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## IM WESTEN NICHTS NEUES: AN EXAMINATION ON “NEW WARS”

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**JCSP 43**

***Exercise Solo Flight***

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*This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin—war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him.*

- President John F. Kennedy, West Point, June 6, 1962.

## INTRODUCTION

By the end of the Cold War, traditional geopolitical parameters experienced a substantial shift. The United States is the only remaining global super-power and with it, challenges regarding individual security policies changed fundamentally. Since then, the majority of experienced conflicts were conducted locally within state borders<sup>2</sup>, instead of conflicts between the two Blocks – the West and the East or their respective Proxy Wars in Vietnam, Korea etc. Additionally, global terrorism appears to be the most recent and relevant security challenge, especially for industrialized states. Whoever believed at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the dissolution of systemic confrontation<sup>3</sup> resulted in a new, more peaceful era of history of mankind, might have felt disappointed.<sup>4</sup> The decade following the disintegration of the Soviet Union was not only shaped by the split-up of former communist multi-cultural state entities, but by genocides such as in Rwanda or civil wars in Sri Lanka, Congo or even Angola. To understand these particular conflicts, classical explanations were insufficient.<sup>5</sup> This resulted partially in the concept of the so-called “New Wars”, introduced to a wider public by Mary Kaldor in 1999.<sup>6</sup> This allowed the distinction between the reality of contemporary warfare and the “Old Wars” as

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<sup>2</sup> Or within borders of former states.

<sup>3</sup> Socialism/Communism versus Capitalism/Democracy

<sup>4</sup> Most prominent example: “The End of History and the Last Man.” By Francis Fukuyama. In 1992, he anticipated a lasting triumph of democracies after the fall of communism.

<sup>5</sup> Mainly because of changing actors, constellations, alliances and mode of conduct.

<sup>6</sup> Berdal, Mats, “The ‘New Wars’ Thesis Revisited,” In *The Changing Character of War*, ed. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (Oxford: University Press, 2011), 109.

embodiment of the conflict during the Cold War, which was basically a conflict among fundamentally different systems. Furthermore, these “New Wars” described the difference between intra-state conflicts (as mentioned earlier in this text) and inter-state conflicts as the predominant perception of warfare since the end of World War II (WW2). But what is it that makes these wars appear “new” at all? Or is it just a glitch, another appearance of Clausewitz’ “War as a chameleon”?<sup>7</sup> This essay is to argue that “New Wars” are not new at all. Both “Old” and “New” War will be explained by starting with classical warfare and its main attributes, followed by the explanation of the transition after WW2 and the attributes of the modern notion of war. The consecutive part will provide arguments why contemporary warfare could be seen as “New War” – and an appropriate response to that, why one could state the opposite.

## **OLD WARS**

In order to discriminate “Old Wars” from “New Wars”, one has to define both. This will be done by comparing the attributes of the one to the other, given that the definition of war itself is already quite challenging. Most definitions are conceptual and typological classifications that reflect historical context and theoretic alignment of the author.<sup>8</sup> These definitions usually claim validity and are difficult to disprove, thus making it difficult to find a commonly accepted and exhaustive definition of war. Nevertheless, these attempts have two aspects in common (at least one of these). On the one hand, an institutionalized, legal, interstate situation, meaning a legitimate type of conflict among

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<sup>7</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege*. Ed. O. Corff (N.p.: Clausewitz-Gesellschaft, 2010), 17.

<sup>8</sup> A realist has another definition of war than a constructivist, for example.

states and/or their conventional armies following the (or “a”) rule of law.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, war is described as rational exploitation of the military as continuation of politics by other means, and cannot be understood as self purpose at all.<sup>10</sup> Retrospectively spoken, history teaches that the phenomenon “war” is mainly described as conflict among states or state-like entities and their military, especially when reviewing “Eurocentric” history.<sup>11</sup> As Clausewitz states, war is an “extended duel” between belligerents and therefore in conclusion an act of violence.<sup>12</sup>

After the end of the Thirty Years’ War and the Westphalian Treaty of 1648, a system of national states emerged and with it, the use of force (explicitly including warfighting) was monopolized within the sovereign state. Furthermore, national states now were considered as legitimate, sovereign entities on equal footing – resulting in symmetrical warfighting as well.<sup>13</sup> That concluded in standing armies that were meant to fight for their national state and its ideology, its people or just its sovereignty. These armies under a central, governmental control could be understood as nexus of military freedom of action, contrary to historical examples, where the majority of fighting

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to Roscini, Mario, *Cyber Operations and the Use of Force in International Law* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 121.

