CONFLICT DOMAINS: WARFARE, INTERNAL CONFLICTS, AND THE SEARCH FOR NEGOTIATED OR MEDIATED RESOLUTIONS

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Summary

This article is an attempt to capture some broader themes suggested by the other articles in this section and by the literature on sources of conflict and processes of settlement or resolution. It is divided into six parts. In the first part, I discuss the key ideas about conflict between and within societies. These include ways of thinking about the causes of war and the possible spillover effects of internal conflicts. The second part is a discussion of divided societies with a focus on sources of internal conflict. In the third part, the role of culture is considered in terms of the way it frames issues and provides categories for its own and other groups. The next part considers some of the conditions that influence the course of attempts to resolve conflicts. The discussion revolves around the distinction between settlements that are usually compromises and resolutions that provide benefits to all the disputing parties. Then, I turn to a discussion of issues of group identity. Attention is paid to three aspects of identities that influence negotiating behavior as well as the impact of those conflict-resolving processes on identity. The article concludes with a summary of the key themes of this section and the challenges that remain for the conflict-resolution community.

1. Conflict Between and Within States

Jensen's article on **International Conflict** describes many possible causes of war between and within states. Causes are conceived of in terms of levels of explanation including the systemic, the societal, and the individual perspectives. One explanation at the system level is that war is the result of changing power balances as one or another state responds to threats to the stability of the balance. There is disagreement among

theorists, however, over whether a bipolar (power divided between two powers) or multi-polar (several spheres of competing influence) system is more stable. Another explanation is that wars result from arms races. Issues raised concerning this explanation include whether nations actually respond to each other's arming decisions (as opposed to their own past behavior), the specific conditions under which arms race disputes lead to war, the stage within the arms race most likely to lead to war, and differences between qualitative and quantitative arms races that may lead either to war or to disarmament.

Alternative explanations for war have been also been suggested from a national or societal perspective. The rise of nationalism, which is often clearly manipulated by leaders, is a source for mobilizing citizens to combat. Nationalist sentiments are more likely to be spread through a population during periods of stability. These sentiments may also contribute to domestic stability and cohesion. Domestic instability is another possible source of war as leaders seek scapegoats in order to resolve domestic problems. A third explanation for war at this level of analysis is referred to as the democratic peace theory. Considerable research has shown that democracies are less likely to fight, particularly against each other, than are more centralized regimes. Several reasons have been given for this finding.

Similarly at the individual level of analysis, alternative explanations have been offered. It is clear that aggression is a learned response to situations confronting individuals. At issue, however, is the role of individuals in decisions to mobilize for war. Theorists are generally divided on this issue, with many scholars of international relations preferring the system or nation-level explanations and political psychologists advancing explanations in terms of individual or small-group decision making. And, within the camp of individual (or small-group) explanations there is a division between theorists who look toward rational explanations and those who argue in favor of misperception and miscommunication as the primary sources of conflict. In any event, there is little doubt that war between or within states occurs for a variety of reasons. Jensen's article calls attention to the multiple factors that can precipitate and sustain international conflict, and cautions against seeking explanations based only on one or a few factors.

Continuing with the theme of warfare in the international system, Sandole concentrates specifically on the relation between intrastate and interstate conflicts (**see *Warfare in the Twenty-First Century***). Like Jensen, he recognizes the increasing incidence of internal, identity-based conflicts. But his goal is both more modest and more ambitious. It is more modest in the sense of focusing attention primarily on only one of Jensen's explanations for war—domestic instability at the national level. It is more ambitious in the sense of providing a more detailed analysis of the connection and then suggesting how such "spillovers" from intrastate to interstate conflicts can be prevented.

After documenting the rise in domestic conflicts following the end of the Cold War, Sandole reviews and then critiques the end of history and democratic peace theories that suggest that local conflicts have limited implications for wars between states. Overlooked by these theorists are the possible spillover effects of limited conflicts. Three kinds of spillover effects are referred to as functional, external intervention, and multiplier effects. Functional spillover emphasizes the functions served by conflict for a group or nation. Based largely on writings about the functions of conflict, spillover

occurs because of the desire by policy-making elites to unify a nation. It occurs most often when the regime in power is being threatened as in Sandole's examples. The perceived "solution" to domestic instability is to foment external conflict. External intervention is another form of spillover. Two types of interventions are those taken on behalf of common ethnic identities (e.g. Turkey siding with Azerbaijan in its war with Armenia) and interventions for humanitarian support (e.g. part of the U.S. mission in Afghanistan). The former intervention can lead to an expanded conflict involving the intervening nation. The latter intervention may lead to perceptions of bias by one or another party to the conflict. The multiplier effect leads to spillover as a result of contagion. Leaders of ethnic minorities may cite rebellions elsewhere as models for their cause. Particularly notable in this regard is the example used by Sandole of "Yugoslav contagion." All three forms of spillover can occur together and, in some instances, reinforce each other. When this happens the eruption of interstate war is not far behind.

The mix of new (identity-based conflicts) and old (militarized disputes between states) warfare discussed in this article calls attention to the warning that local or limited conflicts can have global consequences. Although mechanisms for managing interstate conflicts have been generally effective since the close of World War II, the international community has not developed mechanisms for dealing with the new realities of spillover effects. One approach suggested by Sandole is the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. They have developed a plan for a multifactor, multilevel security system that is designed for preventing future Yugoslavias. Together with some other approaches to peace building, this plan could be applicable to other regions of the world. If effective in Europe, the spillover effects of this mechanism would have positive consequences elsewhere. However, its effectiveness in the European region and its applicability to other regional cultures around the world remain to be evaluated.

