

What Wars Do

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What do wars do? They obviously kill and destroy, but ever since Weber and Hintze, if not before, we have been aware that they do much more¹. These authors noted the centrality of war and military organization for the political, social and economic development of the broadly defined “West”. More recently, Charles Tilly has argued that without war, the contemporary state would be unimaginable². The authors in this volume have sought to establish a more precise position: that there exists a positive link between war and democracy.

Such an argument seems paradoxical on many levels. Given our general positive view of democracy, how can it arise from the squalidness, violence, and injustice of war? Given the chaos and destruction that accompanies conflict, how can it produce something as dependent on rules as democracy? And yet, the historical evidence does indicate a link.

¹ Hintze, Otto. 1975. “Military Organization and the Organization of Violence” in Felix Gilbert, ed., *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. New York: Oxford and “Discipline and Charisma” in Max Weber. *Economy and Society*, 2 vols. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

² Tilly, Charles, “Reflections on the History of European State-Making” in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1975. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds, *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1995. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell . 1995.

Proponents of the war-democracy axis often do rely on broad correlation rather than direct causation. Simply put, in certain periods and in certain places there were a lot of wars, and afterwards there were more democracies than before. Small-n studies allow a better handle on how the specific policies that accompanied a country being at war later led to more progressive measures in one sphere or another. Even rigorous statistical testing does not falsify the claim, but merely suggests that the relationship may be more complex than some attest.

But, the arguments always have some causal ambiguity: is war, for example, a necessary or sufficient factor in establishing democratic rule? Are the exchanges that make democratic rule possible directly related to war or only spuriously associated with it? Does any conflict at any time have this effect, or only do some wars, at some times, and some places help produce democracy? Does simple size of the conflict (as measured in deaths, perhaps?) matter, or is what counts the extent to which the populace becomes involved? If only some wars make democracies, can we really speak of a general rule, or only a regionally and historically defined phenomenon? Finally, how long does this effect take?

The preceding chapters all make valuable contributions to answering these questions. By way of conclusion, this essay discusses how the “war effect” plays different roles in supporting the constituent parts or stages of

democracy as defined by T.H. Marshall³. Rather than arguing that war supports or does not support the establishment of democratic rule in general, we need to ask what its role is in producing and or defending civil or constitutional rights, political and electoral rights, and social rights. In the second part of the chapter, I propose that the creation of what Benedict Anderson calls an imagined community is the central mechanism through which war supports democracy in its various aspects. This link is largely neglected in the contributions to this volume and needs much more attention. I then discuss the problem of geographical and historical specificity of the “war effect” and conclude with some thoughts on the implications for democracy of the transformation of what we may call the “Western Way of War”⁴.

War and Rights

The foundational right in a democracy is that which recognizes the basic autonomy and inviolability of the individual. Civil rights are those that protect that status by assuring constraints on the actions any state can take regarding the life or property of a citizen. How does war affect this?

As Krebs notes in this volume, war can have very different effects on the concentration of power inside a regime and the manner in which that

³ T.H. Marshall. *Citizenship and social class and other essays*. Cambridge: CUP. 1950. Note that the sequence of rights “earned through war” may not be the same as Marshall proposes and that the existence of one form of rights need not guarantee the others.

⁴ For the classic formulation of how war shaped western political organization see Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

power is exercised. Wars provide “emergencies” during which legal rights are perceived as possibly unnecessary and even dangerous luxuries. The suppression of basic civil rights has often accompanied wars: freedom of speech is limited, the constraints on government are weakened, and individuals are required to give up some of their “negative freedom” to the collective needs of the endangered whole. In these instances, wars are prone to creating what Starr calls “garrison states”. As Kryder demonstrates, perceptions of imminent danger do help determine basic policing capacity.

The appeal of such draconian policies is considerable. In the wake of 9/11 and considerably after, it was a brave and rare American public figure that warned about the dangers of giving Federal and Executive authorities too much power. The notion that torture might “save lives” (no matter how empirically falsifiable) had many adherents, as did the notion that constitutional guarantees should not serve as obstacles to strategy. In the absence of dissenting views and with a constant flow of propaganda, states at war can create public atmospheres so consumed with fear of or loathing for an enemy that active suppression may even become redundant. Winston Smith might be well aware of the lies of dictatorial rule, but he still succumbed to the power of the “two minute hate”:

“The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretense was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric

current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic"⁵.

Similar experiences can be found in more democratic societies enraged with their enemies. Wars have the capacity to turn us all into lunatics and to convince us that only the state can protect us from the horrifying foe. The consequences of this form of patriotic euphoria are evident and sinister.

