Some evocative critiques of American power include Harold Pinter's (2005) acceptance of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2005, and Vladimir Putin's (2007) speech at the 43rd Munich conference on security.

Barry Buzan and Rosemary Foot's (2004) book, *Does China Matter? A Reassessment*, includes contributions on China's global role, economically, politically, militarily and culturally.

CHAPTER 13

War and Globalization

As discussed in the last chapter, one of the ways that power is maintained is through military force. It is in the military sphere that American power has its strongest basis. As we saw, America's military might is greater than most of the next most militarily powerful nations added together. The case for unrivalled American power is greater for the military sphere than for economic power, political power or ideological legitimacy.

Military power is important. If economic or political power or cultural or ideological persuasion does not work, there is ultimately physical force, by the threat or use of destruction and power over life and death. Many books on globalization do not say much about war. Sociologists' concerns in general have tended to be with other forms of conflict – for example, class or gender conflicts at work, or in the family or state. When looking at the exercise of power or the maintenance of order, they have tended to look at cultural, social, political or economic bases for these. Why should we pay attention to war and killing, and why should sociologists look at something which is normally the concern of war studies or international relations rather than apparently to do with *social* conflict?

War and sociology

In rich developed countries which are relatively peaceful democracies, such as those in Western and Northern Europe and North America, wars and large-scale violence seem distant and not a big part of people's lives. People are sheltered from them, and allow themselves to be so. Even when they are citizens or residents in a country at war it has little obvious effect on their society. For the soldiers involved, and for their friends and families, it has a great impact, but for the vast proportion of society there is little direct impact of the war itself. This is unlike the experience of the First and Second World Wars, when casualties were extremely high and many people were affected

by bereavements in their families or communities. Economies were war economies – civilians were conscripted into the armed services, women replaced the men who were in the army, industries were turned over to arms manufacture and goods were rationed. In the post-1945 period, there was a constant threat in the background of major nuclear war between the USSR and the US, with Europe being stuck in a battlefield in the middle.

Contemporary wars for Western powers are mostly available through the media. It is not something that most of us have close or direct experience of and the media adds even more distance by sanitization of what we see. Air strikes are portrayed through the radar sights of planes and there is very little film shown of fighting, deaths or the remains of victims. Most people in a country at war, such as the UK or the US, would know little about it if they did not follow the news. It is not noticeable in everyday life, unlike in the mass total wars of the twentieth century. So war may not seem an important part of daily life in rich Western democratic societies, and this is true in many other places. Why should sociologists pay attention to it relative to apparently more immediate concerns such as welfare, the family, education, crime, the media and so on?

But in other societies, beyond the 'West', war – or the threat of being on the receiving end of it – is a major fact of existence and continues to define social lives and power relations. It is easy for people in rich democratic developed worlds to make themselves unthinking about how significant war is for the daily social lives of many people throughout the world. When you are a citizen in a state which is killing in a war, but not in your territorial area, it is easy to make yourself subconscious about this fact. In the face of such adversity we are often more concerned with self-oriented issues such as status or salary. If you bring up the subject of war with sociologists there is often irritation or distraction, from people concerned with matters more important to them, to do with their own or developed countries, where violent conflict is not a daily threat. To Beck's (2007) credit, he acknowledges this:

> I do take the criticism of Anthony Elliott and Charles Lemert (2006) in their inspiring book *The New Individualism* about the violent nature of the risk society which is underdeveloped in my writings: 'Risk is too gentle a word in a world where so many are caught without hope (. . .). The worlds today are not so much risky as they are deadly, and especially for those on the social and economic margins. Deadly worlds are violent worlds (. . .). There is a risk to be sure, but the ubiquity of violence in the world is something more.' (702–3)

When looking at conflict sociologists have tended to look at social conflict, or perhaps economic or political conflict, for instance, to do

with identities such as class, gender or ethnicity and in sites such as the workplace or family. There has been less attention to violent conflict over issues such as territory, resources or security. When looking at order sociologists have tended to focus more on law, legitimacy and ideology, but have paid less attention to violence, or the threat of violence, as a mode of maintaining order and power within societies and between them. Weber is an exception to this rule and these are absences that Giddens, for one, has pointed out.

Violence has social causes, effects and solutions and so is a matter of sociological concern. It has varying social effects on warring societies and changing social actors are involved, as we will see below in discussions of recent wars, post-military society and new wars. The arms trade which underpins war is a major part of the economies of the world and, apart from the direct effect it has on people's lives by providing arms for killing them, it also has social implications in terms of the economic wealth of a society, and employment. To be blunt, the act of killing or being killed is as decisive an event in our social lives as it is possible to have. That sociology does not very often incorporate this fact into its studies, or that sociologists bypass it or somehow leave it to the edges of their consciousness, seeing this as beyond their disciplinary remit, or outmoded and out of date with the new global world, is not excusable.

For Barkawi (2006), globalization studies have tended to see globalization as separate from war, leading to a view of globalization as pacifying. Globalization is equated with the end of the cold war, when the world became more unified and the threat of nuclear catastrophe retreated. War was equated with a bad old world of states clashing, and of communism and capitalism threatening each other. The new dominant ideas became free trade and democracy, and cultural hybridity developed. As far as war and peace goes, globalization is about international security regimes, peacekeeping and international human rights protections.

But Barkawi argues that globalization is tied up with war as much as it is a form of peace. Globalization can cause war. The attempt to impose neoliberalism or American foreign policy, and, previously, European imperialism and its version of 'free' trade, has caused hostility and conflict against such impositions and let nationalism and ethnic strife loose. Global inequality breeds conflict. As we shall see shortly, the globalization of the arms trade has enabled war and the development and spread of ever more dangerous and destructive weapons, sold by richer, more peaceful countries to poorer more conflict-ridden ones. States are intrinsic to the pursuit of war and the processes that underlie it.

