"In the Minds of Men…" – Social Representations of War and Military Intervention

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Abstract

This chapter reviews (primarily social psychological) research on representations of war and military intervention. This research has approached the object of investigation in various ways, focusing to a lesser or greater extent on contextual and historical processes, and assigning differential weight to the social meanings attached to war and military intervention. Furthermore, there are differences in terms of the research's conceptualization of individual positions toward war and military intervention and the role of group memberships and intergroup relations. The chapter tries to bring together research findings from these different traditions by drawing implications for strategies to change representations of war and military interventions. We end by offering questions for future research.

Keywords (5-10)

Peace, war, military intervention, attitudes, social representations, social psychology, political psychology

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”, so says the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the preamble to its constitution (1945). The statement raises questions such as: how are wars represented in the minds of men (and women)?~~;~~[1] how can these representations be changed to “construct the defenses of peace”?~~;~~ and to what extent can changes in representations at the individual level ~~effect~~ bring about peace? Accordingly, psychologists have a long tradition of engaging with war and peace (though not always against war and for peace; for an overview see Christie & Montiel, 2013). In light of today’s ~~degree of~~widespread militarization and occurrence of wars and war-like conflicts, engagement with such questions is more important than ever. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2014), worldwide military expenditure has increased from US$1,208 in 1992 to US$1,753 billion in 2012. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2014), there were 45 wars or limited wars taking place globally, plus 176 violent crises. Money spent on militarization ~~does not only~~ funds wars and military interventions, and thus contributes to direct violence, but it also ~~cannot be used to address~~stands in the way of addressing other pressing social issues, thus contributing to structural violence. With social justice being defined as the presence of structural conditions that enable individuals~~'~~ to fulfil their physical and mental potential~~s~~, and thus essentially the absence of structural violence (Galtung, 1969), research on representations of war and military interventions is therefore of great relevance to the social justice focus of this handbook.

This chapter looks at empirical research and theorizing on representations of war and military interventions from different theoretical angles. First, we present research that focuses on “wars in the minds of men [and women]” by examining individual attitudes toward war and military interventions. From this research, we conclude that the study of individual attitudes is insufficient without ~~an attention~~attending to the meaning attached to war and military intervention;~~,~~ that is, how war and military intervention are socially constructed and elaborated. Therefore, in the second part, we follow a social representations approach that focuses on systems of meaning that not only exist “in the minds of men [and women]” but also in society~~ at large~~. We elaborate on this approach by describing the content and structure of social representations of war and military intervention and ~~how~~ showing how they are historically anchored and reflected in elite and media discourses. Third, we discuss the ways in which

[1] Even though the title of this chapter refers to “men” and gender is an important category when analyzing war, militarization, and military interventions, this chapter does not focus mainly on gender differences in mental representations (e.g., Eichenberg, 2003; Finlay & Love, 1998) or on gendered social representations (e.g., Hunt & Rygiel, 2008; Winter, Pilisuk, Houck, & Lee, 2001). The title of this chapter simply uses the wording of the preamble to UNESCO’s constitution~~ (which nowadays can be considered sexist)~~.

individuals and groups within society position themselves differently toward the ~~social representational field related to~~ issues of war and military intervention, and possible reasons for this. The final part briefly tries to integrate the research findings reviewed, draws implications for “constructing the defenses of peace”, and identifies important questions for further research.

Attitudes toward War and Military Interventions

Attitudes toward war and military intervention were among the first ~~attitudes~~ of these constructs studied once techniques for their measurement ~~measuring attitudes~~ had been invented (e.g., Droba, 1931). Subsequent research has looked either at attitudes related to war in general or ~~at attitudes~~ related to specific wars or military interventions, typically among laypeople (citizens), but ~~sometimes~~ also among political elites (leaders). Some research has also examined how attitudes toward war or military interventions influence individual~~s’~~ behavior. A characteristic assumption underlying this research is that war or a specific military intervention is a “fixed” social object and individuals may differ in how they evaluate this (same) object.

General Attitudes Related to War

Generalized militaristic attitudes (militarism) or attitudes toward war have been conceptualized in various ways. These conceptualizations emphasize different aspects, including: beliefs about the efficacy as well as the moral legitimacy of war as a means to resolve conflict and to achieve security; emotional associations with war and the military (e.g., pride, admiration on the positive side, or disgust on the negative side); concrete foreign policy positions (e.g., views about increases or cuts in military spending); and basic beliefs about whether war is inevitable (Cohrs & Nelson, 2012). In some conceptualizations, the aspect of moral legitimacy is to the fore (Grussendorf, McAlister, Sandström, Udd, & Morrison, 2002; Jackson & Sparr, 2005; McAlister, 2001; see also Tamashiro, Brunk, & Secrest, 1989). Research in political science has often focused on the aspect of foreign policy positions (e.g., D’Agostino, 1995; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987; Peffley & Hurwitz, 1993). Common to most of these approaches is the assumption that militaristic attitudes can vary on a one-dimensional continuum from negative (i.e., highly antimilitaristic attitudes) to positive (i.e., highly militaristic attitudes). Some scholars defined the negative pole of the antimilitarism–militarism continuum not simply as a rejection of militarism, but as support for international cooperation or diplomacy as alternative strategies to resolve conflict and achieve security (Nelson & Milburn, 1999; Vail & Motyl, 2010).

Somewhat differently, Bizumic, Stubager, Mellon, Van der Linden, Iyer, and Jones (2013) distinguish

between two dimensions rather than seeing antimilitarism–militarism as one dimension: attitude toward war and attitude toward peace. According to these authors' findings, individuals can have both positive attitudes toward war and toward peace; in their empirical research in the U.S. and Denmark, this was the case in particular for politically conservative participants.

There is some evidence that individuals' militaristic and antimilitaristic attitudes correlate with their behavioral intentions or actual behavior. Bizumic et al. (2013) found that militaristic and antimilitaristic attitudes correlated with intentions to engage in pro-war (e.g., joining the military, supporting the country going to war) and pro-peace activities (e.g., risking imprisonment, joining a demonstration, joining a human barricade), respectively. Cohrs, Moschner, and Maes (2003) found among Germans who opposed the 2001-2002 war in Afghanistan that antimilitaristic attitudes predicted the amount of different forms of involvement in anti-war activism (e.g., signing a public statement, participating in a demonstration, helping out in an organization, nudging others to get involved).

