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CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

Over time, numerous studies have identified and analyzed the causes that led to armed conflicts. Unquestionably, political-military or armed conflicts have played a decisive role in universal history. Most often, they ended – for large human communities – with what we can call, in current terms, regime change, loss of independence, fragmentation or dissolution of previously constituted entities, the surrender or gain of new territories, great losses that could reach the dissolution of some military powers. This document aims to bring to the fore the armed conflict seen through the influences brought by past events in conjunction with the events of the present, in order to identify which are the main reasons of armed conflicts.

KEYWORDS: aggression, conflict, states, theories, war

1. Introduction

Armed conflict has become an activity which engages both informational and social level. This is possible due to the fact that the military system and society are part of the information age.

"Each armed conflict is part of the larger family of conflicts, which are inevitable presences in all areas of human activity and are liable to change. Each armed conflict is part of the larger family of conflicts, which are inevitable presences in all areas of human activity and are liable to change" (Stoica-Constantin, n.d.).

The circumstances in which a particular action takes place vary from country to country, and the last five centuries have shown us that war is not unavoidable, but must be fought. But for example, Sweden and Switzerland have resolved their conflict situations by avoiding the armed conflicts of 1809 and 1815.

Therefore, it is the governments of states and their leaders who make the decision to give rise to armed conflict, not the aggressiveness of political leaders as individuals and of national character.

2. Definition of Conflict – Concept

Armed conflict means wars in their plurality and other forms of violent protest through lethal weapons which oppose social groups or a social group and a state. Armed conflict, on the other hand, is an organized, collective and violent confrontation between two or more actors, whether state or non-state actors.

"Practically, any conflict is defined by the following elements: The existence of two or more «parties»/«systems» (persons, groups, communities), the existence of needs,

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goals, individual values, resources, or characteristics that are (or only appear to a party or parties) different or mutually incompatible, and the presence of emotions (prior, accompanying, or post-conflict)" (Stoica-Constantin, n.d.). Conflict is a social condition that occurs when two or more actors pursue mutually exclusive or mutually incompatible purposes. In fact, *"conflict is the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups/organizations"* (Miall, Ramsbotham, & Woodhouse, 2000, p. 19).

"Conflicts may arise between parties pursuing the same objective or between parties having very different interests; conflict may also exist without mutually exclusive interests" (Lucinescu, n.d., p. 100). There is often a distinction between armed conflict and war. *"The notion of armed conflict is complex, surpassing the notion of war, with which it is often assimilated"* (Lucinescu, n.d., p. 100).

3. Genesis of Armed Conflict

Many complex factors lead to armed conflicts within States. Some conditions that increase the likelihood of war include the inability of governments to provide good basic governance and the protection of their own populations. In many cases, weak governments have little means to stop the eruption and spread of violence these better organized and more legitimate governments could have prevented or stopped. Armed conflict can also be seen as the struggle for power by a part of the elite that has been excluded from exercising power in authoritarian systems of single-party government.

Countries affected by war also generally suffer from inequalities between social groups. This is rather than poverty, which seems to be a critical factor, although poor countries are much more likely to be involved in armed conflicts than rich countries. Whether based on ethnicity, religion, national identity, or economic class, inequalities tend to lead to unequal access to political power, which too often blocks the path of peaceful change. Economic decline and mismanagement are also associated with violent conflicts, in part because the policies of a shrinking economy are inherently subject to conflicts over those of economic growth. In some cases, the impact of radical market-oriented economic reforms, the structural adjustment imposed without compensatory social policies, is seen as an obstacle to political stability.

Ethnic and religious animosities, massive violations of human and minority rights, and ethnic cleansing resulting from extreme forms of nationalism propagated by hate media are factors that exacerbate conflict. The relative ease with which arms trade is practiced around the world, especially in countries and regions affected by civil wars, is also a contributing factor. While not in itself a cause of conflict, the high availability of these weapons tends to fuel them, undermine peace agreements in situations where combatants have not been fully disarmed, increase violence and crime in society, and hinder economic and social development. Massive and induced population movements have also contributed to the spread of conflicts, as in Central and West Africa.