In these cases, it is democratic rule that may drive us into the arms of authoritarian temptation. There is a long tradition that claims that democratic practices are precisely what lead to the dangers during wartime. It is popular demands for protection and revenge that may lead governments to policies they may not take on their own⁶. If the enemy is "foreign" or different enough, the simple drawing of the distinction between the threat and the victims can actually produce euphoric expressions of belonging. The most obvious rub, of course, comes from giving anyone the right to label whomever as an enemy; if they come for them today in the "Black Maria", when do they come for me?

Obviously, the effect of this fear sometimes dissipates in the post-war period. In fact, as Krebs notes, the excesses of war often can turn into the lessons that help us better protect our rights. "Permanent states of war", however, are not unknown. A variety of regimes justify the limitation on

⁵ George Orwell, *1984*, p...

⁶ Bruce Ackerman, *Before the Next attack: Preserving Civil Liberties in an Age of Terrorism*. London: Yale University Press, 2006. Thanks to Sidney Tarrow for introducing me to some of these arguments: "War, State Making, and the 'War on Terror'" Presentation in CUNY, September 2008.

individual freedoms by either claiming that the enemy remains undefeated, or by pulling ever-new terrors from the political magicians' hat. This is particularly tempting in cases where the enemy always remains somewhat unseen and where the fights are more about ideas than about resources.

There are much more institutional contributions of war to civil rights than the simple setting of negative examples. First, we must consider the oft-cited exchange between states and soldiers⁷. This can be played out in many ways, but essentially involves citizens (even if the term is used anachronistically) demanding some rights in exchange for their participation in war. This participation need not necessarily involve violence. Arguably the most important instances of such an exchange have involved groups of citizens agreeing to provide financing in order to pay for the tools of war. Whether asking for blood or specie, states have often have to “pay” in order to “play” at war.

The grant of citizenship has often been historically linked to military necessities. The concept of the citizen-soldier is born in classical Greece and Rome, and advances in rights can often be traced to strategic needs. (Similarly, the decline of rights can also be traced to the development of military alternatives. So, for example, the professionalization of the Roman army undermined the link between service and citizenship). Similar exchanges have been a mainstay of the history of the rise of the constitutional state in Britain and the institution of a militia in various parts

⁷ See Bryan Turner and Peter Hamilton, *Citizenship*. Taylor and Francis, 1994.

of the world. Such contracts between states and populace are not solely historical artifacts. Today in the United States, for example, there exist programs offering “expedited citizenship” through military service.⁸

Sometimes, the relationship between citizenship and military service is less of a bargain between soldier and state and more the product of the need of the state to defend its reputation. The argument has been made that the competition for global legitimacy during the Cold War forced the Federal Government to support a broader civil rights agenda than might have been the case otherwise⁹. While war has often been associated with the elevation of civil rights for previously persecuted minorities, however, the institution of military service may also serve as a bulwark of ingrained power. In these instances, military service legitimizes a hierarchical ordering of society. The resistance of the samurai to the Meiji reforms, for example, was in part based on their awareness that these would elevate previously detestable peasants into potential soldiers¹⁰. Similarly, one could trace many of the gender or sex based barriers to full citizenship to the historical male monopoly on military service.

What of voting and war? The complex relationship between electoral democracy and the militaries, between the polling booth and the barracks, has been the subject of the most study and Mansfield and Snyder’s

⁸ See the policy report by the Congressional Research Service: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL31884.pdf>

⁹ Mary Dudziak. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* Princeton University Press, 2000.

¹⁰ Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai and the Sacred*. Osprey Publishing, 2006.

contribution to this volume provides a richly rigorous foundation for future discussion. When we include the entire globe of democracies there appears to be a weak relationship between suffrage and conflict, or between war and democracy.

We ought not to be surprised in that electoral rights are a much more complicated structure and historically contingent than what we may call civil liberties or even citizenship. Electoral democracy requires both that people be allowed to vote and that their vote actually mean something for political decision-making. The relationship between war and the political import of election results is therefore harder to unravel than a simple one-time exchange.

The key historical step here, as Avant notes, is the creation of mass armies, where the nobility no longer battles merely supported by a rabble, but where the nation as a whole is called to arms. For some, this represents an ideal of citizens voluntarily serving a republic and therefore establishing their ownership of it. For others, it is the mechanism of conscription, which following the logic of the discussion on civil rights, triggers the exchange exemplified in a Swedish folk saying: “*One soldier, one rifle, one vote*”¹¹. In this process, each individual willing to risk his life (and again the gender specificity is important) is paid off by the state with a promise of suffrage.

¹¹ Uri Ben-Eliezer . “A Nation-In-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel's First Years” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 264-285

Conversely, wars can elicit states of emergency where elections need to be postponed, as Mayor Giuliani sought to propose in the aftermath of 9/11. Wars also potentially limit suffrage by forcing the creation of “grand coalitions” that not only obscure political differences, but also retain power through an agreed deferment of elections, as was the case with the British War Cabinet of WWII.

