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Authoritarianism and the Psychology of War: Exploring Personality Traits in the Legitimation of Military Conflict

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Abstract

This study examines the interplay between authoritarianism, masculinity-related violence, and generalized war support, drawing upon a population survey conducted in the UK in 2023. The analysis focuses on how authoritarian submission, radicalization, political ideology, and particularly norms of masculinity influence attitudes towards military conflict. Emphasizing the significant role of masculinity-related violence, the research highlights how this factor robustly predicts support for war, underlining the gendered nature of militaristic attitudes and the profound impact of aggressive gender norms on support for military engagements. The findings reveal that authoritarian submission is strongly associated with war support, consistent both with Adorno et al.'s (1950) theory of the authoritarian personality and with psychosocial perspectives which draw on Klein's object relations theory (Dawson, 1994). This study expands upon traditional views by integrating the psychological dimension of sadism as an influential factor in militaristic attitudes. Although not the primary focus, sadism emerges as a nuanced trait that complements aggressive masculinity in predicting war support. Radical political ideologies and right-leaning political alignments also significantly predict increased support for war, underscoring the alignment between conservative ideologies and militaristic attitudes. The study nuances the impact of age and gender, highlighting that men and older individuals are more likely to support war, mediated through these identified psychological and ideological factors. By exploring these complex relationships, the study contributes towards understanding the factors that drive public support for military actions, suggesting that both gender norms and personality traits like sadism play crucial roles in shaping militaristic attitudes.

Keywords

authoritarianism; gender norms; generalized war support; masculinity-related violence; political ideology; psychological predictors of war; radicalization; sadism; social dominance orientation

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1. Introduction

In a world increasingly marked by violent conflicts and their escalations, understanding the psychological foundations that underpin the legitimization of war is crucial. Current events, such as the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the recurrent violent confrontations in Gaza, pose significant challenges to the international community. These conflicts are often portrayed as inevitable responses to external threats or national interests, but may actually reflect a more intricate picture where the legitimization of war is a complex process shaped by the interplay of international dynamics, societal relations, cultural narratives, and individual psychological dispositions (Hochschild, 2016).

The role of leaders like Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu, groups such as Hamas, and the actions of individual soldiers who commit atrocities all hint at deeper psychological patterns and societal values. Public attitudes towards war, shaped by conspiracy ideologies and exposure to acts of cruelty, further complicate the landscape of decision-making to engage in and continue military conflict. It becomes evident that the decisions leading to war are not merely the effect of the actions or thoughts of a single actor but are deeply embedded in the collective thinking patterns and attitudes of sections of the population (Dawson, 1994; Navot & Goldshmidt, 2025).

While much of the existing literature on war focuses on strategic interests, historical grievances, and geopolitical power struggles, comparatively less attention has been given to the psychological and ideological underpinnings of war support within populations. However, recent research on authoritarianism, social dominance, and rigid masculinity norms suggests that these individual-level dispositions play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward military aggression. Importantly, while attitudes toward war are not equivalent to direct violent behavior, psychological research consistently shows that attitudes influence decision-making, shape political preferences, and can serve as a precursor to action. Understanding the psychological foundations of war support is therefore essential, as widespread militaristic attitudes can create a social climate in which war is more easily justified, accepted, or even demanded.

This article will explore the intricate relationship between individual psychological traits and attitudes towards war. Situated within the tradition of authoritarianism research, we draw on a quantitative survey conducted in the UK, analyzing how authoritarian tendencies and dark personality traits like psychopathy correlate with the endorsement of military actions. Our study is based on survey data, allowing us to systematically assess the extent to which these psychological and ideological orientations predict war support in a democratic society.

Beyond traditional authoritarianism frameworks, we also investigate the role of masculinity-related violence and hierarchical dominance orientations in shaping war support. Specifically, we analyze whether rigid gender norms, social dominance orientation (SDO), and radicalization tendencies contribute independently to militaristic attitudes. Furthermore, we examine the extent to which personality traits such as sadism play a role in legitimizing aggression, potentially extending our understanding of how psychological structures interact with ideological worldviews to justify war.

By integrating these dimensions into a single analytical model, our study provides a systematic, data-driven examination of the psychological factors underpinning war support. Given that our research is based on a large-scale quantitative analysis of survey data, we offer an empirical test of theoretical assumptions that have

often been discussed in qualitative and historical studies but rarely examined with statistical rigor. Importantly, our focus on the UK context highlights that such hierarchical and militaristic worldviews are not confined to autocratic regimes but can also persist in democratic societies. While we hold that other elements are also vital to understanding war support, for example, the circulation of cultural narratives in a society and its subcultures (Hochschild, 2016; Sawicka, 2024), we contend that understanding these dynamics is not only key to explaining contemporary conflicts but also to identifying societal vulnerabilities that could make future conflicts more likely.

The findings may offer policy-relevant insights for democratic societies, particularly in the context of civic education and conflict prevention. By highlighting psychological and ideological dispositions that correlate with public support for war, the study draws attention to often overlooked factors in current approaches to encountering military conflict. Recognizing these latent structures could inform strategies aimed at reducing societal susceptibility to militaristic narratives.

2. State of the Art

Research has consistently shown that psychological dispositions such as authoritarianism and SDO significantly impact attitudes towards conflict and warfare. Studies like those by McFarland (2005) and Blumberg et al. (2017) highlight how these traits predict support for aggressive policies, influenced by heightened threat perceptions and diminished humanitarian concerns. Similarly, Gulevich and Nevruev (2020) and Gulevich et al. (2023) find that dark personality traits predict strong support for military actions, including violence against civilians.

Lindén et al. (2019) extend this discussion by exploring the role of a latent core of dark traits—comprising Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, SDO, and right-wing authoritarianism—in predicting unethical attitudes and behaviors among peacekeepers. Their findings reveal that this dark core is significantly associated with positive attitudes toward unethical behaviors both within the warzone and within the military organization itself. This relationship underscores the impact of malevolent personality traits on military ethics, suggesting that identifying high-scoring individuals on these traits could help mitigate unethical behaviors in military contexts. Conversely, empathy and prosocial orientations significantly influence attitudes towards peace. Research by Bizumic et al. (2013), Eryilmaz (2014), and Için (2022) shows that higher levels of empathy and prosocial personality traits are linked with a stronger preference for peace and less support for war, highlighting the beneficial impacts of these traits on fostering peace-oriented attitudes.

The impact of personality on foreign policy attitudes is further evidenced in studies by Schoen (2007) and Zhai (2024), which discuss how individual and collective psychological factors such as the big five personality traits, populism, and collective narcissism shape preferences for international cooperation or military engagement.

