Armers and Disarmers: a false dichotomy reconsidered - some tentative designs

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I

At best, some thousands of people, scattered all over the world, are professionally engaged in problems of disarmament and arms control while many millions professionally contribute to the arms race. Such figures indicate once more the relative social isolation of specialists in disarmament and the relative deviance of their professional activities.

Military experts in disarmament usually feel rather uneasy within the context of their profession of origin: at least, their activities are considered as rather "unnatural". Governmental experts are often considered as some wild offsprings of the so much more respectable tree of public bureaucracy. And scientific specialists, sometimes forced to walk along unconventional paths of investigation, are often exposed to forms of aggressive criticism by their solid, sound, conventional colleagues.

Any of these three types of experts has to be careful, ideologically: on the one hand, they have to be prepared for the many obvious ideological comments stemming from their respective professional groups of origin — military, government, science —, on the other hand, any explicit opposition to such professional ideologies would stress their relative social isolation and consequently has to be avoided.

So, disarmament experts are modest in number and are often regarded as professionally "marginal men"; therefore, as a rule, they will be inclined to refer emphatically to the values of their respective occupational groups of origin. Such values — of military men, of governmental people and of scientists — are often opposed to one another. As a result, as a profession, specialists in disarmament, however modest their number and however marginal their position, sometimes — and that at critical moments — will be exposed to serious ideological contradistinctions 1).

One could imagine that professional armers would find themselves more comfortable, ideologically, as compared with professional disarmers. Armers, needless to say, may consider themselves as being in line with the overwhelming majority of

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public opinion, with traditional values and policies. Generally, professional armers will not find themselves exposed to those embarrassing inner needs and fears for self-identification as are often present within the circles of professional disarmers. However, such a picture seems to be an ever more one-sided and incomplete one. To be sure, the great majority of those people who earn their money in arms industries, armed forces and ministries of defence will find traditional values justification enough for their professional activities; although such a general justification does not necessarily exclude any feelings of moral uncertainty as is often supposed. To quote Wilson: "Not all "realists" are thereby led to unqualified reliance on a system of deterrence, though a majority are — and they represent a large sector of opinion".

However, a much more important part of the professional armers who are more directly concerned with problems of politico-strategical decision-making itself, sometimes seems to be exposed to some fundamental lack of certainty, consequently also to debates of a rather critical nature. Such debates are partly reflexions of the complexity and, in that respect, the intransparency of modern security problems. Partly, however, they result from the "new logics" of modern weapons technology that lessened the validity of many traditional arguments. For instance, in spite of the many billions of dollars and roubles invested in "security" by the respective governments, this security (as measured by the number of first-strike-megadeaths) has apparently been largely diminished. Guerilla warfare, once the "war of the poor", is regarded more and more as the only possible form of military action by the leaders of the technically most advanced armies in the world. And even "civilian defence" — once associated with "pacifism" — is now advised by the most respectable author in the field of strategy, Liddell Hart, as being a preferable military strategy in densely populated, flat regions. All this, and much more has made for an ever-growing feeling of fundamental uncertainty in many a government office. It contributes to a great deal of immanent confusion and ideological disputes among such persons who are primarily responsible — directly or indirectly — for the respective "securities". The many inconsistencies in the numerous official statements speak for this confusion, this ever-growing awareness of the invalidity of the traditional arguments.

Thus, as social entities, both professional armers and professional disarmers are composed of ideologically largely different parts. Sociologically there are differences between the respective occupational ideologies; social psychologically, there are differences in respect of the way in which cognition ("the new logic"), dissonant to existing information (traditional policies) has been absorbed. Both dimensions

(occupational ideology and cognitive style) are closely interrelated. Together they result in a scala of generalized notions on security policy as well as in different degrees of resistance to change such a generalized notion.

