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Review article

NOT SUCH A NEW WARS

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the so-called "new wars" that emerged in the late twentieth century. The author attempts to argue impartially both the criticisms and the defense of the claims that qualitative changes have occurred in the nature of violent conflict and that it is now possible to think in terms of "new wars" that are different in significant ways from previous forms of conflict. The idea comes from two related aspects of this general proposition. The first concerns the historical break between "old" and "new" wars and the accompanying argument that links the emergence of "new wars" to the process of globalization in the late twentieth century. The second aspect concerns the actual characteristics of "new wars" and the way in which "they differ from previous wars in terms of their goals, methods of warfare, and how they are financed." In the analysis, we address five components of the debate: the difference between old wars and "new" wars; the problem of defining war; whether the data support the claims about new wars; whether globalization has given rise to new wars; and whether the new wars are "post-Clauswitzian". It summarizes arguments for doubts about the extent to which contemporary forms of organized violence reflect new patterns in terms of actors, goals, space, human influence, and the political economy and social structure of conflict. The results suggest that, however, the obsession with the "newness" of wars misses the point about the logic of the new wars; what is important is addressing the political elements of the new wars. The research defending the position on the "new wars" argues that they should be understood not as an empirical category, but as a way of clarifying the logic of contemporary war that can offer both a strategy for researching that category of armed conflicts and a guide for the politics of their resolution.

Keywords: new wars, globalization, violence, concept, criticisms

Concept of new wars

War in the twenty-first century has taken on a completely new character. The state, once the all-powerful Leviathan, has lost its monopoly on violence, and the erosion of the monopoly on violence by globalization has transformed the character of war. Globalization, that paradoxical process of increasing interconnectedness, has escalated global interconnectedness, confronting a set of challenges to the political, economic, cultural, and military aspects of the modern state (Kaldor 2001, 3). Globalization has caused a multitude of problems by undermining state sovereignty. Globalization, which was supposed to foster cosmopolitan politics and cooperation, has ended up creating more divisions. Along with globalization, the clash of symmetrical adversaries can destroy the world. The emergence of nuclear weapons has changed the traditional logic of war. In fact, any war according to the old logic of war is simply no longer useful. A war between nuclear powers will not benefit either side. Because the costs of such a victory outweigh the benefits, avoiding direct war serves political interests better than waging one. This shift in military logic is evident from the shift in the tactics of today's wars. The role of globalization in modern warfare has rightly been noted, particularly in Eastern Europe and Africa during the 1980s and 1990s, as a key driving factor behind the development of a new type of organized violence due to its impact on the pattern of politics and the rise of the term identity politics from the disintegration of the state system among states (Kaldor 2001, 70).

One line of thought on changes in warfare involves the argument that globalization has led to specific forms of violent conflict labeled "new wars" (Kaldor 1997). According to Kaldor, the term new wars is used to interpret the development of new types of organized violence in the globalized era, especially in the last decades of the 20th century in Eastern Europe and Africa, in order to conceptualize explanations of contexts of binary distinctions between state and non-state, public and private, external and internal, economic and political, and between war and peace, which are both causes and consequences of violence. The idea that organized violence in the twenty-first century is different from wars in the twentieth century has been widely debated in both the scholarly and political literature. Other terms used for the concept include "wars between people", "wars of the third kind", "hybrid wars" (Frank Hoffman)¹, "privatized wars", "network wars" (Duffield), and "postmodern wars". Kaldor's view of "new wars" is made in the context of a broader "new wars thesis" among academics on how to properly define or label the apparent revolution in warfare in the post-Cold War world. Kaldor argues that the new features of war must be

¹Although, according to attempts to define hybrid wars, the characteristics of hybrid wars do not completely coincide with the characteristics of "new wars". Here the focus is on autonomous weapons and improvised explosive devices, that is, on the lack of contact between the warring parties. The changed strategies will focus on knowledge and not on the quantity of soldiers.

analyzed in the context of globalization. However, Kaldor acknowledges that “new wars” are not truly new, in that they would have no historical precedent; however, she insists on retaining the term because there is still a definite need for new policy responses to not-so-new wars. Old international strategies have failed to successfully address the characteristics of new wars and instead continue to treat them as old conventional warfare. The term is an antonym for conventional warfare because conventional military weapons and battlefield tactics are no longer used between two or more states in open confrontation.

