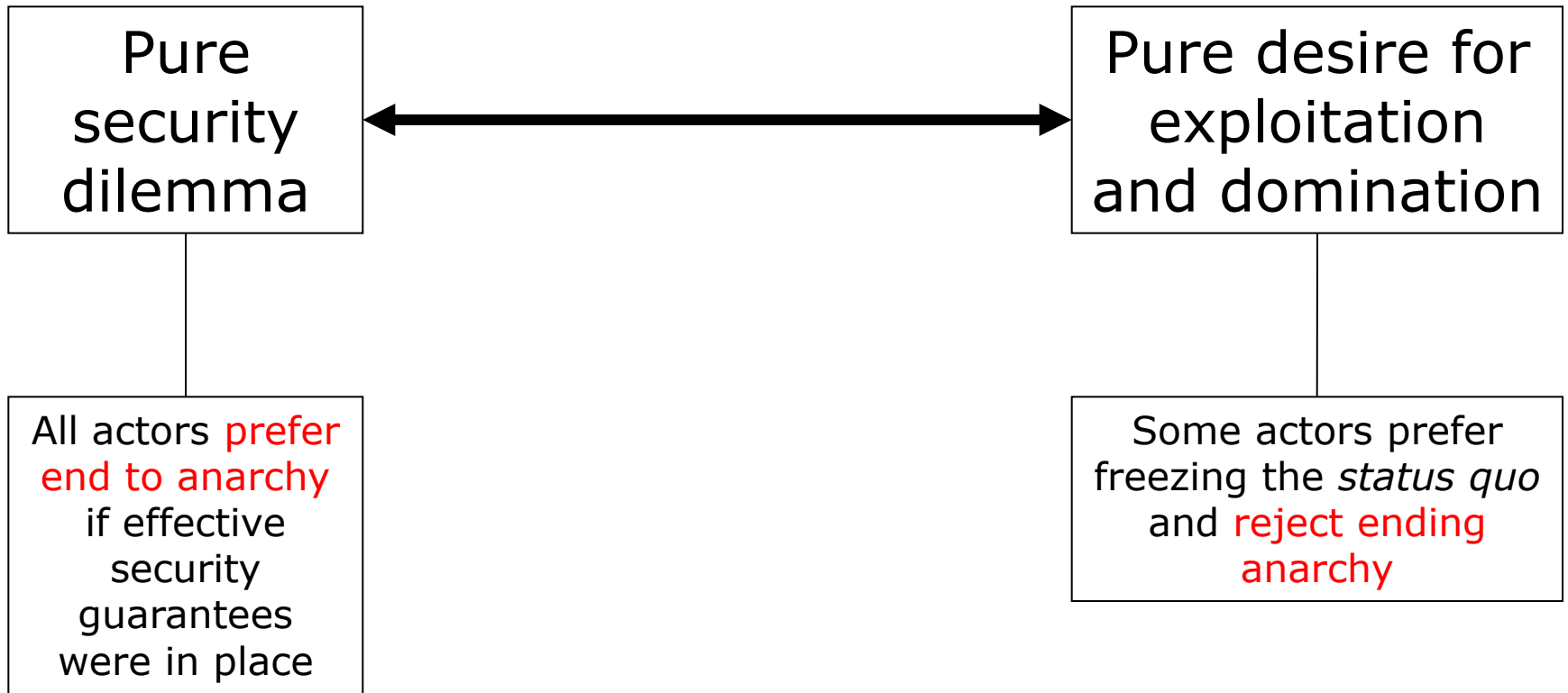


Realist and Constructivist Theories of Intra-state Conflict

Stefan Wolff

The Realist Spectrum of Conflict Situations



Economic Theories of Ethnic Conflict: Collier & Hoeffler

- Civil war is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of low income countries.
- Possessing natural resources makes things worse, unless there are plenty of them → opportunities for looting
- Opportunity as an explanation of conflict risk is consistent with the economic interpretation of rebellion as greed-motivated
- Other significant factors:
 - Ethnic dominance
 - Democracy
 - “Time heals”

Critique and Revisions: Ballentine and Sherman

- Varied impact of economic factors on:
 - Incidence of conflicts
 - Duration of conflicts
 - Intensity of conflicts
- Economic factors matter, but quite possibly in different ways and to differing degrees → alternative *explanations* for Collier and Hoeffler's *findings*

