



War and Religion

Journal:	<i>International Encyclopedia of Ethics</i>
Manuscript ID:	Ethics.5000.08-0635.R1
Wiley - Manuscript type:	5000 Words
Classification:	Politics < Subject, Buddhism < Religion < Subject, Christianity < Religion < Subject, Confucianism < Religion < Subject, Islam < Religion < Subject, Judaism < Religion < Subject, war and conflict < Key Topics, violence < Key Topics
Keywords/Index Terms:	war, just war, pacifism, non-violence, international law, Augustine, Aquinas, Vitoria, Grotius, Buddhist ethics, Christian ethics, Islamic ethics, Hindu ethics, Confucian ethics

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

War and Religion

Word Count: 5300

In a justly famous essay on “The Social Psychology of the World’s Religions,” Max Weber (See also Weber, Max) noted the particular role of religion in the legitimation of social and political order. Politics has to do with the distribution and exercise of power. Yet the historical record indicates that human beings wish for social life to be about something more than “mere” power. Most, if not all communities develop ways of talking that suggest the possibility of distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate (or just and unjust) forms of order. The resulting vocabularies often involve the kinds of things associated with the concept “religion”: appeals to scripture, citations of myths or tales of ancestors long removed, law codes understood as the commands of deities, and so on. (See also Political Ethics; Power)

Given that one of the ways people obtain and secure power has to do with uses of lethal force, it is hardly strange that war is similarly subject to vocabularies of legitimation. Indeed, as the Prussian military philosopher Karl von Clausewitz (d. 1831) put it, war is an extension of politics. And for many communities, the evaluation of the uses of military power (like evaluations of political order itself) involves appeals to religion.

With this as a starting point, the following essay aims to chart the most important patterns by which communities of human beings have related religion and war. The first of these may be called “the just war idea,” in which the presupposition is that the nature of social and political life is such that fighting is sometimes necessary. The goal is then to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate uses of lethal force by answering questions like “Who can authorize fighting?”, “For what causes?”, and “What means will be employed?” The second pattern may be called “pacifist,” in the sense that it involves a rejection of war as an appropriate means of addressing social and political conflicts. Such rejection may be total; more often, however, the pacifist idea is associated with a particular group or class of people, so that it takes on a “vocational” color. By means of these broad categories, one may sort much of the material relevant to a study of war and religion. A final section of this essay will ask the role of just war and pacifism in the contemporary search for global norms and institutions of governance. In that connection, the historic tendencies of particular communities may be usefully compared with the various modern attempts to develop an international law of war. (See also Just War Theory, History of; Pacifism)

The Just War Idea

The term “just war” translates the Latin *bellum iustum*. As that suggests, the notion is most directly tied to ancient Rome. In his treatise *De Officiis* (“On Duties”), Cicero (d. 43 BCE) connects the idea with the practice of the *fetiales* (the priests of ancient Roman religion), who were responsible to invite a potential enemy to come to terms and to declare a state of war if agreement was not forthcoming. According to Cicero, the role of the priests indicates that a just war is (1) a public act, authorized by officials representing the interests of Rome; (2) fought in accord with real interests of state; and (3) honorably conducted. The first criterion distinguishes war from private vengeance, revolution, and other more “anarchic” forms of violence. The second suggests that public officials ought not send armies in order to increase their own wealth or to avenge personal slights. And

the third means that, as a general rule, Rome's armies avoided direct attacks on women, children, the old, and others not involved in fighting, as well as avoiding the use of nefarious means (poisons, lying, breach of treaties, and the like). Cicero notes some historic exceptions to these norms, particularly in cases like the Punic Wars (264-146 BCE) the last of which ended with the total destruction of Carthage. He professes not to be sure about the reasons for such exceptions, but is confident that such extreme measures were not taken without cause.

