Framers, founders, and reformers: three generations of proxy war research

Article

Accepted Version

Framers, founders, and reformers: Three generations of proxy war research

Author and affiliation

Vladimir Rauta

School of Politics, Economics, and International Relations, University of Reading, Reading, UK

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3870-8680

Correspondence details

Vladimir Rauta

University of Reading, School of Politics, Economics, and International Relations, Whiteknights, PO Box 218, Reading, United Kingdom, RG6 6AA.

v.rauta@reading.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of the proxy wars literature invites an examination of its advances and developments. This article's aims are three-fold. First, to assess proxy war literature with a view to understand how it has progressed knowledge. Second, to map the field's effort to cumulate knowledge. Third, to think creatively about the future directions of this research agenda as it addresses a problem no longer at the periphery of contemporary security debates. This article proposes a novel categorization of the evolution of our thinking about proxy wars across three "generations": founders, framers, and reformers. Following on from this, it

provides an assessment of the literature's assumptions in order to show what remains, or not, under-studied. In doing so, it makes a case for a historiography of the idea of "proxy war," and one for embedding strategy in analyses of wars by proxy.

KEYWORDS: proxy war; cumulation; strategy; history; security; external support

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Adam Humphreys and Luca Trenta for comments on earlier drafts, the two anonymous reviewers for their detailed and very constructive feedback, and the journal's editor, Hylke Dijkstra, for his support.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Vladimir Rauta is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom. He researches proxy wars and has published articles in *International Relations*, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, and the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. He is currently working on a book project analyzing the contemporary dynamics of proxy wars.

Proxy war research has matured over the last decade in recognition of the multiple problems proxy wars pose to the international system. To paraphrase Christopher Mitchell's remark about conflict research in the early 1990s, proxy wars have "arrived" at the centre of academic and political attention (1994). As I argue in this article, we are witnessing the "end of the beginning" of the study of proxy wars. In short, while the rapid expansion of the literature has covered the ground usually associated with the first stages of a new research agenda, the debate is now in a position to address more refined and complex puzzles. This presents a threefold opportunity. First, it is an invitation to assess proxy war literature with a view to understand how it has progressed knowledge. Second, it presents an opening to map the field's effort to cumulate knowledge and see what still remains under-researched. Third, it is a call to think creatively about the future directions of this research agenda. In addressing these considerations, this article presents the first attempt at taking stock of the proxy war debate in order to understand its past, present, and future. It does so in reference to two key questions.

First, how has proxy war literature evolved? The expansion of the literature parallels the transformation of contemporary civil wars into multifaceted proxy wars (Marshall, 2016). More specifically, the growing intellectual interest in proxy wars coincided with the transformation of the Arab Spring protests into fully-fledged civil wars, rapidly shaped by local, regional, and international dimensions. No wonder that "proxy war" has become synonymous with the dynamics of violence in Syria (Grant & Kaussler, 2020; Hinnebusch & Saouli, 2020; Dukhan 2019; Phillips & Valbjørn, 2018; Hughes, 2014), Libya (Stark, 2020; Harchaoui & Lazib, 2019), and Yemen (Junean 2016). At first glance, the factors accounting for its emergence parallel those accounting for the "growing business of civil war research" in which the internal dynamics of the discipline gave voice to the contemporary events (Armitage, 2009, p. 18). Yet, even when accounting for trends and fashions, a closer inspection reveals multiple barriers of entry into the debate, across fields and disciplines, each with conceptual, theoretical, and methodological preferences. As previously remarked, these include Cold War historiography, covert action and secrecy, and conflict and terrorism research (Rauta, 2018). Moreover, proxy war literature pushed through by ignoring some of this research, and by being ignored by others in return,[1] in such a way that it emerged and evolved in and from relative anarchy with multidisciplinarity disguised as interdisciplinarity (Barkawi, 2011, p. 707).

In this article, I first propose a novel categorization of the evolution of our thinking about proxy wars across three "generations": (1) founders, (2) framers, and (3) reformers. I argue that each generation produced innovative research and provided transformative contributions to the wider proxy war debate. Second, the article focuses on how proxy war literature has cumulated. The starting point is that it has become common to refer to proxy wars as "under-analyzed" (Mumford, 2013) or "under-conceptualized" (Tamm, 2014). On the one hand, this contrasts with the exceptional growth of the literature which has moved from big picture analyses (Groh, 2019; Borghard, 2014; Mumford, 2013; Hughes 2012), to in-depth case studies of particular proxy wars, from Cold War staples like Angola and Nicaragua (Hoekstra, 2018, 2019), to contemporary ones such as Afghanistan (Akbarzadeh & Ibrahimi, 2020), India-Pakistan (Biberman, 2019), and Iran's Middle East proxy adventurism (Ahmadian & Mohseni, 2019; Ostovar, 2018). On the other hand, it ignores the fact that scholars have come to agree on a set of core features for proxy wars: the role of the proxy as a third party fighting a war using support provided by a state or a non-state actor; the latter's provision of support as an indirect intervention; and an essentially relational interaction between parties (Groh, 2019, p. 29; Rauta, 2018, p. 457; Sozer, 2016, p. 643; Mumford, 2013, p. 11; Hughes, 2012, p. 11).

To assess the tension between framing the debate as "under-researched" and its actual advancements, I propose an assessment of the literature's assumptions. I combine two methodologies of evaluation of cumulation developed in security and strategic studies: a corrective assessment of the intellectual scaffolding of the literature's claims/counterclaims (Vennesson, 2017), and their reframing as premises for a reinvigoration of the field of inquiry (Duyvesteyn & Worrall, 2017). I point to two assumptions needing investigation: (1) the enhancement and expansion of the historical basis of proxy wars research, and (2) the development of theoretically rich accounts of the strategic interactions behind proxy relationships. I interrogate these assumptions at debate level to show how perceived differences are actually the result of their under-specification (resulting in their answering of the same questions or identifying the same gaps in our knowledge of proxy wars).

