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Domestic Politics and War It is difficult to read both the theoretical literature in political science on the causes of war and historians' case studies of the origins of particular wars without being struck by the difference in their respective evaluations of the importance of domestic political factors. Whereas historians devote considerable attention to these variables, most political scientists minimize their importance. Domestic political variables are not included in any of the leading theories of the causes of war; instead, they appear only in a number of isolated hypotheses and in some empirical studies that are generally atheoretical and noncumulative. This gap is troubling and suggests that political scientists and historians who study war have learned little from each other. A greater recognition of the role of domestic factors by political scientists would increase the explanatory power of their theories and provide more useful conceptual frameworks for the historical analysis of individual wars.

This study takes a first step toward bridging this gap by examining some of the disparate theoretical literature on domestic politics and war. It examines the relationship between national attributes and war behavior, the relative likelihood of democratic and non-democratic regimes going to war, Marxist and liberal theories regarding the impact of economic structure, the influence of nationalism and public opinion, and the scapegoat hypothesis. First, however, this article takes a closer look at the different treatment of domestic sources of war by political scientists and historians.

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DOMESTIC POLITICS AND WAR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Traditionally, most political science research on war has followed the "realist" paradigm and has focused on the structure of the international system and the strategic interaction between states as the primary determinants of international conflict. In the last fifteen years there has been increasing interest in the role of bureaucratic-political and psychological variables in the processes leading to war, particularly in the literature on crisis decision-making. Although economic theories of imperialism and war have been developed by Marxist-Leninists, political scientists have generally minimized the direct impact of economic variables on the processes leading to war. Recently there has been increased attention to the role of economic factors, although the focus has been primarily on the effect of economic change on the differential rates of national growth and the resulting changes in the international distribution of military power.

There has been far less emphasis on domestic politics and other societal-level causes of war. One can find numerous hypotheses regarding the impact of a particular variable on the outbreak of war, but these hypotheses are rarely integrated into more comprehensive theories. Unlike variables at other levels of analysis, it is difficult to find anyone, other than a few Kantians, suggesting that domestic political factors are the most important causes of war. Even the most notable recent attempts to construct theories of war that incorporate explanatory variables from several levels of analysis—including those by Choucri and North, Snyder and Diesing, and Bueno de Mesquita—generally ignore the role of domestic political variables altogether.[1] This pattern is not surprising given a similar tendency in the general theoretical literature on foreign policy decision-making. Allison's paradigms include a "rational model" which focuses on systemic and external factors and two models of the operation of governmental politics and processes. Steinbrunner and Jervis have added a cognitive

1 Nazli Choucri and Robert North, *Nations in Conflict* (San Francisco, 1975); Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations* (Princeton, 1977); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven, 1981). One important exception is Lebow, who examines the phenomenon of deterrence failure. He argues that the domestic political interests of political elites often lead them to defy their adversary's deterrence threats and initiate hostile actions, even when those threats are credible and backed by adequate military strength. See Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War* (Baltimore, 1981).

model, but no one has constructed a comparable model based on domestic politics. This pattern is also reflected in several general surveys of the literature on the causes of war. Other than a brief mention of the in-group/out-group hypothesis and more extended discussions of Marxist-Leninist theories, societal-level sources of war are basically ignored.[2]

This neglect of societal variables by political scientists attempting to construct theories of the causes of war contrasts sharply with recent trends among historians in their studies of the causes of individual wars. The Rankean concept of the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (primacy of foreign policy) and of the influence of the foreign relations of states on their internal structures and processes, which once dominated continental historiography, is no longer in ascendance. The traditional focus of diplomatic historians on the strategic interaction between rival states through the study of official diplomatic files has given way to a much greater recognition of the role of internal social, economic, and political determinants of foreign policy. Some historians have argued that the pendulum has swung too far. Craig, for example, has deplored the relative neglect of political and diplomatic history and the tendency of historians studying foreign policy to assert a *Primat der Innenpolitik*.[3]

One clear manifestation of this trend toward an increasing focus on the internal determinants of policy is the historiography on World War I, which has been influenced by the work of Kehr and Mayer, and particularly by that of Fischer. Fischer's methodological emphasis on the importance of socioeconomic variables is as important as his substantive emphasis on German responsibility for the war. Kaiser has concluded that "a far-reaching consensus now agrees that German foreign policy after 1897 must

2 Graham T. Allison, *The Essence of Decision* (Boston, 1971); John Steinbrunner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision* (Princeton, 1974); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, 1976). For some general surveys of the literature on the causes of war, see Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York, 1973); Dina A. Zinnes, "Why War? Evidence on the Outbreak of International Conflict," in Ted Robert Gurr (ed.), *Handbook of Political Conflict* (New York, 1980), 331–360; Bueno de Mesquita, "Theories of International Conflict: An Analysis and An Appraisal," in *ibid.*, 361–398.

