

**The Conflict of Politics
and the Politics of Conflict:**

*How to Think about, Design, and Engage in
Political Conflict, from a Mediative,
Interest-Based Perspective*

Kenneth Cloke

*How to Think about Politics and
Political Conflicts*

“Genuine politics – politics worthy of the name, and the only politics I am willing to devote myself to – is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community, and serving those who will come after us. It’s deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility ... [T]here is only one way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance, and that is decently, reasonably, responsibly, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly. I’m aware that, in everyday politics, this is not seen as the most practical way of going about it.”

Vaclav Havel

Some Classical Purposes of Politics

- Search for the highest common good (Aristotle)
- Provide for the general welfare (Aristotle)
- Make sure that laws are fairly conceived, wisely interpreted and justly enforced (Aristotle)
- Make the citizen “as good as possible.” (Socrates)
- Search for justice (Plato)
- Support “... not the disproportionate happiness of any one class, but the greatest happiness of the whole.” (Plato)
- Promote democracy (Democritus)

“Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good, for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims, and in a greater degree than any other, at the highest good.”

Aristotle

Aristotelian Logic and Politics

1. *The Law of Identity:* A statement is what it is. A is identical to A. Yet we know there are times when A is not entirely A. For example, political calls to “support our soldiers” or “be tough on criminals” may mask calls to war or discriminatory social policies.
2. *The Law of Non-contradiction:* A statement and its contradiction cannot both be true. If A is true and B is the opposite of A, both A and B cannot be true. Yet we know there are times in politics when A and B are both true and opposites. For example, political parties frequently assert opposing claims and principles about complex issues that cannot be reduced to single truths. Physicist Neils Bohr called these “complementarities,” which are “great truths whose opposites are also great truths.”
3. *The Law of the Excluded Middle:* A statement is either true or false, and cannot be both true and false at the same time. Yet we know there are times when political statements are both true and false at the same time. For example, the stories political opponents tell about themselves and each other may be true and false at the same time.

Aristotle's Forms of Political Persuasion, Advocacy, or Rhetoric

1. *Logos*: Arguments based on logic or reason, or on evidence such as facts or figures. Yet is it common for political candidates to play fast-and-loose with facts and figures, and for fact checking and corrections to go unnoticed.
2. *Ethos*: Arguments based on character or ethics, or on credibility or expertise. Yet political debates often place a premium on character assassination, ignore ethical violations, and discount both credibility and expertise.
3. *Pathos*: Arguments based on emotion or feelings. Yet powerful negative feelings like fear and anger can be stirred up by political debates, and easily overwhelm rationality.

Five Other Forms of Political Persuasion

1. *Personal Experience and Empathy*, chiefly through storytelling, dialogue and empathetic listening
2. *Vision and Values*, chiefly through leadership, commitment and modeling
3. *Synergy and Syntheses*, chiefly through conflict resolution and the integration of competing ideas
4. *Beauty and Symmetry*, chiefly through the arts, sciences and mathematical equations
5. *Love and Caring*, chiefly through kindness, heartfelt interactions, shared intimacy and relationships

Adversarial Ways of Defining Politics

- Ways of organizing and exercising power over and against others, especially using war, violence, intimidation and coercion
- A top-down method of problem solving and conflict resolution that favors one group of people over another
- A way of unifying in-groups by pitting them against out-groups
- The gradual narrowing of options through hostility and criticism
- Rules designed by a minority of the propertied to exercise control over a majority of the propertyless
- Rules against cheating and private violence, and a process for resolving disputes through adjudication
- Ways of collecting taxes, protecting private property and distributing power, wealth and resources among groups of people
- Alternative visions of a desirable or undesirable future
- The exercise of control over people within a set geographical area
- A concentration of coercion and a monopoly over the “legitimate” use of force and violence, A hierarchy in social decision making, status and privilege

Other Ways of Defining Politics (1)

- A process of social problem solving that can be adversarial or collaborative
- A collection of ideas, beliefs, interests and desires for the future
- A group of conversations about what should be done and why
- A set of stories and beliefs about the past that shape the future
- A set of relationships and processes organized around power
- A diverse group of people trying to agree on a common goal
- A system for making decisions that bind everyone
- A living, evolving, adapting expression of national identity
- A variety of interlocking activities and processes
- A culture or mind-set about people, power and privilege
- A way of fixing and diffusing responsibility
- A compact, agreement, or contract reconciling competing interests
- A mix of unspoken expectations and desires
- A continually evolving set of values and purposes
- A way of resolving conflicts, a mediation between diverse interests

Other Ways of Defining Politics (2)

- Ways of organizing and exercising power, especially through war
- A top-down method of problem solving and conflict resolution
- A way of uniting some people by dividing them against others
- The narrowing of options through choice and implementation
- Activities associated with governance of groups of people, including coinage, weights and measures and adjudication
- Alternative visions of a desirable or undesirable future
- The exercise of control over people within a set geographical area
- Ways of collecting taxes, protecting private property and distributing power, wealth and resources among groups of people
- A concentration of coercion and a monopoly over the “legitimate” use of force and violence, A hierarchy in social decision making, status and privilege
- A set of adversarially negotiated social outcomes
- Legally sanctioned, legitimate forms of domination by the State

Some Quotes on Politics (1)

- “A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage.” Ambrose Bierce
- “Politics is the art of compromise and decision making based on social benefits weighed against costs.” Max Weber
- “Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.”
Groucho Marx
- “Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.” George Orwell
- “Politics is almost as exciting as war, and quite as dangerous. In war, you can only be killed once, but in politics many times.”
Winston Churchill
- “Politics is the art of preventing people from sticking their noses in things that are properly their business.” Paul Valery
- “Politics is the entertainment division of the military industrial complex.” Frank Zappa

Some Quotes on Politics (2)

- “Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.” Mao Tse Tung
- “Just because you do not take an interest in politics does not mean politics won’t take an interest in you.” Pericles
- “Politicians are the same the world over, they promise to build a bridge even when there is no river.” Nikita Khrushchev
- “Finance is a gun. Politics is knowing when to pull the trigger.” Mario Puzo
- “In politics, stupidity is not a handicap.” Napoleon Bonaparte
- “Government is the great fiction through which everyone endeavors to live at the expense of everyone else.” Frederic Bastiat
- “Practical politics consists in ignoring facts.” Henry Adams
- “Without alienation, there can be no politics.” Arthur Miller
- “War is the continuation of politics by other means.” Karl von Clausewitz
- “Finality is not the language of politics.” Benjamin Disraeli

What's Wrong with Politics as Usual

- It is unnecessarily divisive and adversarial
- It is nearly always win/lose and winner take all
- It is power-based, yet “all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely;” or rights-based, yet controlled by power
- It takes too long, costs too much, and is exercised too personally
- It is increasingly ineffective in solving global problems
- It is controlled by wealthy individuals, military and industrial elites, corporations and special interests
- Global political collaborations, as in the United Nations, are perceived as reducing sovereignty and imposing alien ideas
- There is little interest among elites in openness or direct democracy, and great interest in secrecy and amassing power
- It easily slips into autocracy and boosts social inequality
- It generates bureaucracy and corruption, stifles change and increases chronic conflict

“So long as only one ideal is the true goal, it will always seem to men that no means can be too difficult, no price too high, to do whatever is required to realize the ultimate goal. Such certainty is one of the great justifications of fanaticism, compulsion, persecution If there is only one solution to the puzzle, then the only problems are first how to find it, then how to realize it, and finally how to convert others to the solution by persuasion or by force.

But if this is not so ..., then the path is open to empiricism, pluralism, tolerance, compromise. Tolerance is historically the product of the realization of the irreconcilability of equally dogmatic faiths, and the practical improbability of complete victory of one over the other. Those who wished to survive realized that they had to tolerate error. They gradually came to see the merits of diversity, and so became skeptical about definitive solutions in human affairs.”

Isaiah Berlin

Three Simple Interest-Based Ways of Defining Politics

1. *Politics is a social problem-solving process.* As a result, a diversity of views about the nature of the problem and alternative ways of solving it will predictably result in better, more sustainable solutions.
2. *Politics is a large group decision-making process.* As a result, the greater the consensus, the stronger the democracy, and the more people agree with a decision, the more likely it is to be effective.
3. *Politics is a conflict resolution process.* As a result, the amount of chronic, on-going, systemic conflict can be dramatically reduced by assuming there is more than one correct answer and a complex, egalitarian, interest-based approach can result in no one having to lose so that that others are able to win.

Three Elements of Political Conflict (1)

1. *Diversity*: In the first place, there must be two or more distinct individuals or groups of people, each with diverse beliefs, ideas, opinions, needs, and interests. Without this, there cannot be conflict.
2. *Inequality*: In the second place, there must be an inequality in power between these individuals or groups, reflecting their ability to implement their diverse beliefs, ideas, opinions, etc. Without this, the conflict will not take a political form.
3. *Adversarial, win/lose process*: In the third place, there must be an adversarial, win/lose process for problem solving or decision-making that pits diverse groups against each other, allowing only one to win. Without this, the conflict will not become polarizing.

Three Elements of Political Conflict (2)

1. *Conservatives* and the right commonly seek to reduce the level of political conflict by decreasing diversity, boosting respect for accepted, conventional ideas, and buttressing established authority.
2. *Liberals* and the left seek to do so by increasing equality, drawing attention to new and diverse ideas, and championing the freedom to articulate, argue for and implement them.
3. *Neither*, however, focuses much attention on the adversarial win/lose nature of the political process, without which diversity and inequality do not routinely result in political polarization.

The Neurophysiology of Political Conflict

“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace in a continual state of alarm (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing them with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

H. L. Mencken

Brain Hemispheres

Left brain expression (Academic)

detail oriented
(Looks at parts)
Logical
Sequential
Rational
math and science
can comprehend
Analytical
Objective
uses logic
facts rule
words and language
present and past
knowing
acknowledges
knows object name
reality based
forms strategies
order/pattern perception
practical/planned
safe
cautious

Right brain expression (Creative)

'big picture' oriented
(Looks at wholes)
Random
Intuitive
Holistic
philosophy & spiritualism
can 'get it' (the meaning)
Synthesizing
Subjective
uses feeling
imagination rules
symbols and images
present and future
believes
appreciates
knows object function
fantasy based
presents possibilities
spatial perception
impetuous/spontaneous
adventurous
carefree/risk taking

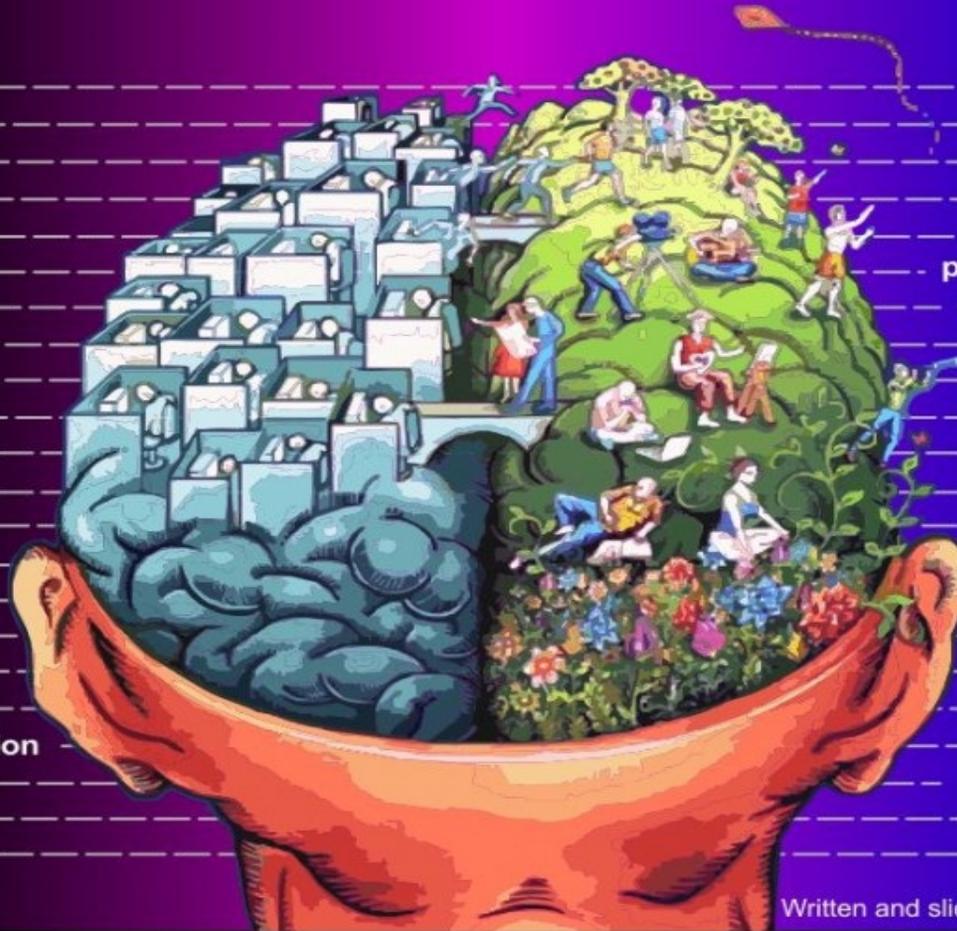


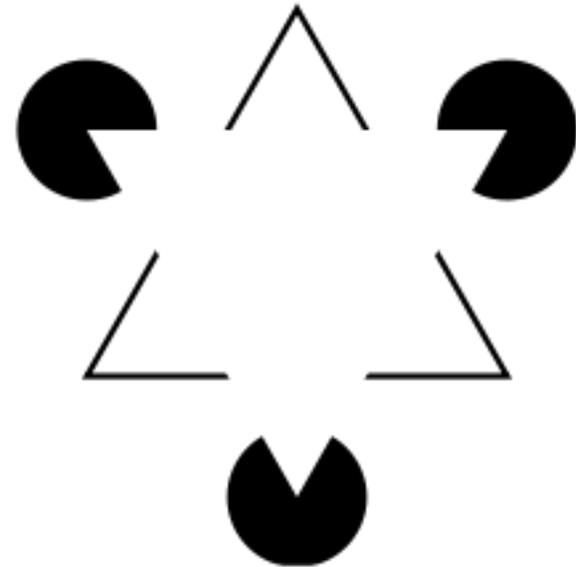
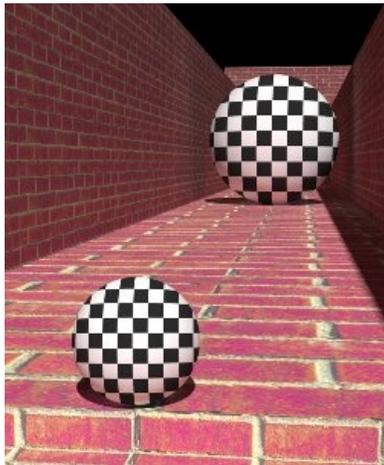
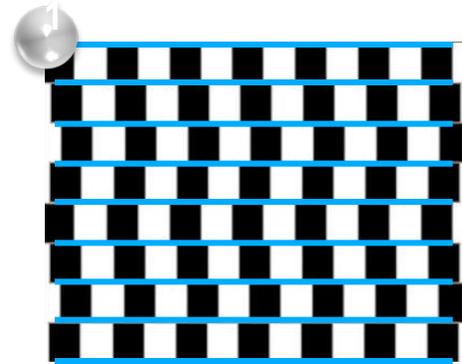
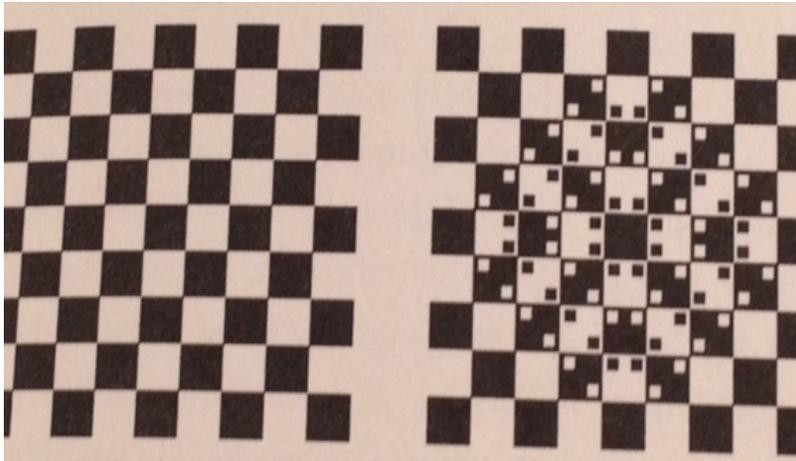
Illustration by: VaXzine

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Cancelation of Duality

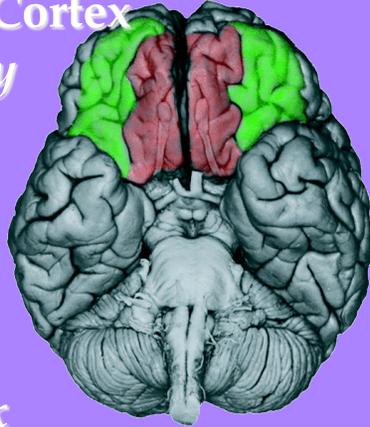


Context and Illusion



Areas of the Brain Involved in Conflict

Orbitofrontal Cortex
Decision utility



(both can block amygdala via ACC)

Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex
Working memory & executive functions (planning, control, Inhibition...)