The main elements of the “new wars” thesis are as follows:

- New wars are within, not outside, states.
- New wars occur in the context of state failure and social transformation driven by globalization and liberal economic forces. While old wars were associated with state building, new wars are the opposite; they tend to contribute to state disintegration.
- In new wars, ethnic and religious differences are more important than political ideology.
- In new wars, civilian casualties are significantly increased, primarily because civilians are deliberately targeted.
- In new wars, the breakdown of state authority blurs the distinction between public and private combatants (Newman, 2004).

According to Kaldor, the new wars are associated with the activities of non-state actors in regions where state power has collapsed along with the emergence of war economies. In a broader sense, it is a question of weakening, not of building a new state.

Their opposite, the “old wars”, consist in the pursuit of defeating the enemy by weakening his military power through violence. The old wars are therefore characterized by the engagement of regular armies and battles between them. The soldiers of the parties to the conflict are uniformed and recognizable. Where “military necessity” allows, civilian casualties are minimized. In the new wars, the traditional division into war (violence between states or organized political groups with political motives), organized crime (violence by private associations, usually for financial gain), and major human rights abuses (violence by the state or private groups against individuals, mainly civilians) becomes blurred. The division into old and new wars is supposed to demonstrate the far-reaching transformation of war in the globalized era. The division itself, as its critics emphasize, does not give satisfaction because it is not always easy to distinguish between the two types of conflict.

The new wars thesis has been criticized from various perspectives, but has nevertheless been adopted and adapted by other authors.² Thus, Martin Shaw uses the term “degenerate warfare” to describe how belligerents attack the civilian population of the enemy as part of a broader military campaign,

²Herfried Münkler from Germany, Martin van Creveld from Israel, Mohammad Mir-wais Balkhi from Afghanistan and Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou from Mauritania.

such as aerial bombing of cities, but its destruction is not the ultimate goal: the enemy is the state, not the enemy population (Moses and Heerten 2018, 27). The term “new war” is often compared to “low-intensity conflict”, a term coined by the US Army, which broadly encompasses all modern armed conflicts that do not meet the threshold or level of violence specific to conventional wars.

Other authors have also attempted to characterize the change in warfare, but using different explanations. Recognizing the blurring between state and non-state actors and the duality of interstate and intrastate conflict, Frank Hoffman portrays modern wars as “hybrid wars”. Here, old ways and means of warfare will remain in use, but most often they will be accompanied by new, postmodern ones (which is why wars are called hybrid). This diversity will require specialization between countries, as is the case with the production of various goods. No state will be able to master all the strategies, techniques and tools of warfare of a new type on its own. Therefore, alliances are becoming increasingly important (including ad hoc alliances to carry out a specific task or achieve a specific goal), as well as the use of the idea of association and sharing and “smart” defense.³

The differences between old and new wars lie in the actors, goals, methods, and forms of financing. The goal is to gain access to the state for particular groups (which may be both local and transnational), rather than to implement certain policies or programs of broader public interest. The goal of the combatants can be understood as a struggle between cosmopolitan and exclusivist identity groups, exercising control over violence for ethnic dominance and/or for ethnic cleansing. Old wars were fought for geopolitical interests or for ideology (democracy or socialism). New wars are fought in the name of identity (ethnic, religious, or tribal). Identity politics has a different logic from geopolitics or ideology. Perhaps most importantly, identity politics is constructed through war. Thus, political mobilization around identity is an aim of war rather than an instrument of war, as was the case in the “old wars.” The ability to mobilize around both exclusivist causes and human rights causes is accelerated by new communications. Во однос на методите, новите војни се водат преку новите начини на војување преку герилиски тактики и контрабунтовништво. A typical technique is population displacement - the forcible removal of those with a different identity or different opinions. The violence is mainly directed against civilians as a way of controlling territory, not against enemy forces. Such warfare is specific because decisive clashes are avoided and territory is controlled through political manipulations displaying “fear and hatred” rather than “reason and feelings”. It is not surprising that paramilitary groups are hired for this purpose because they spread fear and hatred among civilians more effectively than professional military forces (Mueller, 2000). This explains the increasing degree of one-sided massacre, mentioned above. Paramilitary gangs are also

