



CDSn4001: Conflict Analysis

Defining conflict

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Agenda

- What is conflict?
- What is *not* conflict?
- What is the relationship between conflict, violence, and peace?

What is conflict?

- “a situation in which actors use conflict **behavior** against each other to attain **incompatible goals** and/or to express their **hostility**” (Bartos and Wehr 2002).

Incompatibility of goals

- Can evaluate in two ways:
 - 1) Ask: Is it logically impossible for both parties' goals to be achieved simultaneously?
 - 2) Use payoff matrices

Payoff matrices

| | Conflict Parties | |
|---------------|------------------|------|
| | Husband | Wife |
| <i>Goals</i> | | |
| Four children | -3 | 10 |
| No children | 4 | -8 |

Payoff matrices

| | Conflict Parties | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------|
| | Workers | Managers |
| <i>Goals</i> | | |
| Wage: \$20 per hour | 7 | -3 |
| Wage: \$10 per hour | -4 | 8 |
| Solvency of the firm | 2 | 5 |

Goals vs Interests

Goals: alternatives that have a positive payoff

Interests: all the outcomes from all possible alternatives that have positive payoffs

- Incompatible interests are negatively correlated (i.e., when the party's payoff for an outcome is high, the opponent's payoff is low).

Payoff matrices: advantages

- Identify incompatibility
 - two goals are incompatible if one has a positive payoff only for the party and the other only for the opponent.
- Consider conflicts in which there are more than two alternatives.
- Allow for distinguishing between goals and interests.
- Determine the extent to which the goals are incompatible (e.g., zero-sum game).
- Determine whether an agreement is possible.
- Determine what agreement is “best” for both sides.



Payoff matrices:
disadvantages?

Rationality

- 1) consider possible actions/determine possible alternatives;
- 2) consider the likely consequences of each action/determine outcomes linked to alternatives;
- 3) evaluate each set of consequences/assign payoffs;
- 4) choose the action with the most desirable consequences/choose the alternative with highest payoffs.

Rational choice theory in IR

- A methodological approach that explains individual and collective outcomes in terms of individual goal-seeking under constraints (e.g., technological, political social, etc.)
- Assumes that actors are purposive
- Unit of analysis: strategic interactions
- Pragmatic view of theory (i.e., there are multiple ways of approaching the same problem)
- Uses simplification, generalization, formalization

Hostility

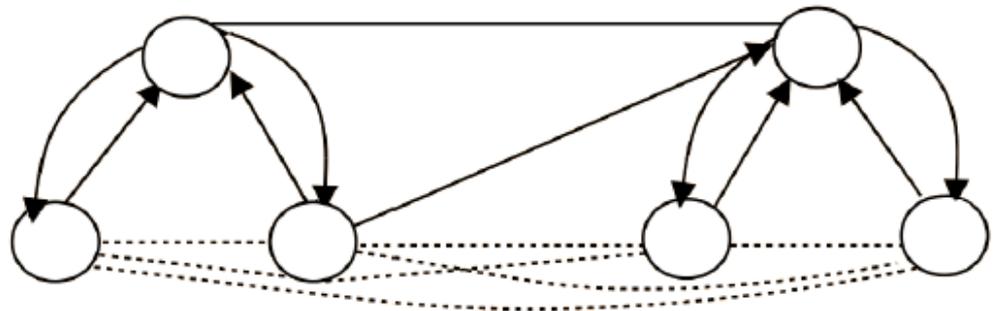
- “antagonism, opposition, or resistance in thought or principle”
- Rational vs irrational behaviour

Types of conflict

- **Structural** (i.e., conflict of interest)
 - Vertical relations – there is always conflict, because it is built into the structure; the periphery states are denied opportunity to pursue goals
- **Actor** (i.e., conflict of values)
 - Horizontal relations – conflict can come and go (actors are capable of formulating and pursuing goals)

Center S_1

Periphery S_2



Structural conflict

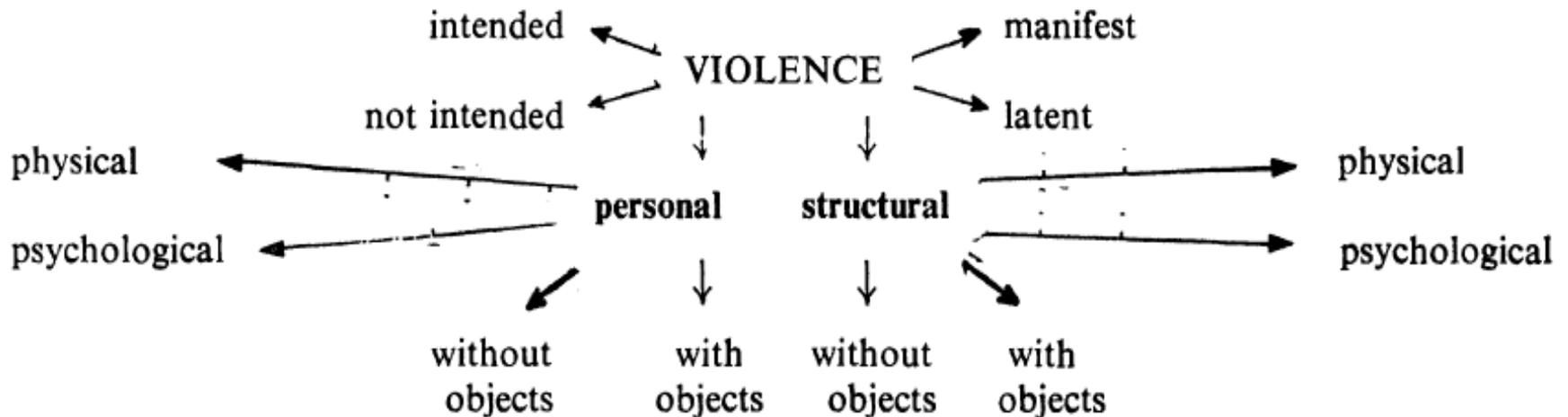
- Persistent fact of social life.
- Defined in terms of interests: **It is in everybody's interest not to be exploited.**
- Interaction relations:
 - *Exploitation*: the total value effects are much more beneficial to one actor over the other (imperialistic relation)
 - *Penetration*: one actor shapes the other's consciousness
 - *Fragmentation*: the top relations are integrated by association, while the bottom relations are disintegrated by disassociation

