

MORE CAUSES OF WAR AND PEACE

Culture, Gender, Personality Disorder, Democracy, Social equality and social justice, Minority rights and human rights, Partition, Prosperity, Economic interdependence, Revolution, Communism, Capitalism, Imperial decline and collapse, Cultural learning, Nationalism, Emotional factors (revenge, backlash from contempt, honor, alpha-male status competition), Catastrophic climate change, Polarity of the international system. Causes of civil war.

PROLOGUE: CRITERIA FOR JUDGING THE UTILITY OF THEORIES OF WAR

Consider the following criteria for judging the utility of theories of war:

- A. **Validity & potency.** Does the independent variable affect the likelihood of war? If so, how much? Invalid theories are not useful.
- B. **Satisfaction.** Is the theory satisfying? Or does it leave us curious? "The candidate lost because she didn't get enough votes" is a valid explanation for an election outcome but is not satisfying. We want to know: why didn't she get enough votes?
- C. **Explanatory power.** What is the range and importance of the phenomena explained by the theory? For example, "petro-states run by revolutionaries cause war" (narrow application) vs. "insecurity causes war" (broad application).
- D. **Prescriptive utility.** Does the theory give rise to policy prescriptions--that is, to feasible ways to prevent war?
 1. Is the cause of war identified by the theory **manipulable**?
 2. Even if the cause is not manipulable, does awareness of the danger framed by the theory **help us devise countermeasures** to mitigate or abate its effects?
 3. Is the cause of war identified by the theory **common** or scarce in the real world? If it is scarce it may cause little war even if it is a potent cause of war when it is present. Hence it may not be worth our time to think about.
 4. Are the **conditions for the operation of the theory known? Are these conditions common?** To use a theory as a basis for policy, policymakers need to know when/under what conditions the theory operates. Otherwise they could mis-apply the theory to situations where it does not work. For example, they might foster democracy under conditions when democracy causes war (as it rarely does) instead of peace (as it usually does).

I. CULTURAL CAUSES OF WAR

"Some national cultures incline toward war. For example, harsh German child-rearing practices makes Germans belligerent." See, e.g., Leopold Bellak's op-ed about Germans in the course reading.

Is this explanation satisfying? What causes culture?

Is this cause of war manipulable?

II. GENDER AND WAR

- A. "Men cause war. War would diminish with the greater empowerment of women." See the assigned course reading on this subject by Joshua Goldstein.
- Is this explanation valid? What evidence would test it?
- Are observed correlations between gender and attitudes on war causal or spurious? For example, might women be more dovish because they depend more on government services? Or play a large role in raising children?
- Does the greater dovishness of women mean states would better avoid war if women were more powerful? Or might states then appease their way into war?
- Is this cause of war manipulable?
- B. "Polygamy causes intense competition among men for wealth, causing conflict and war."

III. PERSONALITY DISORDER CAUSES WAR

Personality disorders include narcissism, megalomania, paranoia, antisocial pathology, and sadism. Some argue that rulers with these disorders govern badly. For example, narcissists have little empathy for others, and thus rule heartlessly; and are enraged at challenge, and thus punish truthful staff who bring them bad news. Hence they live in a world of delusions.

Some claim that these disorders are over-represented among governing elites in many states. Giant pulsating egos ("GPEs") run the world and make a mess of it! Examples include Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Napoleon, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Muammar Qadafy, Foday Sankoh, and Juan Peron.

Studies of this hypothesis are few--more are needed.

What prescriptions follow, if any? We need to know what conditions allow/cause the rise of disordered people to power. What are they?

Important writers on this idea: Rose McDermott, Jerrold Post.

IV. CLIMATE CHANGE WILL CAUSE WAR / ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION WILL CAUSE WAR

"Climatologists worry that human-caused global warming could cause sea levels to rise, flooding vast coastal regions across the world; and could change rainfall patterns, turning verdant lands to deserts and vice-versa. This calamity will displace hundreds of millions of people. These vast refugee flows will directly cause conflict as refugees clash with established populations. The refugees may also develop a Luddite ideology-- 'Western civilization has destroyed our lives, so we now should destroy Western civilization before it does more harm'--that will fuel anti-Western terror and other violence. Marry this trend with proliferating weapons of mass destruction and you could have trouble. Global warming will also open new conflicts between states, who will quarrel over newly-valuable mineral rights in the now-ice-free arctic. What fun!"

> Related: "Environmental destruction of all kinds will cause war. Human civilization is now colliding with the natural world on which civilization depends. As humans destroy this environment they will struggle more fiercely to control ever-scarcer resources, including water and arable land." (Some warn that human folly will cause the Nile river to dry up, leaving many millions of Egyptians without water. They might be upset!

A cheery scenario.)

FOUR IDEAS ABOUT EFFECTS OF SOCIAL/ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ...

