Emotions in War: The Emotionality-Rationality Equation in Clausewitz's Theory of War

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Clausewitz introduced an inclusive equation between emotionality and rationality with regards to the debates on the causality and practice of war in modern strategic thought. In Clausewitz's theory of war, war is a process of governmentality composed by three types of actors: states directing war (leaders and decision-makers), armies executing war (combatants), and people supporting war financially and morally (societies). In this trinitarian scheme, war is a continuous, mutually constitutive interactional process with emotional and rational components both between conflicting parties, and within each side. The aim of this article is to discuss how Clausewitz integrated the emotion-reason equation in his theory of war, to explain through an actor-level analysis how emotions affect, change, and transform war, and lastly to discuss the mutual constitutive relationship between wars and emotions in the contemporary global durable disorder.

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I. Introduction

Although war, as old as human history, is considered as the product of a purely rational construction based on political and military goals, strategies, tactics, and manoeuvres, in fact, is shaped by the unity and mutual construction of reason and emotions. War is a social output of the interaction of reason and emotion in the context of causes, processes, and consequences. Clausewitz is one of the first soldier-thinkers who both experiences the effect of this interaction on warfare and presents the theoretical reading of this experience most clearly. Clausewitz's theory of war includes an emotionality and rationality equation encompassing their interpenetrated relationships on the actor-level. Thereby, the theorist of war focuses on both rationality and the role of instincts and emotions on warfare as a catalyser. This is one of Clausewitz's important contributions to contemporary war studies: his ideas on how reason and emotion, material forces and moral forces can be synthesized in practice and theory.

From this perspective, the main argument of this article is that Clausewitz's theory of war constructs a remarkable equation between rationality and emotions by the application to the

actor-level through his "trinity" of war; and this theoretical framework should be used to analyse contemporary conflicts and wars in which emotions increasingly play a pivotal motivational role and impact on reflexivity in terms of complexity, unpredictability, and uncertainty. Our article will first discuss the emotional turn in social sciences and the significant break from a rationalist epistemology that has too long ignored the role of emotions. Second, the classical narrative on the relation between war and emotions will be discussed through Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. Third, Clausewitz's epistemological and practical view of the emotionality-rationality equation in warfare will be considered. Fourth, dwelling on the intersubjective dimension of Clausewitz's theory of war, we will consider the impact of emotional states and stress-levels on different types of actors in warfare. Finally, the changing character of war in the age of global durable disorder will be discussed in terms of warfare actor diversity and asymmetry which reflect multiple and fragmented identities, overlapping authorities and emotional confusions.

II. The Emotional Turn: Rethinking the Reason-Emotion Equation

The Enlightenment rationalist paradigm based on the axis of Newtonian physics and Cartesian philosophy, deconstructed the Platonian rationalist tradition and "deified reason" or "constructed the religion of reason" as argued by Randall's analogy.[1] As in the understanding of the cosmos and nature, the constituent and sole subject of rationalism's social world design is also reason. This world view based on pure reason has reduced to a dichotomous axis the hierarchy of reason over emotion which has been ongoing since ancient times.[2] The rationalist epistemology constructed the social equation on the categorical distinction between reason and emotion in which reason is postulated as the sole source of objectivity and scientific knowledge, while emotions are considered as subjective and unscientific. In the epistemological equation in question, humans are considered as beings who think and act in a fully rational way. Consequently, the metaphysical and the psychological dimensions of the human being are neglected. This disregard for emotions paves the way to a machine-like account of the human being who becomes alienated from itself.

However, there is nowadays an epistemological consensus against that rationalist paradigm: neither the ontological existence of human beings can be reduced to reason alone, nor can the epistemological and methodological framework of the social sciences that concern humanity be drawn only with pure reason. This thought system has also been opposed by Kant. In an article of 1784, he answered the question "What Is Enlightenment?" with his claim: "Have the courage to make use of your own intellect!" (Sapere aude!), that in turn became the motto of the Enlightenment; he nonetheless concluded the article by asserting that the "human being… is indeed more than a machine." Kant was not only demonstrating the importance of reason, but also showing an intellectual reaction to rationalism which reduces and mechanizes the human mind.[3] In the preface to his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he opposed pure reason taken as independent of any experiment and criticized the

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[1] John Herman Randall, *The Making of the Modern Mind: A Survey of the Intellectual Background of the Present Age* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), 253-307.

[2] For an inclusive analysis focusing on the history of emotions, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, Riccardo Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotion?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

[3] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment," in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, translated by David L. Colclasure, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 17-23.

transcendental role that rationalism imposes on reason.[4] In short, as can be understood from Kant's criticisms, though it was necessary to give reason the value that it deserves, it was also necessary to prevent reason from being sanctified and dogmatized.

Emotion studies in the field of literature have recently taken an important momentum by deconstructing the rationality-emotionality dilemma, and by highlighting the unity of the cognitive and emotional process;[5] the emotional turn in social sciences highlights how the human being is multidimensional, and thinks and acts not only with reason but also with experiences, beliefs, ideologies, values, psychological motives and, of course, emotions.[6] All over the world, emotions shape ideas, determine human action, individual preference, public opinion, social movements and political decisions.[7] Therefore, the phenomenon of politics is a product of emotions as much as reason. Hence, it is possible to reconstruct an equation between reason and emotion as follows: Emotions influence human behaviours and decision-making processes by determining the given options at the beginning and then, only in a second step, the rational mind comes into play by selecting one of those options and finally expressing that preference in practice.[8] Our cognitive and emotional worlds are not independent from each other; they cannot be separated by sharp lines, as if one could be enabled while the other disabled. What is more, emotions contain thoughts, biological sensations, motivations, and an internal sense of experience; thus, they are already associated with the rational sphere and cognition in human nature.[9] As researches in neuroscience indicate, through their interpenetrated unity, reason and emotion exist in a mutually constitutive and complementary relationship in the decision-making process, contrary to the view that they negatively affect each other.[10] Emotions not only play a motivating role in human actions and decisions, but are also within the scope of rational framings and assessments in all social interactions(whether conflict or cooperation). Because emotions are constructed at the same time cognitively and culturally[11], they offer us important insights in order to predict and calculate their collective, political, and sociological impacts on rational decision-making processes.

Due the fact that cognitive activities always produce definitive emotions in return to the impressions received from other people, events, difficulties, or conjunctures, emotional reactions, and possibilities as well as psychological instincts are major components in conflict

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[4] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by F. Max Müller, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), xvii-xxvi.

