FIFTH-GENERATION WARFARE AND THE DEFINITIONS OF PEACE

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Abstract

The intent of this paper is to argue that postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare impact traditional notions of peace and conflict and therefore, a transformative approach to the definition of peace is required. The main objectives of this paper are three-fold: the first is to contend that where traditional notions of peace include the absence of kinetic violence exclusively, fifth-generation warfare and postmodern warfare encompass several different forms of combat; the second objective is to argue that in fifth-generation warfare conflict is perceived as not only intrastate disagreements but conflict between cultural groups taken across transnational borders. Finally, considering the above arguments, this paper concludes by suggesting that peacebuilding requires a need for peacebuilders to adapt a new definition of conflict and peace. Additionally, they need to concern themselves with changing the "belligerent and antagonistic attitudes that foster violent conflict at the grassroots level" (Bellamy et al, 2010).

Keywords: Fifth-generation warfare, Peace, Conflict, Peacebuilding, Transformative Peace

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict; peace is relative and relational, integrated through association, irrespective of an absolute value (Bustamante, 2014, p. 96). The United Nations (UN) for the past seventy-three years has used an alternative rationale to conceptualizing peace. This peace is contingent on the assumption that once cessation is achieved, peacekeepers and peacebuilders can create sustainable peace zones in which democracy and liberal Westphalian values can thrive. However, these traditional notions of peace and conflict fail to consider the social, cultural, and societal factors that influence the attainment of peace in a new era of postmodern and fifth-generation warfare. This essay addresses the following question: does postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare (5GW) impact traditional notions of peace and conflict? If so, what does peacebuilding require? This paper argues that postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare do impact traditional notions of peace and conflict and therefore, a transformative approach to the definition of peace is required in which relative and relational approaches to peacebuilding can influence societies to organize themselves, and create a positive paradigm for peace (Bustamante, 2014, p. 96).

In forming this argument, this paper examines how traditional notions of peace only include the absence of kinetic violence. Subsequently, this paper addresses how conflict in fifth-generation warfare is perceived as conflict between cultural groups, taken across transnational borders and employed by groups and single actors. Finally, this paper looks at how peacebuilding requires a need for peacebuilders to adapt a new definition of conflict and peace in order to deal with the concepts of fifth-generation and postmodern warfare. There is a discussion on counterarguments to the position and a presentation of evidence in support of the main arguments. This tactic is utilized to justify the position made based on the strength of the arguments compared to counterarguments.

Furthermore, this essay defines key terms to provide clarity to the reader. Fifth-generation warfare in this context is defined as "crafting strategies [that] exploit the weakness of enemies employing asymmetrical methods, without always knowing who the enemies are, or even what methods of war they will employ" (Reed, 2008, p. 685). Peace in its traditional sense is defined by Kelshall (2019) as "the absence of insecurity or conflict for all sides of all parties within the international system." Additionally, conflict is defined as the "expression of difference in intra-state disagreements that can become violent" (Kelshall, 2019). Peacebuilding is defined as "all the effort required on the way to the creation of a sustainable peace zone" (as cited in Reychler, L., & Paffenholz, T., 2001, p.12)

Finally, transformative peace in a fifth-generation warfare paradigm is defined as an imperfect peace that is relative and relational to identity-based groups, integrated through association and irrespective of an absolute value (Bustamante, 2014, p. 96). This paper works within the parameters of a postmodern lens, defining postmodern warfare as "an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge where pre-established rules and familiar categories are reformulated," comprised of identity-based cultural politics, post-national global political structures, and technology (Bustamante, 2014, p. 86).

Arguments

Traditionally, peace has always been the absence of kinetic violence (Kelshall, 2019). It is generally presumed that the signing of peace agreements is the best method of securing an end to conflict (Lochery, 2001, p. 2). Therefore, states deploy peacebuilders subsequent to the signing of peace agreements in order to merely moderate the presumed peace and provide states the ability to effectively carry out their core functions. However, where traditional notions of peace only include the absence of kinetic violence, fifth-generation warfare and postmodern

warfare encompass several different forms of combat, including non-kinetic force and soft violence. Therefore, a transformative approach to the definition of peace is required in order for peacebuilders to create a positive paradigm for peace.

Soft violence encompasses harmful activities to others which stop short of physical violence (Kelshall, 2019). Under this definition, the mere absence of insecurity is inadequate in defining peace because it damages the fabric of relationships between communities. Through this form of violence, individuals lose their sense of safety in their communities and their trust in the governing systems (Kelshall, 2019). This poses a threat to peacebuilding because peacebuilding is deployed when there is an absence of insecurity in the traditional sense. Therefore, in order to address the impacts of fifth-generation warfare on traditional notions of peace, peacebuilding requires a change in the definition of peace in order to create a positive peace paradigm in which peacebuilding can address the root causes of insecurity.

