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Further explorations in Defining Violence, Peace and War

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concept of violence to these instances.

After his journeys in time and space B has learned all items of behaviour to which the omniscient A applies the term violence. He has learned the full *denotation* of the term. If A and B were peace researchers, B would now be aware of the complete data set on violence, not only the data sets all previous peace researchers could ever have made but also those of future generations. Furthermore, this data set is clean: it does not contain measurement error. Despite this tremendous increase in knowledge, however, B is still unable to express verbally to a third person what violence means.

Secondly, in teaching B what violence means A could make progress by showing him clippings from newspapers on bank robberies, killings, wars, etc., saying: 'Each time you read such a story in a newspaper that means that violence has taken place'. In this case A is appealing to B's knowledge of language. B has to know the meaning of such words as 'newspaper', 'bank robbery', 'killing', 'war', in order to understand A's explanation of the term violence. Once B has learned the meaning of these words, however, he might be able to apply the term violence to other occasions, in which phrases like 'man killed by bank robber', or 'China and Vietnam are waging war' are used, because they have so much in common with the clippings A has shown him. Of course, sometimes, e.g. reading 'man beats his wife', he will have to argue with himself whether a certain phrase also means violence. Or he will have to ask A.

Thirdly, A could therefore make it still easier for himself by proposing to B a definition of violence, e.g.: 'If a person or a group of persons inflicts physical damage upon another person or group of persons, this is what we mean by violence'. When B understands this definition, this third manner of explanation has a number of distinct advantages. Firstly, B is able to apply the words correctly to all actual instances of violent behavior as well as to consistently imagineable occasions of violent behaviour in the past, the present and the future, without ever having observed or observing such instances himself. Secondly, A and B are now able to talk about violence, the features of violence or the causes of violence without any need to go into disputes about the meaning of the term. Thirdly, when A and B disagree, they know that they disagree about facts or the range of facts. Their disagreement can be solved by looking more closely at questions of fact, e.g. by conducting empirical investigations.

Explanations of the first type rely completely on the common knowledge of facts by A and B. No appeal to a common knowledge of language is made. In explanations of the third type, however, A and B must have a common understanding of the definition of violence in order to reduce their disagreement to questions of fact. As a compromise, in explanations of second

type it is assumed A and B share a common understanding of the connotation of at least some words.

Explanations using words thus obviously have many advantages. But the use of language also creates problems. Once language is used, words can either indicate statements on facts or statements on language (Savigny, 1973).

In statements of fact words are used to talk about facts and disagreements can be solved by looking more closely at the facts. When B says for example that in all wars there are more than 1,000 battle fatalities, A could convince him that he is wrong if he were able to show B a war in which only 500 soldiers were killed. Or when B says that aggressive behaviour is associated with 14/second positive spikes in the EEG-record, A can refute B by indicating that soldiers pressing buttons many times do not show these phenomena.

Statements on language, however, refer to the *intended* use of words and can therefore not be refuted by matters of fact. B could say that he only intends to mean by war, situations where there are more than 1,000 battle fatalities. According to this definition, he refuses to call fights with a smaller number of casualties 'wars'. Neither can A convince B that he is wrong when B persists in considering 14/second positive spikes as a necessary component of the concept of violence.

Consequently, when it is not clear whether statements on facts or statements on language are meant, the use of language can lead to confusion. Since both types of statement may have the same form (e.g. 'A war is characterized by more than 1,000 battle deaths') and both types of statements may appear in the same argument (e.g. 'aggressive behaviour can be explained by physiological changes'), such confusion may easily arise. When authors do not indicate explicitly whether, in such cases, they mean statements on facts or statements on language, they are not able to express the results of their investigations as opposed to what they have defined. *A fortiori* the reader is at a loss. He is not able to decide whether he should react on the basis of matters of fact or not. Factual propositions can be refuted by looking more closely at behaviour. Statements on definitions, as opposed to statements on facts, are statements on language. These cannot be refuted by recourse to observations of behaviour.

1.2 The freedom to define *

The conclusion of the preceding section could be that definitions are free. They are statements in the hortatory mood. All definitions should be con-

* For this section we rely heavily on Lewis (1946).

sidered equally good or useful since they are immune from factual considerations.

