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Article in *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* · July 2019

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A New Historiography of the Origins of the Cold War

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Article Info

History Articles

Received:

Jan 2019

Accepted:

June 2019

Published:

July 2019

Keywords:

Cold War, Historiography,

Structuralist School,

Revisionist School,

Orthodox School

ABSTRACT

The Cold War that occurred between 1945 and 1991 was both an international political and historical event. As an international political event, the Cold War laid bare the fissures, animosities, mistrusts, misconceptions and the high-stakes brinkmanship that has been part of the international political system since the birth of the modern nation-state in 1648. As a historical event, the Cold War and its end marked an important epoch in human social, economic and political development. The beginning of the Cold War marked the introduction of a new form of social and political experiment in human relations with the international arena as its laboratory. Its end signalled the end of a potent social and political force that is still shaping the course of the political relations among states in the 21st century. The historiography of the Cold War has been shrouded in controversy. Different factors have been given for the origins of the conflict. This work is a historical and structural analysis of the historiography of the Cold War. The work analyses the competing views of the historiography of the Cold War and creates all-encompassing and holistic historiography called the Structuralist School.

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INTRODUCTION

The cold war was a term that accurately described the international system between 1947 and 1991 that was characterized by an ideological conflict not only between the two major protagonists; the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), but also between and within states. The period was marked by an intense conventional and unconventional military, the economic, social and ideological standoff between the USA and its allies on the one hand, and the USSR and her bloc at the other extreme (Stephenson, n.d.). The Cold War was abnormal in the sense that while the level of enmity resembled that of outright war,

the conflict took place in conditions of peace. It was a 'cold' war because it did not result in outright hostility between the major actors. Actual war was displaced to the periphery and carried out by proxies or by independent actors whose interests, projects, and associations became entangled within the larger conflict (Stephanson, n.d.). The actors in the war can be divided into two: on the one hand were those who believed that the world economic system was capitalist and to a lesser extent liberal democratic. While on the other side were those who believed in the lessons of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the communists, and renounced capitalism as the route to economic and political emancipation (Ball, 1998, p. 1). Military victory in the Second World War ensured that the United States would lead those states that took the former position and the Soviet Union the latter.

The Cold War was a state of affair that was characterized by conflict and antagonism where the adversary's legitimacy as a regime was denied, and diplomacy understood as a process of resolving issues of mutual concerns in times of peace, withered away and was replaced by diplomacy as ideology and propaganda. The structure of international politics became, as a direct consequence of the projection of the conflict into the world arena, increasingly bipolar in nature. Tracing the exact origins of the war is a Herculean task for historians. This is because, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the two major powers involved, the USA and the USSR have given competing narratives to suit their post-Cold War political objectives. This inability to establish the precise origins of the war has further affected writings on the historiography of the Cold War. The works on the historiography of the origins of the Cold War has been dominated by various competing schools. This includes the Traditionalist school, Revisionist school, Post-Revisionist school and the New Cold War Revisionist school. These different narratives have failed to provide holistic historiography, that is devoid of ideological colouration, for the origin of the Cold War. It is this glaring anomaly that this work hopes to correct. The work achieved this aim by showing that the view of the *Structuralist school* is the missing and holistic link in Cold War historiography. However, before one proceeds further, it is necessary to provide a brief historical background of the Cold War

Origins of the Cold War: A Historical Overview

The exact origins of the cold war are mired in controversy. Historians have attempted at one point or the other to try to ascribe a specific date to when the cold war actually started. Some such as Gaddis Lewis, Denna Fleming and Herz have dated its origins to long before the end of World War I in 1919. Others have traced its origins to the actual policies of the Allied powers during the Second World War. Other scholars such as David Painter, Robert McMahon and Melvin Leffler have even gone further to posit that the Cold War origins can simply be located in the post-war policies and activities of the USA and the Soviet Union from 1945 onward. A more acceptable origin, thus, will be a synthesis of these different and differing scholarly opinions. Paul Gaddis Lewis' work provides coherent and convincing origins and reasons for the war (2013, p. 36). He argued that the cold war developed out of the situation that took shape towards the end of World War II and the years immediately following its conclusion. Gaddis argued that the war was marked by the character and outlook of the leading politicians and statesmen who were involved in its creation. The major sources of conflict, Gaddis observed, lay in the fact that wartime alliance was the products of necessity forced on its participants by Axis aggression and that their community of view did not extend much beyond the necessity of defeating Nazism in Europe.