In fifth-generation warfare, conflict is perceived as not only intra-state disagreements, but conflict between cultural groups, taken across transnational borders and employed by groups and single actor affiliates. These groups are made up of like-minded people, with no formal organization, who choose to fight. Unlike conventional conflict, fifth-generation warfare is not aimed at eroding the state, nor is it directed towards dismantling international peace and security. Instead, fifth-generation warfare is network centric, invoking conflict among communities and enabling a shift away from nationalist loyalty towards the state. This form of 'hybrid warfare' features a hybrid blend of traditional and irregular tactics such as guerrilla warfare and insurgency or acts of terrorism (Bustamante, 2014, p. 92).

The nature of irredentism found in these cultural groups defies transnational borders created by the Westphalian system and challenges the norms of international security. Due to this irredentism, peacebuilding is ill-equipped to deal with the nature of fifth-generation conflict. The international system does not deal with transnational peacekeeping, as its mandate only allows peacebuilders to work within the countries that invite them. Consequently, as the world moves towards an age of conflict that is perpetuated by soft violence and encompasses group versus group conflict, traditional notions of peacebuilding do not allow for peace zones to be created within conflict prone areas. Therefore, in order to create a positive peace paradigm in which peacebuilders can achieve transformative peace, peacebuilding requires an updated mandate where it can

deal with transnational warfare through relative and relational means in which communities can peacefully interact with each other through dialogue.

Peacebuilding requires a need for peacebuilders to adapt to the new definition of conflict and peace, concerning themselves with changing the "belligerent and antagonistic attitudes that foster violent conflict at the grassroots level" (Bellamy et al., 2010, p.258). Bustamante (2014) wrote that as the nature and character of war is evolving, the way we think about peace needs to evolve as well (p. 96). Therefore, if conflict has strategically evolved to include conflict amongst groups that incorporates social, cultural and political factors, the strategies of achieving peace need to be adapted to also include the transformation of peace through these same factors (Bustmante, 2014, p. 96). This idea of peace must include a multitude of peaces, or "many peaces," to achieve a positive peace paradigm (Bustamante, 2014, p. 96).

Accordingly, peacebuilding requires the United Nations to create new adaptive techniques to address the causes of conflict. Traditional liberal UN instinct to enter a country and create democratic institutions to enforce peace upon citizens does not create an environment that allows for positive long-lasting peace to occur. Instead, societies begin to view the UN as a benevolent occupying power with executive administrative capabilities over lives and institutions post conflict (Chesterman, 2005); Therefore, local cultural groups within states view the UN as an occupying force and steer away from supporting any values and order that UN peacebuilders seek to implement. It is argued that the only way to deal with the fallacies of peacebuilders is for the UN to adopt a new definition that enables peacebuilders to address the changing nature of social, political and cultural factors that hinder peace processes.

Counterarguments

Some scholars believe that postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare are a continuation of fourth-generation warfare and therefore the concepts of international peace and conflict remain constant. Fourth-generation warfare can be defined as warfare that appeared after the end of the Cold War, when interstate wars were largely replaced by low-intensity guerilla wars and terrorism (Bustamante, 2014, p. 92). Hammes (2007) argues that "fourth generation warfare uses all available networks – political, economic, social, and military – to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit...the only medium that can change a person's mind is information. Therefore, information is the key

element of any 4GW strategy" (p. 14). This definition of fourth-generation warfare per Hammes (2007) comes in close relation to the definitions of fifth-generation warfare used by Reed (2008) and Bustmante (2014). It perpetuates the idea that fifth-generation warfare is no more than a continuation of fourth-generation warfare and therefore, international organizations like the United Nations, do not need to change peacebuilding mandates in order to deal with international peace and conflict.

Additionally, the forms of violence used in fourth-generation and fifth-generation warfare both look at the state as an opposing factor. While this form of warfare may encompass group vs group conflict, the state is still identified as a key actor for inciting violence amongst groups. When peaceful agreements are signed by state actors, peacebuilding is still required to rebuild and maintain the status quo of the institutions that were in place before conflict broke out. Consequently, the traditional concepts of peace and conflict that are instituted by states across the globe and ratified by UN member states can also be used to create peace environments because the ideas of conflict remain constant.

