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RESEARCH IN ETHICAL ISSUES IN
ORGANIZATIONS VOLUME 23

WAR, PEACE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2020

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83982-777-8 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83982-776-1 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83982-778-5 (Epub)

ISSN: 1529-2096 (Series)

CONTENTS

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THE ETHICS OF WAR AND PEACE

Michael Schwartz and Howard Harris

Leo Tolstoy insisted that his masterpiece, *War and Peace* (1867/2004), was not a novel. Neither, Tolstoy claimed, was it a historical chronicle. But it has a plot and involves organisations at many levels – whether it is family, ballroom, military or government – and at each level we encounter ethical dilemmas. Undoubtedly, humanity strives for peace. However, there is much to support Winston Churchill's (1947) claim that 'the story of the human race is War' (p. 184); especially as warfare has never been restricted to armed conflict between nations. Currently nations, political groups, companies and other organisations are engaged in 'wars' of greater or lesser impact. One could say that wars run amok. The word 'war' is used in many ways, and we refer to 'war' here without in any way suggesting that all meanings are the same. For simplicity, we have used the word war without quote marks even though not all agree that some of the circumstances are properly to be called a war.

China and America are involved in a burgeoning trade war which many fear heralds the end of globalisation. America wages a war on drugs and a war on terror. In Kenya, there is a war against the ivory poachers. Green Peace is challenging whalers. YouTube and Spotify have disrupted the Music Industry. Historians are at loggerheads over interpreting the past in the history wars. Pepsi and Coke seem to have been at war forever. Traditional bookstores are at war with online retailers. Environmentalists are at war with coal miners. Animal rights activists are at war with companies testing their products on animals. Hermés, Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren and other such luxury good manufacturers are at war with counterfeiters. All such conflict has ethical implications.

Peter Drucker (1979) discussed the rise of organisations. Today, they are ubiquitous. Some are for-profit organisations, others are not-for-profit organisations. Ethical issues emerge for organisations when they engage in strategic conflict, go to war, or fight back against predators. In this issue of *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*, we hoped to explore the reality of such situations. And so we issued a call for papers which asked contributors to explore the ethics of war and – if you so like – of peace and the implications of either for organisational ethics.

War, Peace and Organizational Ethics
Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, Volume 23, 1–3

ISSN: 1529-2096/doi:10.1108/S1529-209620200000023001

This issue is organised as follows. In Chapter 1, 'Levinas and Business Ethics in the "War on Terror"', Peter McGhee applies the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas to the role played by business in the 'War on Terror'. McGhee uses Levinasian ethics to explain how organisations, often with many ethical resources, are associated with military drones strikes against civilians, and his chapter offers ideas that challenge this practice.

Military drones use advanced technology. Drones are robots and the technology used by such robots both in warfare and in peaceful employment is evolving. Chapter 2 'The Ten Commandments of Working Robots in Organisations: From History to the Future of Robot Ethics, Legislation, and Management' by Issam Kouatli, Rayan Kouatly and Abir Zaarour explores a new generation of robots which can make decisions without human intervention; and discusses what the authors term 'robot ethics'.

In Chapter 3, 'Closing the Gap Between Promises and Outcomes: How Moral Frameworks Can Guide the Realisation of United Nations Deployment Objectives', Charuka Ekanayake explains that United Nations missions often require troops to employ force, whether it is to safeguard a mission and the humanitarian personnel, or to protect civilians, or to neutralise violent armed groups, or in pure self-defence. But that the use of force – and equally not using force – can readily frustrate the very objectives these troops are deployed to uphold, in turn creating gaps between the Promises they make and the Outcomes they actually secure. Charuka Ekanayake's paper tries to find answers to this dilemma from a moral perspective and considers how the peculiar nature of the morality of *resorting to force* by the United Nations influences its *use of force*.

Indisputably both the ethical employment of robots and the utilisation of moral frameworks, requires moral leadership. In Chapter 4, 'Visualizing Success: The Wisdom of John Wooden', Jim Wishloff writes that Alasdair MacIntyre urged that we learn from the accounts of exemplary lives. In his paper Jim Wishloff provides us with an examination of John Wooden's conception of leadership which bridges virtue theory and leadership.

Both the following two chapters are related to Jim Wishloff's chapter. Alasdair MacIntyre insisted that we need to know which story we are a part of. Cécile Rozuel in Chapter 5, 'Rushing Fools and Wise Women: Tales for Organisations Aiming to Improve Lives', introduces and discusses two tales. Cécile Rozuel uses these tales to highlight how lessons can be drawn from tales with practical implications for organisational life and, furthermore, for the implementation of meaningful change in relation to well-being in and outside of work.

In Chapter 6, 'Strong Identification, Weak Ideology, Organisational Culture or All: Unethical Pro-organisational Behaviour in India', Pratima Verma and Siddharth Mohapatra introduce research which presents a comprehensive explanation of unethical pro-organisational behaviour. Pratima Verma and Siddharth Mohapatra reveal in their study that strong ethical organisational culture may not restrain, but instead facilitate unethical pro-organisational behaviour. This is a view at odds with Wooden's conceptions of a leadership which bridges virtue theory and leadership.

