

**Reham El Morally**

# En-/Discouraging International Cooperations. Benefits and Drawbacks of International Organizations

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**Bibliographic information published by the German National Library:**

The German National Library lists this publication in the National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de> .

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**Imprint:**

Copyright © 2019 GRIN Verlag  
ISBN: 9783346072719

**This book at GRIN:**

<https://www.grin.com/document/492832>

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# **En/Dis-couraging International Cooperation: Benefits and Drawbacks of International Organizations**

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**Abstract:** *The following paper will discuss to what extent do domestic politics impact inter-state cooperation, specifically, whether regime type affects whether states will cooperate over security issues or not. Domestic politics constitute a wide range of subfields under which one can see education, businesses, energy, health care and other sectors of the political apparatus which are determined by the state apparatus. Different regime types approach domestic politics differently and consequentially also have different forms in which they execute foreign policy and behave internationally. The question proposed is meant to assess the extent to which domestic politics affect inter-state cooperation, i.e. to which extent does it matter whether the domestic regime is democratic, autocratic, or fascist regimes affect how the state formulates its foreign policy and engages in agreements with other states. International cooperation is not a new phenomenon, yet it has been heavily understudied throughout the first and second world wars and only gained importance in the cold war period, where cooperation and alliance formations with the increasing number of newly independent states and the bipolar atmosphere of the global arena advocated for the importance of cooperation between states. This research is of importance because the ever-changing atmosphere of global shocks, ranging from security issues to civil wars and internal instability, have all affected how states behave internationally. This study, however, will focus on how inter-state cooperation is independent from domestic regime structures and is rather driven by the Gross National Product (GNP) i.e. the financial strength of the country and Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of the state. The study is expected to unravel the importance of the financial capabilities to increase inter-state cooperation in the lack of an overarching global governance system. Different theoretical frameworks have approached the issue of regime types and their effects on international cooperation differently. This will be discussed in the literature review and the theoretical arguments sections.*

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**Keywords:** International Organizations, International Cooperation, Human Development Index, Foreign Policy, Domestic Policy

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## I. Literature Review

There is a variety of literature analyzing the effects of the different types of domestic regimes and their effects on the conduction of agreements. A piece by Russett and Oneal titled *Triangulating Peace* argues that there are three variables that affect peace: democracy, economic interdependence, and membership in International Governmental Organizations (IGOs). These variables were selected based on Kant's theories put forth in *Perpetual Peace*. that regime type affects the behavior of the state internationally. Moreover, the author states that the different types of domestic regimes are intertwined with the political environment within a state and therefore account for the differences in foreign policies. Domestic regimes, because of their power of establishing the political environment, are of importance when analyzing the effect of international cooperation between states based on the different regimes. There are four subcategories of domestic regimes present in the world today: democracies, autocracies, fascist, and socialist regimes. Each type of domestic regime holds a variety of advantages and disadvantages when analyzing its effects of inert-state cooperation. The following literature review will analyze how different regime types have affected the foreign policy decisions of authoritarian and democratic states.

Liberal institutionalist, such as Michael Doyle, argue that institutions generally endorse international cooperation between their members by closing the gap of information asymmetry, enhancing transparency, credibility, and decrease mistrust and uncertainty (Doyle, 1983). Furthermore, institutionalists believe that the secret for affective cooperation lies in the institutional capacity to promote cooperation through managerial and mediatory to help resolve international disputes and conflicts. Although the institutionalist view does take into account that compliance and enforcement mechanisms disposable for international organizations are virtually nonexistent, they believe that soft mechanism such as reciprocity, the possibility of state retaliation and reputation all filter to restrain states from defecting or

cheating. The delegation of authority to third parties drastically reduce the transaction costs associated with treaty-making, which makes them ultimate for advocates of this framework; they maximize efficiency and reduce costs (Moravscik, 2008). The growing interdependency between states enforced by the increasing interconnectedness induced by globalization, reiterates that international organizations are necessary for the maintenance of international relations and the promotion of international cooperation between states. Furthermore, accountability is one other aspect for which international institutions lack the capacity to execute, however, in democratic regimes the level of accountability is believed to be high, which consequentially means that if member states cannot hold the defectors accountable the domestics will (Keohane, 1984). Moreover, with this knowledge, it is less likely for democratic leaders to defect from international agreements because of the domestic audience cost associated with defection; especially if the representatives are aspiring for re-election. Democratic regimes are most famous for the traits put forth by liberal institutionalists. Democratic regimes therefore enter agreements under the condition that they have sufficient information about the domestic acceptability/rejection of the agreement and are therefore less likely to defect form international agreements to the extent that they shy away from them, if the possibility of defection due to domestic pressure is foreseen (Kant, 1917).

