



# Political Dimensions of Global Conflict: Exploring Legal Challenges and International Relations in Worldwide Warfare

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## Abstract

This paper delves into the intricate relationship between political dynamics, global conflict, and legal frameworks. In an era defined by geopolitical complexities and evolving modes of warfare, understanding the interplay between politics and law is essential. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study examines the political issues inherent in contemporary warfare and their implications for international law and relations. It scrutinizes the roles of state and non-state actors, alongside emerging technologies, in shaping the global conflict landscape. Furthermore, it evaluates the efficacy and adaptability of existing legal instruments in addressing political tensions and promoting peace. Drawing on empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks, this research contributes to nuanced discourse and informs policy discussions aimed at navigating political challenges and upholding the rule of law amidst worldwide warfare.

**Keywords:** Global conflict; International law; Political dynamics; Non-State actors; Cyber warfare; International relations; Legal frameworks

## Introduction

### Background and importance

In the 21st century, global conflict has increasingly deviated from traditional models of state-centric warfare to complex scenarios where diverse actors operate across multiple domains, including cyber and space. The modern geopolitical landscape is defined by multifaceted tensions, where conventional battlefields have expanded to include digital skirmishes and economic confrontations. These changes pose significant challenges to existing legal frameworks and necessitate a nuanced understanding of international relations and law. Historically, conflicts were primarily between sovereign states, clearly defined by territorial disputes. However, today's conflict scenarios often involve non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, private military companies, and transnational corporations, which blur the lines of legal accountability and state responsibility. Additionally, the rise

of cyber warfare, unmanned systems, and artificial intelligence has introduced new dimensions to warfare that existing international legal instruments are ill-prepared to address. The critical need to explore the intersections of politics and law in this context underpins this research, aiming to provide insights into how international laws might evolve to better manage and mitigate global conflicts.

### Objectives and scope

This paper seeks to explore the intricate relationships between political dynamics and legal frameworks in global conflicts. It aims to analyze how international laws are applied, challenged, and adapted in response to the changing nature of warfare. The research focuses on several key aspects:

- The impact of political decisions on the initiation and conduct of warfare.

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- The role of international law in regulating conflicts involving state and non-state actors.
- The legal challenges posed by emerging technologies in warfare.

The scope of this study encompasses conflicts post-2000, providing contemporary relevance and focusing on scenarios that highlight the interaction between new warfare technologies and international law, such as the conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, and the South China Sea.

### Historical context

To contextualize the current landscape, it is essential to understand the evolution of warfare and legal responses over time. Traditional warfare, as defined in the 20th century, saw conflicts such as the World Wars, where the combatants were clearly identifiable and battles were geographically bounded. The Geneva Conventions and the establishment of the United Nations were responses to these types of conflicts, aimed at establishing norms that promote peace and human dignity. However, the latter half of the century saw a shift with the Vietnam War and the Cold War, where the lines between combatants and civilians began to blur, and proxy wars became prevalent. These changes continued to evolve into the current era, where hybrid warfare, involving a combination of military and non-military means, has become the norm. This has posed significant challenges to the existing legal frameworks, which were primarily designed for interstate conflicts.

### Theoretical framework

This paper utilizes a combination of political and legal theories to frame the analysis. From a political standpoint, realism and liberalism provide two contrasting perspectives on conflict and cooperation. Realism, with its emphasis on power and security, helps in understanding the motivations behind state behaviour in war, while liberalism offers insights into the roles that international institutions and norms play in mitigating conflict. From a legal perspective, the principles of international humanitarian law, including the laws of war and human rights law, are critical. These principles are intended to protect individuals and properties that do not participate in hostilities and to restrict the means and methods of warfare.

### Current issues and trends

The current global conflict environment is marked by several trends that challenge traditional notions of warfare:

- **Non-state Actors:** Groups like ISIS and private military contractors operate across national borders, complicating legal classifications and accountability.

- **Technology and Warfare:** Technologies such as drones and cyber tools have transformed the battlefield, creating scenarios where accountability and transparency in combat are more challenging to ascertain.

### Significance of the study

By integrating analyses of political decisions with evaluations of legal frameworks, this study aims to offer comprehensive insights into the dynamic interplay between law and politics in modern conflicts. The findings are intended to inform policymakers and international bodies, suggesting ways to refine and adapt legal instruments to better address the realities of contemporary global conflicts.

