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# War

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civil war, interstate war, nationalism, state building, political legitimacy, political inequality, welfare state, democracy

## Abstract

Though war has long been a neglected topic in the social sciences, we now look back on several decades of systematic research. This review first summarizes the main strands of recent research in political science, where the most influential studies and well-structured debates have emerged. It then outlines four main contributions made by political, cultural, and comparative historical sociologists: the study of ideological, cultural, and legitimation processes leading to and being shaped by war; configurations of political power and inequality as causes and outcomes of war; how wars influence and are influenced by organizational developments (including of state capacity); and the long-term causal forces that produce macro-level regularities.

## INTRODUCTION: SOCIOLOGY'S LONG NEGLECT OF WAR

War arguably represents one of the most dramatic and consequential events in human history, especially in the modern age of mass armies and total mobilization of the population for war. It has demanded an increasingly high death toll: somewhere around 110 million in the twentieth century alone, far more than in any previous epoch (Eckhart 1992, p. 272). The two world wars profoundly shattered societies and polities across Europe and East Asia, as did Cold War conflicts around the world. A third of all countries have experienced a civil war with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths over the past 50 years, and half of them went through an armed conflict costing at least 25 lives. One-fifth of all countries in the world have experienced at least ten years of civil war since 1960 (Blattman & Miguel 2010, p. 3).

**Figure 1** (from Wimmer & Min 2009) gives a detailed overview of average war frequencies over the past 200 years. Left columns refer to the territories of today's countries on which wars were fought (data from Wimmer & Min 2006); the right columns show which states fought how many wars (data from Small & Singer 1982) on whatever territory. The left column thus lists wars by geographic location, the right column by the state actors involved. The figure further distinguishes between interstate wars in the top panel and civil wars in the bottom panel, both of which are defined on the basis of a 1,000-battle-death threshold.[1] When it comes to interstate wars, Western powers have clearly done most of the fighting, and the global South is where most of it has occurred. Civil wars are distributed more evenly over the globe. What emerges from these raw data and figures, then, is that war is a more ubiquitous and frequent phenomenon than is assumed—perhaps because the most prominent social scientists live in Western countries that have not seen any fighting in their own territory since at least World War II or, in the case of the United States, since the Civil War.

Given the prevalence and ubiquity of war, what does sociology have to offer to explain its causes, conduct, and consequences? From the late 1930s (e.g., Keller 1945) to the present (Malešević 2010b, p. 11), sociologists complained that their discipline had contributed "little or nothing" (Park 1940/1941, p. 551) to our understanding of war. Certainly there was no lack of moral outrage, nationalistic finger pointing, and philosophical grandstanding about the meaning of the Great War by major sociologists (cf. Joas & Woodgate 1990), and many policy studies appeared of the consequences of war for population dynamics or the economy (for a British example relating to World War II, see Smith 1986; for the Vietnam war, Modell & Haggerty 1991). Yet few analyses included a discussion of the causes of war.

According to Sorokin (1938), one of the first American sociologists to systematically study war, "The existing literature on war causation reveals the almost hopelessly muddled condition of our knowledge in this field, and in that of causality generally." He concluded, "Either we do not know any-thing real about the causes of war, or if we do know something, the theories, remaining pure conjecture, do not show it" (Sorokin 1938, pp. 475, 480). Echoing Sorokin, Bock (1954, p. 108) stated 15 years later that "signs of a forthcoming empirical sociology of war are less encouraging." Thirty-five years after Bock, a systematic review of half a century of sociology journals in the United States and Europe concluded that "sociologists devote incredibly little attention to war . . . especially in comparison to most other topics" (Garnett 1988, p. 271), a complaint that could also be heard among political scientists (Singer 1980) and economists (Blattman & Miguel 2010).

In the 1980s, sociologists started to debate how to explain this neglect, perhaps stimulated

[1]War is commonly defined as a violent confrontation between armed organizations, at least one of which represents a government. Various death thresholds have been used (for a critical discussion, see Sambanis 2004). It is thus distinguished from genocide (in which the victims are not organized and armed), riots (in which none of the actors represents a government), and other forms of mass violence, all of which are outside the focus of this review.

by the systematic attention that Hans Joas (1991, 1999; Joas & Woodgate 1990; Joas & Knöbl 2013) gave to the intellectual history of sociology's approach to war. Some faulted the classics from Marx to Durkheim, who had neglected the topic because they believed in the peaceful future of modern societies (Ashworth & Dandeker 1987; Mann 1988, p. 147). The modernization theorists of the postwar era, Joas (1999) argued, fell into the same trap by thinking that economic growth and political integration would lead to a peaceful future for the developing South—quite in line with the evolutionary sociologist Spencer (1851), who a century before had predicted that war would disappear once military societies were replaced by industrial ones. Major sociological theorists of the postwar era therefore thought that wars represented contingent events best left to the inquiry of historians.

Others blamed ideology, arguing that the more bellicose authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially of the German tradition, were banned from the pacifist postwar canon (Malešević 2010a). Similarly, Singer (1980) thought that the postwar peace studies movement in Western academia had delayed a systematic empirical study of the causes of war in international relations. Finally, many authors highlighted that sociology had delegated studying war to specialized subfields such as the sociology of the military or to other disciplines altogether, such as international relations (Joas 1991, p. 48) or history (Bock 1954; see also Joas & Knöbl 2013, p. 193; Scott 2001; Shaw 1988, p. 10).

As a remedy to this situation, many scholars suggested rediscovering and building upon earlier students of war who had been ignored for these disciplinary or political reasons, such as Clausewitz and other military strategists (Roxborough 1993, Kestnbaum 2009), the anarcho-syndicalist Proudhon (Noland 1970) who wrote extensively about war, Weber's contemporary Emil Lederer (Huebner 2008), or the various bellicist authors of the prewar era (Malešević 2010a).

However, the *lamento* over the lack of a sociological tradition of studying war is increasingly unjustified. Over the past few decades, sociologists have started to pay more systematic attention to the role of war in the development of modern societies and beyond. Although it certainly does not represent an integrated field with clearly defined contours of debate and also remains marginally influential compared with the dominant strands of research that have since emerged in international relations or comparative politics, a distinctive sociological tradition has grown over the past years. The present article outlines the main elements of this emerging scholarship—leaving out the sociology of the American military, a variant of institutional sociology that has been reviewed elsewhere (Lang 1972, Kestnbaum 2009).

