Defining Militarism: Considering an Empirical Approach

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Abstract *The concept of militarism is becoming increasingly pertinent as it connects with foreign policy decision-making by rising powers and the acceptability of war in the international system. Scholarship on the subject has historically failed to differentiate the term from related concepts like imperialism and nationalism. Similarly, there have been few attempts at systematic operationalization to apply measures of militarism as either independent or dependent variables within empirical research. This article begins by surveying the literature on the subject and offering a descriptive perspective for why the topic has failed to emerge as an independent research program. In the second half, I begin with an argument for why militarism should be recognized as a phenomenon unique from either imperialism or nationalism and follow with a typology that offers a set of criteria by which its variations can be defined. Implications for past and future research related to the topic are developed.*

Since the end of the Cold War and particularly since the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, there has been much discussion about concepts like "forever wars" and the "military-industrial complex," two terms that have become salient within the contemporary zeitgeist. Concerns about nationalism and imperialism have increasingly sifted to the forefront of debates regarding US foreign policy. Moreover, within the re-ignited discussion about renewed great power conflict between the US and China and considering the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, overt and aggressive foreign policies involving direct military employment appear to be

becoming more common in the global community and war may be becoming seen once again as a more legitimate policy tool by world leaders.

Broadly speaking, the analysis of these occurrences has fallen under the category of *militarism* studies. The principal concern is that 1) there is a rising trend of this so-called militarism within the international system and that 2) it can be traced to a paralleled growth of militarism within certain participating states. This combination of systemic and state-centered forces has significant implications for theoretical and policy-oriented conclusions within security studies and international relations more broadly. Consequently, militarism should have a key conceptual role to play in re-evaluating interpretations of historical events and trends that are often used in and across political science literature. The field has not yet established a consensus, operable definition of militarism in a systematic and applicable way for use in future research. Accordingly, this suggests that there should be an analytical re-evaluation of the current literature on the subject.

This paper will consider the evolution of militarism studies, identify problems in past and contemporary methodological approaches to the subject, and offer two typologies as a solution. The first will illustrate why militarism should be conceptually disaggregated from imperialism and nationalism. The second will offer possible approaches to measuring militarism more discretely and provide some examples illustrating distinct types of militarism throughout history. The terms I offer include appreciable and falsifiable measurements that can be applied at a variety of levels, from the individual to the societal. Briefly, I will spotlight examples of these types of militarism throughout history and offer potential methodological approaches to objective measurement.

I start by surveying the literature on militarism from the early twentieth century to the present day; in doing so, I show that, across time, militarism has been variously described either too narrowly or too broadly. Consequently, I argue that while militarism's intellectual history shows its importance as a subject worth studying, there has been no attempt at systematizing the concept in a way that allows it to be effectively used as a dependent or independent variable theoretical or analytical projects.

Tracing the Understanding of Militarism

Early Definitions and the conflation with Imperialism and Nationalism

The definitions for the term *militarism* and the often-adjacent *militarization, militarize(d)* and *militarized society* are abundant. They are usually defined as being meaningfully related (where militarization is the act of inducing more militarism and a militarized society is one with high militarism), but many authors have opted to create separate meanings for each.[1]

In the first seminal piece of 20th century literature about the subject, Alfred Vagts traced militarism as a social movement across time, offering the first real attempt at a conceptual description of the phenomon, defining it as:

[1] For an older spanning chronology, see Volker R. Berghahn, *Militarism: The History of an International Debate, 1861-1979*, 1st pbk. ed (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); For a more modern set of definitions from the critical school, see Anna Stavrianakis and Jan Selby, "Militarism and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century," in *Militarism and International Relations* (Routledge, 2012), 3–18; As an example of an author opting for distinct meanings between "militarism" and "militarization," see John R. Gillis, ed., *The Militarization of the Western World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989). He considers "militarism" to be more related to the dominance of military elites, while "militarization" refers to the preparation and organization for war. Finally, for a work that separates all three terms, see Patrick M. Regan, *Organizing Societies for War: The Process and Consequences of Societal Militarization* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994). Regan identifies militarized societies as those that are exceedingly prepared for war as the result of a public organizational process headed by military elites and a military-industrial complex.

> [M]ore, and sometimes less, than the love of war. It covers every system of thinking and valuing and every complex of feelings which rank military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, carrying military mentality and modes of acting and decision into the civilian sphere.[2]

Vagts notes that inherently stratocratic social structures in certain political hierarchies promoted a martial self-image among elites, but that as technology incentivized larger armies and the recruitment outside of nobility, a growing disconnect began to form in the cultural mindset of military elites less capable of transitioning to other types of leadership.[3] As an illustrative example related to the collapse of feudalism in Europe, he notes that various French nobleman bemoaned their own lack of religious fervor and willingness to engage in virtuous combat in Europe, restlessly identifying opportunities for conquest in the New World as potential replacements for the crusades of old.[4]

By illustrating the effect of militarism through the lens of sociocultural upheaval, Vagts builds the notion that militarism does not always affect the entirety of a society equally; indeed, he maintains the distinct recognition that although militarism can describe the broad orientations of states and governments, it can also describe the psychology and political dispositions of individuals as well. But while this early, multifaceted definition of militarism allowed for a more nuanced tracing of its effects within society, the ideological tumult of World War II would suggest to subsequent writers that imperialism, nationalism, and militarism overlapped so heavily that they should not be meaningfully disaggregated.

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[2] Vagts, 15.
[3] Vagts, 39–53.
[4] Vagts, 50.

In this context, Harold Lasswell identified the "garrison state" as a conceptual type of militaristic society where the military and the state are nearly one and the same.[5] As such, his definition of militarism remains heavily conflated with totalitarian nationalism. Critically, he proposes a key definitional component of militarism that has largely been maintained since his work: the broad connectivity and overlap of the military and civil sectors of society defined along Weberian ideal types. Unlike Vagts, Lasswell does not attempt to identify smaller, more discrete strands of militarism within a society, but rather claims that militarism should be defined as occurring when a state's civil component has largely or wholly been subsumed by military affairs – chiefly for the waging of war.[6] Going further, he continues to connect the authoritarian practices of a garrison state with its militaristic virtues, noting the increased importance of symbols and ceremonies in creating a general ethos that deems both the state and the military to be unobjectionable bodies.[7] By setting up his definition this way, however, he conflates nationalism with militarism without critically examining the inherent differentiation between the two concepts.

