

THEORY OF CONFLICT, WAR AND PEACE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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In a world of danger and trial, peace is our deepest aspiration, and when peace comes we will gladly convert not our swords into plowshares, our bombs into peaceful reactors, and our planes into space vessels. "Pursue peace," the Bible tells us, and we shall pursue it with every effort and every energy that we possess. But it is an unfortunate fact that **we can secure peace only by preparing for war.**

John F. Kennedy

Fall 2020

Session 4: Causes of War II

On the Agenda for Today

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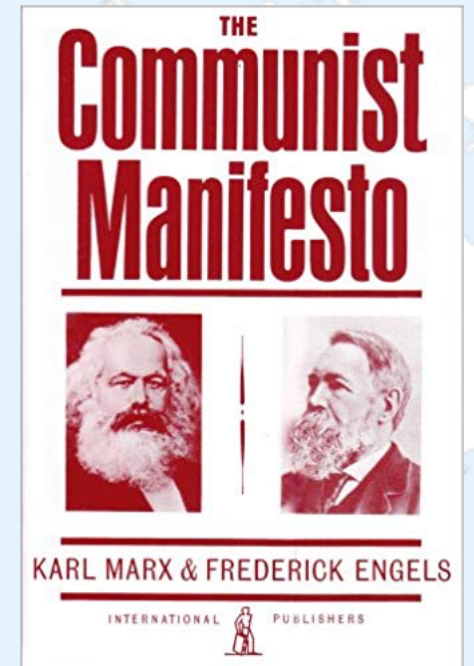
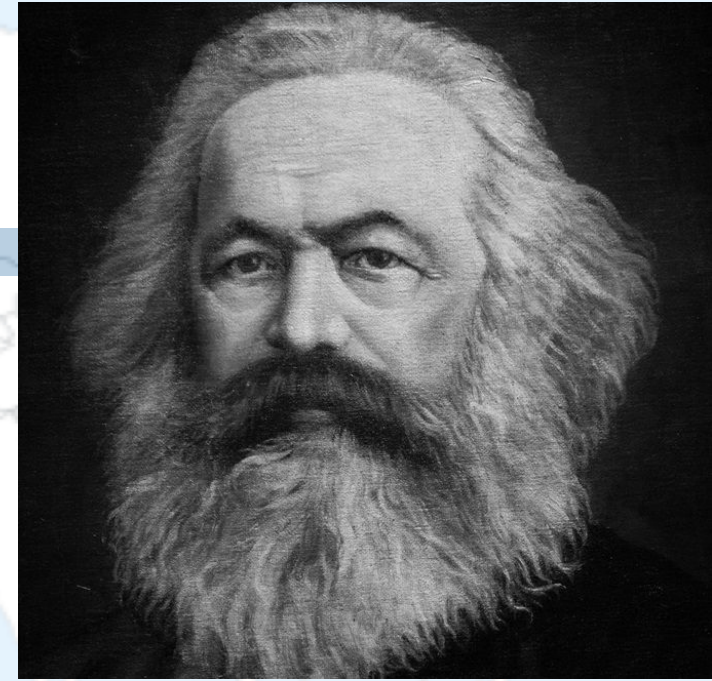
Causes of War II

- Conflict Theory- continue from last class
 - Marxism, Neo Marxism ...
- Realism
 - Classic, Modern/Neo-realism
- Liberal theories
 - Idealism, Liberal Institutionalism
 - Liberal Internationalism
- The Democratic Peace Theory



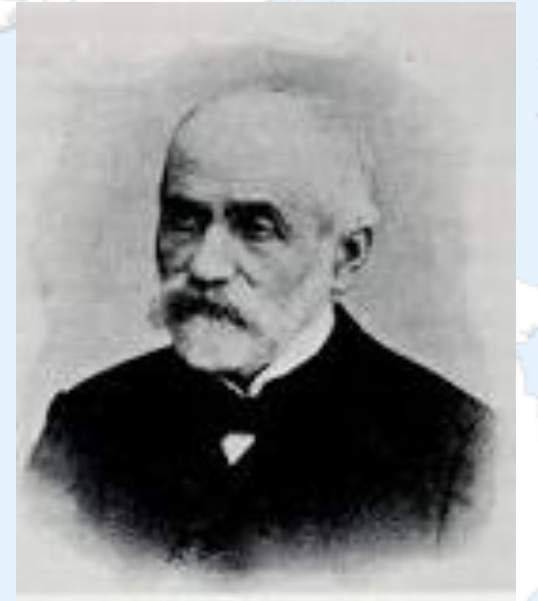
Conflict Theory

- **Marxism** =>
 - Coined the term '**false consciousness**': workers' acceptance of ideologies that ran counter to their interests
 - Argued that in time, **false consciousness** is replaced with **class consciousness** => The recognition of a common class condition and the development of a common unity in opposition to capitalist exploitation
 - Will set the stage for **revolution**



