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SYMPOSIUM – AUTHOR'S REPLY

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A QUESTION

Responses to my Critics

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It is never easy for an author to respond to critics of his work - especially those who combine deep knowledge of the subject with the scientific detachment and sensitivity of the four critics who have reviewed *War, States and Contention* in this symposium. More challenging still, they approach the book from the diverse standpoints of Italian historiography (Procacci); the domestic implications of militarization (Artioli); comparative politics (Kriesi); and social movements (della Porta). I am mainly in agreement with my critics' complaints (these are the "four marriages" in the title of this comment) so I will therefore limit myself to only a few reactions to each contribution. I will close with a question on important work that I think remains to be done on war, states and contention.

Drawing on her vast knowledge of World War One and its aftermath, both in Italy and elsewhere, Giovanna Procacci, offers a number of sensitive reflections on *War, States and Contention.* First, she gently points out that the book ignores the importance of the protests of women, and other "unorganized" actors, during World War One. In this, she is entirely correct: Women protested about food, work, and other issues as they took over jobs normally carried out by men who were in the trenches. Because it was focused on the roots of fascism in the war, my book dealt, perhaps exces-

sively, on more formal movements of both right and left, rather than on the vast amount of social turbulence that was caused by the war and its dislocations.

Second, drawing on her original work in *Warfare-Welfare,* Procacci also shows that increases in social assistance accompanied the restrictions in civil liberties in Italy during the war, a complementarity and apparent contradiction that my book largely ignored. Of course, as her work also shows, social assistance came late, was poorly administered, and led to charges of malfeasance at war's end. Still -- although less so in Italy than in its allies -- the government recognized that the war imposed dislocations that needed to be addressed. My book was more focused on the costs to citizens than on the state's attempts to offer them benefits. If Italy differed from its allies, it was in the relative indiffence to citizens' and soldiers' sufferings during the war (Procacci herself has exposed the indifference of the general staff to the sufferings of Italian prisoners of war) and to the more rapid scaling down of social assistance in war's wake, a reduction that may have contributed to the bitterness among the *ex-combattenti*, many of whom gravitated towards the emerging *fasci* of Benito Mussolini. Just as the Italian elite did not grasp the seriousness of intervening in a modern war against well-equipped modern armies, its members had no idea of what was necessary to return to peacetime.

A third issue raised by Procacci regards the role of contentious politics in Italian intervention and in the war's outcomes. She argues in her review that "agitations [in 1914] were [therefore] a partial cause of entry into the war", a hypothesis that is supported from the correspondence of Sonnino (quoted by Rusconi 2014:210). The hypothesis is reasonable, but I wonder, upon reflection, whether a more fundamental reason for Italy's willingness to intervene was not the "high politics" of interest in territorial aggrandizement and the very "low politics" of bribes paid to members of the elite by the opposing sides to gain Italy's support?

About the role of contention in the war's outcome, there is less ambiguity, but there remains a debate about the role of the post-war labor agitations in bringing on Mussolini's rise. Conservative scholars (i.e., Lipset, 1960) see a shared responsibility between the worker's movement and the fascists; but the evidence is that the *triennio rivoluzionario* had already collapsed when fascist violence peaked, as the declining strike rate among both peasants and workers in 1921 shows. If there was a link between leftwing and rightwing contention, it was the intervening role of the conservative press in hyping the danger of an *ottobre italiano*, the complicity of the police and the army in abetting fascist violence, and the incapacity of the political class to form a coalition that could respond to the threat of eversion. But these are issues that may

never be resolved; probably, as Procacci's own contributions demonstrate, there was no single cause for the collapse of the Liberal state and the advent of its successor.

With his usual gift for illuminating synthesis, Hanspeter Kriesi takes a comparative approach to *War, States and Contention*. Focusing on the book's contemporary analysis of the United States after 9/11, he points to the exceptional nature of the American warfare state by comparing it to the declining importance of war and war-related expenditures in America's European allies. He is correct in this, as Tilly demonstrated in his classic, *Coercion, Capital and European States* (1992).Where America and Europe are following similar tracks -- although at different speeds- is in the growing importance of Mary Kaldor;s "new wars", which combine state and non-state combatants, conventional and unconventional tactics, and a growing indifference to the laws of war.

Without exaggerating the greater European attachment to rights after the terrorist outrages of the early years of the century, I am persuaded of the "trickle-down" effects of America's drift into "war-time" (Dudziak 2010). As my colleague, Joseph Margulies, writes in his notable book, *What Changed When Everything Changed* (2013), emergency rule has increasingly infiltrated the American creed, even as Americans continue to see it as a buttress of liberty. As constitutional lawyers have shown, the exceptional rules that have increasingly governed American national security regulations have "trickled down" into non-national security law and practice, for example, in the militarization of local police forces, the increasing use of the state-secrets doctrine in private law, and the spinoff of national security concerns into immigration practices.