This has a problematic effect for the academic literature on militarism, as the smallest level of analysis justified for the subject was subsequently seen as the state.[8] By restricting militarism to only refer to instances of direct and overwhelming connection between civil and military affairs within a society, the concept becomes inexorably tied to discussions on nationalism within the larger scope of political science. Sub-societal and individual

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[5] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *American Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (January 1941): 455–68, https://doi.org/10.1086/218693; See also the edited volume discussing the modern relevance of the garrison state concept today, Jay Stanley, ed., *Essays on the Garrison State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351292207.
[6] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 456–58.
[7] Lasswell, 459–66.
[8] This can be seen in the chronology described in Berghahn, *Militarism*.

psychological aspects of militarism are thus under-discussed, with the former only ever brought up in sociological, Marxist, and critical theorist circles; and the latter only separately touched upon in military culture studies, military psychology, and international peace research.[9]

Certainly, it would be unfair to blame Lasswell's concept of the garrison state as the sole impactful force behind this deficiency in militarism studies. As Samuel Huntington writes in *The Soldier and the State*:

> [Lasswell] ruled out the possibility of continuing strife and adjustment. In this he reflected the liberal refusal to tolerate the prospect of continuous friction among social units… Lasswell's theory was a measure of the pessimism and, indeed, desperation to which the liberal was driven in contemplating the post-World War II scene. His was the

[9] For examples of work in the sociological, Marxist, and critical traditions see Ron Smith, "Aspects of Militarism," *Capital & Class* 7, no. 1 (February 1, 1983): 17–32, https://doi.org/10.1177/030981688301900102; Michael Mann, "The Roots and Contradictions of Modern Militarism," *New Left Review*, no. I/162 (April 1, 1987): 35–50; Martin Shaw, *Dialectics of War: An Essay in the Social Theory of Total War and Peace* (London: Pluto Press, 1988); Martin Shaw, *Post-Military Society: Militarism, Demilitarization, and War at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); For a concise history of work dealing directly with military psychology, see Carrie H. Kennedy, Matthew P. McCauley, and Eric A. Zillmer, "A History of Military Psychology," in *Military Psychology: Clinical and Operational Applications*, ed. Carrie H. Kennedy and Eric A. Zillmer, 3rd ed., 2022, 1–25; Some examples of peace studies literature tackling militarism include William Eckhardt and Alan G. Newcombe, "Militarism, Personality, and Other Social Attitudes," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 1969): 210–19, https://doi.org/10.1177/002200276901300204; Marek Thee, "Militarism and Militarization in Contemporary International Relations," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 8, no. 4 (October 1, 1977): 296–309, https://doi.org/10.1177/096701067700800402; M. V. Naidu, "Military Power, Militarism and Militarization: An Attempt at Clarification and Classification," *Peace Research* 17, no. 1 (1985): 2–10; Kenneth E. Vail and Matt Motyl, "Support for Diplomacy: Peacemaking and Militarism as a Unidimensional Correlate of Social, Environmental, and Political Attitudes," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 16, no. 1 (January 25, 2010): 29–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/10781910903486813; Also, for a discussion on gender differences in militarization (and the connection they have with nationalism), see Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Second edition, Completely Revised and Updated (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 108–14; in addition, see her more recent follow-up, which more directly addresses the concept, Cynthia H. Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, Second edition, Globalization (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); as well as Mary H. Moran, "Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building: Projects of the Postconflict Moment," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39, no. 1 (2010): 261–74, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-091908-164406; Amanda Chisholm and Hanna Ketola, "The Cruel Optimism of Militarism: Feminist Curiosity, Affect, and Global Security," *International Political Sociology* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 270–85, https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olaa005.

> voice of despair and hopelessness, the anguished recognition of the extent to which liberal illusions had been shattered by the stubborn grimness of the human situation.[10]

It is hard to ignore the ways in which experiences of World War II and the political realities of the Cold War impacted the academic conception of militarism. At that point, ideological militarism was still largely typified by Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and the Soviet Union.[11] Nuanced images of militarism were simply not as readily available – as a result, little of the security studies or civil-military relations literature cared to directly discuss the concept, and even when it did, not much was dedicated to underlying terminological questions.[12]

Attempts to Break Down Militarism: Reflecting on Underlying Characteristics

It was not until V.R. Berghahn attempted to look back on the historical question of what militarism was in practice that the term could be more fully conceptualized.[13] He argued that although the concept is essentially ambiguous, it can be thought of as either the importance a state places on its military in relation to its civil society or, alternatively, as a state's general disposition towards use of force.[14]

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[10] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 19. print (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2002), 350.

[11] Huntington, chap. 3. Huntington variously describes German and Japanese societies as militaristic while assessing the impact of cultural and political forces on the way soldiers and officers perceived war. To his credit, he comes close to offering some rough frameworks for future empirical work, but never explicitly puts forward any methods for operationalization.

[12] Similarly, Morris Janowitz also shied away from disaggregating anything about militarism specifically, although he did briefly describe what could be interpreted as individual-focused militarism: in his words "The Fighting Spirit." This idea, he admitted, is poorly defined, but at its root can be thought of as "the psychological motive which drives a man to seek success in combat, regardless of his personal safety." Unfortunately, the point was made in reference to technology and war, and Janowitz never followed through on the topic of the fighting spirit more thoroughly. So too, he never addressed militarism directly or defined it in any rigorous way. See, Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Free Press trade paperback edition (New York: Free Press, 2017), esp. 31-37.

[13] Berghahn, *Militarism*.

[14] Berghahn, chap. 6; Berghahn goes into a deeper discussion on the changes that Europe underwent with regards to these specific subjects in a later work. See Volker R. Berghahn, *Europe in the Era of Two World Wars: From*

After Berghahn, some of the literature began to see theoretical use in operationalizing the term further. Sociologist Michael Mann, for instance, describes militarism as "a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity."[15] He goes on to say that he perceives this definition of militarism as being notably narrower in scope than most of his contemporaries. If this is one of the two broad halves of militarism defined by Berghahn, then perhaps it might best be described as "behavioral" or "sociological" militarism, as it focuses on the underlying feelings that a society has towards the military and war. The other half, the desire to go to war and the frequent use of force might be then described as "dispositional" militarism, as it more directly describes foreign policy or a propensity towards certain foreign policy choices.

Intuitively, this raises the question as to whether there is an interplay between these two types of militarism. Are militarized societies (sociological militarism) more likely to engage in violent foreign policy (dispositional militarism)? And is the opposite true as well: does violent foreign policy produce militarized societies? Combining quantitative evaluations with a qualitative case study, Patrick Regan attempted to answer this question in one of militarism studies' few formalized efforts.[16] His differentiation between militarism (defined as "military-based values and ideas"), and militarization (defined as "the process of preparation for war") is based on the contrast described by John Gillis in his 1989 edited volume *The Militarization of*

Militarism and Genocide to Civil Society, 1900-1950 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009); see also James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*, 1st Mariner Books ed (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009).

[15] Mann, "The Roots and Contradictions of Modern Militarism"; For a longer discussion by Mann on the relationship between capitalism and militarism, see Michael Mann, "Capitalism and Militarism," in *War, State and Society*, ed. Martin Shaw (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1984), 25–46, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-17414-0_2.

[16] Regan, *Organizing Societies for War*.

the Western World, where he defines *militarization* as a military-industrial process and *militarism* as a the measure of a society's military-oriented culture.[17]

Regan's model of militarization offers some of the first real theoretical insight on conceptualizing militarism within an empirical context, creating a "militarization index" made up of six indicators:

a) active and reserve military forces

b) civilians working for the Ministry/Department of Defense

c) direct and indirect employees in weapons industries

d) veterans participating in veteran organizations, or in Great Britain, the number of people receiving war pensions

e) students enrolled in military-based education programs

f) an estimate of induced employment from the weapons industries.[18]

He concedes that the list does have some obvious omissions, most notably the government's budget and its relative focus on military projects, including research. Additionally, Regan focuses more on the military-industrial process of militarization and less on the soft, cultural aspects of militarism. Moreover, the overlap between militarization and industrialization confounds attempts to isolate non-material causal effects. Complicating this, his results show that highly militarized societies continue to become further militarized after international disputes while less militarized societies do the opposite.[19] This raises the question of how the cultural

[17] Regan, chap. 1, esp. 4-9; Gillis, *The Militarization of the Western World*.
[18] Regan, *Organizing Societies for War*, chap. 2, esp. 40-45.
[19] Regan, 144–51.

variables might differ between these two types of societies and what they role they play in changing outcomes. Still, his metrics provide clearly marked indicators that otherwise help guide the discussion of how to define militarism more generally.

