

The Cuban Revolution: A Philosophic Analysis of Thomistic Just Cause

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## Introduction

In 1952, Fulgencio Batista overthrew Cuban President Carlos Prío Socarrás in a coup d'état, which violated the “constitutional process enshrined in [the Constitution of] 1940.”<sup>1</sup> Although Batista declared that the presence of a political opposition was necessary for fair rule following the coup d'état, his regime was characterized by illegal arrests, censorship, and assassinations of political opponents.<sup>2</sup> Economic inequalities, maintained by governmental policies, also furthered the notion among Cubans that the Batista regime was illegitimate.<sup>3</sup> Such inequalities between the wealthy *habaneros* and the rural peasantry were manifested in the disparities between these groups in employment and literacy rates and access to healthcare.<sup>4</sup> These factors have prompted historians Ramón Bonachea and Marta San Martín to remark that Batista's *golpe* instituted an “illegitimate [political] order.”<sup>5</sup>

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1953, Fidel Castro led a surprise attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago, Cuba.<sup>6</sup> The attack on the Moncada Barracks aimed to “attack those who had betrayed the constitution and the laws of [Cuba].”<sup>7</sup> By attacking the Moncada Barracks, Castro and his followers hoped to gain arms and incite a revolution against who they believed to be an illegitimate ruler.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, Castro's attempt to seize the Moncada Barracks failed and was viewed as “an act of war” by Batista's government, which used the attack as an excuse to

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 789.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 797 and 800-801.

<sup>3</sup> John Foran, “Theorizing the Cuban Revolution,” *Latin American Perspectives* 36, no. 2 (March 2009): 18.

<sup>4</sup> Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27-29. “Cuban modernity masked profound inequalities between urban and rural areas and coexisted with high levels of unemployment and underemployment,” 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ramón L. Bonachea and Marta San Martín, *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1974), 2. *Golpe* is Spanish for a coup d'état.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 828 and 835.

<sup>7</sup> Bonachea and San Martín, *The Cuban Insurrection*, 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 828.

increase its control over the Cuban population.<sup>9</sup> Many of Castro's followers were captured and murdered following the attack.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the attack profoundly affected Cuban society. Not only did the attack on Moncada radicalize Cuba, but public perception of the attack on Moncada greatly affected the morale of the Cuban army and Cuban revolutionaries.<sup>11</sup>

Fidel Castro's trial also affected the morale of Batista's supporters and revolutionaries. Because Castro was not killed, he was required to stand trial for attacking the Moncada Barracks. During his trial, Castro delivered one of his most famous addresses: "History Will Absolve Me." In his defense, Castro attempted to justify the attack on the Moncada Barracks. According to Castro, the "cause of justice" favored the armed attack on the Moncada Barracks because Batista lacked a "legal much less moral basis" to rule.<sup>12</sup> Violations of the Cuban Constitution of 1940 and Cuban laws, Castro argued, made Batista a tyrant, which justified the attack: "the right of rebellion against tyranny...has been recognized from the most ancient of times to the present day."<sup>13</sup> Citing the work of Thomas Aquinas, Castro asserted that the Italian philosopher "reject[ed] the doctrine of tyrannicide and yet uph[eld] the thesis that tyrants should be overthrown by the people."<sup>14</sup> Such injustice, Castro believed, constituted a just cause for violent political revolution, which "even from the depths of a cave can do more than an army."<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the Cuban Revolution, Castro returned to Aquinas's notion of just cause to explain the July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement's actions and to garner support for his cause, arguing that the Cuban people were "at war with tyranny" and that his movement would "return to the [Cuban]

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 835.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 838.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 840-845; Bonachea and San Martin, *The Cuban Insurrection*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Fidel Castro, "History Will Absolve Me" (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1953).

<sup>13</sup> Castro, "History Will Absolve Me."

<sup>14</sup> Castro, "History Will Absolve Me."

<sup>15</sup> Castro, "History Will Absolve Me."

nation its rights.”<sup>16</sup> Later in the Cuban Revolution, Castro also justified the revolution economically, arguing that his “just rebellion [would] redistribute land” and thereby eliminate the inequalities that resulted from Batista’s support of the *latifundido* system.<sup>17</sup>

However, most of the scholarship on the Cuban Revolution has focused on the outcomes of the struggle, without analyzing its origins or the moral value of the actions therein.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the ethics of warfare constantly pervaded the revolutionary discourse, in an attempt to justify the revolution and garner support. Castro said that ethical principles are “elementary in war and politics,” that ethics “is not simply a moral issue—if ethics is sincere, it produces results.”<sup>19</sup> Castro himself resorted to this moralistic framework of Aquinas to justify the revolution. It is surprising, then, how little historians have put the Cuban Revolution in conversation with ethics, including the notion of Thomistic just cause.

Yet, it remains an open question whether these justifications for the Cuban Revolution constituted a just cause, as Castro suggested, and whether Aquinas’ notion of just cause is adequate to the complexities of the Cuban Revolution. This paper will answer both of these

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<sup>16</sup> Fidel Castro, “Murderers’ Hands” in *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1959: The Selected Works of Fidel Castro*, vol. 1, eds. Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 252; Fidel Castro, “Report of the Offensive: Part 2” in *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1959: The Selected Works of Fidel Castro*, vol. 1, eds. Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 413.

<sup>17</sup> Fidel Castro, “Manifesto No. 1 to the People of Cuba” in *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1959: The Selected Works of Fidel Castro*, vol. 1, eds. Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 265.

<sup>18</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 6. “Analyzing the outcomes of revolution has overwhelmed the field of Cuban studies.” Even the most thorough and recent works on Cuba fail to discuss this moralistic dimension; for example, see Michael J. Bustamante and Jennifer L. Lambe, eds. *The Revolution from Within: Cuba, 1959-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); for work on the Cuban underground, see Julia Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); for work on women, see Michelle Chase, *Revolution Within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); for work on Castro’s life, see Jonathan M. Hansen, *Young Castro: The Making of a Revolutionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019); for work on Ernesto “Che” Guevara, see John Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2010); for work on Celia Sánchez, see Nancy Stout, *One Day in December: Celia Sánchez and the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2013); for a structural explanation of the Cuban Revolution, see Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*.

