


Chapter 5

War: International Conflict – The Neverending Story of the Axe and the Tree

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the complex nature of war, examining its evolution, societal impacts, and philosophical foundations, highlighting war is not just a violent conflict but a social process influenced by political goals and power dynamics. Historically, war has varied in its brutality, with ancient conflicts often seen as more honourable compared to modern warfare. The emergence of agriculture and structured societies marked the beginning of organized warfare, driven by competition for resources and territorial control. The analysis critiques traditional terminologies advocating for a more nuanced understanding of war as a mode of inter-political relations beyond the simple binary of peace and conflict, in essence, providing a comprehensive exploration of war, challenging conventional views and suggesting that a deeper understanding can emerge from examining the intricate dynamics at play. It concludes that war is a universal phenomenon, not inherent to humanity but a product of specific social and environmental conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Unless a nation's life faces peril, war is murder - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

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Robert Frost declared that when two roads diverged in a wood, he took the one less travelled by. That had made all the difference. In the poem, however, both paths are equally viable. There is a choice that is available and taken. The same may be said of war. War or armed conflict is a social process. On the one hand, the efficiency of each group's inner workings defines what may be called an army's strength (Yigit, 2022). On the other hand, struggle and confrontation follow social logic in achieving political goals. The opposition of forces created by belligerent groups is not mechanical, as the opposition of two natural forces. To understand military confrontation, one must add the logic of ruse - or artifice - to the logic of strength. The primary purpose is to understand the real ends of the military confrontation, the ends for which the policy must build the means of its power.

Starting any search with a question of philosophy of knowledge may seem incongruous, but one will ultimately benefit from it. Indeed, before studying a phenomenon as comprehensive as war, one must determine how to seek to understand the object that one proposes to examine in this chapter. The ways open to our understanding to pursue the aim of fragmenting and recomposing the complex objects that are constantly presented to us by daily experience are multiple and lend themselves with more or less success to the different domains of knowledge. Moreover, war constitutes a reality so complex and prone to arousing the frenzy of passions that one must cautiously take one's first steps in its examination.

If, therefore, one hopes to come out of the deep, dark forest and contemplate the object that previously deceived our impressions, in order to be able to understand a more satisfactory number of cogs and mechanisms, it is necessary to choose a direction and firmly stand by it. However, choosing a direction of the mind can be understood in several ways. Descartes explicitly advises us to choose one and only one direction so as not to fall prey to doubt by constantly retracing our steps and destroying our previous efforts (Descartes, 2024). On the other hand, the choice of path is left to the autonomous freedom of our understanding.

Standing by one's choice, one must have made it in full awareness and understand the general attitude adopted. The question of why is a matter of intellectual disposition; the question of how remains. This is the limit of the forest metaphor; otherwise, it is beneficial and enlightening: simply put, the direction is not and cannot be chosen randomly. To do this, one must describe the direction of mind chosen to extract ourselves from the deep, dark forest and the consequences one finds by temperament and training due to the choices that guide this chapter. This clarification encompasses the philosophical and methodological presuppositions underlying the assertions made (Yigit, 2024). Hence, there is no surprise nor room for any epistemological naivety.

What does one generally mean when speaking of war? As a reality experienced by our ancestors and transmitted to our contemporary system of thought, war is

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