³These are the ideas, respectively, of the European Union (within the framework of the European Defense Agency) and NATO.

popular because it is difficult to trace the line of responsibility for their actions back to the ones who ordered them, i.e. to the political leaders. This is just one form of the privatization of war. The retreat of the state that has characterized the era of globalization has also allowed the development of private means of acquiring military power, including the proliferation of private military firms. While in the developed world military privatization may refer to the “contracting out” of activities such as logistics, supplies, and base security, in developing countries it can mean the contracting out of war itself and can fundamentally weaken the state’s monopoly on violence. Communications are also increasingly a tool of war, making it easier, for example, to spread fear and panic than in previous periods - hence, spectacular acts of terrorism.

According to Kaldor, the final characteristic of the new war is that it is financed through a global war economy that is decentralized, international, and in which the warring units are self-financed through the black market or foreign aid (Duffield, 2001). Old wars were largely financed by states (defense budget, i.e. taxation, or by external patrons). In weak states, tax revenues are declining, and new forms of predatory private financing include looting and plunder, “taxing” humanitarian aid, diaspora support, kidnapping or smuggling of oil, diamonds, drugs, people, etc. While old war economies were usually centralized, autarchic, and mobilized the population, new wars are part of an open globalized decentralized economy in which participation is low and revenues depend on continued violence. Such wars are difficult to end because some individuals appropriate significant political and economic benefits from warfare and have no interest in ending the conflict (Keen, 2012). It is sometimes argued that new wars are motivated by economic gain, but it is difficult to distinguish between those who use the cover of political violence for economic reasons and those who engage in predatory economic activities to finance their political cause. As a result, September 11th allowed the leaderships of the dominant elite to focus without difficulty on the judgment of the population and thereby shape the world they influence. One effective method of enhancing and maintaining supremacy and financing warfare is to keep the ordinary citizen in constant fear and, more recently, of “terrorism and terrorists.” In this way, the public will agree to spend a larger share of taxpayers’ money to finance the ongoing military industrial complex (Mutonyi 2020, 9005).⁴ According to Mueller (2004, 115), “most of what is considered war today is characterized centrally by opportunistic and improvisational clashes of bandits, rather than by programmed and/or primal clashes of civilizations—although many of the perpetrators are careful to employ ethnic, national, or ideological rhetoric to justify their actions, since emphasizing the thrill and profit of plunder would be politically incorrect.” Victory may not be desirable for most belligerents, for perhaps the point of warfare is precisely the legitimacy it provides for activities that would be sanctioned as

⁴In support of this position, we cite the interventions of Western powers in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Russia in Syria in 2015, the Kenyan Defense Forces in Somalia (2011-2012), as well as Uganda’s peacekeeping engagement in Somalia (since 2007).

crimes in peacetime. War never works for any individual or group except for war entrepreneurs: wealthy individuals who propagate and influence nationalist and fascist warmongering around the world, profiting trillions of dollars from death and destruction while exaggerating their patriotism and inspiring citizen support (Mutonyi 2020, 9009).

Kaldor explicitly states the connection between globalization and the new wars in terms of the “crisis of identity” (2001, 75). For Kaldor, a significant feature of the new wars is that the combatants focus on the question of identity in which she sees these conflicts as negative consequences resulting from the process of globalization. Therefore, attention is drawn to the term “identity politics”. This may be because globalization influences the emergence of consolidations of networks and of state and non-state actors outside the conventional competences of territorially defined governments. In other words, modern state structures are disintegrating due to the interference of regionalization and transnationalization of the governance of state territory. As a result, new wars are being fought in the name of identity politics in which political elites reproduce their power. They, however, try to achieve political mobilization around identity. Thus, in the context of these new wars regarding identity politics, a different identity is used as an instrument of population control in the form of ethnic cleansing of a specific area. Thus, most conflicts are directed against civilians.