[5] For the development of emotion studies which have rested for a long time understudied in Politics and International Relations, and for a methodological debate on emotional turn in recent years, see Maéva Clément, Eric Sangar, "Introduction: Methodological Challenges and Opportunities for the Study of Emotions", in *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn*, ed. Maéva Clément, Eric Sangar (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1-29.

[6] Jonathan Mercer, "Human nature and the first image: emotion in international politics," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 9 (2006): 288-303.

[7] Hanna Samir Kassab, *The Power of Emotion in Politics, Philosophy, and Ideology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1-2.

[8] Jonathan Mercer, "Rationality and Psychology in International Politics," *International Organization* 59:1 (2005): 94.

[9] Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 62.

[10] Richard Ned Lebow, "Foreword," in *Emotions in International Politics: Beyond Mainstream International Relations*, ed. Yohan Ariffin, Jean-Marc Coicaud, Vesselin Popovski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), xii.

[11] Neta C. Crawford, *"*The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships*," International Security*, 24:4 (2000): 125.

and war. The role of emotions cannot be ignored because war is a state of complexity and ambivalency in which the human being is in the very midst of death.[12] Undoubtedly, just like every other social phenomenon, such an environment cannot be free from emotions and psychological tides. War is described by Clausewitz as a "continuation of politics by other means.". We can neither consider it merely as the output of a robotic decision-making mechanism or a purely mechanical process; nor we can define and explain it by limiting it to rational parameters and fully abstracting it from emotions. It is not possible to conduct a war, or to analyse it, without taking into account some basic positive and negative emotions (or motives) like fear, grudge, hate, trust, insecurity, passion, courage, anxiety, recognition, non-recognition, emancipation, fortitude, empathy, compassion, and so on.

III. A Historical Perspective on the Role of Emotions in War

The ancient Greek philosopher Thucydides represents the first example of war studied under its emotional features. *The Peloponnesian War* aims at a comprehensive account of empirical observations experiences, rational ideas, and emotions with respect to their direct or indirect role in warfare. According to Thucydides' analysis, the initiating cause of the Peloponnesian War is fear, in this view, the oldest and most powerful human emotion.[13] Athens' quest for leadership and hegemonic policies caused Sparta to fear a security dilemma, and the war broke out by Sparta's attack on Athens. It is not surprising or contradictory in Thucydides' psycho-political equation that the Spartans took preventive action and intervened on the basis of these emotions. According to him, the three most powerful motivators of human nature are first fear, then prestige and later self-interest.[14] In addition to fear, insecurity and prestige, Thucydides pointed out that the passion of emancipation, the aspiration of recognition, the anger towards the enemy were also catalyst emotions in the outbreak of the war. Further, the features of chance inherent in war produce emotional transitions *vis-à-vis* the danger of uncertainty by provoking anxiety and insecurity.[15] In short, Thucydides wrote a "preface" to the literature that narrated the role of emotions in war by placing the ontology of the Peloponnesian war into a politico-psychological framework.[16]

Similarly, Machiavelli, the first representative of the realist tradition in the modern world, who brings Thucydides' legacy into Renaissance, portrayed the character typology of an ideal Prince, who should have a powerful and centralized authority, within the framework of rationality and emotions. Machiavelli argued that the main purpose of a prince is to know the art of war and to govern warfare and discipline, the first cause of losing or acquiring a state

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[12] Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: Chicago University of Press, 1921), 594.

[13] Lars Svendsen writes with reference to H. P. Lovecraft: "*The oldest and strongest human emotion is fear, and the oldest and strongest form of fear is the fear of the unknown*"; Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*, translated by John Irons, (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 37. Svendsen deepens the ontological and historical perspective of fear by drawing on the narrative passing in Genesis 3:10: "(…) *it is scarcely a coincidence that fear is the first emotion to be mentioned in the Bible: when Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge and discovered that he was naked, fear preceded shame.*"; ibid., 13, 133.

[14] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, translated by Martin Hammond, with an introduction and notes by P. J. Rhodes, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37-38.

[15] Ibid., 39, 78.

[16] Edwin R. Wallace, "Historiography: Philosophy and Methodology of History, with Special Emphasis on Medicine and Psychiatry; and an Appendix on 'Historiography' as the History of History," in *History of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology* ed. Edwin R. Wallace, John Gach, (New York: Springer, 2008), 22.

being, on his account, neglect of the art of war.[17] In this context, he built a theoretical account of the ideal military commander and political leader based on three concepts: *fortuna*, *virtù*, and self-interest. The term fortune is derived from the goddess *Fortuna* (the goddess of prosperity and chance) ruling over men's destinies. Machiavelli transforms *fortuna* to a secularized synonym for event or chance occurrence and compares fortune to a violent river or to a sudden storm. As for *virtù*, this term, usually translated as virtue or prowess, is derived from the Latin *vir* ("man"); and as can be seen from Machiavelli's usage it reflects the masculine ideals of the Renaissance and includes both genius and determination assuring greatness in statesmanship and war. Thus, the prince could possess the strength of a lion and the cunning of a fox as political virtues to cope with the twists and turns of fortune.[18] Moreover, it is important for the prince to have or to seem to have good qualities — for instance, liberality, mercifulness, faithfulness, fierceness, humanity, chasteness, honesty and cleverness, agreeableness, piety, and so on. However, if necessary, a prince must also act contrary to the above-mentioned qualities. Thus, depending on the circumstances, the prince should be rapacious, parsimonious, cruel, a breaker of faith, proud, hard, grave. Forced by necessity, the prince should even know how to indulge in evil (because it is safer to be feared than loved).[19]

In this regard, Machiavelli's concept of *virtù* combines emotions, reason, and highlights the balance between them by focusing on the role of courage and emotional belonging, self-control and the obligation to take rational decisions. In short, it is possible to say that Machiavelli analyses political action by synthesizing *virtù* with the concept of self-interest which defines the human nature and rationality of the modern individual. The typical example of this synthesis can be seen in Machiavelli's descriptions of the army focused on trust and reason. According to him, armies consist of mercenary, auxiliary or national troops, or of a mixture of the three. The most reliable and trusting army is comprised of national soldiers; mercenary and auxiliary troops are unreliable:

> Mercenary and auxiliary arms are useless and dangerous; and if one keeps his state founded on mercenary arms, one will never be firm or secure; for they are disunited, ambitious, without discipline, unfaithful; bold among friends, among enemies cowardly; no fear of God, no faith with men; ruin is postponed only as long as attack is postponed; and in peace you are despoiled by them, in war by the enemy. The cause of this is that they have no love nor cause to keep them in the field other than a small stipend, which is not sufficient to make them want to die for you. They do indeed want to be your soldiers while you are not making war, but when war comes, they either flee or leave. It should be little trouble for me to persuade anyone of this point, because the present ruin of Italy is caused by nothing other than its having relied for a period of many years on mercenary arms.[20]

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[17] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 58. See also Niccolò Machiavelli, *Art of War*, translated and edited by Christopher Lynch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[18] Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A history of International Relations theory* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 43-44.

