

Can killing in war ever be justified? essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



In a modern society such as our own today, we as a collective generally condemn the act of homicide or the taking of human life such that it has been intricately integrated into our legal systems. But why is this so? Is it that we find that nothing can justify the loss of a human life, however innocent? What is clear is that for whatever reason people find to kill, we instantly deem it unacceptable. As justified as this would appear, our value for the sacredness of life is only jurisdictionally applicable. So under what circumstances are we exempt from our own laws of taking another's life? Over the millennia, wars have defined nations and society, carving the very history of humanity. Even today, in particular conditions, we found ourselves susceptible to the innate nature of war. It was not uncommon that much of these involved the brutal and unrelenting slaughter of man, much of which went ultimately unpunished. This would imply that during war, there is a void of our previously held value for human life, finding our justification for war a greater cause. If so then, what is a just war? How can we justify hypocritically killing human life in war if we denounce it so much?

In 13th century, western philosopher Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote a publication documenting and outlining Jus in Bellum theory (the right to war), notating what was traditionally considered implicit "rules" and common "moral values" when it came to one's conduct in war. These involved, notions of minimising loss of innocent civilian life, settling the war motivating rationale as promptly as possible and restricting infrastructural damages. First, war must occur for a good and just purpose rather than for self-gain (for example, "in the nation's interest" is not just) or as an exercise of power. ☞ Second, just war must be waged by a properly instituted authority

such as the state. Third, peace must be a central motive even in the midst of violence. This was further elaborated by proceeding philosophers, the school of Salamanca who went on to state “ just” motives for a war. These for example included In self-defense, as long as there is a reasonable possibility of success. If failure is a foregone conclusion, then it is just a wasteful spilling of blood. Preventive war against a tyrant who is about to attack.