Another explanation for the problems caused by globalization for the concept of new wars is the spread of capitalism. The ideas of capitalism and the free market motivated those actors who saw the potential for profit in war. These actors established private security firms and were available to the highest bidder. Such institutions infused the concept of war with further complexities and further degenerated the legitimacy of violence. These developments highlighted the need for a new conceptualization of war. To deal with these complexities and to lay the foundation for future research, Kaldor defines war as a “mutual enterprise” rather than a “contest of wills”. The reason illustrated by Kaldor is that the latter makes the elimination of the enemy the ultimate goal of war, while the former suggests that both sides are interested “in the enterprise of war, not in winning and losing as well as in political and economic goals”. “New wars are sources of the market for new weapons and lack the ingredients of old wars: ideology and nationalism.”⁵ In some cases, new wars use the rhetoric of ethnic, religious, or tribal identities. But in a real sense, new wars are a collaborative effort of the innovative skills of the arms industry (Mutonyi 2020, 9002). While it is very difficult to understand the means one uses for which goals, the long-running conflicts around the world and the industries that fuel these wars paint a different picture—a picture very close to the concept of war as a mutual endeavor, not a contest of wills.

⁵The lack of nationalism is inconsistent with the case of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as an example of a New War.

According to Kaldor, the solution to new wars lies in the reconstruction of legitimate (cosmopolitan) political communities that trust public authorities, restore control over organized violence, and restore the rule of law. This is a cosmopolitan reinforcement of law in the form of large-scale peacekeeping operations, which include a combination of military, police, and civilian personnel.

New wars or old violence - criticisms of the concept

Kaldor's views on the new wars have been challenged by several criticisms: First, most of the elements she cites are not new (Newman, 2004). Thus, for example, violence against civilians is a feature of all wars and there is no evidence to suggest a temporary, qualitative shift in the use of the crime in the 21st century. It has been argued that the Cold War has obscured our ability to analyze "small wars" or "low-intensity wars", that many of the characteristics of the new wars associated with weak states can be found in the early modern period, and that phenomena such as banditry, mass rape, forced displacement of populations, or crimes against civilians have a long history. Some critics question whether a distinction can be made between old and new, because Kaldor's idea of "New Wars" is not a description of new conflicts as such, but rather of conflicts in less governed countries (Utas 2012). Duffield suggests that what is considered "new" is the security terrain shaped by what he calls network wars, which are described as "rhizomatic and anti-institutional in character" and which can usually be linked to changes in social life. Network wars are seen as an uncertain and violent form of reflexive modernity and where "war as a reflexive network enterprise does not follow the traditional state model of escalation, stagnation and decline".

The dominant understandings of these conflicts that underpin policy are of two kinds. On the one hand, there is a tendency to impose a stereotypical version of war, drawn from the experience of the last two centuries in Europe, in which war consists of a conflict between two belligerent parties, generally states with legitimate interests, what we might call the "Old Wars." This term refers to a stylized form of war, not to all previous wars. In such wars, the solution is either negotiation or victory by one side, and external intervention takes the form of (1) traditional peacekeeping—in which peacekeepers are supposed to guarantee an accepted agreement, and the governing principles are consent, neutrality, and impartiality—or (2) traditional warfare by one side or the other, as in Korea or the Gulf War. On the other hand, where policymakers recognize the shortcomings of the stereotypical understanding, there is a tendency to treat these wars as anarchy, barbarism, historical rivalries, where the best policy response is containment, i.e. protecting the borders of the West from this disease. For the paradigm of a new war between societies, it is customary to create exit conditions", rather than to achieve a final solution of a "typical victory" (more precisely, it is about the possibility of imposing or dictating conditions after the end of the armed conflict) (Antczak 2018, 201). New wars are the opposite

of total war, “they are frequently local in nature and often carried out by non-state actors, but are controlled by larger powers that often sponsor contractors” (Antzack 2018, 199).