Finally, ideological and belief systems are crucial in influencing militaristic attitudes. Research by Van Hiel et al. (2020) and Wollast et al. (2024) explores how right-wing ideological attitudes and collective narcissism contribute to aggressive tendencies and support for military actions, emphasizing the role of sociopolitical beliefs in shaping attitudes toward war and peace.

Cultural and national identity also play pivotal roles in shaping war legitimization. Studies by Barnes et al. (2014) and Li et al. (2022) demonstrate how national identity elements like honor and attachment influence responses to national threats and conflict resolution strategies, with strong national identification leading to both defensive and offensive military strategies.

3. Authoritarianism and Related Concepts for Explaining Support for War

This article contributes to the literature by integrating psychological dispositions (e.g., dark traits and empathy), ideological attitudes (e.g., authoritarian submission and social dominance), and authoritarian gender norms—particularly masculinity-related violence—into a unified explanatory model. We aim to assess their relative influence on support for war in a democratic context and to examine how these factors interact. Rather than viewing war support solely through the lens of rational decision-making or geopolitical interests, we emphasize the psychological and ideological mechanisms that shape individuals' attitudes toward military conflict. These include authoritarian tendencies, SDO, conspiracy mentality, dark personality traits, and rigid masculinity norms. The following sections outline the theoretical foundations of our model, which guide the operationalization of constructs and structure our empirical approach. Rather than viewing war support solely through the lens of rational decision-making or geopolitical interests, we emphasize the psychological and ideological mechanisms that drive individuals' attitudes toward military conflict. These perspectives help us understand how deep-seated dispositions—such as authoritarian tendencies, SDO, conspiracy mentality, and dark personality traits—contribute to the justification of war. By systematically integrating these theoretical insights, we establish a clear basis for the operationalization of key constructs in our analysis, ensuring that our empirical approach remains closely aligned with the theoretical foundations.

Public discussions about the causes of war often focus on the reasons cited by the warring parties themselves—historical grievances, geopolitical tensions, cultural or religious differences, and struggles over resources like oil or water. These explanations usually appear rational and serve to legitimize warlike actions, making conflict resolution more difficult since no side sees itself as wrong. Less frequently discussed are the individual or psychological causes of war, such as patterns of thought or character traits that make violence acceptable or even appealing. Rarely do we ask why individuals come to see others as enemies, or how people can accept mass death—or even commit atrocities with enthusiasm—against former neighbors or friends. It's often said that anyone can become a killer under the right conditions. Books like *Lord of the Flies* and Milgram's famous experiment suggest that cruelty can emerge when social constraints break down or authority demands it. But is everyone equally prone to such behavior? Or are certain individuals, due to specific psychological structures, more inclined to support or engage in violence, and when such people gain political power, do they pose a greater threat to humanity's survival?

This latter statement is central to the theory of the authoritarian personality, which focuses on the contemptible character (Adorno et al., 1950; Horkheimer, 1936; Reich, 1933). The theory draws on Freud's concept of the "narcissism of small differences," which describes how neighboring or otherwise similar communities often project aggression onto minor symbolic distinctions in order to stabilize internal cohesion (Freud, 1930). In this framework, displaced hostility toward outgroups becomes a socially functional—albeit destructive—mechanism for identity formation and control.

Building on the concept of the narcissism of small differences, the theory of the authoritarian personality links authoritarianism with anti-democratic views, prejudice, and discrimination. It also explores forms of religiosity that can either support or inhibit fascist, ethnocentric, and anti-Semitic attitudes (Adorno et al., 1950). These attitudes are considered prerequisites for war. The resulting fascism scale measures hostility and cynicism, exemplified by the belief: "There will always be wars and conflicts, people are just like that" (Adorno, 1999, p. 43). Unlike Freud, who emphasized individual psychological issues, Adorno et al. (1950) argued that unconscious childhood conflicts also foster fascist and ethnocentric attitudes. Hatred toward parental authority, suppressed in childhood, is later displaced onto marginalized or weaker groups (Rippl et al., 2000).

The authoritarian personality includes traits such as power orientation, sadomasochism, aggression toward the weak, punishment desires, intellectual hostility, and moral dualism. Described as "ego-weak," such individuals use projection and scapegoating to stabilize their self-esteem. They also tend to identify with authoritarian leaders, submitting while also deriving strength from them. Research consistently confirms a strong link between authoritarian character structures, fascist ideology, anti-Semitism, and support for war (Bothwell & Kennison, 2004; Crowson et al., 2005; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Swami et al., 2012).

Researchers on authoritarianism during and after the Nazi era traced the roots of the authoritarian personality to the Weimar-era educational ideals, marked by physical punishment and emotional distance from a dominant father figure. Rather than rebelling against their parents, individuals direct aggression toward strangers and others perceived as weaker (Rippl et al., 2000). Recent studies on youth violence support this view, identifying links between emotional neglect, harsh punishment, overprotection, and controlling parenting with the development of narcissistic, Machiavellian, and psychopathic traits—factors that increase readiness for violence (Yendell et al., 2022). These traits often stem from detrimental parenting practices.

A less-cited but significant contribution is Henry Dicks' (1972) *Licensed Mass Murder: A Socio-Psychological Study of Some SS Killers*, which found that many Waffen-SS members exhibited narcissistic and paranoid personality disorders. Yet, Dicks emphasized that personality alone wasn't to blame. It was the societal crisis of the Weimar Republic and the totalitarian conditions under Nazism that triggered regressive, antisocial behavior in otherwise seemingly normal individuals. He argued that a combination of mass regression and severe personality disorders led to SS atrocities. While this study is foundational in authoritarianism research, it is more widely cited in the Anglo-American world.

Another perspective comes from the concept of conspiracy mentality (Imhoff & Decker, 2013), which Decker et al. (2020) describe as part of an authoritarian syndrome, specifically its "projectivity" dimension. This mentality assumes that secretive, malevolent elites control society. It simplifies complex societal problems, allowing authoritarian aggression toward identifiable out-groups (Decker et al., 2018). Notably, conspiracy beliefs do not protect a weak ego but reshape reality to fit personal desires. This mindset is linked with democratic dissatisfaction, right-wing extremism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, far-right voting, religious fundamentalism, and belief in a punitive God, revealing structural parallels with authoritarianism.

