Fun in war

Antonio De Lauri

Fun has every shade of connotation, from the most joyful to the most sinister. In a sporadic and anecdotal way, novels, films, music and, more recently, blogs and social media remind us that those involved directly in the horrors of war also experience fun, excitement and allure.

However, the element of fun in war has rarely been the focus of systematic theorisation and empirical scrutiny in the social sciences. This gap in academic research has had several effects.

Firstly, it has contributed to confining emotions to the private sphere, thus compromising a deep understanding of the nexus of politics and emotions in war. Secondly, it has resulted in a historically unstable relationship between the social sciences. This gap in academic theorisation and empirical scrutiny has rarely been the focus of systematic analysis.

However, the element of fun in war cannot be ignored. Furthermore, it is precisely for this reason that, however, quite a large number of novels, films, music and, more recently, blogs and social media remind us that those involved directly in the horrors of war also experience fun, excitement and allure.

Although recent studies have started to address the complex array of feelings and experiences in war, the questions related to the moral, strategic, psychological, emotional and social implications of fun remain vastly understudied in the social sciences. It is important to focus on elements such as fun or pleasure because, given that they are considered to be a moral and emotional dimension of war, it is important to understand their role in shaping the ‘morality of war’ that, at least to a certain extent, has overlooked the dynamics of war.

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