

War and Politics: The Future of Strategy in the World

Hayriye KORKMAZ

Lund University Department of Political Science

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Introduction

Thomas Hobbes wrote in *The Leviathan* that man is naturally competitive. This is one of the ‘principal causes of quarrel’¹. Men compete for territory, resources and social reproductive needs to maintain the bests of the survival sources.² However, limited resources lead to great struggles between powers and it becomes a winning or losing game in the end. From this simple point of view, war can be seen as inevitable from antiquity because of reflections of human nature over why we make war.

According to Realism and Social Darwinism, war is not only a metaphor of the world, it is closely related to the state, nation, and even the international arena. For instance, Moltke, a mid-nineteenth century Realist, respected war as the ‘honour of a state’³ in order to explain the continued existence of it in international sphere. Bernhardt, a Social Darwinist reduced it all to a struggle which ‘guides the external development of societies, nations, and races’⁴. In other words, political life and social life are both struggles and war is a struggle for survival.

In the modern period, nationalism has come into prominence under the influence of above mentioned ideologies. Thus, nations have become top political authorities which keep control of the monopoly of violence. In keeping control of the monopoly of violence, nation-states are still substantial actors in the international arena and state interest has been perceived in terms of the phenomenon of the war under the nation-state-centered perspective.

War has also been seen as the last resort when all diplomatic ways have failed in the international arena. In this sense, war is actually not independent and different from early or later political processes. War is the continuation of politics as a last political means of states. However, non-state actors have been becoming more visible and this visibility affects the nature and aim of warfare with the growing effects of globalization and technological development. So, the phenomenon of war has gone beyond the traditional understanding in today’s contemporary thinking.

In light of the above mentioned overview, how are wars conducted in the current (global) security environment? How should we approach the current conflict environment? Simply the nature of human beings, the interests of the state and effects of non-state actors can be considered causes of war in terms of the evolution of war. What about the impacts of the idea of ‘world community’ to its evolution in today’s world conjuncture? If the evolution of war can be shown, will future strategies be clearer? Can the traditional views on the conducts of war remain valid today in spite of changes? Or do they affect new paradigms?

¹ Christopher Coker, *Barbarous Philosophers: Reflections on the Nature of War from Heraclitus to Heisenberg*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 153.

² Ibid, p. 153-155.

³ Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 123.

⁴ Ibid, p. 127.

Even if there are many questions about the evolving process, the main question is basically on the topic of the conducts of war. This study will ask what the future of strategy is by applying the traditional and current understandings about the evolution of war and world political order.

Limitations and Methodology

To begin with, this paper has been motivated by Beatrice Heuser's book *Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*. Beatrice Heuser took the path of defining the relationship between political aims and using force with the concept of 'strategy'. These kinds of definitions question the relationships between the changing nature of world political order and the changing nature of war in this study.

Heuser stated two dimensions of war. The dimensions are war "as an instrument of politics"⁵ and "as a function of multiple interdependent variables"⁶. In order to analyze the relationship between war and politics, many scholars apply the Clausewitzian idea, as Heuser does, which is basically taken from the statement that "war is an act of policy". Further, Clausewitz defines war as "an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" and also indicates that force can be used as a tool for political aims during wartime. For centuries, the Clausewitzian understanding has been questioned and developed by so many different perspectives. However, it is not necessary to mention all views about the link between war and politics in the historical process.

Although answering the question using the historical context is difficult and unnecessary in this scope, this study will try to solve the question with a simple division of terms. The terms will not include a strict historical border. Instead, I will try to simplify the literature on the topic (the relationship between war and politics) and the different kinds of divisions of the progress of war. With this simple division, the future of strategy is able to be guessed by looking at the retrospective analysis of strategy.