Cortical brain (CONTROL)

Ventral Striatum
Reward processing & prediction



Amygdala
Relevance detection

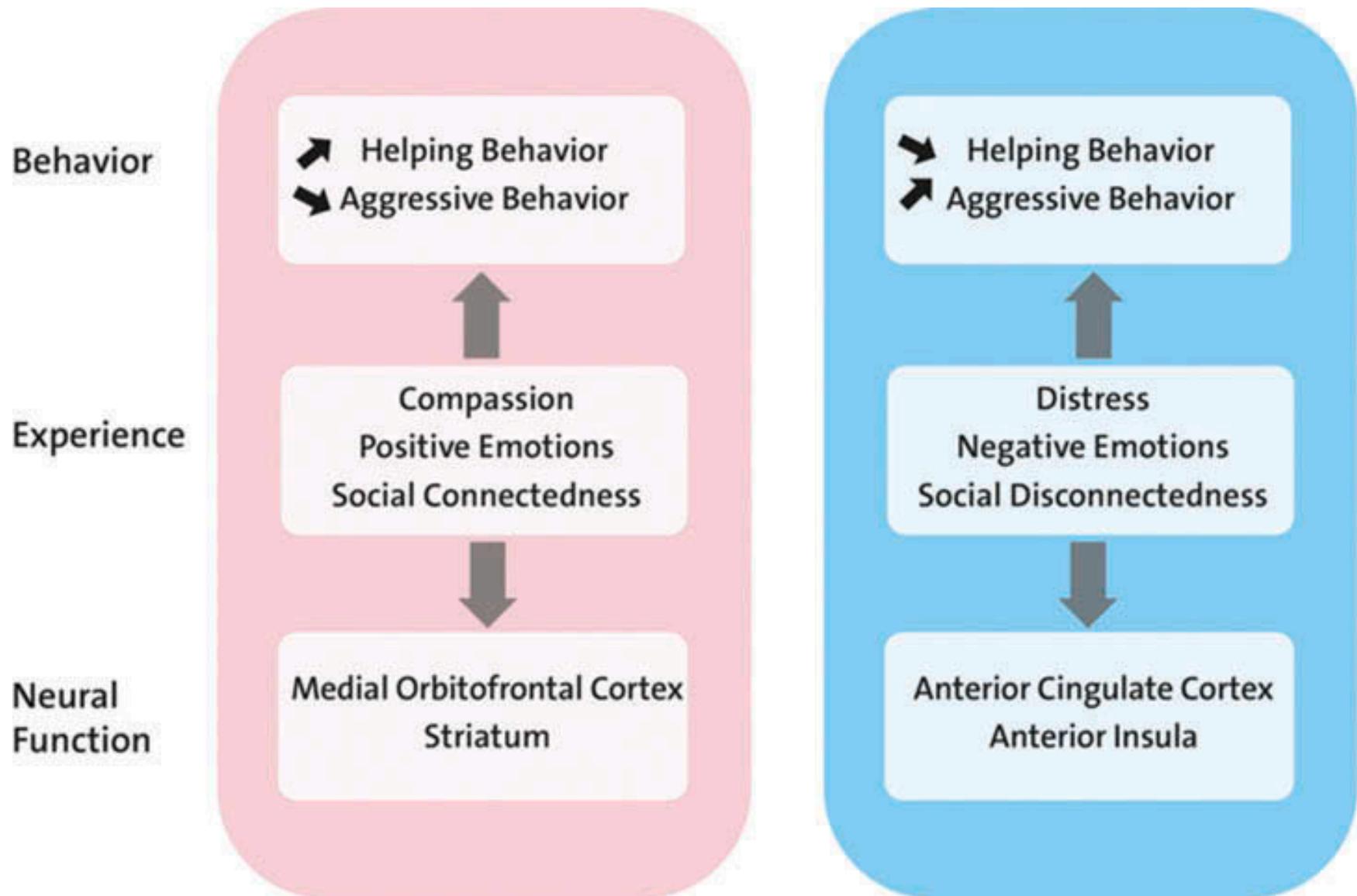
(Amygdala v. ACC => Aggression v. Withdrawal)

Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC)
Adaptive behaviour (performance and conflict detection and monitoring)

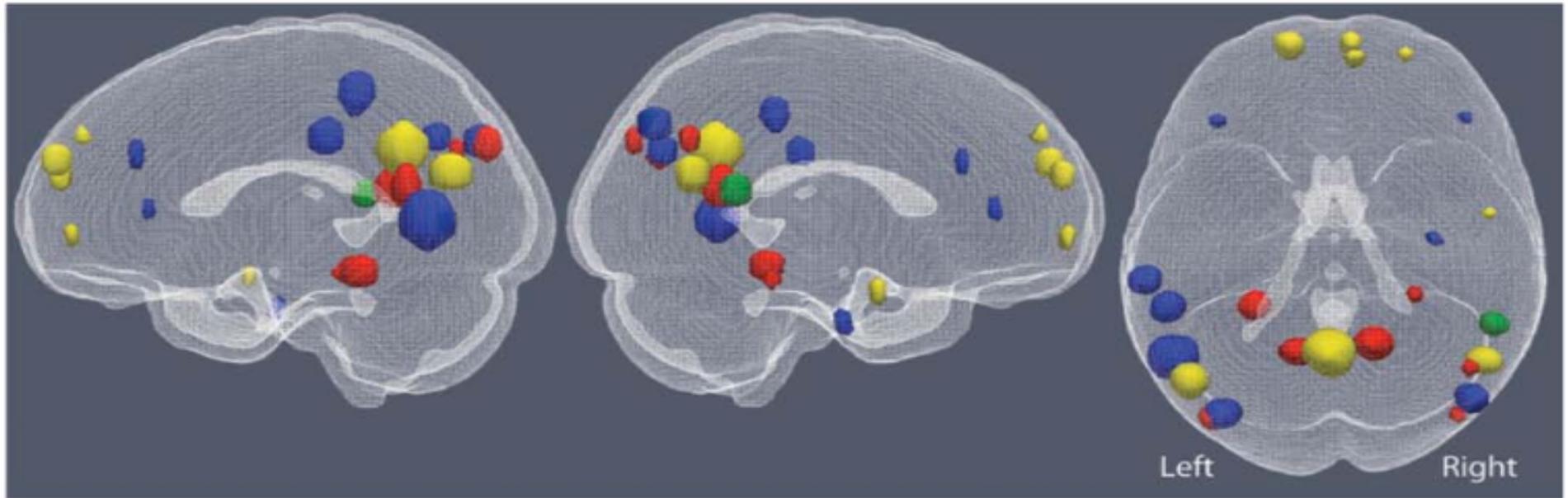


Limbic brain (EMOTION)

Antagonistic Systems of Social Emotions



Location and Plasticity of Social Emotions



○ **PEOPLE**



◇ **PLACES**



□ **ACTIONS**



○ **FEELINGS**

Source: Olga M. Klimecki, The Plasticity of Social Emotions, *SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE*, 2015]

Emotions, Bias, and Social Stereotyping

High Status Competitors

[for example, corporate executives or rich people]

Trigger feelings of *envy*

Resulting in mimicry and hostility

Low Status Competitors

[for example, migrants or poor people]

Trigger feelings of *disgust*

Resulting in punishment

High Status Non-Competitors

[for example, family and allies]

Trigger feelings of *pride*

Resulting in favoritism

Low Status Non-Competitors

[for example, elderly or disabled]

Trigger feelings of *pity*

Resulting in patronizing

[Based on research by Susan Fiske and colleagues at Princeton.]

Red Brain / Blue Brain (1)

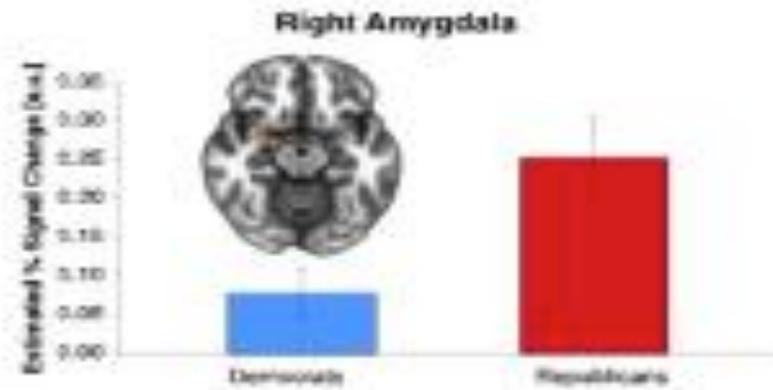
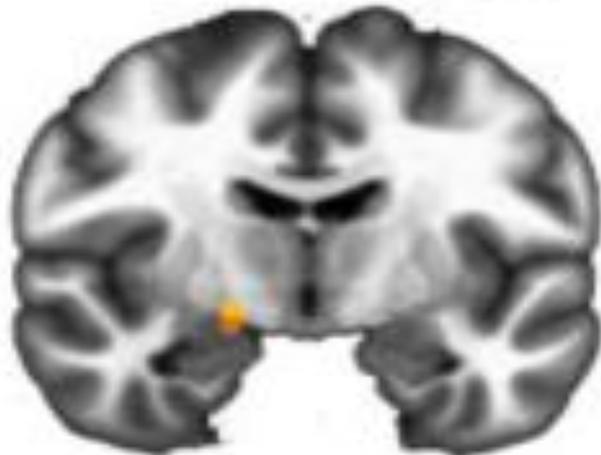
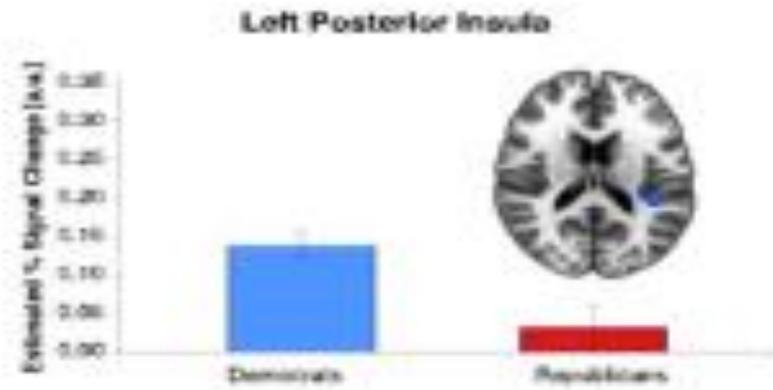
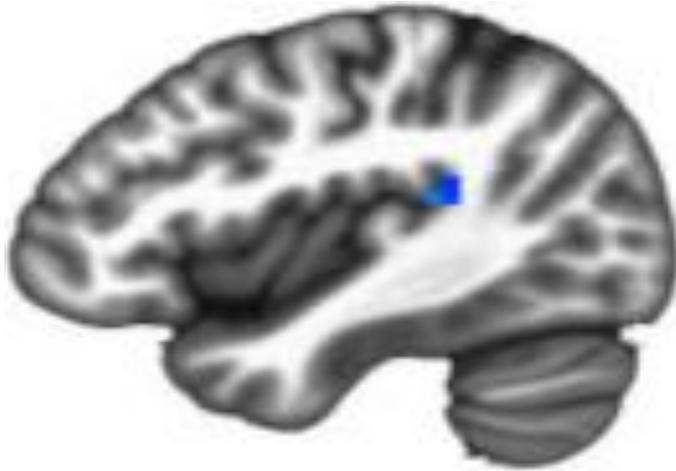
- Dr. Darren Schreiber at the University of Exeter, with colleagues at the University of California, San Diego, measured brain activity as participants played a simple gambling game. They found Republicans and Democrats do not differ in the risks they take, but there were striking differences in the participants' brain activity during the risk-taking task.
- Democrats showed significantly greater activity in the left posterior insula, a region associated with social and self-awareness, while Republicans showed significantly greater activity in the right amygdala, a region involved in the body's fight-or-flight system.
- Brain activity in these two regions alone can be used to predict whether a person is a Democrat or Republican with 82.9% accuracy. By comparison, the longstanding model in political science, which uses the party affiliation of a person's mother and father to predict the child's affiliation, is only accurate about 69.5% of the time. Another model based on differences in brain structure distinguishes liberals from conservatives with only 71.6% accuracy.
- These results suggest that liberals and conservatives engage different cognitive processes when they think about risk.

[Darren Schreiber, Greg Fonzo, Alan N. Simmons, Christopher T. Dawes, Taru Flagan, James H. Fowler, Martin P. Paulus. Red Brain, Blue Brain: Evaluative Processes Differ in Democrats and Republicans. PLoS ONE, 2013; 8 (2): e52970 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0052970]

Red Brain / Blue Brain (2)

- People who self-identify as conservative have larger and more active right amygdalas, an area of the brain associated with the expression and processing of fear.
- A 2011 study looked at MRI scans of self-described conservative young adults and found they had more grey matter volume in the right amygdala than their liberal counterparts. In 2013, another team of scientists expanded that research to show that conservatives generally have more activity in their right amygdala when taking risks than liberals do.
- Recently, Yale professor John Bargh told a group of participants to imagine they'd been granted a superpower by a magic genie and were as invincible as Superman -- bullets bounced off them, fire couldn't scorch their skin, and "a fall from a cliff wouldn't hurt at all." A control group was simply told to imagine they could fly. Researchers asked them political questions, including whether they "would be reluctant to make any large-scale changes to the social order," and whether "it's okay if some groups have more of a chance in life than others."
- Liberal participants' attitudes on social issues didn't shift at all. Conservative participants, on the other hand, began adopting more liberal views on social issues (though not economic ones.) Those who imagined themselves with the ability to fly had no change in their political views.

Red Brain/Blue Brain



Red Brain / Blue Brain (3)

- A study published in the journal [Behavioural Brain Research in January](#) suggests that you can tell whether someone is liberal or conservative simply by the way they react to pictures of things like blood, feces or vomit. The study found that socially conservative students physically look away from "disgusting" images more quickly than their liberal peers (but the same did not hold true for people with fiscally conservative beliefs). Self-reported social conservatives also stared longer at images of faces reacting in disgust to the same images. This was not true for sad or scary images, however, and there were no significant differences in how people reacted to these images based on their political beliefs.
- Self-identified conservatives are more hostile to "outgroups" and to people (or animals) that don't come from the places they do, or think like them.
- In another study, conservatives tended to agree with statements like "I often have tender, concerned feelings for my family members who are less fortunate than me." Liberals more frequently reported feeling tenderness toward less fortunate people in general, beyond those in their own families.
- Conservatives were more likely to tell researchers that they had more empathy for family members over friends, endorsed fellow countrymen over foreigners, and took the side of humans over non-human subjects.

Politics, Poverty, Disease and Disgust

- Jonas Olofsson and his team at Stockholm University in Sweden, have shown that disgust helps explain why people lean toward right wing thinking.
- “We thought body odor disgust might be related to authoritarian ideological attitudes, because inter-group contact and social change is minimized in authoritarian societies, which might make disgust-sensitive individuals feel that those societies are more ‘safe’ from contamination ... Across three studies, we found that body-odor disgust was indeed associated with the degree to which persons reported authoritarian attitudes.”
- Body odor, Olofsson’s team believes, is a shorthand people rely on when gauging how riddled with germs someone might be. So it’s more a person’s fear of disease, rather a dislike of sweat, that explains why they might be authoritarian. This aversion applied to both their own odor and that of others.