<sup>10</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege*. Ed. O. Corff (N.p.: Clausewitz-Gesellschaft, 2010), 467. “Der Krieg ist ein Instrument der Politik“

<sup>11</sup> This explicitly includes North America after colonization by European powers.

<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege*. Ed. O. Corff (N.p.: Clausewitz-Gesellschaft, 2010), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Boot, Max. *War Made New* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 74. Boot mentions the necessity of large state entities to keep large armies. Therefore, the changes of the Peace of Westphalia are not only in state-power-relations, but societal and political.

Refer also to Gat, Azar, *War in Human Civilization* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), Chapter 14. Gat describes basically the nation building process and the influence of ideology, taxation, expensive military equipment and the need for military training, resulting in standing armies.

personnel were hired or assembled for a certain war or battle – but not much earlier as a leader waged war.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the Westphalian Treaty led to the development of international law treaties<sup>15</sup> that were meant to regulate warfare, in general, among the signing states/parties.<sup>16</sup> Revolutionary were definitions of wartime and peacetime and the respective laws, and distinct definitions of combatant and non-combatants. Results of these agreements were, for example, military uniforms a means of distinction.

Following the Clausewitzian dictum of war as violent continuation of politics, violence between states was politically driven, meaning the “ultima ratio”<sup>17</sup>, when other means were exhausted.<sup>18</sup> Thus, interstate wars resulted from assertions of political aims in terms of territorial and/or power gains, when diplomatic, economic or other means failed. As such, this result and means of state power is considered legitimate. But even Clausewitz was well aware of war’s changeability and named it “a true chameleon”.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Von Wallenstein as an example. A very successful mercenary leader during the Thirty Years’ War, but not tied to any state or leader, but the catholic church (later). Refer to Boot, Max. *War Made New* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 67-72.

<sup>15</sup> As an institutionalized agreement among national states. I am aware of treaties, such as “Olympic Peace” in ancient Greece and other predecessors of international law that usually were “purpose-bound” and as such, only valid for a short period in time.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Maoz, Zeev and Azar Gat, *War in a Changing World* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>17</sup> I have been told, I have to explain this – this is Latin for last resort.

<sup>18</sup> One might question the honesty of political leaders that consider to go to war and stating that other means have been exhausted.

<sup>19</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege*. Ed. O. Corff (N.p.: Clausewitz-Gesellschaft, 2010), 22.

## NEW WARS

Classical or conventional war appears symmetric, interstate related, follow the rule of “some” law, are structured, and are conducted by sovereign states and their military.<sup>20</sup> Whereas this “definition” might be sufficient to describe wars between nation states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps the Cabinet Wars<sup>21</sup>, it fails to do so within the Post-WW2 era. Since the end of WW2, a steady increase in numbers of war-like conflicts can be registered. While there were approximately twenty conflicts per annum on average in the 1950s, the annual median in the 1990s was 40 and above.<sup>22</sup> The overwhelming majority of these wars/conflicts do not show the interstate attribute according to the Clausewitzian definition, and were conducted domestically – only one state actor imposed violence on other actors. And these conflicts predominantly took place in sub-Saharan Africa and a few Asian regions, mainly originating from three causes: against (former) colonial powers, secession wars of ethnic groups (often the result of former colonial powers imposing arbitrary borders), and mostly left-wing reformation/revolutionary wars targeting the established system.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Choinacki, Sven, *Demokratien und Krieg. Das Konfliktverhalten demokratischer Staaten im internationalen System, 1946-2001* (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, 2003), 6-8.