Sven Chojnacki rejects the hypothesis that the “New War” is currently the dominant form of violence, as it does not take into account most of the conflicts that are currently taking place. An important factor of change in modern scientific research on wars is the question of the growing risk of military interventions aimed at stopping the continued violence in failing states, terrorism and war crimes. According to him, interventions such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan have become “a prominent tool of foreign policy” since the end of the Cold War. These interventions shape the modern international order and become part of the typology of new conflicts.⁶ Among the types of modern conflicts, it is notable that internal wars are 8 times more numerous than wars between states. In addition, the duration of these conflicts increases civilian casualties (from 10% in 1900 to 80-90% in 2000). However, an indisputable fact about the nature of modern conflicts, confirmed by other researchers, is precisely the change that consists in the increase in the number of civilian casualties compared to military ones.

Along the same lines, Edward Newman writes about the importance of considering historical examples before making any statements about qualitative changes in recent wars. He suggests that many good points can be made in the new wars school, including the importance of social and economic dynamics to warfare, and that there are examples of modern wars, such as the Bosnian War, that fit the new wars template.⁷ However, he argues that most of the elements of the “new wars” are not actually new, but have existed at least for the past century. In Newman’s view, these elements have been more or less prominent in different times and places, and that they have only been increasingly emphasized in recent times, with the difference that it is now that “academics, political analysts, and politicians are focusing on these factors more than before” and better understanding them, and that the media has increased public awareness of the reality and atrocities of war (Newman 2004, 186).

Another major criticism concerns the view of globalization as a new process that has changed the nature of warfare in the late twentieth century. According to Barkawi (2006), globalization is not a new phenomenon as Kaldor suggests, but an old process that concerns circulation, i.e. a process through

⁶In doing so, it neglects the fact that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the examples of New Wars.

⁷At the same time, there are also views on the concept of “new wars” that cite the following wars as contemporary conflicts that are not “new wars”, that is, although modern, they still fit the definition of “old wars”: the Second Sudanese War (1983-2005), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990), the Croatian War of Independence (1991-1995), the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), and the Yemeni War (since 2014). The main component-cause of conflicts in these examples is nationalism, which by definition is not a characteristic of new wars (Mutonyi 2020, 9003-9004).

which people and places become interconnected. Barkawi notes that war has historically been an important form of connection between societies and in this sense warfare has been a globalizing force for a long time. In and through war, people on both sides become increasingly aware of each other, reconstruct their image of themselves and others, and react to the actions of others. To wage war is to connect with the enemy. Such a connection imposes social processes and transformations that fall under globalization... From a military and social perspective, war can be seen as an opportunity for interaction, a form of circulation between warring parties. In and through war, societies are transformed, while society shapes war (Barkawi 2006, 169). The military and war are places of cultural mixing and hybridity. The military, which travels across cultures, exposes soldiers to foreign influence and leads them to question their own ideas about their homeland. Soldiers returning from abroad bring new ideas and practices home... however one understands globalization – as economic globalization, transregional connectivity, or global consciousness – war and the military play a much more important role than globalization studies suggest... An assessment of the ways in which war is centrally implicated in the process of globalization is needed (Barkawi 2006, 172). Globalization understood in this way is not separate from war, aiming to change the nature of warfare as Kaldor argues, but war has been closely linked to the globalization of world politics for thousands of years.

The latest round of criticism of the “new wars” concerns the view that the new wars are post-Clausewitzian. The reasons commonly given for the claim that the new wars are post-Clausewitzian are related to the trinitarian conception of war, the primacy of politics, and the role of reason. The criticism is directed at the views of John Keegan (2004) and Martin Van Creveld (1991) who suggest that the trinitarian conception of war, with its tripartite distinction of state, army and people, is no longer relevant. Other authors suggest that war is no longer an instrument of politics and, in fact, that the “divorce of war from politics” is characteristic of both pre-Clausewitzian and post-Clausewitzian wars (Angstrom 2003, 8). Along with these arguments, critics have also questioned the rationality of war. Van Creveld, for example, argues that it is absurd to think that just because some people possess power, they act calculatedly like computers that are not influenced by passions. In fact, they are no more rational than the rest of us.