An important aspect related to the war in Ukraine is the link between male sexuality and violence. This aligns with Klaus Theweleit's (2019) *Male Fantasies*, a psychoanalytic classic in authoritarianism research. Originally

published in the 1970s, the two-volume work analyzes the psychological and social dynamics of the Weimar Republic, especially after World War I. Theweleit focuses on radical right-wing paramilitary groups like the Freikorps, examining their letters and memoirs to explore how masculinity, violence, misogyny, and political extremism were intertwined.

A central concept is the "male body," which Theweleit presents as shaped by violence and control—an instrument of domination used to defeat perceived enemies and impose political visions. His analysis shows how fantasies of masculinity are tied to authoritarian ideologies and structures of power.

Other psychodynamic work also links masculinity with support for war. In the British context, Graham Dawson's (1994) *Soldier Heroes* draws on Melanie Klein's object relations theory to show how cultural narratives of heroism deal with colonial guilt through the projection of violence onto colonial subjects and foreign "others." This framework remains relevant today (Redman, 2024), suggesting that masculinity and militarism are deeply embedded in national imaginaries.

Another influential concept in extremism and prejudice research closely tied to the authoritarian personality theory is SDO. It measures individual support for group-based hierarchies and social inequality (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDO reflects a preference for unequal, hierarchical relations between social groups and varies across individuals (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 61). It stems from social dominance theory, which posits that stable societies maintain group-based hierarchies benefiting dominant groups. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) distinguish three systems of hierarchy: age (adults over children), gender (men over women), and arbitrarily set groups (culturally defined).

SDO has consistently shown high explanatory power for prejudice and political attitudes aimed at reinforcing social hierarchies (e.g., Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; Dru, 2007; Newman et al., 2014; Uenal, 2016). It is also linked to support for political violence and the dehumanization of victims (Henry et al., 2005; Jackson & Gaertner, 2010; McFarland, 2005; Pratto et al., 1994).

To operationalize our theoretical framework, we include several specific indicators that reflect the constructs outlined. In addition to essential socio-demographic variables and political attitude, these factors help control for structural influences on generalized war support. Political ideology (left–right orientation) is particularly relevant, as previous research consistently links right-wing political orientations to stronger support for military interventions.

Beyond foundational controls, generalized war support refers to individuals' broad approval of military action, endorsement of military values, and belief in war as a justified conflict resolution tool. This construct integrates elements of the authoritarian syndrome, where hierarchical worldviews, punitive attitudes, and emotional tendencies legitimize military aggression:

- Childhood maltreatment and emotional support reflect early socialization, shaping views on hierarchy and aggression. Narratives justifying war often draw on childhood experiences of discipline and lack of warmth. In contrast, greater emotional support in childhood may reduce authoritarian, militaristic attitudes.

- Support for violence and radicalization directly measures acceptance of aggression as legitimate, crucial to war support. Those endorsing violence or radical change are more likely to legitimize military interventions. Militarism also links closely with hyper-masculine norms valorizing strength, dominance, and force.
- SDO reflects a preference for group-based hierarchies, often framing conflicts as battles between "superior" and "inferior" groups. High SDO predicts seeing war as necessary to maintain or expand dominance.
- Conspiracy mentality often fuels authoritarian aggression, framing war as a defense against hidden threats. Those high in conspiracy beliefs are more susceptible to pro-war propaganda stressing existential dangers.
- Building on Adorno et al. (1950) and Altemeyer (1981, 1996), we examine authoritarian aggression (punitive war justification), submission (deference to military authority), and conventionalism (support through nationalism/traditionalism). This tripartite model offers clearer measurement than the original fascism scale.
- Dark tetrad traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism) also shape war support. Psychopathy and sadism reflect detachment and acceptance of harm, while narcissism and Machiavellianism link to nationalistic or dominance motives.
- Empathy functions as a counterforce, correlating with peace-oriented attitudes. Empathy disrupts dehumanization processes central to war propaganda, reducing support for aggression.

Our hierarchical regression framework combines these factors, offering a theoretically grounded and empirically robust method for identifying psychological and ideological drivers of war support in democratic contexts. We do not aim to diagnose individuals but to explain statistical variance in war support, recognizing this as one perspective among many for understanding militaristic attitudes.

Our approach focuses on psychological and ideological dispositions within a general population sample. We do not make any clinical or diagnostic claims, nor do we aim to establish a fixed psychological profile of individuals prone to violence. Rather, we examine to what extent specific attitudinal and personality-related factors statistically explain variance in support for war, acknowledging that this represents only one perspective among several possible approaches to understanding militaristic attitudes.

4. Method and Measures

4.1. Sample and Survey

The survey, entitled Political Attitudes, Violence, and Extremism in the UK (PAVEX-UK 2023), was conducted between February and March 2023 among a sample of 1,009 respondents in the UK, aged 15 to 74 years. The sample included 53.9% women and 46.1% men, ensuring a balanced gender distribution. In terms of educational background, 47.7% had a low level of education, 32.7% a middle level, and 19.6% a high level, based on official statistical classifications. The data were collected through an online access panel provided by Bilendi, with quotas set for age, gender, and education to achieve a representative sample of the UK population. Participants are pre-registered panel members who take part voluntarily and receive incentives for their participation.

Additionally, the survey covered a broad range of topics beyond war support, including political attitudes, ideological orientations, and personality traits. The wording of both the dependent and independent variables used in this study can be found in the Supplementary File.

4.2. Factor Analysis of War-Related Attitudes and the Dependent Variable

To investigate the underlying structure of attitudes toward war, we conducted a principal axis factor analysis with oblimin rotation on a set of statements regarding war and military conflict. The survey included various items measuring different aspects of war support, ranging from general attitudes toward war as a means of conflict resolution to opinions on military values, nuclear deterrence, and the ethical justification of war. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements such as "I believe that war is necessary to resolve conflicts," "war can be ethically justified to protect freedom and human rights," "in my opinion, nuclear weapons are useful for securing peace," "I think arms deliveries to Ukraine are morally justified," and "the UK should spend less money on armaments."

