

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS¹

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KEY WORDS: civilian control, coups, military politics, defense policy, armed forces, principal-agent relations

ABSTRACT

Who will guard the guardians? Political scientists since Plato have sought to answer this, the central question of the civil-military relations subfield. Although civil-military relations is a very broad subject, encompassing the entire range of relationships between the military and civilian society at every level, the field largely focuses on the control or direction of the military by the highest civilian authorities in nation-states. This essay surveys political science's contribution to our understanding of civil-military relations, providing a rough taxonomy for cataloguing the field and discussing the recent renaissance in the literature as well as fruitful avenues for future research. The essay focuses on theoretical developments, slighting (for reasons of space) the many case studies and empirical treatments that have also made important contributions to our knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Civil-military relations is one of the truly interdisciplinary fields of study in social science. Historians, sociologists, political scientists, and policy analysts all have made major contributions to the field and, perhaps more surprising, regularly read and respond to each other's work in this area. The interdisciplinary nature is neatly captured in the subfield's indispensable lead journal, *Armed Forces & Society*, and may help explain why nominally mainstream but increasingly insular political science journals such as *American Political Science Review* have made less of a contribution to the subfield in the past few decades.

¹This essay adapts materials published variously in Feaver 1995, 1997a, and 1997b with the permission of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Transaction Publishers, and Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano, respectively.

This essay focuses on the political science component of the subfield, making mention of associated disciplines as necessary. Political scientists, as distinct from historians, tend to look for patterned generalizations of cause and effect. Political scientists seek not so much to describe what happened in a particular instance as to explain what happens in general and, if possible, predict what is likely to happen in the next case, given the *ceteris paribus* constraint. As distinct from sociologists, political scientists focus primarily on institutions of political control. Factors of direct concern to sociologists—for instance, the integration of the military with society—are of interest only insofar as they may relate causally to the primary political question of who decides what, when, how, and with what effect. Sociologists and historians would no doubt balk at the prominence given to political science theory in this essay. The nomothetic versus ideographic debate plays out in this area as in others, and it is not clear that political science is the lead discipline in the study of civil-military relations anyway. But sociologists and historians are likely to pay greater attention to political theoretical developments in this field than they would in other political science subfields. This is, then, an unabashedly parochial review of the political science civil-military literature, but one with at least an eye directed at associated disciplines.

Although relations between civilian and martial spheres, broadly construed, have preoccupied political philosophers for thousands of years, the modern intellectual history largely dates to the pre–World War II literature on antimilitarism, especially Vagts (1937) and Lasswell (1941). The second large wave of literature came in the early Cold War period, as American social scientists struggled to reconcile the need for a permanent and large standing army with America's traditional suspicions of the threats to liberty posed by standing armies (Kerwin 1948, Smith 1951, Lasswell 1950, Ekirch 1956, Mills 1956, Millis et al 1958). Huntington's landmark study, *The Soldier and the State* (1957), was the capstone to this early work, and most of what has been written since has been an explicit or implicit response to his argument.

After Huntington, the field split along two distinct tracks. The first and arguably more fruitful was a sociologically oriented examination of the military, first in the United States and then extending to other countries. The landmark study, Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier* (1960), spawned literally hundreds of follow-on studies exploring the relationship between society and the armed forces (Moskos 1970, 1971; Larson 1974; Segal et al 1974; Sarkesian 1975; Segal 1975; Bachman et al 1977; Janowitz 1977; Moskos 1977; Segal 1986; Moskos & Wood 1988; Edmonds 1988; Burk 1993; Sarkesian et al 1995). The second track was an institutionally oriented examination of postcolonial civil-military relations in developing countries, a project dominated by political scientists (Finer 1962; Huntington 1968; Stepan 1971, 1988; Perlmutter 1977; Welch 1976; Nordlinger 1977) and largely focused on the problem of

coups; this track has spawned numerous specialty literatures considering civil-military relations in specific contexts—in communist regimes (Kolkowicz 1966, Herspring & Volgyes 1978, Colton 1979, Rice 1984, Colton & Gustafson 1990, Zisk 1993, Herspring 1996), in ethnically divided polities (Horowitz 1980, 1985), in authoritarian and postauthoritarian regimes (Rouquie 1982, Frazer 1994, Aguero 1995), and so on.² Although this essay addresses the literature across the board, special attention will be given to civil-military relations within democracies and, within that set, civil-military relations in the United States because the American case has figured so prominently in the theoretical development of the field.