Overall, the criticism says that “new war” theorists base their arguments on vague generalizations and loose assumptions and, more importantly, do not distinguish between the nature and character of war, confusing the levels of analysis. Moreover, they clearly exaggerate the role played by political rationality in Clausewitz’s concept of war and miss the deeper meaning of the term politics (Jasiukėnaitė 2010, 32).

Philosophical Defense of the Concept of "New Wars"

Are "New Wars" New?!

Engaging with and countering the various criticisms that have been leveled against the term "new," the argument is made that the "new" in "new wars" should be understood as a research strategy and a guide to policy. Because the "old" is embedded in the concept of "new," the term allows us to grapple with the overall logic that is inherent in contemporary violent conflicts and that makes them different in kind from "old wars." It is a logic that goes beyond the specific components of contemporary conflicts—for example, identity politics or economic plunder. Instead, it provides an integrative framework for analysis.

According to Kaldor's defense, many critics use reductionist arguments where new wars are linked to a particular aspect of modern wars, for example, crime or privatization or brutality, and do not take into account the overall conceptual framework that links actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance.

However, it can be argued that there are some truly new elements in contemporary conflicts. Indeed, it would be strange if there were none. The main new elements have to do with globalization and technology. First, the increase in destructiveness and precision of all forms of military technology has made symmetrical warfare—war between similarly armed opponents—increasingly destructive and therefore difficult to win.⁸ Hence, the tactics of the new wars must necessarily cope with this reality.

Some critics miss the point about the logic of the new wars by pointing out that identity politics is also about ideas (the politics of ideology). In a way, this is exactly the same as ideological conflicts can be reduced to identity – communist or fascist identity, as opposed to ethnic or tribal identity, for example. But the point of making this distinction is to illuminate different political logics, the way in which identity politics is linked to different practices, different methods of warfare, and different ways of relating to authority. Identity politics is about the right to power on behalf of a particular group; ideological politics is about the conquest of power in order to implement a particular ideological program. This helps to explain military tactics – population displacement as a method of exerting political control – or the persistence of new wars, because fear is a necessary long-term ingredient of identity politics. Critics seem to imply that the term "identity politics" suggests that politics is a mask, instrumentalized for economic reasons; of course, the new wars are about politics – that is why they are wars – and of course identity is constructed, but so are all other forms of ideology. The point made by the defender of the concept is that the

⁸The case of the war between Russia and Ukraine is the latest example of a symmetrical war - a war in which, even after three years of fighting and the loss of soldiers in the millions, there is almost no political result.

distinction between identity politics and ideology (democracy or socialism) and geopolitical interest implies a different set of political practices and a different methodology of war.

Some critics acknowledge that there is such a thing as new wars. But that does not mean that the “old wars” have disappeared. Especially after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, some scholars and policymakers have warned against expecting future wars to look like Iraq and Afghanistan. Not all future wars will be like Iraq and Afghanistan, since those wars were exacerbated by external military interventions. But neither is it likely that future wars will look like the wars of the twentieth century. Of course, the return of old wars cannot be ruled out. Again, a typical clear example of this last statement is the war in Ukraine.⁹ It is possible to imagine continued competitive armaments by states, growing interstate tensions, and a tendency to forget the suffering of previous generations. But the failure to deal with the “new wars” of the present may make that possibility more plausible. The reconstruction of militarized states through external wars can be seen as a way of re-establishing a monopoly on violence at the national level. According to John Keegan, “the great work of disarming tribes, sects, warlords, and criminals—the main achievement of monarchs in the 17th century and empires in the 19th—threatens to have to be done all over again” (Mueller 2004, 172). In the current economic crisis, where states are cutting defense budgets, there is a tendency to protect what is considered the core defense task—preparation for the “old war”—and to reduce the newly emerging capacity to contribute to efforts to enforce global peace.

Are wars the “new wars”?!