Taken together, the article's aims contribute to an assessment of the growth of the proxy war research enterprise, just as we start observing a rise in proxy wars empirically. Given that they offer "a superficially seductive policy option to any state that is (to quote Alexander Pope) '[willing] to wound, and yet afraid to strike'"

(Hughes, 2014, p. 523), it comes as no surprise that proxy war is now seen as “the most successful kind of political war being waged of our generation” (General Sir Richard Barrons as cited in Roberts, 2019, p. 11). As proxy wars move beyond being a buzzword or a shorthand for shadow wars and dirty foreign policies (Brown, 2016), a more robust future understanding of the phenomenon is warranted, and a useful starting point is understanding how we have been thinking about it. As such, the article’s contributions speak to a broad audience of academics, practitioners, and policymakers concerned with the promises and pitfalls of waging or countering wars by proxy in the ever expanding spectrum of contemporary war. By doing so, the article echoes recent cumulative efforts such as the *Proxy Wars Initiative*, aimed at convening high-level decision makers and influencers, the private sector, scholars, and practitioners to find lasting solutions to indirect conflict.[2]

For proxy wars scholars, an evaluation of the state of the debate will set a much needed benchmark that helps understand where we are and where we are going by looking at what has been done. For policymakers, the article serves to bridge the gap between the growing literature and the policy debate. While this article is not concerned with informing pro-con analyses on the viability of the proxy policy option and the suitability of calls to "arm rebels," it contextualizes the rise of contemporary proxy wars in decades of research findings about the causes and consequences of supporting proxies. The fact that this article articulates a generational assessment of how we have been explaining proxy wars is hugely relevant today as recent decisions to support (or not) rebels have been taken through a distinctive lesson learning lens (Rhodes, 2018, pp. 197-198). Finally, the article speaks to a more general, security-focused audience because it links the presence and appeal of proxy wars with a demand to engage with their intricacies in a comprehensive fashion, from their inclusion in the curricula of professional military education (Jones, 2018) to understanding their contribution to determining “a realistic conception of the sorts of wars” countries are likely to fight in the twenty-first century (Strachan, 2020). To this end, the article discusses the two problems of evolution and cumulation in turn, and concludes with an overview of argument’s implications. Specifically, the article attempts to look beyond the proxy wars literature into the broader international security debate by underlining the research implications of the many links between proxy wars and other forms of conflict, as well as a wide range of security challenges.

Three generations of proxy war literature

The story of the emergence of proxy wars literature weaves trends, tropes, and tensions into a complex debate that has long been denied a narrative in the study of international security, strategic studies, and conflict research. Trends refer to the coming into fashion of the study of proxy wars just as we observed their rise empirically. Tropes speak to the conceptual and definitional morass that engulfs emerging research areas. Finally, tensions translate field fragmentation and its effects, be it a question of plurality of disciplines, paradigms, theories, or methods.

The story of the evolution of proxy war literature can be told by conceptualizing it into three "generations": founders, framers, and reformers (see table 1.1). These generations take into account research orientation (gaps v puzzles), the stability of the organizing concept (autonomous v contested), and thematic outlook (general v specific). This generational assessment breaks down the literature productively with an emphasis on each generation's knowledge advancements, as opposed to its shortcomings. More importantly, the founder-framers-reformers framework maps the evolution of the literature in reference to the socio-political context against which its object of study rose. As Crenshaw (2019, p. 707) recently remarked about the evolution of terrorism scholarship, it is important to recognize the historical context in which questions arise.

Table 1.1 Generations of Proxy War Research

Generations	**Research Orientation**		**Organizing Concept**		**Thematic Outlook**	
	Gap	Puzzle	Autonomous	Contested	General	Specific
Founders	√			√		√
Framers	√			√	√	
Reformers		√	√		√	√

To this end, the three generations aptly describe the back and forth of the relatively young proxy war literature. The founders refers to a generation of scholarship emerging during the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. By talking about this research, I identify the pioneering work on proxy wars as a point of reference to theoretical and conceptual accounts emerging in the distinct socio-political context of the Cold War and its aftermath, to which research today owes, rather paradoxically, its source of internal disagreements, but also a debt of intellectual gratitude. The framers

contributed to the scholarship emerging in the aftermath of 9/11 and around the time of the Arab Spring. Not only did they register the absence of a debate on proxy wars, but they set out the trajectory for their future study in a programmatic shift that drew on creativity, intuition, and intellectual vigor. Reformers captured the rise of proxy wars as the Syrian, Yemeni, and Libyan civil wars collapsed under the external pressures of proxy dynamics. The Russian annexation of Crimea, the ensuing proxy war in the South-East of Ukraine, and the transformation of the so-called Obama Doctrine into a set of strategic responses through proxies added empirical weight (Farrow, 2018). These impressed a demand for taking this form of conflict seriously and providing a set of immediate answers. In taking up this task, reformers refined the debate and redrew existing benchmarks in a thoroughly integrative way: Broad causal accounts of interest-risk-deniability became embedded in relational arguments; concepts were replaced by conceptual typologies; and case study analyses were mirrored by efforts to see big picture trends in proxy wars. Each generation's contributions are discussed next with a view to see how the debate has advanced.

Founders

Of the many dangerous myths accompanying proxy wars (Beehner, 2015), none have been more pervasive than the links between the bipolarity of the Cold War and the balancing role of proxy wars: The term itself now "conjures images of the Cold War" (Beehner, 2015); memoirs by Cold War warriors describe proxy wars as struggles for political influence in the Third World as "an area where direct military confrontation – and the associated risk of global conflagration – could be avoided" (Gates, 1995, p. 533); finally, quantitative data on armed conflict has come to appreciate the Cold War as a type of global proxy war resulting "in wars on a scale that has not been seen since" (Melander et al., 2016, p. 734).

I group the proxy war scholarship produced during the Cold War and its immediate aftermath under the rubric of "founders" and assign to it the rather heavy status of "canon." I argue that the founders' scholarship should act as a canon "whose quality and relevance were thought to be timeless and universally relevant" (Booth, 2019, p. 361), while being open to change and inviting its critical reading "as part of a conversation" (2019, p. 362). More specifically, the founders' canon status is introduced to show that the current debate has not emerged out of a vacuum and that its intellectual

roots are varied and valuable. To this end, this is a macro-category that aggregates multiple organizing concepts, a focus on gaps in the knowledge on the Cold War, and a specific theme: its hot wars. When referring to this scholarship, I include a wide set of literatures written about the Cold War competition and intervention, both in general and with a regional focus. To this end, founders make up a vast literature which took on the challenge of understanding superpower competition as "proxy wars," "third world conflicts," or "low-intensity conflicts" (Feste, 1992; Ayoob, 1991; David 1991).

These accounts of proxy dynamics contributed significantly to the re-discovery of the topic two decades later, with most of the debate using as a starting point Deutsch's (1964) now famous definition of proxy wars as

> an international conflict between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country; disguised as conflict over an internal issue of that country; and using some or all of that country's manpower, resources, and territory as means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies. (p. 102)

Dunér's (1981) significant work drew on this and provided the definitional structure for proxy wars as an indirect military intervention in which an external power tried to influence the outcome of a civil war. This then allowed the founders to expand analyses of Cold War proxy wars to include a range of actors, breaking away from the supposed state-centrism behind proxy wars. For example, McCormick (1984) proposed a repertoire of proxies including terrorist organizations and guerrillas. This explains some attempts made by the founders to distinguish between "proxy as a classification of interstate relationships" and proxy wars as modes of strategic maneuvers involving state and non-state actors (Lamb, 1982, p. 169).

