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Ian Roxborough

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The importance of the sociological study of war is now generally recognized. A recent textbook by Anthony Giddens (1991), for example, devotes a chapter to the subject, and elsewhere Giddens argues

> that the impact of war in the twentieth century upon generalized patterns of change has been so profound that it is little short of absurd to seek to interpret such patterns without systematic reference to it. (1985: 244)

However, as a discipline sociology has not been very successful in producing an integrated corpus of theory about the nature of warfare. In large part this is a result of the emphasis on the study of the internal processes of societies, rather than of inter-societal processes, which have been left to the discipline of international relations and to specialized military studies. As Martin Shaw has said:

> most thinkers about society have not been able to grasp the huge problem which war poses for our understanding of society in general: they have marginalised it, treated it as exceptional, abnormal, etc. Most thinkers about war, on the other hand, have tended to treat it as if it were a self-contained process . . . ultimately operating according to its own laws. . . . The problem of war and society can therefore be seen as a dilemma, the horns of which have been tackled separately by social and military theory. (1988: 10)

Only in recent years have sociologists such as Wallerstein (1974–890, Tilly (1986, 1990), Skocpol (1979), Giddens (1985) and Mann (1986, 1993) attempted to integrate international processes into a sociological account. In addition to the general tendency towards the study of endogenous processes of social change within the parameters of societies, classical sociology had, as Michael Mann has shown, a generally optimistic view about the way in which industrialization would diminish the frequency of war. As he says,

> From the Enlightenment to Durkheim most major sociologists omitted war from their central problematic. This was not neglect; it

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> was quite deliberate. They believed the future society would be pacific and transnational . . . the liberal/Marxist conspiracy has suppressed much of the history of the relationship between war, classes, nations and states. (1987: 55–6)

As a result, work in the sociology of war has lacked an integrating focus. Mann's conclusion is that it is necessary to 'start from scratch' in building up the sociology of war.

The lack of a coherent, integrating framework has not, however, stopped scholarly production. The new interest in war has generated a corpus of work often lumped together under the heading of 'the sociology of war and the military' which is highly diverse (Kurtz 1992). It ranges from macrohistorical arguments about the importance of war as a factor in social change (Emsley *et al.* 1989; Marwick 1974; Smith, B. 1986; Smith, H. 1986) to studies of the impact of war on the civilian population ['What did you do in the War, Mam?' (Price 1987)]. It includes studies of military efficiency in combat (Cohen and Gooch 1990; Stouffer *et al.* 1949–50; Van Crefeld 1983), and the study of peace movements. The field covers the social welfare problems associated with the maintenance of military forces in peacetime, and feminist discussions of the relationship between sex and war. Historical sociologists have explored the impact of war on revolution (Adelman 1985; Chorley 1943; Skocpol 1979), state-building (Giddens 1985; Hall 1987; Mann 1986, 1988; Tilly 1990, 1975), industrial conflict (Haimson and Tilly 1989), and democracy (Downing 1992; Therborn 1977), *inter alia*. All these, and more, are valid objects of enquiry for a sociology of war.

The problem is not that the sociology of war seems to comprise a wide range of topics (this, indeed, might well be cause for congratulation rather than alarm) but that there is little in the way of unifying intellectual concern. The sociology of war currently appears as an incoherent mass of widely divergent intellectual agendas.

There have been, of course, important attempts to bring a measure of coherence to the field. Much of the literature that goes under the heading of 'war and society' is first-class work on the impact of war on mobilizing and challenging societies. Stanislav Andreski (1971), Arthur Marwick (1974) and Martin Shaw (1988) have all developed theories based, at least in part, on the social and political processes unleashed by warfare. However, as Shaw has pointed out, to explain these processes 'really requires analysis on two levels: the general processes of the mode of warfare and the specific forms which they produced in national societies' (Shaw 1988).