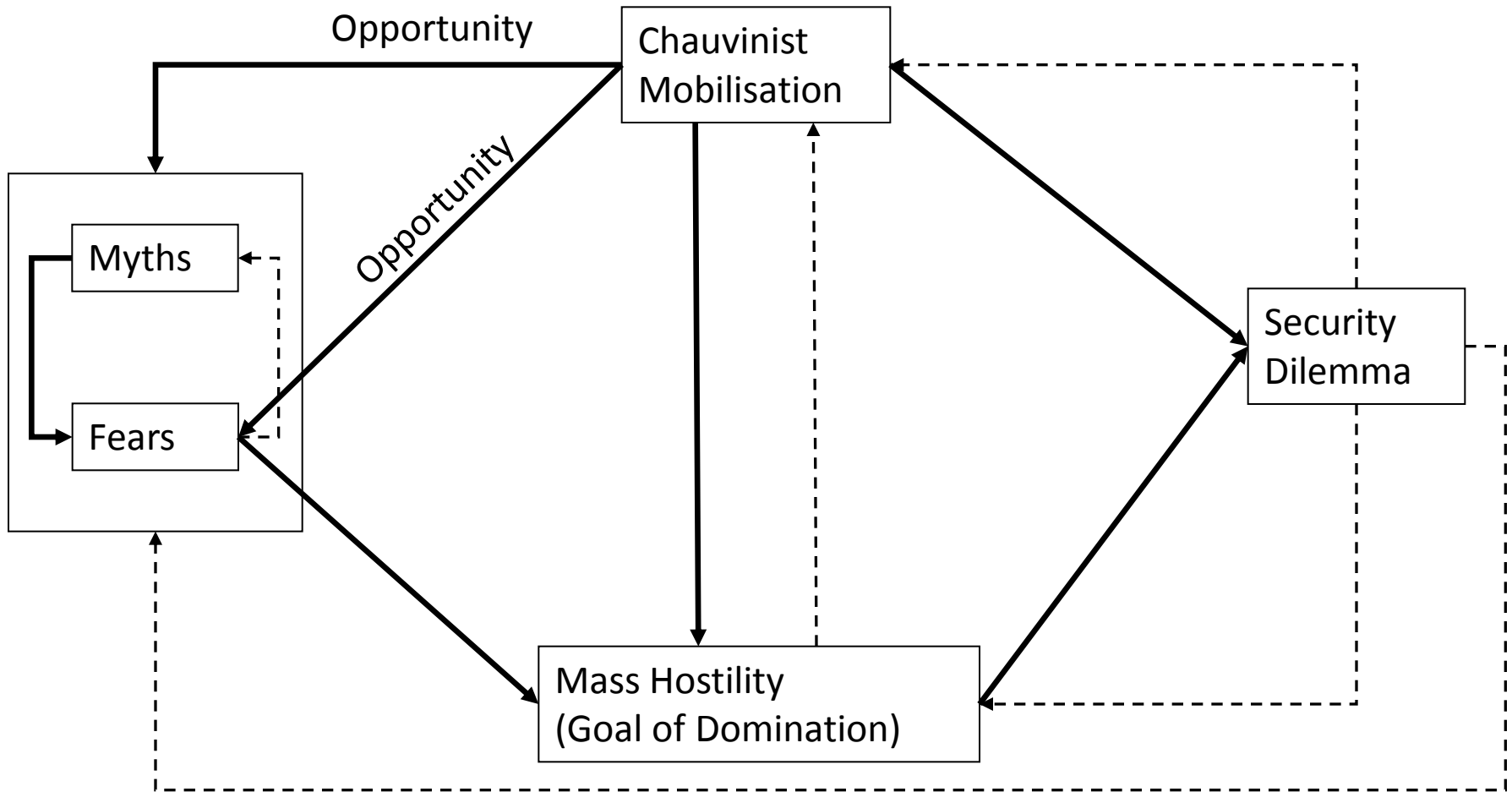
Fear-producing Environments: Walter and Snyder

1. Government breakdown: Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia, Chechnya, Yugoslavia, Kashmir, DRC
 2. Geographic isolation or vulnerability: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Serbs in BiH and Croatia, Muslims in Kashmir
 3. Changing balance of political/demographic power (i.e., actual or potential regime change): Lebanon, Yugoslavia, former Soviet Union, Rwanda, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Aceh
 4. Redistribution of resources (economic and/or military): Yugoslavia
 5. Forced or voluntary disarmament (credible commitment problem): Northern Ireland
-
6. Change in external patronage or balance of power between rival patrons: Africa