However, words are more than a sound or a mark on paper. They are sounds or marks with a meaning. Humans give meanings to words. This does not imply, of course, that at some time in the past people have come together to decide upon the meaning of words. This would have been impossible for no other reason than the lack of a common language to express their decisions. Therefore, the meanings of words are conventional in the sense that they are learned. When people learn the meaning of words, they learn a convention, not a fact of nature. The freedom of stipulation, connoted by the term convention, implies that there is no correct or incorrect use of language except by reference to conventional meanings. Definitions thus are, among other things, *symbolic conventions*. A symbolic convention is a decision of the user of language that, from now on, he will use some linguistic symbols to stand for or represent some other linguistic symbols. For instance: $V = [K;W;Ph.H;IP]$. In other words, a symbolic convention is a statement of the intention to use some symbols as an abbreviation of some other symbols. Symbolic conventions introduce a notational equivalence, not an equivalence in meaning. They require only that the meaning which is assigned to one side of the equation will from now on also be assigned to the other side of the equation. In this sense, a definition is a symbolic convention and as such completely subjected to the freedom of stipulation.

But a definition is more than a symbolic convention. In order to transform a symbolic convention into a *dictionary definition* one needs to assign a fixed and known meaning to the symbols on the left hand side of the notational equation. For instance, symbol V can indicate the conjunction of the terms 'killing', 'wounding', 'physical harm', 'the infliction of pain' as far as humans are concerned. This is considered a dictionary definition because the meaning of the symbol V is constituted by the fixed and known meaning of the conjunction of the terms on the right hand side of the expression.

But even dictionary definitions are subject to the freedom of stipulation. We may let the symbol V stand for the conjunction of the terms 'killing', 'wounding', 'physical harm', 'the infliction of pain' as far as humans are concerned, but another symbol, or row of symbols, will do the job equally well. Likewise, no objection could be made to the identification of the symbol V with meaning of quite different terms, such as the conjunction of the words 'love', 'taking care of', 'being concerned with the well-being of', as far as humans are concerned.

Both symbolic conventions and dictionary definitions are called *nominal definitions*. Nominal definitions either equate one set of symbols with another, or a specific symbol with the definitive meaning of a number of terms

included in the *definiens*. Since they are arbitrary decisions, nominal definitions can at all times be eliminated from statements by writing in the *definiens* in place of *definiendum*. Theoretically, the defined terms are superfluous. They do not create a new relationship between prior understood meanings, nor do they allow statements on matters of fact which could not be made without such definitions.

Nominal definitions introduce new terms into a theory. They can advance and simplify the formation of concepts. Nominal definitions also allow the deduction of new statements (implications) in a theory, which could not be deduced without them. Such statements, however, are true only in an analytical sense: they do not refer to facts not yet covered by the theory in question.

Therefore, the introduction of new terms into the conceptual apparatus of a scientific language by nominal definitions cannot be considered as a sign of scientific progress.

Firstly, the conceptual innovation is only a result of the use of linguistic symbols. Although we may decide to use a widely used symbol to stand for a meaning it did not represent before, this 'new meaning' must be a known one, in order not to become completely incomprehensible. This is a consequence of the condition that statements on the intended use of language by the use of nominal definitions do not create new, previously unknown meanings.

Secondly, it is impossible to decide upon the equivalence of two symbolized meanings, on the basis of nominal definitions.

Statements expressing the equivalence of symbolized meanings are called *real definitions*. Although they may have the same form, real definitions are radically different from nominal definitions. A dictionary definition gives rise to a real definition as soon as the symbol on the left side of the expression is assigned a meaning as well. Real definitions therefore are analytic statements that might prove to be false. Incidentally, real definitions are tautologies when they are true because the *definiendum* has exactly the same meaning as the *definiens*.

Now one may use the symbol 'violence' to stand for every meaning one likes. Thus, one may assign to the row of words 'drinking vodka to the point of delirium' any meaning one likes. However, if used in its normal sense, the statement 'drinking vodka to the point of delirium is necessarily violence' is analytically false. The statement is false because the connotation of the expression 'drinking vodka to the point of delirium' is not contained in the connotation of the term 'violence'. Unlike the terms in the expression 'non-violent war' drinking vodka to the point of delirium may be accompanied by violence or not.

The expression 'cats are necessarily animals' is analytically true because non-animal cats are not consistently thinkable. In the same vein the sentence

'regimes of capitalist nations are necessarily oppressive' is analytically false, since non-oppressive capitalist regime are consistently thinkable, just as socialist regimes without Gulags are consistently thinkable.

Problems arise when one encounters statements like 'wars have at least 1,000 battle deaths', 'socialist nations are one-party dictatorships', 'capitalist nations are oppressive', or 'violence prevents people from attaining their potential'. For the sentence 'wars always have at least 1,000 battle deaths' we have already seen that this may mean: (1) A nominal definition, which is true by the freedom of stipulation: 'I define a war as a fight with at least 1,000 battle deaths'; (2) A statement of fact, which can be refuted by further investigations (e.g. when one discovers that the War of Belgian Independence against the Netherlands caused less than 1,000 battle deaths). Now we discover that the same sentence may also be a real definition, which is used implicitly because the word 'always' is dropped. As a real definition the sentence turns out to be analytically false, because a war with a smaller number than 1,000 battle deaths is consistently thinkable.