Most of the literature in the 'war and society' genre focuses on processes of change in national societies, rather than on warfare as such. In attempting to go beyond the 'war and society' school, Martin Shaw (1988: 22–3) and Mary Kaldor (1981, 1982) have stressed the

tight linkages between economic and political systems on the one hand and modes of warfare on the other. Drawing on both Marx and Clausewitz, Kaldor has developed the notion of a 'mode of warfare' as an analogy to the concept of mode of production. While her work has much to say about the interconnections of economies, arms production and preparation for war, there is little attention in her analysis to issues of strategy and the larger political ends of war. As an attempt to provide the theoretical basis for organizing the field, it is incomplete and one-sided. Shaw offers a more political account of warfare in the twentieth century, very much in line with Clausewitz's dictum that war is an extension of politics by other means. He shows how the different forms of warfare have been related to the political systems of the contending nations. There remains, however, much more to be done along these lines.

From a different starting point, Michael Mann's ongoing effort to write a history of power and Anthony Giddens's aim to go beyond historical materialism in *The Nation-State and Violence* both attempt general macro-sociological accounts of inter-state power. Yet the focus of each of these accounts is on the state, rather than on warfare as such. The presence of war provides a central dynamic in the process of state-building, but otherwise is of little sociological interest. To quote Shaw again,

> A state-centred social theory . . . is not the same thing as a social theory of war, since it will not necessarily explain how warfare has become a central determinant of social and political relations. In fact, what we need is a *war-centred* social theory. (1988: 28)

Despite a number of promising beginnings, none of the works by social scientists to date offers a complete and comprehensive framework for the study of war. Yet if one turns to the writings of military theorists[1] a very different picture presents itself. There has been, of course, considerable diversity in the ways in which military theorists have approached their subject. The attraction of theorists like Antoine-Henri Jomini, with his attempt to reduce warfare to a set of pseudo-mathematical axioms, continues to be great for many military theorists (Shy 1986; Gray 1990). At the other extreme, the writings of the Chinese sage Sun Tzu (1963), with their emphasis on outwitting the opponent through deception and manoeuvre, also exert considerable fascination for military thinkers.[2] However, despite this diversity, in the field of military writing about war the influence of Carl von Clausewitz is today dominant and pervasive. His major work, *On War*, is studied widely in the military, and aspects of his thought and writings are continuously referred to by strategic theorists. No other military thinker has this stature.[3] Commentator after commentator notes the relevance of Clausewitz for contemporary thinking about warfare.[4] Bernard Brodie, for example, has said that 'Clausewitz's

genius is indisputable, and also in his field unique. . . . His is not simply the greatest but the only truly great book on war' (1976: 52–3).

Even those who disagree with Clausewitz frequently define themselves in opposition to his thought, as do two leading military historians, John Keegan (1993) and Martin van Crefeld (1991). The contrast between the theoretical fragmentation and dispersion in the sociology of war (together with a near-total ignorance or dismissal of Clausewitz) and the centrality of Clausewitz's thought amongst military theorists is striking. Could it be that sociologists neglect Clausewitz at their peril?[5] This article suggests five modifications of Clausewitz's propositions which are necessary to create a neo-Clausewitzian framework for the study of war. It begins by briefly locating Clausewitz and his work in their historical context.

CLAUSEWITZ AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French revolution unleashed new energies which found their expression in a revolutionary form of warfare. As Clausewitz said, with the advent of the French revolution

> war again became the business of the people – a people of thirty millions, all of whom considered themselves to be citizens . . . instead of governments and armies as heretofore, the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance. . . . War, untrammelled by any conventional restraints, had broken loose in all its elemental fury. (1976: 592–3)

In campaign after campaign, Napoleon and his armies swept the forces of the *ancien régime* before them. Napoleon's armies were larger, moved more rapidly and were more aggressively orientated toward battle than had been the case in the eighteenth century. For more than two decades the wars of the French revolution and the Napoleonic period focused the attention of Europe.

Clausewitz fought against Napoleon, and devoted his life to reflecting on the meaning of Napoleonic warfare. Out of his reflections came his incompletely revised and posthumously published *On War*. Clausewitz's work was unfinished, written over a long period, and contains contradictory statements. The style of the work is difficult, full of Kantian ideal-types and Hegelian oppositions. His intent was to develop a series of universally valid propositions about war. This aim was in tension with Clauzewitz's appreciation of the importance of historical context for the understanding of military behaviour and the historically variant nature of operations in war. Unlike most of the military writers of the Enlightenment, Clausewitz did not believe that the military campaigns of different historical epochs could be mined for 'lessons' for the present. To the contrary,

Clausewitz was sensitive to the changing interactions of society and military which led to entirely different ways of waging war (1976: 586–93). What could be learnt from an empirical study of war was not a set of tactical and strategic prescriptions, but rather some general features of warfare that were universally valid.

