellectual and inquisitive precedence. Interestingly enough, for some (hyper) positivist theorists adhering to an especially austere version of the nature of the scientific enterprise, the re-introduction of the validity and necessity of metaphysics for social theorisation and research would have meant nothing more than a return to metaphysical speculation. Indeed, for these positivists the only true science was – as Auguste Comte himself framed the issue in the formation of his positivistic philosophy – one predicated on the absence of metaphysical and/or theological inquiry (Venter, 1968:92). This is however a position that very few contemporary positivists would wish to defend (Wight, 2006:19).

Moreover, alternative (i.e., post-positivist) accounts of science increasingly questioned the positivist tendency of providing methodological/epistemological solutions to ontological questions (Wight, 2006:71), thus constituting what Bhaskar (2008:36) has termed the “epistemic fallacy”, viz., that “statements about being can be reduced to or analyzed in terms of statements about knowledge”. This line of critique was most forcefully advocated by those adhering to a scientific realist account of science. From this position, and contra positivist thought, questions of ontology could only be addressed at the level of ontology. Perhaps more importantly has been the acknowledgement, quintessentially ontological in nature, that the philosophical assumptions underpinning positivist theories/philosophies of science are themselves premised on prior ontological considerations. As such, these assumptions provide no trans-contextual (hence time-space invariant) account of what constitute legitimate (social) scientific inquiry. Likewise, and against the logic inherent in positivistically grounded theoretical frameworks, those theoretical attempts proceeding on the basis of mono-causal explanatory accounts, as well as those claiming law-like status, are in and of themselves a product of the ontological (and, following from this, epistemological) considerations presupposing their theoretical frameworks. This implies that all theoretical frameworks are, at their core, value-laden. It is this conception of the theoretical enterprise that underpins Burchill’s (1996a:2) conclusion that the theoretical frameworks espoused by IR theoreticians are intimately shaped and conditioned “by their own historical experience”.

Seen against the background of an apparent intersection between social theorisation and ontological matters, this chapter has three overarching aims. In the first instance, it will investigate and trace the nature of positivism by deconstructing the metaphysical assumptions undergirding the positivist approach to science. The objective here is rather straight-forward: to explicate the assumptions underlying the positivist approach to science with the aim of illustrating its pervasive legacy within the confines of the social sciences, upon social theorisation in general and, more pertinently, IR theory. This will be accompanied by an examination of some of the most basic fallacies inherent in positivism and the mode of theorisation accruing from this. In the second place, a case will be made for the significance of the agent-structure debate (hence ontological matters) to all manner and forms of social theorisation, philosophical positions and practical activities. Specifically, emphasis

will be placed on the recognition that the epistemologically grounded positivist theory of science is itself *ontologically* pre-determined and, more importantly, that those theoretical frameworks embedded in positivistically grounded accounts of science are derivative of prior ontological considerations regarding the nature of agents, structures and their interrelationship (in short, the agent-structure problem). The argument developed should therefore be seen as one of stressing the limits of positivistically grounded theories and, as such, their inextricable nexus to questions of ontology. In the last instance, a cursory examination will provide brief (and introductory) notes regarding the pervasive influence of positivistically grounded theories of science on the theoretical explication of the peace-inducing forces pertaining to the democratic peace, and the import of the agent-structure problem in this regard.

2.2 Positivist science and practice

The history and study of IR has, ever since its disciplinary inception, been characterised by a series of disciplinary and, more broadly, social scientific antinomies: between a realist versus a non-realist philosophy of science; positivism versus anti-positivism (and, more significantly, positivism versus scientific realism); ontology versus epistemology (the theory of being versus the theory of knowledge); and, importantly, the fundamental debate concerning the relative value of structural versus agential factors (i.e., the specific *epistemological* problem arising from the agent-structure debate) in determining (international) social and political outcomes¹⁵. Underlying this duality is, in part, a social structure in which social scientists are, to a greater or lesser extent, embedded and which postulates as a prerequisite for social scientific knowledge the attainment of and approximation to the same sense of explanatory comprehensiveness and prediction that accompanies the natural sciences. Wight (2006:15), falling back on the work of Roy Bhaskar, likens this

¹⁵ On account of the fact that this issue is accompanied by myriad confusions, it is thus better to address it here rather than later. The issue concerning the relative value of structural versus agential factors in determining social and political outcomes logically presupposes an explanatory account of the nature and interrelationship of agents and structures, and in this sense the author concurs with Wendt's (1987:340) argument, stressing that the latter issue (questions relating to the nature, and interrelationship, of agents and structures) is more central to the domain of the agent-structure debate than the former. However, there remains a necessary connection between the two, and the ontological position assumed with regard to the nature of agents and/or structures determinedly influences the relative explanatory power attributed to agents and structures.

situation to the all-encompassing influence of the issue of naturalism within the confines of the social sciences. With the culmination of the behavioural turn in social scientific inquiry, and the cognate emphasis on the utility of positivist principles to social theorisation, an attempt was made to provide theoretical legitimation to those advocating the feasibility of the naturalist tradition (Wight, 2006:15). Reduced to its most basic, the term 'naturalism' is meant to denote the "extent to which society can be studied in the same way as nature" (Wight, 2002:41). This issue has, interestingly enough, substantially influenced all of the so-called 'great debates' of the discipline, and has been indicative of the extent to which the discipline has been permeated by different conceptions of what constitute legitimate social scientific inquiry.

The first great debate of the discipline juxtaposed realist thought against the unsystematic and value-driven (thus: 'unscientific') nature of idealist thought (Kurki & Wight, 2007:16). On its part, the second debate, turning on methodological issues and marked by a fundamental dual between proponents of the behavioural and the traditional approach to science¹⁶, had at its core divergent accounts of the manner in which legitimate (valid) social scientific research should be conducted (Wight, 2006:16). The interparadigm (or third) debate centred on the validity of differing theoretical frameworks for inquiry into IR phenomena, particularly in respect of the theorisation of economic issues and their relation to economic underdevelopment in the Third World (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003:57).¹⁷ Questions relating to scientific inquiry (and naturalism) were ostensibly left by the wayside. Although a consensus surrounding the validity of positivism surfaced during this debate, questions regarding the nature of scientific inquiry (specifically relating to issues of theory choice and theory-incommensurability) soon disturbed the apparent tranquillity (Kurki & Wight, 2007:18). The most concrete treatment of questions relating to the status of social science and, concomitantly, the issue of naturalism, has however emerged during the fourth debate, marked by an overt commitment to and explication of differing conceptions pertaining to the issue of science within the history of the discipline (Kurki & Wight, 2007:19). This has taken the form of an outright polemic between adherents of positivist and post-positivist theories of science respectively

¹⁶ For an overview of exchanges on this issue, see Knorr & Rosenau (1969).

¹⁷ Note that some commentators do not include this 'debate' as part and parcel of the great debates of the discipline. Lapid (1989:236), for instance, identifies three "discipline-defining" debates of IR, paralleling the first, second and fourth debates mentioned here.

(Kurki & Wight, 2007:20). Regardless of the pervasive influence of the issue of naturalism within the confines of the discipline of IR, it remains in essence – if seen within the confines of the history of science – a deeply controversial issue and seemingly at times void of conclusion (Flyvbjerg, 2001:25).

With regard to the issue of naturalism, two traditions have emerged: on the one hand, the naturalist tradition, asserting a fundamental unity in method between the social and natural worlds and, as against this, the anti-natural hermeneutic tradition, stressing methodological variance between these two worlds (Wight, 2006:16). In this battle, the naturalist tradition has predominantly been the victor or, alternatively conceived, the desired disciplinary objective. This has, moreover, culminated in a “quest for certainty” (Hoffman, 1977:57), with the concomitant result that the *raison d’être* of the social sciences (read: International Relations) should, according to this position, be the identification and exposition of law-like regularities. Such a position conforms to and is vigorously defended by, *inter alia*, the neo-realism (or: structural realism) explicated by Kenneth Waltz (1979:1) and is deeply embedded within a positivist theory of science. So strong in fact have the disciplinary quest for certainty and the necessity of theoretical frameworks embodying positivist principles been that the adherence thereto has, in part, coincided with the perceived prominence of theorists, and the theoretical frameworks they advanced, within the discipline (Smith, 1996:13).

But Waltz’s theory in particular and structural realism more broadly are of course not isolated instances of an overt commitment to positivist principles, with liberal and Marxist approaches, conceived broadly, being marked by a similar fate. In fact, as Smith, Booth and Zalewski (1996b:8) correctly note, the emphasis on positivist assumptions has historically been, and to some extent still continues to be, the dominant disciplinary force in IR’s account of science, despite sustained attacks on the utility of positivism as an account of social science. This is all the more perturbing if one considers Wight’s (2002:29) argument that the incorporation of positivist principles into the disciplinary (IR) corpus of knowledge and/or practices coincided with the rejection thereof within the domain of the philosophy of science.

2.2.1 Positivist theory: ontological and epistemological considerations

But what, in any event, could legitimately be considered as constitutive of a positivist approach to science, especially since – as Nicholson (1996:129) has indicated – the concept ‘positivist’ is marred by confusion, and there exists, as Halfpenny (1982:114) perceptively noted, at least twelve versions of it? It thus seems problematic and to some extent self-contradictory that the pervasive influence of positivist approaches within the confines of IR has overlapped with a virtual absence of any discussion regarding what positivism actually entails (Smith, 1996:16). Perhaps a basic point of departure would be to recognise that positivism is in the first instance a theory/philosophy of science and that statements such as those provided by Smith *et al.* (1996a:xiii) in which “positivism and its alternatives continue to vie as competing *accounts of international politics*” (emphasis added) could easily be conceived as misleading and thus intensify the sense of confusion surrounding the term ‘positivism’. Equally, the portrayal of positivism in essentially epistemological terms is unwarranted given that it has its basis in, and is the product of, prior metaphysical (hence ontological) assumptions, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, regarding the nature of the social world and scientific inquiry in general – thus, in essence, a response to the question: “what must the world be like for science to be possible?” (Bhaskar, 2008:23).

This is an *ontological* question that must be addressed by all theories/philosophies of science and of which the answer is deeply engrained within, and constitutive of, the logic of scientific praxis. In order for science to retain its intelligibility, and importantly to set itself apart from other forms of knowledge, it must be the case that all scientists believe in a world beyond appearances – science, as a construction of knowledge, is thus intimately tied to the recognition that the world of appearances does not provide an exhaustive account of the real. Or, following Wight (2006:18): “What marks scientific knowledge out from other forms of knowledge is that it attempts to go beyond appearances and provide explanations at a deeper level of understanding. This implies that the scientist believes that there is a world beyond the appearances that helps explain those appearances”. At the most basic level then, this denotes that science, as a *distinct* mode of knowledge construction is premised on and already embodies a definite ontological position or, more precisely,

a realist metaphysic¹⁸. All theories/philosophies of science must necessarily suffer a similar fate.

In a positivist conception of science this implies that the epistemological foundations undergirding positivist theories/philosophies of science are, in the first instance, a response to the ontologically grounded question of the nature of scientific inquiry.¹⁹ This (epistemological) response, as will be argued, encompasses in turn specific ontological implications and it thus seems prudent to conceive of positivism as encompassing a dual ontological commitment: in the first instance, and given the logic of scientific praxis as laid bare above, all theories/philosophies of science are constructed on the basis of an implicit (or explicit) response to a realist metaphysic; and, secondly, given the positivist tendency of providing epistemological and/or methodological answers to ontological questions (Bhaskar's 'epistemic fallacy'), positivism encompasses a very restricted ontological perspective on the nature of existence. Seen against this background, positivism embodies its own metaphysically (ontologically) grounded set of assumptions regarding the social world. Also, and given that these assumptions are themselves derivative of issues of time, circumstance and place, positivism provides no timeless route to secure knowledge and should, accordingly, be seen as only one account of what constitutes science. This notwithstanding, it still leaves unanswered the question regarding the fundamental assumptions undergirding a positivist theory of science.

2.2.2 The metaphysics of positivism: central assumptions

Since positivism does not represent a monolithic body of thought, any attempt at demarcating and advancing a unifying set of assumptions must be cautiously advanced. Underscoring this proposition is the notion that positivism – as a theory of

¹⁸ The term 'realist metaphysic', as used here, refers to the acknowledgement of the mind-independent existence of structures and mechanisms (hence non-observable entities) as constitutive of the appearances manifest in reality. This correlates to Bhaskar's (2008:9) delineation of a realist philosophy of science: "perception gives us access to things and experimental activity access to structures that exist independently of us".

¹⁹ As Bhaskar (2008:40), in the author's view, intelligibly argues, grounding his argument in a scientific realist account of science, "denying the possibility of an ontology merely results in the generation of an *implicit ontology* and an *implicit realism*". This is due to the fact that all theories/philosophies of science proceed on the ground that the social world, and those entities within it, must be of a certain kind in order for science to be possible.

science – has proceeded through three historically distinct phases of development, originating with Comte's conception of the necessity for a positivistically determined science of society, to a second variant commonly referred to as logical positivism (a product of the intellectual productions of the Vienna Circle during the 1920s) (Smith, 1996:14). It is in the latter form that positivism found its starkest expression (Smith, 1996:14). Emerging out of the ashes of the former, and subsequently capturing the intellectual and inquisitive imagination of the social sciences (and, eventually, IR) during the 1950s and 1960s, was a third variant of positivism (contentiously conflated with empiricism) that has, for better or worse, become the dominant disciplinary account of science and, by implication, the mainstream depiction of the constituent properties of a positivist approach (Smith, 1996:15). Although this variant forms the bedrock for the vast majority of theoretical and empirical inquiry into international relations phenomena (Smith, 1996:15), the exact framing of the assumptions undergirding this variant of positivism has once more induced considerable disagreement. Nicholson (1996:129), for instance, likens this variant of positivism or, more specifically, what IR scholars have been engaged in for the last 50 to 60 years, to the concept of 'empiricism'.²⁰ Smith (1996:17), in turn, has tended to view positivism as essentially a methodological position wedded to an empiricist epistemology which provides a very restricted ontological view of what could be said to exist. This conceptual divergence thus derives from differing positions concerning the issue of whether positivism should primarily be considered through an epistemologically and/or methodologically grounded prism.

Wight (2006:19), echoing Smith on this issue, has likewise argued that positivism gives intellectual and inquisitive priority to "the methodological elements of knowledge construction" with the notion of establishing, demarcating and adhering to a specific scientific method being central to all positivist approaches. Michael Nicholson, for example, a staunch defender of positivism in IR, has in this regard argued that a methodological commitment to the covering law model (also called the Deductive-Nomological or D-N model) must be considered a basic building block for legitimate scientific inquiry (in Wight, 2006:19). Accordingly, for positivists the

²⁰ In fact, Nicholson (1996:131) makes his commitment to this principle explicit, arguing that the conception of positivism he advocates "is one which asserts the centrality of empirical propositions, that is, propositions where the reasons for believing them are grounded in observation".

method is the central prism through which a body of knowledge can be scientifically validated. In fact, it is only through this methodological prism that the objective scientist (itself a heavily laden term) can sufficiently differentiate between scientific knowledge and everyday (non-scientific) belief (Kurki & Wight, 2007:21). Whilst in some respects a legitimate point of departure in demarcating positivism, a more convincing position would be one that views positivism as embodying a set of ontological, methodological and epistemological assumptions. Seen against this background, and accepting the notion of difference within theoretical and/or philosophical accounts, Smith (1996:15-16) has usefully constructed a set of assumptions that most positivists would accept and endorse, and which is framed around four key assumptions. This conception of positivist theory is fundamentally reducible to, and thus encompasses, issues pertaining to the unity of science ideal; the demarcation between facts and values within social scientific research; a belief in the existence of manifest regularities as the constitutive element in social scientific explanation; and the adoption of an empiricist epistemology. Each of these four assumptions designates a specific, yet interrelated, attribute constitutive of positivism.

In the first instance, the unity of science ideal implies the endorsement of the trans-disciplinary applicatory value of methodologies and epistemologies; or, alternatively phrased, recognises that the natural and social worlds are conducive to similar methodological and epistemological approaches and positions, with the positions (methodological and/or epistemological) subsumed within the domain of the natural world providing the groundwork for its incorporation into the social world (Smith, 1996:16). At its core, this encompasses the issue of naturalism and constitutes a derivation of the principles subsumed under the naturalist tradition. The issue of naturalism, furthermore, comprises both a strong and weak version, with the former reduced to the notion of the existence of an essential ontological *and* methodological unity between the natural and social worlds such that it exhibits similar properties, structures, mechanisms and laws. The latter version, while thematising the ontological divergence of the two worlds, nevertheless stresses that the methods of the natural sciences have applicatory value to the analysis of the social world (Smith, 1996:16). The second assumption relates to the existence of a marked difference between facts and values, with the former conceived as theoretically neutral (Smith,

1996:16). Scientific research and explanation, properly conceived, is the domain of factual evidence, typified by the abstention of value-laden judgements in the conduct of research and social explanation (Hughes, 1990:20). Given the theory-neutral nature of facts, objective knowledge of the world is deemed an obtainable objective (Smith, 1996:16). The third assumption derives from the belief in the existence of regularities within the domains of both the natural and social worlds (Smith, 1996:16). These regularities manifest themselves in “patterns of observable events” (in essence, Hume’s notion of ‘constant conjunctions’) and are indicative of the existence and operation of general laws. And finally, positivism is underpinned by a commitment to an empiricist epistemology. The concept of ‘empiricism’ denotes a theory of knowledge in which all claims to (secure) knowledge must be based on, and can only be justified on the grounds of, systematic observation (Hollis, 1996:303). This relates to the existence of, and adherence to, a rigorously established set of methodological guidelines and procedures, with its basis in the necessity for scientific inquiry to be grounded in and legitimated by systematic observation as the only valid instrument for the attainment of secure knowledge (Kurki & Wight, 2007:21). The British philosopher John Locke, considered the protagonist of the empiricist tradition, had in this regard very specific ideas concerning the derivation of knowledge, and it is worth citing him at length on this issue:

Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer in one word, from experience: in that all our knowledge is founded, and from it ultimately derives itself. (Quoted in Russell, 2004:556)

Whilst these conceptions of positivism are in the main satisfactory, some scholars have made a case for a more philosophically grounded account of positivism. Wight (2006:20), in particular, has taken issue with Smith’s treatment of the issue, arguing that it amounts, essentially, to a positivistic treatment of positivism that fails to unravel the essential question of *why* positivists defend and adhere to the specific

assumptions put forth by Smith. Contra this situation, then, Wight (2006:21) has stressed the necessity of expounding the metaphysical underpinnings of positivism and has identified a set of assumptions constructed around the four concepts of phenomenalism, nominalism, cognitivism and naturalism.

In the first instance, phenomenalism alludes to “the doctrine that holds that we cannot get beyond the way things appear to us and thereby obtain reliable knowledge of reality”. Human knowledge, according to this position, cannot transcend the bounds of the appearances mirrored in sense-experience. Thus, any notion of an external (hence: non-observable) world irreducible to, and independent of, the appearances reflected in sense-experience cannot be said to exist given that it is not directly given in, and a product of, appearances. As the British empiricist George Berkeley (quoted in Russell, 2004:591) himself framed the issue, and thereby foreclosing any debate on the existence of an external (mind-independent) existence, “the *reality* of sensible things consists in being perceived”. Kurki and Wight (2007:21), similarly, have emphasised that the positivist tradition had succumbed to the motto *esse est percipi* (to be is to be perceived), in which existence is a product of and dependent on perception. What exists (ontology) is therefore dependent on and the product of appearances. Those ‘realities’ that could not be observed cannot be said to exist. This implies that any reference to non-observable entities (for example ‘society’, ‘the international structure’ or ‘anarchy’) are treated in wholly instrumentalist terms, i.e., as *if* they existed, and as such they bear no ontological import (Kurki & Wight, 2007:21). Secondly, the doctrine of nominalism encompasses a rejection of the reality and objective meaning of the words, concepts and ideas we use, with these merely conforming to convention and as such does not represent anything concrete or ontologically real. Strauss (2009:25), commenting on the issue of nominalism within the purview of science, has treated this concept accordingly and has identified it with an attempt at “rejecting all universal properties outside the human mind”. A commitment to cognitivism constitutes the third assumption. This embodies a rejection of the cognitive value embedded within value judgements and normative statements. And finally and as already indicated, a methodological commitment to naturalism holds that the methods of the natural sciences have applicatory value to the domain of the social sciences.

What makes Wight's contribution especially salient is not only his metaphysical treatment of the conceptual underpinnings of positivism, but – more importantly – the linkages he draws between these terms and the specific beliefs informing positivist scientific praxis. These conceptions of positivist scientific praxis, whilst treated in isolation here, are inextricably tied, in more ways than one, to the metaphysical assumptions laid bare above. Thus, the conception of causal analysis underpinning positivist scientific praxis stands for instance within a mutually dependent relationship with more than one of the above-mentioned metaphysical assumptions. Proceeding from this position then, Wight (2006:21) has identified four key principles constituting the bedrock of positivist scientific praxis. The first key principle, from a strictly methodological perspective, is that all positivist approaches are typified by a commitment to the 'covering law model' of explanation (hence the D-N model), originating from the work of Carl Hempel. Its basic point of departure is the notion that the explanatory validity of science is dependent on the invocation of a law that validates (or covers) all observable cases originating from that which is to be explained. Smith (1996:15) has set out to explicate the workings of the covering law model as envisioned by Hempel: "He [Hempel] argued that an event is explained by 'covering' it under a general law. Usually this takes the form of a deductive argument whereby (i) a general law is postulated, (ii) antecedent conditions are specified, and (iii) the explanation of the observed event deduced from (i) and (ii)". As will be argued in the following section, this model is not beyond critique, but is itself derivative of the positivist adherence to a phenomenalist treatment of knowledge.

The second guiding principle concerns the following: on account of the phenomenalist conception of knowledge undergirding positivist thought, theoretical concepts should be treated in wholly instrumentalist terms. Theoretical terms and/or concepts, accordingly, do not assume any ontological reality and do not render themselves to the categories of truth and falsity, but are treated 'as if' they exist and as such merely constitute an explanatory function in service of explicating the empirically grounded phenomena. As Waltz (1979:8) for instance argued, grounding his structural realist account of international politics within the confines of an instrumentalist treatment of theoretical terms, the "question, as ever with theories, is not whether the isolation of a realm is realistic, but whether it is useful". Bhaskar

(2008:113), rejecting this view, has convincingly argued that any mechanism or structure capable of exerting a physical effect on human behaviour, regardless of the concern whether it is subjectable to sense-experience, must be said to exist and should accordingly be deemed a legitimate object of scientific inquiry. In the third place, a commitment to the Humean conception of cause informs the causal logic underpinning positivist scientific praxis. This implies that if event *a* logically preceded, and was deemed consequential for, event *b*, then when *a* occurs, so will *b*. Or, as Hume interpreted this conception of causal laws, the “sight of A causes the expectation of B, and so leads us to believe there is a necessary connection [in essence, a constant conjunction] between A and B” (quoted in Russell, 2004:605). It is this conception of causality, and causal laws in particular, that is deeply entrenched in Waltzian structural realism and, more broadly, all positivist approaches to science. Waltz’s (1979:1) comments in this regard are, again, a case in point:

If *a*, then *b*, where *a* stands for one or more independent variables and *b* stands for the dependent variable: In form, this is the statement of a law. If the relation between *a* and *b* is invariant, the law is absolute...A law is based not simply on a relation that has been found, but one that has been found repeatedly. Repetition gives rise to the expectation that if I find *a* in the future, then with specified probability I will also find *b*.

There are, however, very specific limitations in perceiving causal laws through the prism of a Humean conception of cause (i.e., as ‘constant conjunctions’), and these will be dealt with in the succeeding section. The final principle as outlined by Wight captures a commitment to operationalism, i.e., the notion that the concepts of science should be confined to the concrete (and observable) operations involved in determining the measurement thereof.

Taken as a whole, Wight’s (2006) conception of the metaphysical assumptions underpinning positivist science and praxis, essentially building on but transcending the contributions of Smith (1996), Nicholson (1996), Hollis (1996) and Kurki and Wight (2007), provides a plausible demarcation of the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions, and their relation to one another, constituting positivism. Whilst the discipline of IR has to some extent accepted the veracity of

alternative conceptions of science, too often scientific validation within the discipline has been intimately tied to an adherence to a positivist theory/philosophy of science. Alexander Wendt, for instance, commenting in a 1987 contribution to *International Organization* on whether a scientific realist conception of science has in essence become the new orthodoxy in the philosophy of natural science, has lamented the lack of awareness or interest among American political scientists in this debate and the disciplinary implications thereof (Wendt, 1987:336). Seen against this background, the continued dominance of positivism within the discipline is understandable. And even though the limitations inherent in positivism have been explicitly dealt with in the philosophy of natural science, the social sciences (and especially IR) have in the main stubbornly refused to relinquish the pervasive influence of positivism on theorising international social and political phenomena.

2.3 The limitations of positivism: from laws to correlations

Ashley (1986:280) stresses that Waltzian structural realism is “theory of, by, and for positivists”, and reduces this conclusion to the metaphysical commitments embedded in Waltz’s treatment of international political outcomes. There is no need to further stress the fact that the metaphysical commitments constituting the theoretical and practical bedrock of positivist science have been challenged and alternatives put forth. However, given the continued disciplinary dominance of positivism, and the multitudinous nature of theoretical contributions explicitly (or implicitly) embedded within this tradition, the task at hand would be well-served by highlighting some of the most pertinent limitations inherent in positivism and the mode of theorising it induces. Strauss (2009:39), in a critique of the empiricist foundations of positivist thought, has critically emphasised the futility of objectively gaining knowledge by way of sense-experience in that all observations and appearances must be interpreted by way of some or other theoretical framework. Thus, as Smith (1996:20) eloquently argues and in keeping with Strauss’ comments, there are “no brute facts, no facts without interpretation, and interpretation always involves theory”. Empiricism, as a theory of knowledge, is thus itself theory-dependent, and theoretical frameworks, as will be argued in the succeeding section with reference to the agent-structure debate, are predicated on, and are the product of, prior ontological assumptions regarding the nature of the social world and the

entities constructing that world. Moreover and as previously emphasised, the epistemological warrant rooted in positivist accounts, articulated in terms of an overt emphasis on sense-experience, permits a very restricted ontological account of reality (Smith, 1996:19; Kurki & Wight, 2007:21). On his part Smith (1996:19-20) has further taken issue with the positivist conception of cause, arguing that given the positivist rejection of unobservable entities, wedded to the instrumentalist treatment of theoretical terms, any notion of cause (conceived in terms of an ontologically real cause-effect relation) must be discarded and, subsequently, causation in positivist science cannot go beyond the bounds of correlation.

It is, however, the commitment to a phenomenalist conception of knowledge and existence, intimately tied to the notion of empiricism, which has most profoundly influenced the mode of theorisation embedded within positivist approaches, and with which this study takes issue. For if human knowledge, following the logic of positivist science, are ultimately confined to the appearances mirrored in sense-experience, and if social explanation (read: causation) is reduced to patterns of observable events (thus related to the nominalist rejection of all universal properties existing outside the human mind (Strauss, 2009:25)), theoreticians are bound at one time or another to be confronted by *observable* regularities. Proceeding from this position, the emphasis on the covering law model of explanation, the Humean concept of cause and – following the positivist emphasis on nominalism – an instrumentalist treatment of theoretical terms seem justified and deemed necessary for legitimate scientific inquiry. It is this (flawed) notion that occasions the positivist emphasis on the theoretical construction of context-independent (thus: universally applicable) laws and accounts of international relations phenomena and that ultimately fail to take account of the contextually real (and diverse) forces generating those (observable) behavioural regularities manifest in reality. Alternatively phrased, and contra positivist science, similarities of outcomes (the regularity principle) do not necessarily translate into similarity of inputs. Theoretical frameworks embedded within this (positivist) mode of explanation inevitably succumb to theoretical parsimony in which the explication of the regularities manifest in sense-experience (thus: correlations) are reduced to the existence of trans-contextual (thus: context-independent) explanatory forces. Wight's (2006:30) comments in this regard are instructive in that he argues that the positivist emphasis on "the manufacturing of constant

conjunctions can be seen as an attempt to intervene in nature, and suppress [the existence of] counteracting forces, with the hope of isolating specific mechanisms". Also, and as Smith (1996:20) reminds us, the positivist adherence to the covering law model of explanation, for example, is intimately flawed in that this model can provide a range of behavioural outcomes (in essence, some form of behavioural prediction) without meeting the requirements of *why* these are likely to occur.

Seen against this background, the inherent failure of the regularity principle embedded within positivistically determined theories of international relations has been its failure to conceive of a twofold set of imperatives: (1) the ontologically real structures and causal mechanisms producing, and governing, these regularities and, more importantly, (2) a conception of human (and state) behaviour that can provide theoretical and empirical space for the notion of the existence of a complex, and contextually determined, interaction between differing structures and mechanisms located at differing levels of reality. The challenge therefore is not one of sufficiently discarding the existence of regularities (correlations), but of explicating the 'counteracting forces' (Wight, 2006:30) constitutive of these regularities. But, moreover, if the existence of regularities is intimately tied to the notion of correlation, in what sense can positivistically grounded theories of international relations speak of, and theoretically account for, the existence of laws, if laws are interpreted as the existence of an ontologically real causal mechanism and/or structure exerting a physical effect on human behaviour?

In a word, and given their commitment to a phenomenalist nominalism, they cannot. In fact, and on account of this rejection of the behaviourally constitutive power embedded within non-observable entities, the positivist conception of law-like regularities cannot therefore be seen as law-like and, following Hume, is merely indicative of a constant conjunction of events. Wendt (1987:353-354), writing from a scientific realist position, has in this regard, and contra positivist science, argued that a true explanatory claim proceeds on the basis of the identification of "the underlying causal mechanisms which make an event naturally necessary". More importantly, however, and referring explicitly to the theoretical explication of the regularities identified by positivistically inclined theoreticians of international relations, is the acknowledgement of the theory-dependent nature of *all* attempts at explicating the

constitutive properties of the regularities manifest in observation. The theoretical explication of these regularities manifest in observation cannot however, contra the logic of positivism, be subjected to any notion of secure (objective) knowledge given that they are, after all, just that (theoretical).²¹ And once the realm of the theoretical is entered it becomes in essence a question of and resolution to the ontologically grounded agent-structure problem.

2.4 Beyond positivism: ontology and the agent-structure debate

The acknowledgement of an antecedent set of metaphysical (ontological) assumptions undergirding all theories/philosophies of science, and the acceptance of the theory-dependent nature of sense-experience, had during the latter part of the twentieth century laid bare the disciplinary conflation of positivism and science. This entailed an alteration in balance – though partially – from the positivist emphasis on epistemology to the constitutive importance of matters of ontology to research practice. Cohering with the disciplinary ascendancy of questions of ontology, and to some extent preceding it, was “the emergence of an ontological debate that was claimed integral to all theoretical positions. This was the agent-structure problem” (Wight, 2006:3). Wendt (1987:337), in a path-breaking contribution thematising the ontological preconditions of social theorising, has advanced a similar conclusion arguing that “all social scientific theories embody an at least implicit solution to the “agent-structure problem,” which situates agents and structures in relation to one another”.

But whilst the agent-structure debate (or, following conventional usage, the agent-structure *problem*) has permeated IR discourse, its exact nature has been tainted, in the first instance, by inconsistencies and confusion owing in most part to an

²¹ Weber (2005:6-7), stressing the epistemological limits of IR theory, draws a similar conclusion arguing that IR theory is tainted by a myth function that serves to transform historically, culturally and ideologically derivative theoretical constructions “into what *appears* to be universal, natural, and purely empirical...Put another way, the myth function in IR theory is making a “fact” out of an interpretation”. Thus, and explicitly referring to the democratic peace literature, while some scholars, notably Slantchev *et al.* (2005:459-460), have indeed stressed the probabilistic nature of social theorisation, and have thereby attempted to defend the theoretical limits of liberal theories of democratic peace, the problem lies therein that these theoretical frameworks are portrayed (viz. theorised) as *if* they encompass time-space invariant explanatory accounts of the regularities manifest in observation. Instead, these frameworks should be providing theoretical space for the theorisation of an interplay (or, in some instances, an outright conflict) between differing theoretical forces over time.

indiscriminate conflation of the agent-structure problem with matters of explanation (for instance, the level at which explanation should proceed, thus constituting the level-of-analysis problem). A second reason relates to the failure to reach consensus among contributors to the debate on which questions should properly be deemed ontological, methodological or epistemological (Wight, 2006:90; see also Wight, 2002:24). This, however, burdens the debate with an undue complexity.

With regard to the first issue, it should be noted that the agent-structure problem is not one and the same as the level-of-analysis problem. Whilst the level-of-analysis problem is centrally concerned with the level at which social explanation should proceed, the agent-structure problem is premised on the properties of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, as constitutive elements of a given object of inquiry, regardless of the level at which explanation proceeds. Wendt (1992:185) provides a similar perspective arguing that we should confine our discussion of levels of analysis to “questions about what drives the behaviour of exogenously given actors, and agent-structure talk for questions about what constitutes the properties of those actors in the first place”. Similarly, confusion surrounding the ontological, methodological and/or epistemological status of the agent-structure problem is unwarranted. For whilst the agent-structure problem encompasses an ontological, epistemological and methodological dimension, the latter dimensions and their distinctive properties are subsequent to the resolution of the former. Accordingly, the agent-structure problem is primarily a problem of ontology or, as Dessler (1989:33) has argued, although lacking any real specificity, a strictly philosophical problem. But if the agent-structure problem is the *sine qua non* for scientific inquiry (Carlsnaes, 1992:246; Wendt, 1987), what in essence are the most basic foundations of this problem?²²

The agent-structure problem originates from, and is structured around, two ontological propositions (or truisms) about social life which form the basis of all social scientific inquiry: in the first instance, “human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which

²² As Carlsnaes (1992:246) phrased it, “[W]hether we like it or not, it is impossible to do social science without at some point coming to grips with the rival claims subsumed under the rubric of [the agent-structure] problem”. This invariably entail that all social theories are characterised by what could be described as a pre-theoretical ontological realm.

they live”, but conversely, “society is [also] made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors” (Wendt, 1987:338). If taken together, it implies not only the recognition that human agency is in some way or other implicated by, and dependent on, the social relationships and/or concrete historical circumstances in which agents are embedded, but also that these social relationships and/or historical circumstances are in some way dependent on the existence of agents whose relationships constitute (reproduce and/or transform) the structural context in which they are embedded (Dessler, 1989:443). Or, as Wight (2006:99) so aptly phrased it, “there can be no social act outside of a social context, but equally social contexts, in and of themselves, do not act”. This implies, at the most basic level, recognition of a mutually constitutive (and theoretically interdependent) relationship between human agents and social structures. Carlsnaes (1992:246), drawing a similar conclusion by conceiving of human agents and social structures as interrelated entities, has in this regard emphasised that an explanatory account of either agents or structures must logically be accompanied by an invocation of an account of the other. As such a conceptualisation of the fundamental properties of both agents and structures must be deemed a theoretical necessity for the proper understanding of social behaviour (Carlsnaes, 1992:246). The problem, however, according to Wendt (1987:338, is that “we lack a self-evident way to conceptualize [theorise] these entities and their interrelationship”. This point cannot be over-stressed and constitutes, in the author’s view, the most basic conception of the ‘problem’ underlying the agent-structure problem. Differing theoretical frameworks, therefore, provide differing conceptions of the nature of agents and structures, and their interrelationship.

Recognising that all social scientific inquiry must conceptualise an object of inquiry, and accepting the ontological import of both agents and structures, Wight’s (2006:63) framing of the agent-structure problem as “a problem of object conceptualisation”, viz. a question of the nature of agents and structures and their interrelationship as constitutive elements of the object we would come to know, is well-conceived. And from this position, Wendt’s (1987:337) insistence that all social theories generate an implicit solution to the agent-structure problem seems warranted. *Ipsa facto*, no resolution to the agent-structure problem, in the sense of entailing a time-space invariant resolution thereof, can be forthcoming. By this token,

the typical disciplinary language that articulates this phenomenon in terms of the agent-structure *problem* is in fact misleading given that the framing of the question in terms of a problem presupposes a definitive solution. This perspective is fundamentally flawed given the competing social ontologies that lie at the heart of differing solutions to the agent-structure problem. Wight's (2006:63) comments in this regard are, again, instructive:

To label something a problem suggests both the possibility of a solution and the need to elaborate one...In respect of the agent-structure problem, however, there can be no solution in the sense of solving the conundrum so that we know the 'answer', or the problem no longer appears as a problem. Every social theory has its own 'solution/answer' to the problem, but this does not mean that the problem has been dispensed with. We may want to reject some formulations and favour others, but again, this does not mean that the problem has been solved. The agent-structure problem must be addressed by all approaches and it is the manner in which it is addressed which represents a major point of theoretical dispute.

