

Editorial

One and a half years ago we announced the first special issue of the Russian Sociological Review “Borders: Merging, Emerging, Emergent.” Three words echoing each other expressed exactly what we aimed to say: borders in the modern world have become less firm, they have undergone changes, and new borders have emerged, sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly. The new borderless world envisioned by the proponents of globalization is about to transform, at least partially, into a seemingly more familiar world of politically bordered territories, as if social evolution took another, backward step. We missed two important words in our tripartite slogan, and they *emerged* spontaneously in the papers we collected and published. The first word was “*contested*” and the second one was “*war*.” Borders, especially new political borders between territorial units would be *contested* and even destroyed during *wars*. The reasons are obvious: new borders might often not be recognized and legitimated by international treaties, and might not be well-embedded in any political geography as a common culture of spatial representations and the images of political landscapes.

However, the notions of borders and wars bring different questions and different themes, and the second special issue of the Russian Sociological Review goes beyond complementing the first. Announcing our second special issue we emphasized both the continuity and novelty of what we aimed to achieve:

Despite globalization, it is often assumed that the self-organization of society takes place within the secure borders of national states. We have to abandon this assumption since there are many instances of hybrid situations in the contemporary world. Examples of undeclared wars, terror, the strengthening of secret intelligence services, coups d'état, and revolutions challenge the traditional oppositions of the external and internal, or war and peace. Warfare and social order have always had an ambiguous relationship. Any warfare causes disorganization and disorder, but it also causes reorganization and the beginning of a new order. Warfare is directly related to the redistribution of resources, border shifts, and the hybridization of social forms. War metaphors permeate civil narratives. The chance of being killed may be higher in a peaceful city than on the front line. Wars now begin without a formal declaration. Peace is often made beyond legal systems, so there is always the possibility of breaching the peace without the fear of being accused of violating agreements, or of being unreasonable. Warfare transgresses the border between the real and virtual worlds, since we live in the age of information-, financial-, hybrid-wars. (Call for Papers)

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In a sense, it was an attempt to get more theoretically oriented papers, to avoid shallow actuality. What we did not know at the time was the growing and threatening actuality of any discussion of war. An old dictum says nothing is more practical than a good theory, but, in fact, we still hope that this striking actuality of the theme will not overshadow the theoretical importance of it.

Since its foundation the Russian Sociological Review has aimed to direct the attention of the academic and broader community to fundamental issues related to the foundations of social order. It has been considered a crucial focus and our editorial policy has been to publish research papers which shed light on how social order is maintained on different levels of social organization. It may seem that this special issue on war marks a shift towards a different kind of research focus — one that is opposed to social order. In the literature this focus has been generally described often in terms of social conflict and change. It can be even argued that war is a radical form of a social conflict that transforms social order. However, with this issue we would like to emphasize its fundamental relevance to the constitution of social order and the topic “State of War: Human Order and Social Orders” reflects our intentions. The central concept *state of war* was chosen very carefully. It appeared for the first time in the middle of the 17th century and in the history of ideas it was permanently associated with the great political thinkers who introduced the concept of war into the very construction of contractually established peace. War is not the absolute beginning of sociality. War is always there, not before, not after the peace, but rather as the dark side of any peace itself. Paradoxically, as it may seem, the wars between political units (i.e. modern states) as well as any other, e.g., partisan or hybrid wars of today, appear less important than this original war (“Warre,” as Thomas Hobbes called it). This is not true. “War writ large” has many faces, and it was our pleasure to get a number of papers where not only the ghosts of the old great thinker would be invoked, but these many different faces of war have been demonstrated with a theoretical subtlety and a practical sense for actuality.

We know that the sociology of war is still a marginal discipline despite the fact that it is becoming more and more popular and has a long and rich intellectual history with many influences from history, philosophy and political science. We wanted to provide a conceptual framework for the discussion of the issues of war in relation to the fundamental problems of sociology and political philosophy, namely the nature of social order within the conditions of warfare or the nature of a specific social order that has war in its core. This project is inevitably cross-disciplinary since it requires thorough historical and philosophical explorations into how war has been understood previously and what the current implications of these understandings are. The papers in this special issue focus on these two key areas. It is not surprising that a number of papers are dedicated to the discussion of the seminal book *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz, who is considered to be one of the forerunners of contemporary philosophers of war. Nicolas de Warren suggests a close re-reading of Chapter 1, Book 1 of the book and follows the philosophical method of Clausewitz in defining the essence of war. Kristof K.P. Vanhoute reconstructs Giorgio Agamben’s implicit references to the work of Clausewitz by establishing a “spectral kin-

ship” between Agamben’s ideas of the state of exception and the law of the escalation of extremes. Anna-Verena Nosthoff’s paper continues the discussion of Agamben’s political philosophy through the issues of pre-contractual violence and the future in Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. Another important thinker in the field—Carl Schmitt—is the focus of Arseniy Kumankov’s study. His paper is a reconstruction of Schmitt’s critique of Just War Theory and the implications of this critique for the political philosophy of Schmitt. João Carlos Graça and Rita Gomes Correia provide an overview of how history may be used to deepen our understanding of warfare and its relevance to economic activities. Close empirical studies of war are often difficult to carry out and social scientists often use representations in order to study these events. Elizaveta Polukhina and Alexandrina Vanke deal with such empirical phenomena, i.e., war memorials. They compared the social practices of using two war memorials, in Moscow and Volgograd. Their study contributes to the understanding of politics of memory regarding war.

The review section opens with a paper by Alexander Lunkov who traces the history of Russian “sociology of war” back to the philosophical debates of Russian military thought of the 19th century. The review by Irina Trotsuk considers contemporary fictional literature on war and asks a number of methodological and ethical questions, i.e., what a “story” or a “narrative” is and who is entitled to speak and describe war events in a contemporary society.

The discussion section has two essays. The first essay written by Hrachya Arzumanian suggests an outline for a new paradigm for the 21st century security environment of the post-soviet geographical area, while the second by Oleg Kildushov proposes a series of theses to construct a robust conceptual approach to study social orders via the analysis of war.

Finally, we publish reviews on books that address issues of war from different angles: Caldor’s book on new and old wars (by Alexander Finiarel), Boëne’s recent book on military sociology (by Evgeny Blinov), Pavón’s book on the political philosophy (by Alexander Marey) and Ivanova’s and Sokolov’s book on early modern “post-Machiavellian” politics (by Alexander Markov).

We hope that it will be enjoyable and thought provoking reading and that this issue will launch and revive further discussions in the field.

The publication of this special issue would not be possible without the help and academic commitment of our colleagues from the Centre for Fundamental Sociology and those who served as anonymous reviewers.

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