This is true to a large extent because the rapid emergence of a bipolar world in the immediate post-war period imposed a particular structure on superpower competition. The existence of two superpowers with distinct interest and differing political approaches facilitated the development of an adversarial relationship, while the enormous economic and technological power of the USA and the large military presence of the Soviet Union combined to accentuate feelings of insecurity and potential threat.

Bowker and Williams (2009, p. 11) emphasized the significant role that bipolarity played in accentuating and aggravating the Cold War. According to them, bipolarity's logic is a logic of insecurity. This is because the action taken by one side to enhance its security is seen as a threat to the interest of the other. This situation was observed at the beginning and throughout the duration of the war. The different ideological orientation of the superpowers made a further contribution to this. The proximity of the Soviet Union to contested areas of central and western Europe and the distance of the United States from them brought additional elements to the pattern of superpower relations. The moment the Russian armies had liberated Eastern Europe and the Balkans from German rule, the USSR achieved economic and political privileges in those areas. Leveraging on this, the Soviet Union gained permanent power over the states of Eastern Europe. By the end of World War II, Russia had an extra estimate of about 24 million people under its control because of the subjugation of Baltic states such as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. This along with her control of communists' states like Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania, Romania and Czechoslovakia, gave her authority over some 90 million eastern European people (Gaddis 1990, p.156).

'Mr. X'¹ telegram further entrenched this bipolarity. In February 1946, George F. Kennan's "Long Telegram" from Moscow articulated the growing hard line that was being taken against the Soviets (Mr X, 1974). The telegram argued that the Soviet Union was motivated by both traditional Russian imperialism and Marxism ideology, and that Soviet behaviour was inherently expansionist and paranoid. Later "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (1974), Kennan drafted the classic argument for adopting a policy of containment toward the Soviet Union ("The Sources of Soviet Conduct", 1974). In July 1947, the former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his famous Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri, describing the impassible barrier which divided Soviet-occupied territory from the rest of Europe (Evans & Newhman, 1999, p.134). The speech called for an Anglo-American alliance against the Soviets, whom he accused of establishing an iron curtain from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic. By the end of 1947, democratic government in Eastern Europe had all but disappeared, and in its place, the Soviet Union had established what it called the "peoples' democracies" of communism. For example, this pattern was noticeable in Poland in 1945 when the Soviet Union liberated Poland from German occupation. It was also repeated in Hungary in 1948, Czechoslovakia in 1948; Romania in 1947 and Eastern Germany in 1949.

¹ This is the nom de guerre used by the author of the influential document the 'Long Telegram' that was to shape western opinion of the Cold War for ages. George Kennan, the American charge d'affaires in the USSR in the 1970s, was later revealed as the author of the 'Long Telegram.'

The event that made Truman to formally institute a policy of containment was the British government's announcement that it could no longer afford to sustain its aid of Greece. This was the first of the crises in the struggle between capitalism and communism. Rather than view the Greek war as a civil conflict revolving around domestic issues, US policymakers interpreted it as a Soviet effort aimed at destabilizing Greece in preparation for a communist takeover (Lafeber, 2014, p. 116). Secretary of State Dean Acheson accused the Soviet Union of conspiracy against the Greek royalists in an effort to expand into the Middle East, Asia and Africa and in March 1947, the administration unveiled the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine assured countries threatened by communism that America would support and help where it could. Indirectly, this Doctrine paved the way for the policy of containment of the administration – that is, the fixing of a point further than which the communist influence must not spread. For example, in his famous speech, Truman rallied Americans to spend \$400,000,000 to intervene in the civil war in Greece. The President painted the conflict as a contest between the 'free' peoples and 'totalitarian' regimes, thus dramatically heightening the rhetorical stakes of the conflict (Lafeber, 2014, p. 116). In June 1947, following the recommendations of the State Department, planning staff, the Truman Doctrine was complemented by the Marshall Plan. This was a pledge of economic assistance aimed at rebuilding the Western political-economic system and countering perceived – threats to Europe's balance of power that the USA had gone to war to restore (Gaddis 1990: 157). Based on the Truman Doctrine the USA had to assist all democracies in their struggle against communism. For example, the USA came to Turkey's aid and admitted it to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to safeguard the Mediterranean and Greece in their respective struggles against communism and allowing these countries to contain the communist force. The twin policies of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan led to billions in economic and military aid to Western Europe and Turkey.