Before conducting the factor analysis, we examined the response distributions for all included items. The results indicate that attitudes toward war and military action vary considerably. While 67.8% of respondents believe that war is inevitable, only 19.1% agree that war is necessary to resolve conflicts. At the same time, 66.1% stated that they would never support a war, while 58% sympathized with military values. The endorsement of specific military actions also differed; 68.7% supported arms deliveries to Ukraine, but only 37.5% believed that nuclear weapons are useful for securing peace. These distributions highlight a complex attitudinal landscape in which some aspects of war support are widely accepted while others remain highly contested (Figure 1).
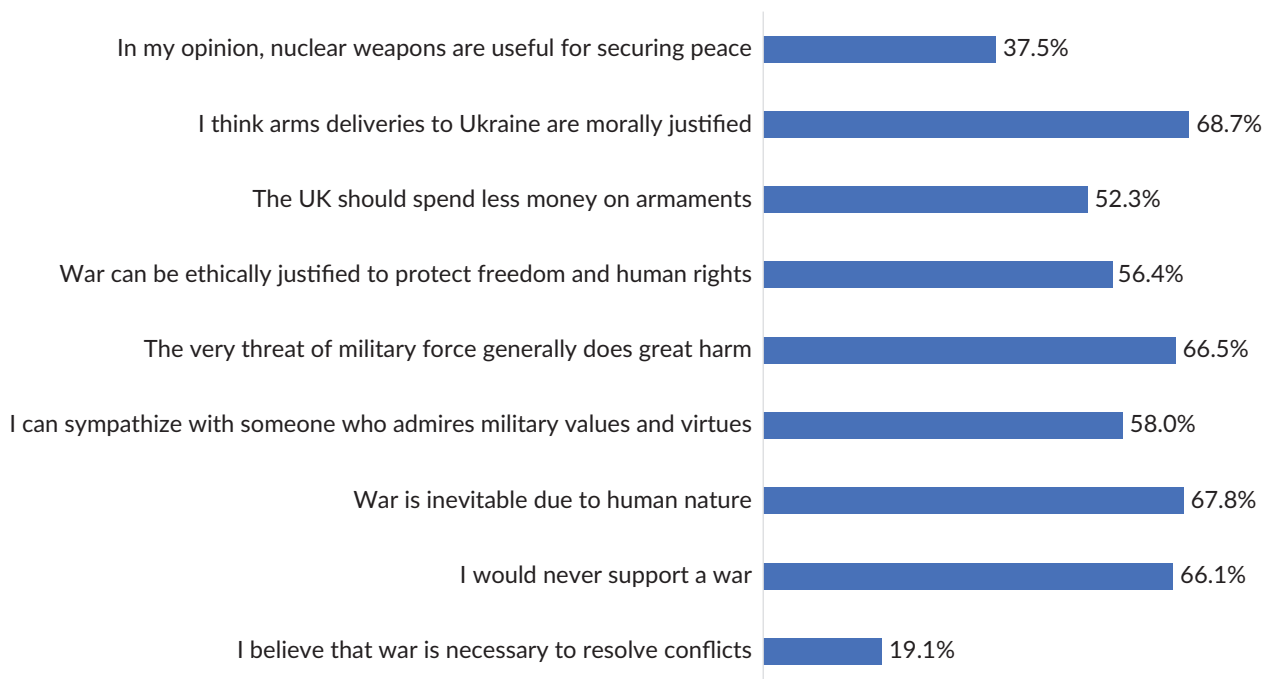

Figure 1. Agreement with statements on war, military force, and armament. Source: PAVEX-UK 2023; own calculations based on survey data, $n = 1{,}009$.

To extract a latent construct that captures the underlying structure of these attitudes, we conducted a principal axis factor analysis rather than a principal component analysis. This choice was made because factor analysis identifies shared variance between variables, rather than simply summarizing observed item responses. Given that war-related attitudes are likely influenced by deeper ideological and psychological dispositions, a factor-based approach allows for a more precise identification of a latent militaristic orientation. The use of oblimin rotation was justified because it allows factors to correlate, which aligns with theoretical expectations that different components of war-related attitudes may be interconnected rather than strictly independent.

Our initial assumption was that war-related attitudes would be multidimensional, potentially distinguishing between a general militaristic orientation, which reflects an endorsement of military values, and situational war justification, which involves the approval of specific conflicts under particular conditions. This assumption was based on prior research suggesting that militarism and support for specific wars may have distinct psychological foundations. However, the factor analysis revealed a single dominant factor, contradicting this expectation. Items that did not reach a loading threshold of 0.5 were excluded from the final model. The retained items all loaded strongly onto a single factor, which suggests that attitudes toward war and military values coalesce into a unified construct, rather than dividing into distinct ideological dimensions.

The final extracted factor includes agreement with statements such as "I believe that war is necessary to resolve conflicts" (loading = 0.639), "war can be ethically justified to protect freedom and human rights" (loading = 0.638), "in my opinion, nuclear weapons are useful for securing peace" (loading = 0.631), and "I can sympathize with someone who admires military values and virtues" (loading = 0.516). The inclusion of sympathy for military values, despite having a comparatively lower loading, remains justified as it exceeds the 0.5 threshold and conceptually aligns with the overarching construct of generalized war support.. Notably, some theoretically expected items, such as the perceived inevitability of war, rejection of war, military expenditure, and support for arms deliveries, did not form part of the extracted factor. Their lower loadings suggest that they do not tap into a single latent construct but rather measure context-dependent beliefs that may be shaped by external events, moral considerations, or political framing rather than stable ideological orientations.

Given these findings, we constructed an index variable based on the regression scores derived from the factor analysis. This index represents the construct we refer to as generalized war support, which integrates both the endorsement of military values and the justification of war in different contexts. This factor-based score serves as the dependent variable in the subsequent regression analyses, allowing us to examine its psychological and ideological predictors.

While it could theoretically be interesting to analyze some of the excluded items separately, conducting multiple regressions on individual items would introduce several methodological problems. First, it would theoretically fragment the analysis, as isolated items lack the coherence of an overarching latent construct. Second, it would increase the risk of overinterpretation, since individual responses are more susceptible to temporary external influences compared to latent ideological orientations. Finally, it would compromise structural validity, as factor analysis identified only one coherent dimension, making it methodologically inconsistent to treat the excluded items as if they represented distinct psychological constructs.

Rather than conducting separate regressions on individual war-related items, our approach ensures greater coherence in capturing generalized war support, a construct that reflects both the endorsement of military values and the justification of war in different contexts. By focusing on this unified measure, the subsequent regression analyses allow for a more theoretically meaningful and statistically robust examination of the psychological and ideological determinants of war support.

4.3. Assessing the Predictors of Generalized War Support

To test our theoretical assumptions, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis using data from a representative general population survey. The analysis includes socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, and political orientation) as well as a series of validated indices capturing psychological dispositions (e.g., sadism and empathy), ideological orientations (e.g., authoritarian submission, conspiracy mentality, and social dominance), and gender-related norms (e.g., masculinity-related violence). These indicators were introduced stepwise to evaluate their relative contribution to explaining generalized war support. Details on the operationalization, scale construction, and reliability are provided in the following sections and in the Supplementary File. Rather than assuming a deterministic pathway from childhood experiences to war support, we employ hierarchical multiple regression analysis to assess which factors exert independent effects on generalized war support and how their relative explanatory power shifts when additional variables are introduced.

