

Wars of the Globalization Era

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Abstract

As in Clausewitz's time, wars are the continuation of politics by other means – though in the globalizing world they acquire a new character of either 'globalizing' or 'globalization-induced' wars. The first are aimed at the abolition of state sovereignty or neutralizing its resistance potential, and shun territorial conquest and administrative responsibilities; the second are aimed at the establishment of viable local totalities in the void left by the collapse of past structures, and strive to reassert the lost meaning of space. The shift in aims changes the character of both categories of wars.

Key words

■ community ■ globalization ■ states ■ territoriality ■ war

By far the most prominent and seminal feature of our times is the emergence of 'global figuration': of a network of dependencies which covers the entirety of the planet and so sets the stage for a human and historical equivalent of the 'butterfly effect' held responsible for eccentricity of unconventional weather fluctuations. As the network of dependencies spreads to absorb and embrace the furthest corners of the globe, nothing that happens anywhere on earth can be safely left out of account in calculations of causes and effects of actions: nothing is indifferent, or of no consequence, to the conditions of life anywhere else.

Certain aspects of the ongoing globalization are particularly salient, dramatic and causing widespread concern. The spread of nuclear weaponry which at any moment may be deployed in any of the numerous local conflicts with blatantly non-localizable consequences, the pollution of atmosphere and water supplies which has in each case thoroughly local causes but potentially global effects, successive waves of massive migration, again prompted by local reasons but affecting demographic balances in all, however remote parts of the globe, are probably the most frequently noted effects of the new globality of dependencies and the ones that cause most alarm among scholars and politicians alike. They are, though, but a tip of the iceberg. The submerged parts of the global network of dependencies *in statu nascendi* include most crucially the interdependency of all ostensibly or allegedly self-balancing, but in fact not self-sustained, let alone self-sufficient, economies. As never before, the stratifying factors shaping all supposedly self-enclosed totalities acquire a supra-local character and operate on

a scale far beyond the reach of local agencies and the comprehension of local accounting offices.

The globalizing trend is not new, it is endemic to capitalism and modernity and has been observed, or anticipated, since the birth of both. Looking backward, one can, however (apart from noting the spectacular acceleration of its pace), distinguish different phases in its operation.

At the end of the nineteenth century the globalizing process took the form of the imperialist scramble aimed at the elimination of 'no-man's-land', or 'filling the void'; it culminated in forty years of world war in the first half of the twentieth century. Mastery over space was at that stage the hub of all domination. Acquisition, administration and colonization of territory and ever more territory was the prime cause of inter-state competition in all its variants (including the wars); any scrap of land not yet under the management of one of the principal players was the most coveted stake in the game: a challenge calling for action, and a rebuke in case the action was not taken or had been unduly delayed. The thought of 'virgin lands', not yet found and mapped, caused many a sleepless night for the indefatigable pioneers of 'geographic discovery', adventurers, statesmen and generals alike. The popular adage of the time, 'nature does not suffer void', wrapped in the idiom of scientific wisdom the practices universal enough to be deemed extemporal and seen as a law of nature which humans may only obey or disregard at their peril.

Monopoly is the overt or tacit aim of all competition, and all competition left to its own course breeds monopoly. As the pool of 'virgin lands' neared exhaustion and the remaining blank spots on the map of the world were painted in the colours of empires, all further territorial expansion could only mean redistribution of spoils. The era of forceful subordination or annexation of the lands viewed as unfit for self-government gave way to a period of hostile or friendly 'mergers' between powers with global pretensions, leading to the emergence of few and fewer still 'superpowers' and eventually to the division of the planet into 'blocks', each with one hegemonic superpower surrounded by a circle of lesser, subsidiary or satellite entities of relentlessly shrinking political, economic and military sovereignty. The 'big' was not just 'beautiful', but the only mode of survival in the world of finely balanced superpower assault arsenals and deterrents. Existence outside a power super-block became all but impossible; even a few countries earnestly trying to retain their autonomy could only think of achieving that purpose through a formation of another, 'non-engagement' block.

Under the umbrella of political, military and economic blocks, the dismantling of the nation-state's 'tripod of sovereignties' (the economic, military and cultural sovereignties on which the political independence was perched) started in earnest. When the blocks finally fell apart together with the Berlin wall, political entities which emerged from behind the missile-launching pads and barbed wire separating the territories claimed by hostile blocks were in a state of advanced incapacitation: severely limited in their capacity for initiating and waging independent policies and no more capable of balancing the books, defending the integrity of the realm and cultural self-sufficiency, that is, of fulfilling the functions once seen

as preliminary conditions of statehood and set as the test to which all candidates to the selected company of independent nations had to be subjected.

In its new emaciated and radically devalued form statehood has turned from a big-denomination banknote into petty cash: widely available, fitting into most pockets, yet carrying little purchasing power. Formal dominion over a territory, like the size of the territory and the distances between territories, is in the current stage of globalization (the era of the 'end of geography', as Paul Virilio suggests) of little consequence for the distribution of power; under such circumstances, the right to statehood in its new, truncated version is easily obtained and gladly granted. Pascal Boniface, director of the French Institute of International Affairs, worried about the *morcellisation* or *balcanisation* of the planet at the time when the number of internationally recognized political units is fast nearing 200 and separatist tendencies acquire a momentum of chain reaction or 'cancerous proliferation' (*Le Monde*, 31 August 1999:16).

