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Militarism and Security: Dialogue, possibilities and limits

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Security Dialogue special issue on “Militarism and Security: Dialogue, possibilities and limits”

Security has become a central preoccupation of the field of IR and the practice of global politics. In the process, it has become the subject of rich, interdisciplinary, conceptual, normative, and policy-oriented study among researchers and practitioners globally—and variously valorised as a critically contested concept and castigated as a policy lapdog. Security (its practice, performance and promise) seems to be everywhere and nowhere, as well as always and never. Yet, as security seeps into previously IR-unfamiliar spaces, we lose sight of its limits in relation to other critical concepts and practices that also lie at the heart of IR. In particular, militarism, broadly understood as the preparation for war, its normalisation and legitimation, has never received the widespread and sustained focus it warrants in either traditional variants of security studies or in the various critical turns of the last decades. The prevalent emphasis on security has taken precedence over the study of the ways in which war and militarism continue to permeate societies the world over, in different forms and to different intensities. In our view, something is lost in the critical scholarly endeavour in this changing purview. But the issue is not necessarily to stake a claim for one concept *over* another. Rather, it is to ask how we are to understand the relationship between security and militarism, both as analytical tools and as objects of analysis.

Such questions are important because as the problems recognized *as* security problems shift and transmute, so too do the familiar lines of distinction that inform our notions of what security is or does, where it resides, as well as how to achieve it. The question of security has been reframed in both IR and in global policy to address political, economic and social processes, practices and materialities that blur, for instance, boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, the civilian and the military, the public and the private, and war and peace. It has made us think more carefully about the operation of power in its variety of forms, and about the scale of analysis from the local to the international, transnational or global. Yet in the move toward the study of security

and the transformation in how we do this, we overlook and at times cast a blind eye to other key areas and interrelationships, such as the political economy of military institutions and their socio-economic practices conducted in the name of development, or the connection between practices of militarization, securitization and mundane security practices in the name of counterinsurgency and public safety.

Militarism has its own contested conceptual history (see Berghahn 1981 for a classic chronology, and Stavrianakis and Selby 2012 for a contemporary typology). While militarism has often been disregarded as a polemic rather than analytic concept, such dismissal belies the variety and scope of scholarly interventions seeking to understand it. And for all the normative debate about the study of security, there remains, in our view, a broad distinction between the oppositional force of the concept of militarism and the critical study of security. Hence, while critical security studies (CSS) in its various guises¹ has opened up our thinking to attend to security critically, it has nonetheless fixed less sustained attention on the question of militarism. War and militarism as objects of analysis have been largely subsumed under the rubric of security in policy as well as in efforts to understand even that which has been traditionally clearly presented as 'war' or 'military force'. Latterly, this oversight has been remedied by burgeoning fields such as Critical Military Studies (CMS) and Critical War Studies (CWS), which have reinvigorated our understanding of many of the practices, processes and materialities that also animate the preoccupation with security briefly discussed above. The re-emergence of attention to militarism and war in *critical* inquiry (often associated with European scholarship) thus invites us to re-focus on war, militarism and their relationship to security.

In this special issue we have asked scholars who might describe their work as oriented towards the question of security or of militarism respectively (and the attending concepts of war and violence), to reflect on the relationship between the two concepts/practices. Three sets of animating questions serve as a red thread that runs throughout the collection of articles: 1) what work do militarism and security do? Methodologically, how can they be mobilised? 2) What are the possibilities of fruitful exchange between knowledge produced about these specific concepts or practices? 3) What are the limits of each concept or practice? What practices would not constitute

¹ With the acronym CSS, we refer to all strands of security studies that self-identify as critical – not just the specific Critical Security Studies project that originated in Aberystwyth.

security or militarism, or when are militarism or security the wrong concepts for productive analysis?

As part of the effort at dialogue, as per the special issue's title and our journal's name, we held a workshop at the University of Gothenburg in March 2017, after the first round of blind peer review. Contributors, editors and discussants addressed the three guiding questions above in light of each article's arguments and our reviewers' comments. We believe that this issue's promise as a springboard for further reflection and debate lies precisely in the variety of the contributors' articles. Their understandings of what is included as security and militarism, as well as their relationships to militarization, war and securitization, diverge, reflecting the creative possibilities of this scholarship. This special issue therefore serves as a forum for dialogue in the hope that in creating this intellectual space we will learn more about both security and militarism as practices and as well what they, as concepts, allow us to do, see, query, desire.

In this article, first, we address several interrelated shifts: the shifts in the world that IR and its related subfields study; shifts in the institutional framing and materiality of fields and subfields of research; and shifts in how IR studies the world (including questions of ontology, epistemology and method). We then discuss the possibilities, dialogue, and limits of security and militarism by paying attention to our contributors' responses to the three sets of animating questions noted above as a means of introducing the articles that follow.

