

# The Militarization of American Social Research During the Cold War

Beginning in the 1950s, the United States military invested heavily in social research, using it to study everything from enemy propaganda to the psychology of soldiers. This investment was driven by the Cold War, which created a sense of urgency about understanding and countering the threat from the Soviet Union and its allies.



## Armed with Expertise: The Militarization of American Social Research during the Cold War (American Institutions and Society) by Joy Rohde

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The militarization of social research had a profound impact on the field, leading to the development of new methods and theories. It also raised ethical concerns about the use of social science for military purposes.

## The Reasons for the Investment

There were a number of reasons why the US military invested heavily in social research during the Cold War. First, the military needed to

understand the enemy. This included studying Soviet propaganda, military doctrine, and social organization. Second, the military needed to develop new ways to fight the Cold War. This included developing new weapons, strategies, and tactics. Third, the military needed to understand the impact of the Cold War on American society. This included studying the effects of the Cold War on morale, productivity, and social cohesion.

## **The Methods Used**

The military used a variety of methods to conduct social research during the Cold War. These methods included:

- **Surveys:** The military conducted surveys of soldiers, civilians, and enemy populations to gather information about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
- **Experiments:** The military conducted experiments to test the effects of different propaganda techniques, military strategies, and social policies.
- **Observation:** The military observed enemy activities and American society to gather information about their strengths and weaknesses.
- **Interviews:** The military interviewed prisoners of war, defectors, and other individuals to gather information about enemy capabilities and intentions.

## **The Impact of Militarized Social Research**

The militarization of social research had a profound impact on the field. It led to the development of new methods and theories, and it raised ethical concerns about the use of social science for military purposes.

One of the most significant impacts of militarized social research was the development of new methods. These methods included the use of surveys, experiments, and observation to gather data about human behavior. These methods are now widely used in social science research.

Another significant impact of militarized social research was the development of new theories. These theories included the theory of cognitive dissonance, the theory of social identity, and the theory of social exchange. These theories have helped to explain a wide range of human behavior, and they are now widely used in social science research.

The militarization of social research also raised ethical concerns. These concerns included the use of social science research to develop weapons of war, the use of social science research to manipulate people, and the use of social science research to justify war. These concerns are still relevant today, and they continue to be debated by social scientists.

The militarization of American social research during the Cold War had a profound impact on the field. It led to the development of new methods and theories, and it raised ethical concerns about the use of social science for military purposes. These impacts are still felt today, and they continue to shape the way that social science is conducted.



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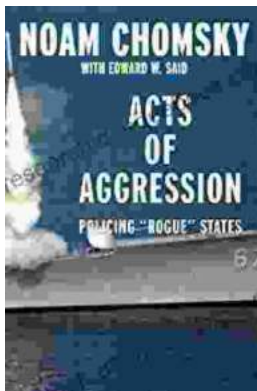
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