How do Wars End?

A Multidisciplinary Enquiry

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Abstract

The cessation of military confrontations rarely coincides with the end of war. Legal and political matters continue after the last shot has been fired, civilians driven from their homes try to rebuild their houses and their lives, veterans need to adapt to their new role in civil society, and the struggle to define the history and the significance of past events only begins. In recent years, in particular, the changes in the character of contemporary warfare have created uncertainties across different disciplines about how to identify and conceptualize the end of war. It is therefore an opportune moment to examine how wars end from a multidisciinary perspective that combines enquiries into the politics of war, the laws of war and the military and intellectual history of war. This approach enables both an understanding of how 'the end' as a concept informs the understanding of war in IR, in international law, and in history as well as a reconsideration of the nature of scientific method in the field of war studies as such.

Introduction

How do wars end? At a glance, war is seemingly describable as a structured sequence of events typically starting with a declaration of open hostilities and culminating with the victory of one party and the defeat of another, both validated by an armistice or a peace agreement. Upon closer examination though, just as a war can start before an official declaration is issued or without it, so it can have endings of different kinds that change over time. The development of the atomic bomb, for example, presented politicians and the military with the possibility of a cataclysmic ending. In historiography, the debates among

the Joint Chiefs of Staff preceding the decision to use the bomb in 1945 and their different visions for how to end the war are only now coming to light. In International Relations, the understanding of war as a succession of events with a clear beginning and an end has been an acceptable simplification only until the end of the Cold War. Nowadays, this conception is challenged by the changing character of war,[1] the emergence of 'new wars'[2] and new weapons,[3] as well as the rise of peace studies and critical security studies, which have questioned any easy distinction between war and peace.[4] In International Law the term 'war' has long lost its traditional meaning and has been replaced by more technical terms such as 'international' and 'non-international' armed conflict. For international lawyers the different temporal dimensions of war today include also the emerging body of 'jus *post* bellum.'[5]

1. The multidisciplinary nature and objective of this Special Issue

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[1] See e.g. Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War: A History*, New York: Penguin, 2017; Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (eds.), *The Changing Character of War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

[2] See the debate following the publication by Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity, 1999. See e.g. Mats Berdal, & David M. Malone, 'Introduction', in Mats Berdal & David M. Malone, eds, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner (1–15), 2000; Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. London: Zed, 2001; Edward Newman, "The 'New Wars' Debate: A Historical Perspective Is Needed." Security Dialogue, vol. 35, no. 2, 2004, pp. 173–189.

[3] See e.g. Christopher Coker, *The Future of War: The Re-Enchantment of War in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004 and *Future War*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015; M. L. Cummings, "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Warfare," London: Chatham House, 2017, available at https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-01-26-artificial-intelligence-future-warfare-cummings-final.pdf, accessed 23 October 2018; John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, *Drone Warfare*, Cambridge: Polity, 2014; Frank Sauer & Niklas Schörnig, "Killer drones: The 'silver bullet' of democratic warfare?", *Security Dialogue*, 43(4), 2012, 363–380; Joshi Shashank, "Army of none: autonomous weapons and the future of war," *International Affairs*, Volume 94, Issue 5, 2018, 1176–1177; P. W. Singer, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, New York: Penguin, 2010.

[4] See e.g. Resat Bayer, "Peace transitions and democracy", *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5), 2010, 535–546; Eric M. Blanchard, "Gender, international relations, and the development of feminist security theory", *Signs* 28(4), 2003, 1289–1312; Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998; Berry Buzan and Lene Hansen, The Evolution of International Security Studies, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; Berenice A. Carroll, "Peace research – Cult of power", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16(4), 1972, 585–616; Catia Confortini, "Galtung, violence, and gender: The case for a peace studies/feminism alliance", *Peace & Change* 31(3), 2006, 333–367; David Fabbro, "Peaceful societies: An introduction", *Journal of Peace Research* 15(1), 1978, 67–83; Johan Galtung, "Violence, peace and peace research", *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3), 1969, 167–191; Nils Petter Gleditsch, Jonas Nordkvelle and Håvard Strand, "Peace research – Just the study of war?", *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(2), 2014, 145–158; Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL Press, 1997; Jeff Huysmans, "Security? What do you mean?", *European Journal of International Relations*, 4: 1998, 226-255.