Militarism Redux?

In the below paragraphs, we narrate the changes in the world that IR studies (and produces) as a story about the conceptual shifts that have marshalled our focus on war, militarism and security. The US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan dashed the hopes of a peace dividend that were nurtured with the end of the Cold War. The formulation of terrorism as the pre-eminent security threat of our time, replacing Communism as international bogeyman, has facilitated militarised responses and stances: the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, themselves contributing to the growth of ISIS/Daesh, in turn spiralling more military intervention in the Middle East. Presently, the ongoing brutality in Syria and Yemen illustrate both the humanitarian catastrophe that accompanies war and also the layering of conflicts, as Russia and Iran, and a western-

backed Saudi-led coalition, respectively, further militarise violent political conflict, creating individual, family, societal, state, regional and international crises in the process.

One way of making sense of such accounts is to argue that war and militarism have generated insecurity in a variety of forms – physical, gendered, food, and health insecurity, to name just a few – through direct physical violence (attacks on civilian populations in both Syria and Yemen, for instance) and its attendant strategies thereof (starvation and famine, displacement) that have effects that are then labelled as security problems – refugee flows being the most politically visible in the West. Simply put, security has become a dominant frame through which such problems are being identified, addressed, and studied as global problems. Even contemporary warfare (understood through traditional categorizations of warring) manifests as also a security problem in myriad ways with seeming unending cascading security effects. Yet, while militarism and contemporary warfare, as objects of analysis if not as analytical tools, certainly do figure in CSS work, they often fit under the mantle of security.

Whilst CSS over the past twenty years or so has paid attention to human insecurity and knock-on security effects, less attention has been paid to the wars and militarism that in many cases generated them or that arise from them. For example, the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report, which first articulated the concept of human security, was clear that militarism is a key cause of insecurity (UNDP 1994). Yet, of human security proponents and critical security theorists, only feminists have paid sustained attention to militarism. Why might this be so? One reason is that directly addressing particular wars and forms of militarism is intensely political and requires analysis of the role of state and of organised violence as a social force, ongoing asymmetries in North-South relations, and the effects of a capitalist global political economy. A policy-oriented agenda such as human security has found it hard to make a critique of militarism bite: policymakers did not want to engage with the women of Greenham Common in the 1980s, and do not want to engage with anti-arms fair protestors today.

Another response is that the relative lack of attention to militarism compared to security reflects a chronic Eurocentrism in security studies, and in IR more generally. For instance, today, whilst the displacement and refugee crisis is far worse felt within Syria and Yemen, and in neighbouring countries such as Turkey and Jordan (themselves

involved in war through e.g. funnelling weapons and financing), and despite the indubitable evidence of widespread violence and harm in these warscapes, much of the emerging security literature, albeit self-identified as critical, nonetheless focuses on the problem as understood in Europe, or when these wars and their effects becomes a political problem for Europe. Even here in this contemporary example, the well-worn patterns that postcolonial critiques of CSS have highlighted (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Duffield 2010) are reproduced. Eurocentrism also blinds us to the different ways in which security and militarism, as well as their interrelationships, manifest in distinct places, scales, temporalities, and imaginaries. This blind spot, generally speaking, includes how the state as both abstraction and institution-- the garrison state, post-colonial state, failed state, fragile state, Western liberal state, authoritarian state-- interacts with society and employs violence and force, and to what ends (Jabri 2012).

Another way of understanding the lack of sustained focus on militarism is to consider its relative neglect as an object of scholarly inquiry in IR generally with the end of the Cold War, due to the political and intellectual dominance of liberalism, the rise of novel policy-relevant concepts around new wars and human security, and the rise of securitization theory (Stavrianakis and Selby 2012). There was, of course, extensive scholarly analysis of militarism during the Cold War, often tightly linked to political mobilisation around issues such as nuclear confrontation and the entrenchment of military power in (what was then called) the Third World (e.g. Eide and Thee 1980; Enloe 1989; Mann 1987; Shaw 1988). However, such inquiry clearly transgressed or emerged from beyond the limits of IR. In particular, a lot of feminist work starts from resistance to war, raising analytical and political questions that result from the recognition of the blurred boundary between war and peace (e.g. Cockburn 2010).

The critical turn in/to security emerged out of a critique of state security and excessive focus on military power as the main type of power (Krause and Williams 1997, Booth 1991). However, in this literature, broadly speaking, there was neither a sustained, explicit critique of the concept of militarism that necessitated its rejection, nor a retention of militarism as a critical concept, feminists and historical sociologists, such as those noted above, aside. Rather, it was largely abandoned (in our view mistakenly) along with the turn away from state centrism (in our view correctly). Thus, the terrain of analysis of

military power was largely allocated to (neo-)realism, Strategic Studies, and some strands of constructivism.

