

This paper is a summary of my 700-page very academic thesis, in Danish, to be published by Aarhus University Press (AUP). A shorter booklet based on it was published by AUP too (November 2014, 250 pages) and so were a number of shorter articles in English, French and German. In Luhmann's systems theory and in sociology at large there is a missing link consisting in the lack of a sociology of war. A number of German systems theoreticians use Luhmann's theory to fill that gap. Yet Luhmann (born 1927), who was a soldier and a prisoner of war from age 15-17, would not write a "Der Krieg der Gesellschaft". The attempt to narrow this lacuna is indeed a heavy burden and a difficult task, in which it is decisive firstly to get the basic distinctions right about a second order observation of war as a conflict system - to be distinct from a military organisational system. This, I do by beginning with a reconceptualization of Carl von Clausewitz' form analysis and self-description of war from Vom Kriege (1832). The central point is to observe the self-reference of war, or how war became war about war. Conflict is basically a problem of essentially contested communication. Once this historical self-reference established around the 17th century was in place, war became delimited by its structural couplings to religion, mass media (propaganda), finance, welfare for victims and veterans, law, politics and other functional systems. The costs of war increased, reconstituted and transformed modern society in a way that has formed a range of risks and - of course - neglected blind spots.

## Introduction

Communication is unable to communicate about every matter in an instantaneous time. Complexity has to be reduced in order to enable meaningful communication. Yet meaningful communication does not mean agreement in communication. Communication does not imply agreed contractual communication. There is no a priori synthetic original position among agreeing partners who attach the same God-given meaning to communication. This is what a theory of war communication has to consider. Communication is communication in conflict as well as in consensus.

Whatever communication is about, the past or about the future, it takes place in the present. Communication, about given resources and means or about hopes and goals, takes place in the present. Communication can even present past presents or future presents. Communication about history or about future risks depends upon the structure of present

communication (Luhmann 1984: 421; 1993a: 140-142). Whether as expectations, decisions or risks, the present observations of such social phenomena take place in the present. Yet the present is not only the infinite instantaneous difference between the past and the future, but also the synchronic contemporary conflict between different, differentiated and even opposed temporal bindings. There is no agreement about how long time the present endures. That is what war is mainly about. The power that determines the time determines the will of the other and rules over war. Since will is time, will is only temporal binding.

We observe the past and the future with contemporary theories (Koselleck 1979; 2000). Today's great social theories and analyses are more or less written by a German and French generation born at the end of the 1920s (Rawls, Koselleck, Bauman, Foucault, Luhmann, Lyotard, Huntington, Habermas, Bourdieu, Derrida, Baudrillard). This generation was old enough to observe and too young to be responsible. In order not to complicate everything, I have selected one of the authors, Luhmann, and observed the social system of war with his theory.

## **I. Philosophical preconditions: From Kant to Clausewitz and to Luhmann**

To Kant, moral was about regulating the maxims of will according to principles universally acceptable by others (Kant 1788/1974: § 7). The reverse evil ('bösen') conflict form was later coined by Carl von Clausewitz, 'war is a violent act that forces the opponent to fulfill our will' ('Der Krieg ist also ein Akt der Gewalt, um den Gegner zur Erfüllung unseres Willens zu zwingen', Clausewitz 1832/1952: 89-90). As a student of Kant's assistant, Johan Kiesewetter, Carl von Clausewitz did not investigate the critique of peace reason already investigated by Kant, but a critique of war reason. Accordingly, Clausewitz defined war in a reversal of Kant's philosophy of universalizable will. War is the neglect of the will of the other. Moral will remain, just as decisions will remain as decided decisions in time. Contested will can be opposed by other determinants, other time-binding measures. War is about a double contingency between opponents that conflict interchangeably ('Wechselwirkungen'). This interchange not only concerns matter in space (territories and borders) but also contested temporalities.

In Immanuel Kant's *Über den Gemeinspruch*, agreement is a rather unlikely state of society. Sustained thought is about will-formation, and the form of will should lead to a universal

valid acceptance transcending the subjective maxims. Yet in the heterogeneous impure world, contest is at least as likely as an ideal *sensus communis*. The contest should certainly aim to transcend itself, but conflict can turn into the evil ('bösen') neglect of the will of others; so Kant in *Religion innerhalb der blossen Vernunft*. Kant's theory of universal will formation was established in his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. Yet his theory of communication ('Mitteilung') in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* did not consider the conflictual contest of disagreement that was so decisive to his theory of war and peace in *Über den Gemeinspruch* and *Zum ewigen Frieden*. Conflicts could also occur in another medium and become - if not resolved then - transformed into the form of law, as described in *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. 'Law is the continuation of communication with other means', states Luhmann in *Soziale Systeme* (1984: 511) and thereby rephrases another conflict resolution than the one Clausewitz analyzed when he famously stated that 'war is the continuation of politics but in another medium' (Clausewitz 1832/1952: 888).

To investigate this interchange or exchange of neglected or evil will-formation, Clausewitz took his departure in Kant's theory of inter- and exchange ('Wechselwirkungen') exposed in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft's* third analogy. This is certainly no easy piece of philosophy, and there is no simple way to see how Clausewitz' famous three notions of interchange in the pure abstract and absolute war relates to Kant's three dimensions of interchanges. Literally, 'Wechselwirkung' means 'exchanged effects'. In the world, there is, according to our apperception, a co-existence of things at the same time, i.e. a co-presence. Simply put, Kant exposed a form of interchange in three dimensions, a substantial matter of opposed effects, a social community ('Gemeinschaft'), and a contemporary temporality. However, it is not obvious how Clausewitz uses this differentiation in the important chapters 3-5 in his first book of *Vom Kriege*.