There is also the tricky historical question of causal order. Which really comes first, the soldier or the citizen? Do mass armies produce mass citizenship, or do already massified polities produce mass armies? We do not have enough historical detail on these questions. The English yeoman precedes the archer of Agincourt and the *levee en masse* would have been impossible before 1789. What is needed is detailed research that carefully documents the process through which conscription evolved from an obligation imposed on the most miserable of subjects (“the scum of the earth” in Wellington’s phrase) to the expected duty of the free citizen. We know, for example, of Machiavelli’s approval of “citizen armies” as opposed to the mercenary variety in the 16th Century, but how did this relate to the domestic politics of the Italian city states?

Moreover, suffrage does not mean democracy. Even if war plays a significant role in expanding voting rights, there is no reason to believe that these votes will have any meaning. The Spanish expression “elección búlgara” (Bulgarian election) refers to those elaborately staged rituals of

popular participation where the regime receives overwhelming support¹².

How do elections become actually relevant and what is the role of war in that process?

Bermeo's chapter in this volume comes closest to proposing specific conditions through which military conflict can promote democratic government. Her findings seem to indicate that military defeat is often a good predictor of some democratic reform (but no guarantee as many cases in interwar Europe attest). Yet, note that at the core of this effect there is no necessarily military component. It is the public failure of a regime to accomplish some goal that delegitimizes authoritarian rule enough as to provide an opportunity for democracy. Such delegitimation could come from an economic crisis or a simple failure to perform adequately. Rather than war making democracy, we might better speak of failure doing so.

The final aspect to take into consideration when defining the relationship between war and voting is that other supposed child of war, state development. For democracy to be established in any meaningful way, the state has to have enough capacity not just to run an election, but also to make its results mean something in policy terms. As Charles Tilly argued, the very process of demanding and defending rights was part of the give and

¹² These ceremonial approbations can often take a life of their own. Stalin supposedly had to change the vote of 100% noted in an election of the 1940s in order to make the results more believable!

take of state-making in the first place¹³. Wars have been cited as producing both states and democracies, but the order of their creation might be critical. It may be that for a functioning democracy, one needs two wars: one to create a state, the next to make it democratic. Efforts to do the latter without the former may lead to failure and a return to simpler authoritarian rule.

Does democracy assist the development of what Marshall called social rights? Kage's chapter provides an important analysis of the basis for this argument: war does promote social mobilization and teaches a broader array of citizens "civic skills" which can then potentially be used to promote their interests. Moreover, as in the case of civil and electoral rights, the need of the state for popular support during wartime provides a key incentive for social spending (or at least the promise thereof). In this instance, instead of being "bribed" by a vote or recognition of citizenship, political subjects are offered state assistance in one form or another.

As Kier documents in this volume, war forces the state to both grow and redistribute. In the best cases, these strategies produce a broad legitimation of both the regime and socially progressive policies. This is particularly true in "mass" or "total" wars in which the population is required to make significant sacrifices and where these need to be "purchased". Yet, there are no guarantees. The wrong kind of approaches to resource mobilization can lead to the rejection of the status quo by particular

¹³ This is part of the argument from the very beginning of Tilly's work on state building in the 1975 volume and continued through his work on democracy more than 30 years later.

segments, as in Italy. Or, the measures taken can be seen as exceptional and not really challenging the politico-economic structures, as in the US. In his chapter, Wilson also demonstrates that the perception of what happened during a war is also critical as different forms of economic intervention may be recognized and celebrated, or not.

It is also important to recognize the many instances of mobilization that did not lead to democracy. Combinations of effective propaganda and coercion can produce a significant popular support for military victory with no democratic institutional legacies. The totalitarian regimes of WWII certainly mobilized their masses with the same fervor, and arguably effectiveness, as the democracies. Note, moreover, that the negotiation between state and populaces need not imply institutionalized social rights, much less welfare states. Populations may bargain for schools and hospitals, but also settle for bread and circuses.

Wars do produce a new subgroup in a population that enjoys a specific legitimacy and whose claims many governments are reluctant to ignore: veterans¹⁴. These groups not only enjoy a special symbolic status, but they are also both more organized and better trained than other possible mass claimants. But even in this instance, the demands of veterans are not

¹⁴ The best contemporary argument for the link between war and the welfare state is Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. But note how little work there actually is on veterans and their political roles. See the discussion in Neill Diamant, *Embattled Glory: Veterans, Military Families and the Politics of Patriotism in China*. Boulder, CO: Roman & Littlefield, forthcoming.

enough to guarantee an expansion of social provisions. The military itself was willing to suppress veterans' demands when the Bonus Army marched in 1932. Moreover, veterans may demand more welfare provisions, or they can demand a more conservative social order as was the case with the *Heimwehr* or the *Freikrops* of interwar Germany.