Notwithstanding this, some scholars have indeed advanced theoretical arguments aimed at providing a resolution of the agent-structure problem (see, in this regard, Dessler, 1989; Wendt, 1987; Carlsnaes, 1992; and for a more radical post-structuralist position, Doty, 1997), with each position (resolution) embodying in the main one of two possible approaches: the reduction of the properties and existence of one unit of analysis to that of the other (hence ontological reductionism, encapsulating both an individualist or structuralist variant) or, drawing on a structurationist approach to the issue (embedded within the work of Anthony Giddens), by treating agents and structures as ontologically equal (Wendt, 1987:339). Structuration theory has, given its conception of agents and structures as ontologically equal, to some extent been the vogue in attempts at theorising, and advancing a resolution of, the agent-structure problem.²³ The social ontology

²³ As will come to the fore in chapter three of this study, some scholars commenting on the democratic peace research programme has ascribed the work of, amongst others, Doyle (1996a) and Owen (1996; 1997) as constitutive of a structurationist approach (see, for instance, Panke & Risse, 2007:93). This position will in the main be challenged in chapter three where the author will endeavour to illustrate the individualist nature of liberal (and/or democratic) theories of the democratic peace directed toward the explication of *international* social and political outcomes.

undergirding the argument developed in this study will be advanced in chapter four. For now it will suffice to say that it shares certain commonalities with Giddens' conception of structuration theory, most fundamentally its conception of agents and structures as ontologically equal, but it differs with structuration theory in other fundamental respects. The aim of this study, it should be noted however, is not to reject or critique Giddensian structuration theory, but to empirically evaluate the resolution underpinning the argument to be advanced in chapter four of this study. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that within the discipline of IR structuration theory has, interestingly enough, been subjected to differing forms of critique, with Walter Carlsnaes (1992:258) in particular, drawing on the work of Margaret Archer, criticising Giddens' conception of structuration theory (or the 'duality of structure') for its inability to "incorporate the notion – quintessentially historical – that structure and action work on different time intervals". Whilst the theoretical tenability of Giddens' conception of structuration theory has enjoyed much standing in social theory, some contributors to the agent-structure problem, notably Hollis and Smith (1991; 1994), have questioned the validity and efficacy of *all* resolutions to the problem arguing that any attempt at resolution of the agent-structure problem is dependent on prior resolution of the explaining/understanding divide constituting social inquiry.²⁴ This implies *ipso facto* that there are no grounds for evaluating between differing theoretical frameworks such that all theories embody a legitimate explanatory account of the social world.

It is a position that this study does not wish to defend. Whilst all theories implicitly advance their own ontologically grounded solution to the agent-structure problem, and accepting and explicitly endorsing the notion that there can be no time-space invariant resolution of the problem, it still must be the case that there should be legitimate grounds for accepting some theoretical frameworks while rejecting others. Perhaps the most basic criterion in this regard should be an inquisitive interest in the explanatory power of differing theoretical frameworks in relation to that which is to be explained (hence the object of inquiry), and their ability to transcend the theoretical claims encapsulated within competing accounts (Wight, 2006:45). This implies that

²⁴ Wight (2006:100) has convincingly argued that this divide is in and of itself dependent on prior ontological resolution of the nature of agents and structures as constitutive elements of the social world.

the agent-structure problem should not be conceived as an obstruction to theoretical development within the discipline and beyond. Noting this, however, the agent-structure problem remains a problem without conclusive (i.e., time-space invariant) resolution. All social ontologies are to a greater or lesser extent a product of time, place and circumstance. It is this conception of the import of time and space that also informs Brown's (2007:48) argument, although referring explicitly to the rich legacy of political theory to IR theory, that there "are no timeless traditions, with recurring questions and answers".

At the most basic level, then, and given the theoretical necessity of prior resolution of the agent-structure problem, there exists a necessary connection between the agent-structure problem and social theorisation. But, and following from this, insofar as all social action and/or practical activities are theory-dependent, the agent-structure problem is essentially transposed from the theoretical to the practical realm. The import of the agent-structure problem then, though derivative of the theoretical realm, transcends it. It is against this background, recognising that all social theories advance their *own* ontologically grounded solution to the agent-structure problem (with each solution derivative of historically determined temporal and spatial considerations, and thus embedded within an incomplete theoretical framework), that the limitations inherent in all theoretical accounts of the social must be recognised and the validity of constructing theory-universal (context-independent) accounts be challenged.

2.5 Positivism, ontology and the theorisation of the democratic peace: preliminary remarks

IR theory remains in the main a product of positivist thought and practice, with alternate theoretical developments being juxtaposed in relation to positivism as the mainstream disciplinary account of legitimate scientific inquiry. The emphasis on theory-universality and ensuing from it, the explanatory validity of mono-causal theoretical accounts of the social world, originates from an unwarranted metaphysical commitment to the doctrine of naturalism. It has at its centre a resolute conviction that an adherence to a natural-scientific justificatory framework, wedded to a process of continued alteration and refinement of the hypotheses advanced in

social scientific inquiry, will enable social scientists to fully comprehend and explain an ontologically complex world. Accordingly, the quest for scientific truth was deemed attainable on the grounds of a continued process of correction and adjustment (Hamilton, 1996:3). This mode of reasoning, deeply embedded within IR theory, has similarly been the constitutive logic of theoretical accounts of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon.

Hedley Bull, in particular, advancing an epistemologically grounded critique of this mode of reasoning, has taken issue with this linear process of intellectual progress, posited by Kuhn, in which scientific knowledge proceeds through various stages with the final stage being the achievement of an irrefutable knowledge base regarding certain aspects of reality (Burchill, 1996a:10-11). This approach is not applicable to the discipline of IR insofar as “the subject matter under investigation cannot be subject to proof or strict confirmation [with the result being] that the central questions of the discipline are never finally settled” (Bull, 1966:361). Underpinning this epistemological dichotomy is the distinction between foundationalist and anti-foundationalist theories, with the former grounded in the belief that all claims pertaining to some postulated truth can be objectively validated as either true or false, with the latter, as Bull stated above, positing that epistemic claims are rendered void of such judgements given the absence of neutral grounds for the conduct thereof (Smith & Owens, 2005:274).

But, insofar as all theoretical positions require prior ontological specification in response to the agent-structure problem, and thereby acknowledging the partially constructed nature of all theories, the balance of argument has to weigh more heavily in favour of the anti-foundationalist position. Notwithstanding the various attempts at disciplinary redirection, the Kuhnian approach is however deeply grounded within the disciplinary history of IR. Contemporary IR theories, specifically those adhering to the mainstream (i.e., realism, liberalism and certain variants of Marxist thought) are still to a greater or lesser extent embedded in this tradition. IR theory, considered from this mainstream rationalist approach, still has as its goal the production of context-independent (universally valid) accounts of the social world that fail to adequately account for the possibility that different contexts provide – to a certain extent – different structural and agential powers. At issue here is,

furthermore, differing conceptions of the foundational properties of IR *theory* and, concomitantly, the nature of theorisation into IR phenomena.

Waltz (1990a:26), for instance, argues that a theory proper should be geared towards the demarcation (isolation) of a separate realm of inquiry, abstracted from reality, as a prerequisite for theoretical (or intellectual) engagement with the issue(s) at hand. At the core of this conception of the theoretical enterprise is the acknowledgement that theory-construction should be, and are, embedded within a “grossly distorted” depiction of reality accruing from the recognition that the “assumptions on which theories are built are radical simplifications of the world and are useful only because they are such [with the result being that] any radical simplification conveys a false impression of the world” (Waltz, 1990a:27). This conception of the nature of the theoretical enterprise stands in marked contrast with King, Keohane and Verba’s (quoted in Waltz, 1997:914) emphasis on the need for social theories “to be just as complicated as all our evidence suggests”²⁵. Although this study accepts the limitations inherent in theory-construction, to wit, an acceptance of theory as “some kind of simplifying device that allows you to decide which facts matter and which do not” (Smith & Baylis, 2005:3), it is not at all clear how much of a distortion of reality could (or should) be accepted before theoretical frameworks are rendered meaningless in terms of explanatory power and/or practical application. We shall return to this issue in chapter four of this study.

The position taken up in this study, stressing the interplay between structural and agential forces over time, provides at first instance a rather bleak verdict regarding the validity of IR theory and presupposes that our social world does not provide a sufficient degree of consistency in order to enable social scientists to construct a theoretically valid account of international relations phenomena. This is certainly a position that the American scholar Noam Chomsky vehemently defends: “[H]istorical conditions are too varied and complex for anything that might plausibly be called “a theory” to apply uniformly” (quoted in Burchill, 1996a:1). An elementary theory of IR ought to be possible, since all social action are theory-dependent and history bears

²⁵ Note that reference to a given scholar(s) should not be taken to imply the acceptance of the entirety of his/her/their theoretical outlook and philosophy of science, but rather with the specificity of the argument involved.

witness to the persistent interplay between ideational and material forces. However, such a theoretical approach can only hope to provide an approximation of reality and cannot therefore capture the full complexity of the social world. This realisation, coupled with the acknowledgement that all theories presuppose prior resolution of the agent-structure problem, remains an elusive property in attempts at theorising the democratic peace phenomenon, with (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions thereof exclusively theorising, and prioritising, one entity (structures or agents respectively) to the detriment of the other.

Hence, in neo-realist theory, states are presumed to be rational, egoistic and unitary (Wight, 2006:94) with the actions and behaviour of agents (in this case, states) being constrained by the properties and effects of the relations (structures) in which they are embedded. Liberal conceptions, on their part, conceive of structures as the product of the intentional behaviour of agents, with structural effects being superable on account of some property pertaining to agents. In contradistinction, this study argues for a conception of the properties of agents and structures and their interrelationship that can provide theoretical and empirical space for the notion that structural and agential effects, and their interrelationship, are themselves subjected to contextual realities, i.e., temporal and spatial differentiation. This implies that structural factors, as conceptualised by neo-realist contributors to the democratic peace, do not *always* deterministically constrain the behaviour of agents. On their part, agents (however conceived), and as against liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, are *sometimes* subjected to structural forces that cannot be intentionally altered through the prism of liberal ideas, ideology and/or institutions. With explicit reference to the democratic peace phenomenon, this implies at the most basic level that the properties of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, are derivative of temporal and spatial differentiation.

2.6 Evaluation

This chapter set out with three overarching aims in mind. In the first instance, the chapter provided an investigation into the nature of positivist thought and practice by way of a deconstruction of the metaphysical assumptions undergirding the positivist approach to science. Second, and delineating the limitations inherent in all

theoretical accounts of the social, a case was made for the inquisitive necessity of accounting for and explicating the nature and import of the agent-structure problem to all manner and forms of social theorisation, philosophical positions and practical activities. In the final instance, a cursory examination was put forth in relation to questions of ontology, positivist theorisation, and their connection(s) to the theoretical explication of the democratic peace phenomenon. Seen against this background, this chapter has argued that positivism – as a theory/philosophy of science – is itself premised on prior ontological (metaphysical) considerations and, as such, provides no secure (hence time-space invariant) account of legitimate scientific inquiry and knowledge of the social world. Similarly, an attempt was made to illustrate some of the most basic fallacies inherent in positivist thought and practice. In particular, this chapter took issue with the failure of positivistically grounded social inquiry to conceive of the theory-dependent nature of sense-experience. Given the commitment to the doctrines of phenomenism and nominalism, positivistic theorisation displays a basic inability to conceive of the existence of a complex and contextually determined interaction between differing structures and mechanisms as constitutive forces of the regularities manifest in observation. The theoretical explication of these regularities manifest in observation cannot, on account of their theoretical nature, be subjected to any notion of secure (objective) knowledge.

This point was reinforced by probing the theoretical and empirical consequences accruing from a consideration of the agent-structure problem in social theory. In view of the necessity for all social scientists to conceptualise an object of inquiry, the agent-structure problem is, at the most basic level, a problem of object conceptualisation. It thus entails the necessity of theoretical specification of the nature of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, as constitutive elements of a given object of inquiry. As this chapter has argued, the agent-structure problem is the *sine qua non* for social scientific inquiry and social theorisation. More importantly however, all social theories presuppose their own ontologically grounded solution to the agent-structure problem and, on account of this very fact, no resolution to the agent-structure problem can be forthcoming. This has definite implications for the theorisation of international relations phenomena and, more focused, the theorisation of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic

peace. In particular, and given the neo-realist and liberal adherence to a structuralist and individualist approach respectively, the agent-structure problem lays bare the theoretical and empirical reach of, one, all social scientific theories postulating an explanatory account of the social world and, two, all theoretical constructions treating the properties and existence of agents or structures as wholly reducible to that of the other. An argument has therefore been put forth – though in an introductory compartment – stressing the ontological and explanatory import of both agents and structures, and furthermore that the properties of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, are themselves subjected to temporal and spatial differentiation.

CHAPTER THREE

**DEMOCRACY AND PEACE: LIBERAL THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE
AND THE REALIST RESPONSE**

[W]e now have solid evidence that democracies do not wage war on each other. Stable democracies rarely even skirmish with each other. They are much more likely than other governments to settle disputes with each other peacefully, by negotiation or mediation.

Bruce Russett (1995:x-xi)

Our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens, and reflect their own cultures. And because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace.

George W. Bush (2005)

All healthy human action, and therefore all healthy human thought, must establish a balance between utopia and reality, between free will and determinism.

E.H. Carr (1981:11)

3.1 Introduction

Ever since Michael Doyle's [1983] (1996a) seminal two-part contribution, published in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, on the dual explanatory value of a Kantian inspired liberal international theory for the explication of both the peace-proneness of liberal dyads (i.e., relations between liberal states) and, conversely, the war-proneness of mixed (liberal and non-liberal) dyads, the democratic peace has rapidly become the dominant research programme within the discipline of IR. Since then, the debate and scholarly contributions on the peace-inducing forces (whether correlational or causal) inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon have amassed at an alarming rate. Doyle's [1983] (1996a) contribution – subsequently followed by a 1986 contribution to the *American Political Science Review* touching on similar themes and issues – was curiously enough not the first attempt at explicitly theorising, or at the very least,

acknowledging the nexus between democracy (and/or liberalism)²⁶ and peace (see for instance, *inter alia*, Babst, 1964; 1972; Rummel, 1983; and, for a critical (dissident) perspective taking issue with the Kantian foundations of liberal peace, Waltz, 1962). This notwithstanding, his work in effect afforded the necessary theoretical (and, *prima facie*, causal) depth and impetus for the evolution of the democratic peace research programme (Cohen, 1994:209). Moreover, it precipitated an ever-expanding body of literature grappling with the theoretical and empirical validation of the democratic peace phenomenon. From the outset however, and especially following Doyle's [1983] (1996a) and, to a lesser extent, Rummel's (1983) theoretical engagement with the issue(s) at hand, the democratic peace research programme has been marked and in some respects tainted by disputes concerning issues of theory-construction (see, for example, Slantchev *et al.*, 2005; Rosato, 2005), measurement and/or methodological considerations (Oren, 1996; Spiro, 1996; Slantchev *et al.*, 2005; Rosato, 2005), and historical/empirical validation (Mearsheimer, 1990; Cohen, 1994; 1995; Layne, 1996a; Owen, 1996). In some instances, furthermore, theoretical arguments postulated during the early evolution of the research programme, and of which some connection or other between democracy (and/or liberalism) and peace was theorised, have subsequently been rejected owing to the utilisation of more advanced methodological approaches and revised (updated) data-sets. Buhaug's (2005) rejection of the monadic thesis (*viz.*, the hypothesis that democracies are more peaceful *in general*²⁷) postulated in Stuart Bremer's (1992) study, on the grounds of a series of methodological concerns, is indicative of this tendency.

Precipitating these issues however, and in some measure constituting the foundational dividing force in the democratic peace research programme, has been the furnishing of differing theoretical and explanatory frameworks for the explication of the democratic peace phenomenon. Most, if not all, theoretical approaches employed in response to the democratic peace have in one way or another embedded their explanatory frameworks within the confines of a (neo-)realist or liberal theory of international relations, with each venturing to explicate the causal

²⁶ As will be argued in the succeeding section, the 'democratic peace' does not necessarily coincide with the 'liberal peace', and could to some extent be indicative of contradictory tendencies.

²⁷ The dyadic thesis/logic, as against this, refers to the notion that liberal states are only peace-prone in relations with other liberal states.

factors responsible for the democratic peace on their own (theoretical) terms. The problem has been (and continues to be), if conceived as an issue peculiar to the agent-structure problem, the recognition that the theoretical landscape constituting the study of international relations phenomena is, in the first instance, marked by differing conceptions regarding the properties of the key elements (units of analysis) and causal factors impacting on (international) social and political behaviour (Wight, 2006:7). Given the theory-dependent (ontological) nature of all social inquiry, this has meant that the democratic peace research programme has in and of itself become a prisoner of the historically grounded theoretical dichotomy premised, in the main, on the structural and agential (individualist) conceptions of social life embedded in (neo-)realist and liberal theory respectively. Compounding matters, principally during the early onset of the research programme, was not only the question of the theoretical and causal validity of differing explanatory frameworks, but also whether the postulated *correlation* between (liberal) democracy and peace – advanced by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace – could legitimately be conceived as statistically tenable (valid). Cohen (1994; 1995), for instance, has in this regard argued that the statistical correlation vehemently defended by liberalist conceptions of democratic peace was much more circumscribed than initially portrayed in the literature. Spiro (1996) reached a similar conclusion stressing the statistical insignificance of the democracy-peace correlation.

Probing the correlational nature of democratic peace theory has, in the main, subsided, with inquisitive priority in regard to the democratic peace phenomenon directed towards the *causal* explication of the absence of war between (liberal) democracies. Liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, in their rendition of the state of inquisitive progress into the causal factors affecting the democratic peace phenomenon, have endowed the democratic peace with the (seemingly) highest possible acclamation in social science research, stressing that it has in essence become “the closest thing we have to an iron law in social science” (Snyder, 2004:57). As will come to the fore, the final verdict on this conclusion remains elusive and, on account of the issues subsumed under the rubric of the agent-structure problem, inherently problematic. On the grounds of the charge that liberal theories of the democratic peace have systematically failed to transcend the bounds of correlational (as opposed to causal) analysis, realist scholars have insisted, in the

words of Rosato (2005:471), that the “democratic peace continues be an empirical finding in search of an explanation”. This implies, notwithstanding liberal arguments stressing the contrary, that the democratic peace remains, as argued in chapter one of this study, a project-in-process (a notable exception is Doyle, 2005:466, arguing that the democratic peace theory may need additional testing).

The outcome of this debate and the stakes involved in it are profound, with the concomitant potential to alter the theoretical and practical dimensions of the discipline. As Lynn-Jones (1996:ix-x) reminds us, reflecting on the theoretical challenge posed by democratic peace theory, the validity of the democratic peace research programme, if proven theoretically and empirically consistent, could potentially destabilise the disciplinary dominance of realist theories of international relations by challenging two central tenets of the realist paradigm: first of all, the condemnation of international politics as a permanent state of war (insecurity), with security competition accruing from the security imperatives generated by an anarchical international system and, following from this, the primacy of systemic (rather: structural)²⁸ explanations in accounting for international social and political outcomes. If the realist argument is however vindicated, it would imply a marked blow to the liberally grounded argument of the existence of a separate peace among (liberal) democratic states, accruing from the ideological (normative and institutional) commitments and attributes of these states. The existence of a separate peace binding all (liberal) democratic states in a pacific community would therefore be indicative of nothing more than “the unconscious reflexions [*sic*] of national policy based on a particular interpretation of national interest at a particular time” (Carr quoted in Burchill, 1996b:69).

More fundamentally, however, the democratic peace theory has – notwithstanding the incomplete nature of the theorisation of the causal factors impacting upon it – become the dominant policy force in Western security discourse during the latter part

²⁸ Wight (2006:75) makes an interesting observation, noting that although Waltz (1979) set out to provide a theory of the system (systemic theory), and he conceptualises the systemic whole as constitutive of both interacting units and the structural domain in which these are situated, his prioritisation of structural theorisation *vis-à-vis* individualist conceptions logically entails a subversion of the very terms he lays out as constitutive of a systemic theory. A more exact ascription of Waltz’s explanatory schema could therefore be encapsulated under the term structural realism. The interchangeable use of ‘systemic theory’ and ‘structural theory’ is clearly evident in Waltz (1988:618).

of the twentieth and early twenty-first century. At the core of this theory-practice nexus is the liberally grounded premise, quintessentially *theoretical* in nature, that liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace have unravelled the chief²⁹ explanatory forces accounting for the absence of war between (liberal) democracies. This presumes too much. Given, moreover, that each theoretical framework, and the causal factors it propounds, is in and of itself derivative of prior resolution to the agent-structure problem, any notion of a definitive time-space invariant account remains inconceivable. The theory-practice nexus accruing from the liberal rendition of the democratic peace is, on account of the complexity of social life, further compounded if the process of theorisation is reduced to the production of theory-universal (context-independent) and mono-theoretical accounts of the social world.

Accordingly, this chapter has three overarching and interrelated aims. In the first instance, it will provide a necessary engagement with the conceptual foundations (whether liberal and/or democratic) of the democratic peace theory. This section will further elaborate on issues of causation and correlation that have marred the democratic peace research programme since the early onset of its evolution. In the second place, an inquiry into the ontological positions, broadly conceived in terms of the agent-structure problem, will transpire in which the structuralist conception of international social and political outcomes inherent in (neo-)realist theory will be juxtaposed against the agential (individualist) conception inhering in liberal theories. The chapter will conclude by stressing that both theoretical frameworks have proceeded on the basis of a theory-universal (context-independent) and mono-theoretical account of the social world (constituting, in essence, a theoretical crisis) of which the implications thereof have, in recent years, manifested itself in real-world terms.

²⁹ Some proponents of the democratic peace, notably Slantchev *et al.* (2005) and Russett (1996), have stressed the probabilistic nature of theories, and have subsequently refrained from ascribing an all-encompassing explanatory framework to liberal explanatory factors. This argument has definitive theoretical implications and will be dealt with in the succeeding sections.

3.2 Liberalism, democracy and the democratic peace: conceptualising the democracy-peace nexus

The theorisation of the democratic peace has, since the outset of the research programme, been marred by the failure of (most) theoreticians to draw a discernible line between the democratic and the liberal peace. Questions relating to war and peace have throughout history been at the forefront of intellectual and, more recently, disciplinary inquiry. With the emergence of a body of literature claiming intellectual primacy by virtue of a scientifically grounded nexus (again, a heavily laden phrase) between (liberal) democracy and peace, those (realist) approaches postulating the inevitability of security competition and war have, according to this liberal position, become increasingly obsolete. The perceived nexus between (liberal) democracy and peace, grounded in a liberal theory of international relations, has not escaped the attention of decision makers and has recently manifested itself in the call for the establishment of a “league of democracies”, actively promulgated by influential advisors to both the Republican and Democratic candidates in the most recent presidential election in the United States (Kupchan, 2008:96). This position has been bolstered by the fact that neo-realist scholars, most notably Kenneth Waltz, have had to concede ground to liberal scholars of the democratic peace by recognising the existence of, at the very least, a correlation between (liberal) democracy and peace: “Still, peace has prevailed much more reliably among democratic countries than elsewhere. On external as well as on internal grounds, I hope that more countries will become democratic” (Waltz, 1991:670). Waltz’s (1991) comments in this regard have not been an isolated instance and other (neo-)realist scholars, specifically those directing their research efforts at the explication (or rejection) of the democratic peace phenomenon, have followed suit.

Rosato (2003:585) for instance has, notwithstanding his relentless criticism of the *causal* logics postulated in liberally grounded theories of democratic peace, made a similar concession, recognising and accepting the robustness of the correlation(s) postulated within the democratic peace literature (for a similar concession, although more implicit in nature, see Layne, 1996a). But whilst Waltz (1991) has conceded the correlational nature of democratic peace theory, he has also – in no uncertain terms – warned of the illusory tendency to conflate pacific periods in international politics

with an outright decline in the importance of power politics (Waltz, 1993:78). Beyond correlation, however, the issue of causation remains contentious. This does not imply however that interest into the correlational nature of democratic peace theory has wholly subsided. Some scholars working within the parameters of the democratic peace research programme still labour with this purpose in mind. As Rosato (2005:471) cautions, referring to Errol Henderson's recently published *Democracy and War: The End of an Illusion?* (2002), the almost disciplinary wide endorsement of the correlational nature of (liberal) democratic peace has in recent years been subjected to revision. However, more studies of this nature will have to be conducted in order to warrant an outright disciplinary refutation of the correlational nature of the democratic peace phenomenon.

The question regarding the causal mechanism(s) specific to the observation of no wars between (liberal) democracies has been a constant source of disagreement within the democratic peace literature, with various scholars opting for democracy as the overriding causal mechanism, whilst others have focused their attention on the pacifying effects inherent in *liberal* democracy. The distinction is not merely analytical insofar as the "the 'liberal peace' may not be identical with the 'democratic peace'" (Lynn-Jones, 1996:ix). This issue has proven to be problematic for, and a realist inspired source of critique of, liberally grounded theories of democratic peace. Spiro (1996:207), in particular, has taken issue with the lack of conceptual clarification in the democratic peace literature and its effect(s) on the assessment of the empirical evidence. He points towards a possible incongruence between the theoretical frameworks postulated by liberal theoreticians, inhering in a normative *liberal* theory of democratic peace, and the specific properties of the data-sets used in validating these theories:

If there is something about the checks and balances of a constitutional republic, or of a pluralist democracy, or of a liberal regime, that prevents war, then we should expect to observe that democracies fight less than other types of regimes. Since every study...agrees that this structural theory is not validated empirically, the definition of democracy used in empirical tests needs to have some basis in a normative theory of democratic peace. A majority of studies, however, use a data set coded by Ted Gurr ("Polity II") that measures elements

of the democratic process, and *says nothing about liberal norms*. (Spiro, 1996:207; emphasis added)

This has meant, as Chan (1997:64) correctly perceived, that the empirical evidence regarding the democratic peace has been tainted with considerable confusion due to the inability of theoreticians to adequately conceptualise the causal mechanism(s) responsible for the democratic peace. Democracy and liberalism, whilst in some instances interrelated, do not necessarily coincide. This recognition should form the basis of all inquiry into the democratic peace and researchers should clearly specify the causal mechanism their theories purport to explicate. At the most basic level, and seen historically, democracy refers to the sovereignty (rule) of the *demos* (Owen, 1997:15), and is derivative of questions pertaining to representation (of voters and voters' preferences) and elections. This coincides fairly well with, *inter alia*, Huntington's delineation of the essential attributes constitutive of a democratic political system. Such a system is typified by regular, free, honest and competitive elections exacting an accountable relationship between voters and collective decision makers (in the sense that the former has the power to remove the latter from political office), and in which a substantial segment of the adult population obtains voting eligibility (cited in Russett, 1995:15). However, no *a priori* reason exists why a democratic political system should coincide with liberal policies and/or norms and why the policy process should reflect this. Owen (1997:15) draws a discernible line between liberalism and democracy in stating that there "is no necessary content to...a democracy, no particular worldview, anthropology, or vision of what the laws should look like. There is only the directive that the people ought to get what they want".

Contributors to the democratic peace research programme have nonetheless, and specifically with reference to the specification of democratic and liberal norms, tended to treat the two as mutually interchangeable (Rosato, 2003:586; for a conflation of democratic and liberal norms, see Russett, 1995:31). Recognition of this reality has not gone amiss within the democratic peace literature, specifically by those adhering to a *liberal* theory of democratic peace. Doyle (2005:463), most prominently, has repeatedly stressed that democratic institutions, on their own, are not immune to the subjugation of the policy process to the externalisation of the

policy preferences (whether xenophobic or hyper-nationalist) of its voters. There exists accordingly no compelling rationale for why two majoritarian governments should remain at peace (Doyle, 2005:463). In fact, Immanuel Kant, the protagonist of the democratic peace theory, was himself deeply critical of democracy, viewing it as a formalised and entrenched form of tyranny (Spiro, 1996:207). To a certain extent, this also constitutes the central argument underpinning Zakaria's (1997) notion of "illiberal democracies".

Various scholars have attempted to address this problem, with the weight of evidence favouring Michael Doyle's argument that without "constitutional liberalism, democracy itself has no peace inducing qualities" (in Zakaria, 1997). Significantly, Doyle (1996a:5) grounded his account of the democratic peace in a liberal theory of international relations (conceptualised in terms of political and economic freedoms), with the emphasis on (some form of) democratic representation or participation being firmly embedded within this liberal theory. Owen (1996:122) provides a similar account in that he vehemently argues for liberalism as the cause of the democratic peace, with democratic institutions (notably: freedom of speech, regular competitive elections, and public deliberation by way of representatives) being a product of, and inextricably linked to, liberal ideas. Both conceptions of liberal theory coincide with, and are indicative of, modern definitions of *liberal* democracy. This implies some form of interplay (of processes) between the attributes laid bare under the rubric of a democratic political system and those which are encapsulated under the term constitutional liberalism.³⁰

With regard to the latter term, two interrelated forces are at work. In the first instance, liberalism refers to the deeply-entrenched tradition in Western philosophical thought that stresses the primacy of individual liberty (Zakaria, 1997). Or following Doyle (1996a:4), liberalism refers to the recognition and mainstreaming of moral freedom, i.e., to treat individuals (and to be treated) as "ethical subjects" as opposed to pawns (objects). On its part, constitutionalism, originating from within the Roman tradition and recognising the paramountcy of the law, provides the warrant for individuals'

³⁰ Heywood (2003:334) defines liberal democracy as a political system marked by a dual incorporation of "both limited government and a system of regular and competitive elections". This broadly maps on to the delineation to be advanced here, although it does not make sufficient room for the deconstruction of the term 'constitutional liberalism'.

rights to life, liberty and property and the prevention of the encroachment of governmental authority into these domains (Zakaria, 1997). Thus, following Doyle (1996a) and Owen (1996), the democratic peace is in reality the *liberal* peace, with the recognition that both liberal norms and institutions (i.e., democracy as the product of liberal ideas) *could* be responsible for the democratic peace. As already inferred, whilst democracy does not necessarily coincide with liberal policies, it is in the main a prerequisite for liberal conceptions of democratic peace, embedded as it is within the concept of liberal democracy. Democracy, then, has to inhere in a normative liberal theory (encapsulating a range of political and economic warrants) in order to produce the pacifying effects ascribed to the democratic peace theory. Democracy cannot in and of itself produce the democratic peace.

This position, advocated by Doyle (1996a) and Owen (1996), makes a firm statement: that the democratic peace is grounded in a liberal theory of international relations in which structural (rather: institutional) and normative theories of the democratic peace both function to produce the no war phenomenon, with the former reducing the democratic peace “to the institutional constraints [properties] within democracies”, whilst the latter “locates the cause of the democratic peace in the ideas or norms held by [liberal] democracies” (Owen, 1996:119). This distinction, deeply entrenched within the democratic peace literature, broadly parallels the distinctive nature of the research programmes of those focusing on the peace-inducing forces inherent in the *democratic* peace theory (thus coinciding with the institutional argument put forth) as opposed to those theorising the *liberal* nature of democratic peace theory (incorporating both normative and institutional arguments). Insofar as Doyle (1996a) gives inquisitive precedence to the normative argument, whilst acknowledging but under-theorising the institutional counterpart (see Owen, 1996:119 in this regard), Owen’s (1996) dual (liberal) approach is particularly salient. Some scholars have however rejected this dual (i.e., institutional *and* normative) approach to the democratic peace (see for example, Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999) and have opted for explanatory accounts grounded in either institutional or normative theories of the democratic peace.

Realist scholars of the democratic peace have been quick to explicate the fallacy of institutional theories of the democratic peace. These theories, grounded in the

premise that the costs and constraints (viz., the possibility of electoral punishment) inherent in liberal democracies limit the range of acceptable behaviour by states, have faltered under the realist critique centred on the notion that the institutional argument invariably entails that liberal democracies will be more peaceful *in general*, a proposition that has proven to be empirically invalid (Spiro, 1996:207; for a similar argument, albeit, from a liberal position, see Owen, 1996:120). In fact, as Mearsheimer (1990:48) correctly observed, liberal democracies are every bit as war-prone as authoritarian states. Whilst accepting this line of reasoning, but attempting to provide greater empirical depth, Rosato (2003:593-599) set out to provide a more empirically sound analysis of the peace-inducing forces inherent in institutional theories of democratic peace, effectively rendering all variants underpinning the institutional logic invalid. His study constitutes in essence the fiercest critique of liberal conceptions of democratic peace to have originated in recent years from realist contributors to the debate.

At the core of the institutional argument, as noted, is the presumption that democratic institutions and processes exact a relationship of accountability between decision makers and various social groups. This constitutes the central logic of the accountability mechanism. Five differing variants underpin the institutional argument of democratic peace, each designating a specific path to peace and itself dependent on the theoretical *and* empirical validity of the accountability mechanism (Rosato, 2003:587). In the first place, the public constraint mechanism denotes that decision makers are constrained in war-threatening crises due to the peace-inducing forces embedded within the general public's aversion to war. Secondly, the group constraint mechanism indicates how anti-war groups (whether within or outside of government) constrains policy outcomes. Thirdly, given the complex process of mobilising public and civil society groups within democracies, they are slow to mobilise for war (slow mobilisation mechanism). Fourthly, the public nature of mobilisation for war makes democracies inept to carry out surprise attacks, providing sufficient time for careful deliberation. And, in the final instance, the information mechanism implicates that democracies are better at signalling than non-democracies. There are two reasons for the latter argument: given their accountability to a war-averse public, and the general expectation that opposition political parties will oppose unpopular policies, democratic elites will only escalate disputes if there exists a high probability of

foreign war success. On account of this recognition private information (democratic resolve in war-threatening crises) is more readily accessible to other democracies (Rosato, 2003:587). Following from this, and recognising that all variants of the institutional argument depend on the theoretical and empirical tenability of the accountability mechanism, Rosato (2003:593) premised his inquiry on the observation that, with due recognition of the absence of war between liberal democratic states and the war-proneness of autocratic states, liberal decision makers must according to this logic “be more accountable than autocrats if accountability is a key mechanism in explaining the separate peace between democracies”. The findings of this inquiry afford scant support for institutional arguments of democratic peace, questioning the notion that liberal states face greater costs and constraints than their autocratic counterparts in war-threatening crises.

Basing his conception of accountability on both the consequences (i.e., punishment, whether by exile, imprisonment or death) and the probability of losing office in response to the adoption of unpopular policies, Rosato (2003:594) found that autocratic leaders have been removed from office after failure in war almost equally to democratic leaders. They have also been removed on more occasions than democratic leaders in the case of costly wars (Rosato, 2003:594). More fundamentally, in both costly and losing wars, autocratic leaders have in far greater percentages been punished for unsuccessful policies (Rosato, 2003:594). At the core of this argument is thus the recognition that democratic leaders have, historically seen, been no more accountable for the policies adopted in response to losing wars and, furthermore, have been far less accountable in cases of costly wars. This invalidates, according to Rosato (2003:594), not only the central logic underpinning the accountability mechanism (and all subsequent variants of the institutional argument, given their dependence on this mechanism), but also illustrates that faced with a war-threatening crisis democratic leaders are not subjected to greater expected costs than autocratic leaders.