Conflict Theory

- Several theorists suggested variations/expansions of this basic theme
 - **Ludwig Gumplowicz** => Polish-Austrian sociologist (1838–1909)
 - Argued that **war + conquest are the basis of civilization**
 - Believed that **cultural and ethnic conflicts led to states being identified and defined by a dominant group** that had power over other groups



Max Weber, Power & Conflict



- Max **Weber** => Renowned German sociologist (1864-1920)
 - Interested in **social changes** (and social conflict) induced by the industrial revolution
 - Viewed the various **class divisions** in society as **normal, inevitable** and **acceptable**
 - Agreed with Marx, but also believed that social conflicts were also about **power** and **social prestige** (not just about money/resources)
 - Noted that **different groups** were affected **differently** based on education, race, and gender
 - Main argument: People's **reactions to inequality** were **moderated** by **class** differences, **rates of social mobility** and by **perceptions** about the **legitimacy** of those in power

Simmel's Conflict Theory

- George **Simmel** => Renowned German sociologist (1858-1918)
 - Conflict can help **integrate** and **stabilize** a society
 - The **intensity of the conflict** varies depending on the **emotional involvement** of the parties, the degree of **solidarity** within the **opposing groups**, and the clarity and **limited nature** of the goals
 - Showed that groups work to create **internal solidarity, centralize power,** and **reduce dissent** and that **resolving conflicts reduces tension** and hostility and can lead to future agreements



The Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School (1930s, 1940s)

- **German philosophers** who worked at the Institute of Social Research, the University of Frankfurt Germany
- Developed a **Critical Theory**, also known as **Neo-Marxism** as an elaboration on Marxist principles
 - An expansion of conflict theory (filled in perceived omissions in Marxism by) **integrating other social sciences** (not just sociology) and philosophy



Neo Marxism

- After seeing the **failure of working-class revolutions** in western Europe after World War I, the Neo-Marxists choose the parts of Marx's thought that might **clarify social conditions that were NOT present in Marx' time**
- Neo Marxism encompasses a group of beliefs that have in **common rejection of economic or class determinism** and a belief in, at least, the **semi autonomy of the social sphere**
- Attempted to address **structural issues** causing **inequality**

Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory

- According to the **Critical Theory**, class divisions under capitalism are more important than gender or sex divisions or issues of race and ethnicity
- More recently, inequality based on **gender** or **race** has been explained in a similar manner and has identified **institutionalized power structures** that help to maintain inequality between groups (feminism, critical race theory)
 - **Critical Race Theory** => Looks at **structural inequality** based on white privilege, associated wealth, power, prestige
 - **Feminism** => Critical analysis of the way **gender differences** in society structure **social inequality**

Intellectual Underpinnings

- **Marx** => Conflict is inevitable in society
 - Class-based
- **Weber** => Conflict is not always inevitable
 - Would depend on personal characteristics + how bad the exploitation is/was
- **Simmel** => Conflict is not necessarily divisive
 - Could constitute a beneficial force for social change

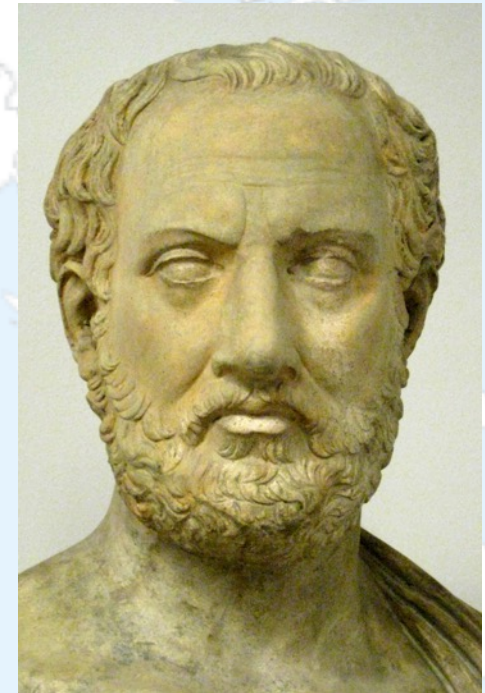
Realism

- Arguably the most dominant approach in IR
- Realism can be divided into two broad types:
 - Classical
 - Modern/Neo-realism