[19] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 61-71. Fear has an important place in Machiavelli's thought. He writes about the emotion in question as follows: "(…) *And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you*."; ibid., 66-67.

[20] Ibid., 48-49.

For Machiavelli, auxiliary troops are much more dangerous than mercenaries, because when they lose you are on your own; when they win, you become their prisoner. In sum, national soldiers emotionally and rationally identify the survival of themselves and their families with the future of their nation.

Although Thomas Hobbes, prefiguring the tradition of Realpolitik in modern thought, did not write directly about war and its emotional dimension, he examined with the fundamental emotional motives in conflict inherent in human nature. Hobbes constructed his political theory within the framework of the interaction between reason and emotion just like the philosophical processors of the same tradition. In *Leviathan* (1651), the emotional motivation in the construction of Hobbes' authoritarian account of political order is fear. Fear and all the other negative and positive emotions that accompanied fear played an important role in his intellectual world: distrust, insecurity, doubt, anxiety, anger, selfishness, passion, survival and self-preservation, hope, desire to be free from fear, and so on. Also, it is worth noticing that he did not neglect to consider these emotions and feelings together with reason and rationality.[21]

Hobbes's pessimistic description of the state of nature leading to his theory of the "covenant" (which expresses the ontological origin of the state) may be regarded as a summary of his political philosophy constructed on fear and insecurity. Accordingly, men are by nature equal in the faculties of body and mind; this equality leads to diffidence and insecurity which plant the seeds of war. Furthermore, there are three principal causes of quarrel in the state of nature: competition, diffidence, glory. Without the state and the common power to keep all the men in awe, there is always "war of every one against every one." In such a war of every man against every man, the continual fear and the danger of violent death prevails; and the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short; nothing can be unjust; the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place; there is no propriety, no domination, no mine and thine distinct; it is the force and the fraud that are two cardinal virtues in war;[22] in short, to summarize it in the classical form, *homo homini lupus*. Therefore, to get out of this war, men agree to the "covenant" by coming together; henceforth, the state emerges. In this regard, the security-oriented emergence of the state and civil society that are generated from mutual fear in Hobbes[23] is very important especially for our topic, because the English philosopher explains the causes that lead men to peace with rationality but also with the unity of the emotions as an underlying motive or driving force:

> And thus much for the ill condition, which man by mere nature is actually placed in; though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the passions, partly in his reason. The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggested convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement.[24]

Consequently, human beings are the product of the period to which they belong; a human being's psychology, feelings, values, beliefs, rationality, and ideas are affected by the era as much as they affect the era. The spirit of the times reveals the interaction of emotion and reason on an individual and societal level. For instance, the anxiety of losing Athens for Thucydides, who was tasked with its defending, Machiavelli's desire to unite and integrate decentralized Italian city-states, Hobbes' hope of transition from the chaotic environment of

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[21] Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, ed. Howard Warrender (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 33-34.
[22] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), 80-83.
[23] Hobbes, *De Cive*, 42.
[24] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 83-84.

the English civil war to a secure order are remarkable because they reflect interactions of both time-space and emotion-reason; just as Clausewitz witnessed the transformation of the war from his early age and experienced the spirit of the Napoleonic wars.

IV. The Synthesis of Emotion and Reason in Clausewitz's Theory of War

Clausewitz made a remarkable and timeless contribution to war studies by taking into consideration the decisive role of emotions before war and during war, the moral forces at play in war as well as the personality and motivations of generals. As Azar Gat pointed out, Clausewitz focused on the emotional forces in order to bring out both a comprehensive and living conception of war and a better understanding of the nature and boundaries of its theory.[25] Clausewitz highlighted that "military activity was never directed against material force alone; it is always aimed simultaneously at the moral forces which give it life, and the two cannot be separated."[26] Based on personal observations and experiences during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Clausewitz aimed at an equilibrium between both material and moral forces/rational and psychological elements which were simultaneously occurring during war in an inter-constructive relationship.[27] According to him, the danger and uncertainty in war is a cause of emotional reaction in itself; the relevant response is to act by courage.[28] In other words, just as emotions such as fear, anger and passion were catalysts before the war, the emotional and rational interaction continues during war. Thus, Clausewitz's dynamic and interpretive approaches are based on an inter-subjective approach of war taken as a "trinity"; and the emotions being one of the constitutive elements of war showed that war could not be fitted into the paradigm of pure rationality.

From this perspective, Clausewitz constructed the synthesis of emotion and rationality by considering mainly the instruments, constraints, trajectory of war and their impacts on the actor-level. Clausewitz's thought can be in this sense characterized as an intellectual and logical combination of trends including Kantianism, idealism, dialectic reasoning, historicism, romanticism, and nationalism.[29] The essence of this eclectic philosophical system is summarized by Peter Paret as follows:

> The reality that Clausewitz wanted to understand was not the abstract reality of pure reason but the actual physical, intellectual, and psychological components of political and military existence.[30]

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[25] Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought: from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 182-183.

[26] Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 84-85.

[27] Violet Cheung-Blunden, Bill Blunden, "The Emotional Construal of War: Anger, Fear, and Other Negative Emotions," *Peace and Conflict* 14:2 (2008): 144. Fleming points out that Clausewitz's experiences in the period of national wars and military changes contribute to his theoretical construction based on the power of emotion and passion, of nationalism, of chance and friction; whereas these features of war had been neglected by his contemporaries; Colin M. Fleming, *Clausewitz's Timeless Trinity: A Framework For Modern War* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 34.

[28] Clausewitz, *On War*, 86.

[29] Youri Cormier, *War as Paradox: Clausewitz and Hegel on Fighting Doctrines and Ethics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 77.