Unsurprisingly liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace have cast doubt on the validity of Rosato’s (2003) findings. This has prompted Slantchev *et al.* (2005) to conclude that Rosato’s data actually serve to validate the accountability logic rather

than discredit it. Departing from the proposition that democratic states *are* more accountable than their autocratic counterparts (thus more likely to be removed from office), and given the low frequency of wars in which democratic states were on the losing side (four as opposed to the eighty-nine in which autocratic states were involved), Rosato's (2003) evidence, according to Slantchev *et al.* (2005:461), instead highlights the fact that democratic leaders are disproportionately more inclined to enter into wars that they can win and will also win the majority of the wars in which they do engage. This proposition (emphasising the selection-effect marking democratic states, and their war-winning tendency in these selected wars) is according to Slantchev *et al.* (2005) a sufficient indicator that democratic leaders are in fact more constrained (accountable) than is the case in autocratic states. The tendency of democratic states to be the victor in major wars is beyond dispute. What is at stake however is the linkage drawn by Slantchev *et al.* (2005:461) between a perceived sense of greater accountability on the part of democratic leaders and their validation of this proposition on the grounds of the perceived democratic aversion to engage in costly wars ('selection effect') and, concomitantly, the disproportionate tendency of democratic states to be the victor in major wars. The validity of this assumption, as Rosato (2005:470) in his rejoinder to Slantchev *et al.* (2005) perceptively notes, is predicated on the assumption that democratic states are in fact more accountable than autocratic leaders, an assumption that has obtained little empirical bearing and has been invalidated by more recent studies ascribing prominence to the notion that defeat in war exacts greater effects on the war-tenure of autocratic as opposed to democratic leaders.

The exposition of the normative argument has subsequently received the most attention in the literature, with especially Russett (1995:41) emphasising the pre-eminence of normative explanations of the democratic peace: "[W]ithin democracies, structural impediments to using force are less strong than within autocracies; normative restraints must bear the load". Normative theories of the democratic peace, premised on the idea that liberal democracies externalise the internal norms of compromise and non-violent conflict resolution found within their borders, have similarly been shown to be deficient. With this recognition in mind, realist scholars of the democratic peace have challenged the normative argument on two fronts. The first line of critique is directed towards a rejection of the peace-inducing forces

inherent in normative theories of democratic peace, stressing the absence of historical validation for these theories in cases of war-threatening crises involving liberal states. Accordingly, liberal norms exact little effect on the pacific nature of inter-liberal relations. A second line of critique centres on the fact that democratic states have frequently intervened against fellow democracies³¹, undermining thus the trust and respect mechanism underpinning normative theories of the democratic peace (Rosato, 2003:590-591). Whilst the jury is still out on the first area of dispute, liberal scholars have indeed addressed the latter issue. Their arguments are convincing. The democratic peace phenomenon is, as Russett (1995:13) has emphasised, confined to interstate wars as opposed to covert interventions which are constitutive of a different political process. In effect, covert interventions render public deliberation on war-questions, and the opportunity for liberal norms to affect policy discourse, futile.

Whilst this argument has gained wide acceptance in the literature, some liberal contributors have taken issue with normative theories of democratic peace on very different grounds. Specifically Owen (1996:121) has taken issue with the inability of normative theories of the democratic peace to account for the effect of perceptions with the result being that many of the states that are considered democratic by modern researchers failed to conceive each other as such during times of war-threatening crises. This implies, consequently, that the prerequisite normative check frequently failed to operate as stipulated in the democratic peace literature (Owen, 1996:121). This introduces an important caveat into the fray in that Owen's (1996:120, 131) argument is premised on the notion that the peace-inducing nature inherent in liberal democratic dyads presupposes that they perceive each other as such: "A liberal democracy will only avoid war with a state that *it believes to be liberal*" (emphasis in original).

Owen's (1996) overt emphasis on perceptions has in recent years come under attack. Realist contributors to the democratic peace debate, most notably Rosato (2003:592; 2005:468), have argued that the prioritisation of perceptions as a concomitant peace-inducing causal factor in the democratic peace literature has

³¹ Rosato (2003:590) makes reference to American interventions during the Cold War in *inter alia* Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954) and Brazil (1961, 1964).

failed to make its mark in terms of empirical validation. Instead, an examination of the historical record focusing on American perceptions (as evident in the dominant political parties of the time) of the liberal status of foreign powers has been marked by the subjugation and derivation of states' perceptions of each other to the outcomes, subjectively defined, of decision makers' personal preferences, issues of party affiliation and/or strategic considerations, as opposed to questions of regime type (Rosato, 2005:592). The outcome is the existence of a very narrow base from which democratic peace researchers could reliably predict how war-threatening crises would impact on states' perceptions of each other (Rosato, 2005:592). This means, in contradistinction to Owen's (1996) argument, that the basic precondition for the peace-proneness of liberal states – the imperative of their perceiving each other as liberal – is itself a product of historically located and temporally determined interests, rather than any objective measurement (perception) of regime type. The democratic nature of states, according to this position, has very little effect on decision makers' perceptions of other liberal states.

Oren (1996) reached a similar conclusion in his in-depth analysis of the changing nature of US perceptions of Wilhelmine Germany before and during the First World War. He noted that in the case of Germany, the shifting nature of US perceptions and the re-evaluation of the institutional and normative justness (or lack thereof) of the German political system were shaped by the changing international circumstances engulfing the US (viz., the deterioration in German-American relations) (Oren, 1996:264). Oren (1996:264) concluded that the democratic credentials of states, in this instance Imperial Germany, were intimately tied to the peaceful nature of their foreign relations rather than an objective time-invariant conception of the constitutive properties of a democratic state. It is worth considering that the German political system, in the years preceding World War I, was admired by political scientists of the time (including president to be, Woodrow Wilson) as a most advanced constitutional state (Oren, 1996:264). Oren's (1996) conclusion poses, at first sight, a definitive challenge to the democratic peace research programme and the concomitant focus on perceptions as an intervening causal factor.

At least two qualifications need to be made in regard to the arguments advanced by Rosato (2003; 2005) and Oren (1996). In the first instance, Owen (1996:125) has repeatedly emphasised that in order for liberal dyads to remain at peace “*liberals* must consider the foreign state a liberal democracy” (emphasis added). This categorisation (stressing the causal influence of a *liberal elite*) encompasses a wider group of individuals, located within both government and civil society, than that ascribed to it by Rosato (2003:592) who reduced it to individuals located primarily within the sphere of government. In fact, from an American perspective the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuelan boundary dispute of 1895-96 was marked and influenced (though without much effect) by the existence of a liberal elite predominantly found *outside* of government (Owen, 1996:146). Hence, the proper focus should be directed toward the perceptions of liberal elites, and not only to governmental officials and/or political parties. There is also evidence of historical support for Owen’s (1996) emphasis on perceptions. The keyword here is context. Ultimately, Owen’s (1996) argument will falter (or be vindicated) by how often the emphasis on perceptions actually operates as stipulated and, more fundamentally, whether the explanatory significance ascribed to liberal elites actually yields empirically grounded evidence indicative of its *causal* influence on the decision makers of liberal states faced with war-threatening crises. This issue will be addressed in chapter five of this study. For now it would suffice to say that there is some form of historical validation for his argument.

In framing the conceptual parameters of the democratic peace, Owen (1996:121) in particular has pointed towards the explanatory validity of a liberal theory of the democratic peace, grounded in (i) *both* institutional and normative explanations of the democratic peace, with the two forces working in tandem, and (ii) the peace-inducing effects ascribed to liberal explanatory forces being dependent on liberal states perceiving each other as such. This position has been supported by Doyle’s (1996a) writings.³² Rosato’s (2003) critique of the institutional logic, if seen against the background of the necessity of a dual liberal approach, thus fails to incorporate the notion of institutional and normative theories of democratic peace working

³² A more thorough engagement with Doyle’s (1996a) work will occur in the following section and will serve to illustrate not only the primacy of his work but also the individualist nature of liberal theories of the democratic peace.

together in producing the peace-inducing effects ascribed to liberal theory. This acknowledges that the normative/institutional dichotomy postulated within the democratic peace literature is in essence an epistemologically, not ontologically, grounded dichotomy (Owen, 1996:148), an argument that sits comfortably with Doyle's (1996a) Kantian inspired liberal theory of the democratic peace. The question then, following a liberal interpretation of the democratic peace, is how does liberalism produce the democratic peace and, alternatively, how have realist scholars responded to the challenge posed by liberal scholars of the democratic peace research programme? This question cannot be adequately addressed without explicating the nexus between realist and liberal approaches to the democratic peace and their response to the ontologically grounded agent-structure debate.

3.3 Bringing ontology back in: agency, structure and the realist-liberal dichotomy in explaining the democratic peace

Doyle's [1983] (1996a) well-conceptualised theoretical explication of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace, grounded in a patently liberal theory of international relations, has remained remarkably robust within the liberally grounded democratic peace research programme. It has afforded sufficient causal justification for the prioritisation of a more encompassing explanatory schema than that taken up under the rubric of the democratic (as opposed to the *liberal*) peace. Whilst Doyle's (1986; 1996a; 2005) contributions have obtained pre-eminence within the confines of the intra-theoretical debate between liberalism and democracy as the central causal forces effecting the democratic peace phenomenon, lesser prominence has been ascribed to his work by realist scholars probing the theoretical forces responsible for the no war phenomenon³³ inherent in the democratic peace.

³³ This ascription remains contentious. Realist scholars of the democratic peace, notably Layne (1996a), have pointed towards World War I as a possible example of democracies waging war. This conclusion rests on the question of whether Wilhelmine Germany (Imperial Germany) should in fact be coded as liberal. The stakes in this debate are important. Given the magnitude of the case under investigation, the ascription of Imperial Germany as a liberal state could potentially invalidate the research programme. Doyle (1996a:13) has recognised the problematic nature of this case, but his attempt at explicating this problem from a liberal vantage point is unconvincing. Stressing that Imperial Germany was marked by the absence of legislative (and/or citizenry) control over foreign affairs (thus, an autocratic foreign policy-making process) and, as against this, the dominance of the emperor in matters of foreign affairs, Doyle (1996a:13) ultimately concludes that Imperial Germany could not be coded as sufficiently liberal. Compounding this mix was, moreover, "the tenuous constitutional relationship between the chancellor and the Reichstag" (Doyle, 1996a:16). But, as

These scholars, with Cohen (1994; 1995) constituting the most prominent progenitor, have questioned the causal validity of the arguments postulated by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, emphasising that alternative explanatory schemas, encapsulating differing (non-liberal) structures of causality, have proven to be more credible (Cohen, 1995:324). On his part, Spiro (1996) has similarly taken issue with the lack of causal validation for the democratic peace, directing his rejoinder to Doyle's (1996a) emphasis on the peace-inducing forces inherent in a liberal theory of international relations: "Doyle's work did not go beyond suggesting what empiricists might look for, and empiricists have done surprisingly little to show that elements of liberalism and democracy are causal influences on peace" (Spiro, 1996:206). Similar evaluations, stressing the lack of causal validation, abound within the realist inspired explication of the democratic peace and more recent contributions have reiterated this line of critique.

Rosato's (2003; 2005) wide-ranging studies of the causal logics underpinning democratic peace theory have concluded that the democratic peace research programme, in all its variants, has failed to transcend the bounds of correlational inquiry (i.e., a *causally* valid relationship between liberalism and/or democracy and peace) into the peace-inducing forces responsible for the no war phenomenon. This recognition has merely confirmed the conclusion reached by Christopher Layne (1996a:190) – basing his argument on a thorough (though to some extent, flawed) evaluation of four war-threatening cases involving liberal states – that the explanatory power encapsulated in the causal logics postulated in liberal conceptions of the democratic peace has proven to be severely restrictive. Whilst reaching a similar conclusion as Layne (1996a), the implications accruing from Rosato's (2003; 2005) findings are of a different form. The dyadic logic of democratic peace theory, postulated by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, has proven to be – if Rosato's (2003; 2005) studies are vindicated – illusory. The implications arising from this proposition are profound. Most fundamentally, it

Layne (1996a:194-196) has argued, an examination of the foreign policy process of the Weimar Republic (the successor of Wilhelmine Germany) indicates that the foreign policy-making process under this regime was just as divorced from the legislative control of the Reichstag as was the case under Wilhelmine Germany. Notwithstanding this, Doyle (1996a:8) codes the Weimar Republic as a liberal state, and argues that Layne's (1996a) analysis is biased given his predilection for presenting the conclusions taken up by conservative historians as opposed to liberal ones, and subsequently his findings are incomplete (Doyle, 1996b:359-360).

denotes that we should expect liberal states to be more peaceful in general. This proposition is informed by a wider critique of democratic peace theory than that previously advanced by realist scholars challenging the dyadic logic of institutional arguments of democratic peace. The proposition points toward the notion that the logic underpinning the democratic peace (in its normative *and* institutional variants) conforms *in toto* to monadic tendencies. Rosato's (2003; 2005) arguments in this regard are at first sight convincing, highlighting the fact that whilst "the democratic peace *finding* is dyadic, the *logics* adduced to explain it are monadic" (Rosato, 2005:467, emphasis in original). Arguing that each theory of democratic peace starts off with the assumption that democratic norms and/or institutions induce liberal states to behave in qualitatively different ways from that of non-democratic (liberal) states, Rosato (2005:467) concludes that the logic underpinning liberal conceptions of democratic peace is ultimately derivative of monadic tendencies:

In essence, the argument is that democracies are less violence-prone than other kinds of states and/or more effective at engaging in the kind of behaviour that makes war less likely. Proponents of the democratic peace then use these monadic tendencies to explain the [dyadic finding]. Simply put, in a crisis involving two democracies, each side has a low propensity for violence and a high aptitude for the kind of behavior that makes war less likely, and each knows that its democratic opponent has these qualities...In short, democratic peace theory's logics rest on a "multiplier" argument: if a state with a low propensity for violence comes into contact with another state that also has a low propensity for violence, then the likelihood of war breaking out is very low indeed.

Within the purview of mathematics, this proposition would take the form: $a/ + b/ = >c$, where $a/$ stands for liberal democratic state marked by a high aptitude for conflict-resolution and a low propensity for violence (thus constitutive of a monadic tendency), $b/$ implies similar characteristics found within another liberal state, and $>c$ denotes that the probability of peace greatly enhanced by the combined effects of $a/$ and $b/$. Whilst this conception of the democratic peace is enlightening, it remains questionable as to whether this proposition could be conceived as theoretically tenable and there are several reasons to question the outright validity of it. Importantly, not all liberal contributors to the democratic peace research programme

have postulated monadic logics in accounting for the democratic peace phenomenon.

Doyle (1996a:31; 2005:463), most concretely, has repeatedly stressed the dyadic logic of the democratic peace by observing that the peace-inducing forces ascribed to his Kantian inspired liberal theory of international relations do not warrant similar pacific tendencies in relations between liberal and non-liberal states. Seen from this position, liberal explanatory forces explain both the war-proneness of liberal and non-liberal states and, conversely, the peace-proneness of liberal dyads. Rosato's (2005:467) rejoinder that the dyadic logic underpinning Doyle's (1996a) argument is *ad hoc* is unconvincing. In essence, Kinsella (2005:456) is precise in his observation that Rosato's (2003; 2005) conception of democratic peace theory too often fails to appreciate the dyadic logic underpinning democratic peace theory. Notwithstanding this, at the core of the conclusions reached by Rosato (2003; 2005), although probing the historical record on the basis of a monadically grounded rendition of the democratic peace, and most notably in Layne's (1996a) evaluation of the dyadic logic of the democratic peace, is a predilection for a realist theory of international relations as the pre-eminent framework for the explication of the democratic peace.

On the grounds of these findings, indicative of the explanatory import of realist forces in accounting for the democratic peace, some liberal contributors to the democratic peace debate have retracted the all-encompassing explanatory influence of liberal forces formerly advocated. Russett (1996:339-340) figures prominently in this regard, conceding that, during his own analysis of the four war-threatening crises examined by Christopher Layne (1996a), the predominance of realist explanatory forces (*viz.*, power and strategic considerations) were vindicated and he is "therefore happy to grant that power and strategic interest greatly affect the calculations of all states, including democracies" (Russett, 1996:339-340; emphasis in original). The explanatory necessity of realist forces in producing the democratic peace thus provides, according to Russett, no overarching and definitive challenge to liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. But as Layne (1996b:356) has noted, the theoretical implications accruing from this concession are severe not only for liberal conceptions of democratic peace but the research programme as such: although Russett explicitly stresses that "his concession does not give the game away...it [in

fact] ends the game decisively". This argument has merit. One would do well to remember that at the core of the democratic peace research programme has always been the theoretical contention that liberal (democratic) variables had succeeded in transcending the explanatory *and* empirical vindication of realism as a theory of international relations or, alternatively conceptualised, that liberal democracies have succeeded in creating a separate peace unrestricted by the bounds of power politics. Doyle (1996a:14) clearly articulates this line of reasoning: "The Realist model of international relations, which provides a plausible explanation of the general insecurity of states, offers little guidance in explaining the pacification of the liberal world".

At issue here are differing conceptions centred on the question of whether an outright invalidation of liberal explanatory forces in a number of cases would sufficiently dislodge the primacy of liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. Thus, whilst Russett (1996:339-340) concedes the failure of liberal explanatory forces in the cases examined by Layne (1996a)³⁴, he disputes their relevance for the status of the democratic peace research programme. His rejoinder on this issue is rather straight-forward: a limited number of cases, even if it confirms the realist case, cannot invalidate the many other instances where liberal forces acted to negate differences before these erupted into war-threatening crises (Russett, 1996:339-340). But, once more, the explanatory power of liberal theories of democratic peace, if valid, should provide powerful evidence of liberal explanatory forces acting to induce an outcome short of war: "[I]f a theory has strong explanatory power...decision-makers should speak, write, and otherwise behave in a manner consistent with the theory's predictions" (Layne, 1996a:165). This does not imply that a given theoretical framework, and the causal logic it advances, will in all instances and under all circumstances operate as stipulated. Recognising, therefore, that the theoretical enterprise is inevitably probabilistic (as opposed to deterministic) in nature, theories should accordingly be confirmed/rejected on the grounds of the frequency by which the logic advanced actually operates as stipulated. This is certainly the criterion that informs Layne's (1996a) approach. Given, moreover, the small number of instances where liberal states have come to the brink of war, these

³⁴ Note, however, that Layne (1996a:158) has pointed toward eight more cases that could possibly vindicate his argument.

cases do constitute in essence, contra Russett's argument, an important (as opposed to insignificant) battleground for the evaluation of the causal logics postulated by differing theories. All of this is however premised on the extent to which Layne's (1996a) explanatory schema, prioritising an overtly structural (neo-realist) theory in accounting for the democratic peace, are actually validated by the historical record. In contradistinction to Layne's (1996a) examination of the historical record, Owen's (1996) study – focusing on the exact cases as those examined by Layne – has highlighted the explanatory pre-eminence of liberal theories of democratic peace, grounded in an agential (individualist) conception of social outcomes.

This theoretical dichotomy has marked the democratic peace research programme since its inception. Recent studies on the democratic peace have merely reaffirmed the theoretically dichotomous positions formerly upheld (see, *inter alia*, Rosato, 2003; 2005; Doyle, 2005; Slantchev *et al.* 2005; Kinsella, 2005). At the core of this problem lie differing *ontological* conceptions of the nature of the social world and, more fundamentally, the basic properties of the elements constitutive thereof. Waltz (2009:499), reflecting on the origins of his own work, has inadvertently captured the ontological dualism underpinning the democratic peace by proffering that the maze of theoretical traditions in IR is grounded in divergent ontological positions in response to the agent-structure problem. Thus, in his attempt to find his way through this maze of theoretical traditions, he “began to realize that authors were starting from different assumptions about cause. Some found the cause of international political outcomes in human nature, some found them within states, and still others found them in the international system” (Waltz, 2009:499). It is this ontological variance that informs the divergent causal arguments postulated by (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace respectively, and which affords a parochially conceptualised prism through which the historical record should be examined.

3.3.1 The logic of structure: realist theory and the democratic peace

At the core of the realist argument is a conception of international social and political outcomes as derivative of forces inextricably linked to issues of power politics and unalterable through the utilisation of human virtue and the accretion of human

wisdom. These issues are endemic to, and deeply engrained within, the very essence of politics (Carr, 1981:102), resulting in the recognition that the relations between groups and/or states are decisively determined by questions pertaining to the proportion of power each group (or state) obtains *vis-à-vis* another (Niebuhr, 1960:xxii). This position, encapsulating an overtly *realist* perspective, affords a very restricted view of the fundamental qualities inherent in human nature and culminates in extreme pessimism concerning the possibility of human rationality to transcend the bounds of conflict and war. Set against this background, Niebuhr (1960:xxiii) explains the rationale for his unwillingness to distance himself from this pessimistic conclusion:

Whatever increase in social intelligence and moral goodwill may be achieved in human history, may serve to mitigate the brutalities of social conflict, but they cannot abolish the conflict itself. This could be accomplished only if human groups...could achieve a degree of reason and sympathy which would permit them to see and understand the interests of others as vividly as they understand their own, and a moral goodwill which would prompt them to afford the rights of others as vigorously as they affirm their own. Given the inevitable *limitations of human nature* and the limits of human imagination and intelligence, this is an ideal which individuals may approximate but which is beyond the capacities of human societies. (Emphasis added)

This depiction of human rationality, though severely limited, has stood at the centre of the ontological conceptions of realist thought on the fundamental elements inducing social outcomes, ascribing human nature with an intimate lust for power (Hans Morgenthau's *animus dominandi*) and an inability to transcend the limitations of self-interest (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003:76). Against the *prima facie* ontological prioritisation of an individualist conception of social outcomes as evident in the realist treatment of human nature, Kenneth Waltz (1979) set out to provide an explicitly structural theory of international politics, departing in fundamental ways from the individualist conceptions underpinning earlier realist thought and informed by the notion that a proper understanding of world politics should transcend the inquisitive prioritisation of unit-level variables (Waltz, 1979:65). With regard to the latter aspect and recognising the import of the work of Émile Durkheim to Waltz's (1979)

conception of theorisation and structure, Waltz evidently heeded Durkheim's insistence on the need for social inquiry to start off on the basis of an examination of the social whole as opposed to its constituent elements (Nisbet, 1965:13). Waltz's (1979:88) conception of structure, thus framed within the parameters of a Durkheimian social ontology, was fundamentally informed by three definitive features, with the international implications accruing from each, designating international politics as a separate behavioural realm compared to the domestic arena: firstly, the principle according to which a given structure is organised; secondly, the character of the units constitutive of the system; and, thirdly, the distribution of capabilities.

Within the international system this takes the form of a recognition that all states (i) are situated within an anarchical international system; (ii) are functionally undifferentiated (all states face similar tasks and encompasses similar functions); and (iii) are differentiated on the basis of the distribution and character of capabilities each possesses (Waltz, 1979:88-99). Anarchy, though designating a state of war, does not imply an international system marked by constant war. As Hobbes (in Nye, 2003:5) explained: "Just as stormy weather does not mean perpetual rain, so a state of war does not mean constant war". Given, however, the absence of a relation of super- and sub-ordination enforcing rules of compliance, states are perpetually confronted with the possibility of war and are condemned to operate within an international system marked by a high degree of uncertainty and intense security competition. Moreover, and in contradistinction with the domestic realm, states must provide for their own security (viz., the notion that states are functionally undifferentiated) with the concomitant result that the international system constitutes a self-help system (Waltz, 1979:104). Within this competitive and highly uncertain realm, all states are geared toward the attainment of relative (as opposed to absolute) gains, a predicament from which democratic countries cannot absolve themselves (Waltz, 1993:60, 78). This correlates with Mearsheimer's (1990:12) depiction of a two-fold set of consequences accruing from an anarchical international system. States are condemned to operate within an environment deprived of trust and each state is the sole guarantor of its own survival and security (Mearsheimer, 1990:12). In such a system, differing relations of power (the distribution and character of capabilities) provide the central prism through which state action is

conditioned. Moreover, and recognising the realities of this system, the accretion (maximisation) of power *vis-à-vis* other states must be considered a basic necessity in order to obtain, and perpetuate, the wherewithal for self-defence (Mearsheimer, 1990:12).

Some scholars have taken issue with this conception of structure on the grounds that it fails to transcend the individualist nature of theorising that Waltz (1979) set out to overcome. Wendt (1987:341), in particular, building on the work of Richard Ashley (1986), has vociferously argued that the distribution of capabilities – a defining feature in Waltz’s (1979) conception of structure – is in essence reducible to the properties of the units (states) comprising the system and, accordingly, Waltz’s (1979) emphasis on the need to transcend unit-level variables patently fails on his own terms. But, as Wight (2006:95) scrupulously noted, this statement is predicated on an erroneous reading of the argument underpinning Waltz’s (1979) conception of structure and the proper place of the distribution of capabilities within his conception of a structural theory of international politics. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz (1979) presciently explains his position on this issue: “Although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not. The distribution of capabilities is not a unit attribute, but rather a system-wide concept” (Waltz, 1979:98). All states – regardless of domestically determined considerations – are situated within, and stand in relation to, an anarchically ordered international system necessitating that attention is paid to the relations of difference confronting all states. Alternatively phrased, each state is thus situated in relation to all other states, with the capabilities of each state (a unit-level property) only ascertainable on the grounds of its relational character *vis-à-vis* all other states, and this constitutes a property of the structure of the system. The distribution of capabilities is therefore a structurally determined relational measure (Wight, 2006:95), providing a positional picture of how each state is situated (on the grounds of its capabilities) in relation to all the other. And, following Waltz (1979:80), the arrangement of the parts within a given system constitutes a property of the structure of the system.

The theorisation of the democratic peace, conceived from a neo-realist perspective, has subsequently reduced the complexity of the democratic peace proposition to the structurally specific attributes of the international system, conceptualised in terms of

an anarchical international system in which the distribution and character of military power, coupled with the importance of strategic considerations, decisively influence the behaviour of all states. This position has been most forcefully expounded by, amongst others, Mearsheimer (1990:6) in his observation that the root causes of war and peace are grounded “in the distribution and character of military power”, with the corollary that the anarchical nature of the international system, engendering the importance of military power, forces states to provide for their own security and subsequently survival becomes the central rationale for all great powers (Mearsheimer, 2001:31). Accordingly, the anarchical nature of the international system entails the necessity for all states, regardless of domestic ideological considerations, to manoeuvre within the confines of a self-help system forcing them to provide for their own security. As Waltz (1979:111) so aptly phrased it, all “units in a condition of anarchy – be they people, corporations, states, or whatever – must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves. Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order”. In this system the behaviour of states is primarily informed by their placement in the international system (Waltz, 1993:45), with placement being centrally linked to the distribution and character of states’ military power *vis-à-vis* other states.

From this vantage point, any reference to international political outcomes being conceived as the product of domestic (ideological) factors and/or the intentional behaviour of the individuals (or states) comprising the system (hence an individualist social ontology) is bound to be misleading and constitutive of nothing more than utopian thinking. Juxtaposing idealism with the *scientific* nature of realist thought, Carr (1981:11) set out to explain the predicament of individualist conceptions of social life by noting that “[t]he utopian is necessarily voluntarist: he believes in the possibility of more or less radically rejecting reality, and substituting his utopia for it by *an act of will*. The realist analyses a pre-determined course of development which he is powerless to change” (emphasis added). It is only when Carr’s critique is placed within the confines of an attempt to construct and endorse a historically located social ontology, and thereby an attempt to provide a structurally determined solution to the agent-structure problem, that the limitations of his account are clearly illustrated. Structure, according to this mode of reasoning, constitutes in essence the inescapable force of state behaviour, with the absence of war between liberal

democracies, if seen against this background, being derivative of the structurally induced necessities of an anarchical international system in which all states are embedded. Mearsheimer (2001:11), framing his structural realist approach against individualistically grounded theories of international relations, conceded this much. He forthrightly admits that his structural realist approach affords scant attention to “individuals or domestic political considerations such as ideology....These omitted factors, however, occasionally [*sic*] dominate a state’s decision-making process; under these circumstances, offensive realism is not going to perform as well. In short, there is a price to pay for simplifying reality”. Whilst this conclusion, indicative of the neo-realist aversion for individualist conceptions of international political outcomes, sits well with Layne’s (1996a) analysis of the democratic peace, it is inevitably anathema to Owen’s (1996; 1997) explication of the peace-inducing forces ascribed to liberalism in various war-threatening cases involving liberal states.

This has meant, with specific reference to the democratic peace proposition, that the causal mechanism postulated by liberal theorists has subsequently been rejected by realist scholars of the democratic peace. These scholars argue that the empirical record does little to validate the liberal contention that democracy at the unit-level has sufficiently negated the structural effects accruing from an anarchical international system (Layne, 1996a:200; see also Farber and Gowa, 1996:261).³⁵ Specifically Layne (1996a:166) has grounded his theoretical explication of the democratic peace proposition in an overtly structural realist theory by arguing that, engendered by the structural constraints imposed by anarchy, states’ behaviour will be decisively influenced by the “relative distribution of military capabilities between them”, with strategic considerations, coupled with concerns over geopolitical advantage, being of vital decisional importance. Thus, in his analysis of various historical cases, Layne (1996a) concluded that military and strategic considerations, rather than liberal explanatory indicators, explain the democratic peace finding. This position has been bolstered by theoretical attempts aimed at explicating, or at the very least acknowledging, the necessity of a hegemonic political power for the construction and preservation of the liberal zone of peace (T. Smith, 2007:118; see also Rosato, 2003:599-600). In this regard US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates,

³⁵ Mearsheimer (1990:50) likewise argues that “history provides no clear test of the theory”.

argues that the “power and global reach of its military have been an indispensable contributor to world peace” (Gates, 2009:39). Some liberal contributors have recognised the importance of hegemonic power to the preservation of the liberal zone of peace. Doyle (1996a:28) has conceded that a failure of hegemonic leadership could seriously imperil the liberal world. Recognition, moreover, of the need for a hegemonic power to sustain the democratic peace locates the theoretical explication of the democratic peace within the theoretical realm of realist theory (T. Smith, 2007:117).

But not all realist scholars have embedded their theoretical analysis of the democratic peace in the extreme structuralism advocated by neo-realist scholars. Spiro (1996:232) has argued that the structural realism advocated by Waltz makes no provision for the likelihood that liberal states, faced with a war-threatening crisis, will tend to align with other liberal states, and has therefore ascribed theoretical primacy to classical realism with its central focus on state interests. This position has similarly been upheld by Oren (1996). Underpinning his approach is the propagation and utilisation of a more classical realist approach to the democratic peace proposition, demonstrating the nexus between the subjective definition of states’ interests, as conceived at a given moment, and the empirical observation of no wars between liberal democracies: “The reason we do not fight ‘our kind’ is not that ‘likeness’ has a great effect on war propensity, but rather that we from time to time subtly redefine our kind to keep our self-image consistent with our friends’ attributes and inconsistent with those of our adversaries” (Oren, 1996:296). This notion underscores Farber and Gowa’s (1996:261) emphasis on common interests, rather than common polities, in their analysis of the peace-inducing forces responsible for the low incidence of disputes between democratic states following World War Two. Insofar as the latter studies, grounded in the theoretical primacy of *classical* realism, attempted to transcend the structuralism embedded in neo-realist theory, these attempts have been, however, in vain. Thus, following Donnelly (2000:49), the emphasis on power politics, central to all realist approaches, requires the acknowledgement that the structurally induced effect(s) of international anarchy on state behaviour and, subsequently, all realist approaches are, invariably, and to a greater or lesser extent structurally grounded.

The recognition that state behaviour is structurally based stems from the realisation that all realist scholars postulate the importance of survival for the continued existence of the nation-state. Survival is emphasised due to the uncertainty generated by an external environment characterised by the absence of any hierarchically ordered political organisation similar to the domestic realm for providing state security. In fact, even Kant, considered to be the visionary architect of the logic underpinning the democratic peace, has acknowledged the structural constraints imposed by an anarchical international system: “Kant’s concern with the strength and thus the safety of the state is part of his perception of the necessities of power politics. Among states in the world, as among individuals in the state of nature, there is constantly either violence or the threat of violence” (Waltz, 1962:334). According to realist theory, therefore, anarchy forces all states to be primarily attentive to military and strategic considerations. On the grounds of the uncertain nature of international politics, generated by the specific structural attributes of the international system, prudent state behaviour compels all states to be attentive to issues of relative power. Hence – and paraphrasing Mearsheimer (1990:50) – not even liberal democratic states can unshackle themselves from the bondage of an anarchical international system.

3.3.2 What structure? Liberal interpretations of the democratic peace

In contradistinction to the overt structural account of realist theories of international relations, liberal theories of the democratic peace have likewise provided a reductionist account of the democratic peace. This culminates in liberal theorists predicating their explanatory frameworks on a reduction of the absence of war between liberal states to the product of the actions and/or properties of agents (liberal states) comprising the international system. At the core of this (individualist) social ontology is, accordingly, a reduction of social life and explanation to the fundamental properties pertaining to agents, affording them in essence the dual capability to both transcend the structurally induced (and constraining) set of circumstances envisioned by neo-realist theory and moreover to construct the very circumstances under which they operate. It is this ontological conception of social life that underpins the liberally grounded notion of the existence of a separate peace among liberal states.

This has meant, with specific reference to the democratic peace theory, that faced with a war-threatening crisis with each other, liberal states can, regardless of the military and strategic considerations occasioned by the specific context, intentionally act to produce an outcome short of war on the basis of a mutual recognition of, and respect for, the liberally grounded domestic institutions and norms upheld by their liberal opponent(s). Whereas liberal states, according to (neo-)realist theory, have refrained from all-out war due to the structurally induced necessity of considering the distribution and character of military power, liberal theories postulate that the absence of war between liberal states is due to the enabling effect of liberal ideology and/or institutions on states' behaviour in that both could equip states' leaders to view liberally grounded states as "reasonable, predictable, and trustworthy, because they are governed by the citizens' true interests" (Owen, 1996:124). Considered from the latter perspective, then, the democratic peace phenomenon, contra realist approaches equating political outcomes with structurally induced forces, is the product of the intentional behaviour of liberal states within the international realm.

With this recognition in mind, liberal ideas engender two intervening variables, notably liberal ideology and democratic institutions, with the former functioning to prohibit war with fellow liberal democracies, whilst the latter allow this normatively grounded framework to affect foreign policy and international relations (Owen, 1996:122). This means, practically considered, that liberal ideology, grounded in a philosophical commitment to individual freedom, enables liberal states to forgo war with other liberal states, once they have perceived each other as such, in that these states are considered as rational and pacific due to their pursuance and protection of their citizens' true interests (Owen, 1996:124). Peace thus presupposes freedom, with domestic institutions, on their part, functioning to transform these liberal preferences into foreign policy. Citizens possess over the means, notably freedom of speech, regular competitive elections and the necessity of public consultation by representatives in response to war-threatening crises, to constrain and radically alter the behaviour of decision makers (Owen, 1996:122-128). Following this line of reasoning, the existence of and adherence to liberal ideas enable decision makers and/or public opinion to intentionally act so as to produce an outcome short of war in war-threatening crises with other liberal states. Echoing this position, Russett

(1995:31-33), postulating that liberal states externalise the norms and principles of non-violent conflict resolution and compromise found within their borders, vigorously advocates the notion that when liberal states are confronted by war-threatening crises, they are able to *intentionally* act to peacefully resolve their disputes by applying “democratic norms in their interaction” which function so as to “prevent most conflicts from mounting to the threat or use of military force”.

Doyle (1996a:10) has likewise emphasised that the existence of and adherence to a liberal theory of international relations, grounded in the nexus between domestically established rights to individual liberty, the subsequent right of political independence (non-intervention) on account of the recognition of this individualist system of rights, and shared commercial interests, has engendered a situation of mutual respect, culminating in the formation of “a cooperative foundation for relations among liberal democracies of a remarkably effective kind”. Whilst this latter conception of liberal theory is helpful, it remains generic and does not sufficiently exact the specific attributes, and origin, of the explanatory forces ascribed to liberalist conceptions of the democratic peace phenomenon and, more fundamentally, its commitment to an individualist social ontology. Given the theoretical attraction of Doyle’s (1996a) Kantian inspired liberal theory of the democratic peace, theoretical engagement with this rendition of the democratic peace is an imperative for the development of the argument within this study.