Attitudes Related to Specific Wars and Military Interventions

Research on militaristic attitudes, or attitudes toward war in general, might be limited because wars can be fought for very different reasons. Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994), for example, measured U.S. college students' attitudes toward "wars of dominance" (e.g., to ensure national influence, to protect economic interests, for national security purposes, to keep an enemy from acquiring nuclear weapons) and "humanitarian wars" (e.g., to ensure human rights are respected, to facilitate emergence food supplies, to protect civilians). They found that social dominance orientation (SDO; a general preference for hierarchical relations between social groups) correlated positively with the former, but negatively with the latter (on support for humanitarian military interventions see also McFarland, 2012; McFarland & Mathews, 2005).

In light of these divergent findings on attitudes toward different types of wars, it makes sense to study attitudes related to specific wars and military interventions. This has been done with regard to many different wars and military interventions in recent history, including the Vietnam war (e.g., Izzett, 1971), the 1991 Persian Gulf war (e.g., Doty, Winter, Peterson, & Kemmelmeier, 1997; Spellman, Ullman, & Holyoak, 1993), the 1999 Kosovo war (e.g., Bègue & Apostolidis, 2000; Cohrs & Moschner, 2002a, b), the 2001/02 war in Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (e.g., Henderson-King, Henderson-King, Bolea, Koches, & Kauffman, 2004), and the 2003 Iraq war (e.g., McFarland, 2005). Some of this research has also studied how people construe or interpret specific wars and military interventions in terms of their aims, consequences, parties involved etc., what emotions people feel in relation to war and military

interventions, and how these cognitive construals and emotional reactions are correlated with support for the war or military intervention.

Cognitive construals of military interventions

In political science, different approaches focus on several factors that are relevant to public support for U.S. military interventions (for a review see Klarevas, 2002). These include: whether vital U.S. interests are at stake; what the principal policy objective of the military intervention is (with the objectives of "humanitarian intervention" or "foreign-policy restraint" leading to higher support than the objective of "internal political change"; Jentleson & Britton, 1998); whether the intervention is sanctioned multilaterally (e.g., by the United Nations); and cost-benefit calculations that consider in particular casualties and policy successes. In addition, it has been argued that leadership cues are important: Public support for a military intervention is more likely when there is a consensus among political leaders on the use of force (e.g., Zaller, 1992). Survey research has provided empirical support for each of these perspectives (e.g., Jentleson & Britton, 1998; Klarevas, 2002).

Concerning cost-benefit calculations, the acceptability of casualties and expectations of operational success appear to be important and interlinked. Eichenberg (2005) found in an analysis of U.S. public opinion from 22 events (1981-2005) in which the U.S. threatened or was involved in war that citizens judged the acceptability of casualties with reference to the outcome of the military intervention, so that casualties were accepted if the mission was successful, but not if it was unsuccessful. Cost-benefit calculations can also play a role *before* an intervention, based on expectations of negative consequences: Eckles and Schaffner (2013) found in a survey experiment with U.S. participants that awareness of potential risks of a military intervention (to help end genocide in Darfur) reduced support for the intervention among participants low in general risk tolerance.

Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser (1999) designed scenarios of conflicts in hypothetical countries and asked participants to indicate their support for or opposition to a U.S. military intervention. In five experiments that were embedded in a representative survey, the authors manipulated the motives of the attacking country (unprovoked or as a result of historical conflict), whether U.S. economic and security interests were at stake, the military power/weakness of the attacking country, the political culture of the attacked country (democracy or dictatorship), the type of conflict (cross-border or civil war), and whether the attacking country possessed nuclear weapons or not. Most of these factors were derived from image theory (Cottam, 1977). Across these experiments, participants were more likely to support U.S. military intervention when the attacking country's motivation was offensive, when U.S. interests were at stake,

when the attacking country was more powerful and when it possessed nuclear weapons (at least when U.S. interests were also present), when the attacked country was a democracy, and when the conflict was a cross-border conflict (rather than a civil war). Herrmann et al. (1999) also found interaction effects of these different factors with participants' more general attitudinal predispositions. For example, militarism and conservative political ideology were associated with stronger effects of the presence of U.S. interests; without U.S. interests, political conservatives were even less likely to support military intervention than liberals.

Regarding the underlying psychological processes, most of these findings can be interpreted in terms of moral justification: A military intervention may be perceived as more justified if it is supported multilaterally, directed against an offensive and powerful attacker, and aimed to protect a democratic country (see also Falomir-Pichastor, Pereira, Staerklé, & Butera, 2012; Falomir-Pichastor, Staerklé, Pereira, & Butera, 2012), and if the benefits outweigh the costs (see also Mann & Gaertner, 1991).

Moral disengagement

In psychological research on support for specific wars or military interventions, many studies start with the assumption that war, as a form of mass violence, is generally considered to deviate from moral norms. Therefore, support for war is contingent on individuals' actively construing a war in such a way that it is perceived as morally acceptable. This is the line of reasoning behind Bandura's (1991, 1999) concept of moral disengagement. According to this approach, a war may be perceived as morally acceptable and worthy of support if:

a) it is perceived as justified because of positive motives (e.g., self-defense, ending human rights violations or terrorism; see also Friese, Fishman, Beatson, Sauerwein, & Rip, 2009) and/or support by international law;
b) responsibility for the war and its consequences is rejected (e.g., by claiming that there was no alternative; see also Agnew, Hoffman, Lehmiller, & Duncan, 2007; Hoffman, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Kulzick, in press);
c) negative consequences of the war (e.g., suffering and killing of civilians) are ignored or minimized; and/or
d) the war opponent is dehumanized and blamed for the war (for a similar analysis of forms of reinterpretation of victimization, see Lerner, 1980).

The similarities of these forms of moral disengagement to the factors introduced above (i.e., principal

policy objectives, multilateralism, cost-benefit considerations, and status of the target country) are evident.

Support for the role of moral disengagement beliefs in support for specific wars and military intervention has been found with regard to German participants' attitudes toward the 1999 Kosovo war (Cohrs & Moschner, 2002b) and U.S. Americans' support for military strikes against suspected terrorists and bombardment of Iraq in the aftermath of 9/11 (McAlister, Bandura, & Owen, 2006; see also Bandura, 2004). In addition, Jackson and Gaertner (2010, Study 1) found among U.S. university students (in 2007) that in particular minimization of negative consequences predicted support for continuous U.S. military involvement in Iraq. However, in their Study 2, which examined students' support for a war between two fictitious countries, it was in particular moral justification that predicted war support. That only one of four moral disengagement factors independently predicted support for war in Jackson and Gaertner's studies may be due to their relatively broad empirical operationalization.[2] Cohrs and Moschner (2002), in contrast, used moral disengagement items that specifically referred to the military intervention in Kosovo.