[5] See only Carsten Stahn and Jann K. Kleffner (eds.), *Jus Post Bellum: Towards a Law of Transition From Conflict to Peace*, Den Haag: TMC Asser, 2008, and Carsten Stahn, Jennifer S. Easterday and Jens Iverson (eds.), *Jus Post Bellum: Mapping the Normative Foundations,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This special issue focuses on the specific challenge of understanding not only how wars end, but also how we can talk of the end of wars in the first place. While in the 18ᵗʰ century victory could be proclaimed by winning the field of battle, how might we today conceive of the end of war given the blurry forms that the seemingly endless war on terror has morphed into? If our standard vocabularies for the description of an event seem ill-suited to characterize the phenomena at hand, which new legal or political concepts do we need to develop to understand how contemporary wars end? 'The end' as concept is surrounded by a whole cluster of related terms and denotes such varying ideas as cessation, teleology, finality, conclusion, exhaustion, etc. Uncertainties about how to identify and conceptualize the end of war raise a whole constellation of questions that are relevant to different disciplines. How do philosophers define ethical responsibilities *in bello* and *post bellum* if the boundary between war and peace is ever so blurred? How do strategists define their objectives if the teleology of action becomes uncertain? How do historians bracket the known endings of war and delve into the arguments that preceded them? Which answers can international law provide for the ending of wars – and which challenges remain or have recently arisen?

This special issue combines enquiries into the politics of war, the laws of war and the military and intellectual history of war to understand how 'the end' as a concept informs the understanding of war in IR, in international law, and in history. It builds on research presented for the first time at a conference hosted by the Center for War Studies of the University of Southern Denmark in the autumn of 2016. Like that conference, this special issue seeks to show the added value of a multidisciplinary approach to the study of war in the 'War Studies' tradition. Initially dominated by military scholars, the field of war studies is today a genuinely multidisciplinary endeavour that 'embarks on the study of war widely and pragmatically'[6] and seeks to be relevant to academic and policy communities alike. This also reflects the fact that war itself is an area of multidisciplinarity from the point of view of scientific application (probably one of the oldest from an historical point of view), and warfare itself has been a key trigger of interdisciplinarity as "use-inspired basic research."[7]

And yet, publications building on the multidisciplinarity of both warfare and the war studies tradition are still sparse. The purpose of this special issue is threefold: first, it aims at

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[6] Sten Rynning, 'War Studies – En Introduktion', *Oekonomi og Politik* Vol 90(1), pp. 3-10, 2017. Translated by the authors.
[7] Steve Fuller, "The Military-Industrial Route to Interdisciplinarity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*. Oxford University Press, 2017, 01-26.

being relevant to scholars from a number of different disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities and to contribute to academic debates about war termination. Second, it seeks to reach out and be relevant to practitioners. Third, the issue tries to create a platform for further communication and dialogue across disciplines gesturing toward not just a multidiscliplinary, but a truly interdisciplinary approach to war studies. We have attempted to achieve the first goal by bringing together scholars from the disciplines of international relations, public international law, and the humanities and asking them to use the figure of the ending as a focal point to crystallize their contribution. At the same time, we have constituted ourselves as a multidisciplinary editorial team, which includes an editor wearing two hats as both legal scholar and academic adviser to the Danish Foreign Ministry (Martin Mennecke). The link to practice is also sought out through a good balance between theory- and practice-oriented contributions and the inclusion of an article on the seemingly interminable war in Afghanistan written by a former career Army officer and adviser to the US State Department (Christopher Kolenda). Finally, we have experimented with the third goal by including some reflections on the utility and feasibility of multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in this introduction. The overall result is a hopefully engaging collection of articles offering new perspectives on how we can understand, manage, enforce and recollect the end of wars.

2. On the added value of multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity

Since its first institutionalization in schools and universities, scientific progress has developed within the boundaries of disciplines, which can be defined as specific bodies of knowledge or skills that can be taught and learned.[8] It was mainly in the 19th century, however, that urbanization and industrialization created clear demands on institutions to produce knowledge that could serve the growing capitalist economy and develop disciplinary expertise.[9] This process together with the emergence of the 'human sciences' as separated from the natural sciences, produced a fragmentation and specialization of scientific knowledge, which already back then was a problem for many. In particular, starting from the assumption that there is no knowledge except scientific knowledge, since the beginning of

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[8] David Alvargonzález, "Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, Transdisciplinarity, and the Sciences," *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 25:4, 2011, 387-403.

