



## LEIBNİZ'S DILEMMA OF THE ETHICS OF CONQUEST: THE CONFLICT BETWEEN HIS VIEWS ON JUST WAR AND THE EGYPT PLAN

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the political and religious contexts surrounding Leibniz's Egypt Plan and evaluates whether it aligns with his philosophical views on the criteria for just wars. To achieve these aims, the study is divided into five sections. Following an introduction to the political atmosphere of the era when the Egypt Plan was conceived, the first section discusses the moral justification of the plan, assessing whether it endorses war on ethically sound grounds. The second section evaluates the plan through the lens of proportionality, asserting that a war is just if the harm caused is less than the harm it seeks to prevent. The third section explores why Leibniz did not consider war as a last resort, emphasizing that it should be an option only after all diplomatic avenues have been exhausted. The fourth section examines the intentions behind just wars, which should prioritize the common good over personal or political ambitions. The final section offers an in-depth analysis of whether Leibniz's plan aligns with divine providence, particularly its adherence to the moral order established by the Christian God, to mitigate both intrareligious and interreligious conflicts. The article ultimately argues that Leibniz's Egypt Plan is inconsistent with his own philosophical views on just war, highlighting inherent contradictions within his proposals in the context of just war theory.

**Keywords:** Leibniz, Egypt Plan, Just War Theory, War Ethics, Consequentialism

## LEİBNİZ'İN İŞGAL ETİĞİ İKİLEMİ: HAKLI SAVAŞ ÜZERİNE GÖRÜŞLERİ VE MİSİR İSTİLA PLANI ARASINDAKİ ÇATIŞMA

### ÖZ

Bu makale, Leibniz'in Mısır Planı etrafındaki siyasi ve dini bağlamı incelemekte ve bu planın haklı savaşlar hakkında ortaya koyduğu kriterler üzerindeki felsefi görüşleriyle ne ölçüde uyumlu olduğunu değerlendirmektedir. Bu amaçlara ulaşmak için çalışma beş bölüme ayrılmıştır. Mısır Planı'nın oluşturulduğu dönemin siyasi atmosferine yapılan bir girişin ardından, ilk bölüm planın ahlaki gerekçesini tartışmakta ve savaşı etik açıdan sağlam temellere dayandırıp dayandırmadığını değerlendirmektedir. İkinci bölüm, planı orantılılık açısından değerlendirerek bir savaşın haklı sayılabilmesi için neden olduğu zararın önlemeye çalıştığı zarardan daha az olması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm, Leibniz'in savaşı son çare olarak neden düşünmediğini araştırmakta ve bunun, ancak tüm diplomatik yollar tükendikten sonra bir seçenek olabileceğini vurgulamaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm, haklı savaşların ardındaki niyetleri incelemekte ve bu niyetlerin kişisel veya politik hırsların yerine kamu yararını önceliklendirmesi gerektiğini belirtmektedir. Son bölüm, Leibniz'in planının ilahi irade ile ne ölçüde uyumlu olduğunu, özellikle de Hristiyan Tanrı tarafından oluşturulan ahlaki düzene olan bağlılığını derinlemesine analiz etmekte, böylece hem din içi hem de dinler arası çatışmaları azaltmayı amaçlamaktadır. Makale, sonuç olarak Leibniz'in Mısır Planı'nın haklı savaş konusundaki kendi felsefi görüşleriyle tutarsız olduğunu savunmakta ve haklı savaş teorisi bağlamında önerilerindeki içsel çelişkileri vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Leibniz, Mısır Planı, Haklı Savaş Kuramı, Savaş Etiği, Sonuçsalcılık.

**Gönderilme Tarihi:** 4 Kasım 2024

**Kabul Tarihi:** 23 Aralık 2024

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### **Introduction**

To understand the political landscape that ultimately inspired Leibniz to devise his Egypt Plan, we must first explore the shifting dynamics in Europe following the Thirty Years' War. This brutal conflict, which began in 1618 and concluded with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, dramatically altered Europe's balance of power. Driven by Habsburg ambitions, the war aimed primarily to advance the Catholic Counter-Reformation and suppress the emerging independence of the United Provinces of the Netherlands. It is crucial to note that Habsburgs' efforts to establish dominance over both the smaller principalities in Italy and those within the Holy Roman Empire. Following Emperor Matthias, a secret agreement was made between Ferdinand, the planned successor, and King Felipe III of Spain, aiming to prevent the weaker German principalities from forming alliances with France. Spain, meanwhile, sought to strengthen its waning authority in Italy by closely engaging with the Italian principalities. The Mantuan Crisis, which erupted in 1627, further intensified France's opposition to Spain's policies in the region. Yet France's staunch opposition thwarted these objectives, and, after thirty years of warfare, Bourbon France emerged as a rising power, while the United Provinces and Sweden established themselves as formidable new players on the European stage (Parker, 1997).

