

# **International Perspectives on Democratization and Peace**

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# International Perspectives on Democratization and Peace

EDITED BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2020

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-068-6 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-067-9 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-069-3 (Epub)



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## Acknowledgments

The collection of chapters contained in this book draw from an international workshop on Democratization and Peace held at the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon in December 2018. While not all the papers presented are included in this volume, some effort has been made to ensure that the entire project coheres theoretically and in terms of geographical representation. The fundamental puzzle addressed in this volume is what is the impact of the process of democratization on civil conflicts?

The workshop and the chapters presented drew on the efforts of academics from the Hiroshima Peace Institute in Japan and the Institute for Political Studies at the Catholic University. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Joao Carlos Espada, the founding Director of the Institute and a distinguished scholar in his own right. The workshop also benefitted from the assistance provided by Monica Dias who attended to the paper writers from Lisbon. On the Japanese side, the team was financially supported by a peace project research grant provided by the Institute and the Hiroshima City University. Makiko Takemoto was the project leader and chapter contributor on Cambodia in this book.

At the broader level, the workshop was supported by a generous grant from the German Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and its Madrid office manager Dr Wilhelm Hofmeister. The Stiftung has been a generous supporter of projects that address important political issues, and we are deeply thankful for this and other support that has been forthcoming for more than two decades in various parts of Asia and Europe now.

Lastly, we would like to thank the administrative and support staff at the Institute for Political Studies in Lisbon as well as the assistance provided by Nick Wolterman from the Emerald Publishing Group. The Hiroshima Peace Institute has an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute for Political Studies that hosted the meeting. We are especially thankful to Nick Wolterman for his early and sustained interest in the chapters and providing us the opportunity to publicize the work to a broader audience.

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# Introduction

*N. Ganesan*

This edited volume examines two important concepts in political science and their interrelatedness in turn. The first of these, peace, is a state of being that minimizes social conflicts and seeks to allow individuals and groups to live harmoniously with each other. Traditionally, it was defined *via negatio* as a condition that precludes conflict. However, this definition has since been revised to identify peace in more positive ways that enhance human fulfillment rather than just a situation where no overt conflict obtains. Additionally, as Mónica Dias notes in the first chapter it is to be regarded as a process that involves non-violent means in the resolution of potential conflicts that abound in human interactions.

The second concept democratization harkens to the notion of sovereignty residing in the citizens of a country. This idea traces itself to the Enlightenment and Rousseau in particular who wrote on contractual government that exercised powers in the public domain on the basis of the explicit agreement of citizens. In other words, since state sovereignty resided in citizens, their explicit consent had to be obtained in order for them to be governed. And the transfer of this power was done through a competitive election that is free and fair in terms of participation as well as contestation. Broad-based participation that is typically extended to all adults is often referred to as universal suffrage. This inclusion also undergirds the important recognition of the equality of all citizens. Contestation, on the other hand, is a reference to the existence of a plural party system that offers choice and precludes a monopoly on the exercise of power. States also invariably impose term limits on elected governments so that their exercise of power is subjected to constant and regular approval by citizens. American political scientists have also long claimed that the presence of a sizeable middle class tends to guarantee that democratic norms obtain. This segment of the population is also valued for the stability of society and in turn the state as well.

There are other norms that are typically associated with a democracy. Such norms often include certain freedoms that are regarded as fundamental to human existence. These are the freedom of speech, thought, action, and association. Naturally, such liberties only obtain on the basis of the proviso that others may exact an equivalent portion of such liberties and these do not infringe on the like rights of others. Liberal democracies that are popular in the West also include

constitutional safeguards for the exercise of such rights so that even an elected government has to observe them as constitutive rules of the game.