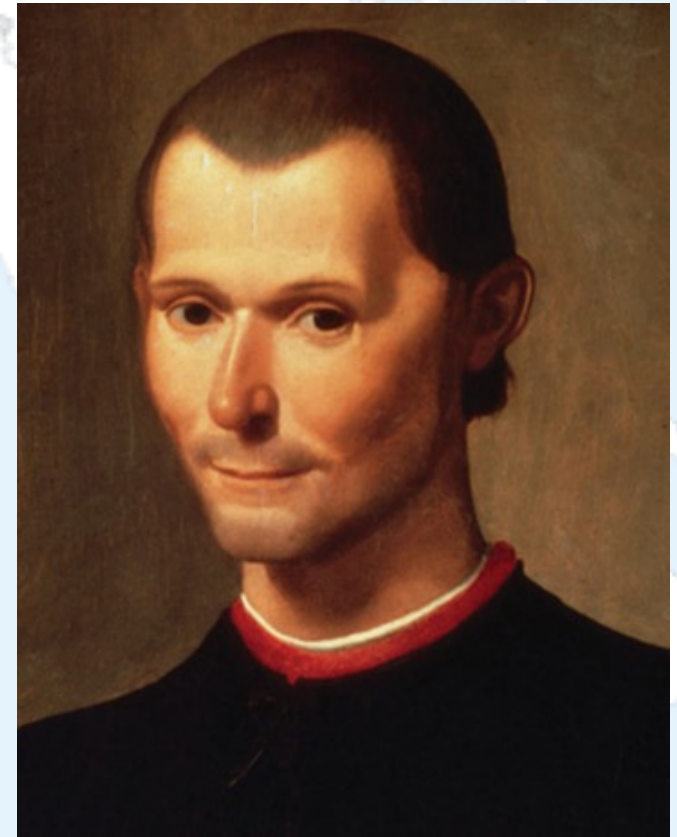
The Classical Realist Perspective

- Most associated with **Thucydides** (460-400BC), **Machiavelli** (1469-1527) + **Hobbes** (1588-1679)
- **Thucydides**, (460-404 BC?), one of the greatest ancient Greek historians
 - First recorded political and moral analysis of a **nation's war policies**
 - Emphasized the **primacy of the state**, but also discussed '**human nature**' (egoism, selfishness and greed)



The Classical Realist Perspective

- Niccolò **Machiavelli** (1469-1527), Italian diplomat, politician, philosopher in the Renaissance period
 - Often referred to as ‘the father of modern political philosophy and political science’
- For **Machiavelli**, morals and ethics had **NO** place in politics
 - *“In politics we must act as if all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to the malignity that is their minds when opportunity offers”*



The Classical Realist Perspective

- Core concepts: **Statism, Survival, Self-help**
- Modern realists' states are the **primary actors** in IR
- **Character + motivation of states in an anarchic international system =>**
Act rationally, with security + maximization of power
- Many realists subscribe to the political conception of war from **Clausewitz: a controlled and rational act, “a continuation of political activity by other means”**
- Main argument: If states see war as a necessary step to further their power/ interests, they will use it as a political tool

The Modern Realist Perspective

- Modern/Neorealism was an attempt to **translate** some of the **key insights of classical realism** into the language and methods of **modern social science**
- Particularly associated with American political scientist **Kenneth Waltz (1924-2013)**
- Argued that:
 - The **internal organization of the state** is crucial in understanding **war propensity**



The Modern Realist Perspective

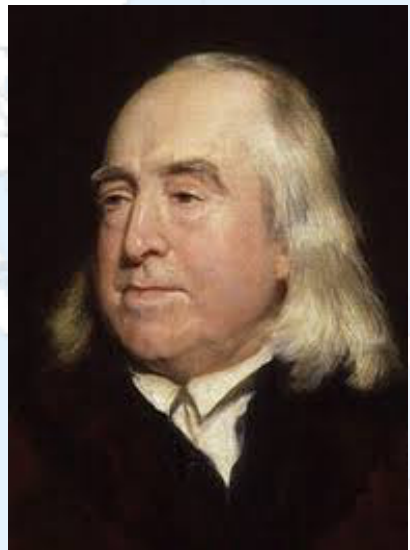
- **Waltz** set out three interrelated **images of the causes of war**:
 1. **Flawed human nature** (in line with **classical realist thought**)
 - *“The evilness of men, or their improper behavior, leads to war”*
 2. **International Anarchy** => Most prominent features of IR, especially the actions of great powers, could be explained solely in terms of the anarchical structure of the international system
 - Since **states have interests** that clash with the interests of others (e.g. over scarce resources), with **no overarching authority to restrain them**, *“a state will use force to attain its goals if, after assessing the prospects for success, it values those goals more than it values the pleasures of peace”*