Aaron Friedberg also writes about the garrison state as a concept and considers why the Cold War-era United States did not fall into the trap of becoming the prototypical garrison state.[20] He offers several answers to his own question, all of which serve as points of inductive reasoning in service of an eventual definition of militarism.

First, he explains that United States leadership had a set of choices regarding its military budget and eventually chose to privilege lower taxation over higher military spending for the sake of the long-term economic outlook.[21] Second, he shows that United States citizens rejected universal military training even though the government expressed significant desire to implement the policy.[22] Third, he charts the path of US industrial policy and demonstrates that while it prioritized military projects early on, domestic interests eventually prompted it to adopt a decentralized, market-based system.[23] Finally, he describes the conflict between the US government's desire to centrally plan the location of its industry and population as a defense mechanism primarily concerned with nuclear war and the economic laissez-faire mentality that stymied optimal logistical and industrial lines of military production.[24]

[20] Aaron L. Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?," *International Security* 16, no. 4 (April 1, 1992): 109–42, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.16.4.109; Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[21] Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?," 121–25.
[22] Friedberg, 125–28.
[23] Friedberg, 128–32.
[24] Friedberg, 132–36.

With this, we can gleam a general process of militarization and identify a set of indices to follow. This case, however, discusses why the United States *did not* become militarized rather than why it did. Inductively, this suggests that the same parameters could serve as useful measures of militarization overall; a state that prioritizes defense budgeting centered around military affairs might have militaristic qualities, a state that focuses its industrial policy around military affairs might have militaristic qualities, and so on.

Contemporary Militarism: Post-9/11 Efforts and Critical Security Studies

Militarism is also frequently used within a normative lens to analyze US foreign policy and military posture.[25] The set of critical literature focusing on this often privileges theoretically parsimonious definitions of militarism.[26] Both Chalmers Johnson's *The Sorrows of Empire* and Andrew Bacevich's *The New American Militarism* see the concept as almost indistinguishable from imperialism.[27] The two authors identify militarism specifically as it relates to United States foreign policy; as such, their conception of militarism and imperial overstretch also explicitly overlap.[28] Like Mann before them, both also focus on the interference between and overlapping

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[25] Catherine Lutz, "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002): 723–35, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.723 is a characteristic example of the type of literature that began coming out immediately after 2001. In her piece, Lutz presents a (negatively) normative definition of militarism within the context of social anthropological ethnography.
[26] As an example, Michael Mann continued to build upon his previous writings about US militarism into the millennium. See, Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (London; New York: Verso, 2005) The book details the claim that the United States is looking to impose itself on the global stage through its military policies. Chiefly, however, he argues that the upswell of nationalism after the end of the Cold War (and especially after 9/11) stands at the root of a new wave of imperialism and militarism, which he defines as inherently overlapping. Indeed, so strong are his considerations that militarism and imperialism are one in the same that he openly refers to the Bush administration as the "new militarists." 267.
[27] Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, 1st ed (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004) Johnson argues that the United States became militarized due to the preponderance of its "martial spirit" following World War II. Johnson's core timeline is based primarily off the one suggested in James A. Donovan, *Militarism, U.S.A* (New York: Scribner, 1970); Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*, Updated edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[28] Alongside Mann, other from the early 2000s also conflated the two concepts. See Carl Boggs, ed., *Masters of War: Militarism and Blowback in the Era of American Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Noam Chomsky,

of the civilian and military sectors is the chief concern when considering the level of militarism within a state or society.[29]

Chalmers Johnson explicitly identifies three generalizable markings of the overlap between militarism. First, the onset of militarism is denoted by the "emergence of a professional military class and the subsequent glorification of its ideals."[30] Within this measurement is the additional recognition of "civilian militarism," described as "the interference and intervention of civilian leaders in fields left to the professionals by habit and tradition."[31] Second, a political indicator of militarism can be seen in the "preponderance of military officers or representatives of the arms industry in high government positions," which constitutes a further breaking down of the nominally separated civilian and military ideal types of sectors.[32] The third hallmark of militarism is the privileging of policies that promote military preparedness.[33] These three markings of militarism parallel past efforts to define it, but similarly do not explicitly state any empirical methodological approaches for the purposes of measurement or comparison. Indeed, the inherent connection made between militarism and imperialism biases any attempt to establish an isolated definition.

Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance, 1st Owl Books ed, American Empire Project (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Clyde V. Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

[29] The popularity of Bacevich's book has since led to its definition serving as the basis for the definition used by subsequent works attempting to dissect militarism, especially within a US context. See, for instance, Christopher J. Coyne and Abigail R. Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism: U.S. Government Propaganda in the War on Terror* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2021).

[30] Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 58.

[31] Johnson, 60; A more recent work develops a different definition of "civilian militarism" that refers more to the presence of certain military-oriented values within society (closer to what I term cultural militarism later in the paper). See Saul M Rodriguez, "Building Civilian Militarism: Colombia, Internal War, and Militarization in a Mid-Term Perspective," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 1–2 (February 2018): 109–22, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617743201.

[32] Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 62–63.

[33] Johnson, 63.

Looking at work assessing military culture can also provide updated components for a new definition of militarism. Because of the need for a comparative framework, key elements of military culture that overlap with militarism should help identify a usable set of criteria. Peter Wilson identifies several overlapping metrics along these lines. Like military culture, militarization can be said to have political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions.[34] He describes political militarization as "the extent to which the state structure is geared for war," and explains that it will change alongside technology and doctrine.[35] He defines social militarization as "the proportion of the population incorporated into military institutions, and, by extension, involved in other preparations for war," noting that this can be further refined by including sub-societal variables like gender and class into the analysis.[36] Economic militarization, he explains, is like the social dimension in that it is "a matter of resource mobilization… [that] includes questions of proportion and flexibility, as well as the interrelationship between military technology, labor relations, and natural resources."[37] Finally, he argues that cultural militarization should be thought of as "the wider presence of military culture in society beyond military institutions."[38] Importantly, he notes the critical significance that should be placed on a society's acceptance of killing, willingness to use force as a state tool, and readiness to accept the hardship that occurs during the preparation for war.[39]

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[34] Peter H. (Peter Hamish) Wilson, "Defining Military Culture," *The Journal of Military History* 72, no. 1 (2007): 11–41, https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.2008.0041. When looking at military culture alongside militarism, Wilson described the current definition of the latter term as "highly problematic and ill-defined," criticizing its Eurocentrism, its focus on the 20th century alongside implicit connections to industrialization/modernization, and its general lack of formulaic explanation as an academic term. Additionally, he criticizes the normative moralizing baked into most of the literature surrounding militarism and militarization, arguing that much of the discussion has devolved into "essentially subjective value judgements."

[35] Wilson, 40.

[36] Wilson, 40.

[37] Wilson, 41.

[38] Wilson, 41.

[39] Wilson, 41.