Emotions and military interventions

Some studies have complemented research on beliefs and attitudes toward specific wars and military interventions by looking at emotional correlates of support for war, in particular *moral* emotions such as anger, disgust, and contempt. Cheung-Blunden and Blunden (2008a, b) found across several samples of U.S. college students that the level of anger experienced when viewing pictures of the 9/11 terrorist attacks predicted support for U.S. military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as additional aggressive actions against terrorists (the studies were conducted between 5 and 18 months after the attacks). Similarly, Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich, and Morgan (2006) found in a representative survey with U.S. Americans that feelings of anger predicted support for expanding the "war on terror" to Iraq, and partially mediated the effect of right-wing authoritarianism on war support. The influence of disgust and contempt (summarized as "dehumanization"), together with perceptions of threat, has been shown in a representative survey with regard to Israeli Jews' support for aggressive retaliatory policies towards

[2] An even broader operationalization, measuring moral disengagement beliefs entirely unrelated to war, was used by Aquino, Reed, Thau, and Freeman (2007). These authors found that moral disengagement was associated with U.S. students' support for killing the perpetrators of 9/11 and with reduced negative emotions toward abuses of Iraqi detainees by U.S. soldiers, unless participants had a strong moral identity or were experimentally primed with a moral identity. However, morality is a double-edged sword. Shaw, Quezada, and Zárate (2011) found that moral certainty was associated with greater support among U.S. participants for the war in the Middle East.

Palestinians; these emotional factors also mediated the influence of general “hawkishness” (militarism) on support for aggressive policies (Maoz & McCauley, 2008). Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav (2005) also found in a representative survey of U.S. Americans that perceived threat of future terrorism in the U.S. was positively related to support for aggressive military action against terrorists.

Interim Conclusion 1: Attitudes toward War and Military Interventions

The research reviewed so far suggests, first, that attitudes toward war and military interventions can be measured and that there are relationships between militaristic attitudes and behavioral intentions or actual behavior toward war (Bizumic et al., 2013; Cohrs, Moschner, et al., 2003). Second, and more importantly, it suggests that support for specific wars and military interventions is contingent on cognitive construals or (re-)interpretations (in particular, moral justification, denial of responsibility due to a perceived lack of alternatives, and minimization of negative consequences), accompanied by feelings of anger. Thus, these findings imply that a war or military intervention ~~is not necessarily the same thing~~may mean different things to different people. This is obvious when different terms are used (e.g., “invasion” or “intervention”), but even using the same term does not imply the same understanding. There is a degree of consensus in terms of the meaning of social objects, but individual~~s’~~ and group~~s’~~ constructions of and positions towards the object will vary systematically. In effect, the meanings of social objects, such as wars and military interventions, are different for different individuals and groups. An approach that avoids the analytical separation of the social object from its meaning and evaluation is social representations theory (Moscovici, 1961/1976; for an overview of the theory see Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, & Abric, 2012).

Social Representations of War and Military Interventions

Social representations ~~are defined~~may be construed as a society’s “common sense”, its stock of “concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications” (Moscovici, 1981, p. 181). They reside in the minds of individuals as well as in society, and comprise elements such as knowledge, meanings, symbols, narratives (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012), attributions, emotions, evaluations, behavioral practices, etc. related to a certain concept or phenomenon. Thus, in this approach attitudes are not a separate outcome variable. Rather, they are seen as inextricably linked with the cognitions, emotions, behavioral repertoires, etc. that represent a social object and constitute its meaning (e.g., Moliner & Tafani, 1987). In short, attitudes can be subsumed under the concept of social representations; they are just one (evaluative) component of the broader social representational field.

Research following the social representations tradition has examined the culturally and historically grounded meanings, values, and images that people attach to war and military intervention, both in general and in relation to specific conflicts. Related research (not always done by social representation theorists) has also looked at how the meanings attached to war and military interventions are represented in elite discourse and in the media. In his analysis of war propaganda in World War I, Lasswell (1927) wrote, “so great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations that every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor” (p. 47). According to Lasswell, the main aim of propaganda is to assign all blame for a war to the enemy, and the main method is to disseminate stories about atrocities. Lasswell’s analysis echoes the aforementioned assumption based on Bandura (1999) that wars are generally considered to deviate from moral norms, and hence, individuals can only support a war if they use mechanisms of moral disengagement. However, this is not only a cognitive, but also a social process. The social representations approach problematizes the location of attitudes in ‘the minds of men’: by fixing these attitudes at the individual level, the influence of social, political, and ideological processes is easily overlooked. In contrast, social representations research emphasizes the necessity of attending to the way in which these broader societal structures are present and interact with people’s representations of war and military intervention.

Laypeople’s Representations of War and Military Intervention

How do laypeople understand the constructs of war and peace? Research has tended to explore the way in which these constructs are structured in common sense among different groups of people, generally without referring to specific conflicts. Using word-association data from Italian students collected in 2004 and 2005, Sarrica (2007) reported that representations of war were stable between time periods and were distinguished by three key features: concrete objects and tangible images (e.g., blood), negative feelings and negative consequences. Women associated war with emotions and its negative consequences to a greater extent than men. While peace was mostly associated with utopian values, metaphors, and interpersonal relationships, data from 2005 ~~encompassed~~ contained more functional ~~aspects~~ elements related to achieving peace (e.g., co-operation). The authors interpret this finding as related to the results of collective elaboration of representations ~~effected~~ brought about by debates in Italian society around the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Sarrica and Wachelke (2010) reported similar findings in their examination of representations of war and peace among Italian adolescents. Representations of war were characterized by themes of material and moral destruction (blood, death, weapons) while, as in previous studies, peace was constructed in more

abstract terms, related to positive emotional experiences (happiness), utopian themes (unreachable), and values (equality). Social representations of war, then, would appear to be more stable and well-developed than social representations of peace. War is associated with powerful, material, and evocative imagery of death and destruction, while peace is a fuzzy and intangible concept tied to abstract values and emotional states.

Orr, Sagi, and Bar-On (2000) compared the social representations of war and peace of Israeli, Palestinian and European adolescents. Israeli and Palestinian youths shared a common representational field, which justified the use of war as a means of achieving national importance or sovereignty. Thus, representations of war were functional in that they justified the continuation of the current conflict. Peace was a more abstract notion for Europeans, who were more positive about taking on the risks and costs of peace than either Israeli or Palestinian adolescents. This suggests that social representations of war and peace are ~~inseparable from~~linked to identity. It supposes the specific meanings of these social objects will be shaped by group processes; in Orr et al.'s study, the disinclination of Palestinian and Israeli youth~~'s disinclination~~ to take on the risks and costs associated with peace is intelligible with reference to the negative consequences that such a position would have for the status and esteem of the national group.