The Modern Realist Perspective

3. In order to **prevent internal self-destruction** (ensure survival from internal strife/civil war), **states must promote a homogenous unified entity** and thus **seek war against others**
- Although Waltz's position was **not original**, in **systematizing** + establishing it on **empirical grounds** he both **reinvigorated realism** and further **detached it from its classical roots**
 - Alternative view to the causes of war => **Liberal Theories**

Liberal Theories

- **Liberalism** => A theory emerged out the **European enlightenment** period (18th century), mostly associated with the writings of **Locke, Bentham, Kant**
- **Core ideals:**
 - Scientific rationality
 - Freedom and the inevitability of human progress
 - Individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy
 - Market capitalism best promotes overall welfare
- Liberalism, like realism, **sees states as being characterized by a human nature**, but unlike realism it sees human nature in a **positive light**



Liberal Theories

- Early manifestations appeared as far back as the **sixteenth century**
- **Rejection** of the idea that **conflict is the natural state of relations between states**
- First liberals: **Erasmus** (war is not profitable - 1517); **Penn** (Diet of Europe – 1693); **Kant** (Perpetual Peace - 1795)
- Liberalism views states from the inside out, seeks to project a **positive human nature onto states**
- As a normative theory that seeks to **promote peace**, liberalism also provides various accounts on the **causes of wars**

Liberal Theories

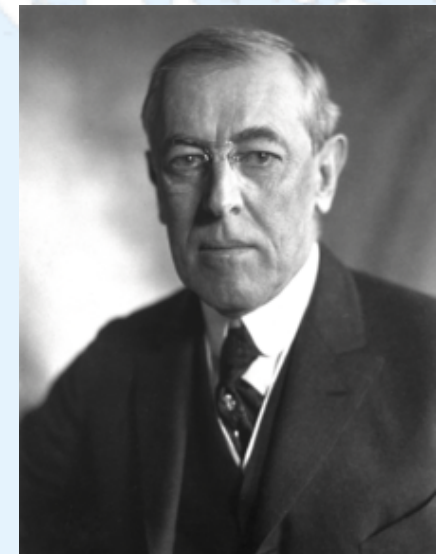
- Main argument => Democratic states never (or almost never) fight each other
- **Liberal thought** in IR can be separated into three major patterns/sub schools of thought:
 - **Idealism**
 - **Liberal Institutionalism**
 - **Liberal Internationalism**

Liberal Theories

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Idealism

- Assert that the **international order should be constructed & managed** by an **international organization**
- **Peace is not a natural condition**, needs to be **constructed and maintained**
 - Liberal internationalist's assumption that **interdependence was associated with peace** was contradicted by World War I
- According to US president Wilson (1913-1921), **peace could only be secured** with the creation of an **international institution** that regulated international relations



Liberal Theories

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Idealism

- The idealist approach in IR materialized through Wilson's "**Fourteen Points**" + creating the **League of Nations** (based on the idea of **collective security**)
 - A proposal for a **post WW1 peace settlement** made by US president **Wilson** (Jan. 8, 1918)
- While the failure of the League of Nations and World War II **buried idealist expectations of global peace**, after WW II some liberal ideas **were implemented** (self-determination, human rights)



**President Wilson's
Fourteen Points**

1. **Open diplomacy**
2. **Freedom of the Seas**
3. **Removal of economic barriers**
4. **Reduction of armaments**
5. **Adjustment of colonial claims**
6. **Conquered territories in Russia**
7. **Preservation of Belgian sovereignty**
8. **Restoration of French territory**
9. **Redrawing of Italian frontiers**
10. **Division of Austria-Hungary**
11. **Redrawing of Balkan boundaries**
12. **Limitations on Turkey**
13. **Establishment of an independent Poland**
14. **Creation of an Association of Nations**