When one is confronted with the sentence 'violence prevents people from realizing their potential' one is at a complete loss in the same way. Is this a nominal definition which can therefore not be disputed? Is it a statement of fact, which can be refuted by empirical evidence? Or is it a real definition, which can be opposed by the argument that a non-violent society defined in this way is not consistently thinkable?

1.3. Classifications as restrictions to the freedom to define

Real definitions should be analytically true. Nominal definitions are subject to the freedom to stipulate. One should therefore ask why freedom to choose one's own nominal definitions does not result in a complete chaos?

To see why the freedom to stipulate does not result in conceptual chaos we should call attention to the role of classifying, which is also fulfilled by nominal definitions.

Nominal definitions express previously understood concepts stated in the *definiens*. If the conjunction of terms in the *definiens* applies to an observation, the *definiendum* applies to that observation. Nominal definitions are therefore rules for the application of concepts to instances of experience. For instance, experiences of sense are known as 'violence' if people are willing to apply the conjunction of meaningful terms 'killing', 'wounding', 'physical harm', 'infliction of pain', to them. Though it is not language itself that determines the meaning of 'killing', etc., people can only express what they mean by using language. The classification of the data of sense, created by the application of meaningful terms to them, does not reflect fundamental

divisions in nature itself. Nothing in the nature of things themselves (independent of language) determines the way it has to be classified. One is free to choose one's own criteria for classification. Behaviour could be classified as violence as soon as organisms are killed. In that case, the extermination of insects and wars could both be cases of violence.

Nevertheless, the classifying function of nominal definitions restricts the freedom to define in at least two ways.

The first way is through the need for fruitful and sensible further research. A classic example here is Plato's definition of man as a featherless biped. As soon as this mode of classification is chosen, the empirical nature of things determines that Plato arrives at data set which not only consists of men as defined in daily life, but also of quite different things, like plucked chickens. Since very few interesting statements could be made for the class of phenomena defined by Plato, such a definition could be rejected as preventing sensible further research. For the same reason, the definition of violence as the killing of organisms should be rejected. In this way the freedom to define is restricted by pragmatic considerations. An example of a nominal definition which has been changed on the basis of later research is the biologist's definition of fish which excludes, among other things whales and cuttle fish.

The second way in which the needs of classification limit the freedom to define is through the requirement of completeness. Let us assume that a biologist defines only the male sex positively, and the female sex by negation of the male sex. On the basis of these definitions he could say for each organism whether it belonged to the male or the female sex. Suppose however, that he now wants to define both class concepts positively, by introducing explicit positive criteria for the female sex as well. Then he will soon discover that the two class concepts will no longer apply to all organisms: he discovers the class of hermaphrodites. That is, he discovers the inadequacy of his twofold classification and of his nominal definitions giving rise to this classification.

In order to investigate how considerations of fact and theory affect peace research, we now return to the hypothetical persons who were introduced at the beginning of this paper. During their trip around the world they got to know all the facts which they later talked about when they were discussing the concept of violence. But assuming that they are also interested in peace, we can ask whether their knowledge of violence allows them to talk about peace as well. Obviously this is not the case, except for one statement they could make: 'Any behaviour to which the term violence does not apply, is an instance of peace'.

A and B are able to make this statement without making another trip. The statement is merely a logical conclusion which can be derived from the definition of violence, and the definition of peace as the negation of violence.

However, as long as A and B define peace as the negation of violence, they will not learn the meaning of peace. As long as they do not characterize peace positively, they will not be able to tell a third person anything about peace, which goes beyond violence.

If A and B are peace researchers they have acquired a complete and clean data set of violent behaviour. But, even when their data on violence predict the termination of violence (e.g. 'A country will stop fighting after more than 10% of its population has been killed in war'), they do not know to which positive items of behaviour their proposition refers. This is because of the tremendous variety of behavioural possibilities which remains after all instances of violence have been identified. Thus, A and B are helpless in trying to find causes of violence in periods of peace, since they simply cannot identify peace positively.

The reason for their hopeless situation is that their commonly understood definition of violence divides the whole universe of human behaviour into two mutually exclusive sets. However, by defining only violence positively and peace as the negation of violence, their unique way of ordering facts is a logical consequence of the accepted definitions only, and not a statement of fact. They are in the same position as the biologist who first defined only the male sex positively.

Now imagine that A and B are aware of their incapacity to say anything about peace that is not known from their definition of violence. Assume also that they happen to meet a third peace researcher C, who knows what peace means. Since C is a naive polemologist, he responds to A and B's question about the meaning of peace that peace means the conjunction of the following expressions: 'making other people enjoy life', 'taking care of', 'being concerned with the well-being of', as far as humans are concerned.