Childhood maltreatment and emotional support capture early socialization into authoritarian structures, which may predispose individuals to hierarchical and punitive worldviews. If childhood maltreatment significantly predicts war support, this suggests that early adversity fosters authoritarian dispositions. However, this does not imply a deterministic pathway—many individuals with difficult childhoods do not develop authoritarian attitudes. By including childhood experiences in the first step of the regression model, we can test whether their predictive power remains robust when ideological and personality factors are added. If their effect size decreases, this may indicate that ideological worldviews account for part of the variance originally explained by childhood experiences, though no direct causal mechanism can be inferred.

Support for violence and radicalization measures the general acceptance of aggressive strategies, both in interpersonal contexts and as a means of political change. If these factors remain significant even after controlling for ideological and personality traits, this suggests that support for war is not purely driven by abstract beliefs but also by a deeper disposition toward aggression.

SDO, as a measure of intergroup hierarchy preferences, allows us to test whether generalized war support is primarily a function of hierarchical worldviews rather than specific ideological stances. If the effect of SDO persists even after accounting for authoritarian personality traits, this would indicate that beliefs about social hierarchy operate as a distinct explanatory factor in war legitimization.

Conspiracy mentality plays a role in war support by fostering perceptions of external threats and hidden manipulations. We expect conspiracy beliefs to correlate positively with generalized war support. However, if this effect weakens or reverses when authoritarian submission is introduced, this would suggest that conspiratorial thinking primarily serves as a cognitive reinforcement mechanism within authoritarian structures rather than an independent driver of militarism.

Authoritarian aggression, submission, and conventionalism capture the cognitive and emotional architecture of authoritarianism, which provides a direct ideological foundation for generalized war support. If these variables explain a substantial portion of variance when introduced, this suggests that hierarchical and punitive worldviews are central to war legitimization—potentially even more so than childhood adversity or general support for violence.

Dark tetrad traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism) allow us to assess whether personality factors contribute to war support beyond ideological frameworks. If, for example, sadism remains significant even after controlling for authoritarian beliefs, this suggests that the justification of war is not only a function of ideology but also of individual-level emotional dispositions toward cruelty and domination.

Empathy and understanding serve as a counterbalance to authoritarian dispositions and function as a potential protective factor. If its effect is weak in early regression stages but strengthens once ideological and personality traits are introduced, this would indicate that empathy does not directly prevent war support but serves as a mitigating force when authoritarian cognitive patterns are activated.

Our hierarchical multiple regression approach allows us to systematically assess which explanatory factors remain significant when additional theoretical dimensions are introduced. Rather than testing direct causal sequences, this method provides insights into the relative explanatory power of different predictors and whether some variables account for variance initially attributed to others. If early-life experiences initially appear to be strong predictors of war support but their effects weaken when ideological and personality-level factors are introduced, this suggests that authoritarian attitudes might mediate part of this relationship, though formal mediation analyses would be required to confirm this. Similarly, if masculinity-related violence remains a strong predictor despite the inclusion of ideological variables, this would indicate that gender norms operate independently as a structuring force in war support rather than being fully explained by authoritarian dispositions.

This multi-level approach not only clarifies the psychological mechanisms behind war legitimization but also reveals the relative explanatory power of different dimensions—ranging from early socialization to personality traits and ideological structures. With this selection of indicators and its specific focus, this study provides a novel empirical contribution by systematically integrating a wide range of psychological, ideological, and personality-based predictors of generalized war support. While previous research has examined authoritarianism, social dominance, or conspiracy beliefs in isolation, our approach combines these factors within a single analytical framework, allowing us to determine which of these dimensions exerts the strongest influence and how they interact.

By employing a hierarchical regression strategy, we go beyond simple correlations to test how the explanatory power of different variables shifts as new levels of analysis are introduced. This method allows us to assess whether certain factors retain their predictive power when additional theoretical perspectives are considered, or whether their influence is better explained by higher-order ideological or personality-based constructs. By explicitly integrating militarized masculinity into the authoritarianism framework, this study extends Theweleit's (2019) conceptualization of gendered authoritarianism and tests empirically whether rigid masculinity norms function independently from other authoritarian structures or

are mediated by broader hierarchical worldviews. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how gendered socialization processes shape militaristic attitudes beyond conventional ideological and personality-driven explanations.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on political psychology and conflict research by providing a comprehensive, multi-level explanation for militaristic attitudes. The findings have implications not only for understanding war legitimization in democratic societies but also for identifying psychological and ideological precursors of radicalization, authoritarianism, and support for military aggression.

5. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of War Support

To systematically assess the predictors of generalized war support, we employed a hierarchical regression analysis. In this approach, variables were introduced stepwise to examine their incremental contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Below, we describe the independent variables included in the models, grouped according to their conceptual domain, and provide a brief overview of their measurement. Detailed information on item wording, index construction, and reliability coefficients can be found in the Supplementary File.

We begin with sociodemographic variables, including age ($M = 46.01$), gender (men and women), and highest qualification (low, middle, and high educational attainment). These control variables account for potential baseline differences in war support and ensure that observed effects are not merely demographic artifacts.

To capture political ideology, we include self-placement on a left–right scale ($M = 5.56$), where higher values indicate more right-leaning attitudes. Given prior research linking right-wing ideology to militarism, we expect this variable to be a key predictor of war support.

We further integrate early-life experiences, which may shape attitudes toward aggression and hierarchy. Childhood maltreatment ($M = 1.9$, $\alpha = 0.813$) is measured using an index of three items assessing emotional and physical abuse (e.g., "people in my family said hurtful or insulting things to me" and "I was hit so badly that I had bruises or scratches"). In contrast, emotional support ($M = 3.9$, $\alpha = 0.910$) captures the extent to which respondents experienced a protective and caring upbringing (see Bernstein & Fink, 1998). These variables help examine whether adverse childhood conditions contribute to authoritarian and aggressive tendencies, which in turn might facilitate war support.

To assess aggressive and violent attitudes, we include three indices. Support of violence ($M = 1.7$, $\alpha = 0.652$) consists of two items capturing willingness to use physical force to achieve personal goals or support violent individuals (Ulbrich-Herrmann, 1995); radicalization ($M = 1.7$, $\alpha = 0.796$) measures justification for violence and lawbreaking as means for achieving societal change (Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018); and masculinity-related violence ($M = 1.7$, $\alpha = 0.725$) consists of three items reflecting traditional masculine norms endorsing violence (e.g., "a man should be prepared to use violence to defend his wife and children"). These constructs allow us to determine whether war support is rooted in broader dispositions toward interpersonal and political aggression.

