

## WHY DO PEOPLE FIGHT?

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### ABSTRACT

Today, whether we take a general overview, it is possible to identify and understand that the world we are living in reflects many problems. Conflicts are present in many regions; threats/challenges towards security have been increased; and an extreme poverty that creates issues on the survival level. In these conditions it becomes essential understanding and analyzing the causes that motivates people and countries fighting and being conflicting. This will be the main aim of this paper. In order to carry out this analysis we will attempt to make use of main international relations theories approaches and the way these theories deploy or explain the individuals and other important actors in the international system. Special attention will be dedicated in comparing and confronting these different philosophical approaches over human nature. The data used for this paper will be based on the written literature.

**Keywords:** War, human nature.

### INTRODUCTION

Many international relations studies have been focusing on war and even-though there is a wide increasing literature on the subject, it still remains an issue that evokes great interest. Wars continue to be a main topic for United Nations and other regional organization, which pay particular interest on it. New countries and weak ones are the leading locations of today's and future wars. Nevertheless, this does not bring to the conclusion that powerful countries, with strong bases of legitimacy are the only solution of the war issue, despite the fact that these countries represent the fundamental element of peace between them and their societies. Understanding war and its causes it is not an easy job, especially because of the lack of a single theory which can explain in a reliable way the wide variety of international interactions, such as conflicting as well cooperative ones. Each of the theories so far, makes analysis only from different points of view. Realism is a school of thought which explains international relations in terms of power. "Ushtrimi i fuqisë nga shtetet në marrëdhënie me njëri-tjetrin në disa raste quhet "realpolitik" ose thjeshtë politikë e mbështetur tek fuqia" (Goldstein, 2003: 68).<sup>1</sup>

According to realism, human nature it is very egoistic; the main actors are states, leaded by their personal interests (primary interest the one of survival); and the international system nature is anarchic. While, according to liberal school of thought, man is essentially peaceful, good and altruist; the main actors are not only states but also individuals, international organisations, etc. For liberalism "rendi mund të zhvillohet nëpërmjet rregullave dhe institucioneve që mbështeten mbi ndërsjelltësinë e bashkëpunimit madje edhe mbi ligjin"(Ibid, 118).<sup>2</sup> Realism and Liberalism are considered as two of the most important school of thoughts, in the international relation field.

<sup>1</sup> EN: The exercise of power by states in relation to each other in some cases called "realpolitik" or simply relying on power policy

<sup>2</sup> EN: Order can be developed through rules and institutions that rely on the cooperation, even above law.

## ANALYSIS ON THE CONTINUITY AND THE CAUSES OF WAR

Philosophers, historians and other international relations experts have tried to define war causes and with war we will understand the organised violence politically led between armed forces of two or more countries. When we think about war, usually we bring to our mind two countries, which deploy their military forces against each-other, followed their obvious confrontation that is well organised and clearly defined. The aim of the war is destroying the ability of the enemy in resisting and by imposing, later on, their political and military conditions. European experience has shown that war can be defined as an armed clash between Sovran countries. In other historical and geographical contexts, wars have been characterised more as a “çështje nderi, plaçkitje, piraterie, kërkim lavdie dhe bastisje pa fre” (Holsti, 2008: 1).<sup>3</sup>

Rousseau was the first one to offer a fundamental explanation for the continuity of Clausewitz war between countries that continues being used today in the international politics. He developed, even-though not in a systematic and consistent way, a general theory on war. For Rousseau, war is feature or a consequence to a system of independent states. This kind of system is called anarchy.

Anarchy does not mean “kaos, kuptimi i saj deri diku konceptohet si mungesë e qeverisjes” (Ibid, 8).<sup>4</sup> States are Sovran and based on this there is no an authority which can stand over them. Only states/countries can make laws for its citizens and its subjects, and they must rely only on their own for their protection. Also, he is of the opinion that protection states policies certainly cause mistrust on their neighbour countries. Thus mistrust between neighbours can be explained with the concept “dilema e sigurisë” (Holsti, 2008: 10-15).<sup>5</sup> States develop their military capacities and they do so because of some reasons.

