Seek truth from facts...

- Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping
- Which facts?
- Empirical subjects involve measuring things and estimating relationships.
  - Sampling - which cases?
  - Inference - what truths?
  - Impact - how much?
Problems of inference

- Tendencies and multiple or latent causality
- Social science phenomena are probabilistic
- Most behavior has latent or multiple causes
- Most common approach: case study
- Existence proof - something happened once
- Sampling - how representative is the case?
- Attribution - which factors matter, how much?
- Disprovability - when is a theory wrong?
- Circularity - theory --> case, case --> theory
Reducing things to Numbers

• “You cannot reduce human events, behavior, etc. to numbers on a spreadsheet.”
• We “reduce” human behavior to words which is literally “quantifying” (words are discrete units).
• Details may be lost, but things are gained, too.
• All knowledge is simplification of reality.
• Most debates are about which simplifications are most interesting, effective, and elegant.
• How can we test probabilistic claims without an approach to testing that captures probabilities?
Political Science 142A
International Relations

Lecture 2: History
Erik Gartzke
Designing A Nation

- Most nations evolve systems of government
- “Path dependent effects”
- The United States is “designed”
  - Unique opportunity to identify influences
History: Themes

• The History of the U.S. is one of expansion
  • growing territory --> growing power --> growing ambitions

• Different factions have different definition of expansion, or differ in their use of territory
  • North, South, West
Contrasts

• The U.S. arguably holds more conquered territory than any other modern country

• U.S. is self-consciously NOT interested in expanding its territorial holdings today
Contrasts

“Other nations in history have fought in foreign lands and remained to occupy and exploit. Americans, following battle, want nothing more than to return home”

George W. Bush
The Beginning

• The origins of the U.S. can be found in the seven years war (1754 - 1966)

• Huge global contest (first “World War”)

• England (Prussia, colonists) vs. France (R.O.E, native American “Indians”)

• Arguably, no one wanted the war
The Beginning II

- Initially, the war went badly for the British
- Braddock ambushed in Pennsylvania
- Setbacks in Europe, Caribbean
- George Washington
The Beginning III

• War goes better under PM Pitt
  • British adopt Colonists’ strategies/war
  • Louisbourg, Quebec
• Victory (huge gains for British)
The Disenchantment

- War does several things:
  - British confident, don’t need Colonists
  - Colonists confident, don’t need British
  - Constraints on Colonists
  - Re-imposition of colonial rule
  - Taxes/representation
The Constitution

• Compromise:
  • What is the minimum needed to govern?
  • Once in place, new things come along
    • Some entity must deal with them
  • Growth of central (Federal) government
The New Nation II

• Priorities:
  • Disengage/deter “old world” ( - Europe)
  • Engage/conquer “new world” ( + West)
  • Business of America is business ( +/- Asia)
  • Slavery (+/-)
Old World

- Major powers are in Europe.
  - Difficult/expensive for U.S. to engage them
  - U.S. is weak, will not have much influence
- George Washington’s resignation speech
  - “Avoid entangling alliances”
New World

• “Power vacuum” in interior of N. America
  • U.S. means to fill/occupy this vacuum
  • Constitution outlines rules for integration of new territories (Canada is included)
• Momentum: As country expanded --> became more powerful --> expanded
New World II

• Economic exploitation:
  • Natural resources
  • Immigration
  • Displacement of populations
  • “Go west” Horace Greeley
Business

- The U.S. is a business compromise
  - South --> export raw materials (tobacco)
  - North --> trade, finished goods
  - West becomes critical politically (Jackson).
Fundamental Crisis

• End of expansion creates fundamental crisis.
  • When it becomes clear that the South will lose demographic/democratic race
  • Violence or defeat are their options
• Splits U.S. Federation