To counter the expansion of the USA and its allies in Germany, Stalin built blockades to block western access to West Berlin. Truman maintained supply lines to the enclave by flying supplies over the blockade during 1948 – 49. The US formally allied itself to the Western European states in the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 creating NATO. Stalin countered by tying together the economies of the Eastern bloc in a soviet led version of the Marshall Plan, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and exploding the first Soviet atomic device in August 1949 (Lafeber, 2009, p. 329). The USA took the lead in establishing the three Western Zones of Occupation in Germany in 1949 (Byrd, 2009, p. 330). To counter the western reorganization, the Soviet Union renamed its zone of occupation in Germany as the German Democratic Republic in 1949. In 1949, Mao's Red Army defeated the USA-backed Kuomintang regime in China. Shortly afterwards, the Soviet Union concluded an alliance with the new People's Republic of China. Confronted with the Chinese Revolution and the end of the USA atomic monopoly in 1949 some in the Truman administration moved to escalate and expand the 'containment' policy.

By using Baylis and Smith's (2017, p. 80-84) classification, the Cold War can be divided into five important phases: Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1953; conflict, confrontation and compromise, 1953-1969; rise and fall of détente, 1969-1979; the second Cold War, 1979-1986; and, the end of the Cold War, 1986-1991. These phrases capture the important milestones during the war such as the Berlin Crises, 1948-1962; The Korean War, 1950-1953; The Vietnam War, 1964-1975; and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The analysis of these different milestones is not necessary since the focus of the research is on the writings on the origins of the war. However,

it is necessary to highlight three important themes in the phases: Domino theory, détente and triangulation. The three are important because they capture in a holistic sense the intense diplomacy, brinkmanship and the convoluted statesmanship that defined the relationship between states during the period.

Domino Theory

Domino theory is an analogy with the way in which a row of dominoes falls sequentially until none remains standing. Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham (1999, p. 134) have observed that the theory was particularly popular with decision-makers in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The cause of the collapsing dominoes during the Cold War was transnational communism that has the potential to expand across state frontiers consuming all before it.

President Eisenhower's press conference of 7 April 1954 was the earliest reference made by any U. S. official concerning the theory. The president argued that in order for the USA to safeguard its interests in Indo-China, Washington must include the neighbouring states of Burma, Thailand, Malaya and Indonesia in its protective ambit. This action was meant to prevent them from falling one after the other to communism like a pack of cards. This is the essence of the Domino Theory: the assumption that once communism was allowed a foothold in any one of the Indo-China states, it will logically and inexorably consume the neighbouring countries if left unchecked. This magnified the importance of even the smallest states and marked the effectual beginning of the Cold War in Asia (Evans & Newnham, 1999, p. 135). The origins of such important conflicts such as the Vietnam War and the Korean War that defined the Cold war could be located within the context of the 'Domino theory'.

Détente

A diplomatic term meaning a relaxation or a slackening of tension in the previously strained relations between states. In diplomatic history, the term is particularly associated with the concert system established in the post-1815 Europe, the period following the Locarno Treaties of 1925 and resulting in the Kellogg-Briand pact of Paris in 1928. However, the term is now most often used in connection with a perceived easing of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union which began in the early 1960s. Détente is sometimes referred to as the antithesis of the Cold War, but may also be viewed as just a stage in its development – a shift in the doctrinaire confrontational policies of the 1950s to the more flexible diplomacy of the 1960s and 1970s. It should be noted that détente is not restricted to great power multilateral relationship alone. Bilateral détente between states was also a significant feature of international relations during the period. For example, West Germany's policy of Ostpolitik and United Kingdoms' efforts in the early 1960s to play the part of 'honest broker' can be viewed in this context. Although no formal treaty established the beginning of détente, scholars usually cite the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 as the beginning of the process and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 as its end. Some scholars date it from as early as the Eisenhower administration and the death of Stalin (1953), others give Kennedy and Khrushchev the honour of its inauguration and yet others fix its inception with the Nixon – Kissinger overtures to China in 1972.