Liberal Theories

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Liberal Institutionalism



- Less **normative** than Idealism, less ambitious
- Trauma of World War II => Global peace is a ‘stretch’, but the need to have an **international organ** with responsibility over **peace** and **security** was **maintained**
- The **United Nations** was created with the sense that the **most powerful states would be essential to its survival**
 - Power arrangement within the Security Council: **15 Members: 5** permanent (China, France, Russian Federation, the UK + US), 10 non-permanent, elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly

Liberal Theories

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Liberal Institutionalism

- The state isn't able to cope with rapid processes of **modernization**, **transnational cooperation** is thus required to solve common problems
 - High likelihood that **cooperation in one sector would lead to further cooperation in other sectors** (EU)
- Once within a union, states will endure **high costs of withdrawing** from it- a negative incentive to leave (Brexit?)
- **Haas (1924 – 2003)**, a German-American political scientist: **International + regional institutions** are especially **necessary** when states with **decreasing capacity to deliver welfare goals** are concerned

Liberal Theories

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Liberal Institutionalism

- Scholars referred to as '**pluralists**', rejected the idea that the **state** is the **sole** important **actor** in IR
 - Tried to characterize IR through the existence of **multiple channels**, linked to **several actors**
- **Keohane** and **Nye** (1977) defended the **centrality** of no state actors (interest groups, transnational companies, NGOs) in IR
- Most profound contribution of **liberal institutionalism** => the notion of **Interdependence: a complex system of interactions**, brought by **capitalism** and **mass culture**
 - Actions in one part affect other parts

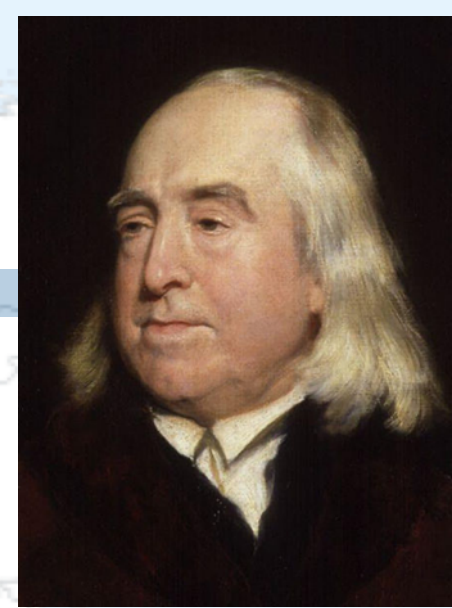


Liberal Theories

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Liberal Internationalism

- Rose in response to 'the barbarity of IR'
- Jeremy **Bentham** (1747-1832), an English philosopher and social reformer is regarded as the **founder of modern utilitarianism** => **A federation of states** would be able to **prevent wars between its members**, ending the pattern of recurring wars as a way of settling disputes
- Main argument: States would be submitted to **a system of legal rights and duties**, without the need of a global government



Kant's 'Perpetual Peace'

- **Kant** (1724-1804), was an influential Prussian German philosopher in the Age of Enlightenment
- Kant discussed the condition of **injustice**, in which states find themselves arranged in an **international anarchy** with **no higher authority**
- In seeking to find a route out of what he called "***the lawless state of savagery***" that existed in IR, Kant proposed a theory of "**Perpetual Peace**"



Kant's 'Perpetual Peace'

- Kant's **perpetual peace** involved **3 core elements**:
 - Republican **constitutionalism**
 - A **federation** of free states => Would be pacific, thus won't fight each other
 - A **universal humanity** => A guiding principle of humanitarian action, the idea that **human beings are**, in some ways, **the same**, possessing the **same needs and rights**



Neo-liberal Theories

- Following the **end of the bipolar system** (early 1990s) + rise of **globalization** => Updated liberalist approaches
 - **Neo-liberal** internationalism
 - **Neo-idealism**
 - **Neo-liberal** institutionalis
- Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' theory received little attention until **Doyle's 'Democratic Peace'** thesis
 - The '**Zone of Peace**' envisioned by Kant has gradually become **reality**