Given the popularity of democracies and the political legitimacy that is thought to accrue from them, this regime type has been the favorite of countries that regard themselves to be politically developed and transparent in terms of governance. Consequently, it is a goal that developing countries often aspire toward and is certainly strongly supported internationally. During the Cold War, this regime type was associated with Western countries and in particular the United States and Europe, while the Soviet Union championed socialism and communism that theoretically at least privileged the importance of the community over the individual. Given the ideological conflicts associated with this period, it was unsurprising that both types of government were heavily politicized then.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism in the late 1980s brought renewed interest in liberal democracy and the United States in particular celebrated what it regarded as the triumph of its political model over all others. Liberal democracy had seemingly emerged victorious in the battle of ideologies and there was much interest and enthusiasm in the Third Wave of democracy as proposed by Samuel Huntington. The conclusion of the Cold War also decoupled many civil conflicts from their external linkages as countries sought to bring about a peaceful end to internal strife. And democracy and democratization were viewed as ways to bring about such reconciliation and development. Democracy was seen as a way to mediate conflicts by channeling them into legitimate and peaceful forms of political contestation. Additionally, it was also hypothesized that democracies had a much lesser propensity to become involved in conflicts and in particular into conflict among themselves. United Nation's Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali's call for a peace agenda in 1992 provided further impetus to solving internal conflicts and the UN became deeply involved in peacekeeping operations in order to actualize this agenda.

These are the theoretical and structural considerations that have informed the authors of this book. Chapter writers were specifically tasked to work on how democracy and democratization had impacted on civil conflicts and whether the introduction of it had indeed yielded a peace dividend. They were specifically asked to address how the conflicts were linked to great powers outside and many of the authors indicate how the civil conflicts were artefacts of the Cold War. Additionally, they were also asked to detail the historical roots of the conflict and previous attempts at mediating them. Then they were tasked to look at the impact of democratization on the conflict and importantly how the introduction of democracy had transformed the conflict. In other words, did democracy yield the peace dividend that is often attributed to its adoption?

Arising from this core consideration were related methodological issues that had to be resolved in order for an edited volume to cohere. As a result of such considerations, it was decided that the book would be divided into three parts. The first part that anchors the entire enterprise begins with a theoretical exploration on the two concepts of democracy and peace and how and why they can be interrelated. Accordingly, Mónica Dias's chapter in the first section addresses this core question and also helps to undergird the case studies that appear in the

second section. She emphasizes the importance of removing the possibility of indirect violence in order to achieve the goal of human fulfillment within a free and just environment that is conducive to human development in general. The argument also regards such development as premised in turn on political empowerment and participation. Such a situation should involve the rule of law and only allow the state and its agencies the legitimate use of force. It should also obtain social justice and encourage and sustain pluralism as a virtue that promotes the conflict transformation into peaceful outcomes.

The second chapter in the first section is devoted to looking at how colonization has had a deleterious impact on democratization and peace. Robert Jacobs who writes about the horrendous experiences of the Pacific Islands that were subjected to nuclear weapons testing during the Cold War provides a worst-case scenario on how bad things could get. The Marshall Islands and French Polynesia were trust territories and colonies where the United States and France, respectively, tested large numbers of the most destructive nuclear weapons that made these atolls uninhabitable. The inhabitants' weak political situation and the callous disregard of the colonial countries are described as major reasons for their fate. There was no moral responsibility accepted for the wanton violence inflicted on entire territories and little by way of compensation and remedy of the situation afterward. While the countries chosen for the case studies themselves have not undergone such dramatic negative impacts on their peoples, this chapter informs readers on the impact of decisions made in remote places on the lives of colonized peoples. And it is noteworthy how many of the writers who examine the country case studies directly link the colonial process to some of the problems that obtain there today. The case of Myanmar and Sri Lanka in Asia and Angola and Mozambique in Africa in particular stand out in terms of the negative impact of the process and its impact on democratization in turn. This issue will be further discussed in the conclusion at the end of the book.

The second section comprises a total of seven case studies that are drawn from three different continents. Three of the case studies are drawn from Asia and they are Cambodia, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. Then, there are two chapters that examine the Latin American countries of Guatemala and Colombia. The latter case is one of the most recent and celebrated cases of the end of civil conflict. And in fact it may be remembered how this region was a source of intensive research on democratization in the 1970s given its proliferation of military authoritarian regimes many of which were also artefacts of the Cold War. Finally, there are two case studies from Africa as well and they are Angola and Mozambique. The intention of such broad representation and number of cases was again driven by methodological considerations. The first of these was the representativeness of the volume in examining case studies from all over the world. The second was the tradeoff between specificity and generalizability. The literature on comparative studies regards these two qualities as somewhat mutually exclusive and often inversely correlated. We wanted to have a list of generalizable propositions drawn from the large number of case studies and importantly the cases would also be drawn from different geographical regions for content and context validity.