<sup>19</sup> Fidel Castro and Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro: My Life: A Spoken Autobiography* (New York: Scribner, 2009), 205-214.

questions. It argues that the Thomistic construction of just cause is inadequate to address political revolutions, or civil wars, as these will be called. Such an inadequacy arises due to Aquinas' inconsistent view of civil wars. This paper will then analyze one of the premier accounts of just cause, offered by the contemporary philosopher Cécile Fabre. It will be argued that Fabre's construction of just cause is only partly correct because civil wars have broader justificatory grounds. Because Fabre's treatment of civil wars is only partly correct, this paper will present a more adequate construction of just cause for civil wars.

Ultimately, through an analysis of just cause and the Cuban Revolution, the tenets of Thomistic just cause and contemporary constructions of just cause will be critiqued. These assessments will allow for philosophical innovation regarding just cause, along with a practical construction of just cause that revolutionaries can use to fight ethically. Likewise, by using the Cuban Revolution to motivate these questions of just cause, there can be further understanding of the Cuban Revolution, its normative content, and its justification.

### **From Aquinas to Fabre: Just Cause**

In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas addressed the question of interstate warfare and its justification. In response to the question, "Is some kind of warfare licit," Aquinas identified "just cause" as one of the three requirements for a just war.<sup>20</sup> According to Aquinas, "a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault."<sup>21</sup> This requirement of a just cause has two different interpretations:

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1981), IIa-IIae, Q40. Much scholarship has been written about Aquinas' question. Namely, there have been scholarly debates on whether this question sets a standard against war and whether Aquinas' original writings included such a title to the question. For more see Gregory M. Reichberg, "Thomas Aquinas Between Just War and Pacifism?," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, no. 2 (May 2010): 219-241 and Richard B. Miller, "Aquinas and the Presumption against Killing and War," *The Journal of Religion* 82, no. 2 (April 2002): 173-204.

<sup>21</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q40, article 1, on the contrary.

warfare as punishment and warfare as self-defense.<sup>22</sup> According to the first analogy, that of punishment, warfare is undertaken as a result of some cause (*culpa*).<sup>23</sup> For example, just as prisoners are punished because they are guilty of crimes, Aquinas argued that warfare is merited if there is moral desert.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, a state wronged another state by breaching a treaty or by denying a state its rights. In both of these cases, that of the individual and that of the state, fault (*culpa*) merits punishment (*poena*), creating the moral desert for a punitive invasion.<sup>25</sup> Yet, while classical just-war theorists often accepted causes like “the punishment of wrongdoing” as a just cause for warfare, such arguments are now rejected by contemporary just-war theorists.<sup>26</sup>

According to the second analogy, that of self-defense, warfare is the result of a duty to protect oneself and others.<sup>27</sup> This second Thomistic analogy is drawn from Aquinas’ discussion of murder, found at Question 64.<sup>28</sup> To Aquinas, one is sometimes justified in killing in defense of one’s property; for example, in a burglary. Since it is sometimes justified to kill in defense of one’s property, “neither is a man guilty of murder if he kill another in defense of his own life.”<sup>29</sup> For instance, take the case of the Bay of Pigs invasion, where the American-backed forces attempted to invade Cuba. Drawing off of the self-defense analogy, Cuba had a just cause against the American-back forces because Cuba was defending itself.

Defensive wars, or wars in defense of oneself, in defense of others, or in defense of one’s property are permitted in Aquinas’ view and constitute a second type of just cause.

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<sup>22</sup> James B. Murphy, “Suárez, Aquinas, and the Just War: Self-Defense or Punishment?” in *From Just War to Modern Peace Ethics*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven and William A. Barberi, Jr. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 175.

<sup>23</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q40, article 1, on the contrary.

<sup>24</sup> “Moral desert” refers to “someone’s deservingness,” usually of reward or blame.

<sup>25</sup> Murphy, “Suárez, Aquinas, and the Just War,” 179.

<sup>26</sup> Jeff McMahan, “Just Cause for War,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (December 2005): 1. I agree with this evaluation of punitive wars, though this is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>27</sup> Murphy, “Suárez, Aquinas, and the Just War,” 179-180.

<sup>28</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q64, article 7, on the contrary. In this argument, Aquinas relies on Exodus 22:2.

<sup>29</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q64, article 7, on the contrary.

Contemporary just-war theorists, though, reject the view that defense of property *alone* constitutes a just cause.<sup>30</sup> For example, the reappropriation of land in Cuba, following the Cuban Revolution, would not have served to justify violence.<sup>31</sup> The reason such violence would be unjustified is because, though land reform breaches on one's property rights, land reform does not cause a significant amount of harm to justify violence.<sup>32</sup>

However, both Thomistic views of just cause solely addressed interstate warfare. Yet, in other parts of Aquinas' writings, he presented conflicting views about civil wars and just cause. Aquinas' writing, *On Kingship*, defined "tyranny" as a form of government where there is a "departure from the common good...where the advantage of one man is sought."<sup>33</sup> Aquinas noted that some argued in favor of revolution if "the excess of tyranny is unbearable."<sup>34</sup> But Aquinas refuted this view and held that "this opinion [that tyrannicide is justified] is not in accord with apostolic teaching," which required obedience to one's master even when one bears injustice.<sup>35</sup> Following the Biblical teaching, Aquinas argued that only public authorities can rightly revolt against a tyrant.<sup>36</sup> For example, Aquinas posited that only a duly elected senate could overthrow a tyrant.

In *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas presented a different view of civil wars. Through his analysis of sedition, Aquinas asserted that "sedition is a special sin" because sedition is directed

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<sup>30</sup> Larry May, "The Principle of Just Cause," in *War: Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. Larry May (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 55.

<sup>31</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 62-63.

