Prospects for NEW WARS in the 21st Century

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Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this article is to carry out an analysis of the main presentations, ideas and classifications of the new wars that have occurred during these first years of the 21st century, and what will be the nature, type and / or classification of the warlike configurations that they will have to happen in the coming years of this century, these conflicts are a sample of the level of evolution of political, strategic, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural thought in society.

**Method:** This converges three research methods: 1)Qualitative research focusing on the research process 2)Literature research according to the characteristics of the purpose 3)Technical research on the level of knowledge achieved. It is a qualitative study that analyzes the way war progresses and the evolution of political-strategic thinking, and this approach allows us to visualize the future of warfare in the 21st century and how it will be used.

**Results:** Humanity faces a revolution in strategic thinking, characterized by military actions that are displaced from their main and direct role in the course of the war, giving rise to different types of warfare planned with the common denominator of using integrated attacks, aimed at exploiting different sources of vulnerabilities, facilitating the exploitation of more and more non-military measures, including economic reprisals, propaganda, political subversion and the use of the media of social communication and mainly cyberspace, this being a real new form of warfare.

**Conclusion:** The new wars of the 21st century are being presented with new multi-causal characteristics (violent, interactive nature and ideological foundation), another characteristic of these multidimensional conflicts is their way of waging war, the participation of new non-state actors, non-military third parties but with interests and active participation in war actions, facilitating the use of asymmetries, a mixture of all the old characteristics, imply new terms such as hybrid and fifth generation wars.

[Keywords] Map of Violence, War, Asymmetric, Hybrid, Unrestricted

1. Introduction

Since the creation of man as the preponderant entity on the planet, his history has been war. If this assertion is correct, it can be argued that the way in which wars have been carried out is a true reflection of behavior, the need for human development; Therefore, the wars that the human being has had is a sample of his development in the way he handles it, conducts it and sustains it. Alvin and Heidi Toffler(1994) state that “the way we make war reflects our way of making money, and the way we fight against war reflects the way we liberate it.” [1].

The nature of war is not new, because being a violent act of clash of wills between two actors, what is really new is the means that these actors incorporate in the execution of the war, allowing the effects of these means develop new forms of confrontations. Situations such as the
diffusion of technology or the rise of non-state actors make it necessary to propose a new paradigm in the way of facing threats. Geopolitical and ideological transformations have also played their preponderant role in the wars of this century, however, the decisive factor has undoubtedly been technological superiority[2]. The participation of third parties to support with means, but avoiding the deployment of units on the ground has been one of the continuous forms of conflicts of high and medium intensity that have marked the beginning of the 21st century, since the no direct participation of Powers interested in wars have marked the conflict scenarios in the Middle East.

The response of a state to any conflict is based on the transversely and synergy of its actions through all the tools it possesses, combining political, diplomatic, economic and military actions; being of utmost importance, the strategy at the highest level, which is understood as the dialogue between the political and military entity, and whose essence is the harmonization of the two elements in order to achieve the political objective of the war[3]. Before starting with a new classification of wars that humanity will have to face in this 21st century, it is of utmost importance to review and not leave out of place the last classification of wars of the 20th century, made by Rear Admiral Eri Solis Oyarzun in 1997[4], since this classification of wars is still in force, however they are less and less prevalent even when they have full validity, since in this new century, there are states that could reach a confrontation of those indicated in Annex A “Classification of the 20th century Wars”[3][5]. Due to what has been described above and without changing the main meaning of the classification carried out by CA Solis Oyarzun, we describe this classification very quickly, in order not to lose this information and to think that the new forms of war that will be presented in the 21st century and that will be exposed here replace the previous ones, on the contrary, it is the interest of this author that in order to have a clear, precise and adequate panorama, this classification is considered as an antecedent of the new wars of the 21st century.

For purposes of ordering and study, wars are classified according to the parameters indicated: a)International Law, b)Participating Entities, c)Amplitude of the Conflict, d)Theater of Operations, e)Political Objective and f)Weapons Used.

International right. - It considers two types of war: Regular and Irregular

Regular War. - It is the one that is carried out in accordance with the laws and uses of International Law and with the organized and legally commanded forces of the adversaries(uniform, organic stability, responsible leaders). It also follows a well-determined phasing arrangement.