All of the countries chosen were in a state of civil conflict and democracy had an impact on the conflict. Cambodia had a dramatic UN-supervised intervention that sought an end to a political situation that had led to the loss of approximately 1.5 million lives. It is regarded as the worst case of state sponsored violence in Southeast Asia. The chapter writer, Makiko Takemoto, draws on the Western and Japanese literature to examine the nature of the intervention and how democracy had impacted on the civil conflict. The first obstacle was the Khmer Rouge that refused to go into cantonment and disarm. Fortunately though, the group relocated to peripheral areas in the country and over time was partly defeated and partly absorbed into the national army.

She goes on to conclude that while the initial impact was positive in the installation of co-Prime Ministers as part of a government of national reconciliation in 1993, that situation collapsed shortly afterwards in 1997 with renewed factional fighting. While international mediation again brought that conflict to an end, the democratic peace that had previously obtained did not have an enduring quality. And she attributes this development to the authoritarian tendencies of Prime Minister Hun Sen who sought to consolidate his own power to the detriment of the political opposition. This development appears to be seemingly aided by China, the country's external sponsor that does not impose conditionalities on aid and assistance unlike Japan and the European Union that were the two major earlier sponsors of the peace process. She ends the chapter by wondering whether Asian cultures and political systems have tendencies that may not support democracies.

The chapter on Myanmar by N. Ganesan looks at the country's ethnic peace process following the onset of democratization in 2010. This conflict has some of its roots in British colonization of the country and its uneven development as well as the failure of territorial and political unification prior to the country's political independence in 1948. A long-lasting military authoritarian regime and the reification of ethnicity all fed into minority disenchantment and insurgency. While the first government of President Thein Sein was only nominally civilian, it undertook to bring the large number of ethnic armed groups in the country into a process of sustained engagement that subsequently led 8 of the 16 groups to sign on to a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in October 2015. Although the NCA was unable to include all the groups, the number of groups that signed it have grown to 10 under the government led by Aung San Suu Kyi that came into power in 2016. While democratization has had a transformative impact on the civil conflict in Myanmar, levels of political violence have continued to remain high. This is especially true in Kachin and the northern Shan states. Fighting has continued between signatories and non-signatories and the military as well as among the ethnic groups themselves. Such fighting is often over control of territory and resources. This is one of the case studies that is not embedded within Cold War dynamics since the country adopted an isolationist foreign policy after the military coup of 1962. However, there are external linkages since geographically proximate countries like China, India, and Thailand are involved in the conflict. The European Union and Norway in particular have been very supportive of the peace process, and China has recently stepped up its role to try and broker

the peace between the Northern Alliance that brings seven groups together and the Myanmar government.

Raquel Duque's chapter on the conflict in Sri Lanka between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan government is the third Asian case study. This case is a little different from the others in that a democratically elected government chose to wage war to end the conflict leading to very high levels of political violence and a large number of casualties. The recently elected government appears to be more moderate in its approach and sought to include the minority Tamil community structurally and electorally. Again, in this case, the grievances are deep rooted and trace themselves back to the colonial period when the Tamils had an advantage politically and socio-economically. In terms of external linkages, India which is the regional power in South Asia intervened directly in the conflict taking different sides at different times. The reconciliation process is described as ongoing although there are international concerns over the large number of missing persons associated with the conflict. In fact, the government announced in January 2020 that the some 20,000 missing Tamils should be presumed to be dead. There has also been recent turbulence in the political process in terms of disagreements between the President and the Prime Minister in 2019 with the former attempting to subvert the electoral process. Fortunately though, the threat of political instability which is always a harbinger of violence has been put to rest, at least for now.

