

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR AND PEACE

I. ANALYZING THE CAUSES OF WAR

KURT LEWIN'S FORMULA $B = f(P, E)$

II. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

A. INSTIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

OPPRESSION, INJUSTICE, &
OTHER GRIEVANCES

THREAT (e.g., effects of 9/11/01 threat on Cal
Poly students)

B. SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION MAKERS

NORMS & POLITICAL INFLUENCES

GROUPTHINK- pressures for conformity and
consensus cause poor decision making

GROUPTHINK EXAMPLE:

CIA conclusions about WMD in Iraq

C. SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON CITIZENS

OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY
CONFORMITY TO SOCIAL NORMS
GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA

III. PERSON FACTORS

A. GENETIC PREDISPOSITIONS – Is war inevitable?

DISPOSITIONS FOR FIGHTING AND
COOPERATING

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN
COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

B. EMOTIONS & MOTIVES

FEAR & INSECURITY

ANGER & REVENGE

PRIDE & HUMILATION

POWER (to control people and resources)

COMPETITION (winning, not losing)

C. ATTITUDES & ATTRIBUTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION
ERROR

ETHNOCENTRISM, DIABOLICAL ENEMY
IMAGE, DEHUMANIZATION

IDEOLOGY - Hard vs. Soft Power (Militaristic vs. Cooperative)

JUSTIFICATION & ENTRAPMENT

Actions > Justification > Perseverance &
Escalation

D. DOES PEACEFULNESS GENERALIZE ?

INTERPERSONAL <-> GLOBAL ATTITUDES

INNER PEACE <-> INTERPERSONAL

INNER PEACE <-> GLOBAL ATTITUDES

E. CHARACTERISTICS OF PEACEFUL PEOPLE
(i.e., high on interpersonal peacefulness and low on militaristic attitude):

Universal Values (equality, justice, beauty)

Empathic Concern

Perspective Taking

See Other People as Similar to Self

Humanitarian Goals

Experience More Peaceful Feelings

Low Valuing of Power and Dominance

Reject Revenge Norms

Less Closed-Minded

Unwilling to Impose Values on Others

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO WAR AND VIOLENCE

- A. CONTAINMENT AND DETERRENCE
- B. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS
- C. POSITIVE INCENTIVES
- D. NEGOTIATION
- E. THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

V. AWARENESS OF ALTERNATIVES REDUCES SUPPORT FOR WAR (EXCEPT FOR HIGHLY MILITARISTIC PEOPLE)

[lecture by Linden Nelson, October 2008]