As well as being about clashes of states, war is often a form of

globalization and furthers globalization by force. For Barkawi, it is as much about interconnection as about the defending of boundaries and national allegiance. It leads to interconnections between societies, even if this comes about through people on both sides doing their best to kill each other. Soldiers travel and literally do get to see the world, as the recruiting posters used to say, and the world gets to experience them. Barkawi tells of how Indian soldiers in the Second World War fighting with Britain experienced cultural and political values and systems amongst the British and took this information home, if they were lucky enough to survive. War is a channel through which the circulation of goods, people and ideas happens, as with other types of globalization. It is through military intervention that other flows then happen – economic, cultural, political and so on. Globalization through war is not restricted to elites. Many ordinary people are soldiers or are those in invaded countries, especially in the mass wars of the twentieth century. After the Second World War, global ideas about human rights and the prevention of genocide, crimes against humanity and a focus on peacekeeping came to the fore. Many local conflicts have global ramifications – the Israel–Palestine conflict, for instance, and the US 'war on terror'.

Barkawi says that those who study mainly military matters tend to leave society out of it. But when you look at war and globalization together society is very important. Conflicts that extend in a globalized way change the society that is making the war as well as the society it is being waged on, and also change the relations between those societies. War transforms the societies that make them, especially in the case of total wars where the domestic population are mobilized. But it also transforms noticeably the society at the receiving end, as in wars to establish empire. These were transformed by the imperial powers, but imperialism also forged anti-colonial nationalism. Rather than being wiped away by globalization or replaced by a benign cultural hybridity, nationalism here is fermented by it. Violent conflict reproduces and transforms national identities and their counterposition to other opposed identities, for instance, between West and East or North and South in the world.

Barkawi uses the example of British imperialism in India, backed up by military force. This changed Britain, part of the process of making it into an imperial power with all the economic, political and social effects this had for the country. It transformed India. And it led to a changing and enduring relationship between the two nations over time. Militarily, the British Indian army played a significant role in the Second World War, and the use of the Indian army was a factor that led to the decline of British rule in India. War also changes global politics – for instance, after the Second World War when Europe was

carved up between communism and capitalism and international institutions were set up, in part to prevent mass conflict happening again.

At the time of writing this book there were a number of wars or violent conflicts going on in the world:*

- Ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Estimates on fatalities in the former vary, but many calculate them to be in the hundreds of thousands since 2003.
- A civil war in Sri Lanka between the government and Tamil separatists, which had been going on for twenty-five years or more and caused tens of thousands of deaths.
- A war in the Darfur region of Sudan which in five years has led to the death of about 2–300,000 people, in part over land, water and resources which are in decline partly because of climate change.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo there are continuing conflicts from a war which officially ended in 2003, leading to the deaths of over 5 million people in the war itself or during its after-effects.
- A recent war in Somalia between the Somalian transitional government backed by Ethiopia with US involvement against opposed militias; so far thousands have died and probably hundreds of thousands have been displaced, with the risk the conflict may suck in further neighbouring countries such as Eritrea.
- This goes alongside a longer-running war in Somalia, started in 1988, in which more than 300,000 have died, a civil war involving warlord and clan militias and in which UN and US troops have also been involved.
- There are conflicts between government and other forces (e.g., FARC) in Colombia, seemingly at present on the decline.
- And there is war between the Turkish army and the Kurdish nationalist PKK, with tens of thousands of deaths.
- In Kashmir, war over territory disputed by India and Pakistan, in which tens of thousands have died.
- Regional and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, for reasons including rights to the benefits from oil production.
- Ongoing conflicts in Chechnya between Russia and rebel Chechens, with deaths in the tens of thousands since 1999.

* I have used multiple news and media sources to obtain figures on fatalities in these conflicts. These themselves have used independent NGO figures. Where higher figures seem to be reasonably disputed I have given lower or more flexible figures (e.g., 'tens of thousands'), so as not to overestimate casualties.

- Ongoing intermittent conflicts in Israel/Palestine, between the Israeli army and Palestinians, and between Palestinian groups.

There are many other ongoing violent conflicts: in Burma between the government and other groups, with thousands dead and hundreds of thousands displaced; between the governments and insurgents in the Philippines; in Peru (in which about 70,000 died before the conflict became more low level); in Laos between government and the Hmong; a drug war in Mexico; conflict over land in Western Kenya; several conflicts within both India and Pakistan aside from the Kashmir dispute; in Niger and Mali over the benefits of mineral mining; and civil war in Chad connected to the Darfur conflict mentioned above. There is a separatist insurgency in Southern Thailand (with thousands of deaths), and insurgencies and separatist conflicts in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Senegal, Uganda, and the Maghreb region across Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco. The latter is connected to the earlier Algerian civil war in the 1990s, in which more than 150,000 died, itself preceded by the Algerian war of independence in the 1950s and 1960s in which probably over 150,000 died.

There have also been recent wars in Lebanon and Georgia. Going back to the 1990s, there was a previous war in Iraq and Kuwait in 1990–1, war and genocide in Rwanda (probably close to a million died), wars in the former Yugoslavia (in which tens of thousands at least died) and Sierra Leone (with tens of thousands of deaths), and previous wars in Afghanistan, involving Russia, and resulting in tens of thousands of deaths. There was a civil war in Tajikistan in which up to 100,000 died, a civil war in Burundi in which about 300,000 died, a civil war in Nepal in which thousands died, a war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, with between 50,000 and 200,000 deaths, a civil war in Liberia (with about 150,000 deaths) and civil war in the Ivory Coast.

