



CDSn4001: Conflict Analysis

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.”

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).

Limits of the static approach

- Does not leave much room for variation within the identified group.
 - i.e., no feminine men or masculine women
- Very conservative view – it can only observe the *status quo* and it does not imagine alternatives.
- The view can also be strongly normative
 - i.e., women ought to behave in this way. Can be very negative for individuals who do not conform to how they ought to act (i.e., a masculine woman or a feminine man)

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.

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.

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.

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.