Yet another way that war may lead to greater social rights is through the instrumental use of welfare policies to produce better soldiers or simply more loyal citizens¹⁵. In the most basic version of such a policy, welfare policies can assure that recruits arrive at the barracks relatively healthy and literate. As warfare became massified, the ability of any state to produce large numbers of soldiers immediately ready to assume their roles or at least to be trained became ever more important. In this instance, institutions that assure a healthier and better educated potential reserve for military duty provide significant advantages and those states that have developed them may be positively selected. Similarly, the ability of a state to count on a loyal population to support militaristic adventures often depended on its ability to deliver services. Both motivations, for example, appear to have played major roles in the development of the German welfare state under Bismarck¹⁶.

¹⁵ For a broad discussion of this relationship see Michael Mann, *States Wars and Capitalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988; Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

¹⁶ War can accomplish a similar welfare function after its conclusion. See Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*. New York: OUP, 2005.

In more contemporary settings, war also seems to be the exceptional case whereby classic Liberals or, in American parlance economic conservatives, are willing to suspend their commitment to absolute individuality and encourage the development of collective goods. The sacrifice of the few thereby legitimizes better state provisions for the care of the many. Again, as in the discussion regarding civil rights above, note that such willingness to place collective interests or responsibilities ahead of individual autonomy may actually be detrimental to democracy.

Wars can, however, also limit the fiscal capacity of the state to address social ills. Certainly LBJ was concerned that demanding too much to pay for Vietnam would derail the creation fo the Great Society. More recently, the Reagan defense buildups, combined with lower taxes, provided much less fiscal wiggle room for any expansion fo social services. Yet, recent work has challenged the alleged choice between “guns *or* butter” which still defines large elements of policy discussions. According to this developing view, it is imperative to recognize the welfare functions of the military itself.¹⁷ Social assistance for military families, veterans’ benefits, and educational supports, make the military a leading social service provider in the US. The extent to which these services then lead ot a broader welfare isomorphism needs to be better analyzed.

¹⁷ Rabinowitz, Mikaela. "Rethinking the Relationship between the Military and the Welfare State" *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Jul 31, 2008; Brian Gifford, “The Camouflaged Safety Net: The US Armed Forces as Welfare State Institution”, *Social Politics*, 13,3, 2006, pp. 372-399.

The findings of the chapters in this volume indicate that war has a potentially important role to play in the development of democracy, but it is certainly not necessary or sufficient, and may even contribute to developments antithetical to democracy. As Starr notes, wars may be catalytic moments, but the outcome of transformations are far from certain. Instead of perhaps too broad a claim about the causal relationship between conflict and democracy, the chapters provide a more detailed view of the wake of war: states with more *potential* interventionist capacity, and citizenry with a greater *potential* claim for voice. The next step has to be to ask what makes these potentialities real?

War and the Imagined Community

Describing the aftermath of an Athenian naval battle towards the end of the Peloponnesian War, Barry Strauss nicely evokes the spirit often associated with war:

“For a brief moment they were all Athenians. On an afternoon in September 406 B.C., the city of Athens achieved a unity that usually eluded it. It was imperfect unity, with no women and only a small percentage of Athenian men present -- less than one per cent. Yet those men represented a cross-section of Athens’ male population. They ranged from the richest to the poorest, from cavalier to knave, from representatives of families so old that they seemed to have sprung from the Attic soil itself to immigrants from obscure villages somewhere in Thrace or Sicily. As a group they comprised citizens, metics (resident aliens), foreign mercenaries, and slaves. They spanned the ranks of the Athenian military, from horsemen to hoplites (infantrymen), from deck-soldiers to rowers, from the home guard to scouts. On this afternoon, men who normally would have scorned each other became brothers. They extended their hands to each other,

literally, because they had to hold on for dear life"¹⁸.

This passage exemplifies that oft-cited claim that wars make “brothers” of us all (again, the gender/sexual identity question is an important one for democratic suffrage). The centrality of war in nation-making was recognized by the German idealists of the 19th Century. Herder defined the origins of the German folk in the battle of the Teutoburg forest, Fichte celebrated the spirit of Jena, and Hegel compared war to an ocean wind purifying the health of the people from the “corruption” of perpetual peace. The great historian of war, Michael Howard, claims that for much of the 19th Century Europe, “...war was the necessary dialectic in the evolution of nations.”¹⁹ A century later, Georg Simmel could celebrate the start of World War I as an opportunity to consolidate national sentiment and cohesion: “the war heralded a purging in the Augean stables of the urbanized money cultures of the West, rooting out all that was ephemeral, superfluous, excessive and inessential in the experience of life”.²⁰

More recently, in part as a reaction to the too quickly accepted notion of what we may call an “Ambroasian spirit”, there has been rigorous

¹⁸ “The Dead At Arginusae And The Debate Over The Athenian Navy Barry Strauss” *Nautiki Epithewrisi [Naval Review]* 545.160s (Jan-Feb 2004): 40-67

¹⁹ Michael Howard, *Lessons of History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 39.