The Level of Political Discourse

- Researchers looked at 3.5 billion comments from 25.3 million people between 2007 and 2017 on Reddit, a social network built around discussion groups used by more than 230 million people a month, and looked at the frequency of offensive words and phrases in political and non-political groups.
- They found that while non-political comments were fairly civil, people were 35% more likely to use offensive language in political discourse, and these comments were more offensive between May 2016 and May 2017 than any other period in the last 10 years. Also, political comments dropped on average from 7th grade (age 12) to 1st grade (age 6) since 2007.
- Alcohol use shifts political views to the right, researchers find, because it strips away complex reasoning. People could be moved to the political right also by distracting them, or putting them under time pressure, or telling them not to think too hard. Those asked to deliberate more deeply shifted their political thinking to the left.
- Right-wing and fascist ideologies were associated with dislike of ambiguity and cognitive complexity, and the lowest 10% in intelligence. The highest 10% in intelligence were inclined either to the left or to libertarian views.

Research on Priming (1)

- Priming is the unconscious activation or “priming” of attitudes, ideas and behaviors by association with words or objects that act as metaphors.
- Integrating words such as “cooperation” and “fairness” into sentences can result in a higher occurrence of these behaviors.
- When subjects were asked to think about the lowest and highest *fair* prices for a car before negotiating, they made conciliatory moves more quickly, were happier with the results, reached agreement in half the time, and were willing to negotiate again.
- Students primed with the word “rudeness” interrupted more quickly than others.
- People using a public bathroom were more willing to pay a fee on the honor system if the word “honesty” was posted, or to pay for coffee if a picture of a face or an eye was posted nearby.
- Seeing a briefcase or sitting in a hard chair caused negotiators to offer less than if they saw a backpack or sat in a soft chair.

Research on Priming (2)

- Scores in Trivial Pursuit were increased by thinking of a professor and decreased by thinking of a soccer hooligan.
- People who were primed with the names of their friends were more willing to help others, including strangers.
- Researchers in Israel conducted a study involving 76 Israel-born Jews, 59 Israeli Arabs and 53 Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territories. Each individual was randomly assigned a reading – one portraying groups as having a fixed nature and the other describing them as flexible and open to change. Those primed to believe their adversaries were changeable were significantly more optimistic about their ability to reach a negotiated peace, suggesting they would be more willing to compromise to reach agreement.
- Group members primed with the words *dependable*, *helpful*, *share* and *support* were more cooperative within their group than others, even to their individual economic detriment.
- Chances that a player will cooperate in Prisoner's Dilemma if it's called a "community game": 7 in 10. If its called a "Wall Street game": 3 in 10.

Politics and Priming (1)

- A study of voting patterns in Arizona in 2000 showed that support for school funding propositions was greater if the polling station was in a school than in a different location.
- A different experiment showed that people exposed to images of classrooms and school lockers also increased their tendency to vote for school funding initiatives.
- This difference was greater than that between voters who were parents and voters who were not.
- On the other hand, words and images of money caused people to become more selfish, sit farther apart, and be less willing to help someone who pretended to be confused about a task, or to help pick up pencils a researcher dropped on the floor.

[Source: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (2011), p. 55]

Politics and Priming (2)

- Reminding people of their mortality increases the appeal of authoritarian ideas.
- Subjects asked to complete the word fragments W__H and S__P were more likely to complete them as WASH and SOAP if they had been primed to think about an action of which they were ashamed, and as WISH and SOUP if they were primed to think of food.
- Merely thinking about stabbing a coworker in the back leaves people more inclined to buy soap, disinfectant or detergent than batteries, juice or candy.
- This also connects to body parts. People asked to lie to an imaginary person over the phone preferred mouthwash over soap, while those who lied in email preferred soap.

[Source: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (2011), pp. 55-56]

Research on Cognitive Ease (1)

- “A reliable way to make people believe in falsehoods is frequent repetition, because familiarity is not easily distinguished from truth.” Daniel Kahneman
- The entire statement of a fact or idea does not need to be repeated to make it appear true.
- People who were repeatedly exposed to the phrase “the body temperature of a chicken” were more likely to accept as true the statement “the body temperature of a chicken is 144 degrees (or any other number).”
- Compare these statements:

Adolf Hitler was born in 1892.

Adolf Hitler was born in 1887.

Both are false but the first is easier to read and more likely to be believed, especially if it is bright blue or red.

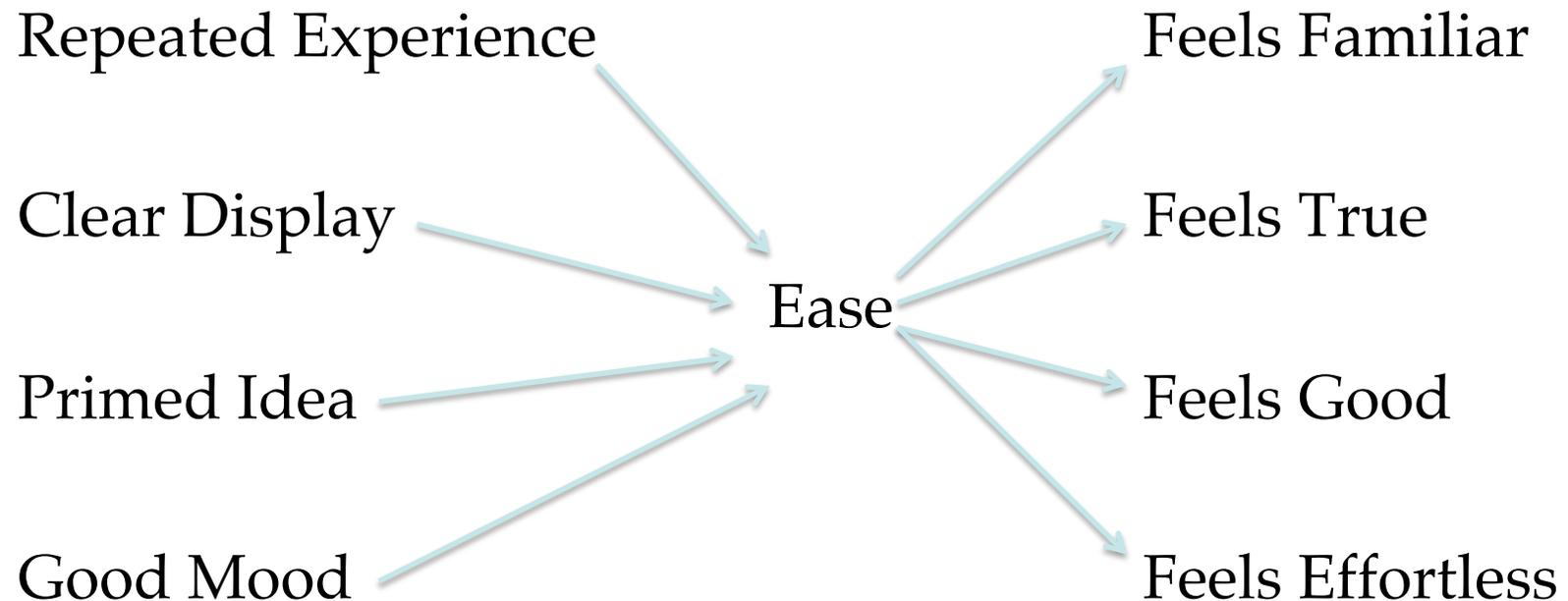
[Source: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (2011), pp. 62-63]
© Kenneth Cloke

Research on Cognitive Ease (2)

- Cognitive ease and believability also occur when simple language is contrasted with complex language, especially in politics.
- Aphorisms were judged more insightful when their ideas are presented as rhymed phrases, as in “Woes unite foes” as opposed to “Woes unite enemies.”
- Participants in a study were asked to evaluate the prospects of fictitious Turkish companies based on reports. One was named Artan and the other Taahut. More weight was given to the former than the latter.
- Mathematical puzzles that were presented in a small font in washed out gray print to induce cognitive strain or a large easy to read font resulted in 90% of the participants making errors where the font was easily readable, and only 35% making errors where it was harder to read.
- Recipes are rated harder to make if they are in a small, complex font.

[Source: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (2011), pp. 64-65]

Sources and Outcomes of Cognitive Ease



[Source: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (2011), pp. 59-60]

Some Implications for Mediators (1)

- Create an environment with objects that “prime” or encourage collaboration and dialogue. Use soft chairs, serve hot drinks or food, and create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Slow, soften and relax your tone of voice, and create a context of acknowledgement and appreciation. Thank them for coming.
- Listen closely to the words they use and search for ways of reframing them from negative to positive. Ask them, for example, what words they would use to describe the kind of conversation they want to have, or what they most want to say to each other, or hear the other person say in response.
- Use words repeatedly that emphasize the outcomes you want to achieve, like “fair” or “satisfying” or “creative.” Try to avoid words like “tough” or “win” or “dissatisfied” or “hard.”
- Speak to both hemispheres of the brain, and help translate between them. When a “left brain” point is made, see if you can translate it into “right brain” language.
- Meditate regularly to build empathy and emotional balance.

Some Implications for Mediators (2)

- Avoid pictures or objects that denote fighting, imbalance, hardness, roughness, coldness. Favor items that connote balance, cooperation, unison of movement or rhythm, warmth, softness. Keep the temperature on the warm side.
- Bring emotional processing into the conversation by asking “Why is that important to you?” or “What does that mean to you?”
- Make unilateral, unexpected concessions yourself, and ask the parties to do the same, for example by asking “What would you be willing to offer, in a spirit of collaboration, without any expectation of return?”
- Be “environmentally” generous, in attitude and demeanor.
- Seek ways of unifying both sides against the problem and its causes. Remind them of what they have in common. Find ways of encouraging them to act jointly, as in solving a common problem. Help them to act in synchrony.
- If you shake hands at the end, consider whether it would be appropriate to shake both parties hands at the same time.

The Language of Politics

*“When a society decays, it is language that is first to become gangrenous....
Although moralists are scandalized by the fortunes amassed by the
revolutionaries [in Mexico under the ruling party], they have failed to
observe that this material flowering has a verbal parallel; oratory has become
the favorite literary genre of the prosperous... and alongside oratory, with its
plastic flowers, there is the barbarous syntax in many of our newspapers, the
foolishness of language on loudspeakers and the radio, the loathsome
vulgarity of advertising -- all that asphyxiating rhetoric.”*

Octavio Paz

Power, Rights and Interests



The Language of *Power*

The language favored by power-based organizations such as the military, police, and monarchical states requires clarity, simplicity, and uniform interpretation in order to encourage unthinking obedience.

The communications that emanate from these institutions therefore take the form of declarations, propaganda, pronouncements, and orders, which reinforce hierarchy and command, and imply punishment and contempt for those who disobey.

The Language of *Rights*

The language favored by rights-based organizations such as legal institutions, bureaucracies, and formally democratic states, requires narrow distinctions, exceptions, and adjudicated interpretations in order to maintain control by permitting some behaviors and forbidding others.

The communications that emanate from these institutions take the form of rules and regulations, policies and procedures, legislative definitions, adversarial arguments, and legal interpretations, which reinforce bureaucracy and control and imply coercion and censure for those who do not fit in.

The Language of *Interests*

The language favored by interest-based organizations such as teams, civil society, and radically democratic states, requires affirmation of diversity, dissent, and dialogue in order to encourage collaboration and participation.

The communications that emanate from these institutions take the form of open-ended questions, open dialogues, value-driven rules, conversations, and consensus decision making, which reinforce social equality, economic equity, and political democracy.

Some Trivial Examples

Power: “You must ...” “You shall ...” “You will ...”
“... or else.” “... because I said so, that’s why.”

Rights: “You should ...” “You ought to ...” “You need to ...” “You have a right to ...” “You are entitled to ...”

Interests: “You could ...” “You might consider ...”
“What would happen if you ...” “What would you like to have happen?” “Why?”
“What do you think will happen if you ...”

“From my experience I can say that the language with which the citizens of a sustained conflict describe their predicament becomes progressively shallower the longer the conflict endures. Language gradually becomes a sequence of clichés and slogans. This begins with the language created by the institutions that manage the conflict directly – the army, the police, different government ministries; it quickly filters down to the mass media that are reporting about the conflict, germinating an even more cunning language that aims to tell its target audience the story easiest for digestion; and this process ultimately seeps into the private, intimate language of the conflict’s citizens, even if they deny it.”

David Grossman

Distortions of Language in Politics (1)

- Broad statements that are so abstract and meaningless they cannot be opposed
- Excessive personalization of issues so they can only be addressed individually
- Negative frameworks that reinforce pessimistic images of the world
- Inculcation of a “learned helplessness” that assumes change is impossible
- Adversarial assumptions that undermine trust
- Strangled or suppressed expression of intense emotions, glorification of abstract symbols, and romanticization of virtues, destiny, and ideals
- Stories of demonization and victimization
- All or nothing assumptions that eliminate common ground
- Demonization of all critics and independent actors

Distortions of Language in Politics (2)

- Repeated references in noble, *basso profundo* tones, to “the country,” “the fatherland,” or “the people”
- Crass manipulations of maudlin sentimentality, particularly regarding children, struggling families, religious figures, the nation’s history, and recently departed political leaders
- Facades of personal outrage and affront about others
- Loud protestations and harsh denunciations of moral transgressions committed by others
- Simplistic claims of uncompromising toughness, formulaic responses, and unyielding principles regarding complex, multilayered, shifting problems
- Demands for punishment of opponents
- Crass use of religious sentiment and God’s support for one nation
- Sanctimony and self-righteousness combined with false humility

Language and Fascism

- Repetitive stereotyping, emotional superlatives, and use of romantic adjectives
- Hijacking or poisoning formerly positive terms such as “collective,” “followers,” and “faith”
- Transforming formerly negative words into positives, such as “domination,” “fanatical,” and “obedient”
- Militarizing and brutalizing common speech
- Discounting reason and elevating feelings
- Using “big lies” and doublespeak
- Generally debasing and “dumbing down” ordinary language
- Legitimizing hatred toward religious, racial, sexual or ethnic groups such as Jews, Blacks, Gypsies, Gays, and others
- “Dumbing down” language to the level that is used by children to ostracize others

(Based partly on work by Victor Klemperer)

“Propaganda must not serve the truth ... All propaganda must be so popular and on such an intellectual level, that even the most stupid of those toward whom it is directed will understand it. Therefore, the intellectual level of the propaganda must be lower the larger the number of people who are to be influenced by it ... The size of the lie is a definite factor in causing it to be believed, for the vast masses of a nation are in the depths of their hearts more easily deceived than they are consciously and intentionally bad.”

Adolf Hitler

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State."