The conflict with Spain, however, persisted until 1659, when the Treaty of the Pyrenees brought peace between France and Spain. Although the war diminished Spain's influence, it bolstered France's standing. France remained concerned, however, about the close dynastic ties between the Austrian and Spanish thrones, which had potential implications for French interests. Thus, when Leopold I ascended to the imperial throne of the Holy Roman Empire in 1658—a development France neither endorsed nor could prevent—there was resistance to any consolidation of the Austrian and Spanish crowns. Under diplomatic pressure, Leopold I was compelled to agree not to extend military aid to Spain. This diplomatic maneuver was largely a triumph for French foreign policy and the newly formed League of the Rhine.

The League of the Rhine, initiated by John Philip von Schönborn, aimed to uphold the territorial integrity and autonomy for princes established by the Treaty of Westphalia. France and Prussia would later join this coalition, and its chief purpose became to shield the region from Habsburg dominance. Many smaller European states and princes, protective of the rights secured under the Peace of Westphalia, aligned themselves with this effort against the potential encroachment of the Holy Roman Emperor. This alliance, which also enjoyed the support of Catholic France and various other states, drew strength from the close rapport between Schönborn and Cardinal Mazarin, France's *de facto* leader.

While France saw the League as a useful tool for its own geopolitical objectives, it carefully managed its influence to avoid alienating other members. Schönborn, on the other hand, viewed the League as a way to uphold the Westphalian order and sustain peace across the German territories and Northern Europe (McKay, et al. 1983, p. 1-10).

The alliance against the Habsburgs marked a significant diplomatic achievement, though the balance of power soon began to shift. In 1661, Mazarin's death allowed Louis XIV to assume full control over France's governance. Although Louis established a defensive alliance with the Dutch Republic in 1662, he harbored territorial ambitions toward United Provinces of the Netherlands. His goal was to collaborate with the Republic to divide the Spanish Netherlands. However, the Dutch preferred a weak Spain over a powerful France, and initially, this resistance blocked Louis's ambitions. The outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1665, however, provided France with a long-awaited opportunity. In 1667, French forces advanced into the Spanish Netherlands, initiating Louis XIV's first major conflict, the War of Devolution (1667-68). This

war also marked the debut of France's newly reorganized army, which proved so formidable that Spanish forces retreated without a fight. The swift rise of this new French military power unsettled both the United Provinces of the Netherlands and England. Consequently, they concluded a peace agreement in Breda in 1667, which would evolve into a formal alliance in 1668. With Sweden joining, the Triple Alliance was established. Its primary purpose was to mediate the Franco-Spanish conflict and contain France within its pre-1659 borders. The alliance even included a secret provision allowing for military intervention if needed to enforce these aims, a clause that deeply shocked Louis XIV. Ultimately, negotiations led to a peace settlement at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668, momentarily stabilizing the situation (Thompson, 1973, p. 33-53; McKay, et al. 1983, p. 14-28).

Around four years after the treaty, Louis XIV launched an attack on the United Provinces of the Netherlands. Behind this assault were political and economic motives, as well as Louis's dissatisfaction of the Triple Alliance, led by the Netherlanders. Louis XIV, who would later become known as the 'Sun King', accused the Republic of imposing its rules and demands on France. In the lead-up to the war, Louis first sought to dismantle the Triple Alliance by winning England over to his side. During this four-year period, France's goal was to diplomatically isolate the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

At this point, Leibniz entered the scene. While an alliance against the Netherlands was being formed, Leibniz was actively engaged in his own pursuits. In 1666, he earned his doctorate with his thesis, *De casibus perplexis in Iure*.<sup>1</sup> During this period, he met Baron Johann Christian von Boineburg, the late minister of the Elector of Mainz, and accompanied him to Frankfurt. Although Leibniz received job offers from the university, he declined them as he was considering a career in politics. Frankfurt thus offered him various opportunities. He managed to present his work, *Methodus nova discendae docendaeque Iurisprudentiae*, to Johann Philipp of Schönborn, which opened the door for him to enter the service of the Elector of Mainz. He was assigned to work on proposed legal reforms. However, the region was soon facing an increasing threat from France. In response, Leibniz expanded his efforts beyond legal reform to help counter this threat. Out of these efforts emerged the documents now known as the 'Egypt Plan' (Meyer, 1952, p. 2-3).