All this makes any discussion on the usefulness of a debate between armers and disarmers a rather muddled piece of thinking. Nevertheless, many such discussions do take place in one form or another. Sometimes "armers versus disarmers" is used as synonymous to "militarism versus pacifism", sometimes to "bureaucrats versus unattached intellectuals", sometimes simply to "professional armers versus professional disarmers"; but most discussions rely upon rather vague mixture of some of these three dichotomies. For instance, according to some people, one of the merits of the Pugwash Organization should be its never fading endeavour to bring together "armers and disarmers". What does such a statement mean? Many a suchlike discussion suffers from lack of clarity simply because the debaters did not take the trouble to communicate about their respective interpretations of such terminology and about its respective underlying tacit assumptions. So, scientifically speaking, "armers versus disarmers" has become a simple dichotomy, even a false one, since psychological cleavages are present within each of both parts. Also, when used in a much broader context — for instance, when identifying "armers" with "warmongers" and "disarmers" with "peacemongers" — nothing else has been done than repacking a well-known and very old contrast, actually while this old contrast is becoming more and more antiquated. It would be better to speak of "traditionalists" versus "experimentalists", or of "bureaucrats" versus "critics". However, in each and every case, both parts of such dichotomies relate to "armers" as well as to "disarmers". In other words, in our opinion, no sociological or sociopsychological classification runs parallel to this simple dichotomy. Usually, social reality is of a much more complex nature than any dichotomy is able to indicate.

Nevertheless, many of these discussions refer to a part of social reality, being of the utmost importance, both from the social and scientific point of view. All that has been said so far is that, when translating this reality into "problems", the respective debaters were not aware enough of the invalidity of the distinctions they used. Thus, the original "problem": is a debate between armers and disarmers useful?, has to be reformulated into a complex of questions. Our problem — a less pretentious one, but perhaps a somewhat more adequate one — is as follows: the new logic of modern arms makes traditional points of view — traditional policies as well as traditional oppositions to such policies — become more and more disputable. To some people this means a necessity to change their views, whether a relativising of traditional views or an exploration of new paths of thought. To others, this leads to a resistance to change. What are the relations, psychologically and sociologically, between these several visions — the traditional ones, the (relativised) traditional ones, and the new "experimental" ones? Where are their ideological cleavages, where their tangents? Where, in other words is a debate useful and where not? And above all: is it possible to map out these cleavages and tangents as a substitute for the lost simple reality if it ever existed? We will make such an attempt.
How does war originate? What is the best guarantee for maintaining the peace? To such “general” questions — rather nonsense questions from a scientific point of view — many generalized answers may be given, and to all intents and purposes have been given. The apparent superficiality of such answers should not mislead us in psychological respect. For whatever their immaturity, they may be part of a fundamental orientation of the persons involved, deeply rooted, as they are, within their personality structure. In general, with regard to such questions, two such fundamental value orientations diametrically opposite to each other, may be discerned. To some, war results from aggression, and aggression, politically, is provoked by relative weakness of military posture. So, the most effective though not always efficient way a government may serve its security is strengthening its relative military posture. “Peace is our Profession”, says the Pentagon’s slogan. To others, war is born of misunderstandings. Peoples and their governments have too vague an insight into each other’s needs and they don’t visualize each other’s positions. As a result, a disorder of communication and a distortion of reason occur, which may stimulate conflicts and draw existing conflicts into an emotional mood which prevents their solution by other means than by use of violence. According to this pattern of thinking, war will be prevented by improvement of mutual understanding together with a reduction of armaments. Thus, as the hard core of both value orientations may be considered respectively the importance of “military posture” and of “insight into each other’s basic needs” or, to put it concisely: “power” versus “needs”. In general, the measure in which one’s ideological position reflects one of these two orientations depends in the first and foremost place on personality variables (and also on social position). So, hypothetically, a continuum can be constructed for the measurement of all possible positions to be taken by pedigree hawks, pedigree doves and all sorts of bastards:

“power” \[ \xrightarrow{x} \] “needs”

Fig. 1. value orientation to the goals and means of security policy formation.

