# Modern warfare: From an anthropological perspective

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*Abstract*

*The main goal of the study is to shed light on what modern wars are, from an anthropological point of view, by observing and documenting the origins of the classification of these wars, the changes that have been identified with them and the key features that differentiate them, in the light of contemporary models and realities. By applying the historical and descriptive analytical method. Research has concluded that the concepts coined so far for modern wars-or new wars-are mostly meant as fourth generation wars, and that what is called "fifth generation wars" is nothing but an extension of this generation or another type of modern anthropology-based warfare. And that the foreign strategies behind modern wars relied on the study of the circumstances of communities and cultures with various sociological and anthropological dimensions. Across modern wars, they have served to fracture and disintegrate their unity by reviving political , ideological, cultural , linguistic and social divisions and turning them into internal conflicts and conflicts at the cost of the national state . As a result, the first way to limit the occurrence of these wars is to build collective consciousness and direct national knowledge to combat them.*

*key words: War, modern wars, fourth generation wars, fifth generation wars*

## I. Introduction

war is the most violent and painful phenomenon among all social phenomena; If sociology is an understanding of history from a certain angle, as "Dor Kayim" says, then it can also be said that history is nothing but the creation of wars, or that the whole history is nothing but a history of wars; Just as wars led to the annihilation of civilizations that were at the height of their power, so they also allowed other new civilizations to forge their way and make their own history. It is the war that has always played its most important role among all the factors that led to the greatest and most influential social transformations.[1]

However, the concept of war is not static, especially if a term such as "war making" is taken seriously; Simultaneously, the post-WWII war theory was able to develop itself according to the development made by the social and human sciences and all other sciences and their implications on political, economic and social life on the one hand, and the development in technologies and means of communication on the other hand. All this led to the emergence of the concept of "modern warfare", as a different concept from the traditional one that prevailed until the beginning of the last decade of the

twentieth century, when it became possible to talk about multiple generations of wars that were distinguished from two generations preceding this era, starting with the wars of the third generation. - Or the third wave war - which practically began with the Second Gulf War (1990-1991) [2], and led to the wars of the fourth, fifth and sixth generation, and other advanced generations whose features are not yet clear.

This study deals with the contribution of anthropology to making and directing modern wars on the one hand, and in understanding the different anthropological paths and dimensions that help in limiting those wars on the other hand, at a time when anthropology is seen as the science of managing and directing the wars of the twenty-first century, aimed at To the dismantling of societies and states from within and transforming them into conflicting groups in geographical areas of failed states.

**Research problem:**

According to the previous classification, the first three generations of wars enter the traditional wars, so that the concept of modern wars is limited to what comes after them, starting with the fourth generation. The first generation is the primitive style that is simple, similar to the traditional wars that were conducted between two regular armies, then the second generation, such as the guerrilla war that took place in Latin America, can be understood and the change that has occurred and led to the emergence of the concept of modern wars can start from the wars that belong To the third generation, which is called pre-emptive war or preventive war, and the most prominent example of which is the war that was waged on Afghanistan and Iraq after the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, while the wars of the fourth generation and the following generations can be visualized through the outcome of the conflicts and the civil wars in the Arab region in the wake of the Arab revolutions that began in early 2011 [3].

Proceeding from that point of view; the problem of the study is represented by the need to shed light on the nature of modern wars from an anthropological point of view, by monitoring and tracing the foundations of the classification of these wars, the transformations to which they have been associated and the main characteristics of them, in the light of contemporary models and realities, in particular those in the Arab region.

**Research questions:**

Several questions arise from the research problem that can be formulated as follows:

1. What is the concept of modern warfare? And on what basis was it classified?

2. What role did anthropology play in creating and directing modern warfare?

3. What role can anthropology play in confronting and limiting modern warfare?

**Research aims:**

The research aims mainly to shed light on the nature and features of modern wars from an anthropological perspective, in addition to the following sub-goals:

1. Explain the concept of modern warfare and the basis for its classification.

2. Exposing the role of anthropology in making and directing modern warfare.

3. Attempting to reach the most important conclusions and recommendations reached by the research.

**Research importance:**

The importance of the research lies in the danger of employing anthropological studies in igniting the fires of wars, conflicts and armed conflicts at the various international, regional and local levels, especially in light of the consequences of the war on terror, the civil wars that broke out on the course of the Arab Spring revolutions, and the ongoing discussion in academic and political circles about The project of fragmentation and division of the Arab countries, and changing the map of the Middle East, by stirring up sectarian, ethnic, regional and factional strife, and inciting chaos and threatening the security and stability of states and peoples.