Strategic Dilemmas: Lake and Rothchild

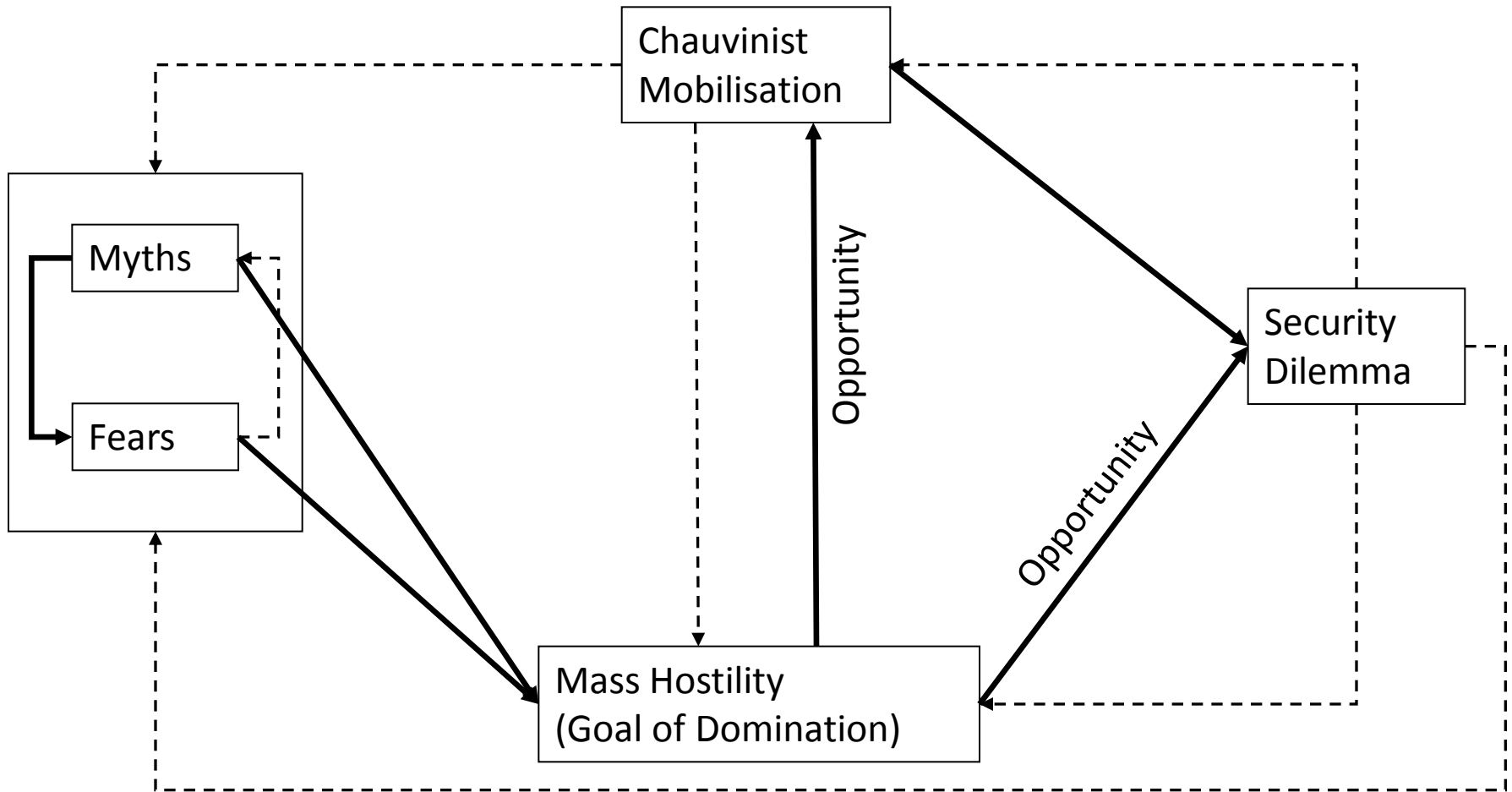
- Information failures
 - Groups cannot communicate their defensive intentions
- Credible commitment problems
 - Mutual distrust prevents groups from committing to disarmament
- Security dilemma
 - First-strike advantage
- + Political entrepreneurs
 - Ethnic mobilisation for personal power gain
- + Ethnic activists
 - Heightened need for ethnic self-identification, peer pressure

Elite-led Processes of Escalation: Kaufman



——> Primary process
- - - -> Feedback loop

Mass-led Processes of Escalation: Kaufman



—→ Primary process
- - - - -→ Feedback loop

Psychological Theories

Realistic Group Theory

- Muzafer **Sherif**, *In Common Predicament* (1966), *The Robbers' Cave Experiment* (1988)
- hostility between two groups results from real or perceived conflicting goals which generate intergroup competition

Psychoanalytic Theory

- Vamik **Volkan**, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (1998), Marc Howard **Ross**, *The Culture of Conflict* (1993)
- minorities attract hatred, suspicion, rage of majority because of their characteristics and serve as reservoirs of the majority's negative self-images

Social Identity Theory

- Henri **Tajfel**, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (1981), Michael **Billig**, *Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations* (1976), and Donald **Horowitz**, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985)
- people strive for a positive social identity through social comparisons

Conclusion

- Different theories or
 - Different phenomena?
 - Different ontologies/epistemologies/methods?
 - Different levels of analysis?
- Relevance of
 - None?
 - One?
 - All?

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