Although the sociological school dominated the study of American civil-military relations, the Vietnam War trauma produced a flurry of empirically rich studies by political scientists that remain important even 20 or 30 years later (Kolodziej 1966, Yarmolinsky 1971, 1974; Russett & Stepan 1973; Russett & Hanson 1975; Betts 1977). The literature continued to prove fruitful, especially its analyses of the implications of the end of the draft, gender issues, and the role of public opinion (Stiehm 1981, 1989, 1996; Cohen 1985; Petraeus 1987; Russett 1990). This literature greatly contributed to our understanding of civil-military issues but did not present a direct theoretical challenge to the dominant Huntingtonian or Janowitzian paradigms. As discussed in the penultimate section of this essay, however, the end of the Cold War has sparked a renaissance of attention to civil-military relations in the United States, much of it as theoretically ambitious as the early work of Huntington and Janowitz. If the past is any guide, this new work, which began as a response to questions raised in the American context, will generate a larger literature treating comparative questions in a new way.

The essay proceeds in seven parts. I begin with a discussion of the central problem underlying all analyses of civil-military relations, which I call the civil-military problematique. I then identify the three forms of analysis—normative, descriptive, and theoretical—that comprise political science's contribution to our understanding of civil-military relations. The next two sections briefly review the political science literature on civil-military relations, parsing scholars according to the different dependent and independent variables stressed in their work. The antepenultimate section addresses in more detail the range of civilian control mechanisms identified by the literature. The penultimate section highlights the recent renaissance in the study of American civil-military relations. I conclude with a brief discussion of promising questions for future research.

²A third track, though further removed from the development of civil-military theory, is the large literature on the interrelationship between war, the military, and state development (Tilly 1975, Downing 1991, Goldstone 1991, Holsti 1996).

THE PROBLEMATIQUE

The civil-military problematique is a simple paradox: The very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity.³ This derives from the agency inherent in civilization. We form communities precisely because we cannot provide for all our needs and therefore must depend on other people or institutions to do our bidding. Civilization involves delegation, assigning decision making from the individual to the collective (in the form of a leader or leaders) and consigning the societal protection function from the leader to specialists or institutions responsible for violence.

The civil-military problematique is so vexing because it involves balancing two vital and potentially conflicting societal desiderata. On the one hand, the military must be strong enough to prevail in war. One purpose behind establishing the military in the first place is the need, or perceived need, for military force, either to attack other groups or to ward off attacks by others. Like an automobile's airbag, the military primarily exists as a guard against disaster. It should be always ready even if it is never used. Moreover, military strength should be sized appropriately to meet the threats confronting the polity. It serves no purpose to establish a protection force and then to vitiate it to the point where it can no longer protect. Indeed, an inadequate military institution may be worse than none at all. It could be a paper tiger inviting outside aggression—strong enough in appearance to threaten powerful enemies but not strong enough in fact to defend against their predations. Alternatively, it could lull leaders into a false confidence, leading them to rash behavior and then failing in the ultimate military contest.

On the other hand, just as the military must protect the polity from enemies, so must it conduct its own affairs so as not to destroy or prey on the society it is intended to protect. Because the military must face enemies, it must have coercive power, the ability to force its will on others. But coercive power often gives it the capability to enforce its will on the community that created it. A direct seizure of political power by the military is the traditional worry of civil-military relations theory and a consistent pattern in human history. Less obvious, but just as sinister, is the possibility that a parasitic military will destroy society by draining it of resources in a quest for ever greater strength as a hedge against the enemies of the state. Yet another concern is that a rogue military could involve the polity in wars and conflicts contrary to society's interests or expressed will. And, finally, there is a concern over the simple matter of obedi-

³Of course, the military may not be established solely to protect the polity against external threats. Other motivations, e.g. preserving the regime's power over the masses or creating the trappings of the modern state for symbolic purposes, may also come into play. Nevertheless, regardless of the motivation for creating the institution, once created, the military raises the same control problematique described in the text.

ence: Even if the military does not destroy society, will it obey its civilian masters, or will it use its considerable coercive power to resist civilian direction and pursue its own interests?

This is a variant of the basic problem of governance that lies at the core of political science: making the government strong enough to protect the citizens but not so strong as to become tyrannical. The tension between the two desiderata is inherent in any civilization, but it is especially acute in democracies, where the protectees' prerogatives are thought to trump the protectors' at every turn—where the metaphorical delegation of political authority to agents is enacted at regular intervals through the ballot box.⁴ Democratic theory is summed in the epigram that the governed should govern. People may choose political agents to act on their behalf, but that should in no way mean that the people have forfeited their political privileges. Most of democratic theory is concerned with devising ways to insure that the people remain in control even as professionals conduct the business of government. Civil-military relations are just a special, extreme case for democratic theory, involving designated political agents controlling designated military agents.