Ascendancy over a territory, and even more so the administration and the management of its population, has ceased to be the stake of the global power struggle; if anything, direct engagement with managerial tasks 'on the ground' or 'in the field' is shunned by global powers and viewed by them increasingly as a chore better left to the states, which are ever more reminiscent of local police precincts and 'independent' mostly in the sense of bearing the consequences of their own policies and refused the right to indemnation in case the policies turn sour. The principal weapons of global powers in the present phase of globalization are speed and facility of movement; the tenuousness, volatility and revocability on demand of transient territorial commitments is a highly appreciated and avidly sought boon. Long-term engagement with day-to-day administrative tasks has become decidedly counter-productive and so is fast falling out of fashion.

Jonathan Friedman (1999: 234) is right when he insists that globalization 'does not mean unification or even integration in any other way than increased coordination of world markets'. But 'increased coordination of world markets' means two things: first, the global network of dependency in which all ostensibly autonomous political units must operate, in which economic accounts are ultimately balanced and the trajectories of cultural goods inscribed; and second, the absence of political and cultural coordination coming anywhere near the degree of 'coordination' of capital, finances and trade.

'Foreign policy' was a notion inscribed in the (by now outdated) context of nation-states as the sole subjects of authoritative power and of the space beyond the boundaries of state sovereignty as a site of inter-state interactions. The 'supra-state' space is today managed by agencies which enjoy great autonomy in relation to most, almost all nation-state agents acting singly, severally, or even all together. In the contest between the global forces' power of acceleration and the local state agencies' power to slow down their movements, the subjects of 'domestic' and 'foreign' policies are, so far at least, in a no-win position. Foreign ministers may 'think global', but 'foreign policy' is not the same thing as global politics.

To sum up: the emergent worldwide figuration is by all traditional standards of social 'systemic totalities' sorely distorted, one-sided and incomplete, suffering

the consequences of blatantly uneven development. Overgrown networks of economic dependencies are not monitored, let alone constrained and controlled, by parallel political and cultural grids. To put it in a nutshell: democratic institutions of self-government developed in the 200 years of modern history stay local, while power which defines the limits of their ambition and their capacity to act turns global and circulates far beyond their reach. The 'leap from the classical international law of states to a cosmopolitan law of a global civil society', which Jürgen Habermas (1999) posited as both imperative and imminent while reflecting on the traumatic experience of NATO war expedition against Yugoslavia, has not occurred yet. Neither is the 'global civil society', the necessary catapult for the adumbrated 'leap', much in sight. Instead of speaking about the 'unfinished character of global civil society', as Habermas does, one should rather admit that the formation of such society has hardly started anywhere except in philosophers' study rooms; its birth, at any rate, seems to proceed at a much slower pace than the birth of 'global capitalism', in reverse order, if compared with the sequence recorded in the birth story of modern nation-states.

It is in the virgin space between the increasingly coordinated global capital and market forces and the sorely under-coordinated political, mostly localized forces, that the major contest of the present stage of globalization is being conducted. Between these two kinds of forces extends an institutional void, a vast expanse of scattered trial-and-error initiatives and partially successful or failed experiments in collaboration or resistance. It is in the same space that this new sort of war is waged; and it is in its frame that they may be understood.

Two types of war are born of the globalization trend. Both bear traits which can be noted, duly appreciated and rightly understood only in the framework of the empty space separating global economics from local politics. I choose to describe them, for the lack of better names, as, respectively, 'globalizing wars' and 'globalization-induced wars'. Both new types of war, being closely related to the ongoing and far from completed globalization processes, may well become a salient mark of this century. No analysis of the emergent 'global society' which attempts to catch up with the global economic system, can be full unless it includes the role played in the process by both type of wars.

Globalizing Wars

'Globalizing wars' are conducted as a rule in the name of the not yet existent but postulated 'international community', represented in practice by ad hoc, mostly regional, coalitions of interested partners. In the long run, perhaps, one shall be able to conclude *ex post facto* that such wars will have been the prime tools in turning the idea of the 'international community' into flesh, just as the cultural and not simply cultural crusades of past centuries, set in motion and guided by the vision of unified and homogeneous nations, proved to be instrumental in the establishment of nation-states. In the short run, though their role, impact and the intentions which prompt them all appear multi-faceted and controversial and

remain contentious, the overall and durable effects of actions and their motives seldom if ever coincide. No wonder that the character of current globalizing wars invites a number of interpretations and remains a matter of contention.

The 'international community' has little reality apart from the occasional military operations undertaken in its name. It lacks political institutions – and most certainly those institutions which could justly claim a binding and authoritative nature for their decisions and could count on consensus or matter-of-fact discipline in lieu of the application of force. There is no 'international polis', and none is in sight. The United Nations, intended originally to play its nearest substitute, is singularly unfit as a building-site for such a polis and will remain so unless radically rethought and restructured: it was called into being at the height of the era of 'all sovereignty to the nation-state' and at a time when 'globality' translated as the sum total of inter-state relations; but it is precisely the trimming down of the sovereignty of the nation-state and the overriding of state-born and state-prompted policies which today's globalization brings in its wake. As Habermas pointed out (in the quoted article), there is no corpus of 'global law' to which the war commanders and their political superiors may refer. In the absence of such a global, enforceable code of law, they can be guided solely by subjective, and so inevitably dubious and contentious, interpretations. To quote Habermas (1999) once more: 'When they authorize themselves to act militarily, even nineteen indisputably democratic states remain partisan. They are making use of interpretative and decision-making powers to which only independent institutions would be entitled if things were already properly in order today.'