3 Gordon A. Craig, "Political and Diplomatic History," in Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (eds.), *Historical Studies Today* (New York, 1971), 356–371. For a more general survey of some of these recent trends in the historical literature, see Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, Conn., 1984; rev. ed.).

be understood as a response to the internal threat of socialism and democracy." This emphasis on the domestic causes of the war is not confined to Germany. Joll argues that the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary was "wholly the product of its internal problems," and that in both France and Russia domestic and foreign policy were so inextricably intermixed that primacy cannot be given to one over the other. Some scholars have emphasized the domestic sources of British social imperialism of the late nineteenth century, and others have argued that Britain's critical failure to give a commitment to France prior to July 1914 was due to cabinet and parliamentary politics.[4]

The importance of internal factors in the processes leading to war is also evident in the other historical cases included in this volume. As Gutmann notes, nearly all treatments of the Thirty Years' War trace its origins to the civil war within the Holy Roman Empire over religion and the internal power of the emperor. Similarly, the French Revolutionary Wars engulfing all of Europe were intimately linked to the social, economic, and political forces within France that led to the revolution and to the dynamics which sustained it. As Chandler argues, internal party politics in France were particularly important in that many internal factions supported war but for different and often conflicting reasons. The socioeconomic forces contributing to the rise of the National Socialist movement and to Hitler's coming to power were key factors in German expansionist policy and the causes of World War II. Some have argued that domestic political constraints shaping British appeasement policy contributed to that war by undermining deterrence.[5]

4 Eckart Kehr (ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler), *Der Primat der Innenpolitik* (Berlin, 1965); Arno J. Mayer, "Internal Causes and Purposes of War in Europe, 1870–1956: A Research Assignment," *Journal of Modern History*, XLI (1969), 291–303; Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions* (New York, 1975); David E. Kaiser, "Germany and the Origins of the First World War," *Journal of Modern History*, LV (1983), 443. On the role of domestic politics in other states in contributing to the war, see James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York, 1984), 92–122; Michael R. Gordon, "Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and German Cases," *Journal of Modern History*, XLVI (1974), 191–226; Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., "The Origins of World War I," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII (1988), 795–818; Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (Oxford, 1951); Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960).

5 Myron P. Gutmann, "The Origins of the Thirty Years War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII (1988), 749–770; and David G. Chandler, "The Origins of the Napoleonic Wars," unpub. ms. (1986); T. C. W. Blanning, *The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars* (New York, 1986). For a review of the literature on the domestic sources of German expansion and of British appeasement, see Jeffrey L. Hughes, "The Origins of World War II in Europe: British Deterrence Failure and German Expansionism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII (1988), 851–891.

Although most of the leading theories of the causes of war in the political science literature minimize the importance of domestic political variables, one can find individual hypotheses that link these variables to war. Although these hypotheses are not integrated into a larger theoretical system, it is useful to examine some of them here.

NATIONAL ATTRIBUTES AND WAR Although international war is a widespread phenomenon, the frequencies of war involvement for different states are not equal, which suggests that the attributes of states may constitute important variables contributing to war. It is sometimes asserted that certain political cultures, ideologies, or religions are more warlike than others, but this proposition finds little support from the quantitative empirical literature. Studies by Richardson, Rummel, Haas, and others have found essentially no relationship between national attributes and foreign conflict behavior.[6]

These and other scholars hence look for explanations for war not in the characteristics of individual states but in the *differences* between states. One common view is that national differences in religion, language, and other characteristics contribute to war, whereas similarities along these dimensions facilitate peace. Nef argues that a "common universe of customs and beliefs" is the "true basis for international peace." Some balance of power theorists, who emphasize the role of power distributions in determining behavior and outcomes, have also suggested that a common in-

6 For the variation in war behavior among states, see Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago, 1965; 2nd ed.), Tables 31–42; J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War, 1815–1965* (New York, 1972), 257–287. On the disproportionate incidence of great power war behavior, see Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975* (Lexington, Ky., 1983). Lewis F. Richardson, *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* (Chicago, 1960), 168–183, 211–246; Rudolph Rummel, "National Attributes and Foreign Conflict Behavior," in Singer (ed.), *Quantitative International Politics* (New York, 1968), 187–214; Michael Haas, "Societal Approaches to the Study of War," *Journal of Peace Research*, IV (1965), 307–323; Raymond Tanter, "Dimensions of Conflict Behavior within and between Nations, 1958–1960," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, X (1966), 41–64; Wright, *War*, 828–829. It is difficult to generalize from these studies, however, because many of them follow Rummel and are limited to the 1955–1960 period.

tellectual and moral framework is a precondition for stability and peace. There have been some attempts to test these hypotheses empirically. Although many of the results are contradictory, the bulk of the evidence points to positive but weak relationships between societal differences and the incidence of war.[7]

The implications of these findings are unclear, however, for the absence of a well-defined theoretical framework guiding these studies precludes a meaningful interpretation of the observed empirical associations. There needs to be greater specification of the types of states and conditions under which these empirical relationships are valid. There also needs to be far more theoretical attention to the causal mechanisms by which these factors are translated into decisions for war. For example, do these differences generate conflicting interests which lead to war by creating expectations of gains from war, or do they generate misleading images of the adversary which contribute to war through misperceptions of adversary intentions or capabilities?