Joseph Goebbels

"Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

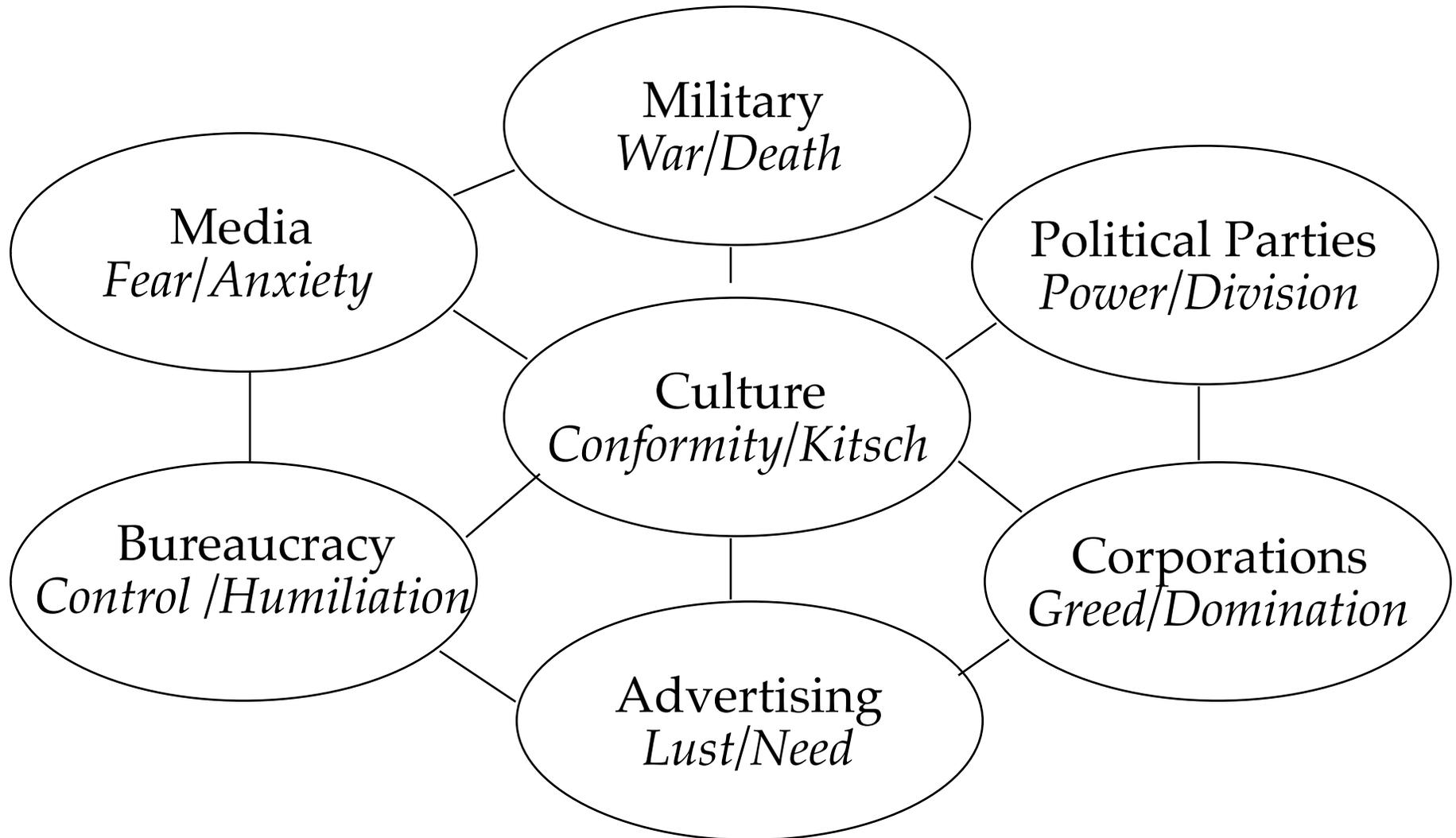
Hermann Goering

The 48 Laws of Power

Among the recommendations in *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene are the following destructive, power-based ideas, each of which generates chronic conflicts:

- Conceal your intentions
- Court attention at all costs
- Get others to do the work for you, but always take the credit
- Learn to keep people dependent on you
- Use selective honesty and generosity to disarm your victim
- Pose as a friend, work as a spy
- Crush your enemy totally
- Keep others in suspended terror: cultivate an air of unpredictability
- Do not commit to anyone
- Play a sucker to catch a sucker – seem dumber than your mark
- Play the perfect courtier
- Play on people's need to believe to create a cult-like following
- Control the options: get others to play with the cards you deal
- Discover each man's thumbscrew
- Be royal in your own fashion: act like a king to be treated like one
- Create compelling spectacles
- Think as you like but behave like others
- Despise the free lunch
- Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter
- Preach the need for change, but never reform too much at once

The Subconscious Needs, Desires and Goals of Adversarial Institutions



Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement

1. *Rationalizing* the possible beneficial consequences of otherwise wrong behaviors that are imagined to outweigh their negative consequences. (“If I make enough money by doing this I can help people later.”)
2. *Obscuring* or lessening personal responsibility for participating in the wrongful activity. (“I just did what I was told.” “I just played a small part.” “Other people do the same thing, so why can’t I?”)
3. *Denying* the seriousness of harmful effects on others. (“He won’t mind.” “He’s going to be fine.” “It was only a small thing.” “He can claim it on his insurance.”)
4. *Blaming*, dehumanizing, or derogating the victim. (“He was stupid.” “She was a bitch.” “It served him right.” “She shouldn’t have ...”)
5. *Demonizing* the perpetrator. (“He is vicious.” “He’s not human.” “He should be shot.”)
6. *Magnifying* or exaggerating the harm that occurred. (“What he did [if a minor infraction] is intolerable.”)
7. *Distancing* or separating from both sides. (“A plague on both their houses.” “It has nothing to do with me.”)

(Based on work by Albert Bandura)

Elements of Demonization

- *Assumption of Injurious Intentions* - they intended to cause the harm we experienced
- *Distrust* - every idea or statement made by them is wrong or proposed for dishonest reasons
- *Externalization of Guilt* - everything bad or wrong is their fault
- *Attribution of Evil* - they want to destroy us and what we value most, and must therefore be destroyed themselves
- *Zero-Sum Interests* - everything that benefits them harms us, and *vice versa*
- *Paranoia and Preoccupation with Disloyalty* - any criticism of us or praise of them is disloyal and treasonous
- *Prejudgment* - everyone in the enemy group is an enemy
- *Collapse of Neutrality and Independence into Opposition* - anyone who is not with us is against us
- *Suppression of Empathy* - we have nothing in common and considering them human is dangerous
- *Isolation and Impasse* - we cannot dialogue, negotiate, cooperate, or resolve conflicts with them
- *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy* - their evil makes it permissible for us to act in a hostile way toward them, and *vice versa*

[Based partly on work by Kurt R. and Kati Spillman]

Commonly Cited Moral Rationalizations

- *Moral Justification*: “He did it first.”
- *Euphemistic Labeling*: “All I did was ...”
- *Disadvantageous Comparison*: “He’s much worse than I am.”
- *Displacement of Responsibility*: “She made me do it.”
- *Diffusion of Responsibility*: “Everyone is doing it.”
- *Disregard/Distortion of Consequences*: “What I did wasn’t that bad.”
- *Dehumanization*: “He deserved it.”
- *Blaming the Victim*: “She was asking for it.”

(Based on work by Albert Bandura)

Potential Political Pitfalls in Mediation

1. *False Assumption of Symmetry*: It is mistaken to assume that oppressor and oppressed, occupier and occupied, powerful and weak are the same or that they can be treated as equally aggrieved.
2. *Tendency to Ignore Underlying Conflicts*: People in mediation often behave reasonably and want to reach agreements, and may ignore or avoid issues that could be disruptive.
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6. *Pressure to Renounce Allies and Practices*: Members of out-group and oppressed groups are often pressured to renounce violence, yet in-groups and oppressors are permitted to continue.
7. *Danger of Co-Optation*: Government authorities can misuse and co-opt mediation for their own purposes.

“What Orwell feared [in the book, 1984] were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared [in the book Brave New World] was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture.”

Neil Postman

*Systemic Sources of
Chronic Political Conflict*

“Genuine politics – politics worthy of the name, and the only politics I am willing to devote myself to – is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community, and serving those who will come after us. It’s deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility ... [T]here is only one way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance, and that is decently, reasonably, responsibly, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly. I’m aware that, in everyday politics, this is not seen as the most practical way of going about it.”

Vaclav Havel

The Global Nature of Conflict

- Every conflict takes place not only between individuals, but within a *context*, culture, and environment; surrounded by social, economic, and political forces; inside organizational systems, structures, and technological settings; among a diverse community of people; at a particular moment in time and history; on a stage, milieu, or backdrop.
- None of these elements is conflict-neutral. Each contributes – sometimes in veiled and unspoken, yet profound ways to the nature, intensity, duration, impact, and *meaning* of our conflicts.
- Each profoundly affects the quality of our lives, our personal capacity for joy, empathy and compassion, and our ability to survive, both as a species and as individuals.
- Like ripples in a pond, each conflict and each resolution extend outward, impacting others and creating a “butterfly effect.”
- As a result, we are each and all of us responsible as global citizens for building conflict resolution capacity around the world.

What are Chronic Conflicts?

Chronic conflicts are those that nations, societies, organizations, families, couples or individuals

- Have not fully resolved
- Need to resolve in order to grow and evolve
- Are capable of resolving
- Can only resolve by abandoning old approaches and adopting new ones
- Are resistant to resolving because they are frightened, dissatisfied, insecure, uncertain, angry, or unwilling to change

Some Features of Chronic Conflict

Chronic conflicts can often be distinguished by their:

- Repetition
- Low levels of resolution
- Incongruity between high level of emotion and apparent triviality of the issues over which people are fighting
- Being commonly mistaken for miscommunications or personality clashes
- Tolerance of disrespectful and adversarial behaviors,
- Seeming irrationality
- Accidental misunderstandings
- Apparent idiosyncratic causes and circumstances
- Underlying similarities

10 Meta-Sources of Chronic Conflict

1. Social inequality
2. Economic inequity
3. Political autocracy
4. Environmental disregard and ecological destructiveness
5. Stereotyping, prejudice, bias and discrimination
6. Hyper-competitive organizations and economic greed
7. Hierarchy, bureaucracy, graft and corruption
8. Power and rights based systems, processes and relationships
9. Aggressive, win/lose approaches to problem-solving, negotiation and conflict resolution, and avoidant or aggressive conflict cultures
10. Exclusive, one-sided and unilateral approaches to problem solving, decision-making and change

12 Sources of Conflict in Capitalism

1. Intense competition for market dominance
2. Unceasing efforts to maximize sales and profits
3. Primacy of the financial bottom line
4. Constant innovation in technology
5. Dependence of profits on costs of production, especially wages, rents, taxes, and raw materials
6. Unequal distribution of profits
7. Hierarchical control over investments, wages, and management
8. Separation and division of labor
9. Centralized organization of work processes
10. Increasing dependence on employee motivation and participation in decision-making
11. Unending search for inexpensive raw materials, cheap labor, and markets for finished products
12. Globalization of production and distribution

Problems that are Global in Nature (1)

- The size and density of human populations
- CO₂ and methane emissions that are resulting in global warming
- The destructive power and availability of military technology
- Species extinctions and loss of tropical rainforest and woodland
- Loss of potable water and arable land
- Resistance to antibiotics and cost of medical care
- Vulnerability to pandemics, natural catastrophes, and severe weather conditions
- Loss of bio-diversity
- Unregulated economic transactions
- The global impact of local, relatively minor environmental decisions

Problems that are Global in Nature (2)

- Nuclear proliferation, willingness to use war and resort to violence
- Terrorism and cycles of revenge and retaliation
- Acceptability of the use of torture and cruelty
- Intentional targeting of civilians in warfare
- Global financial crisis and unregulated economic transactions
- Continuing poverty, social inequality and economic inequity
- Destabilization due to political autocracy and dictatorship
- Rise in prejudice and intolerance
- Genocidal policies and “ethnic cleansing”
- Growth of the drug trade, sexual trafficking, and organized crime

What Won't Be Able to Solve Them

- Military force and coercion
- Treaties and international agreements
- Legal interventions and the rule of law
- Adversarial styles of negotiation
- Traditional rules and regulations, policies and procedures
- Customary power-based approaches to diplomacy
- Nation states and politics as usual
- Capitalism and market principles
- The United Nations, as presently constituted

What We Can Predict

- That global problems will become more widespread, severe, impactful, common and costly;
- That conflicts will be triggered by these problems, and escalate as more individuals, groups, nations and ecosystems are impacted, creating political crises;
- That conflicts will accumulate around the failures in local, national and global response systems;
- That the ability to resolve these conflicts quickly and effectively will have a direct impact on the amount and severity of the damage they create;
- That mediation, collaborative negotiation, dialogue, and allied conflict resolution methodologies will increasingly be needed to address and resolve disputes that result from efforts to act beyond borders.

12 Sources of Ecological Collapse

1. Deforestation and habitat destruction
2. Soil problems (erosion, salinization, and soil fertility losses)
3. Water management problems
4. Overhunting
5. Overfishing
6. Effects of introduced species on native species
7. Human population growth
8. Increased per-capita impact of people
9. Human-caused climate change
10. Buildup of toxic chemicals in the environment
11. Energy shortages
12. Full human utilization of the Earth's photosynthetic capacity

[Based on Jared Diamond, [Collapse](#)]

The Possibility of Collapse

- It is common for people to fear collapse, but mathematicians and scientists are applying mathematical fluctuations in predator and prey groups to human societies. Peter Turchin, evolutionary anthropologist at the University of CT, found two recurring cycles linked to violence and conflict: one is a “secular cycle” of 2-3 centuries in which a society moves from relative equality to increasing inequality; and the second is a shorter cycle alternating between two generations, one peaceful, one violent.
- Safa Motescharrei, a mathematician at the University of MD, also links collapse to extreme inequality and resource depletion, either of which can trigger a collapse, that becomes irreversible when they combine or coincide. As the wealthy are sheltered by their wealth from the effects of resource depletion, they resist calls for a change of strategy until it is too late. By massively depleting non-renewable resources, they can postpone a collapse, but “when the collapse happens it is much deeper.” Joseph Tainter, in *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, agrees.
- Yaneer Bar-Yam at the New England Complex Systems Institute, instead sees an increase in complexity as the world integrates.

*Meditation and
Political Conflicts*

“The fact is that all the power in the world cannot transform someone who hates you into someone who likes you. It can turn a foe into a slave, but not into a friend. All the power in the world cannot transform a fanatic into an enlightened man. All the power in the world cannot transform someone thirsting for vengeance into a lover.”

Amos Oz

“Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions.”

Albert Einstein

“You need power only when you want to do something harmful. Otherwise, love is enough to get everything done.”

Charlie Chaplin

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mediators and Politics – Introduction (1)

- We have all watched political conversations degenerate into angry quarrels, pointless personal attacks and antagonistic power contests. We have all seen people sink into screaming matches, shaming and blaming, and personal viciousness, often over the loftiest ideas, deepest passions and most profound political principles. We all know that these tirades can easily descend into senseless violence and appalling acts of brutality. And we have all participated in them, fanned the flames, or stood passively by and done nothing.
- Yet political conversations matter; they concern our future, our values and integrity, our ethics and morality, our beliefs and behaviors, not only as individuals and nation states, but as *human beings* who are responsible for the world our grandchildren, and our grandchildren's grandchildren, will inherit.
- Successful political decision-making requires not silence or pointless rage, but dialogue; not apathy or aggression, but collaborative negotiation; not passivity or accommodation, but courageous, constructive, *creative* contention. Silence in the face of critical issues signifies not merely the absence of speech, but the loss of learning and *integrity*, and therefore of self, of values, of citizenship, of democracy, of community, of humanity.

Mediators and Politics – Introduction (2)

- As mediators, we have largely been silent about political events. In part this may be because we do not know how to express our political views without slipping into adversarial attitudes and assumptions that define most political communications -- yet we know from practice that both can be transformed and overcome.
- Many of us think of ourselves as “not interested in politics.” Yet, as Pericles declared over two millennia ago, “You may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you.”
- Whatever our justifications for treating each other as enemies or remaining silent when political ideas are discussed, our ability to address the highly complex, increasingly challenging issues that characterize modern political life is no longer optional. What happens in the world politically has an impact on our work in conflict resolution, expanding or contracting the willingness to seek peaceful options. Is it possible that the opposite might also be true? Could mediation have an impact on politics?
- Politics has been called the art of *compromise*, but what if we think of it as the art of *conflict resolution*, in which compromise, as in mediation, is merely one of many possible outcomes?
- What, then, would a *mediative*, interest-based, collaborative form of politics look like? What skills are required for democracy to work?

Some Recent Shifts in Political Conflict (1)

- U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change Agreement and global leadership on energy, environment and climate change
- Relinquishment of U.S. role as “honest broker” and mediator in the Middle East and elsewhere
- Punishment of the United Nations and cuts in funding for opposing the decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, among others
- Abdication of moral leadership on human rights around the world
- Provocation and nuclear brinksmanship in North Korea
- Rejection of global cooperation and collaboration as core principles of U.S. policy, in favor of unilateralism and “America First”
- Uncritical support for brutal dictatorial leaders and ultra-right, neo-Nazi regimes and political organizations
- Willingness to sacrifice democratic safeguards and moral principles in the US for short-term electoral advantage

Some Recent Shifts in Political Conflict (2)

- Increasingly violent racist, sexist and homophobic comments and behaviors that are either defended, ignored, tolerated or justified
- Attacks on independent journalism and journalists as “traitors”
- Withdrawal from regional alliances in Asia, Americas and Europe
- Insulting and stereotyping poorer countries and citizens
- Opening public lands and marine preserves to commercial exploitation and reducing environmental protections everywhere
- Rejection of peace talks, diplomacy, legal obligations and negotiations in favor of power contests, aggressive acts and hostile demands
- Active discouragement of mediation, dialogue, collaborative negotiation, interest-based bargaining and settlement, especially in labor-management disputes and government agencies
- Labeling it “treason” when Democratic congressmen failed to applaud the President’s State of the Union speech

Why Politics Matters to Mediators

- If couples, families or opposing parties engaged in these behaviors during a typical mediation, it would predictably result in a downward cycle of defensiveness, escalation, mutual retaliation, resistance to settlement, loss of trust in the other side (and perhaps the mediator); increased costs, time and effort required to resolve the dispute; decreased effectiveness and listening, fractured relationships, heightened aggression and less willingness to use mediation again.
- The persistence of these behaviors will predictably impact all of us professionally, encouraging the creation of a *culture* of conflict that is openly aggressive, biased, and hostile toward others -- rather than one that encourages conflicted parties to negotiate collaboratively for mutual gain, act respectfully, and seek to satisfy each others' interests.
- Even if some of us agree with the political beliefs that promote these actions, it is important for us *as mediators* to articulate the reasons why they are *professionally* counter-productive, and advocate conflict resolution practices we know from decades of experience are likely to produce better outcomes. Silence, in this case, becomes capitulation, condonation, and a loss of opportunities and professional integrity.