Georg Simmel uses the same form analysis repeatedly to investigate social forms as money, fashion, dinners, urban life, strangers, and even war and conflict (Simmel 1900, 1908, 1918). Niklas Luhmann's social theory of self-referential communication systems here seems to offer an amazingly elegant solution to the reconstruction of the Clausewitzian puzzle about the form analysis of war. It is not always necessary to return to Clausewitz' almost 200 years old but indeed classical conception to discover the secrets of war (Aron 1976; Paret 1976; Echevarria 1995; 1996; 2003; 2007a; 2007b; Herberg-Rothe 2001). Modern social theory, of course, has arrived to far more sophisticated methodologies of for instance

systems analysis than he could develop. Yet be careful, the systems theory used in the US strategic military research is extremely obsolete; at best (John Boyd) it can be compared to Karl Deutsch's (1963/1966), but most often only linear input-output models are in use (Owens 2001; Beckerman 1999; Allen & Cunningham 2010).

It is not obvious why Kant did not establish a so-called 'communicative turn' as stated by especially Habermas; penetrating studies of *Kritik der Urteilskraft* – beginning with Ernst Cassirer – convincingly finds that Kant did work with a communication theory about judgement and reasoning about war and peace; he found claims about what was socially valid as public statements much more demanding than statements about beauty. With Luhmann, we see such forms of communication analysis from aesthetics to law and politics. He only shortly and rarely discusses the form and system of war. Recently, a number of Luhmannian based studies of war and peace has appeared (Brücher 2002; 2011; Harste 2003c; 2009a; 2009b; 2011c; Matuszek 2007; Beckmann 2011; Kuchler 2012). It is possible to elucidate a clear description of the system and form of war, reconstructed with Luhmann's theory. However, my departure is that they have to be developed in a far more congenial systems theoretical way with a stronger focus on historical semantics, self-descriptions, codes, system differentiation, structural couplings and time (synchronization/desynchronization). In particular, the duplication of codes is empirically fruitful to analyse the self-closure of systems, for instance the functional system of war to be distinguished from the military organizational system.

Luhmann has thoroughly reconstructed the originally Kantian theory of interchange ('Wechselwirkung') as trust and mistrust, as confidence or contest about contemporary counterpositions or, in Edmund Husserl's sense, intersubjective co-presence (Luhmann 1968; Husserl 1928: chap. 5). Luhmann adopted Parsons' notion of double contingency to replace the notion of interchangeability. To a theory of war, this replacement easily corresponds to the still classic war philosophy of Sun Tzu's the *Art of War* from about 400 BC, next to Clausewitz, probably the most useful strategic thinker.

## **II. The methodology of observing war with systems theory: The research program**

The Danish school of applied systems theory operates with a number of discursive analytical strategies (Andersen 2003; Luhmann 1987c; Baecker 1999; 2005). Some basic distinctions

have to be clarified in order to study the phenomena of war with systems theory.

1. Contracts, payments, political associations as well as love relations, diplomacy and war are all improbable relations in communication (Luhmann 1990). They need media, semantics, codes and forms to get probable and organizations to emerge as stabilized systems.
2. Every functional system has to be distinguished from the organizational systems, which underpin it. Systems theory operates with distinctions such as religion/church, research/universities, law/courts, politics/parliaments, love/families, mass media/press and in this case war/military organizational systems.
3. Third, if a functional system of war has emerged, it has evolved as a self-referential system that has monopolized the conduct of war in such a form where only war can handle war, functionally equivalent to the self-reference of research about research, law about law, religion that believes in itself, love that turns passionately in love with itself, mass media that communicates about themselves etc. It is possible to detect when, where and how such a self-reference revolutionizes its own doubling into itself (Luhmann 1987c; 1981).
4. The unlikely and improbable evolution of such a self-referential system can be detected in historical analyses of the semantics and codes, which establish the form of war and its revolutionized transformation into a self-referential system.
5. Finally, the structural couplings of the war system with other functional systems as well as the organization of some of these couplings can be analyzed.

These tasks can be fulfilled by an adequate research program. Accordingly, first the organizational conditions of war have to be analysed. Second, the self-reference of war, as well as its risks and blind spots in its symbolic and mass mediated asymmetric relation to its environment, in case the blind spots of asymmetric war and. Third, the structural couplings to finance, families and psychic systems (veterans), law and ethics, and to politics.

On the one hand, of course, the historical material of war is incredibly overwhelming (Harste 2012). The historical record is immense and if the observer does not accept to stay naïve, also demanding and frightening not to say terrible. An immense and very diverse literature with many differentiated and even opposed narratives has appeared, from strategic theory to law of peoples, war history, historical sociology of military revolutions,

and international politics not to speak about soldiers' experiences documented in literature or in psychiatric records.

On the other hand, Luhmann's theory can define social phenomena more clearly than any other theory and comprehend a greater range of social phenomena than, probably, any other theory since Weber's. Albeit he did not write and, probably for personal reasons, could not write a 'Der Krieg der Gesellschaft', he often hinted to such a possibility. The task is to draw the right distinctions, to find the forms, and very importantly not to mix a theory of military organization systems and interaction systems (soldiers 'corporate spirit') with a theory of war as functional system (Matuszek 2007). In order to find the exact form of the social phenomenon war, I propose to be very clear about a Luhmannian reconstruction of Clausewitz' findings, and here I approach the problem in a far broader, more sociological, more Luhmannian and, in my opinion, also more Clausewitzian way than Rasmus Beckmann (2011).

Above all, a social theory of war has to distinguish between two observations of war. On the one hand, the first order observations of war, often occurring in due course of the war itself, observe what is to be done here and now, tactically (as "Ziel") or in political decisions, often at moments when the pressure is high, the information low, the horizon blurred and second order reflections absent. Yet, the political ideas about what have to be done are so resolved about ideals, goals and necessary and sufficient means, that everything seems 'simple'. This is what Clausewitz refers to when he coins the term, the 'abstract' or 'absolute' war. That is - in a Kantian sense - the pure theory of the extreme clash of the interchanges ('Wechselwirkungen') of forces, between opponents, at a certain instantaneous moment.

