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Bringing the study of warfare into theories of nationalism[1]

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Abstract

This article argues that warfare has been marginalised in theories of nationalism, but that in conjunction with nationalism is vital for understanding the rise of nation-states, the formation of nations and the nature of the international system. It offers a critique of statist approaches, suggests mechanisms through which warfare may sacralise nations, and explores different patterns of nation-state formation as they affect the interstate system. In particular, it emphasises tensions between state- and nation-formation as activated by the fortunes of war and the destabilising effects of waves of imperial dissolution, which are accompanied by patterns of re-imperialization. It suggests that it is simplistic both to claim that war has led to a transition from empires to nation-states and that contemporary practices of war-making have led to a post-national era.

Key words: warfare; state formation, national sacralisation; international system; empire; postnationalism.

Introduction

The study of warfare remains a lacuna in theories of nationalism, including the work of Ernest Gellner who is deservedly regarded as a foundational scholar in the field. Until his late writings Gellner's view of nationalism was benign, understanding it as a necessary concomitant of the transition from agro-literate to modern industrial societies. So too was his conception of the resulting international order: the nation-state system operated to decentre power, functioning as a series of (canal) locks. Potential conflict between ethnically diverse populations of unequal power was thereby defused so that each group could find its distinctive level in a competitive world. (Gellner 1964: 175-8). In stressing the emancipatory aspects of nationalism and its compatibility with a liberal modernity, Gellner rightly redressed Elie Kedourie's emphatically negative portrayal of nationalism as an irrationalist ideology that generated war and revolutionary upheavals (Kedourie 1966). Nonetheless, he, like most theorists of nationalism, neglected the role of warfare in conjunction with nationalism as a causal force in the formation of nations, nation-states, and the international system.

I wish to address this failure and examine the very different view of our world that results, one that qualifies the connection between nationalism and modernisation. There are at least four reasons for bringing warfare (in its changing forms) into our theoretical understanding of nationalism (see further, Hutchinson 2017). First, warfare has been central for much *nation-state* formation. Michael Howard reminds us that most nation-states that came into existence before the mid-20th century were created by war or had their boundaries defined by wars or internal violence (Howard 1991: 39–41). It is also hardly an exaggeration to say that *modern* nationalism, in both its civic and ethnic varieties, crystallised in war. The former was expressed during the victory of the French revolutionary army at the battle of Valmy in 1792 when the

French charged Prussian ranks to the cry 'Vive la nation' and sang La Marseillaise. The latter ethnic conception was articulated by Fichte in his 'Addresses to the German Nation' (1807) after Napoleon's humiliation of Prussia at the battle of Jena. Many nationalists subsequently have cited the willingness of populations to sacrifice themselves for the nation-state as an indicator of its validity.

Second, warfare has contributed to the formation of *nations*. The constitutive myths of many nations are derived from war experiences, shaping perceptions of the fundamental values of populations and their place in space and in time. Wars have often operated in the perception of nationalists as critical junctures in the history of nations for good or ill. Most societies have many such martial time markers of great victories as well as calamitous defeats, and the memories of these contrasting fortunes are invoked to draw moral lessons. In the words of Ernest Renan (1882: 26-9) 'a heritage of glory and a reluctance to break apart, to realize the same programme in the future; to have suffered , worked, hoped together; that is worth more than common taxes and frontiers… In fact, national sorrows are more significant than triumphs because they impose obligations and demand a common effort.' An awareness of the vicissitudes of war and the vulnerabilities of even the greatest states has often given heart to nationalists fretting against the subordination of their peoples in imperial states (Talmon 1960: 270-1)

Third, the world order of nation-states is a recent product of the total wars that resulted in the collapse of European empires in a series of convulsive moments in the 20th century. These had the effects of propelling a mass of ill-defined and fragile post-colonial territorial units onto the world stage. Although institutions of transnational governance, such as the League of Nations and the UN) were created in

the aftermath of these wars, they have failed to resolve the security problems created by these transitions.