<sup>32</sup> Unlike an individual breach of property, which constitutes a greater threat to the individual, a violation of territorial integrity does not alone suffice to sanction war, due to the constrain of proportionality. If proportionate harm is suffered, though, warfare would be justified.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship to the King of Cyprus* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1949), IV, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Aquinas, *On Kingship*, VII, 45.

<sup>35</sup> Aquinas, *On Kingship*, VII, 46. See 2 Peter 18 and Romans 13.

<sup>36</sup> Aquinas, *On Kingship*, VII, 48-49.

against “the unity and peace of a people.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Aquinas noted that overthrowing a tyrant is justified because the “tyrant is guilty of sedition,” as he governs for his private interest.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Aquinas did not present a consistent account of just cause for civil wars, as Aquinas defended violent revolution in some texts and decried violent revolution in other texts. Because of Aquinas’ inconsistent account of just cause for civil wars, it is necessary to look beyond Aquinas, to contemporary just-war theory, to better ascertain an account of just cause.

In recent years, much work has been devoted to just cause. Oftentimes, these contemporary philosophical accounts of just cause center on self-defense or the defense of others. For example, Seth Lazar notes that justifications that are tied to self-defense are philosophically attractive and are based on four conditions: (1) an “unjustified threat” must be present; (2) there must be “grounds to prefer the defender’s interests to those of his target”; (3) the self-defense “must be proportionate”; and (4) the “force used must be necessary to avert the threat.”<sup>39</sup>

Contemporary presentations of just cause have special philosophical significance, as a just cause justifies the violence of warfare. Jeff McMahan argues that a “just cause...can justify killing and maiming,” making the requirement of just cause extremely important. Similarly, Michael Gross highlights that a just cause guarantees the right to wage war and “repudiate another’s claim to not be attacked.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q42, article 1, contra.

<sup>38</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, Q42, article 2, reply to objection 3.

<sup>39</sup> Seth Lazar, “Necessity the Self-Defense and War,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 40, no. 1 (January 2012): 1-2; McMahan, “Just Cause,” 1.

<sup>40</sup> McMahan, “Just Cause,” 11; Michael Gross, *The Ethics of insurgency: A Critical Guide to Just Guerrilla Warfare*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 22 and 28.



When considering the notion of just cause, philosophers have extended the notion of just cause to civil wars.<sup>41</sup> According to these thinkers, just cause applies to civil wars, or wars between sub-state groups and their state. Civil wars are restricted to wars fought between sub-state groups or states that have political ends, where parties in the conflict have the capability to inflict casualties. Three clarifications should be made here. First, the fact that groups are pursuing political ends excludes many violent conflicts, including drug wars. Second, this definition focuses on the *capacity* for groups to inflict casualties, as opposed to actual casualties. That is, such groups are said to wage civil wars, even when those sub-state groups attack infrastructure and not individuals, armies, or state apparatuses. Third, this definition does not note any specific number of casualties that qualify a given conflict as a “civil war.” Many empirical classifications of civil wars place this figure within the range of 500 to 1000 casualties in a given year.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, most of these attempts to extend just cause to civil wars aim at refuting political realism, or the view that morality is silent in civil wars and that everything is morally permissible.<sup>43</sup>

In recent years, one of the most famous accounts of just cause is Cécile Fabre’s account. In her *Cosmopolitan War*, Fabre sets forth to defend a “cosmopolitan theory of the just war.”<sup>44</sup> “Cosmopolitanism,” as Fabre characterizes it, focuses on “individuals, rather than nation-states,” arguing that she is “profoundly skeptical of the normative weight of national identity.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For the under-theorization of the ethics of revolution, see Allen Buchanan, “The Ethics of Revolution and Its Implications for the Ethics of Intervention,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 41, no. 4 (September 2013): 291.

<sup>42</sup> Cécile Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 135; Jonathan Parry, “Civil War and Revolution” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and War*, eds. Seth Lazar and Helen Frowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 321-325. It remains an open question whether this classificatory criterion is necessary for a definition of a “civil war.” However, this question lies outside the purview of this work.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 2 and 4.

Nevertheless, Fabre's cosmopolitanism acknowledges a pragmatic form of "patriotic priority," or the view that "one may give priority to one's compatriots" instead of other individuals.<sup>46</sup>

Beyond this formal sketch, Fabre defines "cosmopolitanism" as the view "that human beings are the fundamental and primary *loci* for moral concern and respect and have equal moral worth."<sup>47</sup> Here, it is important to distinguish between "moral worth" and "moral concern."

Although Fabre does not distinguish these two, arguing that "individuals have equal moral worth and should treat one another with equal concern and respect," the two seem different in character.<sup>48</sup> "Moral worth" seems to refer to the *equal* dignity or value that every human is owed because each human is the "primary *loci* for moral concern."<sup>49</sup> Under the term "moral worth," two specific types of rights are vital. On the one hand, there is what Jeff McMahan calls "individual rights," or rights "somehow entailed by our sense of what it means to be a human being," including the right to food, water, and shelter.<sup>50</sup> Among these material rights, there is what Michael Gross calls the right to a "dignified life."<sup>51</sup> These rights, in Gross' view, go beyond mere "physical survival," and include certain basic "civil rights" like the right to free speech and basic "material entitlements" like the right to own property.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, moral worth entails the basic respect for individuals, valuing agents who can reason practically and theoretically. As Christopher J. Finlay writes, these basic material goods of moral worth that McMahan and Gross discuss allow for individuals to pose a minimum

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<sup>46</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 7 and 90.

<sup>47</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Jeff McMahan, "The Sources and Status of Just War Principles." *Journal of Military Ethics* 6, no. 2 (June 2007): 93.

<sup>51</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 34.