DEMOCRACY AND WAR Although earlier studies found no consistent relationship between type of regime and war behavior, there has recently been renewed interest in the Kantian proposition that democracies are inherently peaceful and that non-democratic regimes are more warlike. Kant's basic argument is that in a republican regime (characterized by a constitutional, representative government and separation of powers) the citizens rule, and "those who would have to decide to undergo all the deprivations of war will very much hesitate to start such an evil game." Decision-makers in non-democratic states are more likely to engage in war, even "for the most trivial reasons" because they do not themselves directly suffer its human consequences and because

7 On the importance of a common cultural or moral framework, see John Nef, *War and Human Progress* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 257–258; Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York, 1967; 4th ed.), 208–215; Edward Vose Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (New York, 1955), 19–24. For quantitative empirical work on this question, see Wright, *War*, 1240–1260; Haas, "Communication Factors in Decision Making," *Peace Research Society (International) Papers*, XII (1969), 65–86; Richardson, *Deadly Quarrels*, 211–246; Rummel, "Dimensions of Dyadic War, 1820–1952," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XI (1967), 176–183; Francis A. Beer, *Peace Against War* (San Francisco, 1981), 169. Beer estimates that political, linguistic, and religious differences together account for about 20% of the variance in foreign conflict.

they are not constrained by a system of checks and balances or electoral accountability.[8]

Many who accept the basic Kantian argument concede that, once aroused, democracies adopt a crusading spirit and often fight particularly destructive wars. Democratic polities transform conflicts of interests into moral crusades, demand nothing less than total victory and unconditional surrender, and engage in "liberal interventionism" to promote their own vision of the morally proper international order. Thus Churchill asserted in 1901 that "democracy is more vindictive than Cabinets. The wars of peoples will be more terrible than those of kings." Lippmann reflected the paradox of democracy and foreign policy when he argued that public opinion has forced governments "to be too late with too little, or too long with too much, too pacifist in peace and too bellicose in war, too neutralist or appeasing in negotiation or too transient."[9]

There are other characteristics of decision-making in democratic states which may affect their tendency to become involved in wars, although the linkages to war are not always made explicit. Many have argued that the democratic decision-making process is flawed with respect to the conduct of foreign policy. In a well-known remark, de Tocqueville concluded that "foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democracy; they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those in which it is deficient." Morgenthau emphasizes the importance of a democratic government securing popular approval for its policies, but argues that "the conditions under which popular support can be obtained for a foreign policy are not necessarily identical with the conditions under which a foreign policy can be successfully pursued." Similarly, Kennan argues that public and congressional involvement are "congenital deficiencies" with respect to the effective conduct of foreign policy. More specifically, the factors that are said to be necessary for the effec-

8 Immanuel Kant, "Eternal Peace," in Carl J. Frederich (ed.), *The Philosophy of Kant* (New York, 1949), 430–476; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York, 1954), 80–123; *idem*, "Kant, Liberalism, and War," *American Political Science Review*, LVI (1962), 331–340; Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs: Part I," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, XII (1983), 205–235.

9 Winston Churchill, speech in the House of Commons (May 13, 1901), in Martin Gilbert (ed.), *Churchill* (Englewood Cliffs, 1967), 21–22; Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy* (Boston, 1955), 20.

tive conduct of foreign policy in a hostile world but are uncharacteristic of democracies include coherence, long-range planning and continuity, flexibility, dispatch, and secrecy. Waltz, however, disputes the argument that authoritarian states have decisive advantages in international security affairs, and suggests that the impact of internal politics on foreign policy may be even greater in authoritarian states than in democracies.[10]

Even if it were true that liberal democratic regimes are less inclined to *initiate* foreign wars, it would not automatically follow that they are less likely to become *involved* in international wars.[11] A reduced willingness to prepare for war or to resort to the threat or use of force may under some conditions make war more likely by undermining deterrence. Thus Wright and many others have argued that democracies are ill-adapted to the successful use of threats and force as instruments of foreign policy and often fail to preserve peace by balancing power. Many balance of power theorists argue more generally that the stability of the international system, and hence a low likelihood of major war, depends in part on the freedom of decision-makers to pursue realpolitik without internal constraints. Democratic public opinion impedes the formation of alliances with ideologically hostile states and the sudden shifts in alignments that may be necessary for the maintenance of a proper balance of military power in the system or, more generally, the military commitments that may be necessary for the purposes of deterrence. Public demands for an open foreign policy process also preclude the secrecy that is often necessary, realists argue, for delicate negotiations with an adversary. Many have argued, for example, that a definitive British commitment to France before 1914 would probably have been sufficient to deter Germany from its aggressive policies and hence would have avoided a continental war, but that British public opinion precluded such a commitment. It has also been argued that public opinion in Britain was the primary reason for British diplomatic and military passivity during the enormous shifts in

10 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, 1975), I, 234–235; Morgenthau, *Politics*, 241; George Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger (Boston, 1977), 3–4;* Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics* (Boston, 1967), 308–311.