Between 1990 and 2001, there were fifty-seven major armed conflicts in forty-five locations with sub-Saharan and other developing countries disproportionately affected, with the impact this has on poverty and inequality. Since 1990, conflicts have killed as many as 3.6 million with 90 per cent of the deaths and injuries being civilians and half of these children (UNDP 2003: 45). Of course, there has been enormous bloodshed during the last hundred years across Europe, Asia and the rest of the world, in world wars and other mass killing, with the deaths of tens of millions, but I won't continue the list of wars to before the 1990s.

Most people, including many sociologists of globalization, it seems, are unaware of the majority of recent wars in the rest of the world, even though the proportion of civilian deaths reveals how much they penetrate into ordinary society. The locations of these wars and

conflicts should not mislead. They are often in poor countries and not in Europe or North America. But countries from the latter regions have been very involved in them as military forces or as funders and providers of arms to parties involved. Or the wars are connected with the foreign policies of the richer and most powerful countries. For instance, the deployment of US troops and US support for Israel in the Israel–Palestine conflict has been one factor prompting insurgent movements to take up arms. Many of the conflicts appear to be ethnic, tribal or national but are equally often over the decline of resources due to climate change caused by emissions mostly from rich countries. Many of them are interconnected, conflicts arising because of injustice felt about another situation of conflict (e.g., in Palestine), with overlapping or interlinked forces, or spilling over borders and sucking in neighbouring, or not so neighbouring, countries.

It is difficult to see, following this list, how sociologists of globalization can see the world as one defined, as Barkawi also laments, by cosmopolitanism and a benign mixing of cultures. As we have seen above and will see more below, much of this violence comes from processes of globalization. This is unless you keep your focus on societies beyond those which are poor and war-afflicted, or narrow it to culture, and keep out economics, politics and violence. Alongside the mass poverty and inequality discussed in chapter 8, which in some respects is getting worse, there is widespread war, violent conflict, death and dislocation throughout the world, involving many different states and actors. Such evidence does not support more theoretical and pleasing assertions of a growing cosmopolitanism. Frequently, the wars are over resources, economic and material interests and power. This does not square easily with approaches which see analyses of power, conflict and the importance of the economy as outmoded and crude, with the world as one of emerging cultural cosmopolitanism and universal human rights.

The globalization of war

In this section I will look at the way that war has changed in the world since about 1500, the extent to which military relations have been globalized, and at how far war is a phenomenon of globalization.

Worldwide and historically, the experience of humankind has been run through with conflict through organized violence. Humans have had an astonishing capacity throughout their history to carry out mass killing against one another through war, as well as other means. Genocidal phenomena such as the Holocaust and Rwanda often get much attention in this context. But organized legitimized killing

in war throughout the time humans have been on earth has been another form through which this has happened. Theories that globalization is bringing us together in a way which can be more culturally communal and based on universal rights need to back this up in relation to the history and continuing record of mass violence by humans on humans.

Globalized forms of war developed from the late fifteenth century onwards with the expansion of *European powers* as they tried to construct imperial orders, where necessary through the military subjugation of indigenous populations or in competitive wars with other imperialist nations. These were global forms of war because they were carried out by the major European powers across the world, in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The conflicts between European states, and by them on indigenous populations, rewrote the world order for centuries, globalizing European power and carving the world up between the territories of different imperial powers. After colonized states became independent, both before and during the twentieth century, many problems they faced were due to the way imperial powers had constituted and left them. This was the case, for instance, in the war for the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan, conflict between India and Pakistan over disputed parts of Kashmir, and the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, not to mention ethnic, tribal and border conflicts in Africa. European powers were able to be victorious in the colonial period in part because of the firepower gap between them and what became their colonies, that is, the technological advancement of their weapons. This military gap led others to try to acquire the same sorts of technologies. In this way military technology became more globalized. I will come back to the globalization of the arms trade.

Global war happened in the *two world wars between 1914 and 1945*. These encompassed Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. In part, this was a continuation of competitive imperialist wars. Imperial possessions were fought over, for instance, in Africa. As mentioned above, they were mass 'total' wars that required huge quantities of armaments and people. War was industrialized to meet these demands. And for the wars to be fought many nations had to combine and mobilize money, humans, arms, and supplies such as food. No state alone had the capacity to win. So the wars were multinational and fought between international alliances of nations.

After 1945 the global character of war did not go away. The era of British or European imperialism finished and the imperial *superpowers of the US and USSR* became dominant in a bipolar world. They entered into bilateral and multilateral relations with other states throughout the world. These often involved promises of military protection

by the superpowers, as well as commercial agreements, such as the supply of subsidized goods by the Soviet Union to communist allies. Both superpowers had deployments of bases and troops throughout the world in friendly countries, as the US still has. Conflicts by the superpowers have been characterized as a cold war stand-off, with nuclear missiles pointed at one another but never fired. However, there were hotter elements to it. Proxy wars between capitalist and communist powers were fought in other countries, for instance, in Vietnam, where Americans fought with the South Vietnamese against the communist North Vietnamese backed by China and Russia. In African and Latin American countries, the US and USSR backed and armed the respective pro-Western and pro-communist sides. As such, the superpower conflict was globalized, in bilateral and multilateral agreements, deployments and distant proxy wars. Furthermore, it was luck as much as anything else that prevented the nuclear balance teetering into nuclear war.