However, most agree that detente refers to a structural change in post-war superpower relations and that it set in train a number of significant points of dialogue between them, including the

Helsinki accords, 1975 and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). In the course of the 1960s and 1970s, both the USA and the Soviet Union struggled to adjust to a new, more complicated pattern of international relations in which the world was no longer divided into two clearly opposed blocs by the two superpowers (Ball 1998: 53). Détente was a development in diplomatic efforts in support of the mutual agreement on disarmament and arms control (Hughes 2008: 811-813). In 1962, both President Kennedy and Premier Krushchev consented to mutual proposals to control nuclear arms race and threat to global peace and security. Detente was simply a means of relaxing hardline attitudes toward research and development in the nuclear weapon as well as a reduction of existing nuclear stockpiles. The architect was a German-born American political scientist, Henry Kissinger (Akpuru-Aja, 1999, p. 58). Although indirect conflict between Cold War powers continued through the late 1960s and early 1970s, tensions began to ease, as the period of détente began. In February 1972, Richard Nixon travelled to Beijing and met with Mao Zedong and Chou En-Lai. Nixon and Kissinger then announced a rapprochement with Mao's China at the end of the meeting. By June 1972, Nixon and Kissinger met with Soviet leaders in Moscow and announced the first of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks aimed at limiting the development of costly anti-ballistic missiles and offensive nuclear missiles. Between 1972 and 1974, the two sides also agreed to strengthen their economic ties. Meanwhile, these developments coincided with the 'Ostpolitik' of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt other agreements were concluded to stabilize the situation in Europe, culminating in the Helsinki Accords signed by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975 (Powaski, 1998). However, the détente of the 1970s was short-lived. The USA Congress limited the economic pact between Nixon and Brezhnev so much that the Soviets repudiated it in 1975.

Triangulation

In February 1972, President Richard Nixon visited China and issued the Shanghai Communiqué that eventually normalized relations that had been cold since 1949 between the two powers. This meant China would replace Taiwan on the Security Council, and the USA could start developing closer relations with the Chinese. The reason was that George Kennan's suggestion of working China and the Soviets as separate was finally adopted (Young & Kent, 2013, p. 272-273). The Soviets had to worry if the USA got too close to China, while the Chinese wanted to prevent a USA-Soviet condominium. This is a good example of a relationship that was driven by power considerations based on a realist conception of the international political system. Triangulation diplomacy, as it was later to be called, was the brainchild of Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State to President Nixon. He realized that if America were to involve itself in any active military engagement against one of the two communist juggernauts, there was the distinct possibility of China and Russia teaming up together against the USA. It was this fear that motivated the use of triangular diplomacy in the 1970s to normalize relations with the two and at the same time work one against the other.

It should be pointed out that this is a classic case of the *divide-et-impera*. To stretch it further, it could also be likened to Otto von Bismarck's policy in 18th century Europe of tying together Prussia's mortal enemies in a suffocating bind. For example, Bismarck conceived of the League of Three Emperors in 1872 and the Triple Alliance in 1882 for the express purpose of separating Austria and Russia and at the same time to isolate France. A number of factors informed triangulation but, one was particularly poignant: the realization that the communist bloc had

several competing centres of power rather than a unified command centre in Moscow. The prevailing image of communism in the 1960s shifted from the fearful monolithic one to a more differentiated theory of polycentrism exemplified by their different and competing interests in Vietnam. This was what informed the American of playing the members of the bloc against one another.

In this atmosphere, the USA was able to open a new phase in its dealings with the communist world during the 1970s. By 1971, Nixon dispatched Kissinger to secret meetings with Chinese officials. As America's foremost anti-communist politician of the cold war, Nixon was in a unique position to launch a diplomatic opening to China. The announcement of the Beijing Summit produced an immediate improvement in American relations with the USSR exemplified by an invitation for Nixon to meet with Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev in Russia (Young & Kent, 2013, p. 276). This was the essence of triangulation. The fear of improved relations between China and America was leading the Soviets to better their own relations with America. In meeting with the Soviet leader, Nixon became the first president to visit Moscow. Among the important significance of triangulation during this period were the treaties the two men signed to control the growth of nuclear arms. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and an Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty did not end the arms race, but they paved the way for future pacts that sought to reduce and eliminate arms.