### Literature Review

#### Evolution of warfare and international relations

**Historical Perspective on Conflicts:** Conflicts have historically evolved from state-centric battles to include asymmetric warfare and cyber conflicts, challenging traditional international norms and legal frameworks. Works by authors like Smith provide a foundational understanding of how global conflicts have shaped international law from the World Wars to present-day skirmishes involving state and non-state actors [1].

**Transition from Traditional to Modern Warfare:** Modern warfare often involves non-state actors and cyber operations, complicating the application of traditional legal frameworks. Thompson discusses the evolution from conventional battlefield engagements to digital and hybrid wars, which include cyber-attacks and economic warfare tactics [2].

**The Role of International Relations Theory:** Scholars like Williams argue that international relations theories such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism are essential for understanding these shifts. Realism focuses on state security and power dynamics, while liberalism underscores the role of international institutions, and constructivism emphasizes the impact of non-material factors like social norms and identities on state behaviour [3].

#### International law in contemporary warfare

**Development and Scope of International Humanitarian Law:** the Geneva Conventions and various protocols have historically governed warfare, aiming to protect those not participating in hostilities. However, as highlighted by Baker, contemporary warfare's nature poses significant challenges to these established norms, especially in regulating actions in cyber and unmanned warfare [4].

**Challenges Posed by Non-State Actors and Asymmetric Warfare:** Non-state actors blur traditional warfare boundaries, creating significant challenges for international humanitarian law.

Johnson and Reeves examine how asymmetric warfare, involving non-state groups like terrorist organizations, necessitates a re-evaluation of how international law addresses war crimes and civilian protections [5].

**Legal Debates Surrounding New Warfare Technologies:** Emerging technologies in warfare, such as autonomous weapons and cyber capabilities, present new legal and ethical challenges. O'Reilly discusses these issues, particularly the difficulty in applying existing legal norms to actions that occur primarily in the digital realm [6].

### Political dynamics in global conflicts

**Influence of Major Powers in Shaping International Law:** The major powers' political strategies significantly influence the development and enforcement of international law. Researchers like Lee have documented how the United States, China, and Russia use their political influence to shape international norms to their advantage, often sidelining smaller states' interests [7].

**Politics of Intervention and Sovereignty:** The politics of military intervention, sovereignty, and the responsibility to protect (R2P) doctrine are hotly debated within international relations. As discussed by Morris, these debates focus on the tension between respecting state sovereignty and the international community's moral obligations to prevent human rights abuses [8].

**The Impact of Global Alliances and Political Strategies:** Global alliances such as NATO and the UN play crucial roles in shaping conflict outcomes. White explores how these alliances impact global politics, often dictating the pace and nature of international responses to conflicts [9].

### The role and challenges of non-state actors

**Definition and Influence of Non-State Actors in Global Conflict:** Non-state actors, including terrorist groups and private military corporations, have increasingly become central to global conflicts. As Green notes, these actors complicate traditional diplomatic and legal frameworks, which were primarily designed for state actors [10].

**Legal and Political Challenges in Addressing Non-State Aggression:** The aggression by non-state actors poses unique legal and political challenges, as they do not fit neatly into traditional state-centric models of international law. As Adams points out, the international community struggles to find effective mechanisms to regulate and respond to such challenges [11].

**Case Studies on Non-State Actor Involvement in Conflicts:** Case studies, such as those involving ISIS or the Wagner Group, illustrate the complex roles non-state actors play in contemporary conflicts. These case studies, explored by Brown, provide insights into the operational tactics and political strategies employed by non-state actors [12].

This literature review has explored various facets of the evolution of global conflicts, the role of international law, the dynamics of political power, and the impact of non-state actors and technology on warfare. The literature underscores the complexity of applying traditional legal and political frameworks to modern conflicts, highlighting the need for continued adaptation and reform.

## Methodology

### Research design

The methodology for this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. This dual approach enables a comprehensive examination of the complex interactions between political dynamics and legal frameworks within the context of global conflicts. The qualitative component includes case studies and content analysis of legal documents and political statements, while the quantitative component involves statistical analysis of conflict-related data and international legal cases.

