

CONVENTIONAL AND MODERN WARFARE: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: In the pursuit of a peaceful and secure life, human beings strive to avoid the threat of danger. However, the reality is often marred by disputes, with war being a significant factor that disrupts peace. This paper delves into the distinctions between old and modern models of warfare. Employing a qualitative approach, the study explores relevant literature written by experts on the subject. The research findings reveal compelling differences between old and new wars in terms of their objectives, methods of warfare, and financial backing. Historically, old wars predominantly involved state-to-state conflicts, with state financiers playing a dominant role. In contrast, modern wars encompass diverse players and garner financial support from global sources. Furthermore, new and old wars differ in their target victims, motives, and approaches. These disparities necessitate a corresponding shift in the way these conflicts are addressed and resolved by negotiators worldwide. Understanding the complexities and nuances of modern warfare is crucial to fostering effective strategies for peace building and conflict resolution on a global scale. By examining the transformation of warfare over time, this study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of contemporary security challenges and the importance of adapting conflict management approaches accordingly.

Keywords: warfare, old, modern, state-to-state conflicts, negotiators

Field: Security

1. INTRODUCTION

Flemming (2009) and Clausewitz (1984) define war as 'a continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means.' Gaining a profound comprehension of the nature of war is not only central to policy making but also international relations. In fact, among the primary goals of the policymakers is to comprehend the trends of war, and subsequently formulate effective policies for preventing the conflicts, crafting a resolution framework or reconciliation. It is on such grounds that theorizing about the dynamics, trends, causes and implications of violent conflict has become a major occupation for both policymakers and scholars. In the recent past, scholars have embarked on examining and understanding of armed conflicts, especially the civil war through a postulation that the trends in current wars qualitatively differ from those of the old wars. Kaldor (2012) hypothesizes that "the new wars can be contrasted with earlier wars in terms of their goals, the methods of warfare and how they are financed." Hordes of concerned parties continue to acknowledge the change in the warfare trends, with an equal proportion denying the shift; thus, charging the debate further. In the course of the contention, Mary Kaldor, the owner of the idea, defined and outlined features of new wars (Kaldor, 2012). Dillon (2013) describes new wars as the violent conflicts that occurred after the World War II while the term 'old wars' imply the traditional warfare which comprised two uniformed armies engaging each other in combat especially in interstate conflicts, with the state being the major financier of the warfare.

The individual characteristics of the 'new wars' are the ones that define the differences between the new wars and the old conflicts. On the overall, new wars feature conflicts between a wide spectrum of non-state and state players, fighting that lies on identity politics rather than ideology. Besides, new wars involve tendencies to attain political, as opposed to physical, manipulation of the population through mechanisms involving terror and fear, and conflict is not only financed by the state, but other interested parties that gain from the ongoing violence. Kaldor (2013) adds other descriptive terms for the new wars including wars among the people, wars of the third kind, hybrid wars, privatized wars, and post-modern wars.

2. CHARACTER OF CONVENTIONAL AND MODERN WARS

There are other definitive features of new wars, including the perpetuation of ethnic divisions, exacerbation of state disintegration, and the conflicts target nonuniformed civilians instead of two warring uniformed combatants. In this logical line, the Sierra Leone war qualifies as a new war. Contextually, the

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Revolutionary United Front RUF intended to delegitimize the leadership, and never fought for territory, but the consideration as a legit political opposition. Borrowing from the movie 'Blood Diamond' one gets an overview of the techniques incorporated during the war. Dillon (2013) notes tactics such as amputation, mental, and physical abuse among other terror tactics. On one side, the RUF represented the non-uniformed party in the conflict, with the government representing the uniformed party. The RUF mostly targeted the civilians, not a national army, with a view to attracting the attention of the government. On that note, it suffices to say that "during the last decades of the twentieth century, a new type of organized violence developed;" thus, the contemporary warfare qualitatively differs from old conflict (Kaldor, 2012).

According to Mary Kaldor, globalization is the chief cause of change in warfare. She notes that "the process known as globalization are breaking up the cultural and socioeconomic divisions that defined the patterns of politics, which characterized the modern period (Kaldor, 2012). Since the effects of globalization on the socio-cultural fabrics result in identity conflicts, the idea of new wars should be comprehended with respect to identity politics. Following this line of thought, the first difference between old and new wars holds that new wars are based on identity politics rather than ideology as in the case of old wars. The former seeks to give power to a group, whereas the latter applies power as the primary instrument of implementation of an ideological framework. However, Berdal (2003) and Malesovic (2010) do not seem to agree that differentiating the two conflicts based on identity and ideology is valid. The duo argues that it is often possible and easy to instrumentalize both identity and ideology to meet both the economic and geopolitical ends of the warring parties. From their standpoint, the unwavering quest of the groups to reassert their power, gain acceptance, affirm their identity, and exhibit their influence becomes the primary cause of conflict and replaces geopolitical interests and ideological conflicts. Furthermore, identity is not an exclusive feature of the New War.