But Kriesi is correct in insisting on the comparative implications of the American state of warfare and security, because – as his own work on globalization and politics has shown – borders are increasingly declining in importance. Not only do transnational movements infiltrate across these borders, but international institutions and police practices increasingly combat them, as Chapter Ten of *War, States and Contention* attempts to show. This is the second “wedding” in the title of this comment.

The implication of the military for domestic and especially for urban policy in Italy and France is the original contribution of Francesca Artioli (2013, 2014). The origin of the interactions between cities and the military was, of course, the state of siege which legal historian, Sebastien Le Gal has explicated in a series of pathbreaking articles and in his thesis, Les Origines de l’État de Siège en France; Ancien Régime - Révolution. As Le Gal shows, the French revolutionary governments made increasing use of the *état de siege,* expanding its meaning from the protection of military fortresses on the border to a tool for martial rule of cities and departments and the suppression of dissidence.

But that was then and this is now: Artioli's work on the relationship between militarization and urban policy and politics in France and Italy could well have enriched the analysis of the militarization of civilian life in the United States in my book. For example, as her review points out there was a hidden link between military security and urban sprawl during the cold war. I wish I had known of this work when I wrote my book.

Artioli is perplexed at the analytical status of a key concept in the book - Michael Mann's concept of "infrastructural power". She worries that, at times, the concept is employed to describe the American state's forays into civil society - for example, through defense contracts --while, at other times, I employed it to describe increased state dependence on civil society and - by implication -- giving leverage to civil society actors – like Edward Snowden -- to challenge the state. She is right that the book emphasizes these contradictory trends in the American state's expansion, and she is also right to point to the increasing imbrication between infrastructural and despotic power in wartime. My answer to her complaint is that infrastructural power is *inherently* contradictory -- what Kriesi, in his review, describes as the "dialectic of control." If nothing else, it is this ambiguity that helps to explain the sometimes repressive, but sometimes reformist outcomes of war making for civil liberties and for the growth of the state in wartime.

The Vietnam war illustrates this dialectic best. During that war, the Nixon administration and the FBI impinged on civil liberties in an illegal and anti-constitutional manner; yet only a few years later, Nixon was forced to resign in disgrace, while Congress passed a series of state-controlling and rights-expanding laws. Artioli is correct that *War, States and Contention* would have done well to have explicated these contradictions and to have extended the analysis of hierarchical and infrastructural power beyond the United States in the last decade. This is the third "wedding" in the title of this comment.

My friend and former collaborator, Donatella della Porta, focusses her review on the role of peace movements during warlike episodes and gently charges me with a too-pessimistic account of these movements' rapid decline. She proposes another narrative, that "peace movements could be considered, under several respects, a very successful one". She correctly points out that peace movements have made states increasingly wary of becoming involved in warmaking, and that they have also "been very influential in its impact on other movements" -- such as the women's movement, nonviolent movements and international solidarity. I could not agree more with della Porta, and this is the fourth "wedding" in the title of this comment.

However, as Chapter 5 underscores, and as Kriesi's review points out, America's wars of the 21st century are different than past wars, because they are fought in

peacetime against non-state actors, and they have had no major impact on the lives of the civilian population. These "new wars" have been difficult for peace activists to contest, partly because of the difficulty of focusing public opinion on war's costs, partly because of the fear that the enemy is potentially present in "the homeland," and partly because opposition has been fragmented among three main movements -- legal mobilization, the mobilization of civil society groups, and opposition to surveillance. Of course, all peace movements are coalitions, but unlike the anti-Vietnam war movement, opposition today is more dispersed in both movement space and time.

This takes me to the "question" in the title of this reply. The Whig theory of history held that rights were the result of the civilizing mission of bourgeois society and were set to improve incrementally and to expand from legal to political to social rights, as T.H. Marshall argued (1964). We have become more cautious about the inevitability of rights expansion since Marshall wrote, but are we seeing the opposite of his vision: a general rollback of rights in the wake of global neo-liberalism, war, and the emergency state? And what is the role of contentious politics in contesting this development? My book, which examines only four cases of war and rights over the past two centuries, does not claim to answer this question -- if it has an answer. My question in closing is: "What would it take to answer it: A larger number of intensive case studies like the ones I offer in my book? A methodological shift to a large-N examination using the tools of quantitative analysis like those we find in the "conflict studies" tradition in the United States? Or a combination of the two? Answering this question is beyond the scope of this brief essay, but my four much-too-generous critics have helped me to see its importance, for which they deserve my thanks.