WHAT IS WAR?

Clausewitz addressed the central question: what is the nature of war? He provided two different answers. The first is that war is unlimited violence.

> War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will . . . and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. (1976: 75–7)

Clausewitz distinguished between *absolute* and *real* war. Absolute war was, for Clausewitz, the essence of war, its tendential inner nature. Absolute war was untrammelled violence, the utmost effort to defeat the enemy decisively. Real war, on the other hand, referred to those numerous instances of armed conflict which were limited in aim and scope. While real war might be the statistical norm, the true nature of war had to be sought in absolute war. As Michael Howard (1983) has said, the notion of absolute war was a sort of Platonic ideal.

It follows from this approach to war that the principal aim of the military commander is to destroy the enemy's forces in decisive battle.

> The fighting forces must be *destroyed*: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight. . . . The country must be occupied. . . . Yet both these things may be done and the war . . . cannot be considered to have ended so long as the enemy's *will* has not been broken. . . . (1976: 90) To sum up: of all the possible aims in war, the destruction of the enemy's armed forces always appears as the highest. (1976: 99)

Violence and decisive battle was one answer Clausewitz gave to his question concerning the nature of war. This was how the German General Staff interpreted Clausewitz in the two world wars (Howard 1983; Wallach 1986). However, in his later revisions to the text, Clausewitz provided a second, radically different, answer, the much-quoted notion that war is the extension of politics by other means:

> War is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means. (1976: 60). War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. . . . The political object is the goal, war is the means of

> reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose. (1976: 87)

These two answers are contradictory and irreconcilable propositions (Aron 1985, Gallie 1978; Gat 1989). According to Gat, in 1827, in the middle of composing *On War*, Clausewitz's thought underwent a drastic change of direction.

> Clausewitz announced his intention to revise *On War* on the basis of two guiding ideas: firstly, that there are two types of war: all-out war and limited war; and secondly, that war is the continuation of policy by other means . . . he transformed but *did not* abandon his old military outlook, and resorted to completely new theoretical devices. (1989: 199)

Despite a recognition of the immense variety of types of war, and the diversity of political aims producing war, Clausewitz continued to hold that, of the two types of war, one – absolute war – represented in some sense the essence of war, its tendential natural state. However, as Gat has noted, '[i]f the understanding of war was dominated by its political function, the primacy given to absolute war lost much of its point' (1979: 222).

Clausewitz believed that he had overcome this contradiction between defining war in terms of unlimited violence and defining war as an extension of politics with the introduction of the concept of absolute war. However, the introduction of the notion of absolute war merely transformed the historically specific warfare of the Napoleonic period, which so fascinated Clausewitz, into a model or benchmark for warfare in general. This directly contradicted Clausewitz's understanding of the historical specificity of warfare. His attempted resolution of the contradiction between a notion of war as unlimited violence and war as an extension of politics is unconvincing; modern readers must opt for one or other of the definitions. This article rejects Clausewitz's early formulation in favour of the mature definition of war as an extension of politics by other means as the first step towards creating a neo-Clausewitzian sociology of war.

THE TRINITARIAN NATURE OF WAR

While the notion that war was an extension of politics was the guiding line of his mature analysis of the nature of war, Clausewitz also wrote that warfare was a complex combination of passion, chance and reason. To the extent that war was an extension of politics, it was a rational, purposive activity aimed at altering the behaviour of an

opponent. But war has two other facets. War, as Clausewitz never tired of asserting, was the realm of chance.

> No other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance. (1976: 85) War is the realm of uncertainty: three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. . . . War is the realm of chance. (1976: 101)

He introduced the notion of 'friction' to summarize the many things that could (and normally did) go wrong in war:

> Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war. . . . (1976: 119) Action in war is like movement in a resistant element. Just as the simplest and most natural of movements, walking, cannot easily be performed in water, so in war it is difficult for normal efforts to achieve even moderate results. (1976: 120)

Given the high levels of uncertainty and chance in war, the genius of the commander became of great importance. It was precisely the importance of chance, uncertainty and friction that created the scope for the play of creative genius on the part of the commander.[6] Secondly, war was also in part a matter of great passion, of hatred, danger, exertion.