11 I use the concepts of war involvement or participation to refer to behavior in which no distinction is made as to who initiates the war.

the European balance of power between 1864 and 1875 which created the disequilibrium that undermined stability.[12]

The debate regarding the relative likelihood of democratic and non-democratic regimes going to war has been conducted at the empirical as well as the theoretical level. Most analyses have confirmed the findings of a 1976 study by Small and Singer that there have been no significant differences between democratic or non-democratic states in terms of the proportional frequency of their war involvement or the severity of their wars. Democratic states may be slightly less inclined to initiate wars than non-democratic states, but the evidence is not conclusive. The debate has been rekindled by Rummel's study which suggests that libertarian states are more peaceful, but Rummel's conclusions have been challenged on the grounds that they are due almost entirely to biases in his empirical indicators and the excessively narrow and unrepresentative temporal domain of most of his analyses.[13]

The evidence is conclusive that democratic states have been involved, proportionately, in as many wars as non-democratic states. There is one aspect of the military behavior of democratic states, however, that is clearly distinguished from that of non-democratic states: liberal or democratic states do not fight each other. This observation was first emphasized by Babst in 1972 and reconfirmed in most of the subsequent studies surveyed earlier. The number of wars between democracies during the past two centuries ranges from zero to less than a handful depending

12 On domestic politics and the balance of power, see Wright, *War*, 842–848; Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Power and International Relations* (New York, 1962), 40–93; Morgenthau, *Politics*, 141–144. On public opinion and the British non-commitment in 1914 and earlier, see Mayer, "Internal Causes," 298–299; Gordon, "Domestic Conflict," 195–198. On British passivity during the rise of Prussia, see Paul Kennedy, *The Realities behind Diplomacy* (London, 1981), 74–139; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe, 1789–1914* (Cambridge, 1955), 466–504.

13 Small and Singer, "The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes, 1816–1965," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, I (1976), 50–69; Rummel, "The Relationship between National Attributes and Foreign Policy Behavior," in Singer, *International Politics*, 187–214; Rummel, "Libertarianism and International Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XXVII (1983), 27–71. On the question of war initiation, Small and Singer, "War-Proneness," 64–66, find no difference between democratic and non-democratic states, whereas Chan finds a small but non-statistically significant tendency for democratic states to initiate proportionately fewer wars. Steve Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall . . . Are the Freer Countries More Pacific?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XXVIII (1984), 617–648. See Chan for a critique of Rummel.

on precisely how democracy is defined, but these are marginal deviations from a robust finding generated by rigorous and systematic empirical investigations. Moreover, in general wars involving all or nearly all of the great powers, democratic states have never fought on opposite sides. This absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.[14]

Although a number of plausible explanations for the absence of war between democracies have been proposed, none has been rigorously and systematically tested. One reasonable conclusion, however, is that purely structural explanations, which do not differentiate between states on the basis of their internal characteristics, cannot account for the observed behavioral differences between democratic and non-democratic states. The answer probably lies in variables internal to the states.[15]

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE The most comprehensive of all societal-level approaches to international conflict is Marxist-Leninist theory, which focuses on economic structure as the key independent variable. The basic argument is that the inequitable distribution of wealth in capitalist societies generates overproduction, inadequate domestic investment opportunities, and generally stagnant economies. These effects lead to expansionist and imperialist policies abroad; competition between capitalist enterprises for access to markets, investment opportunities, and raw materials; and ultimately to wars between capitalist states. Capitalist economic systems also generate war economies and high levels of military spending as replacement markets to absorb excess capital, which can lead to war through arms races, international tensions, and a conflict spiral. Capitalist states may also initiate wars against so-

14 Although there is some variation in the definitions of democratic or liberal political systems in this literature, most definitions are comparable to that of Small and Singer in "War-Proneness," 55: "bourgeois democracies" involve 1) regular elections and the free participation of opposition parties, 2) at least 10% of the adult population being able to vote for 3) a parliament that either controlled or shared parity with the executive branch. In this article I do not distinguish between liberal and democratic regimes. Dean Babst, "A Force for Peace," *Industrial Research* (April 1972), 55–58. For possible exceptions, see Small and Singer, "War-Proneness," 19; Rummel, "Libertarianism," 42; Doyle, "Liberal Legacies, 1," 209–217.

15 For alternative explanations of this phenomenon see Small and Singer, "War-Proneness," 67; Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part II," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, XII (1983), 323–353.

cialist states in a desperate attempt to prevent the further deterioration of their own positions.[16]

There are numerous critiques of the theoretical coherence and historical validity of the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism; a few points will suffice here. First, even if one were to accept the link between capitalism and imperialism, the theoretical linkages between imperialism and war, particularly interstate war, have never been convincingly demonstrated. It is equally plausible that imperialist expansion, particularly in an era of an open colonial frontier, reduces the likelihood of major war by diverting great power competition from the core of the system into the periphery, where their vital interests are much less likely to conflict and where compromise solutions are more feasible. Kautsky suggested that imperialist competition would lead to "ultra-imperialism," the cooperation among capitalist states for the joint exploitation of the periphery. Second, on the empirical level, if we assume a strong association between liberal democratic political systems and capitalist economic systems, Marxist-Leninist theory makes two predictions that are directly contradicted by the observed empirical relationships between liberal democracy and war. The predicted wars between liberal capitalist states have not been commonplace, and capitalist states have not been disproportionately war prone or more likely to initiate wars than other states in the international system.[17]

Liberal theory also explains international war largely in terms of the structure of economic relationships, but reaches the opposite conclusions from Marxist-Leninists. The Manchester liberals argued strongly that free trade promotes economic efficiency and prosperity, which in turn promotes peace. Any interference with the operation of the market mechanism, such as constraints

16 Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism* (New York, 1939); John A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (London, 1954).