Wagner, Valencia, and Elejabarrieta (1996) also investigated the influence of the national context on representations of war and peace. Using word association data from Spain and Nicaragua, they reported that representations of war were stable in both contexts, due perhaps to the heavy media coverage of wars worldwide. In both contexts, the 'stable core' of representations of war were characterized by 'hot' ideas and words – those related to bodily (e.g., hunger), emotional (e.g., hatred), or other proximal issues. Many of the associations and words related to this 'stable core' were common to both contexts. The 'periphery' of social representations of war comprised 'cold' ideas and words, which reflected more distant intellectualized associations (e.g., politics, blockade). Similar to previous research, a stable representational 'core' for peace was found only in the Nicaraguan sample. The authors attributed this finding to the consistent conflict in their recent history, which had generated much public debate and discussion on relevant issues.~~The authors interpreted this finding with reference to the specific context of Nicaragua, in which, because of its conflictual recent history at the time, there would have been much public debate and discussion on relevant issues.~~

Social representations may be characterized by 'cognitive polyphasia', wherein "differing, and at times conflicting, styles of thinking, meanings and practices co-exist in the same individual, institution, group or

community" (Renedo & Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 783). Friling's (2012) qualitative analysis of interview data from Israeli parents of soldiers serving their mandatory term in the Israeli Defence Force suggested that representations of war and military intervention were polyphasic. Most significantly, parents constructed their son's involvement in the army as stemming from a natural obligation to serve one's country, but simultaneously questioned the foundation and veracity of these beliefs. Friling argued that the polyphasic quality of representations was functional as it enabled parents to negotiate the 'complex reality' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their place within that conflict.

Similarly, Portuguese veterans of the colonial war in Angola were also found to have complex, polyphasic representations of the war (Figueiredo, Valentim, Licata, & Doosje, 2013). In particular, their representations of the war ~~showed~~ revealed tensions between their mostly negative experience of the war and their experience of *being in* Africa, which they often described in positive terms due to ~~to their perceptions of~~ the beauty of the Angolan landscape. Veterans' positive experiences of being in Angola (as opposed to being at war) problematized the creation of a unitary and coherent representation of the war.

Elite Discourses on War and Military Intervention

As mentioned above in relation to "leadership cues" (e.g., Klarevas, 1999; Zaller, 1992; see also Cunningham & Moore, 1997), the manner in which particular wars and military interventions are constructed in discourse by political elites may have important consequences for public opinion (and the actual direction that foreign policy takes). Presidents, and arguably other political elites as well, possess the power of definition in that they are able to influence how complex political situations are viewed by citizens (Zarefsky, 2004). In addition to this, elite discourse has a didactic function as it equips citizens with knowledge about issues on which, because of their remoteness, they may be less well-informed (Hargrove, 1998). However, elite discourse also reflects the historically and culturally grounded social representations of war and military intervention. As will be seen, elite discourse on issues relating to war and military intervention draws particularly on representations of social categories to achieve its strategic aims. The social identity perspective (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), as well as work which views social categories as specific and powerful social representations (e.g., Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011) may be particularly useful in interpreting elite representations of these issues. Research that has explored elite representations in political discourse has often utilized qualitative analysis of political speeches, in light of potential involvement in specific conflicts.

One key way in which elite representations of war may be objectified is through the creation of 'enemy

images' (see Murray & Cowden, 1999). In the U.S., enemy images of *modern savagery* – in which a leader or government commits acts of aggression to the civilized order possibly as well as its own population – and *primitive savagery* – in which the culture and its lack of proper government/institutions is the issue – may be especially common in elite discourse (e.g., Butler, 2002; Edwards, 2008). Elite construction and use of social categories has a *strategic* dimension, in that the specific meanings attached to social categories will bolster particular political objectives. In this sense, elites can be considered as "entrepreneurs of identity" (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; see McKeever, Reed, Pehrson, Storey, & Cohrs, 2013, for an example study on racist violence).

This strategic dimension of category construction also applies to issues surrounding war and military intervention. Herrera (2003) analyzed how the 1991 Persian Gulf War was portrayed in newspaper editorials, parliamentary debates, and political speeches of pro-war and anti-war leaders and activists. The categories involved in the war and the nature of the war were represented differently in pro-war and anti-war discourse. Pro-war discourse used a "new world order" rhetoric and represented the war as a "clean" war between the then Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, and the "family of nations" of the civilized world. Anti-war discourse, in contrast, represented the war as a war of political leaders against a broad category of ordinary humanity. Similar category constructions were found among laypeople, consistent with an "entrepreneurs of identity" account (see also Herrera & Reicher, 1998, 2001).

Esch (2010) explored the use of two political myths in the U.S. – 'American exceptionalism' and 'Civilisation vs. barbarism' – in political discourse and official documents on the 'war on terror'. In particular, the second political myth provided material to facilitate the discursive 'othering' of those responsible for the 9/11 attacks, thus justifying the invasion of Iraq and the 'war on terror'.

Elcheroth and Reicher (in press) examined qualitative data from Scottish parliamentary debates in 2008 surrounding the invasion of Iraq. Consonant with the above assertion that category construction is a powerful mobilisatory tool utilized by political elites, they reported differences between the rhetorical elaboration of pro- and anti-war positions. Neatly put,

> the pro-war camp referred to a narrative of liberation in which war was necessary to defend 'ourselves' and to alleviate the sufferings of others. The anti-war camp proposed a narrative of aggression in which war was imposed on 'us' by others and was to our detriment. (p. 18)

Thus, political elites drew upon different representations/narratives, and set the parameters of category membership in various ways, to justify their support of or opposition towards the war.

Kuusisto (1998) noted that the rhetoric of elites on war and military intervention works to 'defend the indefensible' (p. 606) and that storytelling, category construction, and the use of metaphors are vital representational resources in this endeavor. Through a qualitative analysis of the political speeches of Western leaders (the U.S., France, and Germany) in relation to two conflicts: the Persian Gulf war against Iraq (1991) and the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-95), it was found that the rhetorical construction of the two conflicts was action-oriented, serving to justify their country's responses to the conflict. The Persian Gulf war was constructed as justified, establishing a new world order and defeating an evil dictator. The Bosnian conflict was constructed as a tragedy, and the aggressors and victims as less readily identifiable. The use of metaphor, which may be linked to processes of social representation, also differed in elite discourse on the two wars. In constructing the Bosnian conflict, elites drew upon metaphors that emphasized the extreme and disorienting qualities of war (e.g., as natural catastrophe, a nightmare). On the other hand, elite discourse on the Persian Gulf war utilized metaphors which emphasized its exciting, adventurous qualities (e.g., as sport, gambling).