<sup>21</sup> Meaning the interstate wars of European Monarchies from 1648 until the French Revolution 1789

<sup>22</sup> Refer to Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, “Entwicklung innerstaatlicher Kriege und gewaltsamer Konflikte seit dem Ende des Ost-West Konfliktes” Last accessed 15 May 2017. <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/54520/entwicklung-innerstaatlicher-kriege-seit-dem-ende-des-ost-west-konfliktes>

These statistics are difficult to read and their relevance difficult to measure. However: Trends can be taken out of such charts and certainly serve the argument. This source is a public, governmental source (even though it is German).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Chart 2.

Many of these post-WW2 conflicts became proxy-wars during the Cold War and both super-powers supported one or the other conflict party financially or militarily. This external support often led to deepening or tightening of these conflicts.<sup>24</sup>

### **TRANSITION (OF WAR)**

As the numbers of conflicts after the Cold War increased (contrary to many people's expectations), records show that only a few of these conflicts were related to nation building.<sup>25</sup> By that time, classic decolonization-type wars disappeared completely and emphasis was more on changes of leadership and control of resources than changes in policy, ideology or actual patronal structures.

The origin of the term "New Wars" found its way to a wider public in particular after the Cold War. Martin van Creveld, an Israeli historian, noted in 1991 that the definition of war as conflict among states was already dated and suggested the term "low intensity wars" to symbolize the change in warfare, whereas other authors suggested terms such as "small wars" or "wars of the third kind" alike.<sup>26</sup> "New Wars" can be found in Mary Kaldor's empirical studies on the civil war in former Yugoslavia, while Herfried Münkler evolved his works from Kaldor's theses by discussing and modifying them.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Refer to Neiberg, Michael S., *Warfare in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2001),89-92.

<sup>25</sup> Refer to Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Entwicklung innerstaatlicher Kriege und gewaltsamer Konflikte seit dem Ende des Ost-West Konfliktes" Last accessed 15 May 2017. <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/54520/entwicklung-innerstaatlicher-kriege-seit-dem-ende-des-ost-west-konfliktes>

<sup>26</sup> Notably Edward E. Rice. Wars of the third kind means neither conventional, nor nuclear, but guerilla warfare.

<sup>27</sup> Refer to Berdal, Mats, "The 'New Wars' Thesis Revisited," In *The Changing Character of War*, ed. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers, 109-133 (Oxford: University Press, 2011). This chapter deals completely with – and among others – Kaldor and Münkler.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW WARS

Causes of “New Wars” can essentially be described as: 1. asymmetric constellation of actors, 2. state decay, privatization and denationalization of violence, 3. economization, criminalization and trans-nationalization and 4. brutalization of warfare.<sup>28</sup> The following part will discuss these attributes in order to analyze whether or not these “new” particularities are truly new to justify a “new notion” of war.

### Asymmetric constellation of actors

Several authors mention an essential part of “New Wars” being the asymmetric conduct of war/conflict, such as a state against insurgents, contrary to the traditional or classical warfare mentioned earlier. This is about showing inequality of the actors, their strategies, methods, potentials and resources. Furthermore, these actors incorporate a fundamentally different status in international law, and these attributes conclude in diametrically different tactics. Contemporary research on this topic received wide public attention in the Western World since 9/11, however, it is far from being new, as the introductory quote of president Kennedy from 1962 suggests.<sup>29</sup> In fact, different statuses in international law automatically lead to an asymmetric constellation of actors. As this is already subject to quite some research and has been addressed by several prominent decision makers, “New War” cannot be considered *new* at all, at least in a matter of time.

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<sup>28</sup> Refer to Münkler, Herfried, “Die neuen Kriege“, in *Die neuen Kriege. Der Bürger im Staat, 54 Jg., Heft 4* (Stuttgart: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 179. Refer also to Matthies, Volker, *ibid.*, 186. While Münkler processed these new wars in own publications prior to this journal, some academics built on that.

<sup>29</sup> See first page.