17 These particular arguments regarding the empirical inaccuracy of Marxist-Leninist theory depend on the assertion that liberal democratic political systems have historically tended to coincide with capitalist economic systems. For critiques of the Marxist-Leninist theory, see Lionel Robbins, *The Economic Causes of War* (London, 1939), 19–59; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass., 1979), 18–37. On the safety valve hypothesis, see Morgenthau, *Politics*, 340–343; T. Clifton Morgan and Levy, "The Structure of the International System and the Relationship between the Frequency and Seriousness of War," in Margaret P. Karns (ed.), *Persistent Patterns and Emergent Structures in a Waning Century* (New York, 1986), 75–98. Karl Kautsky, "Ultra-imperialism," *New Left Review*, LIX (1970), 41–46.

on trade, reduces profits and increases conflict. Veblen, Schumpeter, and others emphasized the radical opposition of the industrial spirit and the military spirit. They argued that imperialism and war only squander the riches generated by industrial capitalism and are contrary to the interests of the masses as well as the bourgeoisie. Liberal states have material incentives to avoid hostile policies that might lead others to break their established economic ties. Moreover, in relationships between liberal states, difficult questions of production, distribution, price, and other aspects of trade and finance are resolved through impersonal market forces, and interstate conflicts over these issues are minimized. Economic relations between centralized economies, however, tend to be determined by considerations of power rather than by the market, and this politicization of economic conflicts introduces additional tensions into interstate relations.[18]

NATIONALISM AND PUBLIC OPINION For Kant, Bentham, and most liberals, public opinion is inherently peaceful, and it is widely believed that when wars occur it is because political leaders force war on an unwilling public. There appear to be numerous examples, however, of precisely the opposite: of a hawkish public pressuring political elites into war, or into adopting more hardline policies than they would otherwise prefer. Some examples include the United States in the War of 1812, both the United States and Spain in the Spanish-American War, and Britain and possibly France in the Crimean War. With respect to the Spanish-American War, for example, May writes that, because of domestic politics, President William McKinley "led his country unhesitatingly toward a war which he did not want for a cause in which he did not believe."[19]

18 For surveys of liberal theories of war, see A. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (New York, 1973), 18–32; Edmund Silberner (trans. Alexander H. Krappe) *The Problem of War in Nineteenth Century Economic Thought* (Princeton, 1946); Barry Buzan, "Economic Structure and International Security: The Limits of the Liberal Case," *International Organization*, XXXVIII (1984), 597–624. On the relationship between industrialism, capitalism, democracy, and peace, see Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1966); Schumpeter, *Imperialism*; Raymond Aron, *War and Industrial Society* (London, 1958). On the politicization of international economic relations between states with centralized economies, see *idem*, *War*; Benjamin J. Cohen, *The Question of Imperialism* (New York, 1973).

19 Jeremy Bentham (ed. John Bowring), *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (Edinburgh, 1843), II–IV. On public opinion, party politics, and the origins of the War of 1812, see Roger Brown, *The Republic in Peril* (New York, 1964). On the Spanish-American War, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955); Ernest May, *Imperial Democracy* (New York, 1961). On Britain and the Crimean War, see Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War* (London, 1967).

Peoples in both democratic and non-democratic states are often highly enthusiastic at the beginning of wars, although this support may decline rapidly if the war becomes prolonged and costly. In American politics popular support for a president invariably increases immediately after the use of force, regardless of the wisdom or success of that military action. This pattern has been explained by the tendency of the public to rally around the flag, the president, and the party, and ultimately by the phenomenon of modern nationalism.[20]

Nationalism has created the sense of a common interest in the nation, a concept of the national interest as the highest value, and an intense commitment to the well-being of the state. This commitment is strengthened by national myths regarding the omniscience and omnipotence of the nation and the congruence of one's national morality with a supranational ethic. Such myths and doctrines can be used by elites to advance their own view of the national interest or their own political interests, but, once created, these myths and doctrines take on a life of their own. Assertive national policies and even war can be psychologically functional for individuals by increasing their sense of power and control over an oppressive environment and by reinforcing the tendency of some individuals to seek their identity and fulfillment through the state. Thus Proudhon wrote that war had acquired the status of religion: "For the masses, the real Christ is Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon." Thus nationalism can generate a hardline public opinion which imposes major constraints on statesmen who recognize the limits of power and who would prefer to act with more prudence in their interactions with other states. In Morgenthau's words, "compromise, the virtue of the old diplomacy, becomes the treason of the new." Thus statesmen are sometimes pressured by a jingoistic public to pursue bellicose

