

# **Mainstream Theories of War: A Reflectivist Analysis**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Mainstream Theories of War: A Reflectivist Analysis**” submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Dedicated to Bruno, you will always be a part of our lives!

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# CONTENTS

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: RATIONALISTS' THEORY OF WAR	9
CHAPTER 3: MARXIST THEORIES OF WAR	24
CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL THEORY AND WAR	41
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES	64

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Page no.</b>
1.	Alan Kurdi washed ashore after drowning when their boat capsized trying to escape the Syrian Civil War	60

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The theory of war has been visited time and again, however, most of the times it is seen from the point of view of extremely rational, gain seeking leaders or military men or from the perspective of emotionless economists who end up narrowing down everything to a cost-benefit analysis. This dissertation attempts to analyse the different theories of war and to show how most of these theories have completely ignored the effects of war on human lives. What International Relations theory lacks is a theory that depicts a holistic and real story of war. The dissertation makes a case for changing the referent object from the state to the human, a case for addressing this lacuna in the IR theory of war.

The Oxford Dictionary defines war as ‘A state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country’ (Oxford 2006). A general perception of war is a state- centric or a collective act of armed conflict. The agency is restricted to merely states, more so powerful states, or collective groups and powerful leaders. There are two outcomes of this. First, keeping the definition to the state or just to the groups takes away agency from common people and legitimises the decision-making position of power of the office bearers. This makes war something, which has been decided by those who know best by the virtue of their position of power. This takes away any say people have when wars are declared. Second, it makes the narrative of war inanimate, as though there is no humanness in the process. This makes it simpler to keep the decision of war away from people’s lives irrespective of the consequences they face because of it.

The portrayal of war as an act to ‘protect one’s own’ at various domains like the media, popular culture and even academics makes it an act that cannot be questioned. Questioning a war, or asking for the justification for the same may tantamount to one being labelled as anti-national or selfish. The mainstream theories of war that one comes across in International Relations or elsewhere do acknowledge the suffering that war brings with it. This acknowledgement is very superficial and there is no engagement with this aspect of war as far as the mainstream theorists are concerned.

It is very rare that a theory of war is focused on the sufferings of a common man. There has been some work done in this field mainly by feminists and critical theorists. The Marxists deal with the exploitation and sufferings that come with war, but their obsession with economics of it and emphasis on class as a cause for war do not let their theory of war capture a holistic view of war. Thus, through this dissertation a case is made for a theory of war which considers these aspects of war which have been ignored ever since the first formal theory of war was written.

Realist theory on war has looked at war from the vantage point of the state. For most in International Relations, the theory war has been synonymous to the Clausewitzian theory of war (Clausewitz 1943). To quote Clausewitz, 'The continuation of politics through other means' seems to have captivated the minds of scholars for years and continues to hold great importance still (Clausewitz 1943). The Clausewitzian concepts of 'Trinity' and 'Friction' continue to hold great importance in the mainstream theories of International Relations (Clausewitz 1943). The theory however completely ignores the effects of war in terms of loss of lives and devastation that war brings with it. Similarly, Sun Tzu and his analysis of war are also from a strategic perspective (Handel 1992). Given the background of both these men the narrative they chose to theorise only makes sense. However, the emphasis of International Relations on these narratives of war reflects a very dismal image of how the discipline has seen the war in a very skewed fashion.

The classical realists concentrated highly on the territorial aspect of war and on the resource oriented nature of the same. It was only after the Second World War that the negative aspect of war was truly seen, when the leaders of different states came together to form an organisation to deal with any possibility of future violence. Even the neo-realist theories have concentrated on war planning, strategy, calculations of benefits and losses of war, deterrence, types of war, reasons for war, new weapons and more. From Hobbes to Waltz, realists have remained focused on the strategic and territorial angle of war (Elshtain 1985). Most of what was written on war during the Cold War were on how to deter the Soviet and theories on what the Soviet Union thought on war and nuclear politics. However, what was missing amongst all of this was a narrative that talks about people and what happens to them during and after the war.



With the emergence of nuclear weapons, there was also a simultaneous emergence of the theory of deterrence; realists could not stop writing about the war in terms of deterrence. Jervis (1976), Glaser (1997) and Waltz (1962), to name a few came up with various theories of deterrence.

Security Dilemma was another aspect of the war that captivated the minds of the realists. Jervis (1978) Snyder (1984) and Levy(1984) did a lot of work on the offensive and defensive balance. The balance of power theories Balancing, bandwagoning were the other works on war(Morgenthau1973). Most of these realists never mentioned the impact of war on human lives. What was missing here was a theory that empathised with people and their losses due to war.

Systemic theories that dealt with systemic causes of war also dealt with the issue of war that kept itself away from dealing with the effects on humans (Levy 2010). The theory moved away from the international to domestic, making a case for how domestic politics affected the decisions related to war and how democratic dyads have lesser chances of fighting with each other over non-democratic dyads, popularly known as the democratic peace (Doyle 1997).

There is no doubt that the realist theory of war has dominated the discipline as far as the subject of war goes, the next that falls in line is the economic theory of war. (Levy 2010) Trying to understand how economics behind war could be a major reason why a country fights another and why a country does not fight the other. The focus also shifted on whether this could promote peace between states (Doyle1997). Clearly there is no importance given to human lives in the perspective of war. Thus, the economic theory of war also misses out on including the loss of lives as an important factor in deciding whether a state should engage in war or not.

Marxism interpreted the war in a different light; they theorised the exploitation of people and loss of lives, but this was a very class specific analysis of war. Marxism focused on how imperialists states exploited the countries at the 'periphery' (Lenin 1939). The focus on class has been the limitation of Marxist theory that has been

criticised at various instances. Wars today are not just fought for economic reasons. Religion, race and identity are other reasons why wars are waged.

Feminist writers were one of the few to address this lacuna in the literature of International Relations. They took up the challenge to speak about the unspoken, the miseries and sorrows of the people. Judith Butler, in one of her works on war, asks a pertinent question as to when will we be 'compelled to grief on the loss of lives, when will it be worthwhile to grieve' (Butler 2016).

Christine Sylvester has written extensively on 'war as an experience' and brought the literature of war to an altogether different light. She has contributed significantly in adding to the already existing strategic and national issues of war, and proposed a theory of war from the view of 'individual experience' (Sylvester 2010). The individual here could be anyone a soldier, a civilian, the child of a soldier, a lawyer and human who experiences the effects of war (Sylvester 2010). This attempt is what could be a great beginning to a theory of war that does not give more importance to the inanimate over the animate.

Parashwar Swati not only speaks of the effects of war on the lives of the people after the war, but also makes a very pertinent point as to how war cannot be just seen as something that 'has entry and exit instead it is viewed in everyday lives of people' (Swati 2009). The writer captures the effects of war not just as mere lives lost in war, instead goes much beyond it and captures the effects years later in people's everyday lives (Swati 2010).

Critical theorists' take a clear normative stance on war. Just like feminists they make a case for making the individual and the community as the referent object while theorising war, security studies and to broaden it even global politics. Booth (1991), not only makes a case for making the individual and the community the referent object but also makes it very clear that according to him theory should work for the larger purpose of emancipation. Critical theory has also questioned the mainstream theories for perpetuating a world order that makes fear and suffering seem normal (Linklater 2007). Critical theorists emphasise on the need to theorise war the way it is

and to bring out the truth, to deal with individuals and people who suffer the most during wars.

Even though there is not much written on this front, these are a few significant contributions in the field by a few scholars. What however is missing is an empirical analysis of how these lives are being affected in detail to establish facts and make the study of war that does not talk about territories or resources. The aim in this dissertation would be to bring into light what has not been spoken about war and why it is so essential to speak about war in terms of loss of lives and their impact on lives of millions.

### **Definition Rationale and Scope of the Study:**

What is war? Is it merely a state of armed conflict between two states, or two or more groups within a state? Is it an act limited to loss or gain of territories? Is there more to war than the economic gains and losses? When we deal with the theory of war, we usually see war being defined mostly in terms of the answers to the aforementioned questions. War has mostly been theorised from a certain vantage point, which privileges states, state leaders and decision makers. What most theories of war have completely ignored or taken for granted is the loss of human lives and the impact of war on humans, animals and even the environment.

The dissertation aims to make a case for a theory of war that defines war in a holistic manner that considers everything that the act of war brings with it. It makes the task of defining and theorising war very challenging but war must be seen as an act of violence that not only affects states, their boundaries, and their economies but the lives of almost each and every individual associated with the state. For example, if one considers, the Vietnam war, what defines that war? A nuclear weapon state defeated by a non-nuclear weapon. There is no denial that this was not an outcome that one would have expected, but there is more to that war than just this.

One also comes across activists advocating against war citing the loss of lives and impact on people's lives. This was seen especially after the US-led war against the

Taliban. However, mainstream International Relations theorists have not taken this into account while theorising war. Barring few feminist scholars and critical theorists, the theory of war has not been written from the perspective of a common person, which this paper advocates can be the only way of writing a holistic and complete theory of war.

With the coming of the twenty-first century the face of war has changed significantly. The scale has increased manifold in terms of weapons, the economics involved and the last and treated the least, the loss of lives. While there are international mechanisms that are at place to control wars and to create a peaceful international system they have not been very successful in doing away with wars. However, wars are now not just between states but also between groups within states. Now we do not just deal with two states that can be penalised for waging wars. There has been a sharp increase in the number of civil wars to overthrow governments or wars for ethnic cleansing. The rising number of terrorist activities, which they call *Jihad* or Holy War, is also a common form of war. These wars are to be seen closely too because most of these are wars of pride and glory and hence the loss of life is the last consideration. Since most of these acts perpetrate violence on a particular group or community or against a government they are seen in terms of saving one's identity or pride and sacrificing ones own life is also taken as martyrdom. Glorifying death in war is nothing new, even though it is not something that is used by theorists to signify war, but its use in parlance makes death in war above normal and attaches a misleading sanctity to it. What is required is a theory of war that considers the devastating impacts that war has on peoples' lives and that completely debunks the underlying ideology of war. The Syrian Civil war, the ISIS and the Boko Haram are good examples of how human lives are not respected. These call for actions from the international community and as long as wars are seen purely in terms of gains and losses nothing can curb them.

The dissertation aims at dealing with the following questions:

1. While theorising war, what has been the central focus of most mainstream International Relations theorists?

2. Why have the mainstream International Relations theorists kept themselves away from writing a theory of war that captures, the effect of war on people and their lives?

At the beginning of the study, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Mainstream International Relations theories, while dealing with war have not rigorously dealt with the adverse effects of war on the lives of people and have stayed focused mainly on the strategic perspective or the economics of war.

Towards the end of the study, the hypothesis has been essentially proved. In addition, the following inference has been arrived at: There is a need to strike a conversation between the mainstream and Critical theories of war and to look beyond the existing dominance of state centric approaches. What is required is to take into consideration the individual and community and their experiences while theorising war

### **Research Methods:**

The work focuses majorly on the existing literature on war in International Relations Theory and hence while analysing the same, the predominant method of research would be a qualitative one. Books, journals, articles, stories and poems will be analysed to understand the notion of war as has already been seen by theorists. The paper also attempts on bringing forth the lacunae in the existing theory. The dissertation will make a case for taking into account the human element, which has remained, absent or only marginally present if at all in the mainstream theories of IR. In order to bring forth the effect of war in terms of human lives, data will be used to show the indiscriminate loss of lives and its impact on people and their everyday lives that war brings with itself.

The paper aims at being more interdisciplinary in its approach, while the paper majorly concentrates on the politics of war and International Relations. It also

incorporates other disciplines and sources like memoirs, historical narratives and literature.

## **Organisation of the Dissertation**

### **Chapter 2 titled ‘Rationalist Theories of war’**

This chapter analyses the different rationalist theories of IR and how these theories see war. The chapter makes a detailed study of the work done in the field of theorising war and brings forth the main essence of most of these works. The chapter highlights the lacunae in these theories and makes a case for why the theory of war needs to be more than pure strategic or cost-benefit analysis based.

### **Chapter 3 titled ‘Marxism and War’**

This chapter looks at the Marxists theories of war and analyses their contribution to war studies. The chapter examines whether the Marxist theory fills the gap that mainstream theories had left.

### **Chapter 4 is titled ‘Critical Theory and War’**

This chapter looks at critical theory of war and the feminist theory of war. The chapter also examines the lacunae in the theory of war that has been tried to be filled by these theorists.

### **Chapter 5 titled ‘Conclusion’**

This chapter summarises the inferences of the study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **RATIONALISTS' THEORY OF WAR**

Rationalists base their analysis of International Relations and war on the cost-benefit analysis which they feel is the primary determinant used by state actors and policy makers to decide future course of actions for states. Anarchy, state dominance and rationality of actors forms the basis of rationalist theory of war (Fearon 1995). Rationalists look for reason in every action and analyse global politics through the lens of reason and rationality. Realists and Liberal theories of war have dominated the discourse of rationalist theories of war and we will try and look at these in detail.

