Measuring Militarism:

Introducing a New Expert Survey Data Set on Militarism Among Great Powers, 1850-2005

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23 April 2021

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Abstract

This article endeavors to investigate the concept of militarism, which has come back into academic and public consciousness in recent years. It presents an overview of the discussion of militarism in the academic literature, advances a new definition suitable for rigorous empirical coding, and presents the results of a large-scale expert survey on militarism in great and regional powers from 1850-present. It then demonstrates the empirical validity of this data set by analyzing the impact of militarism on war initiation, showing that when militarism is considered as a variable in quantitative models, it predicts war initiation even when regime type is taken into consideration.

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The author would like to thank the Charles Koch Foundation for generously funding this research. This research was conducted under Columbia University IRB Protocol # PT-AABQ2779

1 Introduction

Militarism, once associated mostly with the fascist regimes of WWII, has again become a topic of discussion in political science. Militarism is an aspect of state behavior and identity that can easily shape many of the topics that realists and neorealists traditionally examine: state response to threats, the decision to go to war, how states decide to prosecute conflict, and the incentives that states have to negotiate rather than fight when the balance of material factors is not in their favor. Societal identity shapes state behavior and interests in the conflict arena (Brooks and Stanley 2007), and militarism is one factor that can shape a state's societal identity.

Militarism has also come back into the public consciousness, and therefore an examination of militarism has policy relevance as well. With the rise of populist regimes in the West, many analysts, politicos, and academics are wondering whether a resurgence of militarism will follow. For example, in the United States, talk of military parades in Washington, D.C.[2] and the appointment of active-duty military members to traditionally civilian government posts[3] have reignited a debate about the militaristic character of American society. Some have even posited that militarism has returned in full force to America, is "unlikely to disappear anytime soon," and that the US will continue to "nestl[e] more deeply into its embrace" (Bacevich 2005, 5).

But when policymakers and social scientists invoke militarism as a cause for concern, what do they actually mean? Despite recent popular interest in militarism, there is sparse scholarly literature on the subject. The seminal book on the topic, written by German scholar Alfred Vagts, was completed before the outbreak of the Second World War (Vagts 1937). The bulk of the previous work was, quite understandably, concluded in the immediate post-war period and focused on antecedents that would have explained the rise of German and Japanese militarism (Huntington 1959). Sociologists also took a role in examining militarism, but were using the lens of why it appealed to the individual and society (Janowitz 1960). The few recent additions to the literature on militarism have either been intellectual histories of the concept (Berghahn 1982); edited volumes calling for a renewed research program on militarism (Stavrianakis and Selby 2013);

[2] Sisk, Richard. "President Trump to Finally Get His Military Parade on July 4," Military.com (20 June 2019) <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/06/20/president-trump-finally-get-his-military-parade-july-4.html>
[3] Landler, Mark and Helene Cooper. "Trump's Focus on Generals for Top Jobs Stirs Worry Over Military's Sway," New York Times (21 November 2016) < https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/us/politics/donald-trump-national-security-military.html>, "Bookings Experts on Defense React to the Nomination of General Lloyd Austin" Brookings Institute (10 December 2020) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/12/10/around-the-halls-brookings-experts-on-defense-react-to-the-nomination-of-gen-lloyd-austin/>

explorations of the problem of defining militarism (Skjelsbaek 1979; Wilson 2008, 39-41); or sociological explorations of militarism as a concept (Mann 1987; Mann 2003; Shaw 1991; Kimmerling 1993).

Additionally, there is no agreed-upon definition of militarism in this literature, and descriptions of the phenomenon vary widely from the undue influence of the military on political decision-making to the love of war among the people. The adjacent (and much more current) literature on civil-military relations, meanwhile, has only recently begun to speak to militarism again, either as a factor affecting the civil-military balance or as a societal phenomenon which could be interjected into civil-military relations (Cohen 2002; Feaver 2005). The literature does not discount militarism as a phenomenon affecting civil-military relations (and indeed, many scholars write editorial and opinion pieces about its importance),[4] but it is not well represented in the academic literature. This definitional ambiguity and neglect in the contemporary literature have led to theoretical muddiness. This hinders the exploration of militarism as a concept potentially affecting a range of variables crucial to international security—from civil-military relations, to propensity to go to war, to military effectiveness.

Furthermore, if we believe that militarism is an important potential variable to examine in political science, we need a way to quantify it for measurement—and then we need data on militarism across space and time in order to conduct analyses and draw conclusions about its effects. Without reliable large-N data on militarism, we are limited in our analysis to individual case studies and smaller-scale analysis without the ability to draw conclusions about the impact of militarism across space and time.

This article has three purposes. One, it reviews the extant definitions of militarism and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. It then builds a conceptual framework of militarism that cuts through the ambiguity in the literature, providing an improved definition borrowing from the

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[4] For examples, see:
Fallows, James. “The Tragedy of the American Military,” *The Atlantic* (January/February 2015) < https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-tragedy-of-the-american-military/383516/>
Karlin, Mara and Alice Hunt Friend. “Military Worship Hurts U.S. Democracy,” *Brookings* (24 September 2018) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/09/24/military-worship-hurts-us-democracy/>
O’Connell, Aaron B. “The Permanent Militarization of America,” *The New York Times* (4 November 2012). < https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/05/opinion/the-permanent-militarization-of-america.html>
Krebs, Ronald R, Robert Ralston, Aaron Rapport. “Americans’ Blind Faith in the Military is Dangerous,” *Foreign Policy* (3 December 2018) < https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/12/03/americans-blind-faith-in-the-military-is-dangerous-civilian-oversight-deference-mcraven-trump/>

most salient aspects of past work. Two, it introduces the results of a large-scale expert survey that I conducted in order to build a data set of militarism across space and time. Three, it uses the results of that expert survey to conduct a preliminary analysis of how militarism affects war initiation, by merging the data set with the Correlates of War data in an example of how this data might be utilized in future research.