Perhaps the most important contribution of the founders was their discussion of causal concerns. Here, the literature emphasized interest, power, and control, while proposing complex relationships of cooperation or collusion (Bar-Siman Tov, 1984; Towle, 1981; Gross Stein, 1980; Bissell, 1978). Dunér (1981) explains proxy wars as manifestations of interest and as relationships based on the exercise of power, where the level of coercion determines the degree to which third parties are allied partners or proxies. Next to this, Bar-Siman-Tov (1984) introduced risk acceptance/aversion, arguing that "a war by proxy is by definition one in which the proxy undertakes the heavier risk" (p. 271). What adds weight to the founders' contributions is that these

causal accounts are carefully traced across a wide set of strategic contexts, all acknowledging the strategic interaction of several actors: the patron, the proxy, the target, and also those intermediary states managing the delivery of support to the proxy.

Taken together, the founders' pioneering work provides a strong theoretical legacy which most of the current literature embraced. Moreover, the founders' relevance is enhanced by the richness gained from in depth analyses of numerous proxy wars such as Angola, Laos, and Nicaragua, which are still used today as key case studies used to compare today's proxy wars in the Middle East and Central or the Horn of Africa. There is no doubt that the scholarship of the founders speaks to Cold War anxieties. This might explain, even if only partly, why proxy wars have been so slow at overcoming reputational losses, with today's Syrian and Yemeni civil wars being framed pejoratively as proxy wars. Yet, as will be discussed in the next section, the founders have undeniably contributed to the more recent the rediscovery of the phenomenon, pushing and pulling the development of today's research on proxy wars in a way only a canon does: consensus and contestation, rejection and reification, loss and discovery of knowledge.

Framers

A decade into the post-9/11 security environment, concerns over proxy wars had been muted in international security and strategic studies. Mumford (2013) tapped into this absence noting the paradox of being historically ubiquitous, yet "chronically under-analysed" (p. 1). So did Hughes (2012, pp. 2-5) who drew a line connecting Elizabeth I and her support of Dutch rebels against the Spanish rule to the more recent implications of Pakistan's support of Afghan rebels to American counterinsurgency. Innes (2012) added an astute observation to the mix, namely that discussions of proxy war had traditionally been "bogged down in conspiracy theories and scandals of one kind or another, a sorry state that had muddied already murky waters" (p. xix). Against this background, the debate embarked on a corrective of this state of affairs and did so focused on knowledge gaps, by employing a contested concept with a heavy history, and with a thematic outlook focused on big questions: what, why, and how proxy wars were fought.

The framers employed "proxy" as a determinant of indirect interventionist behavior in a broad sense. At maximum, framers circumscribed the scope of sponsorship of armed non-state actors just as this became more visible. Overlapping war

and warfare as well as the dynamics of terrorist and insurgent violence, the adjective "proxy" came to delineate a category of thought complicated “by the myriad of forms that proxy intervention can take” (Loveman, 2002, p. 31). As discussion of definitions already exist in in the literature (Rauta, 2018), two observations are relevant here because they link to the search for knowledge gaps and the types of questions the framers asked. First, what might be regarded as conceptual disarray[3] is the by-product of the framers rediscovering a concept with slightly compromised analytical capital–due to the pioneering, yet hugely diverse Cold War literatures of the founders. As a consequence, "proxy war" was obscured “by the image of major war and the ‘horizontal’ world of sovereign states it presuppose[d]” (Barkawi, 2016, p. 206). Second, the porous borders of meaning of "proxy war" did bring the advantage of allowing for questions to be asked with diverse and creative input and for answers to be presented to a wide range of audiences.

In asking questions about why and how proxy wars were being fought, the framers drew attention to the topic by establishing a vantage point from which to analyze a phenomenon policy-makers saw both as a growing problem and an imperfect solution. Intuition, imagination, speculation, anecdote, and analogy combined with the founders’ causal language–interest, power, benefit and cost trade-offs–in a scholarship that emphasized the process of provision of support, much like Byman et al. (2001) had earlier observed. Causal accounts emphasized strategic rationales (Hughes, 2012, p. 12) and the iterative processes of providing and monitoring of support (Borghard, 2014), while the design of theoretical frameworks was decidedly enthusiastic: “[A]ny theoretical explanation of the phenomenon must reflect such intricacies by broadening the horizons of our understanding and acknowledging the relevance of certain tenets from alternative theoretical schools” (Mumford, 2013, p. 31).

Rich accounts of forgotten Cold War proxy wars provided an intellectual back and forth to the policy debate on the proxy dilemmas facing the Obama administration in Syria or Libya. In trying to strike a balance between the weight of history and the pull of current events, the framers registered a clear security concern deserving understanding and explanation. In a context dominated by the changing character of war, framers attempted an anticipatory, programmatic effort by linking proxy wars to the future of war, namely to cyber and hybrid war. Yet, in so doing, the framers overlooked some of the intricacies of the causal questions they were asking. In focusing on deniability and avoidance of direct intervention, early proxy war scholarship

confused rationales and advantages of waging proxy wars, a matter of fact that can be traced beyond the immediate political context in which it emerged and the usual anarchy characterizing research areas at their infancy. Rather, it was a manifestation of the broader intellectual foundations of the field, as exposed by the scholarship of the founders with its strengths and limitation. However, the framers were followed by a third generation, reformers, whose work successfully capitalized on the rediscovery of the analytical appeal of studying "proxy wars," in an international security context heavily shaped by indirect interventions.

Reformers

Where the framers found a solid background in the scholarship of the founders, the reformers looked for potential. As the most recent generation of scholarship, reformers have refined conceptual, theoretical, and empirical models of proxy wars. They have confidently integrated the framers' progress with the founders' intellectual insights. The reformers' scholarship has expanded exponentially across special issues, think tank reports (Rondeaux & Sterman, 2019), monographs (Groh, 2019; Jones, 2017), and roundtable discussions (Wirtz et al., 2020). More importantly, it has linked proxy wars to a wide range of security issues, and provided more robust discussion of some core problems: provision of support and control of proxies (Moghadam & Wyss, 2020; Rauta, 2020), and moral/ethical dilemmas of supporting proxies (Pfaff, 2017; Pattison, 2018). No wonder that this expansion had conflict research ask the question of "how might we incorporate the idea of proxy war in the study of civil war to broaden the general understanding of how civil wars occur and end?" (de Soysa, 2017).

