

Peace & Conflict Studies

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Week 1 – Intro

Discussion points

- The hegemonic powers which stabilise a balance are only able to do so by perpetuating violence on the frontier
- Peaceful for whom? Peace vs Security?
- Peace as a bottom-up process
- Trade agreements doesn't necessarily motivate states to avoid armed conflict; some rival countries don't have any trade incentives (what does Saudi Arabia have that Iran would possibly want besides hard cash to invest?)
- Bargaining Theory of War (Fearon)
- Military Industrial Complex means that violence pays, regardless of victory or defeat for the US empire. The Peace Dividend was tried and didn't pay enough
- The theft of Surplus labour value is structural violence

Absence of Violence (*Peace Continuum* Davenport et al., 2018)

They break down negative peace into the following concepts:

- Order
- harmonious relationship
- trust
- reconciliation
- social integration
 - especially after ethnic cleansing
 - Inter-state dependence (EU)
- justice / rule of law (punish & deter rogue actors)
- Conflict resolution institutionalisation
- *socioeconomic opportunity*
- *political freedoms / civil rights*
- *equality / non-discrimination*

The italic points enjoy a reciprocal relationship with human rights. Some of these qualities can be met to establishing “peace” in a limited sense.

However, what do Davenport and co. think violence is? And is it safe to presume that positive peace is theoretically symmetrical to the absence of order?

Week 2 - Rapprochement

How do Enemies become friends – or at least, not enemies?

- A “window” period which can be the midwife of just, sustainable, peace
- Does the 1972 China-US rapprochement debunk the democratic peace hypothesis?
- Where is the concern for Taiwanese people’s security and civil rights? Arguably, the Shanghai communique laid the groundwork for Mainland suzerainty and the extradition protests in Hong Kong
- Economic ties and FOMO don’t really lead to rapprochement – enemies are already economically disengaged, and China’s rapid industrialisation didn’t come until a full decade later
 - It’s debatable I guess – an end to sanctions and embargo is always welcome
- What is the goal of rapprochement? Why would otherwise hostile states reexamine their hostility? What do they want to get out of it?
- Status-seeking and international legitimacy motivated China’s dialogue with US just as much as Mao shoring up domestic legitimacy.
- Is it a real rapprochement if we agree to disagree about the Taiwan Question?
- Existential threats motivate rapprochement between peers more than asymmetric pressure between a preeminent hegemon against a minor enemy
- Is trust necessary between leaders for rapprochement? If so, how much?
 - If not, why not?
 - Maybe not trust that they will hold their word, but trust that they are serious
 - An understanding of one another’s *methods* through careful study rather than jingoistic stereotypes and doctrine helps
- How much of the subterfuge with Kissinger was just standard-operating-procedure?

Week 3 – Sources of Intl. Peace

Systemic vs. Regional vs. Domestic Sources and respective peaces

Power Transition Theory

Dominant power Great Powers Middle Powers Smaller powers & Dependencies

As long as there is a dominant power, they will necessarily make enemies within the lower levels of the pyramid, but unable to do anything about it aside from collective action

DiCicco: What if the dominant power is *also* dissatisfied with the status of its own empire??

Week 4 - Liberal Peace?

Derrick: “incredible ethno-centrism” in the perspectives of the reading

- “Democracies win wars more easily” seems woefully out of touch
- “Autocracies are less incentivised to win” confirmation bias much?
 - Availability bias is the rejoinder to that argument
 - Even if the probabilistic evidence suggests that these assertions are valid – would you want your commander in chief to believe this as a given??