#### **Realists' Theory of war:**

The realist tradition has had a great influence on the study of war . Even today despite the emergence of various other schools of thought and their work on war, realism still seems to hold a strong influence in the study of war.

Realism is a school of thought which is not limited to a single theory but is a collection of theories which hold certain similar assumptions and differ on certain aspects(Levy and Thompson 2009). States as units, anarchy and rational actors driven to increase power and security are the assumptions that these theories have in common and what they differ is on the weightage that different realists assign to assumptions while explaining causes of war. While the classical realists do recognise anarchy as a reason why states get into conflict, the selfish human nature according to them gains more importance (Kavka 1983). The neorealist give immense importance to the structure of the international system in terms of anarchy and hence are also known as structural realists (Waltz 1988). Then we have the defensive (Snyder, Lieber 2008) and offensive realists (Mearsheimer 2001). While the former feel that it is the insecurity embedded in the anarchic world that instils fear in states and to protect themselves states end up attacking in defence. The latter feel that the only way to survive in this anarchic system is to expand one's power by attacking. It is a security versus power, which stands as the main reason of conflict between the two strands. Then comes the neoclassical realists they take both domestic variables and the structure of

the international system into account while explaining the causes of war (Rose 1998). This chapter aims at looking at each of these different strands of realism that try to explain the causes of war and at analysing these theories not just in terms of their ability to explain the phenomena of war but also the implications of the theories. Further attempts will be made to critically examine the lacunae of the theory and to question the basic tenets that perpetuate a system of insecurity and war.

Classical realists give great importance to the selfish and self-centred human nature in their theory to explain war. Hobbes, Machiavelli, Rousseau amongst others have based their work keeping the brutish and selfish human nature in mind (Speiker 2008). They place importance to different desires that emanate out of human nature and in the course to achieve those desires, their selfish brutish nature places them in a state of conflict with others. The friction that often emerges between individuals trying to achieve their desires is extrapolated to explain the behaviour of states and the relationships that they share. According to classical realists states are intrinsically self-driven and ruled by self-centred and brutish men who decide to wage a war when in a situation of conflict. Conflict between states often emerges out of the brutish nature of states and anarchy in which they co-exist. This often leads to war (Machiavelli 1970).

Another classical realist who has made a similar point while trying to explain the cause of war is Thomas Hobbes. The 'state of nature is a state of war of all against all' (Hobbes cited in Hood 1966). Hobbes states that the International system is anarchic, that is lack of any supreme authority or world government and there is scarcity of resources. Human beings are all rational and they are self-driven. Thus, in a state of anarchy given the limited resources they end up fighting with one another.

Hobbes chalks down certain assumptions that form the basis of his theory. According to Donnelly these are equality amongst men, the state of anarchy and humans driven by 'competition, diffidence and glory' (2013). There are other theorists who also consider the scarcity of resources as one of the assumptions (Kavka 1983). To elaborate these assumptions, all men have the equal possibilities of defeating the other either alone or by forming alliances and while have this equal opportunity there is not any form of authority that controls their behaviour and hence human actions can be unpredictable and cause harm to others. Coupled with this is the scarcity of resources and human desires driven by



one the three reasons as mentioned above. The first reason as pointed out is competition, where in humans' desires under limited resources bring them in a state of conflict. This however does not have to mean conflict; humans can choose to cooperate rather than entering a zero-sum game, this brings us to the point of diffidence that means to act fearing death or for survival. This continuous fear for survival brings them all in a state of conflict with one another and hence leads to war. Hobbes states that states not only fight for 'competition' and diffidence but the desire to achieve glory often leads to states waging wars against the others. The desire for a state to become world power is what makes it wage war against its competitors in the race for glory. This state of nature according to Hobbes makes the natural state of mankind 'solitary, poor, nasty brutish and short'. However, what is important to understand is that Hobbes does not claim that the act of war is a continuous and ongoing process rather he points out at the 'willingness' that is intrinsic to human nature and it is this willingness that turns moments of friction and conflicts between states into wars between them (Kavka 1983).

Thus, to sum it up according to Hobbes it is the selfish human nature and the anarchic international system coupled with scarce resources that forms the basis of most wars. The selfishness and the desires without an authority to control actions leads to perpetual conflicts and wars.

Hobbes has however been criticised for viewing human nature in a negative light and ignoring the compassion and moral values which are very important virtues of humans. Criticism for Hobbes theory comes from many other theorists, constructivists feel that Hobbes completely ignores culture and ideology as possible reasons for conflicts. Interests and identities according to Wendt play a significant role in conflicts and hence ignoring these factors makes Hobbesian theory of war not very holistic (1992).

While one can acknowledge the fact that Hobbes theory has been an essential part of various arguments put forward by the neorealists, one cannot ignore the fact that Hobbes puts way too much importance to the fact that states in a state of anarchy and limited resources will end up fighting. Why is not there a possibility of cooperation and becoming friends instead of foes. There should not be any surprise that while Hobbes began his career as a scholar one of his first work was translating Thucydides (Schlatter 1945). However, these theories make the world an unhappy place where wars will always take

place and one must be accustomed to it. Normalising war is what is problematic with these theories.

Similarly, we had Morgenthau revive classical realism wherein he also gives immense importance to human nature and states and their desires to accumulate power. Morgenthau just like other realists keeps his theory devoid of morality and argues that politics that states engage in has nothing to do with their moral aspirations. Everything is power driven for self-interest (1946).

Certain classical realists on the other hand wrote extensively on war as a political strategy or war as an 'art' (Sun Tzu 1963). Sun Tzu was a Chinese military man, he wrote on the various tactics and strategies that could be used in a war to gain victory over the enemy. The work primarily focused on how to fight a war on the field and covered not only different positions and tactics of attack but also how to manage the men in the military. While the book deals extensively on how to win a war, it does not say much on what causes war (Sun Tzu 1963). Clausewitz on the other hand wrote more on the politics of war. He describes war as the 'continuation of politics by other means' (Clausewitz and Graham 1873). He sees war as a part of a policy to achieve larger goals, for war is not an end rather a means to larger gains. Clausewitz was a military man himself and his focus on the strategy aspect comes as no surprise. The importance to strategy given by Clausewitz in his work has also received great amount of criticism. Using war as a policy to many seemed highly unethical and morally problematic. However, Clausewitz did not think of it this way, for him war was indeed a part of a larger strategy to attain desired policy outcomes. Clausewitz felt there could be no reason to fight war other than this (Clausewitz 1873).

Clausewitz's work on war has been an important part of policy making in America for years, it was only after the Cold War that the larger question that came in the forefront. Was Clausewitz's (1873) theory of on war still relevant? The emergence of nuclear weapons changed the face of war. War now meant ultimate destruction and hence using it as to achieve a greater policy goal was questionable. While the relevance of his theory as a useful policy strategy is debated, there is no denial that engaging with war as an instrument to achieve larger gains has often allowed policy makers to get away with the moral

responsibility of collateral damage in war. This is indeed very problematic and hence it is essential to be seen in this light.

Classical realists give excess importance to the selfish human as the cause of war and paint a very disturbing image of the world. They perpetuate the idea that wars are imminent and hence nothing can stop their occurrence. This pessimistic view of human nature and the excess importance to anarchy and the inability of the brutish and selfish human nature to keep itself away from conflict, gives the policy maker more than the required leeway when it comes to decision-making.

Moving from classical realists the paper considers the theory of neorealism that seems to have dominated the discourse of war and strategy in the US after the Second World War (Levy 1984).

While one tries to understand the neorealist theory of war, it is important to start with the following assumptions that form the basis of the system (James 1987).

- I. States form the 'dominant actors' in international politics
- II. States are rational actors with transitive preferences
- III. States try to maximise their security
- IV. The international system is anarchic

These form the basis to start on a further reading on the theory of neorealism and war.

Neorealists state that accidental and unexpected occurrences cannot be explained using theory. Instead neorealism deals with 'regularities and repetition' (Waltz 1988). They state that there are certain patterns that recur and these patterns form the basic attributes of the international system. According to neorealists' the recurrence of certain events and patterns form the essential characteristics of the international system and explain how it functions. What happens otherwise is an anomaly and hence not really a characteristic of the system.

In their process of analysing and explaining the international system and how it functions the neorealists place the domain of international system in isolation with the others. While they do not discredit the role of the domestic completely, however, according to neorealist a theory loses its explaining power and parsimony if too many factors are taken into consideration. To elaborate his point Kenneth Waltz compares the international system to

market in economics and states that while individual sellers and buyers do interact with one another however, it is not this interaction solely that determines the price of the goods rather the structure of the market and the role played by a few actors that collectively hold a dominant share of the market. It is the structure of the very market that determines the actions of the various players in the market, similarly it is the very structure of the international system that structures the behaviour of the states' leading to various outcomes (Waltz 1986).

While other theorists have given importance to internal characteristics of states having an influence on the various international outcomes, realists have a different view on the same. Kenneth Waltz states that the 'operation of any system transcends the characteristic of its units' (1986). They state that there are states with different attributes and different domestic structures, while some place extra importance to economics the other give importance to military but what is important to understand is that, despite such varied characteristics they still end up fighting, so there must be something other than the states' individual attributes that lead to wars. By saying this they bring forth the larger argument where they make it clear that for neorealism it is the structure of the international system that plays the major role in the outcomes and actions. Hence, neorealism is also known as structural realism.

Just like classical realism, the neorealists also state that anarchy serves as the major characteristic of the international system with no world government or authority to overlook the actions of different states (Levy and Thompson 2009). The different states act as primary units within the system each thriving for power to increase security for their survival. Unlike classical realists their prime motive is not power, rather power is a means to reach the desirable end of survival. The neorealist states that the anarchic international system instils fear amongst states and this creates an atmosphere of insecurity, which makes states act in a hostile manner with each. All states are rational actors and this means they look for all possible means to ensure their security. This behaviour where one tries to make themselves more secure leads to other feeling insecure and often leads to pre-empting attack also called as security dilemma. In this process of accumulating power different states form alliances or make enemies. There is constant change in the dynamics in the system due to this perpetual desire of power from states. This constant change leads to friction amongst states, which often ends up in war (Levy and Thompson 2009).

The pertinent question that often arises is that, what is it that makes states chose war over cooperation? Just like classical realists, neorealists also believe in the selfish human nature, and feel that states have the brutish, selfish character intrinsic to them. This logic placed by the realists have been questioned by the liberal theorists who cite examples of flourishing world trades and other examples of cooperation amongst states. Neorealists normalise war. For them war is a recurring and intrinsic part of the international system. ‘Theorists explain what historians know: War is normal’ (Waltz 1986)

Kenneth Waltz, highlights the fact that neorealists do not give explanation or reasons to why a war happened, rather what they say is that war is a part of this international system and it is the anarchic and insecure atmosphere that leads to wars amongst states (1989). What is important to note here is the normalisation of war. Just like their predecessors, neorealists paint an equally dark image of the international system. A place where states are always ready to enter into conflicts with one another, where the system induced insecurity is so grave that states fail to cooperate and the possible outcome generally is war. Neorealists have written extensively on the different dynamics that come into play and how the distribution of power affects the occurrence of war in the international system. The given here is that wars happen and it is normal and the best one can do is to look for ways in which this situation can be best dealt with (Levy and Thompson 2009). Neorealists contend that the idea is to look for an international system where occurrences of wars can be reduced not done away with because that seems impossible. Wars are inherent. Hence peace is relative and mostly seen as an absence of war. Neorealists delve deeply into this theory trying to analyse the different arrangements of power in the international system and their outcomes. There are continuous debates amongst neorealists if hegemony, bipolarity or multipolarity, which of these forms of distribution of power would be best suited to minimise wars.

While we talk of neorealism and war it becomes essential to look at how neorealists viewed the emergence of nuclear weapons and what they felt was the future of the international system after the emergence of the absolute weapon.

Kenneth Waltz has been an advocate of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and has taken the clear position of ‘more may be better’(Waltz 1981). In his explanation, he states that

the spread of these weapons would not be as problematic or as dangerous as has been perceived by many. There were many who feared that the character of the state or the leadership holding the nuclear weapons could determine the way these weapons are used. (Sagan 1995). The most obvious fear being that if they are owned by a dictatorship or that by a state that does not have a stable government. These situations could be extremely fatal and lead to catastrophic outcomes. Further if the technology comes in the hand of non-state actors, it would take away from them the threat of the counter-attack. However, Waltz seems to disagree with most of these concerns. Waltz is a nuclear optimist who made it very clear that it was because of the existence of the nuclear weapons that we saw the two super powers coming to the brink of wars at two extremely fragile situations and not indulging in it. Waltz makes it clear that the international system is a self-help system and actions of one has repercussions on the others or even the entire international system, so while states strive for their own security they also understand their actions have repercussions and hence abstain from acts that could lead to a nuclear war. Nuclear weapons help states enhance their security by not using them. They are both the weapons of defence and deterrence (Waltz 1981). They are at their best use when they are not used. The idea is to ensure that it is understood that retaliation to a nuclear attack can mean destruction of states. This is what makes them powerful.