Conceptually, the reformers found themselves at war with an adjective, given the rise of external support literature and its rejection of the notion of "proxy war." The challenge was for "all parties involved will need to get real about what a proxy war is – and what it isn't" (Beehner, 2015). With the notion gaining significant policy traction, reformers saw beyond concepts as nominal problems. The debate evaluated the theoretical implications of labelling parties in proxy wars (Rauta, 2018), and proceeded to differentiate between proxies, auxiliaries, and surrogates (Scheipers, 2017). This typological effort provided greater coherence to the debate since explicit conceptualization is not merely a means of classification but functioned as a way of fostering dialogue between the many corners from which proxy wars were studied. The

attainment of some form of conceptual autonomy provided theoretical benefits since a specification of what proxy wars were (and what they were not), eliminated some contradictions and presuppositions.

Among the most significant turns was the development of more complex explanations. Reformers saw relevance in the notion of "strategy," specifically, its ability to translate actor behavior in a dynamic way. The strategic lens does not assume behavior and choice *ex ante*, but allows for strategic intent to be constructed through interactions: with ones' goals and means, with ones' targets, with the targets' goals and means, as well as with the context and operational environment. As employed by reformers, strategy emphasized relations between actors, and allowed the correlation between one's alternatives and choices with those of other actors. Strategic interaction explanations brought in a focus on goals, their diversity, as well as their divergence. Reformers showed how focusing on the sponsor's initial decision to provide support does not remove proxy agency, with proxies themselves seeking to shape this from before the start of the war. Evidence of this was provided by different geo-strategic contexts, but the most glaring example, came from the Yemeni Houthi rebels, often portrayed as proxies (Ghaffari, 2019). As their fighting ebbed and flowed, partly to the tune of Iranian sponsorship, it was remarkable to see the rebels reward their nominal backer, Hezbollah, raising nearly $300,000 for the Lebanese militants (Porter, 2019).

Moreover, reformers also showed how these goals changed throughout the war, while tracing the degree to which proxies are active pursuers of external support employing a range of tools from diplomacy to the strategic signaling of their ability/willingness to wage war on behalf of other states. Beehner (2015) rightly remarked that proxies "adjust their messages to align with regional heavyweights, creating a kind of bidding war among rebel factions." And this could not be more evident than in the context of the Syrian civil war. As the Syrian opposition morphed into a rebellion, one of the earliest outlets, the Syrian National Council, coordinated politically and diplomatically the efforts of differing dissident factions seeking the overthrow of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in a concerted effort to assume the mantle of the "right" rebel group to receive support. These advancements in proxy war research were testimony to the fact that "both the nature of the relationship between sponsors and proxies, as well as the causes and consequences of the use of surrogates, have evolved since the Cold War" (Moghadam & Wyss, 2018, 2020).

The scholarship of the framers rediscovered proxy wars as having been around since time immemorial and advanced its study by registering its absence in the debate at the time. The third generation, reformers, registered the growing urgency to know more about proxy wars in light of their current ubiquity. As Marshall (2016) pointed out, proxy wars extended to bigger question on "state-building, capacity building, counterinsurgency theory, and development assistance, as well as the relationship between the study of insurgent/irregular actors and wider international relations theory" (p. 184). The three generations of proxy war research show how its scholarship has moved forward rather cumulatively. In as much as it has built and updated previous findings and frameworks, one aspect still puzzles: its insistence that it remains understudied. In the second section, I expand on this issue by making the case for re-evaluating two key assumptions in proxy war research.

Why do we say we know so little about proxy wars, when we know so much?

This section complements the previously discussed generational assessment of proxy war research by providing an assessment of the literature's assumptions as an answer to this question on cumulative growth. The relevance of this should not be understated for, as McIntosh (2015) argued, gaps in our understanding "may arise from epistemological assumptions that inform our work – assumptions that can be interrogated, questioned, and modified" (p. 486). Specifically, I point to two assumptions needing investigation which I discuss in turn: (1) the enhancement and expansion of the historical basis of proxy wars research, and (2) the further development of theoretically rich accounts of the strategic interactions behind proxy relationships. In short, I discuss the role of both history and strategy for the future development of proxy war research: A focus on history follows the generational reconstruction of the debate, and that on strategy speaks to the already-mentioned turn towards presenting strategically informed analyses of war by proxy.

History and proxy war research

In a recent article on statecraft and the uses of history, Brands and Inboden (2018) remarked that history "is a vital safeguard against intellectual laziness and error" (p. 935). As mentioned previously, proxy wars are seen to invite a narrow reading of

history which locates them at the centre of the Cold War superpower competition next to arms races and nuclear war. This assumption has encouraged arguments which reduced the domain of proxy wars to the Cold War by ignoring and dismissing historical evidence, creating myths, and entrenching poor analogical thinking. By including the founders as generation of proxy war scholarship in the overall thinking about the topic, the article partly addressed this issue. In addition, I argue here that the future progress of proxy war research must overcome what has essentially been a narrowing of the historical basis in proxy wars research. To do so, I follow Duyvesteyn and Worrall's (2017) call for a *longue durée* perspective in strategic studies.[4] Specifically, they point to the need for a long-term perspective including "pre-nineteenth-century global history, enabling longer-term patterns to come to light in assisting with the study of today's challenges" (p. 351). This means that the study of proxy wars must be placed on a longer timeframe to break the links between proxy wars and the Cold War.

In short, future research should consider a historiography of the idea of "proxy war" the likes of which Heuser (2010) provided for "small war," or Scheipers (2015) for the notion of "unlawful combatant" and "auxiliaries." A historiography has the capacity to locate proxy wars as a specific tool of statecraft in a more analytically productive way. It is a step toward a much needed sociology of knowledge of proxy wars. In fact, a *longue durée* perspective invites a re-think beyond the confines of the Cold War to include the external interventions in the Russian civil war and those surrounding the fall of the Ottoman Empire to which recent literature has pointed (Oxnevad, 2020; Marshall, 2016). Yet, tracing proxy wars in history is not enough. We should not merely identify proxy wars as shaping a number of conflicts, such as the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), Louis XIV's North American expansion, or France's covert involvement in the American War of Independence (1775–1783). This would only add islands of history next to our islands of theory.

Rather, we should search for patterns as well as their absence. Patterns show, for example, the trans-historical character of considerations and constraints over decisions to go wage war by proxy. United States President Dwight Eisenhower is often quoted describing proxy wars as "the cheapest insurance in the world" (as cited in Mumford, 2013, p. 34). During the Thirty Years' War, Cardinal Richelieu fought the Habsburgs by proxy during the early 1630s precisely because financial obstacles delayed France's

entry into the European war. Thus, Richelieu "waged war via a complex constellation of proxies, while his most able diplomats were dispatched to foment internal divisions within both Spain and the Holy Roman Empire" (Rehman, 2019). Equally, patterns provide a window into the complexity of proxy wars, one often reduced to an interaction between a sponsor, proxy, and target. Again, the Thirty Years' War provides a unique picture in which "nearly all the continental powers were drawn into the struggle, sometimes reluctantly and sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes for religious reasons and sometimes for geopolitical motives, sometimes in bids for aggrandizements and sometimes to prevent a feared rival from profiting" (Brands & Edel, 2019, p. 30). The same complexity engulfed the proxy wars of the 1980s and the 1990s, especially in Central and the Horn of Africa, while today's Middle Eastern civil wars have been qualified as the region's own Thirty Years' War (Milton et al., 2018).