But these former asymmetric wars, stemming from proxy conflicts of the super-powers<sup>30</sup>, could be considered as different from contemporary, asymmetric wars. External support was ceased and thus potentials, resources and methods are different from the former asymmetric conflicts. As these conflicts take place in areas where the state and its military have fallen apart or are falling apart (and legitimacy with it), one could conclude that therefore these conflicts are not even *that* asymmetric anymore, as for example in Somalia any party hardly gains the upper hand.<sup>31</sup> The failed state in itself appears as the great equalizer of warring parties.

In conclusion, asymmetric conflicts are not new, but it has to be asked whether or not some of the so-called asymmetric, domestic conflicts are still asymmetric. The assumption that contemporary wars, as they are in their majority domestic and usually consist of a state and non-state party, are the “New War” and so the “New Normal”, whereas the so-called classic, interstate war is the phase-out model, has at least to be questioned.

### **State decay, privatization and denationalization of violence**

The legitimate monopoly on the use of force is understood as one of the factors that define a state.<sup>32</sup> The monopolized, legitimized use of force in the domestic is thereby the state’s “inner sovereignty”.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the state has to ensure security (inter- and

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<sup>30</sup> Referring again to the initial quote that addressed the Vietnam War that undoubtedly was a proxy war.

<sup>31</sup> A simple google search delivers remarkable results. Asking the question “who has the upper hand in Somalia” delivers on the first page quite contrary answers 1. Islam has the upper hand, 2. Insurgents are getting the upper hand, 8. Ethiopia intervened and gains the upper hand, 10. Clan gets the upper hand.

<sup>32</sup> Alongside a defined state territory/borders and a permanent population. Refer, for example, to <https://www.globalpolicy.org/nations-a-states/what-is-a-state.html>

<sup>33</sup> Refer to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty#Internal>

intrastate) as part of political goods a state has to provide.<sup>34</sup> Rotberg suggests a performance table that divides states that experience “New Wars” in either weak, failing, failed or collapsed condition, in order to measure the erosion of the force monopoly of a state and with it the probability of internal conflicts.<sup>35</sup> In many of the ‘weaker state cases’, state control is operated solely in a small area in or around the capital. The resulting power vacuum is likely to be filled by (violent) non-governmental actors, such as warlords, militias, smugglers and other criminals, who build their own, quasi-governmental structures. This results in further privatization of the use of force, and former governmental sources of income, power, and responsibilities alike. Privatization can be divided into “from below” and “from above”<sup>36</sup> whereas the former adheres to non-governmental actors, such as warlords or corporations, that exploit granted freedom on manoeuvre by a state, the latter describes governmental-driven relocation of responsibilities from the state towards non-governmental agencies. Wulf mentions as an example Private Military and Security Companies (PMSC)<sup>37</sup> that provided the second largest contingent of military personnel in Iraq.<sup>38</sup> The result of this procedure is the withdrawal of governmental obligations from public/democratic supervision. These non-state actors operate autonomously and generally independent from each other, thus decentralized and sometimes even uncoordinated. Having 320+ different non-state PMSCs in Iraq in mind that (co-)operate with regular, allied troops more or less

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<sup>34</sup> Rotberg, Robert I., *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror* (Washington D.C.: Bookings Institution Press, 2003), 2-3. Other, “positive” goods: healthcare, education etc.

<sup>35</sup> Rather dated table, but he mentions (in 2003) Angola, Liberia and Sierra-Leone as weak states.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to Shaw, Martin, “The contemporary mode of warfare? Mary Kaldor’s theory of new wars.” *Review of International Political Economy. Vol.7, Issue 1* (2000): 171-180.  
<http://users.sussex.ac.uk/~hafa3/kaldor.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Such as Academi/former Blackwater, Triple Canopy and alike.