Identity, since the beginning of time, has been a major cause of conflicts, for example, during the 5th century in the BC Greco-Persian conflicts or the Renaissance Italian Wars. Besides, New Wars cannot be solely restricted to politics of identity. Mary Kaldor provides the Iraqi war as an illustration of conflicts that stem from identity politics, especially in the sphere of ethnic and religious conflicts between the Shia and the Sunni which also involved a direct involvement of the population who faced mass displacement and innumerable casualties. The preceding demonstration proves that it is almost impossible to describe a conflict as purely a product of identity battle, which partially invalidates Kaldor's stance. However, it is noteworthy that despite the variety in the causes of the modern wars, identity plays a major part, if not being the lone player in the breakout of war.

Unlike the old wars, the New Wars involve entirely different players whose approaches culminate into the privatization of violence. The modern conflicts have ceased being a preserve of the national armies as the primary protagonists. They have brought on board a wide spectrum of insurgency groups, ethnic parties, criminal gangs, international organizations and mercenaries, and diaspora groups (Newman, 2004). It is the great diversity of the players and the resulting confusion that has led even the disciplined state soldiers to take part in the wars behind the scene to meet their personal ends. In this respect, warlords have been crowned and are revered among their circles in addition to being charged with the responsibility of controlling the conflict landscape in a manner that it benefits all the responsible parties. Duffield (2001) and Kalyvas (2001) define warlords as the armed warriors who apply massive force in battles to maintain control over the unlawful war economy as well as the contentious areas and territories.

Given the variety of approaches, it becomes more challenging to distinguish between the legitimate arms bearers, warlords, and paramilitary groups (Kaldor, 2012). There is an incessant rise in the power and proportion of groups rebelling against the authorities either for their selfish reasons or as a result of the failure of the current administration and the quest for a liberation or revolution. Administrative failures which bear the variety of armed factions include economic decline, impunity, low employment rates, and legitimacy of the current authority. The growing criminal opportunities and the lucrateness of crime also result in criminal factions with different aims.

The characters and the individual interests of the players in the modern warfare primarily determine the approaches to the conflicts. As opposed to the old wars, new wars feature guerilla warfare (Kaldor, 2012). The guerilla approach to warfare has developed over time due to the need to avoid the intense concentration of armed or uniformed forces which chiefly characterize the old conflicts. Kalyvas adds that guerilla warfare allows the outlawed sects to spread around a region and retain a high probability of success (Kalyvas, 2001). In the old wars, troops mostly concentrated around a region that gave the opposite side an advantage of massively destroying their opponents in a single blow once they accurately determined their location. Guerilla warfare incorporates several players, including teenage hooligans and soldiers as well as marginalized soldiers who are intent on carrying out revenge on the government. The approach depicts a move away from the normative techniques of warfare since the global conflicts often

feature a variety of battlegrounds where the legitimate soldiers and uniformed armies converge for a face-off. A

typical example of guerilla warfare is the ongoing conflict between the Boko Haram and the Nigeria government. According to Morgan (2015), the Boko Haram reside in the Sambisa forest from where they plan their attacks and run their welfares. The government has strived to get the group out of the Sambisa forest, but the fact that they are scattered throughout the forest, as common in guerilla warfare, makes it difficult for the uniformed state armies to penetrate, ambush and devastate their residence. Similarly, technological advancement in the New wars indicates a wide gap in the approach compared to the old wars.

The particular type of arsenal employed in any modern conflict is a direct reflection of the nature of the combatants. Belligerents like the Boko Haram may not necessarily possess highly sophisticated weapons given their restricted access unless they are sponsored by certain state mercenaries- which is entirely possible given the nature of the current warfare landscape. In most cases, they depend on the black market as well as the lucrative market of the arms business. While some of these weapons may be overly sophisticated and can cause massive destruction, the undefined control of weapons within the modern warfare leadership hierarchies means that the weapons are available even to the child soldiers. In this sense, the usage is not only considerate, but there is an extremely high possibility of damning destructions or complete annihilation of certain settlements and populations.