Additionally, some Cold War concerns have been re-coded in security terms: international concern over WMD and their proliferation is back on the table with US-North Korea brinkmanship; anti-terrorism remains on the agenda, shifting from Cold War concerns over national liberation to today's anxiety over radical Islam. Problems of civil-military relations that were understood (inadequately) in developmental terms under the rubric of the modernising influence of the state military, are now understood in terms of building a legitimate security sector, including defence forces and private military companies (PMCs), as part of security governance. The increased prominence of PMCs and private security companies, meanwhile, has generated its own sub-literature (e.g. Abrahamsen and Leander 2016). The focus on state-building, stabilization, good governance, and so forth that dominates (liberal) peacebuilding initiatives also emphasizes the centrality of security and its interlinkages to peace and development (e.g. Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, Security Dialogue 2010). And new issues have been added to the security agenda as part of the broadening move: poverty, sexual and gender based violence, health, borders and infrastructure to name a few.

Nonetheless, there might be reasons for reinvigorating the concept of militarism to analyse some of these developments. For example, Cock (2005) interprets the transformations in organised violence in post-apartheid South Africa as privatised forms of militarism. Luckham emphasises that "Democratisation ... has often coincided with new forms of militarism" that we now analyse under the rubric of security sector reform (2003, 3). And the importance of maintaining the civilian infrastructure for nuclear weapons capability seems to be a key, if obscured, factor shaping UK civilian energy policy (Cox et al, 2016), signalling the militarisation of energy policy and challenging the sanctity of the civilian-military binary that serves as a bedrock of international nuclear order. Hence, a (re)turn to war and militarism as fruitful concepts for discussing contemporary violence, and the relationship between war preparation and society need not signal a return to state-centric, conservative, pro-status quo accounts of military or regime security (if indeed, they were ever truly abandoned). Rather, the concept of militarism can be mobilised to offer a critique of military power or ideology, its preparation, effects and legacies, drawing on critical traditions in theory and

methodology. Whether or not this *should* occur under the mantle of CSS or under the rubric of CMS or CWS, which focus on militarism and war as not (predominantly) aspects of security, is perhaps not the most fruitful question. Instead, we could continually ask what a focus on security or militarism allow us to see or do. How, for example, might we best understand the connections between security as imagined, implemented and experienced in Europe, and the war that destroys Aleppo? If we shift our focus to seriously engage war and militarism when we transgress the constraining imaginaries of global order, we might then trouble the picture that allows dominant accounts to portray war as only ‘over there’ — in Aleppo, or Goma – and not in the warscapes in which military power also emerge and operate, such as NATO or the EU.

A Room of One’s Own? Conversations about Security and Militarism

Attending to security as a concept and practice has been the remit of *Security Dialogue* since its reinvention in 1992, in contrast to its older, Peace Research incarnation in which (de)militarisation was a key concern (*Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, initiated in 1970). Hence our journal is emblematic of, and was instrumental in, the post-Cold War shift from a focus on war and militarism to that of security described above and in sponsoring the rise of securitization theory. The articles published in *Security Dialogue* reflect (and also help constitute) this highly securitized landscape in which the limits and possibilities of security are being renegotiated both in academia and the policy world. As noted above, in this, the questions of where security starts and stops, what security does and does not do, and what we can gain by posing security as a question (in relation to, for example, questions of political economy, policing, surveillance, risk, development) loom large. The question of militarism (and its relation to security), however, has not been at the forefront of these discussions in *Security Dialogue* pages either.

The past few years has seen the institutionalisation of new journals such as *Critical Military Studies* (est. 2015, see Basham et al 2015) and *Critical Studies on Security* (est. 2013, see Mutimer et al 2013), and of the Critical War Studies project (e.g. Barkawi and Brighton 2011; Porter 2009). These projects emerged in part in contradistinction to their respective “traditional” counterparts (whose names apparently needed no qualifier previously) as collective efforts to substantiate a space for inquiry into that which is ignored, marginalized, or rendered invisible (but that we know, or suspect *is important*.)

The static, state-centered and one-dimensional notion of security in the mainstream storyline of IR was the main impetus for the establishment of CSS as its own area of inquiry. Many deemed the limitations of the traditional field as rendering it ill-equipped to address, for example, the processes and effects of securitization; the impact of mundane security practices; the ways in which gender works in tandem with other relations of power to delimit and harm particular racialized bodies, etc. Likewise, the question of military power, institutions, processes, geographies and their effects required new critical and interdisciplinary approaches to militarism which lay beyond the purview of traditional military studies and war studies. These critical moves were part of the turn away from the Cold War “mirror image” (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 103) between peace research and strategic studies, in which both literatures predominantly adopted methodologically nationalist, state-centric, often quantitative approaches, but came to normatively oppositional conclusions.