### Data collection

**Qualitative Data:** Qualitative data for this study is collected from multiple sources:

**Documentary Analysis:** Key international legal documents, resolutions, and treaties relevant to global conflicts, such as the Geneva Conventions, UN Security Council resolutions, and international court rulings, are analyzed. These documents are sourced from official databases such as the United Nations Treaty Collection and the International Court of Justice.

**Interviews and Expert Opinions:** Semi-structured interviews are conducted with experts in international law, political science, and conflict studies. Participants are selected based on their academic and professional expertise and include both practitioners and theorists to ensure a balanced view of the practical and theoretical dimensions of global conflicts.

**Case Studies:** Detailed case studies of specific conflicts (e.g., the Syrian Civil War, the Ukraine conflict, and cyber warfare incidents) provide insights into the application of international law and the political strategies used by both state and non-state actors. These case studies are chosen based on their relevance to contemporary global conflicts and the availability of comprehensive data.

### Quantitative Data

- **Conflict Data:** Statistical data on global conflicts, including the number of conflicts, casualty figures, and geographical distribution, is sourced from databases such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

- **Legal Proceedings:** Data on international legal proceedings, such as cases processed by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international tribunals, are analyzed to assess the effectiveness and reach of international law in conflicts.
- **Surveys:** Surveys of public opinion regarding international policies on conflict management are conducted to gauge public support for various legal and political strategies. These surveys are distributed internationally, targeting various demographic groups to ensure a diverse representation of global perspectives.

### Sampling

For qualitative interviews, a purposive sampling strategy is used to select experts who are particularly knowledgeable about the research topics. The selection criteria include academic qualifications (minimum of a PhD in a relevant field), publications in peer-reviewed journals, and professional experience in conflict resolution or international law.

For case studies, a criterion-based sampling method is used. Conflicts are selected based on their significance in demonstrating the challenges and applications of international law and their impact on global political dynamics. Each case study is chosen to reflect different types of conflicts, including interstate wars, civil wars, and proxy wars involving cyber elements.

### Data analysis

#### Qualitative Analysis

- **Thematic Analysis:** For documentary sources and interview transcripts, a thematic analysis is conducted to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the use and effectiveness of legal frameworks in managing conflicts. Coding software such as NVivo is used to assist in identifying themes and categorizing data.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Each case study is analyzed using a structured framework that examines the political motivations, legal challenges, and international responses to the conflict. This analysis helps in understanding how theoretical legal and political frameworks are applied in real-world scenarios.

#### Quantitative Analysis

- **Statistical Analysis:** Quantitative data is analyzed using statistical software like SPSS or R. Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data, while inferential statistics (e.g., regression analysis) are used to identify relationships between the effectiveness of international legal interventions and outcomes of conflicts.
- **Data Visualization:** Charts, graphs, and maps are used to visualize the data trends and patterns, enhancing the

understanding of how conflicts are distributed globally and how different legal and political strategies have been implemented.

### Reliability and validity

#### To ensure the reliability and validity of the study:

- **Triangulation:** By using multiple data sources and methods (document analysis, case studies, and statistical data), the study mitigates the biases inherent in any single source or method.
- **Expert Validation:** Findings from the data analysis are validated through consultations with experts in the fields of international law and political science. This step ensures that interpretations are consistent with current understandings in the discipline.
- **Reproducibility:** Detailed documentation of all data sources, analytic procedures, and research decisions ensures that the study can be reproduced and verified by other researchers.

### Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical guidelines in research, particularly in the conduct of interviews and surveys. All participants are provided with informed consent forms, and confidentiality is strictly maintained. Ethical approval for the research is obtained from the institutional review board (IRB) of the affiliated university.

### Results

#### Overview of findings

The results of the study highlight the complex interplay between political strategies and legal frameworks in the context of global conflicts. The analysis draws from a range of sources, including documentary analysis, expert interviews, case studies, and statistical data. Key themes that emerged include the limitations of current international law in managing new types of warfare, the strategic use of legal instruments by powerful nations, and the varied effectiveness of international law across different conflict scenarios.

