

Assignment 1

Course: **War and Peace**

Instructor: **Andrew Santora**

Student: **Jakob Werle**

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With so many large-scale events filling up the history books, the question of human nature can be discussed for almost any of them. Considering that war and peace times are such defining parts history, it begs the question as to whether mankind is destined to warfare or whether one day all of humanity will come together in peace. Based on a formal definition of war, the outlook of total peace does not look promising for humanity. In *War is Not Over* by Fazal and Poast, the argument is made that war is not going anywhere, but it certainly is changing.

Humans are inherently warlike because it is rooted within the systems they have evolved to have. At many levels, this is observable in people when one considers what it takes to change another’s mind. For example, when two well mannered people have a disagreement about where to go for dinner, it is quite simple for them to negotiate a place to go. If this is escalated to something more controversial, such as abortion rights, even well-mannered people have trouble finding common ground. At the furthest end of the “disagreement spectrum” one can find the most long standing and controversial topics that are tied to the cultural, religious, and ethical values of uncountable groups of people. Just like in a small disagreement, people want to bend the will of their opponent to match their own. But, at this heightened level of challenge, the tactics used can risk the lives and resources of a group. This is a relatively loose description of war; yet it serves to connect the idea that warfare is tied to the nature of mankind so long as mankind continues to disagree with one another.

Fazal and Paust argue that while war is not going anywhere, the methods used and results of wars are changing. According to databases such as the Correlates of War, (CoW) the number of casualties from wars has drastically declined which can be correlated to advancements in medical technology. Moreover, CoW requires a conflict to sustain 1000+ deaths to be considered a war, which augments the definition of warfare all together (Fazal & Poast, n.d.). This begs the question of whether war will still take place if less people are actively fighting. Going back to the traditional definition of war, which ultimately boils down to bending one’s opponent to their own will by any means necessary, Fazal and Paust must agree that war is going to continue in humanity. One point they make is that each country holds one another at gun point. Since the mid-twentieth century, Nuclear weapons have become so deadly that states aren’t willing to risk millions of lives (Fazal & Poast, n.d.). This is seconded by Jan Gotlib Bloch, who wrote in 1899’s *Is War Now Impossible?* that “the improved deadliness of weapons meant that before long you will see they will never fight at all”, yet World War 1 broke out a few centuries later. Another point that Fazal and Pause make is that the duration of war and peace vary off one another, such as WW1 and WW2. The small breakout wars, (which have saturated the twenty-first century), don’t seem to live up to the same definition, however, the conflicts and groups involved are different than just 100 years ago. Global issues due persist and likely won’t go away. But, as seen in the variety of war styles of the last thousands of years, it can take time and opportunity for war to start.

When it comes to conflict intervention, mankind isn’t likely to give up war any time soon. It is rooted within humans to push each other to the edge to get what they want, and unfortunately that takes a toll on society. Fazal and Poast’s passage, *War is Not Over*, largely agrees that mankind is inherently warlike. In addition, they offer an interesting analysis on how the way in which the world goes to battle can change over time, regardless of whether war is sticking around.

# References

Fazal, T. M., & Poast, P. (n.d.). *What the Optimists Get Wrong About Conflict*.