In this regard, Doyle (1996a:21-27) has made a *prima facie* convincing case for the theoretical explication of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace by drawing on the political writings of the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace’, written in 1795, provides according to Doyle (1996a:21) the most secure theoretical foundation for the explication of the democratic peace phenomenon, explaining simultaneously the war-proneness of liberal states in their relations with non-liberal states and the peace-proneness of liberal dyads. Underpinning Kant’s conception of perpetual peace, and Doyle’s (1996a) rendition of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace, is a three-fold set of imperatives (Kant’s Definitive Articles), each exacting a particular peace-inducing force on inter-liberal relations. The First Definitive Article culminates in the necessity for the civil constitution of the state to be republican in form (Doyle, 1996a:21). This

implies a state in which absolute sovereignty is vested in the citizens composing it, coupled with a separation of legislative and executive powers (Huntley, 1996:48). Doyle (1996a:21) provides a more thorough delineation of the Kantian conception of republicanism, imbuing it with a two-fold set of imperatives: in the private sphere, it denotes the necessity of private property and a market-oriented economy. The political sphere, on its turn, should be marked by a preservation of juridical freedom by means of a representative government organised according to the logic of a separation of powers ('trias politica').

The necessity of the establishment of a federation of liberal states (a 'pacific union') coincides with the Second Definitive Article, culminating in a "treaty of the nations among themselves" (Doyle, 1996a:22). This federation constitutes a league of peace (*foedus pacificum*), as opposed to a treaty of peace (*pactum pacis*) (Huntley, 1996:50), and has at its basis the recognition of, and respect for, common principles, norms and practices. Underpinning this delineation is the recognition that the pacific union "is neither a single treaty ending one war nor a world state or state of nations" (Doyle, 1996a:22). Both alternatives set out above are rejected by Kant as inefficacious. The Third Definitive Article, exacting the establishment of a cosmopolitan law functioning in conjunction with the pacific union, encompasses and sets forth the conditions of universal hospitality (Doyle, 1996a:23), constituting in essence the "law of world citizenship" (Kant quoted in Huntley, 1996:52). This cosmopolitan law encompasses, but is simultaneously restricted to, the right of access (of a foreign country), the provision of conditions hospitable for the interchange of ideas and goods, and the abstention from imposing the obligation to trade on foreign people (Doyle, 1996a:23). Each of these articles contains, according to Kant, a sufficient explanatory account for the democratic peace phenomenon. Firstly, republican government (Kant's 'First Definitive Article') induces a constitutionally structured path of caution, exacting a relationship of accountability between voters (citizens) and collective decision makers. Democratic representation, coupled with the institutional disposition of government, give rise to "hesitation" as opposed to autocratic caprice (Doyle, 2005:464). The logic underpinning this proposition is not new:

If the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war....But, on the other hand, in a constitution which is not republican...a declaration of war is the easiest thing in the world to decide upon, because war does not require of the ruler, who is the proprietor and not a member of the state, the least sacrifice of the pleasure of his table, the chase, his country houses, his court functions, and the like. He may, therefore, resolve on war as on a pleasure party for the most trivial reasons, and with perfect indifference leave the justification which decency requires to the diplomatic corps who are ever ready to provide it. (Kant cited in Doyle, 1996a:24-25)

Secondly, the overt adherence to liberal principles and norms entails the guarantee of international respect (Doyle, 2005:464). International respect is, however, predicated on the assumption that the theoretical appreciation of the moral equality of all individuals situated at the core of liberal theory obtains practical manifestation. This denotes the significance of Kantian publicity: within the domestic realm, publicity entails a congruence between the decisions and actions of liberal decision makers and the centrifugal principles professed to be just and with due regard to the electoral preferences of those they (decision makers) claim to represent; internationally, conceptions of mutual respect are dependent on the preservation of free speech and effective communication with the objective of ensuring accurate conceptions of the political inclinations of foreign people (Doyle, 1996a:26). Most fundamentally, this implies that “domestically just republics, which rest on consent, presume foreign republics to be also consensual, just, and therefore deserving of accommodation” (Doyle, 2005:464).

Finally, the attributes subsumed under the notion of a cosmopolitan law provides a material rationale for the preservation of the liberal peace. The incorporation of all states into a market-oriented economy, typified by the creation of transnational ties of interdependence, an internationally diverse labour force and the relegation of issues of supply and demand from the purview of the state to that of the market, create material (economic) incentives to remain at peace, transcending simultaneously the benefits accruing from autarky (Doyle, 1996a:26-27). Seen

against this background, three interrelated pillars of liberal peace emerge, constituting *in toto* the explanatory prism through which the democratic peace should be conceived: the absence of war between liberal states thus depends on each state being marked by (i) a republican constitution typified by juridical equality, some form of representation and the separation of legislative and executive power; (ii) a commitment to and preservation of individual liberties (a basic appreciation of individuals as ethical subjects); and (iii) transnational (economic) interdependence.

Two factors should be taken into consideration with regard to this delineation. Most prominently, it is only when these three forces obtain simultaneously that the peace-inducing forces ascribed to liberal conceptions of democratic peace could reliably be expected to operate. This notion has always stood central to Doyle's (1986; 1996a; 2005) conception of the democratic peace: "No one of these constitutional, international or cosmopolitan sources is alone sufficient, but together (and only where together) they plausibly connect the characteristics of liberal polities and economies with sustained liberal peace" (Doyle, 1996a:27). Taken as a whole, and when complementing each other, these attributes thus enable liberal states to remain at peace with each other and, conversely, points to the war-proneness of their relations with non-liberal states. Also, and following from this recognition, these attributes also provide the path for an identification of a fundamental lacuna in Doyle's (1996a) and other liberally grounded contributors' theoretical explication of the democratic peace, indicative of an overt commitment to an individualist social ontology. Following Karl Popper (quoted in Giddens, 1979:94-95), this denotes that "all social phenomena...should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes, etc. of human individuals [or, conceptualised more broadly, agents]...we should never be satisfied by an explanation in terms of so-called 'collectives'". With the exception of Huntley's (1996) well-conceived study, all liberally grounded theoretical frameworks scrutinised in this study have in one way or another faltered on the grounds of this outright prioritisation of an individualist social ontology.³⁶

³⁶ Huntley's study (1996) provides the exception. His emphasis on a systemic foundation of liberally grounded theories of democratic peace is duly noted but the conception of structure underpinning his explanatory framework is predominantly at variance with that developed within this study. This aspect will fall within the purview of chapter four of this study.

This is admittedly a contentious proposition and legitimate questions could be raised concerning the individualist nature of liberal theories of democratic peace. The reader will recall that chapter two of this study alluded to the theoretical conception of liberally grounded theories of democratic peace as constitutive of a structurationist (constructivist) ontology, ascribing agents and structures equal ontological status. This is certainly the position upheld by Panke and Risse (2007:93) in their categorisation of the work of Doyle (1986; 1996a), Owen (1996; 1997) and Russett (1995) along the lines of constructivist (structurationist) principles. This depiction does not hold under close scrutiny. Giddens' (1979:69) conception of the theory of structuration, marked by the above-mentioned ascription of equal ontological status to both agents and structures, has at its core the recognition that the "structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems". This implies, at the very least, the necessity of providing a social ontology directed towards the theorisation of the interplay and mutually constitutive nature of agents and structures. But, given the *international* dimension of the democratic peace phenomenon, to wit, the recognition that the democratic peace plays itself out within the confines of a systemic whole in which all states are situated, and the concomitant failure of liberal approaches to advance an *international* conception of the agent-structure problem attentive to this reality, these approaches can hardly be coined structurationist. Moreover, as Huntley (1996:62-63) perceptively points out, liberal explanatory accounts of the democratic peace have patently failed to advance a systemic (read: structural) account of the democratic peace transcending the internal characteristics of liberal states, grounding their theoretical frameworks instead in the rediscovery of Waltz's second image (hence, the theorisation of the attributes of states). This constitutes at first sight a level-of-analysis problem. But, as argued in chapter two of this study, the level at which social explanation should proceed (hence, the level-of-analysis problem) is dependent on prior resolution of the agent-structure problem.

Doyle's (1996a) Kantian inspired liberal theory of international relations, laboriously set forth above, provides the most thorough (though severely restrictive) ontological account of the *international* dimension of the agent-structure problem underpinning the democratic peace. It falls short in one crucial respect in that it fails to advance an encompassing theory of the system in which the absence of war between liberal

states, faced with war-threatening crises, is conceived as derivative of the interplay between structurally determined factors (located at differing levels of reality) and the units comprising the system. This implies that liberal theories of the democratic peace have been marked by the absence of theoretical engagement with the fundamental properties pertaining to the structure of the international system that these theories purport to transcend. Within this (individualist) ontological depiction of international social life, the structural attributes of the international system are a product of the intentions and actions of liberal states. There exists therefore no compelling structural account – located at the international level – enabling or constraining the actions and decisions of liberal states.

A structurationist approach proper to the democratic peace, truly reflective of Giddens' (1979) conception of the 'duality of structure', must provide theoretical space for a conception that allows liberal states to be influenced by the structure of the system in which they are embedded. In short, liberal theories of the democratic peace have provided an incomplete *international* rendition of the agent-structure problem. Given the blatant failure of liberal explanatory frameworks in this regard, the explanatory schema underpinning liberal conceptions of the democratic peace fail to transcend the bounds of an individualist social ontology. Notwithstanding the various economic, military and strategic considerations accruing from the anarchically ordered international system, liberal states have, according to this position, apparently succeeded in creating and maintaining a "liberal zone of peace" (Doyle, 1996a:10), thus, contra neo-realist theory, constructing the circumstances under which they operate. In order for liberal theories to claim the significance of liberal explanatory forces as functioning to transcend the structurally induced effects of an anarchical international system, a theory of the system (comprising the interaction between system structure and its constitutive elements) *must* be advanced. This constitutes a theoretical lacuna in the liberally grounded democratic peace research programme.

3.4 From (positivist) theory to practice: accounting for the theoretical crisis engendered by contemporary democratic peace approaches

Former US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice (2005), in a contribution to the pages of the *Washington Post*, pointed out that at the dawn of a new world is a recognition of the primacy of issues of regime type over the archetypal concern in US foreign policy with the international distribution of power. This recognition, in the mind of Rice (2005), culminates in the necessary advancement of democratic institutions as constitutive of the most realistic path toward the attainment of a more peaceful (and secure) world. Rice (2005) was not the first American official, and will in all probability not be the last, tasked with defending the (latent) policy implications accruing from the democratic peace theory, and has merely imitated a long list of Western policy makers drawing attention to its inherent peace-inducing qualities. What sets Rice's (2005) argument apart is the Bush administration's indebtedness to the utilisation of the democratic peace theory as a specific instrument of legitimation, before and preceding the American invasion, for its (bungled) Iraq War (see in this regard Ish-Shalom, 2007; 2008), effectively transposing the democratic peace into the practical realm. The theoretical justification for the Bush administration's War in Iraq, thus wrought from the democratic peace theory, is not simply constitutive of a question of the political manipulation of social scientific theories in order to serve policy interests, but more importantly is indicative of the dangers that accompany theoretical attempts that fail to take account of the inherent limitations in any attempt at theorisation of the social world. Liberal explanations of the democratic peace proposition, which narrowly equate peace with the existence of domestic ideological factors (specifically: liberalism), provided the Bush administration with a *scientifically* grounded theoretical motivation, albeit – seemingly – after the United States' failure to locate any weapons of mass destruction, for their invasion of Iraq. The invasion thus envisioned by the Bush administration could subsequently be viewed as a democratisation attempt that, if successful, would provide peace and stability to the broader Middle East. Although considered a *post hoc* justification, the emphasis on democratisation was central to US grand strategy and could therefore be seen as an implicit foreign policy objective upon the US' initiation of the Iraq War. Thus, as contained in the National Security Strategy of the United States (2002), political and economic freedom is not only a central goal of US foreign policy, but in order to

achieve it, the US will also “use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe” (The White House, 2002). Similarly, neoconservative pundits, considered the theoretical masterminds behind the Bush Doctrine, articulated the necessity of democratising Iraq *prior* to its invasion and therefore, as Ish-Shalom (2007:539) points out, merely “redoubled their use of democratic reasoning” after the failure to locate any weapons of mass destruction. Caraley (2007:vi) has reached a similar conclusion, tracing the American fixation with foreign intervention on the grounds of a policy of democratisation to as early as June 2002.

This implies the *a priori* acceptance by the Bush administration of a liberal interpretation of the democratic peace proposition, with the corollary that those theoretical accounts grounded in a (neo-)realist interpretation of the democratic peace – which critically questioned the underlying causal mechanism postulated by liberalist theories of democratic peace – went virtually unnoticed. In this sense, Walt’s (1998:39) observation, although with reference to the Clinton-administration, became all the more applicable to the exuberant and irrational policies of the Bush administration: “[I]t is therefore ironic that faith in the “democratic peace” became the basis for U.S. policy just as additional research was beginning to identify several qualifiers to this theory”.

That the Bush administration failed to adequately grasp the various nuances of the democratic peace proposition and therefore employed a politically manipulated version of it, is beyond doubt. But, as Ish-Shalom (2008:681-682) eloquently points out, the political use (or: abuse) of the democratic peace proposition by the Bush administration goes beyond theoretical manipulation. It goes to the very heart of theorisation: the process of the political manipulation of theories, their trivialisation and politicisation (i.e., the politically simplified portrayal and use of the rhetorical capital of social theories as an instrument of public persuasion), and the various harms that this leads to, are in the first place derivative of the mode of theorisation underpinning theoreticians’ explanatory schema. Undergirding this problem is a conception of the theoretical enterprise grounded in a reduction of social explanation to theoretical frameworks embedded within theory-universal (context-independent accounts) of the social world. Such accounts leave the efficacy of mono-causal explanatory mechanisms unquestioned. Thus, the danger lies therein that these

theories produce rigidly dogmatic policy guidelines which are bound to fail as they are conceptualised without proper acknowledgement of the complexity of reality (Ish-Shalom, 2008:681). This theoretical crisis, having its roots in the theory-universal and mono-causal (theoretical) nature of contemporary democratic peace approaches (especially liberalism), is therefore inextricably linked to practice: “If democracies are peaceful but non-democratic states are “troublemakers” the conclusion is inescapable: the former will be truly secure only when the latter have been transformed into democracies, too” (Layne, 1996a:198).

3.5 Evaluation

Doyle's [1983] (1996a) theoretical engagement with the empirical observation of no wars between liberal states, departing on the basis of a Kantian inspired liberal theory of international relations, set in motion the evolution of a research programme that has obtained remarkable theoretical and empirical validation. While the democratic peace research programme and its theoretical and empirical underpinnings have not proceeded in isolation of myriad challenges (theoretical, empirical, methodological *and* ontological), it has certainly generated a substantive body of literature geared towards the explication and consolidation of the peace-proneness of liberal dyads and, conversely, the war-proneness of mixed dyads. According to this liberally grounded rendition of the democratic peace research programme, liberal dyads have refrained from war on account of their adherence to the principles laid bare under the ideological banner of liberalism. In contradistinction to the ostensible primacy of liberal conceptions of the democratic peace, realist scholars of international relations have from the onset critically questioned the correlational and causal validity of the arguments put forth by liberal contributors to the debate. Realist scholars of the democratic peace have instead derided liberal conceptions of the democratic peace by pointing towards the inability of liberal states to transcend the structurally induced imperatives necessitated by an anarchical international system. A voluminous literature has amassed providing theoretical and empirical validation for realist and liberal theories of democratic peace respectively. This venture and its outcome are not purely theoretical in nature. To be sure, underlying the liberally grounded conception of the democratic peace is the contention that liberal explanatory forces (located within liberal norms and/or

democratic institutions) have succeeded in transcending the bounds of realist theory. If isolated from the empirical world in which these tendencies play themselves out, this undoubtedly constitutes a theoretical issue.

However, there is also an important real-world dimension to this. Not only has the democratic peace proposition been a source of policy inspiration for Western policy makers, but – as the bungled American invasion of Iraq (2003) has illustrated – it has also served as a theoretical instrument for the legitimation of exuberant war policies. Given the incomplete (ontologically dichotomous) nature of the theorisation of the democratic peace, these policies are in any event bound to fail. This issue becomes more problematic if the mode of theorisation underpinning social theories are predicated upon the provision of theory-universal (context-independent) and mono-causal explanatory accounts of the social world. As this chapter has briefly alluded to, the conception of the theoretical enterprise underpinning this study is one predicated upon the notion that theory should be as real as the problem (object) under study demands. But more on this issue in the succeeding chapter.

At issue in regards to the theoretical duality of the democratic peace are differing ontological conceptions regarding the central causal elements impacting upon international social and political outcomes. Both theoretical positions, if conceived in response to the agent-structure problem, are incomplete. The overt structural directive incorporated in neo-realist theory leaves little room for a conception of international social and political outcomes that affords the units of the system some form of behavioural power. The other side of the coin, encompassing the individualist nature of liberal theories of the democratic peace, is similarly reductionist and errs in its inability to provide a theoretical account of the structural properties of the system in which these units are situated. According to this position, and contra neo-realist theory, liberal states construct the circumstances under which they operate. In this sense, liberal theories of the democratic peace, in attempting to transcend the explanatory power of realist theories, have merely opted to prioritise a different ontological element instead of providing a genuine systemic theory. They fail to incorporate the interplay between system structure and the units comprising the system. To these shortcomings our attention thus shifts and with the explicit purpose

of furnishing an alternative theoretical framework for the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEYOND MONO-THEORETICAL APPROACHES: A MULTITHEORETICAL AND CONTEXT-DEPENDENT APPROACH TO THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE

[T]he fact remains that today's natural-science-modeled social sciences are no more "normal" [in a Kuhnian sense] and have no more predictive success than their seemingly less sophisticated predecessors. After more than 200 years of attempts, one could reasonably expect that there would exist at least a sign that social science has moved in the desired direction, that is, toward predictive theory. It has not.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2001:32)

Only by drawing on more encompassing views of theory can IR hope to make a significant contribution to the study of [...] history.

Barry Buzan & Richard Little (2009:460)

4.1 Introduction

The theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon, in both its (neo-)realist and liberalist versions, has patently been unresponsive to the exigencies of a socially and ontologically complex world. Commenting on the efficacy and relevance of Waltzian neo-realism for a systemic analysis of large-scale historical processes, Barry Buzan and Richard Little (2009:447), in a contribution entitled *Waltz and World History: The Paradox of Parsimony*, have recently noted that the gravamen of Waltz's explanatory schema is rooted in the recognition that "it simply does not work for huge swathes of time and place". A similar assessment could with good cause be levelled at liberal conceptions of the democratic peace and, more broadly, the theorisation of international relations phenomena. The extent to which issues of context and theory-multiplicity have been relegated to the background within the purview of the democratic peace research programme – opting instead for a deeply entrenched disciplinary mode of theorisation typified by the natural scientific mantra of logical simplicity – has done little more than reinforce the permeation of natural scientific conceptions of theory-construction within the confines of social science.

In effect, the well-nigh complete subjugation of social scientific theory to the prescriptions embodied within ideal (natural) scientific theory, typified by the necessity of furnishing explanatory accounts of social activity using “abstract, context-independent elements” (Flyvbjerg, 2001:38), has meant that the inherent complexity of the social world and, by implication, the democratic peace phenomenon has not received the attention it probably deserves. The need to reflect upon, and engage with, the furtherance of more complex (inclusive) theoretical accounts of social phenomena, grounded in a recognition that the object(s), elements and processes of social scientific inquiry function within the realm of an open world, have indeed been touched upon in the democratic peace literature. Lynn-Jones’ (1996:xxxii) call for the need for future research on the democratic peace to be attentive to the (complex) interaction between national- and system-level variables has been noted. Heeding this call, and recognising the apparent shortcomings of liberally grounded individualist conceptions of the democratic peace, Huntley (1996) set out to provide a laudable explanatory account of the democratic peace that attempted to theorise, from a liberal perspective, the systemic sources of the liberal peace.

Also, within the province of IR theory, more encompassing views of social reality, drawing on some form of nexus between agents and structures (located at the domestic and international levels respectively), have surfaced. Rose (1998), in an exposition of the theoretical underpinnings of neoclassical realist theory, has highlighted the *raison d’être* of this theoretical tradition. He points towards a basic discontentment among certain scholars of power politics with the overt “structural determinism” (rather: structural prioritisation) embedded within Waltz’s explanatory schema and opts instead for a more inclusive theoretical framework drawing on both external (structural) and internal (agential) explanatory variables (Rose, 1998:146-7). This points to the recognition not only of the complexity of the real world, but also as Layne (2006:10) has indicated, the need to incorporate the notion that differing variables are causally interdependent. Whilst this conception of the theoretical enterprise and social reality has in some instances left its mark within the discipline of IR and, to a lesser extent, the democratic peace research programme, theorisation of social and political phenomena have steadfastly adhered to a natural

scientific conception of theory-construction, legitimising in turn the validity of mono-theoretical and context-independent accounts of social reality.

The irony is of course that the natural sciences have themselves increasingly come to recognise the need for more encompassing theoretical frameworks. The Danish scholar and philosopher of science, Bent Flyvbjerg (2001:32), referring to the relatively new status of natural scientific disciplines such as biology and meteorology, makes this point well. He also draws attention to the inability of the social sciences to reach the stage of normal science envisioned by Kuhn as well as transcend the bounds of mono-theoretical accounts of social reality: "These relatively new natural sciences [biology and meteorology] have evolved ever more complex theories which account for an increasing range of phenomena, while social sciences typically seeks to develop theories pertaining to one class of phenomena and then abandons these for theories which include another" (Flyvbjerg, 2001:32).³⁷ The essence of the theoretical crisis of the democratic peace and IR theory thus is an inability to transcend the theory-universal and mono-theoretical nature of theoretical frameworks directed toward the explication of social and political phenomena. This translates into the necessity for social theorisation to adapt itself to the rigours of an ontologically complex social world typified by a diverse array of contextual forces fluctuating (in terms of explanatory primacy) in accordance with temporal and spatial realities (hence contextually determined). It is this conception of the social world, coupled with the indebtedness of all social theories to prior ontological engagement with and resolution to the agent-structure problem, that inform the rejection of the time-space invariant theoretical arguments postulated by (neo-)realist and liberal explanatory frameworks in accounting for the democratic peace phenomenon.

The core concern of this chapter is to provide an alternative (hence multitheoretical and context-dependent) explanatory account of the social world and, following from this, the democratic peace phenomenon. Through the utilisation of the logic underpinning the agent-structure problem, a critique will be raised against the fallacy

³⁷ It is this hiatus in social scientific inquiry coupled with the import of context to human conduct that leads Flyvbjerg (2001:25) to wholly reject any notion of 'theory' (understood in the sense of explaining and predicting social outcomes) in the social sciences. Given however the recognition that all social action are theory-dependent, and acknowledging that history does lend credence to *some form of* regularity (order) in terms of social behaviour, an explanatory (not predictive) theory of social outcomes should be deemed possible.

of interpreting international social and political outcomes through the narrowly conceived prism of an exclusively individualist or structuralist social ontology. This research calls for a more encompassing rendition of the nature of the social world, typified by a view of the social as multilayered, multifaceted and contextually determined. With this in mind, the social ontological position informing this study will be advanced, informed by three key pillars: (i) recognition of the explanatory import of both agents and structures to social theorisation; (ii) the necessity of locating the explanatory import of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, within time and space; and (iii) a view of social reality as stratified (layered), multifaceted and contextually determined. This will provide the groundwork for the advancement of a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach to the democratic peace.

4.2 The fallacy of mono-theoretical approaches

The empirical world depicted by (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace, if framed against the backdrop of an examination of the historical record, simply does not afford a plausible vindication for the theoretical arguments postulated by either explanatory framework. In and of itself, the structurally induced security imperatives generated by an anarchical international system thus cannot account – in the sense of providing a time-space invariant explanatory framework – for the complexity inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon. A similar predicament marks liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. Part of the problem relates to the influx of natural scientific conceptions of theory-construction into the disciplinary (IR) discourse on social theorisation. In a quest to establish an alternative conception of social scientific theory transcending the prescriptions subsumed under the rubric of the natural science ideal, Flyvbjerg (2001:26) has pointed towards the necessity of first and foremost internalising the overriding rationale for the permeation of natural scientific conceptions of theory-construction within the purview of social science:

There is a *logical simplicity* to the natural science paradigm, and the natural sciences' impressive material results speak for themselves...In this interpretation advances in natural-science research and technological progress are founded upon the relatively cumulative production of knowledge, the key concepts being

explanation and prediction *based on context-independent theories*. (Emphasis added).

It is this conception of the theoretical enterprise, informed by the natural scientific desideratum of logical simplicity and context-independent theories, that underpins contemporary approaches to the democratic peace phenomenon, and which is most explicitly inculcated within the IR corpus of knowledge by way of Kenneth Waltz's explanatory framework.

Following this mode of reasoning and constituting the cornerstone of the natural scientific conception of the theoretical enterprise, Flyvbjerg (2001:38-39) has noted that ideal theory (i.e., a proper conception of the constitutive principles of theorisation) is informed by six basic characteristics, of which the Athenian philosopher Socrates identified the first three. Accordingly, a theory proper must be (i) explicit (formulated with such clarity as to be understood by any rational mind, and without an indebtedness to interpretation or intuition); (ii) universal (time-space invariant); and (iii) abstract (viz., devoid of reference to concrete examples located in time and space). Adding to these prescriptions, Descartes and Kant added two further imperatives, emphasising that all theoretical frameworks ought to be (iv) discrete (constructed on the basis of context-independent elements, devoid of any reference to contextually determined human motivations for acting); and (v) systematic (constituting a separate realm of activity, abstracted from reality, in which the constitutive context-independent elements and/or properties of the systemic whole are linked by way of rules or laws). Of more recent origins, modern natural scientific discourse has added the necessity for theoretical frameworks to be (vi) complete (i.e., provide an explanatory account of the potential applicatory range of theoretical frameworks) and predictive.

In defending this mode of theorising, and reflecting on the basic parameters forming the bedrock of a legitimate (valid) conception of theorisation (and, by implication, 'theory'), Waltz (1979; 1990a; 1997) has made a case for a conception of social theorisation wholly reducible to the rigours of ideal natural scientific theory. He draws on insights derived from economics in which steadfast progress results from a view of economics "as a realm of affairs marked off from social and political life" (Waltz,

1990a:22-23). Disciplinary inquiry should accordingly be geared towards the demarcation of an artificially constructed realm of inquiry from all else with the aim of isolating and theorising specific causal forces, abstracted from everyday life and *dislocated from time and space* (Flyvbjerg, 2001:39). The position thus upheld renders social theory, in essence, to nothing more than an “instrument to be used in attempting to explain a circumscribed part of reality of whose true dimensions we can never be sure. The instrument is of no use if it does little more than ape the complexity of the world” (Waltz, 1997:913-914).

Two implications, at the very least, follow from this conception of social theorisation. One, a theory proper is only deemed attainable through the demarcation of an artificially constructed realm of inquiry which, in reality, and as Waltz (1990a:26) himself conceded, is inextricably linked to all other realms. Only through this process of abstraction are theoreticians equipped to meaningfully engage with the subject matter under investigation. Two and more importantly, the attempt at isolating specific causal forces operative within an artificially constructed realm of inquiry is fraught with insensitivity to issues of time and space. Waltz’s (1990:26) comment in this regard is illuminating: “Theories deal in regularities and repetitions and are possible only if these can be identified”. As the argument in chapter two of this study has endeavoured to illustrate, the basic fallacy of this position lies in its inability to conceive of the contextually real forces impacting upon the realities manifest in observation and forming the bedrock of Waltz’s explanatory schema.³⁸ Wight (2006:30), endorsing an account of social theorisation at variance with Waltz’s explanatory schema, warns of the explanatory pitfalls inherent in, and accruing from, the isolation of specific causal forces within the parameters of an artificially constructed realm of inquiry:

Surface forms or phenomena, and our experiences of them, do not exhaust the real. What we experience is the result of a complex interaction of [forces and mechanisms], which in controlled conditions produce law-like regularities. If we are to make sense of how this experimental knowledge is then put into practice in open systems, then these same entities must also generate effects in the world beyond the laboratory, but devoid of the interventions of scientists not in

³⁸ This position is similarly applicable to liberal theories of the democratic peace.

the same clean, recurrent stream of cause and effect. Outside the human-induced effects of experimental closure they are part of a natural interactional complexity that results sometimes in particular causal relations, whilst at other times in the suppressing or complete neutralisation of the generative effects in question.

Within the confines of an open world, generative of a multiplicity of forces existent within a natural interactional complexity, the rigors underpinning natural scientific ideal theory hardly constitute a worthwhile venture. Moreover, the endeavour to furnish a parsimonious theory of international social and political phenomena, considered the core business of social theorisation following natural scientific ideal theory, is not only theoretically limited and destined for failure, but encompasses an element of political and ethical risk: "It is dangerous [...] because such theories are apt to provide scientific legitimacy for particular forms of political practice. The promotion of western forms of democracy based on the scientific validity of a theory of democratic peace is but one example of this process" (Wight, 2006:8). This state of affairs is further compounded by the paradoxical recognition that the very exclusion of issues of context from social theorisation – the most basic enabling factor following the natural science model for a theory geared towards explanation and prediction – renders these objectives (explanation and prediction) futile (Flyvbjerg, 2001:40).

Taken together, recognition of the dual import of the complexity of the social world, wedded to the centrality of context to social activity, does not implicate a conception of theory-construction wholly irreconcilable with that advanced by Waltz (1979; 1990; 1997). All theoretical frameworks are at one stage or another faced with the selection of certain facts over others, an endeavour predicated interestingly enough on prior resolution of the agent-structure problem. In this sense, and endorsing *in part* Waltz's position on the explanatory reach (scope) of theory, theory-construction must necessarily be a bounded activity or, following Smith and Baylis (2005:3), a simplifying device of some form or other. The enduring problem accruing from this position lies therein that these theoretical frameworks are more often than not constructed and implemented as *if* they have succeeded in unravelling the entire spectrum of forces constitutive of social life and social behaviour or, as Waltz (in

Halliday, Rosenberg and Waltz, 1998:384) more moderately claims, that they have captured the “big and important things” within a specific domain of inquiry.

Accepting a description of theory-construction as a bounded activity does not hold, however, that we should confine ourselves to a conception of (social) theorisation, and theory-construction, as narrowly conceived as the position upheld by Waltz. There is no compelling rationale for why a theory of social behaviour cannot be more encompassing than that contained within Waltz’s explanatory schema. This is after all the central constitutive logic undergirding neoclassical realist theory, depicted by its proponents as being non-parsimonious in nature (Layne, 2006:10). This is in no small measure a commendable endeavour. For whilst all theoretical frameworks are invariably limited, it is not at all clear – as were argued in chapter two of this study – how much of a distortion of reality should be deemed acceptable before theoretical frameworks are rendered meaningless in terms of explanatory power and/or practical application. Alternatively seen, if we are faced with a choice between an explanatory framework based on a natural scientific conception of logical simplicity and a more encompassing (yet still limited) explanatory framework, itself embedded within and reflective of an open world, it is not at all clear why we should confine ourselves to the former. Thus, the mode of theorisation underpinning both (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions of the democratic peace, having their roots in natural scientific ideal theory and framed accordingly, does little to provide concrete insights into the operative forces constitutive of the democratic peace phenomenon and is in this regard in dire need of theoretical revision/reformulation.

One solution to this problem, broadly paralleling the theoretical prescriptions of neoclassical realist theory and heeding the call for a more complex theory of social behaviour, is to provide some form of synthesis, affording theoretical space for both realist and domestic (liberal) explanatory factors. This approach does not sit comfortably with the objective of this study to transcend the theory-universal nature of social theorisation, an issue we will return to in the next section. For now it will suffice to say that whilst a more encompassing theoretical framework or ‘theory’ in explicating the democratic peace phenomenon (and, more broadly, international relations phenomena) are propagated in this study, this requires a movement away from mono-theoretical explanatory frameworks towards a more encompassing, and

theoretically diverse, multi-theoretical explanatory schema. What is required, therefore, is a conception of social theorisation that recognises that theoretical frameworks ought to be as complex as the reality on the ground. At the core of this imperative lies recognition of the explanatory import of context to social behaviour and, following from this, social theorisation. This requires however a return to the agent-structure problem and its intersection with an alternative conception of the nature and course of the social world.

4.2.1 The agent-structure problem and the democratic peace: an alternative conception

Theoretical accounts of the social, whether explicitly (or implicitly) embedded within an individualist or structuralist social ontological position, should always be deployed with an understanding of their limitations. To this end, and following Wight's (2006:47) outright rejection of the ontological positions upheld by both individualist and structuralist approaches in response to the agent-structure problem, society is more than the outcome of the individuals (and their properties) constitutive of the social whole (the fallacy of individualist social ontologies). Conversely, the individuals comprising the systemic whole are more than the product of the relations in which they are embedded (the fallacy of structuralist social ontologies). With this in mind, Giddens (1979:69) set out to provide a more complete rendition of the agent-structure problem, grounding his structurationist social ontology in a more thorough appreciation of the "*mutual dependence of structure and agency*" (emphasis in original). Conceived as an issue peculiar to the agent-structure problem, contemporary theoretical accounts underpinning the explication of the democratic peace phenomenon are in one way or another deficient. Both (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions of the democratic peace have patently failed to provide a rendition of the agent-structure problem transcending the structuralist and individualist social ontologies at the heart of these explanatory frameworks. Huntley's (1996) study constitutes in this regard a noteworthy exception, endeavouring to provide a systemic foundation for liberally grounded theories of the democratic peace. Whilst seemingly bolstering the liberally grounded argument underpinning the democratic peace through a more complete rendition of the agent-structure problem, the

conception of structure underpinning his explanatory framework is predominantly at variance with the social ontology advanced in this study.

The first of three key pillars underpinning the social ontology advanced in this study endorses the explanatory import of both agents and structures. The conception of structure lying at the core of this study is however more variegated than that advanced by Huntley. The conception of structure underpinning Huntley's (1996) study is predicated on the notion that the *constraining* structural properties accruing from an anarchical international system upheld in Waltzian neo-realism are progressively superable. Anarchy, according to this position, is itself a driving force in negating the structural effects following from it, for from the destruction of war, reason and liberal democracy derive. Huntley's views however do little to engage with the realities accruing from the historical record and, more fundamentally, fail to conceive of the deeply entrenched nature of some structures within (international) social life. This implies that the account of structure constitutive of Huntley's (1996) explanatory framework is too keen to disregard some form of structure having a near-permanent constraining influence on society and/or human conduct. Moreover, Rosato's (2003; 2005) engagement with the democratic peace phenomenon found scant evidence in the historical record indicative of a progressive trend towards more respect among liberal democratic states in their dealings with each other, thus rejecting any notion of a progressive trend towards the transcendence of the structurally induced effect(s) of anarchy envisioned in Huntley's (1996) study and lying at the core of his conception of structure.

A conception of structure, enduring and constraining in nature, informs the ontological argument underpinning this study. While some structures in social life are easily transformed, others are more enduring on account of their deeply entrenched nature in social life. Wight (2006:56) provides a compelling rationale for this mode of reasoning: "Where society surrounds and sustains a relationship with sanctions, including coercive powers, social relations [read structures] *are sustained through immense changes in participating actors' conceptions of what they are doing*" (emphasis added). Two important inferences follow from this position and should be duly noted. (i) At the core of the neo-realist argument, stressing the structurally induced security and military imperatives accruing from an anarchical international

system, is the recognition – deeply engrained within the fabric of society – that the continued existence of a given state is intimately tied to issues of power politics (in essence, *a relationship sustained by society*). The survival of the state is thus the *sine qua non* for the attainment of all else. This, moreover, requires that all states be attentive to issues of relative power (placement) within the international system in which they are situated. (ii) A change in the conceptions of agents regarding the causal effects accruing from anarchy, a central argument of liberal theories of the democratic peace stressing the possibility of a transcendence of anarchy on account of liberal norms and institutions, does not necessarily imply an alteration in its *actual* (real) effects. Nor does this necessarily translate into these effects ceasing to exist. Also, and following from this, their realisation (i.e., the behavioural outcomes of the effect(s) of anarchy on social conduct) does not imply that the agents will be aware of (in the sense of cognitively explaining) its effects. It is only through the actualisation of a multiplicity of changes, located at differing levels, that the structural effects accruing from an anarchical international system can be wholly discarded.