Irregular War. - It is the one who does not comply with International Law.

Participating Entities. - It considers two types of war: International and Civil.

International War. - They are those warlike conflicts where two or more sovereign States confront each other.

Civil war. - It is an internal war in which compatriots fight each other to conquer power. It materializes when the country's Armed Forces divide and incorporate the fighting sides.

Amplitude of the Conflict. - Taking into account the quality and quantity of the belligerent nations and the geographical extension affected by the war, they are classified as: a)Great War or Generalized, b)Local or Localized War, and c)Guerrilla War.

Great War or Generalized. - Its scope is global; all countries are involved in the conflagration directly or indirectly.

Local or Localized War. - Armed confrontation between two countries with reduced potential, its consequences do not go further their borders and its repercussions are only limited to the belligerents.

Guerrilla War. - It is a kind of war, it also corresponds to a method of waging war, and finally, it represents a phase of subversive warfare and tends to be confused with it[5][6].

Theater of Operations. - Taking into account the operational space factor, the theater can be: Land, Sea and Air; However, theaters are not strategically simple but a mixture, consequently, there are wars: a)Maritime-Land, b)Air-Maritime, c)Air-Land and d)Air-Maritime-Land.
Weapons used. - According to this parameter, wars can be: a) Conventional, b) Chemical, c) Biological and d) Nuclear.

Political Objective. - With reference to the political objective, as the generator of wars, these are classified into two categories: a) War of Unlimited Objective and b) War of Limited Objective.

Unlimited Objective War. - Generated by a political objective of such importance that it forces the belligerents to fight to the end of the forces after its achievement.

Limited Objective War. - Generated by a political objective of reduced value for both rivals, who do not need to destroy all of the opposing forces, if we only want a small sacrifice from the enemy.

It is reaffirmed that this classification is in force, even when it describes mostly wars that occurred during the 20th century. As shown in the following <Figure 1>.

**Figure 1.** Classification of wars in the 20th century.

### Classification of wars in the twentieth century

- **International right**
  - Regular war
  - Irregular war
  - International war
  - Civil war

- **Participating entities**
  - Great war or generalized
  - Local or localized war
  - Guerrilla war

- **Amplitude of the conflict**
  - Land
  - Sea
  - Air

- **Theater of operations**
  - Unlimited objective war
  - Limited objective war

- **Political objective**
  - Conventional
  - Chemical
  - Biological
  - Nuclear

Note: Taken from the book strategy manual volume I. Naval War Academy of Chile[4].

### 2. Map of Violence of the 21st Century

Before continuing with the explanation of the violence map of the 21st century, it is necessary to state the main reason why it is stated that, in the new century, new wars have occurred and will occur. Globalization is a consequence of the fracturing and termination of the economic forms of negotiating, supporting the markets and maintaining the old power structures; due to an accelerated and dynamic economic, technological, political, social and cultural process on a world scale that consisted of the growing communication and interdependence between the countries of the world getting together their social and cultural markets, through a series of social, economic and political transformations that give them a global character[3][7][8].

The interdependence between the states in each region, currently it also responds to a series of changes that have been taking place since the end of the 20th century, even though it is
necessary to emphasize that the conflicts and wars that have occurred still maintain the preponderance of the political character, that means, the old and new wars go on the continuity of politics by other means; to be emphatic these new wars are being presented with new multicausal characteristics (violent nature, interactive and ideological foundation), another characteristic of these multidimensional conflicts is their way of waging war, the participation of non-state actors, non-military third actors but with interests and active participation in the war-like actions, as well as the use of asymmetries, a mixture of all the old characteristics, imply novel terms such as hybrid and fifth generation wars [1][9].

Being the states the organizations that maintain the monopoly of military power, to ensure the peace of their inhabitants and citizens, a reflection of the approval of the International Community to the human being and the protection of their rights, it has led to the inclusion of unilateral violence against civilians in the pattern of contemporary armed conflict [3][8][10].