Let me point out that what gives in practice the actions of the military arms of the 'international community' a semblance of legality is precisely the 'decision-making power' of the bidders for legal recognition: in other words, the 'law of the stronger' is in operation, just as one would expect in a sorely under-institutionalized setting. It is because they are powerful and feel powerful, and certainly stronger than their appointed adversary, that 'authorization to act militarily' is given or at least contemplated. (No invocation of the 'international community' and its ethical standards, and above all no invocation of its right and duty to act on those standards, would be heard, and if heard would not be translated into the 'authorization to act militarily', if it were Russia who performed an 'ethnic cleansing' in Milosevic's style, just as it has not been heard in the case of the armed suppression of Tibet's claim to sovereignty by superior Chinese forces.) As long and in as far as the power ratio stays favourable to the attackers, they may hope to escape the charge of aggression which would otherwise be inevitably mounted (and dismiss it lightly if it was), and the bluff of 'international community' is unlikely to be called. The relativity and circumstantial validity of the legitimating formula are, however, only thinly disguised, as is the bare power politics which assures the effectiveness of the undertaking. (But one may say that the situation may serve as a classic example of W.I. Thomas's rule: once assumed to be true, beliefs tend to become reality. There is hardly another way of bringing the 'international community' closer to reality than flexing muscles in its name.)

For the time being, though, in the absence of globally binding and so globally endorsable law, it is the interests of the involved parties which one can count on for the launching of war. The legitimating formula – the will of the ‘international community’ and the enforcement of ethical standards which that community wishes to promote – would not stand a closer scrutiny. A closer examination would reveal instead that the aversion to the practices of the attacked country is measured against its ‘nuisance power’ and resistance potential, and would not lead to military action unless the ‘nuisance power’ were sufficiently irksome and the resistance potential less than off-putting. It took the ‘international community’ 30 years to intervene in the continuous genocide and massive population shifts in East Timor, until Australia, the country directly affected by the turmoil in its ‘area of interest’ and most threatened by one more flood of refugees on the scale of Vietnam ‘boat people’, took the initiative and responsibility for putting and holding together an ad hoc coalition of forces, and until the Indonesian regime disclosed its internal dissent and manifested its lack of resolve to resist foreign troops.

Ignacio Ramonet stated the obvious when pointing out that were the defence of oppressed minorities the genuine purpose of the Kosovo war, why was nothing done (nor is likely to be done) about the sorry plight of the Kurds or the Greek Cypriots, ‘ethnically cleansed’ by another member of NATO, about the plight of the Palestinians forced to abandon their ancestral lands, or for that matter about the homeless Serbs chased away from the territory assigned to Croatia (the list could be extended no end, were the humanitarian impulse of the American and European section of the global elite ever likely to reach as far as the ‘dark continents’ of no ‘strategic’, nor for that matter economic, interest). The difference between a response and its absence, Ramonet (1999: 3) suggests, can be only explained by the fact that ‘Serbia, in addition to its criminal ultra-nationalism, refused to adopt the neo-liberal model demanded by the globalization’. Jean Clair (1999: 16) of *Le Monde* concurs: ‘If wars should be waged everywhere the human rights are derided, they would embrace the whole of the planet, from Korea to Turkey, from Africa to China.’

And yet whatever else the ‘globalizing wars’ may be, their objectives (in sharp distinction from the orthodox modern wars) do not include the conquest and the acquisition and takeover of a territory. The goal of the globalizing wars is, rather, to remove the obstacles on the road to a truly global freedom of economic forces, the hammering home of the idea that trade is indeed *sans frontières* and that the erection of trade barriers will not be tolerated. The intention behind the decision to go to war is to throw the heretofore closed territory wide open to the global circulation of capital, money and commodities. This being the case, there is no good reason why the attainment of the war objectives should be paid for by the awkward and cumbersome responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the territory and management of its population.

Among the functions which the global elite would rather leave to the nation-state turned local police precinct, a growing number of influential voices would include the efforts to resolve gory neighbourly conflicts; solution of such

conflicts, we hear ever more often in the aftermath of the Kosovo war, should be 'decongested' and 'decentralized', reallocated down in the global hierarchy, and passed over to 'where it belongs', to the local warlords and the weapons they command thanks to the generosity or to the 'well understood economic interest' of global companies and of governments intent on promoting globalization.

What caused the second thoughts and prompted the victors to regret the interference (officially proclaimed to end up in victory) was their failure to escape the eventuality which the 'hit-and-run' campaign was meant to ward off: the need for the invasion, occupation and administration of conquered territory. Through the paratroopers landing and settling in Kosovo the belligerents were prevented from a shoot-out to the death, but the task of keeping them at a safe distance from the shooting range brought the NATO forces literally 'from heaven to earth' and embroiled them with responsibility for the messy realities on the ground. Henry Kissinger, sober and perceptive analyst and the grand master of politics understood (in a somewhat old-fashioned way) as the art of the possible, warned against another blunder of shouldering the responsibility for the recovery of the lands devastated by the bombers' war (*Newsweek*, 21 June 1999). That plan, Kissinger pointed out, 'risks turning into an open-ended commitment toward ever deeper involvement, casting us in the role of gendarme of a region of passionate hatreds and where we have few strategic interests'. Civil administration, Kissinger adds, would inevitably entail conflicts, and it will fall on the administrators, as their costly and ethically dubious task, to resolve them by force.

'Ground war' is to be avoided not only for the devastating effects which the inevitable casualties might have on public opinion at home, but also because it might lead to a face-to-face and protracted engagement with the tasks of the management of the conquered territory, a practice which goes against the globalizing logic. It is the free access to (and equally importantly, free exit from) the territory which is the war's objective, not the multiplying of obligations and commitments at a time when the previously entered engagements are meant to be the objects of intense downsizing and outsourcing. Ideally, a globalizing war would be a hit-and-run affair: forcing the adversary into submission without taking charge of the immediate consequences, side-effects and 'collateral damages' of the military actions. That this ideal has not been fully reached yet, it was not for lack of trying, and one can trust the Pentagon sages to be thinking hard about developing a new strategy and a new generation of weapons which will bring the reality of future wars closer to the ideal.