Relatively apart from this distinction one might speak of two opposite role-definitions in respect of the practice of governmental decision-making in general and to decision-making of this specific nature in particular. To some, governmental decision-making should not be allowed to become an “experimental” one; it must be based upon profound experience, upon certainties, so to speak. Of course, the world is changing rapidly, but this tells all the more in favour of a relative stability of governmental policies as compared with other policies. So, to such people, in the first place, governmental policy has to be a stable one and especially where the so important “security policy matters” are concerned. To others, governmental decision-making is already marked by the relative importance of a number of “built-in stabilizers” which prevent dissonant information from
being taken seriously into account by the respective policy planners 7). To these people a major contribution to governmental policy-making consists of its critical evaluation together with the furnishing of new dissonant information, this being especially so where the so important "security policy matters" are concerned. Both loyalties, both policy orientations implicate a role definition since the hard core of both loyalties may be considered as the necessity for stability versus change. In short, "conservation" versus "criticism" may serve as the nuclei of both corresponding role-definitions. In general, a person's choice between both role definitions, will be highly dependent on his professional orientations, more or less together with personality variables. Again, hypothetically, a continuum can be constructed in order to localize all gradual differences between both role definitions:

"conservation" x-----------x "criticism"

Fig. 2. Role definitions in respect of the practice of "security policy" formation.

Many of the discussions about armers and disarmers mentioned implicitly refer to the existence of one of these two dimensions albeit in an often emotionally biased way. Many of the authors apparently identify themselves with one of the alternative values or roles, this being the case with all the consequences to their respective "definitions of the situation". Sometimes, and mostly more or less implicitly too both dimensions are linked and are used as a basis of some typology.

We would focus the attention of interested readers to the following ones:

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<th>author</th>
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<td>Galtung</td>
<td>&quot;legalist&quot;</td>
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In all cases, too small a distinction has been made between both dimensions.


By drawing both continua orthogonally to each other, we find a field to be used tentatively as a map to localize all ideological cleavages and tangents:

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\[ \text{"power"} \]

\[ \text{"conservation"} \]

\[ \text{"criticism"} \]

\[ \text{"needs"} \]

Fig. 3. "traditional" and "experimental" ideological positions; cognitive harmony and cognitive conflict.

Any person, any ideological position, any professional armer or disarmer can be localized somewhere in this field *), necessarily in one of the four quadrants A, B, C and D. The greater part of the professional "armers" — and, as I presume, also a part of the professional "disarmers" — will meet each other in Zone A, while most of the non-official "ethical disarmers" will find themselves somewhere in Zone D. Both Zones, A and D, may be considered as "traditional" ones, A implicating traditional values as well as traditionalist roles ("si vis pacem para bellum", "no experiments"), D referring to traditional forms of opposition to such values and

*) Frankly speaking and to avoid any misunderstanding, our continua are neither intended as some contribution to sociological or psychological theory, nor do they pretend to be useful constructs for scientific verification. Together they are a complex index of a rather heterogeneous nature, "role definition" being a concept of another order than "value orientation". Both continua are primarily to be considered as clarifying concepts, their principal aims being to throw some light upon a rather confused ideological discussion, their procedure being to indicate a field in which the several ideological positions can be located and tackled by plausibility reasonings; all this being possible on the basis of generalized scientific insights.
roles (unhealthy basis of governmental policy, necessity for permanent criticism). Both traditional Zones are marked by positive signs (+) since “power” and “conservation” as well as “criticism” and “needs” will generally be felt as being consonant to each other. It is mainly studies in the field of personality theory, in particular those concerning authoritarianism and dogmatism⁹), that engender our expectations to the effect that such “cognitive harmonies” — resulting from cognitive styles as well as from affective modes of perception — will prove to be rather structural ones*). On the other hand, Zones B and C will be regarded as “experimental” ones, as deviances from traditional views and policies. B implicates some ad hoc oppositions, C referring to some “silent”, potential oppositions. Both Zones are marked by negative signs (—), since “power” and “criticism” as well as “needs” and “conservation” will generally be felt as being dissonant to each other. People in both experimental zones will often feel themselves exposed to inner conflicts; those in the utmost corners of both zones will suffer from frustration. Such extreme ideological positions are rather incidental ones. However, for the reasons mentioned (the growing complexities of modern security planning; the “new logic” of modern arms), one might expect these “experimental” ideological positions to become more structured ones.