Lastly, Chapter 7 in this issue is a response paper. In an earlier chapter in this journal Chris Provis discussed Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean and its counterpart in Confucianism. In their response chapter, 'Forsaking the Mean for the Extreme: A Response to Provis', Michael Schwartz and Debra R. Comer argue that whilst some scholars advocate Aristotle's Mean others advocate forsaking that Mean and pursuing the extreme.

All of the chapters in the issue have been peer-reviewed. The editors are most grateful to the contributors and as always to the reviewers who must remain nameless.

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CHAPTER 1

LEVINAS AND BUSINESS ETHICS IN THE 'WAR ON TERROR'

Peter McGhee

ABSTRACT

This Chapter applies the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas to business' role in the 'War on Terror'. Specifically, it uses Levinasian ethics to explain how organisations, often with an abundance of ethical resources, become associated with military drones strikes against civilians, and offers ideas that challenge this practice. The chapter comprises several sections beginning with a brief introduction to the 'War on Terror' and the use of military drones. A concise discussion about business ethics and just war theory follows after which, the chapter explains Levinas' ethics and his views on war. These ideas are applied to transform business ethical practice in this controversial area. The Chapter concludes with a summary of its main points.

Keywords: War on Terror; Military Drone Strikes; Just War; Emmanuel Levinas; Ethics; Alterity; Business

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, several thousand Google employees signed and published an open letter to their CEO urging the company not to work on a Pentagon 'Artificial Intelligence Engine' (Project Maven) that analyses video for drone strikes. The letter began:

War, Peace and Organizational Ethics
Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, Volume 23, 5–25

ISSN: 1529-2096/doi:10.1108/S1529-209620200000023002

> We believe that Google should not be in the business of war. Therefore we ask that Project Maven be cancelled, and that Google draft, publicize and enforce a clear policy stating that neither Google nor its contractors will even build warfare technology.

Google's management described the work as 'non-offensive'. The Pentagon, they stated, was using "open-source object recognition software available to any Google Cloud customer and the technology is used to flag images for human review" (Shane & Wakabayashi, 2018). However, Chappellet-Lanier (2018), quoting Lt. Col. Garry Floyd, the deputy chief of Project Maven, noted it is "an artificial intelligence and machine learning project that aims to help Air Force analysts make better use of full-motion video surveillance" and that it has "already been deployed to five or six combat locations". Interestingly, Google cancelled the contract at the beginning of 2019 to head off an employee rebellion (Harwell, 2018).

Imagine you lived where there is a supposed terrorist threat, that you were an unwilling part of the 'War on Terror'.[1] Day and night, you hear the constant buzzing overhead. You know that a machine is watching you; taking note of everything, you do. Your government promises the machine only targets 'bad people', but its missiles have come into your village, and sometimes they kill your family, friends, and neighbours. You wonder how many people have died in your area. According to Republican Senator Lindsay Graham, "We've killed 4,700. Sometimes you hit innocent people, and I hate that, but we're at war, and we've taken out some very senior members of Al-Qaeda" (Terkel, 2013). More recent analysis puts the death toll at between 8,459 – 12,105 people (Fielding-Smith & Purkiss, 2018).

While there is clear evidence that drone strikes kill civilians (Fielding-Smith & Purkiss, 2018; Howie & Hutchinson, 2012; Shah et al., 2012; Woods, 2015), countries either deny this, or use euphemisms for such unknown targets as "enemies killed in action" (Scahill, 2016, p. 18) or "military-aged males" (Byrne, 2018, p. 84). This is not surprising given the surveillance and intelligence limitations of drones. Analysts are often thousands of miles away, and do not have access to the local knowledge that ground troops have. Difficulties like the 'soda straw' effect (Howie & Hutchinson, 2012) means drone pilots cannot see the bigger picture as they zoom in on their targets. Consequently, they often fail to perceive neutrals entering the drone strike area at the last moment. Drone operators, Howie and Hutchinson claim, also can experience "data crush", which is the inability to evaluate accurately the large amounts of video data they receive leading to inaccurate targeting. If these were not enough to raise concerns, drone strikes often rely on phone intercepts. However, by switching sim cards, one can produce an effective decoy.

Apart from the emotional cost of losing love ones; in the countries targeted by drones, "Families are often large, and their wellbeing is intricately connected among many members. The death of one member can create long-lasting instability, particularly if a breadwinner is killed" (Serwer, 2012, p. 2). Even if no one dies, the property damage can also have lasting negative outcomes. As Serwer notes, "a house is often a family's greatest financial asset[...]Homes are often shared by multiple families, compounding the suffering and hardship caused when a

house is destroyed" (p. 2). In addition to the physical consequences, there are the psychological effects of living under constant surveillance, never knowing when death might come from the sky. A report by the *Centre for Civilians in Conflict* (Shah et al., 2012) noted "that where drones often buzz overhead 24 hours a day, people live in constant fear of being hit" (p. 24). The endless noise produces emotional trauma and symptoms of anxiety, which often manifest physically in the form of headaches, heart problems, and even suicidal tendencies. This behaviour, states Owen (2013), "Is symptomatic of anticipatory anxiety - a mental phenomenon that causes people to worry constantly about their immediate future, and is very common in conflict zones".

