



# CDSn4001: Conflict Analysis

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Domestic political/social  
causes of war

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# Agenda

- Domestic causes of war/peace
  - Democracy, democratization, and democratic peace theory
  - 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?

# Identity and a constitutive outside

- Constitutive outside: what identity is defined against, setting up an “inside” and an “outside” to an identity group. Us vs Them, determining who does and does not belong.
- Those who are “inside” the group are privileged over those who are “outside” the group.
- The insiders can enforce “purity” on the insiders by threatening them with being outcast and becoming “outsiders.”



# 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.

# Elements of nationalism: territory

- Common territory seen as a homeland, national cradle, historical home – a physical place where nations can ‘act out their dreams and fulfil aspirations’
  - Promotes sense of group distinctiveness and separateness;
  - BUT raises questions about nationality and citizenship, exclusion and inclusion.