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BETWEEN OLD AND THE NEW WARS: WHAT'S "NEW" ABOUT THE "NEW WARS"?

Eski ve Yeni Savaşlar Arasında: "Yeni Savaşlar" da "Yeni" Olan Nedir?

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ABSTRACT

After one year of the New York attacks, the United States of America brought out The National Security Strategy in September 2002. After that, the concept of modern war was coming up for discussion again by the new security policies that the USA had begun to implement on a global scale. Changing and evolving classical understanding of war has been replaced by new forms of violence, internal and proxy wars and new levels that could not be found within the normative levels of the existing international law. In this context the purpose of the study is to provide of what is "new" in "new wars". Herewith firstly, the characteristics that frame the concept of "classical-ancient war" and the social, political and economic relations that created these wars will be evaluated briefly through the treatises of the classical war theorist Carl von Clausewitz. And then, the important differences of these new types of wars will be tried to introduce through the two important works on "new wars" of Mary Kaldor and Herfried Münkler. Finally, some critical thoughts on the relation between the "new wars" and the current international political situation will be revealed.

Key Words: War, New War, Carl von Clausewitz, Mary Kaldor, Herfried Münkler

ÖZET

11 Eylül 2001 New York saldırılarının akabinde, ABD'nin, 2002 yılında açıkladığı Ulusal Güvenlik Stratejisi ile birlikte küresel ölçekte uygulamaya başladığı güvenlik politikaları, modern dönemde üzerinde az çok uzlaşa sağlanmış olan savaş kavramını yeniden tartışmaya açmış oldu. Değişen ve dönüşen klasik/simetrik savaş anlayışı yerini yeni şiddet hallerine, yeni çatışma ve müdahale tiplerine, iç ve vekâlet savaşlarına ve mevcut uluslararası savaş hukukunun normatif düzeyleri içerisinde yer bulunamayan yeni düzeylere bıraktı. Bu değişim/dönüşümlere bağlı olarak da sosyal-siyasal bilimler yazınında savaşların değişen doğasına yönelik yeni tasnifler ve kavramsallaştırma denemeleri yoğun bir biçimde incelenip tartışılmaya başlandı. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın amacı, "yeni savaşlarda", "yeni" olanın ne olduğu üzerine kısa bir değerlendirmede bulunmaktır. Bu doğrultuda, öncelikle klasik savaş kuramcısı Carl von Clausewitz'in savaşa dair tezleri üzerinden "klasik-eski savaş" kavramını çerçeveleyen özellikler, "eski" çağın savaşları ve bu savaşları yaratan toplumsal, siyasal ve ekonomik ilişkiler kısaca değerlendirilecek, daha sonra "yeni savaşlar" a dair günümüz literatürünün iki önemli ismi Mary Kaldor ve Herfried Münkler'in çalışmaları ekseninde bu yeni tarz savaşların önemli farklılıkları ortaya konmaya çalışılacak, son olarak da "yeni savaş" kavramının mevcut uluslararası politik durum ile bağı üzerinden bazı eleştirel düşünceler kısaca ifade edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Savaş, Yeni Savaş, Carl von Clausewitz, Mary Kaldor, Herfried Münkler

1. INTRODUCTION

In his address to the Nation two months after the September 11 attack, US President George W. Bush declared that the "global war on terrorism" was unlike any threat the US people had faced throughout history, and that this war was a different war than any war in history. Bush also underlined that this war will be continuous and endless and has the tendency of establishing the security not only for the USA but the whole world civilization. This was the war of the whole world, of all civilizations in which the friend-enemy distinction of old wars is ambiguous.

Thus, in recent years, a number of analysts have argued that qualitative changes have occurred in the nature of violent conflict and it is now possible to think in terms of 'new wars' that is distinct in significant ways from earlier forms of conflict (Newman, 2004:173). Changing and evolving classical/symmetrical understanding of war has been replaced by new forms of violence, new types of conflict and intervention,

internal and proxy wars and these new levels that could not be found within the normative levels of the existing international law of war. This new type of war is also a result of the transformation in existing social, political and economic relations (Paker, 2012:18). That is, all wars as a form of organized political violence have always been determined both by the political-social-economic order in which they take place and they have constantly reproduced and organized that order. Moreover, the new wars can be contrasted with earlier wars in terms of their goals, the methods of warfare and how they are financed (Kaldor, 2012:26).