Typology of Cold War Historiography: A Review

Martin McCauley has suggested that the phrase 'Cold War' was first used by the fourteenth-century Spanish writer Don Juan Manuel who analyzed the conflict between Christendom and Islam (2016, p. 9). Ball (1998, p. 7) has argued that its ideological roots stretched further back to the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. He was referring here to the ideological conflict between Capitalism and Communism and liberal democracy and Marxism–Leninism that had been present in that affairs since 1917. Patrick Flaherty (1996, p. 1) have opined that it was in the United States that the Cold War as a term entered the popular discourse. He traced the origin to Bernard Baruch, an American financier and policymaker, who used the term in 1947 in passing and without any elaboration. By his own admission, Baruch took it from his friend and speechwriter Herbert Bayard Swope who claimed he had come up with it while considering the Phoney War of 1939 – 40. The term was later popularized by Walter Lipman an American reporter, in 1947 (McCauley, 2016, p. 9).

In trying to establish the historiographical origins of the cold war, there are four schools of thought to consider. They are the Orthodox or Traditionalist School; the Revisionist School; and the Post-Revisionist School and the New Cold War Revisionist School. The different schools will be analyzed at this point. The aim will be to show the present state of scholarship on the one hand, and the other will be to set the rationale for the creation of a new school that captures a holistic origin of the Cold War.

The Orthodox/Traditionalist School

The Orthodox or Traditionalist School tends to argue that a mixture of Marxist –Leninist ideology, military victory, unjustified Stalinist paranoia about western encirclement and traditional Russian expansionism made the Soviet Union an inherently aggressive power after 1945 (Ball, 1998, p.

7). The argument goes that the Soviet Union had ambitions to subjugate Eastern Europe, subvert Western Europe and dominate emerging post-colonial nations through ideology and aid. The main lineaments of this approach were laid down in a number of memoirs by American leaders. The locus classicus of this school was the recollections of Harry S. Truman published in book form as early as 1955 and 1956. Truman also relied a great deal on the memories and interpretations of his former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson who later published his own memoir that strengthened the Orthodox canon (Acheson, 1987). Of particular importance to the Orthodox interpretation of the origin of the Cold War was the George Kennan 'Mr X' article. He stressed the ideological trappings of the Soviet Union and how this has conditioned it to expand territorially in order to ensure its survival. Other Orthodox writers of note include Mastny who regarded the Soviet Union's striving for power and influence far in excess of its reasonable security requirements as the primary source of the Cold War (Mastny, 1979, p. 45-50); and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who argued forcefully that the admixture of Leninism and Communism turned Russia into a totalitarian state and thus conditioned Russia to eschew any form of collaborative activity with the international community (Schlesinger Jr., 1967, p. 251-253). Hence, the origins of the Cold War can simply be located in Russian intractability, intransigence and blind obedience to ideology. This blind obedience made it impossible for Russia to have any meaningful peaceful relationship with the West immediately after the Second World War. One should point out here again that the Orthodox assumptions are based wholly on the views of western bureaucrats and career diplomats who had direct dealings with the Soviets or have served in the capacity that brought them close to the Russians.

The Revisionist School

Revisionism traced the origin of the Cold War to American economic expansionism. The Revisionist school depicted the Cold War in Marxist fashion as an episode in American economic spoliation. It argues that the USA governments resorted to military threats to prevent communists from closing off eastern European markets and raw materials to its corporations. Revisionists emphasized that the belligerent posture of the Truman administration immediately after the Yalta and Tehran conferences and the bombs the Americans dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were interpreted by Russia as means to threaten her (Hopkins, 2007, p. 915). The Revisionists argue that Stalin was not a fanatical aggressor, but a traditional Soviet statesman. Since the Soviet Union had been brutally invaded and had lost 20,000,000 lives in the war, Stalin could thus be excused for insisting on the friendly government on her borders (Hopkins, 2007). Stalin was betrayed, says revisionists, by American militancy and red-baiting after the death of Roosevelt. Some notable scholars of the revisionist school include Robert Tucker, Sidney Lens, Gar Alperovitz, Gabriel Kolko and William Appleman William. Gar Alperovitz argued that from the onset of the Truman administration, there was the overbearing emphasis of constructing an American dominated foreign policy (Alperovitz, 1994, p. 55-57). He explained that the use of the atomic bomb against an already defeated Japan was intended to send a message to the Soviet Union.