The first of these texts, *Regi Christianissimo*,<sup>2</sup> was to be written in December 1671. This would be followed by *Specimen demonstrationis politicae*,<sup>3</sup> *De eo quod franciae interest*,<sup>4</sup> *De optimo consilio quod potentissimo regi dari potest impraesentiarum*,<sup>5</sup> and *Justa Dissertatio*.<sup>6</sup> With the exception of *Justa Dissertatio*, the other works were written at the beginning of 1672. *Justa Dissertatio* was designed to be presented to Louis XIV, and when it arrived in Paris in March 1672, Leibniz was still working on this text. Leibniz's journey to Paris was personally organized by the court of Mainz. The aim was for Leibniz to present his Egypt plan to the King of France and thereby persuade Louis XIV to abandon the war with the Netherlands. However, when he arrived in Paris, the English had already begun their assault, and on April 6, Louis XIV also declared war. It is unknown whether the plan was ever presented to Louis XIV. Nonetheless, Leibniz continued to work on it and, in the summer of 1672, wrote a summary of the plan, titled as

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<sup>1</sup> Degree of Doctor of Law at the University of Altdorf.

<sup>2</sup> To the Most Christian King.

<sup>3</sup> Specimen of Political Demonstrations.

<sup>4</sup> On What Is in the Interests of France.

<sup>5</sup> On the Best Advice That Can Be Given to the Most Powerful King in the Present Circumstances.

<sup>6</sup> A Just Proposal.

*Breviarium*,<sup>7</sup> to present to his patron (Strickland, 2016, p. 462; Mackie, 1845, p. 55-64; Haran, 2010, p. 135-141).

Regardless of lack of knowledge whether Leibniz could ever present his plan to Louis XIV, his plan repeatedly resurfaced throughout history. Napoleon's proposal to launch an expedition to Egypt and the subsequent campaign marked a shift from concept to action regarding the occupation of Egypt. Although Napoleon's campaign ultimately fell short of its objectives and had to be abandoned shortly afterward, it provided an opening for Leibniz's vision to be tested in practice. Contrary to Leibniz's expectations, however, Napoleon's Egyptian expedition did not foster European cooperation. Instead, it was England and Russia—two of Europe's prominent Christian states—that came to the Ottoman Empire's aid following the campaign. Rather than leading to collaboration among Christian nations as Leibniz had envisioned, France's actions deepened divisions and even sparked new conflicts (Şakul, 2009, p. 134-168).

Despite this initial failure, Leibniz's plan retained its importance. Following the campaign, Napoleon himself showed renewed interest in the plan, prompting the first editions of it to be published at that time. The plan came back into focus in 1840 during *the Oriental Crisis* when the issue of Egypt, now central to European diplomacy due to the crisis involving Mehmet Ali Pasha, once again spurred fresh publications of Leibniz's proposal. Throughout various historical turning points—such as the opening of the Suez Canal, Britain's occupation of Egypt, and the events leading to World War I—Leibniz's plan continued to be referenced and revisited, underscoring its enduring relevance (Farruggia, 2023, p. 25-58).

While Leibniz dedicated significant effort to designing his Egypt Plan, he also authored several philosophical texts on the principles that make up the philosophical foundation of just wars. There are several texts discussing the plan in detail, yet there is almost no literature discussing whether the plan philosophically coheres with Leibniz's views about just wars. This study, to fill up the gap in the literature, categorizes the philosophical principles of just wars into five core tenets, arguing that Leibniz's Egypt Plan conflicts with his own conception of a just war. To avoid evaluating Leibniz's plan anachronistically through modern ethical debates on just war, the study focuses strictly on his views regarding just war criteria. Ultimately, it suggests that Leibniz's plan lacks coherence with his philosophical standards for just war, which include moral justification, proportionality, last resort, intention, and divine providence. Under these principles, a war is morally justified if fought for legitimate moral reasons; it is proportional if the harm inflicted is less than the harm it prevents. War should also be a last resort, with all diplomatic avenues exhausted before engaging in conflict. Regarding intention, a just war must aim for peace and promote the common good rather than pursuing power or conquest. Lastly, divine providence requires that a just war aligns with divine justice and the moral order within the Christian conception of God. To assess whether Leibniz's plan would lead to a just war, this study is divided into five sections, each addressing a specific philosophical tenet in relation to the Egypt Plan.

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<sup>7</sup> Summary.

### The Moral Justification of Just Wars and the Egypt Plan

According to the first basic tenet of Leibniz's views on just wars,<sup>8</sup> a war can be considered just if undertaken for a morally legitimate reason, which refer to the reasons such as defense of oneself or the innocent, restoration of peace, or sustaining the peaceful environment. This tenet can be termed as *moral justification*. In the introduction of his *Codex Iuris Gentium Diplomaticus*, Leibniz defends the idea that when one cannot trust the enemy on whether the promises for peace will be kept, one may resort to war.<sup>9</sup> This aspect of the first tenet relies on the notion of trust. As Leibniz contends, there are nations that are almost engaging in perpetual war, and when they make treaties among such nations, there is generally "good reason to suspect the good faith of others" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166), which is equal to when "a *cautio domni infecti*<sup>10</sup> cannot be counted on" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166). The lack of trust explains why there is a perpetual war (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166) between different nations for Leibniz and he justifies and describes the moral rationale of this sort of wars by contending that they refer "not to a right to do harm, but to take proper precautions" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166). Arguing that frequently "because of the geographical and historical situation, a prince must fight continuously, and almost constantly treat of peace and alliances" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166).

