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Why Democracies are less likely to Fight Each Other: The Kantian Peace and Democratic Peace Theory

by

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In the last three decades political philosophers, historians, international relations scholars, diplomats and politicians have widely debated the so called Democratic Peace Theory (DPT), i.e. that democracies are less likely to go to war against each other. The roots of this thesis are to be found in the essay by the German Philosopher Immanuel Kant entitled "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795). Kant argued that the main cause of war is injustice and the sheer absence of political institutions at the national, international, and cosmopolitan level. In the definitive articles of that essay, Kant argued that if national governments become "republican" and an international federation of states (along the lines of the UN or the EU) is formed - what he called "a federation of nation-states"- then peace was most likely to become everlasting. Kant argued in favour of a certain degree of permeability between states. He favoured a cosmopolitan right limited to conditions of universal hospitality meaning that a stranger should not be treated with hostility when he arrives on the territory of another. DPT foremost scholars have presented their theory as an application of these Kantian tenets to contemporary international relations. In this presentation, we will show that despite appearances Kant's model is very different from DPT's, that it is more convincing from a normative perspective, and that it is supported by evidence better than DPT. In particular, we will highlight the difference between the conception of international federation that the two models entertain.

Information on Professor Caranti

Luigi Caranti (Ph.D. Boston University) is associate professor of political philosophy at the Università di Catania. He held visiting appointments in various institutions such as Australian National University, Philipps-Universität Marburg, and Columbia University. His current work focuses on Kant, contemporary political philosophy, the theory of human rights, and democratic peace theory. Caranti is the author of *Kant and the Scandal of Philosophy* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), of *La pace fraincesa. Kant e la teoria della pace democratica* (Rubbettino 2012) and the editor of *Kant's Perpetual Peace. New Interpretative Essays* (Luiss University Press, Roma 2007). His publications appeared in such journals as *Kant Studien*, *Theoria*, *Journal of Human Rights*, *Rivista di filosofia*.