Despite many overlaps and parallelisms with major works in political science, as is noted throughout this review, the emerging sociology of war emphasizes four themes that are less prominently reflected in mainstream political science research: First, sociological work on war often addresses long-term historical developments, rather than short-term decision-making processes or fast-changing configurations of alliances that lead to war. Focusing on secular trends and broad patterns has been largely given up in the political science literature on the subject, as is noted below. Second, a distinctly sociological literature addresses the organizational causes and consequences of wars, including the building of administrative state capacities or welfare states, topics that are less often the focus of a political science literature, which is more preoccupied with the inner workings of formal political institutions (parliaments, cabinets, and the like). Third, some sociologists of war have zoned in on how political legitimacy, nationalist ideologies, or cultural framings affect and are affected by war, topics that find less interest among political scientists, mostly owing to tricky conceptual and measurement issues and to the discipline's commitment to the rational choice paradigm. Finally, sociologists call attention to the role of political power and configurations of power—the varying relationships

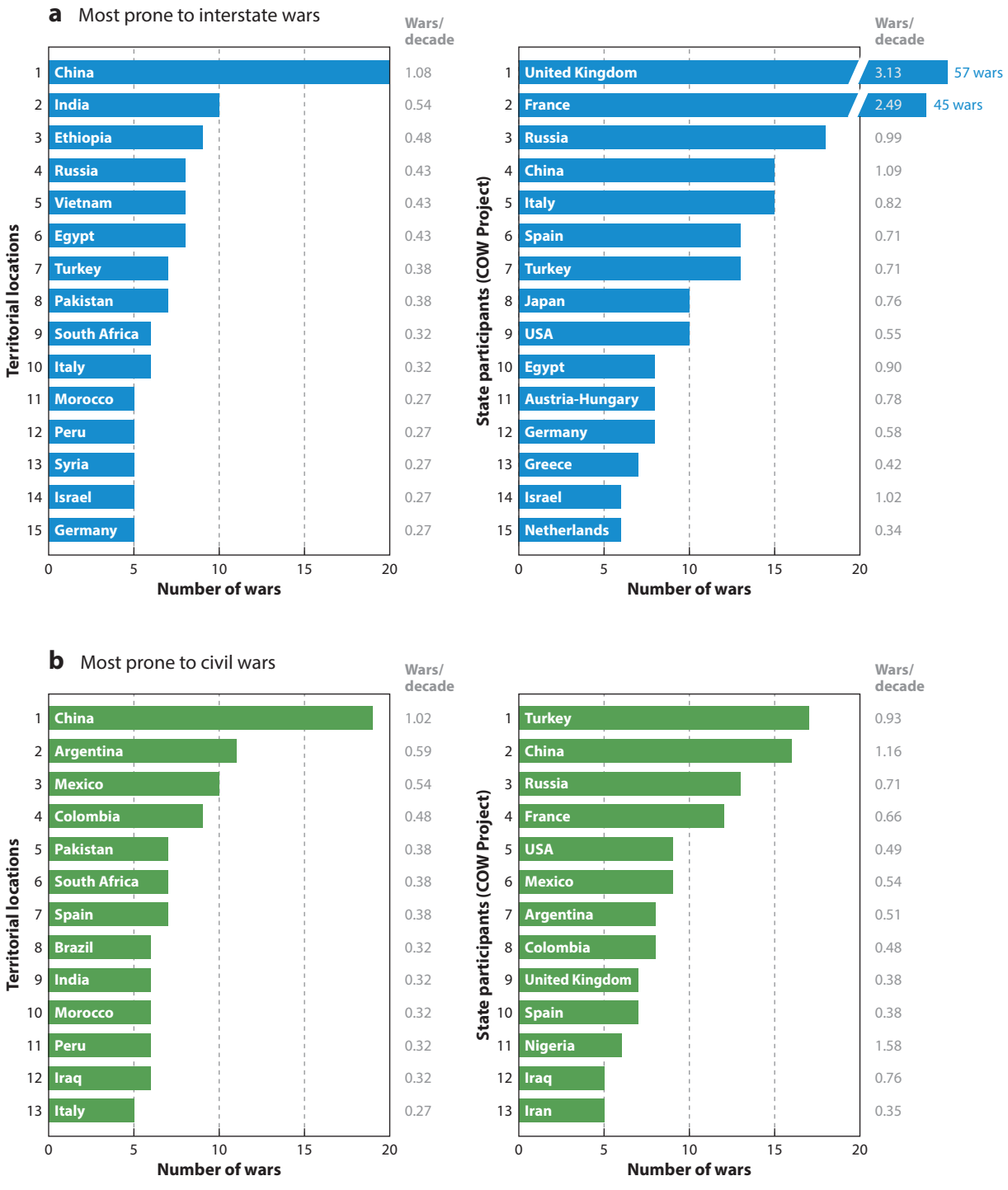

a Most prone to interstate wars
Territorial locations
Wars/ decade
1 China 1.08
2 India 0.54
3 Ethiopia 0.48
4 Russia 0.43
5 Vietnam 0.43
6 Egypt 0.43
7 Turkey 0.38
8 Pakistan 0.38
9 South Africa 0.32
10 Italy 0.32
11 Morocco 0.27
12 Peru 0.27
13 Syria 0.27
14 Israel 0.27
15 Germany 0.27
0 5 10 15 20
Number of wars
State participants (COW Project)
Wars/ decade
1 United Kingdom 3.13 57 wars
2 France 2.49 45 wars
3 Russia 0.99
4 China 1.09
5 Italy 0.82
6 Spain 0.71
7 Turkey 0.71
8 Japan 0.76
9 USA 0.55
10 Egypt 0.90
11 Austria-Hungary 0.78
12 Germany 0.58
13 Greece 0.42
14 Israel 1.02
15 Netherlands 0.34
0 5 10 15 20
Number of wars
b Most prone to civil wars
Territorial locations
Wars/ decade
1 China 1.02
2 Argentina 0.59
3 Mexico 0.54
4 Colombia 0.48
5 Pakistan 0.38
6 South Africa 0.38
7 Spain 0.38
8 Brazil 0.32
9 India 0.32
10 Morocco 0.32
11 Peru 0.32
12 Iraq 0.32
13 Italy 0.27
0 5 10 15 20
Number of wars
State participants (COW Project)
Wars/ decade
1 Turkey 0.93
2 China 1.16
3 Russia 0.71
4 France 0.66
5 USA 0.49
6 Mexico 0.54
7 Argentina 0.51
8 Colombia 0.48
9 United Kingdom 0.38
10 Spain 0.38
11 Nigeria 1.58
12 Iraq 0.76
13 Iran 0.35
0 5 10 15 20
Number of wars

**Figure 1**

War frequencies over the past 200 years. (*a*) Wars of conquest and interstate wars fought on the territories of countries that existed in 2001; the Correlates of War (COW) Project list is of state participants involved in interstate and extrastate wars up to 1997. (*b*) Includes secessionist and nonsecessionist civil wars fought on the territories of countries that existed in 2001; COW list is of state participants involved in intrastate wars up to 1997. Adapted with permission of Taylor & Francis from Wimmer & Min (2009).

of political domination and subordination between political actors, whether or not these find expressions in formal political institutions or remain informal and only loosely organized. In the tradition of Max Weber and Barrington Moore, therefore, political actors are often understood more broadly (and one might say less precisely) as representing social interest groups or class factions (such as the landed gentry in Moore), rather than political organizations such as parties, guerilla armies, or political movements with a clearly identifiable leadership.

This review is organized accordingly. First, I briefly sketch out the major strands of thinking about war in political science, first in international relations, which has traditionally studied interstate wars, and then in comparative politics, which is more concerned with civil wars. I then discuss sociological work on legitimacy and ideology, configurations of power, organizational development, and long-term trends. For each of these four factors, I first review works that see them as causes of war and then those whose focus lies on war's consequences. Recommendations for future research are made along the way.

