CDSn4001: Conflict Analysis

Domestic political/social causes of war

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Agenda

- Domestic causes of war/peace
  - Democratic peace
  - Economic systems and interdependence
    - A note on case studies and qualitative methods
  - Identity politics

Democratic peace theory

- Two versions:
    1) individual DP model, and
    2) the cost of war and public opposition

Individual model

- Looks at behavior of individual states.
- **Democracies in general are more peaceful** (than non-democratic states). ← largely discredited
  - People are generally disinclined to go to war and will stop it if allowed.
  - Authoritarian leaders sometimes start wars to distract the public from authoritarianism, a motivation that democratic leaders do not have.

"The cost of war" model

- Dyadic model (i.e., focus on pairs)
- **Toward autocracies democracies are just as warlike as autocracies, but democracies do not fight each other.**
  - Origins attributed to Kant – possibility of an international federation of republics that could usher the perpetual peace.
  - Ordinary citizens are inherently peaceful because they are the ones who have to fight wars.
  - In democracies, citizens can vote to control politicians.
  - Power-hungry governments go to war against citizens' wishes.

In support of the dyadic model

- **Structural argument**:
  - political disputes resolved by compromise, which carries over into foreign policy
  - democracies keep their promises
  - audience costs
- **Normative argument**:
  - mutual respect among democracies and disdain toward autocratic states
- **Institutional argument**:
  - rational choice theory – political institutions have two effects on leaders.
  - 1) democratic states are more likely to win wars (because citizens are more likely to support war efforts).
  - 2) leaders are more sensitive to political costs of losing a war.

Problems with DPT?

- Is the promotion of democracy a solution to war and conflict?

Case studies and qualitative methods

- **Case study**: "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (George and Bennett 2005)

- **Types of case study**:
  - Atheoretical, interpretive, hypothesis generating, theory testing (confirming or infirming), deviant case studies, most-likely and least-likely case studies

Causality

- Qualitative approach: about "suspected" causes (Xs) and effects (Ys) (e.g., comparative case studies)

- Quantitative approach: X – independent variable, Y – dependent variable (e.g., regression analyses)

- Causality: cause precedes effect
  - A process that embodies the connection between X and Y can be identified

Causal effects and mechanisms

- Two steps in the analysis:
  - compare across cases to see the patterns in X and Y
    $\leftarrow$ **causal effect** of X and Y
  - analyze within cases to see what steps link X and Y
    $\leftarrow$ **causal mechanism**
- What links X and Y? How/why does X lead to Y?
  - process-tracing
  - X and Y can be linked with different causal mechanisms in different cases

Static identity approach

- Assumes that identity is "fixed" or "unchanging."

- Relies on the observation of characteristics of already-known entities (i.e., female or male).

- Often self-referential: i.e., women behave in a certain way (feminine) and men in another (masculine).

Dynamic identity approach

- Assumes that subjectivity (identity) is always a product of discourses – national, ethnic, sexual, racial, gendered, class, religious, economic, etc. – that circulate at any given time and place.

- Acknowledges that the possibilities for who we are as an individual are not left up to the individual, but rather set out in advance and are also limited by society.

Primordialism

- **Ethnic group** = a group of people who share blood allegiances, kinship, and cultural attributes.

- Primordial ties become more significant through recurrent reference to them in symbolic and cultural attributes – through **myths, traditions, and heritage**.

- A nation-state is a product of historical processes
  - Ethnic groups turn into political units
  - Nation-state emergence as a natural process

Modernism

- Nationalism is a political phenomenon (not natural) – driven by political elites (i.e., the state)
    - "Nationalism is not awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist."
    - Through communication and mass-education in a standardized language, elites transform diverse ethnic identities into a unified community.
- Emergence of nations is linked to the processes of industrialization and modernization.
    - Changes in mode of production and communication created a need for "a culturally homogenous community of centrally-educated people."

Imagined communities

- Benedict Anderson – political scientist, historian
- Nation is imaginary
  - A community that is large enough that its members cannot personally know each other is imagined.
  - People perceive themselves as part of the group.
- Print-capitalism and spread of vernacular languages enabled nationalism, because people could relate to each other in new ways.