Cicero's account provided one source for Christian adaptation of the just war idea. Ambrose of Milan (d. 397 CE) actually styled his account after Cicero's, giving his treatise the title *De Officiis Ministrorum* ("On the Duties of the Clergy"). Ambrose, himself a public official when he was suddenly elected bishop (at the time, he had not been baptized, much less ordained a priest), interpreted biblical texts as illustrations of the sorts of virtues a Roman noble should cultivate. Thus the story of Moses' resort to lethal force in defense of a Hebrew slave (Exodus 2: 11-12) confirms that those who are able ought to come to the aid of victims of aggression. At the same time, the demand for total destruction of enemies in the book of Joshua is treated along the lines of Cicero's exceptional cases: such a command is not the ordinary rule, but in particular cases there is a reason—in this case, tied to God's command.

Ambrose's account may be the earliest statement of the just war idea by a Christian official. His influence on subsequent tradition pales in comparison with that of Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), however. (See also Augustine, Saint) It was Augustine who placed the notion thoroughly into a biblical-Christian discourse. In doing so, he transformed just war into a means by which God provides for the maintenance of the relative balance between peace, order, and justice that is possible in a fallen world. For Augustine, the Bible is the great record of God's dealings with human beings. Created in God's image (and therefore, characterized by an original goodness), human beings turned away from their true nature. They thus became unable to resist the various tendencies Augustine associated with the will to power. In political and military affairs, this means that the strong prey on the weak, and do so either for selfish gain, out of desires for worldly fame, or—to put it bluntly—just because they can. The redemption made possible through Jesus Christ addresses this, though the full impact of divine grace will only be experienced in the kingdom of God (and thus, beyond history). In the meantime, Christians try to mitigate the harshness of a sinful world, participating in political and military affairs in ways that maintain peace, order, and justice. Just wars are thus God's means for limiting evil. Those who participate must take care, however. The very passions that incite evildoers to violence can also arise in those who resist evil. Hatred, envy, pride, and the like are powerful, and threaten to subvert even those who comprehend this and seek grace to resist. It is best, Augustine wrote, to allow "necessity" to kill the enemy. To that end, just wars must never be matters of private vengeance. As with Cicero and Ambrose, so with Augustine: wars are just when authorized by designated public authorities, for approved causes, and conducted in accord with right intention or norms of honor. To this, Augustine added a twist which will be taken up below: that is, that the role of clergy, monks, and others devoted to religious life is inconsistent with fighting in war. The service such people render involves reminding others of the proper reasons for fighting, and counseling them with respect to the means of grace.

As Bishop of Hippo, Augustine personified this advisory role. Some of his most influential pronouncements on the just war idea occur in correspondence with Boniface (d. 432), a Roman general and provincial governor of North Africa. During the late fourth and early fifth centuries, Boniface and other authorities in the “western” portion of the Empire attempted to fend off repeated invasions by tribes from the north. Augustine intended his advice on just war as support for Boniface’s attempt to preserve order. Ultimately, the effort failed. Augustine died in 430 during an extended siege of Hippo. Boniface’s death followed shortly. The portion of the Empire with which they were most concerned fell into disarray (although in the East, successive rulers in Constantinople maintained order for another thousand years.) And Christian just war discourse was largely dormant, until Charlemagne (d. 814) and his successors reunited portions of the Western empire, fostering developments that ultimately led to the political order of medieval Christendom.

As this suggests, the development of just war discourse in some sense depends on a stable and friendly social-political environment. Thomas Aquinas’ (d. 1274) succinct statement of the requirements for a war to be just (right authority, just cause, and right intention) summarized the results of several centuries in which Christian interpreters updated the ancient tradition for their time. (See also Aquinas, Saint Thomas) Thomas’ comments on the crusading ideal so prevalent in his time are also of interest. Following Augustine, he argues that clergy and other “religious” ought not participate directly in fighting. They play the role of spiritual advisors. Here, one thinks immediately of Pope Urban II (d. 1099) and his sermons exhorting Christian rulers to send troops to fight against Muslims. Interestingly, Thomas writes that there may be a just cause for such fighting, assuming that Muslim authorities hinder Christians making pilgrimage to holy sites. He also says that such fighting may ultimately be unjust, however, in that it does more harm than good.