The second dimension Heuser uses mostly related to people, society, social institutions and culture. Firstly, the dimension focuses on the Clausewitzian trinity of hatred, chance and reason. Clausewitz emphasizes that the passions of people lead to more violent war because they feel like a unit. War can be seen as some kind of game which involves chance depending on the morale of the troops. Reason is used by governments to start wars. Besides that, the dimension indicates the material, social and political factors of wars which are interconnected between them. These factors can be helped us to understand influences of changing nature of warfare. For example material factors clarify the effects of technology, geography and so on. In this sense, Clausewitz stated "every age has its own way of warfare". The important point is to address that this dimension can provide an analysis of war and the evolving process of war more deeply. It needs to be examined by looking at more specific war examples.

⁵ Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

⁶ Beatrice Heuser, p 18.

However, this paper is related more to the links war and politics rather than the social, cultural or philosophical aspects of war.

Finally, another motivation to note is that war is more akin to politics and focused on creating and maintaining good order than it is in defeating enemies using contemporary strategic thinking. If war has been becoming more related to politics or political aims what kind of strategy will there be in the future? What will happen to clashing interests?

The Concept of “Strategy”

Which sounds more meaningful the evolution of war or the evolution of strategy? This question is important because of the effects of politics on wars. In order to differentiate, Heuser used the term strategy with a capital S when she refers to the links between war and politics. When referring to the actual world ‘strategy’ she does not use a Capital S.

War was not associated with the relationships between states, the world order, political aims and norms of conduct from Machiavelli to Clausewitz.⁷ Before, there was a debate between the strategy focused on the art of war or the science of war. The concept was defined as ‘practical experience’ or ‘theoretical reflections before being applied in war’ as answers to the debate.⁸ However, the link between using force and policy-making was formulated before World War I. Heuser stated Wilkinson’s explanations in advance.

‘A policy is national action directed to an end or purpose. The object set up must be one that the nation values and appreciates, or else the Government will have no support in its efforts to attain it. And the means must be suitable to the end.’⁹

Before Second World War II, the meaning of strategy was closer to policy-making. For instance, Hart saw strategy as fulfilling the ends of policy. After Second World War II, strategy came to mean the ‘overall state policy on foreign and military affairs’.¹⁰ Garnett’s definition of strategy which was -‘used by governments in pursuit of their interests’¹¹- found universal acceptance by the late twentieth century.

As seen above, defining strategy is a topic that consists of a gradual historical process and many other factors. However the effects of the state’s political authorities have been felt clearly. With the growing importance of non-state actors, technological adversity and, globalization have been the causes of changing aims in the world order. These lead to different needs to compete. Therefore, strategy can change depending on new world conjectures. In order to analyze the evolving process with new variables, strategy should be looked at using old glasses.

⁷ Beatrice Heuser, p. 31.

⁸ Beatrice Heuser, p.5.

⁹ Beatrice Heuser, p. 7.

¹⁰ Beatrice Heuser, p.9.

¹¹Beatrice Heuser, p 15

The Nature of Warfare and Strategy in History

“[T]he truth is that war is not an evil thing, but is good and virtuous; for war, by its very nature, seeks nothing other than to set wrong right, and to turn dissension to peace, in accordance with Scripture. And if in war many evil things are done, they never come from the nature of war, but from false usage... for all good things, and all virtue, come from the God... [W]ar comes from God, and not merely that He permits war, but that He has ordained it.” (Augustine of Hippo)¹²

Rather than focusing on the nature of war, historians prefer to focus on the character of war¹³. However, the character of war and the nature of war cannot be separated. They are related to each other when mentioning the general meaning of strategy. So, the nature of war is also important in order to analyze the different strategies, aims, powers and so on in the wars.

Heuser’s classification of the historical process is based on “the changes in attitude to war, the theory and practice of strategy from Antiquity to French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars”¹⁴. She puts emphasis on the ‘pattern of siege warfare’, ‘the recruitments and status of troops’, ‘defensive and offensive strategies’ and the way from ‘limited wars’ to ‘total war’ in the early modern period.¹⁵

According to Heuser’s study, technology did not involve big changes until the early modern period. Some technologies were developed and forgotten. Some of them were reinvented like “the Greek *phalanx*”¹⁶. On this point, Heuser criticizes the war literature as being unaware of the technological changes, and how they were not very different from antiquity until the Industrial Revolution. She gives as an example; Gunpowder which was first used in siege warfare and then was sequentially used in diverse forms until the Napoleonic Wars. Moreover, there were no great technological differences in the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁷ Thus far, these are related to military side of strategy during war. Within this period, the point can be proved which the focus on strategy as being a practical experience rather than using as a political tool.