Once the concept of peace is positively defined in this way the statement that behaviour is either violent or peaceful is no longer a truth by definition, but an empirical statement that can be refuted on the basis of fact. Consequently, our three peace researchers decide to make a new trip by plane. Even without using their telescope, they would soon agree that their system of classification is inadequate. During their trip in the past they discover that executions were frequently organised as if they were in a theatre of a play, in which spectators were obviously entertained by seeing other people being tortured or killed. This shows a form of behaviour which obviously belongs in the class of violence as well as in the class of peace. Of course, they could try to re-cast this part of their definition (e.g. by defining peace as behaviour which is enjoyed by all people). But their system of classification remains inadequate. Many forms of important behaviour (for instance economic relations of exchange by which both buyer and seller gain something,

negotiations, threats, relations of benign neglect, power struggles and bureaucratic infighting) cannot be classified as either violence or peace. So the three peace researchers can already draw the conclusion that their two-fold system of classification does not work after a very short trip.

Thus we see, that the urge of researchers like Wright and Richardson to characterize peace positively and not by negation, is a sound one. As long as there is no more or less generally accepted classification of behaviour which defines violence and peace positively, one cannot systematically investigate which behavioural settings predict towards violence. Neither can one investigate the correlation of peace with other forms of non-violent behaviour. Without such a well-understood classification, analyses at the nominal level of measurement using class concepts only, remain at best at the level of educated guesswork.

Several decades ago Wright and Richardson seemed aware of the necessity to define peace positively and not merely as the negation of violence. Now we turn to the few developments in terminology, which have taken place in peace research since then.

2. Galtung's conceptual innovation

2.1 Galtung's way of defining peace as the negation of violence

In the preceding section we already mentioned the warnings of Richardson and Wright not to identify peace as a situation of non-violence. Richardson noted on this topic:

'(. . .) the classical antitheses of war and peace is not appropriate here. For war is an intense activity, whereas peace (. . .) resembles zero rather than a negative quantity. Negative preparedness for war must mean that the group directs toward foreigners an activity designed to please rather than to annoy them'.

(Richardson, 1960, p. 19)

Wright came to a similar conclusion when he remarked that:

'To be either logically conceivable or practically effective peace must have a positive meaning'.

(Wright, 1965², p. 1091)

These pleas are in line with the general rule that, in order for a system of classification to have empirical significance, each of the classes of the system should have its own criteria of application.

Galtung defines violence as:

'the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual. Violence is

that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance'.

(Galtung, 1969, p. 168)

Despite his broadening of the concept of violence, Galtung remains within the bounds of tradition in equating peace (in his words 'positive peace') with the absence of violence (in his words also including 'structural violence').

It is therefore quite clear that Galtung's redefinition does not meet the objections against the definition of peace as the negation of violence.

Galtung's redefinition might even be called a manipulative one, since he transfers the negative value-loading of the clearly defined concept of violence to new types of behaviour, in order to profit from the negative emotive reaction to the concept of violence in its established meaning.

That the concept of violence has a clearly understood meaning in its traditional sense becomes apparent from the reactions of people. People are well able to identify instances of violence when confronted with them and to differentiate between instances of violence and, for example, hunger or inequality.

Violence is characterized by elements of drama, which makes the concept clearly distinguishable from, for example, mass starvation. People are also well able to express verbally what they see when they are confronted with instances of violence. This means that the connotation of the term is clearly understood. That the signification of the term is clear is corroborated by the fact that people use quite different terms when they have been engaged in violent acts than when they are bored, exploited, suppressed, poor or hungry.

That a negative value-loading is attached to the concept of violence is evidenced by the fact that people – even people using violence 'out of necessity', as for instance in cases of self-defence – try to justify the use of force. They try to justify violence even when they are not asked to do so, whereas on the contrary, they do not feel a need for giving reasons for eating, loving, or envying their neighbours.

Precisely because violence has such clear meaning as well as a negative value-loading it is suitable for manipulative use. Probably all Galtung wants to say is that avoidable poverty and dying are just as bad as violence. Inadequate food and health care may indeed cause more suffering than military conflicts. In this matter, we share Galtung's opinion.

But we think that Galtung's manipulative way of redefining violence just doesn't work and may even be counterproductive.

Morally, people may react in the same way to mass starvation as they did, for example, to the Nazi-occupation: 'We looked in another direction and did our own thing'. Today, such a response is worse than formerly, because mass starvation can be seen on TV and – in countries of the western world – there

is no danger of physical punishment when people openly disapprove of this state of affairs. Galtung's statement that mass starvation is a form of violence which is merely built into the structure makes this evasion of individual responsibility even more respectable, since the social injustice is simply considered as a new form of 'the other guy's fault'.