[9] Robert Frodeman, "Interdisciplinarity," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, vol. 1, 2013, 495-497.

the twentieth century positivist scholars have stressed the need to progressively unify science in order to understand the harmony and the interconnectedness of different parts of the world. [10] This, however, entailed attributing the natural sciences with some scientific superiority and a demand for all other sciences to adopt and adapt to the scientific method, as if there was only one scientific reason. A wave of contestation of such an approach to science has followed in the form of post-positivism, [11] which in the social sciences also translated into the emergence of critical, constructivist, post-modern and reflexive approaches within each discipline.

It is in this context that calls for multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research have been made from various corners of academia on the basis of the acknowledgement that different disciplines come with different epistemological concerns and distinct methods, which are the product of specific operations, relationships, and terms within each field. While transdisciplinarity demands transcending the disciplines, going across, through and beyond each individual discipline, the purpose of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research remains less revolutionary as they remain anchored to the independence and autonomy of each discipline. In particular, while interdisciplinarity analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole, multidisciplinarity draws on knowledge from different disciplines but stays within the boundaries of those fields.[12] All three operations can of course be interpreted in a positivist or post-positivist way. On a positivist view, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are just steps towards a unified science as disciplines are perceived as producing a dangerous fragmentation of reality and transdisciplinarity has therefore a higher status as it aims to achieve not only the unification of sciences, but also the unification of multiple heterogeneous disciplines and beliefs.[13] From a post-positivist perspective, instead, they are goals in and of themselves and meant to enhance knowledge and understanding of given problems while also producing greater awareness of disciplinary differences and identities, which are not perceived as necessarily hindering scientific progress.

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[10] See e.g. I. Hacking, *Representing and intervening*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[11] See e.g. J. Dupre, *The disorder of things*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993; D. Kellner, *Media culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the post- modern*. London: Routledge, 1995.

[12] B. C. K. Choi, and A. W. P. Pak, *Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 1. Definitions, objectives, and evidence of effectiveness. Clinical and Investigative Medicine* 29, 2006, 351–364.

[13] See e.g. Edgar Morin, Interdisciplinarité et transdisciplinarité," *Transversales Science Culture* 29, 1994, 4–8.

Our approach to multidisciplinarity reflects the simple recognition that while transcending disciplines should not be a necessary end-game, dialogue across disciplines and cross-fertilisation should be sought out, especially when it comes to investigating complex social phenomena such as warfare which develop 'on the ground' also thanks to a multidisciplinary application of scientific knowledge. In addition, war and its termination continue to raise difficult questions in various disciplines which is why we undertook a multidisciplinary enquiry into its meaning. It has, however, been argued that '*claims of holistic expertise are always political claims*' and that 'we cannot find powerful evidence that holistic approaches to enquiry improve our ability to act or to make effective decisions.'[14] Moreover, some evidence exists that multidisciplinary research does not improve publication chances since most academic journals are still discipline-based.[15] So why exactly do we believe two, three or four heads are better than one?

First of all, following Clignet and Fertziger, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity enhance scientific innovation as each one of them avoids what the authors call 'independent inventions', that is, redundant concepts or theories developed within different disciplines because of lack of awareness of each other. [16] Second, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity imply the cultivation of a set of personal virtues such as open-mindedness, disciplinary modesty, and the ability to see things from different perspectives, which might lead to research trajectories that would be unthinkable otherwise.[17] Finally, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity push a case-based approach – as with this special issue and its focus on war endings – that in turn leads to critical reassessments of scientific 'laws' and general principles.[18]

At the same time, we also recognize that calls for multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity have been used by academics 'to gesture toward conducting research that's more relevant than "normal" disciplinary knowledge, while avoiding the painful task of actually working with people outside the academy' and that therefore multidisciplinarity and

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[14] D. Sarewitz, "Against holism," in P. Galison and D. J. Stump (eds.) *The disunity of science*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p.73; emphasis in original.

[15] See e.g. Lee Sigelman, "Are Two (or Three or Four … or Nine) Heads Better than One? Collaboration, Multidisciplinarity, and Publishability," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 42(3), 2009, 507-512.