The case studies from Latin America are complicated and in the case of Colombia were only recently solved. Margarita Cuervo Iglesias's chapter on Colombia is an extremely important case study of a very recent successfully engineered end to five decades of violence in Colombia, an achievement that won President Juan Manuel Santos the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016. She traces the roots of the conflict and points to deeply embedded structural causes of violence with multiple actors. The situation was exaggerated by center-periphery tensions that made governance of the country an issue. A long history of violence that included paramilitary organizations and drug trafficking networks is described as having contributed to the violence. Regional and social exclusion resulting from an unfair land tenure system and the state's poor response to social transformations that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s are also viewed as important contributing factors to the situation. The ensuing vicious cycle of violence is described as being exaggerated by the use of paramilitary groups even by the state. The resulting instability in the country is also described as having had a spillover effect on the neighboring countries of Ecuador and Venezuela that were used by some of the armed groups to wage rearguard action. Important external sponsors to the national peace process included Norway and Germany in the 1990s although early efforts bore little success. Consequently, the peace process was long drawn out and staggered. Additionally, democratization did not initially advance the peace process since political violence was regularly employed competitively and democracy brought administrative decentralization that in turn empowered regional elites who were often part of the cycle of violence. It was only after 51 rounds of negotiations that an agreement was finally reached and even then a plebiscite handed the peace deal a narrow defeat on account of issues related to justice and political participation.

Fortunately, negotiations with disgruntled political and social groups eventually produced an agreement that was subsequently ratified by the Senate. In this regard, it may be noted that the country's political executive were involved in some rather ingenious and tactical maneuvers that eventually yielded an acceptable peace agreement. Notwithstanding the agreement, Iglesias describes the ongoing challenges to operationalize the agreements and how local and regional elections in 2019 will offer more glimpses of how the new situation will affect politics at the ground level. However, she does acknowledge significantly lower levels of violence since 2016.

José Carlos Sanabria Arias's chapter on Guatemala harkens to many of the same reasons that accounted for the political violence in Colombia. Sanabria flags the unfair land distribution system inherited from Spanish colonization as one of the root structural causes of the civil conflict in Guatemala. However, in this case, the situation was exaggerated by the direct involvement of the United States in support of the United Fruit Company as part of its involvement in the Cold War. The subsequent overthrow of the Arbenz government in 1954 that included major reversal of previous land reforms in turn sparked an insurgency. The American involvement in the country and its support of the military in dealing with the insurgency further exaggerated the scale and scope of the violence. It was the dynamics associated with the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the *Grupo Contadora* led by regional countries aimed at promoting democracy in Central America that yielded substantive results toward peace in Guatemala. Sanabria alerts us to a drawn out decade long negotiation process spread over four governments that began in Madrid in 1987 and culminated in the 1996 peace agreement. Again, just like in the case of Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Colombia, Norway was involved in brokering the dispute and hosting the peace talks. Key to resolving the conflict is structural and institutional reforms that promote human development in an integrated manner. Strengthening democracy and its related institutions and processes was also identified as a key priority to move the reconciliation process forward. The ongoing political changes since 2015 are identified as part of an important and ongoing process in the entrenchment of democratic norms that are meant to ensure long term political stability. The strengthening of the plural political party system and constitutional reforms are an integral part of this process. Similarly, the justice system and the rule of law are also identified as important issues that require attention. Sanabria concludes by noting how the peace process and democratization are deeply intertwined and that there is no prospect for peace without substantive democratization. He goes on to argue that those involved in the peace process are deeply aware of this coupling and the ability of the democratic process to positively transform the country's civil conflicts.

Two African case studies conclude the second section of the book on case studies. The first of these is Angola that achieved its independence from Portugal rather late in 1975 and was faced with three movements that were involved in the struggle for independence. Not unlike many of the other case studies Angola also became embroiled in the dynamics of the Cold War and had a number of external powers including the United States and the Soviet Union involved in the proxy civil war. Consequently, the settlement of the conflict was also linked to the Cold