<sup>38</sup> Information from this documentation: Inside Blackwater: Iraq's Most Controversial Private Military Contractor - Full Documentary. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDODC0mgQ68&>

effectively without direct governmental control demonstrate the scale of this phenomenon.<sup>39</sup>

Recent developments in global history make it impossible to deny a wide spectrum and diversity of actors. Even a higher, political involvement of these actors can easily be spotted, be it an organization that calls itself “Islamic State”, independence movements in South-Sudan or border crossing terrorist organizations that just want to destabilize a region. To assume a correlation between failing/failed states and the rise of terrorist organizations implies that there was a control before that. And this is not the case for many areas that currently have security issues like rising “state” threatening terrorism etc.<sup>40</sup> Non-governed spaces always existed, in particular outside of Europe. It could be assumed that the European focus on European issues hid non-state conflicts outside of Europe in the past.

The thesis on state decay, denationalization and privatization faces limitations, once one takes into consideration that the decolonization wars after WW2 by far were not fought by state actors alone. In fact, many conflict actors after 1945 barely matched the criteria for a state.<sup>41</sup> While it appears that currently more of these actors take action and have to be dealt with, the phenomenon itself is also not new. The types of protagonists of these conflicts existed centuries or even millennia ago; warlords were around in ancient

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<sup>39</sup> With all resulting implications of commercialization and privatization of security with its own ethic and moral (not to mention: legal!) questions. This topic is far too broad to be discussed in this essay and was part of DSS568 before. Just one more addition: Even PMSCs are not new at all; in a contemporary sense, these companies have been deployed in Bosnia (80+) and the roots of “paid securitization agencies” is by far older than most nation states of today.

<sup>40</sup> Refer to Matthies, Volker “Eine Welt voller neuer Kriege?“, in *Die neuen Kriege. Der Bürger im Staat*, 54 Jg., Heft 4 (Stuttgart: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 186.

<sup>41</sup> Schlichte, Klaus, “Neue Kriege oder alte Thesen? Wirklichkeit und Repräsentation kriegerischer Gewalt in der Politikwissenschaft.” In *Den Krieg überdenken*, ed. Anna Greis (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006), 114 (German). Schlichte combines several academic research in his list that prove this thesis statement.

China and mercenaries are as old as war itself.<sup>42</sup> In conclusion, few aspects of this paragraph appear new, as these have been around before, but might not have been recognized in this peculiarity.

### **Economization, criminalization and trans-nationalization of warfare**

Probably the most prominent attribute of the “New Wars” might be that these increasingly became the continuation of “economics by other means.”<sup>43</sup> While waging war for wealth, power and influence is not new at all; the non-governmental and directly economical driven use of force is. On an increasing scale, “New Wars” serve directly economic purposes, meaning the shift from primarily ideologically/politically driven wars to openly and solely economical pursuits. Thus, these wars conduce private equity and accumulation of wealth.<sup>44</sup> This focus has an impact on the conduct, procedures and characteristics of warfare; “New Wars” become merely focused on economic reproduction and relativize/substitute political aims. A wartime economy has become an end in itself and is no supportive means for ideologically-driven wars anymore. A further causation could be the extended duration of war, as it is no longer desirable to end this conflict swiftly, but continue fighting on a profitable level.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Back to the introduction that standing armies emerged on a large scale with the nation state. Prominent examples can be found throughout history; von Wallenstein in the Thirty Years’ War, the American Civil War, the French Foreign Legion... I am aware that there is a very narrow definition of what is a mercenary and what is not. But it is around for only 40 years, so rather young.

<sup>43</sup> Taken from <http://fpif.org/economics-means-war-poverty-conflict-minerals-africa/>, but certainly inspired by Clausewitz.

<sup>44</sup> Gat, Azar, “The Changing Character of War.” In *The Changing Character of War*, ed. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (Oxford: University Press, 2011), 29.