Talking Politics

- Let's talk briefly about three issues:
 - 1) Abortion
 - 2) Gun Control
 - 3) Immigration
- Let's make three assumptions:
 - 1) That it is not possible to completely discount or disprove any position on any of these issues;
 - 2) That there is *something* legitimate and true about everyone's views; and
 - 3) That there are deeper issues beneath the ones people are arguing about.
- Three of the larger issues that lie beneath the surface of each of these issues:
 - 1) Individual Rights vs. Social Responsibility
 - 2) Life vs. Death
 - 3) Freedom vs. Regulation
- Three issues that are also present, below the surface:
 - 1) Patriarchy vs. Androgarchy
 - 2) Racial, Gender, Class and other forms of Domination vs. Equality
 - 3) Self vs. Other // Empathy and Hospitality vs. Fear and Hatred of Others

Some Failed Mediations in Politics

- Slavery, the Compromise of 1820, the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act, and the Dred Scott decision
- The Kerensky government, the Bolsheviks, the British, and mediation over Russian participation in World War I
- Munich, Mussolini, Chamberlin, and the mediation over Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia
- “Go slow” advocates, Martin Luther King, Jr., and mediation in the Civil Rights Movement

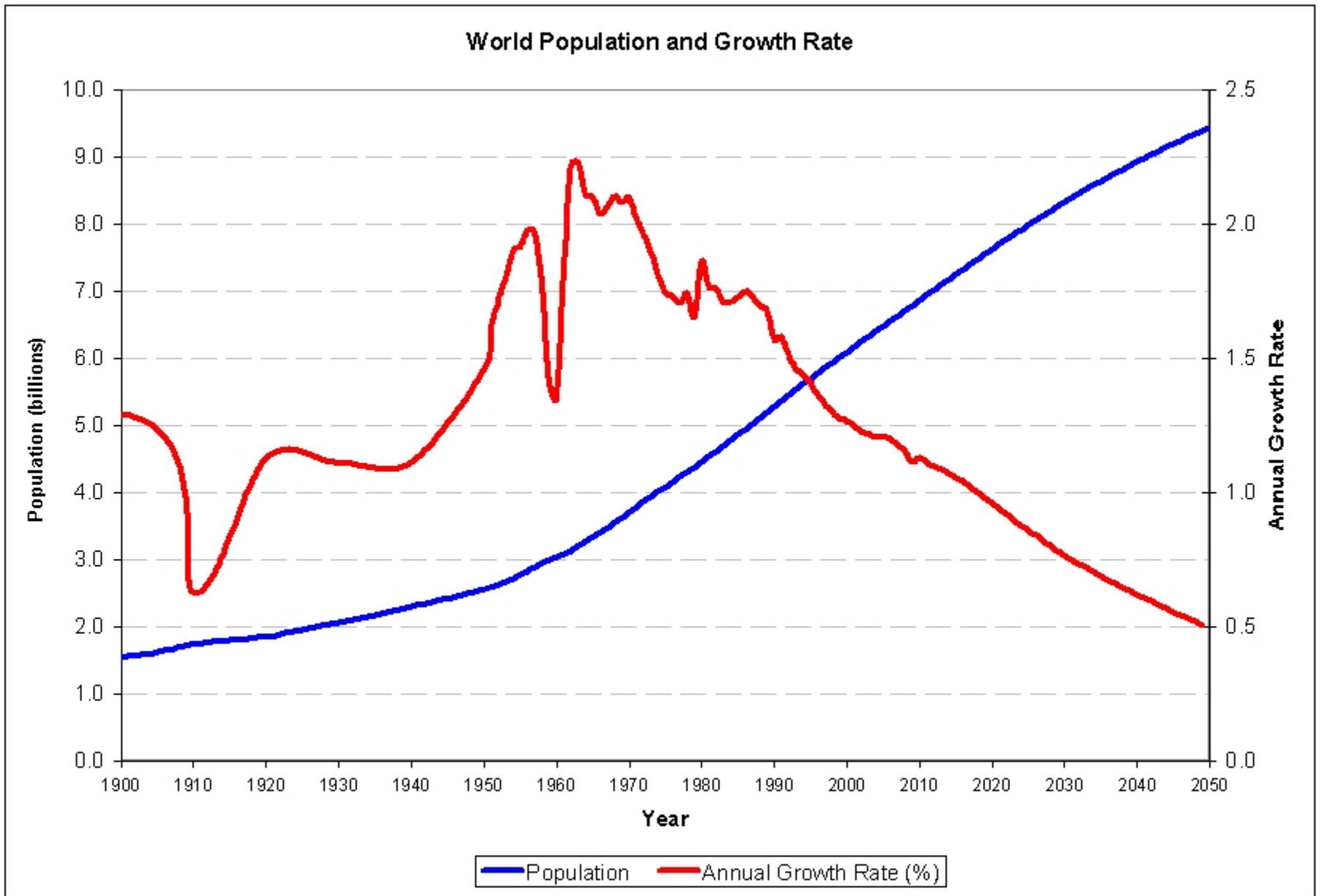
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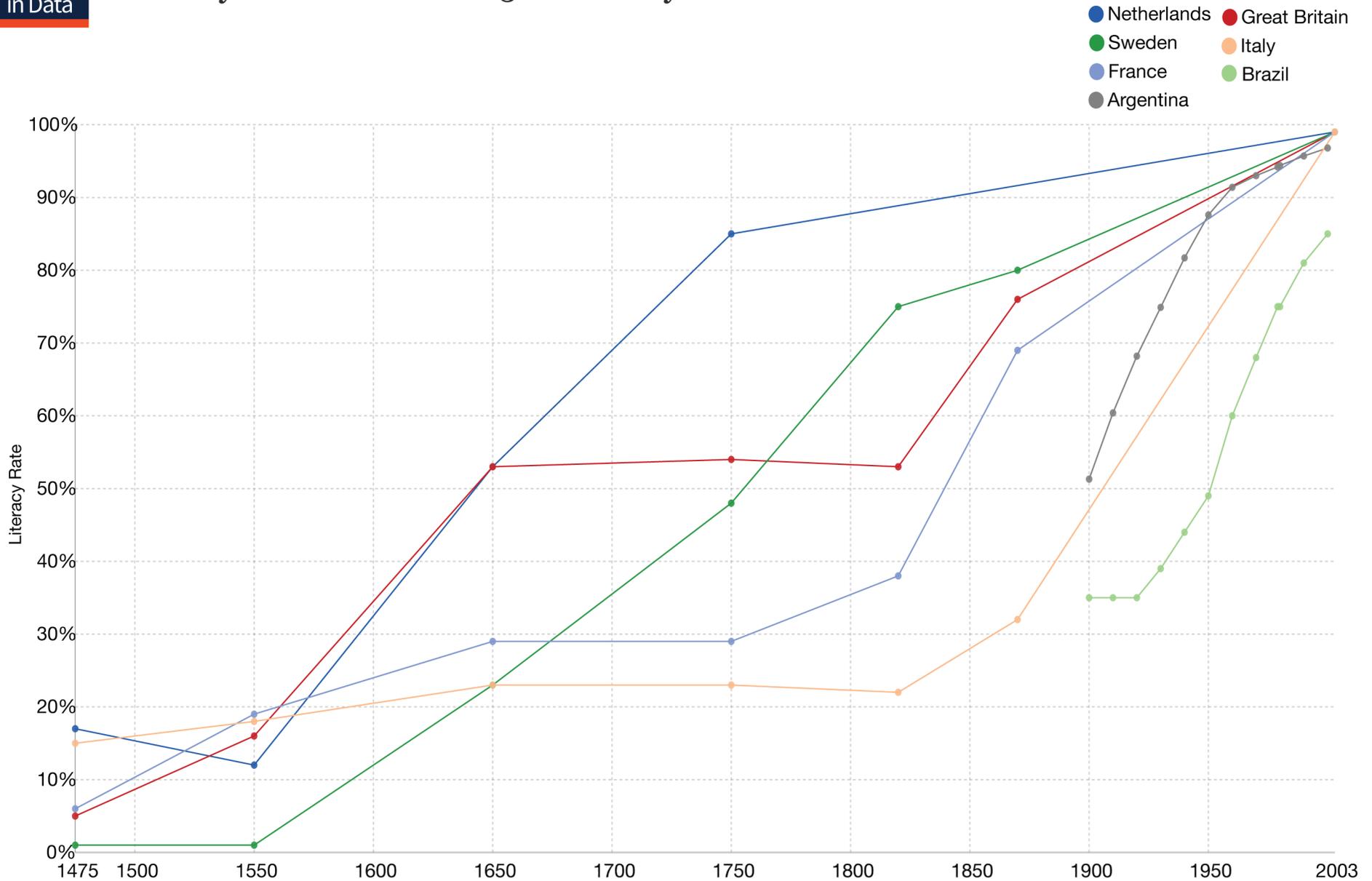
Global Issues in Political Conflict

“We live in terror because dialogue is no longer possible, because man has surrendered entirely to history, because he can no longer find that part of himself, every bit as real as history, that sees beauty in the world and in human faces. We live in a world of abstractions, bureaucracies and machines, absolute ideas, and crude messianism. We suffocate among people who think they are right in their machines as well as their ideas. For those who can live only with dialogue, only with the friendship of men, this silence means the end of the world.”

Albert Camus



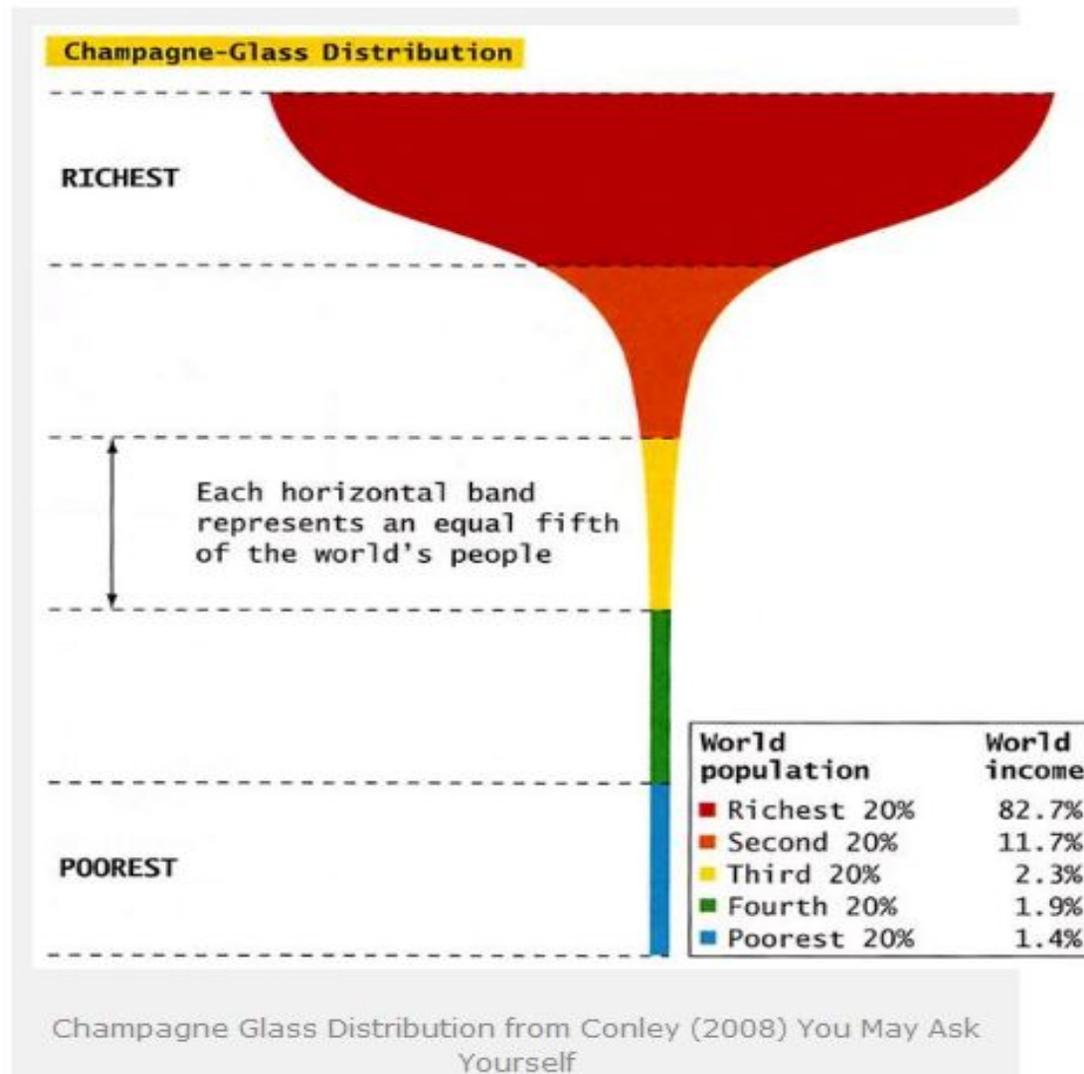
Literacy rates since the 15th century



Data source: Various data sources – all documented on [OurWorldinData.org](https://ourworldindata.org).
 The interactive data visualization is available at [OurWorldinData.org](https://ourworldindata.org). There you find the raw data and more visualizations on this topic.

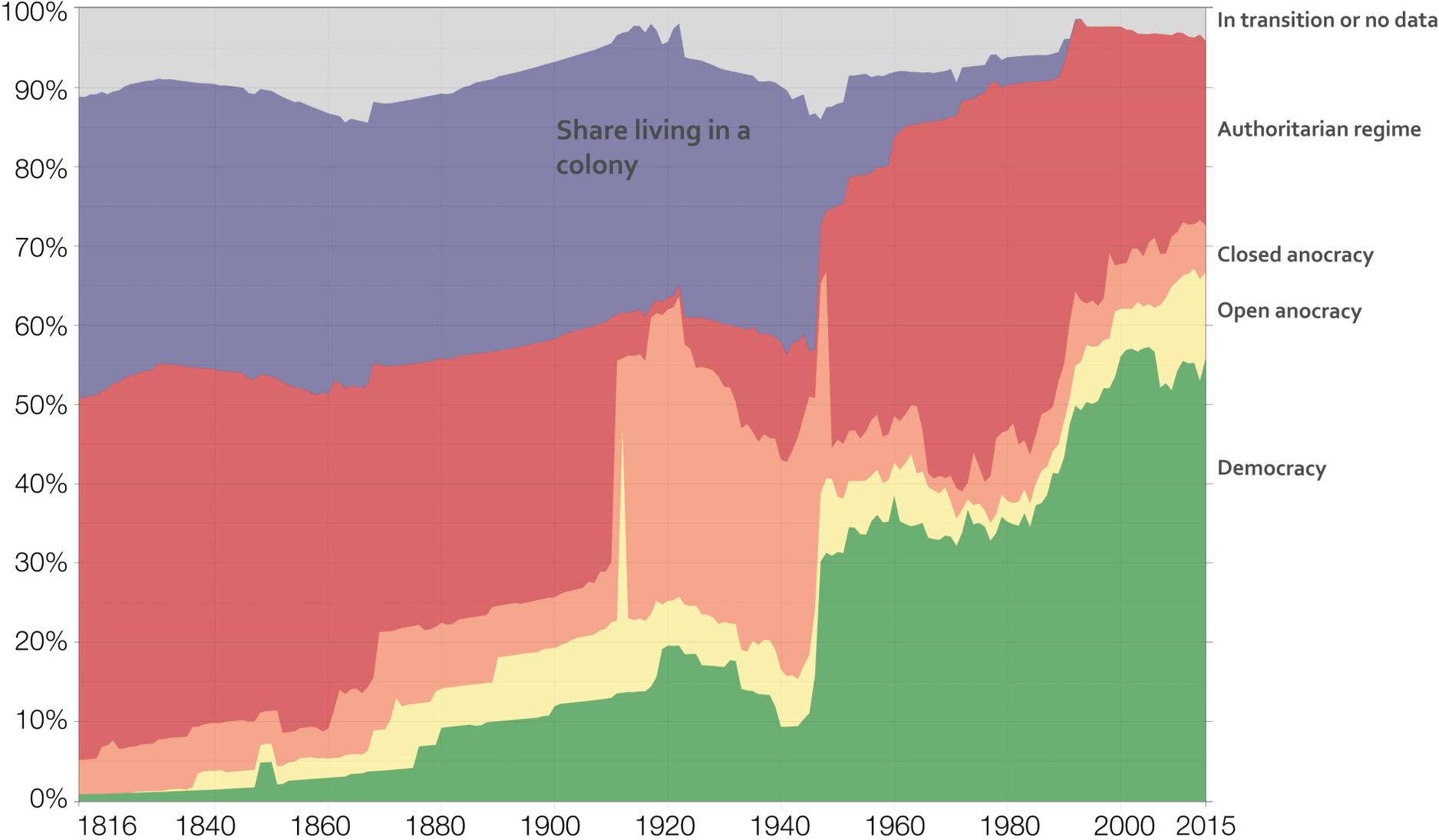
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Global Economic Inequality