2 Defining Militarism

2.1. Existing Definitions of Militarism

Definitions of militarism which are both concise and precise are hard to come across. Vagts, the preeminent scholar of militarism, writes that militarism is "a domination of the military man over the civilian, an undue preponderance of military demands, an emphasis on military considerations, ideals, and scales of value, in the life of states" (Vagts 1937, 12). A militarist society is one which "rank[s] military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, carrying military mentality and modes of acting and decision into the civilian sphere" (Vagts 1937, 15). Vagts also substantiates his definition via contrast by noting that "Militarism is … not the opposite of pacifism; its true counterpart is civilianism. Love of war, bellicosity, is a counterpart of the love of peace, pacifism; but militarism is more, and sometimes less, than the love of war" (Vagts 1937, 15).

Militarism has also commonly been defined as "either the dominance of the military over civilian authority, or, more generally, as the prevalence of warlike values in society" (Gillis 1989, 1). Stavrianakis and Selby write that militarism is "understood as the social and international relations of the preparation for, and conduct of, organized political violence" (2013, 3). Mann (1987, 35) defines it as "a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity." Berghahn reports that the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines militarism as "the spirit and tendencies of the professional soldier; the prevalence of military sentiment and ideals among a people; the tendency to regard military efficiency as the paramount interest of the state" (1982, 2). Bacevich defines his "new American militarism" as "Americans [being] enthralled with military power" (Bacevich 2005, 1). He writes that "Americans in our own time have fallen prey to militarism, manifesting itself in a romanticized view of soldiers, a tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness, and outsized expectations regarding the efficacy of force…Americans have come to

define the nation's strength and well-being in terms of military preparedness, military action, and the fostering of (or nostalgia for) military ideals" (Bacevich 2005, 2).

All of these definitions, and others like them in the literature, suffer from one problem or another that hinders their use in political science analysis. In turn, I deal with issues of conceptual clarity and definition of terms; normative bias in definitions; definition according to outcomes or unobserved variables leading to circularity; and the fact that all definitions presented are binary, as opposed to continuous, representations of militarism.

The first conceptual issue with this sample of definitions is that they lack clarity and specificity. Some are highly multidimensional—encompassing not just attitudes but also behaviors, and at times the outcomes of both on the state and society, like the OED definition. On the other hand, others are extremely vague. Vagts' definition includes the idea that an "emphasis on military considerations, ideals, and scales of value" identifies militarism. But what counts as an emphasis? What is a military consideration, ideal, or scale of value? Vagts concludes by writing that "militarism is more, and sometimes less, than the love of war"—a pithy statement, but one which is perhaps too cryptic to be useful. Likewise, the definition identified by Stavrianakis and Selby calls for the interested investigator to determine what the "social and international relations" are that lead societies to "prepare for" and "conduct" what they term "organized political violence." All of these terms cry out for further clarification. If militarism is to be treated as a variable studied in political science, its definition needs to be clear and unambiguous enough that scholars can code its presence in a non-controversial way, using a standard definition that allows for the direct measurement of observable indicators. On the other hand, some definitions are simply too general to be useful. As one article observes, in most use cases "the term lacks any real definition and risks simply denoting anything to do with military institutions and warfare in general" (Wilson 2008, 39).

Another frequent issue in definitions of militarism is that some definitions presuppose that militarism is defined as a specific, undesirable outcome. This is aggravated by the fact that many of these outcomes are extremely negative, biasing social scientists' willingness to label "friendly" countries as militarist. As sociologists point out, the effort to define militarism is hampered by these extremely negative normative connotations and political context of the debate (not to mention the term's principal illustration by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan during WWII). War-preparation and military veneration among our enemies tends to be labeled "militarism," whereas

the same attitudes and behaviors in our own country are simply considered logical and prudent (Shaw 1991, 9). As Shaw reminds his readers, "unless one is a strict pacifist, militarism is not a matter of good or bad, but of how far military organization and values *(which may be justified and necessary)* impinge on social structure" (1991, 12).[5]

This bias leads to definitions of militarism which define the phenomenon according to its outcomes, whether that be the military taking control of the government, the people calling for war, or the presence of a military that is the most powerful and well-funded institution in a society. For example, militarism, according to Chalmers Johnson, is "the phenomenon by which a nation's armed services come to put their institutional preservation ahead of achieving national security or even a commitment to the integrity of the governmental structure of which they are a part." (He notes that one can identify when militarism has taken hold in a society because it is marked by "the assumption by a nation's armed forces of numerous tasks that should be reserved for civilians" (2004, 23-24).)[6] This definition defines militarism as an outcome—the military taking control of the government and putting its institutional needs before those of the state—as opposed to focusing on what caused or allowed this to happen in the first place. I argue that the latter is the important element if one wishes to use militarism as an independent variable in a study—otherwise, the definition will simply lead to the identification of states exhibiting any potential observable implications of militarism as militarist. This introduces circularity into the definition—it is akin to saying, "societies are militaristic if they do militaristic things."

Relatedly, some definitions appear to bake in an unobserved variable, which means that instead of talking about militarism, the definition is really identifying a prior factor such as military proficiency. For example, Bacevich's definition of militarism as Americans' love of military power assumes that the military is proficient enough to wield the power that citizens come to admire. Vagt's definition of militarism as the "domination of the military man over the civilian" likewise assumes that the military is strong enough to seize control of the apparatus of civilian government. An unobserved variable like the societal influence of the military can mean that the definition is once again conflating militarism with its outcomes—militarism can certainly lead

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[5] Emphasis present in original text.

