



# Disequilibrium, Polarization, and Crisis Model: An International Relations Theory Explaining Conflict

By Isabelle Dierauer

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Different international relations theorists have studied political change, but all fall short of sufficiently integrating human reactions, feelings, and responses to change in their theories. This book adds a social psychological component to the analysis of why nations, politically organized groups, or states enter into armed conflict. The Disequilibrium, Polarization, and Crisis Model is introduced, which draws from prospect theory, realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The theory considers how humans react and respond to change in their social, political, and economic environment. Three case studies, the U.S. Civil War, the Yugoslav Wars (1991-1995), and the First World War are applied to illustrate the model's six process stages: status quo, change creating shifts that lead to disequilibrium, realization of loss, hanging on to the old status quo, emergence of a rigid system, and risky decisions leading to violence and war.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Motivated by an exhaustive and comprehensive historical reading of international crises and wars since antiquity to modernity, Dierauer's *Disequilibrium, Polarization, and Crisis Model: An International Relations Theory Explaining Conflict* maintains that a way to explain conflict generally and armed conflict in particular is to focus on emotions, and visceral, existential feelings about how individuals react and respond to socio-political changes. Dierauer adds and tests a dynamic six-stage process model explaining this important socio-psychological dimension in the analysis and explanation of why nation-states and politically organized groups engage in large-scale armed conflict. Two pre-civil war era cases (the U.S. Civil War and the Balkans Wars in the 1990s), and one pre-systemic war case (First World War) serve as test-cases of the model. The result is a historically well-grounded, theoretically sound, and methodologically rigorous study that adds to the long list of important contributions to socio-political psychology and explanations of the origin and evolution of international crises and wars. It is a most-read book for a wide audience interested in world politics generally, and on the causes of international crises and wars in particular. (Félix E. Martín, associate professor of politics and international relations, Florida International University)

#### About the Author

**Isabelle Dierauer** is an international relations theorist holding an interdisciplinary studies MA in international relations and philosophy from Antioch University Midwest.

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