It follows that, in a democracy, the hierarchy of *de jure* authority favors civilians over the military, even in cases where the underlying distribution of *de facto* power favors the military. Regardless of how strong the military is, civilians are supposed to remain the political masters. While decision making may in fact be politics as usual—the exercise of power in pursuit of ends—it is politics within the context of a particular normative conception of whose will should prevail. Civilian competence in the general sense extends even beyond their competence in a particular sense; that is, civilians are morally and politically competent to make the decisions even if they do not possess the relevant technical competence in the form of expertise (Dahl 1985). This is the core of the democratic alternative to Plato's philosopher king. Although the expert may understand the issue better, the expert is not in a position to determine the value that the people attach to different issue outcomes. In the civil-military context, this means that the military may be best able to identify the threat and the appropriate responses to that threat for a given level of risk, but only the civilian can set the level of acceptable risk for society. The military can propose the level of armaments necessary to have a certain probability of successful de-

⁴This tension is also present in authoritarian regimes and even military dictatorships. The very existence of political power creates the delegation-agency problem. In military regimes, even though political leaders and fighting groups alike wear uniforms, responsibility is divided between those who do the fighting and those who remain behind to wield political power. Wearing the same uniform does not prevent those who stay behind from worrying about whether the fighters are adequate to defend them or whether the fighters are liable to turn around and unseat them, as the many coups and countercoups in military dictatorships attest. This is what Stepan (1971) has called the distinction between the "military as an institution" and the "military as government."

fense against our enemies, but only the civilian can say what probability of success society is willing to underwrite. The military can describe in some detail the nature of the threat posed by a particular enemy, but only the civilian can decide whether to feel threatened, and if so, how or even whether to respond. The military assesses the risk, the civilian judges it.

The democratic imperative insists that this precedence applies even if civilians are woefully underequipped to understand the technical issues at stake. Regardless of how superior the military view of a situation may be, the civilian view trumps it. Civilians should get what they ask for, even if it is not what they really want. In other words, civilians have a right to be wrong.

The two central desiderata—protection by the military and protection from the military—are in tension because efforts to assure the one complicate efforts to assure the other. If a society relentlessly pursues protection from external enemies, it can bankrupt itself. If society minimizes the strength of the military so as to guard against a military seizure of political power, it can leave itself vulnerable to predations from external enemies. It may be possible to procure a goodly amount of both kinds of protection—certainly the United States seems to have had success in securing a large measure of protection both by and from the military—but tradeoffs at the margins are inevitable.

Even if a society achieves adequate levels of assurance against utter collapse at either extreme, battlefield defeat and coup, there is a range of problematic activities in which the military can engage. It remains difficult to ensure that the military is both capable of doing and willing to do what civilians ask. Thus, “solving” the problem of coups does not neutralize the general problem of control on an ongoing basis.

THREE FORMS OF ANALYSIS

In general, political science consists of three forms of analysis: normative, empirical/descriptive, and theoretical. Each component makes important contributions to the study of civil-military relations. Normative analysis asks what ought to be done, how much civilian control is enough, and what can be done to improve civil-military relations. Because civilian control of the military is of such great policy importance, the normative approach often plays a central role in the study of civil-military relations. Political science’s answers to the normative questions are various criteria concerning how much control (and of what type) is enough to satisfy the definition of civilian control or civilian supremacy (Huntington 1957, Colton 1979, Edmonds 1988, Aguero 1995, Kemp & Hudlin 1992, Ben Meir 1995, Kohn 1997, Boone 1997).

The normative lens draws explicitly on the empirical/descriptive lens, which seeks to describe cases in accurate detail. Applied to the problem of civil-military relations, the empirical/descriptive lens involves developing ty-

pologies of various forms of civilian control or lack thereof—for instance, Welch's (1976) distinction between military influence and military control or Ben Meir's (1995) fivefold typology of military roles (advisory, representative, executive, advocacy, and substantive). The key task for this kind of analysis is distinguishing between reality and rhetoric, between what appears to be the case and what in fact is the case. Measured by sheer volume, the bulk of the civil-military relations literature consists of empirical/descriptive treatments of the civil-military scene in different countries or regions. Area studies specialists have long noted the centrality of civil-military issues to political life in various regions—indeed, civil-military relations is a central preoccupation in most area studies subliteratures, except those dealing with the United States and Western Europe. As a consequence, there is a rich literature describing the ebb and flow of relations between the armed forces and the polity (Boene 1990, Zagorski 1992, Danopoulos & Watson 1996, Diamond & Plattner 1996, Lovell & Albright 1997, Zamora 1997).

Also implicit in the normative lens are conclusions drawn from the third form of analysis, the theoretical lens. The theoretical approach may also begin with typology development, but then it moves on to advance propositional statements of cause and effect. It is impossible to recommend a certain course of action without making an implicit predictive claim of cause and effect: A state should do *X* because then *Y* will happen, and otherwise *Z* will happen (where *Y* is “better” than *Z*). The theoretical approach distinguishes between the things to be explained/predicted, called dependent variables (DVs)—for example, coups or robustness of civilian control—and the things doing the explaining/predicting, called independent or explanatory variables (IVs), such as the degree of military professionalism or the type of civilian governmental structure. The theoretical approach specifies ways in which changes in the IVs are reflected in changes in the DVs. As the following two sections document, political science's contribution to the subfield of civil-military relations can be evaluated in terms of successive theoretical debates over what the most important DVs and IVs are.

