

# WAR AND POVERTY

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of war ethics is to decide what is right or wrong among individuals and countries. It leads to the creation of formal codes, such as The Hague and Geneva conventions. War is one of the top three factors fuelling poverty alongside corruption and oil.

The World Bank identifies extreme poverty as people living on a less than (USD) \$1 a day and poverty as people living on less than \$2 a day. Following this standard, in 2001 half the world's population was living in poverty.

## **INTRODUCTION**

War is an actual, intentional and widespread armed conflict between political communities while poverty is the state of being without, often associated with need, hardship and lack of resources across a wide range of circumstances.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

With war comes destruction of structures and other things that make up a society. As a result that society instead of improving its way of life begins to dwindle and it will take a long while for it to recover. Most people who had normal lifestyles are going to be faced with poverty.

I would prefer to have a war free world like the pacifists but at the same time it is very hard to believe that there would ever be a war free world. For this reason if there should be any war at all, it should follow the rules of the just war theory unconditionally.

## **ETHICS OF WAR AND POVERTY**

### **CAUSES OF POVERTY**

Although it is widely thought that poverty and also employment are a result of laziness, the known causes of war include the following:

- A) Individual or "pathological" causes, which see poverty as the result of the behaviors, choices or abilities of the poor;
- B) Familial causes, which attribute poverty to upbringing;
- C) Sub cultural causes, which attribute poverty to common patterns of life, learned or shared within a community;
- D) Structural causes, which argue that poverty is the result of the social structure; and
- E) Agency causes, which see poverty as the result of the actions of others, including government and the economy. An example of the agency cause is the decision of the government to go to war.

#### ROOT CAUSES OF WAR

- A) Culture of violence: The culture of violence pervades our society, glorifying war rather than educating for peace, nonviolence, and international cooperation.
- B) Globalization: Economic globalization has marginalized broad sections of the world's population, further widening the gap between rich and poor. It could be an avenue for the poor to get envious or the rich to take advantage of the poor.
- C) Use of environmental resources: The use of environmental resources is neither sustainable nor un-equitable. The world's dominant consumers are overwhelmingly concentrated among the well off, but the environmental damage from it falls most severely on the poor.
- D) Colonialism and neo-colonialism: neo-colonialism is the economic and political policies by which a greater power indirectly maintains or extends its influence over other areas or people. Indigenous and un-represented peoples are suffering from the suppression of their right to self-determination, ethnic and cultural genocide, the violation of their cultural, language and religious freedoms, and the militarisation and nuclearisation of their lives, lands and waters. An example of neo-colonialism is the US war on Iraq for believing Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.
- E) Racial, ethnic, religious, and gender intolerance: Ethnic, religious and racial intolerance, and nationalism are among the principal sources of modern armed

- conflict. A good example of this is the genocide in Rwanda and the ongoing conflict in Sudan.
- F) Gender injustice: The costs of the machismo that still pervades most societies are high for men whose choices are limited by this standard, and for women who experience continual violence both in war and in peace.
  - G) Lack of protection and respect for children & youth: Children and youth continue to be exploited and victimized, particularly in violent conflict situations where harming children have become not only a consequence, but frequently a strategy of war.
  - H) Lack of democracy and just global governance: The promotion of democracy at all levels of society is a prerequisite for replacing the rule of force with the rule of law.
  - I) Local community violence: Violence in local communities paves the way for conflicts at national and international levels.
  - J) Religions: Religions have been a cause of war. Especially between Muslims and Christians.

## WAR ETHICS

The three theories of war ethics are just war, realism, and pacifism.

### A) Just War Theory

This is the most influential perspective on the ethics of war and peace. This theory is as old as warfare. This idea and its application were discussed by Cicero. Later on Thomas Aquinas and Hugo Grotius codified a set of rules for a just war. Today there are a few modifications. The just war theory is divided into 3 groups: Jus ad bellum, Jus in bello and Jus post bellum.