War and began in New York in December 1988 and it was formalized with the Bicesse Agreements of May 1991. In the Angolan case democracy and a multi-party system was introduced in order to transform the conflict into a legitimate political process involving electoral contestation. However, the introduction of democracy only unleashed political violence that lasted for a decade until 2002 and came to an end when one of the insurgent leaders was killed. Raul Tati argues that Africa in general is plagued with tribalism and related militias and therefore countries that democratize tend in the direction of authoritarianism in order to consolidate state control in the first instance. Consequently, political violence was rife, a situation compounded by the greed associated with the extraction of natural resources. As a result, he argues that democracy in the African context did not carry the positive connotative values and structural norms associated with the Western variant but rather served as a convenient façade for authoritarian appropriation of power and resources. In other words, the landscape of political contestation was always configured in zero sum terms and extremely prone to political violence as a result. Political independence from Portugal therefore only resulted in internal factional fighting for power and control that was exacerbated by the involvement of external powers. He argues that in Angola violence always existed alongside peace talks as all parties sought to strengthen their bargaining position through military means. Hence, the troika of Portugal, the Soviet Union and the United States together with the United Nations simply handed the transition process to the warring factions. And as a result of trying to hurry the process through without proper supervision Tati argues that the process of democratization benefitted one of the insurgent groups that then drew up the rules for the democratic transition strongly skewed in its favor. He concludes by noting that the transformation of the conflict was deeply flawed in the Angolan case and that national interests should have taken greater priority through a slow and mediated reconciliation process fair to all parties. In this regard, he views democracy as having had a deleterious effect on the country in terms of the appropriation of power and spoils arising from it.

António L. Fontes Ramos's chapter on Mozambique begins by looking at the competing Western colonial interests in Africa between Portugal, England, Germany, and Holland. He notes how Mozambique's location close to other resource-rich African countries has led in turn to a skewed horizontal development in the country's communication grid and how this development in turn affected the country's political landscape in terms of poor linkages between the north and south. This situation is exaggerated by strongly rooted mutually exclusive ethnic identities that work against an inclusive national identity. The country was home to a number of anti-colonial movements in the 1960s, and these movements were often based in neighboring countries and drew support from them. Frelimo, the major insurgent group was plagued by ethnic tensions but remained the paramount organization and strongly benefitted from the situation when Portugal transferred power to it in 1975.

Notwithstanding the presence of many other groups that contested political power, Frelimo was able to ruthlessly suppress them and consolidate its own political power. The evolution of a left-leaning autocratic state then worked

toward the consolidation of its own power and sought the creation of a new model citizen. Forced communalization of farmers and economic mismanagement of the country by the new government created new enemies and organizations that often operated from neighboring countries. Consequently, a new organization called Renamo was able to challenge Frelimo and force the latter into peace talks that were held in Rome in 1990. Frelimo however hurried through a new Constitution that privileged it and an election was called two years later with little time for political reconciliation and rehabilitation. A United Nations peacekeeping mission was established during the political transition, but it was too short-lived to ensure national reconciliation. Hence, although the country went through democratization, the voter turnouts became lesser over time and Renamo became disenchanted with Frelimo's structural control of the country. The latter then sought its own political consolidation in provinces where it previously had military strength. Eventually both parties agreed to make changes to the Constitution in 2016 to make it more democratic and representative through political and administrative decentralization. The process of national reconciliation is still fluid and ongoing.

The third section of the book that follows on from the seven case studies has two chapters. The first of these, authored by Gen Kikkawa is a return to broad considerations regarding conceptions of state and human security and possible reasons why non-Western countries do not have the same consensus as the European countries with regard to political structures and procedural norms. His basic argument is that there was a political consensus in the Euro-Atlantic region with regard to the virtues of democracy and peace undergirded by liberal norms. Arising from this fundamental agreement is the region's ability to fashion norms and structures that reflected this pervasive belief. Derivatives of this convergence were multilateral security institutions that promoted shared values and common goals. On the other hand, Kikkawa argues that no such strategic convergence of vision and values obtained in the Asia-Pacific region. Additionally, the Cold War also had a deleterious impact on the region in the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union that led to greater regional tensions and conflict. And the superpowers further worsened the situation by often supporting autocratic clientelist regimes that had little regard for democratization and human rights. Following the collapse of the Cold War, Western and UN-inspired interventions also did not build sufficient state capacity to make liberal democratic values cohere. Rather, these were fleeting attempts to bring a modicum of fast paced peace without structures to deeply embed social rehabilitation to create mutual trust and social capital. Other factors worsening the situation are the US continued reliance on its hub and spokes security strategy derived from the Cold War to maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. This strategic posture negated in turn the ability of regional states to fashion a collective and comprehensive approach to security and peaceful coexistence. Equally challenging is the rise of China and its willingness to ignore domestic political arrangements and grievances to further its own agenda. A convergence of all these developments has shortchanged the region from evolving into an enduring security community with shared norms and values. In fact, Kikkawa's sentiments are echoed in