War after the cold war

With the collapse of one of the two superpower blocs, under the leadership of the USSR, one perspective on the world military order is that it has become more multipolar. I discussed how credible such a description is in the last chapter. Leaving aside economics, politics and culture, multipolarity cannot be said to be an accurate way of characterizing the distribution of military power in the post-cold war period. The *US is a sole superpower militarily*, hugely in advance of everyone else as far as military strength goes. It has greater military expenditure and more weapons. In 2007, the US spent $547 billion on the military, nearly half of the world's military spending. The next two biggest spenders were the UK and China, each at just over $59b and $58b respectively, followed by France, Japan, Germany, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Italy spending 3–4 per cent of global military expenditure (SIPRI 2008: 11). The US has about 1.3 million military personnel in active service. Many are deployed outside the US. Major deployments (in tens of thousands) are in Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, South Korea, and Japan. Its global deployment is more extensive than any other nation. It has hi-tech weapons that allow it to win wars with fewer casualties than its opponents. An example of this is the ability to fire relatively accurate weapons from planes or ships at a distance. These are not so accurate that they can avoid the death of civilians in the enemy area, but they can be fired from such distance that casualties amongst US forces are minimized.

Rivalry between the biggest powers in the world is less one of mutual

military threat than it was in the cold war. Competition between states such as the US, Japan, China, EU members and Russia is more to do with economics and trade. There is also political conflict, for instance, with Russia and/or China sometimes having a different policy to the US, and with some EU states on issues such as war in the former Yugoslavia and intervention in the Darfur region in Sudan. Because Russia and China are on the UN Security Council, this has stymied some of the aims of the US and European allies such as France and the UK. For some, security issues of a military kind are confined mostly to regional or local tensions, for instance, in the former Yugoslavia, North Korea, between China and Taiwan and India and Pakistan, and in secessionist or insurgent conflicts going on globally in various states, from Sri Lanka to India and China.

Having said this, *military tension* between the US and other great powers of the cold war era is not absent. It cannot be said that the cold war is completely over or that rivalry between great powers is devoid of military threat. In the Far East, Taiwan, a province of China, is claimed by China but is self-governing, and an ongoing issue is the possibility of its complete independence. However, China recognizes Taiwan as part of One China with two systems (comparable to the status that capitalist Hong Kong gets, as a former British territory that reverted to China in 1997). China says it will not accept a declaration of independence by Taiwan and the US, who have many troops stationed in the region, say they will not accept Chinese military intervention in Taiwan and will back it if such a situation were to arise.

There are tensions between Japan and China over history, territory and resources, and Japan moved away in small steps under prime ministers Koizumi and Abe from its postwar pacifist standing. India and Pakistan have fought a war and are in ongoing disagreement over the disputed part of Kashmir that lies between the two nuclear power nations. The US has contemplated stationing missile defence systems in Central Europe. They said these were to protect them from 'rogue' states like Iran and North Korea, but Russia saw them as a hostile threat to itself. A defensive system can be seen as hostile because it makes it easier for the state that installs them to launch an attack, knowing that, if the system works, it can protect itself from retaliation. So the old cold war conflict with Russia simmers on, with Russia trying to exert an influence in surrounding nations such as Georgia that the US feels it should not, and with vital supplies, such as gas, that it can withdraw or increase the price of as a way of exerting pressure on its neighbours.

A number of the powers involved in these tensions have nuclear weapons. Japan is one exception. However, some argue that war between such advanced states, because they are so militarily advanced

and often nuclear powers, would be so destructive that none would engage in it. It is thought that war between advanced states, of the sort experienced in the twentieth century with such devastating effects, will not reoccur.

In fact, one development in the postwar period has been mutual, cooperative, *multilateral security agreements*, such as the Warsaw Pact, that bound together communist countries in the cold war, and NATO that bound together the US and its allies and that, since the cold war, has been enlarged to encompass others. Because these are transnational they are seen as a sign of globalization. Although members have fought offensive wars through such mutual pacts, for example, the NATO intervention in Kosovo, these agreements have been as much to avoid war between members as to secure mutual agreements about making war. The European Union was also in part an attempt to bring European nations together in greater mutualism, after the terrible world wars of the first half of the twentieth century, to prevent them fighting each other again.

With the development of more formal and institutionalized multilateral organizations, security has become less about nations defending national territory from invaders and more about collective defence, or ensuring international security. As well as the fora mentioned, other developments of regionalized bodies or agreements have included the Western European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Rapid Reaction Force. The UN is involved in peacekeeping operations around the world, for instance, after the 2006 Israel–Lebanon war and in the Darfur region of Sudan. Alongside UN peacekeeping there have grown international organizations intervening not just to stop crimes against humanity and war crimes (such as in Darfur), but also to bring to justice those guilty of them, for instance, former presidents Milosevic of Yugoslavia and Charles Taylor of Liberia. There have been international agreements on the conduct of wars and attempts to restrict the types of weapons used, for instance, landmines and cluster bombs which kill and maim a disproportionate number of civilians during and after wars. There are mutual arms restrictions treaties, such as those negotiated between the US and USSR in the cold war and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. In short, there have been international dimensions to security, the rules of war and human rights, and to arms restrictions and peacekeeping.

I have mentioned the possible devastation and mutual agreements that hold back advanced states from attacking each other. Such states may not have the same reservations about attacking less advanced states with inferior military capabilities. Those beyond the most advanced states, for instance, in the Middle East and Africa, are

now seen as sites of instability and rising militarism, where conflicts internally or between states or other forces are most likely to happen. This view may be over-sanguine about the prospects of war between advanced states. If what was said above is true, that the absence of nuclear conflict in the cold war was as much luck as deterrence, then warfare between major military states cannot be ruled out in the longer term, given a situation of US military superiority and missile defence systems, with tensions between states such as China, Russia and the US.

