NAVIGATING THE THEORIES IN THE NEXUS BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between war and peace within the realm of international relations, drawing from a diverse array of theories. It investigates conflict, ranging from power dynamics to ideological disputes, while also evaluating the ethical dimensions of the Just War theory. Through the application of the Just War theory to the dynamic interplay between war and peace as a theoretical framework, this study underscores the vital significance of fostering peaceful dispute resolution, upholding ethical standards in warfare, and undertaking comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Employing a historical research design, the study gathers data from secondary sources including journals, books, and ancient encyclopedias, ensuring the credibility of its analysis. Utilizing a descriptive method of data analysis, the research employs deductive logic to maintain a coherent framework and ensure balanced interpretation. Despite disagreements among theories, the study prioritizes accuracy to draw appropriate conclusions. The findings of this study reveal the profound interconnectedness between war and peace, highlighting how conflict arises from a myriad of factors including power struggles, ideological differences, and diplomatic failures. Furthermore, the ethical evaluation of war through the Just War theory provides valuable insights into the moral complexities surrounding armed conflict and its implications for peace-building efforts. Considering these findings, several recommendations are proposed to address the persistent challenge of achieving lasting peace amidst armed conflicts. Emphasizing diplomacy as a primary approach to conflict resolution, prioritizing ethical standards in warfare, and fostering peace education to cultivate values of tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution from an early age are key strategies identified for promoting sustainable peace. By offering recommendations for proactive conflict prevention and strategies in international cooperation, this research aims to contribute to the global pursuit of a more equitable, harmonious, and peaceful world order. Through its rigorous analysis and actionable insights, the study seeks to inform policymaking and advocacy efforts aimed at fostering sustainable peace on a global scale.

Keywords: War, Peace, International Relations, Just War Theory, Ethical Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

The nexus between war and peace is a fundamental aspect of international relations, shaped by various theories and frameworks. As Askerov and Barakat (2021) highlight, these concepts draw from diverse disciplines to analyze conflict at different levels. The field of Peace and Conflict Research emerged in the twentieth century, driven by the imperative to prevent war. However, it lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework, prompting this study to evaluate leading theories and their efficacy. Peace, beyond the absence of conflict, encompasses conditions conducive to human well-being (Jeong, 2017), while conflict, whether intra or interstate, reflects discord and disagreement (Rahim, 2017).

Theories of war serve as catalysts for peace, reflecting its evolving nature in international relations. Eccles (1965) views war as a means to various ends, with its purpose deemed necessary by societies. Despite potential alternatives, war persists as a method to resolve state differences (Eagleton, 1948). The nexus between war and peace is intricate, suggesting their interconnectedness rather than mutual exclusivity. Wars may aim to establish enduring peace through negotiation or victory, yet they can also impede peace efforts, causing immense human suffering and societal challenges.

The absence of a clear relationship between war and peace theories underscores the need for comprehensive analysis. Eagleton (1948), advocates for comparative analysis in international relations, exploring why nations resort to war or seek peace. While some view war as inevitable due to power struggles, others advocate for peace through diplomacy and cooperation. Comparative analysis of war and peace theories is pivotal for understanding these complex dynamics, shedding light on causes of conflict and avenues for peace promotion. This study seeks to address the persistent global challenge of achieving lasting peace amidst armed conflicts through a clear understanding of the relationship between war and peace. Despite efforts, peace remains elusive in many regions, resulting in severe consequences for human lives and international relations. To develop effective peace-building initiatives, a deep understanding of war and peace dynamics is crucial. By analyzing the causes and dynamics of war, the study aims to address successful peace-building activities and improve policy decisions.Ultimately, the article will contribute to the global initiative for a more just and peaceful world, providing evidence-based insights to guide proactive conflict prevention and strategies in international cooperation.

Consequently, the article intends to provide a clear understanding of the relationship between war and peace and to examine war causes and dynamics to enhance peace efforts and policymaking.This article employs a historical research design to analyze the relationship between war and peace. Data is gathered from secondary sources such as journals, books, and ancient encyclopedias, ensuring the credibility of the study. Collection methods include online journals, ancient encyclopedias, textbooks, and historical texts, as the research focuses on existing theories and historical records "... a research data is as good as the parent institution or body that sourced it, where the sources of data are not trustworthy, the data itself has fundamentally suffers bias" (Sanubi 2015). A descriptive method of data analysis is utilized to examine the effects of war on peace, employing deductive logic to maintain an organized framework and ensure balanced data interpretation. Despite potential contention among theories, the study prioritizes accuracy to draw suitable conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The causes of war are deeply rooted in complex interactions between states, ideologies, and power dynamics. Realist perspectives, such as those outlined by Faraj (2007), emphasise the central role of power in international relations. States, driven by the pursuit of their interests, often engage in competition and conflict to secure their position and ensure their survival in an anarchic world. This pursuit of power can lead to tensions and conflicts, particularly when states perceive threats to their security or interests.