Fourth, contemporary military revolutions (namely, the spread of high precision weaponry and developments in asymmetric war) in the context of this new global order are arguably transforming both war-making and collective identity formation.. On the one hand, we see a decline of interstate war in favour of coalitions of nation-states undertaking peace-keeping interventions that are justified by universal mandates. On the other, there is a proliferation of intra-state wars outside the west. This is affecting how populations relate to their state, both in the West and outside the West and has generated debates about whether we are moving into a post national world.

It is therefore surprising that war has been relatively neglected in theories of nationalism, which tend to explain the rise of nations and nation-states as products of modernization. I use Miguel Centeno's (2002: 34) definition of war as 'a substantial armed conflict between organized military forces of independent political units'. I expand, however, the term to refer also to peace-time institutional initiatives and practices related to military preparedness. When discussing the topic, we must also recognise the different forms of martial activity. Wars can be interstate, intrastate, imperial and liberation in character (See Leonhard 2006). They also vary enormously in their military organization and in the range of sectors mobilized, which in the case of 'total wars' may include much of society.

Defining nations and nationalism is more controversial. I agree with the modernists that nationalism as an *ideological* movement is predominantly a post-18th century phenomenon, although nationalist sentiments that could mobilise people are much older. I also accept Susan Reynolds' arguments for the existence of nations in at least parts of medieval Europe (Reynolds 1997: Ch. 8). These were conceived by

their members as natural, objective communities of descent, possessing distinctive cultural attributes and with rights to be self-governing. Such nations lacked many elements of modern nations, including concepts of popular sovereignty, and national loyalties might only be intermittently salient, often being subordinate to dynastic, religious and imperial allegiances. Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the significance of national loyalties as causal factors.

War and the Nation-State

These criticisms do not at first sight apply to the work of Charles Tilly (1992) and Michael Mann (1986; 1993; 1995) who argue first that the modern nation-state is a by-product of rulers' efforts to acquire the means of war and second that war is an organizational phenomenon from which the state derived its administrative machinery (Centeno 2002: 101). The two are mutually reinforcing, as summarized in Tilly's dictum 'war made states and states made war'. Here I define 'state' in modified Weberian terms to refer to a differentiated polity that exercises the durable control (if not the monopoly) of the legitimate violence over a territory.[1] The setting of their analysis is post-Roman Europe, a multi-actor Christian civilization of heterogeneous political units (including empires, city-states, dynastic kingdoms) whose major polities fought to become an imperial hegemon. Both scholars draw on the substantial historiography on the European 'military revolution' of the early modern era conceptualised by Michael Roberts (1956), Geoffrey Parker (1976, 1996), Jeremy Black (1994), and W. H. McNeill (1984). This revolution resulted in new technologies, tactics and strategies, and a rapid increase in the size of armies relative to the population.

Tilly (1992: esp. Chs. 1,3) argues this military revolution favoured centralised political administrations able to combine the power of coercion and capital to levy taxes, raise large permanent (standing) armies, and draw on revenues derived from trade and commercialised agriculture.   Kingdoms such as England and France rose in strength in relation to mercantile city-states (able to draw on capital to hire mercenaries but weak in coercive capacity since merchants can move) and over time agrarian empires (strong in coercive power through which they could raise peasant levies, but lacking capital resources).   Their rulers could centralise power within the territory by using standing armies to quell internal challenges to their rule. These kingdoms became the prototypes of the nation-state. State centralising pressures and recurrent wars between conscripted armies encouraged a growing identification with the territory of the state rather than just one's locality, resulting in a growing national consciousness. When populations revolted against state exactions, they came to stage national rather than local revolts. A decisive moment was the French Revolution, which in transforming a dynastic into a people's state created the nation-state model (Tilly 1992: Ch.4). The military power of the nation-state drawing on the energies of its whole population in the form of ideologically-committed, mass conscription armies ensured its universal diffusion.

In Tilly's account nationalism and the nation-state are late derivatives of state-induced territorial consolidation. Mann (1993: 215-8; 1995: 45-8) is more nuanced in acknowledging the existence of proto-national loyalties from the time of the Reformation onwards, but argues that these have little organisational significance in themselves: it is only when they become fused with the horizontal politics of citizenship (during the French Revolution) that we get modern nationalism. In Mann's account nation-states form from the increasing war-induced pressures of the

late 18th century state (via taxes and conscription) on the new social classes emerging from industrial capitalism. This produces a variety of political movements demanding representation in the state as the key territorial institution. Nationalism originated as a drive for democracy. During their competitive struggle for political representation both the bourgeoisie and working class came to identify with (were caged within) the state, as the nation-state.