Over the last decade, the topic of militarism in academia has largely been confined to the worlds of critical security studies and feminist security studies.[40] Although many of the schools' authors allow that militarism can indeed be thought of as existing along several analytical axes, including ideological, behavioral, and institutional, most argue that the broadest scope of interpretation, the sociological, is the one best used for their research.[41] A direct definition of this this approach is the "focus on the embeddedness of militaries, and war making and preparation, in society," with note that "sociological approaches understand militarism broadly, as in principle encompassing all of these other elements."[42] This widely encompassing scope is illustrated by Martin Shaw, who discusses what he terms "new militarism."[43] Principally, his interpretation focuses on the changes in the availability of technology to militaries and economic actors, and the inherent connections they have to civilian society.[44] "New militarism," he

[40] Here I will primarily reference work in critical security studies on the subject. For some examples of recent feminist security work, see Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*; Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism*; Other recent feminist work includes Cynthia Cockburn, "Militarism and War," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics* (Routledge, 2009); Annick TR Wibben, "Why We Need to Study (US) Militarism: A Critical Feminist Lens," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 1–2 (February 2018): 136–48, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617742006; Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, eds., *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, Praeger Security International (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2010). Importantly, both works build off Bacevich's definition of militarism. One related example of an intersectional study focusing on militarism is Michael L. Butterworth, ed., *Sport and Militarism: Contemporary Global Perspectives*, Routledge Research in Sport, Culture and Society 83 (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), which looks at the connection between sports media and cultural concepts of militarism.
[41] Stavrianakis and Selby, "Militarism and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century," 11–13; The entire edited volume in question serves as the most comprehensive recent look at militarism by the critical security school and includes several important articles employing an interpretive methodology to tease out different aspects of militarism and its impact on society. Anna Stavrianakis and Jan Selby, eds., *Militarism and International Relations: Political Economy, Security, Theory* (Routledge, 2012), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203101476; Published the year before was another edited volume with similar aims. See Kostas Gouliamos and Christos Kassimeris, eds., *The Marketing of War in the Age of Neo-Militarism* (New York: Routledge, 2011), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203130742.
[42] Stavrianakis and Selby, "Militarism and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century," 14.
[43] Martin Shaw, "Twenty-First Century Militarism: A Historical-Sociological Framework," in *Militarism and International Relations* (Routledge, 2012), 19–32.
[44] Shaw, *Post-Military Society*.

explains, can be thought of as a heightened, hyper-interfering form of societal militarism that incorporates all the penetrating qualities coming alongside new technological progress.[45]

The critical security school's reading works well theoretically, as its preference for parsimony produces a wider setting for critical discussion. When trying to operationalize militarism, however, this interpretation is not suitable. Subsequent critical looks at the subject have similarly rejected the use of tighter definitions of militarism, and at this point the literature is seemingly left with no real usable set of tools to analyze the subject further.[46]

Step 1: Separating Militarism from Imperialism and Nationalism

From a definitional standpoint, the conflation of militarism, imperialism, and nationalism bears semantic problems. The first step in creating an empiric typology for militarism is to explain its theoretical distinction from these other two concepts.[47] By separating out the terms, militarism becomes less a generalized, historical idea and more of a distinct and measurable phenomenon that can be independently operationalized for qualitative or quantitative social science research.

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[45] Shaw, "Twenty-First Century Militarism," 28–31.

[46] Much of the academic discussion currently takes place in the journal, *Security Dialogue*. For examples, see Anna Stavrianakis and Maria Stern, "Militarism and Security: Dialogue, Possibilities and Limits," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 1–2 (February 1, 2018): 3–18, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617748528; Bryan Mabee and Srdjan Vucetic, "Varieties of Militarism: Towards a Typology," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 1–2 (February 1, 2018): 96–108, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617730948; Victoria M Basham, "Liberal Militarism as Insecurity, Desire and Ambivalence: Gender, Race and the Everyday Geopolitics of War," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 1–2 (February 1, 2018): 32–43, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617744977.

[47] The issue of properly defining and separating out terms like imperialism and militarism, especially within the US context, has been recently noted in other fields as well. For a directly related discussion about the problems of considering imperialism and military policy within US historiography, see Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 1, 2011): 1348–91, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.5.1348.

I define imperialism broadly as the establishment of and control over a periphery by a substantively differentiable core region or polity. In this sense, one can imagine a society understood to be imperialistic that is not otherwise militaristic. Empires have never expanded through military coercion alone; throughout history many have extended their power at least in part through economic, diplomatic, and cultural means. Indeed, if we buy the premise that the modern period of international relations has exhibited a marked reduction in violence and war, then neo-imperialism has been predicated at least in part on the logic that coercive expansion and militarism are similarly becoming unnecessary for the maintenance of modern empire.

Even when adopting a more stringent definitional requirement that imperialism does indeed require military coercion, the theoretical separation between imperialism and militarism can still hold. Empires in decline, for instance, could be broadly described as displaying imperialistic tendencies or employing imperialistic policies without fundamentally focusing on militaristic expansion. So too, an empire in decline attempting to hold on to its various imperial territories might struggle with maintaining the positive perception of its military institutions, suggesting the contingency of the link between the necessities of imperialism and militarism.[48] Further showing this contingency, one can imagine the inverse: a homogenous, non-

[48] For a illustrative example of a state falling into militarism while defending a collapsing empire's territories, see Christon Archer's two works on the royalist army in the twilight period of New Spain: Christon I. Archer, "The Royalist Army in New Spain: Civil-Military Relationships, 1810–1821," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13, no. 1 (May 1981): 57–82, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X00006167; Christon I. Archer, "The Army of New Spain and the Wars of Independence, 1790-1821," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, no. 4 (November 1, 1981): 705–14, https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-61.4.705; Christon I. Archer, "The Royalist Army of New Spain, 1810-1821: Militarism, Praetorianism, or Protection of Interests?," *Armed Forces & Society* 17, no. 1 (October 1, 1990): 99–116, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X9001700105.

expansionistic and anti-imperial society forced into maintaining militaristic customs only out of necessity: for its defense against expanding rivals.[49]

A similar thought experiment can help to disaggregate nationalism from militarism, though the historical realities of nationalism may make neutral hypotheticals more difficult to imagine than they are for imperialism/militarism. If we take a similarly broad definition of nationalism as a general promoting of the interests of a specific in-group of people over that of out-groups, then it could be argued that militarism is but one of many potential strategies that said in-group could take. Imagine an ardently nationalistic state like the "homogenous, non-imperial society" described above, but now suppose that it is surrounded by militarily superior polities unable to differentiate between defensive and offensive military capabilities.[50] In this scenario, militaristic policies would presumably represent a suboptimal strategy for the survival of the nation in question; as such, especially if we imagine the consequence of a military loss, conservative nationalist interests would likely move towards more pacifistic strategies instead.

Illustrating the contingency of the reverse causal relationship is a bit more difficult, as there is evidence that the socializing tendencies of centralizing military institutions help build collective identities like nationalism.[51] That said, decentralized polities (feudal realms in medieval Europe, for example) can still exhibit strong markers of militarism while failing to

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[49] An interesting example of purely defensive minded military literature manifested culturally can be seen in the advent of "invasion literature" in the US and the UK during the late 1800s and early 1900s. See I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763-3749*, 2nd ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[50] This scenario makes explicit the problem of the security dilemma in international relations. See, Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 167–214, https://doi.org/10.2307/2009958.