The importance of research also stems from the role that anthropology can play in uncovering the truth of modern wars, contributing to confronting and limiting them, and raising the level of public awareness in popular circles of reality and its interpretation from an anthropological perspective.

## II. Research Methodology:

This study is considered one of the basic studies in anthropology, which depends on secondary sources of theoretical literature and documentary material related to the research topic. In view of this, the researcher followed two approaches, namely:

1. Historical method; To monitor and track the historical paths of the phenomenon of modern warfare, and the related concepts and theories.

2. The descriptive analytical approach; To study the phenomenon, describe it accurately and match what it is in reality, and analyze its dimensions, levels, components and relationships involved in its structure and interpretation in an integrated manner from an anthropological perspective.

**Research Plan:**

In addition to the introduction that shows the dimensions of the study and its general objective and methodological framework, the research consists of three substantive demands, and a conclusion that includes the most important findings and recommendations, as follows:

Introduction: It includes the research problem and its questions, its importance, objectives, method and division.

The first axis: modern wars: concept and classification

The second axis: the role of anthropology in making and directing modern warfare

Conclusion

## III. Modern wars: Concept and Classification

### First: the definition of modern wars

The phenomenon of conflict and wars of various forms, tools and means is the most prominent and dynamic aspect of contemporary international relations and politics. The radical transformations that followed the end of the Cold War had very important repercussions on the nature and content of conflicts and wars that the world witnessed in the second half of the twentieth century until today, especially after the decline in the role of traditional military and ideological factors, and the escalation of interest in social, economic and cultural factors in making and managing contemporary wars. [4].

The concepts of wars have evolved a lot over the ages, as have their tools, and yet the human element has remained the common factor in all of them. War was a means in itself, for one of the conflicting parties to achieve what it did not achieve through political means, but the paradox in modern wars is that it has become an end in itself, in addition to being a means. The modern style of war has begun to use this method as an end to create an endless conflict, and the goal of those who ignite it is to continue, in an endless process of attrition, even in countries that are supposed to be friendly to imperialism, and this is given the characteristics of this type of war [5].

The researcher believes that the change that occurred in the concept of war is a change based on the possibility of using and employing the anthropological characteristics and features of peoples and societies in moving the sources of conflict, and turning them into essential causes and tools for what has become known as "modern warfare."

It is prevalent in traditional literature that war is a natural and recurring phenomenon within the international system; it often imagines the occurrence of war to give a new reality to relations between states, which are characterized by the use of physical violence by the armed forces of states on the battlefield against the armed forces of another country. Therefore, the war is often considered a tool in the hands of politicians who seek to achieve the maximum national interest in an international order prevailing in chaos [6].

However, this traditional concept, and other concepts that are based on the definition formulated in the nineteenth century by "Clausewitz" of war as: "an act of force and violence aimed at compelling and coercing the opponent to implement our will" [7], is no longer consistent with What modern and contemporary wars have become, since the beginning of the post-Cold War era in the early 1990s; The structure of relationships and patterns of wars around the world have changed greatly, and the intensity of wars has increased dramatically, rendering the traditional concept of war incompatible in any way with the forms and models of modern warfare. That is why researchers such as Van Creveld, Holsti, and "Kaldor "tried to formulate specific concepts and definitions of post-Cold War war, especially under terms such as "low-intensity conflicts," "third-generation wars," "new wars," or modern wars, as a result of the possibilities Innovated and consistent with new forms of war operations

resulting from technological development, and innovative conventions for new concepts of war itself [8].