Conversely, a historiography of proxy wars helps locate exception and contingency. The fall of the Ottoman Empire is uniquely relevant here as its last days saw a campaign to save the empire through proxies and a parallel one of destroying it through proxy wars: While Sultan Abdul Hamid II's ultimate goal was to build up proxies to save the caliphate (Cagaptay, 2014), the Ottoman Empire dissolved as a result of the British, French, and Russian direct and proxy interventions in its rebellious frontier in the Balkans and the Middle East (Oxnevad, 2020). This points to the singularity and context-dependency of the policies of wars by proxy no matter how much we might try to reduce them to the logic of one enemy's enemy is one's friend. It also highlights the analytical advantage of a historiography of the idea of "proxy war": The balance between context-dependent and universal claims, or in other words, a recognition of the potential of "both historical context considered broadly and particular points in time" (Gray, 2018, p. 108).

This is perhaps even more obvious if we consider Cold War proxy wars themselves in detail. What is often disregarded as a mechanical infusion of aid to third parties relevant to onset or termination of war (Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010), is rarely thought of as a complex policy, with intricate intellectual foundations, shifts, successes, and failures. In the Cold War context, proxy wars as an idea started out as an outgrowth of the conservative American political thinking of the 1950s (Scott, 1996), itself a legacy of the partisan proxy wars waged during World War II. Not only did Lippmann introduce Americans to the reality of the Cold War, but his writings prefigured the United States entrapment in the subsiding and supporting of a network of satellites and

clients (Burleigh, 2014, pp. 3-4). George Kennan's containment also favored support for support for guerrilla and underground movements in Soviet state clients (Burleigh, 2015, p. 54; Andrew, 1996, p. 173), and, thereafter, each presidential administration "personalized" proxy war policy either by fully embracing it, or disregarding it entirely.

As such, by the time proxy wars became the backbone of the Reagan doctrine (Scott, 1996, pp. 14-15), Taylor (1974) had spoken about economic wars by proxy, and Rostow had linked them to nuclear weapons and arms control (Johnson, 1983). Throughout the Cold War their very logic and appeal had changed against a wider background of evolving ideas and strategies in both Moscow and Washington (Halliday, 1990). The foregrounding of the Cold War as a benchmark, therefore marginalized the long traditions of proxy wars as statecraft. It created a misplaced locus of origin for proxy wars inhibiting what should have been their periodization on a wider timeframe. A reappraisal proxy war against a wider historical background has the potential to minimize myth-making, errors in analogy, and provide insights serving as more than sources of data. Moving forward, correcting this assumption yields the benefits of seeing proxy wars as a foreign policy tool, applied in diverse contexts exerting different pressures, in the attainment of a range of strategic goals, carefully and iteratively negotiated between sets of actors.

Strategy and proxy war research

Locating the future of proxy war research through the equally contested notion of "strategy" might seem at first glance futile. Strachan (2005, p. 34) famously decried the loss of meaning of "strategy" and its ever growing banal use. Yet, the basic intellectual structure of strategy–ends, ways, means, and assumptions (Gray, 2018, p. 5)–serves because "strategy is ultimately a question of choice" (Payne, 2018, p. 73), and proxy wars are a set of choices: over whom, by whom, against whom, to what end, to what advantage to wage indirect war. As discussed above strategy has already been placed at the centre of emerging theoretical accounts of proxy dynamics (Hughes, 2012). Strategy and strategic interaction contribute to the elaboration of rich, detailed, and specified causal stories. In doing so, it helps correct the second assumption concerning the development of theoretically rich accounts of the strategic interactions behind proxy relationships.

The analytical utility of the concept of "proxy war" rests on its unique ability to capture the granularity of the decision-making processes “in which military power and other coercive instruments may be used to achieve political ends in the course of a dynamic interaction of (at least) two competing wills” (Duyvesteyn & Worrall, 2017, p. 347). In presenting an alternative to direct war, proxy wars answer *the* essential Clausewitzian problem: “[H]ow to make force a rational instrument of policy rather than mindless murder? How to integrate politics and war?” (Betts, 1997, p. 8). Strategic interaction is a productive framework allowing policy and scholarly debate to move forward by shifting the focus on strategic bargaining between actors. Through this, we can then appreciate the extent to which proxies are invested in warfighting, how other states might respond to proxy strategic environment, and how to balance escalation with inaction or retreat.

Strategic interaction permits the specification of some yet to be explored dynamics in proxy war. On the one hand, we are yet to fully account for why states or non-state actors wage war through proxies. Recent progress by reformers has refined the framers’ initial accounts but we have not specified logics of violence in proxy wars accounting for their variation. For example, Eritrea’s support of the Somali Islamic Courts in the early 2000s cannot be explained using the same considerations that informed the Ethiopian government’s on and off support of the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Even if following the same proxy logic, Eritrea’s proxy war was aimed at weakening its regional rival, and Ethiopia’s was more complex: it did so not just to fight the Sudanese Army as a retaliatory measure for Sudan’s support of some Ethiopian rebels, but also requested that SPLA open new warfronts against the Gaajak Nuer militias, the Anuak Gambella People’s Liberation Front, and the Oromo Liberation Front (Doop, 2013). Equally important, we have not taken into account the diversity and overlap in the strategic goals underpinning wars by proxy. For example, in March 2019, Rwanda and Uganda traded accusation of supporting each other’s rebels. Rwandan foreign minister, Richard Sezibera, blamed Uganda of supporting the Rwanda National Congress (RNC) and Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) (Uwiringiyimana, 2019). While part of an on-going economic stand-off between the two (Beloff, 2019), the countries’ use of proxies against one another is tied to a long history of regional status competition (Tamm, 2019).

Strategy and strategic interaction provide a theoretical framework to assess complexity in a way that provides meaning to the sets of political violence meeting on

the battlespace: of the delegating state or non-state actor, of the proxy, of the intermediary facilitating the provision of support between sponsor and proxy, as well as of the target and their sponsors, if any (Rauta, 2020). This is perhaps even more relevant given that when we identify a proxy war we often identify a complex of inter-locked proxy wars. The civil war in Angola, for example, was a complex cycle of action, reaction, and inaction through direct and indirect interventions involving Zaire (DR Congo), Cuba, China, South Africa, Namibian, and Zimbabwean rebels and only after the superpowers (Scott, 1996; Hoekstra 2018). Furthermore, the Angolan experience also shows how the foreign policy option of waging a proxy war sits neatly into a wider set of economics and diplomatic policies, concurring to wider political goals. It gives a powerful insight into how external states negotiate the provision of support with parties and how this is decidedly not a one-time grant of authority of war, but bargained endlessly, often being rescinded and reinstated much like the Soviets did for the Communist-inclined People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), or the Americans with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). A search for puzzles on past, present, and future proxy wars must, therefore, require strategic articulation in its effort to build a foundation and practice of knowledge capable of understanding and explaining a phenomenon that is not going away too soon.