On the other hand, war turns into an impure dirty historically complex form of interchanges. In such a war, everything that seems simple becomes complex (Clausewitz 1832/1952: 159). Some authors like Keegan (2000) and Owens (2001) doomed Clausewitz out; I do not count van Creveld among them (2000: 119; 2007); others claim for a neo-Clausewitzianism (Herberg-Rothe 2001; Echevarria 2007; Murray 1997; Knox & Murray 2001; Heuser 2002). Certainly, since the disasters in Iraq and Afghanistan, Clausewitz is reconsidered. Yet, why not rethink his abductive methodology.

### **III. The form and transformation of war**

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Communication gets meaning by reducing complexities about matter, sociality, and time. The same applies to contracts. Contracts are about a matter; they are among partners; and they are established in time and valid for a period of time, begin and end. But contracts are established in order to find another medium of communication than conflict (Luhmann 1984: 488-550). If conflict continues, communication turns into another form, into contest, battle and violence. Yet, in the course of historical evolution, fight and battle as the medium of conflict has apparently found unlikely and improbable forms, namely the form of war. This form established a continued contest that specialized and professionalized into a system of war.

To a *first order observation* war is easily and too easily conceived as

1. A conflict over matters such as territory, borders, resources, roads or waterways; or a conflict over power positions, heritages, privileges, since a 'border is a distinction where everything on the other side is more complex' (Luhmann 1982). Such a conflict is often described in terms of available resources effectuated in the conflict and used as input in order to produce a certain eventually predictable and calculable output (Beckmann 2011; Biddle 2004; Beckerman 1999; Jomini 1839). Since Antoine-Henri Jomini, many a tactical master of war has thought that ruling the resources of space is to rule the war; an opinion that Clausewitz opposed.
2. Furthermore, to a first order observation conflict is among opposed partners. They can imply alliances and thus the interchange ('Wechselwirkung') can appear to emerge as balanced among more or less 'equally strong' opponents. This equality not only refers to the material dimension of a) but also to the organizational coordination of efforts (Biddle 2004; Frédéric 1788; 1752/1786).
3. A war begins, culminates and ends. Often war is narrated as a story about victory, about heroes and the military genius who takes the right decision at the right time (Luhmann 1991: chap. 7). Since Fredrick the Great, war tactics have developed an obsession with speed and synchronization, surprise and attack and even with preventive war, as if a war could be solved immediately from its beginning. In such conceptions, time was linear; hence the instantaneous moment became decisive as the infinitely short breaking point between past and future.

Yet, this simple form is only the abstract moment that does not recognize long term strains

and complexities for the implied partners, whether state organizations or guerrilla groups. Accordingly, the material force determines the outcome. To Fredrick the Great, who, by most measures, was probably the greatest tactical and strategic decision-maker in history, this first order observation is a wrong and thin way of observing the strategy of war. Strategy was not about winning battles and short term results, but about reflection and transformed long term planning, winning the peace, i.e. finding solutions for the aftermath. Battles can even be lost if the opponents are demoralized or loses their capacities to coordinate as experienced by Fredrick and later in time by Israel and General Nguyen Giap in the Vietnam War. According to Clausewitz, reflection about the transformation of war was the theme for studying real ('wirkliche') war.

Whenever wars endure, they turn into transformed conflicts. Plans get confused, obstructed, they run into friction and fog, mud and quagmire. To observe such wars demand a second order observation that analyzes the risks of worst case scenarios and the implied time binding systems. It has to observe the risks of blind spots in system observation and hence recognize that it cannot observe that it cannot observe what it cannot observe (Luhmann 1986a: 52). To the classic strategic thinker Sun Tzu, working with the failure of self-observation was decisive to war strategy (Sun Tzu 400BC/1998: 26). Of course, since such endeavours are no fun and do not raise hopes, politicians tend to neglect them - though of course politicians responsible for a risky defence may, as did Churchill 13 May 1940, admitt that, 'I have nothing to offer than blood, toil, tears and sweat'. Political rulers - rather than the opposition - tend to expose the success of their programs and decisions (Luhmann 1991b: chap. 7; Willke 2001: 181-193). In this sense, it is extremely difficult for political systems to steer war systems. Accordingly, a *second order observation* of the war form transforms the three dimensions of double contingencies:

1. War displaces and transforms what Clausewitz called the centre of gravity ('Schwerpunkt') from a battle about strongholds to one of logistics, lines of supplies, arsenals, finance, taxes, credits, public loyalty and public support, sacrifices and 'blood, toil, tears and sweat'. Indeed all major wars - almost by definition - have turned their centre of gravity into the overly extended and overstretched use of finances and morality. Credits are about credibility, even organized and networked credibility, about resources becoming available until the point where the fighting population is starved to death as in the Soviet Union under WW2 (Collingham 2012),



or making false money or destroying the stock-market of the opponents. Thus the contest is also about the capacity to transform planning and plan how to change plans (Yarger 2006).

2. Wars displace and transform the involved, who are included and who are excluded. New alliances may appear at the macro level, and new groups are involved; allied behind enemy lines become involved as the Pashtuns in Pakistan in the Afghan war. War is a policy that does not only distribute collateral goods but also collateral damage. Relatives are involved, and fights begin not against but in favour of 'hearts and minds'.
3. Wars become protracted as wars of attrition. The opponent can attack the capacity to hold the nerve and, above all, furthermore irritate the strong military power that attacks far abroad and has to be able to sustain the capacity, the finances, the moral and the public opinion. To the defender, this preservation is, a priori, a resource since the defender is living at the defended place. While the strong power plans for short, smart, highly technological wars, the defender can remain and attack here or there, now or later, everywhere and nowhere and hence force the attacker to deploy much too many troops, resources and logistics during too much time. Overstretching finances and soldiers' moral is an overextension of time. The present moment of the attack becomes long, enduring and lasts into a still more uncertain future and even into the future of the traumatized war veterans and into the futures of their relatives such as the next generation. Hence the classic distinction, time for war and time for peace, become dissolved.