Leibniz's moral justification for and interpretation of perpetual wars as a means of taking appropriate precautions is grounded in an epistemological framework that assumes rulers are human beings, inherently not wholly trustworthy. Contending that "rulers play cards in private life and with treaties in public affairs" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166), Leibniz assumes that for perpetual wars to cease, one of the warring parties can trust that the other side will not attack only if it is in a position of weakness, rather than trusting an inherently dishonest human being. In that regard, a truly peaceful environment is not grounded on treaties but on the definitive lack of logistic conditions of one party to disturb peace. Yet, the weaker side's incapability of attacking does not imply that the superior side would not attack. Leibniz, being aware of this, contends that unfair conditions "increases the appetite of the victor" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166), meaning that there is a perpetual cycle of wars until one party is eliminated. This raises the question whether such treaties between the nations engaging in perpetual wars constitute a reliable ground for peace. The answer seems to be negative. Leibniz supports this interpretation by arguing for secret agendas of both parties as he states that "many things remain secret in the acts of the powerful and in the causes of treaties, especially because often facts which pass unobserved have a greater effect than is thought" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 166). Clearly, the first aspect of the first tenet fails to provide us with firm ground for just wars.

Leibniz provides a second aspect for the moral justification of wars: self-defense. To the question of whether whatever that is not cause of war is just, he gives a negative answer: "But then it would not be just, in case of assault, to prefer that someone else be destroyed rather than myself" (Leibniz, 1969, p. 134). That is, the just war is just when one prefers harm to the opponent rather than himself. Conceptually speaking, the concept of self-defense implies an assault

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<sup>8</sup> Leibniz does not himself directly discuss the concept of just wars in his political or philosophical writings, yet he aims at justifying his plan and appeals to Grotius's framework, which is one of the most comprehensive and influential account of just wars. See H. Grotius, (2005). *The Rights of War and Peace*. (ed. Richard Tuck), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

<sup>9</sup> Although Leibniz may sound as if he proposes war as the first resort in resolving conflicts, as shall be seen, his defense of war as a means of guaranteeing security and peace is the last resort because the type of war he proposes takes place after treaties.

<sup>10</sup> The Latin phrase reads 'the guarantee of a tainted ruler' in English.

or threat from the opponent. Considering that Ottomans did not pose a direct threat to France but to Habsburgs at the time when Leibniz designed his plan to conquer Egypt, it appears that Leibniz evaluates the political situation from the perspective of the dictum 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend', which is a case of instrumental and pragmatic alliance. Leibniz, not living in a specific country for long periods at that time, was from the lands ruled by Habsburgs. Yet, to defend Habsburgs from the threat of Bourbons, and to prevent inner conflicts among the Christian states, he suggested his plan to direct the expansive thirst of France towards Ottoman territories. To compare, consider Luther's views on just wars. Luther maintained that war could only be justified as a defensive measure (Luther, 1967, pp. 161–205), grounded in divine will and moral necessity (Baer, (2021), pp. 273–300). His views on the Ottoman threat framed their presence as a form of divine punishment for the moral and spiritual decay of Christian Europe. Therefore, for Luther, a just war against the Ottomans would require Christians to first reform their own faith and behavior, aligning their actions with God's will. In contrast, Leibniz's plan focuses on redirecting European conflicts outward, bypassing the need for internal spiritual reform. Luther would likely critique this as a failure to address the root causes of intra-Christian conflicts, making such a plan morally inadequate. A central tenet of Luther's just war theory is that war is only justified when responding to a clear and direct threat (Luther, 1967, pp. 87–137). In Leibniz's Egypt Plan, the Ottomans posed no immediate danger to France or the Habsburgs at the time. Instead, the plan aimed to preemptively redirect France's aggression, treating the Ottoman territories as a convenient target for European expansion. For Luther, such a preemptive war would lack legitimacy. His theological perspective required an immediate threat or assault for war to be morally defensible. The absence of a direct Ottoman threat undermines the validity of Leibniz's proposal in Luther's framework (Gross, 2001, pp. 135–160). Leibniz, not living in a specific country for long periods at that time, was from the lands ruled by Habsburgs. Yet, to defend Habsburgs from the threat of Bourbons, and to prevent inner conflicts among the Christian states, he suggested his plan to direct the expansive thirst of France towards Ottoman territories. This way, he could eliminate both the interreligious conflicts and intrareligious ones. As shall shortly be discussed, victory in interreligious conflicts depend on the victory in the intrareligious conflicts. Thus, the first point is that directing the expansive politics towards another country is not a resolution for the intrareligious conflicts of Europe. Secondly, at the time of Leibniz's plan there were no threats from Ottomans to Habsburgs. Thus, Leibniz's plan is not built on the notion of self-defense for Bourbons. A third point in relation to the second one is that Leibniz's plan would make an Ottoman war against Bourbons just, rather than Bourbons' because it would be the Ottomans who would be in the position of self-defense rather than Bourbons.

