

Micro and macro theories in political science focus

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INTRODUCTION

Countries exist to interact with other nations and states in the international arena. Thus, no country or nation is an island unto itself. As a result of this, isolation from international activities becomes very impossible. In the course of interaction countries tries to gain advantage over other countries, and this has been the basis of conflict and disagreement. Sometimes, if this is not properly handled it will lead to war.

Scholars from different academic disciplines have posited many causes of war. Thus, the great debate over why war occurs has been approached from different dimension. For the historians, scholars like A. J. P. Taylor famously described wars as being like traffic accidents. But this approach has been criticized in the view that some leaders of states make conscious decision in embarking in war and this is not accidental. For the Psychologist, human beings, especially men are inherently violent.

This violence displacement where a person transfers their grievances into bias and hatred against other ethnic groups, nations, or ideologies “(Wikibooks: 2005). Other psychologists argue that the mental unbalanced state of men who rule and control a nation, combine with their human temperament has been the basis of the occurrence of war. “ This school argues leaders that seek war such as Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin were mentally abnormal; screening process, such as election, could prevent these types from coming to power, war would end”. (ibid.).

The Anthropologists see the occurrence of war as a fundamentally cultural, learnt by nurture rather than nature. The Sociologists have Plethora of perspective in seeing the occurrence of war. Some see war as the product of

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domestic conditions, with only the target of aggression being determined by international realities. Others that differ from the traditional approach argue that it is the decision of statesmen and the geopolitical situation that leads to war. The Economist argues war can be seen as an outgrowth of economic competition in a chaotic and competitive international system.

Having looked at the diverse and divergent viewpoint from which these scholars from different discipline has posited as the cause of war, this write up tend to look at the political aspect of why war occurs. As a result of this, various theories in the politicalsciencefield would be applied to enumerate the reason behind the occurrence of war.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Political science has been described as a hospitable umbrella for many disciplines all connected somehow with the operations of government or people acting in relation to government.

According to Alfred Cobban, as quoted in Oyediran (1998: 3), Political Science is a devise invented by university teachers for avoiding that dangerous subject politics without achieving Sciences”.

Thus, political science is that social science discipline that seek to study government and how politics that has to do with the use of power, rule and authority in any human relationship is being conducted.

The study of political science, the normative and the positive approach is adopted while scholars, such as Plato and Aristotle sought to identify the characteristics of politics, their causes and effects, leaving aside moral judgements about their goodness or badness. Therefore, it is seen that

modern political scientists adopt a positive theory to issues that pertain to the field of study, hence, " what ought to be". (Robert Dahl cited by Gerring, 2005: 2).

THEORY: Theory is defined as abstraction from the real world in order to give explanation to phenomenon. Thus, theories give explanation to the relationship that exists between variables. Theories are tested hypotheses that are generally accepted it is used through known facts to give an explanation to the unknown.

WAR: War can be defined as conflict that arises from disagreement, which result into military combat and the end results which is destruction of lives and properties.

War can be classified into civil wars and foreign wars. Civil wars, are those wars that occur within a nation or a state as a result of the emergence of factions that are loyal to an identified group. A typical example of civil war in contemporary time is the civil war in Liberia in the 1990s, between late Samuel Deo faction and Charles Taylor faction. Another typical example of civil war is the 1967 to 1970 civil war in Nigeria, between the Federal troop and the Biafra faction that seek to secede from the Nigeria Federation.

Foreign war is war that involves combat between or among sovereign nation or states. Example of this is World War 1 and World War II.

In recent times the war between Iraq and Kuwait, and the US Allied Forces in the 1990s.

Another version of war in contemporary political world is the cold war that had existed after the world war associated with the bipolar bloc i. e. the eastern

bloc and the western bloc. This cold war is unlike the real combat war where physical and military combat is carried out, but it has to do with war in international arena, that pertains to foreign policies and international pacts and agreement, that tend to be contended for:

This cold war has made many countries to support either of the two factions. But, some countries, like in Africa adopt a different stand, the Non Aligned Movement is pursued as the foreign policies in these black nation. The cold war suddenly collapse in 1989, this brought an end to the bipolar structure of the international system.

POLITICAL THEORIES ON THE OCCURRENCE OF WAR

Political theories on the emergence of state can be utilized to explain the occurrence of war. Here, the Hobbessian theory of state and the force theory are readily applicable to why nation engage in war.

The Hobbessian theory postulated by Thomas Hobbes, explain the human state of existence in what he called the “ state of nature”. According to him, “ nature has made man so equal in faculties of the body and mind and though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another is not considerable as that one man can claim to himself any benefit to which another may not possess as well as he” (Hobbes, 1946).

The equality of man here means they tend to nurse the same aspirations and desires, ends and the same hope. But the uniformity of aspiration tend to be evoke problem since the resources e. g. power, political influence, is a scarce resource that can not go round every body. Thus, it become problematic

when two persons desire the same thing, which they cannot both obtain, they are likely to become enemies and always will seek to destroy one another.