International organizations are believed to promote cooperation indirectly through democratization (Pevehouse, 2002) which is believed to perpetuate international peace and securities as enticed by the democratization theory; democracies do not go to war against each other. This in turn provides fertile ground for states to seek diplomatic solutions, most efficiently, for conflict and dispute resolution instead of resolving to war, which carries more financial and domestic deadweight loss for countries (Russett and Oneal, 2001).

Neorealist views on the other hand, see the world as self-interested individual states, seeking to maximize power and minimize relative losses (Waltz, 1979). For realist scholars,

skepticism dominates interstate cooperation when it comes to questions of ensuring survival. Henceforward, an endless cycle of inter-states distrust exists, and cooperation will occur regardless of the existence of international organizations to mediate, because states will enter agreements that benefit them anyway (Grieco, 1988). Security concerns occupy the forefront for neorealist scholars, yet a balance of power between the hegemons reduces the probability of violent confrontations between states. This means that the unequal power distribution is what causes international stability, and not the international organizations. This draws back on the same point advocated for by institutionalists: the lack of an overarching supranational governing force will always call for skepticism and a power-struggle between states. This indicates that the will of the hegemon to give meaning to international institutions is what substantiates them.

Some scholars however, argue that regime type, international institutions and international organizations are questions beside the point when it comes to cooperation. Scholars such as, Elsig argue that the wealth of a country and welfare, ranging from its GNP to the GDP/capita to human development, lead to the satisfaction of the domestic population allowing the government apparatus to engage in and commit to international agreements as well as actively initiating agreements (Elsig, 2010). This is specifically important because unlike democratic states, where policies have to be adjusted to account for the domestic and international audiences, in authoritarian regimes policies remain in place creating a more stable domestic political environment (Fuchs, 2015). This advocates for a lack of vulnerability of the regime to subdue to reactionary forces and pressure groups, making cooperation smoother and more credible (Weeks, 2008). As Gat and Diamond in their piece's state, the world nowadays is witnessing a "comeback of authoritarianism" due to its capability to conduct more efficient international agreements and the credibility associated

with the disregard of the audience cost, which makes the regime more resilient (Gat, 2007; Puddington 2008)

## **II. Theoretical Argument**

There is a variety of regimes existing in the world today. The literature heavily focuses on democratic regimes versus authoritarian or autocratic regimes. Democracies are defined by the “rule of the many” indicating that power is grass-rooted, where voters possess the power to structure the state apparatus in which way they see fit. In addition to the rule of the many, democracies are often described as having “good governance” in the sense that valued of free flow of information, participation, rule of law, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, transparency, accountability and a strategic vision are being upheld in democracies (UNDP, 1997). This idea of “good governance” which is dominantly assigned to democratic states is assumed to be the cause for the promotion of democracy to enhance inter-state cooperation (Abdellatif, 2003). This is further reiterated by democratic peace theorists who assume that democracy will eventually bring about peace, because democracies do not go to war with each other (Russet, 1993; Doyle, 1986). Democratic regimes are believed to be less likely to defect from international agreements because they take the domestic audience cost into account while entering an agreement; if the domestic audience is more/less inclined to support and uphold the agreement by pressuring the government to respect/violate the agreements (Leeds, 1999).

On the other hand, leaders, such as Winston Churchill, believed that democracy is one of the least bad forms of governments. Supporters of this view conform to the idea that although values of democracy may seem well thought through and equitable superficially, the reality behind democratic regimes prove otherwise. Scholars such as Simon Fan believe that democracy is actually a form of “bullying” where the majority bullies the minority into

conforming to their interests; also known as Kleptocracy (Fan, 2004). Francis Fukuyama also contemplated the poor performance of democracies, arguing that democracies are constantly failing worldwide due to the lack of governmental capacity to absorb and comprehend the demands of democratic regimes, especially in the global south, and therefore is not the appropriate political ideology that should be adopted by states, especially those who have recently experienced internal tension between society and state, such as the Arab World in post-Arab Spring period (Fukuyama, 2015). The rationale behind Fukuyama's claim lie in his belief that new-democracies lack the legal enforcement capacity and understanding of democratic institutions to effectively establish a democratic system.