Over time, specialists have asked themselves many questions, such as why States use force in their relations and have made efforts to explain this. The conclusion most of them have reached is that the origins of armed conflicts are diversified and fall into three levels of analysis, namely individual, state and systemic (at the level of the international system).

The first level of analysis from the perspective of human nature and aggression captures the fact that all wars between States have or do not have the starting point in the decisions of political leaders who determine by what they decide whether the armed conflict will take place or not. Precisely for this reason it is necessary to

consider the relationship between war as a social phenomenon and individuals, and this will refer to the central problem of human nature.

Based on the analysis of the physiognomy of wars and the element that determines their beginning, Sigmund Freud concluded that aggression has as its essence the genetic programming of the human being and the characteristics of his psychology. Konrad Lorenz, by determining that homosapien are among the most aggressive species, showed that the human being is one of the few species that practice intraspecific aggression (that is, it usually kills individuals belonging to its own species). *"Most species practice interspecific aggression (killing only individuals belonging to other species, one exception being cannibalism practiced by some tropical fish species and some monkeys under certain circumstances)"* (Konrad, 1963).

But other specialists have concluded that war is what mankind has acquired as a trait and part of cultural heritage, not a consequence of man's biological nature. Robert Gurr points out that *"aggression is a result of socialization, being acquired early in the course of human life, and is therefore an acquired trait and not a biologically determined behavior"* (Gurr, 1995, pp. 212-217).

Of course, there are other opinions on this subject, so other specialists have used methods of studying behavior to analyze international relations and have raised questions about the possibility of situations where entire nations predispose States of war, therefore, whether that national character determines aggression. The elements highlighted by the national character are the common attributes and values that the members of a nation share. The second level of analysis is carried out from the perspective of the internal characteristics of States and their involvement in war which is determined by differences in the political system, education level, economic performance, ethnic homogeneity, geographical location, size, military capacity, national wealth, population dynamics and ideology.

The third level of analysis is conducted from the perspective of cycles of war and peace in the international system. The fact that the basis of future wars lies precisely in past wars, it can be said that the second World War was a continuation in a different way of World War I, just like those in the Middle East.

According to the theory of the transition of power, inequality in the political, economic and military capacity of competing States or groups of States increases the possibility of war. Peace is best preserved when there is a balance of the capacity of the advantaged and disadvantaged States. The aggressor will usually be part of a small group of powerful unsatisfied dav countries. Also, the most common aggressor will be the hatred of the weaker powers in this group (Organski & Kugler, 1980).

Poor economic conditions are the most important long-term causes of intra-state armed conflicts. Repressive political systems are also susceptible to war, particularly during periods of transition. The degradation of renewable resources (in particular soil erosion, deforestation and water scarcity) can also contribute significantly to the likelihood of a violent conflict, but are generally not as important as political and economic factors. Ethnic diversity is not a cause of armed conflict, but the parties to a conflict are often defined by ethnicity.

Unquestionably, political-military or armed crises have played a decisive role in universal history. Most often, they ended – for large human communities – with what we can call, in current terms, regime change, loss of independence, fragmentation or dissolution of previously constituted entities, the surrender or gain of new territories, great losses that could reach the dissolution of some military powers.

4. Conflicts Theory

Conflict causes interaction at a level more intense than competition. Although conflict, competition, and collaboration are inherently interdependent, conflict occurs when the goals, goals, needs, or values of competing groups collide, and the result is violence, though unnecessary.

The type of political regime captures many aspects, such as the fact that the democratic countries in conflict have not used war as a way of solving problems, but other methods because that culture of democratic States sets its own norms against aggression, and the limits that are imposed on the choices of political leaders are strengthened by institutionalized procedures. The fact that citizens participate in political life and civil liberties, such as the expression of freedom of speech and a free press, causes other members of society to react if they are unjustified and thus increases the fear of bearing the consequences in elections, as a result, they are discouraged from taking measures such as entering a war.