However, the concepts of war developed in a way that differs from its beginning and subsequent developments before it reached the height of its development in the present era, while the conventional war was based mainly on discipline and commitment to the military plan in terms of the distribution of the roles of military weapon branches in the armies, modern wars came to turn against this Style entirely [9]; This, despite the existence of definitions of war that are flexible and general, so that they can be used in various periods, such as Cioffi-Revilla's definition that war is: "The occurrence of lethal and targeted acts of violence between two or more opposing social groups in political goals. Leading to deaths of at least one of the warrior group and organized under the command of reliable leadership. In another definition, war is: "an armed conflict between population groups that can be considered as membership units such as tribes, religious or political parties, social and economic classes, as well as states" [10].

The current state of the concept of war has reached the concept of war based on chaos; The more chaos there is between the various parties to the conflict, of course, the war is in harmony with its modernist character, and it moves away from the classical war. Consequently, the desired results from it are automatically achieved once these components are achieved [11]; This refers to the concept of civil wars as the natural development of a policy chosen by a group of people when normal politics does not allow it to achieve the goal it has set for itself. Moreover, the criterion of civil war does not reside in the characteristic of conflicts. Rather, it can wear the form of traditional military operations, guerrilla warfare, or the nature of the conflicting parties. It can be represented by political blocs, social classes, racism, or religious groups, or in the causes of the conflict itself. It can target the political system in the existing state or create a new state through secession [12].

The researcher believes that the term civil wars is no longer appropriate with modern wars, because the latter makes the parties and local forces tools for a proxy war between regional and international powers competing for their interests in the country of war, and this can be said to be one of the most important features of the change in the war. Modern concept and model.

In this regard, the post-Cold War constructivist theory took another dimension that can be said to be in line with the changes that affected it as a concept, by focusing on self and common understanding about war, and looking at the nature of war as an institution within the global community. We can infer this proposition from Alexander Wendt's definition of war as: "what states and other international agents do in it." This means that the nature of war has changed with the required changes in sharing ideas related to war. [13].

It is understood from this that the environment of modern warfare at the present time is characterized by the absence of dividing borders between the internal, regional and international scales ,However, the final outcome of these wars leads to an escalation in the levels of internal exposure of countries, which increases the pressure on the interior in an unprecedented way, as regional crises cause And the successive international in provoking pressure repercussions on the internal situation such as: revolutions, uprisings, expansion of terrorist organizations, exacerbation of internal conflicts,

and proxy wars run by some regional and international powers [14]; This can be found in the models of the war that followed the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, the war against global terrorism, and more recently in the so-called hybrid warfare, which is characterized by decentralized combat and the irregularity of militias that are not considered professional armies. [15], as well as in the repercussions of the Arab Spring revolutions.

However, the term hybrid warfare does not have a consistent and agreed definition, rather it is a term that analysts and researchers use in various ways. Some use it to refer only to irregular tactics, while others use the term "hybrid" to describe a set of irregular and traditional tactics that are used in the battle space itself, and others use the phrase to describe the doctrine of the (New Generation Warfare Doctrine). While some criticize this term and the concept as a general and rubbery term, little is useful in understanding the specific nature of the threat emanating from the major international powers; Thus, the concept of modern wars that can best be relied upon is: "covert or deniable activities, supported by major international powers and proxy or hostile regional powers, aimed at influencing the domestic politics of the targeted countries"; This concept confirms that modern warfare affects the domestic politics of countries [16].

**Second: Classification of modern wars**

Many strategic and military analysts believe that the history of modern warfare goes back to the signing of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which was linked to the emergence of nation states and their monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and since that time states have entered into conflicts and wars that develop from one generation to the next, and it should be noted that there is some degree of overlap between generations. Wars, just as the emergence of a new generation does not mean copying its predecessors [17].

It is also worth saying that the generations of wars according to the aforementioned classification are not limited to a specific time. Rather, they depend on the nature and development of war itself, which often accompanies the intellectual and technical development of nations and peoples [18].