Another viewpoint advocated for by scholars are the benefits of authoritarian regimes. Mattes and Rodriguez state that in authoritarian regimes the lack of reliance on voter outcomes or voter approval makes the state enter agreements it sees best fit without worrying about the domestic audience costs (Mattes and Rodriguez, 2011). Seeing authoritarian regimes usually rely on appointment rather than voting there is less emphasis on domestic pressures. Mattes and Rodriguez argue that competent authoritarian leaders will make quicker and more efficient decisions concerning domestic and foreign policies with lower transaction costs. Complementing their findings, political scientists such as Nicolas Charron and Victor Lapuente in their examination of four types of different authoritarian regimes discovered that they are more reactive to public demands than democratic regimes (Charron and Lapuente, 2012). The lack of bureaucracy makes for a fastened decision making process, which they argue give authoritarian regimes a comparative advantage over democracies (Charron and Lapuente, 2012). Luke Chambers, agreeing with Charron and Lapuente, believes that the disconnection between the government apparatus and the public opinion provides grounds for a more stable foreign policy execution, which in turn diminishes the mistrust between states (Cahmbers, 2009). Following this logic, it seems that authoritarian

regimes are more likely to engage in cooperation than democratic regimes when analyzing the extent to which domestic regimes affect inter-state cooperation. The literature review revealed that although democracies are the preferred and most promoted domestic regime, authoritarian regimes are more stable in their foreign policies and are therefore more likely to cooperate with other states than democracies who shy away if public support is not available and domestic audience costs are high.

Alternatively, scholars such as Karen L. Remmer and Michael Cox, argue that the regime type is beside the point of international cooperation, and rather lobbies for the military strength of states and their financial capabilities as being the main drive for international cooperation (Remmer, 1998; and Cox, 2012). This logic states that the richer and militarily stronger a state is, the more likely it is to engage in international cooperation to augment its capabilities. The argument relies on the idea of welfare as the baseline to measure international cooperation. The hypothesis states that the more welfare, measured in economic capabilities (GDP per capita), a state possesses, under any type of domestic regime be it democracy, autocracy, or dictatorship, the more likely it is to engage in cooperative agreements to enhance its overall welfare. The rationale behind this argument is that welfare states have an economically satisfied social base that trusts the government apparatus to act in their best interest. Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, is ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the Human Development Index (HDI) and has engaged in numerous bilateral cooperative agreements aligned with the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) policies (Industrial Cluster, 2016).

### **III. Research Design**

In the following passage a quantitative analysis of the question whether regime type affects inter-state cooperation specifically when it comes to arms trading is statistically significant or not. Here Arms trading is the dependent variable specifying how much of the National Gross Domestic Product (NGDP) is allocated to arms trading. The dependent variable is supposed to emphasize the realist rational that states are seeking to maximize their relative gains and increase their security because of the anarchic nature of the world order (Mearsheimer, 1994/5). The research design is supposed to emphasize that regime type does not affect individual state decisions to trade arms to sub-sequentially increase security. The independent variables political stability, level of democracy, and military regime should rationally all affect the decisions of states to enter into arms trade agreements.

The argument is: the more politically stable a regime is the more likely it is to enter into arms trade agreements. Furthermore, the level of democracy should not be statistically significant when it comes to the amount of NGDP a state allocates to arms trading. Moreover, whether a state is governed by a military regime or not should be statistically significant and should indicate that military regimes, realist by nature, should enter more arms trade agreements than states that are not. Controlling for human development, GDP/capita, exports, and foreign direct are held constant at the mean to avoid omitted variable bias, meaning that if we do not account for those variables I could overestimate or underestimate the effect of the independent variables, which would lead to a false-positive or a false-positive and eventually a wrong inference. For the calculation of the model a multiple liner regression model using the Ordinary Least Square estimator (OLS) should be used for the estimation of the results because the dependent variable is a continuous variable and the independent variables include binary variables. Using the OLS would minimize the standard errors and also allows us to correct for heteroscedasticity when it is needed. We will need to correct for

heteroscedasticity because the error term is not constant over time, which means that arms trading of countries who are politically stable varies over time and a correction of heteroscedasticity consistent errors.

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Source</u>
<i>Arms Trading</i>	<i>% of GDP directed to national defense 0 = 10% 1 = 20%-45% 2 = 45%+</i>	<i>World Bank: Military expenditure (% of GDP)</i>
<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Source</u>
<i>Level of Democracy</i>	<i>0-10 Democracy Index</i>	<i>POLITY IV (Marshall 2013)</i>
<i>Political Stability</i>	<i>Range (-2.46 to 1.67) The higher the more politically stable</i>	<i>Quality of Governance (QoG2012.dta – Teorell, et al, 2012)</i>
<i>Military Regime</i>	<i>1 = Military Regime 0 = Otherwise</i>	<i>Geddes, Wright and Frantz. (2012)</i>
<u>Controlled Variable</u>	<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Source</u>
<i>Welfare</i>	<i>income, social expenditures, benefits, pension, taxes, social expenditures</i>	<i>OECD Social and Welfare Statistics</i>
<i>Human Development</i>	<i>Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)</i>	<i>UNDP: Human Development Index</i>
<i>GDP/capita</i>	<i>GDP growth (% annual)</i>	<i>World Bank: OECD national accounts data files</i>
<i>Exports</i>	<i>Export of goods and services (% GDP)</i>	<i>Central Intelligence Agency: Country Comparison – Exports (in USD)</i>
<i>Foreign Direct Investment</i>	<i>Foreign Direct Investment, net inflows (BoP current US\$)</i>	<i>The 2016 A.T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index</i>