Increasingly, debates see *threats to security* as wider-reaching than war and the military. Economic instability and volatility can lead to insecurity for many in ways that are out of their control. Crime, for instance, drugs and violent crime, affect the basic security of people. Terrorism, especially of an international sort, receives attention as a threat to human security, especially since 9/11. Similarly, environmental problems such as climate change which lead to essential resources such as water and fertile land declining, as well as flooding and possibly volatile weather conditions, are now seen in this light.

These are all problems which have global dimensions and cannot be solved by military means or by nation-states alone, even if there have been counterproductive attempts to stop some of them by force (e.g., the war on terror). They have to be solved by the global cooperation of states. I have argued that all-inclusive global cosmopolitanism based on common consciousness is unlikely in many circumstances, as there are divergent interests and ideologies in the world and relations of power and conflict. But, through coalitions of the willing, probably necessarily in conflict with those who are opposed, solutions to such problems need to be established as far as is possible at more international levels. And soft as much as hard power is needed to solve these problems. For example, some problems of international terrorism are in part responses to US imperialism and problems in the Middle East, such as the predicament of the Palestinians. Hence solving these root causes will be more helpful than military action on the symptoms. Drugs and violent crime often (if not only) result from underlying economic or social problems, such as a lack of alternative opportunities for making a living or finding fulfilment. Many of these problems are international and as such require international solutions; clearly, human security is threatened by more than military force, and more than military power is needed to solve the underlying causes which require economic, political and social solutions.

I will return shortly to current forms of war and the future of war. But, first, let us turn to the armaments industry that underpins war and look at how this relates to themes about globalization.

The arms race and globalization

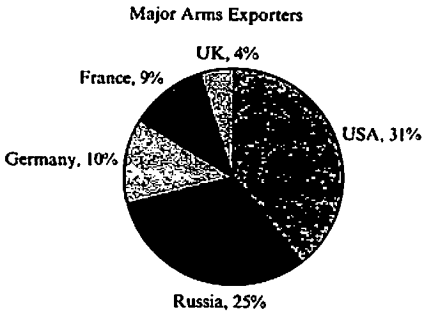
The arms trade has increasingly been globalized. As we have seen in other chapters, for instance on the media, globalizing trends are often linked to developments in regulation (or deregulation), technological development and the possibility of making money by globalizing. The state, technology and capitalism are important.

What has often happened with the globalization of the arms trade is the development and acquisition of new military technologies in some countries, which then leads to their spread to other parts of the world. *Innovation becomes more globally generalized.* The arms trade is a profit-making enterprise in which capitalist corporations develop products for sale on the market to be bought by states or other actors. This capitalist production and trade becomes globalized as new producers seek to make profits from the industry and markets are sought out globally. The arms trade is a form of capitalist globalization.

Held et al. (1999) discuss four tiers in the arms trade. In the first tier is the United States, standing alone as innovators to develop new military technologies. Then come other rich developed countries, like the UK, France and Germany, which adapt these innovations and produce the same sorts of arms technologies themselves, but their own versions. Third come those who copy and produce the innovations, for instance, China, India and Israel. Finally, there is a tier that does not produce arms but generates buyers, for instance, many African and developing countries.

A key development in the *early modern arms trade* was the gunpowder revolution. The mechanization and industrialization of arms allowed some armed forces to leap ahead and have weapons with reach, accuracy and effect superior to others. In this early modern period arms were sold mostly regionally rather than globally, and often privately and in an unregulated way.

Since then, the state has become more often the intermediary through which arms are sold even if they are produced by private companies, and sales have become more regulated and controlled by governments, for instance, in terms of to whom it is allowed to sell. Having said this, many governments have had few qualms about allowing sales to states that use them for repression or aggression (rather than just defence), even if they are governments that emphasize human rights and humanitarianism themselves and have criticized the actions of the states they sell to. The *modern arms trade* involves industrialized mass production of arms, for profit, often for export, with overseas production being established and with more licensing of production but limited regulation. There has been a global diffusion of arms so that more and more actors are able to obtain them.



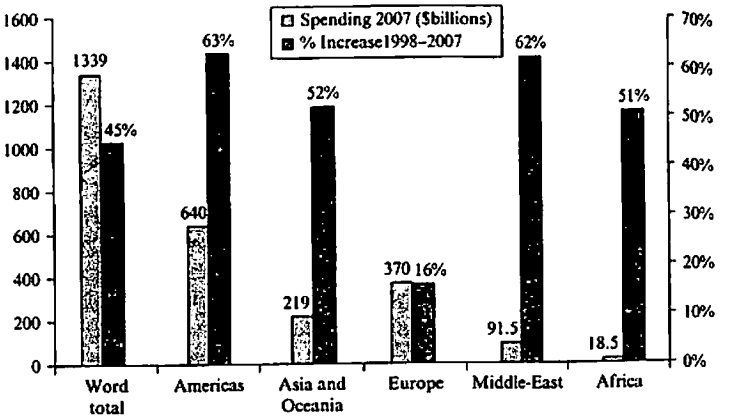
Exporter	*Main buyers*
USA	South Korea, Israel, UAE, Greece
Russia	China, India, Venezuela, Algeria
Germany	Turkey, Greece, South Africa, Australia
France	UAE, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Singapore
UK	USA, Romania, Chile, India

Source: Data from SIPRI 2008: 14

Figure 13.1 Major arms exporters – share of arms exports 2003–2007

The *contemporary arms trade* grew until 1987, with the superpowers and Warsaw Pact and NATO members being the biggest spenders. It shrank thereafter, with the end of cold war tensions. In recent years it has accelerated again. Developing countries' share of arms spending, especially on imports, has increased since the 1960s. The number of producers and buyers has grown, although there are still great inequalities between producers and importers. In the post-cold war period the US has dominated the arms trade, with the UK, France, China, Russia and Germany doing most of the rest of the supplying. Despite Germany adopting a non-offensive stance since 1945, it has been a major arms supplier.