Thomas’ statement of just war criteria provides the background for one stream of early modern just war thinking. The Spanish Catholics Francisco de Vitoria (d. 1546) and Francisco Suarez (d. 1617) brought the just war idea into discussions of Spanish policy. Commenting on developments in the Americas and elsewhere, their accounts take the crusading ideal off the table (as de Vitoria wrote, “difference of religion is not a just cause of war”), while placing greater emphasis on right or honorable conduct as a measure of right intention. It is not always possible for human beings to tell which side truly possesses a just cause, they wrote. Thus, the test of justice is often which side fights in ways that avoid direct targeting of noncombatants, and honor the principle that the means employed in war should be proportionate, in the sense of necessary to the achievement of a legitimate military goal.

The ideas of these Catholic writers are best viewed in relation to the Protestants Alberico Gentili (d. 1608) and Hugo Grotius (d. 1645; see also Grotius, Hugo). By way of contrast, these authors tend to speak of the just war idea in terms of the customary practice of nations. Nevertheless, many of their conclusions are consistent with those of de Vitoria and Suarez, not least because all of these Christian authors assert the universal validity of the norms of statecraft. The “law of nations” is founded on “natural law”, meaning that the standard concerns of just war thinking—that war is a public rather than a private act, to be authorized by established and recognizable political regimes, that just causes are those tied to legitimate concerns of states, and that just conduct requires

discrimination between combatants and non-combatants, as well as proportionality of means—are not simply the outcome of a particular culture’s reflection, but are requirements for all who would participate in international society. Such thoughts form the basis for the modern idea of international law, by which norms distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate fighting are tied to institutions charged with punishing those who violate standards of justice. (See also Natural Law)

These developments receive more attention below. At this point, it is important to follow on the suggestion of the early modern just war thinkers, and thus to ask to what extent the just war idea really does have universal validity. As the discussion thus far shows, there is a sense in which the idea is tied to those historical communities which in some sense inherit a legacy from ancient Rome. And yet, it seems undeniable that other communities speak of legitimate and illegitimate war, and that they do so in ways that are at least analogous to those of the authors mentioned.

In Judaism, for example, rabbinic authorities commenting on Deuteronomy 20 distinguished between *milhemet mitzvah* and *milhemet rashut* (obligatory and discretionary war, respectively). (See also Rabbinic Ethics) Identifying the former with the commandment that Israel engage in perpetual war against the seven nations dwelling in the land of Canaan, as well as against Amalek until these enemies are totally destroyed, interpreters wondered whether any of these ancient foes remained, or whether the commandment is now moot. The consensus of authorities through the centuries, that obligatory war is in fact a thing of the past, allowed for one exception, by which Amalek is understood as a symbol for an enemy which poses an existential threat to the Jewish people. Just how the community would determine this in a particular case (that is, who would constitute an authority with competence to authorize such a war) is an interesting question.

Similarly, with respect to discretionary war, the rabbinic commentary in *Mishnah* and *Gamara* ties right authority to the Sanhedrin or council of seventy learned authorities. These would make a determination regarding the advisability of a war intended to secure or enhance political boundaries, including such factors as the likelihood of success and the proportionality between longer and shorter term costs and benefits of the proposed action. The lack of a functioning Sanhedrin following the disastrous rebellions against Rome in 66-70 and 132-35 CE seemed to indicate that the notion of this type of war might also be moot.

Since the establishment the modern state of Israel in 1948, and more particularly since the victory in the June 1967 “Six Day War”, some authorities have shown interest in renewing the ancient discourse. At a popular level, the followers of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook (d. 1982) known as *Gush Emunim* (“Bloc of the Faithful”) speak in the historic categories, hoping to push Israeli policy in the direction of tradition. By way of analogy, the discussion of *milhemet mitvah* and *milhemet rashut* clearly resonates with the just war idea, particularly with respect to the concern that war be a public rather than a private act, and for a just cause. The particular questions raised by the political history of Jews—and which continues as important in connection with policies of the state of Israel—have to do first, with the location of right authority, and second with the notion that obligatory war, at least as presented in historic texts, involves the total destruction of an enemy.