Framing structure in this manner, viz., as enduring (continuous) and constraining in nature, encapsulates certain qualifications. Failure to do this would render the argument advanced as nothing more than a reinforcement of Waltz's conception of structure. Most important in this regard, 'enduring' does not always imply dominant. This introduces the second key pillar of the social ontological position advanced in this study: the import of context to social behaviour. With reference to the conception of structure advanced above, certain implications follow on account of the introduction of context. Under certain circumstances of time and space, the (constraining) conception of structure advanced above may hold only partially. This provides theoretical and empirical space for a conception of social outcomes as derivative of (i) a purely structuralist position, with structure intervening "between interacting units and the results that their acts and interactions produce" (Waltz, 1979:79)³⁹; (ii) a social ontology in which structural effects obtain primary explanatory import *without negating the secondary explanatory effects of agential (individualist) conceptions*, and following from the latter, (iii) a social ontology

³⁹ Wight (2006:97), explicating the conception of structure informing Waltz's explanatory schema, expounds this position well: "Once in place the structure can be said to operate behind the backs of the units in a way that shapes their behaviour irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not."

predicated on the explanatory primacy of agential (individualist) conceptions of social life, *without negating the explanatory effects of structuralist conceptions*.⁴⁰ The keyword in this regard is context.

This provides a social ontology that not only recognises the import of both agents and structures (and their interdependence) to the aggregate outcome of social behaviour, but also recognises that their interrelationship *within specific spatio-temporal dimensions* is itself contextually determined and remains in a state of flux (hence not predetermined).⁴¹ The latter point cannot be over-stressed and speaks to the explanatory limitations inherent in (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. Moreover, it critically questions any notion of a general theory of international relations and/or the democratic peace phenomenon. Both explanatory frameworks have patently failed to provide an exhaustive account of the complexity of the democratic peace phenomenon on its own (theory-universal and mono-theoretical) terms. It is only through an incorporation of a more encompassing explanatory framework, embedded within a multitheoretical and context-dependent conception of the theoretical enterprise, that a more thorough engagement with the democratic peace can be deemed a realistic endeavour. Recognition of the necessity of furnishing a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach to social theorisation (and by implication, the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon) already embodies a more variegated (complex) conception of the nature of the social world than that taken up within the explanatory frameworks of (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace. To this issue, constituting the third pillar of the social ontology advanced in this study, we now turn.

⁴⁰ The exclusion of a fourth possibility, encapsulating a purely individualist position, is not by omission, but is informed by a thorough reading of the historical record pertaining to Anglo-American relations and their intersection with the democratic peace phenomenon.

⁴¹ It is in this regard that the social ontology forming the bedrock of this study departs in fundamental ways from that developed by Giddens (1979). A similar predicament occurs with regard to neoclassical realism, insofar as it fails to provide theoretical space for a social ontological position, derivative of the intersection of the agent-structure problem with the import of context to social conduct, as encapsulated in this study. One could with good cause ask whether the position advanced here does in essence provide a more encompassing rendition of the agent-structure problem. As previously stated, whilst recognising the import of both agents and structures to the *aggregate* outcome of social behaviour, recognition of the import of context points to the necessity of a less rigid (theoretically predetermined) conception of the interrelationship between agents and structures. Also, it is more encompassing on account of an appreciation of the inability of agents or structures, in most instances, to effect social behaviour wholly on their own terms.

4.2.2 Mono-causality, context and the nature of the social: implications for the theorisation of the democratic peace

Social reality is stratified (layered), multifaceted and contextually determined. Against the backdrop of a conception of social reality analogous to that laid bare above, Wight (2006:46) has made a plea for an incorporation into social scientific discourse of an account of causation (and social science) as multi-levelled and anti-reductionist in its point of departure. Grounding his argument in a more encompassing rendition of social reality than that embodied in a positivist theory of science, he insists that “science has to construct explanations of causation on several levels without always attempting to make reductions to lower levels” (Wight, 2006:46). This position correlates to, and is derivative of, Bhaskar’s (2008:113) conception of emergence in which the laws operative at a higher (less basic) level of reality (human behaviour for instance) are wholly irreducible to the laws governing the lower-order (more basic) level (material matter for instance) from which the higher level emerges. The implications for social scientific inquiry accruing from this position are profound. This proposition renders inept any conception of social theorisation reduced to the operation of causal forces situated at one level of reality and speaks to the stratified and multifaceted nature of social reality. Wight (2006:36-37), deeply committed to Bhaskar’s ‘emergent’ ontology, touches on the central rationale informing this account of social reality and it is worth simultaneously keeping in mind the level-specific nature of (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions respectively in response to the democratic peace phenomenon:

The laws discovered and identified at one level are irreducible to those at other levels. Each level has its own emergent powers that, although rooted in, emergent from and dependent on other levels, cannot be explained by explanations based at the more fundamental levels. The emergent levels, then, have powers and liabilities unique to that level...*[This] entails that reductive explanations, in either upwards or downwards directions, will not suffice.* Some entities, humans for example, will be subjected to laws operative at more than one level...Emergence [therefore] means that although the more complex levels of reality, for example, societies, presuppose the more basic or less complex levels, for example, people, explanations of them are not reducible to the

other...[I]t also has major implications for how we understand the realm of international relations. For it legitimates a distinct realm of human activity at the level of the international, as well as demonstrating how this realm cannot be studied in a manner that assumes its isolation from other realms located both horizontally and vertically in relation to it. (Emphasis added)

In essence, a conception of social reality as advanced above, conjoined with the existence and functioning of causal forces within a natural interactional complexity, constitutes the cornerstone of that which is implicated in the term 'an open world'. Conceived within the parameters of the democratic peace research programme, this denotes a rejection of the mono-causal logic underpinning both (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. It further denotes, more fundamentally, the necessity of furnishing a more complete theoretical account thereof grounded in some form of domestic-international nexus in which both structural and agential forces, operating at the international and domestic levels respectively, are accounted for. But, again, and whilst accepting the logic underpinning Bhaskar's (2008:113) 'emergent' ontology, an appreciation of the import of context to all forms of social behaviour renders a more qualified position: to the extent that differing levels each exert its own causal influences, it does not hold that all forces will be operative within a given context at all times and under all circumstances. In effect, this corresponds to and reinforces the three ontological positions previously advanced as constitutive of social outcomes.

With this in mind, and seen as a whole, a social ontological position emerges with its point of departure grounded in the intersection of three central pillars. In the first instance, the social ontology advanced recognises the ontological and explanatory import of both agents and structures and that a theory proper must in some way incorporate this logic. In the second instance, recognition of the explanatory import of both agents and structures must be located within a contextually determined realm of inquiry. This implies recognition of the import of context to social behaviour, with the concomitant result a conception of agents and structures functioning in a state of flux. In the final instance, social reality is stratified (layered), multifaceted and contextually determined. It is this conception of the social world and social reality

which informs the theoretical argument to be advanced in response to the democratic peace phenomenon.

4.3 Explicating structure *and* agency: towards a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach to the democratic peace

Of what form then is the explanatory framework underpinning this study's theoretical engagement with the democratic peace phenomenon? This framework calls for a more encompassing rendition of the agent-structure problem. It endorses a more variegated (complex) account of social reality and questions the explanatory efficacy (and reality) encapsulated within the frameworks of (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace. Furthermore, in light of an appreciation of a causal framework typical of a multileveled and anti-reductionist understanding of social reality, and thereby acknowledging the multitudinous forces impacting on social behaviour, the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon must be attentive to the complex interaction of causal forces located at differing levels of reality. This study contends that an incorporation of both (neo-)realist and liberal explanatory forces is imperative on account of their historical salience in the construction of the democratic peace. This is necessary for meeting the twin requirements of a more encompassing rendition of the agent-structure problem and being grounded in some form of domestic-international nexus. However, framed in this manner, this theoretical formulation postulates a theoretical argument inattentive to issues of time and space. It is only through the intersection of a more encompassing (multitheoretical) framework with the import of context to social behaviour that we can more realistically approach the theorisation of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon.

A failure to incorporate the explanatory import of context would in essence thrust the theoretical argument advanced in this study into the realm of a synthesis. As noted before, Owen (1996:151) has reflected on the possibility of a realist-liberal synthesis on the grounds of the historical dominance of both power politics and liberal ideas within, specifically, the Anglo-American foreign policy tradition. Acceptance of a synthesis, whilst desirable at first sight, would not produce the dividends initially promised. A synthesis would produce a rigidity of theoretical forces which in reality

does not exist. A conception of social theorisation thus framed would, if reduced to its essence, furnish a theoretical framework inattentive to the situational intricacies and complexities occasioned by various contexts and the interplay of differing forces within and across time and space. Moreover, a realist-liberal synthesis in accounting for the democratic peace phenomenon would therefore do nothing more than reinforce the theory-universal and context-independent mode of theorisation that this study has taken issue with and endeavours to transcend.

Smith (2007:11) argues in this regard that the theories we use, each embedded within its own ontologically grounded response to the agent-structure problem, cannot simply be combined together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in order to produce different views of the same world. Such a move is untenable, as each theory sees a markedly different world (Smith, 2007:11). However, this assumes *a priori* that decision makers, acting on the basis of some social theory or other, can only understand their world under one set of circumstances or addressing Smith (2007) that decision makers can only see, understand and (theoretically) manoeuvre within one world. In contradistinction to Smith's (2007) viewpoint, therefore, this study postulates that decision makers are theoretically equipped to "move from one worldview into another, whilst at the same time knowing both the possibility of moving back into the previous worldview and understanding the one they are in, and knowing the one they are not in" (Wight, 2006:42).⁴² This invariably implies a degree of rationality in decision making.

Practically speaking, it entails that decision makers, cognisant of both realist and liberal explanatory forces and the realities emanating from the spatio-temporal realm of which they form a part, utilise a multitheoretical approach to understand and analyse the complexity of the social world. A given context consequently engenders the theoretical primacy of either realist or liberal theories, but without negating in most instances the effect of the other theory (hence: the existence of primacy versus secondary explanations). This recognises, with reference to the democratic peace phenomenon, two important factors: (i) at the very least, some form of continuity

⁴² Interestingly, Wight (2006:42) further vindicates his argument by referring to Kuhn's 'gestalt switch', encapsulated by the dual image of a duck/rabbit, in which we are equipped, once the duality of the picture has been internalised, to switch to and fro between the duality inherent in the image.

exists in terms of the theoretical (explanatory) forces constitutive of human conduct; (ii) the intersection of these forces with the import of context to the overall outcome of human conduct, results in a conception thereof (i.e., the complex interaction between differing theoretical forces) as residing within a state of flux. With regard to the latter argument, this implies that the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon do not accrue from a single theoretical path, but is derivative of differing theoretical forces (their complex interaction itself a product of time and space) working together in producing the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace. The realist scholar Reinhold Niebuhr (1960:xxxiii) has inadvertently captured a form of this dual approach in which liberal explanatory forces, in this instance, obtained theoretical primacy without subsequently negating the (non-verbalised) effect(s) of realist theories: “Since political conflict, at least in times when controversies have not reached the point of crisis, is carried on by the threat rather than the actual use, of force, it is always easy for the [...] superficial observer to overestimate the moral and rational factors, *and to remain oblivious to the covert types of coercion and force which are used in the conflict*” (emphasis added). As the succeeding chapter will indicate, this is but one theoretical path accountable for the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace.

4.4 Evaluation

A conception of social theorisation *qua* natural scientific ideal theory, if framed against the backdrop of the relatively cumulative production of knowledge within the confines of natural science, presents itself at first sight as a credible avenue for the attainment of legitimate social scientific knowledge. Informed by the natural scientific desideratum of logical simplicity and context-independent theories, the conception of the social theoretical enterprise emergent from this mode of theorisation provides scant theoretical and empirical space for a more encompassing rendition of social reality. With regard to the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon, this has meant the furnishing of a theory-universal and context-independent explanatory framework, whether in its (neo-)realist or liberal depiction, in accounting for the peace-inducing forces constitutive of the no war phenomenon. In contradistinction to this mode of theorisation, this chapter has made a case for a more encompassing rendition of both social reality and the theoretical enterprise, grounded in the

intersection of three central pillars. Attempting to transcend the individualist-structuralist dichotomy in the theorisation of the democratic peace, an argument was made for a conception of social theorisation incorporating both agents and structures, ascribing each – with regards to the *aggregate* outcome of social behaviour – equal ontological status.

The dynamics of the agent-structure problem play themselves out within a spatio-temporally (contextually) determined realm. This denotes a social ontology in which the outcomes of human (and social) activity, manifesting themselves within the confines of an open world, are derivative of the complex interaction between agents and structures. Thus framed, a social ontological conception of agents and structures (and their interrelationship) emerges as functioning within a state of flux, in effect affording a less rigid and theoretically predetermined account of the interplay of differing theoretical forces within and across time and space. This leads to, and is in many ways predicated upon, an account of social reality as stratified, multifaceted and contextually determined. It positions the argument advanced towards the necessary incorporation of a multileveled and anti-reductionist account of social causation. It is with these imperatives in mind that the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach advanced seeks to provide a more encompassing explanatory account of the democratic peace phenomenon, with specific reference to Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) as well as Franco-American relations (2002-).

CHAPTER FIVE

**BEYOND THEORY: CONTEXTUALISING THE MULTITHEORETICAL AND
CONTEXT-DEPENDENT APPROACH – THREE CASES****5.1 Introduction**

The theoretical argument advanced in this study, embedded within a multitheoretical and context-dependent approach, cannot obtain vindication without due consideration of its manifestation within the confines of the real world. To this end, and whilst recognising the imperative of a methodological sample stretching across time and space, three cases emerge with a view to substantiate the veracity of the theoretical argument advanced. This will take the form of an analysis of Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) and, of a more recent disposition, Franco-American relations (2002-) in response to the United States' military invasion of Iraq (2003). The selection of the cases under investigation, whilst admittedly providing a predominantly Western (Anglo-American) perspective, was not haphazardly arrived at. Instead, and as Rosato (2005:468) has aptly pointed out, the methodological prioritisation of Anglo-American cases within the confines of the democratic peace research programme has its foundation in sound logic: inasmuch as Great Britain and the United States have historically and symbolically been conceived as the quintessential paragons of liberal ideology (hence, conceived at any juncture in time as the most liberal of states within the international system), a failure of liberal norms and institutions in cases involving these states would be epochal. It is on these grounds that questions pertaining to the liberal credentials of nineteenth century Great Britain and the United States, if juxtaposed to modern conceptions of the term liberal democratic, must be discarded. Within the parameters of the nineteenth century world, therefore, these two states did constitute the grand models of liberal ideology and institutions. Furthermore, recognition of the impressive material (military) capabilities amassed by both Great Britain and the United States at differing historical intervals provide a similar appraisal of the richness of Anglo-American cases in assessing the explanatory validity of (neo-)realist conceptions of the democratic peace.

An analysis of Anglo-American relations (1861-63), in response to the diplomacy of the *Trent* affair and beyond, will provide the point of departure for this chapter. More concretely, and as an examination of the historical record will illustrate, the Anglo-American diplomatic crisis over the *Trent* affair and, more broadly, the question of British intervention in the American Civil War, necessitate a more encompassing explanatory framework, itself attentive to issues of time and space, than that furnished by (neo-)realist and liberal explanatory accounts of the episode. Similarly, an analysis of the peace-inducing forces implicated in the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuelan boundary dispute, 1895-96, entailing British capitulation to American demands, speaks to the necessity of transcending the mono-theoretical and context-independent explanatory accounts previously advanced. Both cases will, moreover, be subjected to a refutation and, at times, refinement of the theoretical conclusions drawn by Layne (1996a) and Owen (1996; 1997) in their rendition of the peace-inducing forces involved in the episodes.

This will be followed by an analysis and explication of the peace-inducing forces concerned with Franco-American relations preceding the American decision to militarily intervene in Iraq during the summer of 2003. The Bush administration's resolve to embroil the United States in a military venture in Iraq precipitated a diplomatic crisis of sorts within Franco-American relations, though the threat of war never really entered into the fray. This is precisely the point to be underscored. Making a case for the peace-inducing forces implicated in this regard will necessitate a two-pronged approach. It will require, in the first instance, a revision of neo-realist theory with the goal of incorporating into the theoretical discourse the peace-inducing forces inherent in nuclear weapons. Secondly, it is only with reference to the common set of values and institutions (i.e., liberal explanatory forces) underpinning the diplomatic landscape of Franco-American relations (2002-) that a more complete picture of the peace-inducing forces in this regard can be obtained.

5.2 The *Trent* Affair and beyond: Anglo-American relations, 1861-1863

In November 1861, amidst a deep-seated feeling of failure and desperation in respect of its war with the Confederacy, United States Naval Captain Charles Wilkes approached the British mail steamer *Trent* and removed from it the Confederate

agents James M. Mason and John Slidell, and their secretaries, en route to seek diplomatic recognition for the Confederacy in England and France respectively. On approaching the British mail steamer on the night of November 8, 1861, and subsequently demanding an immediate halt of the voyage of the *Trent* through the discharge of a shell across its bows, Wilkes boarded the British vessel and demanded at once the release of the Confederate passengers on board (Foreign Office, 1972a[1861]:476). This Wilkes did over the protests of the British commander of the *Trent*, as well as that of the Confederate agents, and without any form of prior authorisation from his government. What ensued was an Anglo-American crisis in which Britain, resenting the “indignity to the British flag” and threatening with war if her demands were not met, demanded the release of the envoys and the offering of an apology (Pratt, De Santis & Siracusa, 1980:138-140).

News of the capture of Mason and Slidell was enthusiastically received in the Union. Not only did Wilkes obtain the greatest possible admiration in the public mind but, more tellingly, his actions were, with few exceptions, revered and praised by government officials alike (Adams, 1912a:546). This prompted the Illinois Senator, Mr Lovejoy, to propose a joint Congressional resolution – at once unanimously approved – on December 2, 1861, wishing to sincerely thank Captain Wilkes “for his brave, adroit and patriotic conduct in the arrest and detention of the traitors, James M. Mason and John Slidell” and requesting the President to present Captain Wilkes with a “gold medal with suitable emblems and devices, in testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of his good conduct” (Adams, 1912a:548). Reflecting in turn on the prevalent state of mind of the American people in response to the actions of Captain Wilkes, Adams (1912b:37), writing from the vantage point of 50 years further on, aptly commented: “I think I do not remember in the whole course of the half century’s retrospect...any occurrence in which the American people were so completely swept off their feet, for the moment losing possession of their senses, as during the weeks which immediately followed the seizure of Mason and Slidell”.⁴³ The Union government, at first inclined to reject these British demands, eventually

⁴³ Also, and as Adams (1912b:35) further noted, “[o]ne living in those times...cannot but retain, if American, a distinct recollection of the incident, and a general memory at least of the excitement caused by it, and the interest with which every state of its development was awaited”.

succumbed to the internal and external realities facing them and thus gave in to the British demands.

Christopher Layne (1996a:168-174), confining his theoretical engagement to an exclusive focus on the diplomacy of the *Trent* affair, has convincingly argued that the decision by the Union government to capitulate to British demands was grounded in strategic and national interest, as envisioned by neo-realist theory, due to the acknowledgement that a war with Britain would almost certainly have effected the independence of the Southern states and resulted in the permanent dissolution of the Union. The situation, conceived from a neo-realist vantage point, was thus compounded by the existence of an unfavourable distribution of (military) capabilities *vis-à-vis* British military power: “The United States bowed to London because, already fully occupied militarily trying to subdue the Confederacy, the North could not also afford a simultaneous war with England, which effectively would have brought Britain into the war between the States on the South’s side” (Layne, 1996a:172). Added to this unfavourable distribution of military capabilities was the recognition, as articulated by the Boston capitalist, George M. Barnard, in his writings to New York Senator Gideon Welles, that a war with Britain over the *Trent* affair would endanger “the financial & commercial interests of this country as well as our success with the rebellion...The interests involved are too large & important to allow either nation to go into a war unless it can be shown to be an inevitable necessity” (quoted in Claussen, 1940:513).

This fact of national self-interest, accounting for the Union’s capitulation to British demands, remains the dominant interpretation of Union diplomacy in response to the *Trent* affair, and appears consistent with the historical record. Indeed, Union diplomacy during this period, and beyond, was constrained by the existence of the very fact that “the Civil War itself was furnishing a practical exigency – a national interest – which made for a pacific foreign policy” (Claussen, 1940:512). President Lincoln, in his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1861, conceded this much by reminding members of Congress that they “will not be surprised to learn that, in the peculiar exigencies of the times, our intercourse with foreign nations has been attended with profound solicitude, chiefly turning upon our own domestic affairs” (Lincoln, 1861:3). Little less than a year later, reflecting once more on the

state of affairs affecting Union diplomacy, Lincoln (1862:2-4) reiterated that a more confrontational foreign policy, if seen against the backdrop of the internal and external exigencies of the time, “would certainly be unwise”. The Union government was therefore in no position to provide a credible opposition to any form of military engagement, even more so if Great Britain was to be the opposing belligerent. This conclusion has, curiously enough, been endorsed by realist and liberal scholars alike. Owen (1996:140), notably, has argued that Union diplomacy in response to the *Trent* affair does not lend itself to a liberal interpretation of the democratic peace in that Great Britain was still perceived as a monarchy and, subsequently, the peace-inducing effects envisioned by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace has no bearing in this particular context.⁴⁴ Insofar as this conclusion, emphasising national self-interest and endorsed by both sides of the theoretical spectrum, has sufficient historical weight, it only serves to highlight the import of contextual factors in assessing policy outcomes. In *this* context, encapsulating Union diplomacy in response to the *Trent* affair, realist forces were therefore of central decisional importance.

Such theoretical simplicity does not lend itself to the explication of British diplomacy in response to the *Trent* affair, and beyond.⁴⁵ News of the seizure of Mason and Slidell, on board the British mail steamer *Trent*, was virulently received in Britain and initially ignited an outcry for war (or, at the very least, a feeling of resentment) amongst the British government and, more so, the British public. An American citizen residing in Great Britain, writing to his uncle in New York on November 29, 1861, captured the public hysteria upon receipt of the news of the *Trent* affair by declaring that the “excitement consequent upon the insult to the British flag...has entirely monopolized the public mind. I have never seen so intense a feeling of indignation exhibited in my life. It pervades all classes, and may make itself heard above the

⁴⁴ This point, pertaining to the importance of perception to Owen’s (1996; 1997) theoretical argument, was explicated in chapter three of this study.

⁴⁵ An explication of British foreign policy responding to the *Trent* affair appears, at first glance, superfluous insofar as the Union government, cognisant of the unfavourable distribution of American military capabilities *vis-à-vis* British arms, capitulated to British demands. It is not, however, the intention of this study to take issue with this well-established historical fact. Instead, the argument advanced endeavours to explicate the multitudinous forces accounting for the British aversion to war with the Union during the *Trent* affair (and beyond), with the aim of providing a historically grounded argument for the existence of both realist and liberal explanatory forces in British policy during and following the episode of the *Trent* affair.

wiser theories of the Cabinet officers” (Adams, 1912a:544). Lord Russell, British Foreign Secretary, in a November 30, 1861 correspondence with the British Minister in Washington, Lord Lyons, expressed the general British position by stating that the Union government “must be fully aware that the British Government could not allow such an affront to the national honour to pass without full reparation” (Foreign Office, 1972a[1861]:477). Even the Duke of Argyll, considered the most avowedly pro-Northern member of cabinet, expressed at first instance an undignified resentment over Wilkes’ actions, lamenting “this wretched peace of American folly...I am all against submitting to any clean breach of International Law, such as I can hardly doubt this has been” (quoted in Adams, 1925:189). This culminated in the British cabinet, in its initial deliberation of a suitable course of action, demanding the release of the envoys and the offering of a “suitable apology” and, were these demands not met within seven days, Lord Lyons were to close the British legation in Washington and return to London (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:139).

Time, however, played its part in calming the proceedings and provided enough of an opportunity for all stakeholders to weigh in on the question. The ultimatum thus composed by Lord Russell, and the instructions that were bound to Lord Lyons, was furthermore toned down, at the instance of Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria. Lord Lyons, accordingly, was instructed “not to ‘menace’ the United States or to inform Seward [United States Secretary of State] of the seven-day time limit. Later he was told that an explanation would be accepted instead of an apology” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:139). The British liberal and Member of Parliament, John Bright, speaking at Rochdale on December 4, 1861, set out to calm the initial storm by attempting to distance the American government from any prior knowledge or governmental sanction regarding the activities of Wilkes (Bright, 1861), and lauding the American government for its “leadership in democracy” (Adams, 1925:195). Indeed, as Adams (1925:195) correctly observed, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Russell, hoping for an outcome short of war, was himself actively “seeking reasons for delay”. In a subsequent correspondence with Lord Lyons on December 18, 1861, explaining his brief encounter with the United States Minister in London, Charles Francis Adams, Russell expressed this much: “Mr. Adams asked whether the direction to Lord Lyons to leave Washington in 7 days was in the dispatch to be read. I said it was not, and that in case Mr. Seward should ask what would be the consequence of a refusal on

his part to comply with our conditions, Lord Lyons was to decline to answer that question, *in order not to have the appearance of a threat*” (Foreign Office, 1972b[1861]:480; emphasis added).⁴⁶ Although the Union subsequently capitulated to British demands, the British public and government were relieved to see an outcome short of war. Hoping to close the chapter on the *Trent* affair, the British cabinet, formerly demanding an apology, accepted the half-hearted expression of regret – in which the blame for this rupture in Anglo-American relations was partly shifted to British precedent regarding the impressment question – offered by Secretary of State William H. Seward, though Russell indicated that he was at odds with certain portions of Seward’s reasoning. The conduct of British policy, indicative of a shift from an initial unwavering position to a more conciliatory tone, needs to be explicated by acknowledging the import of both realist and liberal explanatory forces in inducing the British aversion for war with the Union. To what extent then, one may ask, can the British aversion to an Anglo-American war during the *Trent* affair be reconciled with a realist and/or liberal theory of the democratic peace?

That British policy, inducing a shift from jingoism to aversion in regard to the diplomacy of the *Trent* affair, was ostensibly grounded within a realist framework, engendering the centrality of national self-interest, is self-evident, as even the most elementary reading of history would confirm. In fact, British foreign policy, in its aversion to the impending Anglo-American war, was primarily driven by the primacy of “national interest, with the corollary of commercial self-preservation” (Claussen, 1940:516). Added to this, was the British recognition of the material and strategic stakes involved in the event of an Anglo-American war. Not only had Britain a vested interest in the maintenance of her merchant marine on the high seas⁴⁷, but with due regard to her strategic interests and possessions in North-America, the British government recognised that an Anglo-American war would endanger Canada (Adams, 1925:208). Non-intervention was, furthermore, more profitable to British

⁴⁶ Of similar weight is Russell’s instructive reply to Adams on the question of the likely consequences of an American refusal to British demands: “Mr. Adams asked me a further question...it was whether, if Lord Lyons came away, a declaration of war would be the immediate consequence. I told him nothing was decided on that point” (Foreign Office, 1972b[1861]:480).

⁴⁷ This economic interpretation was further bolstered by the recognition among British decision makers and commercial groups of the extensive foreign commerce enjoyed by British businessman as well as the importance of the American market to British foreign trade. In fact, Foreign Secretary Lord Russell, in his instructions to Lord Lyons upon his appointment as Minister to Washington in 1859, had repeatedly emphasised the necessity of maintaining this trade (Claussen, 1940:517).

interests. This was borne out by an increase in the prices of textiles, resulting from the American War, the increase in profit margins due to the sale and provision of war supplies to both belligerent parties and, on account of the extensive destruction wrought by Confederate cruisers on Northern shipping, the opportunity for Britain's merchant marine to ensure once and for all its commercial supremacy over its chief competitor (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:135). This interchange of strategic and material interests provided British foreign policy with a material (in this instance: realist) incentive from intervening, and assuming a more conciliatory approach, in the *Trent* affair and, more broadly, the American Civil War.

The emphasis on national self-interest, engendering the importance of the preservation of Britain's foreign commerce and strategic possessions, remains however a force for peace. British foreign policy, responding to the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair and beyond, cannot be fully explicated without due recognition of the influence of liberal explanatory forces. This conclusion is, curiously enough, at variance with the theoretical argument advanced by Owen (1996; 1997). It questions Owen's (1996) theoretical conclusion that, only after the issuance of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (issued January 1, 1863), encompassing the abolition of slavery in all states, did liberal explanatory forces influence British decision makers and therefore become a force for peace. This means, as explicated by Owen (1996:139-143), that the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair (resolved during December 1861) cannot be conceived in liberal terms on account of the fact that only after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did Britain perceive the Union as liberal. This theoretical conclusion does not stand up to close scrutiny of the historical record. In fact, as stated, British diplomacy in the *Trent* affair and beyond cannot be adequately explained without coming to grips with the influence of liberal explanatory forces agitating against war. Pratt *et al.* (1980:139), pointing towards a general sense of aversion among both the British public and government in respect to an Anglo-American war during the *Trent* affair, has convincingly highlighted the influence of liberal explanatory forces during this crisis by arguing that an Anglo-

American war would have aligned “Great Britain, leader in the crusade to end slavery, on the side of the slaveholding South”.⁴⁸

Owen (1996:140), however, has insisted that British opinion (public and official) only started shifting towards the Union after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, thus indicating to the British the credibility of Union abolitionist aims and therefore the liberal credentials of the Union government. Claussen (1940:521-522), similarly, has shown that the radical commentator George Potter, writing in the *Bee-Hive*, lamented Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation as a military and political move and not until April 1863 did his paper ascribe credence to Northern abolitionist aims. But this conclusion misses the point insofar as it reduces British perception regarding the liberal credentials of the Union to the policy-intent (or lack thereof) of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation instead of appreciating the depth of anti-slavery sentiment within the North and towards the South. Anti-slavery legislation within the North further provides evidence of this charge. In fact, President Lincoln, responding in later years to the question regarding the driving forces behind the Emancipation Proclamation, meticulously articulated the constraining pressures of northern abolitionist groups impacting upon his decisional context: “I claim not to have controlled events but confess plainly that events have controlled me” (quoted in Graebner, Fite and White, 1970:569). The question, therefore, should not be whether the Union government was indeed serious in its abolitionist aims but rather whether the British government was more inclined to intervene, on the one hand, on behalf of the slaveholding South or, on the other hand, the anti-slavery North with its well-documented antipathy of Southern Slavery aims? It therefore becomes a question of degree: was the anti-slavery North, critical of the slaveholding South, *more preferable* than the slaveholding South? From a British policy perspective, John Bright’s remarks, in an avowedly pro-Northern speech at St. James’ Hall on March 26, 1863, provide an instructive point of departure. Reflecting on the historically divergent attitudes on the slavery question in American politics – and subsequently agitating for British support of the Union – Bright (1972[1863]:490) noted that in

⁴⁸ Furthermore, the London *Times*, following the release and subsequent arrival of Mason and Slidell in Europe, lamented that the British “should have done just as much to rescue two of their own Negroes” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:140). The British demand in respect to the release of Mason and Slidell was more grounded in an appreciation for the laws of the high seas, and the subsequent insult to British honour, than in any sentiment for the Confederate cause.

respect to the American Civil War there “were principles at war which were wholly irreconcilable. The South...has been engaged for fifty years in building fresh ramparts by which it may defend its institutions [of slavery]. The North has been growing yearly greater in freedom”.⁴⁹ In a previous evaluation of the historical disparity between Union and Southern treatment of the slavery problem in American political life, Bright (1861) reached a similar peroration by noting that the “conscience of the North, never satisfied with the institution of slavery, was constantly urging men forward to take a more extreme view of the question”.

Indeed, other British liberals, notably Richard Cobden, echoing Bright’s position by agitating *against* war with the Union, were in the vanguard of the anti-slavery cause (Combs, 1986:106), and British labour, in particular, shared this sentiment by emphasising that they “had no desire to fight their own kinsmen as allies of a Southern Confederacy resting on slavery” (Bailey, 1980:331). The British cabinet, on their part, grew increasingly averse to the possibility of an Anglo-American war during the *Trent* affair, lamenting that in such a war, as the foremost historian of the question aptly points out, “they might find themselves aiding a slave as against a free State” and, as expressed by the Duke of Argyll, member of the British cabinet, on December 7, 1861 (and again on January 1, 1862), we would therefore become “virtually the *Allies* of the *Scoundrelism* of the South” (Adams, 1925:196, 205; emphasis in original). This support of the Union, interestingly enough, was expressed during the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair and therefore precedent to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Argyll especially was quite pronounced in his aversion to Southern slavery practice and the mere existence of Southern slavery affected his sympathies (Brauer, 1977:459). On his part, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, despite opting for a strict policy of neutrality with regard to the belligerents in the American Civil War, was himself cognisant of the issue at stake. Thus the slavery question perpetually haunted his mind “and at certain critical

⁴⁹ As will come to the fore, Bright’s avowedly pro-Northern attitude was in no measure a response to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. In fact, as early as 1861 Bright’s remarks indicated a marked sympathy toward the plight of the Union government. In a private communication to Charles Sumner on December 7, 1861, Bright communicated to the American that the possibility of an Anglo-American war in respect to the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair would so gravely affect his person “that I believe I shall retire from public life entirely, and no longer give myself to the vain hope of doing good among the fools and dupes and knaves with whom it is my misfortune to live” (Bright, 1912[1861]:151).

moments, his antipathy towards southern slavery played a part in restraining him from adopting an active anti-Union policy” (Brauer, 1977:461).

This pro-Northern attitude was further bolstered by the infatuation among British liberals, notably Bright and Cobden, with the American system of government. They subsequently came to look upon the war as the litmus test for the democratic system of government and in this vein profoundly hoped for the triumph and preservation of the Union (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:135). In fact as Bright commented, appearing before the British Parliament in 1862 (i.e., *before* the Emancipation Proclamation), “there probably never has been a great nation in which what is familiarly termed mob law is less known or has had less influence...Understand, I confine my observations always to the free States of the North” (Owen, 1996:140-141).⁵⁰ On other occasions he went further, waxing lyrically that the malady of slavery “has sought to break up *the most free government in the world*” (Bright, 1861; emphasis added). Added to this was the recognition among British decision makers and businessmen alike of the economic fallacy of war, grounded in the acceptance of the liberal argument – endorsed most forcefully by Cobden – that peace and trade were indeed inseparable.⁵¹ Lord Palmerston, in a memorandum written during the months of November and December 1861, acknowledged this much in his observation that “Commercial Intercourse is the best Security for Peace, because it creates Interests which would be damaged by War” (quoted in Claussen, 1940:517). One must be careful, however, in reading too much into the free trade argument endorsed by British politicians of the time. Not only was free trade in and of itself an instrument for the promotion and maintenance of Britain’s own prosperity relative to that of others (an argument not at odds with liberal conceptions of the democratic peace), but it only became official British policy upon their reaching commercial supremacy over their rivals. Notwithstanding this caveat, British liberals, in particular Richard Cobden,

⁵⁰ Co-existing with Bright’s infatuation with American democracy was the hope, among the British aristocracy, of the permanent dissolution of the Union inasmuch as it would represent “an object lesson in the failure of democracy” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:135). It is, however, not the contention of this study that the pro-democracy sentiment among British liberals was the central (and only) force in British decision making, but rather that it increasingly came to be associated with British labour’s agitation against intervention in the Union. On account of this association, and given the sentiments of British liberals (predominately located within Parliament), the impact of democratic arguments on the British decisional context and policy formulation seem more indirect in its influence.

⁵¹ The emphasis on the trade-peace nexus, actively endorsed by British liberals, is – as chapter three of this study has indicated – a central pillar of liberal conceptions of the democratic peace and has its roots in the Kantian vision of perpetual peace.

firmly believed that free trade would engender world peace and, in an epistolary communication with a fellow cotton manufacturer, articulated his surprise at the extensive nature of the workings of free trade in constraining Anglo-American war:

We are exporting now at the rate of £160,000,000 a year, three-fold our trade 20 years ago. This [has] given an immense force to the conservative peace principles of the Country. The House of Commons represents the wealth of the Country though not its members, & I have no doubt the Members hear from all the great seats of our commercial, ship owning, & manufacturing industries that the busy prosperous people there wish to be at peace. This is one of the effects which we advocates of Free Trade always predicted & desired as the consequences of extended operations. But the manner in which the principle is now operating is most remarkable. (Quoted in Claussen, 1940:519)

As much as this study, emphasising the explanatory significance of both realist and liberal forces operating in British diplomacy during the *Trent* affair, has challenged the theoretical conclusions postulated by realist and liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, it does so with due regard to the situational intricacies. Whilst this study has taken issue with the mono-theoretical (realist) approach postulated by both Layne (1996a) and Owen (1996; 1997) in their theoretical explication of the *Trent* affair, as well as Owen's (1996) argument that the theoretical significance of liberal explanatory forces be conceived as a response to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, it does acknowledge the specific effect(s) of the latter event. In particular, the proclamation thus put forth by the Lincoln administration had the effect of occasioning a *qualitative* difference in British perception regarding the liberal credentials of the Union.⁵² The wording is important. This implies that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation merely "*strengthened* [not initiated] the support of the

⁵² The first reactions to Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (issued September 1862), conceived from the British perspective, was not favourable. Only during January 1863, following Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, did British public opinion come to view the Emancipation Proclamation with more credibility and exultation, though it did not instantaneously influence the British government (Adams, 1925:387). But, as Lord Palmerston himself stated in 1861, referring to the constraining influence of public opinion on British policy, there are "two Powers in this Country, the government & public opinion, and...both must concur for any great important steps" (quoted in Owen, 1996:142). Perhaps more fitting is the comparison made by Gladstone, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, between the constraining influence of British public opinion in relation to that of the Union: "[W]ithin the last two years we have seen that, under the professedly more popular forms of the American constitution, public opinion...acts much more tardily, and at a given time much more feebly, on the Government than it does with us" (Gladstone, 1972[1862]:482).