Share of world citizens living under different political systems (1816-2015)

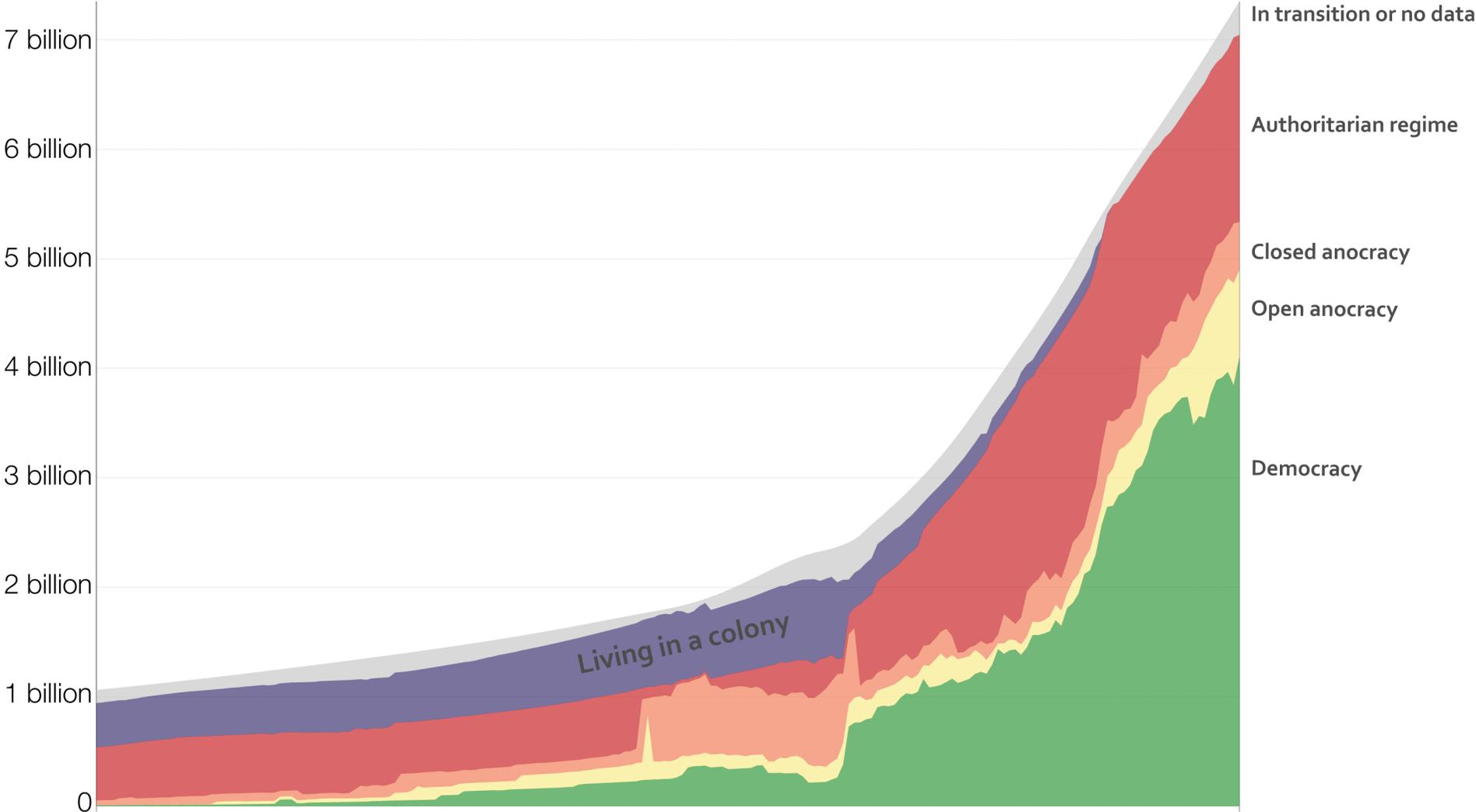
This visualisation is based on the Polity IV data: The Polity IV score captures the type of political regime for each country on a range from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy). Regimes that fall into the middle of this spectrum are called anocracies.



Data source: Polity IV data on political regime; Wimmer and Min (2006) on colonies; Gapminder and OurWorldInData data on population by country and the world. The interactive data visualization is available at OurWorldinData.org. There you find the raw data and more visualizations on this topic. Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the author Max Roser.

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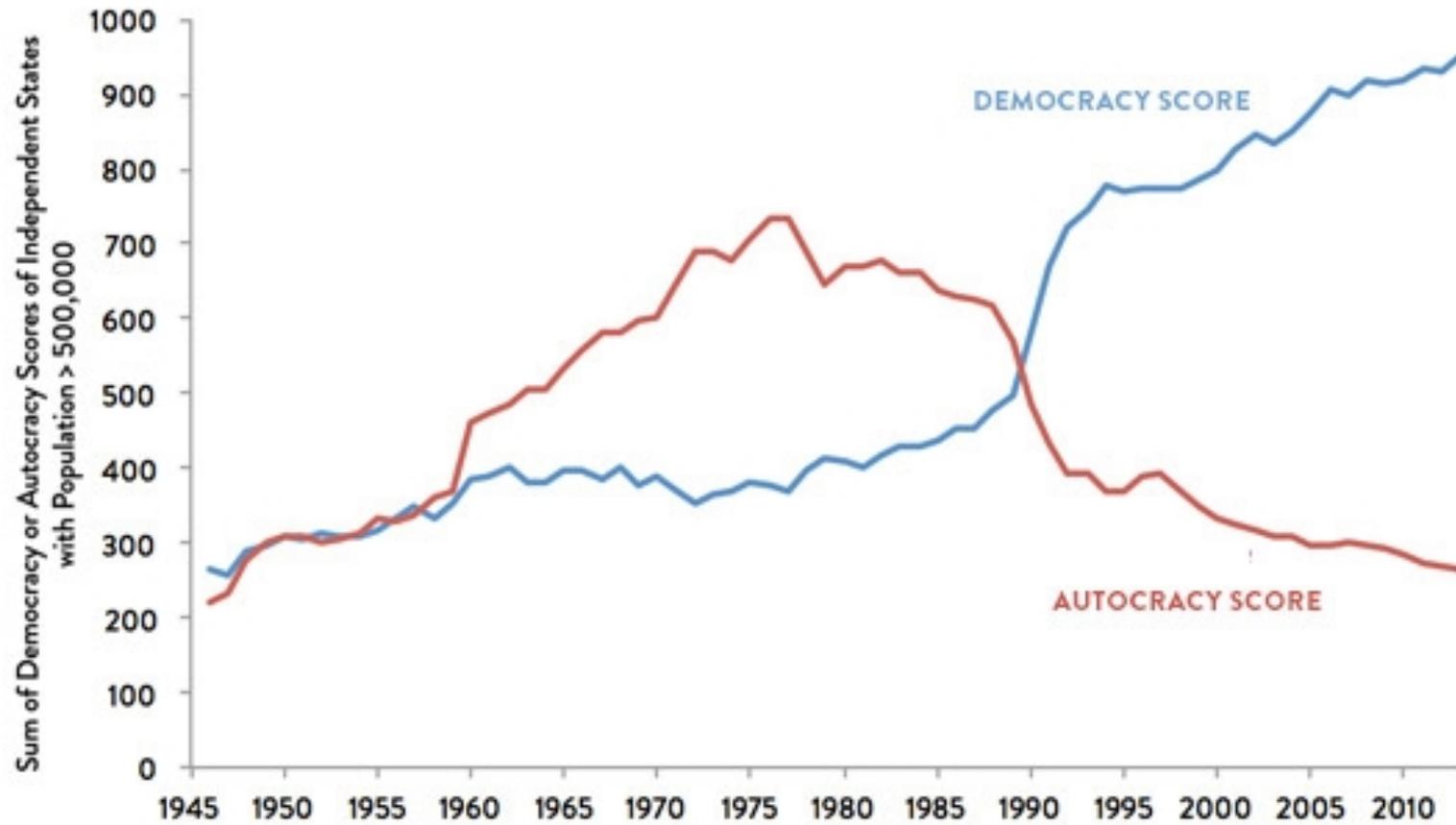


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Global Trends in Governance, 1800-2016



DEMOCRACY AND AUTOCRACY 1946-2013

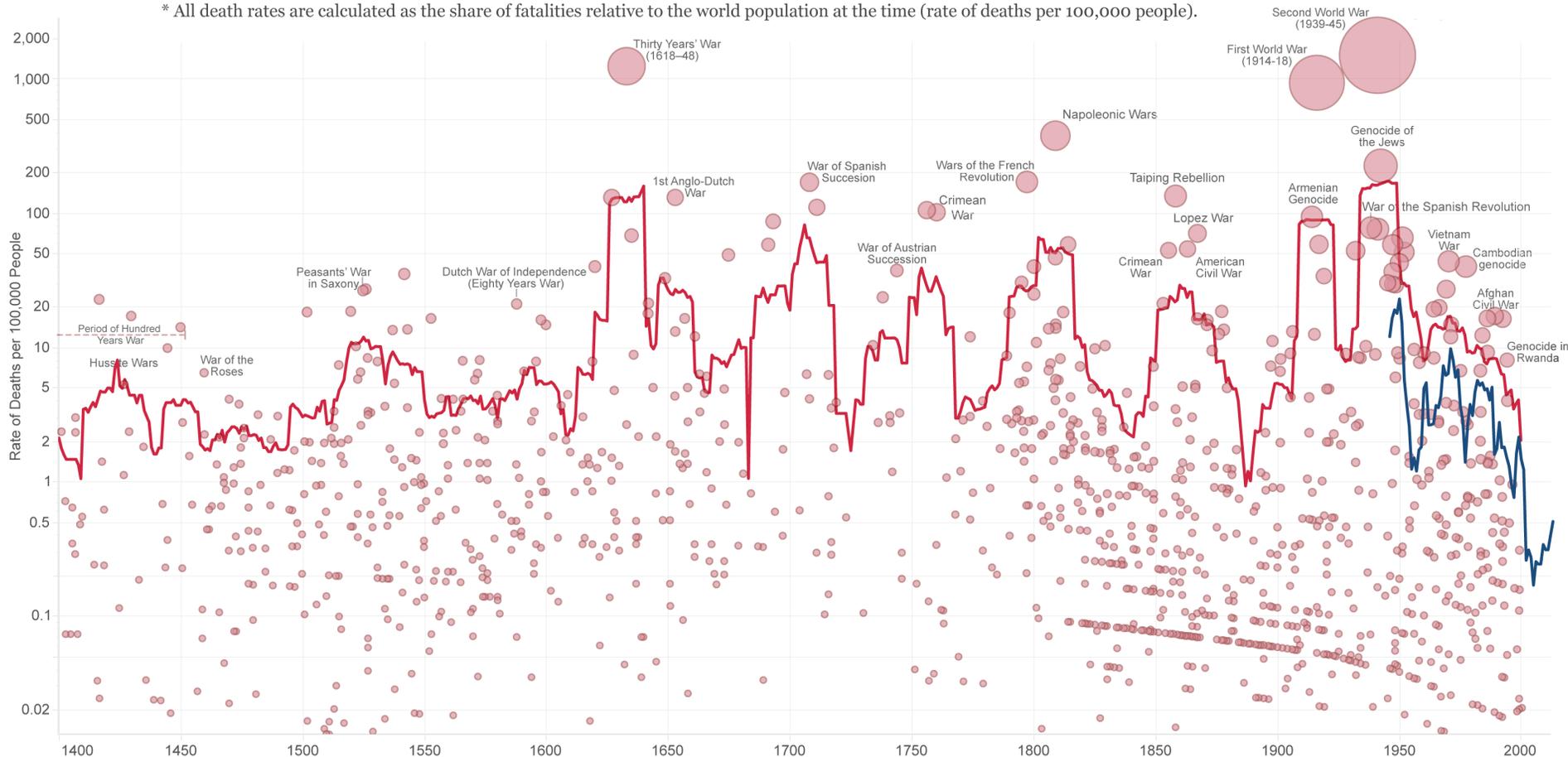


Source: Polity IV Project, Center for Systemic Peace
(<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>),
"Global Democracy and Autocracy, 1946-2013."

Global deaths in conflicts since the year 1400 – by Max Roser

- Each circle represents one conflict. [Data from the *Conflict Catalog* (1400-2000)]
 The **size** represents the absolute number of fatalities (military + civilian fatalities)
 The **position** on the y-axis represents the fatality rate* (military + civilian fatalities)
- **Military + civilian death rate* for 1400-2000** [Data from *Conflict Catalog*] – 15 year moving-average
- **Military death rate* for 1946-2013** [Data from the PRIO Institute]

* All death rates are calculated as the share of fatalities relative to the world population at the time (rate of deaths per 100,000 people).

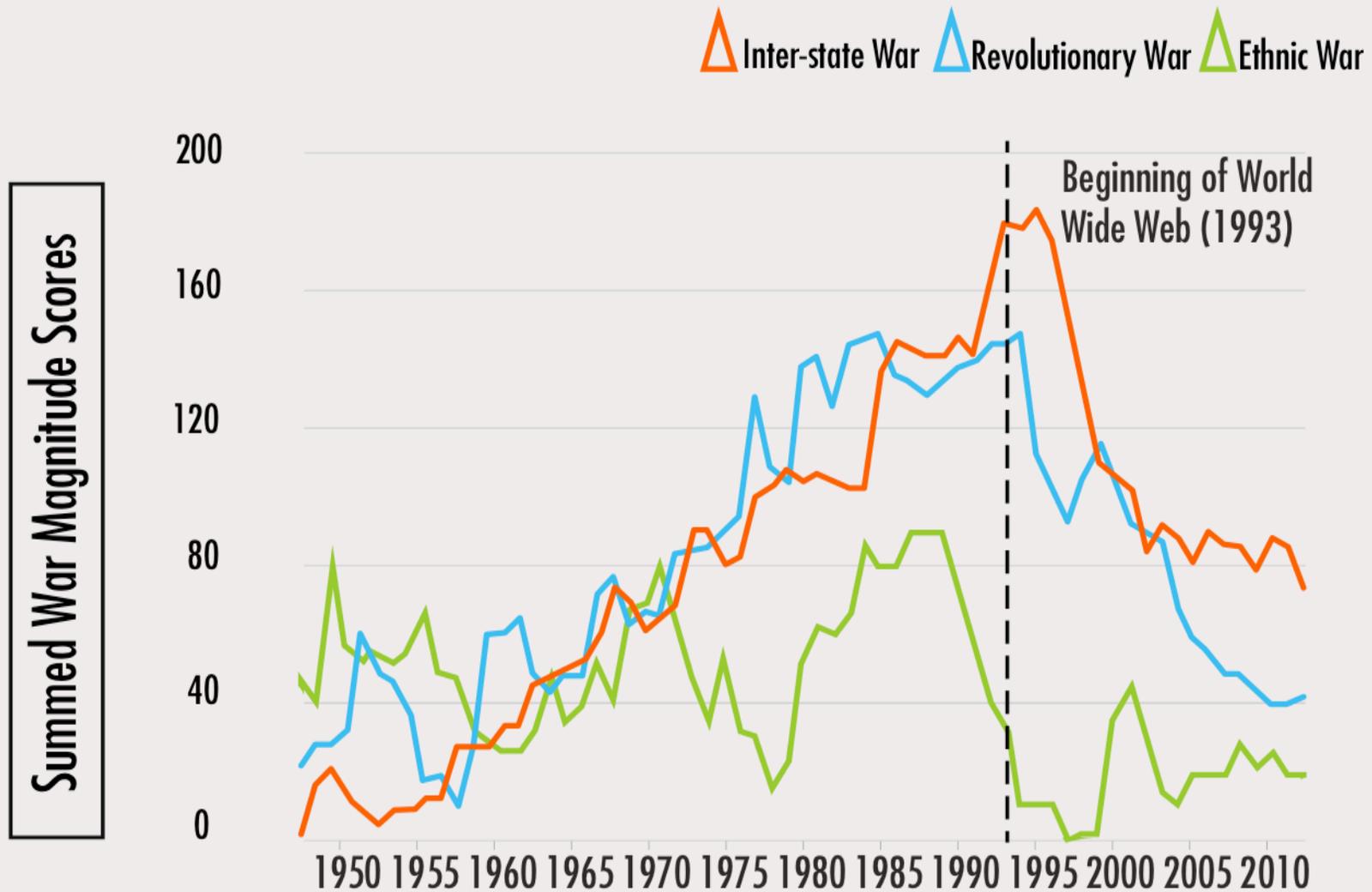


Data sources: Battle Deaths Dataset v.3.0. published by the PRIO Institute and Conflict Catalog by Peter Brecke for data on battle deaths. And world population data from HYDE and UN.