Bringing these three elements together meant that war was a remarkable trinity:

> As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical[7] trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of these three elements mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government . . . the political aims are the business of government alone. (1976: 89)

These three elements – reason, chance and passion – together comprised the phenomenon of war, its remarkable trinity. The relations among them were fluid and tense. As warfare moved towards its absolute nature, passion increased and the rational direction of war became more difficult.

> War is an act of policy. Were it a complete, untramelled, absolute manifestation of violence (as the pure concept would require), war would of its own independent will usurp the place of policy the

> moment policy had brought it into being; it would then drive policy out of office and rule by the laws of its own nature. (1976: 87)

As the goals of war expanded and the stakes increased, warfare would tend towards the absolute form. This tendency towards absolute war would increase the tensions between the constitutive elements of the remarkable trinity, threatening to displace reason from its superordinate position.

WAR AND POLITICS

The purpose of the proposition that war is the extension of politics was to assert the *rational direction* of war as a whole. In so far as it is a political activity, war is fought for a purpose. It is not simply the eruption of unreasoning passion, nor is it merely the result of error or mistakes.

There are two obvious comments to make about Clausewitz's assertion that war is an extension of politics. The first is that this is not always the case, or at least that the truth of this proposition depends very much on what is meant by 'politics'. As Martin van Creveld and John Keegan have suggested, some wars at least are the result of passion and hatred, rather than the deliberate and rational outcome of considered policy. Indeed, much of their argument against a Clausewitzian understanding of war is that it is historically bounded. The trinitarian distinction between state, army and society emerged only in the seventeenth century, and in the low-intensity warfare and ethnic-religious conflict of the late twentieth century appears to be eroding once again. As a result, Clausewitz's notion that war is an activity of the state, and that it is a result of state interest is, according to van Creveld, restricted to a brief historical period:

> Based on the idea of the state and on the distinction between government, army, and people, trinitarian war was unknown to most societies during most of history. . . . From the time of Joshua to that of Cromwell's Ironsides . . . the main reason for which men slaughtered each other was not 'interest' but the greater glory of God. (van Creveld 1991: 57, 213)

If the Clausewitzian trinity is inapplicable to pre-modern societies and to low-intensity warfare, it is also inapplicable to total war, where the boundaries between state and society become blurred and cease to have any serious meaning. 'Whatever else total war may have done, it put an end to any idea that armed conflict . . . is necessarily governed by the Clausewitzian Universe' (Van Creveld 1991: 49). Total war was 'the ultimate denial of the proposition that war was . . . a continuation of politics by other means' (Keegan 1993: 391). This line of criticism is

very powerful, and it is indeed necessary, as van Creveld and Keegan have argued, not to adopt an approach which is confined largely to the experience of modern Europe. However, these writers use the term 'politics' in a very modern sense. Prior to the modern secularization of discourse, which produced an autonomous sphere of 'politics', conflicts about power ('politics') were not absent; political contention, rather, was often expressed in religious or tribal vocabulary. Thus, whether war is a continuation of politics by other means depends very much on how the terms are defined. Similarly, while van Creveld and Keegan are right to point out that the distinction between state, army and society which seemed so unproblematic to Clausewitz is, in fact, historically rooted, they make too much of this. While it is true that an important part of a sociology of war must be to problematize the relationships between society, systems of political authority, and the employment of armed force, this requires a modification rather than an abandonment of Clausewitz's analysis.

The second comment is that it is important to understand what *Clausewitz* had in mind when he used the word 'politics'. The distinction between policy and politics that exists in the English language does not exist in German, which has only the one word, *Politik*. In the world of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, politics was still very much a matter of elites. It was synonymous with state policy. Indeed, the realm of foreign relations continued to be largely insulated from popular pressure for a long time after many 'internal' matters had become a matter of mass political contention. This insulation from popular politics is conveyed in the English language in the use of terms like 'foreign *policy*' and 'statecraft'. When Clausewitz said that war was an extension of politics he should be interpreted as saying that war was an extension of foreign policy in elite-dominated political systems. With the advent of mass democracy the meaning of the dictum that war is an extension of politics underwent an important shift. It was no longer simply the rational pursuit of statecraft by elites, and became a more complex and dialectical process. Clausewitz's dictum is clearly misleading if it implies that politics is an entirely rational process, but if the non-rational elements of politics are acknowledged, then many of the objections to this dictum lose their force.