[6] As a side note, this definition casts the military as a negative, self-interested actor which purposely takes control of government in something akin to a plot. This is not to say that this is impossible – in fact, it is entirely so, and militaries do sometimes act in self-interested ways that undermine the security of the nation in order to seize power – but to define militarism in this way risks labeling societies in which militaries have dominance (and which one disagrees with) of as militarist.

society to fund a military well, which makes it strong—or it could mean that we are not actually observing the effects of militarism, but the effects of another variable entirely.

Finally, one major problem with existing definitions is that they tend to be binary; this hinders our ability to use them as independent variables in analysis. States are classified as either "militarist" or "not militarist," which leaves no room for gradations of militarism to have differing effects on outcomes. The definition I propose considers militarism to be a continuous phenomenon, where the level of militarism matters for the effects it has on policy, grand strategy, and other important variables.

2.2 A New Definition of Militarism

In this project, I define militarism simply as *admiration of the military by society.*[7] How should each of the elements of this definition be understood and measured by scholars? To start with, admiration is synonymous with "arousing respect and approval." It is used in the plain-English sense of the term. The military, in this case, is considered to be the uniformed, official defense forces of the state. I exclude from my definition of militarism other agents of violence employed by the state, like the police, the intelligence services, or paramilitary units like a presidential guard. While these groups can also be the subject of admiration (or disdain) by the public, they are not the focus of this project. Society is defined as the group of citizens within a state that have the power to remove the government – in other words, the selectorate (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). In a democracy, this would be those citizens of voting age who will cast a ballot in response to a legislator's position. In an autocracy, this may be citizens who can protest or instigate rebellion in order to remove the ruling party, or it could be political elites who can organize the removal of a leader. In a transitional regime, it may be some combination of the two. Even totalitarian regimes have some kind of selectorate—for example, one could argue that the German military served as the selectorate for Hitler in World War II (in fact, various factions did unsuccessfully try to remove him from power during the war) (Steiner 2008).

[7] The discerning reader may have noticed that my discussion of extant definitions, and my own definition, exclude mentions of the military as a source of militarism. Many who study militarism define it in such a way that the military themselves can be considered militaristic, or a source of militarism. I do not, and consider militarism to be a society-driven phenomenon. While militaries have undoubtedly been aggressive throughout the ages (see the "cult of the offensive" across Europe in the lead-up to WWI), I conceive of this aggression as the natural, expected state of the military throughout history – part of the reason why civil society exists is to rein in the impulses of the military. In my cases, when the military is aggressive, it is additive to the militarism found in society; rarely does an aggressive military take the reins of a pacifist society. When aggressive militaries exist, they are usually enabled by a militaristic society.

Of course, not every society which admires the military experiences militarism in an overwhelming sense; admiration increases along a continuum of militarism and may be benign in its existence at the left-hand side of the continuum, but gradually becomes more pernicious as societies move rightward along the continuum. When consideration of the society's admiration for the military begins to impact either the military's decision-making or that of the government, a state can be said to be militaristic. Where this critical point lays may be different for each society, or different for the same society at any given point in time.

This definition provides an innovation over those mentioned above in the four areas that I identified as cause for concern. First, as demonstrated above, each of the terms in the definition itself can be defined and identified with enough specificity that key identifiers can be measured. The definition is also conceptually simple and avoids referring to multiple different indicators of militarism. The definition deals only with attitudes, not a mix of attitudes and behaviors, as displayed in several of the definitions above.

Second, on the thorny issue of normative bias, this paper takes a middle-of-the-road approach. A certain level of admiration of the military is necessary for a society to function in a healthy way; the civil-military problematique means that the military must be endowed with enough strength to overcome a state's enemies, and then trusted enough not to wield that force to take over the state (P. Feaver 1996). Admiration for the military is a natural and healthy way for society to accept the protection of a strong military and do the things necessary to sustain it, like choosing to fund the defense budget instead of spending on domestic society. However, when militarism crosses the threshold of this benign influence to something that influences policymakers to choose options that may not be in the best interest of the state, we can say that militarism has undue influence on the state apparatus. As in any circumstance where something is considered as having "undue influence" over a subject, there is an implicit normative judgment that this is a bad thing. This project takes the perspective that it is more important to have a definition that is agnostic about outcomes than normatively unbiased.

Third, the definition avoids circularity stemming from defining militarism according to its outcomes. Societal admiration is the definition of militarism, not its effect. Downstream effects of admiration, like the appointment of military officials to public office, can be used to gauge militarism; they should not be included in the definition as a cause of militarism. Admiration can also be the cause of the military taking more power than its due – because it is admired as an

institution, military encroachment on civilian governance may be accepted as de rigueur. Instead of defining militarism as its outcomes, outcomes are left aside and other aspects are used to make the definition itself. This definition also avoids omitted variable bias. It does not presuppose why society admires the military, for example by saying that militarism is "admiration of the military for its fighting prowess" or "admiration of the military for its victory in wars." Taking admiration of the military as a starting point, this definition allows scholars to investigate the implications of militarism itself, not the downstream effects of victory in wars or military proficiency. It is important to note that while many things can cause initial admiration of the military, that is not the topic of this paper; this investigation is better left to sociologists and those studying political psychology or social behavior.

Finally, this definition treats militarism as a continuous variable, instead of a binary one. Militarism is represented as existing along a continuum, not being something that a state either has or does not have.