Robert Tucker argued that post-1945 USA expansionism was traceable to Washington's inordinate power and its determination to use this power to ensure its own particular version of a congenial international order (Tucker, 1971, p. 106-109). William Appleman (2009, p. 204-206) tries to situate the origin of the Cold War in American 'Open Door' policy. This policy was

formalized by the 'Open Door Notes' which was first issued in 1899 demanding that USA goods and investments be allowed equality of opportunity with competing interests in China. Williams argued that this policy was later globalized because USA policymakers and business elites were of the firm belief that America's domestic well-being depends upon such sustained, ever-increasing overseas economic expansion. Gabriel Kolko, one of the important leading lights of the Revisionist school, has posited that the expansive interests of American capitalism as an economy with specific structural needs are the basic factor responsible for the Cold War (Kolko & Kolko, 1972, p. 8). He asserted that it was the inherent need for expansion by a capitalist economy that drove USA foreign policy. Thus, it was in this need to create an American dominated integrated world of capitalism that the true origins of the Cold War should be rightly located.

The Post-Revisionist School

Post-revisionist interpretations seek to establish the origins of the Cold War based on the activities of both America and the Soviet Union. Scholars of this persuasion see the situation as so infinitely complex that no generalization about who was to blame will suffice (McCauley, 2016, p. 14). Post-revisionism proposes that the forces at work were far too complex to be accommodated within the overarching bipolar scheme of the Cold War orthodoxy and Cold War revisionism (Nwaubani, 2006, p. 10). Post revisionism tries to create a bridge between the orthodoxy and revisionism and at the same time fill the lacunae identified in the analysis of the two schools. Robert Gilpin (1971, p. 225-227) attempts to fill these lacunae in his analysis of USA - Soviet confrontation and its implications in geopolitical terms. He argued that the collapse of German power in Europe and Japanese power in Asia created a power vacuum which both the USA and the Soviet Union sought to fill to their advantage. Neither of the two powers could because of their perception of security concerns varies, and the efforts of each to ensure this only increased the insecurity of the other, causing it to redouble its own efforts. This struggle necessitated the consolidation and expansion of the security lines and the nature of these lines were defined by the differing asymmetric situations of the USA and the Soviet Union. Melvin Leffler (1992, p. 516-518) is another important Post-revisionist scholar. He argued that it was Washington's apprehensions about the postwar global system and correlation of power that forced her to embark on measures designed to ensure its existential survival. It was these measures, such as having overwhelming military superiority, superiority in industrial capacity and in technological strength as well as control of the access to raw materials and denying the materials to prospective enemies, that led her on an irrevocable collision course with the Soviet Union (Leffler, 1992). This is because, as Leffler has aptly observed, both superpowers were interested in achieving these aims in the same international arena i.e. Europe and Asia. Thus making their interests to be mutually incompatible.

New Cold War Revisionist School

The New Cold War Revisionist School tends to situate the historiography of the Cold War squarely on Josef Stalin and his hardline policies immediately after World War II (WWII) in 1945 (Mastrangelo, 2016). Scholars who belonged to this school came to this conclusion of Stalin's guilt because of their access to declassified Soviet archival materials. Mastny (1996, p. 11), a leading proponent of the school, argued that Stalin's insecurity that was based on, among other factors, Western designs for his country, and that of fifth columnists within the communist party,

pushed him to embrace a hardline policy toward America. This is a reasonable assertion. It has been argued in some quarters that Stalin's extreme ideological view greatly influenced his world view. This has been given as the basic factor responsible for the historiography of the Cold War. The view of the New Cold War Revisionist has further been supported by Zubok and Pleshakov (1996, p. xii) who argued that Russia's history of external invasion, Soviet experiences at the hands of the West prior to and during WWII and Stalin's deep ideological commitment to Communism caused the Cold War. This world view was shared by Khrushchev who took over the USSR after Stalin died in 1953. Khrushchev believed, just like his predecessor, that the West maltreated the USSR during and after WWII. He further believed that the West tried to prevent the USSR from taking its rightful leading position in the international political system (Zubok & Pleshakov, 1996, p. 182). This belief further entrenched the Cold War in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin.