## THE STUDY OF WAR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

A vast research area centered on the study of war has emerged in political science and among political economists in economics. It surpasses sociological research on war not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of analytical sophistication and empirical precision. Students of war in political science have also assembled major cross-national data sets (Small & Singer 1982, Gurr 1993, Jones et al. 1996, Gleditsch et al. 2002, Sambanis 2004, Klein et al. 2006, Eck & Hultman 2007, Cunningham et al. 2009, Raleigh et al. 2010). The following overview will have to be brief, touching only on major works, rather than the manifold debates and empirical controversies that many of them have triggered. Also omitted from this review is the considerable amount of work on how best to end wars through external intervention (Doyle & Sambanis 2000) or negotiation (Walter 2002).

### Interstate War

In the international relations literature, long-wave theories of war once sought to explain the periodic recurrence of world wars as a consequence of global economic cycles stretched over six decades (Goldstein 1991) or of the century-spanning rise and fall of hegemonic powers that dominate the global political arena (Modelski & Morgan 1985, Thompson 1988). Although the past two centuries have obviously seen several such global wars involving the major power centers of the world, most researchers now recognize that these wars do not follow a clear pattern of periodicity (a view pioneered by Singer 1980, pp. 355–56). In other words, there are no cycles of a uniform length between global wars, and the search for such regularities has now been largely given up, including by its most prominent early proponents (see Levy & Thompson 2011). But there is still some interest in the question of whether or not a global war breaks out every time a new state rises to global dominance over its main rival (Organski & Kugler 1980), independent of whether or not the rise and fall of hegemons follows a regular pattern.

The dominant strand in international relations research on war (see the excellent overview in Levy & Thompson 2010), however, was never based on world-systems theory but on realist assumptions: the basic insight that the modern world is not governed by a global state

but divided into competing sovereign entities. This anarchic structure makes wars between states a recurrent feature of global history since the emergence of the modern state system. At the beginning, international relations scholars were preoccupied with the question of whether a bipolar system, such as the one that existed during the Cold War, is more war-prone than a multipolar system (Waltz 1979). This once hotly debated issue (cf. Singer 1980, p. 357), which opposed various strands of realism, has now largely been abandoned, perhaps because the *N* in such global-system-level analysis is so small that no firm conclusions can be reached (see most recently Bennett & Stam 2004).

The current focus in international relations research has thus shifted away from long-term, global trends and toward the decision-making processes within states or the nature of pairs of states that make them more war-prone. Decades of debate unfolded to determine which exact distribution of military power between state dyads and which features of their internal decision-making processes will make interstate war more likely. Will security-maximizing states always attack each other when they have the military upper hand (the offensive realism of Mearsheimer 2001) or only when offensive military doctrines and technologies dominate over defensive ones (the offense-defense theory of Van Evera 1999), as before World War I? Are states with a long and persistent history of sabre rattling and competition, such as between India and Pakistan, more likely to fight each other on the battlefield (the rivalry theory developed by Dietz & Goertz 2000)? Which issues that states compete over are more likely to lead them into war (the steps-to-war approach of Senese & Vasquez 2008) and which types of informational asymmetries or commitment problems make the costly pursuit of war more attractive than a bargained solution (the rational choice–based commitment problem theory of Fearon 1995)? Can international norms and institutions (the neoliberal institutionalism of Keohane 1984) or intense trade between countries (Polachek 1980) countervail the consequences of anarchy and prevent war? What kind of domestic coalitions of actors can succeed in pushing for expansionist wars, and how do they manage to rally their populations behind them (a diversionary theory of war; Snyder 1991)? And relatedly and most extensively debated: Why do democratic states not fight other democracies (the democratic peace theory introduced by Russet 1993)? Each of these major theoretical approaches in international relations has given rise to sustained empirical debates, most of which are summarized in Levy & Thompson (2010).

## Civil Wars

A similar movement toward more precise, actor-focused arguments at the micro level can be observed in the civil war literature in comparative politics. It received a considerable boost with the appearance of two large-*N*, cross-country studies of the covariates of civil war, a genre of research that rapidly replaced the hitherto dominant, small-*N*, comparative tradition (for an overview of quantitative research in economics and political science, see Sambanis 2002, Blattman & Miguel 2010).

Fearon & Laitin's (2003) much discussed insurgency model maintains that wars are driven not by questions of political legitimacy but by military opportunity. If government forces are weak and disorganized, and if mountainous terrain allows rebels to hide and retreat, ambitious leaders will be able to organize a rebellion in whatever name: national liberation, fewer taxes, religious renewal, the elimination of class oppression, or straightforward self-enrichment. Similarly, Collier & Hoeffler (2004) argue that civil wars occur where rebellions are most feasible, rather than where actors are motivated by political grievances. More specifically, they maintain that lootable economic resources make organizing and sustaining a rebel organization easier and thus explain where and when civil wars break out (see also Collier et al. 2006). Relatedly, Ross (2006, 2012) studies how natural resources affect different types of violent conflict. When rebels can obstruct the extraction of natural resources,

as with oil, gas, and diamonds, the likelihood of civil war (and especially of separatist civil wars) increases; this has been especially true from the 1970s onward, when oil resources came increasingly under the control of national governments.

Yet another group of authors has related regime type to civil wars. The democratic civil peace theory states that democracies are able to solve internal disputes through the ballot. Autocracies can suppress rebellions by the use of force or by threatening massive violence. Civil wars should therefore be less likely in both democratic and autocratic societies and thus most likely in countries in between, the so-called anocracies (Müller & Weede 1990, Hegre et al. 2001; see the empirical critique by Vreeland 2008).

Another debate has ensued about which formal institutional arrangements—proportional representation, alternate list systems, presidentialism or parliamentarism, certain types of federalism, and so forth—are most likely to prevent civil wars, a topic of considerable interest to policy makers and constitutional engineers. From an original opposition between "consociationalists" recommending federalism, proportionalism, and parliamentarism (Lijphart 1977) on the one hand, and "centripetalists" favoring the combination of federalism, majoritarianism, and presidentialism on the other (Roeder 2005), the debate has now broadened to include a range of more specific institutional designs, tailored to specific ethnopolitical demographics and geographies (cf. Horowitz 2002, Mozaffar et al. 2003, Reilly 2011, Reynolds 2011; for a skeptical view on this literature, see Wimmer 2013, ch. 6).

## New Trends in the Study of Civil Wars

More recent studies of civil war are no longer exclusively concerned with explaining in which countries and during which years conflict is more likely to break out. The debate now includes concerns over how long civil wars last (Fearon 2004, Cunningham 2011, Wucherpfennig et al. 2012); the diffusion of conflicts across countries (Lake & Rothchild 1998, Gleditsch 2007); and whether specific configurations of state and rebel forces (Cunningham et al. 2009), types of rebels (Weinstein 2006), and shifting alliance patterns between armed groups (Christia 2012) shape how a conflict unfolds.

Beyond this broadening of the research agenda to include different outcomes, a threefold trend toward disaggregation can be observed (see also Cederman & Gleditsch 2009): one in terms of the units of observation used to study the occurrence of civil war; the second in terms of studying who is actually killed during civil war; and the third in terms of the combatants' motivations, which are now studied directly rather than assumed from the relative importance of country-level variables.