In war, the simple becomes difficult and complex. Wars involve opponents and opponents try to find loopholes in the planning and destroy steering. Opponents are not only obstacles to control, planning and steering but transform themselves in order to observe themselves, different to what the planner had planned to observe. Thus, realities of war are always different and destroy self-confidence and self-observation. Thus, wars are either over, fast and smooth, due to the misperceptions of the one partner who could not observe its opponent properly, or they endure and become protracted. Protracted wars involve more resources, more men, more finance and credit. Indeed, they normally lead to extremely increased taxes, credit crisis and unplanned welfare expenses.

In the following, I do not consider the so-called (sub-Saharan) new wars (Münkler 2006),

since I, as Herberg-Rothe (2001), do not consider them outside the scope of Clausewitz' conception, but rather at the limit (as Münkler 2007).

#### **IV. The historical lesson**

The normal lesson in historical sociology has a very strong record though there are important exceptions. Since wars, historically observed, are always more costly than tax-planners have planned, they involve overload of war debts. They enforced increased bureaucracies to manage taxes, credits, health care, hospitals, disabled persons and traumatized families. Above all, such costs increase in time and it is even possible to detect the overextension in history and describe it mathematically in three dimensions.

As Paul Kennedy, Bruce Porter, Charles Tilly, and even as early as Otto Hintze, Immanuel Kant and Fredrick the Great demonstrated: We know about this, because it is properly and well documented from historical learning processes. State formation was about the evolution in war, and the political revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were due to administrative revolutions (Tocqueville 1856/1988: 299), which were structurally coupled with financial revolutions and with military revolutions (Roberts 1955; 1993; Glete 2003; Downing 1992). Military forces are usually registered by historians in terms of numbers. Long wars involve larger numbers and involve a competition for the largest number. But above all, the stretch of protracted time changes everything. Hence, we can observe a figure in three dimensions: Numbers, logistical allocations (food, trucks, airplanes, uniforms, navies, garrisons, education, professionalization etc.), and endurance in time as in Figure 1.

The exception to this form does not tell another story but rather confirms it. Wars were also a hunt for money and resources as conquering and colonial wars. They extended not only resources available to exploit but also credit bases, which means long term credibility. In classical symmetric wars, this complex is imitated from state to state.

#### **Figure 1. Growth in military forces and finance from 1500 - 1780**

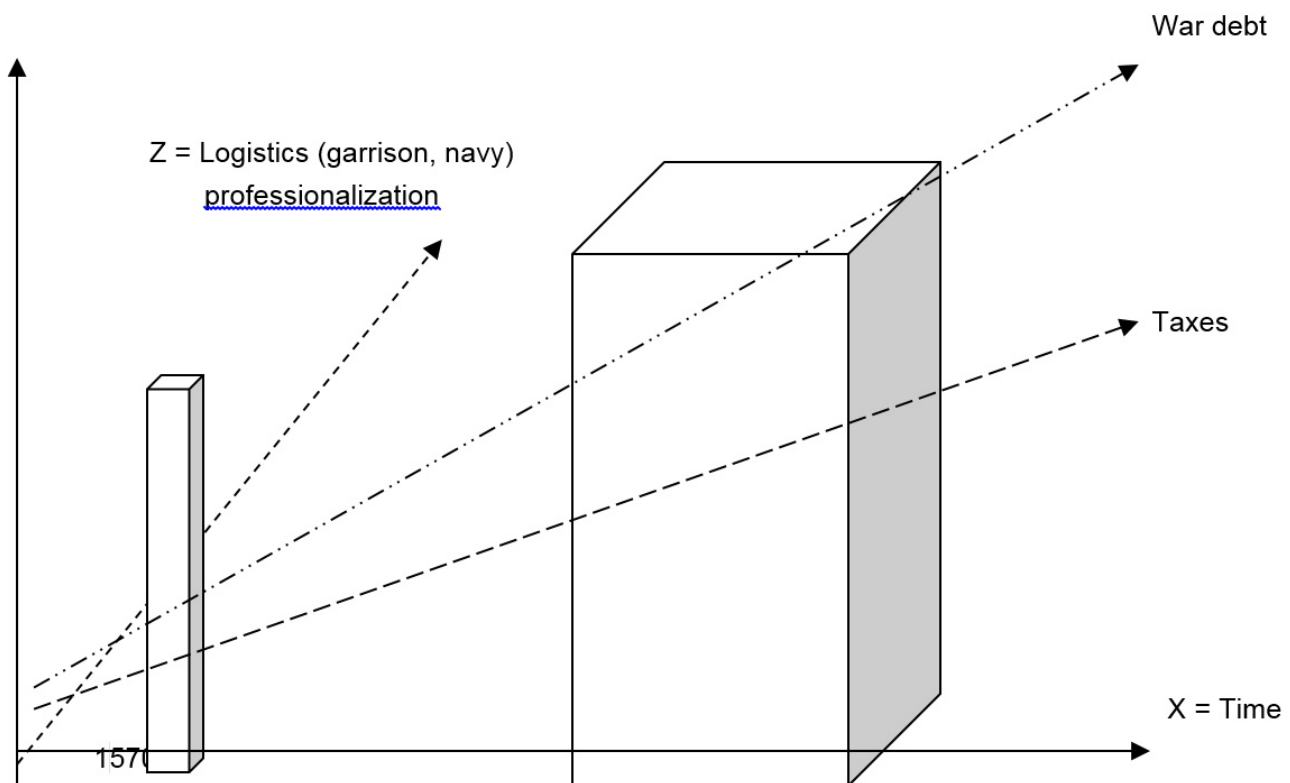
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Amount of soldiers and officers

Amount of bureaucrats

Taxes & war debt



## V. Organised territory

Much has been written about the Greek hoplite and the Roman war machine. Yet in fact, the antic organization lacked temporal stability and a sufficient abstract semantics of administration and officers. These achievements did not occur before Christianity communicated with itself, developed religious codes of inclusion and exclusion (excommunication) (Luhmann 1987d; 1989d). The form of the *corpus spiritus* established a

bouquet of coherent semantics about presence, co-presence and delegation. Above all, it synchronized the communication as a temporal power with distinctions such as eternity (*aeternitas*)/earthly temporal power and hence could establish so-called body politics with authority (*auctoritas*) and power (*potestatis plenitudo*) (Luhmann 2000b). This power empowered its own co-presence and synchronized delegated power in such a form that representatives could be sent to remote corners of the world and still stay present (John of Salisbury 1159/1993; Marsilius of Padua 1326/2001; Quillet 1972; Kantorowicz 1958; Berman 1983; Thornhill 2011; Brunkhorst 2014). This was indeed a very de-differentiated form of organization where the theological codes of religion played the upper hand.