Furthermore, the balance of power theory, as discussed by Giri (2021) and Mearsheimer (2018), sheds light on how shifts in power dynamics can destabilize the international system and increase the likelihood of conflict. When one state or a group of states becomes disproportionately powerful, it can upset the equilibrium, prompting other states to respond defensively or aggressively to maintain their security. This dynamic can create a spiral of competition and conflict as states seek to assert their influence and protect their interests.

Liberalist perspectives offer additional insights into the causes of war. Milevski (2020) highlights how conflicting liberal values, such as democracy and human rights, can lead to tensions and even armed conflict (Agah & Ikenga, 2007; Ikenga 2012). States may view the promotion of these values as essential to their national interest, leading them to intervene militarily in support of their ideological objectives. Additionally, failures in peace-building

efforts, as discussed by Ndeche & Iroye (2022), can exacerbate existing tensions and perpetuate cycles of violence.

Overall, the causes of war are multifaceted and often interconnected. They can include power struggles, conflicting interests, ideological differences, and failures in diplomatic or peace-building efforts. Understanding these complex dynamics is essential for addressing the root causes of conflict and working towards a more peaceful world as war can have a devastating impact on the world at large both directly and indirectly. For example, we can delve into the current Russia and Ukraine war.bThe impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict extends far beyond the immediate region, affecting the global economy through interconnected financial systems and trade networks. Despite the conflict being thousands of miles away, its economic repercussions are felt worldwide due to the intricate interdependencies of nations' economies (Efebeh & Uwuseba, 2023). The conflict has led to a surge in global inflation, particularly in the United States, where households face increased costs for food and energy (Egan, 2022).

Furthermore, the conflict has driven up oil prices, with implications for global inflation and economic growth. Analysts warn that a collapse in Russia's economy could have significant global consequences, with potential inflation rates reaching levels not seen since 1981 (Egan, 2022). Additionally, disruptions in the global supply chain, particularly in industries reliant on Russian exports such as fertiliser, are causing supply shortages and price hikes (Lanktree, 2022).

In the UK, inflation has been on the rise, exacerbated by the conflict, leading to increased fuel and food prices (United Kingdom Parliament, 2022). Similarly, Europe faces significant challenges due to its reliance on Russian energy supplies.

Canada also feels the economic effects of the conflict, particularly concerning its trade relations with Ukraine and potential disruptions to the global supply chain (Neustaeter, 2022). Concerns about rising gas prices and trade uncertainty are affecting investor confidence and economic activity (Bharti, 2022).

The global economic impact of the conflict is further compounded by disruptions to international supply networks, leading to supply hoarding and higher prices (Efebeh & Okereka, 2020). These disruptions exacerbate existing inflationary pressures and pose risks to economic stability worldwide.

Nigeria, despite its distance from the conflict zone, is not immune to its economic ramifications. The surge in oil prices has led to higher fuel costs and inflation, affecting businesses and consumers alike (Ikenga & Oluka, 2023; Efebeh & Uwuseba, 2023). Furthermore, disruptions in wheat supply have driven up food prices, putting additional pressure on the local market and impacting purchasing power (Ozili, 2022). So it is evident that the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates the interconnectedness of the global economy and the widespread economic ramifications of conflicts in contemporary times. Understanding these impacts is crucial for understanding how war can affect peace and help policymakers and businesses navigate the challenges posed by geopolitical instability. The nexus between war and peace is explored through the lens of realism and liberalist theories, as well as various perspectives on understanding peace. Realism, as expounded by scholars such as Morgenthau, underscores the centrality of power and force in international relations, with states prioritizing their security and national interests (Slaughter, 2019). The balance of power theory further elucidates how states seek to maintain equilibrium to ensure their survival amidst potential threats from stronger counterparts (Dunne, Kurki, & Smith, 2016; Giri, 2021). This theory highlights the dynamics of power struggles and alliances in shaping the international system, preventing the dominance of any single state (Giri, 2021).