But we also note a curious divergence: the respective CSS, CMS and CWS projects have neither developed along similar lines, nor engaged in much explicit dialogue with each other. Whilst the former makes sense – the purpose of CWS, for example, is to engender an interdisciplinary field oriented around war as the object of analysis, making it ontologically distinct from CSS – the latter lack of dialogue makes less sense. Hence, the critique of traditional security studies seems to have gone in two directions: CSS has largely abandoned the study of military security and power in pursuit of broadening the range of threats considered as security and in pursuit of not privileging the state. CWS and CMS, meanwhile, have stayed with war and military power, but critiqued the domestic-foreign, public-private, civilian-military binaries. The occasional discussions (e.g. Barkawi 2011, Aradau 2012) have shown disagreement about what the ontological core of study should be, and pointed to the different ways positions are staked in the academic field – despite the frequent overlap in epistemologies and methodologies employed by researchers in each “camp” (Sylvester 2007). Some might argue that avoiding questions of militarism in the study of security blunts its critical edge. Others might argue the flip-side: that the study of war and militarism requires attention to security. This, again, is a reason for our special issue – to bring these fields and their animating questions into conversation.

Academic trends, however, are not only influenced by and influential on the playing out of politics on the global arena; they are also subject to the “marketplace of academic hiring, journal publishing, and grant opportunities” (Stern forthcoming). Hence, the political economy of staking out the field of CSS, CWS or CMS also has to do with branding and creating a niche for a community of scholarship. While the development of subfields offers a venue for fostering collective knowledge production with common points of reference, thus facilitating spaces in which exciting exchanges of ideas and innovations can flourish, the politics of defining a field also give rise to the limiting effects of the politics of identity. Conversations can become insular and self-referential. Opportunities to learn from other parallel or previous scholarly discussions are missed. To take a familiar example: as many have pointed out, the politics of mapping and cataloguing are perhaps exaggerated within CSS (C.A.S.E Collective 2006, 2007; Security Dialogue 2007), with its seemingly never-ending preoccupation with geographically defined schools, and the identification of turns which masquerade as exciting new dance steps. On the sidelines of these productions, the voices of feminist and post-colonial scholars become hoarse from suggesting that perhaps the reflexive turn the corporeal turn, or the everyday turn in CSS, for instance, might have something to learn from decades of feminist theorizing and from choreographies developed by scholars in other disciplines. We therefore also note the role politics, institutional framings and branding play in delimiting the kinds of possible conversations between critical security and critical military projects, and aim to hold these to the light of productive scrutiny through our consideration of the concepts/practices of security and militarism.

Asking and Answering Questions about Security and Militarism

Similarly, the past few years have also seen considerable methodological innovation and attention to questions of method in CSS (e.g. Aradau and Huysmans 2013; Salter and Mutlu 2013) and CMS and CWS (e.g. Basham et al 2015; Williams et al 2016), some explicitly identified as feminist (e.g. Ackerly, Stern and True 2006; Shepherd 2013; Wibben 2016), but with ample overlap. In this reinvigorated attention to method, scholars have foraged in other fields to cull them for appropriate ways to both ask and answer their research questions— questions that often lead them to query the familiar lines of distinction that delineate traditional notions of war, security and their subjects, such as civil-military, domestic-foreign, and public-private binaries. The methodological

innovations occurring in the study of security and militarism do not obviously *belong* to any particular field. The very creativity required to rigorously probe the accepted imaginaries, locus, practices, framings, logics, scales, subjects, materialities, embodiments etc. of security and militarism presupposes a commitment to unruliness, if unruliness is understood as active transgression of disciplinarily “appropriate” (Zalewski 2006) methodologies and methods. Indeed, embracing methodological creativity and transgression has arguably become a hallmark of critical scholarship, as well as rigour and reflexivity.

As evidenced in the collection of articles in this special issue, as well as in the pages of *Security Dialogue* more generally, it is now commonplace to find research projects that use, for instance, ethnographic methods, pay attention to practices and materiality, as well as discourse, and that focus on the corporeal, emotions, and the everyday. There is also a growing wealth of research that actively and creatively seeks to devise methods that attend to the messiness of intersecting power relations, subjectivities, and scales. Relatedly, the previous positivist/post-positivist divide that did much heavy lifting in distinguishing critical scholarship from mainstream work is also coming under scrutiny, as a growing number of scholars are shifting a focus away from solely emphasizing choice of specific method (quantitative *or* qualitative; measurement *or* interpretation?) as a mark of criticality, and instead explicitly posing questions about the politics of methodology as well as method (Aradau and Huysmans 2013; Sjoberg and Horowitz 2013; Wibben 2016).

Dialogue, possibilities, limits

Now that we have considered the shifts in the world that IR studies and the institutional framing, political economy and identity politics of staking out fields and subfields of research, we turn to the questions of dialogue, possibilities and limits. Answering these questions poses conceptual, theoretical and methodological challenges, taken up in different ways by the contributions in this volume. We offer a glimpse of the many ways they formulate such challenges, and highlight some of their stakes. Instead of offering separate summaries of each of the contributions in this volume, we introduce them here through our discussion of what we deem as their responses to our guiding questions.