Conclusion

The article took stock of the proxy wars debate at a crucial point in time, in which proxy dynamics shape neuralgic points of violence from Syria to Central Africa. The late Colin Gray (2005) cautioned that there is a “perennial temptation to misread recent and contemporary trends in warfare as signals of some momentous, radical shift” (p. 15). The story of proxy war has never been about shifts, rather about constancy. The article serves to anchor a vantage point from which to see how much we know, how productive research has been, and where it might be going. Conceptualizing the growth of our knowledge on proxy wars as "generations" served three goals: First, to give voice to productivity and not disagreement; second, to place theoretical development in distinct intellectual traditions; and third, to coordinate scholarly dialogue in a decidedly reflective manner. This generational assessment shows the back and forth of growing

and learning across "ages" of study of proxy wars, and invite future progress with confidence and creativity.

This article traces a debate that is no longer peripheral to international security. Out of the list of *10 Conflicts to Watch in 2020* presented annually by the International Crisis Group (Malley, 2019), seven conflicts are shaped by proxy wars in one way or another: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iran-Israel, Libya, Kashmir, Ukraine, and Yemen. If Libya raises the “spectre of an escalating proxy battle on the Mediterranean” (Malley, 2019), the renewed prospect of ethnic strife in Ethiopia comes only a year after the momentous awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to its Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed Ali. The award was in recognition of Ahmed’s efforts to normalize its relationship with neighboring Eritrea, ending a decades-long cycle of proxy wars. That Ethiopia faces the prospects of proxy wars once more is testimony to the enduring appeal of wars on the cheap, the frailty of agreements designed to end them, and to the challenge they post to the international system.

This review of the proxy war debate has, therefore, three implications for the contemporary security debate. Ucko and Marks (2018) argued in these pages that since 9/11 the West has been conceptually “under-equipped to grasp, let alone counter, violent political challenges” (p. 208). A focus on proxy wars comes some way to manage, not necessarily rectify, some of this turmoil. Terminology aside, what proxy wars capture is the increased reliance on alternative modes of coping with violent security challenges. Evidence for this is not just the ever-expanding list of conflicts shaped by proxy interventions, but the range of security issues delegated to proxies or those intersecting with proxy dynamics (Marshall, 2016). Among the many issues, the fight against the Islamic State is a case in point: Following an established strategic logic of working with local forces developed in Afghanistan and later Iraq, Operation Inherent Resolve has combined air power with support to local proxies, chiefly of which the Syrian Democratic Forces, as a counter-force to the Islamic State and its allies.

Second, proxy wars present a useful window into how we think about contemporary warfare. Not only to they change how we might think about conflict trends or shape of great power competition (Fazal & Poast, 2019), but their utility is to discourage attempts at requalifying the contemporary war/warfare spectrum as entirely "delegated" (Waldman, 2018), or to suggest models that aggregate its complexity under new labels (see for example "remote warfare" or "surrogate warfare"). To this end, proxy war scholarship has sought to explain the extent to which indirect war runs across

the strategic terrain of other forms of conflict. In doing so, it traced its links to hybrid (Rauta, 2019) and cyber warfare (Borghard & Lonergan 2016; Maurer, 2016), renewed great power competition (Lee, 2019), and, finally, new counterinsurgency paradigms the likes of the "by-with-through" model (Ayton, 2020; Votel & Keravouri, 2018).

Finally, proxy wars invite a reckoning with their policy utility. Groh (2019) argued recently that they are the least bad option. However, their transformative effects and consequences on conflict dynamics more broadly–conflict elongation and termination, civilian abuse, victimization, fatalities–demand a careful calibration of short and long term gains, as well as costs and benefits. Frequent calls for arming rebels, indecisive action over supporting or not rebels, and the willingness of regional and local actors to step in where great powers do not, add weight to the need to understand and explain proxy wars by locating them in the complexity of policy decision making processes and of international security debates. These challenges present, however, further research opportunities which taken together form a robust research agenda into a security problem that will define contemporary conflict for decades to come.

Notes

1. The greatest gulf exists between proxy war literature and conflict research studying external support to rebels in civil war. Not only has the latter minimally interacted with the former, but it has unjustifiably invalidated the analytical utility of the notion itself as a relic of the Cold War. In effect, the two have been speaking past each other, with their respective bibliographies being almost entirely different (Berman & Lake, 2019; San-Akca 2016; Salehyan et al., 2011; Salehyan, 2010; Byman et al., 2001).
2. Available at: https://www.pwinitiative.org/
3. For example, where Borghard (2014) uses "proxy alliances," Cragin proposes "semi-proxy wars" (2015).
4. A similar point is advanced by Marshall (2016) for the study of proxy wars.

Reference list

Ahmadian, H. & Mohseni, P. (2019). Iran's Syria strategy: the Evolution of Deterrence. *International Affairs*, 95(2), 341–364. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy271

Akbarzadeh, S. & Ibrahimi, N. (2020). The Taliban: a new proxy for Iran in Afghanistan?. *Third World Quarterly*, 41(5), 764-782. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1702460

Andrew, C. (1996) *For the President's Eyes Only. Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*. Harper Collins Publishers.

Armitage, D. (2009). Civil War and Revolution. *Agora* 44(2), 18-22.

Ayoob, M. (1991). The Security Problematic of the Third World. *World Politics*, 43(2), 257-283. https://doi.org/10.2307/2010473

Ayton, M, (2020, March 23). Amid US uncertainty in Syria, Kurdish YPG eyes bolstering ties with Russia. *Atlantic Council*. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/amid-us-uncertainty-in-syria-kurdish-ypg-eyes-bolstering-ties-with-russia/

Bar-Siman Tov, Y. (1984). The Strategy of War by Proxy. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 19, 263-273. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F001083678401900405

Barkawi, T. (2011). From War to Security: Security Studies, the Wider Agenda and the Fate of the Study of War. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *39*(3), 701–716. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0305829811400656

Barkawi, T. (2016). Decolonising War. *European Journal of International Security*, *1*(2), 199-214. https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2016.7

Beehner, L. (2014, November 12). How Proxy Wars Work, *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-11-12/how-proxy-wars-work

Beloff, J. (2019, March 23). The Roots of the Mounting Crisis between Rwanda's Kagame and Uganda's Museveni. *Quartz* . https://qz.com/africa/1579313/the-mounting-crisis-between-rwandas-kagame-and-ugandas-museveni/

Berman, E. & Lake, D. A. (2019). *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*. Cornell University Press.