[51] Morris Janowitz, "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies," *Armed Forces & Society* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1976): 185–204, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X7600200202; Maury D. Feld, *The Structure of Violence: Armed Forces as Social Systems*, Sage Series on Armed Forces and Society, v. 10 (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, 1977); Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*, Expanded ed., repr, Midway Reprint (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr, 1988).

develop a broader sense of collective identity as a result of the compartmentalized nature of their political structure. Decentralized but expansionist entities come to mind here – thinking only about economic expansion, for instance, allows for the inclusion of companies and corporations within this framework as a particularly salient ideal type, as many exhibit strong incentives to expand and grow but without the geopolitical realities that would otherwise require a military.

Below, I offer a preliminary typological table that illustrates the above differentiation while providing some heuristic examples that typify each cell of the table itself. The examples given here are meant to be more evocative than substantively unimpeachable, and they should hopefully help serve as a comparison between the ideal types between the variations of the three concepts. For a more complicated look at the types of militarism specifically, see figure 3, which similarly identifies a more complex typology of militarism's varieties across overlapping cases.

	Less Militaristic	**More Militaristic**
Less Nationalistic; Less Imperialistic	Most countries today	Finland; Switzerland; Singapore; N. and S. Korea?
More Nationalistic; Less Imperialistic	Hungary; India; Modern Japan	Israel; Post-2014 Ukraine
Less Nationalistic; More Imperialistic	Saudi Arabia; 1800s Netherlands?; Major MNCs?	Soviet Union; ISIS?; British East India Company
More Nationalistic; More Imperialistic	Modern China (PRC)?; Post-War UK?; 1800s USA?	Nazi Germany; Imperial Japan; Modern Russia

Figure 1: Table comparing different historical examples of states along a militarism / nationalism / imperialism axis.

Step 2: Identifying the Varieties of Militarism

As the existing literature offers too broad and too nebulous a definition of militarism, I aim to construct a set of smaller, distinct interpretations of the term as it relates to discrete contexts. Partially, I base my methodological reasoning along the same lines that were placed on strategic culture in Johnston 1995.[52] Namely, his argument contended that previous attempts at definition were both under-determined and over-determined due to "an amalgam of a wide range of (potentially competing) variables and inputs."[53] This statement can be applied to the concept of militarism the same way it was applied to the concept of strategic culture. We ought to construct a set of measurable definitions of militarism that enable the use of falsifiable propositions, and while these definitions can be based around existing literature, they also should have empirical standards that allow for cross comparison while looking at similar objects of analysis. Additionally, these definitions should be seen as fundamentally comparative, relating different societies against either some ideal-type, historical example, or normative convention regarding militarism within a state or society.[54]

I first separate two broad categories of militarism, focused on the non-material and the material, both of which can be broken down further into specific types. Non-material militarism can be thought of as being associated with the previously described "societal militarism," which represents the first half of VR Berghahn's categorization.[55] It looks at the sociocultural aspects of

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[52] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 32–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539119.
[53] Johnston, 33n2.
[54] For a recent argument on why militarism shouldn't be seen primarily through a comparative lens, see Richelle M. Bernazzoli and Colin Flint, "Power, Place, and Militarism: Toward a Comparative Geographic Analysis of Militarization," *Geography Compass* 3, no. 1 (2009): 393–411, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00194.x.
[55] Berghahn, *Militarism*, chap. 6.

militaristic behavior and the connection between their civil and military sectors within a society. Material militarism represents economic measures and physical, materiel outputs by a society.

	Nonmaterial Measures			**Material Measures**	
	Political	Sociocultural	Policy	Military Budget	Arms Production
Example Variables	Are political leaders also actively serving as military leaders?	Weight of military in media / sport / etc. (Ex: % of military movies to all movies)	Frequency of war used as policy tool	Military spending to GDP ratio	Production of military materiel vs. other goods.
	Does being ex-military give political benefit?	Approval rating of military institutions	Frequency of threatening war	Military spending to total gov. budget	Production of military materiel vs. other countries
	How frequently do ex-military run for office?	Relative ease/difficult of recruitment	Does the country employ conscription?	Relative ease/difficulty of passing military budgets	Share of defense companies in private sector and relative success

Figure 2: Illustrated structure of the militarism typology with examples of operationalized variables.

	Nonmaterial			Material		1.5	1	0.5		
	Cultural	**Political**	**Policy**	**Military Budget**	**Arms Production**	High	Medium	Low	Total	
Classical Sparta	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	2	1	2	5	Classical Sparta
Classical Athens	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Low	1	2	2	4.5	Classical Athens
Roman Republic	High	High	High	Medium	Low	3	1	1	6	Roman Republic
Roman Empire	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	1	4	0	5.5	Roman Empire
Mongol Empire	High	High	High	High	Medium	4	1	0	7	Mongol Empire
Feudal Europe	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low	1	2	2	4.5	Feudal Europe
Feudal Japan	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	0	3	2	4	Feudal Japan
Prussia	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	2	3	0	6	Prussia
Tokugowa Japan	Medium	Medium				0	2	0	2	Tokugowa Japan
Revolutionary France	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	0	5	0	5	Revolutionary France
Napoleonic France	High	High	High	High	Medium	4	1	0	7	Napoleonic France
Imperial Britain	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	0	3	2	4	Imperial Britain
Imperial Germany	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	1	4	0	5.5	Imperial Germany
US (1829 - 1893)		Medium	Low		Low	0	1	2	2	US (1829 - 1893)
Early Imperial Japan	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	0	3	2	4	Early Imperial Japan
Warlord Era China	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	1	4	0	5.5	Warlord Era China
Weimar Germany	Medium	Low			Low	0	1	2	2	Weimar Germany
Soviet Union	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High	2	2	1	5.5	Soviet Union
Nazi Germany	High	Medium	High	High	High	4	1	0	7	Nazi Germany
Late Imperial Japan	High	Medium	High	High	High	4	1	0	7	Late Imperial Japan
Israel	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	1	3	1	5	Israel
Taiwan (1948 - 1991)	Low	Medium	Low	Low		0	1	3	2.5	Taiwan (1948 - 1991)
North Korea	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	1	3	1	5	North Korea
Myanmar (1988 - Present)	Low	High	Low	Low		1	0	3	3	Myanmar (1988 - Present)
Modern Germany					Medium	0	1	0	1	Modern Germany
Modern France			Low	Low	Medium	0	1	2	2	Modern France
Modern Saudi Arabia			Low	High		1	0	1	2	Modern Saudi Arabia
Modern Finland	Low		Low			0	0	2	1	Modern Finland
Modern USA	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	1	3	1	5	Modern USA
Modern Russia	Medium	Low	High	High	High	3	1	1	6	Modern Russia
Modern China (PRC)			Low	Low	Medium	0	1	2	2	Modern China (PRC)

Figure 3: Table listing examples throughout history as a way of illustrating the different varieties of militarism as identified in figure 2 and the effects of interpretive weighting.

Political Militarism

Political militarism measures the level of the organizational features a society or state has that fundamentally connect and engrain the military as an institution of political leadership. This can be thought of as a measurement of legally accepted stratocratic features as well as the culturally accepted practices that connect the civil and military sectors. A society that concurrently overlaps its military and civilian leaders (stratocracy), for instance, should be seen as having high levels of political militarism. A society where military experience or leadership is

often viewed as an informal prerequisite for civil leadership, however, should still be thought of as having significant aspects of political militarism, even if they aren't formally institutionalized.