In the immediate postwar period the rich North was the main focus of trade, with the Middle East being a region of increased buying from the 1960s onwards and, more recently, with an increase in arms buying in Asia. As can be seen in figure 13.2, the world spent $1,339 billion on arms in 2007, and arms spending is on the rise across the world. This should be seen in the context of the needs of the one in six globally in poverty, discussed in chapter 8. Stiglitz and Bilmes (2008) put the cost of the Iraq War at $3 trillion, not including indirect and hidden costs. They argue that the money could have been spent with a huge effect on social and economic programmes globally, which would have done more to increase American security in non-violent ways, quite apart from improving the life chances of the one billion or



Source: Data from SIPRI 2008: 10

Figure 13.2 Global military expenditure, 2007

Table 13.1 Largest arms-producing companies, 2006

Company	Arms sales 2006 $m	Profit 2006 $m
1. Boeing USA	30690	2215
2. Lockheed Martin USA	28120	2529
3. BAE Systems UK	24060	1189
4. Northrop Grumman USA	23650	1542
5. Raytheon USA	19530	1283

Source: Abridged from SIPRI 2008: 12

more living on a dollar a day. The arms trade has become more commercial and privatized, and increasingly the contractors are agencies other than governments. As can be seen in table 13.1, some companies make a lot of money from selling arms.

Supplying arms has been a *part of the politics* of the powerful for a long time. Powerful states supply arms to states or organizations that are deemed friendly or will fight for their side, or to buy favours. This was the case in the cold war when the Soviet Union and USA armed forces in distant countries that were more pro-communist or pro-Western respectively. Often military support can be to temporary allies from whom allegiance shifts quickly later on, such as the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, who were fighting against the Marxist government and Soviet troops in the 1980s, supported by Bin Laden and the US amongst others. The US has supplied India with material for the production of nuclear power, in contravention of nuclear proliferation agreements, in return for India's support in the 'war against

terror', whilst trying to halt other countries' development of nuclear weapons, for instance, in Iran and North Korea. In 2007 the US did a series of deals with countries in the Middle East, involving arms sales to the Sunnis in Saudi Arabia who felt the US were being too hard on Sunnis in Iraq, followed by increases in arms aid to Israel that effectively compensated for their arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. So the arms trade is part of the game of power politics.

We have seen that the arms trade is a major source of capitalist profit and is driven by this incentive. It has become increasingly globalized, but very unequally so in terms of who gains from producing and who is spending, and which countries are militarily the most advanced and superior. There has been a diffusion and proliferation of arms globally, including nuclear weapons. As we shall see shortly, there has also been a technological leap forward to more of an information age in arms technology.

New wars and the future of war

In this section I wish to look at current and future wars and whether they are taking a new form or what form they may take in the future.

Looking sociologically at current wars from the perspective of the most powerful nations, and compared to the wars of the twentieth century, these may nowadays be called *post-military societies* (Shaw 1991). Western states can go to war but, because of the technological means that are used, with minimal casualties on their side compared to deaths inflicted on enemies (Shaw 2005). These are asymmetric wars in which one side may have very superior strength, leading the other side to adopt alternative tactics to fight back, for example, guerrilla fighting as in Vietnam or Iraq. Conscription in advanced states is not required, there is no mass mobilization of industry and people, and multinational alliances are sought for military or political reasons rather than to pool enormous resources. The wars of the current eras are, for the advanced powers, not total wars of mass mobilization. Politically, wars may be controversial and affect the fortunes of politicians. This happened to George Bush and Tony Blair in relation to the Iraq War, although it was not an election-loser for either. But sociologically, in its narrow sense, their effect on society is almost unnoticeable in the daily lives of many people in rich warring nations, apart from the supply of sanitized media coverage that does not show the human effects, even if it does sometimes report these selectively. Human and social resources are not fundamentally reorganized as they were in the two world wars of the twentieth century. So advanced states, even if involved in wars, have been defined as post-military societies.

For Mary Kaldor (2001), there has been a shift from older to *newer forms of war*, and she argues for cosmopolitan solutions to such wars (see also Münkler 2005). Old wars, she argues, were between nation-states and often over national territory. In new wars, however, the actors are frequently entities other than nation-states. They are less about state-building or expansion; in fact, they often (but not only) take place within failing or weak states. They may be private actors rather than state actors – warlords, militias, insurgents or terrorist organizations – and often more local or global than national, for instance, in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. These actors fund their weaponry and war-making through participation in a criminal economy. War-making is more decentralized and less total. It may be less between symmetrical state armies than asymmetrical forces, and less focused on full-scale wars than sometimes on-and-off simmering or intermittent conflicts, as in the Israel–Palestine conflict. And the wars are not necessarily expansionist over national or other forms of territory. They may be to do with resisting imperial domination, or around identities, such as ethnic or religious identity, as in conflicts in the former Yugoslavia that are to the fore in Kaldor's thinking. Terror directed at civilians is part of these wars, as much as conflict with armies. Civilians are killed or brutalized as an instrument of war, to prevent them assisting the enemy, as a form of proxy attack on enemy forces, or may be the very aim of war as in the case of 'ethnic cleansing'. For Kaldor, the solution to situations such as these is cosmopolitan humanitarian intervention. This involves cosmopolitan ideals to bring warring parties together, for example, conflicting ethnic or religious groups, and/or intervention by Western powers who have the military might to do so, on the basis of humanitarian concerns and human rights.