In contrast, liberalist perspectives posit peace as the natural state of human beings, advocating for democratic governance (Ikenga, Edo & Ighoshemu, 2022), free trade, and global cooperation to mitigate conflicts (Milevski, 2020). However, liberalism also grapples with the paradox of liberal wars, wherein states may resort to military actions to defend or promote liberal values, leading to complexities in achieving peace (Milevski, 2020). Theories of peace-building and constructivism offer alternative frameworks for understanding peace, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of peace as a dynamic process involving social interactions, norms, and beliefs (Kratochwil & Peltonen, 2017). Additionally, contemporary analyses of peace recognize the need for a nuanced conception of peace that extends beyond the absence of war, incorporating various dimensions such as reconciliation, distributive justice, and societal well-being (Ndeche & Iroye, 2022; Jarstad et al., 2019). These perspectives advocate for comprehensive approaches to peace-building that address underlying causes of conflict and foster sustainable peace at multiple levels of society (Adenyi et al., 2021).

The nexus between war and peace is a profound and intricate concept deeply ingrained in human history and international relations (Frowe, 2021). It suggests that war and peace are not

isolated phenomena but rather intricately linked and mutually influential (Frowe, 2021). Johan Galtung, renowned for his contributions to peace studies, emphasized the pivotal role of understanding violence in achieving sustainable peace (Bilgin, 2018). Through institutions like "The International Peace Research Institute" and "Transcend International Foundation," Galtung spearheaded initiatives aimed at conflict resolution (Bilgin, 2018).

In his seminal work "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" (1969), Galtung laid the groundwork by defining violence as any action that obstructs individuals from realizing their full potential, encompassing a broad spectrum from physical conflicts to economic disparities (Galtung, 1969). He introduced the concept of "cultural violence," highlighting its insidious role in perpetuating structural and direct forms of violence (Galtung, 1990 as cited in Ercoşkun, 2021). Moreover, Galtung advocated for the pursuit of peace through non-violent means, critiquing notions like "fair war" and advocating for a more nuanced understanding of peace (Galtung, 1981, 1985).

Galtung's vision extended to the idea of "positive peace," which necessitates addressing all forms of violence to foster an environment conducive to lasting peace (Galtung, 1996). This framework emphasizes the importance of cultural harmony, equality, and cooperation in contrast to cultural violence (Galtung, 1996). Together, these perspectives underscore the intricate interplay between war and peace, both in theoretical discourse and literary representation. They compel us to acknowledge the complexities of achieving peace and highlight the necessity of addressing violence in all its forms to pave the way for a more harmonious world.

The analysis of war and peace theories provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between conflict and resolution. Realist theories, such as those presented by Slaughter (2019) and Giri (2021), emphasize power dynamics and the balance of power as central to international relations. These theories suggest that war can be a rational response to perceived threats or opportunities for gain, but they also recognize the potential for peace through power equilibrium and deterrence. Similarly, the Clausewitzian theory of war, as analyzed, underscores the multifaceted nature of conflicts and the importance of intellectual engagement, emotional understanding, and alliances in both warfare and peace efforts. Clausewitz's insights provide valuable lessons for promoting peace through diplomacy, trust-building, and learning from past conflicts (Clausewitz, 1832).

Furthermore, the liberalist perspective offers optimism for peace-building efforts through international cooperation, economic interdependence, and the promotion of democratic values (Milevski, 2020). Democratic peace theory, while facing scepticism, suggests that democratic processes foster conflict resolution and peaceful relations between nations (Bhuiya & Jahan, 2022; Skidelsky, 2022).

Constructivist theories highlight the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behaviour and fostering peace (Kratochwil & Peltonen, 2017). Collective security mechanisms, as proposed by Abass (2012), offer frameworks for collective defence and the maintenance of international peace.

Just War Theory is a philosophical and ethical framework that provides criteria for determining when the use of military force is morally justified. Its roots can be traced back to ancient Greek and Roman philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, but it was further developed by medieval Christian theologians such as Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (Belter, 2013). The theory posits that wars can be justified under certain conditions, such as self-defense or the protection of innocent lives (Bellamy, 2006). Some of its key principles include the requirement of a just cause, legitimate authority, proportionality, and discrimination between combatants and non-combatants (Estrella, 2012).

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Theory

The strengths of the Just War Theory include its provision of a structured ethical framework for evaluating the morality of armed conflict (Berkowitz, 2013). It emphasises humanitarian considerations, such as minimising harm to civilians and promoting just and lasting peace (Campbell, 2007). Additionally, the theory serves as a deterrent against unjust aggression by setting stringent criteria for the legitimate use of force (Mapel, 1998).