'Globalizing wars' are reminiscent of the warfare strategy of nomadic tribes rather than of the combat usages of the sedentary nations, let alone of the conquer-and-annex territorial wars of the 'solid modernity' era. The new global powers, like the nomads of yore, rest their superiority over the settled population on the speed of their own movement; their own ability to descend from nowhere without notice and vanish again without warning, their ability to travel light and not to bother with the kind of belongings which confine the mobility and the manoeuvring potential of the sedentary people. Waging a regular ground war and sooner or later relieving the adversary of the impediments which made him a

sitting target for the hit-and-run forces while allowing oneself to be burdened with new and unwelcome obligations, would be utterly counter-productive and might well sap the advantage which the attackers originally enjoyed. In the globalizing war, it is the defeated, not the victor, who should stay the last on the (now ruined and devastated) battlefield.

Richard Falk, an expert in international law, compared the structure of the wars under discussion to that of torture: the torturer has all the power to select such pain-inflicting measures as he hopes to be effective, while leaving no discretion to the objects of torture and being comfortably sure that the tortured will not respond in kind. As Edward Said (1999: 6) comments, 'the current world-status of the USA is akin to that of a tyrant perhaps somewhat stupid, but capable of afflicting more damage than any other power in history'. Globalizing war puts paid to the notion of combat which assumed (however limited) the ability of both sides to inflict pain and damage; globalizing war would not start unless the attackers had calculated that the retaliation was utterly unlikely or virtually impossible. Added to the reluctance to engage in territorial conquest and the firm intention of ceding the task of site-clearing to the defeated adversary, this amounts to the a priori rejection of responsibility for the consequences of war, and so renders the association of a 'globalizing-style' war with ethical purposes something like a contradiction in terms: readiness to sacrifice and recognition of responsibility are, after all, the defining traits of all ethical actions. The moral response to the cry for help is 'I am coming to help you whatever it may cost me', not 'I am coming to bomb you whatever it may cost you'.

Further doubts about the ethical aims of globalizing war are cast by the meagre chances of rectifying the inhuman conditions on the ground (the ethnic, racial or religious hatred which served as the *casus belli*) by armed intervention against one of the mutually hostile sides. The 'hit-and-run' campaign against the Serbs put no end to ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, according to all reports, it only reversed its direction. In the *International Herald Tribune's* (IHT) editorial opinion (of 25–26 September 1999), 'few among us can easily embrace the rude truth that the actual result would amount to replacing one "ethnic cleansing" with another. At a stroke it would erase the moral difference claimed by those who witnessed and in their fashion opposed the first ethnic cleansing. We would be at a place where what some regarded as humanitarian rescue would be considered by others as a war crime.'

By all reckoning, the military interventions failed to restore the inter-ethnic peace either in Bosnia or in Kosovo. If anything, they pushed the ethnic animosity to the point of no return, and having endorsed and sanctioned ethnic claims as morally justified and indeed as the benchmark against which the ethical standards of policies are to be measured, obliquely and inadvertently stocked the ammunition for the 'ethnic cleansings' of the future. As the IHT editorials remind us, the Bosnia that emerged from the Dayton agreement of 1995 'is an artificial grouping of three communities which want nothing to do with each other. The situation would explode if NATO were not there'. Even if the ethical claims about the aim of war were made in earnest when the war was started, the outcomes of

the war proved hardly any more moral than the conditions pointed to as the *casus belli*. And the number of Serb and Roma people chased out of their homes and forced into exile by the day-to-day terror of the Kosovo Liberation Army under NATO control fast approached the number of Albanians 'ethnically cleansed' on Milosevic's orders. Whether ethical concerns have been the main motive of the globalization wars to date is a contentious question; that such wars have failed the test as the tool of promoting ethical principles (and, in particular, inter-ethnic peaceful coexistence) is beyond dispute.

Globalization-induced Wars

The paradoxical effect of the globalization of economy is the new and enhanced significance of place: the more vulnerable the place becomes, the more radically it is devalued and stripped of its 'cosiness' (its feeding and sheltering capacity), the more it turns (to use Heidegger's terms) from '*Zuhanden*' to '*Vorhanden*', from a 'given', a matter-of-fact part of being, into an uncertain, easy to lose and difficult to gain, stake in the life struggle. It becomes a focus of intense emotions, hopes and fears which merge into hysteria.

The tooth-and-nail defence of the place is not a tendency likely to be found solely on the receiving end of globalization; it would be misleading to treat it as a 'reaction to globalization', resistance to the advancing globalizing forces, or a manifestation of the 'anti-globalization' tendency. That defence is best understood as the 'other face' of globalization, the necessary concomitant of the assault against the impermeability of established borders and locally grounded sovereignty. The world is not divided between enthusiasts and adversaries of closely guarded borders nor between countries promoting the abolition of border controls and those wishing to retain it. It is invariably, the other peoples' borders which the globalizing forces wish to dismantle, deprive of their holding and arresting power or render null and void – without the slightest intention to repay in kind. Borders are to be given an 'osmotic membrane' function, allowing free movement one way, but not the other; and a 'sieve' function, letting some substances in, but stopping all others.

