

Causes of War

Bargaining Power

January 13, 2015

Today's Agenda

- 1. Your questions for me.**
- 2. Power and the outbreak of war.**
- 3. Principles of bargaining.**

Your

Questions

for me

**Is this course more
historical with regard to
assessments—i.e., will
tests be more history-
based or analytical?**

**How will this class shape
my view on war?**

If the exams are open-note, what will we be tested on beyond the notes and resources available?

What are the formats of the midterm and final?

**What is your background/
interest in war?**

Power

and the outbreak of war

An Old Question

How does the balance of power affect the risk of war?

- Is war more likely between evenly matched states?**
- Or do the strong prey on the weak?**

Blainey's Answer

"Wars usually end when the fighting nations *agree* on their relative strength, and wars usually begin when fighting nations *disagree* on their relative strength" (p. 122).

At the End of a War

Is power more balanced than at the start?

Do the combatants agree more about their relative power?

Disagreement about Relative Power

Why would states disagree about their relative power in the first place?

And why does war help resolve that disagreement?

Two Puzzles

Do we have to have a war to get states to agree?

Why won't states fight if they do agree?

Principles of

Bargaining

Fearon's Generalization of Blainey

Wars start when states cannot reach a settlement by bargaining.

(Disagreement about relative strength is one obstacle to bargaining.)

Bargaining: A Simple Example

You and a friend are debating about restaurants.

If you don't agree, you'll both eat at home.

Your friend is an excellent cook. You can barely heat up a Hot Pocket.

Who's more likely to get their way?

Bargaining Power

The less you'd suffer from failing to agree, the more bargaining power you hold.

A General Bargaining Model

- **Two or more actors**
- **Valuable object at stake**
- **Settlement outcome**
 - **Division of the object among the actors**
 - **All must agree to the settlement**
- **Disagreement outcome**
 - **If a settlement isn't reached**
 - **Each actor gets their *reservation value***

Bargaining and War

- **Actors: States**
- **Object: Policy or Political Aim**
 - **Commerce**
 - **Territory**
 - **Ideology**
 - **Identity**
- **Settlement: Negotiated Policy**
- **Disagreement: War**

Bargaining Power in War

A state's reservation value is what it could expect to obtain in case of war.

Better capabilities

- Better expected outcome**
- Higher reservation value**
- More bargaining power**

The Gamble of War

No other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance. And through the element of chance, guesswork and luck come to play a great part in war.

— Clausewitz (p. 85)

Bargaining power depends not on what *will* happen in war, but on what states *expect* to happen.

Would You Play This Game?

I'll flip a coin. If heads, I give you \$50. If tails, you give me \$48.

Risk Attitudes

Risk neutral: Sure thing \approx Gamble

Risk averse: Sure thing $>$ Gamble

Risk loving: Gamble $>$ Sure thing

For Next Time

- We'll finish discussing the bargaining model of war and see why it's puzzling that states may not be able to reach negotiated settlements.
- Read Fearon 1995, "Rationalist Explanations for War" (link on syllabus on course website, <http://bkenkel.com/psci221>).
- Be prepared to select supplemental readings to present on.