Betts, R. K. (1997). Should Strategic Studies Survive?. *World Politics*, *50*(1), 7-33. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100014702

Biberman, Y. (2019). *Gambling with Violence. State Outsourcing of War in Pakistan and India*. Oxford University Press.

Bissell, R. E. (1978). Soviet Use of Proxies in the Third World: The Case of Yemen. *Soviet Studies*, 30(1), 87-106. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668137808411170

Booth, K. (2019). International Relations: The Story So Far. *International Relations*, *33*(2), 358–390. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0047117819851261

Borghard, E. D. (2014). *Friends with Benefits? Power and Influence in Proxy Warfare*, [Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University]. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8Q81B7Z

Borghard, E. D. & Lonergan, S. W. (2016). Can States Calculate the Risks of Using Cyber Proxies. *Orbis*, 60(3), 395-416. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2016.05.009

Brands, H. & Inboden, W. (2018). Wisdom without Tears: Statecraft and the Uses of History. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41(7), 916-946. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2018.1428797

Brands, H. & Edel, C. (2019) *The Lessons of Tragedy. Statecraft and World Order*. Yale University Press.

Brown, S. (2016). Purposes and Pitfalls of War by Proxy: A Systemic Analysis. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(3), 243–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1134047

Burleigh, M. (2014). *Small Wars, Faraway Places. The Genesis of the Modern World: 1945-65*. Pan Books.

Byman, D., et al. (2001). *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements.* RAND.

Cagaptay, S. (2014, September 1). The New Davutoglu. The Next Prime Minister's Game Plan. *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2014-09-01/new-davutoglu

Cragin, R. K. (2015). Semi-Proxy Wars and U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 38(5), 311-327. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1018024

Crenshaw, M. (2019). Constructing the Field of Terrorism. In E. Chenoweth, R. English, A. Gofas, & S. N. Kalyvas (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism* (pp. 705-724). Oxford University Press.

David, S. R. (1991). *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

de Soysa, I. (2017). Proxy Wars: Implications of Great-Power Rivalry for the Onset and Duration of Civil War. In W. R. Thompson (Ed.) *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics***.** Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.526.

Deutsch, K. W. (1964). External Involvement in Internal War. In H. Eckstein (Ed.), *Internal War* (pp. 100-110). The Free Press of Glencoe Collier-Macmillan Limited.

Doop, V. M. (2013). How to Handle Your Neighbours' Conflict: Ethiopia's Relationship with Sudan and South Sudan. UNISCI Discussion Papers 33. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/767/76728723009.pdf

Dunér, B (1981). Proxy Intervention in Civil War. *Journal of Peace Research*, 18(4), 353-361. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F002234338101800404

Dukhan, H. (2019). *State and Tribes in Syria: Informal Alliances and Conflict Patterns*. Routledge.

Duyvesteyn, I. & Worrall, J. E. (2017). Global Strategic Studies: a Manifesto. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 40(3), 347-3. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2016.1269228

Fazal, T. M. & Poast P. (2019, October 15). War Is Not Over. *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-10-15/war-not-over

Farrow, R. (2018). *War on Peace: The End of Diplomacy and the Decline of American Influence*. William Collins.

Feste, K. A. (1992). *Expanding the Frontiers: Superpower Intervention in the Cold War*. Praeger Publishers.

Gates, R. M. (1995). *From the Shadows. The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*. Simon & Schuster.

Ghaffari, S. (2019, November 4). Houthi Haven: Why Iran's Proxy Warriors Have Flourished in the Era of Trump. *The National Interest*. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/houthi-haven-why-irans-proxy-warriors-have-flourished-era-trump-93681

Grant, K. A & Kaussler, B. (2020). The Battle of Aleppo: External Patrons and the Victimization of Civilians in Civil War. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 31(1), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959

Gray, C. S. (2005). How Has War Changed since the End of the Cold War?. *Parameters*, 35(1), 14-26.

Gray, C. S. (2018). *Theory of Strategy*. Oxford University Press.

Groh, T. L. (2019). *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*. Stanford University Press.

Gross Stein, J. (1980). Proxy Wars: How Superpowers End Them: The Diplomacy of War Termination in the Middle East. *International Journal* 35(3), 478-519. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F002070208003500304

Halliday, F. (1990). *Cold War, Third World. An Essay on Soviet-American Relations*. Hutchinson Radius.

Harchaoui, J. & Lazib, M.-E. (2019). Proxy War Dynamics in Libya. *Proxy War Project Conflict Studies*. https://publishing.vt.edu/site/books/10.21061/proxy-wars-harchaoui-lazib/

Heuser, B. (2010). Small Wars in the Age of Clausewitz: The Watershed between Partisan War and People's War. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33(1), 139-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402391003603623

Hinnebusch, R. & Saouli, A. (2020). *The War for Syria. Regional and International Dimensions of the Syrian Uprising*. Routledge.

Hoekstra, Q. (2018). The Effect of Foreign State Support to UNITA during the Angolan War (1975–1991). *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 29(5–6), 981–1005. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2018.1519312

Hoekstra, Q. (2019). Helping the Contras: The Effectiveness of U.S. Support for Foreign Rebels during the Nicaraguan Contra War (1979–1990). *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Online First. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1568004

Hughes, G. A. (2012). *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics*. Sussex Academic Press.

Hughes, G. A. (2014). Syria and the Perils of Proxy Warfare. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 25(3), 522-538. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.913542

Innes, M. A. (2012). *Making Sense of Proxy Wars. States, Surrogates and the Use of Force*. Potomac Books.

Jones, S. G. (2017). *Waging Insurgent Warfare. Lessons from the Vietcong to the Islamic State*. Oxford University Press.

Jones, S. G. (2018, August 26). The Future of Warfare is Irregular. *The National Interest*. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/future-warfare-irregular-29672

Johnson, R. H. (1983). Periods of Peril: The Window of Vulnerability and Other Myths. *Foreign Affairs* 61(4), 950-970.

Juneau, T. (2016). Iran's Policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: a Limited Return on a Modest Investment. *International Affairs*, 92(3), 647–663. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12599

Kalyvas, S. N. & Balcells, L. (2010). International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 104(3). 415-429. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000286

Krieg, A. & Rickli, J. M. (2018). Surrogate Warfare: The Art of War in the 21st Century?. *Defence Studies*, 18(2), 113–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2018.1429218

Lamb, C. (1982). The Nature of Proxy Warfare. In W. J. Taylor Jr. & S. A. Maaranen (Eds.), *The Future of Conflict* (pp. 169- 194). Lexington Books.

Lee, M. (2019, December 4). Subversive Statecraft. The Changing Face of Great-Power Conflict. *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-04/subversive-statecraft.