Similarly, Halverscheid and Witte (2008) analyzed discourse of (1) the U.S. government to justify military strikes in Afghanistan (2001–) and the war in Iraq (2003–), (2) the Red Army Faction to justify terrorist attacks in Germany between 1972 and 1984, (3) the former President of Iraq (Saddam Hussein) to justify war against Iran (1980–1988), and (4) of members of Al Qaeda to justify terrorist acts between 2001 and 2004. Of particular interest to the authors was the way in which the Western and Arab elites, and those justifying terrorism and war, differed in their utilization of ethical principles. For example, the Western elites drew more often on the argument that action was necessary for the good of the majority, while the Arab elites to a greater extent justified their activities based on the enemy's infraction of specific duties. The authors argued that these cultural differences in ethical argumentation may be one factor in why peace negotiations often fail.

Media Discourse on War and Military Intervention

The analysis of media has been one of the key means by which social representations have been investigated. Moscovici's (1961/1976) study of representations of psychoanalysis in different social milieus and their associated media in France is a classic example. The media provides access into the development of particular social representations, whether new scientific discoveries or technological developments (e.g., Bangerter & Heath, 2004; Kronberger, Holtz, & Wagner, 2012; Wagner, Kronberger, & Seifert, 2002), threatening new illnesses (Gilles et al., 2011), or other novel phenomena. Wagner et al. (2002) stated that "the less proximal a phenomenon is to their [people's] immediate life space, the more

they depend on media communication and the less they can rely on personal communication" (p. 324). Thus, particularly when there is a large distance to wars and military interventions, it seems likely that the media will play a key role in orienting the meanings, images, and other associations which individuals and groups attach to these phenomena. Media discourse is also important to investigate social representations because of media's crucial role in agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and framing (Entman, 1993). In terms of agenda setting, media discourse identifies particular social objects, events, and phenomena as significant, or indeed often as problematic. In terms of framing, it can also influence the content of social representations by selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality and [making] them more salient in a communication context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

The media should not be considered value-free (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). As Moscovici (1961/76) noted, the way in which social knowledge is transmitted is not neutral, but is informed by the political and ideological climate. At times of war, professional journalistic quality criteria like objectivity, detachment, and truthfulness are often insufficiently fulfilled and media may contribute to the legitimization of the war (Kunczik, 1995). This has been shown, for example, in content analyses of media coverage with regard to the U.S. war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (Kempf, 1990) and the 1991 Persian Gulf War (Kempf, 1994). Chiefly, and consistent with Lasswell (1927), "undesirable" information (which would question the legitimacy of a war) is ignored, minimized, or downplayed while "desirable" information (which would increase the legitimacy of a war) is repeated, reinforced, and enriched through words, images, and explicit commentaries. In addition, events are usually reported without consideration of their historical and social context, and in a personalized manner. Regarding media construction of the Kosovo intervention of 1999 in Germany, Claßen (2000) and Mayn (2000) stated that reporting on the background and development of the conflict between Kosovo-Albanians and Serbs as well as the different motives involved was rare, whereas many stories were reported about atrocities committed by Serbian forces.

Importantly, these mechanisms make use of, and correspond directly to, the psychological (cognitive, motivational, emotional) factors involved in conflict escalation (Kempf, 2003). In contrast, the concept of "peace journalism" refers to various approaches to reporting about conflict and war in such a way that it contributes to the de-escalation rather than legitimization of war (e.g., Kempf, 2012). In line with the concepts of agenda setting and framing mentioned above, these approaches focus on *what* is reported (e.g., non-violent civil society activities rather than only elite-level developments) and *how* it is reported

(e.g., in an objective, detached, and fair manner that is respectful to all sides in the underlying conflict). According to Kempf's (2003) model, media coverage of war needs to move from a war discourse that focuses on questions like "who is guilty?" and "how can he be stopped?" to a peace discourse that focuses on questions like "what is the problem?" and "how can it be solved?", and in turn to a reconciliation discourse that focuses on questions like "who is the other?" and "how can we meet each other with mutual respect?"

Research has also looked at media representations of war and military intervention in popular culture, independent of specific military interventions. A salient example is popular video games, which, like most forms of popular culture, have an implicit didactic as well as entertainment purpose or orientation. Increasingly realistic, even sometimes utilizing footage from actual wars in which the U.S. has been engaged, the content of such video games is sensitive to social and political objectives specific to the context. For example, often the villain in such games will mirror actual perceived antagonists on the international stage; there is then in some sense a mapping of real geopolitical situations into a virtual space, or objectifying them. Power (2007) explored representations of war, and the ideological assumptions they carried, in an examination of one particular video game – *America's Army* – which had been developed by the U.S. Army. Particular features of the game served to legitimize and bolster support for war. Succinctly put:

> Games can reinforce the image of a clean war with clean battle lines, no moral questions posed and no consideration given to the reality of taking a life. Death and bodily dismemberment are often banished from games (in much the same way images of death were excluded from images and accounts of World War II), so that war becomes more palatable as the 'mud of battle' is pasteurized. (p. 285)

Hewer (2012) also emphasized the crucial role of the media and popular culture, specifically singling out television, in shaping social representations of war and peace. Specifically, he noted the preponderance of characters populating televisual discourse, real and fictional alike, whose inclination toward violence and aggression was presented as a virtue. More problematic still (and consonant with the ideas underpinning 'peace journalism' mentioned above), he noted, is the way in which the mass media has failed to present peaceful heroic characters or role models in a similarly convincing way.

Interim Conclusion 2: Social Representations of War and Military Interventions

The research reviewed here, taken together, suggests that war and military interventions exist as social representation in societies. Representations of war and military intervention have a degree of consensuality. War is frequently associated with imagery of death and destruction and with negative

emotions and, as a social object, seems better elaborated and more consensual than peace (Sarrica, 2007), possibly because of the difficulty to define peace positively (and thus concretely) rather than negatively (and thus ambiguously). The cross-cultural similarity in representations of war is unsurprising given the fundamental way in which war affects human beings, posing a common existential threat (Wagner et al., 1996). It may also be partially due to the saturation of the mass media and popular culture with images of war, in contrast to peace, as well as the central importance of wars in social representations of history across cultures (e.g., Liu et al., 2005). Some research has problematised the role of the mass media and popular culture in legitimating representations of war as just (Hewer, 2012; Power, 2007) and in conflict escalation (Kempf, 2003; Kunczik, 1995). Overall, the strategies used by elites and in the media to represent a war and military interventions as justified (e.g., through the construction of categories; Elcheroth & Reicher, in press) seems to match the cognitive construals that are needed for individuals to support war (reviewed above) rather well.