²⁰ Austin Harrington, “Introduction to Georg Simmel’s Essay ‘Europe and America in World History’”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 8, 1, 2005, p. 64.

questioning of the extent to which wars do create nations²¹. As we saw in the Winter chapter, wars can actually lead to what might even be called anti-nationalist or certainly anti-bellicist movements. Yet, I would argue that there is fairly clear evidence for war making a strong contribution to, not necessarily a state centered nationalism, but a less institutionally coherent, united, if imagined, community.

I would argue that without that sense of a community, the democratizing potential of war is nil. Democracy involves the elaboration of agreements regarding future political decisions. Such political pacts must remain vague and require considerable amounts of trust to be viable.

Without such a sense of trust, doubts as to the enforceability of contracts and the willingness of others to live with its consequences would undermine the potential for social agreements. Much of the classic Liberal notions of democracy and the state, beginning in Greece, but more explicitly with the English tradition of Hobbes and Locke, assume the prior existence of a mutually accepted *polis* whose members recognize communal interests and identities. Without that pre-existing union, the exchanges described above would not lead to the Marshallian process of ever accruing rights, but to a

²¹ Stephen Ambrose was a well known exponent of the special community created by war, for example, see his *Band of Brothers, E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: From Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. Paul Fussell has been one of the strongest critics of such a romantic image of war, but even when criticizing, he admits to how war does create some sense of shared purpose. See his *The Boys' Crusade: The American Infantry in Northwestern Europe, 1944-1945* 2003. For an interesting revisionist analysis of the communitarian effect of war, see Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

form of political free-for-all where each member or sub-community sought to protect and expand its position *vis-a-vis* all others. War, by defining a clear boundary around the community makes it possible for it to even consider governing itself.

The contrast of “us” and “them” is never clearer than in war. Regions, which had preserved their identities, can merge into a single group, at least temporarily²². The best indicator of this is precisely how veterans groups recognize each other’s legitimacy even across national boundaries. But most of the time, those who are suffering through a war do not recognize their fellow victims across a political divide. Rather they seek to partner in new ways with those whom they see a common bond, be it ethnic, geographic, political, or ideological. Wars provide opportunities for the elaboration of rituals of sacrifice and reciprocity, which arguably are the foundations of social life.²³

This is the sense of unity that Dankwart Rustow claimed was an essential part of the foundation for democratic rule is an essential product of war²⁴. It is a unity born out shared struggle, a sense of danger, and the euphoric celebration of community. This sense of oneness can then translate into a recognition of the less fortunate in the society as worthy of assistance

²² See Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

²³ Christian Papilloud, “Three Conditions of Human Relations: Marcel Mauss and Georg Simmel”. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 30, 4, 2004, pp. 431-444.

²⁴ Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Towards a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 2 (April 1970).

(they are, after all, our “brothers and sisters at arms”), it can serve to expand suffrage (“there are no racists in the foxholes”), and it may also provide the basis for the recognition of minimal civil rights that all in the community can share.

This spirit of commonality need not be triumphant. War monuments, the architectural expression of this unity, have certainly gone from the celebratory (Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the Wellington Arch in London), to the commemorative (the Cenotaph in London or the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC). No matter the emotion they seek to elicit, all of these serve to recognize a shared identity and are used to habitually remind the population of such²⁵. The particular suffering involved in civil wars may actually create bonds across ideological or ethnic divisions through the commitment of “never again”, be it in 19th Century US or 20th Century Spain.

A final way in which war creates community is by literally bringing together populations long isolated from each other. While many of the European armies well into the 20th Century would rely on locally defined regiments, the identity basis of these dissipated as wars progressed, and units became less regional and more national. In the case of the United States, boot camp was (and in some ways remains) a place where different members of the society could meet. The differences being gulfed could be based on class (especially important in both world wars in almost all

²⁵ Jay Winter has done of the best work on war and memory as in his *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995)

countries) or ethnicity (exemplified for the US by the Hollywood cliché of the Italian from Chicago, the Jew from Brooklyn, the cowboy from Oklahoma, and the Ivy Leaguer from Connecticut, meeting on their way to war. After the mid-1960s the urban black kid would join them). These meetings fostered not just a set of shared identities, but also may have contributed to the creation of a common language and even culture.