"Another concern is the frequency with which democratic States have intervened militarily not only in autocratic States, but also in other democratic States, to force them to accelerate democratic reforms. Peace based on democracy can be jeopardized precisely because States cannot become mature democracies overnight, they go through a period of transition, in which the politics of the masses specific to democracy is mixed with the politics of the elites, specific to autocratic systems" (Fukuyama, 1992).

Nationalism is highlighted by the spark that can give rise to war, namely love and loyalty to the state. As a provocation to war, it may be considered the moment when it undertakes to sustain the power and prosperity of the country, contributing to the moral, physical and political strength of the state, the desire of citizens to determine their identity and personal affirmation with the help of the state and the institutions they lead. The combination of racism and nationalism is one of the most powerful, virulent and intense movements of the contemporary era.

Ethological theory: behaviorist biologists and psychologists have used animal behavior or ethology studies to illustrate possible ideas about human behavior. People often ignore the fact that we are part of the animal Kingdom. However, we should be cautious and not directly transfer conclusions about animal behavior to humans. Both human and animal behavior are complex phenomena involving motivators such as territoriality, dominance, sexuality, and survival.

Instinctual or innate theory of aggression: older psychologists have often postulated the idea that there was an innate or biological instinct that would predispose people to aggression. This theory combined elements of early psychological studies (Freud's "death instinct", for example) and Darwinian social theories of the struggle for survival. This theory was later discredited by biologists, who did not believe that such a mechanism existed. The roots of human conflict must be sought in human nature (genetic) or in education (environment). The scientists of Seville were firmly on the side of the environment. However, as recent genetic findings illustrate (gene map, for example), the debate is far from over.

Frustration-aggression theory: the basic assumption is that any aggression, whether interpersonal or international, has its root causes in the frustration of one or more actors due to the failure to achieve the goal. In other words, conflict can emerge from failure to achieve personal or group goals and resulting frustration. Since the demand for basic needs always exceeds the possibilities of being satisfied, any human conflict can be explained by the failure to obtain what is necessary for man.

Social learning theory: it is based on the assumption that aggression is not innate

or instinctual, but learned through the process of socialization. The individual acquires aggressive attributes because they are learned at home, at school, and through their interaction with the human environment in general. Interaction in society helps to direct and focus stored aggression on enemies. This is an important concept, particularly when the conflict is ethno-national or sectarian.

Social identity theory (SIT): what is specific and important in social identity theory is that it is based on normal psychological processes that operate under all circumstances, not just in the conditions of conflict between groups. We create our social identities in order to simplify our external relations. Social identity theory has at least helped social psychologists recognize that individuals in a group are different at the level and that because of these differences, forms of group action emerge. In other words, what social identity theory has realized is that it has described a process that places the individual in the group and at the same time places the group in the individual.

Decision theory and game theory: have their origins in the 20th century rational actor model the rational actor model was developed by economists to explain human economic behavior. It assumes that people make choices and make decisions based on informed choices and weighing opportunities. The theory of the game is based on the model of the rational actor in that it is based on the belief that there is a rational decision-making process, which is fundamental for engaging in human conflict.

Theory of enemy systems: the essence of the theory is the hypothesis that humans have a deep-rooted psychological need to dichotomize and establish enemies and allies. This phenomenon occurs at both individual and group levels. This is an unconscious need that feeds conscious relationships, especially in our group life. This is especially important with regard to the formation of ethnic and national group identities and behavior.