Political militarism is based on the general argument found at the core of the garrison state concept: namely that the more the civil and military spheres functionally overlap, the more militarized the society.[56] In addition, institutional theory from civil-military relations and its concept of objective civilian control forms the underpinning of this category. Specifically, the structure of legal and constitutional frameworks serves as the main object of analysis.[57] Juntas and "praetorian states" serve as examples of this type, as while they are usually temporally restricted in scope, their time in power often holds few restrictions.[58] In general, I would argue that more weight should be given towards legally upheld stratocratic statutes over martially imposed ones. A society that willingly accepts or prefers the intersection of the military and civilian spheres should be thought of as more stratocratic than a society where such structures are imposed on them by military elites.

The most basic analysis of stratocracy should look for legally bound connections between the civil and military sphere. A law requiring that some portion of a society's civilian leadership be made up of generals, for instance, would constitute a directly observable stratocratic element.[59] There are certainly more salient examples of stratocratic societies throughout history

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[56] Lasswell, "The Garrison State."
[57] Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, chap. 7.
[58] The term "praetorian states" here refers to states where armies not only have an outsized importance, but frequently coup the central government when their needs are not met. See Amos Perlmutter, "The Praetorian State and the Praetorian Army: Toward a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Polities," *Comparative Politics* 1, no. 3 (1969): 382–404, https://doi.org/10.2307/421446; For an example of military culture and the impact it might have on contemporary praetorianism, see Uri Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-Military Relations Paradigm: The Inverse Relation between Militarism and Praetorianism through the Example of Israel," *Comparative Political Studies* 30, no. 3 (June 1, 1997): 356–74, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414097030003004.
[59] For example, Myanmar's constitution (before the coup) required that 25% of all its legislature seats be reserved for active military personnel. See Roger Lee Huang, "Re-Thinking Myanmar's Political Regime: Military Rule in

than there are in contemporary times. For instance, by the very nature of its hierarchical structure, feudalism inherently connected military leadership with civilian leadership.[60] Republican Rome is another strong example of stratocracy in practice: consuls were not only elected simultaneously as civilian leaders and military generals but were judged by their ability to find success in both roles.[61]

Beyond looking at institutionally bounded legalistic frameworks described in civil-military relations literature, political militarism can also be gauged by the unstructured and unspecified arrangements operating between the civilian and military spheres.[62] The informal crossover between the two for instance could be measured by the frequency with which civilian and military leaders unofficially overlap one another.[63] For instance, in a democratic state, metrics assessing both the frequency with which a society sees its military leaders run for office after retiring as well as their level of disproportionate success once campaigning could serve as

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Myanmar and Implications for Current Reforms," *Contemporary Politics* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 247–61, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2013.804149.

[60] Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, chap. 1.

[61] C. E. Brand, *Roman Military Law* (University of Texas Press, 1968), https://doi.org/10.7560/733930, esp. chap 1 and 5. For further depictions of Roman military makeup, see L. J. F. Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); John Patterson, "Military Organization and Social Change in the Later Roman Republic," in *War and Society in the Roman World*, by John Rich and Graham Shipley (Routledge, 2020), 92–112, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003071341-5.

[62] In comparison to institutional militarism, but similarly working alongside the same set of literature, see Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, chaps. 6 and 15.

[63] Anders Themner recently published a series of work detailing the subject of ex-military leaders running as electoral candidates in Africa. See Anders Themnér, ed., *Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-Military Leaders and Electoral Politics*, Africa Now (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2017); Fofana Abraham, Henrik Persson, and Anders Themnér, "Yesterday Warlord, Today Presidential Candidate : Ex-Military Leaders Running for Office in Post-Civil War Societies" (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2019), http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-2312; Henrik Angerbrandt and Anders Themnér, "Above Politics? Ex-Military Leaders in Nigerian Electoral Politics," *Democratization* 28, no. 4 (May 19, 2021): 782–800, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1866552; Additionally, see Abdoulaye S. Saine, "The Soldier-Turned-Presidential Candidate: A Comparison of Flawed 'Democratic' Transitions in Ghana and Gambia," *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 28, no. 2 (2000): 191–209.

comparative indices of cultural militarism.[64] A contemporary example of this can be seen in Israel, where a large portion of its important civilian leadership has historically come directly from leadership roles in the IDF.[65]

Sociocultural Militarism

Sociocultural militarism measures the importance of the military and war within a society or state as perceived by its people. Part of it could look at the cultural relevance of and level of adoration for military institutions and their service members, while another could measure society's aggregate disposition towards violence and war more generally. This type of militarism is also based on the garrison state concept but focuses more directly on media, symbols, and social psychology as potential operationalizable measures.[66]

A society that has proportionally outsized veneration for military personnel and veterans might be described as having culturally militaristic traits.[67] Its adoration of the military and the glorification of its ideals can be observed across a variety of mediums, including the relationship between the military and sport or the preference a society shows towards military topics in art.[68]

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[64] As an example of such analysis, see Donald N. Zillman, "Where Have All the Soldiers Gone--Observations on the Decline of Military Veterans in Government," *Maine Law Review* 49 (1997): 85.
[65] For a more thorough discussion of militarism and military culture in Israel, see Sara Helman, "Militarism and the Construction of Community," *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1997): 305–32; See also Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-Military Relations Paradigm"; Yagil Levy, *Israel's Death Hierarchy: Casualty Aversion in a Militarized Democracy* (NYU Press, 2012), chap. 2; Eyal Ben-Ari, ed., *Military, State, and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351326322.
[66] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 459–62.
[67] For a recent work detailing the connection between general civilian propensity towards use of force and perceptions of the military in a society, see Ronald R Krebs, Robert Ralston, and Aaron Rapport, "Why They Fight: How Perceived Motivations for Military Service Shape Support for the Use of Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (December 17, 2021): 1012–26, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqab033.
[68] For an analysis of the connection between a society's art and its glorification of the military, see James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2009); For the connection between sport and militarism, see J. A. Mangan, J. A. Mangan, and Boria Majumdar, eds., *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons* (London: Routledge, 2003), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203504055; John Kelly, "Popular Culture, Sport and the 'Hero'-Fication of British

The success of military-related books, movies, video games, etc. relative to other genres of media and relative to other societies could indicate levels of cultural militarism.[69]

Sociocultural militarism can also include aggregates measures of a society's psychological disposition towards militaristic behavior, including variables quantifying the perceived importance and recognized prominence of war at individual levels within a society or state. Additionally, history shows that these patterns could be wildly different for a society's elites and for its general populace.[70] A society whose decision-making elites perceive war as an inherently beneficial or useful concept would be described as having significant levels of militaristic psychology at its highest levels. A society whose general populace holds these same views to an outsized degree would be described as having high levels of a more societally interspersed type of cultural militarism.

This type of militarism most directly intersects with military culture, notably in the image members of a society have of themselves both as it relates to their importance in times of war and in their potential willingness to engage in combat.[71] This should be thought of as distinct

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Militarism," *Sociology* 47, no. 4 (August 2013): 722–38, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512453795; Butterworth, *Sport and Militarism*.

