

A Critical Humanitarian Intervention Approach

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“War, to be abolished, must be understood. To be understood, it must be studied.”

Karl Deutsch in introduction of Quincy Wright’s Study of War (Wright, 1965)

The above statement, in my view, illustrates the argument and the inner thought of the author. Since in this intriguing book, Butler avidly displays a strong interest for the study of how reconceptualising security in terms of *Ken Booth’s Theory of World Security* can improve the theoretical and practical limitations of solidarist theorizing on humanitarian intervention. These limitations stem from solidarism’s problem-solving approach to analyzing *Supreme Humanitarian Emergencies (SHEs)*, where the focus is on intervention than prevention. For Butler a Critical Humanitarian Intervention Approach (CHIA), which focuses on the prevention of SHEs and changes those structures rather than replicating existing, structures and their management, is the alternative approach. This could be possible through the deconstruction of the liberal peace and solidarist perspective, which contextualized SHEs, and through the construction of CHIA. According to Butler, failing to consider the economic context in which SHEs erupt leads to missing opportunities for their future prevention. Whereas, for solidarists military humanitarian intervention, mainly after Kosovo 1999, shows international society’s moral commitment to support the values of liberty, human right, the rule of law and a better world. However, CHIA argues that these ‘claims will remain nothing more than imaginary unless the workings of international economic order are included in the analysis of humanitarian intervention complexity’ (p.1). Above all, Butler aims to address two central issues: first, reconceptualizing security through *Ken Booth’s Theory of World Security* and to explain ‘why solidarist theorizing on humanitarian intervention prioritizes the act of military intervention over prevention’ (Booth, 2007, p. 25); and second, to propose an alternative perspective to the solidarist theorizing on humanitarian intervention.

This exciting book structured into four major chapters. In the first chapter, Butler claims that solidarists encourage the act of intervention over prevention because they maintain a problem-solving method of theorizing about SHEs and their method of theorizing preoccupied with the ‘whether or not to intervene’ which is methodologically confined. In this regard, reconceptualizing security in terms of *Booth’s Theory of World Security* would help to understand why the solidarist approach to humanitarian intervention focuses on the act of intervention than prevention. Butler considers two problems of solidarist theorizing. First, their positive method of theorizing ‘truth as correspondence’ (p.32) and the second is ‘their legitimization structures of inequality without considering their part in contextualizing SHEs’ (p.32). For Solidarists, ‘truth as correspondence’ stipulates that ‘theoretical explanations will be true to the extent that they accurately reflect empirical reality to the extent that they correspond to the facts’ (p.33). The book shows the positivist method as problematic and prefers instead the method of anchorage, which informed by critical distance, is a better theoretical alternative. Butler believes that taking facts as the starting points for analysis is difficult since it restricts humanitarian intervention theorizing to the subject of military intervention. Instead, what is a more desirable is reciprocal prevention, which supported by, the method of anchorage. According to Butler as cited Booth, ‘critical distance helps to diagnose the restrictive common sense of a theory and instead seek an alternative perspective’ (p.31) and being able to stand ‘analytically’ outside a given local and global framework, give a critique, and then to explore ideas which might promote the emancipation of people from oppressive structures of domination.

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In the second chapter, Butler investigates two fundamental questions: First, why solidarist theorizing on humanitarian intervention is problem solving in character; and the second is what alternative perspective to problem-solving solidarist theorizing. The book addresses the first question, through Robert Cox's framework and defines such theorizing as problem-solving theory because it maintains the positivist method of theorizing and it legitimizes dominant social and political structures. Solidarists consider SHEs as 'truth as correspondence' (p.84). However, Butler argues that such treatment is limiting because it prioritizes the act of intervention over the act of prevention. Further, it considers the act of military intervention as exhaustive of international society's moral responsibility in the event of SHEs. Solidarists on humanitarian intervention continue with problem solving by following a liberal approach, in which 'artificial' divisions are drawn between the political and economic spheres. This creates limitations for the consequent theorizing: the way in which liberal economic remedies can influence the likelihood of violent conflict is rarely considered and solidarist theorising on humanitarian intervention has a narrow understanding of why conflict occurs and how it prevented. Responding to these limitations the author proposes an alternative perspective called CHIA and 'rejected the positivist method and encourages the method of anchorage, mainly critical distance' (p.78). Theorists of anchorage reject those solidarist conclusions that accept military intervention as a way of managing crisis under international society's moral commitment to encouraging human rights around the world and for the guardianship of human rights everywhere. CHIA argues that what should be associated with international society's commitment to uphold those rights is the prevention of SHEs. CHIA builds security along Caroline Thomas's concept of human security, which first considers the welfare of all human beings, not merely of victims. A CHIA avoids replicating an existing international economic order and instead seeks to change it. However, Butler insists that 'the moral argument of having a duty to others ought to apply to political, social and economic international relations...' (p.57). Problem-solving theory takes the world without questioning it and characterized by positivist methodology and it legitimizes prevailing social and political structures. Robert Cox argues that there are three main reasons why a theory would legitimize social and political structures. First, 'it takes the world as it finds it' (p.65); hence second, the existing order is not questioned. Consequently, the general purpose of problem-solving theory is to 'make the system work smoothly' (p.73).