<sup>52</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 34.

sphere of agency.<sup>53</sup> For example, the moral worth of Cuban citizens would have required the Batista regime to provide citizens with basic needs like food, water, and shelter; additionally, the Batista regime would have been required to provide these citizens with basic protections from unwarranted harms or assassinations.<sup>54</sup> Moral worth, then, entails both basic material goods and basic respect for other agents. Ultimately, Fabre groups these two sets of rights together, into what she calls “human rights.”<sup>55</sup>

This moral worth of basic rights differs from “moral concern,” which refers to the *differential duties* that are owed to individuals, each who has an equal moral worth. Fabre acknowledges that while all individuals are owed a certain minimum standard, not all individuals are owed similar preferential duties.<sup>56</sup> For example, take the case of Fidel Castro. On his way to work, two people are drowning: Fidel’s brother Raúl and a random man. Given the circumstances, Fidel can only save either his brother or the random man. Although both Raúl and the random man have equal moral worth as moral agents, Fidel may express more moral concern for his brother and save him, because of his familial obligations. When expanded to states, it appears that citizens of the same state are owed some preferential right, due to special state obligations. In the case of Cuba, Cuban citizens would have been owed the legal protections guaranteed in the Cuban Constitution of 1940.<sup>57</sup> This distinction will come to bear later in this paper.

With Fabre’s cosmopolitanism in mind, she applies this framework to just-war theory. Fabre argues against thinkers who hold that civil wars are less permissible because of a “*prima*

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<sup>53</sup> Christopher J. Finlay, *Terrorism and the Right to Resist: A Theory of Just Revolutionary War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 28.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 797 and 800-801; Foran, “Theorizing the Cuban Revolution,” 18.

<sup>55</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 26 and 36.

<sup>56</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 28. Fabre employs the example of a parent and her child. These duties may arise to contractual obligations and obligations to family, among others.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 789.

*facie* duty to regard [the] state’s directives as binding.”<sup>58</sup> Fabre posits that “individuals do have (limited) rights against their regime and compatriots” because of common “interests in communal goods such as political self-determination.”<sup>59</sup> Because civil wars are at least as permissible as interstate war, Fabre defends the thesis that “what counts as a just cause for an interstate war also counts as a just cause for a civil war, and *vice versa*.”<sup>60</sup>

Jonathan Parry termed Fabre’s claim the “equivalence thesis.”<sup>61</sup> Fabre’s equivalence thesis makes two distinct claims, which Parry does not distinguish:

1. a. If an interstate conflict is just, the conflict requires a just cause.  
b. If a civil war is just, the conflict requires a just cause.
2. a. If reason J justifies an interstate conflict, then reason J justifies a civil war.  
b. If reason J justifies a civil war, then reason J justifies an interstate conflict.

On this view, then, Fabre’s equivalence thesis offers two distinct claims. First, Fabre’s equivalence thesis advances the position that interstate conflicts and civil wars both require a just cause, in order for the conflict to be justified. Second, Fabre’s equivalence thesis advances the position that the reasons that justify interstate conflicts also justify civil wars, and *vice versa*.

In the following section, this paper will argue in defense of Fabre’s first claim, that all justified wars must have a just cause. Although this paper will defend Fabre’s first claim, this paper will challenge Fabre’s second claim. Primarily, this paper will argue that Fabre’s equivalence thesis is partially incorrect because civil wars can be justified on a broader range of

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<sup>58</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 137; Parry, “Civil War and Revolution,” 322-323.

<sup>59</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 137.

<sup>60</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 165. Here, I take “civil war” to be equivalent to “intrastate war.” This is the clearest presentation of Fabre’s equivalence thesis, though she does advance the same claim at page 132, as well.

<sup>61</sup> Parry, “Civil War and Revolution,” 322.

reasons. This broader set of reasons, it will be argued, can be used to justify conflicts like the Cuban Revolution. The more expansive set of civil war justifications is inherently based on the *moral concern*, or differential duties, that specific individuals are owed. Because civil wars and interstate conflicts have a different set of justificatory reasons, this paper will defend the “inequivalence thesis.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Moral Worth: Who Is Offering Reasons to Whom?**

What exactly is a “just cause”? As this paper has described, a “just cause” is a reason that is offered in favor of going to war, one that outweighs the reasons against going to war. Because war is a theatre of the utmost moral gravity, reasons of just cause are necessary *to justify the killing of moral agents*. Reasons, then, ground the resort to war, “repudiat[ing] another’s claim” against unsanctioned violence.<sup>63</sup> Beyond simply offering reasons, the construction of a just cause also entails the formation of a goal, or what can be understood as the ideal outcome of a given war.<sup>64</sup> For example, take the case of Ernesto “Che” Guevara and a soldier from Batista’s Rural Guard. Perhaps, Guevara could offer the soldier a reason defending his use of violence against the soldier, like self-defense.<sup>65</sup> If Guevara offers these, as he did, then *ceteris paribus* the violence could be viewed as justified. In this example, Guevara’s reason can repudiate the soldier’s claim against unwarranted violence because the latter is a belligerent; furthermore, the goal of the violence can be conceived as that of protection. This example of Guevara and the soldier, which acts as a microcosm for the example of warfare, highlights two important characteristics of just cause. First, just cause is based on *interpersonal relations* between two or

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<sup>62</sup> Parry, “Civil War and Revolution,” 324-325.

<sup>63</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 28; McMahan, “Just Cause,” 3-4.

<sup>64</sup> McMahan, “Just Cause,” 11. “A just cause, then, has to be a goal of a type that can justify killing and maiming.”

<sup>65</sup> Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* (North Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006), 132.

more agents. By offering reasons to justify the resort to violence, it seems that “moral worth” of others is respected—referring to individuals as moral agents with the capacity to morally reason. Second, just cause is based on the *strength of reasons* that can be offered in defense of violence, like going to war.<sup>66</sup> In this section, this paper will address the first of these two points: that just cause refers to an interpersonal relationship between two or more agents, based on reasons that respect moral worth. The second of these points—the substance of the reasons that can count in favor of a just cause—will be bracketed until the next section of this paper.

According to Fabre’s equivalence thesis, “what counts as a just cause for an interstate war also counts as a just cause for a civil war, and *vice versa*.”<sup>67</sup> Usually, in both interstate conflicts and civil wars, these reasons are offered by some group in favor or against going to war. For example, in the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro’s “History Will Absolve Me” speech offered moral justification, drawing from Aquinas when posited that “rejects the doctrine of tyrannicide, and yet upholds the thesis that tyrants should be overthrown by the people.”<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, Castro also cited legal justification for his rebellion, arguing that because “the dictatorship that oppresses the nation is not a constitutional power, but an unconstitutional one,” that the rebellion would be protected by the 1940 Constitution.<sup>69</sup> Despite the fact that Castro was not an elected official, he offered reasons that could constitute a “just cause.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 22 and 28; McMahan, “Just Cause,” 11.