Since it is easier to justify the use of force as a response to violence than as a response to other behaviour (which could equally be counteracted by, for instance, financial aid), Galtung's redefinition can also foster the killing of members of the elite who are held responsible for the existence of 'structural' violence. Galtung's broadening of the concept of violence in this way obscures the difference between violent and non-violent responses to injustice, which most people are willing to accept.

Scientifically, Galtung's conceptual innovation would be justified if it could be shown to lead to better theories. But peace researchers become no better equipped to explain physical violence after the concept of violence is extended to all kinds of (other) injustices.

Neither do economists become better equipped to explain the unequal distribution of wealth when the term violence is applied to it.

On the contrary. The fusion of meanings suggested by Galtung hinders scholars to regard physical violence as a predictor of economic inequality, and economic inequality as a predictor of physical violence.

Galtung probably puts all these different eggs into the same basket because they have a common outcome: avoidable injury to persons.

This is as true for the use of force as for mass starvation, car accidents or smoking cigarettes. Scientists will nevertheless, stick to the accepted meanings of these concepts, not out of respect for tradition, but because they do not see that calling them all violence helps the construction of explanatory theory. Since there is no evidence whatsoever that car accidents, smoking cigarettes and wars are caused by the same variables, Galtung's definition reminds one of Plato's definition of man.

2.2. How the actor-spectator ambiguity muddles Galtung's differentiation between forms of violence

At the end of this book *'Les règles de la méthode sociologique'* Durkheim concludes that sociologists do not need to choose sides in the great debates that divide philosophers, such as the debate on determinism versus voluntarism.

However, studies on violence amply testify to the fact that sociologists frequently do choose sides, though often in an implicit way, revealed only by the language they use. Consider the following statement by Aron (1967, p. 706):

'States fight either for something (land, men, booty, etc.) or else because of something or someone (population pressure, search for markets, despotic or Capitalist or Communist regime, ambition of the military or of the munitions men). (...) The explanations of the first type do not exclude the partial truth of the explanations of the second type. Explanations of the second type are false if they are regarded as complete'. (emphasis by Aron).

Aron states here that nations are living like amphibia, moving at the frontier of two essentially different orders of being. On the one hand states, and by implication their decision-makers, seem to be submerged in the world of nature, belonging to the unitary order to which all other things belong. In this view, 'nature' is extended to include human behaviour and society. In consequence, social scientists can try to discover how social reality hangs together by stating general laws, which are applicable to nature. This is why causal explanations are applicable to war and peace: states fight because of something else. In explanations of this kind human agents disappear as independent actors. The scholar conceives them as part of the realm of fact from which they are unable to escape.

On the other hand, Aron argues that decision-makers can master nature. Human agents are able to mould their relations with other states, even to the point of threatening or waging war as an instrument of policy. Decision-makers are seen as able to construct social reality purposively. Human agents decide on the basis of preference, being able to control outcomes by their capacity for foresight. This is why Aron considers causal explanations of war incomplete: wars are not caused, but decided upon.

This actor-spectator ambiguity may be called a metaphysical element in Aron's discourse. There is also an ontological element in Aron's analysis in the sense that he considers the difference between actor and spectator applicable to groups (states) as well as to individuals. According to Aron, states can be intelligent and act rationally in the same way as individuals. Groups are as real as individuals.

Whatever one may think of Aron's treatise, there seems to be a real problem here. While most people are inclined to see war and peace as a consequence of decisions, the scholar who tries to explain violence in terms of individual ordering of preference and choice leading to action, deprives himself of the possibility of regarding these orderings of preference as dependent variables. Most people however, are not willing to accept that statesmen are totally free in choosing their orderings of preference between peace and war. But if scholars could find external determinants of these preferences, they could do without the concept of preference ordering and link violent behaviour directly to specific contextual elements.

It is one thing to admit human agency, and quite another to reject it as

inexplicable. Fortunately, there is a third possibility. In this third view one postulates that each of the actors has a distinct set of beliefs with respect to himself and the other actors. One need not specify how the actors have acquired these beliefs. One can then try to show what unanticipated outcomes may result from inter-action when each actor is behaving on the basis of his beliefs.

This was the road travelled by Richardson in his studies of the arms race. Notwithstanding the fact that each of the statesmen may say that he only strives for the enhancement of national security, a competitive process of armament build-up may develop, which may result in war. In Richardson's analysis peaceful objectives at the national level can be over-come by violent outcomes at the collective (i.e. the dyadic) level.

In this third view social reality is seen as a cosmos between nature and agency (for the concept of cosmos see Hayek, 1968, p. 10). Unlike nature, social reality is made by man. But, unlike a design of one actor, the actors do not achieve what they want in their interaction.