There has also been justification of warfare. In this context, religion is most prominent phenomenon. In simple terms, Christianity was used to legitimize war with the goal of conquering the enemy’s area in the early modern period. This kind of justification and legitimization paved the way for “just war tradition”¹⁸ by Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas as an early discourse of the tradition as can be observed in above quotation of Hippo.

In early modern warfare, sieges were more general. They were focus on seizing certain areas because of the existence of fortified places. Fortification of towns, castles or settlements is a kind of defensive strategy against an enemy. This can provide supplies to armies who have been occupying the fortified places. Although sieges consist of fewer battles, they lead to

¹² Beatrice Heuser, p. 50.

¹³ Christopher Coker, p.66.

¹⁴ Beatrice Heuser, p.39.

¹⁵ Beatrice Heuser, p.76-100.

¹⁶ Beatrice Heuser, p. 40.

¹⁷ Beatrice Heuser, p. 39-42.

¹⁸ *War: Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. Larry May, Gregory M. Reichberg: *Jus ad Bellum*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008), 33.

brutal violence at the end of battles. Heuser discusses the preference of mercenaries or militias which is similar to Machiavelli's approach about recruitments and status of the troops.¹⁹ His ideal is based on the soldier-citizen who fights in the name of his country.²⁰ Afterwards, a debate around battle avoidance and decisive battles is discussed as theoretical questions about preferring offensive strategies and defensive strategies.²¹ Machiavelli thought that a "well-defended country should risk a defensive stance, while a country with poor defences would be better off trying to carry a war into the adversary's territory."²²

The last aspect that Heuser discusses about the eighteenth century discourse or understanding about the nature of war. Even before the French Revolution, there was a widespread claim that wars were limited in their effects on civilians until Napoleon's mobilization for war aims strategy. In criticism of this, Heuser gives an example using Weigley's statement about the early modern age as the "Age of (frequent) Battles". Hart's discourse is one that focuses on the "rareness of battles and the indecisiveness of campaigns".²³ Also, her approaches to the issue is so important to indicating that the evolution of warfare has not been one directional. She rejected the notion of the directed from limited war to unlimited war with below statements:

*"Particularly when seen from a long-term perspective, the notion that wars before 1792 were limited and thereafter became unlimited in scope, decisiveness and war aims is a misconception. This is because, as we have seen, war aims, and the strategies employed to achieve them, have fluctuated widely in European history and the history of war in other parts of the world. In fact almost all major categories of warfare and insurgency to genocide, from limited, small-scale skirmishes to massive battles with large scale casualties. Technological change did not play the direct and dominant role as the simple, all-conditioning variable which determined the intensity of wars. Instead, throughout history, the use that was made of technology has depended on social, cultural, political and ideological variables."*²⁴

The paragraph above was chosen because it highlights both support for and against this study. If we return to the issue, Jack S. Levy and William Thompson's observations about battle-related deaths show an enormous increase in the severity of war until the nineteenth century.²⁵ Then, they state that there has been a change in the last five centuries. Because this is "probably related in causal sense: the increasing destructiveness of great power wars has reduced the incentives of great powers to fight them."²⁶

¹⁹ Beatrice Heuser, p. 82-87.

²⁰ Beatrice Heuser, p. 82-87.

²¹ Beatrice Heuser, p. 76-100.

²² Beatrice Heuser, p. 91.

²³ Beatrice Heuser, p. 98-99.

²⁴ Beatrice Heuser, p.99.

²⁵ Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, *Causes of War*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publication, 2010), 11.

²⁶ Ibid.