In this context, there is a direct relationship between the war and the emergence of the state, war and bureaucratization, war and civic practices, war and the construction of social order in every stage of history. Therefore, preparations and practices of warfare not only redefine the interstate relations, but also transform the main structure and all the actors of this system. In other words, the controlling of coercion by states has created key and fundamental transformations in the construction of their sovereignty (Tilly, 2001 ve Giddens, 2008). In Foucault's words, wars are the engines of all institutions and order. According to him, the war power cannot be explained just by order and practices of the army, it uses all "military" methods to establish the same system and discipline in the social order by extending them to the base. Therefore, according to Foucault, wars (not only actual wars, but in the sense of the whole institutional, legal, social, economic organization behind that war practice) are not independent from the social international and economic accumulation order (Foucault, 2002:48). All this relationality builds, reproduces and always reproduces the order. It is obviously seen that contemporary wars move away from the earlier forms of war. Thus, the purpose of this study is to make a short assessment of what is "new" in "new wars"

In this context, first of all, the characteristics of the "classic-old war" and the social, political, economic relations which created these wars will be briefly evaluated around the theses of the classical war theorist Carl von Clausewitz on the war. Then, the important differences of the new type of wars will be tried to reveal throughout the two main works; Mary Kaldor's book, *Old & New Wars* and Herfried Münkler's book, *Die Neuen Kriege* (The New Wars) which introduce the concept of "new wars" into the related literature. Finally, some critical thoughts will be expressed briefly on the relation between the concept of "new war" and the current international political situation.

2. THE MODERN WARFARE

International war by the means of total conflict between the sovereign nation-states and which can be regarded as the birth of modern war practice has emerged as a result of the socio-economic transformations in Europe since the 16th century and over time it had a function of reorganizing the social relations in which it was involved. Until then, the total mobilization of violence by the public authority was historically an exception. Indeed, wars in medieval Europe did not comprise whole society and did not mobilize them altogether. Wars were more like organized by the groups which involve mercenaries, recruits, nobles, looters, pirates, etc. especially for the interests of political actors such as dynasties. However, from the end of the 16th century, the war began to become a social process that concerns the whole society, by the central government, in the name of a land worth fighting for. This transformation requires a new generation of specialized, hierarchically organized and disciplined manpower, who know how to use these war tools together with the developments in war technologies (such as the spread of cannons and rifles). In fact, it indicates to the emergence of the central states that claim sovereignty over a certain territory, which is called the nation-state and it is compatible with the developing capitalism as a new economic system. This new type of sovereignty, as Max Weber famously put it, required the concentration of the monopoly of violence by the state and the neutralization and disarmament of power within certain boundaries. Hence, the process of building nation-state sovereignty and the centralization of wars -refers to the legitimate monopoly of violence- by states.were the processes that fed eachother. One of the most important consequences of this transformation is that wars or the use of violence have started to be organized as a public service financing entirely by the public. The other is that states distinguish the practices of violence/coercion within and outside their borders through different specialized structures (Paker, 2012 and Yalçınkaya, 2008). In this context, while domestic violence/coercion -whose legitimacy derives from the authority given by her citizens in return for their security-was being handled at the criminal levels and while any act contrary to the sovereignty (thus the constitution and laws) was considered as a crime and punished through domestic legal norms; the wars against it and therefore to the army order had essentially turned into violent practices in areas outside the borders (Hobbes, 2006). And so wars had become simply



an act of one dominant authority against another. In this way, the exclusion of war from the national socio-political sphere within the borders and the restriction of only external conflicts between the sovereign states brought all the institutional divisions related to police protecting the inside and the soldier protecting the outside. As realist theories indicate, the inside of the borders was an “order” and the outside, the interstate system, had an “anarchic” feature (Waltz, 2009). Lately, this transformation provided becoming the preparation for war as a total social process that would also apply in “peace” times. Therefore, the process led to the need to expand and reorganize many administrative tasks such as treasury, taxation systems, food services, and military recruitment to finance armies. In short, wars formed the institutional infrastructure of modern nation-states through the administrative organization and efficiency calculations required to wage war. Therefore, as Michael Mann has examined, in this new period, as much as the states made war, wars also established states (Mann, 2013).

Another development appeared in this transformation process, especially after the French Revolution. Conscription became the norm, first in France and later in all European states. With the Napoleonic Wars, each soldier turned into a citizen, and each citizen into a soldier in defense of the country, greatly increased the obligations of all citizens to their states and further expanded the sphere of influence of states. This transformation which changed the relationship between the state and its citizens in a completely new way, also played a founding role in increasing the importance attributed to a nation, a homeland. The developing movement of nationalism and all kinds of state activities related to it provided unprecedented material and moral support to wars. So that all the mobilization efforts made for war preparation in peace times and the enemy images that were always kept alive contributed more to the formation of a nation than real wars. Wars were no longer just a military issue, but an issue for the whole nation. In Hobsbawn's words, by the 20th century, a state model was prevailed which influenced and mobilized citizens. The vast majority of the male European population was trained for war and ready to be driven to the front (Paker, 2012, s. 26).