<sup>67</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 165.

<sup>68</sup> Castro, “History Will Absolve Me.”

<sup>69</sup> Castro, “History Will Absolve Me.”

<sup>70</sup> This chapter does not address the criterion of “legitimate authority” or notions of “legitimacy,” especially tied to issues of consent. “Legitimate authority,” though, is discussed in another chapter of this work.

In both interstate conflicts and civil wars, reasons for going to war are directed at two groups of individuals; however, the groups of individuals differ in interstate wars and civil wars.<sup>71</sup>

As for interstate conflicts, reasons that constitute a just cause are directed towards the state that will be fought; that is, the reasons that are offered are directed towards the citizens of an opposing state. For example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fidel Castro defended any military action in “the spirit of defense.” Here, it is important to note that Castro addressed his reasons of just cause to the United States, its public, and the American government under President John F. Kennedy.<sup>72</sup> These reasons explain why a state has decided to resort to war, an announcement of the state’s actions and a sort of warning. Beyond this, though, the reasons provided as just cause are directed toward the individual citizens of the warring state, similarly explaining to citizens why a state has decided to resort to war. In the example of the Cuban missile crisis, as well, Castro addressed the Cuban “nation in its entirety,” justifying the resort to armed force to Cuban citizens, not simply citizens of an opposing state.<sup>73</sup>

As for civil wars, a similar situation occurs. On the one hand, reasons are offered to the citizens that a sub-state group is warring against. For example, in his “History Will Absolve Me” speech, Fidel Castro addressed his reasons of just cause to the Cuban people at large, decrying the Batista regime’s rights violations.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, in his “Report of the Offensive: Part 2,” Castro specifically addressed Batista’s military, defending the actions of the Cuban *guerrilleros* and urging the military to support the revolution.<sup>75</sup> This has a similar parallel in interstate wars,

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<sup>71</sup> Throughout this paper, I use “individuals” and “agents” interchangeably, because reasons are directed towards individuals as moral agents.

<sup>72</sup> Castro and Ramonet, *My Life*, 276.

<sup>73</sup> Castro and Ramonet, *My Life*, 276.

<sup>74</sup> Castro, “History Will Absolve Me.”

<sup>75</sup> Castro, “Report of the Offensive: Part 2,” 413-415.

where reasons of just cause are offered to a state's opponent—the individuals of another state. In civil wars, however, the opponents happen to be members of the same citizenry. Similar to interstate war, sub-state groups also provide reasons in defense of just cause to their individual followers. In the Cuban Revolution, Castro also offered reasons of just cause to his individual followers, defending the resort to armed conflict.<sup>76</sup> When Castro wrote to Frank País, he maintained that the “blood shed and the tears shed by so many mothers” justified the resort to force, so as to accomplish “the goal for which we are fighting”: a successful, just revolution in Cuba.<sup>77</sup> This is similar to interstate wars, where a state directs its reasons towards its citizenry at large. Thus, in both interstate and civil wars, reasons of just cause are provided to two groups of individuals: one's opponents and one's supporters.

The fact that just cause entails these two groups of individuals illustrates an important practical principle. In warfare, *reasons are offered as a way of respecting the moral worth of individuals*. By offering reasons concerning just cause, in defense of a just war, a state or sub-state group acknowledges the status of their opponents as moral individuals. Namely, a state or sub-state group acknowledges that its opponent is comprised of moral agents who can utilize practical reason. Through the possibility of reflection upon the reasons offered, the possibility of practical reasoning, opponents can understand the warring state's claims and evaluate the moral status of their own group's claims. In doing so, the reason-giver accounts for the moral worth of the reason-receiver.<sup>78</sup> A similar situation occurs when a state or sub-state group offers reasons of just cause to its individual supporters. By offering reasons in favor of going to war, individuals

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<sup>76</sup> Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: BN Publishing, 2012), 52.

<sup>77</sup> Fidel Castro, “Letter from the Rebel Army to Frank País” in *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1959: The Selected Works of Fidel Castro*, vol. 1, eds. Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 348-349.

<sup>78</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 28; Lazar, “Necessity,” 1.



can possibly practically reason about the morality of the given war. With these reasons in mind, supporters can reevaluate their support for a given state or sub-state group.

An important note must be made here. By offering reasons in favor of going to war, a state or sub-state group presents reasons that allow others to *possibly* engage in practical reflection.<sup>79</sup> For example, take the case of the Batista regime where the media was heavily restricted.<sup>80</sup> Because of media censorship, it was difficult for the Cuban rebels to communicate their reasons of just cause. A clear instance of this is Fidel Castro's "History Will Absolve Me" speech, which needed to be compiled, and later distributed, clandestinely. As a result of this censorship, it can be inferred that Castro's reasons of just cause for the Cuban Revolution were not transmitted to all Cuban citizens. Yet, it would be overly demanding to require groups waging a war with just cause—like Castro—to *ensure* that others engage in just cause-related practical reflection. Rather, it must solely be the case that groups offering reasons of just cause must present these reasons through a *good faith effort*. Perhaps, these good faith efforts include multiple attempts to communicate the reasons of just cause, through different media. Such an effort, in both interstate and civil conflicts, may be unsuccessful at reaching the citizenry of a totalitarian state. Yet, by making a *good faith effort* to transmit these reasons, the reason-givers provide the *possibility* that practical reflection upon reasons will occur, both among one's opponents and one's supporters. In the case of Cuba, Castro filed a lawsuit against the Batista regime before the Moncada attack, arguing that the Batista regime was illegitimate. Ultimately, it was only after Castro's brief was discarded that he resorted to armed violence. Mixed media was also used in the Cuban Revolution, where Castro's rebels utilized newspapers and the radio, both

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<sup>79</sup> I am grateful to Professor Peter Lewis for turning me to such a scenario.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 800-801.

as means to transmit the reasons of just cause.<sup>81</sup> Through such efforts, even if these efforts are restricted or unsuccessful, the reason-giving group respects the moral worth of agents within other groups.