[30] Peter Paret, "Clausewitz," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University, 1986), 194. Peter Paret notes that in late adolescence in notes and in his earliest historical studies, Clausewitz mostly shaped his critics to theories of wars by reason of fact that they ignore the psychology and the emotions of the combatants and peoples during the war; Peter

Thus, Clausewitz rejects the optimism and scientific dogmatism of the Enlightenment. Rather, through his account of friction, uncertainty, unpredictability, and the nonlinear nature of war, he prioritizes the idea that war is a certain type of human relationship. He takes simultaneously human will and emotions as existential elements of war.[31]

As a witness to the era of transition from dynastic to nationalistic wars, in his multidimensional reflection bringing together different social sciences,[32] Clausewitz's analysis has a sociological view in which he discusses the correlation between society, government and army; in this sense Aron frames the philosophical question formulated by Clausewitz as: "under what conditions and in what manner is it possible to subsume the concrete varieties of war under one"?[33] Clausewitz contributes to the construction of a bridge between military sociology and the sociology of emotions by embodying emotional dynamics with an actor-level analysis and putting forward affective structures in military life and the armed forces' hierarchical relationships. Military sociology focuses fundamentally on mobilization into war, treatment of the enemy, and signification in intra-state and civil wars.[34] In this sense, for an interpretive understanding of how war occurs, how decision-making processes in warfare function, and how collective support is socially and politically generated, Clausewitz developed an intertwined approach to explain complex causality and intersubjectivity in war both as a social organization, and as a policy-making process. The Clausewitzian linkage between sociological and political aspects of war and emotional and cognitive variables, especially in his trinity, enables the interconnectedness of these sub-fields in war studies.

More broadly, contrary to the view that emotions are merely an element to be coped with and restrained by power,[35] Clausewitz considers emotions in two ways. On the one hand, he considers negative emotions (like as fear, doubt, and loss which are difficult to overcome) with respect to actual wars. On the other hand, he does not neglect positive emotions like courage, self-control, sacrifice, self-trust and so forth, which are catalysts to deal with the difficulties of war. In addition, Clausewitz considers some emotions such as passion, hate and pride as a powerful motivator leading to the path of war and its possible success. These emotions can be instrumentalized by the rational sphere. In this respect, Youri Cormier identifies passions, in both Clausewitz's and Hegel's thoughts, as a starting point which gives room to managing violence within a rational structure.[36] One can see this view in Clausewitz's assertion that:

> A powerful emotion must stimulate the great ability of a military leader, whether
> it be ambition as in Caesar, hatred of the enemy as in Hannibal, or the pride in a

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Paret, "Machiavelli, Fichte, and Clausewitz in the Labyrinth of German Idealism," *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics* XVII: 3 (2015): 90.

[31] Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Muhteşem Ortaklık: Kant ve Clausewitz," *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations* 4:14 (2007): 171.

[32] By highlighting that Clausewitz's approach includes a wide range of discipline from philosophy to international relations, pollical theory, psychology, sociology, public administration and etc., Hugh Smith argues that "*Clausewitz was also writing at a time when social science was in its infancy, and his analysis of the social and psychological factors in shaping decisions in war and influencing the performance of armies was itself part of the development of modern social science*"; Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 67.

[33] Raymond Aron, "Reason, Passion, and Power in the Thought of Clausewitz," translated by Susan Tenenbaum, *Social Research* 39: 4 (1972): 602.

[34] Meyer Kestnbaum, "The Sociology of War and the Military," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 235.

[35] David Ost, "Politics as the Mobilization of Anger: Emotions in Movements and in Power," *European Journal of Social Theory* 7: 2 (2004): 229.

[36] Cormier, *War as Paradox*, 215.

glorious defeat, as in Frederick the Great. Open your heart to such emotion. Be audacious and cunning in your plans, firm and persevering in their execution, determined to find a glorious end, and fate will crown your youthful brow with a shining glory, which is the ornament of princes, and engrave your image in the hearts of your last descendants.[37]

There is an almost irreducible linkage between emotion and reason in human attitudes and behaviours; this unity among the emotional and the rational corresponds to the equation of rationality and emotionality in Clausewitz's theory of war which is formulated as a resultant of psychological, cognitive and intersubjective components. Hence, Clausewitz claims that the quest for a theory of war must focus on the need to make sense of and analyse these factors' complex causality and the countless potential outputs of their interrelationships in war.[38] For instance, Clausewitz criticized Swiss-French military strategist Jomini's approach in that regard. According to Clausewitz even though Jomini's military strategy (with its focus on mathematical analysis, the importance of rational warfare standards and calculability) captured the reality and technological advances of contemporary war, Jomini nonetheless ignored the psychological components and the key role of human intelligence, will, and emotions that constitute an integral part of the realm of the military art.[39]

As Clausewitz argues, the incompatibility of warfare with the theoretical approaches which take reason as the main reference point, reveals the need to take emotions into account. The state of war as a confused, inconsistent, and ambiguous labyrinth causes one to act accordingly to particular dominating impressions or emotions rather than according to strict logic. This reality generates the incoherence, difference and incompleteness between theory and practice.[40] To take an example closer to our era, the Vietnam War is an emblematic example of the incoherence between theory and practice in that it highlights the importance of moral forces and *Volkskrieg*; the Vietnamese war effort supported by its people demonstrated that the quantitative superiority in military forces couldn't work if the feeling of being attacked by an invader sparked moral strengths.[41] By contrast to the moral resistance of the Vietnamese, there was a significant lack of emotional excitement and belief in the war amongst large parts of US troops.

Finally, after having laid emphasis on the fact that a strictly logical theory of war is inconsistent with the reality of the fog of war, Clausewitz states:

We must, therefore, be prepared to develop our concept of war as it ought to be fought, not on the basis of its pure definition, but by leaving room for every sort of extraneous matter. We must allow for natural inertia, for all the friction of its parts, for all the inconsistency, imprecision, and timidity of man; and finally we must face the fact that war and its forms result from ideas, emotions, and conditions prevailing at the time (…).[42]

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[37] Carl von Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, translated and edited by Hans W. Gatzke (The Military Service Publishing Company, 1942), 30. Available at: www.clausewitz.com/mobile/principlesofwar.htm (Accessed January 23, 2022).

[38] Clausewitz, *On War*, 221-222.

[39] Peter Paret, "The Genesis of On War," in Clausewitz, *On War,* ed. and trans. Michael Howard, Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 10-11.

[40] Ibid., 223-224.

[41] Raymond Aron, "Clausewitz et notre temps," *Études internationales* 43 :3 (2012) : 366-367 ; Andreas Herberg-Rothe, "Clausewitz's 'Wondrous Trinity' as General Theory of War and Violent Conflict," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 114 (2007): 51.

[42] Clausewitz, *On War*, 224-225.