2.1. The Transformation After The I. and II. World Wars

I. and II. World Wars were the first major wars of the sovereign nation-states with citizen-armies. Before and after this period, civil-military mobilization reached unprecedented levels in the world. With these two wars, the world had industrialized and entered a period of total war relying on mass destruction, mass mobilization and mass production. This intensive and broad mass dimension also relied on the overall economic and ideological mobilization of societies and therefore required the further expansion of state potency. Thus, wars were no longer just a military act waged on a few fronts; the enemy line and the homeland had become one. From this point on, what was important for states was not how the military operations would be carried out, but an administrative coordination issue that would include economic, political and ideological dimensions and would be carried out on a wide platform where all resources could be mobilized (Paker, 2012:27, 28).

At the end of the II. World War, the characteristic of the war was transformed once again. This period was a world of balance of power, divided into two superpower centers that won the great war and did not experience armed conflicts thanks to nuclear deterrence owned by both sides. The system of international alliances, such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact, became permanent, and the possibility of industrialized total war was reduced. Thus, the practice of total war with conventional weapons began to be replaced by limited proxy wars. In many conflicts such as the Middle East, Vietnam and Korean Wars, leaders had waged proxy wars by supporting the conflicting sides. This does not mean that conventional wars were completely over but the existence of the nuclear threat had made it easier for conventional wars to be kept at certain levels in terms of duration and effect (Eker, 2015:39, 40). The last quarter of the 20th century represents a transformation that can be seen as a preparation stage for "new wars" (Schmitt, 2017). Despite the disarmament agreements made by the bloc leaders in the 1970s, conflicts that were carried out by guerrilla groups against states with asymmetric methods and turned into civil war was appeared especially in Third World countries. With the involvement of non-state actors in these wars, "new wars" had begun to take place in the way. During this period, all sides sharpened the distinctions between the inside and outside of their states and improved the defense and intelligence devices corresponding to this distinction.

The basic and most cited theoretical work of the period before this new style of war, which started after the World War II and became dominant after the end of the Cold War, is Carl von Clausewitz's work *Vom Kriege* (On War) published in 1832. Theoretically, wars were analyzed with the Clausewitzian approach until the concept of "new wars" began to be discussed especially after the 1990s. According to him, war is a

rational policy tool and to achieve victory there must be a balance among the people, the army and the government. War is a method of achieving goals that cannot be reached by any other means through violence and the main thing is the political result it brings (Clausewitz, 1999: 35). In other words, wars always begin, continue and end according to the outline of a policy, so it is essentially a political action (Clausewitz, 1999:656). Clausewitz also underlined the importance of war and peace declaration (the duration of the war), warriors, the front in wars and the main battle, which he saw as the centerpiece of the war, which are characteristic of classical wars. In this sense, war theories based on an "interstate" centered understanding where the main actor was the state until the post-Cold War period have been the legacy of Clausewitz (Clausewitz's work examining the nature of war and the relation between war and politics has particularly influenced contemporary theorists such as Foucault. See also on this topic. Oktay, 2012: 1. Chapter ve Kardeş, 2019: 121, 127. See also for a different Clausewitz interpretation. Karaosmanoğlu, 2011: 5, 25).

3. THE NEW WARS

The concept of new wars explained with determinants such as globalization, the erosion of the nation-state and economic factors is theoretically based on the criticism of the Clausewitzian approach. In this context, Kaldor's *Old & New Wars* (1998) and Münkler's *Die Neuen Kriege* (2002) are seen as two main works that bring the concept of "New Wars" to the literature.