In order to present the most recent classification of the new wars of the 21st century, the typology used by the “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute” (SIPRI) will be applied as the first analysis of the new wars and their characteristics:

The number of conflicts. - According to SIPRI researchers, in the first decade of the 21st century there has been a certain downward trend in conflicts, this is affirmed because between 2001 and 2010 there have been 400 violent actions, in which only 69 were armed conflicts, with terrorist actions and the insurgency as the main protagonists of the first years of the century [5][8][11].

In the second decade of the 21st century, violent actions have increased, mainly due to the reactions of the Arab Spring and its consequences in civil wars in several nations in the Middle East. Without a doubt, civil wars in both Africa and the Middle East have marked this decade of the new century.

The level of intensity. - So far in the new century, high intensity conflicts and classic wars in which several states have remained at war for several years, moreover, thousands of people have disappeared have also been reduced.

Military interventions in failed nations, in matters of attacks against the security of people and violations of human rights, have allowed coalitions and alliances of both the UN and NATO, to carry out operations that have not lasted for several years, reaching the objectives and pacifying and stabilizing the zone and the states, even though most of them later continue in civil wars.

The number of victims. - At this point, the new wars of the 21st century have made a great difference, because in the last century most of the victims were military because of the violent actions of the wars, however, so far this century there is a greater number of civilian victims, due to the participation of non-state, non-military actors in the map of violence characteristic of the new wars [8][12].

Combat methods such as asymmetric wars, hybrid wars, 4th and 5th generation warfare, and cyber warfare, do not differentiate combatants from non-combatants, affecting both civilians and military, increasing the victims of these new wars.

To the spatial context. - Within this classification, two trends that have marked the conflicts in these 20 years of the 21st century can be seen: a) Reduction of inter-state conflicts / Prevalence of civil or internal conflicts, and b) Conflicts are no longer limited to an specific zone of the territory / The internal and international border is not always clear and sharp.

Prevalence of civil conflicts. - Conflicts between states or interstate are less and less and their reduction has caused civil or internal conflicts in each country to be more visible, problems such as insurgency, fight against transnational organized crime, war against drug trafficking are some of the conflicts, that make states take measures to counteract these threats, in these conflicts non-state actors mix with civilians, preventing their identification and on several occasions, civilians are affected as a result of state actions.

The internal and international border is not always clear and sharp. - The internal conflicts of each state are currently based on problems such as: civil wars, counterinsurgency and war
against drug trafficking, in these cases there are third parties that support with means, but avoid their deployment with units on the ground, affecting the borders of states making these conflicts regional in many cases[2][6][8].

To the actors. - The new wars of the 21st century, have new protagonists, the years in which wars were established between two states with clearly defined armies are left behind, the current conditions as has already been evidenced and explained, in which civil conflicts are those that have greater preponderance, those define that the actors are the following: a) Non-state actors, such as: 1)insurgent political groups, 2)insurgent guerrillas, 3)militias, 4)local and international paramilitary gangs, 5)terrorist groups with transnational connections, 6)organized transnational crime groups, 7)drug traffickers and narcoguerrilla; and b)military and private security companies.

Non-state actors. - Currently, the vast majority of actors in contemporary armed conflicts are non-state actors against them, but there are few in which government forces confront regular forces. The loss of the strictly military character of armed conflicts has been described as "demilitarization of armed conflicts", this expression being useful to explain the dilution of the characteristics of the modes of combat and the use of force in conflicts, this diversity of actors that intervene in current armed conflicts, implies that most of them are asymmetric, since the parties that face are very disparate and use non-proportional methods[3][13].

Military and private security companies. - This phenomenon arose after Operation Iraq Freedom 2003, in the second Iraq war, when the United States government could not clearly define a political objective that would allow the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government and stabilize the country[9][10][12].

This situation is part of a broader condition called "The privatization of security" that has very serious consequences on some central aspects of security and international order. Privatization affects the process of transformation of state sovereignty, security and conflicts, and global governance. There are negative consequences of the actions of these companies: they cause serious damage to the security of people, even affecting the identity and autonomy of weak states, through the external introduction of imbalances between the parties in conflict[8][9][14].

The Causes and Objectives. - With reference to these points, the wars of this new century are characterized by: a)Conflicts for identity reasons(ethnic, religious, national or tribal), b)Conflicts for resources(energy, minerals, food, aquifers), c)Changes in power structures(geopolitical and geo-economics readjustments, demography and internal social divisions such as religious and economic).