On these foundations, of course, disagreements developed about the conditions for centralized and decentralized delegation. Luhmann is probably quite right when he, as Elizabeth Eisenstein, observes the printing press (Luhmann 1997a: 291-301) as the last push against the centralized dedifferentiated power, that the anti-Machiavellian political, legal and theological movements abstracted their self-descriptions of new organized forms of natural law. The esprit de corps of French commissars, described by Jean Bodin (1576/1961) and François de la Noue (1587/1967), happened to establish another temporal form to the semantics of commissars and military officers, respectively: As with Jesus Christ, the office holder could die, yet the office remains. This idea Bodin transferred into the earthly power of the sovereign prince re(-)presenting eternal power in the temporal dwindling earthly monarchy. This is all about temporal stabilization (Luhmann 1986a: 172; 1979; 1980b; 1989a, 1989b).

Another form of this evolving involution was the semantic architectural form of the central perspective. The central perspective is often interpreted only to be a spatial perspective. However, it was also a temporal perspective of synchronization: It could coordinate divisions by vision. Centralize the decentralized parts. Hence, it could solve the old quarrel so destructive to the Catholic Church. Bodin used it as a description of a form more abstract than the bodily organism and its organization. That form was the 'system'. The system synchronizes.

A few decades later, Armand Richelieu's 'raison d'État' (1638/1990) reinforced that semantics, but the central perspective's synchronizing power was not used to empower territorial organization of tax administration and surveillance before Jean-Baptiste Colbert

came to power in 1661-1683. The modern state emerged as a state able to centralize and decentralize with the power of a synchronizing machine, the central administration of decentralized officials (Luhmann 1989b; 1990f; 1995a; 2000a). Versailles was built as a symbolic fortification, which described how the central perspective and central administration formed a vision of the departmental divisions in the state territory (Mukerji 1997; Harste 2003a).

Between Bodin and Colbert, the military state organization revolutionized war as well as organization. The 'necessitas' of the reason of state was due to the internal complexities of war. So what happened with the war system?

## **VI. The evolution of self-referential war**

In the centuries from Charlemagne to the Italian Wars (1492-1525), the codes of war and peace were symmetrically second to theological codes about *securitas*. *Pax Dei* certainly ruled the codes of justified war that was accepted as holy war and otherwise submitted to arbitration and deliberation by the Catholic Church. The Crusades developed simultaneously with the theological semantics and the Catholic organization of the corporate spirit. War became codified with semantics of honour, pride, eternity, life/death and all the concepts that Harold Berman calls the medieval legal revolution (Flori 2001; Berman 1983; Harste 2003b).

Yet, from about 1460 to 1560, the church lost its authority at the same time as a number of challenges occurred, le Nuovo Mondo, other semantics and codes emerged, central perspectives and the expensive fire weapons. The Protestant princes monopolized the possessions of their wealthy monasteries.

Altogether, this accelerated the military competition with more and stronger rulers that were all in need of military organizations and tax organizations to feed their immensely and suddenly increasing armies (Corvisier 1993; Cornette 1993; Contamine 1998; Downing 1992). Hence, dynastic political semantics were replaced by more abstract semantics, more professional codes and in war communication codes that adapted to a form of war where

nothing else than war itself could rule the violence and force of war. War developed in a “system of war”, in a “system of states”, and a “system of equilibrium” (Grotius 1625/1999: 99; Saint-Pierre 1713/1981: 132, 143, 195), which ruled itself. The Thirty Years War, some places it took about 80 years, was probably, according to some agenda setting authors as Michael Roberts (1955), the revolutionizing turning point. War became a self-referential system, which could refer to the needs and necessities of war. *As if* war could become what Clausewitz called an ‘absolute’ system.

Yet, it was obvious that no system can totalitarize its own needs in the longer run (of course a nuclear war could have escalated into such an almighty power, Brücher 2011). Albeit European states – from about 1500 to 1815 – were almost incessantly in war or licking their wounds and repaying their war debts, their wars were in need of military organizations that again desperately needed finance, educational systems, law, research, motivated soldiers and political systems to authorize taxes and conscriptions etc.

## VII. Asymmetric war

The monopolization of organized and symbolic violence (Weber 1922/1980: 822; Bourdieu 1994: 106ff) created a number of blind spots. Many of those were detected already by Clausewitz. The Spanish guerrilla created problems for Napoleon’s revolutionary army that could not kill insurgents as brutishly as the Swedish army did in the 1660’s in Southern Sweden. Clausewitz’ two main empirical references, the strategic Fredrick the Great and the tactician Napoleon Bonaparte, developed warfare as speed and synchronisation, and evolution in modern society has ever since taken pace with an ever increased acceleration (Rosa 2005: 316ff; Virilio 1977).

However, the Napoleon story about speed does not observe the complex organization of temporality inherent in Fredrick’s strategic way of combining short-term acceleration (by instantaneous structural coupling of political and military decision by the hence mythically unified commander) with long term endeavours sustaining not only finance but also a diplomatically well-formed peace system. To win the peace is the strategic goal of war, annihilation of the enemy is not the goal. For both commanders, the synchronization of force

was decisive in warfare, but to Fredrick, logistics has to be sustainable in the long term and should not be wasted away in resourceful campaigns.