[69] For a few examples, see Nina Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne, eds., *Joystick Soldiers: The Politics of Play in Military Video Games* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Roger Stahl, *Militainment, Inc: War, Media, and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Roger Stahl, *Through the Crosshairs: War, Visual Culture, and the Weaponized Gaze*, War Culture (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018); For a work interpreting narratives as they occur within the context of military affairs, see Ronald R. Krebs, "How Dominant Narratives Rise and Fall: Military Conflict, Politics, and the Cold War Consensus," *International Organization* 69, no. 4 (ed 2015): 809–45, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000181; Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 138 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[70] For sake of simplicity, I would recommend defining "elite" along the lines of C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); with the added inclusion of cultural or media leadership as described in Der Derian, *Virtuous War*; Jonathan Caverley challenges the assumption that elite-focused analyses can fully explain military uses in foreign policy. See Jonathan D. Caverley, *Democratic Militarism: Voting, Wealth, and War*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 131 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[71] Janowitz, "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies"; Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*; See also Wilson, "Defining Military Culture."

from political militarism, as the former measures the formal and informal organizational structure between the civilian and military spheres.[72] While a politically militaristic society would might have immediate connections between its military and political institutions, this does not inherently mean that its elites and citizens hold a similarly high regard for those same institutions. Moreover, it also does not measure said society's views on conflict or killing more broadly. Cultural militarism fills this gap, as it can include the attitudes held by society towards killing, war, and the preparation for war.[73] It could also be thought of as a collective construct potentially denoting a society's ideological predispositions for conflict in the first place.[74] The most straightforward measuring of a society's psychological militarism would entail large-scale psychological paneling that directly raises the question of individuals' willingness to go to war or to kill.[75] On the other hand, elite-focused work might want to look at the psychology of decision-

[72] There may be argument against this separation, as some recent work has overlapped sociopoltical and psychological elements of militarism. See Daniel F. McCleary and Robert L. Williams, "Sociopolitical and Personality Correlates of Militarism in Democratic Societies," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 15, no. 2 (April 27, 2009): 161–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/10781910902837248.
[73] These three questions are not exhaustive but can serve as a generalizable set of psychological metrics. They come from Wilson, "Defining Military Culture"; For a discussion on the demographic traits that might denote individual psychological predisposition towards violent behavior as it relates to combat, see Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House Trade Paperback ed (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006), chaps. 2 and 10.
[74] Terror management theory has discussed the connection between death anxiety in society and expectations about war. See Orit Taubman-Ben-Ari and Liora Findler, "Motivation for Military Service: A Terror Management Perspective," *Military Psychology* 18, no. 2 (January 2006): 149–59, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327876mp1802_4; Armand Chatard et al., "Terror Management in Times of War: Mortality Salience Effects on Self-Esteem and Governmental and Army Support," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 2 (2011): 225–34; Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Thomas A. Pyszczynski, *The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life*, First edition (New York: Random House, 2015), 116–23.
[75] There are numerous sets of literature that discuss the topic of measuring psychological dispositions towards violence. For contemporary work, see the quarterly journal *Psychology of Violence*. As an example of this question being asked during the interwar period, several studies were carried out that directly intended to measure individual's willingness to go to war or to kill during war. See D. D. Droba, "Effect of Various Factors on Militarism-Pacifism," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 26 (1931): 141–53, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0074786; Joseph Zubin and Morris Gristle, "An Empirical Scale for Measuring Militarism-Pacifism," *The Psychological Record* 1, no. 2 (March 1, 1937): 27–32, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03393188.

makers within the foreign policy decision-making process and their willingness to risk war in certain circumstances.[76]

For many societies, these sets of beliefs may not be universal across class, religion, race, etc. In periods of European and Japanese feudalism, for instance, the nobility had a more militarized image of themselves and their role in society's hierarchy than did the average person.[77] Conversely, early Weimar Germany stands as an example of a state whose elites and leadership had much lower levels of psychological militarism than its citizens did, which eventually led to significant upheaval as a result.[78]

All things being equal, if volunteering to join the military proves to be a popular career choice compared to its alternatives, it could point to the relative cultural importance that the institution holds within a society. Let's imagine a hypothesis of "states that have a relatively easier time at recruiting will see greater military effectiveness." Evidence here would want to identify a causal connection between ease of recruitment and the capabilities of its military – though it should be noted that a process like this would almost surely be dialectical and fraught with endogeneity (as a more successful military would likely be more popular within society).

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[76] For a discussion about the potential connection between individual psychology and militaristic behavior in decision-makers, see Brian D'Agostino, "Self-Images of Hawks and Doves: A Control Systems Model of Militarism," *Political Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1995): 259–95, https://doi.org/10.2307/3791832.

[77] On the military culture of European nobility, see Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society. Vol. 2: Social Classes and Political Organization*, trans. L. A. Manyon, vol. 2, A Phoenix Book 156 (Chicago [Ill.]: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), chaps. 11–15; On the military culture of the nobility in Japan, see Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, 5. print (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001).

[78] Many ex-military citizens of the early Weimar Republic were so psychological distinct from their civilian leaders that a large amount simply refused to disband their units and continued to wage war regardless of their government's wishes. For a full narrative of the period, see Robert G. L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany 1918-1923*, The Norton Library (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 1969); For a direct depiction of post-war German psychological militaristic thinking, see Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel*, trans. Basil Creighton (Independently published, 2019); Ernst Jünger, *War as an Inner Experience*, trans. Kasey James Elliott (United States: Anarch Books, 2021); opposing views on the subject from the same period did exist, however, and are best exemplified by socialist leader and antimilitarist Karl Liebknecht. See Karl Liebknecht, *Militarism* (B. W. Huebsch, 1917).

Policy-Oriented Militarism

Policy-oriented militarism measures the bias a society or state has towards using its military as a policy tool. This can be thought of in both a foreign and domestic policy sense. All things being equal, a society that frequently chooses to go to war over pursuing more peaceful diplomatic options can be described as having high levels of policy-oriented militarism. Similarly, a society that constantly implements policies that help it prepare for war could also be said to have high levels of policy-oriented militarism.

This should be thought of not just as a society's willingness to go to or prepare for war, but also its actual experience in doing so. This is the most direct exemplification of the garrison state in practice, as it represents a society's experienced propensity for choosing violence or the preparation for violence over the alternative. Although it might be tempting to assume that there is an inherent causal connection to the other categories of militarism, there is no inherent logical requirement that societies with high levels of practiced militarism must have any markers of the previous types of militarism.[79] Indeed, one could imagine the example from earlier of the non-imperial, defensive minded society that experiences frequent besieging by its rivals; were it to constantly prepare for or be at war, it could show high levels of this type of militarism without necessarily showing similarly high levels of institutional, cultural, psychological, or economic militarism.[80] It is certainly fair to hypothesize that such a society would quickly develop other

[79] This is most directly shown by the differentiated impact of war experiences on certain areas of society as shown in Regan, *Organizing Societies for War*.

[80] Admittedly, the connection between political and sociocultural aspects of militarism and a country's stance towards war is a complicated subject. There are arguments that internal cultural and psychological variables do directly lead to war, or at the very least provide significant predispositions to war. See, for instance, Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 58–107, https://doi.org/10.2307/2538636; Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 108–46; Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and*

forms of militarism if continually subjected to war and its consequences, but this type of causal connection does not imply the inherent requirement of its inverse.