In Islam, the set of “judgments pertaining to armed struggle” (*ahkam al-jihad*) developed by members of the *ulama* or learned class suggest another analogy to the just war idea. (See also Islamic Ethics) Here, the form of discourse involves a scholar recognized as knowledgeable with respect to the approved sources (Qur’an, the *sunna* or exemplary practice of Muhammad, and the historic consensus of scholars) providing a response (a *fatwa* or “opinion”) to a question concerning the appropriate mode of Muslim behavior in a given circumstance. Given the fact that Muslims constituted a dominant political as well as religious class in regimes exercising power over a wide-ranging set of territories—and did so for centuries—the variety of questions and responses pertaining to military practice resists systematization. Nevertheless, the consistency with which the learned represented legitimate war as a public act, authorized by the head of state or that person’s designees; for the cause of establishing, maintaining, or defending an Islamic polity; and conducted in accord with norms of honor (in particular, with respect to the prophetic order to avoid direct targeting of women, children, the old, the lame, clerics, and other classes of noncombatants) lends support to the judgment that the judgments pertaining to armed struggle constitute a just war discourse. Even the modern emphasis by which various Muslim groups adapt historic vocabulary to the cause of armed resistance bears the character of a just war argument. The claims advanced in the 1998 World Islamic Front *Declaration on Armed Struggle against Jews and Crusaders* (signed by Usama bin Ladin, among others) attempt to justify a popular uprising by citing opinions of *ulama* concerning emergency situations, in which established political authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their duty. Not surprisingly, representatives of those authorities respond with citations of the overwhelming consensus of the learned indicating that armed groups (like al-Qa`ida) are more like private militia than regular armies, and are thus not in a position to command the Muslim community in matters of war. As well, the claim advanced by bin Ladin and others that the prophetic order to distinguish between enemy combatants and noncombatants does not apply in fighting against Americans and their allies is hotly debated among Muslims of all persuasions.

If Jewish and Muslim teaching on war present relatively straightforward instances of the just war idea, some other traditions are more controversial. For example, Buddhism is typically presented as a pacifist tradition. (See also Buddhist Ethics) Yet the discussion surrounding the duties of Buddhist kings suggests a view in which military force is sometimes necessary. And the *Mahavamsa*, an epic poem presented as a chronicle of the kings of Sri Lanka presents an image of rulers whose legitimacy is tied to protecting the island as a special enclave of Buddhist practice. Accounts of the long conflict between Sinhalese government and Tamil rebel forces in Sri Lanka indicate that Buddhist monks often cited this text as a way of justifying military action against the rebels. The most extended study of these matters describes the war doctrine of the text as an imperfect or partial analogue of the just war idea, in that it clearly ties just war to public authority and specifies just cause as a matter of defending Buddhist territory. The text does not include much in the way of norms governing the conduct of fighting, however.

By contrast, Hindu, Chinese, and Japanese traditions present a variety of textual evidence reflecting on right authority, just cause, and honorable conduct. (See also Hindu Ethics; Confucian Ethics) These are rarely integrated into a consistent statement, however. For example, Confucian literature presents many examples in which sages

1 discuss rulers who utilize force in “punitive expeditions” intended to reform or replace
2 tyrannical regimes. But the discourse suggests that the superior virtue of such rulers
3 leads to “bloodless victories,” in which those suffering under the rule of tyrants display
4 loyalty to their liberator, and the tyrant thus promises reform or steps down. By contrast,
5 strategic and military treatises like Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* demonstrate familiarity with
6 battlefield tactics, and in that regard contain material related both to right authority and to
7 the code of warriors. Such texts are less interested in just cause, however, and thus seem
8 again to present a partial analogy to the just war idea.