20 The support of presidential actions by the American public is analyzed by John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York, 1973). For some recent empirical work which qualifies the rally-around-the-flag hypotheses, see Richard Stoll, "The Guns of November," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XXVII (1984), 231–246; Charles W. Ostrom, Jr., and Brian L. Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force," *American Political Science Review*, LXXX (1986), 541–566.

policies for which the risk of war far outweighs the interests at stake and to forego compromises which are in the best interests of all.[21]

Public opinion is not always hawkish, and there are numerous examples of public opinion constraining decision-makers from taking more hardline policies. Although it would be useful to know whether public opinion is usually more hawkish or more dovish, there are other questions that are probably more important. One concerns the conditions under which public opinion prefers more belligerent policies and the conditions under which it prefers more conciliatory policies. Another concerns the particular kinds of military actions that the public is likely to support (for example, the quick and massive use of force as opposed to gradual and limited actions). An even more basic question is the extent to which public preferences influence state decisions relating to war and peace. These are complex questions, particularly because of the diversity of political systems and historical circumstances over which we want to generalize. In addition, political elites are not only constrained by public opinion, but they can also actively manipulate public opinion for their own purposes. The nature of this reciprocal relationship between political elites and the mass public is poorly understood. The complexity of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy decision-making is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the absence of a theory of public opinion and war.

THE SCAPEGOAT HYPOTHESIS The tendency of peoples in a wide range of circumstances to support assertive national policies which appear to enhance the power and prestige of the state may lead decision-makers, under certain conditions, to embark on aggressive foreign policies and sometimes even war as a means of increasing or maintaining their domestic support. This old idea is often referred to as the scapegoat or diversionary theory of war, for political elites can use a foreign war to divert popular attention from internal social, economic, and political problems.[22]

21 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago, 1985); Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York, 1941); Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *La Guerre et la paix* (Paris, 1861), quoted in Nef, *War*, 405; Morgenthau, *Politics*, 532–550.

22 A different theoretical question, which is not discussed here, concerns the symbiotic relationship between domestic politics and external war in the processes involved in the development of the modern state. See Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1985), 169–191; Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975).

Theoretically, the scapegoat theory is based on the in-group/out-group hypothesis in sociology. Simmel, in the first systematic treatment of the subject, argued that conflict with an out-group increases the cohesion and political centralization of the in-group, and generalized to international relations: "war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for a state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms, or else to break up definitely." Coser modified many of Simmel's propositions. He argues that the cohesion of the in-group will be increased only if there already exists some minimal level of internal cohesion and only if it is generally perceived that the external threat menaces the group as a whole and not just some part of it. Otherwise, external conflict will lead to internal conflict and disintegration rather than cohesion. Coser is the most widely cited authority on the in-group/out-group hypothesis, but this important qualification is not always recognized.[23]

There has been a great deal of empirical research on the in-group/out-group hypothesis by psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists. This literature has been thoroughly reviewed elsewhere, and a brief summary of the political science literature will suffice. Numerous quantitative studies, which simply correlate a variety of indicators of the internal and foreign conflict behavior of states, have generally agreed that there exists no relationship between the two. However, some studies which attempt to control for other variables (such as type of regime) have found positive but weak relationships between internal and external conflict.[24]

Some comparative historical studies have found, contrary to the large-N correlational studies, a much stronger relationship between internal instability and external war. Rosecrance con-

23 Georg Simmel (trans. Kurt H. Wolff), *Conflict* (Glencoe, Ill., 1955), 93; Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, Ill., 1956).

24 See Rummel, "The Dimensions of Conflict Behavior within and between Nations," *General Systems Yearbook*, VIII (1963), 1–50; Tanter, "Dimensions of Conflict"; Jonathan Wilkenfeld, (ed.), *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics* (New York, 1973), 148–190. For more detailed reviews of this literature, see Arthur A. Stein, "Conflict and Cohesion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XX (1976), 143–172; Michael Stohl, "The Nexus of Civil and International Conflict," in Gurr (ed.), *Handbook*; Zinnes, "Why War?" 341–344.

cludes that the primary determinant of international stability and peace in the European system from 1740 to 1960 was internal stability and the resulting security of elites, whereas domestic instability and elite insecurity were associated with war. Rosecrance argues, contrary to some of the quantitative correlational studies, that this relationship holds regardless of the political structure or ideology of the regime. In addition, there have been numerous historical case studies suggesting that a major cause of individual wars was the motivation of political leaders to solve their internal problems through a diplomatic or military victory abroad.[25]