As long as they their safety can not be supported by the other, they must have the necessary security and military power for self-defense. But the growth of a state military power for defense creates, as we already mentioned above mistrust on the other countries. Thus, the means that states develop for their survival represent a threat for the neighbours. The Rousseau analysis relies on a “neorealist” view, which explains that basic features of national system causes conflicts. Morgenthau, with another point of view, explains the continuing war for power between countries referring to the unchangeable human personality. Human nature is always seeking for more power.

There are many factors which can bring the outbreak of war. According to liberalism, “perceptimet e gabuara si dhe veprimet e një udhëheqësi mund të çojnë në shpërthimin e luftës” (Mings, 2008: 255).<sup>6</sup> One of the most common perceptions that has been frequently used is the magnification of adversary hostility, by seeing aggressiveness even-though when is missing and by believing that the adversary is more enemy than it may be in fact, or that the enemy has greater military and economical capacities than he could actually have. This wrong calculation can lead a country to a reaction, thus undertaking actions as the military strengthen, which on the other side can be seen as a hostile act by the adversary. In this way, misunderstandings escalate by increasing the possibility of initiating a war. Furthermore,

<sup>3</sup> EN: A matter of honour or glory, robbery, piracy and unbridled ride.

<sup>4</sup> EN: chaos, its meaning somehow is perceived as a lack of government

<sup>5</sup> EN: security dilemma

<sup>6</sup> EN: Wrong perception and actions of leader can bring to the outbreak of war

liberals think that republican regimes have lower chances in developing a war between them, and this is the essence of democracy peace theory. For other, the origins of war it is found the depths of “psikikës njerëzore”. (Ibid, 257).<sup>7</sup> Their aggressive behaviour can be explained with their primary interest of surviving, and accruing to them this inner biologically.

We can say, in terms of war, have been proposed constantly different solutions for this problem, from strategist, civils and also form militars in different periods in history. Moreover, there have been different points of view for the causes the leads people and countries to war. The diversity of ideas, analysis, views, has made increasingly difficult and kompleks the universally conception of war, as well as in defing the reasons why individuals and countries fight with each-other.

## PHILOSOPHICAL POINTS OF VIEW ON HUMAN NATYRE

Nature has made people equal in their physical and mental abilities. This equality in abilities gives birth to the equality of hope in achieving our goals and therefore, if two people desire the same and not the two of them can achieve and enjoy the same thing, they become enemies of one another. In order to achieve their goals, which mostly consist in self-preservation and only sometimes in pleasure, they try to exterminate one another. The most reasonable way to protect and secure oneself is to take preventive measures, i.e. to become master of as many subjects as possible by using “”forcës ose dinkërisë të bëhet zot i subjektit i të gjitha atyre që mundet, për aq kohë sa ai të bindet që nuk ka më ndonjë fuqi tjetër më të madhe sa ta vërë atë në rrezik” (Hobbes, 2002: 77).<sup>8</sup>

We can identify three factors in human nature, which may cause conflicts or war: 1. Rivalry (drives people to attack for personal profit); 2. Distrust (individuals do not trust one another); 3. Gear i.e. the thirst for glory (fame). As long as there does not exist a higher authority that keeps a tight rein on humans, “gjëndja e tyre është ajo që quhet luftë dhe kjo është lufta e të gjithëve kundër të gjithëve” (Ibid, 79-83).<sup>9</sup> A war is not just a single battle or the act of fighting; it is rather a whole period of time, during which humans’ willingness to combat is expressed clearly. The reason for this behaviour is that people live without safety, and the only things that give them some kind of safety are their minds and force/ strength. Under these circumstances, humans constantly feel insecure. Not only are they capable of causing damage to one another, in many cases they are advised to do so. In the state of nature, “lojë e gjallë dhe e përjetshme dyshimi, mosbesimi e padurimi për të përmbysur fuqinë e të tjerëve, një dëshirë për të dalë në krye të të tjerëve ose për të shtuar fuqinë në sajë të shkatërrimit të tyre” (Pufendorf, 200: 162).<sup>10</sup> Nature has given to everyone the right to everything. That means, in the state of nature, before people come up with arrangements and engage themselves into certain obligations, it is legitimate for everyone to do what they think is right to do and to undertake any „appropriate“ action against anyone, as well as to possess and use everything they can and everything they want. So, the reason why people want to hurt one another arises from the fact that many people want to do the same thing at the same time.

<sup>7</sup> EN: human psyche.