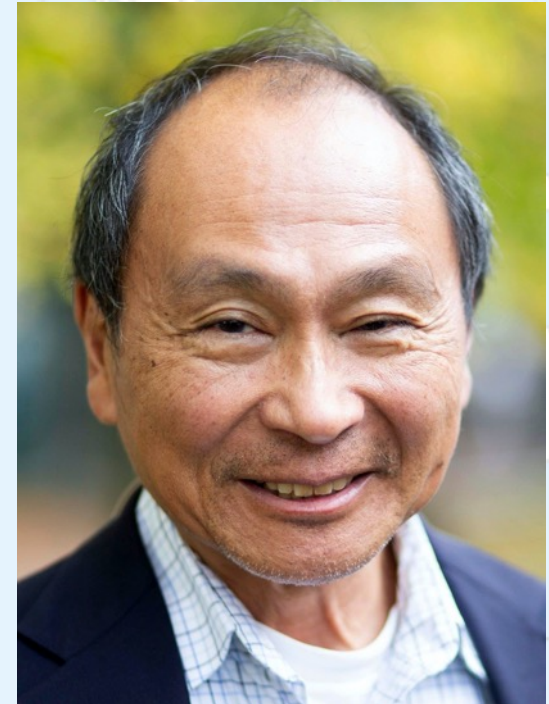


“Democracies were peaceful, but only with one another”

Neo-liberal Theories

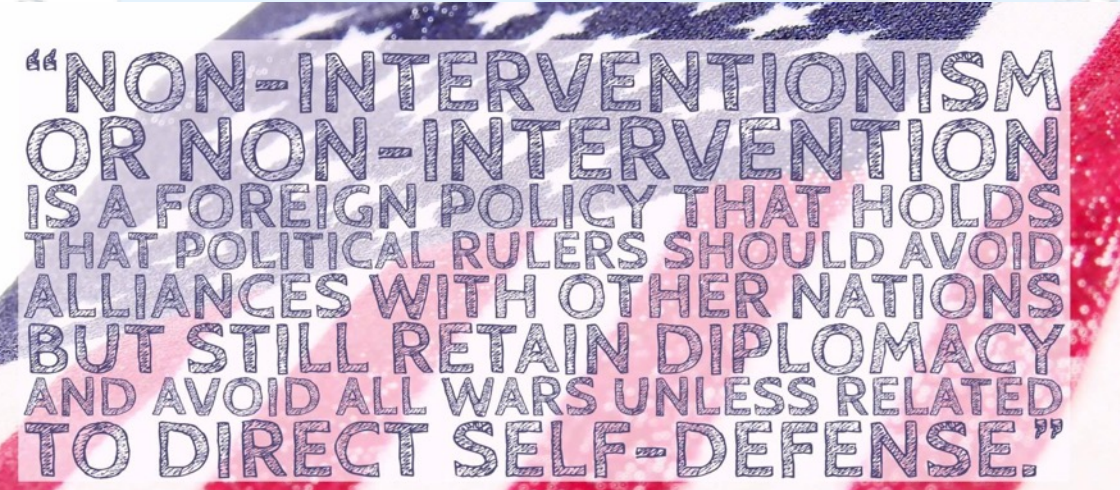
Doyle's 'Democratic Peace' thesis (neo-liberal internationalists)

- Main argument: **Liberal states do not use war** to resolve conflicts between them => Doyle's "**separate peace**"
- Doyle: the main cause of war is **undemocratic regimes**
- Similarly, **Fukuyama** defended the **expansionism** of **liberal values** against authoritarianism in the post cold war era (the "**The End of History**") in order to provide **peace and stability** to the international system



Neo-liberal Theories

- Critic => This view has occasionally been used to justify intervention to the affairs of nondemocratic countries
- Important questions concerning the **limits of liberal expansionism** as it contradicts core freedoms of liberalism:
 - **State sovereignty**
 - **Non-intervention**
 - **General freedom**



“NON-INTERVENTIONISM OR NON-INTERVENTION IS A FOREIGN POLICY THAT HOLDS THAT POLITICAL RULERS SHOULD AVOID ALLIANCES WITH OTHER NATIONS BUT STILL RETAIN DIPLOMACY AND AVOID ALL WARS UNLESS RELATED TO DIRECT SELF-DEFENSE.”