Albeit Fredrick was the brighter strategist, Napoleon had the largest impact, according to a spatial law of entropy. Some warfare thinkers follow William Lind in his evolutionary idea of a first generation, second generation, third generation and fourth generation warfare that delineates the spreading of armies (Lind 1989; Hammes 1994; 2006). In spite of the third generation Blitzkrieg tactics, the US forces mainly, until 2007 leaned upon a Napoleon tactics, substituting war strategy with Napoleon warfare tactics of heavy massed forces with a concentration of speed: Attacking Iraq and winning a tactical victory in six weeks only to lose the long term strategic fight in the asymmetric war that followed (Cerami & Boggs 2007) and hence also losing in Afghanistan. Bush's, Rumsfeld's and Cheney's fight was similar to McNamara's against Giap, to Brezhnev in Afghanistan and to Napoleon against Russia: A strong army does not observe its own weaknesses, and Al Qaeda simply could copy Lind's and Hammes' teachings about Mao Ze Dong's strategy (Mack 1975; Arreguin-Toft 2001; Record 2005). The stronger army dogmatizes its own capacities to communicate with itself about its own brilliance (using an extreme network of acronyms), and 'cannot observe that it cannot observe what it cannot observe' (Luhmann 1986a: 52).

Since T.H.Lawrence's self-description (1935/1997) of the British strategy to help the Arab insurgency under the Second World War, the asymmetrical answer has been that the weak shall use surprise, hazard, contingencies to protract the irritations and the friction that turn the stronger part still more vulnerable. The point is not to win the material battles but to expose symbolically failure. Guerrilla as asymmetric defence and terrorism as asymmetric offensive is not about space but about communication and time (Harste 2011c). They attack the credibility system of finance and morals by using symbolically generalized fear and mistrust as the medium and battle field for temporally extended warfare. Hence, the military system and the war systems are demasked as risk systems rather than being sustained as legitimized security systems. Hence, the American way of warfare (Gray 2006; Record 2005) has been dissolved and the idea of an eternal, unipolar and universal Pax Americana that defended *The Globalization* finally lost its breath (2003b). It had four weaknesses: the structural couplings to finance (X), to psychic systems (XI), to law (XII), and to its own political self-observation (XIII).

### **VIII. The structural coupling between war and finance: The limits of war**

Financing wars is about the temporalities of sudden warfare and increased capacities to tax. Wars can be financed in four or five ways, through external plunder or internal starvation, taxes, inflation and credit. Taxes have always been contested (Bonney 1995), but in the long term they have to be paid, one way or another. Empires, the one after the other, have overstretched their military capacities compared with their capacities to maintain high levels of taxation. Taxation can be substituted by inflation or credit systems. In all cases, present payments for explosively increased expenses are substituted with future costs. Hence the temporal management, of trade-offs between present suffering and future sacrifices, is the contested battlefield of present warriors and future payers: who will be the losers? According to Luhmann (1988: 158ff), the symbolically generalized medium of payments codifies repayments as a diabolically generalized medium. The biggest and most dramatic difference has probably been between the US financing of the WWII supplies compared to the Soviet supplies to the WWII. Though taxes increased manifold in US, the major finance came from war obligations, an old financial medium used by the Medicis, but refined in a financial revolution by Amsterdam's Wisselbank and especially in the complex credit development in England since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After WWII US could develop the credit further, substituting gold with dollars and developing the network of credit institutions into still more layers.

As systems theoreticians Dirk Baecker (1991) and Elena Esposito (2010) have shown, banks trade with trust and time. In history, they concentrated in the greatest cities since these centers synchronized communication about information, social trust and future credibility and accountability (Braudel 1979; Germain 1997; Fontaine 2008; Ferguson 2009). Banks, from the Fuggers over the Rotchilds and to modern bankings systems develop networks of arrangements as forms that trade short term payments with long term loans. The networks develop credibility through the medium in still more pumped complex subsystems, in which everyone are considered trustworthy (AAA+, AAA, AAB etc) by every buyer and seller at the credit markets. In this way, credits develops to hedge the price stability of the so-called 'futures', price guarantees produced, sold and bought. Already the medium of money is possible because present purchases are replaced symbolically with the possibility of future



purchases. Since the dollar in 1945 became the reserve currency, and US the world's 'lender of last resort', this position could be severely abused (Kindleberger 1984; Germain 1997; Eichengreen 2007; 2011; Rockoff 2012). Hence, USA could finance unpaid military campaigns such as Vietnam, the Iraq War and the Afghanistan Wars, the longest wars since the Napoleon wars.

In contrast to the extremely increasing US Economy 1941-1944, the economy and production of Soviet Union immediately decreased in 1941, especially in the food production (Collingham 2012; Harrison 1998). Albeit Soviet established some war obligations, the debt circus went the other way around and turned into a negative debt, it had to use starvation and probably more than 20 million Soviet citizens starved to death; probably 43-45 million Soviet citizens died (Sokolov 2009), of which 17 million civilians. The population was traumatized, and so were the ontologies of trust and mistrust that can hardly be described with other forms of communication than silence ('Schweigen'; Luhmann 1989f).

## **IX. The structural coupling to veterans costs: The war re-enters peace**

Another cost of war and negative debt is accounted for in the structural coupling between the war system and the psychic systems of the war veterans, including their relatives. In fact, the sharp distinction between military organization systems and the war systems allows for observations of the organizational unhandled experience of soldiers. In a short formula, war veterans get caught squeezed in-between systems, including their own traumatized psychic systems that has to cope with experiences which do not fit into normal narratives (Luhmann 1995a; 1995b; *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 2010,1). Biographical narratives do rarely structurally couple thought and communication. In the communication about war veterans, the 'war veteran' has become an 'essentially contested concept', a battlefield for uncoupled systems that all try to flee the unknowable 'an sich' war experience or translate and codify it into their problem-solving programs (Harste 2010b).

By means of a a still more immense literature, it is possible to detect traumatized experiences the whole way back to Homer's Iliad and to Odysseus (Shay 2003). The Christian theology about sin, guilt, shame and belief developed under the Crusades and in a

binary dichotomy to such described problems the noble semantics of honour developed as well. Grimmelshausen wrote his famous book about *Simplicissimus* (1667/1967) in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War. Hospitals for the experienced veterans should encourage soldiers and were, with *L'Hôtel des invalides* in Paris, famously for exemple in this case built as a direct correspondence to Versailles. With Napoleon, some social care was invented for war veterans; yet before, Swedish soldiers had a far more organized system of care. The Krim War invented nurses as better off women (not whores). Shortly after, the US Civil War got an aftermath with millions of traumatized and disabled soldiers. In the 1890s, 42 % of the federal expenditures went to veteran pensions (Juul 2009).