North on the part of liberal and labor groups” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:135; emphasis added) or alternatively phrased, that liberal explanatory forces gained greater depth after the issuance of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Indeed, as shown in these pages, there existed a theoretically significant liberal force in British diplomacy prior to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and thus during the *Trent* affair.

This is a subtle, yet theoretically significant, departure insofar as it illustrates the fallacy of interpreting British foreign policy, responding to the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair, through a mono-theoretical lens. Acknowledging that Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation induced a strengthening of British perception in respect of the liberal credentials of the Union, it therefore becomes theoretically salient to state that, during the *Trent* affair, both realist and liberal explanatory forces were central to the British decisional context. One caveat remains however: theoretical primacy, in this context, should be ascribed to realist explanatory forces without negating the effect of liberal explanatory forces. This ratio of realist to liberal explanatory forces changed somewhat after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation with liberal explanatory forces acquiring an even greater practical significance. The American minister in London, Charles Francis Adams, gave adequate expression to this conclusion by arguing that “[t]he Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy. It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favor all over this country” (Bailey, 1980:342). Liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, notably Owen (1996:143), have similarly highlighted the constraining influence of public opinion, grounded in liberal explanatory forces, upon the British government in response to the Emancipation Proclamation, eventually rendering British intervention in the American Civil War well-near impossible. In a private communication to a colleague, British foreign secretary, Lord Russell, articulated the growing import of liberal explanatory forces in British diplomacy towards the Union: “If we have taken part in interventions, it has been in behalf of the independence, freedom and welfare of a great portion of mankind. I should be sorry, indeed, if there should be any intervention on the part of this country which could bear another character” (Owen, 1996:143). In the same vein, John Bright (1972[1863]:490), speaking at a meeting of the Trade Societies of London during March 1863, insisted that British intervention ought to be reflective of an appreciation of the liberal credentials of the Union government. He subsequently

urged British labour for a yet more vigorous emphasis on British non-intervention in the Union by refusing “the hand of fellowship to the worst foes of freedom that the world has ever seen” (Bright, 1972[1863]:490). The influence of Bright was instructive in the strengthening of pro-Northern sentiment amongst British labour. Thus, addressing the Trade Societies of London, Bright derided Southern labour practices in which the “labourer is made a chattel. He is no more his own than the horse that drags a carriage through the next street; nor is his wife, nor is his child, nor is anything that is his, his own” (Bright, 1972[1863]:488). It is for this very reason, actively inculcated by Bright within the mind of British labour, that Bailey (1980:323) concludes that British labourers had a vested interest in the outcome of the American Civil War, stressing that the defeat of the Union forces would result in a marked blow to the institution of free labour and on this charge British labour exercised a restraining influence on the British government. In this manner, therefore, liberal explanatory forces emerge as a constraining influence upon British policy during the American Civil War.

Insofar as this necessitates a greater appreciation for the theoretical significance of liberal explanatory forces in accounting for British non-intervention in the American Civil War, it remains however a force for peace in Anglo-American relations. The emphasis on national and strategic interests, repeatedly emphasised by British decision makers, did not suddenly disappear in the face of greater sentimentality in the British appraisal of the liberal credentials of the Union⁵³, but remained a key objective of British diplomacy in the face of an impending Anglo-American war. Preferring one set of theoretical or historical conclusions to the other creates a sense of theoretical simplicity which any analysis of international and diplomatic relations, and Anglo-American relations (1861-63) in particular, seldom allows. Both realist and liberal explanatory forces therefore constrained the British government from intervening in the *Trent* affair in particular, and the American Civil War in general.

⁵³ This is an argument that Owen (1996; 1997) fails to consider.

5.3 Anglo-American crisis, 1895-1896: The Venezuelan boundary dispute

In the years 1895 to 1896, Anglo-American relations were once more driven to the precipice of war, on this occasion over a long simmering boundary controversy between British Guiana and Venezuela and in respect of the boundary line proper of the former. The procurement of Venezuelan independence from Spain in 1810, and the subsequent recognition of Venezuelan sovereignty by the United States in 1822, provided fertile grounds for the precipitation of questions of boundary demarcation with the adjacent state of British Guiana, itself only ceded to Great Britain from the Netherlands in 1814. This was borne out by the failure of the former colonial masters of both Venezuela and British Guiana to reach agreement on the erstwhile boundary line (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:158). In 1841, the British government resolved to rectify this deficiency by commissioning Sir Robert Schomburgk, a British surveyor, to establish the boundary line proper of Western British Guiana, a line never accepted by the Venezuelans and which triggered the boundary controversy and, progressively, the deterioration in Anglo-Venezuelan relations (Steel, 1967:304).

The area in dispute, furthermore, was of considerable importance to the Venezuelans, more so than to Great Britain, knowing full well that given its military (especially naval) predominance in world affairs she could settle the dispute at her own discretion and within a timeframe subservient to her interests (Bailey, 1980:438). For not only did the parameters of the Schomburgk-line infringe on Venezuelan territorial rights in general, but the inclusion of Point Barima, estuary of the strategically salient Orinoco River on which the water-based commercial intercourse of the upper third of South America hinged, also ignited a tempest of immediate protest on the part of the Venezuelans (LaFeber, 1998:243). This was followed by a consistent call for arbitration of the territory in dispute (LaFeber, 1998:243). On several occasions Great Britain made overtures to the Venezuelan government by proposing limited arbitration, with Caracas steadfastly refusing and upholding the claim for unlimited arbitration in the boundary dispute. Amidst renewed failure to reach a compromise satisfactory to both sides, and on account of the disavowal on the part of Great Britain to engage in anything more than limited arbitration, the Venezuelan government finally severed its diplomatic ties with London during the early months of 1887 (Steel, 1967:304). This state of affairs and,

perhaps more tellingly, the marked increase in British territorial claims in Venezuelan territory stretching from an initial 76,000 square miles to 108,000 square miles and the renewed inclusion of Point Barima as a British territorial possession, resulted in the United States Secretary of State, Thomas F. Bayard, during the months of 1887, providing the United States' first real intimation of protest through a diplomatic note to E.J. Phelps, the United States Minister in London (LaFeber, 1998:244). Phelps, however, failed (in reality, was indisposed) to transmit the correspondence to the British government, with the Anglophile Secretary of State, Bayard, doing little to encourage him otherwise (Steel, 1967:304).

The Venezuelan government had however repeatedly invested itself, and the likelihood of a vindication of its claims, in embroiling the United States in the dispute. Preceding the incumbency of the Cleveland administration in 1893, these appeals had proven to be of little avail. Amidst a renewed vigour on the part of the Venezuelan government in involving the United States in the dispute, the newly installed Cleveland administration finally responded. Walter Q. Gresham, the American Secretary of State, drafted a message on July 13, 1894 to Bayard, now American Ambassador in London. He alluded to the increase in British territorial claims in Venezuela and the disposition on the part of Great Britain to include the richly endowed gold district of the Yuruari as part and parcel of British territory (LaFeber, 1998:244). These instructions, bound for London, amounted to very little and, diplomatically, it scarcely succeeded in intimating a growing concern on the part of the United States with the Venezuelan boundary issue. For not only did Bayard make no great haste in disclosing to the British Foreign Office the instructions thus composed by Gresham, but in the end he succumbed in presenting "a weakened version of the note" (LaFeber, 1998:245). Notwithstanding this, the boundary question increasingly impinged on the diplomatic mind of the Cleveland administration.

In his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1894, President Cleveland indicated a growing concern on the part of the United States with the Venezuelan boundary dispute. He not only stressed the necessity of a renewal of diplomatic attempts aimed at fostering a reopening of Anglo-Venezuelan diplomatic relations and, more concretely, an adjustment of the boundary question through an arbitral

process, but also ventured to argue that an early resolution of the issue “is in the line of our established policy to remove from this hemisphere all causes of difference with powers beyond the sea” (Cleveland, 1895[1894]:x). To this end, Gresham renewed his diplomatic correspondence with Bayard during January 1895, asking him to probe the British government on the question of arbitration (LaFeber, 1998:245). In the midst of incessant rumours of British claims to the mouth of the Orinoco – itself strategically, commercially and politically salient for the United States – Gresham responded on January 16, 1896, eleven days after deliberation of the issue by the American cabinet (LaFeber, 1998:254). The message read that if “Great Britain undertakes to maintain her position on that question, we will be obliged, in view of the almost uniform attitude and policy of our government to call a halt” (quoted in LaFeber, 1998:254).

In the meantime, the particularities of the Venezuelan boundary issue gradually made its way into the halls of Congress and public sentiment, with both forces at length agitating for a more vigorous policy on the part of the Cleveland administration. On the part of Congress, this resulted in Leonidas F. Livingston, Congressional representative from the state of Georgia, proposing the adoption by Congress of a resolution – subsequently unanimously accepted – stressing the American aversion to the unwavering British position (Blake, 1942:275). The resolution thus adopted indicated the American desirability of “friendly arbitration” in respect of the issue at hand (LaFeber, 1998:249). Members of Congress, in particular, progressively agitated for a preservation of the Monroe Doctrine in the boundary dispute on the part of the Cleveland administration. They viewed the British disposition towards Anglo-Venezuelan arbitration as an encroachment on Latin American territory and, as such, a violation of the sacred doctrine of Monroe, conceived as of vital importance to the overall security and welfare of the United States. Following March 1895, public opinion and the American press increasingly added their voice to the proceedings (Blake, 1942:262). In essence, the Monroe Doctrine (articulated by former United States President James Monroe in 1823) proffered two guiding principles of American policy in respect to the conduct of European relations with the Americas: (i) that the American continents were not to be further subjected to any form of colonisation on the part of the European powers; and (ii) European powers were not to interfere “with the Governments who have declared

their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have...acknowledged [and, were this principle violated,] we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States” (President Monroe quoted in Pratt *et al.*, 1980:62).

The New York *Sun*, interpreting British action as an outright violation of the Monroe Doctrine, emphatically stated that British policy was geared towards an accretion, whether through diplomatic or military means, of American territory and concluded that the United States was duty-bound to support the Venezuelans in the event of an Anglo-Venezuelan clash of arms (Blake, 1942:263). On a similar charge, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, fearing that a failure to act on the part of the United States would occasion a precedent of European encroachment on American territory and, subsequently, induce a practical refutation of the supremacy of the Monroe Doctrine, actively endorsed a more vigorous policy (Lodge, 1895:658). Lodge emphatically stressed that the “supremacy of the Monroe doctrine should be established and at once – peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must” (Lodge, 1895:658). To some extent, these perspectives were cultivated by forces outside the immediate American perception of British action and the Venezuelan boundary issue as such.

In 1894, the Venezuelan government had hired William L. Scruggs, former American Minister to Caracas under President Harrison and now special agent for the Venezuelan government, with the explicit aim of cultivating American interest in the boundary dispute (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:159). With this purpose in mind, Scruggs published his highly influential pamphlet, entitled “British Aggressions in Venezuela, or the Monroe Doctrine on Trial”, during the autumn of 1894 and, in the course of circulating through four editions, distributed it to newsstands, editors, governors, influential Congressman and public members of high esteem (Bailey, 1980:439). It was this very pamphlet that induced Representative Leonidas F. Livingston to propose the aforementioned adoption of a Congressional resolution of February 6, 1895, and which explains, in part, its unanimous approval by both houses of Congress (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:159). Effectively giving voice to the Venezuelan case,

Scruggs advanced an argument for a more vigorous policy on the part of the United States on account of American interests being threatened by British claims to the mouth of the Orinoco River (LaFeber, 1993:124). Not only did the mouth of the Orinoco River constitute, following Scruggs, the key to vast commercial markets in South America but also, in the event of the failure of Great Britain to relinquish her claims to the mouth of this river, the British could use their newly acquired territorial position “to work radical changes in the commercial relations and political institutions of at least three of the South American republics” (Scruggs quoted in LaFeber, 1998:253). These proceedings, and the subsequent belligerence of American Congressional and public opinion, failed however to make an impression on the British government. For in May 1895, amidst the Venezuelan crisis gaining in momentum in the American public and official mind, the British government found the time opportune to deliver an ultimatum to the Nicaraguan government for reparation for the seizure and subsequent expulsion of British subjects from Nicaraguan territory (Blake, 1842:263). Upon the failure of the Nicaraguan government to meet this demand, British occupation of the port of Corinto followed, with the temper of American Congressional and public opinion mounting in respect of a possible British violation of the Monroe Doctrine. The resolution of this dispute, culminating in the withdrawal of British forces upon securing a guarantee of payment from the Salvadoran government and leaving the Monroe Doctrine intact, did little to appease Congressional and public opinion (Blake, 1942:263, 266) and thwart the still-prevalent force of Anglophobia in the fabric of American politics (Bailey, 1980:436).⁵⁴

Whilst the influence of Scruggs was instrumental in the cultivation of Congressional and public interest in the boundary dispute, his pleas did little to affect the sensibilities of the Cleveland administration. For, as LaFeber (1998:254) scrupulously points out, “Venezuela and Scruggs could have conserved their energies. Cleveland and other leading Americans fully realized the value of the Orinoco”. Part of this recognition stemmed from the increasing realisation among influential sectors of the American political and commercial establishment that

⁵⁴ President Cleveland failed to advocate a more vigorous policy in the Corinto affair, arguing with just cause that British actions in Nicaragua did not constitute a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Notwithstanding this the Cleveland administration “evinced concern as to the implications of British policy in Nicaragua” (Sloan, 1938:487).

overseas commercial expansion (hence, the need for foreign markets) could offset problems of economic stagnation and social turmoil precipitated by the prevailing economic depression, with Latin America serving as a chief commercial consideration towards the attainment of these ends (LaFeber, 1998:242). In effect, this consideration constituted a grave consideration in American public policy: “Every economic depression led to revived emphasis on the need for expanding foreign markets. This one, with its railroad strikes and armies of the unemployed marching on Washington, seemed to pose a particular threat to the nation’s social fabric. Foreign markets seemed essential to the preservation of social stability, and American businessmen were eyeing with jealous interest the competition of Europe in the markets of South America” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:158). To this end, the confirmation of the rumour that the British claim to the mouth of the Orinoco had been “conclusively proven and established as a British possession, and would not be submitted to arbitration”, confirmed by the British Foreign Minister, Lord Kimberley, on April 5, 1895, pressed down heavily on the president (Lord Kimberley quoted in LaFeber, 1998:252, 254). It intimated, in the president’s mind, that the maintenance of the British position would be prejudicial to American commercial and political interests inasmuch as exclusive territorial rights to this river would translate into British economic and political encroachment in the interior (Lord LaFeber, 1998:254). For the Cleveland administration, in particular, it seems that the British contention of exclusive territorial rights in respect to the mouth of the Orinoco River unleashed the increase in American fervour in respect of the boundary controversy (LaFeber, 1998:251), which at length culminated in, as President Cleveland subsequently came to label the diplomatic note sent to Britain on July 20, 1895, Olney’s “twenty-inch gun” (Bailey, 1980:411).

5.3.1 Anglo-American crisis: Olney’s “twenty-inch gun” and beyond

With this in mind, Cleveland at once set out to undertake a more vigorous policy in respect of the boundary dispute. The death of Walter Q. Gresham, the American Secretary of State, whilst in the process of drafting a new diplomatic note bound for

Britain, brought into the State Department Richard Olney.⁵⁵ Certain segments of the American press, notably the New York *Tribune*, immediately prophesied an increase in American resolve in the boundary dispute (Blake, 1942:268). To some extent, this perception was justified. Olney firmly believed that American material capabilities were progressively providing manoeuvring space for the alignment of American policy with the preservation and enhancement of extant and future interests. As LaFeber (1998:256) perceptively notes: “He [Olney] believed that the United States of the 1890’s had emerged from its century of internal development into a full-fledged world power...and that it was rapidly developing the power to clear away obstacles which lay in its path.” On the part of the Cleveland administration, therefore, recognition of the commercial and political interests at stake, especially with respect to British claims to the mouth of the Orinoco River, coupled with a more thoroughgoing appreciation of the shifting nature of the United States’ position in world affairs, culminated in Olney’s epochal July 20, 1895, note bound for Lord Salisbury, British Foreign and Prime Minister.

Commencing his despatch by acknowledging that the conclusions reached, and the instructions accruing hence, did not originate without due appreciation of their gravity, Olney immediately followed this by noting that the claims advanced by both disputants in the boundary controversy are “of a somewhat indefinite nature” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:545-546). The Venezuelan claim, the Secretary of State noted, contented itself, out of “moderation and prudence”, with a territorial retraction from that originally advanced following its independence and the British failed to absolve their claim from a similar sense of “indefiniteness” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:545-546). On account of the varying nature of the claims thus upheld by both disputants, the Secretary of State concluded that “neither of the parties is to-day standing for the boundary line predicated upon strict legal right” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546). Olney then proceeded to reflect on, and subsequently raise protest to, the evolution of British territorial claims in respect to the boundary line proper of Western Guiana. The steady increase in British claims had its most pronounced expression with the designation of an increase of 33,000 square miles in the course of two years (from 1885-1887). This was followed by the

⁵⁵ As LaFeber (1998:255) points out, given Gresham’s increasing dissatisfaction with the British position, this was likely to be a “stern note”.

extension of British claims subsequent to, first, the Salisbury line of 1990, which in effect extended British claims to “the mouth of the Amacuro west of the Punta Barima on the Orinoco”, and later the Rosebery line of 1893 (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546-548). These implicated an infringement of Latin American territory reprehensible to the United States (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546-548). To this end and with due consideration of the boundary controversy as a whole, the Secretary concluded that “the United States has not been, and indeed, in view of its traditional policy, could not be indifferent” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546-548). By now, Olney argued, this fact of unequivocal United States interest in the controversy thus underway should be evident to all parties implicated in the boundary controversy. Hence, the failure to incorporate this recognition into policy formulation could not be met with other than an unfriendly disposition on the part of the United States:

By the frequent interposition of its good offices at the instance of Venezuela, by constantly urging and promoting the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, by pressing for arbitration of the disputed boundary, by offering to act as arbitrator, by expressing grave concern whenever new alleged instances of British aggression of Venezuelan territory have been brought to its notice, the Government of the United States has made it clear to Great Britain...that the controversy is one in which both its honor and its interests are involved and the continuance of which it can not regard with indifference. (Department of State, 1896[1895]:552)

This resolve on the part of the United States to intervene in the boundary dispute still left Olney with the challenge of providing some form of (international) legal vindication for the American position. To this end, Olney subsequently attempted to draw on the principles encapsulated in the Monroe Doctrine (LaFeber, 1998:260). For Olney, legal vindication for American action rested on the “admitted canon of international law” in which “a nation may avail itself of [the right to intervene in a controversy] whenever what is done or proposed by any of the parties primarily concerned is a serious and direct menace to its own integrity, tranquillity, or welfare” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:553). The Monroe Doctrine, accordingly, constituted a “peculiarly and distinctively American” form of this legal principle

(Department of State, 1896[1895]:553). This accrued from the recognition that the Monroe Doctrine did not only demarcate the bounds of legitimate action on the part of foreign powers in the Americas, but it also explicated certain “practical benefits” deriving from its application: that the interference on the part of foreign powers with the workings of American governments would be “regarded as antagonizing the interests and inviting the opposition of the United States” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:554). In Olney’s mind therefore the Monroe Doctrine, and in particular the so-called non-interference principle, afforded the United States with sufficient legal justification for interposing in the boundary controversy. But to what extent – if any – were United States interests and the Monroe Doctrine as such threatened by the conduct of British policy in respect to the Venezuelan boundary issue?

In answering this question, Olney advanced two ways in which British action could threaten the safety and welfare of the United States. A subjugation of Venezuelan territory would, in the first instance, imply a reversal and subsequent loss of the advantages – political and commercial – accruing from the relationship of amity extant between the American states. In the second instance, an entrenchment of European governmental authority in the Americas would signal the transposing of monarchism onto American soil, and thwart the “cause of popular self-government” in which “the people of the United States have a vital interest” (Department of State, 1896[1895]:557). Indeed, a deep-rooted belief existed within the fabric of American social and political life that the (republican) system of government constituting the cornerstone of governmental organisation in the New World was “morally superior” to the monarchical ideal undergirding European politics (Grenville, 1964:56). It is in respect of this latter issue, more than anything else, that in Olney’s mind the interests of the United States would most seriously be imperilled in the event of unopposed British (or any foreign) action in Venezuela or other American states (Department of State, 1896[1895]:558). Recognising therefore that the supremacy of the United States in the Americas is intimately tied to the preservation of the Monroe Doctrine, Olney observed that

[t]o-day the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. Why? It is not because of the pure friendship or good will felt for it. It is not simply by reason of

its high character as a civilized state, nor because wisdom and justice and equity are the invariable characteristics of the dealings of the United States. It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers. (Department of State, 1896[1895]:558)

This warning, Grenville (1964:60) concludes, was not earmarked to impinge merely upon British sensibilities, but was equally directed at the Venezuelan government.⁵⁶ Upon reaching his conclusion, Olney again reiterated that the Monroe Doctrine, deeply embedded within American public law and taking its cue from certain segments of international law, afforded the United States the right to intervene in disputes centred on the assumption of political control of American territory by foreign powers (Department of State, 1896[1895]:559). With respect to the Venezuelan question, the United States was thus legally justified to enforce this right on account of the political control to be gained by British acquisition of Venezuelan territory (Department of State, 1896[1895]:559). Furthermore, and amidst British refutations of these charges (hence, the quest for the political control of American territory), in order to ascertain the true intentions of Great Britain with respect to the boundary controversy and with the explicit purpose of maintaining an impartial position, the United States also possessed according to Olney over the “right to demand that the truth be ascertained” and, more importantly, that “peaceful arbitration” was to be the only “feasible mode” towards the realisation of this purpose and the settlement of the boundary question (Department of State, 1896[1895]:560). Thus, Olney in effect afforded the United States the right to settle European boundary questions in respect to the Americas on the basis of the terms laid bare by the United States, with peaceful arbitration fitting this bill (Grenville, 1964:60). The Monroe Doctrine, in Olney’s mind, therefore implied that in respect to the failure of the British to submit the boundary question to an arbitral process, Britain was violating the sacred principles advanced by President Monroe (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:158). Olney instructed Bayard to relate these views to Lord Salisbury, and subsequently inquired whether the British would acquiesce in unlimited arbitration in the boundary controversy (Department of State, 1896[1895]:562). Olney thereafter

⁵⁶ As LaFeber (1998:262) acutely observes, Olney’s reference to the primacy of United States power was not meant as a “debating technique”, but stemmed from a sincere conviction that the United States had developed into a great power in terms of its position in world affairs.

impressed upon the American Ambassador in London the wish that the British reply should reach Washington in time for the president's annual message to Congress (Department of State, 1896[1895]:562). The diplomatic note thus composed by Olney, having in more than one respect the pretensions of an ultimatum⁵⁷, was enthusiastically received by the president. Despite proposing "a little more softened verbiage here and there", Cleveland (as well as his entire cabinet) nonetheless actively endorsed the message thus sent to Bayard, calling it "the best thing of the kind I have ever read" (LaFeber, 1998:259). Olney himself was pleasantly surprised with the president's response. In an epistolary communication with his daughter, dated July 10, 1895, he intimated this much by remarking that the president's letter in response to his note was "astonishing for the extent of its praise" (quoted in Blake, 1942:269). On account of the bellicose nature of Olney's message, Olney and Cleveland undoubtedly believed that the British reply would reach Washington in a prompt manner.

Olney's message, notwithstanding the bellicose stance assumed by the American Secretary of State, did little "to thunder in Salisbury's ears" (Grenville, 1964:57). Delivered to the Foreign Office by Bayard on August 7, 1895, Salisbury immediately expressed his "regret and surprise" to Bayard, lamenting that the American Secretary of State had found it "necessary to present so far-reaching and important a principle and such wide and profound policies of international action in relation to a subject so comparatively small" (Lord Salisbury quoted in Grenville, 1964:61).⁵⁸ Salisbury, meanwhile, was "maddeningly deliberate" and did not evince a written reply for more than four months and, when the reply at last reached Washington, it had failed to meet Olney's request to be on time for the president's annual message to Congress, with Cleveland's patience – amidst this prolonged delay – swiftly approaching an end (Bailey, 1980:441-442). Part of the explanation for the delay undoubtedly lay in a failure on the part of Lord Salisbury and, as Gibb (2005:23) has more recently illustrated, the British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Julian Pauncefote, to internalise the significance attached to the boundary dispute within the American mind (LaFeber, 1998:263), with the result that the American note did

⁵⁷ Layne (1996a:175) similarly argues that, perceived from a British position, the Olney note could justifiably have been conceived as amounting to an ultimatum.

⁵⁸ Curiously enough, at this very time Salisbury once more reiterated the British objection to the American contention of unlimited arbitration (Grenville, 1964:61).

not receive the attention it probably warranted (Pratt et al, 1980:159). Other forces, however, conspired in preventing a more prompt response from Lord Salisbury. Not only was Olney's note 10,000 words in length and touched on issues of grave implication (Bailey, 1980:443), and subsequently required the detailed analysis of the British legal corps (Steel, 1967:494), but the Foreign Minister was also engaged with more pressing diplomatic matters, notably the deepening crisis in Turkey (Grenville, 1964:62). This, in Salisbury's mind, greatly overshadowed the Venezuela boundary dispute (Grenville, 1964:62). Added to this was a general sense of uncertainty prevalent in the corridors of the British Foreign Office in respect of the exact time during which Cleveland's message was to reach Congress (Grenville, 1964:62). The subsequent preference on the part of the British to send the despatch by way of mail rather than cable also did not help in stemming the growing American impatience (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:159).

Salisbury's response, consisting of two notes both dated November 26, 1895, finally reached the State Department on December 7. The first note, premised on a thorough examination of the legal standing of the Monroe Doctrine and constructed with a tone of "superior dogmatism, a patronising self-confidence" (Steel, 1967:307), not only questioned Olney's interpretation of that doctrine, but also emphatically refuted its validity as international law. The principles contained in this doctrine, Salisbury argued, had scant relevance in respect to the prevalent state of affairs in the Western Hemisphere and, on this basis, the proceedings surrounding the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute was of "no apparent practical concern" to the United States (Foreign Office, 1896a[1895]:564). This implied that British action in the boundary controversy was "none of America's 'damned business'" (Bailey, 1980:442). Salisbury next proceeded to reject the "novel prerogative" Olney afforded to the United States in bestowing the right upon herself to demand arbitration in any boundary quarrel between a European power and an American state. The Monroe Doctrine, Salisbury emphasised, simply did not afford any such privilege to American statesmen, neither was it enshrined in the statutes of international law (Foreign Office, 1896a[1895]:565-566). Furthermore, whilst arguing that Great Britain has on occasion assumed a sympathetic disposition towards the principles contained in the Monroe Doctrine, recognition thereof as international law constituted a different matter altogether:

It [the Monroe Doctrine] must always be mentioned with respect, on account of the distinguished statesmen to whom it is due, and the great nation who have generally adopted it. But international law is founded on the general consent of nations; and no statesmen, however eminent, and no nation, however powerful, are competent to insert into the code of international law a novel principle which was never recognized before, and which has not since been accepted by the Government of any other country. (Foreign Office, 1896a[1895]:566)

Salisbury's second note, turning on a historical examination of the boundary controversy proper, commenced by noting once more that the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary controversy did not implicate the interests of the United States or, for that matter, any other foreign power (Foreign Office, 1896b[1895]:568). Salisbury charged Olney with furnishing a profoundly "erroneous view of many material facts" on account of his predilection for resting his case on "*ex parte* statements" emanating from Venezuelan sources (Foreign Office, 1896b[1895]:568). He set out to correct some of the more blatant misconceptions in Olney's message, in essence tearing the Secretary of State's argument to pieces (LaFeber, 1998:266). More pronounced, while Salisbury conceded the willingness on the part of Great Britain to submit to arbitration certain segments of disputed territory (predominantly West of the Schomburgk line), she could not with due regard to her colonial responsibilities submit to arbitration those tracts of territory involving "British subjects, who have for many years enjoyed the settled rule of a British colony" (Foreign Office, 1896b[1895]:576). Seen in a larger sense, Salisbury's rejoinder amounted to three overtly stated dicta: (i) a refutation of the American contention that the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary controversy was one in which her interests were implicated; (ii) the contention that the Monroe Doctrine lacked sufficient international legal standing and, if properly conceived, had no bearing on the dispute at hand; and (iii) the assertion that Great Britain, therefore, cannot otherwise but continue to reject any proposition based on unlimited arbitration (Grenville, 1964:64).

Both notes, contra Olney's belligerent disposition, personified a certain sense of "civil indifference with just a touch of boredom" (Bailey, 1980:442). The British cabinet, on their part, fully endorsed the strong line upheld by the Prime Minister (Grenville,

1964:64). Whilst recognising that the Cleveland administration might very well raise the stakes in their rejoinder to the British position, Salisbury was not only willing to accept such a risk (a move not wholly incommensurate with his diplomatic *modus operandi*), but he also firmly believed that any subsequent action on the part of the Americans would pose little danger to Britain (Grenville, 1964:65). On account of a perceived unfavourable distribution of military capabilities *vis-à-vis* British arms, and faced with a united British empire resolved to secure the defence of the territorial interests of the British Crown, Washington were sure, the Prime Minister steadfastly believed, to bow down (Grenville, 1964:64, 65).

The arrival of Salisbury's rejoinder to Olney on December 7, 1895, five days overdue for Cleveland's annual Congressional message, surely did not help matters (Blake, 1942:273). Amidst an increasing feeling of impatience over the dilatoriness of the British response, the Chaplain of the House of Representatives promptly prayed: "Heavenly Father, let peace reign throughout our borders. Yet may we be quick to resent anything like an insult to this our nation" (quoted in Bailey, 1980:441). Subsequently, in his annual message to Congress on December 2, 1895, President Cleveland could merely inform members of Congress that, on account of the boundary controversy reaching an "acute stage", the United States advanced a statement during July 1895 in which its emphasis on full arbitration was explicitly advanced (Cleveland, 1896a[1895]:xxviii-xxix). And this anticlimactic state of affairs came amidst a feeling, cultivated in the American press for a considerable time, that the annual presidential message to Congress would amount to a vigorous engagement with questions of foreign affairs (Blake, 1942:273). The subsequent receipt of Salisbury's rejoinder, bearing as it did the Prime Minister's refutation of the American position and a maintenance of the British position previously assumed, did not sit well with the president. Cleveland, in fact, was "mad clean through" (Steel, 1967:307). Bayard's attempts to bestow a sense of calm on Cleveland and Olney by labelling Salisbury's notes as "in good temper and moderate in tone" failed miserably, for both Cleveland and Olney were indisposed to be subjected to Bayard's exaltation of Salisbury's diplomatic craft (LaFeber, 1998:267). In such an atmosphere Olney set out to draft the president's special message on the Venezuela question, subsequently redrafted (though, undoubtedly, in small measure) by the president, to be sent to Congress on December 17, 1895 (Bailey, 1980:443).

Olney's draft, on a later occasion exalted by Cleveland on account of the fact that it "entirely satisfied my critical requirements" and conceding without reservation that "I have never been able to adequately express my pleasure and satisfaction over the assertion of our position", did not obtain the advantage of being submitted to the critical insights of other members of the cabinet (Cleveland quoted in LaFeber, 1998:267).

The president's message, departing on the basis of an outright rejection of the British refutation of both the relevance of the Monroe Doctrine to the prevailing state of affairs in the Western Hemisphere and its application to the boundary controversy proper, strongly suggested that the Monroe Doctrine was "strong and sound" and that its enforcement was necessarily implicated in the preservation of "our peace and safety as a nation...the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government" (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:542). The relevance of the Monroe Doctrine, Cleveland (1896b[1895]:542) further contended, was under no circumstance temporally bounded and could not but endure in the face of the continued existence of the Republic. The principles upheld in this doctrine – whilst never practically enshrined in the code of international law, but having always been claimed as an inextricable right of the United States – were also not void of sufficient international legal justification (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:543). To this pronouncement was attributed the assertion that the principles upheld in the Monroe Doctrine obtained international legal standing on account of their originating thus from "those principles of international law which are based upon the theory that every nation shall have its rights protected and its just claims enforced" (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:543). Framed in this manner, Cleveland in essence reduced the Monroe Doctrine to a doctrine of self-interest (LaFeber, 1998:268). Intimating his disappointment with the failure of the British response in yielding a more conciliatory position, Cleveland reached the flaming peroration that the time has come for the United States to reach conclusion on the boundary line proper between the Republic of Venezuela and British Guiana (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:544). To this end, President Cleveland recommended to members of Congress the establishment of a commission of inquiry, to be funded by a Congressional appropriation and appointed at the discretion of the Executive, tasked with the responsibility of inquiring into and reporting upon the boundary line proper within the least possible time (Cleveland,

1896b[1895]:544). More pronounced, however, was that which followed: “When such report is made and accepted it will in my opinion be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory which after investigation we have determined of right belongs to Venezuela” (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:545).

It is highly improbable that the president arrived at this conclusion without a thoroughgoing examination of the stakes involved. Indeed, the president affirmed this much by conceding that in “making these recommendations I am fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may follow” (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:545). This was an emphatic statement of United States resolve to tread the path of an Anglo-American war for the preservation of the principles previously laid bare (LaFeber, 1998:268), with the message undoubtedly being “war-like in tone” (Steel, 1967:307). But Cleveland was not yet done. Whilst reminding sentimentalists – abroad and at home – that an Anglo-American war would be “a grievous thing to contemplate”, the president nevertheless warned that he is “firm” in his “conviction that...there is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows a supine submission to wrong and injustice and the consequent loss of national self respect and honor beneath which are shielded and defended a people’s safety and greatness” (Cleveland, 1896b[1895]:545).⁵⁹

The president’s message, falling little short of a call to arms, precipitated a “public sensation” in Great Britain as well as the United States (Grenville, 1964:65). Congress, in particular, was overcome with a profound sense of excitement. Amidst fierce cheering by House representatives and, more uncommonly, Senatorial applause – stretching across deeply divisive party lines – upon hearing the president’s proposed course of action, Congress promptly acted in appropriating the necessary expenses for the establishment of the boundary commission (Bailey, 1980:443). Public opinion, meanwhile, heartily endorsed the president’s message (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:160) and a jingoistic wave befell the entire country with “[p]ublic

⁵⁹ Garvin (1934:67) concludes that the president’s message amounted, in effect, to “a violent ultimatum”.

men in all walks of life” rising in applause (Bailey, 1980:443). Upon an inquiry to determine the extent of support if faced with an Anglo-American war, twenty-six out of twenty-eight governors, approached with this purpose in mind, replied in the affirmative and, on another front, Civil War veterans promised their support (Bailey, 1980:443). The American press, furthermore, reflected and to some extent advocated similar sentiments. The editorial pages of *Public Opinion* remarked: “It is doubtful if there was ever before witnessed in the United States so nearly unanimous an expression of press approval of any Administration” (quoted in LaFeber, 1998:270). On his part, the young Theodore Roosevelt, ever increasing in esteem, emphatically stated: “Let the fight come if it must; I don’t care whether our sea coast cities are bombarded or not; we would take Canada” (Roosevelt quoted in Bailey, 1980:444). On another occasion he intimated his sincere hope that the American people would not yield in the face of an impending Anglo-American controversy (LaFeber, 1993:125) and that he “hope[d] the fight will come soon” (Garvin, 1934:68). Business opinion, though more complex in its outlook, predominantly supported Cleveland’s message (LaFeber, 1998:270-276).⁶⁰ Surveys conducted by the New York *World* and *Bradstreet’s*, inquiring into the opinions of leading business people and commerce bodies, attested to this (LaFeber, 1998:272).