9 The Pacifist Idea

10 By contrast with *bellum iustum* or just war, “pacifism” is a term of relatively recent
11 origin—by most accounts in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe, where it
12 was adopted by activists opposed to war as a means of addressing international disputes.
13 The term was quickly adopted by scholars of religion, however, and in 1919, C. J.
14 Cadoux advanced the argument that the early (and thus, normative) teaching of
15 Christianity should be characterized as pacifist. It is important to distinguish this claim
16 from the idea that Christian texts represent peace as an ideal. All, or almost all religions
17 contain some notion of an ideal order in which human beings live in harmony with one
18 another and with nature. As often as not, however, such visions are connected with the
19 military prowess of an ideal ruler (as in Isaiah 9 and 11). It is not the idea of peace itself
20 that constitutes the pacifist idea. Rather, Cadoux and others focused on the fact that
21 Christianity and other religions have given rise to various movements by which believers
22 actively oppose war as a means of statecraft, particularly by refusing to take up arms or
23 serve in a military capacity.

24 Cadoux’s particular interest was in early Christianity; as indicated, his account of
25 history had a normative purpose. More recent studies suggest that the evidence is not so
26 straightforward. The sayings of Jesus in Matthew 5-7 and elsewhere seem less a
27 categorical denial of the utility of armed force, and more a kind of counsel to those whose
28 lack of power indicate that armed resistance to Roman forces will prove futile. In this,
29 the gospel accounts probably reflect the disastrous rebellions previously mentioned in
30 connection with Jewish versions of the just war idea. The rabbinic comments on
31 obligatory and discretionary war are themselves surrounded with warnings reflective of
32 these defeats, the point of which seems to be that Jews must not resort to armed
33 resistance in order to restore their dominance in the land of Israel; rather, they must wait
34 until God brings about a return of God’s people. The fact that early Christian teaching
35 includes the divine warfare of the Book of Revelation suggests that notions of war as a
36 means of addressing injustice did have a place in the nascent faith. As well, the evidence
37 Cadoux developed from authors like Tertullian (d. 220) suggests that those who opposed
38 Christian participation in the armies of Rome were as worried about the requirements of
39 state religion (by which soldiers were exposed to and might be tempted by worship of
40 idols) as they were about participation in war.

41 In a treatise known as *Contra Celsum*, Origen of Alexandria (d. 254) did present a
42 very important version of the pacifist idea, however. Replying to a prominent Roman
43 critic of Christianity, Origen notes the charge that Christians do not participate in the
44 military, and that this failure (along with some others) means they ought not be counted
45 as loyal subjects of the Emperor. His response involves a claim that Christians make a
46 particular kind of contribution. They pray, and thus serve the Emperor’s cause by
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

interceding with God on behalf of the Imperial forces. By analogy, Origen suggests that the Empire recognizes such “alternative service” with respect to its own religious specialists. The priestly vocation is one in which purity is required, so that someone who participates in war (and thus has “blood” on his or her hands) is thereby rendered less effective. Let the Christians pray, as “spiritual athletes” writes Origen. They will prove their value, as the armies of Rome march to victory.

Origen’s argument is not quite as Cadoux and others would have it—it is hardly a disavowal of the just war notion that military activity is a necessary and sometimes apt means of statecraft. It is an argument for “vocational pacifism,” however, so that some persons or groups ought to be excused from fighting in order to render alternative service. As indicated above, Augustine and Aquinas developed a version of this idea in relation to the role of clergy, monks and others in war. Those with a religious vocation serve by providing spiritual support to armed forces. They may and should exhort people to fight, give counsel as to specific means of war; but are not themselves to engage in killing, construed as somehow inconsistent with their liturgical and sacramental role.

This form of pacifism thus has a long history, continuing into modern times. Thus, members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) applied for alternative service as combat medics in the First and Second World Wars. (More recent adjustments in U.S. policy make some combat medics combatants; thus the duty is less “alternative” in a contemporary setting). And Additional Protocol I (1977) extends the Geneva Accords to indicate that military chaplains are noncombatants, meaning not only that they are not to be the direct targets of military action, but also that they ought not engage in fighting.

In addition, the notion of vocational pacifism resonates in non-Christian traditions. For example, Buddhist monks and nuns take a vow committing them to avoid directly killing any living thing. On some accounts, this commits them to a thoroughly anti-war stance. As noted previously, however, other accounts indicate that these “religious specialists” serve as spiritual advisors to rulers and fighters, albeit with an intention to avoid directly participating in war. Similarly, certain classes of Brahmin priests (Hinduism) were not to engage in fighting.