Also evident in this strand of research is the way in which the social representational field depends on the specific historical, cultural, and political context, as exemplified in the use of myths and political narratives (Esch, 2010; Kuusisto, 1998). Elite and media discourses not only influence how a war or military intervention is represented in society, but also reflect historically and culturally grounded interests of society members (e.g., to define collective identity in distinction to other societies). Social representations of war and military intervention are malleable; representational work ensures the functionality of such representations for societies.

These assertions should not be taken as muting the cognitive polyphasia, the ambivalent potential of representations of war and military intervention. We turn next to the different positions that individuals and groups can take towards the social representational field, and discuss possible reasons for this.

Individual and Group Differences in Relation to Social Representations of War and Military Intervention

We have already seen that a social representation~~al field~~ can be characterized by cognitive polyphasia, by ambivalence and conflict. Different groups can occupy different positions toward a social representation. In addition, a social representations approach does not preclude the study of individual differences in attitudes (Van der Linden, Bizumic, Stubager, & Mellon, 2011); individuals can position themselves differently toward the social representations of war and military interventions that exist in their social environment.

To understand differences across individuals and groups in their positions toward war and military intervention, Doise’s (1992) conceptualization of ‘social anchoring’ at the psychological, ‘psychosociological’ (i.e., between the individual and social levels), and sociological levels is helpful. Social anchoring at the psychological level reflects individual positioning towards the social representation~~al field~~ in terms of personal values or ~~attitudes~~attitudes, at the psychosociological level it reflects positioning in terms of people’s orientations towards the social structure and perceptions of intergroup relations, and at the sociological level it is broader category memberships (e.g., class, age, political affiliation) which are of relevance (Spini & Doise, 1998). To illustrate: Doise, Spini, and Clémence (1999; see also Spini & Doise, 1998) investigated social representations of human rights across a variety of contexts and found that such representations are related to (or anchored in) psychological variables such as personal values, psychosociological variables such as perceptions and experiences of social conflict, and sociological variables such as memberships in political, religious, or cultural groups.

The psychological level of social anchoring

At the psychological level, attitudes toward war have often been related to more general personality traits, personal values, and ideological attitudes. Research has revealed several correlates of militaristic and antimilitaristic attitudes (for a review see McCleary & Williams, 2009). Militaristic attitudes have been found to correlate with (among other constructs) authoritarian and social-dominance ideological attitudes, power- and superiority-oriented values, security values, and lack of personal distress. In contrast, antimilitaristic (or peaceful) attitudes have been found to correlate with egalitarian and non-authoritarian ideological attitudes, equality and harmony-oriented values, universalism values, and greater empathic concern for others (e.g., Bizumic et al., 2013; Cohrs et al., 2005; Mayton, Peters, & Owens, 1999). These findings suggest that militaristic attitudes originate from concerns for security and certainty, needs for self-enhancement (status and dominance), and a lack of concern for others (Cohrs & Nelson, 2012). Antimilitaristic attitudes, conversely, seem to originate from feelings of security and certainty, needs for self-transcendence, and empathic concern for others. In addition, McCleary and Williams (2009) characterized individuals with militaristic attitudes as holding a simplistic worldview. However, a lack of clear empirical relations between militaristic attitudes and problem-solving competences, intelligence, academic grades, or political knowledge does not seem consistent with this claim (Cohrs & Nelson, 2012; Nelson & Milburn, 1999).

Largely the same findings have emerged with regard to specific military interventions. Although there are exceptions (e.g., in cases of humanitarian interventions to end genocide; see McFarland, 2012),

cognitive construals of a military intervention as justified are more likely to occur for individuals with greater concerns for security and certainty and needs for self-enhancement (status and dominance), as reflected in right-wing authoritarian and social-dominance attitudes as well as power and security values (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

The psychosociological level of social anchoring

Clearly, there is some overlap in terms of the psychological and psychosociological levels of social anchoring; variables such as right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation can potentially be considered at both levels as they are individual-level constructs, which reflect orientations towards specific forms of intergroup relations (see, e.g., Lehmiller & Schmitt, 2007). Nevertheless, what is key is that each of the three levels of social anchoring is specified and considered empirically.

Lyon and Malone's (2009) examination of U.S. public opinion towards humanitarian intervention may be interpreted in line with the psychosociological level of social anchoring. The authors found evidence of a 'hangover effect', in that there were significant correlations between perceptions of the past U.S. intervention in Bosnia and support for the (then ongoing) humanitarian intervention in Kosovo. In this respect, individual level positions towards the current conflict were shaped by the 'historical milieu', in that conceptions of the relationship between the nation-states of the U.S. and Bosnia organized individual positions towards representations of the intervention in Kosovo.

A qualitative study of Irish citizens' representations of the foreign policy orientation of Irish neutrality (O'Dwyer, Cohrs, & Lyons, 2014) may also be interpreted in line with the psychosociological level of social anchoring. This study utilized a focus group methodology, in which hypothetical conflicts were outlined and a specific form of involvement which the Irish state might take was advanced. Apparent in the analysis was the way in which the global political context, and in particular participants' views on the relationship of the Irish state to other nation-states involved in the hypothetical conflicts, shaped their views on the proposed intervention. Their ideas about the affinity or natural alliances between Ireland and other states influenced their views on foreign policy action and shaped their representations of Irish neutrality as a specific form of engagement on the international stage.

These studies emphasize the necessity of elaborating the psychosociological level of social anchoring of representations of war and military intervention. This research suggests that representations of the global political structure and the relationships between nation-states, which are necessarily shaped by

past experience of wars and military intervention, may be important for organizing individual and group positions. ~~of particular importance for organizing individual and group positions may be representations of the global political structure and the relationships between nation-states, which will necessarily have been shaped by the experience of engagement in previous wars and military interventions.~~

The sociological level of social anchoring

There is also some overlap in terms of the psychosociological and sociological levels of social anchoring; perceptions of intergroup relations or the global political structure may form the basis for group memberships, specifically in groups that are based in shared opinion rather than "objective" criteria (i.e., opinion-based groups; Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007). For example, Musgrove and McGarty (2008) showed with regard to Australians' reactions to the post-9/11 "War on Terror" that the strength of identification with the opinion-based groups of war supporters and war opponents, respectively, predicted participants' emotions (anger at terrorists, anger at government) and behavioral intentions toward the war.