According to Mary Kaldor, a distinction have to be made between the organized violence of the 21st century and the wars of the 20th century. Those in the 20th century are old wars and those in the 21st century are new wars. The "New Wars" are the wars of the globalization era. According to Kaldor, the actors of the old wars are the regular armies of the states, while the actors in the new wars are non-state formations that emerge with the combination of state networks such as private security companies, mercenaries, jihadists, warlords, paramilitary forces. Typically, the new wars are characterized by a multiplicity of types of fighting units, both public and private, state and non-state, or some kind of mixture. For the purpose of simplicity, I identify five main types: regular armed forces or remnants thereof; paramilitary groups; self-defence units; foreign mercenaries; and, finally, regular foreign troops, generally under international auspices (Kaldor, 2012: 96). According to Kaldor, the aims of new wars and old wars are also different from each other. Old wars generally take place between geopolitical interests and ideologies, and new wars between purely ethnic or religious identities. The issue of identity has a different reason than the ideological or geopolitical interests that represented ancient wars. Here the aim is to reach to the state for certain group interests through identity politics. Whereas in former wars aim is to implement policies to the public interest. Identity politics are produced by the way of war and a political mobilization around identity constitutes the aim of the war. The new wars have political goals. The aim is political mobilization on the basis of identity. The military strategy for achieving this aim is population displacement and destabilization so as to get rid of those whose identity is different and to foment hatred and fear. Finally, the politics of identity, itself, has a tendency to spread. All identity-based groups, whether defined in terms of language, religion or some other form of differentiation, spill over borders; after all, it is precisely the heterogeneity of identities that offers the opportunity for various forms of exclusivism (Kaldor, 2012: 116,117). In other words, the concept of identity has become an aim rather than a tool of new wars.

The methods of new wars and old wars are also different from each other. According to this, while it is aimed to gain a certain land with military means in old wars, in new wars, land is obtained by political means rather than conflict; the political tool is provided by the control of the population. Because of this, violence is perpetrated on civilians rather than military targets.

According to Kaldor, another difference between the old and the new wars concerns the financing of the war. Ancient wars are often financed by states via taxes and borrowing and so, war economies are centralized economies. New war economies are as to global. The new globalized war economy is almost exactly the opposite of the war economies of the two world wars. The latter were centralized, totalizing and autarchic. The new war economies are decentralized. Participation in the war is low and unemployment is extremely high. Moreover, these economies are heavily dependent on external resources (Kaldor, 2012: 11).

Another important approach of Kaldor, who emphasized that the changes in wars should be sought for changes in sociological and political conditions rather than technological and tactical changes, is that the



negative impact of new wars can only be eliminated with the Kantian understanding of cosmopolitanism. In this sense, new wars should be understood as a struggle between closed identity groups and open, ie "cosmopolitan" identity groups. Kaldor defends the universal paradigm of law which is based on the Immanuel Kant philosophy that is against the war paradigm in general and emphasizes that new universal norms (properly such discussions as "humanitarian intervention", "humanitarian war" etc.) regarding the legitimacy of wars must be built and are being made (Ören, 2017).

Herfried Münkler, who shares the similar ideas with Kaldor, explain the transformation in the concept of war in his work as follows: "The face of the war has gradually changed over the past decade, although it has long been unnoticed by the political public: The classical states war, which has left their mark on even the Cold War scenarios to a great extent, seems to be outdated as a model of war; States that were no longer the true monopolies of wars were increasingly replaced by state-like actors, even partially private actors - from local warlords, guerrilla groups, mercenary companies operating around the world to international terror networks and war has become a fertile field for these actors" (Münkler, 2010: 11). The subordination of the power of the nation-state with the effects of supranational, sub-national and non-state actors on war and thus politics has brought a change that creates serious risks in terms of economic, political and most importantly human security (Alca, 2020: 29).

Münkler addressed the issues that distinguish new wars from conventional wars within the framework of interrelated issues such as the asymmetric method, the erosion of the state's monopoly of the use of power and the emergence of non-state actors associated with it (Münkler, 2010: 37, 57). According to Münkler, one of the parameters that make new wars new is the commercialization and privatization of the war, that is, the influence of private actors acting on the war with economic motives rather than political reasons; Another variable is the asymmetry of war, that is, less consideration of the rules and limitations of the law of states, armament for possible external threats, and the resulting exposure of the civilian population to the violence of the war (Münkler, 2010: 57). Thus, new wars ceased to be strategies carried out within the framework of interstate law but turned into a commercial character and so great wars came to an end. "The view of the great wars are now finished does not mean that eternal peace will be achieved on the contrary to what many hope. Conversely, this development also give cause for the spread of small wars. However, small wars are called small not because they are short-lived, cause little damage, or have a low number of victims, but mainly because they are conducted with light weapons and only partly with regular armies. The devastating effect of small wars is at least as great in the long run as that of classical wars" (Münkler, 2010: 62-63). Münkler mentions that the new wars have acquired a low-intensity, intermittent and at the same time continuous appearance rather than heavy-handed conflicts. New wars, spreading over wide areas, carrying a potential continuity and penetrating deeply into the social sphere, therefore, have more serious consequences than classical wars (Münkler, 2010: 34). Besides, by creating a state of constant chaos and confining the situation to a potential eternity, the state of "permanent war" becomes commonplace and the "state of peace" is almost not seen. Whereas, in conventional wars, after a certain period of time, the relations between the sides are re-established by ending the war, ceasefire or peace treaties. In this case, "peace", which will damage this continuity in new wars, never emerges, and thus the traditional concept of "victory" becomes meaningless.