These accounts have been subject to significant criticism. Miguel Centeno (2002) argues these accounts are Eurocentric, since the military-fiscal-extraction mechanism they identify does not apply to Latin America or post-colonial Africa, where states with some exceptions have gone to war infrequently with each other. A still more fundamental objection is that even in their European setting both neglect the existence of national sentiments and national communities during the early Middle Ages, which emerged independently of war. We need a much more long-term and interactive conception of the relationships between warfare and state-formation and warfare and nation-formation in Europe.

Early medieval nations, taking on 'sacred' qualities via associations with the Crusades, played a crucial role in territorial state-formation and war-making. Crusading wars against both Islamic territories and internal heretics (e.g. Cathars) were important sources of state-building, used by rulers to centralize power, impose taxation legitimized by Papal Bulls over clergy and laity, and pursue territorial expansion. Ernst Kantorowicz (1951; 1957: 236-42) argues that consequently the concept of martial martyrdom became this-worldly to encompass a heroic death for a terrestrial fatherland. By the end of 13th century the idea of the loyal soldier dying for the *patria* was being charged with religious expression in state propaganda. Norman Housley locates the growth of a sanctified patriotism that, to varying degrees, shaped

both state-building and popular mobilization from the 14th century in England and France (during the Hundred Years' War), Bohemia (the Hussite rebellions) and the Spanish Habsburg territories. Such conflicts were suffused with Crusading imagery and claims that kingdoms or peoples were new Israels (Housley 2000: 223-4).

A related problem is the failure (especially on Tilly's part) to explore the sources of the legitimacy of medieval and early modern states. An overstress on coercive power insufficiently recognises that warfare could destroy states, as well as provoke rebellions in the name of the community of the realm (in Reynolds' terms, the nation).[2] Although medieval monarchs (in England, France and Spain) had the rights to demand military service and taxation from their subjects, these could not be imposed without the consent of free men (Reynolds 1997: 305). Much of the authority of rulers depended on their exercise of judicial, administrative, and law-making duties which consumed in peace the majority of state expenditures. While war could extend the administrative and territorial reach of the state, it could also result in breakdowns of such key functions, as well as economic distress. (Gunn et al. 2008: 386-8).

When this occurred a national sentiment crystallised intermittently against rulers to assert the rights of the 'community of the realm', represented by nobility, clergy and urban middling orders. Hoping to gain support from their subjects, monarchs appealed to xenophobic national sentiment by the 13th century: King Edward 1 sought to deflect internal dissensions by claiming that the King of France planned to wipe out the English language (Reynolds 1997: 272), but monarchical failure – of Henry III in his wars against the French and the Welsh - provoked opposition on the part of the nobility and middling orders combined with demands that he rely on his natural counsellors and not aliens (Reynolds 1997: 270-1).

These patterns continued into the early modern period where the intertwining of religion and nationalist sentiments during the wars of the Counter Reformation could either strengthen or undermine the integrity of states.   Rulers, supporting the Catholic or Protestant cause in general European wars, sought to mobilize their populations against neighbouring powers and repress internal opposition from religious dissidents.   The attempt of the Catholic Spanish Habsburgs to extract taxation from their subjects in the (largely Protestant) United Provinces together with fears of the Inquisition provoked a large-scale revolt in 1572 (dubbed the Eighty Years' War), during which competing ideas of the Dutch emerged against a Spanish 'Other' (Duke 2004). These were a Calvinist Hebraic belief (of chosenness); a republican ethnic myth (of descent from ancient Batavians); and a monarchical conception centred on the Orange princes. The Calvinists supported a strong central government that would enforce an ecclesiastical discipline and the reconquest of the Catholic Southern Netherlands, and they generally allied with the monarchical-patriarchal visions of the House of Orange, who portrayed themselves as modern Davids or Solomons. Their rivals were the regents of Holland, the strongest province and main carrier of Batavian myths, who supported separation from the South, state control over the Church, and a federal system that Holland could dominate. These external and internal conflicts formed the Dutch nation-state (Gorski 2000; 2006: 151).