Just as one can unravel studies of war in this way, so one can unravel views on peace. Peace can also be seen as a chosen state of affairs, consciously organized by human agents preferring peace. This is what pacifists think, or think they can contribute to. Peace can also be studied as a state of nature, which exists if certain external conditions are fulfilled. This is the view represented by researchers on the correlates of war. Thirdly, peace can be seen as an unforeseen and unintended outcome of the interaction among a group of actors. This is implicit in balance of power theories.

Furthermore, it can now be seen that these distinctions in metaphysics not only affect language, but also imply stopping rules in research. It is no coincidence that, in research in background conditions to war, the rationality of individuals has disappeared as a factor, while similarly in studies of the rational behaviour of policy makers, external pressures determining preferences have vanished from sight.

If these distinctions in metaphysics make sense, Galtung's thinking on violence should be considered as muddled to the extreme. After having confused the meaning of violence, he is cutting the cake of violence in two pieces again:

'However, it soon will be clear why we are rejecting the narrow concept of violence, according to which violence is somatic incapacitation, or deprivation of health alone (with killing as the extreme form), at the hands of an actor who intends this to be the consequence'. (emphasis by Galtung).

(Galtung, 1969, p. 168)

(...)

'We shall refer to the type of violence where there is an actor who commits

the violence as personal, or direct, and to violence where there is no such actor as structural or indirect'.

(Ibid., p. 178)

Probably in an attempt to clarify the distinction between direct and structural violence, Galtung presents the following example:

'Thus when one husband beats his wife, there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence'.

(Ibid., p. 171)

Apparently, Galtung considers that the language of 'actors realizing their intent' is applicable to violence in its traditional sense. He thereby incidentally pays tribute to Von Clausewitz in assuming that groups (assemblies of men sharing a decision-making apparatus) may commit personal violence in the way as individuals do. Structural violence, on the other hand, refers to a type of behaviour which is accomplished behind peoples backs. Here the human agent is irrelevant.

Galtung's categorisation of violence therefore turns out to be the result of an arbitrary application of different metaphysical outlooks to different parts of his classification of violence.

The consequence of Galtung's differentiation would be that generations of scholars who have attempted to find external determinants for large-scale violence (wars, revolutions, a million husbands beating their wives) have always been taking the wrong theoretical viewpoint. This is hard to believe in a time where studies of the disastrous First World War in particular have driven home the point that man and society are entities too dangerous to be allowed to use violence as an instrument of policy. The dissolution of the Ottoman and Austrian-Hungarian Empires and the one way trip of the Tsar to Jekaterineburg should have made clear to Galtung that from an intellectual point of view the Clausewitzians are dead and that the presentation of war as nothing more than intentional use of violence is untenable.

2.3. The impossible of a conceptually viable peaceful society in accordance with Galtung's definition

Galtung defines violence as the discrepancy between the actual and the potential. But what does 'potential' mean in his definition? Does it signify something better of something else? Since anything can always be re-arranged, this would imply that there would always be structural violence, even in an 'ideal' society. But even if by 'potential' Galtung means the 'best attainable solution' one may ask whether it is possible to define clearly what

this solution is.

Firstly, Galtung's definition is silent on the question of whether it refers to the behaviour of individuals or to society as a whole. Although the concept of 'structural violence' suggests otherwise, most of Galtung's examples (ignorant women, illiteracy, lack of food) refer to individuals. But where he does in fact refer directly to the question of individual behaviour, it is impossible to imagine an ordering of their interdependence which would allow all individuals to attain their maximum potential. This can be illustrated with an example of the division of labour.

Suppose that in a society large numbers of farmers are retrained to become peace researchers. From an intellectual point of view this could mean that for a lot of people the discrepancy between the actual and the potential decreases. But such a less violent society would soon suffer from a lack of food supply, which would shorten the life expectancy of the population (including the newly trained peace researchers). Of course, one could effect a change in policy and sacrifice some intellectuals. But in that case an *a priori* limit to the number of intellectuals who would suffer could not be fixed, as is amply illustrated by recent developments in South-East Asia.

Secondly and more generally, we encounter here problems which are normally dealt with in the theory of social choice and in the theories on the (optimal) economic order (Sharp, 1973). Here we find two ideal types of solution for the problems neglected by Galtung. In the first solution society is thought to have a 'designing mind', being completely informed about the 'maximum potential' of all individuals and about the available capital and labour, and input-output relationships. With this information the government could regulate centrally the allocation of people among the several professions in order to maximize social utility. It is very unlikely that the concept of peace would be relevant to such a collectively regulated society since the threat of force at least would be needed to accomplish the detailed national production plan. In the second ideal type of economic order the individuals are left completely free, independently to realize their own potential on the basis of information they have acquired by their own efforts. Such a society without a government, however, would be characterized by cumulative inequalities, economic depressions and environmental deterioration to a degree to which Galtung himself would probably refuse to regard the term 'peace' as applicable. Of course, mixed solutions are possible like Tinbergen's optimal degree of (de-)centralisation. But these all refer to societal characteristics and not to individual characteristics.