Hence, Clausewitz identifies friction in time of war as a catalyser element which reveals transitivity, interdependent relatedness, complementarity and mutual construction with respect to both reason and emotion. The friction of war demonstrates that planning and execution are undoubtedly different.[43] The state of war is full of challenges, misperceptions, emotional manipulations, failing plans, mistakes arising from fear and haste, incalculable and unpredictable dangers, and uncertainties. A theory of war that does not take into consideration the existence of emotions and the relation between emotion and reason would be incomplete. This contribution, focusing on the equation of emotion and reason and of human nature in war, in other words this dialectic synthesis of emotion and reason, is central to Clausewitz's theory of war, and accounts, in large part, for its longevity.

V. An Actor-Level Analysis on the Impact of Emotions in Clausewitz's Trinity of War

Among other things, Clausewitz's concept of the "trinity" shows the following: War as a complicated and unpredictable phenomenon contains a dynamic and mutually constitutive linkage amongst who decides to go to war, who fights in war, and who supports war, as represented in. The reference point of this multi-dimensional approach is the combination of reason, passion and chance, and each of them corresponds to different variables of war: with an actor-level construction, reason is related to government as decider of war, passion is linked to the support of the people (population/society), and lastly chance refers to the armed forces and their ability to overcome contingent events.[44] Clausewitz remarkably points out this "floating balance" of the three tendencies in war:[45]

> War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity — composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government.[46]

This framework, which considers war as a socio-political activity, exposes the importance of the reason-emotion balance at different actor levels. Each of the variables contains an inconstant pendulum between emotion and reason which is hard to sharply separate. Society is identified as the subject whose emotions are more dominant than reason, while generally armed force, and especially the commander, is the actor who should act with a balanced manner in the emotion-reason pendulum. That is due to the fact that, in the face of frictions of war, this balance using the force of both emotions and reason is a key element to victory in warfare. Lastly, the political actor or government, whose decisions are generally regarded as dependent on reason, are also evaluated by Clausewitz through an emotional perspective.

The Clausewitzian trinity also contains intersubjective constructions amongst its different parts. The interconnectedness of these actors with their emotional and rational worlds implies that they mutually change, interact, and decide in the trajectory of war. This reality combines

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[43] Ibid., 65.
[44] John Stone, "Clausewitz's Trinity and Contemporary Conflict," *Civil Wars* 9:3 (2007): 283.
[45] Andreas Herberg-Rothe, Key-Young Son, *Order Wars and Floating Balance* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 72.
[46] Clausewitz, *On War*, 30.

with the non-linear influence of psychological factors, that is, the unpredictability and uncertainty embedded in the nature of war.[47] In other words, the state of war corresponds to the instinct of self-preservation both at the level of individual survival and collective identity.[48] This means a sphere of clashing wills, rising emotions, uncertainty, diverse complexity and confusion for all parts of the trinity. [49] Although in varying propositions, the human response always appears as a complex mix of positive emotions, negative emotions and rational reactions. For example, the unpredictability and challenging outcomes of friction can cause war fatigue, anxiety, anger, hopelessness, frustration and loss of motivation and passion in people and armed forces; unexpected defeats can provoke confusion, negatively influence decision-makers and cause a decrease in the support of population.
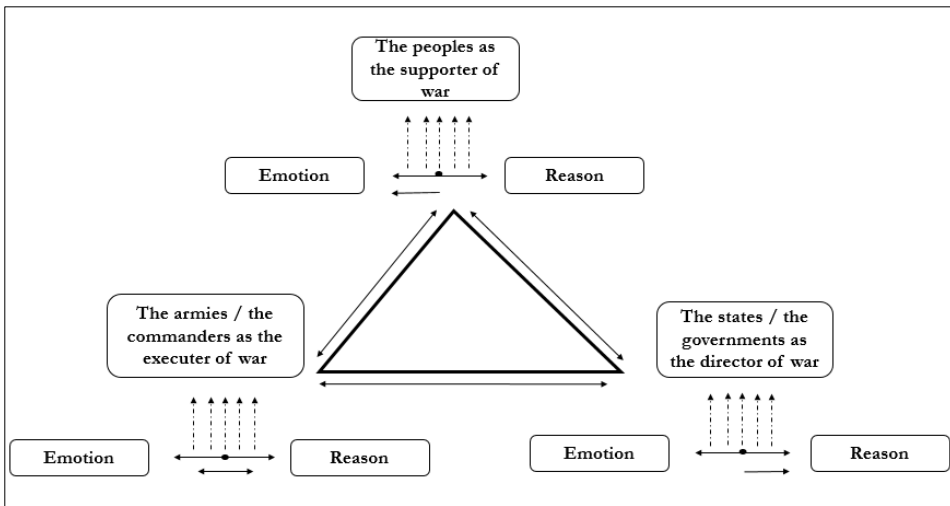

Fig. 1. The emotion – reason relationality in Clausewitz's trinity of actor[50]

This is also the case for passion, one of the dominant emotions of war. The meaning of passion is a strong inclination towards a self-defining activity that people love and find important and in which they invest time and energy; there is a unity consisting in a mix of negative and positive emotions which include, on the one hand, joy, hope, love, and, on the other hand, suffering, fear, and anger. Both positive and negative emotions are the result of different kind of experiences about the same object.[51] In Clausewitz's view, passion is a necessary element for people's motivation and their support of war. Passion is the main motive for the warriors not to give up and to continue the struggle and can be instrumentalised by the decision-makers as a leverage in the rational sphere. That is why, throughout the entire war, the experiences, and changes of trinitarian actors related to passion

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[47] Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17:3 (1992-1993): 73.

[48] Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle: The Political Theory of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 49-50.

[49] Thomas Waldman, "'Shadows of Uncertainty': Clausewitz's Timeless Analysis of Chance in War," *Defence Studies*, 10:3 (2010): 339.

[50] All figures in this study have been designed by us.

[51] Ira J. Roseman, "Transformative Events: Appraisal Bases of Passion and Mixed Emotions," *Emotion Review* 9:2 (2017): 134.

have a positive or negative transformative effect with a spill over effect on the emotional and rational world for each other. It is also necessary to keep in mind that war is an endless interactional process not only for the trinitarian equation but also between adversaries in that it generates unexpected macro-effects. The confusions of one of the opposing warring parties due to the fog of uncertainty — paralysing, for instance, the decisions of the commander and triggering him into making mistakes—can be an emotionally and rationally mobilizing element for the other side's trinity.[52] Briefly, for all kind of units, the nature of war, especially the fog of war, implies the permanent motion of moral and material forces, emotions and reason which change, transform, build collective memory, reveal a spirit of endeavour and create waves of confusion in the decision-making process.

