The international political economy of war, critical theory and change: addressing the root of armed conflict.

María San Martin Claver

Supervisor: Andy Storey
University College of Dublin
Abstract

An accurate understanding of the causes of armed conflict is essential for both its prevention and resolution. The most prominent theories of contemporary conflict, those developed since the Second World War, are reviewed in Chapters I and II. The insight gained through all these years of research and debate is invaluable and of great use. However, many questions regarding the explanation of armed conflict remain unanswered. As conclusions are not definitive, a critical assessment of these theories from an international political economy perspective is carried out in Chapter III. This approach highlights important questions to be included in the research on the causes of war: the significance of history, and in particular the global political and economic interconnections in the formation of the structures of society, when studying social phenomena; the central role of cultural and social particularities in the configuration of social conflict; the essential inclusion of the structural dimension in giving an account of the underlying causes of war; and the need for approaching armed conflict with the clear intention of promoting the change of all those aspects of our society, culture and system that contribute to the outburst of social violence and all its human and material costs.
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ...................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter I. The conflict resolution field and the explanations of armed conflict .......... 2

1. Introduction to conflict resolution ........................................................................ 2

   1.1. Terminology ................................................................................................. 3

   1.2. Traditional approaches to conflict resolution ............................................... 5

   1.3. Peace research and conflict resolution ......................................................... 7

2. The evolution of the conflict resolution field ............................................................... 8

   2.1. Preliminary developments: 1918-1945 ......................................................... 9

   2.2. The second generation - Foundations and Institutionalisation: 1946-1969 11

   2.3. The third generation - Consolidation and expansion: 1970-1989 ..............20

Chapter II. Contemporary conflict resolution ................................................................. 30

1. Incidence, trends and costs of contemporary armed conflicts ....................... 30

2. Theories of conflict since the end of the Cold War ............................................ 37

   2.1. Global explanations of war ......................................................................... 37

   2.1.1. Old and New wars .............................................................................. 37

   2.1.2. Environmental conflicts ...................................................................... 44

   2.2. Regional explanations of war ..................................................................... 44

2.3. Explanations of war centred in the State .................................................... 45

2.4. Explanations in the societal level ............................................................... 45

2.5. Explanations of war at the individual level: the Greed v. Grievance debate 46

Chapter III. The international political economy of armed conflict ....................... 60

1. Critical theory and political economy: the challenge posed by Robert Cox ..... 62

2. Critical theory and international political economy in explaining armed conflict. 64

   2.1. Reviewing theories of conflict from an IPE perspective ................................. 64

   2.2. Exploring the potential for structural change and the ways to precipitate the change ................................................................. 71

Conclusion .......................................................................................................................74

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................76
The international political economy of war, critical theory and change: addressing the root of armed conflict

San Martin Claver, Maria