3 An Expert Survey on Militarism

3.1 Why Expert Surveys?

Expert surveys are a relatively recent innovation in the political science methodological toolkit. Most notably, Keren Yarhi-Milo's (2018) recent book makes use of expert surveys of historians to judge presidents' levels of self-monitoring. She notes that using expert surveys to code her independent variable "…diminishes coding bias and tautological inference" (2018, 16). When expert surveys are conducted at large scale, they provide a way to mitigate the bias that is often present in other forms of coding. For example, archival documents can be selectively read by a researcher to produce a specific outcome (and which documents are included in an archive could itself be a source of bias). While individual historians' beliefs might be the product of a biased assessment, having dozens of these assessments allows us to detect outliers and thus mitigate the impact of distorted viewpoints on our analysis.

Despite their relative novelty in the political science literature, expert surveys are both a valid and useful way to collect data (Budge 1999). Many existing and well-regarded data sets are based on the use of expert surveys, either to validate codings or as the data itself. For example, the University of Gothenburg's Quality of Government data set includes an expert survey data set on the "structure and behavior of public administration in a range of different countries. The

data covers 159 countries and is based on a web survey of 1294 experts" (Dahlström et al. 2015). Discussion and use of expert surveys can be found in 54 journal articles from the top 10 political science journals since 2000.[8]

In particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic, expert surveys provided a safe, accessible way to replace coding meant to be done via extensive archival work. In a time when most archives are closed to the public, expert surveys can be deployed at low cost and with relative ease. They should therefore be considered for any researcher looking to collect new data during periods of public health crisis.

It is important to note that expert surveys are, in effect, providing a meta-measure of the independent variable in question. Instead of directly assessing the level of militarism in a given time period, expert survey data provides us with a measure of *what historians believe to be* the level of militarism in a given time period. While we are therefore one level abstracted from primary-source data, expert historians are trained to form conjectures based on their analysis of primary sources. Historians have deep, specialized knowledge of their time periods of interest, and therefore provide a valuable source of information that distills down insights extracted from a vast amount of primary source data.

3.2 Expert Survey Methodology

This expert survey covered 15 countries from the period 1850-2005. Countries were chosen for inclusion in the survey sample based on the Correlates of War (COW) major powers database. These countries include: the United States, Prussia (Germany), Russia, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Britain, Japan, and China.

Regional powers were also included to allow for more detailed, region-by-region analysis of the impact of militarism on conflict. These countries include: Spain, India, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Iran. The COW major powers database does not reflect the great deal of non-European conflict occurring below the level of wars involving major powers. The addition of these countries, drawn from published analysis of regional great powers and consultation with experts, helps to broaden the sample and redress these issues.

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[8] The top 10 political science journals were taken from SCImago citation metrics and included: AJPS, IO, WP, QJPS, APSR, Political Analysis, JCR, IS, JPR, and Review of International Organizations. See <https://library.bu.edu/PS/topjournals> for a complete list of top political science journals. Keyword search data was taken from Scopus.

Because I intend for this dataset to be matched with standard political science data sets, this preliminary effort only included the periods of time for each country directly before all intra-state conflicts listed in the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set between 1850-2005. This is a total of 80 conflicts. Because I targeted a limited number of great powers in my surveys, I then researched each conflict and determined whether one or more countries in my sample was a belligerent, and generated a list of country-conflicts. These country-conflicts formed the periodization for each of my country surveys, and resulted in a total of 119 country-conflict periods. A full list of country-conflicts is available in Appendix A. Future data collection efforts could focus on the time periods not covered in this initial survey, as well as extending the data set to the present day and back to earlier historical periods. Surveys could also be expanded to include all countries involved in one of the 80 intra-state wars between 1850-2005 listed in the MID data set.[9]

The survey sample included all historians from the top 50 US history departments[10] whose biographies indicated that they had expertise in one of the countries in the sample, for roughly the correct time period. I chose to include both advanced PhD students (those at the dissertation stage) as well as faculty in my sample. For many countries, there are only a few top historians in the United States. Including advanced PhD candidates allowed me to collect more responses while still seeking the judgement of experts.

In many cases, historians were included on the sample list because of an expressed interest or research program in "modern East Asian history" or "pre-war Central European history." These vague expressed research interests did not necessarily translate to specific expertise in the country and time periods included in my survey, so these potential survey respondents were contacted via email and asked if they felt they had sufficient knowledge of society's relationship with the military in a given country-spell to complete a short survey. If they felt they did not, they were asked to provide the names of other scholars who might be able to serve as respondents. Doing so strengthens our belief that the experts who responded did so because they would rate themselves as experts on the topic (Yarhi-Milo 2018, 71-72).

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[9] As a PhD student, I relied on the generosity of scholars volunteering their time to answer my surveys, and an additional motivation for only asking about the periods of time before inter-state conflicts was not wanting to overburden them by offering what could potentially be dozens of discrete time periods for their analysis in order to form a continuous data set. This is a rich area for further survey research in the future.

[10] As judged by the US News and World Report rankings. See: https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-humanities-schools/history-rankings

If a historian agreed to participate in the survey, they were directed to a Qualtrics survey that would anonymously record their responses. Each survey began with an introductory block of text which explained my research, my conceptualization of militarism, and then obtained informed consent from the respondent. The survey then walked respondents through blocks of questions based on which country-conflict periods they wanted to evaluate. Each block contained four questions and then an opportunity for a narrative free-text response. The initial four survey questions asked respondents to rate, on a scale of 1-100, their assessments of the country-conflict period for the following questions:

- How militarist was [country x] during [time period y]?
- During [time period y], to what degree did [county x's] society admire the military?
- During [time period y], to what degree did [county x's] society trust the military?
- During [time period y], to what degree did [county x's] society have confidence in the military?

Respondents had the opportunity to include a free-text response to explain or expand on their numeric coding, and many scholars chose to do so.