However, the theory also has its weaknesses. It is subject to subjective interpretation, leading to disagreements over what constitutes a just cause or proportionate use of force (Coverdale, 2004). Defining a just cause can be challenging, and modern warfare often results in unavoidable harm to non-combatants, highlighting a discrepancy between theory and practice (Berkowitz, 2013). Furthermore, the Just War Theory's limited scope restricts its applicability to broader issues of international relations and systemic injustices that may lead to conflict (Estrella, 2012).

Application of the Theory

Just War Theory offers insights into the relationship between war and peace by providing a framework for evaluating the moral justifications for engaging in armed conflict and the ethical conduct of warfare. By delineating criteria for when the use of force is justified and how it should be employed, the theory inherently addresses the transition from war to peace.

Applying Just War Theory to the nexus between war and peace involves utilizing its principles to influence the relationship between conflict and stability. Firstly, it emphasizes that military force should only be a last resort in response to grave injustices or threats to security, promoting peaceful dispute resolution. Secondly, it underscores ethical conduct during warfare, prioritizing the protection of non-combatants and proportionality in the use of force to minimize harm and aid the transition to post-conflict stability. Thirdly, it extends to post-conflict reconstruction efforts, advocating for just and lasting peace by addressing root causes, promoting reconciliation, and upholding human rights (Ikenga & Agah, 2020). Lastly, it involves assessing past conflicts to determine their moral justifiability, fostering accountability, and learning to prevent future unjust wars, thus contributing to a culture of responsibility and ethical governance for sustained peace.

3. DISCUSSION

The discussion reveals the intricate dynamics that shape international relations and conflict resolution efforts. Realist perspectives underscore the role of power struggles and security concerns in driving conflicts, while liberalist theories offer optimism for peace-building through cooperation and shared values. Constructivist frameworks highlight the importance of ideas and norms in shaping state behaviour and fostering peace, while Just War Theory provides an ethical framework for evaluating the morality of armed conflict.

Realist theories, such as those presented by Slaughter (2019) and Giri (2021), emphasize power dynamics and the balance of power as central to international relations. These theories suggest that war can be a rational response to perceived threats or opportunities for gain, but they also recognize the potential for peace through power equilibrium and deterrence. However, critics argue that realist theories may oversimplify complex human motivations and neglect the role of ideology and identity in shaping conflicts.

Liberalist perspectives offer optimism for peace-building efforts through international cooperation, economic interdependence, and the promotion of democratic values (Milevski, 2020). Democratic peace theory, while facing scepticism, suggests that democratic processes foster conflict resolution and peaceful relations between nations (Bhuiya & Jahan, 2022; Skidelsky, 2022). However, challenges arise when liberal interventions in support of democratic values lead to unintended consequences or exacerbate existing tensions.

Constructivist theories highlight the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behaviour and fostering peace (Kratochwil & Peltonen, 2017). Collective security mechanisms, as proposed by Abass (2012), offer frameworks for collective defence and the maintenance of international peace. Yet, constructivist approaches may struggle to provide concrete policy prescriptions and address power imbalances that underpin conflicts.

Just War Theory, rooted in ethical principles, offers a structured framework for evaluating the morality of armed conflict and promoting ethical conduct during warfare (Berkowitz, 2013). While it provides valuable insights into the moral justifications for war and the conduct of military operations, it also faces challenges in its application and interpretation. The theory's subjective nature and limited scope may limit its effectiveness in addressing broader systemic injustices that contribute to conflict.

4. FINDINGS

The analysis of war and peace theories reveals that conflicts are driven by a complex interplay of factors, including power struggles, ideological differences, and failures in diplomacy or peace-building efforts. While realist theories highlight the importance of power dynamics and security concerns, liberalist perspectives offer optimism for peacebuilding through cooperation and shared values. Constructivist frameworks underscore the role of ideas and norms in shaping state behaviour, while Just War Theory provides an ethical framework for evaluating the morality of armed conflict.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the relationship between war and peace is multifaceted and dynamic, shaped by diverse theoretical perspectives and real-world complexities. While each theory offers valuable insights into the causes of conflict and pathways to peace, no single approach provides a comprehensive solution. Instead, a holistic understanding of war and peace requires integrating

insights from multiple disciplines and perspectives, recognizing the interplay between structural factors, individual agency, and ethical considerations. By fostering dialogue and collaboration among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, we can work towards a more just and peaceful world, guided by evidence-based insights and ethical principles.

Recommendations

1. Emphasize Diplomacy: Priorities diplomatic solutions to conflicts through mediation and negotiation.
2. Follow Ethical Standards: Uphold ethical principles in warfare, protecting civilians and maintaining proportionality in the use of force.
3. Foster Peace Education: Promote peace education to cultivate values of tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution from an early age.

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