Alongside such vocational pacifism, it is possible to find some groups which reject war entirely. Mennonites and Amish communities, for example, consider that refusal to participate in war is a constitutive feature of Christian witness. The Christian community is called to demonstrate an alternative to “normal” politics, not least by resolving disputes without resort to lethal force. In South Asia, members of the Jain community are similarly exhorted to avoid war—indeed, on most accounts the principle of non-injury (*ahimsa*) obligates Jains to avoid causing harm to any living thing, so that the Jain practice is even more stringent than that of comparable Christian groups.

Mention of *ahimsa* lends itself to discussion of one final version of the pacifist idea, which might be described as “strategic” non-violence. (See also Non-violence in Religions) In the twentieth century, Mohandas Gandhi popularized the notion of non-violent resistance in relation to his campaign for the independence of India. Arguing that non-violence is morally superior to war, Gandhi articulated the view that those who engage in disciplined, non-violent acts of resistance to injustice would discover the power of *satyagraha* (soul force). This metaphysical reality would lend strength to resisters, bring the force of conscience to bear on the enemy, and ultimately lead to victory. Gandhi appealed to a number of historic texts in developing this idea, including not only

Indian texts like the *Bhagavad Gita*, but also the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5-7. In this respect, one might think of Romans 12: 17-21 (which in turn develops Proverbs 25: 21-22) as a Christian version of the idea: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil...if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." In a U.S. context, Martin Luther King, Jr. cited Gandhi along with the Bible as sources of inspiration for his advocacy of non-violent resistance in connection with the Civil Rights movement. (See also King, Jr., Martin Luther; Civil Rights)

The Search for Global Norms

The idea of a "law of nations" formed a part of the early modern version of Christian just war thinking. In that regard, interpreters like de Vitoria, Grotius, and others fashioned a version of the just war idea for an emerging international order in which territorial states possessed authority to make war. In so doing, they recognized a certain structural weakness in the notion: that is, in a system of sovereign states, there could be no global court of appeal. In adjudicating claims of justice, the international system recognized no authority above that of individual powers.

In one sense, this had always been the case. In speaking of war as a public act, interpreters of the just war idea relied on the consensual practice of particular places and times to provide the substance of right authority. For Cicero, as for Ambrose and Augustine, this meant the Emperor or his designated representatives. For Thomas Aquinas, it meant those princes who did not rely on others for protection. Similarly, for Muslim developers of the judgments pertaining to armed struggle, right authority typically implied the Caliph or his representatives.

Nevertheless, the structural problem of an emergent order of states has been the focus of intense discussion throughout the modern period. There are several reasons for this. First, repeated conflicts between the great powers of Europe—themselves in an important sense the originators and guardians of the current system—suggested the need for ways to arbitrate disputes. The great conflicts identified with Napoleon led the great powers to orchestrate a more or less informal set of agreements by which a balance of power could be maintained; when this came undone, the consequences were dreadful, as in the First and Second World Wars.

Second, the expansion of participation in the inter-state system occasioned by the end of European imperial power raised important questions about international authority. The domination of non-European peoples had been one of the chief causes of great power rivalry throughout the nineteenth century. Following the First, and even more the Second World War, such peoples were able to throw off the most direct forms of European power. Their demand for recognition as full participants in the order of states, inclusive of authority to make war, heightened interest in building norms that might govern a truly global society, as well as forging institutions able to enforce such norms.

In an early proposal for such norms and institutions, Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) argued that lasting peace could only be realized through the spread of democratic regimes. (See Kant, Immanuel; Kantian Practical Ethics) A league of democracies would spark the development of means by which states could arbitrate disputes by law rather than force of arms, Kant wrote; this would be so because the interests of ordinary citizens (as opposed to governing elites) is by and large consistent with peace rather than war. Kant argued that the development of democracy would be slow and arduous, not least because

democracy cannot be imposed by force, as a matter of principle. Nevertheless, he thought this process both morally obligatory and historically inevitable.