All these causes and objectives described before are not so new, since in the last century several of these reasons were the cause of wars and inter-state, regional and even global conflicts. However, such as it has already been described, the wars for resources are the ones that are marking their future the most, since the states must ensure a better future for their inhabitants and must ensure that their living and non-living natural resources are maintained in such a way that allow them to support their settlers.

Tactics and Combat Instruments. - In the new century, the tactics used in conflicts are based on the violence applied to the actors: a)violence for political purposes, b)organized violence for profit and private purposes, c)violence against civilians, d)terrorist techniques, and e)guerrilla techniques. As for the instruments in this century, the use of small arms and light weapons are those that have the greatest use, because the in-surgency, terrorism and guerrillas use this type of weapon for its acquisition on the black market[5][15].

The financing or economics of conflicts. - The economy of the current wars is strongly marked by corruption, the privatization of violence and, in some cases, the criminalization of the State. The methods used by the parties to finance themselves vary from revolutionary taxes, kidnapping, looting, the black market and the illegal traffic of products and merchandise(weapons, resources, oil, precious stones, minerals, drugs[10][12].

The pattern of regional conflict. - Four zones are proposed based on the presence or absence or the greater or lesser probability of armed conflicts: a)zones at war, b)zones without war,
c) zones in peace and d) pluralist security communities. This pattern continues today: there are conflicts in all areas, but the risk of leading to armed conflicts is not the same in all of them.

The relationship between conflict and security. - Most normative and institutional instruments for conflict resolution are designed for a world of states and interstate conflicts in which the greatest threat was the armed attack of another state, so the new wars that have been indicated are taking place a real assessment of the relationship between the conflict and security, since conflicts in which civilians are most threatened by mixing with non-state actors such as guerrillas, paramilitaries, terrorists and insurgents, where international relations and operations other than war they are the ones that mark its actions in the new century.

After the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the world underwent a resounding change in security processes and procedures in order to contain the threats that have evolved and that global vulnerability increases, due to the presence of insurgent groups, terrorists and narco-guerrilla. As shown in the following <Figure 2>.

**Figure 2.** Classification of wars according to the 21st century map of violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wars in the 21st century</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of conflicts</td>
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<td>The financing or economics of conflicts</td>
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<td>The pattern of regional conflict</td>
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<td>The relationship between conflict and security</td>
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### 3. The Current Trend of the Conflicts of the 21st Century

Before continuing with the explanation of the violence map of the 21st century, it is necessary to state the main reason why it is stated that, in the new century, new wars have occurred and will occur. The nature of conflicts in the 21st century will continue to maintain the relationship established by Karl von Clausewitz in his book “On War”, as a political instrument and mainly the relationship of the trinity, with the passion of the population, the rationality of politicians and the will of the military[8][10].

The World Economic Forum has identified a series of dynamics that could shape armed conflicts in the short and medium term in the new century. Among them, the following deserve special attention:
1) The growing technological gap, which it has been established between the countries with greater technological development and the countries of the third world, facilitating those countries that do not have access to this technology to use forms of un-conventional confrontations, which it will fundamentally take place in an area indeterminate that begins to be known as the “gray area”[13][16].

2) The speed which armed conflicts are unleashed and developed, this directly affects the transition in the phases of a crisis, a situation that increases the level of uncertainty in international relations and, on the other hand, the level of isolation and alert-ness of security mechanisms in different countries.

3) The impact of the new weapons systems and areas of action, which will lead to a possible arms race between states and per-haps between regions, it could trigger regional instability, mainly when it is necessary to limit the access of these systems to several countries that cannot maintain internal order.

4) It is to be expected that future conflicts will shift their actions towards new domains such as cyberspace and outer space, Antarctica, the Arctic and the depths of the oceans will be new spaces to dispute their control. Different activities are those that these places are expected to allow, such as the exploration and exploitation of resources such as oil, natural gas, minerals and other living and non-living resources of interest to humanity and their sustainability.