Whereas previous quantitative scholarship took country-years as units of observation, scholars have more recently begun to assemble fine-grained data sets, including detailed civil war event histories that decompose a civil war into various battle episodes (Raleigh & Hegre 2005), or studies of war theaters at the regional level, allowing the researcher to locate battle events in grid cells of various sizes (Buhaug & Rød 2005, Aas Rustad et al. 2011). This research offers new insights into the strategic and tactical logic of fighting, allowing us to understand how terrain, natural resources, the positioning of army garrisons, and so forth influence where the fighting takes place.

A second trend of disaggregation concerns the actual logics of violence during civil war—a closer look at who kills whom and why. The central focus of this research strand is to understand why and when combatants target civilians. Three prominent approaches have emerged. According to Weinstein (2006; see also Humphreys & Weinstein 2006), rebel organizations that initially relied on funding from natural resource extraction or from outside governments attract opportunistically motivated fighters and will be less hierarchically integrated. Such organizations therefore count more loose guns among their ranks and will be more likely to prey upon the civilian population,

looting their possessions, killing those who cannot run fast enough, and raping women as a rite of initiation (Cohen 2013).

According to Kalyvas (2006), both rebel and government forces seek information on locals who collaborate(d) with their opponents and then kill them, especially after freshly entering a territory. This dynamic of targeted killing is fed by village feuds among the locals who denunciate each other as supposed collaborators, especially when an occupying force is in firm control and the risk of denunciation is therefore low. When territorial control over an area is not yet fully established, Kalyvas argues, civilians are most likely to become victims of targeted killings because an already sufficiently high supply of denunciations meets a still high enough demand for killing collaborators.

Greed theories of civil war maintain—as do prominent nongovernmental organizations working to prevent conflicts in Africa—that lootable natural resources such as diamonds and other minerals are the main stake in armed conflicts between warlords, government troops, and rebel organizations. Correspondingly, the population in resource-rich areas will more likely become victims of terror and intimidation that armed groups deploy to establish or maintain control over these territories (Azam & Hoeffler 2002). These and a range of other theories are now explored using regional- or even local-level data to track civilian victimization in more detail (for an overview, see Kalyvas 2008; Blattman & Miguel 2010, p. 33).

A third recent strand of research offers a more disaggregated view of conflict participants by using surveys of or interviews with former combatants or members of informal support networks (Parkinson 2013) to discern motives, modes of recruitment, experience with violence, and postconflict behavior. This is a quickly expanding domain of empirical research, and I refer the reader to the most prominent studies in this field, including Gates (2002), Humphreys & Weinstein (2008), Verwimp (2005), Blattman (2009), and others (Blattman & Miguel 2010, p. 36).

## SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

As mentioned at the outset, a political sociology of war and violent conflict has emerged over the past few decades, making the refrain that sociology has little to offer to our understanding of war sound like an echo from the past. My review of this literature is confined to those areas where sociologists could or already have made a difference with regard to the dominant political science research outlined above. These contributions consist of bringing (back) into the picture questions of political legitimacy and cultural framing, political power configuration and grievances, organizational developments, and long-term historical trends.

### Legitimacy, Cultural Frames, and Collective Memory

**Principles of political legitimacy: nationalism.** The first consistent argument that focused squarely on political legitimacy is Luard's (1986) overview of how war has been waged by different types of states in the past 600 years. He argues that the motivations, aims, and decision-making procedures vary dramatically between dynastic states, sovereign territorial states, nation-states, and communist regimes because leaders operate within different cultural frames that define honor and shame, victory and defeat, friend and foe, and so forth. Consequently, the types and frequencies of interstate war depend on which of these political cultures informs state behavior (for empirical evidence of this conjecture, see Wimmer & Min 2009).

Wimmer & Min (2006) and Wimmer (2013) further developed this Bendixean (Bendix 1979) theme on the basis of new data assembled for the entire globe since 1816. They show that war is most likely to occur when and because principles of political legitimacy—theocracy, empire, absolutism, and the nation-state—change. Most importantly, the shift from imperial to nationalist principles of legitimacy—when sovereignty is transferred from the emperor to a nationally defined people—represents one of the main causes of both international and

domestic war in the modern world. Nationalism delegitimized imperial hierarchies and encouraged anticolonial movements across the world, often leading to violent wars of national liberation. Once nation-states were established, and with them the like-over-like principle of political legitimacy, ethnopolitical inequalities could be even more easily portrayed as illegitimate. Violent civil wars over who controlled the national state often followed (see also Wimmer et al. 2009). Interstate wars over the fate of coethnics across the border, equally motivated by nationalism, were a frequent accompaniment to the process of nation-state formation as well (on nationalism and interstate war, see also the international relations scholars Miller 2007, Woodwell 2007, Saideman & Ayres 2008).

Taking nationalism as a source of war seriously and focusing on the nature of state units that compose the international system represent a considerable departure from standard international relations approaches. These have treated nationalism not as a serious candidate for explaining wars (Van Evera 1994) but rather as a "second order force in international politics" (Mearsheimer 1990, p. 21) because it is "caused in large part by security competition among. . .states, which compelled. . .elites to mobilize publics to support national defense efforts" (Mearscheimer 1990, p. 12; for an empirical critique of the notion that nationalism is a consequence, rather than a cause, of war, see Hiers & Wimmer 2013). As one of the main students of nationalism in international relations theory notes (Miller 2007, p. 32), this fails to account for why most nationalist movements are directed against existing states—as in the anti-imperial, secessionist nationalisms that have transformed the shape of the world in the past two centuries. Mainstream international relations theory long overlooked that unit-level transformation—the shift from an international system composed of empires and dynastic kingdoms to a system composed of nation-states—is itself an important cause of war.

A small, more recent literature on nationalism and war in political science is beginning to change this. Miller (2007) argued that a combination of ethnopolitical demography and state strength explains when which type of war is to be expected: In regions with strong states hosting politically mobilized minorities who identify with another state, interstate war is more likely; in regions where weak states combine with politically mobilized minorities, civil wars are most common. J. Lyall (unpublished manuscript) looks at the role of nationalism in determining the outcomes of interstate wars. He shows, using global data sets that span long periods, that wars are won by the soldiers who are more motivated because they identify more with their state. In other words, states with nationalistically mobilized populations win over less nationalistic ones.[2] Although this is a classical realist argument, Lyall adds an important element by showing that a state's troops are more nationalistic the more inclusionary the ethnopolitical power configuration—a finding that complements Wimmer and coauthors' (2009) argument that ethnopolitical exclusion fosters civil war.