V. DEMOCRACY CAUSES PEACE: THREE ARGUMENTS

Variant #1:

"Democratic states very rarely fight one another. This is because (a) publics are more anti-war than elites, making states ruled by the public more peaceful; and/or because (b) democratic publics are infused with democratic values that clash with the notion of conquering and ruling others against their will." An argument by Immanuel Kant, Woodrow Wilson, and Michael Doyle.

Is this hypothesis valid? What evidence would test it? (Strong evidence supports it.)

Is this cause of war/peace manipulable? Can democracy be conjured up and sustained in non-democratic societies?

Does democratization promote peace in multiethnic authoritarian states? Civil conflict in Sri Lanka and Kenya warns that democratization can cause war in such settings. Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran have worrisome demography from this viewpoint.

Does democratization cause war while states are still democratizing? Some (Jack Snyder and Ed Mansfield) argue that democratizing states are prone to hyper-nationalism and hence are bellicose.

Variant #2:

"Democracies have free debate. This weeds out bad ideas (says John Stuart Mill), hence better ideas govern policy, hence democracies wage fewer foolish wars, and so wage fewer wars overall." In fact, though, democracies don't wage fewer wars than dictatorships (as this hypothesis predicts).

Variant #3:

"Democracies are less stratified than other societies (see Hypo #5, below), and their governments draw legitimacy from being elected. Hence elites in democracies feel less need to purvey self-glorifying and self-white-washing myths in order to legitimate themselves. Hence war-causing myths are less pervasive."

VI. PROSPERITY CAUSES PEACE

"Prosperity gives people more to lose in war, so they avoid war more carefully. And wealthy societies are less desperate for economic gain than poor societies, and so wage fewer wars of plunder. Also, prosperity promotes democracy, which independently promotes peace."

Prosperity may cause peace by promoting democracy, which in turn causes more equality and therefore less nationalism.

But history does not reveal a clear correlation between prosperity and peace. Today wealthy global regions are far more peaceful than poor regions. But during 1914-1945 the world's richest states unleashed immense violence on one another, wreaking vast ruin.

Also, prosperity is hard to foster from outside.

VII. ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE CAUSES PEACE--OR WAR?

"Economic interdependence between states raises the cost of cutting economic ties between states. This dampens the risk of war by raising its costs. Interdependence also fosters

communication that dampens conflict." An argument by Imanuel Kant among others. The opposite may also occur. States that depend on imported food, oil or other materials may fear being strangled by embargo or blockade and so wage aggressive wars to gain control over these resources. Such fears fueled German and Japanese aggression in World War II.

Recently China has sought to integrate its economy with Taiwan's economy to draw the two societies together, with some success.

VIII. SOCIAL EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE CAUSE PEACE

"Social inequity causes war by creating social conflict that elites defuse by pursuing conflict with other states. Social inequity also spurs elites to sow war-causing nationalist myths in order to defuse demands from below."

Is this cause of war manipulable? Not easily!

IX. MINORITY RIGHTS, OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSE PEACE

"Minorities that are treated fairly are less likely to pursue secession by force. This dampens the risk of civil war."

The 1969-1998 Catholic rebellion in Northern Ireland ("The Troubles") and the 1983-2009 Tamil rebellion in Sri Lanka were provoked by the oppression of the Catholic and Tamil minorities. Accordingly, the European Union and U.S. government promoted minority rights in Eastern Europe after 1991 to prevent/abate civil war. Likewise Kofi Anan and the George W. Bush administration ended the 2007-8 civil war in Kenya by brokering a new power-sharing political system that empowers minorities more than the previous winner-take-all system. Many argue that civil peace persists in Switzerland and Belgium because their political systems empower minorities.

But minority rights are often hard to nurture. How could the U.S. do this in Syria and Iraq today? This is much debated. Also, some warn that systems that recognize minority rights increase ethnic conflict by reinforcing ethnic identities. And some warn that outside powers can trigger secessionism among minorities by insisting that governments recognize their rights--once they get these rights the minorities will use force to gain full independence.

X. PARTITION OF DIVIDED SOCIETIES CAUSES PEACE

"Sometimes a divorce is the best answer to internal conflict. Divided societies should be partitioned into separate states, as groups in conflict will fight less as separate states than as citizens of the same state." For example, in 1919 Woodrow Wilson proposed self-determination for the nationalities of Europe as a means to bring greater peace to Europe. Past partitions include: India/Pakistan 1947, Ireland 1922, Palestine 1947, Yugoslavia 1995, and all European colonial empires in the 1950s and 1960s.