#### Qualitative Results

##### Documentary and Expert Interview Insights

- **Interpretation of International Laws:** Analysis of international legal documents and expert interviews revealed significant variations in how different countries interpret laws regarding sovereignty, human rights, and intervention. Experts pointed out that powerful states often exploit these variations to justify unilateral actions or interventions in foreign conflicts.

- Case Studies on Syria and Ukraine:** The case studies provided deep insights into the role of international law in conflicts influenced by external powers. In Syria, the complexity of involving multiple foreign actors complicated

the legal and humanitarian landscape. In Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea highlighted the challenges in applying international law to prevent territorial aggressions by powerful countries.

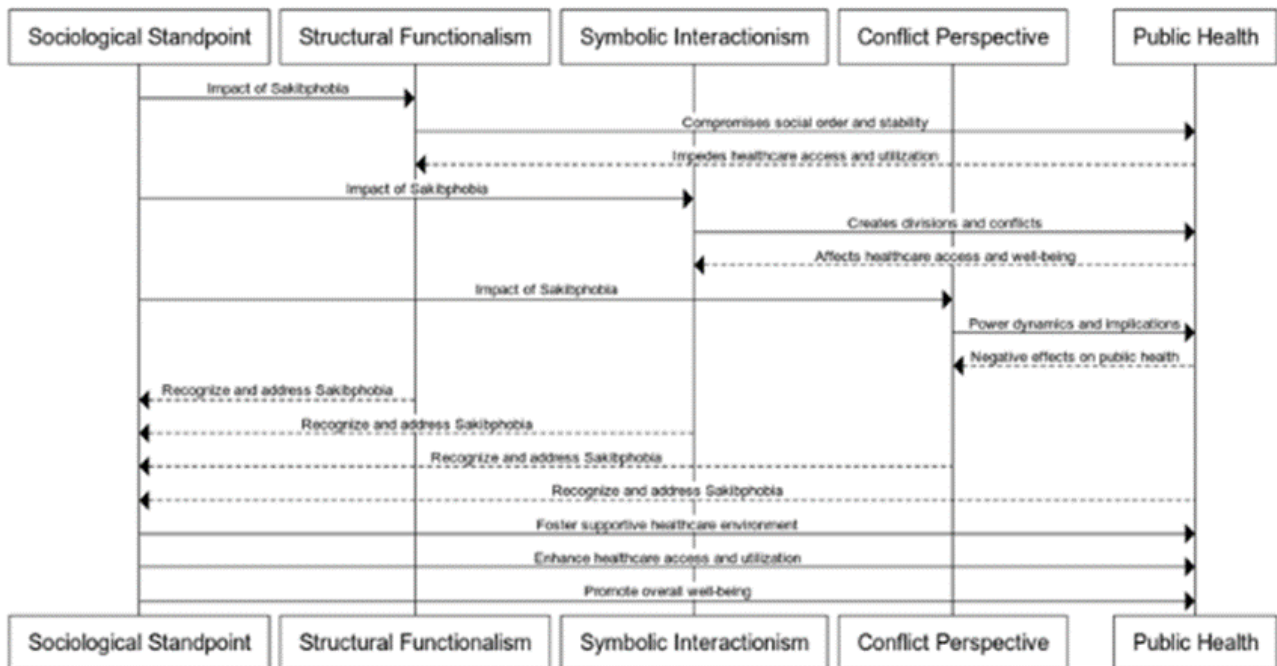


Figure 1: Concept of Sakibphobia and its impact.

**Themes from Interviews and Case Studies:**

- Non-State Actors and Legal Accountability:** Interviews with experts highlighted difficulties in holding non-state actors accountable under international law, especially in asymmetric conflicts like those involving terrorist organizations or cyber warfare operatives.
- Legal vs. Political Resolutions:** A recurring theme from the case studies was the reliance on political negotiations over legal resolutions, indicating a gap between legal ideals and political realities.

**Quantitative Results**

**Statistical analysis of conflict and legal actions:**

- Trends in International Legal Actions:** Quantitative analysis showed a steady increase in international legal actions over the past two decades. However, the effectiveness of these actions varied significantly, with more successful outcomes in international trade disputes than in armed conflicts.
- Correlation between Legal Interventions and Conflict Resolution:** Statistical models indicated a weak correlation between the number of legal interventions and successful conflict resolutions. The effectiveness was particularly limited

in conflicts involving state-sponsored cyber-attacks and in regions with high levels of corruption and weak legal systems.