Relatedly, in an article based on survey experiments conducted in Afghanistan, Lyall et al. (2013) showed that counterinsurgency activity by foreign troops delegitimizes them, whereas the same activity by local (Pashtu) forces has no such effects on the minds of the local population—another illustration of the consequences of nationalism. Similarly, in a detailed study of Eastern Europe and the western Soviet Union, Darden (2013) explored patterns of voting, secession, and resistance to German and Soviet occupational forces during World

[2]This contrasts with the microsociological perspective of Collins (2013). He starts from the assumption that humans are not very good at being violent and generally prefer to run rather than fight, are inefficient killers in the face of dangers to their own life, and so forth. Rather than being motivated by nationalism or other macropolitical concerns, soldiers in large-scale wars fight because they cannot run away and because they care for the life and well-being of their fellow platoon members. In other words, it is the microstructure of discipline and camaraderie that armies can organize—from Greek phalanxes to parade-ground formations in the age of Europe's mass armies—that allows soldiers to overcome humans' antiviolent instincts and to wage war effectively.

War II. All three were influenced less by strategic opportunity or coalitional politics than by the national identities learned in the schools that first alphabetized the population.

Finally, sociologist Feinstein (2012) has studied the mechanisms underlying the rally-around-the-flag phenomenon in the United States, which allows presidents to wage international wars with public support. He combines historical analyses of rally and nonrally foreign policy crises, the analysis of surveys, and the results of a survey experiment. Contrary to elite manipulation or rational choice models of the rally phenomenon, Feinstein shows that it occurs when nationalist framings trigger an identification with the American nation, which in turn leads to emotions such as pride, hope, and confidence in the president, increasing support for his foreign policies across political divides.

Future research in this area needs to zone in more precisely on the empirical questions of how and by whom legitimacy and national identity are actually perceived and experienced. To avoid endogeneity problems, one could analyze global longitudinal surveys on how major political actors, including governments, are perceived by different segments of the population before conflict erupts. Understandably, this has so far proven difficult to achieve, despite dramatic improvements in international surveying capacity thanks to, among others, the Global Barometer surveys, given that autocratic governments usually resist such questions being asked. Another fruitful methodological strategy is to use survey or natural experiments to identify more precisely the conditions under which individuals perceive political actors as legitimate.

**International cultural order.** A second strand of sociological research focuses on the principles of legitimacy enshrined in global-level institutions. The idea of state sovereignty and the sanctity of its borders represents, in the postwar world, one such institutionalized principle of legitimacy, as sociologists of the world society tradition have long argued (Meyer et al. 1997; for similar approaches in international relations, see Hall 1999, Bukovansky 2002). Writing within this tradition, Hironaka (2005) shows that this has consequences for how wars are fought and especially how long they last: Because existing governments in the global South are legitimized and financially or even militarily supported by the international system, they are less easily overthrown by rebellious movements. They remain institutionally and militarily too weak, however, to decisively win civil wars. As a consequence, civil war duration has tripled since the immediate post–World War II years. This is in line with arguments put forward by political scientists Jackson (1990) and Badie (2000), according to whom many states in the developing world remain institutionally weak because they can rely on international law as a source of legitimacy and on global institutional support. They are therefore not consolidated into fewer entities through war and conquest. This line of reasoning might profit from a more direct encounter with other possible predictors of civil war duration [from the power configuration that drives them (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012) to the number of rebel factions involved] or state strength [from climate and geography à la Herbst (2000) to past wars à la Tilly (1975)]. Sociologists following this line of reasoning may also want to consider early-nineteenth-century Latin American experiences (Centeno 2003), which arguably unfolded in a period long before the nation-state model became enshrined in world cultural templates and international law.

**Cultural frames and norms.** Smith (2005) introduced a more straightforward cultural sociology argument about how cultural frames shape when and why governments declare war. Analyzing the public discourses surrounding the American war in Iraq (2003–2011), the Gulf War (1990–1991), and the Suez Crisis (1956), he decodes the cultural narratives that make war seem a plausible course of action: the binary distinctions between good and evil, sacred and profane, and rational and irrational that together produce an apocalyptic narrative

that legitimizes the large-scale sacrifice of human lives.

A similar approach has recently been revitalized in international relations work on interstate wars. Following up on a long, qualitative tradition of scholarship, Dafoe et al. (2014) argue that protecting national honor, reputation, and status are important motives for the decision to go to war. They offer methodological advice on how to study these soft aspects of decision making in more rigorous ways—similar to Dafoe & Caughey's (2013) own work that seems to indicate that southern US presidents, who grew up in a culture of honor, are more likely to fight wars and to fight them in more persistent ways than do northern presidents. Whereas the above work focuses on elite discourse and norms, political scientist Wood (2003) looks at the frames of legitimacy that motivated peasants to support the guerrillas in the Salvadoran civil war. Rather than hopes of future gains from a rebel victory or immediate concerns about possible repression, as rationalist theories would have it, these peasants were motivated by moral outrage over what they perceived as an unjust regime and the hopes of realizing their vision of full citizenship in the future.[3]

**Cultural consequences: militarism and nationalism.** This brings us to sociological studies of the cultural consequences of war. In a series of books and articles, Shaw (e.g. 1991) has argued that the total mobilization for World War I and II produced a militarist political culture, i.e., a view of history that sees war as inevitable and preparation for future wars as practically necessary and morally justified. Writing at the end of the Cold War, Shaw diagnosed a process of demilitarization throughout the Western world, reducing the overall preoccupation of the population and political elites with war making and defense. Democratization in Eastern Europe and the collapse of Stalinist militarism, the increasing resistance to military conscription, the rise of professional armies, and technological change that makes war a distant matter of aerial bombings or drone attacks combined to produce a "postmilitary" citizenship (Shaw 1991; see also Lachmann 2013).

At a more micro level, Wagner-Pacifici (2005) studied the cultural performances and rituals to end war—more specifically, the ceremonies of surrender that concluded the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), the American Civil War (1860–1865), and World War II (1939–1945). She analyzes how surrender and domination are enacted and represented and considers how the rituals themselves preconfigure the fault lines of future conflicts by providing a dramatic visualization and performative evocation of defeat and dishonor that future political and military leaders may feel called upon to correct. In a related study, Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz (1991) analyze the controversies around the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC. They argue that collective remembering of lost wars sometimes does not produce shared feelings of heroism and collective struggle, as the cultural historian Mosse (1991) had argued with regard to German war memorials, but rather brings into sharp relief the internal dissent and conflicting interpretations of what a lost war might mean for national history.

On a more theoretical level, Malešević (2010b, ch. 6) argues that if nationalist ideologies have not already deeply penetrated everyday perceptions of the political world among regular citizens, wars will not foster national cohesion, offer heroic memories, or establish symbolic community. This latter view—that war creates nationalist sentiment—was embraced by a long line of prominent sociologists who saw war as a community-creating and recreating event (Smith 1981, Hutchinson 2007) or even as a necessary blood sacrifice without which the civic religion of nationalism would cease to hold its spell on the citizenry (Marvin & Ingle 1999).

In a related vein, Olick (2007) and Giesen (2004) study how nationalist memory can even

[3] Another cultural argument about the causes of war posits that monotheistic religions or religiosity itself foster armed confrontations (see the review in Gorski & Türkmen-Dervişoğlu 2013).

incorporate lost wars and war crimes, such as in Germany—with important consequences for the nature of political debates, political culture, and the future likelihood of war. According to Giesen, Germany's postwar political culture centers firmly around the "trauma of the perpetrator." Beyond the specificities of the German case, Giesen argues, remembering moral shame and acknowledging past injustice have become part and parcel of a post-utopian collective identity spreading throughout the Western world (Giesen 2004).