As mentioned above that there are many who feel that nuclear weapons can be of great harm if they get into the hands of crazy rulers or non-state actors. Waltz feels that no ruler is bigger than the structure of the international system. Even if the ruler is not answerable to his/her people for his actions the anticipated reactions to the same should deter any action that would mean the use of nuclear weapons against another. It is the escalatory power of the nuclear weapons that make them a weapon that should never be used. It is their existence that has avoided any war from escalating and reaching a level where these could be used. If one thinks deeper and tries to question the situation post Hiroshima and Nagasaki other way round, why haven't wars escalated to the level of a world war? The answer to this explains the real use of nuclear weapons. Waltz sees good in nuclear weapons and feels that a non-state actor getting access or being able to make a nuclear device is a farfetched argument since the technicalities and the technology involved does not provide for even many states to have access to them (Waltz 1981). For that matter, even if the warhead is stolen the activation device is elsewhere. The storage of a nuclear weapon is done in such a way to avoid such situations.

While Waltz wrote his article in 1981, he had not foreseen what would have happened twenty years down the line. The attempt of proliferation by a Pakistani Scientist A.Q. Khan today serves as testament to this that nuclear weapons can get into wrong hands. Similarly, the constant fear of North Korea holding nuclear weapons, while does not really prove Waltz wrong but does to a certain extent question his argument of more is better. While there is so much written by realists on deterrence and nuclear weapons, it is beyond the scope of this chapter.

The security versus power debate can be taken further ahead by discussing the two types of realists who form the either sides of the coin in this debate: offensive realists and defensive realists. Offensive and defensive realists both are essentially structural realists and are very much in understanding with the assumptions that Waltz puts forward in his theory of the International System. While they have the common assumptions what they disagree is with the amount of power that is sufficient for a state or the amount of power a state considers is sufficient for its survival in the international system. The offensive realists feel a state wants to accumulate more and more power to make itself feel secure in the international system while the defensive feel that accumulation of maximum power or hegemony is not the best option. We look at both the theories in detail.

Offensive realism states that a state would want to maximise its power relative to that of other states so that its powerful enough to deter all possible attacks. This emerges from the basic assumptions of structural realism where there is anarchy and self-help is the only way a state can protect itself. Given the limited resources in the world and perpetual fear states consider each other as enemies and want to maximise power. Offensive realists state that states try to accumulate as much power as they can, such that they have more power than other states. This according to Mearsheimer (2013) is straightforward, the more powerful a state is the less likely it is to be attacked. No country in the Western Hemisphere, for example, would dare strike the USA, because it is so powerful relative to its neighbours. Thus, it is only plausible for states to accumulate power and protect themselves given the structure of the international system.

Defensive realists, like Waltz (Mearsheimer2013) however feel that hegemony is not the best possible state to be at, rather power is essential but not the end, it is only the means to

ensure security. Thus, maximizing power does not guarantee state survival. Rather this drive for maximising state power can generate fears and insecurities in the system, which could further lead to states forming alliances and attacking the hegemon.

Defensive realists further feel that amassing power is not very helpful because they also believe in the logic of the offense defense balance and strongly feel that it is the defender that is most likely to win (Snyder and Lieber 2008). Further in the world today it is very unlikely that the state attacking and trying to take over another state will sustain power for long as it wishes to. The sense of self determination and independence are the core values of the people of the world today.

Offensive realists on the other hand do not agree with the fact that it is the offender that ends up losing mostly. They strongly believe in increasing as much power as possible. Both offensive and defensive agree that power is essential but the debate is how much. While the former feel as much as a state can gather the latter believes that any amount enough to ensure security is enough. While the offensive realists feel that power is an end, the defensive realists state it is the means to ensure security and survival in the system. One considers power as the end goal and the other considers security as the end goal (Mearsheimer 2013). Given the insecurities in the international system and the lack of an authoritative head states do tend to feel insecure and hence search for ways and means for survival. The offensive and defensive realist debate on the right way to achieve survival.

Neoclassical realists consider both internal and external variables into consideration while developing a theory of world politics. They are realists who acknowledge the role of domestic factors in shaping foreign policy apart for the structural reasons. For them it is essential to acknowledge the positioning of a state in global politics in terms of the state's power and security. Anarchy and absence of a world authority demands states to act in a manner that enhances their security. While this point is in line with the realist thinking, what separates them from the neorealist is the importance they assign to domestic politics in shaping a state's foreign policy.

Neoclassical realists state that there are two types of variables that determine a country's foreign policy and whether it will go to war or not. The first is the 'independent variable' which is the structure of the international system and the second is the 'intervening



variable' which is the influence of domestic politics. Neoclassical realists state that in an anarchic world where every state is on its own its important for states to develop policies that enhance their security. These decisions are made by states based on their positioning in the international system in terms of the theory of relative power and security. Thus, it is highly unlikely for a state which is not a great power to decide to fight a war. These structural factors are independent variables that determine a state's policy. Neoclassical realists state that state policies are made by political leaders and elites. Hence it is their perception of the relative power of the state that matters more than the actual factor. This is the intervening variable, which is the role of domestic politics. Neoclassical realists' also state that there are various domestic pressure groups and other influential actors in domestic politics that shape a nation's foreign policy. Thus, whether a state decides on a policy of war not just depends on the structural factors of the international system but also on how the domestic leaders perceive these factors and their response to the same (Rose 1998).

The other rationalist theory of war that puts forward the importance of domestic politics in determining a state's decision on foreign policy and war is Liberalism. According to liberal theories of International relations, globalisation determines world politics. States exist in a globalised world where they practise both domestic and international politics simultaneously. For liberals, Global Politics is not just about enhancing security but also about maintaining and spreading economic, social and cultural ties with other states. It is important to note that while a state engages in both domestic and international politics simultaneously, the actions in one has impact on the other. Certain actors who play a strong role in domestic politics also influences a state's actions in the international arena. Similarly, the actions and choices of certain international states have impact on the domestic state actors. These impacts can be economic social or even cultural (Moravcsik 2010). Thus, it is very important to understand the role of these domestic players in shaping a state's preferences internationally.

War for liberals, is when these preferences of different states conflict with one another. Clearly, domestic actors have a major role in influencing a state's war decision. To elaborate, if the dominant pressure groups whose preferences shape state's preferences, has an aggressive outlook a war is more likely. Thus, liberal theories focus on the role of domestic actors and their influences shape a state's war decisions.

Liberal theorists acknowledge the role of anarchy and accept state as dominant actors in world politics but shape they disagree with realists on what determines their politics internationally. Liberals differ with realists because of the role that domestic actors and preferences shaped by them play in their theory of international relations. Liberals state that domestic actors and their influence in domestic politics shape state preferences internationally and when these preferences conflict with preferences of other states, states engage in war (Moravcsik 2010).

Moravcsik (2010) recognises three strands of this theory of domestic preferences shaping international politics:

- I. 'Ideational Liberalism' – this form of liberalism states that every state has certain values and morals that determine the social identities of that state. These often shape state's preferences and how a state behaves internationally. Every society has certain sets of values and morals that define it and shape its future course of actions. According to Moravcsik, it is not rationality or the best possible option but preferences determined by domestic social conditionings that determine state actions internationally. 'National identity' and 'political ideology' amongst others play a significant role in shaping state preferences. (2010)
- II. 'Commercial Liberalism' –according to this strand of liberalism, state policies are driven by economic interests of various social actors, businesses firms and corporations. The global economics is under constant change and with globalization, change in one part of the world has tremendous effect all over the world. These changes constantly exert pressure in the domestic economy and greatly influence the functioning of domestic businesses. Thus, a state's actions internationally should be such that it keeps in mind the economic interests of domestic actors and ensures that its actions facilitate domestic economic endeavours.
- III. 'Republican Liberalism' – this stand of Liberalism states that a state's preferences will be shaped by the institutional set up it embodies and the form of government that rules a state. The democratic peace theory is a theory which claims that

democracies do not fight with each other. Let's look at this in detail. (Moravcsik 2010)

#### Democratic Peace Theory:

The democratic peace theory states that democracies avoid and hesitate in engaging in wars with one another. This had been refined to state that democratic dyads are peaceful and would hesitate on engaging wars with one another. Liberals state that the structural and ideological characteristics of democracies do not allow them to engage in wars in a haste and must keep in mind the various repercussions that come with it (Gleditsch 1992).

In democracies, states are run by governments elected through competitive democratic elections. Hence, public opinion and accountability form two important aspects of how these governments function. The repercussions of war are borne mostly by the people and hence such policies which promote wars do not get acceptance by the public. The institutions of democracy, accountability, electoral competition and political opponents do not allow a government of taking the extreme step of waging a war. Thus, the argument here is that it is not as if democratic governments produce democratic and liberal leaders who take peaceful decisions rather it is the structure of the democratic set up within these countries that does not allow the leaders to wage wars (Gleditsch 1992).

The normative argument states that the very ideologies and culture that define the basic nature and functioning of a domestic government does not promote war. This implies that all democratic states hold the same values and ideologies; these nations would hence look for peaceful means of settlement of disputes (Moravcsik 2010). Thus, it is not the accountability or the structure of the government rather the very ideologies and principles of democracies that promote peace.

Thus, what lies at the centre of Liberal theory is the preferences determined by the domestic actors and if the domestic conditionings and ideologies promote democracy war is not the best policy option. To reinstate, liberals feel that promoting democracy will help reducing wars and conflicts world over.

#### **Conclusions:**

Rationalists give too much importance to their state centric approach and do not account for ideologies and interests. While Liberalism still considers the preferences of states shaped by domestic ideologies, they also do not take into consideration the identity and ideologies that drive nations and their actions. The emergence of radical religious organisations such as ISIS and their actions cannot be explained using the rationalists' theories. This sort of radicalisation and the wars that have been fought by this organisation is ideologically driven and there is no rationality in any of their actions.

For Realists, international relations and international politics is nothing but an arena of perpetual insecurity, where there is no authority to keep a check on states and their actions and the only way of survival is self- help. These structural features according to realists are intrinsic to the international system and cannot be changed. This paints a very dismal image of the world where some states shall continue to remain more powerful than the other; some people and societies will continue to stay poor and vulnerable and inequality perpetuates. Critical theorists say that not only is this a very pessimistic way of looking at the world but it is also untrue (Linklater 2007). Powerful nations have always wanted to maintain a world order and a system that promotes their domination.

Feminists have always questioned the rationalists' narrative of war. Their portrayal of war according to feminists is very myopic. Parashar (2013) problematises the mainstream theories of war for focussing on only two questions: why war happens? how do they end. There is no consideration in the mainstream theories as to what happens between these two questions. There is an absence of the experiences that people go through. Rationalists theory also lacks morality since their entire concentration is on the maximization of benefits irrespective of losses that individuals go through.

Anarchy, states as dominant actors and absence of a world government or central authority form the basic assumptions on which the rationalist theory of war is based. While the realists focus on maximising power and security by states for survival due to perpetual insecurity, the liberals feel that it is not just the desire to maximise security but preferences that determine state actions. Cost benefit analysis, however forms the driving force of the rationalist theories of war. Rationalists normalise wars as outcomes of the structure of global politics and hence legitimise the actions of state leaders that often have catastrophic outcomes. While they harp on to reason and rationality being the essence of their theory,

they seem completely ignorant of morals and any normative calling to make this world a better place.

### Chapter 3

## MARXIST THEORIES OF WAR

#### **Introduction:**

For Marxists, a war is an armed struggle between different actors: the actors could be clans, tribes, states, classes and even an armed struggle to achieve self-determination when it comes to nations that have been subjugated as colonies (Kára 1968). Unlike realists who focus on states as a referent object, Marxists base most of their theory on the socio-economic system and the relationships between actors that emerge out of this system. These relationships can often be frictional in nature and give rise to conflicts. The Marxists theory of war deals with these conflicts.

The Marxist theory gives due importance to the role of socio economic system of a society. The theory is deeply entrenched in the material concept of history. Marxists state that it is the order in which a society is organised and the relationships between the individuals formed based on the socio-economic developments that explains conflict and war in that social system. Thus, when one tries to study the Marxist theory of war one must keep in mind the changing socio-economic relations and the conflicts that arise out of it. Karel Kara (1968), makes a similar effort to understand war, as per the Marxists when societies were classless and there is no accumulated capital, the conflicts would end up in loots. Lack of capital and labour capital organisation did not allow for the invader or the aggressor to subjugate and exploit a territory. The advent of capitalism changed the nature and purpose of war, now subjugation and exploitation were essential part of wars.

