



WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS

Organized by



Hosted by



In Association with



WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS-2023

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA | 9-14 AUGUST 2023

CRD2 SOCIAL CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ROUND TABLE TITLE:

DECODING WAR AND WAR GAMES IN SEARCH OF GLOBAL PEACE PERSPECTIVES FROM ANTHROPOLOGY

CO-ORDINATOR: PROF. KAMAL K MISRA,

MODERATOR: PROF. SHALINA MEHTA

ABSTRACT

On 24th February 2022, World was witnessed to changing contour of wars that nations fight for sovereignty and territory. The open declaration of combat after eight years of threat of a war that simmered between Russia and Ukraine since 2014, global peace became a casualty. Fear of a third world war, and occasional threats of nuclear confrontation brought home poignant reminder of Albert Einstein's prophecy, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones".

In World War I and II, humanity lost more than 130 million people, while Russia-Ukraine war has claimed nearly 300,000 killed and wounded in one year. These are not just numbers, but memories written in human blood that tell stories of barbarism of wars. Human angst and misery left behind by the two World Wars gave birth to notions of lasting negotiations for Peace. Inter-Governmental organizations like the United Nations were created to ensure international peace and security. After World War II, United States emerged as a prospering economy. Under the Marshal plan, it gave support to several countries in Europe to rebuild their infrastructure and economy. Money was given both as Aid and Loans. Strengthening economies gave momentum to European nations to emerge as strong industrial societies and in the process, nations buried past histories for a better and peaceful future. These developments gave hope to analysts that peace is the Mantra for humanity to survive and not wars.

In 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, began the latest wave of globalization, resulting in swift integration of global market economy and intense interconnectedness between peoples and nations. These developments had reconfigured the culturally defined perceptions of human nature of extreme selfishness and aggressive behaviour to control. It appeared humanity was more concerned with many global threats like global warming, human security, and equitable justice. War and violence for territorial control and sovereignty often moved from the battle fields to negotiating diplomatic tables. The central focus hovered round environmental sustainability, conflict resolution, and human rights.

Pre- and Post-Congress In Collaboration with





WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS

Organized by



Hosted by



In Association with



WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS-2023

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA | 9-14 AUGUST 2023

In 1947, Mahatma Gandhi declared, “I can say with confidence that if the world is to have peace, non-violence is the means to that end and no other.” (Harijan, 20-7-1947, p. 243). President Kennedy went a step further by saying, “Every thoughtful citizen who despairs of war and wishes to bring peace, should begin by looking inward—by examining his own attitude toward the possibilities of peace” (1963). Despite these proclamations and uneasy calm, wars did not disappear. Initially these became subtle confrontations resulting in inflated defence budgets, supremacy in ‘destruction technology’ and global power hegemonies rooted in economic heft. Then came hybrid wars of which war on Terror is most pronounced. These started in 2001 with the invasion in Afghanistan, followed by war in Iraq in 2003, fought either in the name of elimination of terror or for supposedly installing democracies, replacing other forms of governance practises. These wars have “neither a foreseeable end nor clear territorial boundaries” (Kilcullen, 2009). These are proxy wars, civil wars, counterinsurgency operations and legitimised violence enforced by states (Waterson 2008, Armitage 2017). But war in Ukraine takes one back to the era of first two World Wars.

To imagine a war free World appears a phantasmagoria to most researchers of war. However, in a recently published article Fry et.al. (2021) counters the assumption made by most researchers of war (Wilson 2001, Wright 1942) that “all societies engage in war”. By documenting ethnographic evidence from several societies, they suggest that “peace systems can be found in different part of the World and at various levels of social organisation” (for details read Fry 2006; 2012; Souillac and Fry 2014).

Anthropology of War in some recent studies gives hope for a possible war free society. One of the leading scholars of Anthropology of Peace, Fry et.al in a 2021 article in Humanities and Social Science communication develops a research paradigm comparing war free societies with warring societies to argue that “Societies within peace systems avoid war and build positive intergroup relationships” (for further discussion refer to <http://doi.org> accessed on 29/03/23). In another article published in 2018 in Annual Review of Anthropology, Nikolai Ssorin -Chaikov argues for a case for Hybrid Peace. He writes:

I suggest a notion of hybrid peace to ask what it means to inhabit a world in which war is not quite war but also peace is not quite peace. I argue that this emergent hybrid peace requires new languages of ethnographic description. My goal in this review is to indicate some contours of this language (2018:251).

The need of the hour is undoubtedly more of cooperation for sustainable global peace rather than conflict and war. Anthropology’s potential to contribute to this urgent issue that continues to plague humanity is immense. It contributes to our understanding of the contemporary relevance of global peace when nations are at war for years. Anthropological approach and its methodologies respect cultural diversity, believes in cultural relativism and experiments with culturally embedded conflict resolution practices of many indigenous communities across the world. This Round Table would theoretically and empirically interrogate issues relating to human cultural potential to prevent, limit and resolve conflicts at the local level, which could be a global model for sustainable peace. Growing challenges before the humanity now demand urgent conversations on the subject. We would like this dialogue to be interdisciplinary and invite scholars from political science, international relations, history, and all those interested in this urgent humanitarian concern to come forward and participate in these deliberations.

Keywords: WAR, WAR GAMES and GLOBAL PEACE

Pre- and Post-Congress In Collaboration with