The important questions that these various cultural sociologies of war raise is whether indeed different forms of framing a conflict (Smith) or remembering war (Wagner-Pacifici, Smith, Hutchinson, Marvin & Ingle, Olick, Giesen) influence the behavior of political elites—independently of coevolving political alliance structures, military capabilities, and other aspects focused upon by the realist tradition. For example, whether Germany's political culture of guilt indeed shapes its foreign policy preferences to make interstate war less likely than does a country with a more bellicose nationalism such as the United States (Marvin & Ingle 1999) is a conjecture that awaits a more rigorous comparative and empirical test. Equally intriguing would be to study, following up on Smith (2005), whether narratives of an apocalyptic encounter with evil always precede international wars and whether political leaders use these narratives instrumentally or are themselves trapped by them (for a related argument about the ideological correlates of genocidal violence in contemporary Africa, see Straus 2012).

## Domestic Power Configurations and Grievances

A second perspective prominent in sociology is seeing war as the outcome of a genuinely political struggle over state power. In political science, by contrast, civil war is often analyzed as a matter of the repressive capacity of the state, individual-level incentives to join a rebellion, economic inducements such as price shocks, the presence of natural resources or lootable goods, institutional incentives to radicalize political party platforms, commitment problems in postconflict power-sharing coalitions, and the like.

Olzak (2006), following up on her earlier work on urban riots in the United States, studied the dynamics of ethnic mobilization and war. Using a global event data set as well as information on a subset of ethnic groups from the Minorities at Risk Project, she argues that a combination of ideological and power relational factors determine whether ethnic mobilization escalates into violent conflict and war. The spread of global ideas about human rights and equal opportunity into a national political arena leads to political mobilization of minorities; if this combines with restrictions on formal political rights of minority members at the national level and poverty at the group level, mobilization might well turn into violent conflict.

Also focusing on ethnic conflict and war, Wimmer and political scientists Cederman and Min (Wimmer et al. 2009) assembled a new global data set that more precisely describes changing ethnopolitical relations of power. Working within a power-cum-legitimacy theoretical framework developed earlier (Wimmer 2002), they show that within a more exclusionary power configuration—i.e., where large segments of the population remain detached from the web of political alliances centered on the national-level government—ethnic wars are more likely to erupt. This represents an important corrective to the dominant political economy approaches in political science that disregard grievances as a factor for understanding civil war. Group-level analysis of this data set by the same authors (Cederman et al. 2010) further revealed that groups that fell from power are particularly likely, among politically excluded groups, to rebel (in line with the qualitative findings of Petersen 2002), as are junior partners in a power-sharing coalition that represent a larger share of the population than senior partners—another way of violating the like-over-like principle of legitimacy introduced by nationalism.

Further explorations of this data set by political scientists led to additional refinements of the power configurational view of war. Political scientist Roessler (2011), for example, showed how African leaders in unstable coalitions fraught with commitment problems might preemptively stage a coup and politically marginalize their former coalition partners, thus producing a situation of political inequality that might lead to civil war further down the road. Political scientists Wucherpfennig and coauthors (2012) showed that civil wars caused by high levels of ethnopolitical inequality last longer than other civil wars.

The literature discussed so far has focused squarely on ethnopolitical configurations of power, but the same approach could be applied to other types of political cleavages—along the lines of class, region, profession, or party allegiance, for example—or even to a full, simultaneous mapping of all aspects of a power configuration. Considerable investment in data collection would be necessary to bring such a project to fruition, yet it is feasible and brings the considerable benefit of a test of the political grievances argument beyond the domain of ethnic politics.

Power configurational arguments have also been made by international relations scholars (though not under that label). Walt (1992) highlighted a possible link between a revolutionary change in the domestic power configuration and the possibility of interstate war (see also Maoz 1989). He offers a classical neorealist argument, according to which "revolutions cause war by increasing the level of threat between the revolutionary state and its rivals and by encouraging both sides to view the use of force as an effective way to eliminate the threat" (Walt 1992, pp. 322–23). More recently, Colgan (2013) has argued that revolutions lead to international war because the leaders emerging from revolutionary turmoil are inherently less conflict averse and more politically ambitious.

Emphasizing another possible link between a change in domestic power configurations and international war, Mansfield & Snyder (2005) demonstrated that states more often go to war with each other during the early stages of democratization. In a shaky political arena, both old and new elites who vie for control of the democratizing state mobilize the masses to get an electoral advantage over their competitors. The elites then use the nationalist spirit conjured up during this process to lead their countries into an international war, hoping that this will increase their legitimacy in the eyes of the masses and thus help them stay in power (for an empirical critique of this diversionary theory of interstate conflict, see Narang & Nelson 2009).

Several other scholars have studied the reverse conjecture: that a revolutionary transformation of the domestic power configuration may result from international war. The most prominent study in comparative historical sociology can be subsumed, for the purposes of this review, under this angle: Focusing on the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions, Skocpol (1979) sought to counter dominant Marxist interpretations of revolution by hearkening back to the writings of Otto Hintze (1975). Rather than rising revolutionary class consciousness and popular mobilization, she argued, it was lost international wars and the ancien régime's incapacity to respond to the resulting crises, given the constraints imposed by monarchical or imperial institutions, that made these massive revolutionary transformations of the power structure possible. Although the long debate initiated by Skopcol's study cannot be reviewed here (cf. Goldstone et al. 2014), quantitative work by political scientists Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1992) has shown, quite in line with Skopcol's original argument, that lost wars (especially by the instigator) increase the risk of violent regime change quite substantially, possibly for democratic regimes as much as autocratic ones (Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson 1995; for a game theoretic analysis of the consequence of winning wars for regime stability and nation building, see Sambanis et al. 2014).

Finally, another group of political scientists has explored whether war may enhance the prospect of transitioning from autocracy to democracy. Celestino & Gleditsch (2013) show

that violent insurrections increase the chances of transitioning from one autocratic regime to the next, whereas peaceful mobilization increases the likelihood of a democratic transition. In line with this general finding, a detailed analysis of African cases shows that a violent war of independence based on a rural guerilla movement is associated with postcolonial autocracy, whereas peaceful urban independence movements lead to more stable democracies (Wantchekon & Garcia-Ponce 2013). Referring to interstate, rather than civil, wars and to earlier phases of political development in Europe, Downing (1992) arrives at a similar conclusion about the negative consequences of war: that frequent war between powerful and contiguous neighboring states delayed democratic transitions. The constitutional arrangements of late medieval Western Europe combined in different ways with the consequences of the military revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during which large, extraordinarily expensive, standing armies emerged. Where wars were less frequent and could be financed from outside revenues or from existing coffers, medieval constitutions were not abrogated for the purpose of more effective war taxation, and early and lasting democratization followed.

Systematic statistical analysis of the relationship between external war and the prospects of democratization between 1827 and 1997 by Mansfield & Snyder (2010), however, does not reveal that war hinders democratization in a systematic way. Similarly, Wantchekon & Garcia-Ponce (2013) and Bermeo (2010) find that democracies that emerged from violent conflict after World War II have lasted longer than those born peacefully. Obviously, further research is needed to reconcile the conflicting findings of how war and democratization relate to each other.