Psychological theory also points to some other relevant evidences. For instance, and rather tentatively, the distinction between power and needs, indicating a value orientation resulting mainly from personality variables, will prove to be of more “fundamental” nature than is the case with the distinction between “conservation” and “criticism”, the latter resulting mainly from professional ideology. Of course, there is some correspondence between personality and the choice of an occupation (including its ideology), but such correspondence is never an absolute one, even not in the case of the “profession of arms”. Hence, a person may be exposed to “ideological cross pressures” stemming from professional identification versus characterological disposition. To put it briefly and in terms of our scheme: when considered as cleavages, the horizontal borderline AB-CD will prove to be more difficult to pass than is the case with the vertical one (AC-BD). Power and needs positions are of a rather immovable nature, as compared with conservation and criticism positions.

When mapping out the cleavages between the several ideological positions, we have


*) It would be going far beyond the scope and the intentions of this study to open up a discussion about these expectations. Our continua are based upon certain fundamental socio-psychological concepts and insights. Readers interested are invited to read principally the brilliant survey by Eckhardt and Lentz, especially their factor analyses, and to consult the stimulating theoretical study by d’Amato. In many ways, our continua are to be understood as being complementary to their findings. For a “survey of surveys”, see Herbert C. Kelman: “Social-Psychological Approaches to the Study of International Relations, Definition of Scope”, in H. C. Kelman (ed.) “International Behavior, a Social-Psychological Analysis”, New York, 1965; William Eckhardt & Theo F. Lentz: “Factors of War/Peace Attitudes”, Peace Research Reviews, I, 5, Oct. 1967; distributed by the Canadian Peace Research Institute, Clarkson, Ontario, Canada. Anthony A. d’Amato: “Psychological Constructs in Foreign Policy Prediction”, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. XI, no. 3, p. 294-311.
necessarily had to ignore their tangents. In fact, all the differences mentioned are gradual ones. One may favour traditional policies or traditional oppositions to such a policy more or less dogmatically, and one may adhere to new, experimental insights more or less emphatically. When drawing a straight line at an angle of 45° through the point of intersection of both continua, bisecting both Zones A and D (Armers and Disarmers!), we construct an imaginary index*) to localize (measured) "traditionalism", (as well as "experimentalism") in ideological positions.

* Through lack of any empirical testing, we simply use both extreme fourths of the diagonal, which are the resultants of the extreme fourths of both continua as indicators of "ideological rigidity" within both traditional views. However, ideological rigidity partly stems from a more general pattern of cognitive rigidity, sometimes labelled as "closed mindedness", or as "dogmatism". One might expect some differences between both continua in respect of the measure in which their respective extremes correlate with this personality-based general cognitive rigidity. Taking our haphazard "extreme fourth measure" as a relative one, relative to the state of affairs within the other dimension, one could add the annex (tentatively modified) figure to figure 4.

Fig. 4. "traditional" and "experimental" ideological positions; ideological rigidity.

Fig. 4a. expected high correlations of ideological positions and "general cognitive rigidity" ("dogmatism").

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Both ends of this index indicate extremely traditional ("traditionalist") ideologies. Or, to put it in other words: the ideologies at both ends are characterized by a diametrically opposite position to each other as well as by a common (dogmatic) style of cognition. As is often stated, those at both ends are unable to communicate. Their contradictory frame of reference as well as their cognitive style makes any debate useless. The nearer a person is located in the middle of this index, the higher will be his capability to relativise traditional views as well as his capacity to listen seriously to his opponents. Generally, the remoter (x) a certain position is from this index, the more rigidly "experimental" its nature will be.

Persons or views with high scores for "needs" and "conservation", or for "power" and "criticism", will be depreciated by both groups of traditionalists, though for different reasons. After all, in a debate, when confronted with the many "obvious" traditional arguments, such extreme experimentalists will prove themselves rather unbalanced. As a rule, they will find it rather difficult to integrate their "conflicting" reasonings into an ideology of a rather permanent and overt nature (see fig. 5). Persons or views with rather moderate scores for (one of) both values will be more tolerated, especially by the moderates among the traditionalists.