Here, reasons in favor of just cause signal the equal moral worth of moral agents, an equality founded on the ability to understand practical reasons. Plainly, in war, reasons address individuals as moral agents with moral worth. Through reasons, *individuals* are prompted to evaluate their claims—possibly their state’s claims—and to refrain from injustices, from unjust wars, and from unjust killings. This account of just cause, which hearkens to the moral worth of other agents, explains why justified wars without a just cause are so sparse. Such justified cases of war, without a just cause, seem to fall under the label of a “supreme emergency,” where the “the necessity of preventing [a] disaster outweighs the grave injustice done.”<sup>82</sup> In such supreme emergencies, “the burden of justification [for war] is therefore very substantially greater” because the moral worth of individuals as practical agents is violated.<sup>83</sup>

Reasons, then, appear as a morality-preserving force when offered in the form of just cause. When reasons are offered in defense of war, these reasons address individuals as moral agents, appealing to their moral worth and respecting an agent’s ability to understand practical reasons. The moral worth of individuals is why interstate and civil wars require a just cause.

### **Just Cause: The Content of Reasons**

If a conflict is to be characterized as just, then reasons must be offered in favor of the conflict. In the previous section, this paper has defended the position that reasons of just cause address individuals as agents with moral worth. The necessity of just cause is tacitly presented in

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<sup>81</sup> See the difference between the newspaper and the radio in Fidel Castro, “Murderers’ Hands”; Fidel Castro, “Report of the Offensive: Part 1.”

<sup>82</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 251-268; McMahan, “Just Cause,” 16.

<sup>83</sup> McMahan, “Just Cause,” 16.

Fabre's equivalence thesis, although, Fabre does not elucidate the connection between reasons of just cause and moral worth.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, while this paper has defended the first half of Fabre's equivalence thesis, this paper will argue against the second half of Fabre's thesis. Namely, this paper will argue for the "inequivalence thesis," which holds that it is not the case that "what counts as a just cause for an interstate war also counts as a just cause for a civil war, and *vice versa*."<sup>85</sup>

Here, it is useful to reintroduce Fabre's view of cosmopolitanism: "that human beings are the fundamental and primary *loci* for moral concern and respect and have equal moral worth."<sup>86</sup> Because human beings are the focal point of moral worth and moral concern, Fabre argues that the *entire basis* of just cause, and of her cosmopolitan just-war theory, comes from "the right to kill in self-defence and the right to kill in defence of others."<sup>87</sup> Since individuals have "rights not to be killed" and because "letting grave injustices such as unjustified killing pass without serious attempts (where possible) to impede or prevent them is wrong,"<sup>88</sup> self-defense or the defense of others are the only reasons that count as a just cause.

At this juncture, it does well to clarify the meaning of Fabre's "self-defense." Fabre notes that self-defense "consists in a right to maim or kill enemy combatants in defence of one's individual and jointly held rights," prompted by an act of aggression.<sup>89</sup> In the case of the individual, aggression constitutes the violation of one's individual rights; in the case of a collective, aggression violates a "communal good," making self-defense a collective effort.<sup>90</sup> Usually, this aggression takes the form of a territorial invasion. For example, take the case of the

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<sup>84</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 16.

<sup>85</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 165.

<sup>86</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 16.

<sup>87</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 26; Christopher J. Finlay, *Is Just War Possible?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 25.

<sup>89</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 52 and 55.

<sup>90</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 65.

Cuban Missile Crisis, where the United States breached Cuba's sovereignty through a "U-2 spy plane flying at [a] high altitude."<sup>91</sup> Because of the communal nature of the good in question, Cuba's political sovereignty, the right to maim or kill is transferred to an "army and its individual members."<sup>92</sup> Through such defense of a communal good, individuals prioritize their own rights, along with the rights of their compatriots with whom "they too hold fundamental rights."<sup>93</sup> The notion of self-defense, though, can be expanded to include serious right deprivations. Fabre notes that the deprivation of basic material goods is "tantamount to attacking the capacity for political self-determination."<sup>94</sup> For example, the Batista regime deprived much of the Cuban population of economic standards necessary for a decent life.<sup>95</sup> Because of this, violence against the Batista regime could be *prima facie* justified. When this view of defensive warfare is combined with her equivalence thesis, Fabre holds that all interstate wars and civil wars must be founded on self-defense or the defense of others.

Fabre's combined thesis can be reformulated as follows:

1. a. If an interstate conflict is justified, then the interstate conflict must be founded on the reasons of self-defense or the defense of others.
- b. If a civil war is justified, then the interstate conflict must be founded on the reasons of self-defense or the defense of others.

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<sup>91</sup> Castro and Ramonet, *My Life*, 274.

<sup>92</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 66.

<sup>93</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 90.

<sup>94</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 106, 128, 239. At page 239, Fabre writes that these constitute "grievous rights violations."

<sup>95</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 27-31.

Fabre, however, is mistaken in her characterization of just cause. Fabre's error lies in her distinction between "moral worth" and "moral concern." As noted earlier in this paper, "moral worth" refers to the *equal* dignity or value that every human is owed because each human is the "primary *loci* for moral concern."<sup>96</sup> Moreover, "moral concern" refers to the *differential* obligations that are owed to individuals, each who has an equal moral worth.