Shaw (2003) pinpoints another even more dramatically negative consequence of war by arguing that most genocides occur during war and that the analytical separation into a distinct field of genocide studies is therefore not justified. Genocide represents, according to his analysis, a form of degenerate war that is directed against specific groups of civilians with the intent to exterminate them. In other, less extreme forms of degenerated war, combatants seek to break the will of the enemy civilian population by targeting it with massive violence. In this context, it is interesting to note that democracies are more likely to inflict mass casualties on civilian populations during interstate wars, as Downes (2007) has shown. More systematic work on the occurrence of genocide confirms Shaw's intuition: Genocides almost always take place in the midst of war (Harff 2003), which thus represents a perhaps necessary—but not sufficient—condition for their occurrence. Correspondingly, war does not feature as a crucial factor in either quantitative (Harff 2003) or qualitative (Mann 2005) empirical work on genocide (for an overview of recent scholarship on genocide, see Owens et al. 2013).

## Organizational Development

**State capacity.** Sociology's most widely recognized contribution is without doubt the comparative historical analysis of the relationship between state development and warfare. Following up on Hintze's (1975) arguments a century before, Charles Tilly has argued in a series of well-known books (Tilly 1975, 1990, 2003) that throughout Western history, a state's capacity to tax and administratively penetrate its territory depended on, and was in turn further enhanced by, its capacity to wage and win wars with other states. In a nutshell, the more deeply a state reached into the hinterland, the more administratively capable it was, the more it could raise taxes to finance standing armies, the more prone to and successful in waging war such a state was, the more territory it controlled and the more completely it controlled it, leading to a further increase in taxing capacity, which in turn fed a subsequent round of war-making.[4] Other historical

[4]In later work, Tilly took on an increasingly critical, anti-statist view, comparing states to racketeers "since governments themselves commonly simulate, stimulate, or even fabricate threats of external war and since the repressive

sociologists have confirmed the basic lines of this developmental story, although Mann (1986–2013, Vol. 2) added popular mobilization by the taxed population to the analysis, arguing that citizens started to demand participation in return for direct rule and an increasing tax burden, thus leading to more politically inclusionary, gradually democratizing regimes. A series of case studies, such as the one by historian Sparrow (2011) on the dramatic increase of the size and power of the American federal government during and after World War II, has confirmed Tilly's bellicist theory of state formation even for more recent periods.

Giddens (1995), the grand master of British social theory, presented a similar account of the same process. He points the causal arrow mainly in one direction: from state formation to international war, arguing that political modernization, the increasing control and surveillance of the domestic population, and its gradual integration through citizenship rights and democracy produced internally homogeneous and largely pacified social spaces, bounded by the power container of the state. This internal pacification and homogenization, however, allowed the waging of total war between such national states, thus adding an element of endemic conflict to modern society. In line with more recent constructivist scholarship in international relations, the anarchic and war-prone character of the state system is therefore derived from the nature of its constituent units, rather than from system-level characteristics.

More recent research has extended the Tillyean line of reasoning to civil wars. According to the political scientist Slater (2010), violent popular rebellion in Southeast Asia played a functionally equivalent role to war between territorial states in early modern Europe if it fostered elite coherence and thus the political capacity to develop administratively and militarily capable leviathans. Observing how effective states were built after the decisively won civil wars in Rwanda, Uganda, and elsewhere in Africa, some policy-oriented scholars have argued against the dominant doctrine of peace making through negotiation in favor of "letting one side win" and thus building long-term state capacity (Weinstein 2005).

Similarly, some scholars have called attention to the structure of the international system, which granted legal recognition and thus protection from conquest even to fragile states that would never have survived interstate competition in early modern Europe. The result, particularly in regions with late transitions to independence such as Africa (Jackson 1990), is a system of weak states prone to civil wars (Holsti 1996) that are difficult to end decisively (Hironaka 2005). Similarly, Centeno (2003) has argued that the relative peacefulness of the transition to independent statehood and the low frequency and intensity of postcolonial interstate war made Latin American states weaker than their more bellicose European counterparts. They thus had fewer taxation capacities and shaky monopolies of violence, and their populations identified less with them and saw them as less legitimate, making them more prone to civil war (a conjecture that is confirmed in **Figure 1**).

In the meantime, some critical studies have modified the basic Tillyean story about the European cases. They showed that war is not the only route leading to the modern state on the old Continent. State centralization in France preceded the rise in war frequency and was achieved by political bargains and coalition building (Spruyt 1996, ch. 5); wars spurred political centralization only if they increased in frequency after bureaucratic positions were no longer sold but staffed with university-educated professionals (Ertman 1997); increased taxation could also be brought about in decentralized polities such as the Netherlands; religious asceticism was as much a motivating force for the state builders of Prussia and the Netherlands as the hunt for more taxation to finance larger armies (Gorski 2003); and so forth (cf. Vu 2009, who also summarizes major work

and extractive activities of governments often constitute the largest current threats to the livelihoods of their own citizens" (Tilly 1985, p. 171). He also elaborated on how coercive state formation varied depending on how it interacted with the rise of commerce and capitalism (Tilly 1990).

beyond Europe). Other political sociologists have criticized the almost exclusive focus on regular armies in Tilly's work and have investigated how irregular armed forces, from guerrillas to police forces to warlords, undermined, mimicked, or enhanced processes of state formation (Davis & Perreira 2003).

This discussion on the link between war and state building would be greatly enhanced if it could move beyond consideration of European, Latin American, and a handful of East Asian cases. A Continental or even global analysis based on quantitative data over long stretches of time, however, is not currently feasible because there is no good indicator of state capacity (see the discussion by Hendrix 2010). Considerable efforts are needed to overcome this problem and gain a more precise understanding of whether interstate wars precede, follow, or both from increasing state capacity; whether this pattern is limited to certain periods and regions; what other historical routes to administratively centralized states exist; whether weak administrative capacity is indeed a recipe for civil war; and so forth. Another possibility is to treat the frequently shifting boundaries of states over relatively stable populations as natural experiments to study how state capacity relates to war probability, including the likelihood of civil war in these particular areas (for an example of how to exploit shifting state boundaries analytically, see Darden 2013).

**Welfare state and citizenship.** Historical sociologists have also studied other aspects of organizational development, most importantly the rise of welfare states and citizenship rights. In contrast to research on bureaucratization and state formation, however, war is now treated almost exclusively as a cause, rather than an effect, of institutional development. Multiple authors have studied how caring for the veterans of war laid the institutional foundation for the development of modern welfare states. Perhaps the most prominent study in the English-speaking world is by Skocpol (1992). Her largely historical narrative recounts how caring for the veterans of the US Civil War and their families represented a major institutional innovation—which did make it more difficult, however, to establish a generalized pension or worker's insurance scheme later on, despite serious and sustained efforts in the Progressive Era. The war-born origins of the American welfare state thus explain its patchwork character that contrasts with that of its European counterparts. Similar stories about how warfare translated into welfare, however, are being told for postwar Japan (Kasza 2002), Canada (Cowen 2008), various European countries that transformed their war economies into welfare economies after World War II (Klausen 1998), Kenya after World War II (Lewis 2000), Eastern and Western Europe during the Cold War (Obinger & Schmitt 2011), and so forth.