The focal point of Marxist theory is class, this applies to their theory of war as well. If one analyses the work of most Marxists and their work on war, it revolves around the capitalist world society and the class conflict that arises out of it. While the rationalists' theory of war revolves around the anarchic world order and the insecurity arising out of it, class conflict is the centre of Marxist theory of war (Hobden and Jones 2001). The exploitation of one class by the other leads to increasing conflicts and war. The focus has been on the rise of capitalism accompanied by the formation of two classes the bourgeoisie and proletariat, followed by the resultant exploitation

of the latter by the former. Thus, only an end to this class divide and overthrow of capitalism by socialism can end wars. Hence for the Marxists it is the ultimate achievement of the communist world society that will bring an end to wars. According to Marxists there would not be any socio-economic or political contradictions and any conflict if at all arises will be solved peacefully. Hence class is central to the Marxist theory of war.

Clausewitz (1873) wrote 'war is continuation of policy by other means'. Marxists have quoted Clausewitz in their work time and again (Lenin 1908). War cannot be seen in abstract as merely a military act or an act of aggression, instead it is a means to achieve certain desired end and to achieve certain policy goals. It is a follow up on the previous policy action, and a precedent to what a nation desires to do next. It is a well-planned act, and a part of a larger policy to achieve larger goals. For instance, an imperialist war cannot be seen as just a war to acquire a territory for nationalist ambitions or rivalry, but must be seen as a policy to plunder the colony and drain the wealth. Hence, war is not an end but means to an economic policy to exploit and drain wealth from the colony.

There is a clear emphasis on analysing social world in a holistic manner in the Marxists theory. While the realists made a case from abstracting one discipline from the other for the sake of parsimony, Marxists have felt that it makes a theory very unrealistic. In the real world, everything happens in relation with the other, things are interconnected and forces have influences on one another. Thus, an attempt to understand a part of this reality in abstraction will make our understanding very superficial. Hence if one needs to understand the politics of a certain country one needs to understand the history, the economics and the sociology all of it. There is an emphasis of viewing world in totality and not abstraction (Hobden and Jones 2001). Similarly, Marxists have made it very clear that for them foreign policy of a nation cannot be seen in isolation with the domestic policy. The two are very much interdependent and it is the ruling elite of a nation who have a major role in deciding the course of both.

Marxists believe in analysing every specific war within a framework which considers the historical development of that war and the circumstances surrounding it. Lenin

states that Marxists are not like liberals or pacifists who condemn all wars. While Marxists do recognise the devastating effects of war, they do not see all wars as (revolutionary in nature are wars that help in shaping the course of history. These wars get their support from the Marxists. Wars for self-determination, revolutions for emancipation have been praised by Marxists (Lenin 1908). Emancipation plays a very important role in the Marxist theory of war. Marx analysed a war based on ends. For Marx, a war that liberated people and led to a socialist revolution was justified. Similarly, the socialist revolution is supposed to be emancipatory and is meant to liberate classes and people from the clutches of capitalism. The sepoy revolution of 1857 in India was seen by Marx as a possible seed for the ultimate proletariat revolution globally (Marx 1853). While Marx's analysis of the revolution was farfetched, what is important to note is that any war which could possibly lead to an eventual proletariat uprising and end of capitalism was favoured by the Marxists.

On the other hand, wars in name of nationalism were criticised by Marxists. For them wars fought for nationalism, was a hideous means to exploit the proletariats, brainwashed to fight against each other for the capitalists who only used them to acquire colonies and exploit them further. The Marxist criticism of colonisation is also accompanied by his controversial statements on imperialism. Marxists' also felt that imperialism was historically good for the colonies (Marx 1853). This needs to be analysed in detail and hence is discussed later in this chapter.

Marxists have similar stance on violence. While the first choice is a peaceful attainment of revolution. However, if that cannot be achieved, Marxists have made it clear that if the only way out is violence, the revolution should adopt violent means as well because the eventual attainment of a socialist world order will bring an end to all forms of violence, wars and exploitation. This highlights a very important characteristic of Marxist theory, the importance of ends over means. At various instances, one can see the reflection of this in Marxist theory.

To understand the Marxist contribution to the theory of war, we will now analyse the contributions made by prominent Marxists to the theory of war.



## **Karl Marx:**

Karl Marx felt that the dominant actor in International Relations and theory of war was class. Unlike other theorists who stressed on the anarchic nature of the international, Marx felt that it was class and the conflicts between different classes that led to war. He wrote on the role of class conflicts and exploitation of one class by the other. It is important to note that Marx's work on war and international conflict is dedicated primarily to the rise of capitalism and the effects it has had on the world (Marx and Engels 1848).

The two classes as per Marx's theory of capitalism are the bourgeoisie – the owner of mode of production, capital and profits, and the proletariats – the ones who sell their labour for wages. These two classes come into existence and are tied together closely by the production process. The capitalist system of production often leads to the formation of a society where there is a collusion between the government and the owners of capital. Hence, for Marx, this is a complete recipe for the exploitation of those who do not own capital at the hands of those who own it. The desire to maximise profits makes capitalists pay the least wages to the proletariats and hence make their living conditions miserable. This leads to conflict between the two classes. Marx felt this conflict was global and believed in the coming together of the proletariat class all over the world in a revolution against the capitalist society (Marx and Engels 1848).

Marx declared that capitalism would spread far wide and through colonialism, plunder and exploitation of colonies. This according to Marx would lead to the formation of a capitalist world society. However, Marx did not see it as something completely negative as for him the formation of a world capitalist society was a prerequisite for the socialist revolution and formation of a communist world. Marx has stated at various instances that imperialism and introduction of capitalist mode of production is essential, hence should be seen in terms of the end it leads to. Marx(1853) has been criticised for his controversial statement on imperialism in India.

*England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia. (Marx 1853)*

His view that imperialism was essential for the upliftment of the Indian society and eventual realisation of a communist society reeks of Eurocentrism. While he does acknowledge the barbarity of the British rule in India, but Marx also writes how the introduction of technology, railways and various means of production can pave way for the ultimate revolution. (Marx 1853). Once again it can be seen that it is the end that matters to Marx over the means. While he is critical of the imperialist atrocities on the colonies the importance and essentiality of the imperialist wars in his work cannot be ignored. Similarly, Marx's (1853) emphasis on the fact that the real fruits of capitalism and attainment of socialism can only reach the Indians when they free themselves from the clutches of the British rule or if there is a proletariat revolution in Britain.

Thus, there are two things that one can draw from Marx's view on Imperialism, first that it is the ends that matter more than the means and second the importance of revolution in the Marxist theory of war. Both these points bring us to an important question, is war bad if it leads to a socialist revolution?

Marx states that war is intrinsic to a capitalist world system. The struggle to increase their share of profits will force capitalist nations to fight with one another to retain their controls and expand their colonies. It is only the overthrow of this capitalist system that can end this mindless fighting, hence the revolution or the war of the proletariat against the capitalists is essential to bring an eventual end to all possible wars. Hence if a war helps in the attainment of a communist world society it has complete support from the Marxists. This gives an answer the question asked above., it is the end, the achievement of a world socialist society that holds greater significance than the means even if it means war (Kára 1968).

Wars have not been negated by the Marxists as something only bad. While this can be understood from the discussion above it is also important to understand that Marx believes in analysing every war separately. The study of any war without taking into

consideration the historical development that led gives an incomplete view of that war. The context and the time of a war are very important and hence these need to be analysed while theorising war (Gilbert 1978). There is support for violence and war in Marx's writings. The war could be for self-determination, freedom and emancipation or if it is a revolutionary war against capitalism.

Emancipation plays a very important role in Marxist theory of war. 'Philosophers have interpreted the world, the point however is to change it'(Marx 1976). As mentioned above, the support of a war that leads to emancipation and freedom is supported by Marxists. This highlights the support for the ends over means intrinsic to Marxist theory. Marx wrote to achieve a socialist revolution, to make this world classless and this was aimed at achieving emancipation. The desire to make this world a better place for Marxists is through global emancipation.

Marx has however been critical of wars in the name of nationalism. The first world war brought together the bourgeoisie and proletariats, with the latter giving away their lives in the name of nationalism. He felt these were wars of imperialists against each other for gaining greater market control and had nothing to do with the feelings of patriotism and it was only way to gain support from people. Marx felt that people would understand this dynamic. However as criticised by many like Linklater, Marx did not foresee or understand the power of nationalism and how it can influence people (Linklater 1990).

Thus, for Marx, it was the division of the world into two different classes under the capitalist system that made war an essential part of the world in which we lived and only a socialist revolution which leads to the formation of a world socialist society can bring an end to wars.

### **Friedrich Engels:**

Engels was known as 'general', he had a special expertise in military affairs and warfare and had also served for a year in the Prussian artillery. He wrote extensively on military affairs and on different wars as and when he witnessed them. He wrote on varied subjects related to warfare. The influence of industrialisation on warfare, the

emergence of new weapons and their impact on war strategies and tactics, the impact of these changes on world politics, the organisation and command and control in the army were few subjects on which he showed the world his expertise(Achcar 2002).

‘Economic determinism’ is an essential characteristic of his theory of warfare and military affairs. For Engels, the relationship between forces of production and the social relations established by the same had a very important role in the way the army functioned. He felt that the army was greatly dependent on the economic conditions and the forces of production. He was one of the few theorists who wrote on the impact of technical advancement and the ramifications of the same on warfare (Trotsky 1924). He wrote extensively on the impact of railways on modern warfare, from transportation of troops to arms and ammunitions. While Engels acknowledged the fact that advancement in military technology reduced the differences between militaries of different nations, he maintained that there was a civilisational difference that separated one from the other(Achcar 2002).

Engels like Marx analysed wars separately, based on their objective historical meaning. While Lenin based his analysis primarily on Clausewitz’s continuation of policy by other means, Engels saw war as a part of a historical movement. Engels also gave importance to ends over means. In his analysis of different wars, he made it clear that a war which led to the emancipation of the oppressed should not be criticised. On the other hand, a war fought to oppress people and subjugate them was heavily criticised by them. Class was a dominant actor in his theory of warfare and he devoted much of his work on war and military affairs such that his work could be of help for the emancipation of the proletariat.(Kitchen 1977).

Engels prophesised the First World War (Archar 2002). He predicted a war so huge was to happen that it would affect all over Europe and the violence would be beyond imagination. He also stated that he could not predict who would win the war, but the fact that a war that huge was to happen was imminent. While Marxists waited for a war to overthrow the capitalist system, he did not stand in support of the First World War because he strongly felt that this war would not play any role in the formation of world socialist society instead he saw it as an impediment for the ultimate revolution.

The use of violence and militia has a lot of mention in Engels' work. He was not against the use of violence. Lenin, also felt that if revolution couldn't be achieved through peaceful means, there was nothing wrong in taking up violent routes as long the ends were emancipatory. He felt that the police and the government machinery was under the control of the capitalists and if the workers wished for a just society the only way to achieve in such a case would be through violent uprising. There are instances where Engels has shown belief in peaceful methods, he saw a possibility of a peaceful route to socialism in democratic countries like the USA (Kitchen 1977).

He did not support any revolution in the form of militant activities that were scattered or negligible in their impact. A strong believer of discipline, training and effective leadership, Engels believed that these activities singularly could not do much and needed to be part of a larger operation. For him the force from the unorganised masses and fringes needed to be organised effectively to expect any desirable outcome (Trotsky 1924).

### **Lenin on War and Imperialism**

In War and Revolution Lenin (1982) puts forward a few questions as being essential to be answered to understand war. What causes war? What classes are waging it? What historic and historical conditions gave rise to it? Class finds itself in the centre of Marxists explanation for war. Lenin like other Marxists stresses on the importance of the formation of class and the divide created by capitalism, the inequality and the increasing exploitation of one class by the other both domestically and internationally in the form of one nation exploiting the other as the central reason for conflicts and war (Lenin 2010).

Lenin (1908) has cited Clausewitz at various instances while discussing the issue of war. War is a 'continuation of policy by other means', has been used by Marxists to theorise and explain wars. For Lenin just like other Marxists, war to be understood and studied comprehensively needs to be seen in totality. The attempt to abstract war from the rest of the social and political forces for the sake of parsimony leaves the theory superficial. War is a means to an end: to achieve the ultimate goals as set by

the larger policy. In *War and Revolution*, he cites Clausewitz to say that the assumption that there was a time when there was no war and people lived peacefully and then suddenly, they started fighting, is absurd and false. He stressed on the importance of understanding the policies of all the parties to war historically, to understand the dynamics of war between them.