In two recent studies, Cohrs and colleagues have explored a Q-methodological approach to studying opinion-based groups in the related domain of conflict (for information on Q methodology see, e.g., Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Uluğ and Cohrs (2014) examined representations of the Kurdish conflict among Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab people in Turkey across three domains: causes and issues of the conflict; relationships, processes and dynamics of the conflict; and possible solutions for the conflict. Five competing representations of the conflict were found, of which two were pro-Turkish, two were pro-Kurdish, and one was more ambivalent. Each of these representations took different positions in terms of the central issues, evaluations of the salient actors, as well as the justifications and explanations offered for the conflict. The participants' degrees of similarity to each of these representations may be interpreted as their affinity to different opinion-based groups. Similarly, Stahel and Cohrs (2014) explored representations of the Israel-Palestine conflict among Swiss residents; that is, laypeople who are 'outsiders' to the conflict. Participants were members of pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel activist groups, members of religious communities, or students and professionals with an interest in the Israel-Palestine conflict but no current involvement in activist organizations. Four competing representations were found, each of which constructed the conflict differently in terms of its causes, evaluations of the salient actors, and ideas about potential solutions to the conflict. The participants subscribed to each of these representations, corresponding to different opinion-based groups, to varying extents. Follow-up research has to examine identification with the identified opinion-based groups directly, to study the

antecedents and consequences of opinion-based group identification.

The sociological level of anchoring is implied more clearly once we consider memberships in groups that are more clearly recognized as "groups", such as conservatives or liberals (Herrmann et al., 1999), ethnic groups (Uluğ & Cohrs, 2014), or peace activists. For example, Sarrica and Contarello (2004), using word associations, examined representations of war, peace, and conflict among Italian peace-activists and non-activists. Only peace activists were found to have an independent, stable representation of peace. They represented war in more constructive terms (e.g., in terms of the means of addressing it) than non-activists, who constructed it as frightening. Differences were also found between the groups in their representations of conflict: Activists viewed it as something normal and manageable, whereas non-activists viewed it in negative terms, partially conflating the term with war, while emphasizing its more local and interpersonal signification. The authors interpreted this tendency of activists to represent these constructs in more concrete terms as a form of community coping to the threat of war. Constructing conflict and war as objective facts, which *can* be addressed to result in a well-elaborated peace, empowers and enables activists to take collective action against war and military intervention. The representation of war, peace, and conflict in this way contributes to their perceived sense of efficacy in resisting war. Thus, the process of representation is not accidental; its specific form is functional on interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup levels (Breakwell, 1993).

Integration and Conclusions

We have reviewed a large body of literature on attitudes toward war in general and specific military interventions, as well as on social representations of war and military interventions among laypeople, elites, and the media. We also addressed the question of how, and why, individuals and groups may hold different positions towards the issues of ~~social representational field related to~~ war and military intervention. Although ~~both~~ research on attitudes toward and research on social representations of war and military interventions are part of distinct theoretical approaches with different histories, nevertheless, on the issue of war and military intervention, their findings may be complementary. ~~have made important contributions, the social representations framework can subsume the concept of attitudes, acknowledging individual differences and individual-level processes while avoiding the danger of individualizing socio-political issues.~~ The final part of the chapter aims to draw implications for "constructing the defenses of peace" and to identify important questions for further research.

The social representations framework that we have described suggests that both the content and processes of the representational field need to be mapped. In terms of content, the meanings,

associations, images, and construals related to war and military intervention need to be examined in sites where social knowledge is elaborated, such as (but not limited to) the representations of lay people as well as media and elite discourse. In terms of processes, Doise's (1992) conception of social anchoring at the psychological, psychosociological, and sociological levels presents a possibility to unify disparate lines of research to build a holistic view of how it is that individuals and groups orient themselves differently towards the representational field of war and military intervention. Simultaneously considering the dimensions of content and process is key, and furthermore is the need to attend to the ways in which these dimensions interact. This dual focus on the content and processes of representation, at multiple levels of analysis, is one way in which drawing false causal implications may be avoided.

Implications for "Constructing the Defenses of Peace"

The empirical research presented in this chapter suggests three different strategies to "construct the defenses of peace": (1) changing ~~or adding to the~~ social representations of ~~al field regarding~~ war and military intervention on the societal level; (2) identifying and giving voice to alternative positions toward the social representations (i.e., different opinion-based groups), in particular non-dominant ones; and (3) working with individuals, in terms of value education, peace education/education for peace etc.

The first strategy takes as its starting point the assumption that social change is achieved through a change in social representations~~al change~~. This process can be brought about by social influence, collective action, or indeed by scientific or technological developments which will affect the content and processes of social representation. The role of the media in ~~social representational change~~this process is crucial. Depictions of war which legitimize support for war, by foregrounding stories of personal heroism and censoring the materiality of war, need to be countered by alternative representations of peace.

Alternative representations may be central to the facilitation of social change (Gillespie, 2008), i.e. to~~.~~ ~~They~~ promote 'the possibility of difference' (Glăveanu, 2009), from which resistance is possible. To illustrate, young Irish citizens' representations of elite practice of foreign policy as ambivalent and pragmatic opened up a space for them to criticise Irish foreign policy and offer alternatives (O'Dwyer et al., 2014). This further highlights the importance of meta-representational processes (e.g., what we think others think) for social change (Elcheroth et al., 2011). A key consideration should then be the way in which alternative representations, which may resist or counter hegemonic representations of war and military intervention (such that war is inevitable or necessary), may best be promoted (see also Cohrs et al,. 2014, for a similar point in relation to representations of conflict).

Research presented in this chapter has suggested that, in contrast to war, laypeople do not have a solid or stable conceptualization of peace~~, in contrast to war~~. A growing attention to and practice of peace journalism could offer a solution in this respect (see, e.g., Kempf, 2012). However, given the ideological functioning of media representations of war, which may work to legitimate support for ‘perpetual war’ (Power, 2007), it is clear that this will not be an easy task. In this respect, social media may represent a useful space for citizen journalists, activists, whistleblowers, and other interested parties to offer alternative perspectives and narrative on issues related to war and peace, to a lesser extent refracted through the objectives of dominant groups and ideologies.

An additional point that needs to be considered at the societal level is that some beliefs toward war or military intervention (which might be supportive of war) may be taken for granted in a particular society or culture. Such beliefs are impossible to challenge from within society and can only be changed through comparisons with other contexts or historical epochs. For example, a close look at peaceful societies might help to identify possibilities for social representational change (Bonta, 1996).