Human needs theory: it is based on the assumption that humans have basic needs that must be met in order to keep societies stable. Participants in conflict situations struggle compulsively in their institutional environments at all levels of society to cover the primary and universal needs such as security, identity, recognition and development. They are increasingly striving to gain control over their environment, which is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these needs. This fight cannot be fought, it is a primary struggle. The struggle for primary needs is theoretically linked to the frustration-aggression theory, which is based on the stimulus-response hypothesis. Frustration of not meeting these needs leads to aggression and, implicitly, to conflict. What distinguishes the theory of human needs from that of frustration vs. aggression is that the former focuses only on absolute requirements (needs), while the latter also refers to shortcomings and desires.

Burton's conflict resolution theory: professor Burton made the following difference between conflict resolution, management and ending: Management is done through alternative dispute resolution skills and can stop or limit conflict; the end of the conflict is done through authoritarian and legal processes and can be imposed by the elites; the resolution of the conflict means the liquidation of the conflict by analytical methods that lead to the root of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to management or ending, leads to a point where the product is seen by all parties involved as a permanent solution to the problem.

Maturity theory refers to psychological States that encourage parties involved in serious conflicts to take the step toward negotiation. It was proposed by William Zartman in 1989 as a way to explain the approach of wars to the peace process and to help mediators assess the timing of their conflict. Later, in 2000, Zartman specified two conditions that are necessary, but not

sufficient, for the parties to enter into negotiations:

a) an impasse affecting both parties, they becoming aware that they cannot overcome the impasse by escalating the conflict;

b) the perception by both sides of a way out of the impasse – they provide that *"a negotiated solution is possible"*. Dean G. Pruitt revised the theory of maturity and renamed it the *"theory of preparation"*. He argues that the preparation of an actor to resolve the conflict depends on the motivation to end the conflict and the optimism about the success of the negotiation.

The attack theory is the latest and explains the cyclicality of wars and is also called the long cycle theory. It claims that during the last five hundred years periods of global war have cyclically alternated with a so-called general war that they have erupted about once every century and at irregular intervals. The economic, political and military fields are responsible for determining the frequency with which major wars have periodically arisen throughout modern history. From the perspective of the long cycle a great power has risen to a hegemonic position at an interval of about one hundred years, such as the following periods determined by the measure of the degree of dominance of maritime power: Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands in the early 16th and 17th centuries, England in the early 18th century and the U.S. at the end of World War II.

5. Conclusions

Conflict causes interaction at a level more intense than competition. Conflict, competition, and collaboration are inherently interdependent, conflict occurs when the goals, goals, needs, or values of competing groups collide, and the result is violence, though not necessary at all.

"In times of hegemony, the military power of some countries was monopolized, as was trade, determining for the most part the rules of the system, but the decline in the legitimacy of the effective power of the hegemons was due to the assumption of responsibilities greater than the real possibilities, the enormous cost of maintaining hegemony and the emergence of a powerful enemy. When the threat to the rule of support established by the hegemon power increased sufficiently, a global war broke out after a long time, every century. Upon the completion of each new war, a new world leader achieved hegemony" (Modslcki, 1978, pp. 214-235), and a new cyclical process begins again.

In my opinion, currently, a fusion of enemy systems theory and human needs theory provides the most comprehensive and objective explanations of conflict. However, the explanation is not enough. Burton's theory of conflict resolution provides a holistic approach to conflict resolution. It provokes the acquisition of Western political thought, which believes that power is based and exercised through elites who establish norms of behavior. However, it remains to be seen whether this approach will be accepted by the participants in the conflict and used for their benefit to resolve it.

In accordance with the evidence of history, it can be said and argued that the international system in which war is possible will have the possibility of being replaced by a system based on peace, and what is happening now demonstrates that the classical war between States has ceased the domination of international affairs. Thus, if the war is to disappear, in this case armed conflict and acts of violence may be maintained within the States.

I strongly believe that the origin of the conflicts will no longer be state, national or ideological, but cultural. Although nation-States will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, the main conflicts in global politics will occur between nations and groups belonging to different civilizations. Global politics will

be dominated by the clash of civilizations. The battle lines of the future will be the rift that divides civilizations, and the conflicts between civilizations will be the last phase in the evolution of the conflicts humanity will know.

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