On a different note, concerning the balance of emotionality and rationality in the trajectory of war, one of the most important themes in Clausewitz are his reflections on "military genius" meant as a harmonious combination of the intellect and temperament of a commander.[53] Indeed, Clausewitz identifies military genius as a combination of rationality and emotionality or a complex mix of intellect and emotional qualities where the emotion of self-control provides the balance between them.[54] Clausewitz describes the emotion of self-control as a moderating motive in the face of psychological confusion during war and in the decision-making process:

> (…) the gift of keeping calm even under the greatest stress—is rooted in temperament. It is itself an emotion which serves to balance the passionate feelings in strong characters without destroying them, and it is this balance alone that assures the dominance of the intellect.[55]
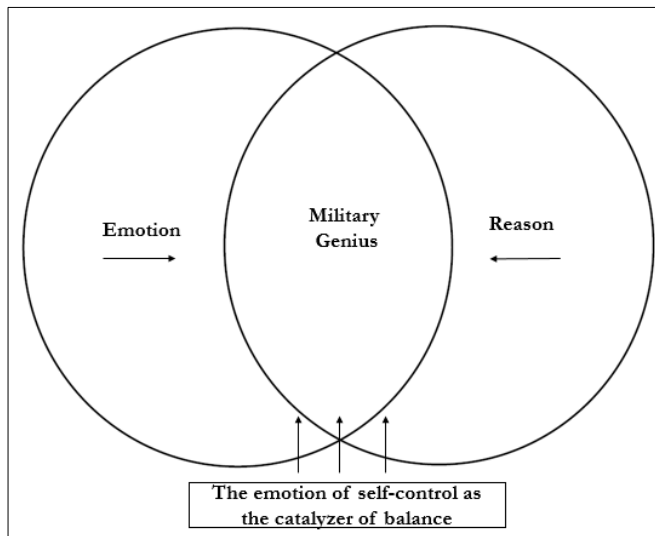

Fig. 2. Military Genius in Clausewitz's thought

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[52] Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," 80. Thomas Waldman, "'Shadows of Uncertainty'," 360.
[53] Clausewitz, *On War*, 44.
[54] Thomas Waldman, "'Shadows of Uncertainty'," 356.
[55] Clausewitz, *On War*, 51.

As the state of war is fraught with dangers, miscalculations, and misinformation, it generates doubts which give rise to an emotion of uneasiness in the commander.[56] A strong military genius possessing adaptability and creativity acts with courage in the face of uncertainties and manages the negative impacts of the current situation on the soldiers by instilling confidence.[57] If we adopt current terminology, we might say that these characteristics correspond to "resilience" i.e., reflexivity and adaptability in response to complex challenges, uncertainties, or disruptive changes, as well as the ability to self-organize, learn from, and adapt to disturbances.[58] Clausewitz claims that the courage of a commander has a double-sided existence which includes courage in the face of personal danger, and courage to accept responsibility with determination despite the uncertain trajectory of war.[59] The reason for that is that when confusion and unexpected events dominate, emotions are more predominant than thoughts; and if courage as an emotion sets in motion reason in such a challenging situation, the determination of a commander, as a unity of reason and courage, assures to limit the agonies of doubt and the perils of hesitation in the chance-dominated context of war.[60]
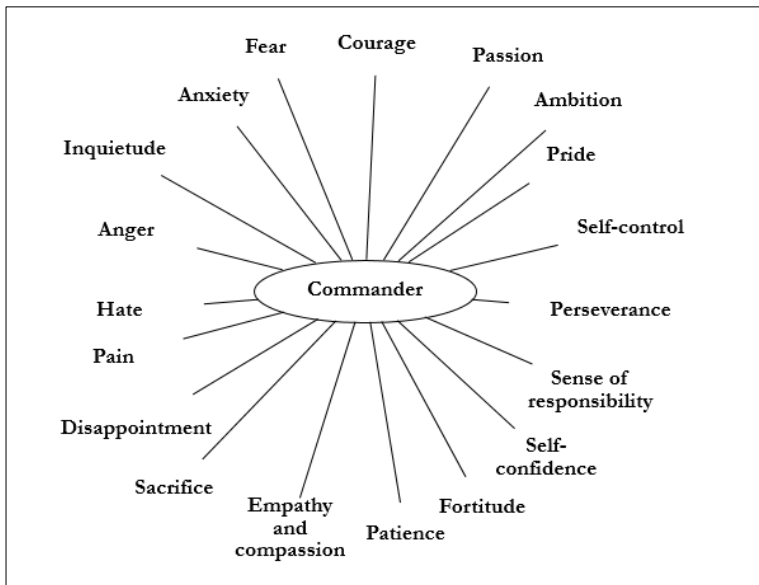

Fig. 3. Visualizing the variety of the dominant emotional features of a commander
in Clausewitz's theory of war

The environment of war brings forth confused thoughts, strong emotional changes, fear, and hope for all soldiers. Consequently, the capability of a commander to foresee, to comprehend the emotional situations of his soldiers, to instil confidence, to maintain an *esprit*

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[56] Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, 27.

[57] Thomas Waldman, "'Shadows of Uncertainty'," 357.

[58] Trine Flockhart, "Is this the end? Resilience, ontological security, and the crisis of the liberal international order," *Contemporary Security Policy* 41:2 (2020): 216. Mareile Kaufmann, "Exercising emergencies: Resilience, affect and acting out security," *Security Dialogue* 47: 2 (2015): 100.

[59] Clausewitz, *On War*, 45.

[60] Ibid., 47.

de corps, to keep them under control, and to remotivate them with strength and courage, constitutes one of the key qualities of a commander.[61] Clausewitz highlights that the most powerful springs of action in men lie in their emotions. When the soldiers' strengths are exhausted and endowed with fear and doubts, the commander should have a wide-ranging emotional capability (including empathy, that is, experiencing one's own feelings through the experience of another[62]) in order to manage their emotional states and free them from anxiety.[63] For higher ranks in army, Clausewitz adds that they need a broader point of view varying between envy, generosity, pride, humility, wrath and compassion.[64] To conclude, in the labyrinth of warfare which amounts to a permanent state of incertitude, the commander assures, through an equitable combination of emotions and reason, the strength of the army along with the experience, courage, and patriotic spirit of the troops.