Thus, the five generations of modern wars can be highlighted as follows:

**[1]. First Generation Warfare:**

It is also called "conventional wars", because it takes place between two states and two regular armies on a specific territory and direct confrontation [19]; In these wars, it relied on the use of rifles and primitive cannons, as the warring opponents were mobilizing a large number of forces in the form of rows to direct fire intensely and throughout the battlefield, and the main goal of the war was to achieve a decisive military victory from the first confrontation, for example the Napoleonic wars in the early century nineteenth; The importance of this generation of warfare is that it contributed to instilling a culture of order and discipline in armies, which is still the main feature of modern armies, but with the development of weapons and military equipment, especially automatic rifles, the tactics of the ranks have become sterile and suicidal [20].

**[2]. Second Generation Warfare:**

This kind of war prevailed in the First and Second World War, through Germany's development of "blitzkrieg" tactics, which depend on the elements of speed and surprise, to bypass the enemy, and the collapse of his forces from behind, and it was called maneuver war due to its flexibility and speed of movement, and the use of The element of surprise is also [21].

The second generation wars were based on the technological development in artillery, which contributed to providing more intense firepower on the battlefield, especially with the proliferation of automatic rifles and heavy armor, which led to a retreat from the tactics of mobilizing a large number of forces on the battlefield, and relying on trenches Instead of that; The main goal of the war was attrition.

Also included within this generation is what is known as "guerilla wars" (Guerilla War), similar to the wars that were going on in Latin America, which are similar to the war of the first generation, except that they were distinguished from them by the use of fire, tanks and aircraft between the warring gangs [22].

**[3]. Third generation warfare:**

The wars of this generation are based on the "Theory of Deterrence" that the United States applied in its military strategies after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War era, in that this war relies on what is known as a "pre-active strike"[23]. Which is known as: "an operational initiative taken against hostile crowds, aiming to occupy sites of vital security concern to the enemy, before his supposed attack begins, and even to occupy strategic lands within his territory" [24].

That is why this generation of wars is called "Preventive War" as the war on Iraq in 2003 [25].

This kind of war emerged after the events of September 11, 2001, and the US administration of President George W. Bush adopted it as a doctrine and theory adopted in US foreign and military policy, as part of what was known as the "preventive war", As a strategy of the "War Against Terrorism" [26]

**[4]. Fourth Generation Warfare:**

The wars of this generation were defined as: "a form of military intervention based on the use of weapons or the threat to use them, which one country undertakes against another country as a means of pressure." Some also defined it as: "a military intervention aimed at influencing the affairs of another country by using weapons or threatening to commit acts of armed violence, carried out by an armed group supported by the intervening state" [27].

Historically, some researchers trace the start of this generation of wars back to long before World War II, as in the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904--1905). Mao Tse Tong, leader of the Chinese revolution and founder of the People's Republic of China, was the first to write and successfully implement the fourth generation wars [28]; However, another aspect of researchers believes that fourth-generation wars were developed by the United States and called it "Asymmetric Warfare", and then developed by following the theory of "Proxy war", which relies on

non-governmental military groups that receive support and direct assistance. From an external force [29].

This generation of wars was developed by the United States, due to the high cost of conventional war, and the challenge created by the military invasion of countries in the face of the national culture of the peoples, so this war in the face of potential enemies was based on hollowing out the national content of nations culturally, politically and socially so that states easily fall for the interventionist to grasp. International or regional countries at the lowest prices and without losing a single drop of blood. That is why some call it "Soft Warfare" [30]; The result of this war is to break the state's monopoly on the right to practice violence and own the armed forces, and to empower informal actors, thus bringing the forms of armed conflict back to pre-modern stages [31].

### [5]. Fifth Generation Warfare:

This generation's wars have been defined as: "A war without restrictions between two parties using all modern technological tools, in which the minds, not the land, of a party are occupied in order to eliminate it, and its energy is depleted in internal wars, through armed and organized ideological groups, to threaten security and national stability. For the benefit of another party that wants to dominate it without interfering with the least possible losses [32]; the war is no longer confined to states and organized groups only, but has become a field of work for other entities, such as transnational networks, but even individuals with highly distinctive competencies (Super-Empowered Indi). visuals) and the alliances that could be established between them (Supra-Combinations), which is an unprecedented development [33].