In 17th century Protestant England, encroachments on the rights of parliament by the Stuart monarchy - viewed as too close to the Catholic absolutist powers of France and Spain - triggered a civil war that enveloped Ireland, Scotland and England. During this conflict religio-national identities hardened.   On the parliamentary and puritan side, a popular English sentiment was directed not just against the Catholic Irish, but foreigners in general during the 1640s. This included the Welsh who looked

to the Crown as a guarantor of their constitutional privileges in the 'British' state and eventually the Presbyterian Scots with whom the parliamentarians were initially allied. Cromwell harnessed an English nationalism in his new model army to establish a Protestant Commonwealth (Stoyle 2000; 2005).

In short, in many parts of Europe in the early modern period national identities were formed and reformed from wars with neighbouring powers and from civil conflicts. Mann's claim that nationalism originated during the French Revolution as a drive for democracy and citizenship has to be qualified. Many of the nationalisms (re-) emerging in response to the French revolution and invasions in Britain, the Netherlands, and Spain were conservative, supportive of older political and religious establishments (Nabulsi 1999: Ch.2; Verheijin 2016: 319-23).

Warfare and the sacralisation of national communities

Warfare then was ambiguous for state formation, sometimes accelerating it, sometimes threatening the integrity of states, depending on the characteristics of the populations they governed. This suggests we need to separate out the processes by which war affects state-formation from those that shaped nation-formation before going on to examine the interaction between the two.

A sense of national identity may emerge from many sources, including a sense of religious distinctiveness, explored in Anthony Smith's *Chosen Peoples* (2003), as well as early state formation. However, we can identify four mechanisms through which warfare in premodern and modern eras contributed to the formation of nations as sacred communities of sacrifice (see Hutchinson 2009). First, wars have offered raw material for *ethnic mythomoteurs* (constitutive myths) whose narratives (often shaped by religious conceptions) have endowed populations with a sense of meaning

and unique destiny, especially when wars are perceived to be turning points in the history of the community. Second, they have produced *we-they stereotypes* that result in collective self-differentiation *vis-á-vis* threatening others. Third, wars have generated public commemorative *rituals* which produce a sense of in-group commonality. Fourth, they have instigated *political projects* that embedded symbols and myths of war in everyday life.

With respect to the first, warfare might contribute to narratives of triumph such as the Spanish Reconquest myth of the unification of Spain under the Catholic monarchs of Castile and Aragon, followed by the establishment of a great empire in the Americas. Memories of perceived disasters were also potent loci of identity insofar as they could 'explain' the miseries of the present. These catastrophes might be associated with imperial subjugation: Greeks lamented the fall of their holy capital, Constantinople, and the wider Byzantine Empire in 1453 as well as their subordination within an Islamic Ottoman Empire. Often these explanations were couched in religious terms as either a punishment by God for deviating from his laws or as a trial of their faith in His Providence, combined with a promise of future redemption and liberation (Smith 2003). But over time they also acquired an ethnic character. Such memorializations in the premodern period were particularly potent when carried by multiple sites, including sacred religious texts, official chronicles, folktales, and epic poetry that celebrated great heroes who became role models, as well as identifying villains who betrayed the nation.

In the era of modern nationalism wars could be viewed as test of the vitality of the nation measured by its ability to inspire heroic sacrifice. New romantic genres in music, painting, drama and the novel celebrated eras of national grandeur and successive generations of heroic martyrdom. Societies often had multiple and competing *mythomoteurs*. Spanish liberals in the 19th century rejected the

Reconquista myth, instead presenting the guerrilla war against Napoleon as the origins of the Spanish nation, arguing that the triumph of the Catholic monarchy was a source of Spain's decadence. Such debates merely reinforced the significance (negative or positive) of the formative events.