Marie-Claire Caloz-Tschopp (1999) points out the striking similarity of intentions on the 'acting' and 'reacting' ends of the process:

Each crisis, any movement of population (the Iran-Iraq war, Kurdistan, Bosnia) gives an occasion to refine further the policing and warfare strategies in the field of the policy of immigration and asylum rights. Each successive attempt at massive deportations and each successive tide of refugees prompts further tightening of border controls and another stage in the ongoing fight to stem influx of foreigners.

In the official document released by the United Nations in July 1998, 'intervention in the areas of conflict', aimed at the prevention of migratory pressures, was named as the primary objective. European space in particular, in Caloz-Tschopp's words, has transformed itself into a secure shelter for a privileged

minority; the most the asylum-seekers can count on there is 'provisional tolerance', and a war may be waged to facilitate their 'return home'. Globalizing wars aim to throw the state borders open for some – but also to shut them down for many others.

The territorial obsessions germinate and thrive at both ends of the globalizing pressures; the globalizing forces do not work to defuse them, but on the contrary they reinforce the 'new significance of place' by their actions, while sanctioning its tooth-and-nail defence by their own example.

'As the shifting institutions of the economy diminish the experience of belonging somewhere special at work, people's commitments increase to geographic places like nations, cities and localities', observes Richard Sennett (1999: 15). With the *mutuality* of dependence between the employers and their employees characteristic of the 'solid' and earth-bound stage of modern capitalism all but gone, and replaced by the new strategy of disengagement on demand which results in the endemic precariousness of jobs, the work settings, once the hub around which most life projects rotated, are no longer durable and solid enough to offer support for life prospects and ambitions. They do not hold the trust and confidence necessary for the feeling of 'having a grip on the present' and so also for the courage to bid for the control over the future. Trust and confidence seek in vain safe havens in which to anchor; the extant addresses are no more reliable as conditions change fast and mostly without warning. And it is not just the work settings and job demands which are notoriously changing and fluid: all frames in which trust and long-term plans used to be inscribed (most notably partnerships, households, neighbourhoods) are falling apart, and the pace of their dismantling and replacement occurs, like everything else in the globalizing world, with accelerating speed.

Unanchored trust desperately seeking shelter is a source of permanent anxiety. It prompts rising demands for certainty, security and safety. With the prospects of certainty and security dim and (in the context of global figuration devoid of a legible institutional frame for political intervention) and hopelessly beyond the grasp of individual or collective action, the pressures generated by ambient anxiety condense into the demand for more safety. The body, home, street, neighbourhood, near or distant, all become the targets of acute attention and protective concerns. Body orifices and interfaces with the world, home and car doors and windows, the outer limits of residential areas and the state border checkpoints, are all watched closely in the vain hope of stemming the tide of the contingent and the unpredictable. A meticulously controlled diet and nervousness about the substances ingested or inhaled, burglar alarms, closed-circuit TV spy cameras and gated communities, neighbourhood watch and the demand for tougher laws against migrants and travellers and for more determined police action against new hate-figures, prowlers and stalkers, are the most popular, since closest to hand, weapons in the ongoing yet ultimately vain effort to (in Ulrich Beck's poignant expression) find a biographical solution to systemic contradictions: to fight back the unprepossessing consequences of *global* processes by *local* means and with *local* resources. However effective in reaching their immediate

purposes, safety measures are but *safety* measures and so leave the roots of *insecurity* and *uncertainty*, those principal causes of anxiety, intact and unscathed. They are overloaded with expectations much over the volume of their carrying (assuaging, tranquillizing) capacity. As long as the sources of insecurity and uncertainty cannot be dealt with effectively (neutralized or defused), there is little chance that the preoccupations with safety will lose their intensity, let alone grind to a halt.

Running to safety is guided by the dream of simplification. The reduction of variety looks like the best way to facilitate control: similarity seems to be the equivalent of predictability, and the monotony of sameness looks like a foolproof preventive medicine against surprise and unkindly fate. The vision of being surrounded solely by 'people like me' is alluring. Even more tempting is the prospect of banishing conflict and violence beyond the pale of one's own hunting ground, and joining ranks against one shared enemy outside seems to guarantee the solidarity inside, among the ranks of 'others like me'.

If, as Pierre Bourdieu (1998) insists, '*la précarité est aujourd'hui partout*', one would expect a general rise of violence (or, rather, a widely shared belief that such a rise indeed happens, given the present trend to change the classification of the applications of force from the category of 'legitimate coercion' to that of 'violence', that is an illegitimate coercion, calling for, and justifying, resistance). The frames which contained such varieties of coercion as used to be deemed both justified and inescapable are now thrown back into the melting-pot; what, if any, form the new frames will take or can be given, is a matter of ongoing contest and trials by combat. This plight can be documented in human relationships of all levels, starting from marriage partnerships and the family, through urban neighbourhoods, and ending with imagined, or rather postulated, communities. At this last and highest the most common trial by combat takes the form of inter-ethnic warfare in all its varieties: from terrorist acts through ethnic cleansing to genocide. The wars in question can be justly described as 'globalization-induced': as it happens, it is in the result of 'power flowing out of politics', that most seminal feature of globalization, that the frames supporting the 'imagined communities' or eagerly sought for 'postulated' ones are melting, and while doing so set in motion the long chain of trials by combat.

If the principle of the sovereignty of the nation-state, the major impediment to the completion of the globalizing process, is being gradually, yet relentlessly discredited and removed from the statute books of international law, if the state's power of resistance is effectively broken and delegitimized so that it can no longer be seriously reckoned with by the global forces in their calculations, the replacement of the 'world of nations' by the supra-national political order is but one, and not necessarily the most likely, of the possible scenarios. The worldwide spread of what Pierre Bourdieu dubbed 'the policy of precarisation' is equally likely to follow.