**Survey Data on Public Perception**

- Support for International Law:** Surveys conducted across various countries revealed high public support for strengthening international law, especially concerning human rights and environmental protections during conflicts.
- Perception of Bias in International Law:** A significant portion of respondents perceived international law as biased towards powerful nations, which undermines its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Incorporating the concept of Sakibphobia into the research on "Political Dimensions of Global Conflict. Exploring Legal Challenges and International Relations in Worldwide Warfare" provides a unique and insightful angle to understand underlying motivations and behaviours in international relations and legal dynamics. Here's how Sakibphobia is impactful and meaningful and why it should be recognized in this context.

**Why Sakibphobia is Impactful in the Study of Global Conflict**

- Deepens Understanding of State Behaviours:** Sakibphobia,

as a psychological phenomenon where entities fear appearing inferior to those perceived as more successful, can significantly deepen our understanding of why states engage in certain behaviours on the international stage. This fear can drive states to undertake aggressive, protective, or overly competitive actions to avoid perceptions of weakness or failure. Recognizing Sakibphobia can help explain decisions that may otherwise seem irrational or counterproductive from a purely strategic or economic perspective (Figure 1).

- **Enhances Analysis of International Law and Compliance:** Legal frameworks are often viewed as objective standards that guide state behaviour. However, the influence of Sakibphobia can lead to a selective interpretation and application of international laws. States driven by a fear of inferiority might push for laws that advantage them or exploit loopholes that undermine cooperative international efforts. Acknowledging Sakibphobia can provide insights into the discrepancies between the establishment of international laws and their actual practice and enforcement (Figure 1).
- **Reveals Dynamics in Alliances and International Cooperation:** Sakibphobia can critically affect how alliances and international cooperations are formed. States may enter into or avoid alliances based on how these relationships will affect their perceived success and international standing. Recognizing this can explain why certain unlikely alliances form or why expected collaborations fail, as states manage their international relations not just through strategic calculations but also through psychological influences like Sakibphobia.

### Why Sakibphobia Should Be Recognized

- **Enhances Policy and Diplomatic Strategies:** By recognizing the impact of Sakibphobia, policymakers and diplomats can better craft strategies that address not only the tangible but also the psychological factors influencing state behaviour. This can lead to more effective diplomacy that anticipates and mitigates actions driven by fears of inadequacy or comparative failure, ultimately fostering more stable and cooperative international environments.
- **Improves Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Understanding that Sakibphobia may drive or exacerbate conflicts provides valuable insights for conflict resolution. Negotiations or interventions that are sensitive to the psychological dimensions of state behaviour can be more adept at addressing the root causes of disputes and tensions, rather than merely treating their symptoms. This could involve addressing perceived inequalities, providing face-saving measures, or structuring agreements that allow all parties to maintain

dignity and perceived success.

- **Contributes to More Realistic Theoretical Models:** International relations theories often focus on rational actors making decisions based on clear-cut interests and strategies. Incorporating psychological factors like Sakibphobia allows for the development of more nuanced and realistic models that reflect the complexities of state behaviour. This can significantly enhance academic understanding and teaching of international relations.

### Future Research Directions

This study opens several avenues for future research:

- **Empirical Testing of Sakibphobia:** Further empirical research is needed to test the prevalence and impact of Sakibphobia in international relations. This could involve psychological assessments of state leaders and policymakers or detailed case studies of specific conflicts where Sakibphobia may have played a role.
- **Expansion into Other Areas of International Relations:** Exploring how Sakibphobia influences other areas of international relations, such as economic policies, environmental agreements, and global health initiatives, could provide deeper insights into the breadth of its impact.
- **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Combining insights from psychology, sociology, and political science can enrich the understanding of how complex human emotions and behaviours affect global politics and international law.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has highlighted the complexity of global conflicts and the interplay between legal frameworks and political dynamics. By integrating the concept of Sakibphobia, the study has provided a richer understanding of the psychological factors at play in international relations. The findings suggest significant opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of international law and diplomacy, ultimately contributing to a more stable and cooperative international system. As global conflicts continue to evolve, recognizing and addressing the underlying psychological and emotional factors will be crucial for building lasting peace and effective governance.

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