Even if we accept the powerful effect of war, it is worthwhile noting that the cohesive potential of war is also highly dependent on the ante-bellum state of social relations. Lewis Coser wonderfully contrasts the British and French responses to the onrush of war in 1940²⁶. In the first case, the Nazi threat increased social cohesion, but in the latter, pressures led not to unity, but to defeat. The pressures of war can make a “happy national family” ever stronger, but it can finish with the destruction of those already ready to break apart.

We should not forget, however, that inclusiveness, if and when it comes, is defined by exclusion. *We* are the same because *they* are different from *us*. It is this sense of exclusive community, even more than the institutional basis of territoriality, which might make notions of transnational citizenship so difficult to achieve. War is an important part to the construction of this community, but in the absence of collective enemies

²⁶ Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1956, pp. 93-94.

that serve to underscore what we share, how to create a democratic unity on a non-national basis?

There is perhaps no better example of this “Janus-face” of war, on the one hand welcoming its citizens, and on the other seeking to crush those against its walls, than the Athenians in Thucydides. On the hand, Pericles can claim:

It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few...There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private business we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant.²⁷

On the other, some pages later, the Athenians can speak to the Melians with nothing but threats and disdain prior to their destruction of the city:

For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences...- since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.²⁸

So citizens of democracies may look after one another, but also be willing to bully any of those they do not recognize as equals.

If there has been much written on war and democracy, it cannot compare with the massive literature on the so-called democracy peace²⁹. If war produces democracy, does it, in turn, produce peace? It is true that

²⁷ Book 2.34-46

²⁸ Book 5.85-113

²⁹ See for example, Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

democracies seem to be reluctant to fight each other, and it is possible that this reluctance stems from the power of the populace to punish belligerent politicians. Yet, democracies also seem quite willing and able to fight non-democracies. Sometimes these fights are bathed in the glow of a crusade for freedom, other times not. What is particularly interesting here is that in many cases it is popular demands that drives war, as in the various calls to teach someone or other a lesson or to simply "take what should be ours". Fear of a populace frustrated by an early peace or simply fear of appearing weak may motivate politicians as much as fearing the pacifist vote. For example, we will long debate the extent democratic mechanisms braked or fueled the American invasion of Iraq.

In his chapter, Starr reverses the question of war and democracy and wonders how and when democracies fight. Do democracies fight in different ways than do other types of regimes? Thucydides certainly did not believe that democratic regimes would perform as well as more authoritarian counterparts and fairly explicitly laid the blame for the eventual Athenian defeat on the *hoi polloi*. And yet, the historical record is surprising in that, particularly in wars requiring the highest levels of social mobilization, democracies perform rather well. Moreover, their forms of victory seem better at assuring postbellic peace.

In many ways, these two sides of democracy, peaceful and bellic, are the paradox that Winter documents for Cassin. How can notions of decency

and humanity be made to apply universally, no matter political identity? Note, for example, how the notion of basic human rights developed much more easily in the face of a totalitarian threat during the Cold War than in the post-1989 environment where economic considerations have been included. It seems easier to feel for others' suffering and to be willing to fight against it, when there is a common bond (or the perception of one) between victim and observer. In this regard, it is interesting that a common theme in such contemporary "Earth is in danger" films such as *Independence Day* or *The Day After Tomorrow* is the creation of planet wide unity. Perhaps only in the face of such a "planetary emergency" will we develop a non-national sense of an imagined community.

No matter the import of bellic cohesion, it is also worthwhile to note that the same mechanism which produces social unity, can also lead to centralization of power and to an increase in non-democratic governance. Over and above threats to civil liberties discussed above, the unification brought on by war can lead to the suppression of dissenting views and the imposition of a single model for being a patriot. Lewis Coser warns, "Groups which are engaged in continued struggle tend to lay claim on the total personality involvement of their members....[and] are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity".³⁰

Beyond the Modern Atlantic

³⁰ Coser, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

How universal are these legacies of war? The literature on the social effects of war seems to be based on relatively small number of cases: Napoleonic France, Bismarckian Germany, Meiji Japan, interwar Britain, and post-Civil War United States. This geographical and temporal sampling is partly the reason why scholarship on war and democracy can find so much historical support, and yet fail the statistical significance test when applied to a broader group of cases. We need to expand the sampling frame of our scholarship on war if we are to discover truly generalizable principles³¹.

What seems to be the evidence for the effect of war and democracy outside of the usual suspects?

The literature on the political and social effects of war first neglects many of the European cases outside of the preferred circle. Spain, for example, was engaged in wars almost continuously from the mid-16th century through 1815 and yet, the resulting states, whether Hapsburg, Bourbon, or “Liberal”, were infamous for their inefficacy. The Balkans were at war almost continuously whether with one of the great powers or with each other from the mid 19th Century through 1945, and yet strong states, much less democratic regimes, failed to develop. Perhaps the most surprising missing case is that of Russia, whose experience of conflict from 1914 through 1945

³¹ For an excellent start on this see Brian Trevor and Roxana Botea, “Tilly Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World”, *International Studies Review*, 10, 2008, and Hillel Soiffer, ed., ‘Revisiting Infrastructural Power’ special issue of *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 2008.

probably cost nearly 40 million dead. How did that experience shape Soviet society?