The second strategy, at the level of opinion-based groups, could be seen as fostering pluralism and democracy from a deliberative democracy framework (e.g., Chambers, 2003). Because of the ideological function of media, many alternative positions toward social representations of war and military that exist in society may be marginalized or may not be known widely. Giving voice to such marginalized positions would increase possibilities for people to identify with opinion-based ~~groups~~groups that match their own orientations toward a war or military intervention and thus can represent their position. Researchers have a particular responsibility here. Instead of focusing only on the mainstream and on “the average citizen”, looking out for “untypical” cases using qualitative research is important. The same holds for journalists. Peace journalism has been defined as “when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report, and how to report them – which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). To achieve this, journalists could, for example, seek out to report on the positions of various civil-society activities that document alternatives to war.

Strategies at the individual level would be the common intervention strategies related to education. For example in school contexts, predispositions that make people prone to support war in general could be addressed through value education, peace education, or trainings in conflict resolution competences (e.g., Salomon & Cairns, 2010). Concerning specific wars, disseminating information about the war (e.g., pointing out negative consequences, as well as the availability of alternatives etc.; see above) may also

have the potential to change representations of war, or at least to intensify war-critical attitudes. However, Cohrs and Moschner (2002a) showed with regard to attitudes toward the 1999 Kosovo intervention that general political knowledge as well as knowledge of anti-war information was related to lesser support for the intervention only for those participants who were predisposed to be critical of war due to their ideological and value orientations. Kowalewski (1994) even found that teaching empirical facts from peace research reduced militaristic attitudes in some students, but led to *even more* militaristic attitudes in individuals with military experience. These findings may suggest that information is assimilated into existing representations of war and military interventions, which in turn ~~may be~~are influenced socially.

Directions for Further Research

The research presented in this chapter leaves open a number of questions ~~which~~ that could be explored in future research. These questions coalesce around (1) examining the ideological and rhetorical functioning of social representations of war and military intervention; (2) exploring cross-cultural differences; (3) investigating how change in militaristic attitudes might be facilitated; and (4) enquiring into the capacity of laypeople to resist representations of war and military intervention as positive or inevitable. Future research might address each of these issues separately, but could more usefully address each using a social representations approach to the study of war and military intervention. What is surely essential is that researchers treat the issues under study critically. Like Gibson (2011), we agree that the issue of how militaristic attitudes and representations become consensual, and how military institutions and government policies bolster them, must be ~~attended to~~addressed. As ~~S~~social psychologists, our research questions and methods should be chosen deliberately to avoid giving the erroneous impression that we are ~~not~~ disinterested actors in relation to these issues. ~~Thus, our research questions and methods should be chosen deliberately to avoid giving this erroneous impression~~.

In relation to the first priority, research should focus on what particular social representations of war and military intervention *do* for specific individuals and groups. Analysis of political and elite discourse foregrounding this strategic dimension would be useful in this respect. Alternatively, following other work (Gibson, 2012; O'Dwyer et al., 2014), research could examine how support or opposition toward war is rhetorically accomplished in a wide range of contexts. By investigating and deconstructing the arguments and strategies which are effective in creating support, consent, or opposition towards war in a variety of contexts, the possibility of resisting such strategies could potentially be highlighted.

In relation to the second point, such investigations could be ~~done across~~carried out in different cultural

contexts. A cross-cultural research design would allow ~~examining~~ an examination of the way in whichhow ~~how the~~ political culture, or ~~historically shaped~~ social ~~representational~~representations ~~field related to~~ of war and military intervention, are~~is~~ used or can be used in arguing for support for or opposition to war (e.g., in terms of degree of militarization or historical experience of war; Van der Linden et al., 2011).

Addressing the third suggested priority, research could investigate the influence of education on militaristic attitudes. In addition, it could address social influence processes, focusing on how minority groups such as pacifist organisations create or fail to create attitude or representational change in relation to war and military intervention.

In relation to the fourth point, research could address how and under what conditions individuals and groups feel efficacious and are able to resist legitimating representations of war and military intervention. One way of considering these issues would be to extend a line of research focusing on how peace activists represent war, military intervention, and peace and what alternative representations they offer (e.g., Sarrica & Contarello, 2004). Alternative, qualitative methods in addition to the analysis of word-association data would offer a more detailed analysis of these issues. Furthermore, such analyses would possess the potential of creating insight into how interventions might be developed to facilitate the creation of such alternative representations, for example in educational settings.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a large body of research which has considered representations of war and military intervention. We have argued that war and military interventions need to be considered as social objects which are (1) elaborated by individuals and groups; (2) possess context and historically-specific meanings, and (3) are anchored at psychological, psychosociological and sociological levels. Further, we propose that further research in this field needs to take such a perspective, considering the societal, group and individual levels of analysis simultaneously.

In this sense, we feel that the adoption of such a perspective offers the potential of critical insight into how social change might occur, by influencing individual attitudes through educational initiatives, by giving voice to opinion-based groups, or by shaping media discourse to offer representational alternatives. We hope that these insights can contribute to psychologically informed efforts to prevent war and promote peace and social justice.

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- I think in general it's quite well written and summarized and categorized the literature. I don't know the book or the target audience of this book, but I would personally reduce the first section on individual attitudes and focus a bit more on future direction and the synthesis. I have a few rather general comments:

- Intervention vs war
    - You do mention the difference and clearly they might be differently represented. Perhaps, it could be nice to use a few examples of real life anti/pro-war campaigns (that succeeded and failed) and field studies to illustrate how they are constructed as different social objects. The way the 'war on terror' or 'Gulf War' is represented and the seemingly internationally consensual war (or intervention) on the ISIS represented do constitute interesting comparisons.

- You do argue that media coverage should contribute to de-escalation of the conflict and alternatives to war should be voiced. Third parties (e.g. the media) should be respectful to all sides in the conflict as well. But my question as an individual is that how is this even possible? I ask this question not only as someone researching on the Kurdish conflict, but as someone who is watching the media and most recently appalled by the way the Israel attack on Gaza was portrayed in the media. I do not believe an objective journalism is possible, if at all necessary. Isn't giving voice to an oppressor and treating them 'equally' on a moral scale also legitimizing oppression and justifying their cause? Similarly, asking about alternatives to war to an aggressor is like asking more convenient ways of oppression, not necessarily challenging the structural lack of peace.

- In research, the same thing is easily done when we talk about conflict 'parties' as such. I would also argue how certain research discourses are no different from media discourses on war and conflict. I would also point out more directly to the dangers of individualizing accounts of 'war attitudes'.

- I think it would be worth talking a little bit more about the cognitive polyphasia which results from the tension between competing identity claims and a general humanistic attitude and how it can help make better sense of certain ambiguities in research, too.

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