There are some reasons to be a bit sceptical about parts of Kaldor's analysis, although it should be stressed she is talking of a shift from old to new wars rather than a clean break between the two types. For instance, direct attacks on civilians and the terrorizing of civilian populations is not new. This was a tactic used by the Americans and British in the Second World War against Germany, in the bombing of cities such as Dresden, as well as by many other powers in wars. Similarly, although the argument for cosmopolitan solutions is well meant and, where such solutions are possible, should be pursued to prevent large-scale human death and tragedy, there are reasons (as we saw in chapter 10) to be doubtful about how realistic such global cosmopolitanism is. One reason to doubt the possibility for such cooperation is that a lack of mutual global cosmopolitan ideals or consciousness, combined with the degree of conflicting interests and use of power in the world, makes it unlikely that there will be

cooperation on a significant enough scale in the foreseeable future. Actors may forge agreements if they have coinciding material interests in doing so, but there is not much evidence of a cosmopolitan consciousness that can be the basis for this.

So interventions may have to come from a more limited range of powers where there are coalitions willing to pursue them. These will often have to occur in non-cosmopolitan situations, against opposition, as has been the case in international interventions in violent situations so far, for instance, by NATO in the former Yugoslavia. As Kaldor has noted, such interventions may have to involve conflict where outside interveners take one side against another, rather than acting as neutral peacekeepers, staying in the middle to keep the sides apart or attempting to forge a cosmopolitan consensus in which all are agreed on the intervention. Wars happen because one side is attacking the other and sometimes the solution is for one of these sides to be defeated rather than for a buffer zone to keep them apart, which is not to say the latter is not valuable in some cases. Cosmopolitan interventions, desirable and possible as they may be in some cases, often in practice meet with opposition, for instance, from China and Russia. They are seen, consequently, as Western imperialism, and may aggravate as much as resolve problems.

Since the American use of the atom bomb against Japan in 1945, a key and frightening development in military technology has been the development and diffusion of *weapons of mass destruction*, from that initial bomb to contemporary nuclear weapons, together with other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons. These can kill hundreds of thousands of people on or very soon after impact, with many people for decades afterwards being effected, for example, by nuclear radiation, as was the case in Japan. The focus in public debate is sometimes on the development or acquiring of WMDs by 'rogue' states or terrorist organizations. But many advanced states in the world have had such weapons for a long time and, as we have seen, have been the ones so far who have been willing to use them with terrible consequences.

Since 1945 many more states have developed or acquired nuclear weapons, or are trying to develop these. In some cases this is, in part, in response to the military power of major states, and in contexts where there is tension between nuclear powers, for example, between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. In 2008, eight nuclear weapon states had over 10,000 operational nuclear weapons, thousands of which can be launched within minutes. Including other nuclear weapons, these eight states have over 25,000. It also seems likely that non-state actors will at some point be able to acquire such weapons, perhaps from a state that sponsors them or from individuals who for financial

Table 13.2 World nuclear forces, 2008

Country	Strategic warheads	Operational nuclear weapons (including non-strategic warheads)
USA	3575	4075
Russia	3113	5189
UK	185	185
France	348	348
China	161	176
India	-	60–70
Pakistan	-	60
Israel	-	80
Total		10,183

Source: Abridged from SIPRI 2008: 16

or ideological reasons will help them acquire the knowledge to make WMDs.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other arms agreements were designed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. However, these do not work as well as would be hoped. Some states do not join and advanced states put pressure on some (such as Iran and North Korea) not to develop nuclear weapons, while being more relaxed about others (such as India) and unwilling to disarm on a major scale themselves. They try to prevent others developing or acquiring nuclear weapons whilst wishing to retain the right to have them themselves. This damages the effectiveness of non-proliferation and undermines the legitimacy of attempts at it. The US is developing missile defence systems that would allow them to deter nuclear attacks. This would make it easier for them to launch nuclear attacks because there would be less fear of reprisals getting through, should the technology work. At the same time, President Obama has made the reduction of nuclear weapons an aim of his period in office.

Hirst (2001) points to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) a significant aspect of which is the development of hi-tech weaponry. He raises the prospect of computer or robot wars in the future, at least on the part of richer advanced states that can afford to develop such technologies and use them against their enemies. Drones or robots, such as unmanned planes or other vehicles, can do remote-control fighting, lessening the casualties for the advanced state and, as such, perhaps making them more willing to go to war. The US has used drones to fire missiles in places like North Pakistan and Somalia. Greater use of space, mobility and intelligence are also part of what are seen as new developments in war-making, replacing large mass armies. Smaller

units capable of responding quickly, having the intelligence to know where to strike and where threats may come from, are increasingly emphasized.

Nevertheless, lesser technology – from planes on September 11th to roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and AK47s – can cause serious problems for a hi-tech force like the US, and there is a limit to the type or amount of information that can be gathered with even the most complex information technology systems (Boot 2006). The war in Iraq, waged by the most technologically sophisticated power in the world, still involved old methods of fighting. There were quite precise missiles fired from great distance with minimal casualties to the US. These did not prevent substantial civilian deaths, or the civil bloodbath that followed Saddam Hussein's fall, but they were able to hit targets from a distance without direct risk to those firing them. However, a great deal of the Iraq War also involved men on feet or in vehicles entering towns and cities, patrolling and being attacked by insurgents guerrilla-style. The latter forms of warfare, with echoes of the tactics used successfully against the US in the Vietnam War, has been the biggest military challenge faced by the US in Iraq. In 2004 the Iraqi town of Fallujah was taken by American and Iraqi forces in urban fighting, with the loss of over 100 lives on their side and more than a thousand amongst insurgents in the city.