Actor conflict

- “the access to one goal-state is blocked by efforts to reach another goal-state” (Galtung 1973)
 - the goal-states are incompatible

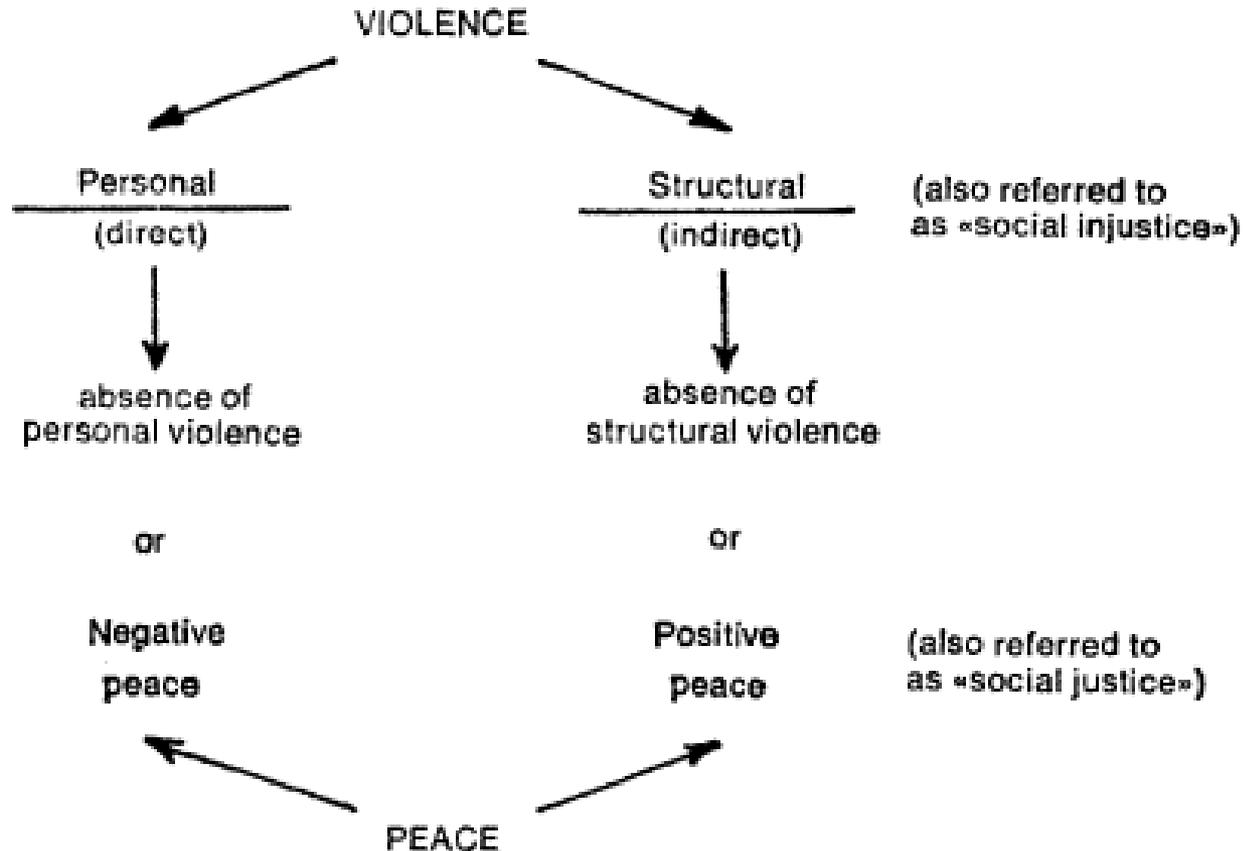
What is violence?

- “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung 1969)
 - when this is *avoidable*, violence is present



Peace

- absence of personal violence and absence of structural violence - negative and positive peace



Some after-thoughts

- What is the relationship between conflict and violence in the study of conflict?
 - Is violence always conflict and conflict always violence?
- Does peace mean absence of threat?
- Can we apply the same concepts and/or metrics to the study of inter- vs intrastate violence?