The second modification of Clausewitz concerned the meaning of the concept of 'politics'. With the addition of the concept of the trinitarian nature of war to Clausewitz's dictum (with 'politics' properly understood), the fundamentals of Clausewitz's thought are now in place. The next, and third, step in the elaboration of a neo-Clausewitzian sociology of war is to take account of the momentous changes in the conduct of war introduced by the industrial revolution.

EXPANDING THE TRINITY

The industrialization of warfare from the mid-nineteenth century onwards greatly enhanced the destructive and violent nature of war, and wars increasingly mobilized entire populations and economies. The importance of this transformation in the conduct of war cannot be underestimated, and it has led some analysts to suggest that the industrialization of war has greatly reduced the relevance of Clausewitz for contemporary social thought.[8]

It is certainly true, as Michael Handel has noted, that in his analysis of the trinitarian nature of war Clausewitz left out an element which the industrialization of warfare has made obvious: the economy. Calling this 'squaring the triangle', Handel has argued for the inclusion of a fourth realm, the economic, in a neo-Clausewitzian scheme (Handel 1986). In this article, this new realm will be referred to as 'the mundane'. It encompasses all those elements of material reality that constrain the warmaking activity of the military commander. Economics is important, both in terms of the productive capacity of a country and in terms of the financial capacity of the government. But the realm of the mundane should also include the problems of logistics, and the impact of science and technology.

Clausewitz's neglect of the mundane is explained only in part by the fact that he wrote before the industrialization of warfare. After all, as Clausewitz knew, the warmaking activity of states in the pre-industrial age was heavily constrained by state finances, by logistics, and by population and economic resources. It was, rather, the peculiar characteristics of Napoleonic warfare that partially blinded Clausewitz to the importance of economic and logistical factors. For a brief period, as Napoleon's armies swept the armies of the *ancien régimes* before them, warfare seemed to be released from the logistical and financial constraints that had so circumscribed eighteenth-century warfare and were so to determine the nature and outcome of warfare in the twentieth century. Napoleonic warfare enabled each element of Clausewitz's trinity to achieve full development: the elemental energies of a mobilized populace, the clarity and simplicity of state policy using war as an instrument of politics, and the genius of the commander, able to deliver decisive results by destruction of the enemy's armies.

Both before the French revolutionary wars and after, economic factors have been of considerable importance in warfare, and a great deal of recent work in the sociology of war has been concerned with the realm of the mundane. Works on logistics have shown how the operation of armies has been constrained by the ability to provide food, weapons, ammunition and other supplies for them, and to deliver these supplies to the right place at the right time (Van Crefeld 1977). Much recent work on war has emphasized the financial and

economic dimensions of military effort, both in the twentieth century and in previous periods (Mann 1986; Tilly 1990; Kaldor 1981). State-building and warmaking have gone together as states have attempted to find new and more effective ways of financing warfare, and as warfare has increased fiscal pressure on the government.[9]

FROM REALMS AND ACTORS TO DIMENSIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ORDERS

To Clausewitz's original three realms (passion, chance and reason) we have added one more: the realm of the mundane. However, Clausewitz's realms of war are really analytic dimensions of social action, rather than concrete institutional orders, and should be reconceptualized as such.[10] This is the fourth modification of the original Clausewitzian scheme. The following may be suggested: the notion of passion might be replaced with an analysis of values, affect and the symbolic order. In place of chance we might think of a constellation of attributes reflecting preparedness, flexibility and skill, as well as both risk and uncertainty. The realm of reason would correspond to purposive rationality in the Weberian sense; and the realm of the mundane would comprise a set of characteristics associated with efficiency, productive and organizational capacity, productivity and (with regard to the armed forces) discipline.[11]

The fifth modification is that, in addition to conceptualizing the realms as analytic dimensions, we should avoid the conflation of analytical dimensions with concrete institutional spheres. Let us look again at what Clausewitz has to say about the three realms of war (passion, chance and reason):