The Changing Nature of Warfare and Strategy in Current

Levy and Thompson elaborated on the absence on great power in the last half century in connection with the earlier quotation. The statement can be clearer if the development of nuclear weapons is taken into consideration, as many scholars do.²⁷ More important than this point, scholars started to debate peace because of absence of great power wars'. However, Levy and Thompson's argument is supported with clear evidence like the continuation of interstate wars as in the period before World War II. Rather than peace, they mentioned the changing nature of warfare with regard to some new trends. For instance, there has been an increase in the occurrences of civil wars and other conflict since 1945. Moreover, another shift was observed in the character of warfare which means that war has moved away from Europe.²⁸

Before analyzing the changing character and nature of warfare in the global era and contemporary strategy theory, Heuser's historical accounts on the modern period should be mentioned briefly. This is done in order to understand the effects of the period's events to the evolution of strategy. Beside this, it should be clear why this study investigates the modern period patterns from the French Revolution in the title of current. The perspective has blurred because of the discourse about disappearance of the nation-state's effects on the world political order. Furthermore, nationalism is dominant phenomenon of the modern period as being in middle point to evolution of strategy

As it mentioned earlier, the Romano-Christian world finds peace as the justification of war. In addition to this, some limitation factors can be found in looking at war ethics like self-defense. However, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars changed the nature of war and thinking about war. If the character of warfare were to be narrated, it could be said that the Napoleonic War was overshadowed by the French Revolution in the name of strategy. This is because, the French Revolutionaries fought for their own liberties and they had new political ideals such as democracy²⁹. However, the Napoleonic Armies were well organized. Their army was recruited systematically which changed the ways of warmaking. In other words, the ability to involve the entire society into a large war instead of using various kind of conscription denoted an innovation in warfare. Thus, medieval characteristic of militarist sentiment was transformed in the nineteenth century and purely military environment was established as a fashion of uniform. Regarding these two wars, an understanding of modern warfare can be drawn from concepts which are the 'Militarism', 'Social Darwinism' and 'Racism', 'Nationalism' and even 'Xenophobic Nationalism'³⁰. These ideologies were widespread in Europe and all over the world because of the dominance of Europe. Their effects on war can be followed from strategies used in the wars of the modern period. Heuser explored the strategies or strategic theories under a paradigm which influenced war between 1792 and 1945. The name of the paradigm was inspired by Napoleon and other strategists before him. The importance of the paradigm comes from the ability to approach or criticize all

²⁷ Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, p. 12.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Beatrice Heuser, p.114.

³⁰ Beatrice Heuser, p. 115.

the period with its understanding. The paradigm gradually changed and adapted according to today's conditions. It was firstly seen in the World War I as the "Total War" which embodied the "total mobilization of one's national resources"³¹. After the World War I, it was observed that the process of the total war should be based on some kinds of strategy such as "firstly being defensive in the most static possible way" and also "minor indirect approach to confronting the enemy" as targeting undefended population like women or surprising enemy with "manoeuvre warfare". In order to realize the main goal that is "the annihilation of the enemy Army and of the enemy nation."³². The annihilation of enemy culminated in World War II with genocide. Thus, the effects of Darwinism and Nationalism came into existence in genocidal strategy. In between the two World Wars, technological innovations became influential. Ideologies were used, such as in seen the American Civil War and The Wars of German Unification with the use of mass-production weapons, railways, the telegraph and so on.³³ On this point, Hart mentions the evolution of war since the mid-eighteenth century. It can be explained with four trends including the impacts of new weaponry on growing warfare size on land and sea and the industrialization effect on mobility.³⁴

To briefly explain the modern period, ideologies stimulated technological innovations, technological advance supported ideologies to realize their subjective perspective on the order and even to go further. Heuser points out that the mentality behind maritime strategy in using blockade against enemy and its similar logic as in deterrence of air power and nuclear strategy.