<sup>8</sup> EN: force and cunningness, until the individual is convinced that there is no other greater force that would put him or her in risk

<sup>9</sup> EN: they live under the condition of war, a war of all against all

<sup>10</sup> EN: there is a lot of suspicion, distrust and impatience to overthrow the others, a desire to come out on top of the others or to empower oneself by destroying the others

“ambicia që i vë ato midis gjithë këtyre rreziqeve dhe në kundërvënien me njëri-tjetrin” (Stumpf, 15).<sup>11</sup>

For others, “lufta është thellësisht një sëmundje” (Stoessinger, 2007: 341).<sup>12</sup> Even though „aggression might be born, war is a learned behaviour, therefore people may get rid of it“ (Ibid, 343). If we have a look back in history, we will see clearly that human nature has changed, and so can war as a phenomenon disappear in the future. Some assume a sort of “sociabiliteti të njerëzve edhe në gjëndjen e tyre natyrore, sociabilitet i cili mundësohet nga ligji natyror” (Kullashi, 2005: 191).<sup>13</sup> They do not see the state of nature as a state of law. The state of nature includes some sociability between people, a feeling of amiability and comradeship, and common normal norms. In spite of all the different perspectives regarding human nature, it is worth noticing that all these philosophical thoughts have something in common, they namely emphasize the aspect that all humans are in the state of nature equal in nature. Equality and freedom are integral features of the state of human nature. However, they differ with regard to the concept of freedom. For some, freedom cannot be understood as something boundless that takes no consideration of other people’s freedom. They also differ with regard to the common norms and laws. For some, from a philosophical point a view it should be concluded that the state of nature does not recognize any shared (common) norms and laws, while, according to others, there do exist shared (common) norms and laws that regulate life, health, freedom, wealth, so that an individual cannot vanquish another individual.

## CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The question “What makes people fight?” is not an easy one. Answering this question requires deep reflection. Every time that we will deal with that question and every time that we will think about possible answers, we will be confronted with new elements, new aspects, and that makes this issue quite difficult and complex. Finding an answer requires a preliminary study. There have always been conflicts and wars in Earth’s human history, and they have been conducted in different forms in terms of the tools and instruments used. However, the nature of the conflicts and wars has been and remained the same.

There is a strong debate on the reasons that lead people to fight. The debate is related to those who support the point of view that humans by their very own nature are characterized by rivalry against each other, by fear and mistrust toward the intentions of others, as well as by the desire to dominate others, as a way to escape the insecurity and the possible danger hailing from the others. Under these circumstances, in the absence of common laws and norms and in the absence of instances that would guarantee the rule of law, the rights of an individual are defined by his or her strength, by how much power they have in order to fulfil their desires. So, such a situation in which everyone can do what they want, can easily turn into a war of all against all. In other words, the absence of a political central authority leaves room for war. The opposite point of view in this debate is that people are not selfish, that they want a better life and that they want cooperation in order to ensure a better life for all. The freedom of individuals is not boundless and they cannot overlook or ignore others. There also exist common norms and laws and since all individuals are equal and independent, an

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<sup>11</sup> EN: Ambition puts people in danger and brings them to hostility toward one another

<sup>12</sup> EN: war is just a disease

<sup>13</sup> EN: sociability of humans in the state of nature, o sociability made possible by the law of nature

individual cannot do harm to others, as far as it concerns their life, health, freedom and wealth.

I think it would be really good and righteous if individuals would respect each other and behave well, but I think that this cannot be the case anytime and anywhere. People are usually selfish and put their interest first. The reasons that lead people to conflicts are related to their nature (their character), namely their immense desire to be mighty, dominant and able to confront the others. When an individual's interest coincides with someone else's interest, they are immediately declared as enemies, even though perhaps, little earlier, the person might have still been described as "a best friend". Humans are capable of doing anything in order to achieve their goals. Even when someone is apparently trying to find a peaceful solution to a problem, I am convinced that they still want and try to be the winner of the deal, i.e. to profit as much as possible. What makes people fight is related to their nature, to their constant struggle for survival. We can observe such a behaviour also in the way that governments try to accomplish their goals i.e. strengthen the position of the state in the international arena in order to have a better role and a better position in the arena of global politics. This would give a state more safety, more security. Also, every state tries to legitimise any policy and any action taken toward other states, so as to fulfil its national interests.

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