

Graduate Conference of the European War Studies Network

Paris - January 27th-28th, 2020

Deadline to submit abstracts: November 12th, 2019.

Contact: Marie Robin, marie.robin@sciencespo.fr

The changing character of war: new Just Wars or just new wars?

Assessing the strategic, legal and ethical consequences of the changing character of war



CENTRE THUCYDIDE

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The Graduate Conference and the War Studies Network

The new security environment has brought defence and war-related issues back on the policy agenda in Europe. To some degree, the pluridisciplinary study of war also re-emerges on the academic agenda, as illustrated by the development of several centres or projects examining war in European universities. While the United Kingdom has a clear head start in that field, with a long tradition of “War Studies”, this development is more recent for mainland European universities and scholars and practitioners alike have come to the realization that War Studies largely suffer from a lack of communication between the disciplines and between the countries¹. Nevertheless, several very active research centres can be identified in European countries². This academic interest must be welcome, as it promises exciting new research in the pluridisciplinary study of war and its relationship to peace.

¹ Olivier Schmitt, “Si Vis Pacem, Intellege Bellum. Etudier la guerre pour préparer la défense”, *Note de l'IRSEM* n° 38, 9 May 2017.

² David Galbreath and John Deni, *Routledge Handbook of Defence Studies*, Routledge, 2017.

To support these developments, the War Studies Network³ - which was created at the initiative of the Center for War Studies at the University of Southern Denmark and inaugurated in October 2018 in Odense, Denmark - proposes to facilitate exchanges between research centres in order to cooperate on research, teaching and publications, thus contributing to put War Studies at the forefront of research agendas in the humanities and the social sciences, and meaningfully contribute to war-related policy debates at the European level. The network now gathers 20 pluridisciplinary centres dedicated to War Studies in the UK and mainland Europe.

Consubstantial to the wish to promote international and interdisciplinary research in defense and security is the desire to contribute to the emergence of a new generation of researchers working on defense and war issues. The War Studies Network aims at making them gather, discuss and confront their ideas, at least once a year, during a special Graduate conference designed for them. Dedicated to PhD students, this two-day conference aims at reinforcing the European dialogue on War Studies.

Topic of the conference

The first edition of the War Studies Network's conference will take place in **Paris on January 27-28, 2020**. Located at the heart of the Latin neighborhood of Paris, the Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas will host the event.

The topic for the first edition of the War Studies Network's Graduate Conference is:

The changing character of war: new Just Wars or just new wars? Assessing the strategic, legal and ethical consequences of the changing character of war

Machines, robots, artificial intelligence and drones. New technological features of conflicts increasingly challenge the traditional conception of war as theorized by grand military strategists, including Sun Tzu and Clausewitz⁴. The rise of the machines additionally questions the ethical nature of conflicts, and the literature on Just wars⁵. Can a robot be morally accountable? Can a robot distinguish between combatant and noncombatant and take all feasible precautions before shooting? Is the Just War

³ For any information on the War Studies Network, please contact : Dr. Olivier Schmitt, schmitt@sam.sdu.dk.

⁴ FREEDMAN Lawrence, *The Future of War: A History*, Public Affairs, 2017.

⁵ See for instance : ARKIN Ronald, « Lethal Autonomous Systems and the Plight of the Non-combatant », *AISB Quarterly*, No 137, 2013; JAY Bradley (ed.), *Killing by Remote Control: The Ethics of an Unmanned Military*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013; *Journal of Military Ethics*, "Special Issue : Cyberwar and Ethics", volume 12, 2013, Issue 1; KAHN, Paul W., "The Paradox of Riskless Warfare", *Faculty Scholarship Series*. Paper 326, 2002.

literature relevant to analyze new wars? Is it strategically valuable to rely on robots on the ground?

Beyond technology, the increasingly asymmetric nature of current conflicts also questions the nature of war and its ethics⁶. The increasing involvement of nonstate actors: private military companies, armed groups, NGOs, religious actors, private firms etc. blurs the borders between combatants and noncombatants, as well as between war time and peace time. Among nonstate actors, who can be the legitimate authority to wage war? Can there be a responsibility from actors outside the State domain? Can religion, economic benefits, climate change, passions etc. be just and legitimate causes? Is it justifiable to use force as self-defence against information manipulation or cyber operations?

This conference intends to examine some of the main ethical, legal and strategic challenges posed by the emergence of new actors, new technology and potential new causes of war to decisionmakers and scholars alike.

The contributions could fall along the following lines:

- **War and technology:** enhanced soldiers, drones, Artificial Intelligence, Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), weaponry etc.
- **New actors, new practices?** Religious actors, nonstate groups, nonstate warfare, NGOs, women and gender, private military companies, private sector, etc.
- **Reinventing just wars:** disinformation, cyberoperation, just war theory, international law, international justice, lawfare, etc.
- **Causes of war:** Climate change, access to natural resources, emotions, reputation, role of international organizations, etc.
- **The future of War Studies:** challenges of the discipline, future issues at stake etc.
- Contributions that do not fall along these lines will also be considered.

The conference welcomes contributions from **various disciplines** included in the War Studies (political science, law, history, economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, humanities etc.) Applicants should note that this graduate conference gathers European universities but does not have in any way a specific focus on European

⁶ See CRAWFORD Neta C., "Just war theory and the US counterterrorism war", *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 1, issue 1, 2003, p. 5-25; GENTRY Caron E., "Epistemic Bias: Legitimate authority and Politically Violent NonState Actors", *The Future of Just War: New Critical Essays*, p. 17-29; GROSS Michael, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

studies. Applicants working on regional studies, transatlantic issues and War studies in general are most welcome.

Organization board

- Pr. Jean-Vincent HOLEINDRE, Professor of Political Science (Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas)
- Marie ROBIN, PhD student in political science (Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas / University of Southern Denmark).

Members of the War Studies Network

- Center for War Studies, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark.
- Department of War Studies, King's College London, United Kingdom.
- Center for War and Technology, University of Bath, United Kingdom.
- Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- Changing Character of War Programme, Oxford University, United Kingdom.
- War, Literature, Culture research cluster, Oxford University, United Kingdom.
- Literature and War, Leicester University, United Kingdom.
- Center for the Cultural History of War, University of Manchester, United Kingdom.
- Ways of War Centre, University of Reading, United Kingdom.
- Institute for the Study of War and Strategy, University of Saint Andrews, United Kingdom.
- International Studies, Loughborough University, United Kingdom.
- Centre Thucydide, Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas, France.
- Schaeffer Center for Genocide, Human Rights, and Conflict Prevention, American University of Paris, France.
- Center for International Security Policy, Hertie School of Governance, Germany.
- Institute for Security Policy, Kiel University, Germany.
- Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, University of Hamburg, Germany.
- Research cluster "Polemology and legal ethics", University of Vienna, Austria.
- UCD Center for War Studies, University College Dublin, Ireland.
- Stockholm Centre for the Ethics of War and Peace, Stockholm University, Sweden.
- Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

- Centro Universitario di Studi Strategici Internazionali e Imprenditorial, University of Florence, Italy.

To submit

Abstracts - which include a title, a summary of up to 350 words and a short biography of the author(s) - should be sent to Marie Robin (marie.robin@sciencespo.fr) **before November 12th, 2019.**

Calendar and practicalities

- Deadline to submit abstracts: November 12th, 2019
- Choice of the accepted contributions: November 2019
- Deadline for sending the papers: January 6th, 2020
- Conference: January 27th-28th, 2020

The conference will be held in Paris. No funding support is provided by the War Studies Network, nor by Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas. Applicants are advised to seek funding for travel/accommodation from their home institution.

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