After the mentions about longstanding general process of strategy in different dimension, the starting point of this part should be returned. After the 1945, there was a major concern about the changing nature of warfare. Both Heuser and Levy and Thompson have related the changes with the invention of nuclear weapons and the destructive effects they have. In addition, Levy and Thompson question that "the conventional Westphalian model of Warfare continues to be relevant for the contemporary era"³⁵ while Heuser remarks that earlier "war-weariness and the waning of Western nationalism and militarism"³⁶ were taking place. However Heuser evaluates strategy with regards to today's humanitarian and ethical approach to strategy. The author summarizes the thinking about the entire process from antiquity until the today. Although old concepts and paradigms had been preserved during the process, they became last in the long run. She says there is a gradual change in the aim of using force from annihilation of enemies to "police action"³⁷. And this new ethical understanding legitimizes that stable world order can be provided benefiting all sides rather than imposing our will unilaterally.³⁸

³¹ Beatrice Heuser, p. 137.

³² Beatrice Heuser, p. 138.

³³ Beatrice Heuser, p. 171.

³⁴ Beatrice Heuser, p. 172.

³⁵ Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, p. 13.

³⁶ Beatrice Heuser, p. 503.

³⁷ Beatrice Heuser, p.500-505.

³⁸ Ibid.

Although there are diverse variables to explain the contemporary strategic thinking in Heuser's book, the current security environment was most clearly reflected in Levy and Thompson's works'. Besides the increasing frequency of civil wars, they also reflected the impacts of globalized criminal networks with the changing nature of civil wars and insurgencies. They said that more privatized wars were being fought using the funding of global networks and that states could become unable to protect their citizens. On the other side, conflicts that are driven primarily by security goals, economic resources, political power, private interests or parochial interests of insurgents were masked with the ethnicity or identity question.³⁹ In that case, what implications of today's world order and what kind of security environment or stability or even peace will be claimed?

Conclusion and Strategy in Future

It must be born in mind that Heuser signified the effects of technological change on the evolution of strategy. She advocates that technological advance is not capital of strategy. It only serves the ideological, cultural, social and political variables to compose strategy throughout the history. Although her perspective can be proved in the general perspective, these kinds of understandings have become a controversial at the present time.

On the other side, Heuser discussed in her last point that the Michael Howard ideal about "world community" which can be established in the future with the way of "sharing the same cultural norms"⁴⁰. According to him, it basically depends on idea of "invention of peace"⁴¹. In other words, peace is human made which comes from long historical lessons (of war) .And it can be stabilized in the world peace order by the time of progress more than today. Heuser argued Howard's idea in the light of Clausewitzian notion. She believed the idea that the mutual benefit should be provided in between sides while imposing will rather than sharing the common cultural norms. Although her perspective can be clarified with today's police action understanding as in humanitarian interventions, this kind of approaches have stayed on very certain places to foresee future paradigms.

Above mentioned two perspectives of Heuser can indicate us her general way which is historical interpretations of the topic. In this sense, Levy and Thompson's statements can be referred that historically oriented political scientists want to write complete explanations rather than probabilistic explanations⁴². On the other side, Levy and Thompson's way were based on theoretical generalization which can be seen as in system level theory explanations of them. Rather than this, I would prefer to skip the framing of clear-cut picture for future strategy or strategies with looking wars since 1945. Therefore, the globalization and technological developments can be accepted two general aspects to evaluate the question in critical way.

Starting from this point of view, it is important to note that the concept of technological advance is also evolved in today's (global) security environment. In this context, cyber

³⁹ Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Beatrice Heuser, p. 505.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, p. 214-215.

warfare was mentioned and exemplified with the cyber-attacks of the Russian-Georgian 2008 War by Metin Gürcan⁴³. Another clear example can be seen in U. S. CYBERCOM which was started to establish in 2009 as an independent force from land, air and sea forces⁴⁴. These examples are pointed out under the technological advance because they have similar effects with old technology what for old wars as using railway in American Civil War or nuclear weapons in Cold War although to a lesser extent. In comparison with Heuser's perspective about the technological advance, technology cannot be standing on ground as only a military practice today. In the promoting the war, the impacts of technology has become effective as much as ideologies. Also, the line between the using ideology and using technology for a war aim has blurred in these days. For example, Arab Spring was characterized in the name of social media's political power which directly points out the technological developments in the computer and information system⁴⁵.