The cases of the Middle East are also relatively understudied.³² The colonial and post-colonial struggles of Algeria and Egypt, for example, did not produce strong democracies nor has the constant state of war with Israel done much for its neighbors. The Iran-Iraq war arguably did produce more potent (if authoritarian) states, but ones also run by either small thuggish clique or a *sui genesis* alliance of clerics, soldier zealots, and small businessmen. The case of Israel seems to confirm many of the claims made for war and the creation of both a deep democracy and a strong sense of nationhood. Note, however, than even in this case, the unity among Israelis facing external enemies has not trumped the deeper ethnic loyalties and identifications of Jews and Arabs. Nor has it guaranteed the rights of Arab veterans.

South Asia provides an excellent and yet barely used laboratory for testing the relative importance of war for democracy. Both India and Pakistan inherited parts of the Raj army. They both faced potentially disastrous wars with clearly demarcated others (each other!). Yet, the contrast between Pakistan and India could not be greater in terms of those two classic institutional legacies of war: state capacity and democracy. We

³² See David Waldner, *State Building and Late Development*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

need scholarship to explore how whatever these legacies might have been were dissipated in Pakistan or strengthened in India.

Outside of the Japanese case, the effect of war in the creation of the East Asian economic miracles has also been unappreciated³³. We know that expenditures of the Viet Nam war did help spur initial growth in some of these economies, but what about their own conflicts? One of the most incredible transformations in contemporary history was that of the Kuomintang from the corrupt and ineffective institution prior to 1949 to the (still corrupt, but much more effective) overseer of the Taiwanese development. What role did the trauma of the defeat to the Communists play in the reform of the Kuomintang? Similar arguments could be made about the South Korean regime frightened by its easy collapse during the Korean War. Fear of both communism and isolation from Malaysia arguably created war-like conditions for Singapore. As in South Asia, counter examples also abound as the experience of WWII and later local insurgencies did not create a strong or democratic state in the Philippines, not did the equivalents do so in Indonesia.

Interestingly, African and Latin American wars and their state building consequences have received some attention³⁴. In both cases, the absence of wars or of the “right” kind of wars has been noted as an important

³³ Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed. *The Developmental State*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

³⁴ Jeff Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Miguel A. Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and Statemaking in Latin America*. University Park: Penn State Press, 2002.

potential factor in the construction of states, or the lack thereof. Even here, however, exceptional cases like Chile and South Africa and the possible contribution of war to their political development have been understudied.

The sampling bias also includes a preference for some wars and not for others. The number of studies on the political and social consequences of the Franco-Prussian War would fill a not so small library. The attention paid to the Russo-Japanese War might fill a shelf.

The Eurocentric perspective on war also applies to discussions of the future of conflict. Books such as James Sheehan's *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?* and many of the chapters in this volume speak with assurance about the end of war. If Sheehan is at least explicit that he is speaking of Western Europe, many other commentators are not. Yet, for large parts of the world, war and even "total war" is not a thing of the past. India and Pakistan maintain fortified frontiers, Iran and Iraq fought something of a copy of the Western front only 20 years ago, the Chinese military thinks geopolitically of challenges to the North and West as well as control of the South China Sea. The Great Lakes region in Africa has witnessed a poor man's version of geo-military competition and the Brazilian Army does not take control of the Amazon for granted. For many of these countries, war is not only *not* a thing of the past, but also even arguably a path towards a greater future. What do the scholars of war have to say to them?

One other problem with the “sampling” of war studies is the inadequate attention paid to differentiating between forms of warfare. Influenced in part by the availability of the Correlates of War dataset, we have learned to speak of war as simply those conflicts rated as such by the number of participants involved. Yet, it would make sense to disaggregate war types. For example, “wars between equals” as in the classic cases of intra-European wars should be treated differently than colonial wars. The role played in social and political development of occupation duties, as opposed to wars truly ending in decisive battle also need to be defined and distinguished. (Certainly we can imagine that occupation duties would have corrosive elements on the democratic formation or political attitudes of veterans, for example).

A call for a broader set of comparisons is not simply the product of an inclusion fetish or of simply the desire to create ever more analytical categories for their own sake. The strange fact that Europe produced arguably the bloodiest centuries in history *and* the most progressive and democratic state deserves recognition, but also demands a broader comparative perspective. That the two aspects of European history are linked seems obvious, but what the precise mechanism may be and how these may be duplicated (hopefully with less blood) are not.