## **Imperialism**

‘Imperialism the highest stage of capitalism’ was written by Lenin in the year 1916 while the First World War was going on. This was a period when socialist parties in other states like France and Germany had extended support to their nationalist government. Lenin and his party however unlike the other socialists stood against the decision of the government and vehemently criticised the act as nothing more than clashing ambitions of imperialist nations. For Lenin, the war was nothing but a conflict between imperialist nations trying to increase their share of power territorial acquisition globally. The imperialist ambitions and increased colonial conflicts according to Lenin stemmed out of change in nature of capitalism during the second half of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century (Lenin 1908). While he did acknowledge the existence of imperialism prior to this period and even before the arrival of capitalism, Lenin in his work makes a case for the change in nature of imperialism: from mere retention of territories by nations to now complete takeover of lands of Africa and Asia.

Lenin states five features of this new imperialism (Lenin 2010),

- I. The formation of monopolies due to the rise of capitalism and accumulation of capital by increasing production capabilities. He also acknowledges the role of these monopolies and their influence on policy making.
- II. The emergence of ‘finance capital’
- III. The movement of capital across borders globally.
- IV. The rise of monopoly corporations who share the world between them
- V. There is also a geographical division of the world amongst these monopolies through imperialism and colonisation.

New Capitalism according to Lenin can be characterised by an increase in

monopolistic capitalism accompanied by a large scale increase in production. This increasing concentration of ownership of means of production also led to increasing inequality within the society. To add to all this was a rise in prices of raw materials and shrinking market for the output produced by these capitalist firms. Inequality and low income for the proletariat led to falling demand for goods. The rise in finance capital is a stark feature of this period as pointed out by Lenin. An amalgamation of these circumstances within the capitalist nations led to search of new markets for both purchase of raw material and sale of their end products and investment for their accumulated capital respectively. Lenin sees no coincidence in the search for new markets and the rise in imperialist wars, as stated earlier for him it is a policy by other means (Lenin 1908). A policy to look for markets and increase profits through control and subjugation of remote and far off lands. This often led to confrontation between different capitalist nations. There was a clear division of the world in the form of imperialist colonies and a continuous struggle to maintain control and extend it to other parts of the world even if within the control of other imperialist nations. The rising imperialist ambitions often led to wars among these nations. Hence according to Lenin, the two world wars when seen from a historical point of view makes it very clear that these were wars for domination over world markets between ambitious capitalist nations (Lenin 1908). As mentioned earlier for Marxists the explanation of every war is different and hence needs to be evaluated as per the circumstances of that period and needs to be viewed from a historical lens. There is a systematic explanation to what caused friction and led to war and cannot be explained in an ahistorical manner (Lenin 1982).

Are all wars bad? According to Lenin there are certain wars that are revolutionary and help the oppress seek emancipation, such wars are not to be ostracized. Lenin segregates wars as defensive and offensive wars and for him any war which is for independence and self-determination are defensive wars and are called 'just wars'(Lenin 1982). However, those that are fought for annexation and imperialism, the offensive wars aren't seen in the same light and hence Lenin makes it clear that such wars are out rightly criticised by the Marxists including him.

### **Dependency Theory:**

The end of the Second World War saw many changes in the world, globalisation was one of them. This was also accompanied by a global divide between the global north: the rich capitalist countries and the poor underdeveloped nations forming the global south. The idea of liberalism and one world spread its wings far and wide in the name of globalisation. The entire world was held together through trade of goods and services. While the rich and prosperous nations felt it was their duty to introduce technological advancement to the poor nations and often used this as a reasoning for their interfering with the economy of the countries of the global south, this is not how everyone else saw it. Globalisation did not improve the economy or living conditions of most of the nations, instead it ruined most of their domestic economy due to excessive competition from cheap machine-made goods (Brewer 2002). Many saw it as a farce in the name of development. To many it was 'development of underdevelopment' (Frank 1966).

There is a school of thought which believes that this globalisation instead of helping the underdeveloped countries in the Global South has made further deteriorated their economy. This theory is called the dependency theory. Marxist economists Andre Gunder Frank and Paul Baran have written extensively on this. Baran in his book *Political Economy of Growth*, describes how colonial plunder and imperialism was taken over by the modern wave of globalisation and development but the essence was very much the same, drain of wealth. (Baran 1968)

Andre Gunder Frank (1966) wrote on the 'development of underdevelopment'. Frank's theory has the world divided into two blocks the 'metropolis' and the 'satellite' states. The former are the rich capitalist states while the latter are the poor underdeveloped states, also known as the Global South. According to Frank both development and underdevelopment in the world is happening simultaneously, while the metropolis seem to be developing at the costs of the underdevelopment of the satellite states. This development in one region of the world is dependent on the underdevelopment of another region in the world. Frank stresses on the fact that this simultaneous development and underdevelopment is not just between different countries but also within a country, while the cities develop the villages pay the cost of it by further drowning into underdevelopment.



Frank has also written extensively on the Gulf War and has been a critique of the American motives. Calling it a Third World War, Frank has questioned the political and economic motives behind this war. He did not agree with the reasoning put forward by the United States of America and felt that there was much more to the war. According to Frank the justification given by the US that the Gulf War was fought to 'protect the "principle" of world order', to not let international law be trampled upon and to save the sanctity of the charter of the United Nations is a lie (Frank 1992). Citing Israel's invasion of Gaza strip and the American attack on Nicaragua and military control over Panama for years, Frank questions if these were not violations of the same principles and the UN Charter.

For Frank, there were other hidden reasons behind the American war with Iraq, the primary being oil. It was feared that if Kuwait came under the control of Iraq, Iraq would have control of over 40 percent oil reserves as stated by Nixon (International Herald Tribune 1991). The domestic recession and the need to defend American economic and geopolitical interests worldwide were the other reasons for this war. Frank stressed on the emotion generated during the war, the emotion of us versus them, the Arabs: the terrorists and the Islamic fundamentalists. This feeling was used to generate a unanimous west support as far as the public opinion is concerned. Marxists have pointed out how the same feeling was used repeatedly through the years to follow to gain similar support for the American imperialist aspirations in the name of just war. The Gulf War was very beneficial for the American hegemonic status, according to former NSA Zbigniew Brzezinski, the war not only punished 'blatant aggression', brought the Middle East and the Gulf under the American influence but also made the military might of the Americans clear (Frank 1992). Thus, Frank wants to bring forth the reality of the wars fought in the name of world peace. The Gulf War wasn't a war to save the UN Charter or the principle of the world order but instead was an imperialist attack by the US to gain control over the most valuable commodity in the world, oil. The economic and political motives behind the Gulf War need to be assessed to understand the war in totality (Frank 1992). It was not a war for world peace but a war to gain control and influence in the middle east and to make a point, a point about the American hard power.

As stated earlier in the beginning of this chapter, Marxism uncovers the hidden truth and brings forward the reality of the situation, Frank's work is one such attempt. Frank's work thus brings out the reality of international politics in two ways. When he wrote about the development of underdevelopment (Frank 1966), he spoke about the skewed development that spread of finance capital and the new age development theory brought with it. His work on imperialism has been criticised by Warren (1973), who felt that imperialism also benefited the economies and stated that claims such as his were over exaggerated but many still give credit to his work.

Similarly, his work on the Gulf War makes a scathing critique of the modern day 'just wars' fought by big capitalist nations. His attempt to understand and critique the gulf war fought in the name of upholding values of the UN charter and the world order brings to the forefront the many lies told to retain hegemony and exercise power (Frank 1992).

### **Bill Warren:**

Warren's work is devoted to bringing forth 'historical mission of capitalism', that capitalism is necessary to achieve a world socialist society. He is very critical of the various Marxist theories of imperialism that paint a negative picture of imperialism and capitalism. For Warren, most of the ideas when it comes to imperialism and capitalism have been generated from Lenin and his views on it. Lenin stated that imperialism was a stage of capitalism that had made it impossible for capitalism to perform its historical function and had reduced it to merely an exploitative phase. For Warren writing off imperialism in this manner was incorrect and he felt that while introduction of capitalism *via* imperialism had its cost, the larger purpose of laying the foundation of the world communist society needed recognition (Warren 1973).

Building on the Marxist theory of capitalism, Warren states that capitalism is much better than the previous forms of societies and that the main purpose of capitalism is to pave a path for the future world communist society (Warren 1971). He also extends his support to Marx's controversial statements on Imperialism in India. Imperialism in India and Asia was essential for the introduction of capitalist modes of production, which would form the material basis for the advent of a socialist society. It not only

helped in bringing political unity in a country which was a cluster of numerous small princely states, extremely diverse in terms of religion, culture class and caste but also introduced modern technology from the telegraph to the railways. For Warren (1973), imperialism helped in the advancement of the society, the revolution to overthrow the British was progressive not because the Indians wanted the Mughals to rule them again but because it was a revolution to form a democratic modern economy. While there were negative impacts of capitalism on the lives of people and the barbarism involved cannot be ignored, the larger picture is that imperialism led to advancement of subjugated countries and formed the basis for the ultimate world socialist society.

For Warren, capitalism is performing a historical function and hence criticises the Marxists who have ruthlessly been critical of capitalism. He feels that Marxists who claim that capitalism has made things worse for developing countries are only seeing the incomplete picture. The claims made by dependency theorists on the drain of profits from the third world countries in the name of invested finance capital according to Warren, is blown out of proportion (Warren 1973). For him the investment has made both the developed and developing better off than before and hence a comparison with plunders that were done in the medieval times is not accurate. Warren also points out at the economic development that has taken place in the third world countries and feels that looking at capitalism as only having a negative impact on the economies of these countries is very myopic (Warren 1971).

Warren's work garnered a lot of attention; while many praised him for his work there were others who felt that his work also created a lot of confusion (Hobden and Jones 2001). His views also seem very pro imperialist. His book on imperialism not only looks like a work defending capitalism but at instances also feels like there is support for imperialism. Roy (1981) while reviewing his book criticised Warren for having a linear understanding of Marxism and that 'time and space dimension' is not taken into consideration.

Warren claims to be taking up from where Marx had left and defends imperialism stating that the criticisms are exaggerated and far-fetched. He tries to make a case for capitalism forming a historical function of leading the world towards a world communist society

## **Conclusion:**

While Marxist theory of war and imperialism needs to be appreciated for looking at wars from a different perspective, moving beyond state as a referent object and making a case for emancipation, the theory has been criticised for various reasons.

The Marxist theory of war has placed significant importance on class and the conflict that arises out of it. This is accompanied by role economics must play in the theory of war. The idea that the working class throughout the world will unite against the dominating bourgeoisie never really materialised. It became more like a fantasy story (Kára 1968). This importance to class neglected the role of nationalism and patriotism. While Marx was critical of nationalism, Marx's mistake was that he underestimated the power that it held. The imperialist wars were at their peak with plunder and exploitation world over. There was also growing conflict between the imperialist nations, Marxists believed that it was a war for greater economic reasons and that it would only further the exploitation. He felt that it was for the workers to understand that fighting this war would do no good to them. According to Marxists, it was a way of pitting the proletariat of one nation against the other for the gain of the capitalist class. However, what the world saw was not a war of the workers of the world against the capitalists but a war for the safeguard of nationalist identities. Marxists, had failed to understand the importance of patriotism and nationalism, and how the idea of a nation could be used to get together the two classes which Marxist felt were opposed to one another (Buecker 2003).

Marxist have often been criticised for lack of morality in their theoretical endeavours (Gasper 2010). While one does see contradiction in the theory, to write off Marxists theory for lack of morality is not right. The significance of end over means brings out the lack of morality in Marxist theory (Singh 1990). It is essential to recall the Marxists view on imperialism and class conflict to analyse this claim of lack of morality. The principle stance of Marxists against capitalism has been the outright exploitation and plunder by the capitalists. At the same time Marxists had given

importance to the cause of imperialism in introducing capitalism and modern technology to the colonies, which would help pave the path for the world communist society. The fact that Marxists felt that imperialism did have a positive role to play takes away from them their moral stand on the issue. A similar take on violence and war finds its place in Marxist theory. Thus, morality in war and use of violence has been contextualised and then decided if it got support from Marxists or not. One does see the contradictions, where on one hand Marxists speak of emancipation and on the other hand do not hesitate on use of violence. Marxists however have been very suspicious of morality. Morality for them has been a tool used by the upper class to keep everyone else under check.

Capitalist class could not have even endured for a week through force alone, it needs the cement of morality(Trotsky 1964)

Historical materialism forms the basis of Marxist theory and the role of economics and class is central to their analysis of war. While giving excess importance to economic factors, Marxists completely ignore other aspects which play very important roles in conflicts (Hobden and Jones 2001). Firstly, the analysis of a society, with economics as the driving force of the society gives a very partial view of the society. A view that does not consider the other social factors such as culture, ideology, caste, race and gender is an incomplete view. The role of ideology in the religious fundamentalist wars cannot be explained through the dynamics of economics. We do see economics and trade playing an important role in bringing the world together. Thus, an analysis of wars fought for pure economic motives and maximization of profits does not endure the passage of time. The Twenty-first century instead saw countries coming together instead of fighting wars for economic benefits.