Second, as Anthony Smith observed (1981), the war experience may unite previously disparate groups and differentiate them against threatening others. He proposed that in recurring dyadic conflicts between neighbouring populations warfare served to elaborate and harden ethnic group self-images, as we/they stereotypes were created by the competing propaganda of rival states. This formed over time a common national consciousness. Not all differentiation was invidious: close contact could make antagonists aware of the positive attributes of the other. Robert and Isabelle Tombs, husband and wife, he English, she French, have documented the mutual fascination of the English-French relationship in their co-authored book *That Sweet Enemy* (2007), in which a Voltaire could praise English toleration, while Whig aristocrats sought to emulate French manners. Such comparisons, whether negative or positive, tended to emphasise the distinctiveness of one's nation.

Third, the threat of death and conquest can force populations to confront fundamental questions about their identity and purposes. In these situations wars engender moments of ritual effervescence that seek to control overwhelming emotions and in turn create or re-inforce collective identities. There were many kinds of such rituals, including the traditions of humility days in the USA, England and the Netherlands. These originated in the early modern but extended well into the modern period, when, policed by churches and political authorities, populations would seek collective atonement from God for their sins, now transposed from the individual to the nation (Callahan 2006).

With secularisation, however, the nation itself became deified and an object of worship, particularly in the cult of fallen soldiers, observed in the French revolution. Such commemorations of the national dead coming to the fore in a period of large-scale conflict could be seen as a means of overcoming the anguish of mass death. As George Mosse (1990) and Anthony Smith (2003: Chs. 2,9) also argued, they also had the capacity of binding survivors to the values for which the dead supposedly fought, thereby contributing to the formation of a cohesive community. These commemorative rituals marked profound shifts in attitudes to death, time, and social status. Whereas in premodern societies death meant an individual transition into an otherworldly realm, and death was differentiated by estate. In contrast, in the this-worldly and future-oriented ideology of nationalism the cult of the martial dead was democratized. Remembrance was no longer reserved for the nobility but now addressed all who had suffered for the nations (Koselleck (2002: 289–91).

Finally, the outcomes of warfare have often produced a thorough-going political re-organisation that has embedded national values in social life. Victory has tended to vindicate war leaders and their vision of the nation, notably in new nation-states established by liberation or unification wars, where they have become the 'fathers' of their country: Washington and Jefferson for the USA, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for Turkey, and Castro for Cuba. State-approved historiographies have created teleologies of collective progress that are inculcated in public educational systems, festivals and public monuments.

Arguably the experience of defeat generates more radical popular energies. In the era of nationalism the consequences of defeat were more intense, because of the greater scale of wars and because defeat could be seen as moral failure of the people itself, not just of its governing class (Horne 2008: 16-7). This could inspire a popular revolt against establishments, the search for an alternative historical vision of the

nation, and for scapegoats, and a root and branch reformation of social and political institutions. The shattering defeat of Imperial Germany in the First World War with the loss of territory and population to neighbouring states inspired not only leftist revolutionary movements but also radical nationalist programmes of regeneration and irredentism. These latter campaigns were spearheaded by ex-soldier's organizations embittered at the loss of military prestige, and by populations uprooted from their former homelands.

All four factors contribute to the social embedding of myths by a variety of social actors so that these myths became available as resources for interpreting and giving meaning to everyday life experiences. In high culture the images of past conflicts have been mined to throw light on the present, as in Dickens's *The Tale of Two Cities,* one of whose purposes was to warn the governing classes in Victorian Britain against the dangers of reactionary politics by depicting the chasm between the French poor and their opulent aristocracy. In an era of potentially alienating social change, the streets and squares of mushrooming cities in the 19th century were 'historicised' by naming them after national heroes and famous battles (for example, Trafalgar Square). The charisma of dead heroes (such as Napoleon in France) was reproduced and consumed by the general population in legends, songs, novels, clothing and household objects (Hazareesingh 2004: Ch. 3). Later in the nineteenth century, novel genres of popular fiction and children's comics, catering to the literate, created national and imperial martial models of chivalrous manhood to 'civilize' rising generations of male youth (Paris 2000: Chs. 1 and 2).

This interweaving sets of myths and legends provided a common set of idioms and reference points that political elites used, often unself-consciously, to communicate with a larger audience. The study of how they furnish languages through which ordinary individuals articulated their relationships and tastes is still yet

to be fully explored, but there is little doubt about the growing relevance of such national myths to the constitution of everyday life (see Zerubavel 2003: Ch. 2). This popular culture has formed the base on which more formal and didactic remembrance ceremonies rest.