However, it was WWI, which gave the greater push to the question of 'shell shock', 'Granatenzittern' and nervous breakdown. Physically disabled were recognized, far more in France and Germany than in Great Britain, but the problem came with the traumatized, who especially in Germany also officially had lost the war. Psychic problems were codified as 'Rentenhysteria', even in neutral Denmark that should bother with 26.000 former soldiers in Southern Jutland. In Germany, voluntary help agencies were dissolved right away from 1918 in favor of professionalized top down health and welfare expertise. This led to the fatale experience of humiliation and lack of recognition. Hence, several non-social democratic veteran organizations turned into fascist and Nazi radicalization (Geyer 1983; Cohen 2001).

Still after WWII traumatization was hardly recognized (Diehl 1993). German lawyers, as indeed Luhmann, should only include veterans according to universal positive law - and it functioned. In Soviet traumas were all over and were mainly drowned in vodka, but also in suicide (Nikouline 2011). In US, the GI Bill established the one and only happy narrative about heroes coming home. The fact was that by far the major part of US soldiers served in logistics and the minor part did not fit well into the care systems, but care was there and was taken serious. The Vietnam War traumatized the Vietnam population. Yet among US soldiers after Vietnam, more veterans committed suicide than those who were killed in Vietnam (57.000) (Schulzinger 2006). The form of the distinction killerùvictim had its asymmetry replaced as victimùkiller. The forms of mental suffering lead to the diagnosis of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) used to describe 31 % of all US soldiers in Vietnam, i.e. close to all who experienced battle. In 2012, more than 8.000 US veterans committed suicide and close to 50 % who did service in Iraq and Afghanistan have applied for veteran pensions (Korbs 2009; VA 2013).

Hence, the individualization of traumas follows along with the individualization process of modern society since the Crusades, the Renaissance, late Enlightenment and in generational changes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Coker 2001). Today, the person is so individualized that s/he only is recognized as identical to herself if s/he is able to become another and transform the self into another and still more performing narrative. Exactly this becomes increasingly difficult for the war veteran, who so often, since the non-obligatory recruitment came in use after the Vietnam War, is told that war experiences will strengthen the personality. Strong evidence demonstrates that the opposite is the case (Glantz 2007, 2009; Holmstedt 2008; 2009).

Veteran experience is about temporal narratives. The past, the present and the hopes for future do not integrate. The veteran seems split and cannot cope with the differentiated functional systems and their organizations. The systems seem remote and he or (especially) she cannot communicate in their codes. Even families and former friends seem remote. A piece of theater is going on and the veteran is on the scene but without the ability of acting and playing his role. Hence, social systems theory can describe the split between uncoupled systems and also how communication, thought, feeling, bodily experience operate in different temporalities. Luhmann finds that the speed and integrated - or disintegrated - thoughts are overwhelmingly faster than the much slower speed of communication, especially talking, not to say writing. Luhmann himself was a war veteran after having been soldier from his 15<sup>th</sup> to his 17<sup>th</sup> year. To him, a society can establish a war with itself and even form and transform war into a self-referential system. Yet, the psychic system stays at the outside observing the conflict and quarrel society has with itself.

## **X. The structural coupling to law: How peace re-entered war**

Ever since Cicero and Augustine, the distinction war/peace has historically been structurally coupled with the distinction legal/illegal (Harste 2009a). Before, Thukydide, in the Melior dialogue, described how moral codes were used to judge what is possible in war (*jus in bello*) and to allow for war (*jus ad bellum*). With the Crusades, the legal codifications developed still more and even so in Islam law (Khadduri 1955; Tuck 1999). Peace re-enters into war in the form of law. The *Pax Dei* was justified as a code of moral used in courts to

judge if killing was accepted, in the narrowest form: no killings of noble ladies in churches on Sundays! However, such rules spread bottom up and met universal rules top down which lead to the so-called peace of land law (*Landesfrieden*) (Jannsen 1979a; 1979b; Fisch 1979).

Before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, war was all over and there was no strong distinction between times of war and times of peace (Cornette 1993; Genet 2004). Yet the German *Landesfrieden* in 1555 established a law codex beyond opposed confessions. The abstract idea of an eternal natural law got a reasonable form beyond its theological formulation, of course belonging to Christians, but the pure idea continued: In the same word, with the same God, with one Ocean, could some abstract coherent code of co-existence be justified, if not established. It should be eternal and at the same time synchronic to the partners: recognized in the co-present time simultaneously and in whatever will come in the future as contingencies.

The organizational revolution, which began in the 16<sup>th</sup> and culminated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century did establish the reference for a law of nations. Hugo Grotius could describe how *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum* became an external affair for empires. In addition, from 1648 – 1748, from the Peace of Westphalia to the Peace of Aachen, to transgress state borders violently with armed forces became illegal.

From Samuel Pufendorff, over French Chancellor d'Aguesseau, his contemporary Abbé Saint-Pierre to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, however, the natural law could only be accounted for as some abstract, yet reasonable hope for regulation. Then Immanuel Kant, with his evolution theory of 'self-organizing' systems, inspired by the legal reforms of Frederick the Great (1788), found some solution to the problem, described in especially *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (1795/1977; Harste 2009a). Since war is an increasingly organized and violent competition for the better places in the finite world, war evolves into systems that are still more complex. Hence, military organized states have to differentiate as described by Montesquieu (1749) and military departments from tax departments, credit systems, educational systems and especially legal systems (Behrens 1985). Taxes have to be administrated legally, in order to avoid tax costly rebellions. Yet states copy each other. Hence, they converge into still more similar forms and their cooperation capacities evolve. Accordingly, whole networks of cooperation facilities will develop in the future. This was Kant's realist account for a world future. A world state would be a failure, but a complex

network of cooperation and systems of diplomacy and peace was possible; the future was possible in the past. This where we are, now, in Kant's future (Luhmann 1993a: 579ff). Though dissens and collisions between divergent regimes of hybrid law will increasingly emerge too (Fischer-Lescano & Teubner 2006).