Neo-liberal Theories

Neo-Idealism

- Supports **democracy** and the idea that **interdependence brings peace**
- Main argument: **Peace** and **justice** are **not natural**, but should be **actively produced** and **maintained**
 - By **encouraging/forcing non-liberal states to become liberal**
- **International institutions** (that are also **democratic**) are **essential** in constructing such an order => **Double Democratization**

Neo-liberal Theories

extinction
rebellion

Neo-Idealism

- **Global social movements** must be part of the decision-making process
 - Transnational networks of actors that define their causes as global + organize protest campaigns and other forms of action that target more than one state
- Contrary to **neo-liberal internationalists**, neo-idealists do **NOT** always perceive **globalization** as a **positive process**, criticise its evolution
 - Recognize that **globalization** and **communities** are **frequently at odds** with each other, and calls for “**globalization from below**”

Neo-liberal Theories

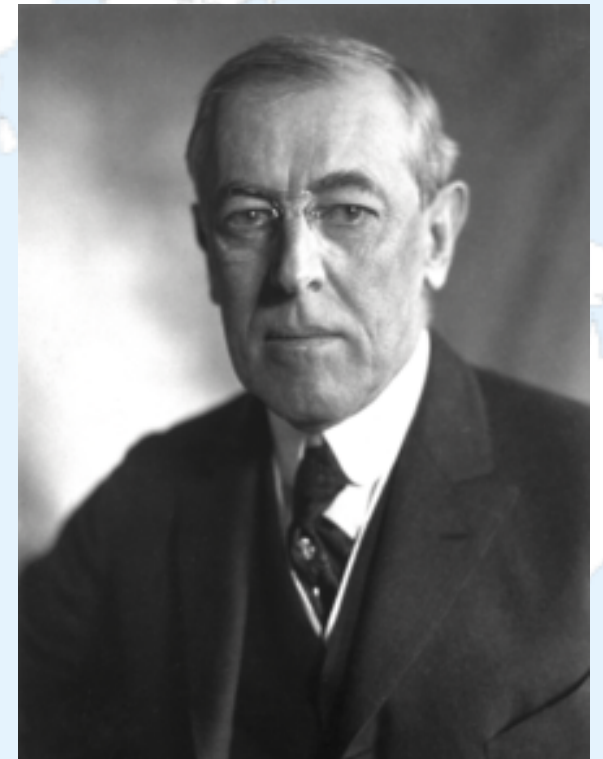
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Neo-liberal Institutionalism

- Similar to neo-realism
 - **Absolute gains are more important** than **relative gains** => A state will enter into cooperative relations even if their partner state gains more from the relationships
- Shift towards a more **state-centric vision of IR**
 - **Non-actor states are subordinate to states**
- Main argumente: International cooperation **can be achieved** despite the anarchical structure of the international system via **Integration**

Neo-liberal Theories

- The concept of **democratic peace** is distinguished from the claim that **democracies are, in general, more peaceful than nondemocratic regimes**
- Democracies are in general more peaceful =>
Controversial
- Democratic states do not fight each other => Widely regarded as **true** by IR scholars and practitioners
- US President **Wilson** (1917): The US aims to make the world “*safe for democracy*”



Why Don't Democracies Fight Each Other?

- Two main explanations exist:
 1. Democracies are more peaceful to one another because of a **shared political culture** => The **norm** that **disputes are to be settled by peaceful means**
- When two democracies are locked in a dispute, their leaders expect each other to **prefer dispute settlement** to the use of power

Why Don't Democracies Fight Each Other?

2. A **structural/Institutional factor** => **Political institutions** in democratic states **matter more than the norms** of their citizens
 - **Separation of powers + checks and balances** (characteristic of democratic political systems) **constrain** the ability of elected leaders to move their countries toward **war**
 - When a conflict arises between two democratic countries, their leaders need not fear a surprise attack- the inherently **slow process of national-security decision making** grant diplomats some **time to de-escalate** the situation **peacefully**