On the other hand, there is discourse about the globalization effects on the world order which defined with diverse names as the "globalized world", "global political order" and even "global village"⁴⁶. John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens edited book is one of the most prominent study about global politics. They started their point from that "the subsequent war in Afghanistan (2001-2) and the particularly controversial attack on Iraq in 2003, and the subsequent insurgency and civil war, are further clear example of what it means to call the current era globalized-they involved international coalitions and transnational violent networks in conflict that linked events in seemingly unrelated parts of the world"⁴⁷. In other words, they generalized totality of actors such as international, multinational, transnational, non-governmental actors in one order. Looking with the conceptualization, it can be said that globalized community is another kind of world community. It can also be integrated to new security environment as being closely related with political order. There are also so many factors like global criminal networks to indicate globalization effects. However, it cannot be referred as a new paradigm. In this sense, Jen Bartelson argued the difficulties of "globalizing community"⁴⁸. He mentioned that "the idea of any legal or political authority over and above the individual states" swiftly changes under the criticism of old practice like despotism and even before today⁴⁹.

Regarding diverse variable of today's world conjuncture, the parallel proceeding changes in the wars and changes in the world political order can be observed. Sometimes this is claimed that the new paradigms were born by the old paradigms. Sometimes, the new paradigms claim new prospects. There is no possible way to a clear answer. However, all special war includes

⁴³ *Teoriler Işığında Güvenlik, Savaş, Barış ve Çatışma Çözümleri*, ed. Atilla Sandıklı, *Metin Gürcan: Savaşın Evrimi ve Teorik Yaklaşımlar*, (Istanbul: BILGESAM Publications,2012),107.

⁴⁴ *Teoriler Işığında Güvenlik, Savaş, Barış ve Çatışma Çözümleri*, ed. Atilla Sandıklı, *Metin Gürcan: Savaşın Evrimi ve Teorik Yaklaşımlar*, (Istanbul: BILGESAM Publications,2012),108.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ John Baylis, S. Smith and P. Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴⁷ John Baylis, S. Smith and P. Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008),2.

⁴⁸ Jens Bartelson, *Vision of World Community*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2009),141.

⁴⁹ Jens Bartelson, p.141.

authentic interpretations which clarify the link between political aims and warfare. The point arrived that war is a way to create order. It does not matter that the characters of warfare and ages of war. War is the way of politics. In this sense, Andrew Heywood explained politics as “[...] a struggle over scarce resources and power is the means through which this struggle is conducted”⁵⁰. Following this, He stated the Harold Lasswell’s book title “*Who gets What, When, How?*”⁵¹. Thus we returned the starting point of this study: human nature. In this respect, Waltz argued that “[...] human nature cannot explain the obvious variations in war and peace over time and space”⁵². He wanted develop realism with the help of societal explanations. Therefore, he supported that “pursuit of power” is reasoned by “pursuit of security”⁵³. At the end of the this reasoning, he accentuated international anarchy as a reason of wars without the absence of top political authority.

Hobbes’s “human nature”, Realists’ “state”, Waltz’s “international anarchy” and Howard’s “world community” stand in line. At that case, what are future strategies? What is the future of strategy? According to last statistical analyses of Peace Research Institute Oslo and Havard Hegre, the world will be more peaceful in the future. They predict that conflicts like in Syria are becoming increasingly rare. Also, they pointed out conflicts that they can be defined between governments and political organization and their conflict models “[...] shows that the combination of higher education, lower infant mortality, smaller youth cohorts, and lower population growth are a few of the reasons why the world can expect a more peaceful future” according to them.⁵⁴ It is good to know that. However, statistics are based on numerical evaluation. Predicts are predict. Wars continue.

⁵⁰ Andrew Heywood, *Politics*, (New York: Palgrave Foundations, 2007), 10.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jack S. Levy and William Thompson, p. 32.

⁵³ *Apollon Research Magazine* 19 November 2012,

[electronic available :<http://www.apollon.uio.no/english/articles/2012/peaceful-world-awaits.html>]

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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