What work do militarism and security do? Methodologically, how can they be mobilised?

Asking what work the concepts of militarism and security do requires paying attention to what is brought into view, and how, through their deployment; what is excluded; and the methodology for doing so. And what is brought into view with each concept also depends on how we make sense of a whole constellation of other concepts: war, violence, organized, political, order, peace, development etc. These constellations shift and slide, detach and reattach, in the conversations about militarism and security in the pages of this volume, as well as in the forums for the study of security and militarism more generally. How then do we broach the vast question of the object of inquiry when, of course, as many of the contributions here remind us, the object is polysemic, and not *a priori*?

We start with some insights from feminism and postcolonial research in order to underscore the slipperiness of analysis of security and militarism. Feminists have long been noting and interrogating the continuum of violence (Kelly 2012), and the (in)adequacy of the categories that distinguish between different forms of violence, thus problematizing the lines of distinction between war and peace, the public and private, domestic and political violence, and so on. Feminist insight has shown us that for people living in war zones, war is relational and systemic, a continuum in which “it is not quite so easy to set aside ‘ordinary’ aggression, force or violence as ‘not war’” (Cockburn 2010, 146). And postcolonial analysis problematizes the conventional distinction between war and other forms of violence such as (internal) armed conflict, inviting us to critically rethink how we conceive of a host of forms of organised violence (Barkawi 2016). Warzones might not be located only in the theatre of traditional combat, but instead can be found in the seemingly safe place of our homes, our streets, our borders, and inscribed on our bodies. Sylvester (2013), for example, advocates a reinvigorated study of war through attention to its embodied and emotional experiences as a social institution. Recent work on queer approaches to IR troubles boundary drawing even further, exploring the ways that “power, desire, pleasure and agency come together in militarization,” meaning that “power relations are productive and enjoyable, not merely oppressive” (Crane-Seeber 2016). Furthermore, the concepts and practices of militarism and security are not only deeply gendered but also racialized and reflect colonial imaginaries (e.g. Chisholm 2014; Porter 2009; Ware 2012). Simply put, through careful

empirical and theoretical research, feminist and postcolonial literature situated *within* CSS, CMS and CWS has questioned the premises of both traditional security studies and war studies, and cautioned us not to draw too tight a boundary around the concepts of security and militarism, and their possible objects of inquiry.

CMS and CWS, as burgeoning fields, have more explicitly focused on military power as their object of inquiry than CSS, whilst being explicit that “our very conceptions of military power, militarism and militarization are themselves open to critique and reimagining” (Basham et al 2015, 1). A shift from a focus on the military as institution to military power allows us to notice the workings of militarism (however construed) and martial practices as they are infused in, and co-constitutive of society. In strategic thought, this generates attention to the malleability of norms around what constitutes civil and military across space and time (Angstrom 2013, 224). “War and society” approaches (e.g. Shaw 1988) allow us to see how military power shapes and is shaped by wider social relations, without mistaking an analytical distinction between military and civilian for substantive separation. Howell pushes this further, exhorting us not to assume “any fundamental separation between military and civilian life” (Howell 2017), raising the question of whether military power is even a discrete object of analysis. Work on the spatialities of militarism meanwhile (e.g. Rech et al 2015, Henry and Natanel 2016), the rise of “everyday militarism” approaches (e.g. Bernazzoli and Flint 2010), and attention to practices, material, emotions and embodiment, have wrested militarism away from the confines of narrow understandings of military power. However, militarism’s “stickiness” (Ahmed 2004: 89-92) to violence, to the state, and to the institution of the military, clearly poses some challenges in disengaging it from its traditional moorings. Witness how easy it is to be talking about militarism and yet quickly slip into a discussion of war and the military (traditionally understood). Nonetheless, critical scholarship has opened up space for querying militarism in its myriad forms.

If militarism and security are potentially everywhere, though, how are we to know if or when we are seeing them – and when they are *not* in operation? It is only partly evident in the identity of the actor: does the taking on of more roles by the military (e.g. in disaster relief or crime-fighting) or the increasing use of military weapons and tactics by the police, signal the militarisation of a previously civilian or police issue area? Does the burgeoning of pastoral roles on the part of the military under counterinsurgency

signal a civilianisation of the military, a transformation of security practices, the militarisation of development policy, or does it trouble both the concepts of security as well as militarism by indicating the imbrication of social engineering and war (e.g. Khalili 2012, Owens 2015)? If disciplines and practices central to civilian and military life grew up together, is it appropriate to talk of *militarisation*, as if ostensibly civilian practices were not always already enmeshed with military power, itself central to the constitution of social order and the state? Is security simply the term for certain forms of militarism? Can there be a non-militarized security? Such lines of questioning invite us to reconsider the normative connotations that also “stick” (Ahmed 2004) to militarism. Is the task of CMS to critique violence, or at least martial forms of violence? Is militarism (as concept) so integrally dependent upon the binaries civilian/military, war/peace, and militarism/pacifism, that moving them beyond these terms seems difficult, at best? Can we, for example, conceive of a non-pacifist anti-militarism?