Surveys that were never completed were discarded in line with standard procedures for dealing with non-complete survey responses. For most non-completes, there was no explanation offered as to why the respondent failed to complete the survey. However, there were a small subset of respondents who took the time to inform me of their reasons for non-completion via email. The most common source of non-completion among respondents who identified a reason for their non-completion was methodological disagreement. Roughly 3% (n=9) of those who started the survey declined to finish it on the basis of their disagreement with the survey's format and methodology. While the questions above are complex and multifaceted, I asked respondents to reduce their answers to a numeric quantity. However, I structured the survey this way to generate metrics that could be used in quantitative analysis. The free-text responses provide a rich ground for future text analysis, as well as an important way of validating the numeric results. Some historians felt that being asked to make a quantitative judgement was methodologically inappropriate. This finding, on the different ways in which disciplines perceive information-gathering exercises, could provide a fruitful arena for future research.

I introduced respondents to my definition of militarism ("societal admiration for the military") at the beginning of the survey. I then asked them to rate the country-spell's overall

level of militarism, as well as the level of societal admiration for the military. This allows me to determine whether respondents accepted my definition of militarism—if the value for the militarism question matches the value for the societal admiration question, it is indicative that the respondent views those two questions as analogous.

I also included a question about societal trust in the military, and societal confidence in the military. These two questions reflect alternative definitions of militarism besides my own, and allow for scholars to run analyses based on different conceptions of militarism and different facets of societal perception of the military.

Finally, I asked all respondents to direct me to others who they thought would be willing to participate in my survey. This "snowball sample" technique allowed me to expand my list outward to subject matter experts from different programs, and importantly different countries, while validating their expertise through a trusted recommendation. I contacted all historians who were offered up as contacts, and expanded the respondent list to political scientists and military historians who were recommended as well.

3.3 Expert Survey Results

Ultimately, 311 historians participated in the expert survey across all countries. The breakdown across countries was:

Country	Number of Historians in Sample (contacted)	Number of Survey Participants	Response Rate
United States	168	60	35.7%
Prussia	145	47	32.4%
Russia	147	34	23.1%
France	86	31	36.0%
Italy	23	9	39.1%
Austria-Hungary	48	17	35.4%
Britain	48	10	20.8%
Spain	19	10	52.6%
Japan	93	33	35.5%
China	43	11	25.6%
India	72	16	22.2%
Egypt	24	11	45.8%
Iraq	18	6	33.3%
Israel	25	12	48.0%
Iran	14	4	28.6%

Not all of the participating experts chose to evaluate every country-conflict period in the survey. Appendix A records the number of responses for every country-conflict period.

Interestingly, despite being provided with a definition of militarism as "societal admiration for the military," many of the historians in the sample did not appear to accept the definition. Q1 for each country-conflict period asked historians "on a scale of 0-100, how militarist was [country X] during [time period y]," while Q2 asked "on a scale of 0-100, how much did [country X's] society admire the military during [time period y]." These scores often differed dramatically, indicating to me that historians were taking other factors besides societal admiration into account when rating how "militarist" a country was during a given time period. Endeavoring to understand this difference would be a fruitful area for future research.

After non-complete responses were removed from the sample, I averaged the response values for each question to create four variables for the country-conflict period: militarism, admiration, confidence, and trust. The following are the range for each of these four variables:

	Minimum Value	**Average Value**	**Maximum Value**
Militarism	13.4	57.4	87.78
Admiration	16.43	55.28	91.33
Confidence	15.6	54.48	92.56
Trust	19.4	52.26	92.67

The results of the expert survey and the resultant four variables for each country-conflict period were compiled into a database, merged with the MIDs database, and control variables were added to create a data set that could be used to analyze the results of militarism on war initiation. The following section details the sample analysis I conducted using the new militarism data set.

4 Quantitative Analysis: Militarism and War Initiation

This section of the article seeks to demonstrate that the data I collected can be used in quantitative analysis. I have chosen to include a sample analysis investigating how inclusion of my militarism variable impacts analysis of war initiation, a topic of interest to political scientists of the realist persuasion. I take as the basis for this analysis Reiter and Stam (2007), which was an original and groundbreaking analysis of the determinants of war initiation, and determined that regime type was a predictive factor in the decision to go to war.

4.1 Theory

I argue in this section that militarism provides a compelling explanatory variable for when and why states choose to initiate conflict. The first link in my argument is that militarism

impacts the decision-making process of policymakers. In this theory, militarism can impact the decision-making process of policymakers through two separate causal mechanisms. First, the policymakers could be influenced by society's admiration of the military. Second, the policymakers could themselves be militaristic.[11] Notably, I do not make any predictions about the hawkishness or dovishness of individual policymakers or military officials, because militarism is a societal variable.

The first proposed mechanism operates through a causal process akin to the audience costs argument. I argue that when policymakers perceive that societal admiration of the military is a factor crucial to society, they come to believe that they will be punished for not abiding by what has come to be a social norm. If the policymaker is in a democracy, this might constitute being voted out of office at the next election, censored by their party, or ridiculed by the media. If the policymaker is not a legislator but is instead the head of state in a transitional regime or an autocracy, this might constitute removal from office by the selectorate, or risking a coup by political opponents. The second mechanism by which militarism can influence policymakers' decision-making processes is when it directly affects the leader. This means that the leader has undue admiration for the military and has their thinking biased by militarism. This most often appears in totalitarian regimes, like those of Nazi German and Imperial Japan in World War II. However, any regime could theoretically have a militaristic head of state, which would introduce bias into the decision-making process. The difference is merely the degree of constraint on the leader, and how much their individual militaristic bias is liable to influence the ultimate policy outcome.