A related topic concerns how the mass involvement in the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries affected citizenship rights. Andreski (1968) maintained that the growth of armed forces and a correspondingly high "military participation ratio" would lead to undemocratic, hierarchically structured, and highly centralized polities. Most authors, however, think that universal conscription prepared the way for full citizenship rights and democracy. Historian Marwick (1988), for example, argued that total war increased participation, including through voting, of previously marginalized groups of people who contributed to the war effort. Similarly, Mann (1987) identified a European "period of citizen wars" that lasted from the Napoleonic wars to World War II, during which he observed a "dialectic of development of civic and military participation," i.e., a deepening of democracy as a result of mass mobilization for war through universal conscription. This is also the main thrust of Kestnbaum's (e.g., 2002; see also Lachmann 2013) analysis of how popular mobilization for external wars led, in the four Western countries he studied, to universal conscription, which in turn provided the framework within which popular interest in war and identification with its

causes developed, thus preparing the ground for mass political participation and citizenship.

Markoff (1996) argues that the world wars led to the enfranchising of women and propertyless men as a reward for forgoing strikes and by filling in for men in the war industries (for a more detailed analysis of the conditions under which labor can maintain wartime gains, see Kier 2010). In a similar vein, Hughes (2009) has shown through quantitative analysis that especially long-lasting civil wars in the developing world often have produced political openings that proved beneficial to women's representation in parliament (but see the more pessimistic assessment by the historians reviewed in Hartmann 1982; see also the reverse argument—that war-prone regimes tend to have less female political representation and labor force participation—by Caprioli 2000). Along similar lines but with a focus on citizen participation in voluntary organizations rather than citizenship rights or political representation, Kage (2010) finds that cohorts who experienced World War II are more likely to join such organizations, especially in societies that were fully mobilized for the war effort (see also, for the United States before World War II, Skocpol et al. 2002). Finally, Blattman (2009) showed that boys abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda to serve as child soldiers were later more likely to vote and to become active in community affairs, mostly because of the psychological growth that followed experiencing traumatic violence (see also for Sierra Leone: Bellows & Miguel 2006; and further literature cited in Blattman & Miguel 2010, p. 44).

As with other areas of research, much more needs to be done to disentangle the various causal processes and positive and negative feedbacks (or endogeneity). The research on war, welfare, and citizenship could more systematically take into account other factors that have been discussed in the historically oriented welfare literature (Ritter 1986) as well as in the democratization literature (e.g., Boix 2011). Does war indeed make a difference when the picture broadens to include these other factors? More than other areas of research, moreover, the problems of sampling on the dependent variables persist in that most research looks at how total war led to the extension of effective citizenship and the development of welfare for soldiers and citizens. No such effects, however, have so far emerged, for example, from what has been termed a Third World War currently taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighboring states. Conversely, the world's first social welfare scheme developed in Bismarck's Germany for a variety of reasons (Ritter 1986), none of which was directly related to war. It would therefore be useful to extend the analytical horizon beyond the OECD and to more precisely specify the scope conditions under which the purposed mechanisms are at work.

## The Long-Term, the Complex, and the Contingent

A final characteristic of the political sociology of war is that it assumes a long-term historical perspective that has, for the reasons outlined in previous sections, been largely abandoned in international relations (with the exception of rivalry theory; Senese & Vasquez 2008) and comparative politics (with exceptions such as Darden 2013). Much of the literature discussed above assumes such a long-term perspective. This includes most of the research on state building and war inspired by Tilly; the more recent work on the shift from imperial to nationalist principles of political legitimacy as a major cause of war; and scholarship on welfare state development and war as well as on the linkage with democracy. In all of these strands of research, causality is thought to work through long-term processes that often span centuries, certainly decades, and never just through the instant context of individual decision making. Long-term patterns of regularities thus emerge, invisible if the analytical or data horizon is reduced to only a couple of years, as in the more disaggregated research programs currently pursued in comparative politics.

Another characteristic of much of the political sociology literature on war is its tolerance of complexity and contingency. This is perhaps the defining feature of Mann's (1986–2013) monumental four volumes *The Sources of Social Power*. These are not books about war per se but about the entire history of humankind over the past millennia, including the wars that have shaped it. Most remarkable for the purpose of this review, Mann does not aim at a clear-cut causal argument of when which type of war is more likely to break out, even though his theory gives military aspects of society an unusual prominence by conceiving it as one independent system of power beyond those of economics, politics, and culture. Mann does not formulate a theory of war because he sees history as a largely contingent process: Ideological, political, military, and economic processes are not synchronized with each other; rather, each system produces its own patterns, obeys its proper logics, and follows a different rhythm or temporality, to use Sewell's (1996) term. The four systems influence each other in crucial ways, however. Combine this with the consequential actions of powerful, but not fully rational, leaders and with the concatenation of independent event chains that cascade into dramatic accelerations of history and you get the crises that have interrupted the regular, long-term developmental trends emanating from the normal functioning of each system, such as World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and so forth.

Conformingly, in order to understand how and where wars have emerged and what their consequences were, Mann takes other, nonmilitary forces and factors into account that have also influenced event chains and societal developments, such as the rise of capitalism, the emergence of democracy, and technological revolutions. Writing the history of humankind and its major wars then becomes one single, integrated, and complexly woven narrative tapestry. Extending Mann's approach, one could argue that regularities of how economic, political, ideological, or military mechanisms affect war probabilities and consequences can indeed be discerned. But concrete historical developments such as those leading to a specific war can only be reconstructed narratively as the outcome of the conjoint influence of multiple such causal mechanisms. Such a view of history—as a contingent conjunction of causally effective processes (see also Tilly 1995) that lead to and from war—represents a welcome complement to the search for regularly recurring causal mechanisms that preoccupies much of political sociology and political science today.

## TWO CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the above makes clear, sociologists pay much attention to culture/ideology/legitimacy, political inequalities, organizational developments, and the long-term; they have also studied the consequences of war more often than its causes. Because it seems to be the opposite in political science, one could argue that a healthy division of labor between neighboring social science disciplines has emerged. One wonders, however, if this sort of division of labor does not hinder, over the long run, an adequate understanding of war because it impedes the precise identification of the endogenous, positive and negative feedback loops between war-causing and war-caused phenomena. There is, therefore, much to be said for an integrated approach that tries to empirically specify, analytically identify, and theoretically synthesize the various processes leading from and to war.

Furthermore, identifying individual mechanisms through controlled case comparisons, statistical work, or natural experiments has, over the past few decades, led to an ever-larger list of mechanisms that may be at work (the "x matters, y matters too, and so does z" research program), as this review has made evident. Sorting these mechanisms in order of their effectiveness, specifying the conditions under which they operate, and identifying countervailing mechanisms that make the focal ones ineffective or reverse their consequences remains a major challenge for future research. Now that the social sciences no longer ignore

the wars that have shaped modern societies in such profound ways, a more systematic and theoretically integrated study of its various aspects is perhaps within reach.

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