The conceptual caution espoused by much of the work cited above to continually refuse to definitively settle the meaning of militarism and to know *a priori* its workings or its subjects is visible in several of our contributions. For instance, in her article, Basham explores how militarism relies on the co-constitutive practices of the geopolitical and the everyday, thus reminding us to pay attention to the multiple scales through which military power operates. She queries how gendered and racialized logics underwrite the facilitation, justification and legitimation of British airstrikes in Syria to show us how war preparedness is also reproduced through social and political contestations, institutions, inequalities and the practices of everyday life. Hence for Basham, all of these make up the object of militarism. Similarly, through a critical feminist lens, Wibben explores the intersections of oppression that are embedded in the everyday in her discussion of US militarism. Feminist security studies never drew a sharp distinction between militarism and security, which is what allows Wibben to ask whether fighting for gender equality in wars of national security is really liberation. For Wibben, the everyday becomes the object of analysis in order to understand the workings of security and militarism, and their mutual dependence.

Other contributions to this volume also clearly reconfigure the question of security in their discussions of its relationship to militarism. Frowd and Sandor, for instance, focus on security assemblages as a means of understanding the workings of

violence in the Sahel - and show military actors engaging increasingly in pastoral roles. Parashar places developmental assistance programmes in India, often conducted in the name of security, as the site of inquiry in her interrogation of the interrelationships between militarisation and securitization. She illustrates how the direction of travel between militarism and security has changed over time and according to political climate; yet military power remains central to governance in India. Grassiani further unsettles the boundaries that have traditionally delineated our understandings of security and militarism by highlighting the blurring of lines of distinction between the public and private, military and security, in her work on “private security professionals” in Israel. And Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen cast their critical eyes on the work that security cannot (or does not) perform in the colonial reimaginings of security and militarism in Africa by CSS theorists.

The contributions in this issue also do not shy away from prying open the concept/practice of militarism in their reflections on its relation to security. Mabee and Vucetic take as their point of departure the character of militarism as a contested concept, and offer a typology for better understanding the different meanings with which it is imbued. They characterise securitisation as an exceptionalist form of militarism that needs to be understood in comparison to other ideal types. Eastwood, meanwhile, argues for rethinking militarism as ideology in order to open space for a critique of violence. Such a move would help break the deadlock CSS has faced in assessing “the ethical ramifications of various understandings of security for the pursuit of violence.” Abrahamsen invites us to rethink static and universal conceptions of militarism: while the merging of security and development have facilitated the return of militarism, its form cannot adequately be captured by old conceptual accounts. Rather, the operation of global militarism in contemporary Africa is dependent on the logic of security and securitization. And Rodriguez-Hernandez moves between conventional and new approaches to the concept of militarism to chart the blurring of war, internal armed conflict and urban security in Colombia. Arguing that the turn to security is a façade for militarism, he demonstrates the ways that civil authorities have used the discourse of security to facilitate militarised responses to a vast array of problems, despite the Colombian military being formally subordinate to civilian control.

Taken as a whole, the contributions demonstrate the value of reinvigorating the concept of militarism; that the turn to security loses analytical and political purchase when it ignores militarism; and that the study of militarism cannot disregard the transformations that have come with the turn to security (in both theory and practice). So it is not a case of choosing one concept over the other, but thinking them in relation to each other. The contributions underscore that we need to understand the ways in which security practices, ideologies, discourses shape and are shaped by militarism. How one does that depends on theoretical and political orientation – and also methodology, to which we turn next. Paying attention to *how* people, institutions, practices, processes, etc. are militarised or rendered the subjects of security or securitized, and to what effect, is an important methodological move.

Our contributors demonstrate a range of methodological approaches. Mabee and Vucetic work in a historical sociological tradition of ideal types, in order to build a bridge between CSS and historical sociological accounts of militarism. This allows them to construct the category of “exceptionalist militarism” that is co-constituted by three other ideal types: nation-state militarism, civil society militarism, and neoliberal militarism. Eastwood combines Althusserian and psychoanalytic ideology critique in order to foreground the task of anti-militarist critique. In this, he challenges the criticism of ideological approaches to the study of militarism, arguing that a reformulated concept of ideology can facilitate a stronger ethico-political critique of violence. Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen alert us to the postcolonial politics of methodology, arguing that our choice of methodological framework is often imbued with Eurocentrism, if we *a priori* deem certain approaches inapplicable to the African continent.