Promoting Peace

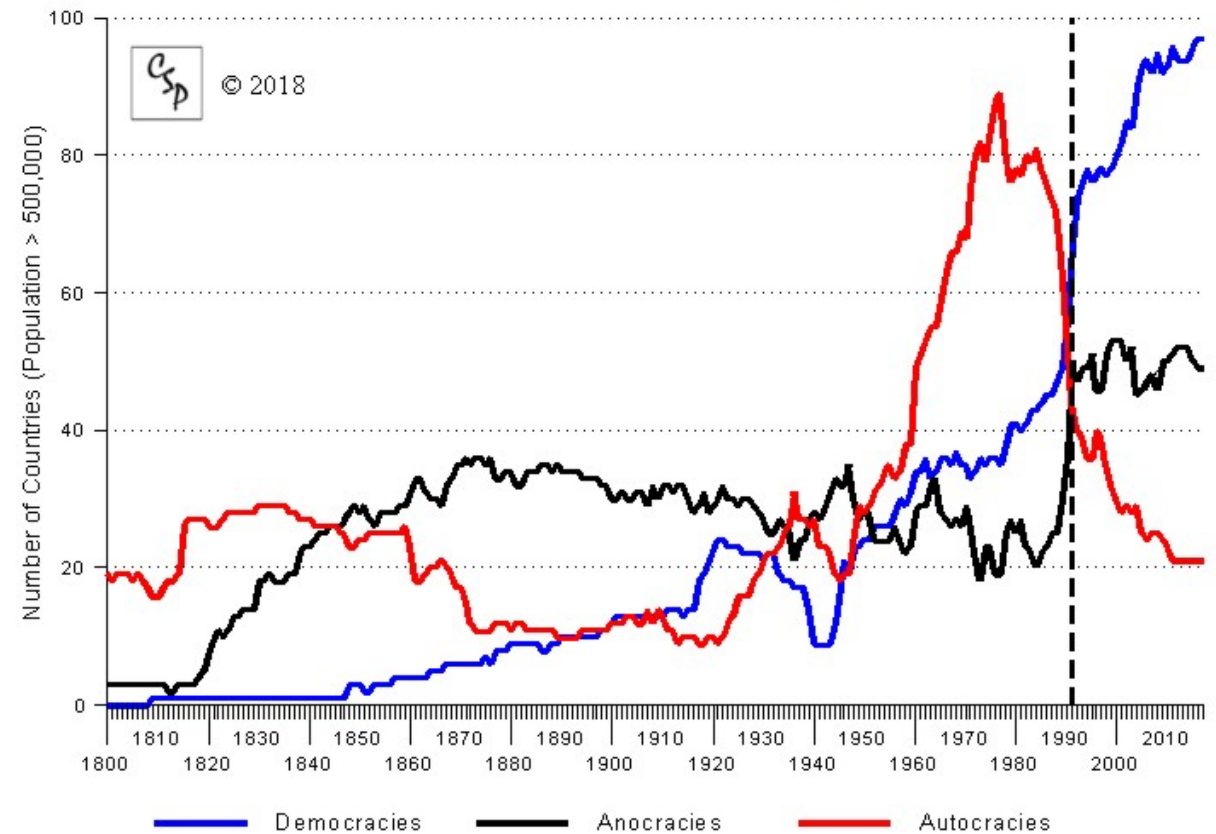


- **International peace is promoted by:**
 - **Economic interdependence** between states +
 - **International institutions**
- Some liberalist scholars see the causes of war rooted in the problem of **imperialism** or the **breakdown of the balance of power in IR** => can only be remedied by cooperation and mutually beneficial commerce
- Other liberalists (e.g. Schumpeter, an Austrian political economist, 1883-1950) considered war the result of the **aggressive urges of groups of unrepresentative elite rulers**

The Democratic Peace

- **Popular idea in IR**
- Main argument: If the formerly autocratic nations of Eastern Europe + former Soviet Union **democratized successfully**, the US and its western European allies would **no longer need to contain** them militarily because democracies do not fight each other

Global Trends in Governance, 1800-2017



The Democratic Peace

- The foreign policy rhetoric of American President Bill Clinton during the 1990s featured many appeals to this thesis:
 - **Spreading democracy** throughout the globe as a principal goal. Administration officials used the concept/idea of the **Democratic Peace** to justify that policy



Liberalism vs. Realism

- The main rival of **international liberal theory** is **realism**
 - **Realism** => Foreign policy behavior of states is primarily shaped by the **anarchic structure of the international system** (due to the **absence of a supranational authority** capable of effectively providing for the security of states)
 - As long as the **international system is anarchic, violence will remain hidden, if not apparent in global politics, regardless of the internal characteristics of individual states** (e.g., regime type)

Liberalism vs. Realism

- However, to the extent that a **perpetual state of peace prevails among liberal democracies**, its emergence **contradicts realist expectations** and undermines the position of realism as the leading theory of IR
- **Commonly cited exceptions** to the Democratic Peace Theory => The Lebanese air force's intervention in the Six-Day War, the state of war between Finland and the UK during World War II, the Kargil War (India/Pakistan, 1999), the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus ...
- The definition of some of the involved countries as **truly democratic** is disputed

Next Session...

A light blue world map with white outlines of continents and countries, serving as a background for the slide.

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- **Conflict Prevention**

Questions? Feel free to email the lecturer =>

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