## **XI. Conclusion: The structural coupling to politics and the risk structure of modern society**

The mythology of a direct structural coupling between war and politics is strong (Luhmann 1987c). It probably has several sources. One is the unified justification that authorized war with the word of a unified God. Another is a bit more secularized and used the king as mediator at the same time as the king was a legal sovereign, and became head of the protestant churches and was leader of the army as well as the prime financial supplier. Only a few kings ever corresponded to that myth (Christian IV and Fredric III in Denmark probably, but even Swedish Gustav Adolphus less). With the Enlightenment, however, a more modern version got some reality with Fredrick the Great and Napoleon. This is the reference for Clausewitz, but even more for Jomini's quite influential lesson. Both were the undisputed political sovereign leaders of their states and both were the undisputed leaders of their armies as well as the most professionally informed tactical leaders in history to that moment. To Jomini war became the planned tool and controllable instrument of the political system. Later, other political generals would follow, Mao, de Gaulle, Eisenhower, even Colin Powell, and in some respect Churchill who had an officer career. However, a number of dilettantes have also disturbed the world (Hitler, Mussolini, Rumsfeld).

Yet, there is a trap in-between the political system and the war system (Huntington 1957; Vandergriff 2001) . This disturbing risk is the military organization system and the problem is not the blind spots of a professional officer corps. Often, officers very well observe the risks of military campaign, albeit they seldom are responsible for the explosive financial costs and risks of wars and often close their eyes towards those veteran traumas that would impede recruitment of soldiers to their armies if officers told recruits about the risks of psychic traumas. The risk is in the codes of administrative control that ever since Bodin and Colbert are so celebrated in the political system. The political system lives of its basic code

of ruler/ruled that in parliamentary systems function as government/opposition. The opposition has to demand for control and - together with the mass media - overloads the government for claims of control. The government exposes how much it controls and if caught in failure, claims that it already reforms the control measures.

Since the organizational system was formed in the stratified estate society, it is hierarchically bound to an inclusion/exclusion system that re-enters into itself and to codes of command (Luhmann 1997a: 701, 718-722). With such long path dependencies, the organizational system lends itself to control by the civil political order (Huntington 1957). This certainly became the narrative for modern military organizations western style (and even to the Red Army; Bellamy 2007). Hence, the political system operates with codes of control and this probably is the normal form of means/goal decision-making so generally used in the central administration (Luhmann 2010: 156-166; 1968; Beckmann 2011). Hence, the temporal form of synchronic differentiation is bracketed by a mean/goal-codification that is formed after the scheme of temporalised past/future-dichotomies. The present form of differentiated co-presence in decision-making (Luhmann 2000c), in trust and mistrust, not to forget the interchange form of Clausewitz' three 'Wechselwirkungen' is neglected into oblivion; so also by Beckmann's analysis, but not in Brücher's analysis of violent escalation.

Furthermore, the parliamentary political system operates with the short term temporal binding of risks until the next elections. However, parties as organizations are bound to the much longer temporal binding of careers (Luhmann 2000a: 267-268). At the same time, politics is structurally coupled to the mass media that cope with the shortest of all temporal bindings, the code of news and sensations (Luhmann 1996). They overload the political system with demands for conflict- and problem-solving measures (Easton 1965; Luhmann 2010: 292ff.). 'For the political system only organized communication counts. Organizations communicates with organizations.' (Luhmann 1991: 164). Accordingly, the military organizational system, itself divided into army, navy and air forces compete with itself to pose problem-solving measures even without being sure about the question and the problems: it has the solutions. In the Jomini-instrumental form dependency, it tells: that it has the hammer and accordingly the world, the environment to the system, is made of nails.

This has been the ruling narrative from 1814 over 1914 to 2014. Its form-dependencies of semantics, codes, communications, narratives (Smith 2005) and mythologies have lasted

even longer. It has coined the mythology of decision-making for and in war with ideas of God's presence on Earth and eternity present at 'the right decisive moment' (Luhmann 1991b: 160). This short term risk-binding codification is abstract, in Clausewitz' terms. It seems to lack structural coupling with the realities of war and especially to the double costs of war. War systems are not subject to steering, only to delimitation (Herberg-Rothe 2001). War systems escalate ('entgrenzen'); and then they are delimited ('begrenzen'), by political systems, when the public opinion, the credit systems and the care systems cannot and will not anymore pay the burden of costs. The financial risk of wars always turns 10, 100 or 1000 times as expensive as planned, with WWI and WWII as the extreme cases (Strachan 2004; Harrison 1998). The Iraq war probably turned about 100 times as expensive as planned (Kaysen 2002; Stiglitz 2008). The second cost is humane. The sacrifices and traumatizations have returns for generations. If North-Eastern Germany recovered after the Thirty Years War and its aftermaths, the fights for securitization, only in the 1770s, the Soviet Union, Russia, Belo-Russia and Ukraine probably still not have recovered. The Cold War began as a misperception of the strength of the Red Army and the Russian supplies, the Western powers did not observe the miserable state of the Soviet Empire including Eastern Europe. The Red Army literally had no capacity to fight another war and especially absolutely no motive, only it had learned from the First and Second World Wars that attack is less costly than defense. The Western strategists did not observe this vulnerability and risked to turn the world into the Almighty hell on that account. This would finally have ended society's future, a future that, according to Luhmann in 1982, 'cannot begin' (Luhmann 1982: 271); yet in 1993 (129-148) he began 'a description of the future'.

Yet in the future, private military companies and drones may become alternatives (Harste 2009b). If such scenarios emerge, political accountabilities may be dissolved beyond recognition (Singer 2004a; 2004b; 2008; 2009; Rosén 2008).

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