Loveman, C. (2002). Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention. *Conflict, Security and Development*, 2(3), 29-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800200590618

Malley, R. (2019, December 25) 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2020. *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/26/10-conflicts-to-watch-2020/

Marshall, A. (2016). From Civil War to Proxy War: Past History and Current Dilemmas. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *27*(2), 83-195. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129172

Maurer, T. (2016). Proxies and Cyberspace. *Journal of Conflict & Security Law*, 21(3), 383–403. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcsl/krw015

McCormick, G. H. (1984). Proxies, Small Wars, and Soviet Foreign Policy'. In J. H. Maurer & R. H. Porth (Eds.), *Military Intervention in the Third World: Threats, Constraints, and Options* (pp. 37-66). Praeger.

McIntosh, C. (2015). Theory across Time: The Privileging of Time-less Theory in International Relations. *International Theory*, 7(3), 464-500. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971915000147

Melander, E. et al. (2016). Organized Violence, 1989–2015. *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5), 574–587. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022343317718773

Milton, P. et al. (2018). *Towards a Westphalia for the Middle East*. Hurst & Company.

Mitchell, C. (1994). Conflict Research. In A.J.R. Groom & Margot Light (Eds.) *Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory* (pp. 128-141). Pinter.

Moghadam, A. & Wyss, M. (2018, December 16). Five Myths about Sponsor-Proxy Relationships, *Lawfare*. https://www.lawfareblog.com/five-myths-about-sponsor-proxy-relationships

Moghadam, A. & Wyss, M. (2020). The Political Power of Proxies: Why Nonstate Actors Use Local Surrogates. *International Security*, *44*(4), 119-157. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00377

Mumford, A. (2013). *Proxy Warfare*. Polity Press.

Ostovar, A. (2018). Iran, its Clients, and the Future of the Middle East: the Limits of Religion. *International Affairs*, 94(6), 1237–1255. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy185

Oxnevad, I. (2020). Beyond a Desert Revolt: TE Lawrence's Theory of Proxy War and State Creation. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Online First. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1723283

Pattison, J. (2018) *The Alternatives to War: From Sanctions to Nonviolence*. Oxford University Press.

Payne, K. (2018). *Strategy, Evolution, and War. From Apes to Artificial Intelligence*. Georgetown University Press.

Pfaff, A. C. (2017). Proxy War Ethics. *Journal of National Security Law and Policy* 9(2), 305-353.

Phillips, C. & Valbjørn, M. (2018). 'What is in a Name?': The Role of (Different) Identities in the Multiple Proxy Wars in Syria. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 29(3), 414-433. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2018.1455328

Porter, L. (2019, July 22). Yemen's Houthi rebels raise nearly $300,000 for Hezbollah. *The National*. https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/yemen-s-houthi-rebels-raise-nearly-300-000-for-hezbollah-1.889034

Rauta, V. (2018). A Structural-Relational Analysis of Party Dynamics in Proxy Wars. *International Relations*, 32(4), 449–467. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0047117818802436

Rauta, V. (2019). Towards a Typology of Non-State Actors in "Hybrid Warfare": Proxy, Auxiliary, Surrogate and Affiliated Forces. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* Online First. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1656600

Rauta, V. (2020). Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict: Take Two. *The RUSI Journal*, 165(2), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2020.1736437

Rehman, I. (2019). Raison d'Etat: Richelieu's Grand Strategy during the Thirty Years' War. *Texas National Security Review*, 2(3), 38-75. http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/2928

Rhodes, B. (2018). *The World as It Is. Inside the Obama White House*. Random House.

Roberts, P. (2019). The Future Conflict Operating Environment Out to 2030. *RUSI Occasional Papers*.

Rondeaux, C. and Sterman, D. (2019). Twenty-First Century Proxy Warfare. *New America*. https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/twenty-first-century-proxy-warfare-confronting-strategic-innovation-multipolar-world/

Salehyan, I. (2010). The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(3), 493–515. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022002709357890

Salehyan, I., Gleditsch, K. S., & Cunningham, D. (2011). Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups. *International Organization*, 65(4), 709–44. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000233

San-Akca, B. (2016). *States in Disguise: Causes of State Support for Rebel Groups* Oxford University Press.

Scheipers, S. (2015). *Unlawful Combatants: A Genealogy of the Irregular Fighter*. Oxford University Press.

Scheipers, S. (2017). Irregular Auxiliaries after 1945. *The International History Review*, 39(1), 14-29. https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1179206

Scott, J. S. (1996). *Deciding to Intervene. The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*. Duke University Press.

Sozer, B. (2016). Development of Proxy Relationships: A Case Study of the Lebanese Civil War. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(4), 636-658. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189495

Stark. A. (2020). The Monarchs' Pawns? Gulf State Proxy Warfare 2011-Today. *New America*. https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/the-monarchs-pawns/

Strachan, H. (2005). The Lost Meaning of Strategy. *Survival*, 47(3), 33-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396330500248102

Strachan, H. (2020, February 26). Clouds of War and Strategic Delusions. *Standpoint*. https://standpointmag.co.uk/issues/march-2020/clouds-of-war-and-strategic-delusions/

Tamm, H. (2014). The Costs and Benefits of Intervention by Proxy. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 8(4), 381-386. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2014.964456

Tamm, H. (2019). Status Competition in Africa: Explaining the Rwandan–Ugandan Clashes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *African Affairs*, 118(472), 509–530. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ady057

Towle, P. (1981). The Strategy of War by Proxy. *The RUSI Journal*. 126(1), 21-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071848108523403

Taylor, M. D. (1974). The Legitimate Claims of National Security. *Foreign Affairs*. 52(3), 577-594.

Ucko, D. H & Marks, T. A. (2018). Violence in context: Mapping the strategies and operational art of irregular warfare. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39(2), 206-233. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2018.1432922

Uwiringiyimana, C. (2019, March 5). Rwanda Accuses Uganda of Supporting Rebels. *Reuters.* https://uk.reuters.com/article/uganda-rwanda-diplomacy/rwanda-accuses-uganda-of-supporting-rebels-idUKL5N20S4J7

Vennesson, P. (2017). Is Strategic Studies Narrow? Critical Security and the Misunderstood Scope of Strategy. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 40(3), 358-391. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1288108

Votel, J. L. & Keravuori, E. R. (2018). The By-With-Through Operational Approach. *Joint Force Quarterly*, 89(2), 48-55.

Waldman, T. (2018). Vicarious Warfare: The Counterproductive Consequences of Modern American Military Practice. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39(2), 181–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2017.1393201

Wirtz, J. J., Dalton, M., Gaston, E., & Plana S. (2020). Book Review Roundtable: Understanding Proxy Warfare. *Texas National Security Review* 3(2).