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War, a Challenge to Sociology

Edited by Manfred Max Bergman, Peter Imbusch, Ueli Mäder and Michael Nollert

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11 The Nation State and War [E] | Max Haller

The paper investigates the relationship between the development of nation states and the emergence and persistence of wars up to the present time. Its general thesis is that the age of “high nationalism”, culminating in the two World Wars of the 20th century, was an exceptional period in which the universal value of the dignity and worth of the human person was applied to the collective unit of the nation state. It further argues that a sociology of war and peace must include two perspectives: an empirical-explanatory one showing the changes in the causes and forms of war; and a normative one, looking for ethical principles legitimizing violence and war. Based on a typology of wars in the last centuries, it concludes that the persistence of nation states is not necessarily associated with violent international relations, especially if nation states around the world become democratized.

Keywords: Nationalism, nation state, violence, war, peace.

31 The Violence of Rent: the Exploitation of Natural Resources as New Fields of Accumulation [G] | Christian Zeller

In the course of far-reaching institutional changes concentrated financial capital in the form of pension and mutual funds has increased its power. Due to problems of over-accumulation, capital is seeking new fields for investment and placement including the control, appropriation and commodification of natural resources. These new fields are sources of continuous rent income based on the enforcement of property rights. Rent income has become a central form of valorization of natural resources in finance-dominated capitalism. The enforcement of such property rights is based on processes of dispossession and on specific relations of power and violence. The control over territories is a key prerequisite for the extraction of natural resources and their finance-dominated valorization.

Keywords: financial capital, rents, natural resources

53 Rationalities of Warfare: War Concepts in Vietnam and the Concept of Network Centric Warfare [G] | Stefan Kaufmann

The article addresses the issue of the present change of the patterns of war by examining the ongoing transformation within the American armed forces. It analyses the changes in the scientific principles, in the technics and the media conditions under which the knowledge of war – that means knowledge of how to organize and to wage war in way considered as efficient – emerges. In order to seize the fundamentals and the range of the transformations brought by the Network Centric Warfare the article conducts a comparative study with the principles of warfare in Vietnam.

Keywords: War Concepts, Vietnam War, Network Centric Warfare, sociology of warfare

75 Making Money with Security: Private Security and Military Companies in War and Post-War Contexts [G] | Andrea Schneiker

Since the beginning of the 1990s the number of private security and military firms (PSMFs) has grown rapidly. Today, PSMFs are no longer only force multipliers but charged with the provision of security in war and post-war situations. But contrary to public forces the work of PSMFs is driven by a commercial logic in search of profit. As a consequence, security becomes a private good for those who can afford it.

Keywords: private security and military companies, state monopoly of legitimate violence, security, privatisation

97 Hobbes and his Theory of Tribal War [G] | Jürg Helbling

Durkheim and Parsons – like a majority of philosophers – considered the Hobbesian “state of nature” of anarchy, anomie and war as a hypothetical counter model to social order. However, Hobbes’ reflections on the “state of nature” can also be interpreted as a theory of tribal society, in which wars between politically autonomous “family groups” can break out at any time. Besides waging wars, local groups can also co-operate and form alliances against common enemies. Game theory helps to describe the interactions between local groups in societies without a state, where war and alliance are constitutive elements.

Keywords: Tribal warfare, “natural condition of mankind”, Hobbes, game theory, political anthropology

117 Reflexive Modernisation and the Overcoming of Categorical Dichotomies of Terrorism [G] | Thomas Kron

In this contribution I will show that the new transnational terrorism of Al-Qaida as an unintended result of interaction is geared to the overcoming of categorical dichotomies usually used in politics and science. To uncover this an adequate socio-scientific methodology is necessary as it is proposed with the “methodological cosmopolitanism” of Ulrich Beck’s theory of reflexive modernisation which can be stated more precisely by fuzzy-logic.

Keywords: Reflexive Modernisation, Cosmopolitanism, Terrorism, Fuzzy-Logic

137 Nyamagumba: Hill of Thousand Memories [G] | Andrea Grieder

The post-genocide configuration of Nyamagumba is characterized by a high density of memories and a social proximity between killers and survivors of the Tutsi genocide of 1994. Based on three testimonies which are put in relation with the politico-judicial and commemorative processes of dealing with the past, processes of reconstruction and steps to

reconciliation are discussed. The article proves that the participation in the community is ambiguous. When verbal or physical violence continue, a feeling of fear, insecurity and real danger are reinforced. In consequence, self-control as well as the role of the governmental in providing security become important.

Keywords: Violence, Genocide, Memory, Subjectivity, Rwanda

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