The Quesako Cycle: An Overlooked Cause of Wars?

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A Question That Goes Beyond Forecasting

Wars are generally explained by multiple factors: political, territorial, historical, economic, military, and others. Jean-Baptiste Renard's research on the Quesako Cycle proposes that an additional periodic factor may interact with these causes and influence the outbreak or intensification of conflicts. If this causal interpretation is confirmed, it could transform not only the anticipation of wars but also our understanding of them and certain approaches to diplomacy.

Findings That Warrant Serious Examination

The cycle under study has an average period of 3,095 days, or approximately 8.47 years, with amplification and attenuation phases. According to the author's calculations, nearly 60% of the interstate wars included in a series drawn from Correlates of War and extended through 2024 begin during an amplification phase. The most striking finding concerns the geopolitical contexts studied: more than 80% of the wars recorded within them reportedly begin during these phases. The reported proportions reach 89% for wars on European soil and, through October 7, 2023, 100% for the wars included in the Arab–Israeli context. The definitions, thresholds, and exceptions must be independently verified.

An Additional, Potentially Major Cause

The proposed interpretation is neither deterministic nor exclusive: the cyclical phenomenon would act by amplifying known causes, without removing human responsibility or making war inevitable. The author suggests that a share on the order of one-third of the causes of wars ongoing since 2022 could be linked to this invisible factor. This estimate is an undeveloped hypothesis put forward by the author, not an independently established measurement. In his analysis, it concerns, in particular, the Russia–Ukraine war, Sudan, and the Arab–Israeli conflict that began after October 7, 2023. The question of the underlying mechanisms has led to the proposal of a model consistent with the observed facts.

Additional Evidence and Earlier Forecasts

The author formulated a hypothesis concerning the "materialization" of the phenomenon in changes in conflict-related mortality, initially based on data from Iraq. He subsequently compared this hypothesis with UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program) data series, which were produced independently of his research: the observed graphical correspondences warrant quantitative evaluation. Forecasts made before the events also deserve examination, notably a January 2022 document discussing war risks for 2022–2026 and identifying risks of war in Europe and in the Arab–Israeli context. Their dates, specificity, and the full set of outcomes, including forecasts that did not materialize, must be verified.

Why Public Officials Should Be Concerned

If the proposed factor exists, some conflict dynamics may escape conventional analytical frameworks. Taking it into account could reshape the analysis of escalation, dialogue between opposing parties, preventive diplomacy, and early-warning systems. Political and military decisions would remain fully important: identifying an amplification factor neither excuses the actors nor absolves them of responsibility.

An Independent Evaluation Should Begin Promptly

The potential significance of these findings warrants public institutions and research organizations considering, without delay, an independent, reproducible, and critical assessment. Such an assessment should replicate the calculations, test alternative definitions and war datasets, compare the model with competing explanations, analyze mortality data, and audit dated forecasts. An initial feasibility assessment could establish the protocol, data, and expertise required. The point is not to adopt a theory before it has been verified, but rather not to postpone examining a proposal whose implications, if confirmed, would be considerable.

Conclusion

The central significance of the Quesako Cycle is not merely the possibility of better forecasting wars: it is the possibility that a previously unrecognized causal factor plays a role in their outbreak and intensity. In other words, the Russia–Ukraine, Arab–Israeli, and Sudanese wars can only be fully understood, under this interpretation, by incorporating knowledge of the "Quesako Cycle," without discarding the other already known causes. The importance of this possibility calls for a proportionate response: a prompt, independent scientific evaluation, followed, depending on its findings, by an examination of its diplomatic and strategic implications.

References and Contact

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- in English US : a checked translation is available here or on request to cyclequesako@gmail.com
- Scientific Summary V1
- contact: cyclequesako@gmail.com