One may conclude therefore that a peaceful society à la Galtung is not consistently thinkable. Peace in Galtung's sense, should be rejected as a real definition. When all Galtung wants to say is that a thorough reorganization

of the world is needed to remedy present and prevent future disasters, he is perfectly right. Such a thorough reorganization will however not result from terminology which excites some peace researchers, but from the discovery of social and organizational forms that work in the present world.

3. Pitfalls in operational definitions of war

In this section we wish to consider briefly some of the problems which arise in contemporary quantitative research on the causes of violence. These problems exist, because – unlike the meaning of violence, which we consider clear-cut – the meanings of a great number of *terms expressing violence* are not clear at all. The terms we refer to are terms such as war, limited war, military confrontation, military intervention, police action, punitive action, reprisal, hostilities, coercive diplomacy, border incidents, and the like. Even for the term war there are no commonly accepted criteria of application. This fact is shown by the existence of multiple data-sets for the same spatial-temporal domain, such as the data on war collected by Singer's COW-group, those by Richardson in his *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* and the collection published by SIPRI.

Though it is undisputed that all these facts are cases of violence, the concept of war seems to have an area of imprecision in which applicability is indeterminate. No one doubts that the First World War should be considered as a war. Similarly, there will be little dispute that the Morocco crises preceding that war were not cases of war as this term is commonly understood, but cases of something else. But was the Belgian struggle for independence against the Netherlands a war? Richardson thinks it was. Singer and Small do not think so, without being able to say what else it was, because there is no system of classification in their work. In this situation relatively small and at first sight unimportant shifts in defining criteria may lead to substantial changes in the composition of the data-set of wars.

One way to cope with this imprecision is to regard the various terms expressing violence as *classifying terms*. That is: the cake of violence is cut up into different types of violence, to which different terms are applicable. The problem of imprecision in language can then be solved by operationism, meaning that operational definitions are decisive for the classification of the separate items of behaviour.

Though operational definitions should be preferred to non-operational ones, at least two problems are not solved by the grouping together of facts on the basis of operational definitions.

In the first place, since operational definitions only state the criteria for the application of a term, they are not identical with the meaning of a con-

cept. Consequently, the problem of concept validity remains unsolved in operationalism. Just as a measuring rod only measures length if it is previously agreed what length means, operational definitions presuppose meaningful terms to measure. Test routines and codings rules are not substitutes for meaningful terms. If concepts are unclear therefore, operational definitions should be preceded by nominal definitions and by analyses of meaning. In contemporary research, operational definitions seem to be more popular than nominal definitions or analyses of meaning. But it is wrong to consider them as equivalent substitutes for the latter.

In the second place, the use of operational definitions tends to obscure important issues with respect to the nature of the defining properties themselves.

According to Aristotle's theory of definition, defining properties are construed in such a way that each property is considered necessary, and the whole set of properties jointly as a sufficient condition.

If war is the concept to be defined and a, b, c, and d are the defining properties, the logical structure of the definition of war is therefore:

$$\text{War} = \text{at a.b.c.d.}$$

According to this definition an instance of violence is classified as a war if the conjunction of the properties a, b, c, and d applies to it. All wars are characterized by a, b, c, and d, and all cases of violence characterized by a, b, c, and d are called war. Definitions of this form are called conjunctive definitions.

A less restrictive method is to construe defining properties in a *disjunction*. In a disjunctive definition an instance of violence is called war if either a, or b, or c, or d applies to it. The logical structure of a disjunctive definition is as follows:

$$\text{War} = \text{at aVbVcVd}$$

In a disjunctive definition each of the properties a, b, c, and d is a sufficient, while at least one of them is a necessary, condition. Consequently, a case of violence is still considered as a war, even if a, b, and c are absent, as long as d is present. In disjunctive definitions the vagueness of language is conceived as a quorum function: any of the defining properties may be absent as long as one of them is present. Conditions can be relaxed even further by defining a class as a set of instances which show statistically covarying properties in disjunctive series of unlimited length. In such definition no specific set of properties is a necessary, and any set in the series is a sufficient, condition

(Hull, 1964-1965).

These differences in the nature of defining properties do not usually attract much attention in quantitative research. Nevertheless, we can clearly see that investigations testing the same hypothesis with more than one data-set (as for example, in Weede, 1975) in fact jump from a conjunctive definition of war to a disjunctive definition.

