

11. Berliner Colloquium zur Zeitgeschichte

Western Societies and »New Wars«

Convenor: Sönke Neitzel (London School of Economics and Political Science)

Conference language: English

26 and 27 April 2013

Questionnaire

Session I Society

Introduction Sönke Neitzel

Chair Anna Geis

What is the significance of »New Wars« in the public opinion?

Which explanations are used in public discourse to give reason and meaning to the waging of war?

From critical reflection to »military pornography« (e.g. stylish magazines on the special forces, weapons, ordinances): What is the scope of public discourse on »New Wars«?

What role do social media (blogs!) and computer games play in public communication about »New Wars«?

How is warfare itself discussed in public?

To which extent has the public image of the armed forces been changed by »New Wars«?

How does the public perceive civilian-military relations?

Heroes? Victims? Perpetrators? What are the master narratives in the public discourse about soldiers in »New Wars«?

Have public perceptions of soldiers changed due to the (increasing) integration of women into armed forces?

What can be said about the military's integration into society?

Has the social structure of the military changed since 1990?

What impacts have »New Wars« had on the social prestige of the military?

Under which circumstances is the public willing to accept casualties?

Session 2 Politics

Introduction: Klaus Naumann

Chair: Bernd Greiner

What about the classic notion of war as a continuation of politics by other means?

What are the strategic concepts of political elites in »New Wars«?

Which strategic interests are supposed to be achieved by going to war or by remaining at war?

Is there a strategic culture and who represents it?

Has the attitude of the political elites towards war and the military changed since 1990?

Do political decision-makers (or their advisors) have competence in military and strategic affairs?

Do political and military elites share the same value system?

To what extent are war-related decisions of policymakers driven by public opinion?

Is there a widening civilian-military gap?

And if so, what are the consequences?

To what extent is there a primacy of politics?

What is the military's impact on political decisions?

Session III Military

Introduction Sönke Neitzel

Chair Klaas Voß

What can be said about the soldiers' self-perception?

To what extent is it influenced by public discourses on »New Wars« or on national (military) history?

Western armies saw intense fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. How has this fighting experience changed the self-perception and mentality of today's soldiers?

Is the »warrior« a dominant archetype for NATO soldiers?

Has the self-perception of soldiers changed due to the integration of women into the armed forces?

Are there national »warrior cultures«?

Or is a »warrior culture« rather a transnational phenomenon driven by combat experience?

Are there any differences in the value systems of today's Western armies?

To what extent do different and possibly even opposing identities exist within national armies (»miles protector« vs. »miles bellicus«)?

How has a »post-heroic culture« influenced the armed forces since 1990?

How does the military perceive civilian-military relations?

What is the military's perspective on the primacy of politics?

Does the military claim a special role in politics?

What is the military's actual impact on political decisions?

How is the relation between warrior ethos and democracy perceived and discussed in various countries?

Session 4 History

Introduction Simon Ball

Chair Rachel Utley

What can be said about the entangled relationship of past and »New Wars«?

To which extent and in which way have the »New Wars« changed public discourses about past wars (e.g. World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam)?

How does the perception of history influence the value system (e.g. notions of bravery and heroism) of today's armies?

What key factors explain the formation of a military tradition?

To what extent is it influenced by non-military factors (e.g. public discourse, political culture)?

With regard to the armed forces as an institution, what is the impact of »institutional memories« and »institutional cultures«?

Suggested Reading

Anthony Forster, *Armed Forces and Society*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; 253-270

Anthony King, The Afghan War and »postmodern« memory: commemoration and the dead of Helmand. In: *The British Journal of Sociology*. 61(2010),1; 1-25

Edward Luttwak, Post-Heroic Warfare and Its Implications. In: *International Symposium on Security Affairs, 1999-2000*; 127-139

Harald Müller, Transformation stress: democratic soldiers between ideals and mission impossible. In: Sabine Mannitz (Ed.): *Democratic Civil-Military Relations. Soldiering in 21st Century Europe*. London: Routledge, 2012; 271-291