The higher the GDP of a country the more it engages in inter-state arms cooperation, the more politically stable a country is, and the more likely it is a military regime. The null hypothesis would therefore state that there is no correlation between military expenditure and



political stability, regime type, or democracy. The effects of the three independent variables will be calculated individually, holding the controlled variables constant at the mean, and then compared with the `anova()` and `screenreg()` functions on R-Studio. Statistical significance will be taken into account.

It is expected to find a strong statistically significant correlation between low levels of democracy and high levels of democracy and military expenditures, i.e. it does not matter whether you rank high or low on the democracy index, so there is no difference between autocratic regimes and democracies as long as you are politically stable and the country generates enough revenue to increase military expenditure; a statistically significant correlation between political stability and military expenditure; and lastly a statistically significant correlation between military expenditure and whether the regime is a military regime or not.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The debate about what are the conditions under which inter-state cooperation increases or decreases has been on-going since the establishment of formal international organizations and has occupies the forefront in many theoretical arguments within the epistemic community. International organizations have been supported by liberal institutionalist and providing a fertile ground and a capacity for states to negotiate agreements and conflict/dispute resolution through the delegation of authority and the reduction of transaction costs. The neorealist perspective however has heavily criticized international organizations and advocated that states will only comply with agreements they would have committed to regardless of the institutional establishment (Nicolacopoulos, 2008). Both theoretical frameworks and their supporting scholarly community have nonetheless agreed that the nature of the world order is highly anarchical. Although the realist perspective perceives this anarchy to cause a security dilemma that cannot be abolished unless there is a supranational governing body, the liberal institutionalists believe that international organizations are the key to anarchy (Herbert, 1996). Constructivist scholars concur with the liberal perspective about the benefit of international organizations and their institutional capacity that gives ground for socialization, and the consequential norm emergence (Wendt, 1992).

The literature has emphasized that authoritarian and autocratic regimes tend to cooperate more than democratic regimes because of the low social audience cost and the lack of domestic pressures. The literature further emphasized that autocracies are more efficient and more inclined to enter into cooperative and coordinated agreements than democratic regimes (Stein, 1982). The democratization of the world could therefore be analyzed through different perspectives depending on the social cost carried within the cooperative nature. However, the literature, although conflicting, has also emphasized that the richer a country is, the more likely social welfare exists, and the more likely this state is internally politically

stable, which in turn gives room for a state to engage in agreements with other states. Indeed, countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia – high income states – have engaged in more cooperative agreements and highlighted commitment and implementation of more agreements than democratic countries such as the USA.

Regime type is believed to have an effect on inter-state cooperation. The initial hypothesis states that democracies are more likely to engage in inter-state cooperation under the theoretical agreement upon the democratic peace theory and the ideology that democratic states do not go to war with one another. International organizations are therefore believed to be a mechanism of democratic states to promote democratization and consequentially increase inter-state cooperation and bring about world peace through cooperation. However, the research has emphasized that the neoliberal democratic perspective is in fact irrelevant when it comes to arms trading. The fact is that the realist perspective holds more ground than the liberal perspective where it emphasizes that states cooperate when it comes to security and survival issues more than on any other aspect. Arms trading has, since the end of the Cold War dominated the trading sphere. It occurs between states of different political orientation and regime types have been discredited as being a primary effector on international cooperation. If the liberal statement rings truth, then cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia should be conditional, yet in reality it is not because states seek to maximize survival and security rather than social utility and welfare. This has been emphasized in the quantitative analysis, which disproves that democracies cooperate more than other regime types.

In summation, regime type is irrelevant when it comes to inter-state cooperation. States will engage in cooperative agreements which maximize their security and survival regardless of the social costs it bears. Regime types are indicative of commitment and credibility of a state, yet when it comes to security issues and arms trading countries with

lower levels of democracy are more likely to engage in efficient cooperation than countries than rank higher on the democracy index. Furthermore, countries that follow a military regime strategy are even more likely to engage in arms trading and cooperating, regardless of where they are ranked on the democracy index.

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