4. New Ways of Making War

So far in the 21st century, the new ways of making war are marked by the methods of confrontation and the objectives to whom the attacks are being directed, therefore, the following are the forms of wars that are being marked and will maintain in this century: 1)Fourth Generation Wars or Asymmetric Wars, 2)Hybrid Wars, 3)Fifth Generation Wars and 4)Wars in Cyberspace or Cyber Wars. To chronologically locate the wars of the first, second and third generation, they were exclusive for the confrontations of states against states and that they manifested from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, ending the Thirty Years' War, and beginning the institutionalization of the state monopoly of the exercise of violence[17].

Fourth Generation or Asymmetric Wars. - In order to analyze and explain what fourth generation warfare is, we must first define what is understood by Asymmetry, synonyms are uneven, irregular or unbalanced, lack of symmetry. All these definitions present us with a clear idea that asymmetric warfare is that conflict that occurs between two sides without there being a symmetry of means and participants. Asymmetric warfare is not new and of recent appearance in this century, since wars like Vietnam were a faithful reflection of the use of an unequal combatant power and method of use of its means. However, this method of war has been used with greater initiative and fervor by the sides with fewer war resources and / or sophisticated weapons. In regards to insurgency, terrorism and transnational organized crime and the narcoguerilla, they are clear exponents of this kind of war. In asymmetric warfare, the state loses its monopoly on the use of forces, due to many actors who are not military, who mix among civilians and act as one of them but who at the same time are combatants, they become partisans against the order that the state tries to maintain. A key point to achieve success in the Fourth Generation War can be "lose to win", this means that it is not necessary to destroy the adversary but only to disarm him and a constant multidisciplinary work[18].

Hybrid War. - It is the conjunction of centrally planned, coordinated and controlled activities, which include both conventional and unconventional actions, carried out by military and non-military actors, and which are developed in areas such as traditional conflict, intelligence operations and influence, economic and financial security, energy security and cyberspace[9][19].

As can be seen in the definition, this type of war is a mixture of conventional actions, asymmetric actions that avoid direct confrontations, they are normally difficult to sustain both by state and non-state actors, creating an area called gray zone, where it is not clear what type of
conflict theory can be applied and also what type of legislation will be the most appropriate, the International Law of Armed Conflicts and / or the laws and norms of control of a state. Colonel Eugeny Messner in the seventies, based on a study of the conflicts of the Cold War, determined that in the future the potential objectives to be achieved in wars would be: 1) The destruction of the moral enemy, 2) The defeat of the main opposition group of the adversary, whether military or civil, 3) The capture or destruction of objectives of high psychological and military value and 4) the influence on the morale of potential allies. In this same study, Col. Messner indicated that these objectives could be achieved by actors that would be grouped into four categories: 1) group of protesters capable of generating social instability, 2) covert actors who carry out illegal activities ranging from sabotage to terrorism, 3) irregular groups of armed resistance and 4) conventional armed forces[10][20]. It can be expressed that hybrid warfare is a product of globalization and constitutes the natural reaction of the weak and a style of warfare typical of advanced societies. It is that the freedom granted by technological, financial and economic advances, collaborate and help any actor to carry out illicit actions unimaginable years ago. The free market and free trade agreements in the world, as well as they open the doors to trade, are also a way for criminal actors for a state[15][17][21].

Fifth Generation War. - This war is directly linked to ICT information and communication technologies and the actions of the media to affect the mind or psyche of the enemy or target audience. According to Pope Francis, the fifth generation war is carried out by globalized world imperialism, GWI, with the use of scientific mechanisms of total control, the use of mass media, financial systems such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other institutions that work for the GWI or for power groups that want to change the established order and current financial system[13][22]. The fifth generation war has as its object the direct manipulation of the human being through his neurological part. It is evident that here they are working with binaural waves and components of magnetite crystals of the brain and the methods on their possible manipulations, and, in general, everything that has to do with neurology, for the conditioning and manipulation of people[14][16][23].

Cyberwar. - War in cyberspace can be defined as the set of actions that are carried out to produce alterations in the enemy's information and systems, while the information is protected against the attacker's systems. In the 21st century where most states have their records, databases and information in computer infrastructures, these data can be subjected to interference, attempted theft or impairment of their fidelity, which they can be attacked by military or non-military offensive, but of a computer nature through hackers who implant computer viruses that can damage, erase and / or affect information of high value to a state. There are several types of cyberspace attacks, however, all these attacks can be detected, avoided and controlled with a correct procedure and control system for computers and infrastructure[9][13][16]. The implementation of information security policies makes it easier to detect in time possible attacks by cybercasts who try to impersonate or steal data from the state or key state institutions.