Measuring militaristic policy might entail looking at how often a country declares war, threatens war, or prepares for the outbreak of war compared to other countries.[81] The first two metrics here are easy enough to imagine and quantify, though the latter would require a more substantive analysis of a country's internal decision-making and policy choices qualitatively. From an external perspective, objectively determining when, why, and how a country chooses to prepare for war remains a difficult prospect. This is especially true for societies that are more closed and less prone to overt or accidental signaling.[82] So to, there are differences in how states conduct war in the first place. Differentiating militaristic policy for war on land versus war at sea, for instance, would be an example of one factor complicating the comparison of military policies and experiences between different types of states or across various historical periods.[83]

International Ambition, 2. print, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1994); See also, Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?*

[81] Ascribing shifts in foreign policy towards practiced militarism might also be seen more simply as an increased usage of the military as the main tool for policy implementation. For an example of work describing this process in the United States, see Gordon Adams and Shoon Kathleen Murray, eds., *Mission Creep: The Militarization of US Foreign Policy?* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014).

[82] This issue aligns with signaling literature in international relations. For a brief set of related examples, see James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (February 1, 1997): 68–90, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002797041001004; Evan Braden Montgomery, "Signals of Strength: Capability Demonstrations and Perceptions of Military Power," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 2 (February 23, 2020): 309–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2019.1626724.

[83] The Anglo-German naval arms race preceding World War I comes to mind as an example where this differentiation should be see as important given the different historical military experiences of the two countries involved. Additionally, at the time of the arms race, there were overt discussion about the theoretical differences between naval militarism (or "navalism") and land militarism. See Karl Liebknecht, *Militarism And Anti-Militarism* (Black Rose Books, 2011), https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/M/bo33809006.html; For a more recent discussion on naval militarism during this period, see Dirk Bönker, *Militarism in a Global Age: Naval Ambitions in Germany and the United States before World War I*, The United States in the World (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2012), esp. 1-19. ; Other recent work has highlighted the historical differences in foreign policy choices when comparing naval powers and land powers, which would lend credence to the complicated nature of separating types of practices militarism. See Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?," *International Security* 35, no. 1 (July 1, 2010): 7–43, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00001.

Material Measures of Militarism

Material measures of militarism look at the amount a society or state's economy focuses on military matters along two axes. First, it looks at the degree to which the economy is tailored towards military-industrial concerns relative to other matters. A society whose economic makeup disproportionately revolves around either building military equipment or ensuring that its military can be supplied with sufficient materiel would be described as having high levels of economic militarism. Second, it looks at the proportion of the budget that is dedicated to military matters. A society whose governmental spending disproportionately favors the military relative to other areas would similarly be described as having high levels of economic militarism.[84]

This type of militarism is chiefly based around the concept of the military-industrial complex and the role it plays in a society's overall functioning. Metrics measuring economic militarism will likely be the most objective of all five types, as they are inherently the most quantitative. All things considered, the proportion a country spends on its military relative to its GDP is generally thought of the most common measurement of a society's commitment to its military, though a study could also look at the proportion a country spends on its military relative to the rest of its budget as well.

Operationalization here would look at the relative weight of the defense industry within a country and the sector's success compared to other sectors, especially during moments of economic change. Presumably, a country that values its military institutions more highly will see

[84] For arguments leaning towards this reasoning, see Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?"; Regan, *Organizing Societies for War*; Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*; For a recent work using this type of measure in an attempt to operationalize militarism within the context of civil-military relations, see Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "Civil-Military Relations in a Neo-Kantian World, 1886-1992," *Armed Forces & Society* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 2004): 227–54, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0403000205.

a greater percentage of defense companies overall and a greater percentage of defense expenditures within companies more generally. Consider the bi-directional hypothesis "countries with a higher percentage of defense-related private sector expenditure are more likely to escalate diplomatic disputes involving arms exportation." One axis of analysis might look to identify a causal link between the role played by agents in the defense industry and the link to diplomats' willingness to escalate diplomatic disputes dealing with arms exportation.[85]

There are several organizations continually producing measurements that look at national production and industrial makeup, and thus finding numbers for cross-comparison is trivial in most cases. Qualifying certain types of industry as being military-focused, however, is slightly more complicated and runs the risk of either over- or under-qualification depending on what is included and what is not. For instance, raw materials like iron or copper are not inherently related to military-industry, but because they serve as inputs that feed into eventual outputs like warships and tanks, they present a categorical problem – especially when a country cares about retaining strategic reserves, for instance.[86]

The difference between these two sub-categories can illustrate decidedly different types of economically militarized states. For instance, Saudi Arabia has one of the highest military spending to GDP ratios in the world, and yet does not substantially produce much of its own war materiel.[87] Conversely, although Germany has a small military spending to GDP ratio, it has a robust military industry that produces weapons not just for its own army but for many countries

[85] Jack Snyder's argument about log-rolling between industrial and military leaders provides an apt theoretical example here. See, Snyder, *Myths of Empire*.
[86] For a discussion on the connection between raw materials, strategic reserves, and military power see Hanns W. Maull, *Raw Materials, Energy and Western Security* (Springer, 1984).
[87] For a recent overview of Saudi Arabi's military budgeting and arms importation, see Anthony H. Cordesman, "Military Spending: The Other Side of Saudi Security" (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2018), https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22439.

in the international market.[88] Both countries could be said to have markers of economic militarism in this sense, but of varying natures.[89]

Conclusion

Above, I have defined the methodological and theoretical problems related to the subject of militarism as it is understood in modern literature. Despite the rising importance of militarism in the international system over the last several years, the concept has continued to remain under-discussed and under-recognized as a potential tool for empirical work. An obvious result of this is that the literature has consistently been uninterested in employing it as a variable for otherwise intersecting research that would benefit from a more fully realized conceptualization of the subject. Because there has been no concrete agreement as to what militarism is, there has subsequently been no work done to try and think about its importance in any meaningful way.

Looking at militarism as a societal component presents some fundamentally interesting questions. The deep-rooted relationship between human nature and war may be more important than previously imagined. Certainly, when assessing historical societies and their relationships with war the concept of militarism bears itself quite readily. It is easy to look at states in antiquity, feudal societies, or fascist states in the 20th century and explain away their cultural and

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[88] Germany is an interesting case, often being described as "antimilitarist" in its general inclination towards the use of mlitary force as a foreign policy tool while maintaining an otherwise notable defense industry (though some have argued that this has been chaning since as early as re-unification in the 90s). See Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Frank A. Stengel, *The Politics of Military Force: Antimilitarism, Ideational Change, and Post-Cold War German Security Discourse*, Configurations: Critical Studies of World Politics (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020); For an overview of the German defense market, see Jeffrey P. Bialos et al., *Fortresses and Icebergs: The Evolution of the Transatlantic Defense Market and the Implications for U.S. National Security Policy* (Washington, D.C: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2009), 355-398.

[89] For a specific discussion about the connection between Germany's politics and its contemporary military economy, see Volker R. Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, 2. ed., Repr (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996) esp. part VI.

psychological reasonings by citing militarism. It is perhaps a much more difficult task to look at contemporary society and ask where, why, and how militaristic behavior may still play a role in the way humans approach each other and the way states approach the international community.

Will militarism play a role in the coming great power competition of the future eras? It is hard to say, and few have attempted to interpret some of the important upcoming questions through its lens in the first place. The caveat is that militarism should not be overused as a free pass for criticism of a society, but instead thought of as a tool with which these questions can eventually be examined. The concept clearly has a role to play in conceptualizing future conflict and reassessing previously overlooked aspects of warfare.

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