The End of War?

The last half-century has witnessed a dramatic change in the role of warfare in the daily political, social, and economic life of the developed societies in North America and Europe. What are the implications of this for democracy?

Several of the chapters in this volume have addressed this question with special attention to the implication for political life of the “War on Terror”. Let us begin by analyzing what has happened to the kinds of war that most scholars argue did lead to democratic reforms.

The more functionalist reading of Marx sees capitalism as a product of the steam engine. Similarly, the “mass-reserve” army of the 19th and 20th Century was partly a product of technology. As many have argued, the mass production of weapons and their increasing lethality both undermined the aristocratic claim to military privilege and allowed the military to become ever more inclusive. In a classic dialectical shift, however, the development of ever more destructive technology led to the creation of weapons that made these reserve armies impractical and even dangerous. Thus, the possibility of a classic “Western War” between the rich became ever less likely, especially after 1989.

The “West” however, did maintain a monopoly over such instruments and when new powers made the mistake of challenging it in the military arena, they were able to use it in incredibly destructive fashion. Thus the

stupidity or insanity of Saddam Hussein in challenging the US to fight a WW II tank war led to his own annihilation.

Nevertheless, the West could not claim a monopoly on more “democratic” aspects of the new technology. Biological and nuclear weapons are potentially the ideal “weapons of the weak” in that while requiring sophisticated technology; they can be produced by even more the most destitute of states (as in the case of North Korea). The very complexity and inter-connections of contemporary life also makes the rich societies much more vulnerable to the strategies available to the less developed. The “war on terror” is particularly challenging as the enemy is not even another state, but a much more elusive network of potential combatants.

The changes in technology and in the definition of the enemy made it possible, and even imperative, to do away with mass conscription. The capacity of the killing machines was such that one needed fewer men-at-arms to kill an equivalent number of the enemy. Moreover, the technology required so much training that a drafted recruit would only begin to become useful around the time his enlistment ended. These changes made it possible for the wishes of both the professional military and the burgeoning middle class to be satisfied: a professional (and in some cases privatized) military fit perfectly with the political and technological transformation of the “West”. The new form of threat makes the old style military even less practical. How

is a mass army to deal with an enemy whose identity might be unknown and whose presence might be distributed across thousands of miles?

Will the new form of war change the relationship of conflict with democracy? Again, explicitly limiting ourselves to the developed countries that have experienced this transition, the answer has to be yes. Consider the links discussed above. The “exchange” mechanism of rights for service clearly breaks down when only a relative (and socially segregated few) can claim that they have served. When veterans are no longer part of the masses, but simply another interest group, the “back and forth” between state and populace is much less consequential.

More ominously, the segregation of military service also breaks down the positive contribution that war serves for the creation of the imagined community. Certainly in the US, the perception and reality of who has served since the Vietnam War has fed a class and even region based sense of an *intra-national* them and us. The unpopularity fo the Iraq war has made discussions of who serves politically challenging.³⁵ The oft-cited difference in discipline, demeanor, and success of those with military background has also served to highlight the supposed “decadence” of the average civilian. The

³⁵ Yet, the demographics of military service and even being in Iraq certainly are not that of the aristocratic and racist state often depicted. The decades long African American over-representation in the Army has been reduced and whites are actually marginally more likely to serve in Iraq. The upper class is notable in its absence, but the recruits come more form the storied middle than the bottom. The most difficult demographic problem may actually be regional, with the South and rural areas in general over-represented. See David Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal, “America’s Military Population”. *Population Bulletin*, 59, 4, 2004.

hagiographic worship of the “warrior” in contemporary American political rhetoric is potentially dangerous, not matter how well deserved such attention and praise may be³⁶.

Finally, the very nature of the new form of war represents a much more intense potential threat to civil liberties. In a war where the identity and plans of the enemy are the key unknowns, the temptation to favor one side of the balance between safety and liberty is great. The “War on Terror” risks all the dangers associated with threats to democracy from war, while providing few of its benefits. The potential to manipulate an ever constant, yet secretive, threat from those with whom we (supposedly) share so few values is both obvious and immense. The ease with which the threat of war can and has been used to distinguish between “degrees of Americanness” should give us considerable pause.

This is not to say that democracy is under imminent threat. The long-term legacies of war discussed above are deep and institutionalized in laws and practices. Yet, in nations where ethnic identity is less and less homogenous, the absence of the cohesion of the “national” wars of the 19th and 20th Centuries will leave a significant hole in a political fabric. Such communities, constantly fed a rhetoric of menace and xenophobia, may be far too willing to sacrifice liberties in order to feel safer in a dangerous world.

³⁶ The tone of recent “video-ads” for the National Guard, for example, could be troubling: <http://nationalguardwarrior.com/>.