5. The Unrestricted War

The Unrestricted War corresponds to a proposal defined by two Chinese Colonels, Quio Liang and Wang Xiangui, who expressed their thoughts in a book named in the same way[24]. They argue that "using all methods, including armed forces or non-armed forces, military and non-military, lethal and non-lethal, to force the enemy to accept our own interests." The concept of war is expanded based on the new possibilities of exercising violence, which those are not limited only to military operations. Therefore, the diversity of means that can be used today in the exercise of war has broadened the very concept that distinguishes it[5][25].

The Unrestricted War can be understood as a combined war that transcends the main areas and methods of military and non-military affairs, where all the dimensions that influence national security must be included and where a political objective is pursued through exercise of
violence in a broad sense. In other words, it goes beyond the domain of the military to unrestrictedly combine elements from the different scopes of security, surpassing its borders, through combinations of the supranational, supra-domain, supra-media and supra-levels, in order to control the adversary[16][26].

For a war to be considered unrestricted it must meet the requirements of non-military war operations, which it is established, according to Chinese writers, by disinformation and the control of certain sensitive areas for a country and its society, this is due to add the intervention of other actions of violence such as political, restrictive economic, technological and mainly actions on the supply of strategic resources of the states[9][18].

As can be seen, the definition of unrestricted warfare becomes a combination of asymmetric warfare, hybrid warfare and fifth generation warfare whose actions affect the world strategic political scene, this theory and form of war proposed by the Chinese colonels is focused on a strategic political level, where the planning and orientation of the war must consider all the powers of the state, to face a situation that threatens the security of its inhabitants. As shown in the following <Figure 3>.

Figure 3. Ways to wage war in the 21st century.

6. Conclusion and Implication

The nature of war is not new, because being a violent act of clash of wills between two actors, what is really new in the 21st century is the means that these actors incorporate in the execution of the war, allowing the effects of these means, develop new forms of confrontation. Humanity is facing a revolution in strategic thinking, characterized by military actions that are displaced from their main and directing role in the course of the war, giving rise to different types of war planned with the common denominator of using attacks of integrated character, aimed at exploiting different sources of vulnerabilities, facilitating the exploitation of more and more non-military measures, including economic reprisals, advertising, political subversion and the use of the social media communication and mainly cyberspace, being this a real new form of warfare.
The new wars of the 21st century is being presented with new multi-causal characteristics (violent nature, interactive and ideological foundation), another characteristic of these multi-dimensional conflicts is their way of waging war, the participation of new non-state actors, third parties non-military but with interests and active participation in war actions, facilitating the use of asymmetries, a mixture of all the old characteristics, imply new terms such as hybrid and fifth generation wars. The Stockholm International Peace Search Institute, characterized by carrying out different studies and analyzes on the new wars and their characteristics, it has made possible to identify the violence map of the 21st century, in which it is stated that unilateral violence against civilians it is the pattern of contemporary armed conflict.

The World Economic Forum has detailed a series of dynamics that could shape armed conflicts in the new century, making it possible to identify the growing technological gap between countries, the speed which armed conflicts are unleashed and developed, and the impact of new systems for weapons as the reasons for new conflicts. So far in the 21st century, the new ways of making war are marked by the methods of confrontation and the objectives to whom the attacks are being directed, that allows the following forms of wars that are being marked and will continue identifying this century: 1) Fourth Generation Wars or Asymmetric Wars, 2) Hybrid Wars, 3) Fifth Generation Wars and 4) Wars in Cyberspace or Cyber Wars.

7. References

7.1. Journal articles


7.2. Books


7.3. Additional references


8. Appendix

8.1. Authors contribution

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<th>Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Corresponding Author*</td>
<td>SP -Make a significant contribution to collection ✓ -Final approval of the paper ✓ -Corresponding ✓ -Play a decisive role in modification ✓ -Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data ✓ -Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers ✓ -Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper ✓</td>
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