The next step in my argument is showing how policymakers affected by militarism create poor wartime grand strategy. Wartime grand strategy is defined in this project as the interaction of military and non-military means to defend the country's national interest in a time of threat. I distinguish wartime grand strategy from peacetime grand strategy, which I do not examine in this

[11] In this article I use the term "policymaker" generically to mean a member of government with decision-making power over whether the state goes to war, and if so, how that war is prosecuted. Some states have many policymakers – in the US, for example, policymakers include representatives, senators, and the president. Some states have only one policymaker – in an autocracy, the head of state may be the only individual with true policy-making authority. Others may have a small group of policymakers, like transitional regimes or autocracies ruled by a leader with a small selectorate. In hegemonic party regimes, the distinction between society and policymaker collapses, since the selectorate is made up of policymakers (e.g. the Chinese Communist Party members are the selectorate that President Xi Jinping must maintain the support of, but those members are simultaneously policymakers).

project. Grand strategy of any kind is made through the strategic interaction of multiple types of stakeholders, from elected officials to bureaucrats to the military to the intelligence community. Academics have weighed in on the ideal balance between all of these stakeholders, and they usually fall on the side of favoring civilian preponderance (Cohen 2002).

This analysis focuses in on two key actors in the formation of wartime grand strategy – civilian policymakers and the military. The balance of power between civilians and the military is theoretically a continuous variable, but it could be grouped into three general categories – military preponderant, civilian preponderant, and balanced wartime grand strategy. I argue that militarism leads to the abdication of civilians' equal and separate responsibility for crafting inputs to grand strategy due to civilians willingly giving up this power because of the military's popularity with civilians, or because the leader is a militarist themselves and as a result fails to consider alternative policy options.

The military should have a large (perhaps the only) say in the crafting of tactics and operational art. But when it comes to making wartime grand strategy, civilian input is crucial. This is because the crafting of effective wartime grand strategy requires an understanding of various factors that the military does not necessarily have any specialized knowledge of – how to obtain funding, alliance politics, coalition strategy, an understanding of the enemy's interests and their will to fight, how domestic support will hold out over time, and an understanding of the shape of the battlefield. At the end of the day, states need a balanced interaction between the military and civilians in order to get optimal grand strategy. The military and civilians both need to be able to bring their special skill and knowledge to the table. The military deals with the kinetic use of force, while the civilian policymakers decide when the use of force is the best option, as opposed to the use of other tools of statecraft, like economic sanctions or institutional condemnation of an enemy. The military also has a crucial role in advising civilians on important military strategic considerations during this process, for example by providing estimates of the military feasibility of different kinetic options. Military input may also drive non-military considerations, like whether allies are required to provide troops and material beyond the resources of the state. To have the optimal integration of political and military means to achieve the desired ends, a balanced grand strategy is required. With an unbalanced, military

preponderant grand strategy, the military is likely to be deployed to conflicts where military force alone cannot achieve victory, without the non-military support required.[12]

4.2 Hypothesis

The theory outlined above leads to the following hypothesis, which I will test using the data in my militarism data set:

> *H1: states with higher militarism scores are more likely to initiate wars than states with lower militarism scores.*

Testing this hypothesis provides an interesting opportunity to assess whether the inclusion of my militarism variables in quantitative analysis of war changes our understanding of conflict dynamics. Reiter and Stam (2007) famously test the impact of democracy on war initiation and victory. If my theory is correct, it challenges some of the findings of previous research by focusing on another variable, militarism, that better predicts war initiation—and perhaps other conflict behaviors as well.

4.3 Results

An initial inspection of the bivariate correlation between the militarism variables and war initiation provides support for H1. Initiators receive higher expert survey scores on militarism, admiration, trust, and confidence in the military.

Variable	**Initiator (COW)**	**Non-Initiator (COW)**
Militarism	62.1	57.5
Admire Military	59.24	53.69
Trust Military	55.28	50.64
Confident in Military	57.08	53.44

Moving beyond bivariate correlations, I use logit regression to investigate my hypotheses, because initiation and war outcome are both binary variables. Testing H1, a logit model looking at the effect of admiration (my definition of militarism) shows a statistically significant (P=0.015) correlation with an increased likelihood of initiating a war. I control for

[12] Observers have long noted that in the American case in particular, admiration may be playing an especially strong role in the deployment of the military to difficult conflicts. Because of admiration for the military leading to perceived hyper-proficiency, the military may even be deployed to conflicts that it is not tactically capable of winning (Schake and Mattis 2016, 315).

societal confidence in the military using data from my expert survey, which recent work (Golby and Feaver, working paper) has shown has a substantial influence on societal relationships with the military. I also include an interaction between my admiration and confidence variables, to test for whether the effect of admiration on war initiation is contingent on societal confidence in the military. I also include control measures from Reiter and Stam (2007)—two measures of regime type, one measuring Polity IV score and another indicating whether the country is democratic, and a measure of military force ratios. The following table displays the results of the model.