Indeed, if the blow delivered to state sovereignty proves fatal and terminal, if the state loses its monopoly of coercion (which Max Weber and Norbert Elias alike counted to be its most distinctive feature and at the same time the *sine qua non* attribute of modern rationalized and civilized order), it does not necessarily

follow that the sum total of violence, including the violence with potentially genocidal consequences, will diminish; it may be that violence will be only 'de-regulated', descending from the state institutions to the poorly or not at all institutionalized 'community' (neo-tribal) level. In the absence of the institutional frame of state 'arborescent' structures (to use Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor), sociality may well return to its 'explosive' manifestations (the form of sociality described in more detail in my *Postmodern Ethics* [1993]), spreading rhizomically and sprouting formations of varying degrees of durability, but as a rule unstable, hotly contested and devoid of foundation except for the passionate, frantic and frenzied actions of their adherents. The endemic softness of foundations would need to be compensated for. An active (whether willing or enforced) complicity in an 'original crime', which only the secure and continuous existence of the community of accomplices may exonerate and effectively exempt from punishment, looks seductively like the most suitable candidate to fill the vacancy. Explosive communities need violence to be born and need violence to go on living once the power of explosion fizzles out. They need enemies who threaten their extinction and enemies to be collectively persecuted, tortured and mutilated, in order to make every member of the community into an accessory to what, in case the battle is lost, would be most certainly declared a crime against humanity, prosecuted and duly punished.

In a long series of challenging studies (*Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde; Le bouc émissaire; La violence et le sacré*) René Girard developed in recent years a comprehensive theory of the role played by violence in the birth and perseverance of community. Violent urges always seethe, separated by a few inches of etiquette from the deceptively calm surface of peaceful and friendly cooperation; they need to be drained and dumped beyond the bounds of the community, so that the communal island of peace and tranquillity can be cut out to form that 'inside' in which violence is prohibited. Violence whose intermittent eruptions would otherwise call the bluff of communal unity is thereby recycled into the weapon of communal self-defence. In this recycled form, though, it becomes indispensable; it needs to be restaged over and over again in the form of a sacrificial rite, for which a surrogate victim is selected according to seldom explicit, yet nevertheless strict, rules. 'There is a common denominator that determines the efficacy of all sacrifices', says Girard (1979); this common denominator is 'internal violence – all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels with the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.'

What unites the numerous forms of ritualistic sacrifice is in Girard's view the purpose of keeping the memory of the origins of communal unity, and the awareness of the continuing precariousness of that unity, alive. But to perform such a role, the 'surrogate victim', the kind of humans sacrificed at the altar of communal unity, must be properly selected – and the rules of selection are as demanding as they are precise. To be suitable for the sacrifice, the potential object 'must bear a sharp resemblance to the human categories excluded from the ranks of the "sacrificable"' [that is, to the humans who are assumed to be the 'insiders of the

community'] 'while still maintaining a degree of difference that forbids all possible confusion.' The candidates must come from outside, but not from too far; be similar to 'us, community rightful members', yet unmistakably different. The act of sacrifice is meant, after all, to draw tight and unsurpassable boundaries between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the community. It goes without saying that the categories from which victims are regularly selected tend to be

... beings who are outside or on the fringes of society: prisoners of war, slaves, pharmakos . . . , exterior or marginal individuals, incapable of establishing or sharing the social bonds that link the rest of the inhabitants. Their status as foreigners or enemies, their servile condition, or simply their age prevents these future victims from fully integrating themselves into community.

The absence of a social link with the 'legitimate' members of the community (or the prohibition against establishing such links) has an added advantage: the victims 'can be exposed to violence without risk of vengeance' (Girard, 1979: 8, 12, 13). One can punish them with impunity, or so one may secretly hope, while overtly manifesting quite opposite expectations: painting the murderous capacity of the victims in the most lurid of colours and thus making a reminder that the ranks must be kept closed and keeping the vigour and vigilance of the community at a high pitch.

Girard's theory goes a long way towards making sense of the profuse and rampant violence at the frayed frontiers of communities, particularly the communities whose identity is uncertain, contested and denied value; or more to the point, of the common use of violence as the boundary-drawing device when the boundaries are absent, or the extant boundaries are porous or blurred. Three comments seem, however, in order.

First, the regular sacrifice of surrogate victims may be the rite of symbolic renewal of the unwritten 'social contract' thanks to its other aspect, that of the collective remembrance of the historical or mythical 'event of creation', of the original compact entered into on the battlefield soaked with the enemy's blood. If there was no such event, it needs to be construed and made credible by the assiduous repetitiveness of the sacrificial rite. Genuine or invented, it sets, however, a pattern for all the candidates for the community status, the would-be communities not yet in position to replace the 'real thing' with benign ritual and the murder of real victims with the killing of surrogate ones. However sublimated the form of the ritualized sacrifice which transforms communal life into a continuous replay of the one-off miracle of 'independence day', the pragmatic lessons drawn by all aspiring communities prompt deeds short on subtlety and liturgical elegance.

Second, the idea of a community perpetrating the 'original murder' in order to render its existence safe and secure and to tighten up its ranks, is in Girard's own terms incongruent; before the original murder has been committed the ranks will hardly call to be tightened and the community will not be likely to demand security. (Girard himself implies that much, when explaining in Chapter 10 the ubiquitous symbolics of severance in the sacrificial liturgy: 'The birth of the

community is first and foremost an act of separation.’) The vision of the calculated deportation of internal violence beyond the community borders (the community killing outsiders in order to keep peace among the insiders) is another case of the tempting but ill-founded expedient of ‘taking the topic for a resource’, a function (whether genuine or imputed) for the causal explanation. The reverse order of cause and effect needs to be considered: it is, rather, the original crime itself that brings the community to life, by demanding solidarity at all costs and creating the need to keep the ranks closed and tight. It is the dubiousness of the original crime’s legitimacy that calls for communal solidarity and is sought to be mitigated year after year through the restaging of sacrificial rites.