XI. MASS REVOLUTION CAUSES WAR

"Regimes that seize power by mass revolution are more warlike because: (1) They are infused with myths of their own enormous goodness, leading to a messianic expansionism. (2) They exaggerate the ease of overthrowing regimes, since their own experience of revolutionary success makes overthrows seem easier than they are. This leads them to recklessly attempt to overthrow neighboring regimes, and also to an unreasonable fear

of being overthrown by counterrevolution--leading to foreign campaigns against counterrevolutionary regimes. (3) They misperceive the world because revolutionary regimes tolerate no dissent, hence they do not correct their own errors by self-evaluation. (4) They produce emigrés who seek to manipulate their new homelands into attacking their old homeland." An argument made by Stephen Walt in a book and an article on the subject. (5) They select sociopathic leaders with personality disorders, e.g., Stalin, Mao.

This theory seems well-supported by evidence. See for example, the wars gotten into by revolutionary France during 1792-1815, by revolutionary Russia during 1920-21 and then during the Cold War (1947-89), by revolutionary Cambodia in 1979, and by revolutionary Iran with Iraq in 1980-1988 and its cold war with the U.S. 1979-present. But the world's mass revolutions seem largely behind us; and mass revolution is hard to influence.

A variant of this theory: "Petro-states run by revolutionaries--e.g., post-1979 Iran, Saddam's Iraq, Qadafy's Libya, are aggressive, warlike" (Jeff Colgan).

XII. COMMUNISM CAUSES WAR

"Communist regimes are infused with a revolutionary messianism that leads them into foreign wars."

This is basically a variant of the previous proposition, "Mass Revolution."

XIII. CAPITALISM CAUSES WAR--an idea in two variants

1. "Capitalist states must conquer the markets that their economies require to avoid recessions and depressions. This leads to wars over colonies and wars against colonies." A favorite Marxist argument.

This hypothesis fits some wars during 1890-1918, especially the Spanish-American and US-Filipino wars, but not more recent wars. And it points to a cause that is not manipulable.

2. "Capitalist states spawn multinational corporations that manipulate their home states to intervene in states where they do business."

This hypothesis fits the U.S. intervention in Guatemala in 1954 and perhaps British and U.S. covert action against Iran in 1953. But major wars don't illustrate, despite the charge that "oil companies pushed the U.S. to war in Iraq 2003."

XIV. IMPERIAL DECLINE AND COLLAPSE CAUSE WAR

"The collapse of empires leaves the zone of imperial retraction without settled borders and leaves nearby powers unsure of their rights and responsibilities in this zone. Conflict results."

Historical evidence supports this hypothesis. Some current conflicts may also illustrate, e.g., the ongoing Russia-Ukraine-U.S. conflict, and Turkish-Kurdish conflict in Syria. But imperial collapse is now rare. It's a war-cause that is largely defunct--those empires prone to collapse have already collapsed. And it is very hard to manipulate.

A related hypothesis ...:

XV. UNSETTLED DISPUTES CAUSE WAR

"Conflicts of interest that are unsettled can become politicized and then become causes of war. States should move to

agree on terms for settling all possible conflicts interest before they become politicized." Settlements on almost any terms are often better than no settlement.

XVI. CULTURAL LEARNING CAUSES PEACE / HUMAN ETHICAL PROGRESS CAUSES PEACE

"War was delegitimated as a human practice by the slaughter of the World Wars, just as slavery and duelling were earlier delegitimated." An hypothesis from John Mueller.

Is this hypothesis valid? What about World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Iraq wars of 1991 and 2003-present? The civil wars in Angola and Sudan? The great Central African war of 1996-present? The growing Islam-Western collision?

Perhaps war is not now being delegitimated as a human practice, but could it be? What if peace religions (Mennonites, Bahai's, Buddhist peace sects) expanded in size? Some believe this is the answer to war. Surely human ethics have advanced since the Romans entertained themselves at the Coliseum by watching people die and the Aztecs and Philistines practiced human sacrifice. Can they advance further?

XVII. NATIONALISM CAUSES WAR

"The rise of nationalism--the doctrine that people owe their prime loyalty to their ethno-cultural group and that this group deserves a state--is a prime cause of conflict. Replace nationalism with a pan-human identity and we abolish a prime cause of intergroup conflict."

Nationalism is indeed new (post 18th century) and sets up great conflicts between ethno-national groups. But how can national identities be abolished?

A more practical idea: accept national identities as inevitable but make them more benign by inducing national groups to abandon nationalist mythmaking and commonize their histories--as discussed last week.

XVIII. EMOTIONS CAUSE WAR OR PEACE

"Emotions like desire for honor, desire for vengeance, pride, backlash against displays of contempt, and jealousy at a status reversal can trigger war. Apology and displays of contrition can bolster peace."

IX. BIPOLARITY CAUSES PEACE

"A bipolar international order is more peaceful and a multipolar order, because false optimism is less likely. States can't have illusions about how many allies will join their side in the next war because there are no major nonaligned states in the system." An idea from Kenneth Waltz.

Is this hypothesis valid? Does it point to a manipulable cause?

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17.42 Causes and Prevention of War
Spring 2018

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