VI. Emotions and the Changing Character of War in the Age of Global Durable Disorder

The modern international system has been facing a systemic transition or a period of global durable disorder, in particular since the end of Cold War.[65] Numerous symptoms (the concentration of grey areas, the existence of complex authority and loyalty networks, the rise of non-state actors, strong dynamism in social movements, the dominance of uncertainty and insecurity, the acceleration of colliding universal and hegemonic quests, rising opposition to the status quo with the global decline of systemic leaders, decentralization, the increase of structural violence and migration, the appeal of religious and ethnic identities as a security umbrella, the concentration of fragmentation and integration dynamics, as well as rapid technological and economic developments) have significantly come in sight as indications of that systemic transition. These powerful dynamics of transformation are reflected in the changing character of war.[66] Because of this, the terminology of "new wars" emerged in order to conceptualize the characteristics of new warfare whose key differences with modern warfare might be summarized as follows: the ever more blurred distinction between public and private, state and non-state, formal and informal violence; the emergence of cyber wars and virtual wars; the dominance of uncertainty with regards to the existence of conflicting parties; transnational warfare; the complex loyalties and overlapping interactions and the rise of hybrid wars; the strengthening role of non-state actors; the prominence of identity politics and psychological factors as a cause of war; the strong technological transformative impacts on war; the asymmetric and decentralized interactions.[67]

In light of the "new wars" analysis, it has been sometimes argued that Clausewitz's theories do not match the realities of current wars, primarily due the fact that his main focus would have been the state and political rationality. Against that, others have concentrated on Clausewitz's important contributions on people's war, his account of non-linear characteristics of war as a social fact, the role of psychological factors, moral forces, emotions and motives, and the possibility to use his remarkable trinity for actor analyses of current

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[61] Ibid., 50.

[62] Helen Riess, "The Science of Empathy," *Journal of Patient Experience* 4:2 (2017): 75.

[63] Clausewitz, *On War*, 60.

[64] Ibid., 87.

[65] Philip G. Cerny, "Neomedievalism, civil war and the new security dilemma: Globalisation as durable disorder," *Civil Wars* 1:1 (1998): 36-64; William R. Thompson, ed., *Systemic Transitions: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[66] Hew Strachan, Sibylle Scheipers, ed., *The Changing Character of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[67] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 2-3, 11.

wars.[68] In this sense, it is also necessary to consider these aspects independently from the state structure. In contemporary warfare, what Clausewitz meant by "the state" might be taken as an equivalent to the concept of community as the central actor of organized violence (with political, social, identity or religious ambitions when civil wars, guerrilla wars or terrorist groups are considered).[69] Additionally, in the age of anxiety and uncertainty, contrary to more ordered times, states and decision makers also produce policies based on identity and emphasise emotional motivations. Taking into account Clausewitz's trinitarian analysis, we would like to focus, first, on the causal impact of emotions on today's war and, secondly, on the emotions and motives of the participants of non-state armed groups.

The ontological needs of human beings are identity, liberty, recognition/self-esteem, participation and security; and the lack of one of them or more, in other words deprivation, provokes emotional and rational reactions, quests, aspirations in individuals, religious and ethnic groups, societies, and states which may trigger conflicts.[70] The satisfaction of those psychological needs rests on the interconnectedness of the emotional motives and rational decision-making processes whose importance may vary depending on the situation. Similarly to the effects of decremental, aspirational and progressive deprivation in expectations, it is also possible to mention structural emotions based on position in hierarchies, situational emotions based on changes in power and status during interactions, and anticipatory emotions based on power and status; these circumstances can generate positive (hope, confidence, security, self-reliance) or negative emotions (fears, depiction, humiliation, hate, jealousy, anger, frustration, disappointment, passion, anxiety).[71] Dissatisfaction of ontological needs, and deprivation in expectations are mainly reasons for individual, societal and intrastate violence, conflicts and wars. For instance, the rapid changes in structural conditions as economic depression or the lack of participation and the existence of discriminatory behaviour against one social group can cause frustration, anger, fear, insecurity, and further negative emotions. Henceforth, emotional motives among the masses can lead to social movements or conflicts as a reflexive rational action in pursuit of specific goals. This pertains to the combination of emotional responses and rational choices, but the essential underlying motive are emotions.[72]

According to this framework, in 2007, Dominique Moïsi published his article "Clash of Emotions" in which he discussed how conflicts in the 21st century are based on the existence of different emotions (structural, hierarchical and anticipatory) in societies and states. By highlighting the impact of increasing global encounters and so increasing comparisons between societies, he categorized the West as dominated by a culture of fear because of its relative decline and loss of control,[73] the Arab and Muslim worlds trapped in a culture of humiliation accompanied by the aspiration for a better future, and Asia displaying a culture of hope with desire for a better status.[74] When evaluated in terms of Clausewitz's trinity, the

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[68] Colin M. Fleming, "New or Old Wars? Debating a Clausewitzian Future," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32:2 (2009): 213-241.

[69] Herberg-Rothe, "Clausewitz's 'Wondrous Trinity'," 60.

[70] Paul Sites, "Needs as Analogues of Emotions," in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, ed. John Burton (London: The Macmillan Press, 1995), 27.

[71] Sarabjit Kaur, "Economic Inequalities and Political Conflict: A Study of Theoretical Perspective," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 67:4 (2006): 737; James M. Jasper, "The Sociology of Face-to-Face Emotions," in *Emotions in International Politics: Beyond Mainstream International Relations*, ed. Yohan Ariffin, Jean-Marc Coicaud, Vesselin Popovski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 67-68.

[72] Paul Sites, "Needs as Analogues of Emotions," 28-29.

[73] The rise of anti-refugee and conservative authoritarian populism are one of the main symptoms of the culture of fear in Western societies.

[74] Dominique Moïsi, "The Clash of Emotions," *Foreign Affairs* 86:1, (2007): 8-12.