Fifth generation wars are characterized as targeting society, as they are based on exploiting the contradictions in its structure and the existing weaknesses in it, to arouse the discontent of the people, and then threaten the entity of the state from within, in a way that threatens the possibility of its collapse or weakening it in the least cases, just as economic wars are relied upon Information and finance, and the establishment of broad alliances that include states, groups, criminal networks, and even individuals, who do not necessarily have an interest other than to overthrow the target state [34].

## IV. The role of anthropology in making and directing modern warfare

The end of the Cold War marked the birth of a new stage in the development of the international system, which led to transformations in the nature and concept of power, as this stage witnessed a decline in the traditional concept of power and war, due to the emergence of conflicts with religious, cultural and social dimensions, which indicated the rise of the role of cultural factors in shaping international interactions Due to the emergence of the concept of cultural identity and its taking on severe conflict dimensions in various regions of the world [35]; If the conflicts during the Cold War were of a strategic source, that is, they belong to the circle of confrontation between East and West, then the disappearance of the ideological conflict, revived the national and ethnic identities and gave a strong breath to the return of ethnic and sectarian conflicts and wars in many regions of the world [36].

And so on; The nature of war did not change, but there were basic features that could be said to be the ones that occurred in the war in its traditional sense, and led to the emergence of modern warfare as a living concept and model, and these are the features that can be summarized as follows [37]:

**1. The decline of conflicts between states**, in exchange for the increase in internal conflicts, which erupt between the state and armed militias, without this denying that some countries intervene in these internal conflicts in support of the parties allied with them.

**2. Increased cooperation between non-state armed militias, transnational organized crime groups and terrorist groups;** Although its goals are totally different, common interests push them to cooperate, which leads to an increase in security chaos, and the existence of regions and areas outside the control of state institutions.

**3. The proliferation of protracted conflicts that last for long periods of time;** The parties involved in the conflicts realize that they will not achieve their goals or be able to resolve the conflict in the short term. Therefore, they follow the method of "limited engagement", meaning avoiding direct military involvement in conflicts, relying on proxies from armed militias, and providing them with material, military and intelligence support.

**4. The exploitation of armed militias of technological development;** Especially dual-use materials and technologies that are circulating for commercial purposes, and can be re-employed to carry out terrorist or combat operations, such as loading drones with explosives, or using 3D printers in the manufacture of weapons and explosives.

**5. Blurring the lines between the states of war and peace;** Especially with the resort of states, and even armed militias, to employ information warfare in the face of their opponents, and this is related to the expansion of globalization, the development of means of communication, and the increase in economic and trade wars.

**6. A decline in loyalty to the nation-state in focus of armed conflict;** This is due to the rise of sub-loyalties to entities or issues that cross the borders of the state, such as seeking to establish a caliphate or strengthening the spread and existence of the axis of resistance, or loyalty to narrow entities without the state on specific ethnic or sectarian bases, which led to the spread of religious, national and sectarian extremism.

It is possible to imagine the role that anthropology played in shaping the rules of the game of war-making and managing internal conflicts and transforming them into their new and renewed form, based on their ethnic and identity sources, in addition to the fact that some of these conflicts have an extended social character, that is, they feed on themselves and reproduce themselves because of their mobilizing capacity [38]; Precisely after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States directed everything it had to wage a cultural war against the awareness of the peoples in the target countries, directing it to paths drawn to transfer a cold war between it and the United States of America to crush any opportunity or movement for the establishment of strong and unified national states [39].

Since then, anthropological research and studies have been employed to provide decision-making sites and strategies in Western countries with accurate reports and information on the state of societies in the target countries, in terms of the cracks and cracks they suffer from. Based on this information, Western powers have worked to strengthen the role of organizations working in the field of human rights in nurturing the separatist, independence or revolutionary spirit of ethnic and sectarian groups and movements, and defending their demands and rights related to preserving their independent identity and recognition by states, especially within the framework of the principle of "international humanitarian intervention." , Which has always been used as a cover for undeclared goals [40].

From the point of view of the socio-historical approach, the international conflicts in the target countries reflect the orientations of the West towards implementing a project of global hegemony or creating a global theater based on chaos, and that the countries threatened by these trends will be obliged to resist. So that one expects in the disputed states where there is a competitive intervention in which the conflicting international powers compete to keep local social forces - based on religious, sectarian, ethnic or regional - friendly foundations in power, or to bring them to power, in a way that contributes to fueling conflicts and internal wars, And thus the fragmentation of society, the weakening of the state [41].

