

The search for a concept of war in times of New Wars

The working title of Sebastian Schneiders thesis is “*Die Frage nach einem Kriegsbegriff in Zeiten der Neuen Kriege*” (“The search for a concept of war in times of New Wars). There, he wants to deal from a philosophical perspective with the question of what the concept of “war” means, or can or should mean, in the current (global political) situation. As empirical studies show, the classic inter-state war as a form of a violent conflict is giving way to more sub-state forms of conflict. Today, most wars are civil or guerrilla wars or terrorism, not conflicts between countries. In political science, the (disputed) concept of the New Wars has established itself as the term for such conflicts. Since labelling a conflict as a “war” does not merely describe a conflict situation, but also defines responsibilities and enables actions which are, from a moral philosophical perspective, problematic, he wants to question the concept from a philosophical point of view. What does it mean when we talk about “war”? In what circumstances can the word “war” legitimately be used for a certain conflict, and how can we distinguish “war” from other forms of violent conflict such as crimes of an international scale? To provide an extensive overview, he will also examine the approaches taken by political science and international law.

PhD Dissertation Project Sebastian Schneider, M.A.
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