- I. Jus ad bellum concerns the justice of resorting to war in the first place. For this, six conditions must be satisfied:
  - a. War must be for a just cause
  - b. Must declare by a proper authority. For example the UN security council is the proper authority for the 15 countries that signed the UN charter because of Article 2(4): “All members shall refrain in their international

relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”; and Article 51: “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

- c. Intention behind the war must be good
  - d. Must be a last resort
  - e. Must be a reasonable chance for success
  - f. Must accord to the principle of proportionality, i.e the evil to be avoided or the good to be attained must be greater than the destruction produced by war.
- II. Jus in bello concerns the justice of conduct within war, after it has begun. It has 3 widely recognized rules:
- a. Discrimination: Soldiers are entitled to target only those who are engaged in harm. It is wrong to take a deliberate aim at civilian targets.
  - b. Proportionality: The force used by soldiers must be proportional to the end they seek. For example, weapons of mass destruction are usually seen as been out of proportion to legitimate military ends.
  - c. No means: Weapons which are evil in themselves such as mass rape campaigns, genocide, torture and weapons whose effects cannot be controlled e.g. chemical or biological agents; are not to be used by soldiers.
- III. Jus post bellum concerns the justice of peace agreements and the termination phase of war. There are 5 rules proposed recently by Brian Orend.
- a. Just cause for termination

- b. Right intention: Revenge is strictly ruled out.
- c. Public declaration and legitimate authority
- d. Discrimination: Undue and unfair hardship is not to be brought upon the civilian population in particular.
- e. Proportionality

## B) Realism

It is the concern for fact or reality and rejection of the impractical and visionary. Advocates for realism believe that war is an intractable part of an anarchical world system and once it has begun, a state ought to do whatever it can to win.

Realism is most influential amongst political scientists, as well as scholars and practitioners of international relations. Realists emphasize power and security issues, the need for a state to maximize its expected self-interest and, above all, their view of the international arena as a kind of anarchy, in which the will to power enjoys primacy. A realist believes that if adhering to the rules of just war theory, or international law hinders a state during wartime, it should disregard them and stick steadfastly to its fundamental interests in power and security.

There are two types of realism: prescriptive and descriptive. Descriptive realism is the claim that states, as a matter of fact, either do not (for reasons of motivation) or cannot (for reasons of competitive struggle) behave morally, and thus moral discourse surrounding interstate conflict is empty, the product of a category mistake. Prescriptive realism is the claim that a state ought (prudential "ought") to behave amorally in the international arena. There might be some room for overlap between prescriptive realism and just war theory because prescriptive realism might actually endorse rules for the regulation of warfare, much like those offered by just war theory. These rules include: "Wars should only be fought in response to aggression"; and "During war, non-combatants should not be directly targeted with lethal violence."

## C) Pacifism

It is the opposition to the practice of war. Advocates of pacifism are in favor of peace and believe that no moral grounds can justify resorting to war. A pacifist objects to killing in

general and particularly objects to mass killing, for political reasons, which is part of the wartime and experience.

People are pacifists for such reasons as religious faith; non-religious belief in the sanctity of life; and practical belief that war is wasteful and ineffective.

There are four types of pacifism:

- ✓ Absolute pacifism  
 an absolute pacifist believes that it is never right to take part in war, even in self-defence. They think that the value of human life is so high that nothing can justify killing a person deliberately.
- ✓ Conditional pacifism  
 Conditional pacifists are against war and violence in principle, but they accept that there may be circumstances when war will be less bad than the alternative. Conditional pacifists usually base their moral code on Utilitarian principles - it's the bad consequences that make it wrong to resort to war or violence.
- ✓ Selective pacifism  
 Other pacifists believe that it is a matter of degree, and only oppose wars involving weapons of mass destruction - nuclear or chemical and biological weapons - either because of the uniquely devastating consequences of such weapons, or because a war that uses such weapons is not winnable
- ✓ Active pacifism  
 Pacifists are heavily involved in political activity to promote peace, and to argue against particular wars. During a war many pacifists will refuse to fight, but some will take part in activities that seek to reduce the harm of war, but other pacifists will refuse to take part in *any* activity that might support the war.

## CONCLUSION

The first step in eliminating poverty would be to address the causes of poverty. War which is a major cause of poverty should be addressed. Would it be necessary to still go to war no matter how justifiable it is, if it is going to put a group of people in the poverty level? It is also ideal that we bear in mind that extreme poverty would most certainly lead to death from starvation, little or no health care etc especially in children. Taking a look

at the two world wars, the money spent could very well have gone a long way in helping to eradicate poverty. Financial cost of World War 1 was \$196.5 billion. Financial cost of World War 2 was \$2,091.3 billion.

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