2. Divided Societies

Identity conflicts are also the theme for Jeong's article *Conflict in Divided Societies*. Like Sandole, he recognizes this source of division as a serious threat to world peace. Unlike Sandole, however, Jeong's attention is focused on the sources of these conflicts rather than their consequences for interstate warfare. Revolutionary politics emerge from self-conscious underclass identities. When gaps between rich and poor overlap with ethnic or racial identities, the conditions are ripe for the sort of domestic instability that can lead to violent conflict. The stability of heterogeneous societies depends in large part on equitable distributions of resources across various ethnic boundaries. When economic and ethnic lines cross cut (rather than overlap), as they do for example in Switzerland, the prospects for internal conflict are reduced. In many of the regions of the world, however, economic deprivation coincides with indigenous or racial identities. For many theorists, this is a primary source of deep-rooted conflicts that result in long periods of warfare within societies.

The influence of identities on conflict turns on issues of mobilizing populations for collective action. Focusing on identities rooted in deprivation, Jeong's article raises, but does not answer, the question of how these groups can be mobilized for action against

repressive regimes. There is a substantial literature on the role of nationalism in preparing groups to take actions and in sustaining the actions during the course of prolonged conflict. Nationalist sentiments (or strong identities) provide the motivation to act. They can be, and often are, manipulated by leaders with a stake in securing their own power. At times, leaders attempt to redirect the frustration-driven aggression toward outside "enemies." This is Sandole's idea of functional spillover. It is intended to shore up unity among group members, considered vital for effective mobilization and combat.

It is also the case that identities can mobilize members for action from the bottom up. Deprived groups can develop a collective consciousness about their plight, appoint leaders from the ranks, and foment revolution from below. This can result in actions against incumbent regimes rather than toward outside targets. There is much yet to be learned about the conditions for top-down versus bottom-up processes for mobilization. And, although motivation to act depends on arousing strong sentiments attached to identities, effective mobilization depends also on group organization and logistics. These are some of the factors that would contribute to a broader framework that specifies the path between identities, mobilization, and sustaining combat over time.

3. The Role of Culture

The link between individual and collective identities is influenced by culture. In his article, Avruch shows how cultural materials are used to raise consciousness about shared group identities (see *Cross-Cultural Conflict*). By increasing the intensity (and commitment) of group identification, self-consciousness strengthens the motivation to act on behalf of the group. Widespread identities, in turn, facilitate mobilization for actions directed at other (out) groups. These actions occur across a broad spectrum of types of conflict including those rooted primarily in competition for scarce resources or power. Perceptions play an important role in all types of conflicts. Cultural experiences shape the way that issues and parties are defined as well as how groups are categorized, either simply as "us" and "them" or in more complex ways that take account of both similarities and differences.

Culture has been an elusive concept. Avruch reviews its multiple meanings, including the distinction between universal or generic and local culture. By emphasizing the universal, conflict resolution practitioners call attention to those similarities between social groups that can promote peace. By emphasizing the local, leaders call attention to the differences between groups that can produce or exacerbate conflict between them. In both cases, the notion of culture, as shared or distinct, is manipulated to serve either humanitarian or political purposes. This issue is at the heart of many discussions surrounding conflict analysis and resolution. It is reflected in the tension between the bridge-building efforts of various problem-solving interventions and the psychological rewards that accrue from group membership and loyalty. Many conflict-resolution professionals attempt to break down the barriers to communication caused by differences in values, ideologies, and worldviews. One impediment to their success is the functions served by group (or cultural) identification. Their challenge is to persuade members of the conflicting groups that these functions (including the psychological rewards of membership) can be served as well by cooperation. This is done in the

context of managing conflicts, as discussed in Jensen's and Sandole's articles on warfare. It is also done to achieve the goal of improved relationships over time. It is the latter goal—conflict resolution—that involves considerations of the way culture shapes perceptions of self and other.

A distinction reflected in the articles prepared for this section is between conflict settlement and resolution. By settlement, we refer to agreements that serve to manage conflicts. By resolution, we refer to agreements that restore old or create new relationships between the disputing parties. The distinction was introduced long ago by Walton and McKersie in their book on labor negotiations. It has been the basis for considerable research conducted in the decades since that book appeared. Implications of this research are discussed in the next part of this theme article.

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Biographical Sketch

Daniel Druckman is the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Professor of Conflict Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, where he also coordinates the doctoral program at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Previously, he directed a number of projects at the National Research Council and held senior positions at several research consulting firms. He received a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and was awarded a best-in-field prize from the American Institutes for Research for his doctoral dissertation. He has published widely (including 11 authored or edited books and over 100 articles) on such topics as negotiating behavior, nationalism and group identity, group processes, peacekeeping, political stability, nonverbal communication, enhancing human performance, and modeling methodologies, including simulation. He received the 1995 Otto Klineberg award for Intercultural and International Relations from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues for his work on nationalism and a teaching excellence award in 1998 from George Mason University. He currently sits on the boards of six journals including the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and the *American Behavioral Scientist*. He is an associate editor of *Negotiation Journal* and of *Simulation & Gaming* as well as a founding board member of *International Negotiation*. He is the editor of the special issue of the *American Behavioral Scientist* on "Public and Private Cooperation in the Beltway," published in August, 2000, and co-editor of the National Research Council book on *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War* in which he also authored chapters. His comparative study of turning points in international negotiation appeared in the August 2001 issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and he is a co-editor of the textbook *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention* to be published by Continuum in 2003.