The role that anthropology has played in making and directing modern warfare is evident through its contributions to the theoretical field concerned with interpreting the reality and paths of conflict and international relations for the post-Cold War period, starting from where the structural realism theory founded by (Hans Morgenthau) diverged. (Margenthau) and the second structural realism advocated by Kenneth Waltz. Morgenthau viewed the new wars from the perspective of human nature as the decisive structure that falls within the framework of history and cannot be surpassed, while Waltz went on to explain these Wars based on the theory of chaos, stressing that the chaotic structure of the global system is what prevents countries from entering into a state of peace.

The anthropology's explanation of what is known as "subculture" is one of the most important foundations put forward to explain identity struggles within a single culture - or mother culture -. Subculture, from an anthropological perspective, is not of one form in terms of its relations with the mother culture, and whenever the subculture develops to take the form of counter-values, it enters into conflict with the larger community, and then the subculture turns into a contra culture [42], and there is no doubt that explanations of this Gender was the result of collecting a large amount of information about different societies, and the possibility of its fragmentation or fragmentation into cultures and sub-identities, transformed over time in certain conflict frameworks into counter-identities, used and used in the dismantling or demolition of the state from the inside, especially since the term culture itself includes All cultures and sub-identities (ethnic, sectarian, linguistic, religious, regional, regional), so that entities of this kind can be dealt with as independent and colliding cultures and identities, which in themselves have become a growing source of social and international conflicts.

On this basis, it is possible to perceive two levels of modern wars, between which the concept and description of these wars contrast, and the role that anthropology contributed to in making and directing them, as follows:

**level one;** In it, the term conflicts within states are used, which refers to violent armed conflicts, which are often called terms such as ethnic civil wars or ethno-political conflicts. These conflicts may include, in addition to issues such as separation and autonomy, other issues that include issues of identity and security, Or religion and a sense of well-being, as it may arise between the state and local groups that belong to sects, ethnicities, and regional and regional formations, not to mention the problems of minorities [43].

**Second Level;** In it, the terms soft war [44] or proxy war [45] are used, which refer to international and regional interventions that employ the tools of conflict at home to defend their interests or to prevent the domination of hostile forces over the state in the target country.

The fourth and fifth generation wars, according to the previous anthropological perspective, have created mechanisms of rejection that are translated through the repositioning of local groups and identities in the context of the fragmentation of the national identity, and this creates new forms of violence that are difficult for international mechanisms to stop or curb, from where the revival is always going on. The largest number of identity conflicts, and paving the way for different groups to defend or claim their identities [46]; Experts in this field confirm that the previous three generations of wars relied on the direct use of hard force and heavy and violent military action to achieve the goals of the aggressor state, and that the shift to the pattern of modern wars, starting with the wars of the fourth and fifth generations, which moved away from the traditional stereotypes of previous wars completely. And it relied on the strategy of demolishing from the inside of the target state, with the aim of transforming it into a failed state that is unable to protect its borders, sovereignty and independence, nor to manage its institutions in preparation for imposing foreign will on it later [47].

In light of the foregoing, the researcher concludes that wherever modern wars are discussed, the intervening and influential anthropological dimensions cannot be ignored: ethnicities, sects, cultural and social identities, and other dimensions that fall into the flesh and vain of anthropological research.

## V. Conclusions

**1-** If the colonial countries relied on employing anthropology in the manufacture of modern wars in order to tear apart the national identity of peoples, then it is imperative to develop and enhance awareness of individuals and societies and to reveal what they want.

**2-** Awareness of the recognition of the right of peoples to change with the necessity to preserve the security and stability of the state

**3-** Spreading the spirit of wakefulness and national awareness on scientific foundations that take into account all the valuable anthropological cultural dimensions

## VI. Recommendations

**1-** Implementing the good governance policy and managing areas of proactive strategic development by the state

**2-** Promoting a culture of tolerance and respect for pluralism and different identities to avoid entering into a cycle of violent conflict

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