The fact that new wars have gained a commercial dimension does not means that the financial form of violence has changed. According to Münkler, this change prolongs the duration of wars and transforms their contents. The profitability and efficiency of this new financial form rely on the violent economy for warlords is indisputable: "As well as increasing the number of mercenary companies, the fact that war lords are at work - conducted with large business links, at least with light weapons, cheap fighters and the globalized economy- is the most reliable indicator that war has become a profitable business again. War would not have been privatized if the violence had not been achieved (Münkler, 2010: 152).

Accordingly, the systematic continuity of violence in new wars, on the one hand, becoming a tool of psychological violence used by international terrorist forces on the world public opinion -that has negative effects on the world economic balance-, on the other hand, the processing of underground resources seized in war zones where military intervention is applied, oil or natural gas drilling, mineral exploration; the right to collect land tax; all of the organized crime practices such as extortion and ransom, blackmail, drug, gun and human trafficking constitute a serious financial resource and become the main motivation of wars. According to Münkler, this situation is a natural result of new wars and one of its important distinguishing features. And unfortunately, "it makes us think that we are on the verge of extremely worrying, bad times".



4. CONCLUSION

Based on the views of both thinkers, it is seen that new wars are mainly based on mobility and flexibility and are conducted mainly by intelligence and information. [in this regard, in similar with today's post-Fordist accumulation regime (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 59, 63)]. By this way, it could be said that the new wars indicate a transformation comprised of the following features: Instead of mass citizen-armies mobilization, small, professional, specialized, flexible and technology-intensive operational units form the main warrior pattern. Also, the mass armies and the front line are replaced by high-tech autonomous weapons that act simultaneously and rapidly, as well as the media is a part of this war technology. states have moved away from being the main war actors, instead, all kinds of non-state actors have become the main sides in wars and in this context, inter-state wars have evolved into a kind of world civil war (by this aspect, the transformation of the state-centered defense style into an all-encompassing security style, as a result of the blurring of internal and external borders, the intertwining of police-criminal activities and army-military activities at the level of "operation" instead of "war") that the war has turned into a fight against "crime" (for example, the transformation of the USA into "world police", "global gendarmerie" etc.). Especially, by the means of the war against terrorism, the security organization has shifted from deterrence to the prevention, the boundaries of the war are both spatial (no front, no square, in everywhere and against everything threatening) and temporally ambiguous [no declaration of war and no peace afterwards, a constant and global vigilance, a permanent global state of emergency regime in which the distinction between war and peace, becomes impossible which today's critical thinkers like Agamben are trying to theorize (Agamben, 2008)]. In this new scene, the act, conducted to defeat a political enemy that threatens the existence of main incentives; also against the "devil axis "(defined as moral rather than political) and local/regional economic reasons is more decisive; political effects are not prominent (For the controversial concept of "just war" that stands out in this context, see. Walzer, 2017). In paralel with the globalized market order, security itself has become a commodity in every field. [private armies, private security, private prisons, personal and private security technologies, etc. (Zabcı, 2004: 21, 48)]. And as stated above, this transformation should be perceived as a total process that includes new power-force relations and radically transforms the parameters of the organization of violence.

If new wars are really "new" (for a critical approach to the Old and New War distinction, see. Neocleous, 2014), it means that we are on the eve of a radical social-political-economic transformation. The crisis of the concept of war is also an indication that we live in such an ambiguous time. It is uncertain and contingent how we will evolve. However, in order to make some inferences, evaluations, and political interventions it should not be forgotten that wars are never independent from the problematic of social, international order, building and reproducing order of economic accumulation, as it is tried to be emphasized at the beginning of the study. Here, as Foucault (Foucault, 2002: 31, 32) states by reversing the definition of war by Clausewitz, if politics is the continuation of war by other tools, we can evaluate today's policies in every field in the context of transforming wars. Because new wars, like old wars, are essentially a way of building the world order throughtout the security, order and accumulation in its broadest sense by reproducing human as new subjects, rebuilding people with new security modes and ways of ruling, and above all by establishing new grounds for the global regime of capital accumulation.

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