

identity-politics literatures, which clearly share an analytical core, but have thus far rather insufficiently informed one another.

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Jennifer Mittelstadt: *The Rise of the Military Welfare State*
Cambridge 2015: Harvard University Press, 344 pp.

The welfare state is not popular in the United States, yet it is growing. In particular, the US military has been spending more and more on welfare since conscription was abolished. Various social programmes for veterans, military spouses, and families swelled in the US defence budget during the first decade of G. W. Bush's Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). As a result, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has had to cope with the effects of deploying the military in GWOT. The welfare state is getting more and more accessible for many Americans through military service. In this book, Jennifer Mittelstadt guides her readers through the story of development of the welfare state under the Department of Defense. That story started at the beginning of WWII, when the state had to support the families of 10 million draftees inducted into the military.

As Mittelstadt demonstrates, the story is still continuing. She organises the book into eight chapters. The first three describe the armed forces' struggle to define, demarcate, and defend their benefits during

the rocky nascent period of the volunteer army's welfare state. Chapters 4 to 6 chronicle the advance and vitalisation in army social welfare programmes in the 1980s. Chapters 7 and 8 recount the transformation of the army's social programs by anti-'dependency' ideology and the outsourcing and privatising of many army support programmes in the 1990s. The author's narrative of the US military welfare state matches with her specialisation as a historian. In particular, she pays a close attention to the actors who—as members of higher circles (politicians, high rank officials, and flag-officers)—either forced new social programmes in the military or advocated and revitalised the traditional system in the last forty years.

Mittelstadt points out that the open-handed welfare state was established in the US military in the Fiscal Year 1972–1973, when the federal government struggled to get an adequate volunteering military manpower for the European theatre, which was endangered by the communist Soviet military and other Warsaw Pact troops. At that time, the welfare state sneaked into the DoD policy as an option to recruit troops. Meanwhile, the military has become more advanced in technological areas and more competitive on the national labour market owing to social programmes since the 1970s.

However, the social and health-care programmes for soldiers, veterans, and military families have started consuming more and more taxpayers' money since the 1970s. The military welfare state flourished notably during Reagan's presidential term, when demographic growth was slowing down. Thus, neoliberal hawks did not hesitate to extend the military social programme in order to get enough manpower for the military plans. This raises the question of whether the rising costs of the military welfare do not contradict the effort of the US military-industrial complex which has made a significant profit on the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) so far, particularly

in the last 15 years. Nonetheless, the perspectives of the DoD budget for the next 30 years seem to be rather gloomy, while federal social and health programmes are rising as well.

Such developments might have peculiar consequences for international security, in particular for peacekeeping, because the military welfare state may be considered as NATO omnipresent. Especially in Central and East Europe, servicemen are often seen more as employees than soldiers serving their state. For instance, the current welfare expenditures in the Czech military budget hover around 0.2% of GDP and they are included in the 2-percent commitment to NATO. Yet the United States have partly included the spending on the social military security into the military budget. The rising social cost in the US military budget can hardly be regarded as a contribution to international security and scarcely as a contribution to dealing with America's social problems. Nevertheless, we might conclude that the rise of the social military welfare state in the 1980s contributed not only to the arms race between the West and the East but also to the end the Cold War, as the majority of Soviet satellite states were not willing to sacrifice their social development on waging a 40-year-old Cold War.

In spite of the rising military welfare state in the United States, the author believes that the welfare state will extend into society sooner or later: If soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines can have their benefits outsourced and privatised—even while they are at war—this seems likely for ordinary citizens too. Indeed, many civilian policies protecting economic security, health, and well-being have come under new assault from free-market conservatives in the past several years—collective bargaining rights, public pensions, health care, and Social Security, to name a few. The author points out that if military pensions and health care go the way of vouchers and cash payments, ordinary Americans can expect to share this fate too.

This idea is worth paying attention to. The welfare state was historically connected with warfare, and later on, with industrialised society [Kuhnle and Sander 2012]. The turmoil of frequent local wars in the 19th century changed the newly industrialised liberal economies precipitously. Lily Braun [1901] recognised that before World War I already. Nations of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, decimated for centuries by many wars under the flag of the House of Habsburg, enjoyed the highest employment rate of females among the superpowers at the end of the 19th century. War and the post-war situation triggered the emancipation of female labour manpower and required a new social policy.

Mittelstadt is focused on national topics from an American point of view. It would be beneficial to conduct a NATO study dealing with the phenomenon of the military welfare state in the post-WWII context. It seems that conscription and imperialism, inherent attributes of the neoliberal social and economic doctrine until 1945, contributed to the rise of the modern welfare state gradually and conclusively. Libertarians wanted to abolish the draft in the United States at the end of World War II [Rostker 2006] but they managed that as 'a triumph of liberty over expanding omnipresent government' as late as in the 1970s. Mittelstadt points out that this natural tax, which was what conscription was argued to be [Friedman 1967], was substituted by the expanding welfare state due to fact that the military has been forced to compete with other employers.

In the end, the military—as a kind of *imperium in imperio*—is found in a new paradigm today. The GWOT has led to a growing critique of AVF in contemporary military journals, in particular, from retired senior officers [e.g. Lewis 2009; Yuengert 2015]. Ironically, such a point of view unwittingly supports the ideological negation of AVF presented by communist sociologists in the 1980s [J. Hrábě 1983] as a reflection on the discussion of early AVF in

the *Armed Forces & Society* journal. At that time, the welfare state was already present in the communist military because the latter was a constitutive part of the communist welfare state. Will the United States move closer to European social democracy as a result of the next evolution of the military welfare state?

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