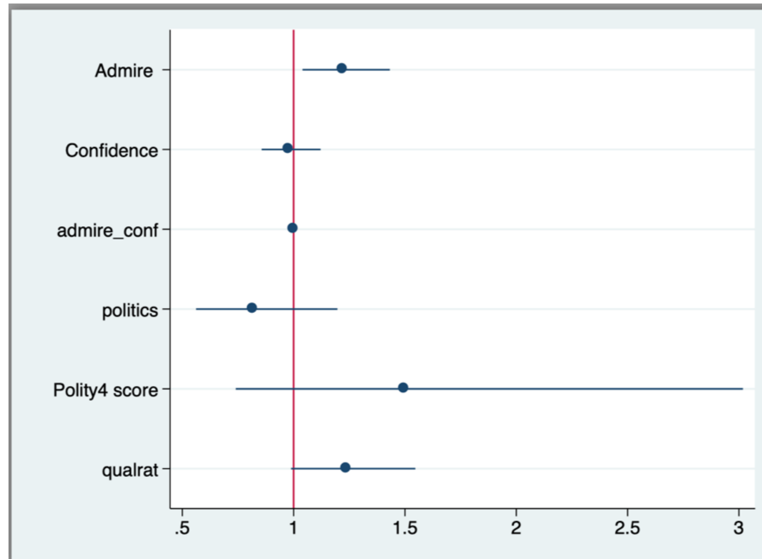
```
. logit init Admire Confidence admire_conf politics democ4 qualrat

Iteration 0:   log likelihood = -44.330164
Iteration 1:   log likelihood =  -36.88679
Iteration 2:   log likelihood =  -35.73255
Iteration 3:   log likelihood = -35.543268
Iteration 4:   log likelihood = -35.542631
Iteration 5:   log likelihood = -35.542631

Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         64
                                                  LR chi2(6)      =      17.58
                                                  Prob > chi2     =     0.0074
Log likelihood = -35.542631                       Pseudo R2       =     0.1982
```

init	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Admire	.1992278	.0816612	2.44	0.015	.0391749	.3592808
Confidence	-.0204753	.0687268	-0.30	0.766	-.1551774	.1142268
admire_conf	-.0013559	.0009763	-1.39	0.165	-.0032694	.0005577
politics	-.198527	.192935	-1.03	0.303	-.5766726	.1796187
democ4	.4018103	.3585986	1.12	0.263	-.3010299	1.104651
qualrat	.212179	.1142359	1.86	0.063	-.0117193	.4360773
_cons	-7.645525	3.430732	-2.23	0.026	-14.36964	-.9214139

The following plot graphs the odds ratios for the above model. Odds ratios are a measure of the strength of association with an independent and a dependent variable, providing an easier way to interpret the above findings.



The model shows that admiration is the only variable with a significant, positive effect on war initiation. This model shows that democracy might not be a determinative factor when it comes to war initiation. Controlling for democracy, polity score, confidence in the military (which could influence a state's decision to go to war), and balance of forces (which similarly could influence war initiation), admiration for the military is still a statistically significant determinant of war initiation. Importantly, when admiration for the military is included in the model, the effect of democracy on war initiation is negated. Alternate model specifications are provided in Appendix B.

This analysis demonstrates that there is promise in reexamining important findings in political science through the lens of militarism, which could be a driving force behind many conflict behaviors of interest to researchers. This is especially important if academics and policymakers are concerned about a recent rise in militarism, which could impact conflict dynamics if militarism is indeed a variable of concern in these theories.

5 Conclusion

This article has defined militarism, presented an original expert survey data set on militarism across time and space, and offered an example of the kind of quantitative analysis that can be done using this data. My models showed how a relationship between militarism and war initiation that challenges the standard interpretation of which states initiate wars. These results indicate a need to reexamine classic beliefs about war initiation, such as Reiter and Stam (2007), and perhaps a need to consider militarism in other studies of conflict dynamics.

There is a vast amount of research that can be conducted using this new data set, including, but not limited to, research on conflict. My broader dissertation project investigates the impact that militarism has on grand strategy, and through it, effectiveness in war. Other applications of this data include investigations into how militarism affects signaling and deterrence, the impact of militarism on military effectiveness, and how militarism affects preparation for war, including the acquisition of new military technologies. Further work must also be done to broaden the data set—collecting information on country-conflict periods before 1850, and broadening the data set's scope beyond great powers and regional powers. As the data set grows more comprehensive, we will be able to draw more conclusions about the effect that militarism, an important variable in social science, has on a range of outcomes of interest.

APPENDIX A

Country	Conflict	N Responses
Egypt	Anglo-Egyptian War (also known as the British conquest of Egypt) in 1882	5
	Arab-Israeli War in 1848	6
	Second Arab-Israeli War (also known as the Suez Crisis, or the Tripartite Aggression) in 1956	6
	Third Arab-Israeli War (also known as the Six Day War or the June War) in 1967	6
	War of Attrition against Israel in 1969	5
	Fourth Arab-Israeli War (also known as the October War, the Ramadan War, or the Yom Kippur War) in 1973	5
United States	World War I in 1914	.
	World War II in 1939	36
	Persian Gulf War in 1991	37
	War in Afghanistan in 2001	28
	Iraq War in 2003	28
Austria-Hungary	Second Italian War of Independence in 1859	8
	German-Danish War (also known as the Second Schleswig-Holstein War) in 1864	8
	Austro-Prussian War in 1866	9
	Austrian-Bosnian War in 1878	7
	Boxer Rebellion in 1899	7
	WWI in 1914	6
Russia	Crimean War in 1853	19
	Second Russo-Turkish War in 1877	19
	Boxer Rebellion in 1899	15
	Sino-Russian War in 1900	12
	Russo-Japanese War of 1904	18
	WWI in 1914	20
	Russo-Polish War in 1919	12
	Sino-Soviet War (also known as the Manchurian War) of 1929	9
	World War II and the Russo-Finnish War in 1939	11
	Korean War in 1950	11
	Soviet Invasion of Hungary in 1956	13
	Vietnam War in 1965	11
	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979	14
Prussia	Franco-Prussian War in 1871	16
	WWI in 1914	20
	WWII in 1939 (as Germany)	15
United Kingdom	Crimean War in 1853	7
	Second Opium War in 1856	6
	Anglo-Persian War in 1856	4
	First Boer War in 1880	5