> The first of these three elements mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government . . . the political aims are the business of government alone. (1976: 89)

He posits a one-to-one correspondence between each 'realm' and a specific social actor. Clearly this is a simplifying device at best. For example, the identification of the people with passion, and the government with reason, might be valid when applied to the eighteenth century; with the rise of mass polities, this identification no longer holds in any simple manner. A changing mixture of both passion and reason characterizes the stances of both the people and the state. The one-to-one correspondence postulated by Clausewitz stems from his conservative politics, and not from theoretical necessity. While the role of patriotism, affect and symbols continues to be of great importance today, in modern polities mass citizenship participation means that at some level at least political leaders must engage in public debate over war aims. Similarly, the Clausewitzian notion that

the government is the embodiment of the cold, calculating rationality of *raison d'état* needs reappraisal. Modern polities, even with a certain degree of insulation of foreign policy from the operation of mass politics, are large and complex political systems which cannot be treated simply as the repository of substantive rationality. In addition to the more obviously non-rational elements of politics, the bureaucratic rationality of complex organizations often leads the polity in directions which are clearly less than rational from the perspective of state policy as a whole. In general terms, each actor involved in warfare will operate to a greater or lesser extent in each of the four realms or dimensions.

With these modifications, the Clausewitzian dictum that war is an extension of politics takes on a new and subtle meaning. As Theda Skocpol (1979) had reminded us in another context, the state has a Janus face: it looks both outward to other states, and inward to its own population. In mass polities state managers must reconcile the often conflicting demands of inner and outer politics. As Robert Putnam (1988) has suggested, this is a difficult process of simultaneously playing a two-level game. The intersection of these two dimensions of politics can produce interesting phenomena. For instance, while state managers may have a clearly defined set of war aims, these may be judged by them to be unacceptable to the electorate and an alternative rationalization for the war may be sought. A great deal of political effort (and contestation) may go into the legitimation of a particular war, producing shifting and often contradictory public rationales for warmaking. Both Vietnam and the Gulf War seem to be clear instances of the importance attached by state managers to influencing public perceptions of war aims. The compelling logic of the body bag count is one obvious way in which, at least in mass democracies, domestic politics interacts with foreign policy to give new meaning to the proposition that war is an extension of politics by other means. The politics of war is no longer confined, as it largely was in Clausewitz's day, to relations among states; it now also encompasses an important domestic political struggle to legitimize foreign policy and mobilize resources.

REDEFINING CLAUSEWITZ'S ACTORS

A final step in the direction of a neo-Clausewitzian sociology requires a disaggregation and recasting of the other aspect of the remarkable trinity: the actors. Clausewitz thought in terms of three actors: the commander and his army, the government and the people.

Despite the phrase 'the commander and his army', in his writing Clausewitz focuses largely on the person of the military commander, and has relatively little to say about the army as such. He generally

treats it as the unproblematic instrument of the commander's will. Clausewitz's focus needs, in the modern world of the bureaucratic military, to be redefined to include as separate elements the military high command, the complex array of military institutions, and the troops themselves. A considerable part of the sociology of war in the period since the Second World War has concerned itself with the military as an organization.[12] This literature can be incorporated bodily into a neo-Clausewitzian sociology of war.

The 'government', similarly, needs to be replaced with a notion of a differentiated political system. Modern political systems are complex, and contain manifold internal contradictions and inefficiencies. Political science studies of decision-making, of aggregating and defining political issues, of legitimation, and so on – in so far as they bear on issues of war and peace – should be incorporated into a neo-Clausewitzian account of warfare. In so doing, Clausewitz's rather unproblematic notion of 'reason' will undoubtedly require some reworking. At the very least, the complexity of modern polities suggests that a single undifferentiated notion of political rationality needs to be replaced by a more sophisticated account of how actors arrive at collective decisions.

The 'people' likewise, must cease to be the homogeneous mass depicted by Clausewitz, and be replaced in a neo-Clausewitzian sociology by an account that is nuanced in terms of class, organization, gender, religion, region, age, race, etc. And to these actors and institutional orders, a neo-Clausewitzian account would have to bring in the economy, government finance, and the organization of science and technology as these are relevant for warmaking.