Some critics suggest that contemporary violence is largely privatized and/or criminal and therefore cannot properly be described as war. The new wars can be described as a mixture of war (organized violence for political purposes), crime (organized violence for private purposes), and human rights violations (violence against civilians). The advantage of not using the term “war” is that all forms of contemporary violence can be considered entirely illegitimate, requiring a police rather than a political/military response. Moreover, much contemporary violence – such as the wars against drug cartels in Mexico or gang wars in major cities – seems to have a similar logic to the new wars, but must be classified as criminal conflicts. The same kind of argument has been used with regard to terrorism. There has been widespread criticism of the term “war on terror” because it implies a military response to terrorist violence when it is argued that police and intelligence methods would be more effective (Howard 2002).

On the other hand, the political element must be taken seriously. War involves organized violence in the service of political ends in two ways. On the

⁹Currently, 2025.

one hand, the articulation of a cosmopolitan politics as an alternative to an exclusivist identity is the only way to establish legitimate institutions that can provide the kind of effective governance and security that is proposed as a solution. On the other hand, politicization is the way in which criminal activity is legitimized as a form of war. Suicide bombers in their farewell videos describe themselves as soldiers, not murderers. Even if it is the case, and it often is, that those who frame violence in ethnic, religious, or ideological terms are purely instrumental, these political narratives are internalized through the process of engaging in or suffering violence. In fact, this is the point of violence; it is possible to win elections or mobilize political support only through the politics of fear. Overcoming fear and hostility does not necessarily have to be achieved through compromise, even if that is possible, because compromise can entrench exclusivist positions; rather, it requires a different kind of politics, the construction of a common discourse that must be the basis of any legal response.

Data controversy

Proponents of the new wars concept, based on qualitative research on the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the South Caucasus, and sub-Saharan Africa, support the argument that decisive battles are becoming rare and that most violence is directed against civilians. One argument has been the dramatic increase in the ratio of civilian to military casualties, and the other has been the increase in the number of displaced persons after conflict. Other data that may be relevant concern the recurrence and/or persistence of contemporary conflicts, as well as their tendency to spread.

There seems to be a decline in the “old wars”, which is largely what the databases present. It is also a decline in the number of people killed in battles, which is consistent with the argument for a decline in battles. And there seems to be evidence for the argument that new wars are hard to end and tend to spread if we assume that the data does reveal some elements of “new war.”

What do the casualty data tell us? First, the data indicate an overall decline in all war-related deaths. One of the misapplied criticisms of the new wars thesis is that new wars scholars claim that atrocities in new wars are worse than in previous wars. The only claim the new wars thesis makes is that most of the violence in new wars consists of violence against civilians, not combat—it would be inappropriate to claim that violence against civilians is worse than modernist state-based atrocities such as the Holocaust or the Soviet purges. Second, there has been a dramatic decline in battle deaths. If we compare all war-related deaths to battle deaths, rather than to civilian and military casualties, then it is possible to argue that the ratio has increased on a scale consistent with the original “new wars” claim (Lacina & Gleditsch 2005). Third, casualties among regular soldiers are a very small proportion of total deaths in wars, both because there are fewer regular soldiers participating in wars and because of the decline in battles.

As for the number of forcibly displaced people, no one disputes that the total has increased. But critics suggest that these figures need to be qualified on two counts. First, data collection has improved significantly, particularly for internally displaced people. Second, data on refugees and internally displaced people tend to be cumulative, as many people do not return to their homes. However, recent conflicts – particularly in Iraq, Somalia and Pakistan – seem to confirm the claim that forced displacement is a central methodology of new wars. In Iraq, for example, some 4 million people were displaced at the height of the war in 2006-2008; roughly half were refugees and half were internally displaced. Indeed, it could be argued that one reason for the lower death toll in war is that it is easier to spread fear and panic using new communications, so that more people are fleeing their homes than before. At the same time, there appears to be a trend toward increasing post-conflict displacement. Using data from the American Refugee Council, Myron Weiner (1996) calculated that the number of post-conflict refugees and internally displaced persons increased from 327,000 post-conflict in 1969 to 1,316,000 in 1992 (1992, of course, was the peak year for conflict).

Has globalization given rise to new wars?

In the context of globalization, it is clear that the process of globalization has connected the world, but at the same time, this process has resulted in exclusion and alienation, leading to the emergence of a global class based on the possibility of cooperation in this process (Kaldor 2001, 4). In addition, the acceleration of the globalization process, especially advanced communication and transportation, is very likely to lead to the rapid connection of different communities and supporters at once. Hence, it is very likely that globalization can cause organized violence.