The British public, on their part, did not in any sense share these sentiments. Not only did the existence of an Anglo-Venezuelan boundary controversy first reach the majority of British citizens subsequent to Cleveland’s message of December 18, 1895 (Grenville, 1964:65; Bailey, 1980:444; Garvin, 1934:66), but the British press and public opinion alike, with the notable inclusion of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, at once intimated an expression of friendship towards the United States and the imperative of an amicable settlement of the controversy (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:160; Steel, 1967:308). For the majority of the English, recoiling with horror at the possibility of, as they saw it, an Anglo-American *civil* war, the widespread support

⁶⁰ LaFeber (1998:270-276) has convincingly argued that the subsequent panic in the American financial markets following Cleveland’s message to Congress on December 18, 1895, was not – contra conventional historical argument (see, for instance, Bailey, 1980:444; Steel, 1967:308) – induced by a sense of panic in respect to an impending Anglo-American war. In fact, not only did the stock markets, following the financial crash of December 20, 1895 (which barely lasted for a day), immediately recover on account of American financial moves to firm declining stock prices, but the crash in itself was largely derivative of factors other than the diplomatic crisis thus underway (LaFeber, 1998:271, 273-274).

for the Cleveland message, on the face of it pointing to American support for the Spanish-speaking Venezuelans⁶¹, in contradistinction to the call to arms in respect of the linguistically similar (hence, English-speaking) inhabitants of the British colony of British Guiana, was beyond understanding (Sloan, 1938:494). Thus Arthur James Balfour, leader of the House of Commons, lamented that the hostile attitude coming from the other side of the Atlantic was “simply incredible” (Balfour quoted in Sloan, 1938:494).

In illustrating their aversion to an impending Anglo-American war, a grand total of 354 members of the House of Commons thus signed a memorial stressing the desirability of establishing a general arbitration treaty for the settlement, hence by way of arbitration, of all current and future Anglo-American disputes (Bailey, 1980:445). To this move towards Anglo-American friendship, various other civil society groups – on both sides of the Atlantic – added their voices. On the American side, the clergy, in particular, as well as certain segments of the American press, strongly agitated for a peaceful settlement of the dispute, with Joseph Pulitzer’s New York *World* taking to the press English “messages of peace as Christmas greetings to Americans”, received from such prominent Englishmen as the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the liberally inclined William E. Gladstone (Sloan, 1938:496; Bailey, 1980:444). On their part, prominent British authors, in their correspondence with American literary figures, strongly protested the impending Anglo-American war (Sloan, 1938:496), with numerous English workingmen exerting pressure on the Salisbury government through their adoption of a resolution implicating “that a war between England and the United States of America would be a crime against the laws of God and man; and would cause unspeakable misery to the peoples of both countries” (quoted in Bailey, 1980:445).

Salisbury and other members of the British cabinet, meanwhile, understood that the American commission thus proposed by Cleveland was bound to reach conclusion and make its recommendations in no less than one year, and perhaps even longer (LaFeber, 1998:270). The Prime Minister was thus content with waiting and

⁶¹ As LaFeber (1998:242-283) has repeatedly insisted, the United States embroiled itself in the boundary controversy not for the sake of the Venezuelans, but with the explicit purpose in mind of preserving American commercial and political interests.

subsequently neglected to convene the cabinet over the Christmas period (Grenville, 1964:67).⁶² Writing to Joseph Chamberlain on January 6, 1895, Salisbury intimated his willingness to accept a “legitimate” conception of the Monroe Doctrine, but – as Grenville (1964:68) emphatically concludes – “he was not ready to withdraw one step from the position he had previously taken that the Monroe Doctrine did not apply to the Venezuelan boundary dispute”. In a word, American interests had little bearing on the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary controversy thus underway. Seen against this background, and whilst remaining cognisant of the belligerent position upheld by both Olney and Cleveland, it is somewhat surprising that some historians have tended to downplay the significance of the dispute.

Grenville (1964:55), in particular, has questioned the probability of an Anglo-American war in respect of the Venezuelan boundary controversy, viewing the crisis as “somewhat synthetic”. Bourne (1967:319), however, on account of Salisbury’s unwavering position subsequent to Cleveland’s December 18 message, has indicated that the probability of an Anglo-American war was “very real”. In fact, not only did both sides “actively consider the possibility of war” (Bourne, 1967:319), but each nation also thought it prudent in calling in the expertise of their military planners (LaFeber, 1998:270). Garvin (1934:68), writing from a British vantage point, similarly concludes that “[o]ur age nearly forty years after forgets the momentary blackness of that passing cloud”. Part of the problem in respect of this issue relates to a general failure to appreciate the significance of the boundary controversy to the United States. This is certainly true of the position upheld by Grenville (1964). Whilst the boundary commission thus proposed by Cleveland undoubtedly provided an opportunity for cooler heads to prevail, the American position was clear: the boundary controversy was one in which American interests were implicated and the United States would risk an Anglo-American war, grievous as it may be to contemplate, for the preservation thereof.⁶³ Underscoring this conviction was, most concretely, “a rational opinion that American interests in Latin America would have to be expanded and protected” (LaFeber, 1998:282). Salisbury’s refutation of the

⁶² In a letter to Sir Robert Meade on December 18, 1895, Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, noted that “it must be months before there is a real crisis” (Chamberlain quoted in Garvin, 1934:72).

⁶³ Layne (1996a:176) has reached a similar conclusion in his analysis of the episode.

American position, thus laid out to Chamberlain on January 6, 1896, could not otherwise but create a combustible situation.

5.3.2 Resolution of the crisis

Yet no Anglo-American war ensued in respect of the Venezuelan boundary controversy. The British cabinet, convening on January 11, 1896, now intimated their willingness (with the notable exclusion of Lord Salisbury) for an amicable settlement of the diplomatic crisis – subsequently eventuating in the British capitulation to the American demand of unlimited arbitration – despite their previous approval of Salisbury's hard-line approach (Grenville, 1964:68). Theoreticians of the democratic peace research programme, most notably Layne (1996a) and Owen (1996; 1997), have toiled in bolstering (or, in Layne's case, refuting) the logic of the democratic peace through probing the causative forces responsible for British capitulation to American demands. Their arguments have, unsurprisingly, reached markedly different (hence, theoretically divergent) conclusions, with Layne (1996a) stressing the predominance of strategic (neo-realist) factors and Owen (1996; 1997) advocating an overtly liberal explanatory framework.⁶⁴ A closer look at the peace-inducing forces accounting for British capitulation to American demands depicts a historical narrative at variance with that advanced by Layne (1996a) and Owen (1996; 1997).

The immediate British position following Cleveland's belligerent message to Congress was not, notwithstanding the predominance of British military power *vis-à-vis* American arms, as strategically tenable as a first glance of the situation permits. Not only was the British merchant marine bound to be at risk to American privateers (Bailey, 1980:445), but – more importantly – the Royal navy, whilst otherwise constituting the hegemon of the sea, was itself strategically overextended, with the recognition that British naval superiority in the Western Hemisphere could only come at the expense of abandoning the strategically important (for Britain) Mediterranean (Kennedy, 1981:108). On account of these factors, both Ernest May and A.E. Campbell (in Bailey, 1980:450) have concluded that owing to the extensive nature of

⁶⁴ We will return to the conclusions reached by these authors subsequent to the analysis of the peace-inducing forces accounting for the British policy shift.

British naval engagements elsewhere, the British navy was in no position to sufficiently mount a credible naval challenge to the numerically inferior American navy, much less provide a defence of Canada, the self-evident (colonial) “hostage” in the event of an Anglo-American war (Kennedy, 1981:108). Coming as the Anglo-American controversy did, furthermore, during the midst of the Armenian issue, coupled with the progressively deteriorating circumstances of British engagements in Africa, China and India (Grenville, 1964:54), the Cleveland message “exposed the complete nakedness of Britain’s isolation in the world” (Garvin, 1934:69).⁶⁵ To this state of affairs came news of the failed Jameson raid against the government of the Transvaal, eventuating in the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, sending a congratulatory telegram to the Boer leader, Paul Kruger, upon capturing the Jameson raiders and “defending the independence” of the Transvaal Republic without resorting “to the aid of friendly Powers [hence Germany]” (Wilhelm II quoted in Garvin, 1934:92; LaFeber, 1998:276).

This outright subversion of British policy in South Africa on the part of the German Emperor did not founder in making an impression on the British public and official mind. Although largely unknown to the British public, Anglo-German relations had already indicated signs of strain precedent to the news of the Jameson raid, with this incident serving to push Anglo-German relations to the utmost limits (Garvin, 1934:64, 66). The Kruger telegram, therefore, amidst an instantaneous tempest of British hostility towards Germany, at once diverted British attention from the Anglo-American diplomatic crisis to the blatant hostility coming from Berlin (LaFeber, 1998:276; Pratt *et al.*, 1980:160). This patent anti-German hostility also manifested itself in British theatres, with “Yankee-doodle” receiving British cheers, while “Die Wacht am Rhein” was groaned at with contempt (Garvin, 1934:96). In an article in *Spectator* on January 18, 1896, appearing under the title *Allies and Foes of Great Britain*, the implications of the Kruger telegram for British grand strategy was aptly conveyed by noting that the “jack-boot policy of the German emperor is forcing Englishmen to consider the question of alliances...A month ago half England would have replied that Germany would be the friend, but William II has for this generation

⁶⁵ Sloan (1938:501) similarly argues that British isolation was a grave consideration in the conduct of British diplomacy. Other historians have reached similar conclusions. Blake (1942:276), for instance, notes that subsequent to the Kruger telegram “the danger of England’s isolation and the reality of Germany’s hostility were patent”.

rendered that solution impossible” (quoted in Sloan, 1938:500). The hostility of British public feeling upon hearing of the Kruger telegram, as opposed to British overtures immediately following the belligerent position upheld by President Cleveland, can be attributed, some observers argue, to the distinctive nature of the Anglo-German as opposed to the Anglo-American relationship (Grenville, 1964:66). It would seem that British aversion to an Anglo-American war and, amidst this, American press adversity in response to the position taken by the German Emperor, did to some extent provide a more conducive atmosphere for Anglo-American cooperation in respect to the Venezuelan boundary controversy (Sloan, 1938:500).

Whilst the Kaiser’s ill-considered message undoubtedly had an adverse effect upon British public sentiments and constituted a grave consideration in the subsequent policy to be adopted by the British cabinet, it did little to perturb the British Prime Minister. For Salisbury, the threat of a further deterioration in Anglo-German relations amidst the provocation raised by the Cleveland administration could not otherwise but amount to nothing. As with the threat of the American recourse to war, Salisbury earnestly believed that the German position, likewise suffering from an unfavourable distribution of military capabilities *vis-à-vis* British arms, was nothing more than a “bluff” (Grenville, 1964:66). To this end, he thought it sufficient to revert to a naval demonstration in British waters as a way to temper German hostility (Laughton, 1951:338). But, in reality, Salisbury’s position on these issues (specifically in respect of the impending Anglo-American war) did not, it would seem, count for much. Upon convening on January 11, 1896, the British cabinet in effect overruled the Prime Minister, with the cabinet thus intimating a willingness to meet the American demands. This, however, did not bear the approval of Salisbury. In his diary entry of January 11, 1896, Chamberlain recalls the Prime Minister’s utter disapproval of the new British position assumed by the cabinet, threatening his resignation: “Lord Salisbury said that if we were to yield unconditionally to American threats another Prime Minister would have to be found” (Garvin, 1934:161). In Salisbury’s letters to the Colonial Secretary also, he clearly indicated his utter discontentment with the line thus adopted by his fellow cabinet members: “As my Cabinet colleagues decline any step that might lead to war – I do not put this forward as my own policy, but as my reading of the inclination of the Cabinet....[I]f the worst comes to the worst we would

be forced to enter into an unrestricted arbitration” (Salisbury quoted in Grenville, 1964:68).

Whilst Salisbury failed to appreciate the realities of the British strategic position, other members of his Cabinet were more attuned to such considerations. With this in mind, the Kaiser’s telegram thus implicated a twofold threat with reference to British interests in South Africa. Firstly, it challenged British policy in a region which was not only claimed by Britain as its own, but which was, moreover, of vital strategic importance to her (Kennedy, 1981:108). Secondly, German subversion of British policy in South Africa yet again made Britain aware that “Germany lay on her flank” (Bailey, 1980:446). Compounding matters was the recognition that both Germany and the United States, whilst embroiling Great Britain in diplomatic crises in geographically diverse settings, did not measure up to British perceptions regarding the anticipated chief rivals of the British Empire (Kennedy, 1981:109). To this venerable category was to be attributed British fears of an impending Franco-Russian combination, which not only posed a challenge to British naval supremacy⁶⁶ but, more importantly, rivalled British ambitions in a number of strategically salient theatres of operation (Kennedy, 1981:109). Seen in this light, and on account of the fact that Britain had embroiled herself in diplomatic disputes the world over⁶⁷, the deterioration in Anglo-American relations, coinciding with the German challenge in an area of vital strategic import for the British, undoubtedly constituted a grave consideration in the British cabinet’s deliberations and thus facilitated their capitulation to American demands (Kennedy, 1981:108). Seen from a purely strategic position, then, and if framed in respect to the Anglo-American controversy, Great Britain was in essence strategically over-extended. She could thus only meet the American call to arms through abandoning other areas of more pressing and enduring strategic significance. Whilst this was certainly true of the British cabinet, one can only speculate that Salisbury, too, though abhorring the cabinet’s capitulation to American demands, recognised the strategic realities facing Britain. For in 1896, amidst the British cabinet’s refusal to uphold the more vigorous policy

⁶⁶ Bourne (1967:340) points out that the Franco-Russian naval alliance of 1894 had already precipitated fears of British naval inferiority in the strategically salient Mediterranean and Western Pacific.

⁶⁷ It is in this context that Chamberlain referred to Britain as the “weary Titan, staggering under the too vast orb of his own fate” (Chamberlain quoted in LaFeber, 1993:126).

previously supported, Salisbury also made overtures to Russia in respect of the latter's interests in Asia (Grenville, 1964:73).

Though doubtlessly constituting the chief consideration in British policy, strategic factors were nonetheless not the only consideration pressing down on the British cabinet, or the steadfast Prime Minister, in respect of the Venezuelan boundary controversy. In particular, the ostensibly pro-American Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, played no small part – in both Britain and the United States – in attaining an Anglo-American settlement (Garvin, 1934:159). Chamberlain had a well-nigh unparalleled conviction that the bonds of culture and common kinship implicated Anglo-Americans in a “special relationship” (Grenville, 1964:55). And whilst incessantly pondering over the faint hope of Anglo-American cooperation in respect of the Armenian question, Chamberlain – upon responding to the Cleveland message – was “determined to move heaven and earth to avert conflict between the two English speaking peoples, his own country and his wife's...For weeks he allowed hardly a day to pass without letters and interviews in the endeavour to find a way out” (Garvin, 1934:67, 76). Consequently, speaking at Birmingham, the Colonial secretary noted that

[w]ar between the two nations would be an absurdity as well as a crime...The two nations are allied more closely in sentiment and in interest than any other nations on the face of the earth...I should look forward with pleasure to the possibility of the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack floating together in defence of a common cause sanctioned by humanity and justice. (Chamberlain quoted in Owen, 1996:146-147)

Chamberlain was not alone in expressing these sentiments. Other British statesmen were likewise alarmed at the possibility of an Anglo-American war. Perhaps more vigorous than even Chamberlain in his endeavours at facilitating an Anglo-American settlement was the Liberal leader in the House of Commons, William Harcourt, a lifelong admirer of the United States (Owen, 1996:146) and an avowed advocate of unlimited arbitration (Gibb, 2005:35). Discussing at some length the Venezuelan boundary controversy with Chamberlain on January 9, 1896 and fearing a continuation of Salisbury's hard-line diplomacy, Harcourt made his position on the

issue explicit (Garvin, 1934:160). He not only stood for complete British capitulation to the American demand of unlimited arbitration, but in his capacity as joint leader of the opposition he also “would feel bound to indict them [the Salisbury government], confident the people would be on his side” (Garvin, 1934:160). Given the prevailing public sentiment in respect of an impending Anglo-American war, and the acute hostility generated by the Kruger telegram, this threat could not otherwise but have been a definite consideration in both the Cabinet’s and Lord Salisbury’s deliberations of a suitable course of action. Thus, the interplay between British public opinion and the incessant pressure from Harcourt in the House of Commons consequently acted as a restraining influence on the Salisbury government. To this state of affairs was to be added Chamberlain’s incessant efforts at producing an amicable Anglo-American settlement.

Seen in its larger aspects therefore the shift in British policy resulting in the cabinet’s complete capitulation to American demands can only be explicated by accounting for the peace-inducing forces of both realist and liberal explanatory variables. The analysis of British strategic considerations following Cleveland’s belligerent message of December 17, 1895, indicating Britain’s isolated and over-extended international position, remains however the dominant prism through which the event must be construed. Had the British government enjoyed a free hand, her position and concessions in respect to the boundary controversy might very well have taken an entirely different form. Layne’s (1996a:174-180) analysis of the episode, departing on the basis of an overtly realist explanatory framework, has in this regard reached a similar conclusion, illustrating that British capitulation to American demands derived from an unfavourable distribution of British military capabilities *vis-à-vis* American arms and the grim realisation of British isolation in the international system. From a purely strategic point of view, Layne’s (1996a) analysis does not falter in any sense. But, in contrast, Owen’s (1996:143-148) engagement with the episode, though failing to incorporate the strategic considerations affecting British policy, does raise some interesting points. Of the greatest weight is his rejoinder to Layne (1996a) that British overtures to the United States, diverting in fundamental ways from (the hostile) British feeling towards Germany following the Kruger telegram, was not a random act of diplomacy in service of strategic interests, but derived from British *perceptions* of the liberal credentials of the United States, the basic precondition for the absence of

war amongst liberal dyads (Owen, 1996:148). Faced with the belligerency of both Germany and the United States, the British were naturally predisposed to gravitate to the latter owing to a common (Anglo-American) culture and kinship. As previously noted, this was certainly true of British public sentiment, though Lord Salisbury in particular cannot be lumped into this category. Other members of the British cabinet, notably Joseph Chamberlain and prominent statesmen such as William Harcourt, did however express an earnest desire to cultivate friendly relations with the United States. Specifically Harcourt went to great lengths in exerting pressure on the Salisbury government to ensure a peaceful resolution of the controversy. Part of the explanation for British capitulation to American demands therefore cannot otherwise but derive from liberal explanatory forces. But, crucially, one should also remember that the Venezuela question as such, though important to the United States, was hardly of comparable interest to Britain and even less so if it was to be contrasted with British interests in South Africa. In this respect the pro-American Joseph Chamberlain, writing to Sir Robert Meade on December 18, 1895, had already raised concerns in respect of foreign intervention in the Transvaal Republic (Garvin, 1934:72). Owen's (1996:147) argument, treating the Venezuelan and South African questions as comparable in interest to Britain, thus falters in this regard. Moreover, in order to meet the American call to arms British interests in other areas of strategic importance would have to be abandoned.

Owen's (1996) argument errs in yet another crucial respect. He erroneously concludes that the American liberal elite (amounting, in effect, to Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*), situated outside of the corridors of government and constituting a numerically limited group who viewed Great Britain as democratic, had an effect on the Cleveland administration. In fact, one of the key hypotheses of Owen's argument emphatically states that in "a crisis with a fellow liberal democracy, liberals will use the news media and other fora to *persuade* leaders and the public to resolve the crisis peacefully" (Owen, 1996:132; emphasis added). Though Cleveland and Olney, as already noted, no doubt preferred an outcome short of war, their position was clear: that in the event of the boundary commission rendering the British position untenable, the United States could not otherwise but enforce – by whatever means necessary – the judicially established territorial rights of the Venezuelan Republic, regardless of United States sentiment towards Great Britain. American policy, it

would seem, was thus directed by brute interest, informed by rising perceptions of American military capabilities and an earnest concern regarding the commercial and strategic implications of British policy for American interests. British policy, conversely, can only be accounted for by recognising the import and interplay of both realist (in this instance, predominant) and liberal explanatory forces.

5.4 Franco-American relations and the Iraq War (2002-)

The events of September 11, 2001 (hereafter: 9/11) represented – to some extent at least – something of a watershed in American foreign affairs. It paved the way for the pursuit by the Bush administration of an overtly unilateralist and militarist approach to issues of foreign policy and international security. That the Bush administration was already treading the path of unilateralism in foreign affairs precedent to the events of 9/11, based on progressive perceptions of American pre-eminence (military and moral) in world affairs, is of course nothing new. American recantation, or in some instances the threat thereof, of extant international legal instruments – notably, the Clinton administration’s signature in respect of the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as well as the Kyoto Protocol relating to issues of global warming – attest sturdily to this (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:53). Nonetheless, the aftermath of 9/11 had the effect of revitalising an acute sense of patriotism among the American people, creating in essence a political climate conducive to the adoption of a more assertive American approach to foreign affairs (Falk, 2008:21). These developments were further cultivated and, in some measure, legitimised by proceedings transpiring across the Atlantic. Public opinion and prominent statesmen, especially in and across Europe, recoiled with horror upon hearing of the American predicament and indicated at once a willingness to support American action in pursuit of justice, however defined. With that end in view, the French president, Jacques Chirac, immediately proffered his “total support” for President Bush (Chirac, 2001), and the French magazine *Le Monde* zestfully asserted that “[w]e are all Americans now” (quoted in McAllister, 2002:21).⁶⁸ The French president was not alone in expressing these sentiments. Within mere hours,

⁶⁸ Following the attack on the World Trade Centre, President Chirac promptly communicated with the French Ambassador to the United Nations, tasking him with the immediate responsibility of preparing a resolution recognising that the “United States was in a situation of legitimate self-defence” (Chirac, 2002c).

member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were ready to take up arms in solidarity with the United States by invoking the organisation's Article V mutual defence clause (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:1-2). Subsequent to the American determination to embroil itself in a war in Afghanistan, the only issue of contention in the mind of President Bush seemed to turn on the over-zealousness of European countries in placing at the disposal of the United States the services of European military personnel (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:1-2). Amidst this state of affairs, France immediately embroiled itself in the American-led war in Afghanistan "since", as the French president contended, "in time of trial we stand, self-evidently, with our ally" (Chirac, 2002a).

5.4.1 The rising tide: the French challenge to American foreign affairs

European, and in particular French sympathy, did not last long. By March 2003 American resolve to oust the authoritarian regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, and the American desire to cultivate a 'truly' democratic system of government in that country, had driven transatlantic relations to the end of its tether (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:2). Public opinion – on a global as well as a regional (European) level – seethed with rage in respect of American military deliberations over Iraq. On February 15, 2003, an unprecedented eleven million protestors worldwide agitated against the American war-plans (Falk, 2008:3). Led by the avowedly anti-war French and, to a lesser extent, Gerhard Schröder's Germany, European public opinion did not lag behind in adding their voices to the global outcry against war. Nor was their anti-war belligerence fleeting. As late as March 10, 2003, three quarters of the French populace, for instance, held firm in their renunciation of the war (Graff, 2003a:36), coupled with a downward trend (from 63 percent in 2001 to 31 percent in 2003) in respect of the overall propitiousness of French opinion of the United States (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:3). Spearheaded by President Jacques Chirac and his outspoken Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, the French government did not merely react to the hostility of French (and European)

public opinion, but actively sought to undermine and constrain the United States in waging war against Iraq.⁶⁹

On their part, Bush administration officials indulged in the rampant wave of French-bashing fermenting within American society at the time, with a fair amount of Americans thus viewing the French position as “[a]rrogant, unreliable and cowardly” (Wall, 2004:126; Tapper, 2003). American opinion leaders, too, could not resist the temptation of taking a stab at the French. The prominent scholar and columnist of the *New York Times*, Thomas Friedman, in an op-ed piece entitled *Our War With France*, noted that France was no longer “just our annoying ally” but was progressively “becoming our *enemy*” (Friedman, 2003; emphasis added). Reflecting this mood, American legislators actively deliberated over the feasibility of subjecting French products to the imposition of a trade sanctions regime, as well as a reconfiguration of NATO with the explicit purpose of sidelining the French (Tapper, 2003). Whilst the French approach in rebuffing the United States failed to leave a favourable impression on many Americans, a great deal of Americans actively opposed the Bush administration’s Iraq War, drawing a discernible line between their distaste for the French policy position and the perceived irrationality of President Bush’s war-plans. Prominent political figures critical of the impending war did not falter in making clear their thoughts on the subject. The Democratic Party’s presidential hopeful in the 2000 presidential election, Al Gore, rebuked the Bush administration for failing to appreciate and adhere to the depth of world opinion on the issue, and for squandering progress made in respect of the War On Terrorism in pursuit of other objectives (McAllister, 2002:21). Members of the scholarly community likewise disapproved of the proposed redirection of American foreign policy. The realist scholars, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, highlighting the strategic irrationality of the Bush administration’s proposed war on Iraq and proffering the efficacy of a policy of containment, forthrightly contended that a war

⁶⁹ In fact, De Villepin set out to actively lobby members of the United Nations Security Council in utilising their veto-power in withholding Security Council legitimisation for the proposed American military invasion of Iraq (Guitta, 2006).

with Iraq “would be one the Bush administration chose to fight but did not have to fight” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2003:59).⁷⁰

Counter-arguments were readily at hand. Republican Senator John McCain, notably, argued that America lacks “reliable allies” in order to enforce a policy of containment (Tapper, 2003). One does not need to dwell on the intended target of the Senator’s onslaught, especially if seen in the context of the above-mentioned Congressional debate on sanctioning French products. Irrespective of the tenability of a policy of containment, the American resolve to militarily intervene in Iraq and, preceding this, the entirety of her approach in arriving at this decision, pushed Franco-American relations onto a collision course. The costs of this rift, whilst in retrospect amounting to little, were perceived as very real at the time. In the minds of some it signalled, in the first instance, a progressive deterioration in transatlantic trust and credibility (Geary, 2002:23) and, informed by a broader view, held the potential of undermining some of the central pillars of the post-Second World War world, notably the United Nations, NATO as well as the European Union (Graff, 2003b). More profoundly, the French and German opposition to the war raised the spectre of the existence of a fundamental divergence in transatlantic interests, values and worldviews (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004:2).

Part of these perceptions undoubtedly held true at the time, especially those pertaining to the potential destabilising effects of an American military intervention on the institutional architecture of the post-1945 world. The evolution of French policy from its initial unwavering support of American policy immediately following 9/11 to the emphatic warning on February 26, 2003, by Jean-Pierre Raffarin, French Prime Minister, that a war over Iraq “would rock the international order by undermining collective security and multilateralism” (Raffarin, 2003), testifies to this. A closer look at the background influences on French foreign policy in respect of the Iraq War reveals the interplay of a number of forces of which the outcome invariably necessitated a policy position at odds with the Americans. The incessant American clamour during the summer of 2002 about the dangers posed by the Iraqi regime,

⁷⁰ Along similar lines, President Chirac concluded on March 18, 2003, that the Iraqi regime did not constitute at that moment in time “an immediate threat” and a resort to force could not thus be justified (Chirac, 2003d).

supposedly in possession of weapons of mass destruction and constituting a core member of, as President Bush framed it, the “axis of evil” (Bush, 2002), culminated in the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council during November 2002 of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441. This resolution stipulated the return of weapons inspectors to Iraq and her peaceful disarmament. For France in particular this was a major victory not only in respect of progress on the Iraq issues, but for the international community and international order as such. This was borne out by the recognition that the unanimous adoption of the resolution reaffirmed the French presidency’s conception of the Security Council’s indispensable “role and responsibilities in the sphere of peace and security” (Presidency of the Republic, 2002). It was this very issue of acting through the legalist framework envisioned in the United Nations Charter – more than anything else – that proved to be the central divisive force in Franco-American relations in respect of subsequent developments on the Iraq issue.

The Bush administration, whilst contenting itself at the time with working through the multilateral channels entrenched in the Security Council, was never really invested in a non-militarist solution to the issue at hand. It seems that, by December 2002, Washington had already agreed upon the decision to militarily invade Baghdad (Wall, 2004:132). Moreover, as President Bush later conceded, multilateralism was at any rate only bound to be conceived as a viable policy approach if it were to coincide with or reinforce the American position on dealing with international security issues: “From the beginning, America has sought international support for our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq...There is a difference, however, between leading a coalition of many nations, and submitting to the objections of a few. *America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country*” (Bush, 2004; emphasis added). For Washington, therefore, the adopted course of action enunciated by Resolution 1441, namely providing a framework for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq through the deployment of weapons inspectors, was fraught with defects, with the Iraqi’s cooperating, in the mind of President Bush, only half-heartedly. On these grounds, the Bush administration immediately pushed for the adoption of a second resolution presenting, firstly, an ultimatum to the Iraqi regime (in effect, the necessity of peaceful disarmament by March 17, 2003) and secondly, in the event of a failure of compliance, Security Council authorisation for the

recourse to war, a vote that at any rate never took place. Any such vote was, moreover, likely to fail with France indicating her willingness to utilise her veto power in thwarting Security Council authorisation for the American invasion (Chirac, 2003b).

For the French, the issue of multilateralism – in particular the primacy of the Security Council as the central vehicle through which international security issues should proceed – constituted a grave consideration in her dealings with the United States. Addressing the National Assembly on the issue of Iraq on February 26, 2003, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin emphatically asserted this point: “Going beyond the current [Iraq] crisis, what is at stake is the people’s confidence in the future of international law. Under no circumstances and nowhere must the right of force be able to supplant the force of the law...We’re fighting to uphold the law” (Raffarin, 2003). French diplomatic papers and interviews by leading French political figures are replete with references attesting to this conviction. In his annual New Year’s message to the diplomatic corps, the French president reiterated that the Security Council is the only legitimate framework for dealing with Iraq, and that any “decision to use force must be explicit and must be taken by the United Nations Security Council on the basis of a report by the inspectors giving the reasons for their conclusions...Let us resolutely repudiate the temptation of unilateral action” (Chirac, 2003a).⁷¹

The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, made speech after speech in which he touched on similar issues. In the minds of the French, he argued, the Security Council must be consulted at every stage of the process as a failure to do so could result in subverting the processes and mechanisms of the international community (De Villepin, 2002a; 2002b). The Foreign Minister, in fact, did not stop here. As he argued during October 2002, “[o]ver and above the Iraq issue, the world order is at stake: unilateralism or multilateralism, use of force or law. France is on the side of the law” (De Villepin, 2002a). Seen in this light, the emphasis on a legalist

⁷¹ Part of the explanation for this position undoubtedly derives from an enduring French critique of the stability of a unipolar world marked by unbridled American military power (Ward & Hackett, 2003:1). President Chirac, moreover, conceded this point in his acknowledgement of the concomitant dangers of a unipolar world and his preference “for a multipolar world, in which Europe has its place” (Graff, 2003b).

and multilateral approach preoccupied French policy from the outset of the Iraq crisis, and they subsequently agreed upon a two-stage process following their endorsement of resolution 1441: (i) the deployment of United Nations weapons inspectors in order to ensure the peaceful disarmament of Iraq (subsequently enshrined in resolution 1441); and (ii) were this option to fail, the Security Council would heed the recommendations of the weapons inspectors and deliberate a suitable course of action, including – if deemed proper – the resort to the use of force (De Villepin, 2003a). The latter point cannot be overstressed. Whilst France deplored the use of military force in the Iraq crisis⁷², believing that it would further destabilise the Middle East region and that it should be restricted to an instrument of last resort, she was from the outset willing to sanction military force. It was, however, only in the event of a complete failure of the weapon inspections regime and, more importantly, if the Security Council were to authorise such action, that France would conceive of undertaking a more militaristic approach to the issue (Chirac, 2002d). But, contrary to the United States, France firmly believed that the inspections regime was reaching the promise initially envisioned for it and that more time and resources – rather than a resort to force – should be placed at the disposal of the weapons inspectors in order to reach an outcome short of war (De Villepin, 2003a). The majority of Americans, curiously enough, reached a similar conclusion during February 2003 (Graff, 2003b). Against this backdrop, therefore, the rift in Franco-American relations seemed to turn on differing conceptions in respect of attaining the common objective of Iraqi disarmament (Raffarin, 2003). The Bush administration was nonetheless little perturbed by French deliberations on the efficacy of a legalist approach to the issue. In the end the Americans acted, to the chagrin of France, without any prior form of authorisation from the Security Council.

5.4.2 Forces for peace: the improbability of a Franco-American war

While the diplomatic crisis over Iraq certainly tested Franco-American relations, the possibility of armed conflict (or even war) never entered the fray. And that is precisely the point to be underscored. In this context a two-fold set of forces, when functioning in conjunction with each other, had rendered the possibility of a Franco-

⁷² As both Graff (2003b) and Gordon and Shapiro (2004:11) have concluded, President Chirac was motivated by a sincere conviction that the consequences of the war would be disastrous.

American war highly improbable. Save for radical change in the environment (military and political) in which these states conduct their relations and *ceteris paribus*, a future war between France and America should be conceived, this study holds, in the same vein. The two forces thus implicated in this regard are: one, the neo-realist emphasis on the peace-inducing effects of nuclear weapons and, two, the peace-inducing effects of liberal norms and institutions. In respect of the first force, accounting for its effect(s) requires – to some extent at least – a return to the theoretical (read: realist strategic) realm.

The advent of the nuclear era, and the concomitant condition of stable deterrence following the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the possession of the United States, have created, as Kenneth Waltz has pointed out, a remarkably peaceful condition for their possessors void of any major military confrontation (in Sagan, Waltz & Betts, 2007:137). The logic of a nuclear world, if juxtaposed to that pertaining in a conventional world, has at once removed one of the central causes of war extant in a world in which states are armed only with conventional weapons, to wit, the problem of miscalculation (Waltz, 1981). Within a conventionally armed world, in which the size and efficacy of adversaries' forces are difficult to estimate, calculations turning on the military capabilities of states are both more readily susceptible to miscalculation and, owing to the complexity of accurately predicting success/defeat in battle, states' leaders may be more liable to pursue military adventures perceiving the costs thereof as acceptable (Waltz, 1990b:734). Thus, given the difficulty of accurately gauging the comparative conventional military capabilities and military-strategic craft of adversary states, states are prone to overestimate their own capabilities and likelihood of success in battle and, obversely, underestimate the military strength and war-winning capabilities of an adversary state (Waltz, 1981).

This situation differs in fundamental respects from that which obtains in a nuclear world. The sheer destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the looming threat of annihilation promised in the event of an ill-considered nuclear exchange⁷³ have

⁷³ As Waltz (1990b:733) presciently notes, there is no *a priori* reason why a nuclear exchange between nuclear armed states – if it were to occur – should result in mutual annihilation. Deterrence,

obviated problems of miscalculation existing within a conventionally armed world. For, as Waltz (1990b:734) argues, nuclear weapons bring with them a certain simplicity in gauging the military capabilities of adversaries – i.e., there are no illusions about what could transpire in the event of a nuclear exchange. Given the exceedingly high levels of violence thus implicated in their use, deliberations of war in a nuclear world “focuses one’s attention not on the probability of victory but on the possibility of annihilation” (Waltz, 1990b:734). Miscalculation and political opportunism in contemplating war with other nuclear powers – the vices of a conventionally armed world – are thus thwarted by the logic of a nuclear world in which certainty of calculation and political caution (restraint) reign supreme (Waltz, 1981). In such a world, prudence and moderation in respect of threatening the vital interests of other similarly armed states become the watchword.