![Fig. 5. estimated normative harmony and conflict within ideological positions.](image)

This leads to a tentative answer to our main question: where is a debate useful? To put the question means to answer it, at least partially. In any case, debates are possible and useful somewhere the "inner magic square" (A_4 \ldots \ldots D_4), in any case, they are neither useful nor possible among persons localized in the extreme corners of our map. (A_1 \ldots \ldots D_1).
Within this “magic square of moderates”, two kinds of communication are possible: between persons either from fields adjoining each other (A₄ - B₄; B₄ - D₄; etc.), or from fields without any common borderline (A₄ - D₄; C₄ - B₄). However, such a distinction does not seem to be a relevant one, since within this inner square all ideological positions are relative and relativised ones. Contrary to this, such a distinction might make some sense when applied to debates between exponents from the horizontal fringe of our map (minus both extreme corners) and persons from the inner square. Hypothetically, persons with high values for “power” will generally not be willing to enter into serious discussion with “moderates”, unless they have something ideological in common. Thus, debates between A₄ and A₂ could prove rather useful, while debates between A₄ and B₂ may be impossible, etc. In view of what has been argued in respect of the rather “immovable nature” of the vertical dimension, the same may be expected to hold true once more for debates between the vertical fringe and the inner square. Debates between A₄ and A₃ will turn out to make more sense than between A₄ and C₃, etc.

III.

These latter remarks have brought us to the borderline of scientific plausibility and speculation, of hypothesis and phantasy. (Maybe, they have even pushed us over this borderline). Nevertheless, we should like to continue and finish this exploration by taking a short walk on speculative ground. When trying to map out the several ideological cleavages and tangents, one might expect such ideological positions to be partly understood as reactions to specific security policy practices, both this reaction and the perception of such practices being a function of social position and of psychological disposition.

Furthermore, we have taken the line, that, as a rule, almost all security polices of almost every country are characterized by relatively high values for “power” and “experience”.

What will happen, one may ask, if such a policy has been changed fundamentally?
Suppose, a certain government starts relativizing the relevance of “power” and “experience” to security policy formation. Furthermore, suppose that such a government would survive politically, and that such an “experimental” policy would come into existence. Of course, such a change will meet approval as well as encounter much opposition. However, the manner in which this shift in policy formation is perceived, will to all intents and purposes be largely divergent. Within the “magic square” such a new course will meet much approval: the moderately traditionals (as well as the moderately „experimentals”) will welcome the new policy as a testimony of good conduct before their respective “absolutists”. Furthermore, some movement may be expected, in particular from and within the (horizontal) fringe. The traditional opposition will to a certain extent find the ground cut from under their feet. Many of them will become less critical, though ideologically somewhat dissatisfied; others will appear to be more moderate all along the line, while yet others will hesitate to consider the new course as new anyway.

In the opposite Zone (A) also some movement and counter-movement will take place. Some people will find themselves supporting a more moderate ideological position, while others, alarmed by the new course, will be inclined to be less in favour of experimental or relativist positions than they were before. Many of the absolutists will prove to be incapable of joining the new policy and will tend subsequently to consider themselves as farm dogs once more.

One could continue speculating, but this would be beside the question. When introducing change, movements and countermovements will occur. In all parts of our landscape some people are present, before and after — albeit often other people, and other numbers of people. When introducing change some selection takes place: one has to show one’s colours.

When introducing change — and what kind of a change! — the dogmatic, absolutist proponents, the closed-minded people, who are cognitively incapable of listening
to and debating seriously the respective arguments, are separated definitely from the relativists. Thus, psychologically, this process of selection may implicate a crystallization of personality types, this bearing some influence upon the distribution of ideological positions over the landscape we have mapped out.

Figs. 8 and 9. relative willingness to debate, resp. before (fig. 8) and after (fig. 9) the introduction of an "experimental" security policy formation.

In other words, by introducing change, both the dogmatic proponents as well as the dogmatic opponents to traditional security policy formation are becoming isolated, technically as well as — much more important — socially.