In order to effectively discuss how globalization is likely to usher in a new era of war, it is first necessary to understand the shift in the logic of organized violence from the previous era to the era of globalization. According to the classical term of war, it is war between states and waged by states, in an attempt to achieve state interests by defeating the enemy of the state and acquiring its territory through the use of national forces. On the other hand, today's conflicts, according to new war theories, generally seek to be part of an open world in which the contexts of contemporary politics and economics are influenced by the process of globalization, leading to the erosion of state authority provoked by individual or group interests and greed (Malantowicz 2010, 159). Furthermore, the rapid advancement of communications and technology as part of the globalization process is closely linked to the rise of identity politics in a situation that, in the worst case, could lead to a form of violent ethnic cleansing directed against the civilian population because of its identity (Kaldor 2001, 78).

In defense of the globalization and new wars argument, while it may be the case, as globalization theorists argue, that globalization has not led to

the downfall of the state but to its transformation, it is important to distinguish between the different ways in which states change. Perhaps the most important aspect of the transformation of the state is the changing role of the state in relation to organized violence. On the one hand, the monopoly of violence is eroding from above, as some states are increasingly embedded in a set of international rules and institutions. On the other hand, the monopoly of violence is eroding from below, as other states become weaker under the influence of globalization. It can be argued that there is a major difference between the kind of privatized wars that characterized the premodern period and the “new wars” that have come after the modern period and are about disintegration.

The Post-Clausewitz Debate

The arguments against Clausewitz are rather trivial, and all can be refuted. Hugh Strahan (2007) points out that the trinity refers to “tendencies” or motivations, not empirical categories. The point of the concept is to explain how a complex social organization, composed of many different individuals with very different motivations, can become, in his words, a “personalized state” - a “party” to war. “War,” says Clausewitz, “is therefore not only chameleon-like in character, changing its color to a certain degree in each particular case, but is also, as a whole, in respect of the prevailing tendencies which are in it, a wonderful trinity, composed of the original violence of its elements, hatred and hostility, which may be seen as blind instinct; the play of probabilities and chance, which makes it a free activity of the soul; and of the subordinate nature of a political instrument, which thus belongs to pure reason. These different “tendencies” - reason, chance and emotion - are mainly associated with the state, the generals and the people, respectively, but the word “mainly” or “mostly” suggests that they are not exclusively associated with these different components or levels of warfare. Clausewitz argues that war is what unites the trinity. The trinity was “wonderful” because it made possible the association of the people and the modern state. Obviously, the distinction between state, army and people is blurred in most modern wars. But if we think of the trinity as a concept for explaining how different social and ethical tendencies are united in war, then it is clearly very relevant.

The new wars are also fought for political goals, and indeed war itself can be considered a form of politics. The political narrative of the warring parties is what holds together the dispersed, loose networks of paramilitary groups, regular forces, criminals, mercenaries, and fanatics, representing a wide range of tendencies—economic and/or criminal self-interest, a love of adventure, personal or family vendettas, and even a mere fascination with violence. It is what gives license to these diverse tendencies. Moreover, these political narratives are often constructed through war. Just as Clausewitz describes how patriotism is fueled by war, so these identities are created through fear and hatred, through the polarization of us and them. In other words, war itself is a form of political

mobilization, a way of bringing together, of bringing together the different elements that are organized for war.

Contrary to such criticisms, in defending the post-Clausewitzian position, according to the definition of war as “an act of violence involving two or more organized groups, politically framed”, war can be either a “contest of wills”, as implied in Clausewitz’s definition, or it can be a “mutual undertaking”. The “new wars” tend to be joint undertakings, not contests of wills. The inherent tendency of such wars is not war without limits, but war without end. Wars, defined in this way, create a common self-sustaining interest in war for the reproduction of political identity and for the advancement of economic interests.

Overall, the discourse on “new wars” remains just an example of a trend to criminalize war, by placing it in a field of open moral condemnation.

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