Other contributors work at the micro scale of methodology in order to think about the international. Frowd and Sandor creatively use interviews and participant observation in order to understand the assemblages of (in)security in the Sahel – the logics of everyday violence, multi-scalar arrangements, and the often conflicting effects of actors’ actions. Grassiani employs an ethnographic approach that combines interviews with participant observation to get at the identity work being done at the boundaries, in the move from the Israeli military to the private security industry. Wibben’s feminist focus on the everyday allows her to study the shared norms of manliness and war, and their gendered myths and images, with the normative impulse of resisting co-option into

militarized practices. Basham reads gender against/with race in her analysis, which draws on the Foucaultian impetus to study the continual reinscription of war in and through institutions, language, bodies, and the feminist focus on desire and embodied experience. This combination allows her to analyse the co-constitution of the geopolitical and the everyday, particularly in its gendered and racialized forms.

As these examples illustrate, our contributors showcase a range of the methodologies in play in contemporary critical military, war and security studies. Their methodological choices remind us of the ways in which security is employed as both an emic and etic concept. This enables vastly different methodological projects and a room for manoeuvre that the study of militarism has not (yet?) enjoyed to the same extent. Indeed, the contributions highlight the methodological challenges of studying militarism, given the obdurate stickiness of militarism with sovereign state power, the military as institution, and its penchant for secrecy – often providing creative ways of shucking the straightjackets that such associations with the state occasion. Combined with their different takes on the object of inquiry, they generate a rich variety of accounts of militarism and/or security. From here, we turn now to consider the overlaps and possibilities for fruitful exchange.

What are the possibilities of fruitful exchange between knowledge produced about militarism and security?

As is evident from the brief sketches above, for most of our authors the possibility for fruitful exchange comes from putting the concepts of militarism and security into conversation with each other. In that sense, then, there seem to be multiple possibilities. As editors, three things strike us about the politics of knowledge production generated in this encounter. First, the experience of putting together the special issue underscores the obvious—yet often forgotten—importance of learning each other’s vocabularies (as well as honing our own) for conversations across disciplinary subfields to occur. Second, in the process of trying to generate exchange, we were struck that, of all the articles, Eastwood’s is the clearest in making the case for one concept (militarism) over the other; and that nobody responded to the call for papers by making the case for security over militarism, which surprised us, given the dominance of security as a conceptual category in critical scholarship. Third, given that most of our contributors think – and through their

work, demonstrate – that putting the two concepts into conversation with each other is a productive move, why has this not been happening more widely, beyond feminist approaches, which have long shown that is inadequate to think they can be studied separately (e.g. Cohn 1987, Enloe 2007, Masters 2017)?

Part of the answer to this lies, we think, in the institutional, professional and socializing practices of academia. That is, for many if not most academics, their experience of scholarly training revolves around socialization into particular schools of thought, or literatures focused on particular concepts or thinkers, rather than being primarily problem-driven. From our student days onward, we are trained to think in terms of schools of thought, pitting them against each other with their attendant methodologies; rather than surveying and experimenting with a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies that help us answer a particular problem or puzzle. These trends are amplified by the dominant ideological or discursive context of the contemporary moment, the political economy of knowledge production noted above, and the ways in which even critical approaches can end up partly reproducing the concepts and practices they are trying to examine. In this, the question of why we care about concepts, theory and method comes to the fore, and the ethico-political task of scholarship is foregrounded.

What are the limits of militarism and security?

Finally, we turn to the question of limits: where or what is *not* militarism or security? Posing this question allows us to reflect upon how we draw boundaries around concepts, despite our attempts to loosen the strongholds that others have drawn around them. It also invites the formulation of other lines of inquiry, such as whether or not the question of militarism or security is the *wrong* question—and what, if so, might be a *better* question? Should, for example, we refresh our consideration of security and militarism’s relationship to violence, war, the state?

Some scholars eschew both terms, whilst still dealing with questions of violence, harm or political order. The concept of pacification is prominent in this regard, as a means of understanding the insecurities generated through processes of capitalist accumulation (Neocleous 2011), the ways in which liberal forms of social control accompany coercive practices (Kienscherf 2014), or the homology between practices of counterinsurgency

and household rule (Owens 2015). Other alternative concepts include governmentality: Aradau and van Munster (2007, 105) ask, what if the right object of analysis is not war or “a recent rediscovery of militarism but of a governmentality that activates all the technologies imaginable in the face of uncertainty”? And Louise Amoore deploys the concept of “algorithmic war” to challenge accounts of militarization that rest on a clear distinction between the military, civil and commercial spheres (2009). The burgeoning literatures on governmentality, risk and surveillance ask a rather different set of questions to those being posed by many of our authors – but Jabri’s insistence on connections to actual war (2006, 2010) is pertinent here, as many practices associated with governmentality, risk or surveillance are intimately connected to war in the periphery and war preparation, and constitute “Foucauldian 'boomerang effects' which continually shift between the colonial metropole and the war-zone frontier” (Graham 2011, 88.).