Tensions and interplays between states and nations

This might imply that in the modern period the political and social embedding of national myths and symbols results in an increasing integration of state and nation. However, war has also in the modern period periodically uncaged populations by threatening the overthrow of states, foreign occupation, the radical redrawing of boundaries, and the forced redistribution of populations between states. The disjunctures between states and nations, activated by the fortunes of war, have been one of the recurring triggers of nationalism. It is in such liminal moments when the existing order is threatened with dissolution that one sees heightened debates about national traditions to redefine who constitute the people (should they be defined by ethnic or civic criteria?), where the homeland is located and on what basis a national state can be reconstituted. This can be a prolonged process in which rival intellectuals from different nations as well competing protagonists from within nations become involved.

Even the two most powerful states in modern Europe, France and Germany, were subject to such instability. France was occupied wholly or in part by foreign powers several times, in 1814, in 1870, and in the First and Second World Wars. The German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine in 1871 generated the famous debate between German and French intellectuals (between, for example, Theodor Mommsen and Ernest Renan) about how membership of the nation should be decided, whether

by the 'subjective' choice of its inhabitants or by 'objective' criteria such as language. The wars also produced a recurring struggle between competing ideas of French nationalism, republican, Imperial-Bonapartist and Catholic-traditionalist, whose rise and fall was triggered by periods of defeat (Hutchinson 2005: Ch. 3). What is notable is that both republicans and anti-republicans looked back to medieval history to ground their projects, in particular to the figure of Joan of Arc, who expelled English invaders from its soil. Whereas to republicans, she embodied the democratic spirit of the France, crushed by monarchy and Catholic reaction, to the anti-republicans she was the expression of a European Catholic civilisation of which of which France was the 'Eldest Daughter'. By the 1880s the Third Republic made her feast day a national holiday, and in the First World War she became a figure of unity when right wing nationalists and republicans joined in great festivals devoted to her cult that mobilised the French against German invaders. During Second World War she was invoked by opposing sides, by Petain and by de Gaulle, to link past and present in order to articulate hopes for the future (Gildea 1994: Ch.5).

The contemporary German preoccupation with their 'unmasterable past' owes much to the legacy of the Holocaust, but it has also been shaped by a long range political and territorial instability as a result of war. A cultural conception of the German nation preceded the formation of a German state (though one also shaped by memories of the Holy Roman Empire). Warfare created the German nation-state in 1871 but also has regularly endangered it. After unification Germany was regarded by the advocates of *Grossdeutschland* as an unfinished nation-state, failing to include all Germans and with substantial Danish, Polish and Walloon minorities within its 1871 borders. In the 20th century Germany's borders radically expanded or contracted nine times (in 1914, 1918, 1923, 1939, 1941, 1945, 1949, 1961, and 1990), largely through war or state collapse. (Jarausch and Geyer 2003: 350). For much of this time,

a sense of political and military rivalry with France, Britain and Russia as well as Germany's shifting geography resulted in recurring debates between advocates of a 'Western' liberal-democratic individualistic and an 'Eastern' authoritarian organic conception of nationality. As Jarausch and Geyer argue (2003: 352-3), disrupted territorial units lead also to disrupted time, to multiple competing histories in which it is impossible to construct simple historical continuities on which stable identities rest. The question of the strength of its Eastern Prussian heritage versus its recommitment to Western liberal-democratic values re-emerged in the debates after German unification about the siting of its capital in Berlin or Bonn. This German territorial instability in the very centre of Europe in turn destabilised the histories of its neighbours both to the East and the West.

Warfare and the International System

If this demonstrates the dynamic interplay between state and nation formation in Europe activated by war, it remains true that the European pattern of incessant interstate warfare has resulted in a rough congruence between ethnographic and political boundaries. Arguably Europe, however, is not the norm, but rather the world exception (Centeno 2002). The majority of nation-states along with the modern international system came into being recently by a completely different martial route: of sudden imperial dissolution in three convulsive waves during the 20th century. The first was the collapse in total war of the dynastic continental empires in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe at the end of the First World War; the second the break-up nation-state overseas empires in Asia and Africa after the Second World War; and the third began with the collapse of the Soviet Union from the intensifying military and economic pressures of the Cold War.