Moreover, a credible nuclear deterrent is not exceptionally difficult to actualise. Part of the explanation for this derives from the ease with which nuclear weaponry can be rendered invulnerable to incoming attacks (through, for instance, mounting them on submarines) and, conversely, the ease with which they can be delivered or, alternatively phrased, the difficulty of mounting an effective defence (Waltz, 1990b:732). Furthermore, unlike in a conventionally armed world, the relative size of forces (hence, force superiority) is not a decisive factor in contributing to the credibility of a nuclear deterrent. Once a second-strike capability is reached (i.e., the ability to retaliate to a first-strike of an adversary with sufficient forces to inflict unacceptable damage) all else beyond this threshold becomes for all intents and purposes futile (Waltz, 1990b:732; 1988:627; Mearsheimer, 1990:20). In fact, there is no compelling rationale for comparing forces within a nuclear world (Waltz, 1981. For a similar assessment see Mearsheimer, 1990:20). While continuing to exist in a situation in which two or more powers have at their disposal a second-strike capability, the accretion of nuclear forces by one side renders the military balance unaltered (Waltz, 1990b:738).⁷⁴

he argues, is dependent on *the capability* of inflicting damage, “not on what one *will* do” (Waltz, 1990b:733; emphasis in original).

⁷⁴ Thus, as Waltz (1981) points out, “more is not better if less is enough”.

The second force functioning to sustain peace derives from the explanatory domain of liberal conceptions of the democratic peace. On account of the extensive treatment of this aspect in chapter three of this study, there is no need to revisit the arguments put forth by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace. It would therefore suffice to say that the peace-inducing effects envisioned by liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace originate from the intersection between liberal norms and institutions in providing a constraining influence on liberal dyads if faced with war-threatening crises. Curiously enough, a closer examination of the Franco-American case does lend credence to the *theoretical* argument postulated: that the co-existence of the peace-inducing effects of nuclear weaponry and liberal explanatory forces would function to constrain a resort to war. Again, it is worth stressing that the possibility of a Franco-American war over Iraq was never really a realistic outcome – this is at any rate *not* the object of theoretical and empirical inquiry or the contention of this study. What this study does contend, however, is that the interplay between the theoretical forces exposed above has created a remarkably robust condition in preventing both an escalation of the diplomatic discord in Franco-American relations and, even in the hypothetical event of higher stakes involved for both sides, a resort to war. This (theoretical) assertion does have its foundation in the concrete (practical) world, as an examination of French discourse illustrates.

In a speech on French nuclear deterrence during January 2006, President Jacques Chirac reminded friend and foe of the realities (hence, utter destructiveness) of a nuclear world and, on these grounds, issued a warning to all potential and actual adversaries of the dangers in encroaching on the vital interests of the French: “We are in a position to inflict damage of all kinds on *a major power* that would want to attack interests we would regard as vital” (Chirac quoted in Rosenthal, 2006; emphasis added). These statements were not only directed at emerging nuclear powers such as Iran, but also served as a friendly reminder to President Bush of the credibility of the French nuclear capability (Rosenthal, 2006). Moreover, conceiving these statements, in the face of American nuclear dominance, as implausible would be a glaring mistake. For, as Waltz (1990b:743) has repeatedly stressed, to deter an adversary one need only believe that the invulnerability of a single belligerent submarine could be achieved. France’s *Le Triomphant* class submarines, mounted

with sixteen missiles of which six carries multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) nuclear warheads, coupled with the nuclear weapons capability of its *Le Redoutable* class (Hutchinson, 2003:180; Miller, 2004:406), thus lend credence to President Chirac's threat. And this, of course, does not even take into consideration France's land-based nuclear weapons or the possibility of delivering nuclear warheads by other means.

While raising the spectre of nuclear retaliation and nuclear deterrence, one is tempted to downplay the role of liberal explanatory forces in sustaining a Franco-American condition of no war. This would be a mistake. Looking at French discourse *before* the diplomatic crisis over Iraq unfolded into its more heated stages, and subsequently during the crisis itself, intimations of respect deriving from liberal explanatory forces seem to take centre stage. In fact, as President Chirac assuredly contended in May 2002, the amicability of the Franco-American relationship was not confined to the more recent era in world politics but was firmly rooted in history: "More than two centuries ago, the friendship between our two countries was sealed in the founding of your great nation...On the strength of this centuries-old brotherhood, we have always since then come together, our differences notwithstanding, when our values were at stake, when our concept of man and his rights were threatened" (Chirac, 2002b). The Franco-American relationship, notwithstanding the oft-visible elements of difference, did not develop in response to the advent of the nuclear era, but preceded it. French diplomatic statements attesting to this are not few and far between. Amidst incessant rumours of a fundamental divergence in Franco-American values and interests in the face of the Iraq crisis, the French body politic steadfastly refused to entertain any notions to this effect. For, as President Chirac pointed out responding to American charges of French anti-Americanism, it is precisely the depth and respect typical of the Franco-American relationship that necessitates the forthright nature of the French position:

So you say to me: "Yes, but what about the criticism?" Well yes, of course, there has always been criticism, thank goodness. You know, one should never confuse friends and courtiers, neither in private life nor in international life. They are two different things...And let me tell you, France is one of America's friends,

and not necessarily one of its courtiers. So when it has something to say, it says it. (Chirac, 2002c)

At its core, this implies that the nature of the French-American relationship instils a moral imperative – or, following Prime Minister Raffarin, a duty (Raffarin, 2003) – on each side to oppose or, at the very least, caution against policies adopted by the other that are perceived as imminently dangerous (Chirac, 2003c). What sustains this relationship through such episodes of diplomatic discord, however, is the fundamental recognition that the Franco-American relationship is underpinned by a mutual respect for similar values as well as a comparable understanding of the course of history (Chirac, 2002d). This culminates in the existence of a “natural bond”, deeply rooted in the fabric of society and of which “there’s nothing that could break it or even fray it” (Chirac, 2002d). Underscoring this commonality of values is, as President Chirac perceived the issue, a mutual appreciation for “a certain conception of Man, of freedom, of democracy, of mutual esteem, and mutual recognition” (Chirac, 2003c). Owing to this, any deep-seated deterioration in respect of the Franco-American relationship would be, simply put, inconceivable (Chirac, 2003c). Void of any cultural, political or strategic rationale for conflict, France and America, the president contends, are bound to enjoy a longstanding relationship of amity (Chirac, 2003c).⁷⁵ His Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, addressing the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies during 2003, likewise argued that the existence of common values between France and America could not otherwise but compel a resumption of unhindered Franco-American cooperation (De Villepin, 2003b).

Seen in its entirety, therefore, the co-existence of nuclear weapons and liberal explanatory forces has fixed the range of acceptable outcomes in Franco-American relations. For one thing, nuclear weapons have rendered the costs of war unimaginable and have afforded states the luxury of operating within a state of nuclear deterrence. But, whilst nuclear weapons certainly play their part in sustaining

⁷⁵ Outside of the French body politic, members of academia have come to reach a similar conclusion. Gordon and Shapiro (2004:5), for instance, although focusing more explicitly on the future of the transatlantic relationship, have pointed out that in respect of Europe and the United States the long-term drivers of policy, to wit, the interplay between interests and values, do not diverge in fundamental respects.

Franco-American amity, the relationship itself is not a product of the advent of the nuclear era. For historical and cultural reasons, underpinned thus by a mutual appreciation for liberal norms and institutions, the French-American relationship has upheld and, for the foreseeable future at least, will continue to uphold a diplomatic relationship typified by the absence of major war.

5.5 Evaluation

This chapter departed on the basis of an acknowledgement of the necessity of providing vindication for the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach laid bare in this study by probing the extent to which the forces it expounds are actualised within the confines of the real world. The cases probed here, deriving from a methodological sample stretching across time and space, held up well, addressing the tenability of both a multitheoretical approach to the democratic peace phenomenon and its intersection with the import of context to social explanation and behaviour. Three cases were advanced in defence of the theoretical argument proffered. An analysis of the peace-inducing forces in Anglo-American relations (1861-63), focusing on the diplomatic crisis of the *Trent* affair and beyond, constituted the first case under investigation and raised a number of points of interest. On the part of the United States, diplomatic conduct in the *Trent* affair and beyond was constrained by an earnest concern with the exigencies laid upon the Union government by the American Civil War. Under these circumstances, President Lincoln, for reasons of national and strategic interest, could not otherwise but take notice of the British demands.

The conduct of British policy was – in marked contrast to the American situation – burdened by a greater sense of complexity. Above and beyond the primacy of material and strategic interests pressing down on British statesmen, many Britons recoiled with horror at the sight of an Anglo-American war, viewing the Union government as ostensibly liberal. Though British estimations of the liberal credentials of the Union government became more marked after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in late 1862, it was in no measure predicated upon it. The issue of context, again, is important in this regard. A comprehensive analysis of British diplomacy in respect of the *Trent* affair, whilst highlighting the theoretical

primacy of realist explanatory forces, cannot obtain vindication without recognition of the peace-inducing effects of liberal explanatory forces. Beyond the episode of the *Trent* affair, and following President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, there does seem to be a deepening (to some extent at least) of British perceptions of the liberal credentials of the Union government. However, while altering the ratio of realist to liberal explanatory forces, the Emancipation Proclamation did not reverse it.

In 1895-96, Anglo-American relations were once more subjected to serious strain, this time in respect of the boundary controversy between British Guiana and Venezuela. For the Americans, the threat of British encroachment on Latin American territory represented an unacceptable challenge to United States commercial and political dominance in the Americas. By invoking the Monroe Doctrine, the Cleveland administration claimed an American right to demand arbitration in respect of determining the boundary line proper in the dispute. The British, however, failed initially to grasp the significance of the crisis for the Americans. In fact, the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, stuck to his guns by refusing to concede to the American demands despite the belligerency of Olney's July 20, 1895, note.

With the threat of war looming large subsequent to Cleveland's bellicose message to Congress on December 18, 1895, the reality of an impending war rapidly encroached on the mind of the British cabinet and, early in January, intimations of British capitulation to American demands were apparent. As the argument put forth in this chapter has illustrated, the concessions thus made by the British cabinet need to be explicated by accounting for both realist and liberal explanatory forces. The chief consideration in British policy undoubtedly derived from strategic and military considerations – Britain was not only strategically overextended, but she also faced severe (and strategically superior) diplomatic crises elsewhere. These crises took the form of outright challenges to British supremacy in Southern Africa, raised by the Kaiser's belligerent message to the Boer leader of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. This notwithstanding, the import of liberal explanatory forces cannot be ignored. British public opinion, for one thing, immediately intimated a friendly disposition towards the United States in the face of the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary controversy, with the liberal credentials of the United States being of central importance in this regard. This stands in marked contrast with the

war-like nature of British public opinion with reference to the belligerency of the German Kaiser. Also, amidst incessant pressure from the Liberal leader in the House of Commons, William Harcourt, and the efforts of the pro-American member of Cabinet, Joseph Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister's hands were sufficiently tied in pursuing a different (more vigorous) course of action.

The chapter concluded by probing the peace-inducing forces in Franco-American relations (2002-) preceding the American invasion of Iraq during March 2003. American claims of Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction and the need for a militarist solution to the problem precipitated a diplomatic crisis of sorts between the two countries. For the French, any military action – regardless of the nature of the threat posed to international security – could only be authorised through explicit authorisation from the United Nations Security Council. For the Americans, this institution served no apparent purpose if it did not act as a rubber stamp for American interests. Though the diplomatic discord between France and the United States over Iraq was certainly heated, the possibility of war was never on the cards. Assessments of the future course of Franco-American relations, this study contends, should be similarly conceived. Two arguments were advanced in support of this proposition. Falling back on the explanatory domain of neo-realist theory, an argument was advanced stressing that nuclear weapons – owing to their destructive nature and the difficulty of mounting an effective defence – have rendered the possibility of war highly improbable. On its own, the logic of nuclear deterrence *is* convincing, as President Chirac himself has alluded. Given this reality, it is rather easy to (mistakenly) conceive the amicability of the Franco-American relationship as a product of the nuclear era. But, as was argued, this relationship has deep historical roots and, as a closer look at French diplomatic discourse has indicated, is embedded within a thoroughgoing appreciation of the liberal credentials of the other.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In the final chapter the focus will fall on providing an overview of the main findings of the study. This will be done by reflecting on the limitations accruing from contemporary theoretical accounts of the democratic peace and, as against this, the alternative approach proffered in this study. The chapter, and study, will conclude by pointing toward areas for future research lying at the intersection of, *inter alia*, IR theory, the agent-structure debate and the theorisation of the democratic peace.

6.1 The main findings

Informed by a growing discontentment with the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon, this study was conceived with a two-fold view in mind. In the first place, it endeavoured to challenge the efficacy of the (neo-)realist-liberal dichotomy in theorising the democratic peace. In the second place, and more progressively, it recognised the failure on the part of contributors on both sides of the theoretical aisle to heed the intersection of the theoretical frameworks thus implicated with the import of context to social theorisation. On their own, the explanatory forces proffered by (neo-)realist and liberal theoreticians of the democratic peace, while capturing in certain contexts a great deal of the forces responsible for the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace, do not capture nearly enough. This deficiency has its origins in a basic failure on the part of both sides to the debate to arrive at a more encompassing (inclusive) ontological rendition of the agent-structure problem in social theory.

Conceived as the inescapable *sine qua non* for social scientific inquiry and social theorisation, the agent-structure problem constitutes in essence an ontological question of the nature and properties of agents and structures, and their interrelationship, as the constitutive elements of the object under investigation. While there is no time-space invariant resolution to this 'problem' (itself a misnomer) forthcoming, the structuralist and agential (individualist) bias depicted in neo-realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace respectively, can hardly be deemed

satisfactory. For one thing, the social world does not operate according to the simplistic prescriptions of either social ontological position. The relationship between agents and structures and the very properties constitutive of each are marked by complexity. Part of the explanation for this derives from the social ontological position advanced in this study. There is, this study contended, no static (hence time-space invariant) conception of the relationship between agents and structures. Whilst recognising the import of both agents and structures (and their interdependence) to outcomes of social behaviour, their interrelationship within specific spatio-temporal dimensions is, first and foremost, a product of time and place and can thus be said to reside in a state of flux, removed of any theoretical predetermination.

Yet the theoretical endeavours underpinning (neo-)realist and liberal contributions to the theorisation of the democratic peace patently miss the mark in another respect. The domestic-international dichotomy manifest in the democratic peace literature, informed by the privilege attributed by neo-realist theory to the structural attributes of the international system and, conversely, the emphasis on domestic factors pervasive in liberal conceptions, is a poorly conceived construction. To this end, this study has emphasised the need for a conception of social scientific inquiry (and social causation) as multi-levelled and anti-reductionist, i.e., deriving from differing levels of reality and with each level of reality contributing its own unique (level-specific) causal forces. It does not hold however that every social act will be subjected to all forces extant within the designated environment in which these acts obtain, but instead points toward the import of context in the determination of the influence of differing forces within demarcated settings. The emphasis on a multileveled and anti-reductionist conception of social scientific inquiry is, therefore, not removed from the import of context to social behaviour. The interchange between the social ontological position thus expounded above, and the emphasis on an account of social causation as multi-levelled and anti-reductionist, does therefore locate the theorisation of the democratic peace within the parameters of an alternative framework.

The theoretical argument advanced in this study has at its core two characteristics at once setting it apart from the explanatory frameworks upheld by (neo-)realist and

liberal contributors to the democratic peace research programme. Firstly, it departs on the basis of an insistence that the theorisation of the democratic peace should be predicated on a multitheoretical approach, recognising the import of both agents and structures, located at the domestic and international levels respectively. Secondly, the forces implicated in this regard are themselves predicated on issues of time and space. Within a given context, consequently, the theoretical primacy of one theoretical framework may trump the explanatory forces of another, without the effect(s) of the latter necessarily being without purchase. This highlights the existence of primary versus secondary explanations in accounting for social outcomes.

The inclusion of the import of context to social theorisation does not obtain without rejecting some of the more entrenched assumptions accruing from a positivistically grounded conception of social theorisation. The emphasis on observable regularities, deriving from the positivist adherence to a phenomenalist conception of knowledge and existence, and by implication the notion of empiricism, has occasioned the theoretical construction of context-independent laws of social behaviour. Moreover, the very principles embodied in natural scientific ideal theory – the emulation of which constitutes a central leitmotif in positivist thought – are predicated on a conception of social theorisation at odds with any reference to issues of context or, more problematically, the complex and contextually determined interaction of differing forces within and over time. Owing to this shortcoming, therefore, and by stressing the import of a context-dependent approach to social theorisation, this study has questioned the efficacy of any notion of a general (time-space invariant) theory of international relations phenomena and, subsequently, the democratic peace phenomenon. It is for reasons touching on the import of context to social behaviour and social theorisation that this study furthermore rejected the feasibility of a theoretical synthesis in accounting for the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon.

In defence of the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach thus proffered, three cases – derivative of a methodological sample stretching across time and space – were advanced. This took the form of an analysis of the peace-inducing forces in Anglo-American relations (1861-63 and 1895-96) and, more contemporarily

grounded, Franco-American relations (2002-). In some quarters, undoubtedly, the rationale for selecting the first two cases could very well be met with a certain sense of academic suspicion. In what sense, the critical observer might ask, could either Britain or the United States be conceived as liberal states? On the score of modern standards and definitions of the term liberal democratic, neither of course fit the bill entirely. But that is at any rate not the point. The point underscored in this study is that both countries have historically been considered as the most liberal of states at any given moment in time within the international system. In the nineteenth century world of international politics, these two states – regardless of their patent shortcomings in respect of modern conceptions of liberal states – did constitute the quintessential paragons of liberal ideology. An outright war between these two states, once they perceived each other as liberal, would therefore go a long way in undermining the explanatory power of liberal theories of the democratic peace. But of course there have been no such incidents, not that this provide in any measure – as this study has indicated – unqualified confirmation of the explanatory viability of liberalism.

The three cases put under the microscope provided ample evidence of the fallacy of mono-theoretical and context-*independent* explanatory frameworks in theorising the democratic peace phenomenon. In fact, all three cases have upheld the theoretically grounded contention – though, of course, in differing measures in accordance with differing spatio-temporal realities – of the need to approach the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon from a more encompassing and contextually determined explanatory framework. This has not led to a wholesale rejection of the theoretical arguments postulated by (neo-)realist and liberal contributors to the debate. As was argued from the outset, the forces identified by both realist and liberal contributors to the democratic peace have, in some measure, legitimate historical grounding. But in an attempt to arrive at a more cogent explanatory account of the democratic peace phenomenon, recognition must be forthcoming that the arguments rooted in either explanatory framework are somewhat overblown. Nor do they in any measure heed the extent to which the theoretical forces constituting the bedrock of either explanatory framework are themselves subjected to issues of time and space. It is this basic deficiency, embodied in the furnishing of mono-theoretical and theory-universal explanatory accounts of the democratic peace, that

moreover provides the impetus for the politicisation of the empirical observation of no wars underpinning the democratic peace, and which constitutes in essence the explanatory crisis that this study has endeavoured to transcend.

6.2 IR theory and the democratic peace: notes for a future research agenda

It was never the contention of this study that the entire spectrum of forces, however conceived, was bound to be (or even could be) captured in respect of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon. Nonetheless, the advancement of an alternative framework in service of theorising the democratic peace has rendered, the author argues, a more cogent explanatory framework in respect of theoretical engagement with the object of study. Furthermore, the theoretical argument thus advanced has pointed towards not only the necessity of transcending the (neo-)realist-liberal dichotomy pervasive in the democratic peace research programme, but also the tenability of alternative constructs of the democratic peace. Yet a more thorough understanding of the conditions and forces constructing the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace remains, irrespective of the results accruing from this study, a theoretical and practical imperative. Towards this end, a number of areas for future research on the democratic peace can be identified, taking into account, on the one hand, current and future threats and issues with reference to the long-term sustainability of the democratic peace and, on the other hand, certain theoretical challenges (historically and contemporarily conceived). In respect of the former, four such areas emerge:

One, the theorisation of the democratic peace phenomenon remains, for better or worse, a state-centric endeavour. Both (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace convey an undeniable bias toward a conception of the state as enduring and functional (Hoffman, 1995:168), and in which states have at their disposal a certain amount of control over that which transpires within their territory. As opposed to this, states are increasingly subjected to complex forms of (global) governance, typified by the inclusion and interaction of a wide array of actors and institutions unaccountable in any concrete sense to domestic constituencies who suffer the fate of decisions unanimously reached by these globally operative actors and institutions (see for instance, McGrew, 2005). In what sense then, one may ask,

is the future of the liberal peace threatened by the erosion of democracy at the local (domestic) level? Doyle (2007:191), notably, has conceded that the process of globalisation “both sustains elements of the Kantian [liberal] peace and also undermines it, making it less sustainable and indeed vitiating some of the democracy on which it is founded”. Whilst this is a good point of departure, more studies are needed in order to fully comprehend the implications of the process of globalisation on the sustainability of the democratic peace.

Two, the rise of China to great power status seems, at this moment in time, highly probable. If the democratic peace phenomenon is – as some realists contend (see in this regard chapter three) – the result of American military and political hegemony and China’s rise poses a challenge to this state of affairs, to what extent then should we expect the liberal peace to hold? Will China’s rise thus pit liberal states against one another or bolster notions of a common threat and the need for ideological uniformity, creating a political climate akin to the Cold War era? In the likely event of such an outcome becoming a reality, should liberal states pro-actively act to thwart such a possibility? Alternatively, if China were to undergo an intensive political process of transformation towards liberal democracy, will this finally usher in a truly peaceful international system? Or are such questions at any rate redundant, given the logic of nuclear deterrence? And finally, what repercussions could we expect in the face of the concurrent rise of China and, of a more recent nature, criticisms of the failure of liberal economic policies (see for instance, Gerson, 2010)?

Three, as the bungled American invasion of Iraq has demonstrated, the attempt at enlarging the democratic zone of peace is highly problematic. How can Western liberal states expand this zone of peace without precipitating a democratic backlash? More importantly, how prudent can it be to utilise the democratic peace theory as the basis for policy when the underlying theoretical forces remain, as this study has argued, a work-in-progress? Will such endeavours to expand the zone of peace not lead to divisions among liberal states themselves and, if so, are these divisions (as the Franco-American case has illustrated) surmountable? To what extent is it possible that non-liberal zones of peace, say, a communist-inspired zone of peace, could become the defining feature of the twenty-first century?

Four, the emergence of a politically unified Europe as a counterweight to American power (were it to endure) is not wholly absurd. While Europe is currently experiencing a wave of economic setbacks, it could be these very conditions that provide the springboard for a more united Europe. What effect, if any, would a united Europe have on both the enlargement of the democratic zone of peace and the maintenance of the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon? More speculatively, in the absence of American hegemony, and the subsequent rise of China and a politically unified Europe, would Europe suffice in carrying the torch of the liberal republics and work to sustain (and enlarge) the liberal zone of peace? And is this a realistic political scenario given that a disconcerting trend in Europe towards retrogressive conservatism (especially in Germany) is seemingly emerging?

Providing answers to these questions require, in large measure, some sort of theoretical understanding of the peace-inducing forces inherent in the democratic peace phenomenon. In respect of the *theorisation* of the democratic peace, and whilst remaining cognisant of the multitheoretical and context-dependent approach proffered here, a number of issues should form the core of a properly conceived future research agenda:

One, it seems from the theoretical argument advanced here that the full complexity of the dyadic nature of the democratic peace is yet to be fully explored. If the tenability of a multitheoretical approach is to be deemed legitimate, what implications do this hold for the theorisation of the relations between liberal and non-liberal states? What role could issues of time and space play in these relations? Also, are there any fundamental differences in the manner in which liberal states conducted their relations with non-liberal states during, for instance, the nineteenth century as opposed to their more recent dealings with each other, or are we to expect a similarity of causal forces across time?

Two, the agent-structure debate holds an important key to unlocking some of the puzzles inherent in the democratic peace. Theoretical accounts of the democratic peace have not done enough to substantiate their theoretical arguments in developments within social theory and/or the philosophy of science, nor have they

sufficiently questioned the extent to which differing social ontological positions could be complementary and lead to a more encompassing explanatory account of the democratic peace. Furthermore, a basic point of departure for future studies on the democratic peace must be, as this study has contended, recognition of the import of both agents and structures to the theorisation of the democratic peace, without reducing the properties of one to that of the other. The latter proposition, i.e., the emphasis on anti-reductionism in social scientific inquiry, should similarly inform questions earmarked toward identifying the level at which social explanation should proceed. Therefore, what benefits can be gleaned from a more thorough incorporation of advancements in respect of the agent-structure problem and the level-of-analysis problem? What pitfalls are there in utilising these instruments, given that they naturally do not constitute a disciplinary panacea?

Three, whilst the theoretical argument advanced in these pages has, the author believes, gained credence through an examination of the historical record, the three cases thus examined cannot be said to be enough. It does however represent an opening for future research. Probing more cases remains therefore an imperative. Future cases to be put under the microscope should also, where possible, attempt to move away from the patently Anglo-American (but also, great power) bias forming the bedrock of empirical analysis in search of confirming or rejecting theoretical frameworks geared toward explicating the democratic peace. Alternatively, in the absence of a sufficient number of cases in this regard, researchers could probe both the peace- and war-inducing forces accruing from the relations between liberal and non-liberal states, with the caveat of being directed by a more encompassing conception of the spectrum of forces operative in this regard. With this in mind, researchers could extend their research endeavours beyond the confines of the Western world. What insights, for instance, are to be gleaned by embedding the theorisation of the democratic peace in the diplomatic history of Western (specifically European and American) engagement with Africa? While some of these directives are perhaps not novel, a renewed (theoretically and ontologically more encompassing) look at old questions might prove a worthwhile endeavour.

Four, in respect of the theorisation of the democratic peace, neoclassical realism holds definite promise. It provides a more encompassing explanatory account than

that postulated by classical realism and, conversely, Waltzian structuralism. Would a re-examination of the historical record through a neoclassical realist lens lead us to accept or reject the theoretical conclusions set forth by (neo-)realist and liberal contributors of the democratic peace? Is a neoclassical realist account of the democratic peace even possible given that its primary adherents, notably Layne (2006), has restricted its explanatory use to the post-Second World War era and, more specifically, to issues of grand strategy?

And finally, attention should be given to the extent to which the ratio of realist to liberal explanatory forces in accounting for the democratic peace, as contended in this study, changes over time and in accordance with specific spatio-temporal realities. Is it possible that, with time, the ratio of realist to liberal explanatory forces could constitute an inverse proposition (i.e., an increase in the explanatory import of the one entails a decrease in the other) to the extent that realist explanatory forces amount to very little? To what extent is it possible for liberal states to unlearn (if this is deemed possible) the specific assumptions leading to the import of realist explanatory forces in state action? Or are decision makers eternally doomed to be governed by the specific assumptions forming the bedrock of (neo-)realist theory?

Framed against this backdrop, the attempt at arriving at a more encompassing, and contextually informed, construct of the democratic peace constitutes a theoretical and practical imperative. A more thoroughgoing understanding of the central forces underlying the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace must presuppose all attempts at expanding the liberal zone of peace. This imperative is, however, deeply embedded in the notion that the liberal peace project remains the only viable option for future discourse and action in respect of international security issues. The question therefore must be: to what extent are alternative (non-liberal) models of international security likely to emerge and entrench themselves in the policy discourse of the (emerging) great powers of the twenty-first century?

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical accounts in search of explicating the no war phenomenon inherent in the democratic peace proposition continue to permeate the discipline of International Relations (IR) at an imposing rate, giving credence to claims that the democratic peace research programme has obtained a position of pre-eminence within the discipline. Moreover, continued theoretical engagement with the democratic peace has resulted in the steadfast progression in the endorsement and, in some instances, the outright utilisation (read: manipulation) of the democratic peace theory as a panacea for real-world challenges facing Western policy makers. The emphasis on the democracy-peace nexus, grounded in liberal interpretations of the democratic peace, is however inherently problematic as the debate on the democratic peace remains essentially a project-in-process. Explanatory accounts of the democratic peace have thus far proceeded through an ontologically dichotomous framework in which the democratic peace is reduced to either structural or agential (individualist) accounts of (international) social and political outcomes. This has pitted the structural prioritisation embedded within (neo-)realist theory against the patently individualist nature of liberal theories of the democratic peace. Coinciding with this has been a failure of theoreticians on both sides of the theoretical aisle in transcending the domestic-international dichotomy accruing from their theoretical frameworks. This has meant that the theorisation of the democratic peace has failed in a twofold manner. Firstly, and if conceived as a problem peculiar to the agent-structure problem in social theory, the mutual exclusivity of agents and structures, embedded within the theoretical frameworks of liberal and (neo-)realist conceptions of the democratic peace, does not hold. Secondly, the domestic-international dichotomy thus accruing from the ontological positions upheld by these theoretical frameworks has provided little room for an alternative (multileveled) account of social explanation.

In an attempt at addressing these shortcomings, this study highlights the need for a conception of social theorisation and, by implication, the democratic peace more attentive to the import of both agents and structures, located at the domestic and international levels respectively. A multitheoretical approach to the theorisation of the democratic peace will be advanced, drawing on both the structural and individualist

arguments embedded within (neo-)realist and liberal theories of the democratic peace. This should not be construed as an attempt at arriving at a theoretical synthesis. Such a conception is anathema to the approach to be advanced in this study. By arguing for a conception of social life as inherently complex, this study will further attempt to transcend the theory-universal (context-independent) explanatory accounts derivative of (neo-)realist and liberal conceptions of the democratic peace by pointing towards the import of context to social theorisation and social conduct. The exclusion of context in social theorisation, derivative of a positivist theory of science, is challenged by providing a conception of social theorisation and social conduct as subjected to issues of time and place. Within such a conception of social life stressing the interplay of forces within and across time and space, the notion of a theoretical synthesis cannot but be left by the wayside. The multitheoretical and context-dependent argument to be advanced will be bolstered by probing the peace-inducing forces in Anglo-American relations (1861-1863 and 1895-1896) and Franco-American relations (2002-). Anglo-American relations, 1861-63, focusing on the diplomacy of the *Trent* affair and beyond, has highlighted the extent to which a multitheoretical approach is theoretically tenable. Similarly, the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuelan boundary dispute, 1895-96, entailing British appeasement of the United States, was grounded, in part, in an unfavourable distribution of military capabilities on the part of Britain *vis-à-vis* the United States. However, British appeasement was also grounded in the existence of liberal explanatory forces deeming any war against the (liberal) democratic United States as unacceptable. The theoretical argument postulated will conclude by probing the peace-inducing effects concerned with Franco-American relations in response to the Iraq War. That Franco-American relations were ever in any real danger of erupting into armed conflict (or even war) is, of course, beside the point. The argument, rather, will explicate the nexus between realist and liberal explanatory forces as mitigating factors in preventing the transformation from conflict to war, with the neo-realist emphasis on the peace-inducing effects of nuclear weapons and the comparable effect of liberal values and institutions fixing the range of acceptable outcomes.

Die voortbrenging van teoretiese raamwerke ten doel om 'n omvattende verklaring te bied vir die afwesigheid van oorloë tussen (liberaal-)demokratiese state – die

sentrale kenmerk van die demokratiese vredesteorie – blyk `n voortdurende invloed op die dissipline van Internasionale Verhoudinge (IV) uit te oefen, en verskaf geloofwaardigheid aan stellings betreffende die dominansie van die demokratiese vredesteorie as navorsingsprogram binne die bestek van IV. Die voortgesette teoretiese verbintenis met vraagstukke rondom die demokratiese vredesteorie het die toenemende relevansie en, in sommige gevalle, inkorporasie van die demokratiese vredesteorie as `n instrument vir beleidsvorming en –implementering binne die veiligheidsdiskoers van Westerse beleidsvormers geïmpliseer. Die klem op die samehang tussen demokrasie en vrede, gefundeerd in liberale interpretasies van die demokratiese vredesteorie, is egter inherent problematies, aangesien die polemieë oor die demokratiese vrede steeds in wese onafgehandel is. Verklarings ten opsigte van die demokratiese vrede het tot op hede by wyse van `n ontologies-tweeledige raamwerk geskied, waarin die demokratiese vrede tot óf strukturele óf agent-gesentreerde (individualistiese) verklarings van (internasionale) sosiale en politieke uitkomst gereduseer is. Dít het by implikasie die strukturele voorrang gefundeerd in (neo-)realisme in direkte teenstelling met die kennelik individualistiese aard van liberale teorieë van die demokratiese vrede geplaas. Dié tekortkoming hou egter nou verband met die onvermoë van beide partye tot die debat om die interne-eksterne tweeledigheid wat uit hul teoretiese raamwerke voortspruit, te bowe te gaan. Met inagneming van dié tekortkominge, misluk die teoretisering van die demokratiese vrede derhalwe op `n tweevoudige wyse. Eerstens, en indien dit gereduseer word tot `n kwessie eie aan die agent-struktuur probleem in sosiale teorie, die onderlinge eksklusiwiteit van agente en strukture, gefundeerd in die teoretiese raamwerke van beide liberale en (neo-)realistiese voorstellings van die demokratiese vrede, is onjuis. Tweedens, die interne-eksterne tweeledigheid, wat voortspruit uit die ontologiese posisies voorgehou deur dié teoretiese raamwerke, bied weinig ruimte vir `n alternatiewe (veelvlakkige) begrip van sosiale verklaring.

Ten einde dié tekortkominge aan te spreek, beklemtoon hierdie studie die noodsaaklikheid van `n begrip van sosiale teoretisering en, by implikasie, die demokratiese vrede wat meer doelmatig gerig is op die belang van beide agente en strukture – intern en ekstern gesitueer – ten einde `n meer omvattende verklaring van sosiale uitkomst te bied. Vervolgens sal `n multiteoretiese benadering tot die teoretisering van die demokratiese vredesteorie voorgehou word, waarin die

argumente vervat in beide (neo-)realistiese en liberale teorieë as prominent geag word. Dít impliseer egter nie dat hierdie studie die weg wil/sal baan vir `n teoretiese sintese met betrekking tot die teoretisering van die demokratiese vrede nie. Sodanige onderneming sal indruis teen die teoretiese argument wat in hierdie studie voorgehou word. Deur die fokus te plaas op `n meer komplekse begrip van die sosiale, sal die studie verder poog om die teorie-universele (konteks-onafhanklike) verklarings tekenend van (neo-)realistiese en liberale voorstellings van die demokratiese vrede te bowe te gaan. Dit sal vermag word deur te wys op die belangrikheid van konteks tot die onderneming van sosiale teoretisering en sosiale gedrag. Die uitsluiting van konteks in sosiale teoretisering, met as sentrale oorsaak die verbintenis tot `n positivistiese wetenskapsteorie, sal uitgedaag word op grond van `n begrip van sosiale teoretisering en sosiale gedrag as onderworpe aan tydruimtelike kwessies. Binne die bestek van sodanige begrip sal, namate die argument blootgelê word, die idee van `n teoretiese sintese volkome verwerp word.

Die teoretiese argument wat derhalwe voorgehou word, gefundeerd in `n multiteoretiese en konteks-afhanklike benadering, sal versterk werk deur die spesifieke vrede-afdwingbare oorsake in Anglo-Amerikaanse betrekkinge (1861-1863 en 1895-1896), sowel as Frans-Amerikaanse betrekkinge (2002-), krities-analities te ontleed. Anglo-Amerikaanse betrekkinge, 1861-63, met as fokuspunt die diplomatie van die *Trent*-aangeleentheid en verder, verskaf geloofwaardigheid aan die noodsaaklikheid van `n multiteoretiese benadering. Die Anglo-Amerikaanse krisis rakende die Venezolaanse grensgeskil, 1895-96, was eweneens gefundeerd in `n noodsaaklike samehang tussen die vrede-afdwingbare oorsake voorgehou deur beide neo-realistiese en liberale teorieë van die demokratiese vrede. Die teoretiese argument sal afsluit deur die spesifieke vrede-afdwingbare oorsake in Frans-Amerikaanse betrekkinge (2002-) in reaksie op die Irakese Oorlog te verreken. Dat Frans-Amerikaanse betrekkinge die moontlikheid van konflik (of selfs oorlog) ooit in die gesig gestaar het, is natuurlik nie ter sake nie. Die argument sal eerder wys op die samehang tussen die spesifieke vrede-afdwingbare oorsake voorgehou deur neo-realisme (spesifiek: kernwapens) sowel as die liberale fokus op waardes en instellings as bepaalde instrumente om die moontlikheid van oorlog te verwyder.

Key terms: the democratic peace; the liberal peace; neo-realism; liberalism; the agent-structure debate; positivism; theory-universality; multitheoretical approach; context-dependent approach; Anglo-American relations; Franco-American relations