Another argument that arises against the need for a new formation of the term peace is that the "modernity" found in fifth-generation warfare can be seen in Sun Tzu's strategic views of conflict and peace; Therefore, peacebuilding does not require any changes in dealing with postmodern warfare (Barnett et al., 2010). Sun Tzu illustrates that while the conduct of war has changed, the nature of war itself has not (as cited in Giles, 2013). He writes that "to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill" (as cited Sun-tzu, & Griffith, S. B., 1964). Per Sun Tzu, strategies that rely on undermining an enemy's strengths by focusing on vulnerabilities fall in the category of plain old warfare, as he states that "water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing" (as cited in Giles, 2013, p.164). The examination of Sun Tzu's *Art of War* explains that the general strategies of fifth-generation warfare are as old as warfare itself, so the ways in which conflict is combated and peace is achieved relate back to historical notions of peace and conflict. For this reason, it can be argued that the techniques mandated by the UN and used by peacebuilders all deal with how modern war is conducted and positive peace is achieved. If this is the case, peacebuilders are wholly equipped to aid groups in rebuilding their societies once conflict has subsided.

Mitigation

Despite the arguments of some scholars, it is clear that postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare are inherently different concepts when the following information is considered: fifth-generation warfare deals with identity-based conflicts and exploits the weaknesses of enemies by employing asymmetrical methods of warfare, sometimes without knowing who the enemies are, or even what methods of war they will employ (Reed, 2008, p. 685); this is unlike fourth-generation warfare, where states vs. networked non-state actors are engaged in global insurgency. Fifth-generation warfare amounts to a return to ethnic, family and gang-based functional and protective units that aim to weaken the bonds of society (Kelshall, 2019). Therefore, a change in the concept of peace is required in order to deal with the arguably ill-equipped capabilities of peacebuilders in dealing with groups that engage in fifth-generation warfare.

Furthermore, where some aspects of the 'nature of war' remain constant, a great deal of the nature and conduct of war has changed. Fifth-generation warfare is not fought among military units that are initiated and controlled by states and deployed to fight against states, but instead are created among cultural and societal group in which actors perpetuate soft violence in order to harm the fabric of society. When Sun Tzu addressed the nature and character of war, his writing reciprocated the belief that war was fought among nations, where people could use intellect to end war before it even started. However, this concept of war does not encompass the internal conflicts of a failed state that lead to insecurity within the institutions of its society, consequently preventing communities from working with one another. Therefore, peacebuilding mandate cannot rely on older definitions of peace and conflict, nor can it rely on Sun Tzu's ideas of the 'nature' and 'character' of war itself. Instead, peacebuilding requires a bottom-up approach of transformation in a society where a variety of groups exist to help formulate an idea of many peace's so that states can live in a positive paradigm of peace.

Evidence

2001 Anthrax Attacks

The 2001 Anthrax attacks are an example of how fifth-generation warfare was used to instill fear among groups and create a new platform for conflict. Following the events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, anonymous letters laced with anthrax were delivered across the United States to different media companies and

congressional offices. These attacks occurred over several weeks, from September 2001 to November 2001. Five separate letters were mailed to ABC news, CBC news, NBC news, the New York Post, and the National Inquirer. On October 9th, two more letters were addressed to two democratic senators, Tom Dashle and Patrick Leahy. What occurred in the following weeks was that at least twenty-two victims developed anthrax infections and of the twenty-two, five died from anthrax inhalation. After more than seventeen years, over 9,100 interviews conducted, 6,000 grand jury subpoenas, and 67 searches, there have been no arrests announced in the case (Reed, 2008, p. 708). While Bruce Edwards Ivins was declared the sole culprit, no arrests were made because he died of an overdose of Tylenol with codeine in an apparent suicide. This occurred shortly after he learned that criminal charges were likely to be filed against him by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for an alleged criminal connection to the 2001 anthrax attacks (Jordan, L. J., & Dishneau, D, 2008).

Of the letters sent to the New York Post and NBC news, the following messages were attached to them: "09-11-01, THIS IS NEXT, TAKE PENICILLIN NOW, DEATH TO AMERICA, DEATH TO ISRAEL, ALLAH IS GREAT" (Usher, 2009a). The second note addressed to Senators Daschle and Leahy read: "09-11-01, YOU CAN NOT STOP US. WE HAVE THIS ANTHRAX. YOU DIE NOW. ARE YOU AFRAID? DEATH TO AMERICA. DEATH TO ISRAEL. ALLAH IS GREAT" (Usher, 2009b). This form of violence perpetrated by anonymous senders to instill fear amongst populations is an example of acts carried out by the characteristics of fifth-generation warfare. The capabilities that were used in the Anthrax attacks demonstrated the potential for super-empowered individuals or groups with specialized knowledge to carry out chemical or biological warfare (Reed, 2008, p. 707). This example shows how individuals can become virtually non-existent and carry out terrorist attacks, all while remaining unidentified.