Marx and his successors did not really write much on international relations and war. Most of Marx's work has been restricted to his writings on political economy and class conflicts. He never really wrote a full theory on wars, however he has written and spoken at many instances on the wars that he witnessed (Gilbert 1978). Engels on the other hand was a military man and wrote and spoke significantly on military affairs and wars. While his theory and views had a military bent to them, he did share most of Marx's ideas and views. Marx laid his analysis on every war individually, for

him every war was different and had to be analysed under the specific context it was fought (Kitchen 1977). Imperialism and imperialist wars had been the centre of attention for the Marxist analysis of war. From Lenin to Warren, all wrote extensively on imperialism. Marxist theory has been devoted to the achievement of a world communist society. A society where there would be no wars and any conflict that arises will be addressed in a manner that there would be no need for wars. The socialist revolution as per the Marxists would be such that it would emancipate the entire world and would leave no scope for further friction, conflicts or wars (Gilbert 1978). While Marxist theory of war does have its drawbacks, and seem to be entrenched in economic determinism, nevertheless it does raise a voice for emancipation and liberation, a cause for the betterment of this world.

## Chapter 4

### CRITICAL THEORY AND WAR

Critical Theory's<sup>1</sup> contribution to the field of international relations has been primarily to take a normative stance on issues of war, security and global politics (Linklater 2007). It advocates change in the existing structures, the ideologies that perpetuate these structures, and the theories that have for long served the purpose of perpetuating these ideologies (Linklater 2007). While rationalists' theories revolve around state as the dominant actor, Critical theorists advocate for making individuals as the referent object for theorising wars and security (Booth 1991). Critical theory question the mainstream theories of International Relations for their lack of morality, their obsession with a state centric approach and the idea of maintaining a world order which often leads to insecurity and wars. Their aim however is to do away with the immutability assigned by mainstream theorists to International Relations and achieve 'global emancipation' (Linklater 2007).

Critical theory argues that the claims mainstream International Relations theories make about the objectivity and neutrality of their theory is a false claim. Critical theorists emphasize that every theory is written from a certain vantage point and it reflects the various socio-political structures and relations of a society or community or thought. Thus, the claim that wars are inevitable in global politics is not a value neutral statement, it reflects a certain vantage point, a perspective which seeks to maintain an order and perpetuate the existing world order (Cox 1981).

Critical Theory also questions the characteristics of 'immutability' assigned to International Relations. For realists, international relations and international politics is nothing but an arena of perpetual insecurity, where there is no authority to keep a check on states and their actions and the only way of survival is self- help. These structural features according to realists are intrinsic to the international system and

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<sup>1</sup>The Critical Theory referred to in this chapter is the Critical theory as postulated by the Frankfurt School and extended by Andrew Linklater in the field of International Relations.

cannot be changed. This paints a very dismal image of the world where some states shall continue to remain more powerful than the other, some people and societies will continue to stay poor and vulnerable and inequality perpetuates. Critical theorists say that not only is this a very pessimistic way of looking at the world but it is also untrue (Linklater 2007). Powerful nations have always wanted to maintain a world order and a system that promotes their domination. Hence, for Critical theorists war is nothing but a way to maintain the order best suitable or to ensure hegemony. Wars were only means used by these nations to maintain an order that maximised their interests (Brincat 2016). Critical theorists on the hand make a call for making the world a place where individuals and societies are free and equal (Linklater 2007).

Critical theory appreciates Marxists theories for explicitly pointing out at the discriminatory practices prevalent in the international system and calling for a revolution that would do away with this discrimination. While Marxists have focused primarily on class based discrimination and based their theory on the economics of production, Critical theorist not only makes a case for ending not just class based discrimination but instead discrimination of any form such as class, gender, caste, race and even nationality. Conflicts for critical theorists arise out of any and every form of discrimination and to do away with conflicts and war, one as to do away with discrimination. Critical theorists even question the concept of nationality because they feel it distances and separates people from others. Wars in the name of nationalism is indeed a common occurring (Linklater 2010).

Critical theorists make a call for doing away with all constraints both physical and ideological that have been imposed by realists both in theory and practice. They make a case for initiating conversations between people and communities. They also question exclusionary practices that have become an integral part of global politics. Critical theorists strive to make this world an amiable place based on 'discourse ethics' (Linklater 2007) where every individual has freedom and equality.

Critical theorists place emancipation at the centre of their theory. Unlike realists who have stressed on the maximization of power as the means of enhancing security for Critical Theorist's security can be only achieved through emancipation (Booth 1991). They feel that the idea of maximisation of power to enhance security is a flawed



concept because an increase in someone's power is always at the cost of someone else's. This only leaves people and states more insecure and insecurity has often been cited by realists as the primary cause of war and hence the only way to enhance security is through emancipation (Booth 1991).

To understand critical theory and its contribution to International relations, war and security let's have a look at some theorists whose contributions to the field are remarkable.

### **Robert Cox:**

'Theory is always for someone and for some purpose'(Cox 1981). Robert Cox one of the most remarkable critical theorist, makes a very pathbreaking point. He states that every theory is written from a vantage point; it tries to put across a perspective which has a specific political and social time and space dimension. For Cox, it is very important to study and analyse a theory and make attempts to uncover the hidden perspective. For him, every theory has certain values that it embodies and the claim made by theorists that theoretical work is factual and neutral is a false claim. Theory is never objective but a reflection of the social and political forces of the society of which the theorist is a part of and stands for. He rejects the claim of objectivity and universality in any theory (Hobden and Jones 2001).

Cox (1981) categorises theories into two types, 'problem-solving' theory and 'critical' theory. Problem Solving theory 'takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action' (Cox 1981). It explains the various dimensions and aspects of the world of which it sees itself as an image. The ambition of this theory is to ensure the smooth functioning of the various institutions and their relationships of power and order. Thus, problem solving theory accepts the world without questioning it (Cox 1981). With the shortcomings and the contradictions, and looks for ways to manoeuvre around the same and find solutions within the same. Problem-solving theories abstract one discipline from the other for the sake of objectivity and simplicity which Cox feels makes the theory very unrealistic. In the real world, everything happens in relation with the other and if we try to understand a part of this

reality in abstraction, our understanding will be very superficial. It is value laden and accepts the prevailing order without questioning its existence (Brincat 2016).

Critical theory on the other hand, unlike problem solving theory questions the given and dismantles the institutions and the relations between them (Cox 1981). It stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and questions the origin and prevalence of that order. Unlike problem solving theories that aim at retaining the existing order and institutions of that order, critical theory questions the very institutions and the relationships between them. critical theory sees the world as a whole and takes both social and political spheres together while theorising. While this does take away the simplification from theorising, it adds layers of complexities that makes it closer to reality. The primary purpose of Critical Theory is to challenge the current order, its social and political institutions, the relationships and the ideologies it embodies (Brincat 2016). The essential characteristic of critical theory is that it is not merely a descriptive theory or an aid to the existing order but it aims at bringing about a transformation. The real ambition of critical theory is to emancipate, to transform the lives especially of the marginalised. To bring it all together, Critical Theory questions the existing order and systems to transform the existing world order and to achieve emancipation.

Cox criticises the mainstream theories of International Relations and makes an attempt to develop an alternative theory of International relations. Cox takes from Gramsci's theory of hegemony to explain the functioning of the International System (Jones and Hobden 2001) He states that powerful states have used various means to maintain their domination in the world. While the means have changed over the years, from wars and conquests in the earlier times to using ideologies of liberalization and globalisation in the recent years the ends have been the same. Powerful states have always wanted to maintain a world order and a system that promotes their domination. Hence, for Cox war is nothing but a way to maintain the order best suitable or to ensure hegemony. Wars were only means used by these states to maintain an order that maximised their interests. He criticises the mainstream theories and claims that these serve the purpose of maintaining the prevailing order, the interests of those in power, of the powerful nations. Rationalists claim that theory is nothing but a reflection of reality and that they are stating things the way things are,

this according to Cox helps in perpetuating the existing order. His endeavour was to develop a theory that would both maintain stability in the world order and at the same time also work in the process of transformation to achieve the ultimate goal of emancipation (Hobden and Jones 2001). We began the discussion on Cox's theory with a quotation from Cox where he states that theory is always for someone and some purpose, thus for Cox the purpose of critical theory is to transform the prevailing systems and world order and bring about emancipation (Cox 1981).

### **Ken Booth:**

Ken Booth describes International Relations as an area of study which covers vast and diverse areas and subjects. However, for him International Relations is not about diplomats attending conferences but the reality that hit Hiroshima. This devastating experience that Hiroshima had to go through was nothing but an outcome of the dominance of the realists' perspective on International Relations. He states that if anybody wants to understand International Relations they need to start off from here (Booth 1991a). Clearly, for Booth International Relations is beyond policy makers, diplomats and causes of war, for him it is to take into consideration the impacts on people, on societies and the extent to which rationalist calculations can make for their gains.

Booth (1991b) also criticises the exaggerated importance that realists give to anarchy to explain the causes of war. According to Booth the absence of world government as a supervisory authority to keep a check on states and their actions leading to states being aggressive and often leading to wars ignores the role of international law, international organisations and the ideologies of democracy and sovereignty. He quotes Bull characterises the international system 'the anarchical society' (Booth 1991b).

Booth goes to the extent of calling himself 'post realist'. He states that while he acknowledges the pertinent arguments and points made by realists such as Waltz, at the same time he feels that to theorise war, security and international relations one needs to move beyond the calculations of cost benefits and self-interest (Booth 2007). The idea that wars are imminent is not the right way to understand or describe

international relations. In doing so we do not look for a way of making the system better but accepting something which is not even true.

He also stresses on treating people not as means but ends to achieving security (Booth 1991a). While realists' theories have kept states at the centre of theory, Booth like other critical theorists' advocates for making individuals and community as the referent object while theorising wars and security (Booth 1991a).

Reviving utopia has been one of Booth's central endeavours in theorising war, security and international relations. He feels that the term utopia has been criticised out of proportion and has been given a negative image, this according to Booth has helped realist theorists perpetuate the idea of status quo. He talks of two theories 'theories of survival' and 'theories of good life' (Booth 1991a), while the former according to him are the realists' theories that discuss the various ways and means which states use to accumulate power and enhance security but these theories do not say what after that. They stick to status quo. On the other hand, there are 'theories of good life' which Booth states are theories which move beyond status quo and make a case for better lives for individuals, for better societies and for a better world. He makes case for a theory that takes both into consideration a theory of 'Utopian Realism'(Booth 1991b).

Security and emancipation according to Booth are 'the two sides of the same coin'(Booth 1991a). Unlike realists who have stressed on the maximization of power as the means of enhancing security for Booth security can be only achieved through emancipation. He questions the rationalists' idea of maximisation of power as a means to enhance security. Power can be increased for one only if it is taken away from the other. Hence this would leave someone worse off and insecure. Emancipation unlike maximisation of power, leaves everyone better off. 'Emancipation is freeing people from those constraints that stop them from carrying out what freely they would choose to do'(Booth 1991a).

This according to Booth does not just mean end of wars or violence but also doing away with other constraints like poverty, discrimination and exclusion. This would mean doing away the ideas of the other, doing away with exclusion. Booth also talks

on the 'reciprocity of rights' in his article *Security as Emancipation*, where he states that emancipation cannot be achieved by a person or a group alone, emancipation has to be global only then will it lead to security. This according to Booth will take away insecurities and fears from people, the source of friction. Emancipation can end wars and bring a society where people are better off without making someone else worse off.

He stresses on the need to place emancipation at the centre of the idea of security because it is the right time to do so. While emancipation has been a part of various struggles in the past and continues to be so, it is high time we understood the importance of emancipation in maintaining security. For Booth (1991a), the only way of achieving security for the world society is by making emancipation the centre of political discourse and the ultimate aim for international relations.

### **Copenhagen School:**

Copenhagen School's significant contribution to security and war has been the securitisation theory. They argue that security can be used as a 'speech act' (Buzan, et.al 1988). For the social construction of issues related to security as threats, where utterance alone can be used to make a person, community or nation into an object of potential threat. It is often even used to make something seem as a threat even if it is not (Vultee 2010).

As per this process any object can be securitised, what is important is the medium of the speech act, which needs to be more structured and specific. There needs to be a certain context to the securitisation and even the use of language in the 'speech act' needs to be such that it is conducive to the whole process of securitisation. (Buzan et. al 1988)

Many Critical theorists claim that this 'speech act' has been used by super powers and leaders of these countries to wage wars and garner support for their acts of aggression. Critical theorists have used the theory of securitisation to explain the wars on terror, wars waged for oil, and wars waged to maintain the hegemonic world orders. However, many theorists have pointed out the need for the theory to go beyond the

‘speech act’, to other forms of political communications that have now become a part of the modern political functioning and people’s daily lives (Vultee 2010).