What is at stake here is not how defining properties should be construed in order to express what war is in essence, or what it is generally considered to be. The determining factor, in our opinion, should be success in explanation. For instance, when the threshold of 1,000 battle deaths produces better explanations, this threshold should be adopted. But if this threshold does not show up as relevant in research – that is, if cases of violence below this threshold can be explained by the same predictors – the threshold should be dropped. In the same vein, pragmatic considerations should decide in which way the cake of violence and the cake of peace are divided in distinct types. Such decisions ought to be taken pragmatically because the nominal definitions giving rise to a classification are designed for purposes of explanation, not to put things into pigeon holes.

Disjunctive definitions allow a certain amount of compensation for the fact that, while the use of classifications suggests marked discontinuities, the facts to which these concepts are thought to apply do not, on the other hand, show such rigid limits. The relaxation of conditions for defining properties in this way foreshadows a second method of coping with the imprecision of terms expressing violence.

This second method, in which terms expressing violence refer to different *grades* of violence, is completely different from the use of classificatory concepts. In this second response, items are ranked on the basis of the amount of violence involved in a violent event: wars are understood as more violent than military intervention, military intervention as more violent than reprisals or border raids, etc. Concepts that grade or rank observed events on the basis of different degrees of a feature which they have in common (in this case violence) are topological terms (Hempel and Oppenheim, 1936). War as a topological term says only that war involves *more* violence than other forms of violence, as opposed to war as a term of classification, which ascribes to war certain features belonging only to war.

We feel that this differentiation between war as a term of classification and war as a topological term is interwoven with modern research on the causes of war. To illustrate this point, consider the study by Weede. In investigating differences between dyads of nations that waged war and dyads that did not, Weede apparently uses war as a term of classification. The main question in his research is: 'Why war in these dyads?', and not: 'Why more or less war in

these dyads?'. Stuckey and Singer (1975) on the other hand, ranked states in a decreasing order on the basis of the amount of war experienced by these nations. These scholars use war as a topological concept. Their main research question is: 'Why have some nations experienced more war than other nations?' and not: 'Why have some nations fought wars and others not?'

Although this difference between war as a concept of classification and war as a topological term is very important in research, it is often overlooked by the researchers themselves.

The first reason why this difference is so important is that the definition of war as a term of classification is logically independent from the definition of war as a topological term. In a general way defining the positive degree of an adjective does not involve defining its comparative degree. However, in the COW-research carried out by Singer and his associates for instance, it is our impression that war is defined as a term of classification, while in actual research it is treated as a topological (or metric) concept. If this is indeed the case, such issues as whether it is correct to measure the concept of war by the amount of war, turn out to be false problems (cf. Duvall, 1976).

The second reason for the importance of the difference between both concepts of war is that each requires different research questions and different research designs. Propositions using war as a term of classification should take the form of stating a tie between all those, or a percentage of those, states which have waged war when compared with those that have not, and the classification of all states by other characteristics, such as the existence of latent territorial conflicts etc. A research design using cross-classification is required here.

Propositions using the topological (metric) concept of war, however, should take the form that there exists a tie between the ranking of states (or dyads) with respect to their amount of war, and their ranking with respect to other features they may have in different degrees. Of course, such rankings may be extended to lower levels of violence than war.

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Onderzoek

Physical planning at the local level in Belgium

by Herman Wuyts

I. Introduction

The theme 'decision making' is, in political science, if not the most important, then certainly one of the most important themes. The decision making process and the influences on it always have led to empirical research and abstract theory building. Discussions about this theme find their place in the broad framework of discussions about democracy in general and democratic forms of government in particular.

A substantial position in these discussions is occupied by decision making and governmental organization at the local level, notably the level of the municipality, township, commune. This level has, rightly or wrongly, the reputation of being most appropriate to meet the needs of democracy. That the commune is called 'Elementarschule der Demokratie' (A. Klönne), is just an external sign for this. As reason for this reputation are usually mentioned the relatively small scale governmental organization and the relatively short distance between government and governed.

This 'idealistic' image, however, does not always correspond with the reality of communes having to face new tasks with forms of government out of the past. The problem of communal autonomy has sharply been posed, as well in the literature as in practice and the opinions about efficient government and democratic decision making are more in confrontation with each other than, together, in search of a type of commune 'new style'.

In the mean time, however, governmental practice has, almost in whole Western Europe, taken a step to larger entities by the amalgamation of small(-er) communes, this step is justified by the need to tackle new tasks and to give new substance to the excavated autonomy. At first sight priority has been given to an efficient task execution at the cost of democratic decision making, since, in general, the governmental organization itself has only undergone little change.

Nevertheless, something happened on this domain too. Starting from a critical questioning of the functioning of local democracy, theoretical models of intra-communal decentralization and participation have been set up. At