#### **The Problem of Proportionality in the Egypt Plan**

The second tenet of Leibniz's views on just war is *proportionality*, according to which the harm caused by war should not exceed the harm that it seeks to prevent. Technically, a war plan involves numerous parameters that must be carefully evaluated before the war begins. In that regard, proportionality is a notion that partially applies to the pre-war stage. As almost no war goes according to the plan, and in accordance with the alternative plans, proportionality also needs to be calculated after the war. When both aspects of proportionality are considered, it becomes evident that Leibniz aims at avoiding such victories as Pyrrhic victories. Noting that the true calculation regarding the results of wars can be done when the war is over, Leibniz argues that "when one must stop the game, the counting of the playing-pieces tells how much each one has gained or lost, which, until that moment, had remained in suspense" (Leibniz,

1988a, p. 169). If proportionality can be calculated without suspension only when the war is over, one can easily see that Leibniz's notion of proportionality is a pragmatic notion rather than a notion that characterizes the justness of a war. In the case of his plan, proportionality would become a matter of comparison between how many civilians in Egypt are harmed and how many civilians are not harmed in Europe by a possible intrareligious conflict. Note that merely pragmatic considerations of proportionality are incompatible with any form of moral justification in contemporary discourse, as they conflict with fundamental and modern concepts such as human rights, the right to life, and similar principles.

When Leibniz's notion of proportionality is evaluated from the perspective of his time, it soon gets clear that Leibniz interprets the political conflicts on the ground of religion, dividing warring parties into two as Christians and infidels.<sup>11</sup> The threat posed by the Ottoman Empire, alongside that of France, was a significant factor in Leibniz's Egypt Plan. The Ottoman threat, which was increasingly felt in German territories, was perceived as a threat to nearly all of Christendom. Therefore, although France had formed an alliance with the Ottoman Empire against the Habsburgs and had provided significant support for the siege of Crete, the Ottoman Empire symbolized the Eastern Empire. The struggle for empire between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons had long dominated European politics. However, a victory over the Ottoman Empire or its elimination would also mean that the title of Eastern Emperor would find a new owner. On the other hand, collaboration against the Ottoman Empire could lead to a European alliance. This was also one of the aims of both Leibniz and those who had expressed similar thoughts before him regarding the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire. In 1607, the Austrian statesman Sully proposed a European unity project in line with a partitioning plan. Leibniz held a similar view. In a sense, it was thought that the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire or a collaboration arising for it could pave the way for unity in Europe (Bilici, 2004, p. 1-74). Still, infidels posing no threat Bourbons at the time of the plan, his plan to conquer Egypt is still not a justified war on the part of Bourbons, but on the part of the Ottomans who mostly held the same religion-based interpretation of the political atmosphere as the Muslims and the non-Muslims (Almond, 2013, p. 463-483; Johns, 2024, p. 1-21).

#### **The Egypt Plan as the Last Resort**

The third tenet treats a just war to be the last resort, i.e., all peaceful and non-violent means of resolving a conflict, e.g. diplomatic negotiations etc., must be exhausted before considering war as the resolution. Thus, this tenet can be shortly termed as *last resort*. Leibniz narrates a saying from a notable character in international relations, according to whom an ambassador of a great prince, who was always negotiating, says that his "prince live sumptuously, *car il traite toujours* [for he is always negotiating]" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 167). At superficial reading, the quote sounds like as if the ambassador prevents conflicts by negotiations, such that the prince enjoys a sumptuous life. When considered within the context of the third tenet, it seems plausible to prevent wars as much as possible through negotiations, such that war becomes the very last resort. Yet, Leibniz indeed criticizes French policy, claiming that "An expedient of French policy today is precisely this: as soon as one inflicts an injury, talk at once of peace. Thus one receives the advantages of war, and at the same time seeks praise for [being] a peaceable

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<sup>11</sup> This is also one of the main reasons why Leibniz titles his satirical work that criticizes Louis XIV and his expansionist policies towards the Christian-populated states as '*Mars Christianissimus*'. See G. W. Leibniz, (1988e.) "*Mars Christianissimus* (The Most Christian War-God)". *Leibniz: Political Writings*. (Ed. & Trans. P. Riley,) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

spirit" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 167). His criticism is that the role of negotiations in French policy is not about preventing possible wars but preventing the loss of the advantages of war and further presenting the French as the peaceful party, which is the one whose policies cause the war. Considering his plan to conquer Egypt, Leibniz fails to abide by his basic tenet because there is no negotiation between Ottomans and Bourbons. Leibniz's plan reflects a notion of policy more like the one he criticizes rather than presents as a tenet to justify a war as the last resort. However, there is an additional point: The plan itself plays the role of negotiation to prevent intrareligious conflicts in Europe. Considering the possibility of being defeated by Ottomans in Egypt and comparing the scales of intrareligious war in Europe with an interreligious one in Egypt, Leibniz seems to be one-sidedly miscalculating the proportionality in his plan to conquer Egypt.