Hirst also emphasizes new bases for war. *Climate change* leads to desertification, the loss of fertile land and water, especially in hot climates such as parts of Africa where these resources are already in short supply. Consequently, there is competition over declining resources that are vital for the very bases of life, and to this can be added the threat of declining oil reserves, at present combined with a lack of alternative fuel development by states and societies. Hirst predicts that competition over declining resources such as land, water and oil will lead to military conflicts. Migration to escape from such conflicts or from the loss of land and water will provoke its own conflicts as societies resist immigration to protect their own resources. Such conflicts already exist. The war in Sudan has been portrayed as a war between ethnic or religious groups, or between the government and some of its citizens. But it is also a war over declining water resources and land. About a quarter of a million people have died as a result of the conflict, at the time of writing. While advanced powers have invested trillions of dollars in the war in Iraq, arguably related in part to oil, there has been less willingness and slow progress in developing a 'cosmopolitan' intervention in the Sudan conflict (with echoes of the West's unwillingness to intervene also in the genocide in Rwanda despite its military capacity to do so). So, for Hirst, the future is one where we will face increasing violent conflicts over water, oil and fertile land. He argues that states are still key actors in these scenarios, as they control energy resources and land and provide armies. And the firepower revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is still the most important – that is, the move by societies to the mechanized weaponry that remains the mainstay of many conflicts today. At the same time, the ability of advanced states to put up missile defences and use drones and robotic technology, so minimizing their own casualties, only increases the likelihood that they, the forces with the most destructive power, will go to war.

Conclusions

For sociologists to turn their face away from international war shows a narrow and blinkered view of the world and of the study of society. In advanced industrial states we are sheltered from the significance of militarism, and can easily allow ourselves to be so, but war is a major fact of life and death in many parts of the world. If you want to understand society you need to understand the role of military action. And war has social causes and consequences. Consequently, sociology has a reason to be interested in it and to cast light on it.

War has been a quite globalized phenomenon: as far back as the European imperialist powers, this has been the means through which many parts of the world have been conquered, and military power has maintained the domination of one state over another. The world wars of the twentieth century and the cold war were internationally extended conflicts, and showed the global nature of military conflict. In the post-cold war situation, the world's greatest military power, the US, has demonstrated a unipolar version of globality in its military deployment. Nevertheless, in these global military situations war-making power is highly unevenly distributed. If globalization is consistent with very powerful actors defeating the distant and less powerful then this is globalization. But if it involves a more equal integration of different parts of the world, then it is difficult to see these examples as globalization.

So, power is an important part of the history of modern war. Capitalism also plays a large part in it. War is a business, out of which corporations and states can make a lot of money, and in which the most advanced states are the major producers from whom other poorer countries purchase military technology. The arms industry that underpins global military capabilities is driven by profit incentives, reproducing power and inequalities between the core and periphery. As we have seen, the role of state regulation (or lack of it) is significant, as are technological developments in weaponry.

Capitalism, economic incentives, the state and technology are important factors in global war and arms.

I have suggested that there are reasons to be worried about the future of warfare. The most powerful states have immense military capability, including the WMDs they seek to deprive others of, and, in the case of the US in Japan, have shown they are willing to use them. During the cold war, it was mainly due to good fortune that nuclear weapons were not used, but missile defence systems make the use of nuclear weapons more likely in the future. The development and siting of defence systems themselves increase conflict and tension of the sort that can spiral into military action. Russia has spoken out strongly on the basing of US missile defence systems in central Europe. Powerful states will be able to wage war, minimizing casualties on their side through other technological advancements such as the computerization of military capability. Furthermore, climate change produces new and developing sources of conflict in the world, on top of existing ones, with competition for declining water and land resources and over the ensuing migration from desertified areas. As nuclear proliferation widens to include more states and possibly non-state actors, the chances of hugely devastating war and great human tragedy increases. The onus in this situation lies with the most powerful not to aggravate the situation by building up arms or threatening other parts of the world, as was the strategy in the early years of the twenty-first century. The alternative is that the most heavily armed states lead the way in making radical arms reductions, especially of WMDs, and seek to resolve sources of tension and conflict in the world which increase chances of military conflict – for instance, the Israel–Palestine situation in the Middle East, climate change, global poverty and resented overseas interventions.

Further Reading

Tarak Barkawi's (2006) book, *Globalization and War*, explores the interconnections between war, globalization and society. I have summarized some main points from this book towards the start of this chapter.

Paul Hirst (2001), *War and Power in the 21st Century*. This is a readable short book by Paul Hirst who, with Thompson (1996), wrote the sceptical book *Globalization in Question*. Hirst provides a knowledgeable historical perspective on the development of military technology and war, seeing the gunpowder revolution and the nation-state as vital developments. He has a bleak view of the potential consequences of

developments in military technology and competition over declining resources caused by climate change, to which cosmopolitan solutions do not provide a realistic response.

Held et al.'s (1999) *Global Transformations* is a few years old but, nevertheless, chapter 2 on organized violence is a good introduction to the globalization of war, security and the arms trade, historically and up to the late 1990s.

The *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* has a website and many publications on the state or conflict and arms proliferation globally, including an annual yearbook.