Arguably these adverse consequences produce more enemies, the contrary objective of any military strategy (Jaeger & Siddique, 2018). As mental health professionals note, "People who have experienced such things, they don't trust people; they have anger, a desire for revenge… So when you have these young boys and girls growing up with these impressions, it causes permanent scarring and damage" (Owen, 2013). A recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (2017) on African extremism supports this claim. It found that over 70% of 'extremists' in Africa stated that the arrest or killing by security forces of a family member or close friend motivated their choice to become part of a terrorist group. In other words, the 'War on Terror' is encouraging people to perpetuate the very terror it is trying to eliminate. As an illustration of this, after alleged American involvement in a Pakistani Military Drone strike in 2006 that killed 83 religious students, there was a suicide revenge bombing in Dargai that killed over 40 Pakistani soldiers and injured 20 others (Gall & Masoodnov, 2006).

Of course, there are arguments in support of drone strikes. For instance, Bradley Strawser (2012), a leading advocate, argues:

> The best empirical evidence suggests that drones are more precise, result in fewer unintended deaths of civilian bystanders, and better protect their operators from risk than other weapons, such as manned aircraft, carrying out similar missions. Other things being equal, then, drones should be used in place of other less accurate and riskier weapons. But they should be used only for morally justified missions, in pursuit of a just cause.

Indeed, when we judge military drones by the number of sorties and kills in pursuit of terrorists, a supposedly just cause, it is easy to argue this is a normal form of warfare, and that these people are targets, even if the drones were unavailable. However, as Byrne (2018) argues such thinking misses a key feature of these strikes, something that makes them different from other forms of weaponry: drone use distorts the line between terrorists and civilians. In a traditional war, civilians are collateral damage. In this modern 'War on Terror', this difference ceases to exist (Schwarz, 2016) since anyone in the target area is a potential militant or terrorist, especially if selection is via 'signature' whereby "individuals are targeted when their identities are unknown, but whose behaviour suggests that they are legitimate targets" (p. 69). To put this in real terms, of the number of drone kills reported by Fielding-Smith & Purkiss since 2004, approximately 769 – 1,725 were civilians, and of these 253 – 397 were children. Other analysts estimate

the civilian casualty rate to be as high as 25% (Asaro, 2012; Woods & Yusufzai, 2013). This is particularly disturbing given these civilian deaths occurred in countries with whom the United States and its allies are not legally 'at war'.

Eduardo Galeano (2013), the pre-eminent Uruguayan novelist once wrote, "In the Age of the Almighty Computer, drones are the perfect warriors. They kill without remorse, obey without kidding around, and they never reveal the names of their masters" (p. 311). Encountering this quote, reading the letter by Google's employees, and contemplating the impact of military drone strikes on civilians, led the author to examine the role and moral responsibility of business in this 'War on Terror' using the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. The next section sets the scene for this analysis by first providing a brief discussion about the business ethics of war.

2. THE BUSINESS ETHICS OF WAR

Historically, the political state was responsible for fighting a war, while accountability for waging a war fell on the state's armed forces (Alzola, 2011). Left unchallenged, these assumptions tended to exonerate business of all responsibility. As Byrne remarks (2007), businesses "are well aware of this normative agenda, but they see themselves as being outside its purview" (p. 202). Byrne claims that the authority of the nation state in this area makes it near impossible to "get a hearing for any claim that any business devoted to 'national defense' could possibly be involved in fundamentally (not just incidentally) unethical activity" (p. 202).

In recent times, several authors have challenged this view. For instance, Byrne (2010) writing from a consequentialist perspective, argued that a firm might be unethical if its actions were unjustifiably damaging either (a) always or (b) circumstantially. When applied to Google for example, the company may be unethical not because the product itself (recognition software) is harmful but because of how such software may be used by the military. It is true that responsibility directly lies with the Department of Defence who use the software, but if Google is aware of how this software is used, and continues to supply it anyway, Byrne claims they may be circumstantially responsible.

Starting with the notion of *jus bellum justum* ('just war theory'), Alzola (2011) reconsidered the ethical responsibilities of firms during wartime. Traditionally, *jus ad bellum* ('right to go to war') defines the legitimate purposes for which a country may engage in war. In contrast, *jus in bello* ('right conduct in war') regulates the conduct of parties in a war. For Alzola, there are at least two issues with the just war approach. First, the independent status of *jus ad bello* and *jus in bello*, as they currently function, seems misleading. For example, a country may fight a just war using unjust means, or alternatively, engage in an unjust war yet fight in a just manner. Second, it is difficult to evaluate to whom hostilities should be directed against during a supposedly just war. Traditionally, enemy combatants are targeted and civilians (i.e. 'the innocents') are spared, but this line becomes blurred when, for example, civilians work in factories that provide military supplies, or