#### **The Intentions behind the Egypt Plan**

The fourth tenet is *intention*, which refers to the motives that determine the decision to engage in war. A just war aims for peace and promotes common good instead of motives such as desire for power. While the first tenet defines the positive outcomes of a just war, the fourth tenet focuses on what motives should be excluded, offering a negative framework for assessing the legitimacy of war intentions. Undoubtedly, Leibniz is aware that evil intentions, pride issues, or just bad mood of the rulers may start a war. To demonstrate, regarding the emotional factors, he contends that "sometimes a remark which is maliciously reported or invented strikes the soul of a prince or of his minister and leaves its sting; from which issue hidden impulses of hatred and revenge" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 168), which can be a cause of war. He lists other examples such as "a night [on which] the prince has slept badly, after which he has made rash decisions, because of an unsuitable mental and physical condition, is soon paid for by many thousands of unfortunates with their blood" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 168). It is possible to list some other causes of war such as "the abuse of power by a woman is that which pushes a husband or a lover to act; more often the inclinations of ministers are communicated to their sovereigns" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 168).

The point of the fourth tenet is a warning against this sort of unjust cause that might replace the just and plausible intentions of starting a war. War is not a game for children and as there are considerations for why to start a war, there are as many false intentions for why rulers should not initiate one. Leibniz obviously makes a plausible point when he discusses this sort of cause of war and emphasizes the significance of intentions when it comes to starting a war. To emphasize the role of negotiations, the basic tenets of war ethics with the aim of resolving the intrareligious conflicts, Leibniz writes an anonymous satire titled *Mars Christianissimus* (Leibniz, 1988e). By the satire, he aims at provoking the French intellectuals to critically assess the French expansive policies from the perspective of the overall benefit of the Christian world. While Leibniz abides by the fourth tenet regarding the intrareligious conflicts, it seems that he has a double-standard when it comes to the interreligious conflicts. Starting a war against infidels, which is an indexical term, changing its meaning from one user to another, is no less unjust than the ones he lists above. Although he seems to be pragmatically aiming at the benefit of the Christian world by directing the expansive French policies towards Egypt, this move still lacks positive intentions, such as sustaining the peaceful environment or defending the lives of the innocent.

#### **The Egypt Plan as a Part of Divine Providence**

The fifth and final tenet is rooted in a religious motive, which can be termed as *divine providence*, according to which, human actions, including warfare, should align with divine justice and the moral order established by God, i.e., the Christian God.



Undoubtedly, the threat posed by France to the Netherlands was a significant factor behind Leibniz's Egypt Plan. However, the peril from the Ottoman Empire was felt more acutely than ever before. The defense of Crete, covertly supported by France since 1645, collapsed in 1669, leading to the island's conquest by the Ottoman Empire. Concurrently, the Ottoman Empire continued its expansion into Eastern Europe. After the 1660s, the conflict between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans intensified. Alongside the siege in Crete, Ottoman forces were advancing into Europe. In 1663, the city of Uyvár fell to the Ottomans, signaling that they were drawing closer to Vienna. This expansion prompted the ringing of the "Turkish bell" in German churches as a call to arms. The Habsburgs, in conjunction with the Pope, urged all Christians to unite against the Ottoman threat. Although the war eventually concluded with the Treaty of Vasvár in 1664, the Ottomans had reached their widest territorial extent in Hungary. This marked a significant indication that the Ottoman threat had encroached deeper into Europe than ever before (Kolçak, 2012, p. 560-562).