The fact that only self-defense and the defense of others count as reasons in favor of a just war hearkens to Fabre's conception of "moral worth." In Fabre's view, there is an assumption that individuals have equal moral worth. Because individuals have equal moral worth, Fabre holds that unjustifiably killing individuals is wrong. However, when an individual imperils the moral worth of another individual, the killing of the former can be justified.<sup>97</sup> In other cases, where the moral worth of an individual is not threatened, killing would be unjustified. A universal imperative emerges that all individuals, including collectives of individuals like states, must respect the moral worth of self and of others.<sup>98</sup>

Because states must respect the equal moral worth of individuals, citizens and non-citizen alike, interstate war can never be justified offensively, but only in response to attacks on the equal moral worth of individuals. Similarly, to Fabre, because sub-states groups must respect the moral worth of individuals, members of the sub-state group and non-members alike, civil war can never be justified offensively, but only in response to attacks on the equal moral worth of individuals. Simply, on this view, all reasons of just cause are *defensive* reason. From this universal imperative, grounded on the equal moral worth of individuals, Fabre argues that interstate and civil conflicts can be justified on the grounds on self-defense and the defense of

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<sup>96</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 16; cf. McMahan, "Just Cause," 11 and Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 34.

<sup>97</sup> Death seems to be the clearest threat on moral worth, but one can imagine that other violations of human rights could constitute a sufficient threat on moral worth, which could then justify self-defense or the defense of others.

<sup>98</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 20-21.

others. Here, Fabre's argument seems both intuitive and correct. Conflict can be justified in the name of self-defense and the defense of others, as a way to respect the moral worth of individuals. For example, in the case of the Cuban Revolution, Batista violated the moral worth of Cubans because he "indiscriminately arrested, tortured, and murdered countless victims (primarily students)," justifying the conflict.<sup>99</sup> Likewise, Fabre's argument seems capable of accounting for the positive disposition towards humanitarian interventions, where the disrespect of moral worth prompts outside intervention.<sup>100</sup>

However, Fabre's argument solely proves that war can be justified on reasons of moral worth. Notwithstanding this conclusion, Fabre does not prove that conflicts *can only be justified with respect to the moral worth of individuals*. While all states have a basic imperative to respect the equal moral worth of individuals within their borders and without their borders, states have weightier obligations to those within their borders. Michael Gross illustrates this differential obligation when discussing propaganda and censorship. According to Gross, the "obligation of governments toward compatriots is different from what [the obligations] they owe an enemy."<sup>101</sup> Here, states owe citizens "the truth (or at least more of it)," whereas "[e]nemies, and to a lesser extent, third-party nations...deserve no such temperance [of censorship and propaganda]."<sup>102</sup> Thus, beyond respecting the moral worth of a citizenry, states also have an obligation to respect the "moral concerns" of their citizenry, the *differential* obligations that are owed to citizens.

States, then, have more stringent obligation to their citizens, as states must respect their citizenry's moral worth *and* moral concern.<sup>103</sup> These state-owed moral concerns, it should be

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<sup>99</sup> Norman LaCharité, *Case Studies in Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: Cuba, 1953-1959* (Washington, DC: Special Operations Research Office, American University, 1963), 12.

<sup>100</sup> See Buchanan, "The Ethics of Revolution"; cf. Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 166-207.

<sup>101</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 237.

<sup>102</sup> Gross, *The Ethics of Insurgency*, 237.

<sup>103</sup> I do not venture to discuss how a state comes under this obligation in this chapter or how things become moral concerns. A vast body of literature on socialization and institutions serve to answer such questions.

noted, must be communal goods, as opposed to individual guarantees. For instance, a state may owe its citizens a moral concern to protect landmarks, a *communal good*. Instead of simply respecting the minimal notion of “moral worth,” a state must *also* fulfill its obligations of “moral concern” to citizens. Because of these more stringent obligations, civil violence against a state has a wider range of justificatory reasons. Plainly, interstate conflicts can only be justified on the basis of self-defense or the defense of others; however, civil conflicts can be justified on the basis of self-defense, the defense of others, or a state’s *failure to meet moral concerns*.<sup>104</sup> For example, if a state violates its duties of moral concern, perhaps economic or cultural concerns, then sub-state groups have moral standing in resorting to war. Contrarily, it does not seem to be the case that economic or cultural *concerns* justify interstate conflicts. Rather, only violations of moral worth can justify interstate conflicts because states do not have the obligation to meet the moral concerns of non-citizens. To better defend this assertion, take the examples below, which demonstrate the “inequivalence thesis.”

EX1: In Cuba, sugar very important as an economic industry and as a cultural symbol. Cubans feel it is a “moral concern” that the government respect the role of sugar. However, a justly elected government has decided to ban the sale of sugar. Nevertheless, the government respects the moral worth of all Cubans, all human rights are met, along with some minimum economic standard. Cubans are outraged because of the economic and cultural impact of the government’s decision. After weeks of peaceful protest, the Cuban government still refuses to allow the sale of sugar. In response, the Cubans take up arms to overthrow the incumbent government, citing the economic and cultural impact of the government’s law, which banned the sale of sugar.

EX2: In Cuba, sugar is very important as an economic industry and as a cultural symbol. Cubans feel it is a “moral concern” that the government respect the role of sugar. However, a justly elected government has decided to ban the sale of sugar. Nevertheless, the government respects the moral worth of all Cubans, all human

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<sup>104</sup> Individuals, too, can be responsible for certain moral concerns. For example, cases of contracts and special relationships imply a level of moral concern. Yet, these cases differ in scale, when compared to states; furthermore, these concerns do not meet the necessity condition, which will be explored in the following section.

rights are met, along with some minimum economic standard. Cubans are outraged because of the economic and cultural impact of the government's decision. After weeks of peaceful protest, the Cuban government still refuses to allow the sale of sugar. In response, the French take up arms to overthrow the incumbent government, citing the economic and cultural impact of the Cuban government's law.

In EX1, the revolt seems adequately justified, as the sub-state actors cite an additional obligation in favor of their armed struggle: the moral concern regarding the role of sugar in Cuban society.<sup>105</sup> Here, it is noteworthy that the reasons given as "just cause" are not reasons of self-defense or the defense of others, but rather reasons of *moral concern*. In this case, the Cuban government has an obligation to respect the status of sugar within Cuban society, both as an economic industry and a cultural symbol. In EX2, though, the interstate war does not seem justified. Namely, it is unclear how the Cuban government's decision to ban the sale of sugar violates the moral concern that the Cubans owe to the French. In EX2, if the Cuban government did not respect the moral worth of its citizens, then the French invasion could constitute the defense of others. For example, if the Cuban government did not meet the basic needs of its citizens, then the French intervention could be justified. However, because the Cuban government meets this basic standard of moral worth for its citizens, the French invasion cannot be conceived as a case of the defense of others. Furthermore, it is unclear how the Cubans have an obligation to the French, or vice versa, regarding a moral concern for the economic and cultural role of sugar.