Nationalism within these empires had been with some exceptions a relatively weak force, confined mainly to educated elites, but was transformed by total war. In both World Wars imperial minorities were politicized by large scale military recruitment, the use of forced labour in agriculture and industry, and the ferocious extraction of resources, leading at times to famine. To this was added, in the First World War, mass ethnic displacements and scapegoating of minorities; and in the Second World War the triumphs of Japanese armies in Asia that shattered European prestige and destroyed their collaborator networks (Hutchinson 2017: Ch.3).

The effects of relatively sudden imperial dissolutions were, as Aviel Roshwald (2001) argued with respect to the First World War, to catapult into power nationalist elites governing ill-defined territorial units, sometimes carved violently out of ethnically disputed territories, lacking developed economic and political institutions. Indeed, a mass of (often fragile) nation-states imbued with a sense of victimhood and political vulnerability have been thrust into a hierarchical state order still dominated by great powers. It is widely assumed that the World Wars have decisively brought an end to the era of empires. However, the disruptive effects of this large-scale entry of such ethnically diverse states - often with unresolved boundary issues with neighbours - has regularly resulted in projects of re-imperialization and wars of aggression by great powers.

Of course, there had long been a hybridisation between the national and imperial principles. The rise of many European nation-states in the medieval period had been accompanied by imperial expansion, both through the colonisation of immediate neighbours and the conquest of overseas territories. Although in the modern period liberal nationalists might reject empire, racial nationalists asserted the rights of elite nations to rule over others. These latter extolled empire as integral to national prestige and as justifying claims of a civilizing mission. As revolutions in

industry, communications, and trade demonstrated the global interdependence of states, so by the late 19th and early 20th centuries imperialist nationalists dreamed of creating pan-national or racial blocs (Anglo-Saxon, Slavic, Germanic, Asian). This in the belief that only units of near continental scale could provide geo-political and economic security (Darwin 2008: Ch. 5; Lieven 2015: Ch. 1).

Imperial dissolution in the 20th century has been followed by imperial rollbacks in part arising from the security problems created by the new states, in part from temptations to exploit power vacuums. After the First World War the Bolsheviks largely reconstituted the Russian Empire; Hitler resurrected dreams of Mitteleuropa; Mussolini's Italy sought an African Empire, while Japan in the 1930s began its drive for an East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. As the Nazi empire crumbled in 1945, so the Soviet Union expanded into Eastern Europe.

Is the Soviet Union the last empire? Mark Beissinger (2005: 33) suggests not. He argues that in the contemporary era, empire can be redefined to refer to illegitimate relationships of control by one national political society over another. This definition not only applies at times to the postwar United States, Russia, China and perhaps the (Franco-German dominated) EU, but also to the interstate system itself. The provisions of the United Nations Charter, established by the great states, seek to tame the principle of national self-determination by rendering illegitimate any interference in the territorial integrity of existing states. As Ian Clark (2001: 250) argues, norms of state sovereignty and restrictions of self-determination to state territorial units constitute a form of imperial rule by established states that deny the rights of stateless nations. This renders dubious Tilly's arguments (1992: Ch.6) that interstate warfare creates homogenous nations states, and through subsequent international treaties, a world of nation-states. Instead, on balance war and the major

post war settlements have intensified dislocations between the world of states and the world of nations.

Contemporary warfare and post nationalist debates

What then of our current situation? Many have argued that the old relationships between war and national reproduction are obsolete. The experiences of two world wars (of mass destruction and genocide) is blamed on national rivalries. Together with the development of nuclear weaponry, this is taken to demonstrate that the institution of interstate war is a direct threat to the existence of national peoples, and that only forms of transnational governance can save us (UN and the EU). In Western Europe there has been a shift from mass conscription to small professional armies and large-scale demilitarisation (Howard: 1976: Ch.7). Outside the West, intra-state conflicts predominate in fragile new states, undermining the possibility of nation-building (Kaldor 2006).