The arguments by Kehr, Mayer, and others that the aggressive policies of Germany and other powers in 1914 were driven by the hope that they would help maintain a precarious domestic status quo against the forces of democracy and socialism have already been mentioned, and there are numerous other cases. Michon adopts a scapegoat interpretation of French policy in 1792: "War was willed solely to act as a diversion from the social problems. . . . [War] would give the government dictatorial powers and would allow it to eliminate its detested enemies. For these groups the war was a grand maneuver of domestic politics." Many trace the origins of the Russo-Japanese War to the motivation articulated by the Russian minister of the interior: "What this country needs is a short victorious war to stem the tide of revolution." Hitler also used an aggressive foreign policy to consolidate his internal political position (although this was probably not the primary cause of the war), and similar motivations have been widely attributed to the Argentine junta in their 1982 attempt to seize the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands from Britain. Thus the quantitative empirical research bearing on the scapegoat hypothesis contradicts much of the historical literature, and it is not clear which (if either) is correct.[26]

Although the quantitative studies of the relationships between domestic and foreign conflict are beset by numerous methodological problems, the conceptual problems are even more serious.[27] These studies have not been based on or guided by theory, but instead have been driven too much by method and (after Rummel) by data availability. They have focused on the question of whether there exists an empirical association between internal and external conflict without regard for the causal processes which might produce such a result. Their strictly correlational methodology fails to distinguish processes in which internal conflict generates external conflict from those in which external conflict generates internal conflict.[28]

25 Richard Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics* (Boston, 1963).

26 On the 1914 case, see the sources in n. 4. Georges Michon is quoted by Blanning, *French Revolutionary Wars*, 71. William L. Langer, "The Origin of the Russo-Japanese War," in *idem*, *Explorations in Crises* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 3–45; Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (New York, 1983).

The first of these processes can be further subdivided. Conflict within state A may tempt A's leaders to resort to the use of force externally for diversionary purposes, as suggested by the scapegoat hypothesis. Alternatively, conflict within state A may tempt state B to intervene, either to exploit a temporary military advantage created by the impact of A's turmoil on its military strength, or to attempt to influence the outcome of the struggle for power in A. It is possible that both of these processes may be operative. Conflict within A may generate weaknesses which provide an opportunity for B to attack, which in turn provides the political leadership of A with a real external threat which can be exploited for its own domestic political purposes. This external threat can be particularly useful for revolutionary regimes, as suggested by the cases of France in 1792, Russia in 1918, and Iran in 1980.[29]

Another weakness of empirical studies of the in-group/outgroup hypothesis is their failure to identify the conditions under

27 One serious flaw in the research design of these quantitative studies is the 1955–1960 period upon which most of them are based. This is not only too narrow a temporal domain but also coincides with a period which is relatively peaceful and entirely unrepresentative of "normal" international political behavior, and thus restricts the generalizability of the findings. For an excellent methodological critique, see Joseph M. Scolnick, Jr., "An Appraisal of Studies of the Linkages between Domestic and International Conflict," *Comparative Political Studies*, VI (1974), 485–509.

28 External war often results in an increase in the government's extraction of resources from society to fund the war effort, which under certain conditions generates resistance from key elites or masses. War may also weaken the government's repressive capacity and encourage its internal enemies to rebel. See Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-making," in *idem*, *Formation*, 74.

29 Blainey, *Causes of War*, 68–86, argues that external attacks to exploit internal weaknesses have historically been more common than diversionary actions, but this claim is an unresolved empirical question. The possibility of a revolutionary regime responding to an externally initiated attack in a way that helps consolidate its own political power was emphasized to me by Joseph Nye.

which the proposition is likely to hold. The resulting correlational analyses over a universe of cases have a minimum of scientific controls and may be masking stronger relationships that hold in more restricted circumstances. Although many of these empirical studies refer to Coser, they generally neglect his qualification that if the level of pre-existing internal conflict is too high, foreign conflict will increase rather than decrease internal conflict. If this is true, the point at which the relationship reverses must be specified before the hypothesis can be tested. External constraints are also important. A diplomatic defeat usually (but not always) intensifies internal political divisions, and therefore a state's relative power position may be an important factor affecting scapegoating. The rate of change in military power may also have an impact. Decision-makers faced with a decline in military strength as well as internal divisions may be particularly willing to gamble on a war that might solve their external and internal problems simultaneously, and thus be driven to war by the interaction of scapegoat and preventive motivations. Fischer and others argue that these were the two primary motivations leading Germany to precipitate a war in 1914. Lebow's work suggests that this phenomenon may be more general. In fact, internal conflict—and the social and economic problems that often generate it—may sometimes be an important cause of national decline.[30]

For these and other reasons, the international relations literature on the in-group/out-group conflict serves as a classic example of the futility of rigorous empirical research that is not guided by adequate theorizing. As Stohl argues, "The continuing lack of theoretical foundation has worked against the cumulation of evidence" producing instead only "isolated bits of information." One reason, in this author's opinion, for the atheoretical nature of much of the research by political scientists on the relationship between domestic and foreign conflict is the failure to give much attention to work in other disciplines. These researchers have accepted Coser's basic hypothesis without considering its qualifications, and have not utilized the literature in psychology, anthropology, and sociology regarding some of the other conditions affecting the relationship between in-group and out-

30 Fischer, *War*, 398; Lebow, *Between Peace and War*; Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics*, XL (1987), 82–107.