Third, Girard’s assertion that ‘sacrifice is primarily an act of violence without risk of vengeance’ (1979: 13) needs to be complemented by the observation that for the sacrifice to be effective this absence of risk must be carefully hidden or better still emphatically denied. To keep the powder dry and justify continuous vigilance and the stocking of ‘defensive weapons’, the enemy must be seen as having emerged from the original murder not quite dead, but ‘un-dead’, a zombie ready to rise from the grave at any moment. A really dead enemy, or dead enemy unfit for resurrection, is of no use: a dead enemy is unlikely to inspire enough fear to justify the need for unity. Sacrificial rites are conducted regularly in order to remind everybody around that the rumours of the enemy’s ultimate demise, being enemy propaganda, are themselves an oblique, yet vivid proof that the enemy is alive, kicking and biting: in short, as dangerous today as in yesteryear.

In his formidable series of studies of the Bosnian genocide, Arne Johan Vetlesen (1998) points out that in the absence of reliable (credibly durable and secure) institutional foundations, an uninvolved, lukewarm or indifferent bystander turns into the community’s most formidable and hated enemy: ‘From the viewpoint of an agent of genocide, bystanders are people possessing a potential . . . to halt the on-going genocide.’ Let me add that whether the bystanders will or will not act on that potential, their very presence as ‘bystanders’ (people doing nothing to destroy the joint enemy and refusing to bloody their hands) is a challenge to the sole proposition from which the explosive community derives its *raison d’être*: that it is an ‘either us or them’ situation, that ‘they’ must be destroyed so that ‘we’ may survive; killing ‘them’ is the *conditio sine qua non* of ‘us’ staying alive.

Let me add as well that since membership of the community is in no way preordained nor institutionally endorsed, ‘baptism by fire’ – a personal participation in collective crime – is the sole way of joining and the sole legitimation of continuous membership. Unlike in the case of state-administered genocide (and, most prominently, unlike in the case of the Holocaust), the kind of genocide which is the birth-ritual of explosive communities cannot be entrusted to the experts or delegated to specialized offices and units. It matters less how many ‘enemies’ are killed; it matters more, much more, how numerous are the killers.

The ‘original crime’ cannot be kept secret either: here is another difference from the crime of the Holocaust. It matters a lot that the murder is committed openly, in the daylight and in full vision, that there are witnesses to the crime

who know the perpetrators by name, so that no retreat and no hiding from retribution remain a viable option and thus the community born of the initiatory crime remains the only refuge for the perpetrators. Ethnic cleansing, as Vetlesen (1999) found in his study of Bosnia,

... seizes upon and maintains the existing conditions of proximity between perpetrator and victim and in fact creates such conditions if they are not present and prolongs them as a matter of principle when they seem to wane. In this super-personalized violence, whole families were forced to be witnesses to torture, rape and killings.

Again unlike in the case of the old-style modern genocides, and above all the Holocaust as the 'ideal type', witnesses are indispensable ingredients in the mixture of factors from which an explosive community is born. Explosive community can reasonably (though often self-deceptively) count on a long life only in as far as the original crime remains unforgotten and so its members, aware that the proofs of their crime are plenty, stay solidary, glued together by a joint vested interest in contesting the criminal and punishable nature of their crime. The best way to meet these conditions is to periodically or continually refresh the memory of crime and the fear of punishment through topping the old crimes with new ones. Since explosive communities are normally born in pairs (there would be no 'us' if not for 'them'), and since genocidal violence is a crime eagerly resorted to by whichever of the two members of the pair happens to be momentarily stronger, there would be normally no shortage of opportunity to find a suitable pretext for a new 'ethnic cleansing' or genocidal attempt. Violence which accompanies explosive sociality and turns into the way of life of the communities it sediments is therefore inherently self-propagating, self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing. It generates Gregory Bateson's 'schizmo-genetic chains', notorious for developing their own momentum and gaining immunity to the attempts to cut them short, let alone to reverse.

There is another violence-promoting 'schizmo-genetic chain' in operation in the times of globalization (though, in Bateson's terms, symmetrical rather than complementary): an unplanned and unanticipated, yet nonetheless intimate, collaboration and mutual reinforcement between globalizing wars and globalization-induced wars. One type of war sets the stage for the other; one type draws from the other its reasons and the confirmation of 'being in the right'. Globalizing wars do not trim the likelihood of new globalization-induced wars. They stock the dangers instead of defusing them, and render the eruption of further inter-communal strife (given the right chance) all but inevitable. But the perpetuity of inter-communal strife is certain to supply ever new reasons for further globalizing wars. The two types of war cooperate in setting conditions for the likelihood of each.

The Consequences of High-tech Wars

In the preface to the French edition of his *Just and Unjust Wars*, Martin Walzer observes that shooting clay-pigeons is not a combat. Since the world finds itself irremediably split into those who launch bombs and those on whom they fall,

the situation has become morally dubious. Kissinger (*Newsweek*, 31 May 1999; qu. after Gresh, 1999: 1) voices similar doubts: 'What sort of humanism is expressed in the refusal to suffer military losses and in the devastation of the civilian economy of the adversary for decades to come?'