[16] Remi Clignet, Allen Fertziger, "Independent Inventions in the Social Sciences: A Plea for Multidisciplinarity", *Science Communication*, 11(2), 1989, 170-180.

[17] Frodeman, "Interdisciplinarity."

[18] Wolfgang Krohn, "Interdisciplinary cases and disciplinary knowledge," in R. Frodeman (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of interdisciplinarity* (pp. 31–38). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010.

interdisciplinarity bring with it the risk of strengthening a certain academic tendency 'to get caught up in inside-baseball debates.'[19] For that reason our attempt to initiate a joint discussion across disciplines and with practitioners on the endings of wars is anchored in the specific characteristics of the war studies tradition and its aspiration to create such dialogue.

3. Setting up a dialogue between disciplines

In its attempt to facilitate multi- and even interdisciplinary research, this special issue has been put together with the explicit goal of enabling a fruitful dialogue across different disciplines as well as a pragmatic and at the same time reflective approach to the study of war. Following Klein, while multidisciplinarity involves encyclopedic, additive juxtaposition or, at most, some kind of coordination, but lacks intercommunication and the integration of disciplines, interdisciplinarity does precisely that – integrating, interacting, linking, and focusing.[20] This special issue constitutes a multidisciplinary platform that sets the stage for a truly interdisciplinary integration. With this objective in mind, we first organized a conference where the contributors to the special issue met and discussed their work amongst each other and with other representatives of the disciplines present in this issue. We then asked them to develop their contributions further, hoping the multidisciplinary conversation started at the Center for War Studies in Odense could lead them to new insights. The articles that now comprise the issue are therefore written from the respective disciplinary perspectives and reflect explicitly on how 'the end' of wars is conceptualized in particular fields and on the consequences this has for the understanding of war and peace. Yet, taken together, they form a multidisciplinary attempt to analyze the current meaning of how wars end. And in some cases they also display a quest for interdisciplinary integration. To name just one example, Cian O'Driscoll, by choosing to focus on Just War Theory and its ambiguous relations with the notion of victory, has ventured into the traditionally

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[19] Robert Frodeman, "The Future of Interdisciplinarity: An Introduction to the 2nd Edition," in Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein, and Roberto C. S. Pacheco (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of interdisciplinarity, Second Edition, On-line edition.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2017.

[20] Julie Thomson Klein, "Typologies of Interdisciplinarity: The Boundary Work of Definition," in Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein, and Roberto C. S. Pacheco (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of interdisciplinarity, Second Edition, On-line edition.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2017.

interdisciplinary field of ethics,[21] and he engages with popular fiction and poetry to support his argument alongside debates in strategic studies and international law.

When reviewing the contributions for the issue, we were struck by the rich insights captured in the multidisciplinary conversations before us – but also witnessed that more work needs to be undertaken before we can speak of genuine interdisciplinarity. In fact, while sometimes interdisciplinarity arises smoothly from the convergence of two or more disciplines in a given field and even gives rise to new independent and sovereign disciplines – as it has happened, for example, in biochemistry, geophysics, cybernetics or the science of climate change – at other times it requires targeted, explicit, and institutionalised efforts. Clearly, in the field of war studies, multidisciplinarity is nowadays perceived as a must, but it has not yet produced any clear interdisciplinary convergence. This introduction reflects the attempt of the editors at learning from the different articles in the collection. We do so with a view to emphasize the need for more actual multidisciplinarity in war studies and assert that such approach may lead toward an interdisciplinary research agenda.

A few key points emerge. The most obvious one is the elusiveness of the phenomenon at hand. As the articles show, war termination – arguably one of the most important elements of strategic thought – has not only been difficult to achieve; it is inherently difficult to grasp conceptually. As Cian O'Driscoll (from the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow) discusses in his contribution, the end of war has long been a difficult subject for Just War Theory due to the ethical problems arising from the concept of victory. Perhaps this should come as no surprise if we consider the phenomenon itself. The plural form of the noun in our basic question, How do wars end? signals not just the recurrence of warfare as a singular event, but the plurality of forms that wars have. In a detailed typology, Joachim Krause (from the Institute for Security Policy at the University of Kiel) lays out the wide variety of wars and the often stark differences between them. To properly think war termination, one has to acknowledge the multiple distinct types of war whose specific features have a significant impact on the character of their endings. For strategists to devise plans of action that might successfully bring wars to a

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[21] Carl Mitcham and Nan Wang, "Interdisciplinarity in Ethics," in Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein, and Roberto C. S. Pacheco (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of interdisciplinarity, Second Edition, On-line edition*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2017.

conclusion, they must first become fully cognizant of the differences between types of wars as well as between types of actual and potential war endings.