This has been explored by Vultee when he discusses the role of modern media, television, newspapers in the portrayal of terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 (Vultee 2010). The use of videos to show terror camps and videos where men and women are being indoctrinated and radicalised had become an integral part of the prime-time news of most media houses. A similar sort of rapportage could be seen in the leading newspapers where people were informed about the future dangers of these terrorist organisations and the states that are harbouring them. All this helped in the securitisation of these terrorist organisations and justifies war.

Critical theorists have pointed out that when an opponent is labelled as a terrorist and a fear of terrorist action is communicated to the people, the enemy’s motives become evil and thus the war at the enemy’s end becomes an immoral war. This makes the nation under threat the hero and gains legitimization for its war. Any act of aggression against terror gets its sympathy and support from the masses. Buzan expands on the reaction to threat by categorising the reactions to threat, the first when a state decides to get weary of the actions of the terror group and decides to act on it and the second when the state acts complacent. According to Buzan the reaction of the state completely depends on the success of securitisation. Hence, according to critical theorists when one analyses the war on Afghanistan and Iraq one can understand it as successful acts of securitisation (Buzan 2006).

Buzan states that unlike other wars, the war on terror is a political war (Buzan 2006). He does acknowledge the threat that terrorism poses. However, he does not feel that this threat is the only reason for the war on terror. According to Buzan the larger agenda to establish and extend US supremacy in the world for the and the years that were yet to come was the real reason behind the war (Buzan 2006).

Critical theorists have always made the attempt to try and uncover the hidden agenda. For them things are not how it seems. Every theory has a vantage point and every cause has a hidden story. Thus, war on terror that started after the 11 September 2001 and then moved on to Iraq against the Saddam Hussein’s regime where the US feared

nuclear proliferations have been cited by critical theorists as acts of securitisation where the larger motives have been establishing supremacy either ideological, commercial or even military. They have also written extensively how the same fear is often used by nations to target their own citizens. Acts of violence by states often gained consent by the masses if a threat to the nation and its existence has been created or portrayed. Critical theorists feel that nations have often used this fear of threat to legitimize their acts of aggression for bigger political economic and military gains (Buzan 2006).

### **Andrew Linklater:**

Andrew Linklater problematises the imposing of immutability to International Relations by mainstream theorists. He states that rationalists see the Global Politics as an arena, where states are ever willing to fight one another. For them this emerges out of the insecure anarchic world order and the absence of a world government or authority. For them these characteristics are immutable and states need to manoeuvre within these itself in order to survive. He quotes Wendt 'Anarchy is what states make of it' to say that when realists argue that power, force and insecurity drives the international system and determine the future course of world politics they fail to understand that this is nothing but an outcome of states and their behaviour (Linklater 2010). Linklater makes it very clear that the theory of the international system and its structure is unchanging, unalterable and that wars are imminent is completely flawed.

### **The problem of harm**

Linklater states that there are various questions on harm that have been central to the study of International Relations. While most of these questions have centred around the causes of war that cause harm and the effects of the same, what is absent is the impact that this harm has on the lives of individuals and societies (Linklater 2007). Linklater also states that one comes across innumerable instances in world politics when harm has been inflicted ruthlessly on individuals, communities and societies. However, there is an absence of any systematic study on the same (Linklater 2010).

Linklater questions the existing mainstream theorists if they have ever acknowledged the harm that comes with the maintenance of world order that they preach. He says that there is an approach in the world today to develop and invent instruments of harm. There has been a rise in countries acquiring weapons and system that can now inflict harm on individuals from a distance too. All this according to Linklater is to do away with any human emotion involved in war, this dehumanises the act and makes it very mechanical (Linklater 2001). He questions if realists understand the harm that women and children go through as victims of war.

Linklater criticizes the mainstream theories for not understanding the moral implications of the harm that comes with war, conflicts and the maintenance of the world order. There has been the mention of use of moral and ideological reasons mostly in the name of safeguarding human rights in conflict zones by powerful states to often inflict harm through wars, and according to Linklater these were wars of maintaining world order and enhancing security (Linklater 2001).

‘Discourse ethics’ (Linklater 2007) and emancipation are central to Linklater’s work on International Relations. (Linklater 2007) makes a call for doing away with all constraints both physical and ideological that have been imposed by realists both in theory and practice. They also question exclusionary practices that have become an integral part of global politics. He states that there is exclusion in the name of class, race, gender, caste and even nationality. They make a case for initiating conversations between people and communities. He also feels that a global and inclusive conversation cannot exist given the existing structures of sovereign state where individuals are separated based on their citizenship and beyond. For Linklater ‘discourse ethics is a means through which emancipation is attained is such that every person’s perspective is taken into consideration’ (Linklater 2007). He calls for an inclusive conversation between people and communities where every voice is heard and every point is taken into consideration and there is no hierarchy. The idea is to move ahead and beyond the exclusionary practices that have been a part of the International System for long and initiate conversations between communities and people, conversations where every person is given an equal front and there is no hierarchy whatsoever. This according to Linklater (2007) will give shape to a world where there is no friction or insecurity and will lead to global emancipation.



There are certain critical theorists who specifically question the gendered nature of the international relations and call for an overhauling of the existing structures and ideologies, these are the feminist theorists. Feminist theorists are critical theorists that question the mainstream theories and their biases and make a case for a gender neutral theorising International Relations. They also make a case of making the individual the referent object and call for global emancipation. To understand the contribution of critical theory on war it is essential to have a look at the feminists' theories of war.

### **Feminist theory of War:**

Feminists like other critical theorists question the status quo, but also question the perpetuation of gendered ideologies and gendered theories that have for long dominated the theories of International Relations. They criticise the obsession of mainstream International theories with rationality, cost benefit analysis and structural politics. They have criticised the mainstream theories for their excessive importance to power and completely ignoring the individual (Enloe 2010). Feminists make a case for making individual the referent object while theorising war and security. Tickner (2004) states that the approach used by the mainstream theorists is a 'top down approach', while feminists make a case for a 'bottom up approach'. They question the obsession of mainstream theorists with order and stability. Feminists feel that the very idea of power and order is gendered and only reinforces patriarchy. They claim that when it comes to war, there is clear domination of men in all spheres. For years wars have been fought mostly by men and decisions on war have also been made mostly by them. Not just this but most theories of war traditionally have been written by men. Hence there is a clear dominance of men when it comes to war or theorising war (Davis, George and True 2017).

Tickner feels the main problem is the inability of the mainstream International relations theory and feminist theory to have a conversation. She feels that this is primarily due to the epistemological and 'ontological differences' between the two theories. There is clear difference in the referent object between the two- state for the

former and individual for the latter. It is like they speak two different languages which either of them does not understand (Tickner 1999).

Feminists can be categorised into two kinds. First the pacifist feminists who believe in the idea of the peace loving 'moral mother' role played by women to end war and violence, and second who want to break these very shackles of stereotypes that surround women and look for equal status when it comes to war and global politics. While the former stress on the motherly instincts as a great attribute to end wars, spread peace and love, the latter wants to do away with these stereotypes (Tickner 2004). The pacifist feminists call for greater participation of women in global politics and decision making since they are soft hearted and have motherly instincts. They feel women participation in global politics will change the course of world politics since women are lesser prone to aggression and violence (Tickner 2004). On the other hand, there are feminists who have questioned these stereotypes and binary characteristics assigned to men and women and their role in world politics. Stereotyping women to have certain characteristics or assigning adjectives such as peaceful, moral and emotional does nothing to help their oppressed situations. These stereotypes further take away from them their credibility to perform their duties and hold offices of power. Often these assigned characteristics have been used to criticise women and their ability to make rational decisions. The perpetuation of the idea that men are the aggressive gender and women the peace-loving ones, encourages man to take decisions when it comes to war because the enemy is unpredictable. This has for years been the reason why women have been kept outside the realm of international relations and global politics. The rate of women participation in decision making and global politics is dismal and these adjectives have only made things worse. While feminists do acknowledge that women would want a peaceful world, they ask if men want anything different and if both eventually want the same thing why to keep one away from the field? (Tickner 1999)

Feminists have always questioned the mainstream narrative of war. The mainstream portrayal of war according feminists is very myopic. Parashar (2013) mentions that there are only two questions on war that concerns the mainstream theorists- first 'why' war happens? and the second 'how do they end'. For Parashar, there is so much that happens in between these two questions and is never considered by the

mainstream theorists. Feminists have alleged that people affected by war know more about the international relations than what International Relations knows about war. She claims that never has any mainstream theory dealt people and their experiences in war, IR theory neither understands nor recognises their emotions or experiences (Parashar 2013).

Feminists criticise the mainstream theories of being negligent of the 'ordinary' people and of individual experiences. Ordinary people and their experiences have never been of much interest to IR since they are not influential decision-makers who can change answers to the two central questions theorists have sought.

Christine Sylvester (2013) questions the effects of war on the lives of the people. War for Sylvester is not just when it is on but also the period before and after, because the impacts are felt at these times too. Similarly, Parashar (2013) writes about the lives of the men and women during war and how its shaped by it. She deals with not just the impact of war in terms of the atrocities faced by these people but also focuses on how certain women feel empowered during war. In her article, *What wars and 'war bodies' know about international relations*, she gives examples of women participation in war in Sri Lanka and Kashmir. While in the former women take on roles normally assigned to men, in the latter their functions are more auxiliary in nature. These examples show the impact on lives of these women. There are certain feminist writers who have on the other hand written extensively on war crimes and rapes inflicted on women and children. Feminists question the absence of these narratives from the mainstream theories.

Sylvester (2013) tries to understand the after effect of war, questions if victory helps a soldier forget the horrors of war, or lets a son forget the loss of his parents or lets a journalist get over the trauma of seeing death of hundreds? She also cites the example of post rehabilitation Rwanda, on how the lives of the people even years after the genocide revolved around it (Sylvester 2013). She emphasises on the impact of war on people's lives even years after.

Sylvester also critiques the privilege that military men and defence officials get when it comes to their word on war. This is an incomplete and incompetent perspective on

war according to her. Sylvester emphasizes on the need to understand war from the perspective of an individual subjected to the rage and misery of war, of a victim of war crimes like rape and loot, in war, from people who have gained power, from people who have lost power, from a soldier who lost a body part, from an ordinary person who has been affected by war (Sylvester 2013).

Similarly, Enloe (2010) in her book *Nimo's War, Ema's War* makes a case for a holistic theory of war, a complete portrayal, one which deals with the experiences of ordinary people. The book revolves around the lives of eight women of which four are Americans and four are Iraqi, each caught up in between the US- Iraq war. While the book does look at the US Iraq war from the perspective of the mainstream theories addressing questions like what led to the war and who would win and what would be the outcomes, what makes the book stand apart from other narratives of the same is that these questions are answered in the backdrop. The central focus of the narrative is on the experiences of these women and their lives in war and the impacts on them. The fact that the stories are of the same gender, Enloe tries to show how war is gendered and how it can be seen affecting the lives of different women. Enloe, tries to make a case for developing a theory on war which deals with the human aspect of it. The experiences of people both bodily and emotional during a war are very essential to the understanding of war and is the central focus of her book.

Feminists have been very critical of war narratives put across by the governments, the media and the defence organisations of different nations. Feminists feel that war narratives are gendered and they are wrapped under the veil of dominant ideologies and then presented to the public (Sjoberj 1983). The roles performed by individuals during war are also gendered while we do have women in few countries performing combatant roles, the soldier is mostly a man when we see globally. While there are governments that have started employing women for these roles and it is just a start and cannot be used to analyse the gender roles.

Feminists further feel that there is a construction of a gendered culture when it comes to war. From text books to movies, to folktales most depict the man as the saviour for the nation a hero who saves his country and his women and children (Cockburn 2013). We often see that there is immense respect given to soldiers, they are glorified,

their death is glorified. While death can be nothing but mournful, this glorification of the death of a soldier who died for his nation makes him a hero. While the self is glorified and praised by a nation, the enemy is criticised, the enemy is compared to the devil. The enemy state is abstracted from its citizen, like a lifeless object or a big monster who knows only evil. Any form of life or familiarity from the enemy is taken away, most of the times it is nothing but a piece of land with a crazy blood seeking general. Feminists feel that this portrayal makes it easy for governments to garner support from the public, it also uses the same to tackle any criticism faced. Similarly, the other narrative is when the war is won, the winner here would be a loser too because who really wins in a war, however the winner is adorned with adjectives such as heroic, valour, bravery while the nation that loses out is called incompetent, eunuch, loser. This makes war like a game, and completely takes away the pains, the miseries and the difficulties of those who face it (Sjoberg 1983). Feminists find this gendered narrative very problematic, for them it only perpetuates discrimination and does not really tell anyone the real narrative of war.