What these two examples bring to the fore is the fact that civil conflicts have a broader range of justificatory reason that count as "just cause." Plainly, civil wars can be justified based on violations of "moral concern," in addition to violations of "moral worth." Such reasons of moral concern include economic rights like limits on inequality levels, advanced civil liberties

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<sup>105</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 5.



like competing press associations, and advanced social goods like literacy and healthcare. For example, in the case of the Cuban Revolution, Batista's violations of moral concern included all of the aforementioned objects of moral concern.<sup>106</sup> However, such a list of "moral concerns" is not meant to be comprehensive, as different political societies may have pluralistic objects of moral concern. To illustrate that different political societies can have different objects of moral concern, take the two following political societies:

EX3: Following the Cuban Revolution, the Cuban government banned all weapons, including firearms and knives. In his speech to Havana on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Castro asked "Weapons for what purpose? To fight whom? To fight the revolutionary government, which has the support of the entire people?"<sup>107</sup> The people of Cuba accepted the government's decision on ban weapons.

EX4: Throughout the United States' history, citizens have been allowed to own weapons, including firearms. In recent years, laws that have aimed to limit gun ownership in the United States have been struck down by the judicial system. Limitations on gun ownership, then are not accepted because gun rights are a specific object of moral concern in the United States.<sup>108</sup>

EX3 and EX4 clearly illustrate that different political societies may have different objects of moral concern—in this case, gun rights. Here, gun rights were specifically used, as they represent a moral concern, guaranteed by the government, though not an object of moral worth.<sup>109</sup> Moral concerns within a society can also be expanded over time, just as healthcare has come to be considered a right in some societies. As Jeff McMahan argues, the "relevant

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<sup>106</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*. For high inequality levels, see 30-31; for violations of advanced civil liberties, see 59; for high levels of illiteracy and poor healthcare, see 29.

<sup>107</sup> Fidel Castro, "Speech Delivered in Ciudad Libertad," accessed July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109-1.html>; Tony Perrottet, *Cuba Libre!: Che, Fidel, and the Improbable Revolution That Changed World* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2019).

<sup>108</sup> See the US Supreme Court decisions of *Washington DC v. Heller* (2008) and *The City of Chicago v. McDonald* (2010).

<sup>109</sup> I am grateful to my brother, Gabriel Vergara, for pointing me to the example of gun rights.

principles [of just-war theory]...are conventional principles designed to serve morally motivated goals [which] makes it possible to think of them as revisable.”<sup>110</sup>

Through this philosophic examination, this paper has argued that violations of moral concerns can justify civil wars, while violations of moral concern can justify both civil and interstate conflicts. However, interstate conflicts cannot be justified based on violations of moral concern but can only be justified on violations of moral worth. Because civil wars have recourse to a broader set of reasons in justifying conflicts, Fabre’s equivalence thesis is partially incorrect. It is not the case that “what counts as a just cause for an interstate war also counts as a just cause for a civil war, and *vice versa*,” as questions of moral concern do not justify interstate wars.<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

This paper has systematically analyzed the notion of just cause. Beginning with the Thomistic rendition of just cause and the Cuban Revolution, this paper illustrated that Aquinas failed to present a coherent account of just cause for intrastate conflicts. Because of this inadequacy in Thomistic just-war theory, this paper moved on to analyze one of the premier contemporary articulations of *ius ad bellum* principles: Cécile Fabre’s *Cosmopolitan War*. It was shown that Fabre’s just cause hinged on the notion of self-defense, in line with many other constructions of just cause. However, this paper illustrated that Fabre failed to distinguish between “moral worth” and “moral concern.” The lack of such a distinction skewed Fabre’s philosophic analysis, leading her to claim that “what counts as a just cause for an interstate war also counts as a just cause for a civil war, and *vice versa*.”<sup>112</sup> However, this paper’s analysis argued that this equivalence thesis was partly incorrect, and defended the view that while all

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<sup>110</sup> McMahan, “Sources and Status,” 104.

<sup>111</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 165.

<sup>112</sup> Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, 165.

conflicts require a just cause, intrastate conflicts have a wider range of justificatory reasons than interstate conflicts.

Through the arguments presented in this paper, much has been gained, both in regard to Cuban studies and just-war theory. Cuban studies have often focused on the effects of the Cuban Revolution.<sup>113</sup> This work has broken from the outcome-focused tradition and sought to normatively examine the justifications provided during the Cuban Revolution. Through the argument advanced in this paper, it becomes clear that the Cuban Revolution responded to violations of moral worth and moral concern. The Cuban Revolution, then, appears justified. This view of the Cuban Revolution importantly affects further studies of Cuba, including the *post bellum* understanding of the Cuban Revolution, the goals of the Cuban Revolution, and the normative content of the Cuban Revolution.

Regarding just-war theory, two important notes ought to be made. First, the argument presented in this paper highlights that just-war theory and its principles require modification. While this paper has only analyzed the notion of just cause and argued for the principle that intrastate conflicts have recourse to a wider range of justification, just-war theory is an area of further intellectual development. Areas of theoretical development include the link between just cause and proportionality, and how just cause develops when an intrastate conflict becomes an interstate conflict. Areas of empirical development may involve calculations on the presence of just cause and its perception, along with any possible dichotomy between intrastate and interstate conflicts. Second, the arguments presented here have a great effect on other just-war principles. Because many just-war theorists advance the position that *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello* are

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<sup>113</sup> Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 6. “Analyzing the outcomes of revolution has overwhelmed the field of Cuban studies.”

inseparably linked, any modification to *ius ad bellum* affects the type of violence that may be used *in bello*.

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