Chapter 3 discuss the effects of neo-liberal international economic order essentially the role played by International Financial Institutions (IFs) such as IMF, World Bank and EU in their project of integrating the former Yugoslavia prior to Kosovo crisis of 1998-9. Butler insisted that the project of integrating the former Yugoslavia into the neo-liberal international economic order was provoked by the neo-liberal economic ideology of the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. However, for the solidarists, as Butler portrayed argued that Kosovo's 1998-9 SHEs were 'through its urgency and the nature of the danger involved' (p. 104). Hitherto, for Butler, this view of the solidarist is wrong and it argues that analyzing crises in problem-solving methods limits the way in which similar crisis could be prevented in the future. The neo-liberal international economic order and the programmes of liberalisation considerably contributed to the collapse of former Yugoslavia. So SHE of 1998-9 Kosovo crisis cannot explained without considering international societies economic involvement. This argument also supported by Chris Brown (2002), argument of Kosovo's war focus on to preserve NATO's credibility and to have halted the ethnic cleaning of the Albanians. Many have argued that the politics of the *Great Power* at Versailles from 1918-41 using the principle of self-determination created Yugoslavia multinational country. For the author, Yugoslavia's decline was indeed 'related to events in the global economy, more than anything that was occurring internally' (p. 113). These global events relate to the rapid increase in oil prices in 1973-4; to the ensuing global debt crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s; and, to the end of the Cold War, which caused the loss of Yugoslavia's strategic value for the Western powers. These factors lead the country a breeding ground for division along political, economic and ethnic lines and results excessive unemployment, polarisation along social and political lines, effects of inflation and shortages of consumer goods. Butler, argued that the conditions imposed by the IMF, the World Bank and some Western states contextualized these violent events as a local event, caused by local people, however for the author, including economic sources of conflict and the neo-liberal international economic order in the analysis of SHEs is vital in order to understand the crisis of Kosovo.

In conclusion, in the last chapter, Butler explores alternatives to the liberal peace and solidarist theorizing of humanitarian intervention approach. In this chapter the author, focus on reciprocal prevention of SHEs. The book elucidates light prevention as problematic in addressing SHEs and instead deep prevention is a possible remedy to address root causes of SHEs. Deep prevention means '... to address the sources of conflict by encouraging economic development; meeting the

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needs for the identity, security and access of diverse groups...' (p.145). According to Butler solidarist theorising on humanitarian intervention is problem-solving and such theorization follows the liberal agenda, which divides the humanitarian intervention complex into three separate stages: economic statism, intervention and peace building. Economic statism 'implies that economic decisions are separate from political consequences' (p.149). Unlike the solidarists, Butler argued that the neo-liberal international economic order is not natural and permanent rather it is artificial, system supporting and changeable. Thus, CHIA includes the neo-liberal international economic order in its analysis of all SHEs and in consequence encourages international society to recognise its shared responsibility for such events. This shift makes it easier to use reciprocal preventative methods because, once international society has recognized its share of responsibility for a disaster, it will perhaps pay more attention to applying preventative policies.

In general, one may conclude that the author has effectively addressed and highly rocked her objectives throughout the chapters in detail and has managed to provide an impressive presentation of the topics. Butler introduced a new model in the study of human intervention approach called CHIA that focused on the act of prevention than the act of intervention, which is an alternative for solidarist problem-solving theorizing by taking the cases of Kosovo. As maintained by Butler CHIA used reciprocal preventive methods in addressing SHEs at grass root level and it introduce a new methodological approach through rejecting the confined method of problem solving. Moreover, the most appealing and critical issue that the author contributes in this book is the production of knowledge, which helps to fills the gaps of the literature both practically and theoretically in humanitarian intervention approach. The book also elucidates the weakness of solidarist theorizing and exposes the hidden agenda of the neo-liberal international political order that consider itself as occidental model of humanity.

To conclude, there is no distinct best theory that works both theoretically and practically. In this case, both CHIA and solidarist theorizing has their own limitations: for instance, why not to reconcile than antagonize each other? Prevention first, when it falls, intervention next. Butler is wrong in its rejection of military intervention. For instance, we have a bad memory of Rwanda genocide in 1994, Somalia and Liberia human deaths due to absence of military intervention. Solidarists are also wrong in their assertion of military intervention as guardian of humanity since they are lacks universality in their application. For instance, Why NATO intervenes to address human rights violations in Yugoslavia (Kosovo) and not in Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone when the conflicts in the two countries peaked almost the same time in the late 1990s. Further, Butler follows the reductionist approach in the making of her theory, which excludes other alternatives as well, and rejects the liberal peace theory without suggesting what types of state she aspire. Consequently, to make this book sound I argued that employing prevention of SHEs first and the use of military intervention next when necessity exists is the best way.

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