This is a data visualisation from OurWorldinData.org. There you find more visualisations on this topic.

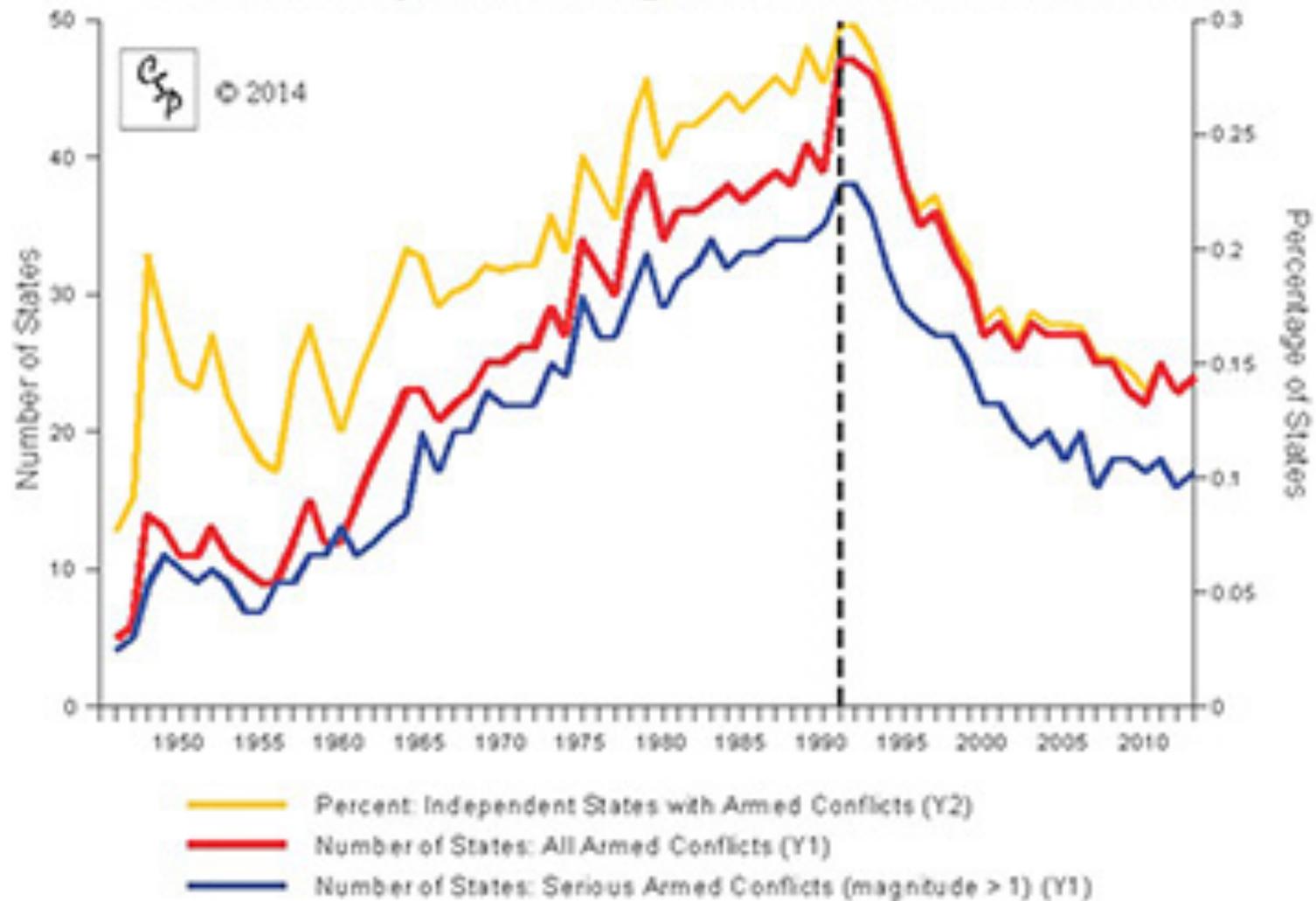
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Trends by Armed Conflict + Impact of the World Wide Web

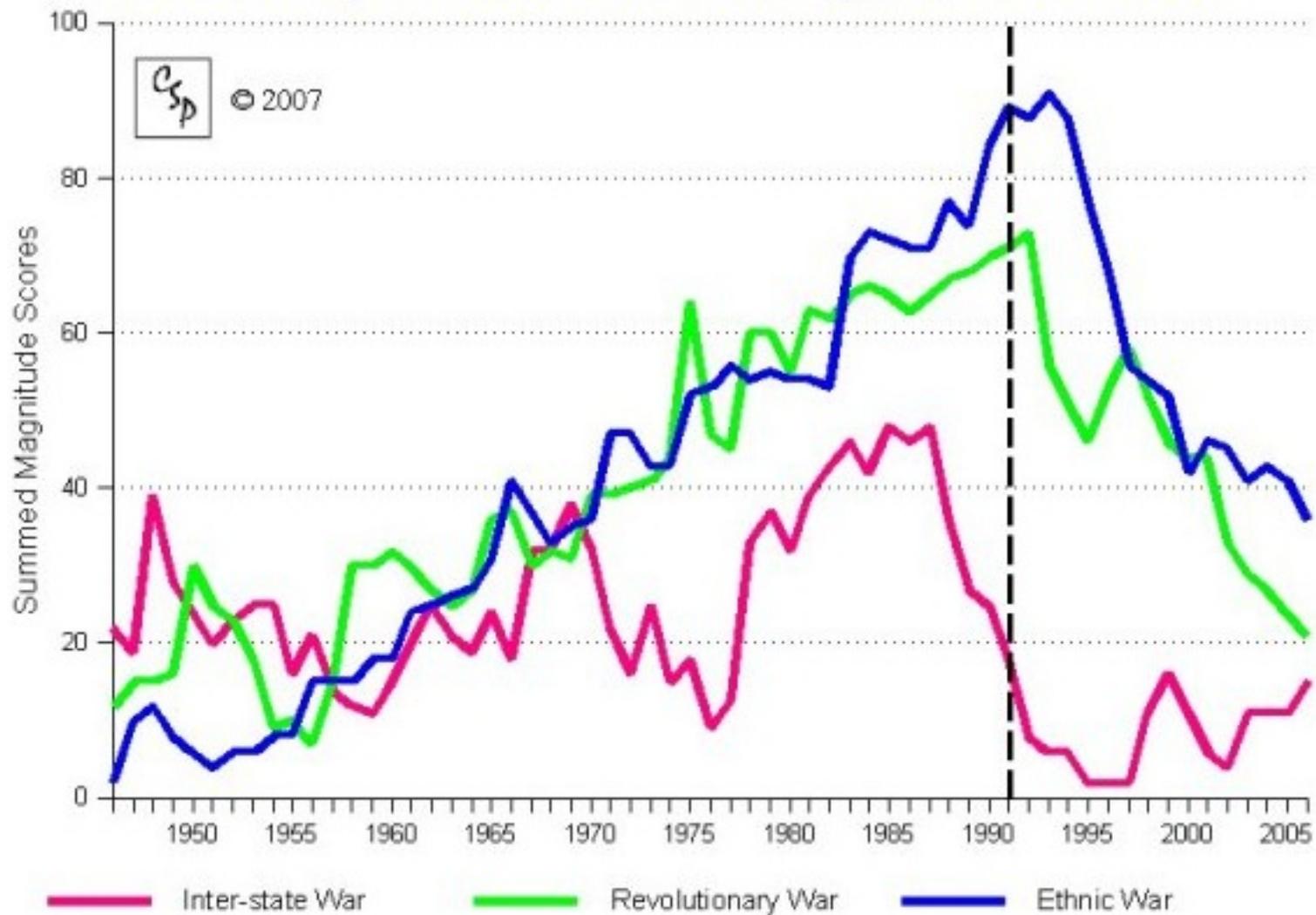


Source: CSP 2011

States Experiencing Warfare, 1946-2013



Trends by Armed Conflict Type, 1946-2006



Global Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946-2016

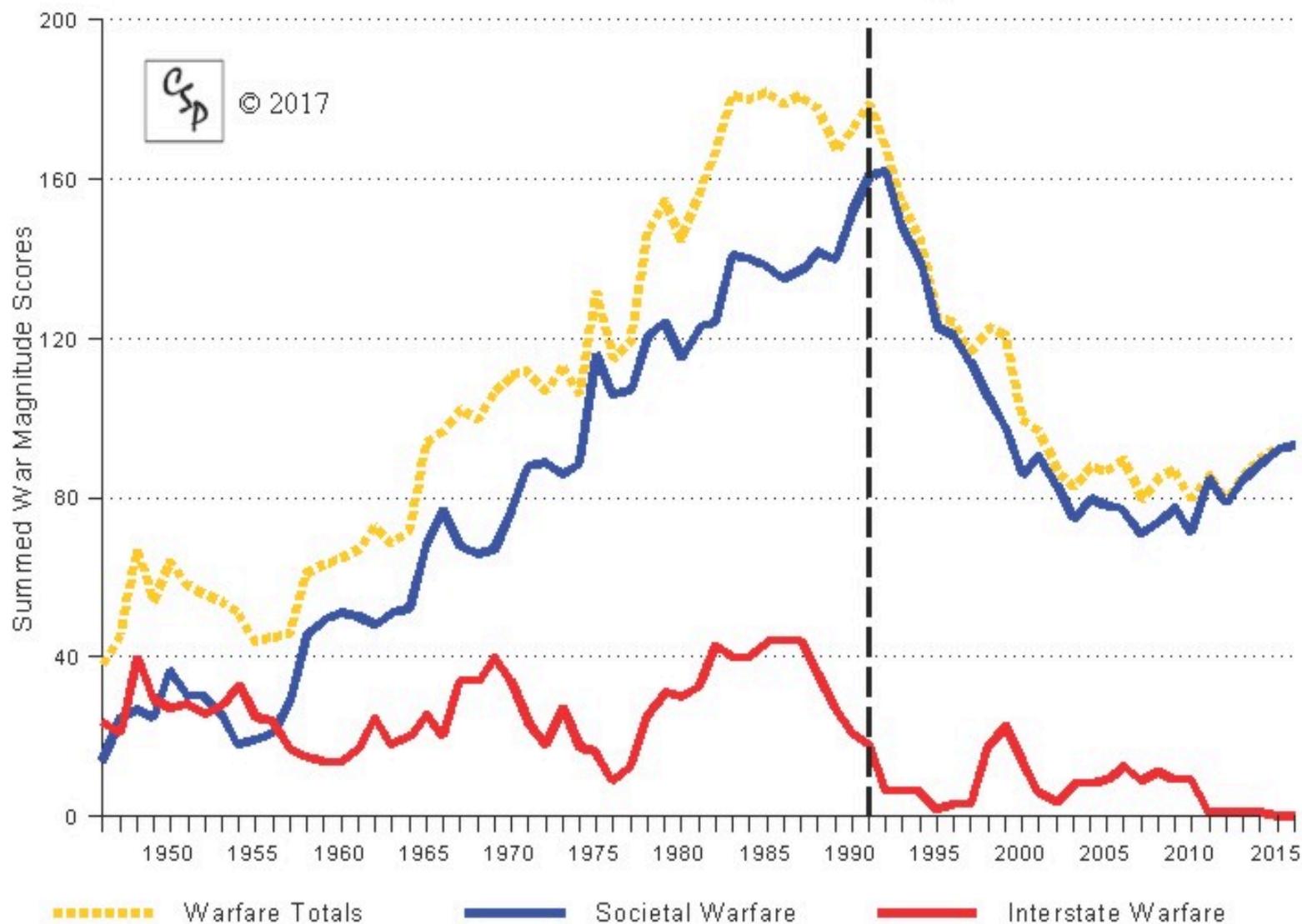
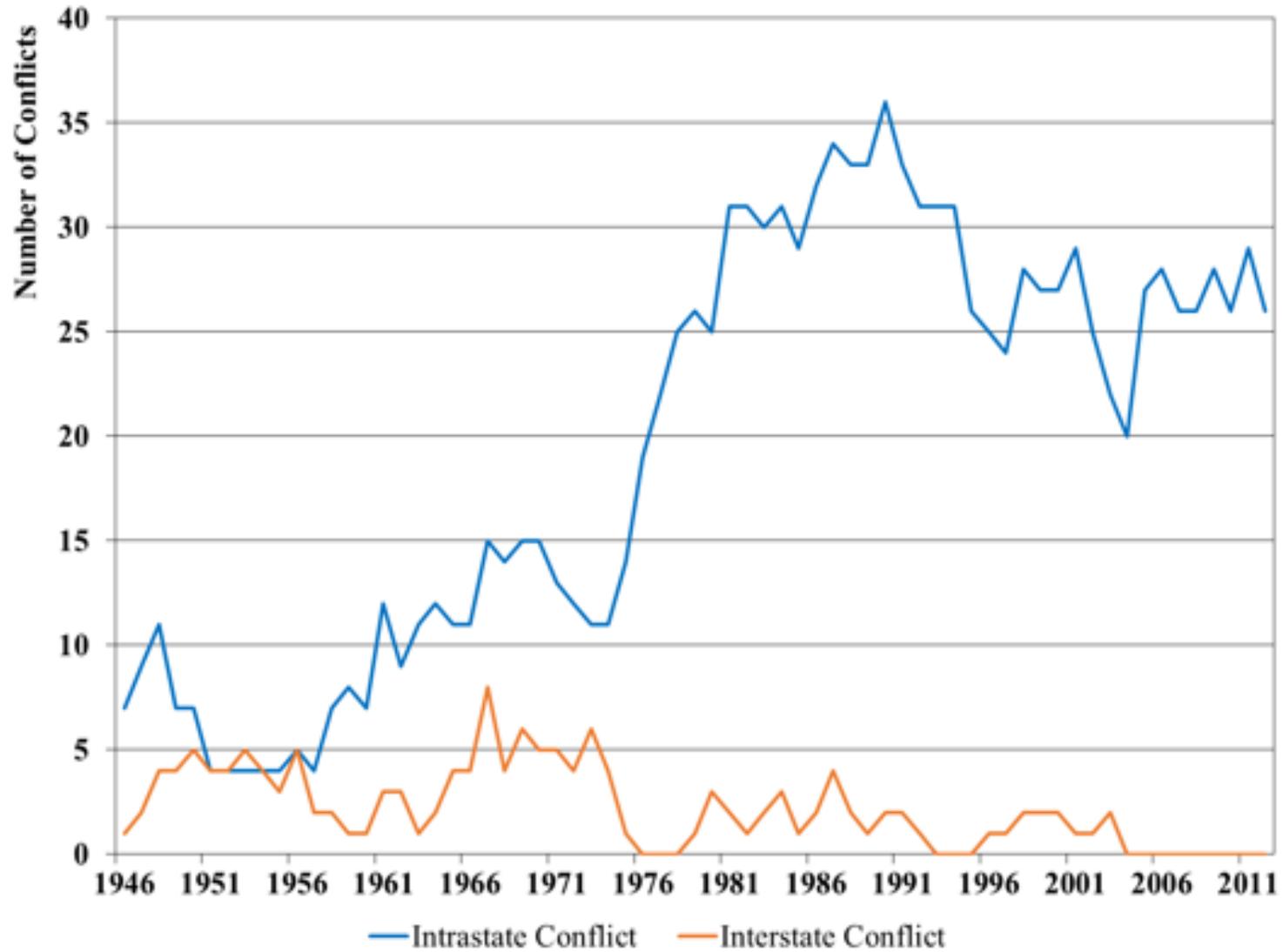
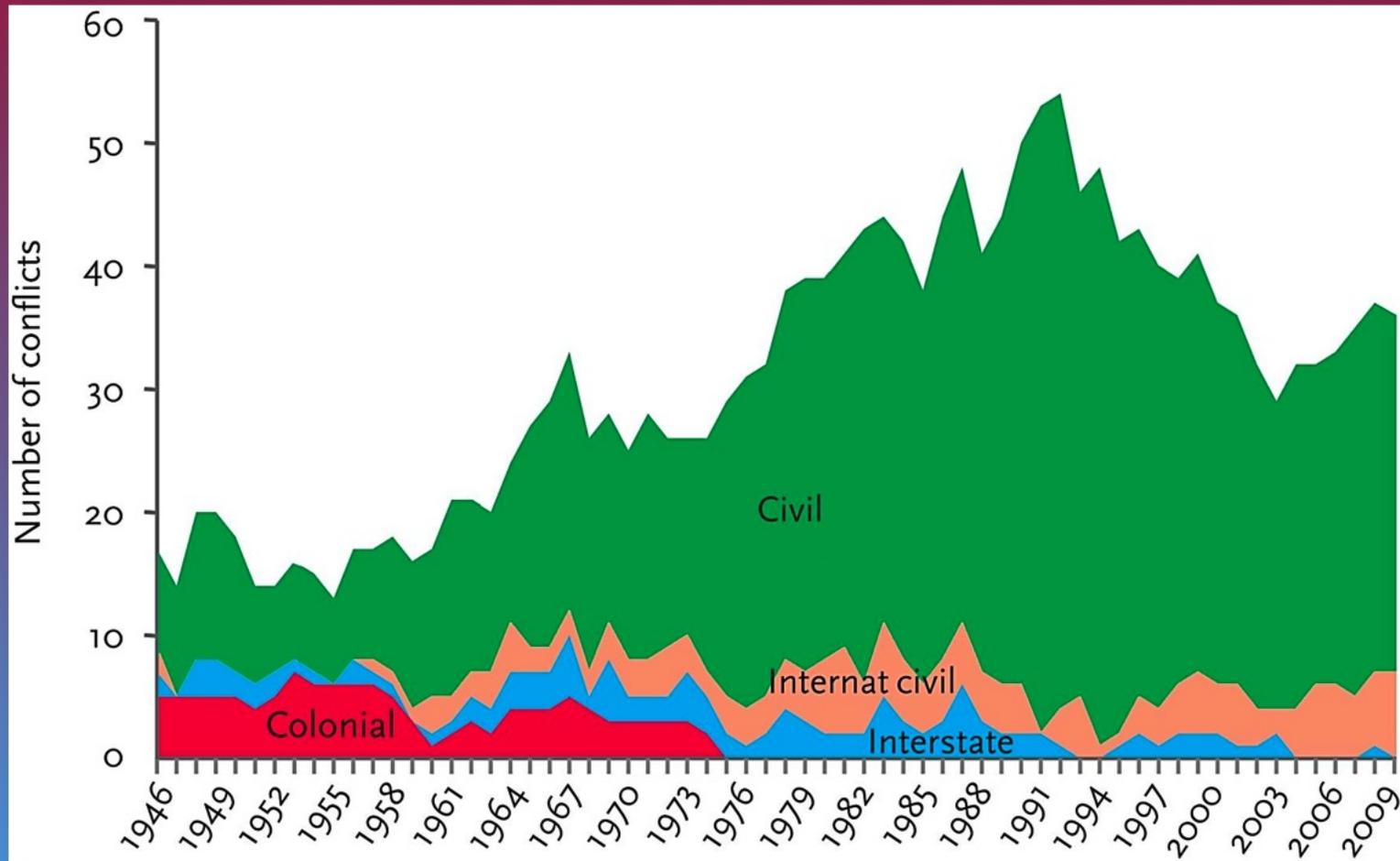