In an interdependent world the security implications of weak states continue to result in quasi-imperial military interventions by great states, but they tend to be justified by international (for example, via the United Nations) and humanitarian mandates. Even so, such military missions are hobbled by casualty aversion as, it is claimed, demographic decline makes European citizens increasingly unwilling to risk their children (Lachmann 2013). Everywhere in a post-imperial world there is a shift away from heroic martial myths that legitimised nation-states to traumatic narratives that focuses on victimised peoples (Barzan 2000).

These analyses have some force. But such post-national perspectives are largely limited to Western Europe, and arise from the special horrors of the two World Wars. Casualty aversion in the West may exist with respect to foreign military

interventions, but this is in response to doubts about the official rationale of these wars, rather than of war itself. In Asia and the Middle East nationalist tensions between regional powers are intensifying. Many of the intra-state wars (contrary to Mary Kaldor's claims) do contribute to nation-state formation; e.g. the recent wars in the Balkans and Sri Lanka (Malešević 2010: 325). Moreover, while universal norms might justify international intervention, coalitions of nation-states, rather than the UN per se, remain central to defending conceptions of world order. To mobilise support from their electorates for such military interventions, state elites must invoke national security considerations (Ryan 2014). Romantic ideas of war may seem outmoded in favour of a greater recognition of individual loss. Nonetheless, 'heroic' commemorative frames maintain their potency, as indicated in the continued resonance of the remembrance ceremonies of the First World War, while the perceptions of war as traumatic may itself contribute to national solidarities.

Conclusions

Bringing warfare into theories of nationalism challenges those approaches that that understand national and nation-state formation as a product of modernisation, since war is an unpredictable phenomenon that crosses the premodern-modern divide, with often far reaching consequences. Wars tend to embed a sense of historicity (however mythic) into emergent nations when they set in chain long lasting developments, memories of which shape populations' perceptions of their place in space and time and belief systems. Such perceptions inflect how states and their populations engage with modernisation, which throws up threats as well as opportunities. One of the claims of nationalists, sometimes in association with, sometimes in opposition to, religious adherents, is to make sense of the randomness of history, often created by

the vicissitudes of war. Given that nationalists define the nation as a community of ultimate loyalty, performance in war has been used as a test of the potency of national identity, failure in which continues to lead to prolonged crises of reflection and revaluation with major cultural and political consequences - as we saw in the USA after the Vietnam war.

Wars vary in their characteristics, and when we consider the relationship between war and nationalism we need to consider the type of war and the context in which it is fought. Our view of the nation-state is structured by the consequences of interstate warfare on the European subcontinent from which arose a rough correspondence between state and nation. In playing a significant part in the construction of the nation-state, European warfare then provided the framework for the triple revolutions (political, economic and cultural) of modernity. But most of the polities we call nation-states have arisen via imperial collapse in total war and deviate considerably from the European 'norm'. Such nation-states, if we can call them that, by virtue of their fractured character and economic vulnerability, cannot easily be depicted as the institutional vessels of industrial modernisation. The modern international system itself also seems removed from the harmonious system of locks that Gellner envisaged in his earlier writings on nationalism. Formal empires may have largely come to an end, but the new states confront a world economic and political system dominated by Western powers that itself has an imperial character. The security problems of the postcolonial world themselves invite forms of re-imperialisation by competing great powers, including Russia and China. These multiple challenges are the source of much of the current world disorders and generate further rounds of nationalism.

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[1] Tilly (1992: 44) defines the state 'as any organization that commanded substantial means of coercion and successfully claimed the durable priority over other
users of coercion within at least one bounded territory.'   Note there is no reference to legitimacy.
[2] Mann distinguishes between states exercising despotic
and infrastructural power, the first a zero-sum approach that operates through
coercion, and the second that is generative arising from social cooperation. During the later
Middle Ages states began to exercise power through co-ordination with other power groups,
though this was in the form of a territorial federalism. The nation-state is in effect the organic
state (fused with the interests of dominant classes), which is able to penetrate much of society.

This, he claims, does not emerge until the time of the 1688 Revolution in Englandj (Mann 1986: Ch. 14).