In applying this scenario to sovereign states, the scarce resources that each state seeks to obtain for itself, this brings about competition and invariably lead to the emergence of war, if such competition gets to the extreme and the level of tolerance becomes unbearable. According to Ighadola (2000: 12), " human competitiveness for status symbols are always characterized by fighting where this happens outside the preview of any settled and civilized state, the picture of the " state of nature" comes to the fore boldly".

The state of nature as stipulated by Thomas Hobbes, is the time when men lived without a common power to keep them in check; i. e. every man is a government and law unto himself, there is no formal contract to the establishment of state and government. In state of nature, war of every man against every man was the perceptual condition of human relations. Thus, man is brutal and exhibited a hostile tendency towards those around him. It is also argued that, " War, as Hobbes used the concept, did not necessarily denote actual fighting, rather it meant the disposition to fight" (ibid)

Man in the state of nature did not engage in perpetual warfare, he was only perpetually inclined to fight to acquire what he desired and to protect what he already possessed. The inclination in man to be aggressive in competition and fight is moderated by the fear of death. Thus, the disposition to fight to is further heightened by the absence of centralized authority. In the international political arena before the emergence of international organization like the United Nation, the broke out of World War I and the <https://assignbuster.com/micro-and-macro-theories-in-political-science-focus/>

emergence of World War II, is as a result of absence of a strong centralized International authority. The League of Nations collapsed as a result of the Second World War. This led to the emergence of the United Nations; that is acting as a centralized authority in the international arena, in preventing the outbreak of conflicts among nations or states.

Another angle of the Hobbessains theory sees Man's selfishness and self-seeking nature ensures, without a superior restraining force, the condition of the state of nature that would remain permanent. This results in a threat to the condusive actualization of human potentials and insecurity. In applying this to the emergence of wars among nations, it is seen that the selfishness and self-seeking nature of some nation has prompted them into encroaching into the rightful possession of other nation. In order to defend their possession, these other nation would recourse to protect itself by engaging in war. Most times, this has been the base of war among nations.

Thus, Hobbes has proffered a centralized authority that is imposed in one individual as a solution to avert this state of nature, so as to prevent the brutish and aggressive nature in man, and thus, reducing the outbreak of war.

Critics have pointed out that Hobbes advocacy of absolute power puts a hole in his argument. The central authority or sovereign should operate the law made, fairly and equitably among the people not absolute authority in one man. Thus, central power is advocated that is democratic, in place of the sovereign ruler of Hobbes. This is because the sovereign ruler is taken from society and has its own selfish desire, which could lead to autocratic rule, i.

e., he cannot be outside society and therefore cannot be above the law. (ibid: 15).

Another political theory that can be used to advocate for the emergence of war is the Marxist theory. Karl Marx's theory concentrates both on political and economic perspectives of the state. In his view, the society is divided into two main classes, i. e. the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and this has always been the driving force behind conflict in society and its attendant social change.

Marxist theory of war argues that all wars grow out of the class war. It sees wars as imperial ventures to enhance the power of the ruling class and divide the proletariat of the world by pitting them against each other for contrived ideals such as nationalism or religion. (Wikibooks, 2005).

Marx and Engels posited in *The German ideology* that with all the mischief's contradictions and crisis inherent in the capitalist mode of production, the proletariat bears the entire burden without enjoying its advantages, they become isolated from society. Having been driven to the wall, they are forced into the most decided antagonism to the other class because an alienated man is a revolutionary man. (Marx, et al, 1977).

Hence, Karl Marx sees wars as a natural outgrowth of the free market and class system, and will not disappear until a world revolution occurs. According to Ighodalo (2000: 20), " the expectation of Marx is that the destruction of the capitalist system would lead to the end of class antagonism, since the basis of its property ownership would have been

eliminated thereby creating a classless society where all give according to his/ her ability and receive according to his/ her needs.”

Another theory of the evolution of state that can be applied to the reason why war occurs is the Force theory. This school of thought holds that the state is a creation of conquest and coercion of the weak by the strong. The state was seen as evil because it was a way of oppressing the poor. However, German writers of the 19th century, contended that force was an essential attribute of a state. (Oyediran, 1998: 19). The Force theory can really be adduce as a basis why war emerge between nation.

Countries that are strong and have mighty military force had in the past annexed weak countries to themselves. They succeeded in doing this by embarking on war with them. In 1939, Finland's decision to resist the invasions and annexation aggression of Soviet led to the Winter War. “ Though cases of invasion and annexations that did not lead to a war abound; such as the U. S. led invasion of Haiti in 1994, the Nazi invasions of Austria and Czechoslovakia preceding the Second World War, and the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in 1940.

CONCLUSION

The different Political Theorist has directed their argument on the reason why war occurs, even though not in the same tone and direction, the fact that the selfish interest and self- seeking nature of man and government, has been identified as a major reason why war has been a recurrent factor in the international arena. Even internally, where civil war occurs within the boundary of a country this has retained the same causal factor. The fact is traceable down line immemorial of historical war among nations.

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Furthermore, the scarce resource, such as power has been a basis for the eruption of conflicts among nations, since these resource cannot go round, it tend to be conflictual.

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