There are three considerations of Leibniz for the divine providence of just wars. Leibniz, dividing the concept of natural right into three, *strict right*, *equity*, and *piety*, contends that the first is strict right, the precept of which is that "no one is to be injured, so that he will not be given a motive for a legal action within the state, nor outside the state a right of war" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 172). This type of right refers to the domestic peace of a state as well as peace understood internationally. When one abides by the precept of the strict right, no one harms the other where there is no need for personal revenge acts or legal cases—except the unintentional cases of harm—, where the domestic peace is grounded on. The scope covers the international cases where a citizen of a state is harmed by the citizen of another, which prevents international conflicts arising from harming a citizen or a group of citizens of a country—again except for unintentional harm. Leibniz argues that from the strict right the second type of right arises, which he defines as "distributive justice" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 172). Just as the strict right, equity is a dual-aspect concept, referring to domestic and international types of peace. While strict right is a negative code prohibiting harming others, equity is positive in the sense that it "commands us to give to each his due" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 172). By equity, everyone gets his share of deserved good or bad treatment, thus explaining "privileges, rewards, and punishment" in a state and between states. Optimistically, if states abide by equity, they neither support nor punish another unjustly. The last type of justice is piety, which is the highest form of natural justice. Leibniz contends that by piety, "we can think of all men as living in the most perfect state, under a monarch who can neither be deceived in his wisdom nor eluded in his power; and who is also so worthy of love that it is happiness to serve such a master. Thus whoever expands his soul in service of Christ will regain it" (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 172). Leibniz eventually relates the highest form of justice to his political philosophy by making an analogy between God and sovereign. When a sovereign does not imitate God, justice becomes a particular virtue which "comprises only what are called commutative and distributive justice" (Leibniz, 1988c, p. 60). Yet when a sovereign "is founded on God or on the imitation of God, it becomes universal justice, and contains all the virtues" (Leibniz, 1988c, p. 60).

Obviously, Leibniz's perfect state is a Christian one and defining such universal state by the divine powers of the Christian conception of God always keeps the religion-driven wars in horizon because Leibniz holds natural religion identical to Christianity (Leibniz, 1988b, p. 79). The religious state is such a universally comprehensive one that even the men without revelation are categorized among the citizens of the perfect state. It seems that Leibniz shares the instinct of grounding his political views philosophically by appealing to universal concepts

(Wallerstein, 2006). When evaluated along with the points made regarding the first tenet, Leibniz's conception of a perfect state is an idealist one, "whose purpose is the general and supreme happiness" (Leibniz, 1988b, p. 77), which will never be actual until it eliminates the other states with different religions and until eliminating them, there will be a perpetual war among these states. Apart from the inter-religious conflicts, Leibniz's conception of a perfect state will never be actual until intra-religious conflicts end.

Both Leibniz and various proponents of partition projects before and after him shared the goal of Christian unity. Many of advocates of these projects were clergy, which contributed to the religious motivations behind these proposals. Consequently, the narrative emphasizing the Ottoman threat to Christians became prominent. One of Leibniz's suggestions in response to this threat was fostering collaboration among Christians. This proposed cooperation would not be limited to European Christians. As Leibniz noted, an operation launched against the Ottoman Empire could mobilize Christians in Eastern Europe and within Ottoman borders as well. He even held an optimistic view on this matter. Under this plan, Poles from the East, as well as Italians and Spaniards from the Mediterranean, could join forces to launch a collective attack on the Ottoman Empire. In this context, Leibniz argued that if Louis XIV were to initiate a campaign against the Ottomans, it could also mean that he would assume the leadership of all Christians. Louis XIV, who always intended to see himself as an emperor, maintained close ties with the Pope. Moreover, France had long sought to position itself as the leader of Catholics. To this end, it would not shy away from assisting in the defense of Crete. This scenario would create a power struggle between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons over Catholic leadership. Consequently, Leibniz would detail the religious aspect of this campaign in his Egypt Plan, asserting that it would serve Christianity significantly. By proposing this plan, Leibniz was also offering Louis XIV the opportunity to assume a leadership role within Christianity. This leadership, however, would not be limited to that of Catholic Christians; through this project, Leibniz was presenting Louis XIV with the chance to become the leader of all Christians. This role would, in turn, transform him into a savior figure. From this perspective, Leibniz would advise Louis XIV to attack Egypt rather than the Netherlands, deeming it far more beneficial compared to the potential damage incurred in the Netherlands.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the idealist or utopic character of the perfect state, Leibniz seems to have firm belief in the possibility of actualizing it. To defend the Christians against the infidels and unite the Christian world in one state, he gives the chief role to the Caesar, who is the "defender, or rather the chief, or if one prefers the secular arm of the universal Church" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 119). As the chief of the perfect Christian sovereign, the Caesar has the role of ending both interreligious wars as well as the intra-religious ones. Yet, ending war is one thing, sustaining the peaceful atmosphere is another. Caesar has both duties and to achieve them, he has the ultimate authority. Leibniz, describes the duties of Caesar as follows:

*Caesar is the commander [Imperator], that is, the born leader of Christians against the infidels: it is mainly for him to destroy schisms, to bring about the meeting of [ecumenical] Councils, to maintain good order, in short*

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<sup>12</sup> About Leibniz's plan see. M. De Hoffmanns, (1840). *Mémoire de Leibniz, à Louis XIV sur la Conquête de l'Égypte, publié avec une préface et des notes par M.de Hoffmanns, suivi d'un Projet d'expédition dans l'Inde, par terre, concerté entre le Premier Consul et l'Empereur Paul 1er au commencement de ce siècle*, Paris: Edouard Garnot, libraire-éditeur, and G. E. Guhrauer, (1838). *Mémoire sur le projet d'expédition en Egypte, présenté en 1672 à Louis XIV par Leibnitz*, Paris: Typographie de Firmin, Didot Frères.