Having shown the different and contrasting ideas and controversies that have plagued the historiography of the Cold war, it is necessary to provide what one can call a unifying narrative that captures the essence of the discourse. This is what is dealt with in the subsequent sub-heading.

The Structuralist School: A New Paradigm

From the foregoing, it could be seen that there is no consensus about the historiography of the Cold War. Most of the available schools have looked at the historiography of the Cold War through the prism of capitalism and communism. This is evidenced by the differing positions of the various scholars who have studied cold war historiography. These ossified positions have made it difficult for there to be a meaningful and fruitful discourse on Cold War historiography. What is needed to resolve this conundrum is an approach that does not privilege any of the different ideological positions. Such an approach will make it possible for one to provide a dispassionate view of the historiography of the Cold War. It is our assertion that the Structuralist school captures the historiography of the Cold War in all its ramifications. So, what is the Structuralist school? The Structuralist school believes that the historiography of the Cold War should be located, not in the ideology of communism and capitalism or the different leaders involved in WWII. But, the historiography of the war should be located in the structure of the international political system itself. This position is similar to the aspect of Realism, Neo-Realism, espoused by Kenneth Waltz (2010). Structural realism presents a systemic portrait of international politics that depicts the component units in the system based on their manner of arrangement (Waltz, 1988, p. 618). Structures are features of systems (Wendt, 1999, p. 73, 79). A system comprises of interdependent units (states)The fundamental property of a structure is the dependence, interdependence and interactions of parts within it (Jervis, 1997, p. 3). The international structure has three dimensions: differentiation of units, distribution of power and an organizational principle. Of the three, the distribution of power has the most important effect on state interaction within the international political system. It is the only variable in the structure that determines how the units stand in relation to one another or how they are arranged and positioned (Buzan & Albert, 2011, p. 315-332). This is what forces states to splinter into blocs to maximize their power and ensure their security or their survival within the system. Importantly, this power distribution also forces states to go into an alliance to confront to guarantee their survival or to 'piggyback' (bandwagon effect) on the back of the more powerful states. This factor explains the East-West blocs that the world was divided to at the end of the war in 1945. Besides,

it further explains the realignment that took place among states in Europe and Asia at the end of the war. Our argument here is that the international political system was in a state of flux after the end of WWII. This is not unlike the anarchic situation that formed the crux of Thomas Hobbes seminal work on Realism (Hobbes, 2017). This anarchic situation forced the states to use every and any means at its disposal to ensure its survival. The means could be through cooperation with other states or self-help. The point here is that it is the anarchic nature of the international political system that modified (forced) the behaviour of states to fall in line with it (Keohane, 1986). In the same vein, the anarchy or vacuum that ensued at the end of WWII forced states to act in a manner that created instability and insecurity in the international political system. Rather than look for the historiography of the Cold War in the prevailing and competing ideologies, the answer should be sought within the structure of the system itself. This is an inverse situation. Instead of the actors, the USSR and the USA or Capitalism and Communism, dictating the pace of events at the end of WWII that later culminated in the Cold War, it was the system (structure) that became the actor and set the pace for the states to follow. This is the kernel of the structuralist school.

CONCLUSION

The exact causes of the confrontation termed the cold war, are complex and controversial (Rourke, 1999, p. 34). The historiography of the origins of the Cold War is a subject that has interested scholars since the beginning of the conflict itself. The course of the war and the different controversies the conflict generated and the different ideological orientations of researchers interested in the conflict are major barriers to carrying out an objective investigation of the Cold War. The extant historiographical literature on the war has always stressed the traditional positions between communism and capitalism, hence, the revisionist, orthodoxy and post-revisionist schools. This work has shown that there is an alternative school. This is what we have called the Structuralist school. The Structuralist school argues that rather than focusing on the role of ideology and human actors for a holistic understanding of the Cold War historiography, a more rewarding and convincing scholarly exercise will be to focus on the crucial role of the political system.

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