Several ideological and belief-based factors are included, as they provide insight into hierarchical worldviews and cognitive styles that may influence militaristic attitudes. SDO ($M = 2.6$, $\alpha = 0.762$) is measured through

an index reflecting preferences for hierarchical social structures, with higher values indicating endorsement of inequality and group-based dominance. Conspiracy mentality ($M = 4.3$, $\alpha = 0.885$) is assessed through a three-item index capturing generalized belief in hidden, malevolent forces shaping societal and political events (Imhoff & Decker, 2013). Both constructs have been linked to authoritarian and extremist attitudes, suggesting that individuals high in these traits may be more inclined toward war support.

To account for right-wing authoritarianism, we include three core dimensions: authoritarian aggression ($M = 3.8$), which reflects punitive attitudes toward societal deviants, authoritarian submission ($M = 2.9$), measuring deference to authority figures, and authoritarian conventionalism ($M = 2.9$), which assesses adherence to traditional social norms (Beierlein et al., 2015). These dimensions have been widely associated with militaristic attitudes and legitimization of state-led violence.

In the final steps of the regression analysis, we introduce personality traits associated with the "dark" psychological profile. Four well-established constructs are considered: narcissism ($M = 2.5$, $\alpha = 0.898$), Machiavellianism ($M = 2.0$, $\alpha = 0.906$), psychopathy ($M = 2.2$, $\alpha = 0.902$; Jonason & Webster, 2010), and sadism ($M = 1.3$, $\alpha = 0.902$; O'Meara Davies et al., 2011). These indices, each based on multiple items, measure manipulative tendencies, emotional detachment, and the enjoyment of harming others—traits that have been linked to aggression and justification of violence. Additionally, empathy and understanding ($M = 3.9$, $\alpha = 0.843$) are included as a counterbalancing factor, assessing the ability to consider others' perspectives and emotional states (Davis, 1980).

By structuring the regression analysis hierarchically, we assess the independent effects of each set of predictors while observing how explanatory power evolves across models. This stepwise approach allows us to determine the extent to which psychological and ideological dispositions contribute to generalized war support, ensuring that findings are robust across multiple theoretical domains. For detailed descriptions of the items and scale properties, we refer to the Supplementary File.

The first model (Table 1) included only sociodemographic variables (age, gender, and education). Gender was the only significant predictor ($\beta = -0.292$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that men were significantly more likely to support war than women. Neither age nor education showed a significant effect, and the model explained 8.4% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.084$).

In the second step, we introduced political ideology (left–right self-placement), which emerged as a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals with more right-leaning political views were more likely to support war. The inclusion of this variable increased the model's explanatory power to $R^2 = 0.155$. However, age and education remained insignificant, while gender continued to be a strong predictor ($\beta = -0.264$, $p < 0.001$).

The third step added childhood maltreatment and emotional support during upbringing. Childhood maltreatment was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.176$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that early-life adversity contributes to later war-supporting attitudes. Emotional support, however, did not reach significance. Interestingly, political ideology remained a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the idea that ideological orientation is a key determinant of war attitudes. With these additions, the explained variance increased to $R^2 = 0.185$.

Table 1. Stepwise regression analysis predicting generalized war support (N = 1,009).

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Age	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.111 (***)	.090 (***)	.117 (***)
Gender (0 = men; 1 = women)	−.292 (***)	−.264	−.270 (***)	−.129 (***)	−.119 (***)	−.098 (***)
Highest qualification	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Political attitude (left–right	—	.269	.250 (***)	.159 (***)	.117 (***)	.100 (***)
Childhood maltreatment	—	—	.176 (***)	.110 (***)	.103 (***)	.064 (*)
Emotional support	—	—	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.056 (*)
Support of violence	—	—	—	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Radicalisation	—	—	—	.188 (***)	.161 (***)	.119 (***)
Masculinity-related violence	—	—	—	.274 (***)	.256 (***)	.244 (***)
Social dominance orientation (SDO)	—	—	—	—	.085 (**)	.060 (*)
Conspiracy mentality	—	—	—	—	−.061 (*)	−.062 (*)
Auth. aggression	—	—	—	—	n.s.	n.s
Auth. submission	—	—	—	—	.195 (***)	.178 (***)
Auth. conventionalism	—	—	—	—	n.s.	n.s.
Narcissism	—	—	—	—	—	n.s.
Machiavellism	—	—	—	—	—	n.s.
Psychopathy	—	—	—	—	—	.073 (*)
Sadism	—	—	—	—	—	.134 (***)
Empathy and understanding	—	—	—	—	—	n.s.
Corrected R^2	.084	.155	.185	.311	.358	.376
Change R^2	—	.071	.030	.126	.047	.018

Notes: Results from hierarchical regression analysis; the dependent variable is *generalized war support*; values represent standardized regression coefficients (β); significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Source: PAVEX-UK 2023, own calculations based on survey data, n = 1,009; n.s. = not significant.

The fourth step incorporated support for violence, radicalization, and masculinity-related violence. Radicalization significantly predicted war support (β = 0.188, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals with extremist tendencies are more likely to favor military interventions. Masculinity-related violence had an even stronger effect (β = 0.274, $p < 0.001$), confirming the theoretical assumption that aggressive masculinity norms are closely linked to support for war. At this stage, age became a significant predictor for the first time (β = 0.111, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that older individuals might not inherently support war, but, when considering their ideological and socialization patterns, their attitudes align more with militaristic views. The model at this stage explained 31.1% of the variance (R^2 = 0.311), marking a considerable improvement.

The fifth step introduced SDO, conspiracy mentality, and the three authoritarianism dimensions (authoritarian aggression, submission, and conventionalism). SDO significantly predicted war support (β = 0.085, $p < 0.01$), aligning with previous research that hierarchical worldviews are associated with militaristic attitudes. Authoritarian submission also had a strong effect (β = 0.195, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals who show high deference to authority are more likely to support war. However, conspiracy

mentality, which was positively correlated with war support in bivariate analyses, showed a negative effect in the regression model ($\beta = -0.061$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests a suppressor effect—while conspiracy theorists might initially appear more militaristic due to distrust of external forces, when controlling for authoritarian worldviews, their skepticism toward state and military narratives may actually lead them to oppose war. The explained variance increased further to 35.8% ($R^2 = 0.358$).