*to act through the authority of his position so that the Church and the Republic of Christendom suffer no harm (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 113).*

When the quote scrutinized, it gets clear that Leibniz sees infidels as the potential enemies of the Republic of Christendom, meaning that from the religious aspect, he has a bipolar interpretation of the international relations: one horn is the Republic of the Christendom and the other is the states of the infidels. Thus, Caesar's decisions to initiate an interreligious war is religiously justified by his duties. Yet before achieving the interreligious peace, he needs to resolve all intra-religious matters by destroying schisms and then unite all Christians under the republic. As the second duty is a step towards the achievement of the first one, it is justified for the same religious motivations.

Assigning Caesar with these two crucial duties is not enough to overcome the interreligious and intrareligious conflicts, which further opens the justificatory role of the religious motive to question. There are three reasons regarding the rulers: (1) uncertain sources of their authority, (2) inherent fallibility of their nature, and (3) their lack of absolute authority.

Beginning with (1), note that according to Leibniz there are two heads of the Holy Empire: "the Emperor and a legitimate Pope" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 112). In that regard, whether the two heads have absolute authority or represent the divine authority is the first reason. Leibniz doubts whether "the Pope has the power to depose kings, and to absolve subjects of their oaths of fidelity" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 112). Similarly, there is no certain religious text that he quotes as the textual ground of Caesar's authority, contending himself with asserting that rather than Caesar himself, it is the senates that have the authority to declare war against the infidels, akin to the Councils. Thus, the heads of the empire neither hold the ultimate power of his domain personally nor represent the divine authority in person.

Regarding (2), as men or human beings, both heads of the empire are inherently not trustworthy (Leibniz, 1988a, p. 165), and "even the best of human institutions are subject to corruption" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 175), which includes both heads of the empire. Thus, religion-motivated just wars to establish both interreligious and intrareligious peace have weak, or inherently untrustworthy ground, namely the human nature. The same applies to the institutions such as the Council, or its hypothetical equivalent suggested by Leibniz, "a general Senate of Christendom" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 112).

Coming to (3), Leibniz maintains that no king is above all the laws (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 119), which is the reason he would have demanded for a senate of the Christendom if there were any such Caesars under whose reign all Christians united. Like the senates or the councils of the kings, there would be such a senate for Caesars, as he would not be above all the laws. Giving the example of the judiciary that condemned Sultan Ibrahim, and the example of the killing of Osman II, he argues the same for the Ottomans, claiming that no king or emperor is above all the laws ((Leibniz, 1988d, p. 119-120). Thus, religion-motivated wars are just in the sense that they are assessed in the councils, which can always make mistaken decisions.

These three reasons indicate that Leibniz has a utopic-realist tension in his political philosophy. On one hand, there is an ideal institution called the universal church, such that although it is doubtful whether Pope has the authority that enables him to depose kings or absolve the oaths of fidelity, "no one doubts, at least among those who follow Roman doctrine, that this power resides in the universal Church" (Leibniz, 1988d, p. 113). On the other, there is no legitimate representative that holds and justly applies the power that resides in the universal church. It eventually turns out that the justness by religion has neither firm ground nor probability of getting actual.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Leibniz's views on just war reveal a complex interplay among moral justification, proportionality, the principle of war as a last resort, the positive intentions behind just wars, and divine providence as the religious motive for engaging in them. His Egypt Plan exemplifies a consequentialist and pragmatist conception of war, which philosophically contradicts the five basic tenets of his just war theory. The plan fails to meet the moral justification criterion, as it is not grounded in morally legitimate reasons such as self-defense, the defense of the innocent, the restoration of peace, or the maintenance of a peaceful environment. While these elements may be present in the motives behind his plan, they predominantly favor innocent Christians, neglecting the innocent individuals of other faiths. Regarding proportionality, Leibniz's plan presupposes a French victory in Egypt, which is just one of many potential outcomes; the war could also be lost or, worse yet, could drag on indefinitely. Consequently, the plan does not adequately address the proportionality criterion, which necessitates an assessment of the war's potential end. As for the tenet of war as a last resort, it is evident that Leibniz would advocate for this principle but restrict its applicability to conflicts within the Christian realm due to his religious beliefs. In the case of the Egypt Plan, war emerges as the first resort rather than the last. Concerning the positive intentions of the Egypt Plan, Leibniz appears to apply this criterion only to intrareligious conflicts, as expansive policies seem less problematic when the victims are non-Christians. Most significantly, his Egypt Plan is rooted more in religious motives than any other consideration. Ultimately, he seeks to resolve intra-religious conflicts and unify Christendom by directing expansionist policies toward a less significant target: non-Christians. This illustrates that his plan not only favors Christians but also embodies a consequentialist and double-standard perspective.

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