Furthermore, this addition of soft violence to other forms of violence show that where traditional notions of peace only include the absence of kinetic violence, fifth-generation warfare and postmodern warfare encompass several forms of combat, including non-kinetic and soft violence. The attack on well-known news channels and democratic leaders not only hurt individuals, but instilled fear into the fabric of society. Government buildings shut down in the aftermath of the event and people were questioning how many more letters were spreading across the United States, ready to harm those unknowing of its content. Consequently, the UN peacebuilding mandate in this instance was incapable of dealing with issues that relate to fifth-generation warfare. Peacebuilding is said to occur in countries after peace agreements have been signed to further create suitable peace

zones. However, in instances where fifth-generation warfare tactics are deployed across states that are not actively in combat, peacebuilding techniques are ill-equipped to deal with these issues, as the idea of positive peace in developed countries is believed to already exist. Therefore, a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding in which a transformative peace that encompasses the idea of "many peaces" per Bustamante (2014) is required, in order to achieve a positive paradigm (p. 96).

Peacebuilding in Somalia

It can be argued that peacebuilding continually fails in dealing with the nature of fifth-generation warfare in Somalia. Over the past two decades the nature of conflict in Somalia has progressively changed. Tracing back to when General Mohamed Siad Barre came into power through a military coup in 1969, which was ousted in 1991 from power by several Somali armed groups, the United Nations has substantially failed in creating a platform for sustainable peace. The ousting of Siad Barre resulted in clan clashes over a fight for power. As conflict escalated, the hostilities resulted in widespread death and destruction, forcing hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee their homes and caused a dire need for emergency humanitarian assistance (UNISOM, n.d.). Despite the conflict, the United Nations continued to engage in humanitarian assistance in Somalia, but on several occasions, were required to temporarily withdraw troops. For example, the United Nations, with extensive support from the United States, aided in the support of several failed missions, including United Nations operation in Somalia (UNISOM) 1, which transitioned to UNISOM 11, and finally the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). All three of these interventions were ineffectual because there was no central government, and the country was prone to factional violence. Despite the efforts to create peace in Somalia, the nature of peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandated by the UN failed to deal with the nature of fifth-generation warfare: a form of conflict that is perceived as not only intra-state disagreements, but conflict between cultural groups, taken across transnational borders and employed by groups and single actors. When deploying UN troops to Somalia, the United Nations mandate relied on traditional notions of peace and security. Thus, in the process of peacebuilding in war-torn states, the approach of the UN and other entities have usually been top-down (Burgess, 2013, p. 302). Peacebuilding is implemented with Western liberal ideals of democracy and state construction, however, what the UN fails to consider is the clan versus clan conflict that influences the nature of war in Somalia.

Unlike inter-state conflict, the nature of warfare in Somalia deals with groups that cross transnational borders and find territorial boundaries irrelevant to state power. For example, the majority Darood clan in Somalia has groups rooted in Kenya and Ethiopia. The Hawiye clan has claimed territory in Kenya and Somalia and clans like the Oganden, Harti, Abgal, Issaq, and Rahanweyn are all dispersed across the fluid boundaries of Somali territory. Not only are clans dispersed across transnational borders, but these groups are also dispersed within the country of Somalia itself. Therefore, the nature of irredentism found in these cultural groups defy transnational borders created by the Westphalia system and challenge the norms of international peace.

To deal with this form of conflict, a bottom-up approach of transformation is required in peacebuilding in order to achieve a positive paradigm of peace. Peacebuilding and state building have often been implemented without representation from clans and civil society. The UN and the United States continue to make the mistake of enforcing boundary-based conceptions of peace on clans in Somalia. What is required instead is a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding, found within the nature of Somali society. The peacebuilding mandate needs to adopt a definition of peace that allows for a multitude of peaces to simultaneously occur between clans in Somalia, all while keeping a balance of power between these groups. As evidence shows, civil society and commerce in Somalia tends to thrive where central government is absent and suppressed when reconstructed (Burgess, 2013, p. 308). Therefore, what is required from the UN to provide sustainable peace in Somalia is to reconstruct Western liberal notions of peace and irredentism found in UN mandates. Since fifth-generation warfare includes transnational conflict between cultural groups employed by groups and single affiliates, the UN needs to adopt techniques that work with these clan-based systems and civil societies to create a positive peace paradigm.

Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) allows for an examination of why peacebuilding requires a need for peacebuilders to adapt to a new definition of conflict and peace and concern themselves with the changing "belligerent and antagonist attitudes that foster violent conflicts at the grassroots level" (as cited in Bellamy et al., 2010, p.258). Peacebuilding failed in the DRC because local and political conflicts over power increasingly became self-sustaining, autonomous, and disconnected from the national and regional track (Autesserre, 2007, p. 425). The DRC has experienced violent conflict for a number of years. As identified in the case of Somalia, the modern successful state

is believed to be one that successfully claims a monopoly of the means of violence and create liberal, democratic rules of law in which the mentioned country subjects itself to the nature of the Westphalian system (Autesserre, 2007). However, in the DRC, state control in 1965 was dominated by a military coup in which the country eroded, allowing for traditional leaders to continually influence the governing of the state. "When a coalition led by Laurent Kabila marched towards Kinshasa in late 1996, they met little resistance. Instead of fighting, the army fled, plundering local villages on the way...from the fall of Mobutu until 2003, half the territory was outside state control altogether" (Eriksen, 2009, p. 656). As the country perpetuated ongoing violence, weak administrative capacities failed to contain the conflict. Thus, in 1999 the United Nations Security Council created the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), tasked to establish security in the country, monitor the cessation of violence, and aid in state building.

The mandate in which MONUC ran ultimately led to the failure of peacebuilding in the DRC. Firstly, "external actors tended to rely on standardized approaches to state-building across countries" (Eriksen, 2009, p. 660). The assumption made by the UN was that the state building guidelines provided by the UN worked everywhere. However, this mandate failed to look at how local conflict at the level of the village, the district, or the community caused political, economic and social distress among communities. Villages would engage in human rights abuses and massacres all while the UN dealt with "fixing" the state through bureaucratic institutions. "In North Kivu, South Kivu, and North Katanga, a mosaic of alliances and counter alliances separated the numerous ethnic groups in each province. Clannish, ethnic, political, and social identities remained extremely fluid during the transition and individuals often switched allegiance from one group to another as opportunities arose" (Autesserre, 2007, p. 430). In the east, "one of the main actors at the local level was the Mai Mai militias, local self-defense armed groups formed on the basis of ethnicity throughout the eastern Congo" (Autesserre, 2007, p. 429). When displaced persons tried to return home "they threatened them and forced them to leave again" (Autesserre, 2007, p. 429). Thus, peacebuilding is ill-equipped to deal with the nature and complexity of local violence that perpetuates upwards and hinders a state's ability to create peace. What is therefore required is for peacebuilders to address the conflict that persists in a country by beginning at the grassroots level. Peacebuilders need to be equipped to deal with the changing nature of warfare, in which the traditional notions of peace and conflict have been altered. States have seemingly changed in the way they carry out conflict. Cultural group disagreements, coupled with the perpetuation of soft violence, have changed the ways in which conflict is

undertaken. A new concept of peace and conflict is required in order to address these changes. UN peacebuilding mandate can no longer only look at addressing problems within institutions that uphold liberal order, but instead they must formulate a new conception of peace where all clans, groups and parties within a state are content with the way they are governed, creating a transformative arena in which a positive peace paradigm can be achieved.

Conclusion

In conclusion, postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare do impact traditional notions of peace and conflict. A transformative approach to the definition of peace is required in which relative and relational approaches to peacebuilding can influence societies to organize themselves, creating a positive paradigm for peace. In supporting this claim, this paper argued that where traditional notions of peace only include the absence of kinetic violence, fifth generation and postmodern warfare encompass several different forms of combat, including non-kinetic force and soft violence. Furthermore, it was clarified that in fifth-generation warfare, conflict is perceived as not only intra-state disagreements, but conflict between cultural groups, taken across transnational borders and employed by groups and single affiliates. Finally, it was proposed that peacebuilding requires a need for peacebuilders to adapt a new definition of conflict and peace, concerning themselves with changing the "belligerent and antagonistic attitudes that foster violent conflict at the grassroots level" (Bellamy et al., 2010). As evidence shows, the inability for the United States government to find the criminals that conducted the 2001 Anthrax attacks, coupled with the failures of the UN to effectively peace-build in Somalia and the DRC at the grassroots level, determines that postmodern warfare and fifth-generation warfare impact traditional notions of peace and conflict. Therefore, peacebuilding requires a transformative approach to the definition of peace, in order to create a positive paradigm of peace that is relative and relational, integrated through association, and irrespective of an absolute value (Bustamante, 2014 p. 96).

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