

International relations

Age group 13-15

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What are the main causes of war?

A war is an armed conflict that can occur between different countries and populations or between distinct groups of people within the same country. “The principal cause of war is war itself.”<sup>1</sup>, this is what C. Wright Mills, an American sociologist, believes is the cause of a war. Experts affirm that there are several factors which contribute to the birth of war and those are: economical, political, territorial and religious reasons. These two affirmations might be seen as contradictory but in the end they both express that what people fight for and what makes them fight is what creates the conflict.

The American Civil war (1861-1865) is a great example of an economic and political conflict, caused by the economic and social differences between the North and the South of the USA. There were many dissimilarities between the two areas and mainly on what their economy relied on. The Northern states relied on wage laborers instead people in the South relied on slaves. This is why the conflict started, the Southerners wanted to keep on having slaves because in that way their economy could grow. Moreover, this conflict was also affected by a political and social aspect. The Southerners political leaders resisted to the Northern anti slavery political forces’ attempts to block slavery in their territories.

Additionally, nowadays there are more than 150 territorial disputes <sup>2</sup>all around the world: they are mainly disagreements and conflicts for control of land between different territorial areas, usually caused because in the wanted territory there are natural resources, fertile land, petrol and minerals but even because of nationalism. The major cause of war is the states and countries’ willingness to be in possession of a territory and consequently their decision to invade it. The Falklands War, was a military

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<sup>1</sup> The Power Elite, 1956, C. Wright Mills

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/3/140328-disputed-territories-geography-russia-crimea/>

conflict that took place in 1982 between Argentina and the UK. The aim of the dispute was for Argentina to be in control of the Islands which had many oil fields.

Moreover, it is also important to take into consideration the cultural and religious spirit of a country, which can still play a main role in the starting of a war. A holy war is usually caused by differences in religion and also by the desire to have the land where that particular religion has its roots, which is what happened during the Crusades. There were eight military expeditions promoted by the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages with the objective of taking away Palestine from the Muslims because it was the place where Jesus had lived.

In conclusion, Mills was right, despite the main theoretical causes, everything that creates a war is combined and mixed together and a war creates itself on its own. In my opinion, all the causes of a war are connected one to the other because they all involve a population, state and nation and even though they are all supposed to fight to find the wellbeing of a country, they create more problems than benefits. Therefore, as also written in the 11th article of the Italian Constitution<sup>3</sup>, I believe war should not be a way to resolve controversies and to find a solution neither to international nor to national problems, since it just creates more damage and deaths to a country which needs repair and resolutions.

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<sup>3</sup> Italian Constitution, 1st January 1948,  
<https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione.pdf>

Bibliography:

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American Civil War, <https://youtu.be/oWww0YIf-JE>