Figure 1. Global Trends in Armed Conflict

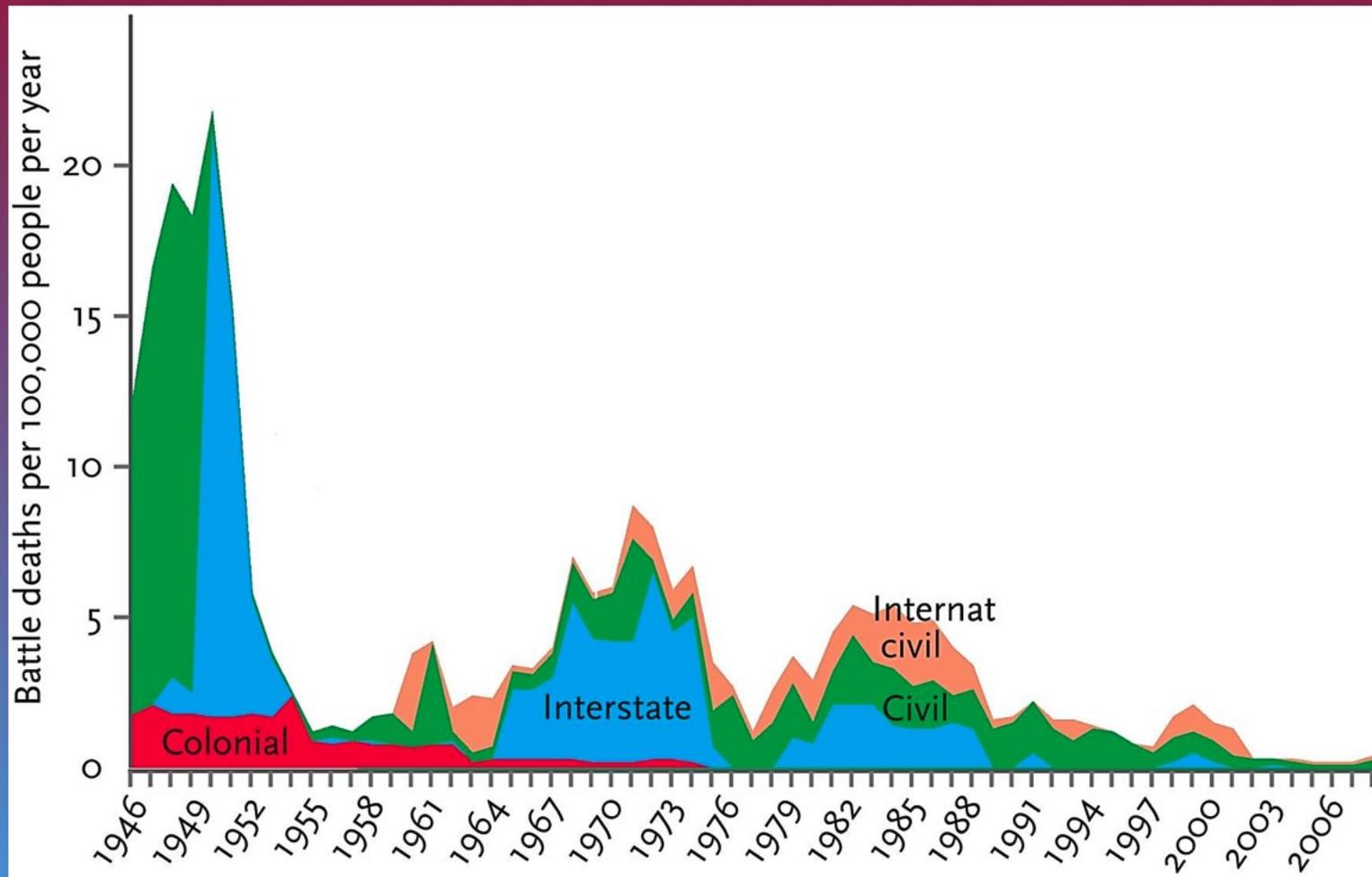


Number of Wars, 1946-2008



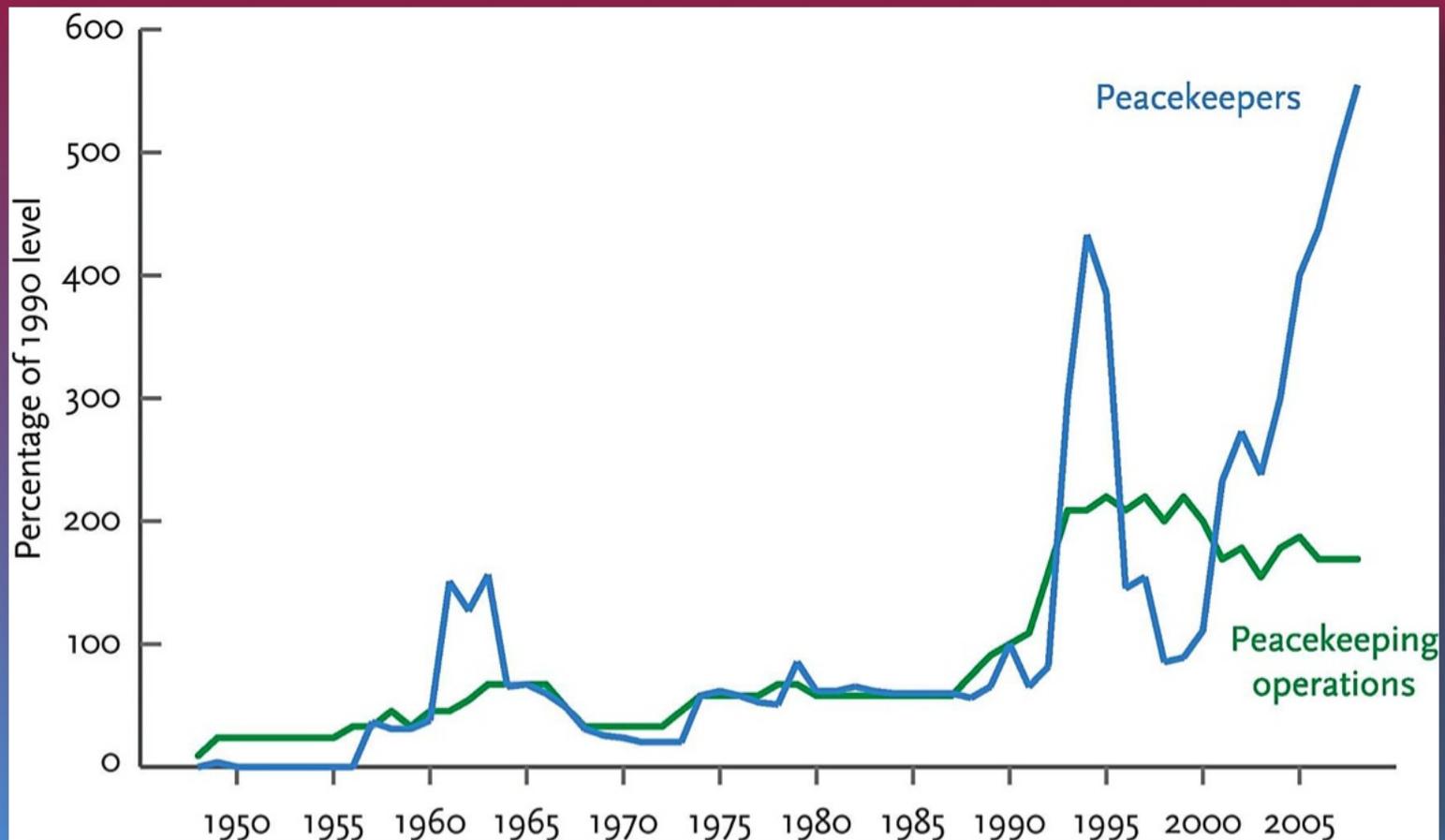
Source: UCDP/PRIO; Human Security Report Project

Battle Deaths in Wars, 1946-2008



Source: UCDP/PRIO; Human Security Report Project

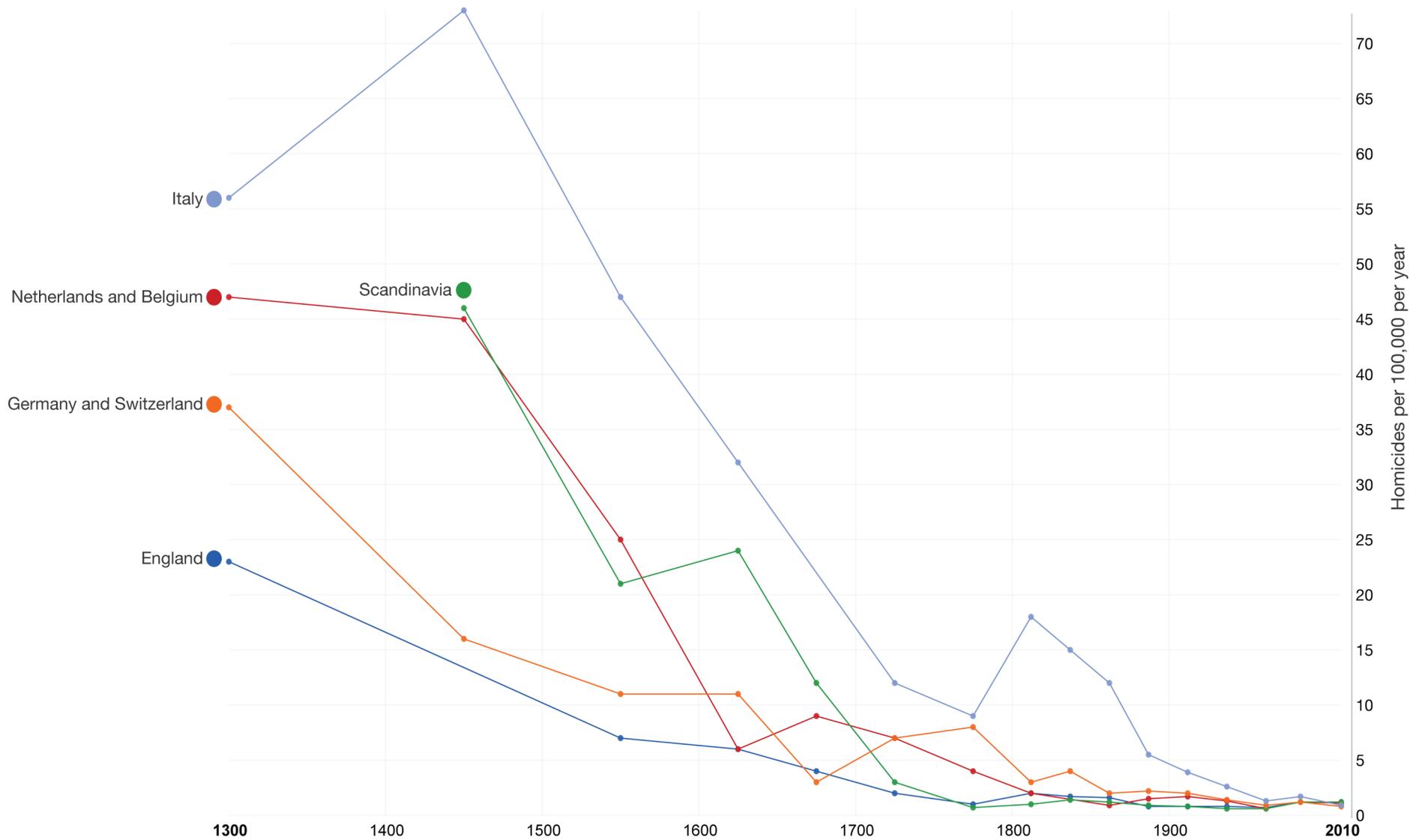
International Peacekeeping, 1948-2008



Source: Gleditsch, 2008

Homicide rates in Europe since 1300

The observations are plotted at the midpoint of period they refer to.



Data source: All but 2010 from Eisner (2003) – Long-Term Historical Trends in Violent Crime. In *Crime and Justice*, 30, 83–142. 2010 from UNODC Homicide statistic 2012.

The interactive data visualization is available at OurWorldinData.org. There you find the raw data and more visualizations on this topic.

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“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words or actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men ... and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr