

AN EVALUATION OF THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MICHAEL WALZER'S JUST WAR THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the evaluation of the ethical implications of Michael Walzer's Just War Theory. Walzer's theory provides a structured perspective for examining the justice of armed conflict, incorporating the principles of 'just cause', 'proportionality', and 'discrimination'. Despite the fact that Walzer's theory is very influential and highly regarded, it has elicited severe criticisms from scholars as a result of its ethical implications, particularly in contemporary contexts marked by evolving warfare tactics and moral dilemmas. The fundamental questions are: What are the basic tenets of Michael Walzer's Just War Theory? What are the core ethical principles in the theory? What are the ethical implications of the theory? Is Walzer's theory applicable in historical and contemporary conflicts? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory? These and other related issues are the basic concern of this article. Employing analytical and evaluative methods of philosophical enquiry, this article examines the ethical implications of key components of Walzer's theory such as the criteria for just cause, the principle of discrimination and the concept of proportionality in the use of force. It also assesses its applicability and adequacy in addressing contemporary challenges of warfare. This study argues that Walzer's theory provides valuable ethical framework for assessing the morality of war. Through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates moral philosophy, international law and political philosophy, this study unravels the ethical strengths and weaknesses of Walzer's Just War Theory. It maintains that there are complexities in practical application of Walzer's ethical framework to warfare. However, the researchers argue that, despite the weaknesses of the theory, Walzer made significant contributions towards understanding the ethical issues involved in warfare. Certainly, this study contributes to ongoing discourse within the fields of ethics, political theory, human and international relations.

Key words: Walzer, War, Ethical Implications, Just Cause, Theory.

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INTRODUCTION

War is one of the realities of human existence in the universe. According to *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, War is "an open armed conflict, especially between nations" (Robinson and Davidson, 2001: p.1597). Certainly, some countries of the world or some regions of the world have experienced war in one way or the other. Generally, War should be the last resort in addressing issues or disputes that cannot be resolved peacefully. Also, War is used as means

of seeking independence or self-determination by some civil societies as a result of marginalization or maltreatment received from the governing body. It ought to be noted that some of the wars that were fought in the past began with a rally or protest by a tribe or a group of people that felt maltreated or marginalized. Such group of people would communicate to the governing body their intention of separating themselves, and thus become independent. The morality of war is a very controversial issue among scholars. The controversy on the morality of war can be traced to the ancient period of philosophy. Aristotle argued consistently that quest for peace is the only condition that can necessitate war. Hence, it is the desire for peace that can lead to war, and war itself ought to be geared towards establishing peace among different states. He states categorically that “War must be looked upon simply as a means to peace, action as a means to leisure, acts merely useful as a means to those which are good in themselves,” (Aristotle, 1959: p.212). This implies that without the intention of peace, war cannot be said to be good in itself. Similarly, Cicero expresses the same view in *De Officiis* that the only justification for war is the establishment of peace. He buttressed this point in *De Res Republica* by stating categorically that war has two just causes: repelling an invader (that is, self-defence) and to redress an injury (Arend and Beck, 1993, p.13). On the same note, Augustine (1950) argued that the true object of war is nothing but peace (p.687). His argument is quite similar to those of his predecessors on the issue of war.

The emergence of Michael Walzer’s ‘Just War Theory’ marked a turning point in the understanding of the morality of war. In his very influential book *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer provides a set of criteria for determining the ethical justifiability of going to war and the conduct of war itself. His ‘Just War Theory’ is a very important framework for analyzing the ethics of war. However, just like any other ethical theory, it is subject to scrutiny regarding its implications and applications in real-world scenarios. It has elicited both admirations and criticisms from different scholars as a result of its controversial nature. Nevertheless, it ought to be noted that Walzer applied ethics on how war ought to be fought both internally and externally. He argued that the reason for going to war and the possibility of success after the war must be considered before engaging in any war. The moral justification for war is one of the primary ethical implications of Walzer’s theory with its provision of a moral framework for assessing the legitimacy of resorting to armed conflict. By delineating criteria such as just cause and last resort, Walzer offers a means for differentiating between morally justified and unjustified wars. Walzer (1977) underscores the importance of minimizing harm to non-combatants during warfare. This ethical imperative reflects a commitment to safeguarding the rights and lives of innocent civilians caught in the midst of conflict. His requirement of

proportionality in both *jus ad bellum* (justice of war) and *jus in bello* (justice in war) serves to limit the scope and intensity of violence permissible in war, (p.20).

The fundamental questions that are scholarly very imperative in this article are these: What actually are the basic tenets of Michael Walzer's Just War Theory? What are the major ethical principles in the theory? Is it possible to apply the theory in historical and contemporary conflicts? What are the moral implications of the theory? What are the weaknesses of the theory? What are the strengths of the theory? What are the problems associated with the ethical implications of the theory? These are the basic issues that would be given scholarly attention in this article. Hence, this article examines Walzer's Just War Theory and its ethical implications, employing analytical and evaluative methods of philosophical enquiry.

Specifically, this article is partitioned into five sections. The first section focuses on examination of the key tenets of Michael Walzer's Just War Theory. The second section examines the core ethical principles in Walzer's theory. The third section focuses on the application of Walzer's theory in historical and contemporary conflicts. The fourth section centres on the ethical implications of Walzer's theory, while the fifth section is the evaluation as well as conclusion of the article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Examining the Key Principles and Tenets of Michael Walzer's 'Just War Theory'

Michael Walzer is one of the most popular scholars on the ethics of war and war-related issues. His book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, originally published in 1977 is a very famous and influential book that attracted the attention of scholars in the contemporary period. Just War Theory (JWT) as articulated by Michael Walzer in his popular book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, has the key principles and tenets of just war theory, which are divided into three main categories. These categories or parts are (1) *jus ad bellum* (justice of going to war), which concerns the right to war as well as the justice of resorting to war; (2) *jus in bello* (justice in conducting war), which concerns the right conduct in war as well as the justice of conduct within war, after it has started and (3) *jus post bellum* (justice after war), which has to do with the justice after war agreements and the ending phase of war. They pertain basically to the ethical conduct of warfare.

1. *Jus ad Bellum* (Justice of Going to War)

It ought to be noted that *jus ad bellum* (justice of going to war) is presented in terms of theory of aggression. It is rooted on the presupposition that there is a society or state whose members have political sovereignty as well as territorial integrity. Hence, any attack on the state is an act of aggression which the victims have the right to resist, and at the same time punish the aggressor. The only ‘just cause’ that is recognizable under modern circumstances is self-defence. This implies that all the members of the state have the right to defend themselves against external attack on their territory. The above stipulations concern pre-emptive war, which is quite different from preventive war (Brown, 2017, n.p.). However, Walzer (1977) outlines six criteria for *Jus ad bellum* (justice of going to war), which are the necessary conditions that justify the act of resorting to war. The six criteria are these: just cause, right intention, legitimate authority, probability of success, proportionality within justice of going to war as well as last resort. These conditions ought to be there before any war can be said to be justified.

2. *Jus in Bello* (Justice in Conducting War)

Michael Walzer’s idea of *Jus in Bello* (justice in conducting war) is a central component of his just war theory (JWT). *Jus in Bello* (justice in conducting war) directs the moral and ethical conduct of warfare, focusing on how combatants should behave in the course of war. According to him, the justice of a war has nothing to do with who may, or who may not be killed in the course of war. Soldiers should be seen and understood as representatives of a political community, and not just as individuals. However, there are norms that govern the circumstances under which they can kill, or be killed. It ought to be noted that all combatants are legitimate targets in the course of war, irrespective of the fact that they may be fighting for a just cause. Furthermore, Walzer argues that non-combatants should not be targets in the course of war under no condition of war. However, he argues in the Part 4 of his book that waiving of this rule might be justified on the condition that there is a ‘greater moral disaster’ that can be avoided. (Orend, 2006, p.6). In understanding Walzer’s concept of *jus in bello* (justice in conducting war), there are some key components that are very prominent. They are: discrimination, proportionality within justice in conducting war, killing combatants, sparing civilians, engaging in harm and fair treatment of prisoners of war.

3. *Jus Post Bellum* (Justice after War)

Walzer introduced the concept of *jus post bellum* (justice after war) as a part of his broader framework on just war theory. This concept deals with justice after war, focusing on how to establish a just and lasting peace once hostilities have ended. Certainly, Walzer (2005) acknowledges that his idea of *jus post bellum* (Justice after war) could not account for the problems associated with the contemporary humanitarian interventions at the end of the Cold War (p. xiii). The key elements, according to Walzer, that are often associated with *jus post bellum* (justice after war) include: restoration of order, justice for war crimes, reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation, fair peace settlements and human rights. Overall, Walzer's theory emphasizes the moral responsibilities of both victors and the international community in creating a sustainable peace that respects the rights and dignity of all affected parties.

Core Ethical Principles in Walzer's Theory

Walzer's Just War Theory (JWT) is grounded in the moral principles of human rights and the shared values of international society. He emphasizes the moral equality of soldiers, arguing that soldiers on both sides of a conflict are subject to the same ethical standards. This challenges the traditional view that only the victors or the states waging just wars are morally justified (Walzer: 1977, p.45). Another core moral principle in Walzer's theory is 'non-combatant immunity.' He argues that civilians ought to be protected from the violence of war, and should not be deliberately targeted. This principle is closely related to the principle of proportionality, which requires that the harm caused by military actions must be proportional to the military advantage gained (Walzer: 1977, p.91). Also, Walzer introduces the concept of "double effect," which permits actions that have both good as well as bad consequences, provided the bad consequences are not intended and are proportional to the good achieved. This concept is important in modern warfare, where civilian casualties are often an unintended but unavoidable consequence of military actions (Walzer: 1977, p.114).

Applications of Walzer's Theory in Historical and Contemporary Conflicts

Walzer's theory has been applied to analyze numerous historical and contemporary conflicts, including the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and interventions in Kosovo and Afghanistan. His theory provides a robust ethical standard for assessing the morality of these wars. For example, Walzer's analysis of the Vietnam War highlights the importance of just cause and proportionality, arguing strongly that the U.S. intervention lacked a just cause and resulted in disproportionate harm to civilians (Walzer: 1977, p.179). With regard to the Gulf War,

Walzer's theory was employed to justify the coalition's intervention based on the principle of just cause, as the war was aimed at repelling Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and restoring international peace as well as security. However, he criticized the conduct of the war, especially the targeting of civilian infrastructure, which raised questions about proportionality and non-combatant immunity (Walzer, 1977, p.203).

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WALZER'S JUST WAR THEORY

Michael Walzer's just war theory is morally grounded, and has been very influential in shaping contemporary discourse on the morality of warfare. In other words, it contributes significantly to the discourse on the ethics of warfare. The following are the ethical implications of the theory:

1. **Just Cause:** As already demonstrated above, one of the central tenets of Walzer's theory is the requirement of a just cause, which typically includes self-defense, defense of others, or rectification of a grave injustice. Certainly, this criterion provides a clear moral justification for resorting to war. However, its practical application can be very contentious. This stems from the fact that the determination of what constitutes a just cause is often subjective, and consequently open to different interpretations, leading to potential abuses by states seeking to justify aggressive actions. Francisco de Vitoria (1991) argued that "the sole and only just cause for waging war is when harm has been inflicted," (p.304). In fact, just cause is the cornerstone of the just war tradition, specifying the legitimate reasons for resorting to war. The major considerations here include:
 - a. **Self-Defense:** This is the most widely accepted just cause, involving the defense of a state or its citizens against an imminent or ongoing attack. Certainly, this principle asserts the inherent "rights of states to protect themselves from external aggression" (Walzer, 1977, p.54).
 - b. **Defense of Others:** This is an extension of the principle of self-defense. Just cause also encompasses the protection of innocent third parties who are facing grave threats, such as genocide. Walzer (1977) supports that "the common life that is defended in a just war is sometimes not only one's own but also that of others, with whom one is in a moral community" (p.62). Admittedly, this is part of the commitment to humanitarian principles and the responsibility to protect the life of innocent human beings.

- c. **Rectification of Injustice:** This entails addressing grave injustices or violations of international law, such as aggression, occupation, or systemic oppression. Walzer (1977) cautiously argues that “the use of force across borders... is justified when it responds to acts that ‘shock the moral conscience of mankind’” (p.107). Hence, this criterion emphasizes the moral imperative to confront and redress egregious wrongs.

Nevertheless, it ought to be noted that determining what constitutes a just cause is often subjective and context-dependent. This stems from the fact that one’s interpretation of issues is influenced by a lot of factors. For instance, interpretations of self-defense can vary widely based on perceptions of threat, the credibility of intelligence and the political interests of involved parties, (Rodin, 2002, p.10). Moreover, the potential for abuse, where states invoke just cause to justify aggressive actions or pursue narrow geo-political objectives, underscores the need for careful scrutiny and accountability.

2. **Last Resort:** Another important aspect of Walzer’s theory is the principle of last resort, which stipulates that war should only be pursued when all peaceful alternatives have been explored, or are deemed unlikely to achieve the desired result. This criterion or requirement reflects a commitment to minimizing the adverse effects of conflict and upholding the value of diplomacy as well as negotiation. However, the practical application or implementation of the criterion of last resort is very challenging, especially in situations where political leaders may be reluctant to pursue diplomatic solutions due to strategic or ideological reasons. Major considerations here include:

- a. **Diplomatic Efforts:** Before resorting to military force, states are expected to explore diplomatic solutions, negotiation, mediation, and other non-violent means of conflict resolution. This may involve engagement with international organizations, third-party facilitators and other diplomatic channels. Notably, “the presumption is always against war. The moral burden lies with those who would break the peace” (Walzer, 1977, p.61). In other words, this implies that a just war must emerge from necessity, not preference or strategic calculation alone. Diplomacy is a moral obligation before the use of arms can be justified.
- b. **Sanctions and Pressure:** These entail the employment of economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and other forms of non-military pressure to

compel adversaries to change their behaviour or address grievances without resorting to war. Walzer (1977) stated here that “the justification of war begins with the presumption that war is wrong and must be avoided, and any serious effort to avoid it..., is morally commendable” (pp.21-23, 61). However, this implies that war must not be undertaken if there are still credible, peaceful tools available that could reasonably achieve the desired ethical and political outcome.

- c. **Conditional Ultimatum:** This involves issuing ultimatums or conditions for compliance, providing a final opportunity for peaceful resolution before initiating military action. Walzer (1977) avers that “a political community that is to take moral responsibility must act in good faith... War should be preceded by an effort to avoid it, and by a warning if it is to come” (pp.79-81).

Nevertheless, it ought to be noted that the practical application as well as implementation of the last resort criterion is also challenging. This stems from the fact that Political leaders may face pressure to demonstrate resolve or may be influenced by strategic calculations, domestic considerations, or ideological factors that limit their willingness to pursue diplomatic avenues, (Fabre, 2012, p.22). Moreover, the dynamics of conflict escalation and the perception of time constraints can erode the feasibility of non-violent alternatives, raising questions about the genuine commitment to last resort.

3. **Proportionality:** Walzer emphasizes the principle of proportionality in warfare. The principle stipulates that the harm resulting from war should be proportional to the good achieved or the legitimate military objectives pursued. Certainly, this criterion seeks to prevent excessive use of force and unnecessary suffering as well as disproportionate collateral damage. However, its application in practice is complex and very difficult. Calculating the proportionality of military action involves predicting and weighing potential harms and benefits, often in the midst of uncertainty and under intense pressure. Also, the subjective nature of assessing proportionality can lead to divergent interpretations and ethical dilemmas. The basic elements to be considered in this area include:

- a. **Balancing of Costs and Benefits:** Before engaging in war, decision-makers must weigh the anticipated military advantages against the foreseeable

human, economic and social costs of military action. This involves assessing the potential impact on civilian populations, infrastructure and long-term stability. Hence, “the aim of war must be sufficiently important to override the presumption against the use of force” (Walzer, 1977, p.21).

- b. **Mitigation of Harm:** This entails effort to reduce civilian casualties, avoid indiscriminate attacks, and observe the principles of humanitarian law and human rights. “In judging any particular engagement, we ask whether the legitimate ends of war could have been achieved with less destruction and suffering” (Walzer, 1977, p.129). This requires the use of precision weapons, target verification procedures and measures to protect non-combatants.
- c. **Long-Term Consequences:** Consideration should be given to the broader consequences of military intervention, including the risk of escalation, the exacerbation of underlying grievances, and the potential for unintended consequences. Nevertheless, “once we say that future harms justify present aggression, the gates are open to limitless violence” (Walzer, 1977, 81). Proportionality extends beyond immediate tactical calculations to encompass strategic, moral, and political dimensions.

Nonetheless, the calculation of proportionality is inherently subjective and contingent upon factors such as military capabilities, situational awareness, and the fog of war. Moreover, the asymmetrical nature of modern conflict, where non-state actors and insurgent groups operate within civilian populations, complicates efforts to apply proportionality effectively, (Orend, 2006, p.55). The challenge lies in balancing the imperative to achieve military objectives with the imperative to minimize harm and uphold ethical standards.

- 4. **Discrimination:** *Jus in bello* (justice in war) underscores the importance of discrimination or the principle of distinction, which stipulates or requires that combatants should distinguish between civilians and legitimate military targets, and refrain from deliberately targeting non-combatants or civilian infrastructure. This principle is rooted in the fundamental principles of humanitarian law and human rights, emphasizing the protection of innocent citizens as well as the preservation of civilian immunity, and minimizing collateral damage. However, it is difficult to apply this principle practically. This stems from the fact that the increasing use of asymmetric warfare and tactics such as terrorism complicates the application of the discrimination principle, blurring the

traditional distinctions between combatants and non-combatants. The major factors to be considered here include:

- a. **Identification of Targets:** There is need for proper identification of targets in the course of war. Military operations should be directed against legitimate military objectives, such as enemy forces, command centers and infrastructure directly contributing to the war effort. However, “the deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime. The moral reality of war begins with the distinction between combatants and non-combatants” (Walzer, 1977, pp.136-137). Combatants must take precautions to verify the status of targets and minimize the risk of civilian harm. The essence of this is to avoid harming innocent people.
- b. **Precautionary Measures:** If non-combatants are likely to be killed, then precautions must be taken, weapons and targets carefully chosen, and attacks mounted with sufficient force-and no more than sufficient (Walzer, 1977, p.156). This involves taking proactive steps to prevent or mitigate civilian casualties, including the issuance of warnings, the establishment of no-strike zones, and the provision of humanitarian corridors for civilians to evacuate.
- c. **Prohibition of Indiscriminate Weapons:** The employment of indiscriminate weapons or tactics that cannot be channelled to specific military targets without regard for civilian lives (Walzer, 1977, p.152), such as chemical weapons or certain explosive devices, is prohibited under international law. In other words, weapons that cannot distinguish between civilian and combatants are inherently unjust.

However, it ought to be noted that the application of the discrimination principle is complicated by factors such as urban warfare, where combatants are intermingled with civilian populations, and the use of asymmetric tactics, such as terrorism, which deliberately target non-combatants to achieve political objectives. Such non-demarcation between combatants and non-combatants challenges traditional notion of distinction and underscores the importance of adapting legal and ethical frameworks to evolving threats, (Orend, 2000, p.46).

EVALUATION

From the above discourse, it is obvious that Walzer's Just War Theory furnishes a moral standard for examining the justification as well as the conduct of war. His theory comprises two main principles: *jus ad bellum* (justice of war), that addresses the circumstances under which a war can be initiated, and *jus in bello* (justice in war), that governs the ethical conduct of combatants during the war, (Walzer, 2006, p.56). By emphasizing principles such as just cause, last resort, proportionality, and discrimination, Walzer offers valuable insights into the complex interplay between ethics and warfare.

Michael Walzer contributed immensely towards the understanding of the ethics of war. His theory has significantly influenced contemporary Just War Theory (JWT). Walzer revitalized war theory by addressing the moral dilemmas posed by modern warfare and introducing new interpretations of traditional principles. His emphasis on the importance of ethical considerations in both the decision to engage in war as well as the actual conduct of war demonstrates the fact that there are some principles that ought to guide engagement in wars. Also, his theory is notable for its focus on the moral equality of soldiers, the principle of non-combatant immunity, and the concept of "double effect." Hence, he argued consistently that soldiers on both sides of a conflict are morally equal, and non-combatants must be protected from harm. The principle of double effect permits actions that have both good as well as bad consequences, provided the bad consequences are not in any way intended and are proportional to the good achieved, (Walzer, 1977, p.78). However, despite the above contributions, Walzer's war theory has been subjected to severe criticisms. Critics argue that Walzer's theory may be overly idealistic and not fully applicable to the complexities of modern warfare. Some scholars such as Jeff McMahan, Igor Primoratz and so on, contend that his emphasis on moral principles may not account for the pragmatic realities of war, such as the necessity of strategic decisions that may conflict with ethical standards, (Coady, 2008, p.34). Also, Walzer's interpretations of just cause and proportionality have been subjected to severe criticism. This stems from the claim that they can be subjective and open to manipulation by political leaders. The principle of non-combatant immunity, while morally sound, is often difficult to enforce in the chaotic and unpredictable environment of war, (Luban, 2014, p.57).

Most criticisms of Walzer's just war theory revolve around ambiguity in its application, challenges of modern warfare and its state-centric approach. Critics like Jeff McMahan and Igor Primoratz argue that Walzer's just war theory is ambiguous in its application, and it is

open to varied interpretations, leading to subjective judgments regarding the justice of particular wars. For instance, Primoratz (2002) maintains that the excuses Walzer provides to free soldiers from the responsibility of *jus ad bellum* (justice of going to war) do not stand, and thus those “soldiers fighting for an unjust cause and those fighting for a just one are not morally equal and, therefore, the former (soldiers fighting for an unjust cause) have no license to kill at all,” (p.230). Hence, Primoratz (2002) rejects completely and fails to accept the existence of the category of non-responsibility on the unjust side. Besides, the application of criteria such as just cause and proportionality can vary depending on individual perspectives, raising concerns about the consistency and objectivity of ethical evaluations. Furthermore, the evolving nature of warfare, characterized by non-state actors, asymmetric conflicts as well as technological advancements, challenge significantly the applicability of traditional just war principles. Hence, Primoratz (2002) rejects Walzer’s account of real contemporary states as well as governments, and offers a different account. He positions himself at the central position, between Walzer who frees the citizens of any significant responsibility and Michael Green who maintains that “the people remain responsible for what the government and military do even in a tyrannical regime,” (p.234). Primoratz (2002) argues consistently that there is a varied view of responsibility and culpability between them. He thus concludes that Walzer’s theory fails to adequately address these complexities, raising questions about its relevance in contemporary military contexts.

Another criticism of Walzer’s theory is its inherent state-centric bias, which prioritizes the interests and sovereignty of states over other moral considerations. Primoratz (2002) argues that if we “take seriously the freedom, rationality, and responsibility of human beings, as well as the implications of democracy, however imperfect” (p.241), we conclude that citizens are to be held responsible for their states’ as well as governments’ actions. This emphasis on state sovereignty may overlook the rights and welfare of marginalized groups within or across borders, challenging the universality and inclusivity of the ethical framework.

The major problem associated with Michael Walzer’s just war theory centres on its applicability in concrete situations. The practical application of Walzer’s just war principles is fraught with challenges, complexities and ethical dilemmas, requiring careful consideration of context, consequences, and competing moral obligations. However, despite the above problems and criticisms, Walzer’s Just War Theory remains highly relevant for assessing the ethical dimensions of military intervention and conflict resolution in the context of contemporary geo-political challenges. From humanitarian interventions to counter terrorism

operations, the principles outlined in Walzer's framework continue to inform debates surrounding the legitimacy and morality of military action. However, the evolving nature of warfare, technological advancements, and shifting geopolitical dynamics pose new ethical challenges that require ongoing scrutiny and adaptation of just war principles. Ultimately, Walzer's Just War Theory provides principles for assessing the justice of going to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the justice in conducting war (*jus in bello*). Indeed, Walzer's Just War Theory can provide a yardstick for examining the ethical dimensions of conflicts and assessing the actions of the parties involved. Obviously, his theory encourages a nuanced examination of the reasons for going to war, the conduct during the war, and the aftermath, shedding light on the moral complexities of secessionist movements and state responses. As one navigates the complexities of contemporary conflicts, the enduring relevance of Walzer's Just War Theory reminds one of the imperative to uphold ethical standards and strive for a more just and peaceful world. Consideration of the ethical dimensions of armed conflict requires careful consideration of context, consequences, and competing moral obligations, as well as a commitment to upholding humanitarian principles and minimizing human suffering.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Scholarly attempt has been made in this article to evaluate the ethical implications of Michael Walzer's Just War Theory. From the discourse, it is obvious that Walzer's Just War Theory offers a valuable ethical yardstick for assessing the morality of war, providing criteria for determining the justice of going to war as well as the conduct of war. It ought to be noted that its ethical implications are subject to critique, particularly regarding ambiguities in application, state-centric biases, and challenges posed by modern warfare. Therefore, while recognizing the enduring significance of Walzer's contributions to the ethics of war, ongoing discourse and refinement are necessary to address these limitations and ensure the continued relevance and applicability of just war principles in a rapidly evolving global landscape. However, despite the limitations and problems associated with Walzer's Just War Theory, Walzer made immense contributions towards understanding the ethics of war in the contemporary period.

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