3. TARGETS OF MODERN WARFARE

In the same vein, modern warfare targets a different crop of victims. Unlike in the old days, the contemporary warfare mostly targets the civilians as the easiest means of getting the attention of the government. It is noted that the primary objective of the combatants is not to win the war, but to prolong the violence and hold states at ransom until their needs are met, thus, the violence has shifted away from the military forces to the innocent civilians to attract and international recognition and attention. The recognition assists them in championing for their quests through the involvement of the major global participants including the human rights bodies.

The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) notes an increasingly worrying trend in the contemporary civil wars where one side of the warring parties deliberately targets innocent civilians with statistics projecting that 90 percent of the deaths and casualties in the modern warfare being civilians and noncombatants (ICISS, 2004). This indicates a massive rise from the 15 percent at the beginning of the century (Chesterman, 2001; Münkler, 2005; Newman, 2004). Apparently, the incorporation of child soldiers, sexual violence, the annihilation of social groups, and forced displacement continue to insignia conflicts and usher in a new era of warfare that entirely differs from the old epoch. Examples of warfare that illustrate this difference include the violent confrontations in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. In all the cases, the belligerents, instead of fighting their kind, they mercilessly and brutally murdered civilians so as to provoke the government and military action. The focus on civilians has led to the death of more than 21 million civilians, with 67 million others being displaced since the year 1945 (Collier et.al, 2005).

4. THE ECONOMY OF MODERN WARFARE

Lastly, the general economy of war has greatly changed. In the old days, the economy of war used to be autarchic and centralized, with large masses of people marshaled to participate in the war to increase chances of success. That is far away from the truth in the context of New Wars, where the economy is largely decentralized, financial sources fragmented, and the level of public participation has significantly declined (Chojnacki, 2006). A contextual examination of the new wars economy mainly focuses on resources. Reyna maintains that most of the new wars spring from the need of the various parties to control particular natural resources (Reyna, 2009).

In the Sierra Leone war, for instance, diamonds were the primary natural resources under contention. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) partially monopolized the diamonds trade, and their goal to own its monopoly fully was the major fuel behind the rife battle. Their partial control of the trade gave them the requisite financial muscle to continue with the war. Resources are also one of the chief justifications for the growing discussion of the new wars concept at a global level. Cross-border players always take part in the trade and control efforts of the resources under contention. The availability of crime sector cartels, most of them international players, in the contemporary world has ensured that national conflicts benefit

from international and cross-border support on various spheres such as financial. Dillon adds that this form of conspiracy has, for instance, enabled multinational corporations dealing with natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C) to facilitate their illegal mining activities with the help of the local violent groups (Dillon, 2006). In retrospect, the role of resources, as part of the war economy, combines with other characteristics to classify the war as a new war.

The other characteristics also define the new war economy and set it apart from the economy of the old wars. The first feature of the new war economy is the privatization of military forces (Wolfendale, 2011). The 'failed states' are gradually losing the monopoly of war as was with the old wars, thus, correspondingly reducing their ability to strengthen the national social bonds and collect taxes. The situation has resulted in a concurrent privatization of conflicts and violence. Similarly, a different pattern has been witnessed in the war economy. The new wars borrow heavily from counterinsurgency and revolutionary warfare as was apparent in the case of Sierra Leone and the contemporary Somalia and South Sudan.

The resultant warfare entails territorial control through hatred and fear, which climax into an inconsiderate victimization of the civilian population. Likewise, new wars draw funding from various sources, including group projects and international financiers who project to gain from the chaos. On that ground, Hoffman claims that new wars are challenging to stop, except with thorough democratic negotiations and agreements which consider the underpinning economic and social connections (Hoffman, 2007). Finally, the nature of the economy of new wars has a deeply entrenched propensity to spread and bring in more regional and international actors for the purpose of ameliorating the war economy. These overt characteristics of the incessantly changing war economy landscape have been witnessed in almost all the modern-day conflicts.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, albeit contentious, Mary Kaldor's new war theory is valid on many fronts. First, it has been proven that "the new wars can be contrasted with earlier wars in terms of their goals, the methods of warfare and how they are financed." The old wars were mostly actions of the state against another state; thus, state financiers dominated the scene. The situation shows a great contrast with the current trend of wars that not only incorporate a variety of players, but also financiers from across the globe. Other aspects like target victims, motives, and approaches also differ between new and old wars. As a result, there should be a corresponding shift in the mode in which these conflicts are addressed and tackled by the negotiators from all over the world.

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