Clausewitz's trinitarian scheme, therefore, needs modification in three ways: (1) the distinction must be made between realms (or dimensions) of war and actors or institutional spheres (instead of the conflation introduced by Clausewitz); (2) a fourth realm of war, which in this article has been referred to as the 'mundane', comprising the economy, state finances, logistics and organizational capacity, should be added to the analysis; (3) Clausewitz's three actors (the commander, the government and the people) should be expanded and disaggregated to make this more sociologically adequate. Together with the other two modifications (the definition of war in terms of politics, rather than in terms of the tendency towards unlimited violence, and the broader definition of 'politics'), these provide the basis for a neo-Clausewitzian sociology of war.

THE SINGULARITY OF CLAUSEWITZ

Carl von Clausewitz did for war what Karl Marx and David Ricardo did for political economy: he provided the basis for a non-individualistic,

properly sociological, approach, to his topic. Like Marx, Clausewitz's work sits uneasily on the boundary of a society that was passing away and a society that was coming into being. Marx described an early phase of capitalism, and used this to attempt to project the future development of the system. Clausewitz observed the first challenge to the international politics and warfare of the *ancien régime* and glimpsed the first phases of truly modern warfare. Yet, like Marx, he lived too soon to grasp the full implications of industrialization for the object of his study. Clausewitz clearly marks a break with the warfare of the *ancien régime* and stands on the threshold of industrial war; yet he has no adequate image of industrialized warfare.

There is, however, a crucial difference between Marx and Clausewitz. While Marx's shortcomings have been generally recognized and efforts have been made to transcend them while incorporating his insights, military thinking about the nature of war has singularly failed to move far beyond Clausewitz. An adequate theory of warfare cannot rest simply on Clausewitz's 1832 classic; as this article has attempted to show, a major revision is required.

With the growing complexity of modern states, Clausewitz's simple truths have become complex objects of empirical enquiry: the notion that the government could be the embodiment of reason has ceased to be self-evidently true; the 'people' have a more complex and problematic relation to war; and the scope for the commander's genius is more clearly circumscribed. The dead weight of the mundane hangs heavily over warfare once again. In this light, Clausewitz's dictum that 'the best strategy is always to be very strong; first in general, and then at the decisive point' (1976: 204) takes on a prophetic meaning. The outcomes of major, conventional wars in the twentieth century would be decided by a slugging match between economies and societies.[13]

These remarks hold true largely for conventional warfare between industrialized nations. In the twentieth century, in a dialectical reversal that would have delighted Clausewitz, in people's wars, wars of national liberation, low-intensity conflict and so on, material forces have ceased to be predominant. Here the target is the will of the enemy as expressed in sustained public support for a continuation of the war. The principal advantage of the insurgent population has been their willingness to bear the sacrifices necessary to bring about this result.[14] This, of course, fits perfectly with Clausewitz's appreciation of the energy released by social revolution and the defence of nationhood.

TOWARDS A NEO-CLAUSEWITZIAN SOCIOLOGY OF WAR

This article has attempted to expound the central ideas of Clausewitz's scheme, to draw attention to the contradictions in his thought, and to

propose five ways in which his thought can be developed to form the basis for a neo-Clausewitzian approach to war. A neo-Clausewitzian is directed to ask about the role of values and affect, of chance and preparedness, of instrumental rationality, of resources and organizations and of efficiency in the decisions to start and end wars, and also with regard to preparations for war and the conduct of war. A neo-Clausewitzian sociology of war answers these questions by feeding them through the array of relevant institutional orders and dimensions, integrating the results in a comprehensive overall analysis of war. The neo-Clausewitzian framework is a systematic way of addressing the central question: what kind of war are we looking at? The result should be a repackaging of the present *ad hoc* collection of studies into a coherent framework.

This neo-Clausewitzian scheme is, no doubt, limited in a number of ways. It would be surprising indeed if a single thinker, particularly one whose thought was so rooted in a very specific political and military conjuncture, could serve as the basis for a comprehensive paradigm for the study of war. It is, nevertheless, a fertile starting point. Sociologists have neglected Clausewitz, and left the study of his thought to military historians and military strategists. They need to assimilate his thinking, and to modify it to provide the basis for a systematic approach to the study of war. It is not necessary, as Michael Mann has suggested, 'to start from scratch' (1987: 56). The building blocks for a neo-Clausewitzian approach to the sociology of war are largely in place. The time has come to start fitting them together.