"War on Terror" after 9/11 reflects the dominance of fear and the emotion of revenge in policy-making process, public support and army's management processes. During the Iraq War of 2003, the fog of war, forces of friction and uncertainty became involved in the dynamics of the conflict. Despite their technological superiority, advanced weapons, and detailed operational planning, Coalition Forces dominated by the emotions of self-esteem and arrogance fell into turbulence many times in face of Iraqi opposition; this unexpected reality of war caused disappointment, more rage in fragmented troops and war crimes. As a consequence, public support diminished.[75] The war began to be questioned through the emotionally powerful impact of visual documentation about war crimes and torture techniques as symbols of abuse of power and loss of legitimacy and prestige.[76] On the one hand, emotions continued to be influential in each actor of the Clausewitzian trinity in the unfolding of the war, as well as in the pre-war decision-making processes. On the other hand, traumas of war in Iraqi society had an escalatory effect on the emotion of deprivation and disappointment and made a deep emotional wound due to lack of basic ontological needs such as self-actualization, self-esteem, participation, belonginess, and security. Additionally, this reality gave way to an increasing radicalisation and the emergence of non-state armed groups with an institutional structure corresponding to the trinity of war.
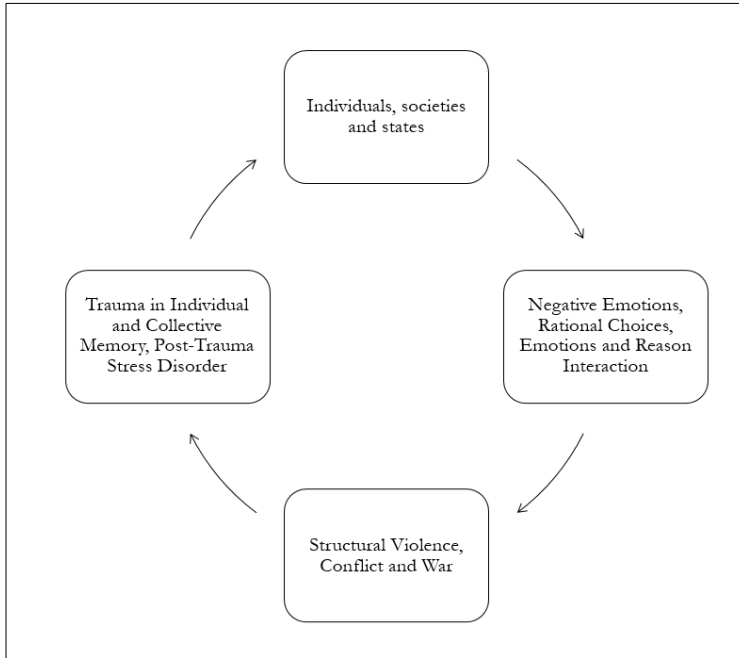

Fig. 4. Vicious circle of conflict and war that is hard to transcend

On a different note, the emotions, and motives of participants of non-state armed groups are currently one of the most important global issues in order to understand the effect of global disorder and crisis due to liberal world politics that proved unable to fulfil their

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[75] Thomas Waldman, " 'Shadows of Uncertainty'," 361.
[76] Roland Bleiker, "Mapping Visual Global Politics," in *Visual Global Politics*, ed. Roland Bleiker (New York: Routledge, 2018), 18-19.

promises. In the face of an emotional lack of belonging and self-satisfaction due to alienation and practices of exclusion, the participants of non-state armed groups as warlords, terrorists, and foreign fighters choose the spiral of violence and insecurity as a means of self-actualization with ethnic, religious, political, or economic reasons. They chose the path of violence to fulfil their feelings of belongingness and victimization and — while pursuing revenge, status, identity, and excitement — to instrumentalize purposeful aggression.[77] They link their survival with conflict and choose violence both as a catalysing force of emotion and as a result of rational decision-making. Those violent groups reflect new 'imagined communities' which give an identity, a life purpose and an emotion of belonging.[78] They additionally strengthen the state of durable disorder by bringing together the actors who are not satisfied with the established order in political, economic, ethnic or cultural terms (dissatisfactions which give rise to different kinds of motivations and goals).

Therefore, we can identify the emotional underpinnings of the Clausewitzian trinitarian structure in these new imagined communities. Indeed, they include: (1) governing leaders who shape the rational decision-making process and maintain the purposeful integrity and loyalty of their cause and group; (2) the fighters who conduct warfare; (3) the people who support them with ideological, religious, ethnic or politics purposes. In this trinitarian structure, leaders and governing actors seeking to retain or increase their authority, use the emotions to evoke images of unity in-groups and stimulate the discriminatory behaviours and violent acts toward the out-groups. This is the rational instrumentation of emotions such as humiliation, hate, abandonment, anger, revenge and so on in order to legitimate the structure, maintain in-group cohesion and propose a security community in the midst of grave insecurity for fighters and the supporting mass.[79] The conflict and violence spiral in question becomes also indispensable for the individual survival of the connected nonstate combatant actors in the asymmetric war process. In this sense, to focus on the role of emotions, the psychological factors, and the intersubjective constitutive relationship of emotionality-rationality balance among different kind of actors in war offers a comprehensive framework to analyse and resolve today's complex and multicomponent war puzzle, to understand the structures of non-state armed groups, and civil war dynamics. Additionally, emotions studies currently constitute an important research field in order to transcend conflict's deep causes, understand the spiral of war, deradicalize and reintegrate foreign fighters and warlords.

VII. Concluding Notes

The theme of emotions in war is discussed from classical war stories to current war studies. The moral and psychological factors are generally regarded as a catalyst or leverage for different actors. However, war has been seen as too serious a task to be left under the influence of emotions and therefore rationality has often been considered as the dominant factor in theories of war. Scholarship and practice in international relations and war studies have long neglected the emotional studies and the importance of psychological factors. But recently, especially in the last two decades, a significant emotional turn has become noticeable. Today, such a turn is needed in order to understand the dynamics of a wide range of complex actors and subjects that war studies were not hitherto used to. We need to learn more about

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[77] Evren Balta, *Tedirginlik Çağı: Şiddet, Aidiyet ve Siyaset Üzerine* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), 65.

[78] Diane E. Davis, "Non-State Armed Actors, New Imagined Communities, and Shifting Patterns of Sovereignty and Security in the Modern World," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30: 2, (2009): 221-245.

[79] Wendy Isaacs-Martin, "The Séléka and anti-Balaka Rebel Movements in the Central African Republic," in *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa: Terrorists, Rebels and Warlords*, ed. Caroline Varin, Dauda Abubakar (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 16.

the relationships between the motivations, emotions, and rational decision processes of those new actors.[80] What is more, the emotional turn in war studies may also contribute to solving problems by encouraging positive emotions, transcending conflicts, transforming the destructive effects of the structural turbulence on the individual and preventing wars and radicalization. Clausewitz, who comprehensively analysed the reality of the modern, regular, interstate war as a continuation of politics, proposed (especially through his trinity) a powerful theoretical framework of emotion and rationality in war. The Clausewitzian trinity based on reason, emotion, and chance gives us important insights psychological and rational reflexivity in the face of uncertainty and unexpected outcomes in the unfolding of war.[81] War, whether civil or interstate, is a complex phenomenon including mutually constitutive relationships between individual, society, army and governing mechanisms. Further, in that very process, they reciprocally transform and shape each other's emotional and rational worlds. So, in today's global durable disorder where emotions are much more dominant in the shade of ambiguity and uncertainty, we have plenty of reasons to revisit Clausewitz's theory of war.

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[80] Evelin Lindner, *Emotion and Conflict* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 148.

[81] Herberg-Rothe, Son, *Order Wars and Floating Balance*, 5.

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