group conflict. Historical research on this question is also useful, not just for analysis of individual cases which demonstrate the importance of scapegoating, but also for more theoretically oriented efforts to generalize about these relationships.[31]

Mayer's work on the internal causes of war is a good example of historical analysis which provides a richer theoretical development of the scapegoat hypothesis than can generally be found in the political science literature.[32] Mayer argues, with Coser, that the impact of external war on internal cohesion depends on preexisting levels of internal unity, and also on the outcome of the war: victory strengthens the internal political position of those who advocate and direct the war, whereas defeat reduces their power and increases that of the opposition. Political decision-makers recognize these dangers and, Mayer suggests, refrain from external diversionary actions if internal tensions are sufficiently acute or if the risks of defeat are too great. He hypothesizes that internal politics have the greatest impact on foreign policy, whether by providing incentives or disincentives for war, in revolutionary and prerevolutionary times and under conditions of internal instability rather than in times of domestic and international peace. Internal crises create a siege mentality among conservatives and an effort to maintain their privileged political, social, and economic positions through the diversionary use of force against external enemies. Mayer applies his framework to a number of cases beginning with the French Revolution and concludes that the primary cause of internal crises and foreign wars was "over-reaction to over-perceived revolutionary dangers rather than any calibrated and hazardous resistance to enormous and imminent insurgencies."[33]

31 Stohl, "Civil and International Conflict," 326–329. For a more extensive analysis of the scapegoat hypothesis, see Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War," in Manus I. Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies*, forthcoming.

32 It is revealing that Mayer's work is rarely cited in political science research on the relationship between internal and external conflict. One exception is Michael G. Fry and Arthur N. Gilbert, "A Historian and Linkage Politics," *International Studies Quarterly*, XXVI (1982), 425–444.

33 Mayer, "Internal Causes of War"; *idem*, "Internal Crises and War since 1870," in Charles L. Bertrand (ed.), *Revolutionary Situations in Europe, 1917–1922: Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary* (Montréal, 1977); Mayer, "Domestic Causes of the First World War," in Leonard Krieger and Fritz Stern (eds.), *The Responsibility of Power* (New York, 1967), 286–300. Note that Mayer's conclusion does not appear to be fully consistent with his

Mayer may go too far in always assuming the existence of a relatively homogeneous upper class which attempts to hold onto the reins of power through the diversionary use of force abroad. A more pluralistic political model, in which one faction may seek a foreign confrontation to advance its own interests in the intra-elite competition for power, may be more plausible. Lebow suggests such a hypothesis. He argues that the attempts to expand Russian influence in Korea prior to the Russo-Japanese War were the result of deliberate efforts of the Bezobrazov faction to undermine the political influence of Sergei Witte, the minister of finance. Alternatively, each of several internal factions may believe that war or warlike policies would advance its own bureaucratic or domestic political objectives. A good example is revolutionary France, where nearly all of the major factions (save the extreme radicals) sought war but for different reasons.[34]

It is also possible for a decision for imperialism or war to emerge from an internal coalition-building process without it being the leading preference of any single political faction. Snyder has constructed a theory which emphasizes divisions in the elite, the lack of a compelling interest for external expansion in any one group, and the processes of logrolling and compromise that lead to internal harmony and imperial overcommitment. The German coalition of iron and rye in the late 1800s would be one example, and the British coalition of liberals and conservatives supporting social imperialism during the same period would be another.[35]

A major theme of this article is the gap between historians and political scientists in their evaluations of the relative importance of domestic political variables in the processes leading to war. The political science literature on the relationship between the domestic and foreign conflict behavior of states is a particularly striking example of this discrepancy. The lack of any support for such a relationship in the quantitative empirical literature contrasts sharply with the case studies of individual wars by historians,

argument that political elites' awareness of the risks of external diversionary actions under conditions of low internal cohesion deters them from undertaking such actions.

34 Lebow, "Deterrence Deadlock: Is There a Way Out?" in Jervis, Lebow, and Stein (eds.), *Psychology and Deterrence*, 180–202. On the French case, see Blanning, *French Revolutionary Wars*.

35 Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and Strategic Ideology*, unpub. ms.

with historical studies by political scientists, and with the theoretical literature in political science. These discrepancies, in conjunction with the methodological limitations of the quantitative studies, lead to the tentative conclusion that the relationship between internal conflict and the foreign conflict behavior of states is more substantial than implied by the quantitative empirical literature in political science.

The primary explanation for the lack of evidence for such a relationship is the absence of a well-developed theoretical framework guiding the empirical studies. One reason for this theoretical impoverishment is exceedingly narrow disciplinary boundaries and the failure of political scientists to appreciate the potentially rich sources of theoretical insights in other fields. Although political scientists often acknowledge the potential utility of historical literature for testing their own theoretical generalizations, they underestimate its utility as a source of theoretical propositions. The literature relating to the scapegoat hypothesis is an excellent example of Bueno de Mesquita's argument that "too often we do not bring as much rigor to our theorizing as we do to our data analysis," but it also illustrates the multiple sources of important theoretical insights that might aid in the task of theoretical development.[36]

36 Bueno de Mesquita, "Theories," 396.