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Ian Roxborough
Department of Sociology and Department of History
Suny-Stony Brook

NOTES

1. I am using the term 'military theorist' very broadly here. I mean to include not only those people writing in and for military establishments, but also those who focus largely on war and the military to the general exclusion of a concern with 'society'. This includes much military history and strategic analysis. There are exceptions and difficulties in defining a clear boundary, of course, but I believe the distinction is a tenable one. It should be clear that I by no means underestimate the importance of this work; but it is not, by and large, social science as normally conceived.

2. And, apparently, also for businessmen, who may be the greatest consumers of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (1963). I do not mean to belittle Sun Tzu. No less an authority than Martin van Crefeld (1991) has described *The Art of War* as 'the best work on war ever written'.

3. The strategic contributions of naval strategists like Alfred Thayer Mahan, and geo-strategic thinkers like Mackinder and Spykman, while important and relevant, are not discussed here since they do not directly address the question of the nature of war.

4. One of the widely read 'Young

Turks' of the US military, Colonel Harry Summers, wrote a critique of the Vietnam War from a Clausewitzian framework (Summers 1982). His *On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War* (1992) devotes considerable space to analysing how the US military installed Clausewitz firmly in the centre of their thinking in the aftermath of Vietnam.

5. Some contemporary sociologists have devoted considerable attention to Clausewitz. The most notable is Raymond Aron, whose *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (1985) offers a Clausewitzian analysis of recent warfare. A useful discussion of Aron's work is Hall (1984). Both Kaldor (1982) and Shaw also draw on Clausewitz, but not in a sufficiently systematic manner. Giddens, as noted above, rejects Clausewitz entirely.

6. Clausewitz uses the notion of genius, in common with most writers of the time, to indicate a capacity for action, rather than a superhuman quality. The term 'genius' could also be applied to collectivities, and it would be entirely appropriate to expand Clausewitz's notion of the genius of the commander to include the army. He has in mind here the capacity both of great commanders and of the mass of the soldiery to act with great effectivity.

7. The original German is 'wunderliche', and it is unclear why the translators have chosen to use 'paradoxical' in this central passage.

8. Giddens says that, with the industrialization of war, it 'could no longer be held to the limited engagements, restricted by the political motives underlying them, that Clausewitz had in mind. The era of "total war" negates just this supposition, as well as others with which Clausewitz characterized the nature of warfare' (1985: 330). This hardly does justice to Clausewitz, who was frequently concerned with the almost unlimited warfare of the Napoleonic period and the tendency towards absolute war.

9. With the triumph of the mundane in the core areas of the world in the twentieth century, there has been a dual reaction to Clausewitz. Both Clausewitz's romanticism and his conservative elitism seem to have had a continuing appeal for military practitioners, but the social scientific enquiry into the nature of war has ceased to be of great interest. War has ceased to be the realm of the free play of genius, and has become subordinated to the exigencies and constraints of finance, resources, and logistics. (In this way the silences of the liberal and Marxist traditions in social thought meshed nicely with the focus on the economy as the deciding factor in war.) Not surprisingly, much of the contemporary work in the sociology of war has mirrored this shift and has, in effect, reduced the sociology of war to an important, but subordinate, aspect of the sociology of the state on the one hand, and the sociology of the economy on the other. In some ways, recent work in the sociology of war seems to have been about anything but war itself. It has been concerned with the 'society' half of 'war and society'.

10. There are a number of ways in which this might be done, and this is not something that can be satisfactorily resolved in an exploratory article such as the present.

11. This scheme has some obvious affinities with the Parsonian AGIL scheme. This is coincidental. As I have indicated, I regard the exact manner in which Clausewitz's 'realms of war' are translated into dimensions of social action as an open question.

12. The literature on the military as an institution is now enormous. For a useful bibliography, see Lang (1972).

13. Of course this was not all there was: the fighting power of particular armies, the skill of individual commanders, the solidity of national political systems, the mobilization of affect, and sheer blind luck all continue to be important. But most important of all has been the realm of the mundane. The longer the period of fighting, the greater the importance of the economic bases of the combatants.

14. The obvious example here is Vietnam, as numerous commentators have noted.

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