In the final step of the regression analysis, personality traits—including narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, sadism, and empathy and understanding—were introduced alongside the previously included ideological and socio-psychological predictors. This model accounted for 37.6% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.376$), reflecting a moderate increase from 35.8% in the previous step, confirming that while personality traits contribute to explaining war support, ideological and authoritarian factors remain the strongest drivers.

Among the dark personality traits, psychopathy ($\beta = 0.073$, $p < 0.05$) and sadism ($\beta = 0.134$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as significant predictors. These findings suggest that individuals who exhibit callousness, emotional detachment, and a tendency to derive pleasure from harming others are more likely to support war. The effect of sadism is particularly pronounced, aligning with theories suggesting that aggressive tendencies and dominance motivation play a crucial role in militaristic attitudes. However, narcissism and Machiavellianism were not significant, indicating that support for war is not primarily driven by self-importance or strategic manipulation, but rather by a deeper inclination toward aggression and dominance.

Another notable but small effect is that emotional support ($\beta = 0.056$, $p < 0.05$) emerged as a positive predictor of war support. Although this factor was not significant in earlier models, its appearance at this stage suggests a suppressor effect, as individuals with greater emotional support in childhood show a slightly higher inclination toward militaristic attitudes once other socialization and personality variables are controlled for. However, given its small effect size, this does not override the stronger impact of authoritarian and ideological factors. Conversely, empathy and understanding did not show a significant association with war support ($p > 0.05$), indicating that a general tendency to empathize with others does not necessarily translate into lower war approval once ideological and authoritarian factors are accounted for.

Looking at the key ideological and authoritarian predictors, the final model strongly reinforces the importance of authoritarian submission ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), masculinity-related violence ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$), and radicalization ($\beta = 0.119$, $p < 0.001$) as the most robust predictors of war support. These findings confirm that individuals with a tendency to submit to authority figures, those who endorse violent masculinist ideals, and those prone to radicalized thinking are among the most likely to support war.

Additionally, SDO ($\beta = 0.060$, $p < 0.05$) remained a significant predictor, further supporting the idea that individuals who endorse hierarchical and dominance-based worldviews are more likely to justify military aggression. However, the effect size is weaker compared to authoritarianism-related factors, suggesting that group-based dominance motivations play a role but are secondary to authoritarian submission and radicalization.

A particularly unexpected finding is the negative relationship between conspiracy mentality and war support ($\beta = -0.062$, $p < 0.05$), despite its positive bivariate correlation. While descriptive analyses suggested that

individuals with a conspiratorial mindset are more likely to express pro-war attitudes, the multivariate model reveals that once authoritarian and ideological factors are accounted for, this relationship reverses. This suggests that while conspiracy-oriented individuals may support war narratives when framed as a response to external threats, they ultimately reject militarism within a broader ideological stance that often includes skepticism toward state institutions and military interventions.

Finally, age ($\beta = 0.117$, $p < 0.001$) remains a significant predictor, strengthening from earlier models, indicating that older individuals are more likely to support war once authoritarian, ideological, and personality-related factors are taken into account. Gender remains significant as well ($\beta = -0.119$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that men continue to show higher levels of war support compared to women.

Overall, the final model underscores the dominance of ideological and authoritarian drivers of war support, with radicalization, masculinity-related violence, and authoritarian submission as the most powerful predictors. While dark personality traits, particularly sadism and psychopathy, provide additional explanatory power, their impact is secondary compared to ideological and authoritarian factors. The unexpected inverse relationship between conspiracy mentality and war support highlights the complexity of how distrust in institutions interacts with militaristic attitudes, and the small buffering effect of emotional support suggests a limited role of early socialization experiences in mitigating war support.

5.1. Key Findings and Interpretation

The results of the regression analysis strongly confirm the theoretical assumptions outlined earlier. Masculinity-related violence, authoritarian submission, radicalization, and political ideology emerge as the most important predictors of support for war. These findings provide strong empirical support for theories linking authoritarianism and gendered violence norms to militaristic attitudes.

Masculinity-related violence was one of the strongest predictors throughout all models ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$), remaining highly significant even after controlling for multiple psychological and ideological variables. This finding supports Theweleit's (2019) and Dawson's (1994) argument that aggressive masculinity and militaristic fantasies are closely linked. In our model, masculinity-related violence is conceptualized as an attitudinal disposition—reflecting beliefs that men should be dominant, assertive, and willing to use force. Individuals who endorse such norms are significantly more likely to support war. Rather than viewing this disposition as entirely separate from cultural or institutional factors, we understand it as part of a broader psychosocial syndrome in which gendered identity constructions and militarized worldviews reinforce each other.

Authoritarian submission ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$) also plays a major role in explaining war support. Individuals who exhibit high deference to authority and embrace hierarchical structures are significantly more inclined to support military action. This supports Adorno et al.'s (1950) theory of the authoritarian personality, which emphasizes the tendency of highly submissive individuals to align with aggressive state policies, including warfare.

Radicalization is another critical factor ($\beta = 0.119$, $p < 0.001$), with strong and consistent effects throughout the models. People with extremist tendencies—those who endorse radical political or ideological views—are

more likely to support military aggression. This aligns with research linking ideological rigidity and extremist worldviews to belligerent attitudes.

Political ideology (left–right self-placement) remains a stable and significant predictor across all models. Right-leaning individuals consistently show stronger support for war ($\beta = 0.100$, $p < 0.001$), independent of other ideological and psychological factors. This reinforces previous findings that conservative political orientations are associated with more hawkish attitudes and a preference for military interventions.

Interestingly, gender remains highly significant throughout the analysis, even when controlling for psychological, ideological, and social factors. Men show a systematically higher support for war ($\beta = -0.119$, $p < 0.001$) than women, underscoring long-standing research on gender differences in aggression, military attitudes, and authoritarianism. Another noteworthy pattern is the emergence of age as a significant predictor from Step 4 onward.

While age was not significant in the earlier models, it became relevant once radicalization, authoritarian submission, and masculinity-related violence were included. In the final model, older individuals showed greater support for war ($\beta = 0.117$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that their war support is mediated through ideological and psychological variables that become more pronounced over time.

Finally, conspiracy mentality, despite showing a positive bivariate correlation with war support, turns negative in the multivariate analysis. In the final model, the effect was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.062$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests a suppressor effect, while conspiracy theorists may generally distrust global institutions and elites (which could make them more susceptible to war support in some contexts), when controlling for authoritarianism and social dominance, their skepticism toward state-led military actions becomes more apparent. This highlights the complexity of ideological structures and the need for careful interpretation of correlations in political psychology.