<sup>45</sup> This could be the case for producers of military equipment and PMSCs alike. Joseph Schmidt, a Blackwater official, speaks openly in a documentary from 2006/2007 about possibilities of governments pulling back from some military engagement abroad and leaving it to PMSCs. Technically a withdrawal forces without withdrawal of footprint. Inside Blackwater: Iraq's Most Controversial Private Military Contractor - Full Documentary; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDODC0mgQ68&>; Time: 39:17

Beginning and end of “New Wars” are hard to define. These conflicts usually have pre-war phases with acts of war, and chaotic/anarchic post-war phases that are hardly to define. As these non-governmental conflict participants lack taxation etc., they are tied to other methods of internal<sup>46</sup> income, such as exploitation of all available resources<sup>47</sup>, scavenging, protection money and often the heist of humanitarian aid etc. With regards to external income, several changes have been experienced with the end of the Cold War.<sup>48</sup> External sources of income disappeared for developing countries alongside the bipolar order of the world, as proxy conflicts ended with it. In addition to the power vacuum mentioned earlier, a financial vacuum occurred that has been filled by transnational corporations/organizations and other actors.<sup>49</sup> These actors have their own aims and reasoning to conduct warfare, often in combination with the prolongation of wartime economy, either to conduct blunt “wartime-business” (selling weapons) or to conduct their business unharmed (drugs, piracy). Another source of income are diasporas abroad that in many cases account for large amounts of money in both non-criminal and criminal organizations in respective countries.<sup>50</sup>

The mere fact that belligerents gain money by waging war, is neither new nor surprising. Historical examples are German *Landsknechts*, privateers/pirates for Britain/Spain/Netherlands or the *Condottieri* in the Renaissance to name a few.<sup>51</sup> Rather

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<sup>46</sup> Contrary to “external” finance, meaning money that is spend by foreign institutions, donors etc.

<sup>47</sup> Including refugee camps, prostitution, child soldiers, rape, drugs. To some extent, these criminal organizations are far closer to total war than most Western countries ever were.

<sup>48</sup> Refer to <http://fpif.org/economics-means-war-poverty-conflict-minerals-africa/> Last accessed 15 May 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Notably China as new actor in Africa and other Asian countries. Refer to e.g. Alden, Chris, *China in Africa* (London: Zed Books Ltd.: 2007)., 5-7.

<sup>50</sup> Such as the Somali or Armenian diaspora in Canada or the US, the Turkish diaspora in Germany, the Russian diaspora in Ukraine.

<sup>51</sup> Refer to Gat, Azar, *War in Human Civilization* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 473.

new are the so-called *markets of violence*<sup>52</sup>, describing criminal acts, such as drugs- and weapons trade, and blackmailing as means to finance the own quasi-governmental organization. This incorporates both the idea that these organizations might not be interested in actually finishing a conflict and also that these actors act globally, as drug and weapons trade are difficult to conduct solely locally, if such an organization wants to make “big money.” Moreover, the global diasporas, such as the Tamils and the Somalis, get targeted by these actors. There is usually both a network and often even cash flow between these organizations and the particular diaspora. There are only few records on this in earlier, classic conflicts, but this might be the case because: 1. of the contemporary interconnected world, and 2. there are today actually huge diasporas outside several countries; probably (in that scale) a rather new phenomenon.<sup>53</sup>

Some authors argue that the prolongation of rather low-intensity conflicts is a new aspect that underlines the economically driven side of these. This explicitly includes lower casualty rates, just enough to keep wartime economy going.<sup>54</sup> This might be too narrowly considered, as the use of force is about improving one’s own negotiation position and might also derive from the application of *Smart Power*, in Joseph Nye’s notion. It might also lack of consideration of fractioning of the parties or interference with governmental institutions. And this still delivers no sufficient answer, if economic

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<sup>52</sup> Elwert, Georg, *Gewaltmärkte*. (German, tl: Markets of violence), last accessed 15 May 2017 <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.537.3680&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, *Diskussionspapier: Beitrag der Diasporas zu Konfliktminderung und Konfliktlösung in den Herkunftsländern* (Eschborn: GTZ, 2009), 5. <https://www.giz.de/fachexpertise/downloads/gtz2009-de-diaspora-konfliktminderung.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Refer to Dülfer, Jost, *Alte und neue Kriege. Gewaltkonflikte und Völkerrecht seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2016. Last accessed 15 May 2017. <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/232960/alte-und-neue-kriege?p=all>

considerations are the driver or just a by-product of these conflicts.<sup>55</sup> In case of the by-product, the economic side of these conflicts would not be new, only in a few aspects, as the incorporation of wartime economics in the overall construct. Insofar as this is valid, the de-politicization does not necessarily take place in “New Wars”, just the networking capabilities of the participants.