In response, critics like G.W.F. Hegel (d. 1831) argued that peace is always the result of some imposing their will upon others, and thus that truly global institutions would only develop in connection with something like an imperial ambition. (See Hegel, George William Friedrich) The debate between proponents of Kant's program and advocates of Hegel's views continues. Whichever is correct, there is no question that many have been interested in and contributed to the development of norms intended to govern states' resort to and conduct of war, as well as to build institutions with power to enforce these. So the Charter of the United Nations suggests that the right of individual states to make war is limited to self-defense. More extensive use of military power requires authorization by the U.N., working through its Security Council. Similarly, the Geneva Convention (1949) and the additional protocols of 1977 and 2005 attempt to regulate the conduct of war. Advocates of the International Criminal Court see it as an institutional mechanism to enforce such norms, a recent case being the prosecution of political and military leaders charged with the commission of crimes during fighting in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

One of the important questions to be addressed in the development of global or international norms and institutions has to do with authority. Specifically, what obligates states with respect to norms such as those embodied in the U.N. Charter, the Geneva Conventions and additional protocols, and a variety of other agreements? One answer rests on the sanctity of agreements. De Vitoria and Grotius, among others, argued that one of the most ancient and fundamental judgments of the law of nations is that agreements must be kept. In this respect, states that join the U.N. or that sign on to the Geneva Conventions are obligated by virtue of indicating consent. (See Consent) Grant this, and the development of enforcement mechanisms appears to follow.

In response, many have noted that the governments of states do not always represent the people. The growth in the numbers of states claiming the right of war as participants in the international system does not correspond with the spread of democracy Kant identified as a prerequisite for global order. In that sense, it hardly seems surprising that various states are sometimes the site of civil wars in which some portion of the population seeks to affect the distribution of power, or that (as appears to be the case with al-Qa`ida and like-minded organizations) groups of people challenge the legitimacy of the system of states in the name of an alternate vision of global order.

In this connection, it seems possible to argue that the comparative study of religious or cultural traditions regarding war has an important role to play in assessing the possibilities for the development of global norms. And thus, an inquiry into the just war idea and its analogues, as well as the varieties of pacifisms presented by human communities over time may continue to be of interest—whether it ultimately serves the cause of identifying possibilities for cooperation, or of identifying points of contention.

Cross-references

Aquinas, Saint Thomas
Augustine, Saint
Buddhist Ethics

Civil Rights
 Confucian Ethics
 Consent
 Grotius, Hugo
 Hegel, George William Friedrich
 Hindu Ethics
 Islamic Ethics
 Just War Theory, History of
 Kant, Immanuel
 Kantian Practical Ethics
 King, Jr., Martin Luther
 Non-violence in Religions
 Political Ethics
 Power
 Rabbinic Ethics
 Weber, Max

References

Cadoux, C. J. *The Early Christian Attitude to War*. Oxford: Dodo Press, 2008.

Clausewitz, Karl von. *On War*. Trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Reichberg, Gregory M., Hendrik Syse, and Endre Bigby, eds. *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. [contains selections from Ambrose, Aquinas, Augustine, Cicero, Gentili, Grotius, Hegel, Kant, Origen, Suarez, and Vitoria, among others]

Weber, Max. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions". In H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. *From Max Weber* New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 267-301.

Suggested Readings

Aho, James A. *Religious Mythology and the Art of War*. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood, 1981.

Bartholomeusz, Tessa J. *In Defense of Dharma*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002.

Brekke, Torkel, ed. *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Brock, Peter. *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

Firestone, Reuven. *The Death and Resurrection of Jewish Holy War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Hensel, Howard M., ed. *The Prism of Just War: Asian and Western Perspectives on the Legitimate Use of Military Force*. Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2010.

Helgeland, John, and J. Patout Burns, eds. *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1985.

Johnson, James Turner. *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Idem. *The Quest for Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California, 2009.

Kelsay, John. *Arguing the Just War in Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Miller, Richard B. *Interpretations of Conflict: Ethics, Pacifism, and the Just-War Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Palmer-Fernandez, Gabriel, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion and War*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Russell, Frederick H. *The Just War in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.