In the following section, two international law scholars contribute their perspectives on this matter. Cecilia M. Bailliet, from the Institute of Public & International Law of the University of Oslo, focuses on the relation between international law, the ending of wars and sustainable peace. Bailliet argues for adopting a 'strategic holistic approach' to attain positive peace after the end of warfare and underscores that international law needs to overcome its fragmentation to reflect the multiple dimensions of a post-conflict scenario.

Thomas Obel Hansen from the School of Law at Ulster University then returns to the plurality of wars that was highlighted in the aforementioned article by Krause – but Obel Hansen analyzes whether and how international criminal law can accommodate this plurality when it comes to prosecuting massive human rights violations. Looking beyond the law, Obel Hansen discusses the political tensions that arise when international law establishes a duty to hold war criminals accountable both during and at the end of wars.

In the fifth article, Phillip O'Brien from the University of St. Andrews unearths the key discussions that preceded the at once most emphatic and problematic way to end a war – the use of the atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. If in hindsight it is difficult to imagine alternative endings to WWII, O'Brien reveals that between the civilian and the military leadership, it was surprisingly the latter that voiced greater doubts about using the bomb. Among other things, military leaders were concerned about the reputation and global standing of the US in a post-war world and later worried that the while the bomb had ensured the Allied powers a complete military victory, it had failed to win the peace. If the atom bomb decision resulted in a decisive military victory, the meaning and the consequences of the bomb in the long run were anything but clear.

Several of these difficulties that beset war termination outlined in the first five essays are borne out by recent events as detailed in the final essay of the issue. Christopher D. Kolenda, who served as a task force commander in the Afghan Kunar and Nuristan provinces, examines the military and political quagmire of what Mark Danner has labeled the "forever war" – the American intervention in Afghanistan.[22] It is a cautionary, ongoing tale of what happens when politicians and military leaders fail to think hard about how wars should end.

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[22] See Mark Danner. *Spiral: Trapped in the Forever War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016.

If the individual essays cast new light on war endings within their respective fields, how might this light be deflected onto the discussions in adjacent fields? In other words, how might the different analyses of war termination gathered here learn from one another? Perhaps Just War theorists should indeed pay more attention to the concept of "victory," as Cian O'Driscoll argues. But what are the consequences of thinking this notion of "victory" into the strategic framework set up by Joachim Krause? Or how might the problems that have historically beset the notion of victory informed future political decisions to go to war and decide on their conclusion? Should accountability, in the form delineated by Thomas Obel Hansen, always already be a part of the mental framework of military strategists, and if yes, what might be done to ensure that it is? Will the increasing push for legal accountability and the arrival of new legal tools and institutions impact both the beginning and the end of wars in a way non-legal scholars still have to reflect in their own research? What is the response by other disciplines to the questions underlying Bailliet's call for a new approach to jus post bellum – what do scholars outside international law consider the meaning and value of 'positive peace'? Tackling such questions would be the next step. But first they must be posed.

4. Conclusion

In this introduction we have suggested that a multidisciplinary approach to the understanding of war ending can be both illustrated and fostered through multidisciplinary publications such as this special issue, because they serve as platforms to open a stable and durable dialogue across disciplines. We have showed how the articles in this collection talk to one another and how the very act of reading them in sequence may lead to new questions about war termination as well as lay the foundation for an even more ambitious and interdisciplinary approach to the problem.

At the Center for War Studies at the University of Southern Denmark, we have taken new steps to facilitate such course of action. We have established a Masters Programme in International Security and Law where we experiment with co-teaching and simulation games to nourish an interdisciplinary mindset for the practitioners of the next generation, but also to foster dialogue among faculty members from different disciplines. Every autumn we host an international, multidisciplinary conference as the one that triggered this special issue and

we have recently established a multidisciplinary Network of War Studies gathering all war studies environments in Europe. One of the goals of the network is to provide interdisciplinary education to the PhD candidates affiliated to the Network's member institutions. It is our belief that such endeavors are necessary to develop the mindset and the mode of research that the subject requires.

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