In summary, the growing trans-nationalization of markets, networks and communication structures tends to decentralize and fragment society as a whole. That affects non-governmental organizations, as these have to deal with that fragmented and global society and their markets as well. So, there are some new aspects in the whole debate, but arguably hardly enough to justify the term “New War”.

### **Brutalization of warfare**

Fundamental changes in the application of force are another attribute of “New Wars”; an attribute where the rule of law and acceptance of borders do not count anymore. Even more, the distinction between combatant and non-combatant is not possible anymore, a fact that leads to more open violence against vulnerable groups, such as civilians and prisoners.<sup>56</sup> The results are blurring meanings of warzone, population, homeland, war, and peace and deriving from that more use of force against combatants and non-combatants alike.<sup>57</sup> Statistics support these theses, as Münkler compares correlation between civilian and soldier casualties throughout the centuries and while a

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<sup>55</sup> Matthies, Volker “Eine Welt voller neuer Kriege?“, in *Die neuen Kriege. Der Bürger im Staat*, 54 Jg., Heft 4 (Stuttgart: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 187.

<sup>56</sup> Refer to Dülfer, Jost, *Alte und neue Kriege. Gewaltkonflikte und Völkerrecht seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2016. Last accessed 15 May 2017. <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/232960/alte-und-neue-kriege?p=all>

<sup>57</sup> Boot, Max. *War Made New* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 472-473.



relation of eight soldiers, one civilian used to be common at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the relation turned the other way by the late 1990s.<sup>58</sup> Even worse is the “normalized” anarchic use of violent means against civilians, resulting in torture, rape and murder with archaic weapons, appearing to be the “new normal” rather than the horrifying exception.

Are these atrocities new at all? A short glance at history reveals many conflicts, like European Colonial War on Africa, German execution squads in WW2, Algeria, and many more. When Matthies stated “There have always been dirty wars!”<sup>59</sup> it appeared as though he was right. Regarding the conduct of war, there seem to be only few relevant differences.

The problem with Munker’s 8:1 statistic is that it is barely comparable and other researchers tend to bring up different numbers. However, one could argue that the perception of war in terms of brutalization etc., still do not justify calling this contemporary war a real “New War”. It seems to be tied to one’s own perception of war.

## CONCLUSION

Are “New Wars” really new? Or did the chameleon just change its colour? At the end of the day, “New Wars” are not entirely new, even though some want to believe that as it is different from the global memory and probably influenced by Hollywood’s

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<sup>58</sup> Berdal, Mats, “The ‘New Wars’ Thesis Revisited,” In *The Changing Character of War*, ed. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (Oxford: University Press, 2011), 114.

<sup>59</sup> Matthies, Volker “Eine Welt voller neuer Kriege?“, in *Die neuen Kriege. Der Bürger im Staat*, 54 Jg., Heft 4 (Stuttgart: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 187. Translation from German: “Schmutzige Kriege gab es schon immer.”

portrayals of WW2.<sup>60</sup> That being said, a short review of history is often enough to note that there is not much new about contemporary, asymmetric or “new” war. The ideal war, where every belligerent is fair and sticks to treaties has been long gone – or will never appear. Maybe it is because of a generally lesser acceptance of death and casualties as a society that we tend to have a different perception of warfare. This could make war appear differently and *this* is, what some try to explain by mentioning a whole new type of warfare.

Fact seems to be that if a state is about going to war, this state will take all necessary action to achieve its goal. It can only be that way, because: if you do not intend to go full spectrum, why would you consider going to war at all? In summary: “New Wars” are not *new*. There are far too many things that can be learned from history and essentially have been experienced before.

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<sup>60</sup> Refer to Falk, Barbara J. and Paul T. Mitchell, “The last good war?: The lingering impact of World War II epistemology and ontology in conflict and popular culture” in *Critical Studies on Security*, 2015 Vol. 3, No. 3, 290–296. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2015.1123953> (Accessed April 2017)

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