	Anglo-Egyptian War (also known as the British conquest of Egypt) in 1882	4
	Boxer Rebellion in 1899 / Second Boer War in 1899	5
	WWI in 1914	7
	WWII in 1939	6
	Korean War in 1950	5
	Falklands War in 1982	6
	Persian Gulf War in 1990	4
	Intervention in Bosnia in 1992	1
	Intervention in Kosovo in 1998	1
	War in Afghanistan in 2001	3
	War in Iraq in 2003	3
China	Anglo-French War (also known as the Arrow War or Second Opium War) in 1856	5
	Sino-French War (also known as the Tonkin War) of 1883	4
	First Sino-Japanese War of 1894	7
	Boxer Rebellion (also known as the Yihetuan Movement) in 1899	7
	Sino-Russian War in 1900	4
	Sino-Soviet War (also known as the Manchurian War) in 1929	7
	Second Sino-Japanese War in 1931	8
	Third Sino-Japanese War in 1937	8
	Korean War in 1950	8
	Sino-Indian War (also known as the Indo-China War) in 1962	5
	Second Sino-Indian War (also known as the Second Indo-China War) in 1967	4
	Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979	4
	Sino-Vietnamese Border War in 1987	2
India	First War of Independence in 1857	11
	WWI in 1914	10
	Indo-Pakistani War of 1947 (also known as the First Kashmir War)	10
	Sino-Indian War of 1962	9
	Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 (also known as the Second Kashmir War)	8
	Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971	9
	Kargil War in 1999	7
Israel	Arab-Israeli War of 1948	9
	Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 (also known as the Sinai War)	9
	Six Day War of 1967	10
	War of Attrition with Egypt of 1969	9
	Yom Kippur War of 1973	9
	Israel-Lebanon War of 1982	10
France	Crimean War in 1853	12
	Second Opium War in 1857	7
	Second Italian War of Independence in 1859	7
	Franco-Mexican War in 1862	3
	Franco-Prussian War in 1870	10
	Sino-French War in 1884	9
	Third Franco-Vietnamese War in 1882	6

	Boxer Rebellion in 1899	5
	WWI in 1914	19
	Franco-Turkish War in 1919	13
	WWII in 1939	15
	Korean War in 1950	12
	Persian Gulf War in 1990	7
	Intervention in Bosnia in 1992	3
Italy	Second Italian War of Independence in 1859	1
	Third Italian War of Independence in 1866	1
	Second Italian-Ethiopian War in 1895 Boxer Rebellion in 1899	2
	Italian-Turkish War in 1911	2
	WWI in 1914	2
	Italian Conquest of Ethiopia in 1935	2
	WWII in 1939	2
	Persian Gulf War in 1990	2
	Iraq War in 2003	3
Japan	First Sino-Japanese War in 1894	19
	Boxer Rebellion in 1899	15
	Russo-Japanese War in 1904	16
	Japan-Korean Guerrilla Wars in 1907	14
	Second Sino-Japanese War in 1931	18
	Third Sino-Japanese War in 1937	17
	WWII in 1939	16
	Iraq War in 2003	14
Spain	First Spanish-Moroccan War in 1859	4
	Spanish-American War in 1898	5
	Second Spanish-Moroccan War in 1909	6
	Persian Gulf War in 1990	5
	Iraq War in 2003	5
Iraq	Arab-Israeli War in 1948	3
	Third Arab-Israeli War in 1967 (also known as the Six Day War)	3
	Fourth Arab-Israeli War in 1973 (Also known as the Yom Kippur War, the Ramadan War, and the October War)	3
	Iran-Iraq War in 1980	4
	Persian Gulf War in 1990	4
	Iraq War in 2003	4
Iran	Anglo-Persian War in 1856	1
	Iran-Iraq War in 1980	1

APPENDIX B

I re-ran my logit regression models as OLS models to provide interpretable coefficients.

H1: Militarism and War Initiation

```
. regress init Admire Confidence politics democ4 qualrat

      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =      64
-------------+------------------------------           F(  5,    58) =    2.24
       Model |  2.58549188     5  .517098376           Prob > F      =  0.0624
    Residual |  13.3988831    58  .231015226           R-squared     =  0.1618
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.0895
       Total |   15.984375    63  .253720238           Root MSE      =  .48064

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
        init |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
      Admire |   .0215145   .0094985     2.27   0.027     .0025012    .0405279
  Confidence |  -.0164026   .0092648    -1.77   0.082    -.0349481    .0021428
    politics |  -.0330865   .0367915    -0.90   0.372    -.1067327    .0405597
      democ4 |   .0735893   .0697833     1.05   0.296    -.0660973    .2132758
     qualrat |    .011841   .0055026     2.15   0.036     .0008263    .0228556
       _cons |  -.1299121   .3368269    -0.39   0.701    -.8041445    .5443203
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Taking confidence out of the equation as a robustness check:

```
. regress init Admire politics democ4 qualrat

      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =      64
-------------+------------------------------           F(  4,    59) =    1.94
       Model |  1.86138848     4  .465347119           Prob > F      =  0.1150
    Residual |  14.1229865    59  .239372653           R-squared     =  0.1165
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.0565
       Total |   15.984375    63  .253720238           Root MSE      =  .48926

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
        init |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
      Admire |   .0061352    .003911     1.57   0.122    -.0016907     .013961
    politics |  -.0295106   .0373946    -0.79   0.433    -.1043371    .0453158
      democ4 |   .0634491   .0707947     0.90   0.374    -.0782109    .2051091
     qualrat |   .0112132   .0055896     2.01   0.049     .0000284     .022398
       _cons |   -.136369   .3428454    -0.40   0.692    -.8224011    .5496631
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

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