Feminists also point out that sexual crimes in war are gendered. A woman is raped because she is a woman, a man because they want to treat him like a woman, to make him feel weak and incapable (Cockburn 2013). The rape of a woman similarly signifies the incapability of the man to protect his woman. Feminists feel that most of these gendered crimes arise out of the deep embedded patriarchy and gender stereotypes. Not only do they want this jingoism to go away but feminists also want narratives to include people and their experiences, only then will a narrative be true to war (Parashar 2013).

Cockburn also problematises the excess allocation of funds for defence purposes. This allocation further increases during war times and to increase funds for weapons, funds are taken away from social heads like healthcare and education. The government expenditure on social provisions is mostly for the utilisation by marginalised, the poor, women and children. This taking away of fund from these heads affects these people. Women are the ones that are the most affected by these cuts because of their gendered roles in families and society (Cockburn 2013). Thus, feminists are not just talking about war in terms of an event that leads to the victory of one nation and the loss of the other, but they also delve into effects of the same. Feminists not only study

effects that are direct outcomes of war in terms of violence, deaths or war crimes but also indirect like fund cuts as mentioned above.

There are many feminists who feel that reducing gender equality will contribute positively on world peace and security. Davis, George and True (2017) make similar claims, they point out that the greater the gender equality in a region, the greater the participation of women in social and political spheres, the greater there is peace and tranquillity in that region. Just like pacifist feminist they stress on the impact of women participation in decision making spheres leading to less aggressive policies and peace.

The main purpose of most feminist theories has been centred around emancipation. Feminist theory of war and security stresses on the importance of emancipation. Feminists theory stresses on the importance of acknowledging the marginalised and their experiences. Feminists feel that have been ignored by the mainstream theorists because of their incapability of making decisions that can change history (Parashar 2013). Similarly, women and their role in world politics and the theory of the same has been mostly ignored and most of the times their voices have never been heard or even silenced, feminists make a case for emancipating women and their voices. An emancipation of gender that will bring equality and acceptance to women as world leaders, decision makers and theorists. The skewed participation of men in the various of domains of war is no coincidence, it is a deliberate act, an act that perpetuates gendered exclusion (Sjoberg 1983). Feminists also criticise the mainstream theories for being exclusionary, these theories only deal with those in power and the decisions they make. The marginalised, women and the weak do not find any mention in these theories. This absence is not as big a loss for the marginalised, as it is for the domain of International Relations. Inclusion and emancipation find great importance in feminists' theory of war and global politics.

An analysis of various feminist theories makes it very clear that there is a normative calling attached to their theory. They call for making the theory of war, a theory which takes into consideration the individual and their experiences, a theory which is free from gender biases, a theory which questions gendered war narratives, a theory which moves beyond the cost benefit analysis and a theory which seeks emancipation.

**Conclusion:**

Critical Theory not only challenges the assumptions and the narratives of war and international relations as laid down by the mainstream theories of international relations, but also gives alternatives to look beyond strategic explanations of understanding global politics. Critical theory makes a case making this world a better place to live. As Booth has stated, emancipation lies at the heart of critical theory, it becomes evident that the real motivational drive in theorising war and International Relations by critical theorists is to achieve global emancipation. Critical theorists and their endeavour to achieve global emancipation has often received criticism of being Eurocentric. The critical theorists however, claim that while the norms of equality and justice have emerged from Europe, these are rights that every human should be entitled too. Equality cannot be gendered and feminists have often criticised mainstream theories for their patriarchal approach and gendered notions. On the other hand, feminist theory has often been criticised for giving too much importance to gender and ignoring the main causes of war that can be detrimental to the existence of states if left ignored. This is a misunderstood critique, feminists feel the lack of conversation and ontological differences between mainstream and feminist theories give rise to such a flawed criticism. Critical theorists and feminists both make the case for making theory about the individual and communities and moving above and beyond the state and calculations of gains and losses. Their endeavour is to bring individual to the centre of theorising wars and international relations.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

There was a man who faced the biggest man-made catastrophe twice in his life (The Independent 2010). Tsutomu Yamaguchi, an engineer in his twenties, was both at Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the United States dropped the not so little ‘little boy’ and the very fat ‘fat man’ at the two places respectively in a span of two days. The government of Japan has recognized almost 200 such people who just like Yamaguchi faced the trauma of this war. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (1946) believes the dead at Hiroshima to have been between 70,000 and 80,000, with an equal number injured; at Nagasaki over 35,000 dead and somewhat more than that injured. For Tsutomu Yamaguchi it changed his identity, now called *nijū hibakusha*<sup>2</sup>, Japanese with an added identity.

The reason this chapter starts with how Yamaguchi’s life changed after the Second World War is to make a point: that while to many war might be just a date, or an occasion of celebration of triumph, or a learning from past act to devise better foreign policies, for Yamaguchi it completely turned his life upside down.

This dissertation asks the certain pertinent questions. The questions are as follows:(a) Is the narrative of war as narrated by the mainstream theories of war complete? (b) What is it that is missing from this narrative?

To answer these questions, the chapter is divided into two parts:

- a) the war we know of and
- b) the war we need to know

#### **The war we know of**

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<sup>2</sup> People who suffered the effects of both bombings are known as *nijū hibakusha* in Japan.



The analysis of mainstream theories of war helps us understand that the theories of war that have dominated the mainstream International Relations do not really deal with war in totality. The approach is myopic. This section is devoted to what exactly do these theories of war tell us and what is the war we know of through these theories.

The discourse on war in International relations has been dominated by the rationalists' theory of war. Realism has had a great influence on the American strategy and security studies. Since, the United States hegemony has dominated global politics, it is no surprise that realism has been dominating the discourse of global politics and war. It was the emergence of trade and globalisation that saw the emergence of liberalism as a theory on International Relations and War (Donnelly 2013).

The idea that anarchy leads to insecurity and fear amongst states and the absence of a world government makes self-help the only mode of survival has been the realists' call on international Relations. While the liberals have showed their faith in institutions of democracy, globalization and trade, the fact that global politics is an insecure place where rational calculations can help a state survive has dominated both these theories. What ties them together is their assumption of the insecure anarchic world and the idea that state actors are rational and base their policies on cost benefit analysis. This however is a very gloomy portrayal of the world we live in and as criticized by Linklater it assigns immutable characteristics to the idea that the structure of global politics is such that wars are inevitable (1990).

The liberal theories on the other hand believe that policies emerge out of preferences moulded by the rich and powerful in a state. To elaborate, the liberal theories of war focus on how the domestic politics and aspirations of the domestic elites could influence a state's foreign policy (Moravcsik 2010). Democratic peace theory is a such theory which propagates the idea that because democracies have governments elected by the people, their accountability and answerability would dissuade them from waging wars and also the very ideology of democracy does not promote war. They call for democratisation of states to reduce wars (Gleditsch 1992).

While the idea that wars could be reduced in numbers seems to be a better moral positioning to have than the acceptance that they are inevitable, the reality is that it does not help much to help get rid of the immutable characteristics assigned to the structure of International Relations. The liberal theory also points at the role of the

leaders and the powerful elite in shaping these decisions, while the liberals are of the view that globalisation and world trade does not promote the idea of war in these influential business circles, they cannot ignore the logic underlying the idea that big arms and ammunition manufacturers and dealers influence leaders to go on war.

The mainstream perception of war has been restricted to a state centric or a collective act of armed conflict. The agency in these theories is restricted to states or collective groups. There are two outcomes of this. Firstly, keeping the definition to the state or just to the groups, indicates to ordinary people that it is an act that is beyond their reach, and those who participate in it are going to make the decisions because they know it the best. This takes away any say people have when wars are declared. Second it makes the war narrative highly inanimate, as though there is no humanness in the process. This makes it simpler to keep the act of war and decisions around it sanctified, as though it is a decision that needs to be made and only certain people in power can make it. These theories do little to change the status quo and as often criticised by the critical theories they perpetuate the world order and the idea that wars is inevitable. Their theory on war does not go beyond the powerful and the cost benefit analysis. This theory of war is myopic. Thus, the dominant discourse on war or the war we know of is incomplete.

### **The war we need to know**

**Figure 5.1.1: Alan Kurdi washed ashore after drowning when their boat capsized trying to escape the Syrian Civil War.**



### **Image Source: The Independent, 2015**

An image of a three-year-old boy's body washed ashore hit the entire world on 2 September 2015. Alan Kurdi was accompanied by his parents and an elder brother. The family was trying to migrate to Canada and for this, they took the help of a trafficker. The entire family except for Alan's father died when the boat capsized (The Independent 2015). They knew the route was dangerous and extremely risky, yet they chose this option over staying back. The question is why did they decide to do so? Why would they risk their lives and chose such a perilous way out? When people do travel far off in search of better jobs and livelihood, was it because the family could not find a decent livelihood back in Syria? Was this decision even a choice they could make?

The Syrian war has forced many such families and people to look for ways out and migrate to countries all over Europe creating one of the largest refugee crisis in the years gone by. While they were not killed in war, they were killed by it. The impact of war is neither just when it is at its active phase nor on people who die by bullets and bombs.

The fixation of mainstream theories of war with the policy aspect of war, and the gains and losses that comes with it completely ignores the tragedies that millions of people go through. What many children like Alan went through and finally succumbed only finds space in some newspapers or a slot in a news channel and after that everything is forgotten or normalised. Unfortunately, many of these images are all over the internet and the mass media as a result of which violence and death are normalised. Susan Sontag (2003) in her book *On Photography* wrote on this very process of normalising war. She problematises the use of photography in the Vietnam war, and how soon the protest over the war subsided by the emergence of thousands of photographs that showed how horrific the war was. The resultant normalization is skewed. While one sees immense outcry on the death of two or three civilians in the developed states, the death of thousands in Africa and Asia goes unheard. A life lost is a life lost; it does not matter whose it is. Unfortunately, in world politics and international relations it does.

While feminist theories (Tickner 2004) on war have recognised individuals and the impact of violence on women and children, their work has been seen as a theory of gender studies and has never been given its due. There is no conversation between the mainstream theories and feminist theories of war. This is perhaps because the mainstream theories lack the understanding of war beyond states and power. But why is it important to see gender in war? A war is a war and there are people who suffer. Why do we need to specifically look at what women go through?

The answer to it is very simple, because in wars violence is gendered. As mentioned by feminists, women are raped to take away the honour of their men and society, they could be killed but raping them makes the act of violence different. Salil Tripathi (2016) in his book on the Bangladesh war has devoted a chapter on rape victims in the war. He reminds us through his book that rapes in wars are systematic crimes and are used as weapons to terrorise women.

The ignorant engagement of International Relations with war gets highlighted in the best manner when we see how soldiers and the men who fight wars are described by the mainstream theories and mainstream discourses. While wars and deaths of soldiers are glorified in the name of nationalism and martyrdom, the biggest failure for International Relations is that the theories that dominate the discourse, lack the understanding that soldiers are humans who have lives just like any other individual. However, there are many soldiers who wrote memoirs and books to fill this lacuna. While these were never considered as academic work on war or International Relations, their contribution in understanding war is immense and its high time that it is recognised. *A Rumour of War* by Philip Caputo (1996) is one such example. Caputo (1996) writes from his experience as a Marine Lieutenant deployed in Vietnam during the US Vietnam war. He makes an attempt to show the brutal reality of war that soldiers face. He states that the obsession of people and politicians with the mere politics of war fails to recognise the perils that these men in uniform go through. He feels that the glorification of war and martyrdom or victory is an incomplete narrative of war. To understand war, one also needs to understand the immense physical and psychological suffering a soldier goes through. A narrative of war which does not go beyond the politics of war is a shallow narrative and a narrative of war which does not capture the impact of it on the lives of those who fight is indeed an incomplete

narrative. To quote Caputo in his book he writes about “the things men do in war and the things war does to men”

With the emergence of Critical Theory in International Relations we do see a shift in conversation. There is a case made by Critical Theory to make the individual and the community the centre of the theory. They advocate doing away with the state-centric approach of security and International Relations. Ken Booth (1991) and Linklater (2010) have written extensively and demanded that the focus and aim of international Relations should shift from states and wars should focus on individuals and not gains. They claim that as long as exclusionary practices exist both in reality and theory, emancipation cannot be achieved. Marxists also wrote extensively on exclusion and discrimination that has been a part of world politics. While economic exclusion was central to Marxian theory, Critical Theorists have often appreciated their contribution and made a case for getting rid of exclusions of all form, not just economic. Their contribution to the field is commendable and needs to be understood and accepted not just as mere criticisms but real understanding of the mainstream theories and the lacunae in the existing theory of war.

To conclude the paper makes a case for a conversation between different theories and discourses in the field of war in International Relations. Taking up from Linklater’s ‘discourse ethics’ (2007), this dissertation appeals to the theories of international relations to look beyond states and power and understand that the life of every individual is equally important. There is a need to strike a conversation and look beyond the existing dominance of state centric approaches and take into consideration the individual and people and their experiences while theorising war.



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