While many of our contributors discuss how militarism and security may be parallel processes, preconditions of each other, or even reflect the same phenomenon, what is striking is that few of the contributions draw any hard lines between the concepts they use or the practices they interrogate. Militarism and security morph, loop, and generally slip and slide about, as do their attending concepts/practices of (de)militarization, and (de)securitization, as well, of course, as their inverses. They nonetheless persist in the pages of this special issue as distinct phenomena, worthy of analysis *as* distinct and unique, as well as polysemic and dynamic.

Conclusion

We are struck by the ways in which our contributors have produced a fruitful exchange between the concepts of militarism and security, in light of our earlier comment that CSS on the one hand, and CMS and CWS on the other, have developed in rather different directions. So where does this leave us? It reminds us that IR’s preoccupation with documenting its choreography and staking out its fields and subfields need not seduce us into becoming so preoccupied with the boundaries we erect that we forget to pay attention to the myriad creative possibilities that can arise through razing the walls that house us. Such razing can occur through conversations that render constricting limits visible, as we have attempted to do here; it can also occur through refusing such limits,

and instead honing in on the problems that bother us, the puzzles that confound us, the silences that render us uneasy, the lives that we touch and are touched by, and the experiences that move us. It can also occur through striving for our conversations to be continuously enriched by listening to those occurring elsewhere and otherwise (both within and outside IR, CSS, CMS, CWS and so on), and through searching for inspiration and methodological tools from one another.

In preparing this special issue, we have been reminded of the vast amount of creative and robust scholarship that engages in the questions of security and militarism. These concepts/practices – while surely overlapping, limited and limiting, as well as overwrought with ideological, historical, and institutional baggage—nonetheless still are put to excellent use in attempts to reflect, analyse, understand and even change the world and redress harm. This brings us back to our political project in putting these two concepts in dialogue. One of the things we take from these contributions is that there is a pressing need to reinvigorate a focus on militarism and its co-constitution with security – and as evidenced here, there are extant and emerging scholarly resources with which to do so.

There are still gaps, of course. Having endorsed the critique of state-centrism, it is nonetheless important to recognise that state-based institutions of organised violence are not going anywhere. They remain powerful and in need of study, just, we aver, not in methodologically nationalist or state-centric ways. And there are still notable quiet zones that beg for critical attention: for all the innovative work being done in critical military and war studies, there is not a burgeoning literature on, for example, the role of the military (as institution, interests, or practices) in the economy – a politically significant force in many states around the world, and surely a necessary part of any discussion of militarism. Such work can rightly be considered critical but falls more often under the banner of political economy or area studies than security, war or military studies (e.g. Marshall and Stacher 2012, Siddiqa 2007). Whilst attention has been paid to, for example, the political economy of the rise of private military and security companies or of US and European militaries, far less attention has been paid to non-European institutions in IR and its sub-fields.

At the workshop in preparation for the special issue, in Gothenburg, we noted quiet zones in our own conversations. What we did *not* focus on in that forum, as well as in the contributions that inspired it, is perhaps just as interesting as what we did consider. Surprisingly, our conversations focused on querying militarism; the question of security, while still salient, did not elicit our fervent concentration. The reasons for this are surely many, including the profiles of those who answered the call for this special issue, the extensive scrutiny security has sustained in the pages of *Security Dialogue* and elsewhere, as well as—perhaps—a shared sense that the current global conjuncture requires us to vigorously reconsider militarism and war. However, thinking about militarism also allows us to step back from the sense of immediate crisis and ask how we got here. For instance, the longer-term normalisation of nuclear weapons as a precondition of peace and security, and militarisation of the Korean peninsula, form the backdrop against which the current crisis between the USA and North Korea is unfolding. While violence, war and the state persistently stuck to our reflections of militarism, they nonetheless repeatedly slipped away from centre stage in our reflections. This combination of adherence and elusiveness alerts us to the need to pay more attention to these concepts/practices and their interrelationships – not to definitively answer them, but to open them up as promising avenues of exploration. Other quiet zones included areas of inquiry that often accompany contemplation of militarism and security, such as questions about empire and occupation, nationalism, peace, class, risk, the exception, and terror/ism. Why, we wonder, did these figure as silences (or at least as whispers) in our conversations? What other silences resound?

Instead of approximating cohesive answers about their purchase or their effects, we find that, as moving targets, these concepts/practices of militarism and security continue to compel us in our critical thinking about violence, war, peace, development, gender, race, and so on. They are crucial to a continued reflexivity over the tools of our trade as critical academics who are engaged with questions that are grounded in the wish to stem violence and prevent harm, and who are wary of the constraints that disciplines and concepts impose on our ability to do so adequately.

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