These are serious charges, brought about by the products of the novel capacities of high-tech war, capacities which moral philosophers had no occasion to ponder in the past, but ponder now they must, and urgently. No consideration of the ethical problematics of the globalization era can come anywhere near completeness without such doubts being confronted with all the seriousness they deserve.

The right of the promoters of global ethical rules to occupy the high moral ground is dubious for another reason as well; it so happens that the countries which supply aircraft, pilots and missiles for the punitive actions against the rule-breakers – the USA, the UK, France – are also the major suppliers of the military equipment which renders the rule-breaking feasible and increasingly plausible. Free trade which the globalizing forces promote extends to the selling and buying of weapons; that circumstance by itself would go on creating causes for ever new punitive expeditions 'in defence of ethics and humanity'. The true volume of the global arms business is not, for obvious reasons, reliably recorded, but in the estimate of the International Institute of Strategic Studies that business was worth in 1988 £33.4 billion; in 1998 the UK alone sold £9 billion worth of weapons, but it occupied only third place among the arms suppliers, after USA and France (*The Guardian*, 22 October 1999). There is a striking similarity between the global arms trade and international drug traffic: in both cases the clients die while the sellers profit, and in both cases the profits of the sellers are a major obstacle to the salvation of the buyers. The drug traffickers do not, though, claim the right to claim the role of the knights of human rights and defenders of global ethical standards.

Ethical questions are crucial; yet there are others of no lesser urgency and of tremendous practical import. High-tech wars (if the one-way punishing blows can still be discussed under the rubric of 'war') posit dangers of their own, as much unprecedented as the ethical quandaries that they have forced on to the agenda of philosophy and politics.

If one can use force with impunity, fearing no retaliation – if one can safely remove one's own risks, the most vexing among the unknown variables, from strategic equations – then the option of resorting to force becomes an exceedingly seductive choice and an option easy to take. In the case of hit-and-run punitive actions no checks and balances endemic to the orthodox face-to-face combat are in operation. And let us remember as well that the guiding principle of our time, a gospel hammered home daily by the practice of late modern technology, is that 'if this can be done, it shall'.

But there is something else and probably even more important to be kept in mind. 'Punishing with impunity', the hit-and-run style of war in which causing the consequences tends to be strictly and unambiguously separated from bearing them, is the work of a new type of military force armed with a new type of

technology: a small and wholly professional army, deploying weapons which require high-level expertise, rare skills and protracted training. Professional army service is not much different from other kinds of jobs. Servicemen are hired and fired, and 'job satisfaction' is an important factor of their performance. The same rules of 'safety and hygiene at work' apply to military 'work' as to other types of hired labour, and if the rules are broken, the affected servicemen can, and do, sue for pecuniary compensation.

The times of mass conscript armies are over, and so is the time of ideological mobilization, patriotic ecstasies and 'dedication to the cause'. For Clausewitz, the 'morale' of the soldiers and of the nation as a whole was ultimately the decisive, 'long-term' factor of victory. Cornelius Castoriadis (1999: 192) could note without further argument that 'hatred [of the enemy] is, no doubt, not just a necessary, but the essential condition of wars', and let us note that hatred is not an unproblematic resource ever ready to be mined, but a state of emotions which needs to be laboriously cultivated and properly channelled. If hatred is indeed the 'essential condition of wars' then a long and costly 'ideological mobilization' of the population is the precondition of going to the war; wars cannot be launched against anybody, and cannot be launched overnight. But all this is irrelevant now. Force is applied by a selected group of emotionally balanced professionals for whom one 'target' is no different from another and whose personal sympathies and antipathies are as irrelevant to the outcome of the operation as the music preferences of machine operators are to the smooth running of CD-factory presses, or for that matter the literary tastes of office workers to the effectiveness of bureaucratic business.

Besides, remote as they are from their 'targets', scurrying over those they hit too fast to witness the devastation they cause and the blood they spill, the pilots-turned-computer-operators hardly ever have a chance of looking their victims in the face and to survey the human misery they have sowed. Military professionals of our time see no corpses and no wounds. They may sleep well; no pangs of conscience will keep them awake. It takes little effort to convince them that what they have done served a noble cause; the nature of the cause is hardly relevant to their frame of mind. In addition, wrapping their operations in noble causes may serve important PR purposes for public opinion consumption, but is neither here nor there when it comes to the precision and efficiency with which the operations are conducted. As the military action goes, moral considerations have been stripped of significance as thoroughly as never before. The ethical justification of contemplated actions is no longer a factor which the planners of war must reckon with and include into their military calculations. In making the wars conducted with the help of weapons of unprecedented murdering power immune to ethical evaluation, the adiahorization of violent actions has attained altogether new heights.

In private correspondence, Keith Tester brought to my attention another potentially seminal feature of high-tech wars: from now on, there will be no 'our boys' graves', and so there will be no monuments to remember them, no cenotaphs and no annual rituals of remembrance. If that indeed happens, then future wars (at

least those of the 'globalizing' kind, of the nature of 'shooting clay-pigeons') will no longer be woven into the history of communal solidarity and the ongoing 'extended reproduction' of solidarity-sustaining tradition; increasingly, they will be subject to Niklas Luhmann's law of 'functional differentiation' with all its ordinary consequences. They are likely to become an activity apart, ruled for better or worse by their own logic and, like other fields of action which have gained independence from other aspects of life, subject solely to the pure and impassioned calculation of gains and losses, costs and benefits. This will be, by itself, another powerful factor of the accelerated adiaphorization of violence.

The long-term consequences of all that we are only beginning to assess, though there are few other tasks more seminal or urgent.

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