6. Conclusion: The Role of Authoritarian Psychology in War Support and the Neglected Dimension of Gender

This study has demonstrated that support for war as an attitude is deeply embedded in a complex interplay of psychological dispositions, ideological orientations, and personality traits. Our hierarchical regression model explained 37.6% of the variance in generalized war support ($R^2 = 0.376$), providing substantial empirical support for the idea that individual psychological and ideological orientations significantly shape how individuals evaluate and justify military aggression.

Among the strongest predictors, we identified authoritarian submission, SDO, and radicalization as central explanatory factors. These findings reinforce established theories on the psychological underpinnings of authoritarianism and militarism, confirming that individuals who favor hierarchical structures, deference to authority, and ideological rigidity are more likely to hold pro-military attitudes and see war as a necessary means of conflict resolution. Importantly, our results show that political attitude (left–right orientation) remains an independent predictor of war support, even when authoritarian dispositions and social dominance preferences are accounted for. This suggests that beyond personality-based predispositions, political ideology continues to play a crucial role in shaping militaristic attitudes.

A particularly striking result of this study is the independent role of masculinity-related violence, which emerges as a strong and significant predictor even after controlling for authoritarian submission and SDO. While previous research has focused primarily on authoritarianism as an ideological structure, our findings highlight that rigid masculinity norms operate as a distinct and influential factor, not merely as a byproduct of broader authoritarian worldviews. This supports Theweleit's (2019) expansion of authoritarian personality theory, which emphasizes the role of militarized masculinity in shaping authoritarian and violent dispositions.

The strong predictive power of sadism further underscores the importance of individual-level personality dispositions in the justification of military aggression. Unlike other personality traits within the dark tetrad, sadism is characterized by the active enjoyment of cruelty and harm, making it a uniquely relevant factor in understanding why some individuals show greater acceptance of war as a legitimate means of conflict resolution. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this study does not measure actual behavior, but rather the underlying attitudes and psychological structures that contribute to war support.

In addition, authoritarian submission plays a notable role in shaping militaristic attitudes, reinforcing the idea that deference to authority figures and hierarchical power structures is an essential psychological mechanism in war support. Individuals who exhibit strong authoritarian submission tendencies are more likely to trust government narratives on military action, accept security-driven restrictions, and defer moral judgments to perceived strong leaders. Similarly, radicalization emerges as a key factor, indicating that support for war is linked not only to authoritarian tendencies but also to an underlying willingness to embrace extreme, unlawful, or violent political actions.

These findings also have broader theoretical implications. War and militarism are often analyzed primarily through the lens of geopolitics, power struggles, and economic or strategic interests. However, as Theweleit (2019) and previous authoritarianism researchers have pointed out, these macro-level conflicts are deeply intertwined with psychological structures operating on the individual and collective level. Behind the rhetoric of imperial ambitions and power politics lie unconscious inner conflicts, authoritarian personality structures, and rigid masculinity norms that shape the way societies engage in militaristic endeavors. Geopolitical decisions and historical trajectories are not made in a vacuum; they are shaped by the collective psychology of societies, including deeply ingrained hierarchies, notions of dominance and submission, and the legitimization of violence.

One disturbing manifestation of these dynamics is the widespread use of sexual violence in war—not as a by-product, but as a strategic tool of terror and domination. It reflects the link between militarism, rigid masculinity, and control over sexuality. While our study does not examine war crimes or military actions, it addresses the ideological structures that make societies more willing to justify war, including its violent dimensions. The prevalence of sexual violence in conflicts points to broader systems of gendered power and control that help legitimize aggression.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine illustrates how authoritarian submission, militarized masculinity, and hierarchical dominance ideologies intersect in political conflict. State propaganda contrasts the "feminized" and "decadent" West with a strong, traditional masculinity and frames aggression as a defence of cultural and moral order. This includes explicit rejection of gender diversity and LGBTQ+ rights, linking authoritarianism, homophobia, and militarism. While this example helps illustrate how psychological and

ideological structures manifest in political contexts, our findings are based on a UK sample and should not be generalized to non-Western authoritarian regimes.

However, the presence of such psychological structures is not limited to autocratic regimes. Even in democratic societies, war-supporting dispositions can persist in the form of violent subcultures that normalize aggression, dominance, and rigid gender roles. A notable example is British football hooliganism, where hypermasculine violence, group-based hierarchy, and the glorification of physical aggression form a parallel to the psychological structures underlying war support (Redhead, 2016). While such forms of aggression may seem detached from political decision-making, they reveal that militaristic and authoritarian attitudes can remain socially embedded even in otherwise democratic contexts. Recognizing these cultural undercurrents is crucial, as they highlight that democracy is not an automatic safeguard against violent and hierarchical worldviews. Societies must actively counteract these tendencies to prevent their escalation into broader political and militaristic legitimizations of aggression.

6.1. Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers a thorough analysis of psychological and ideological predictors of war support, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design does not permit causal inference. Although the hierarchical regression approach helps disentangle the relative importance of predictors, longitudinal data would be needed to understand how authoritarian attitudes, masculinity norms, and personality traits influence war support over time. Second, as noted, the UK-based sample limits the generalizability of our findings. Future research should examine whether the same mechanisms apply across cultures and political systems. Moreover, a fuller account of the genesis of war support requires attention to socio-cultural dynamics, particularly the circulation of cultural narratives (Dawson, 1994; Hochschild, 2016; Sawicka, 2024)—an aspect not captured by our design. This points to the value of mixed methods and interdisciplinary approaches.

Finally, these findings have practical relevance for political education, media literacy, and conflict prevention. Understanding that war support is shaped not only by strategic considerations but also by psychological dispositions and gendered belief systems allows for more targeted interventions. Public discourse on militarism should critically engage with how masculinity, authoritarian submission, and social hierarchy normalize war. This study ultimately underscores the need to integrate psychological, ideological, and gendered dimensions into analyses of war support. Recognizing these mechanisms is essential to understanding how authoritarian regimes exploit societal anxieties to legitimize violence and how such support might be challenged.

Conflict of Interests

In this article, editorial decisions were undertaken by Oliver Hidalgo (University of Passau).

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available at present because further analyses are planned by the authors. The dataset will be made publicly available in 2027. Until then, the authors are happy to provide additional information about the dataset and the analyses upon reasonable request.

LLMs Disclosure

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024) to support the translation and linguistic refinement of selected passages. The tool was employed solely to improve clarity and accuracy in English, as one of the authors is not a native speaker. All intellectual content, analyses, and interpretations are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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