WHAT IS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE?

Traditionally, civil-military relations theory has focused on the direct seizure of political power by the military, i.e. the coup. With the remarkable spread of democratic governance over the past several decades, the question of coups remains interesting, but it is by no means the only interesting civil-military phenomenon to be explained. Accordingly, it makes sense to distinguish between a variety of DVs, any one of which might be the most important or interesting in a particular region at a particular time. The next five subsections describe a list of DVs adapted from Desch (1999). The evaluation of the list is my own.

Coups

Coups are the traditional focus of civil-military relations because they so dramatically symbolize the central problem of the military exploiting their coercive strength to displace civilian rulers. Under the general heading of coups, political scientists have looked at two related but distinct questions: on the one hand, the instance or frequency of coups (or coups attempted), and on the other hand, the probability that a coup will be successful. Classical civil-military relations theory has primarily addressed the former. Both Huntington (1957) and his earliest critic, Finer (1962), address the propensity of military institutions to coup, as do subsequent studies by Bienen (1968), Nordlinger (1977), Horowitz (1980), Thompson (1975, 1976), Jackman (1978), Perlmutter (1977), O'Kane (1981), Zimmermann (1983), Johnson et al (1984), Bienen & Van de Walle (1990), Londregan & Poole (1990), and Frazer (1994). Luttwak (1979), in an iconoclastic analysis, addressed the second question of how to conduct a coup successfully, and coup success is also covered in Zimmermann (1983), Bienen & Van de Walle (1990), and Frazer (1994).

Coups are a problematic focus for future studies of civil-military relations, however, because looking only at coups can underestimate military influence. A coup may indicate military strength, at least compared to the other political actors the military suppresses. But it can also indicate military weakness, reflecting the military's inability to get what it wants through the normal political process. In this way, the dog that does not bark may be the more powerful and, for ascertaining whether or not the democracy is robust, the more important dog. Moreover, while coups have not entirely disappeared, they are certainly less frequent in many regions, and the coup success rate has also fallen (Zagorski 1996, Hunter 1998). Thus, theories explaining the propensity to coup would yield fairly consistent null predictions in many cases, missing interesting and important changes in the nature of civil-military relations over time. Most recent work on civil-military relations, therefore, has focused on other issues.

Military Influence

Because the coup/no-coup dichotomy misses much of the interesting give and take in civil-military relations, some theorists have preferred to study military influence instead. Whereas the coup variable is dichotomous, the influence variable is continuous, or at least offers more than two gradations. The focus on military influence captures the idea that the military institution may be politically powerful even (or perhaps especially) when it does not seize direct power through a forceful takeover.

Even the classic texts on civil-military relations recognized that the problem of civil-military relations was larger than a question of coups. Huntington

(1957:20) observed, for instance, that “the problem of the modern state is not armed revolt but the relation of the expert to the politician.” *Finer* (1962) and *Janowitz* (1960) likewise acknowledged the utility of a non-dichotomous variable. *Finer* added a third possibility, covert intervention, and *Janowitz*, although not explicit on the point, treated civil-military relations as a continuum. Subsequent theorists, including *Stepan* (1971, 1988), *Welch* (1976), *Nordlinger* (1977), *Colton* (1979), *Rice* (1984), *Pion-Berlin* (1992), and *Brooks* (1999), all add additional gradations to the military influence variable.

Military influence is much harder to measure than coups, however, and the measurement problem limits its theoretical usefulness. *Nordlinger* (1977) addressed this problem by inventing a tripartite typology of praetorianism, consisting of moderators, guardians, and rulers. His typology, however, only captures varieties of overt military control and misses the far more nuanced and more interesting situation where the military is able to shape government actions without directly controlling them. *Stepan*’s (1988) second measure of civilian control, the extent of military institutional prerogatives, is a superior gauge of influence because it explicitly includes military behavior short of insubordination by force. *Stepan* traces prerogatives through 11 issue areas ranging from defense policy to the legal system. As *Stepan* defines civilian control, however, it is not a very sensitive metric; he allows for essentially only two codings—low and high (he also has a “moderate” category in three instances: active military participation in the cabinet, the role of the police, and the military role in state enterprises). *Colton* (1979) offers a still more sensitive operationalization of the influence DV by distinguishing between four types of policy issues over which the military exercises influence (internal, institutional, intermediate, and societal) and by distinguishing between the four means used (official prerogative, expert advice, political bargaining, and force). *Colton*’s approach offers considerable analytical leverage over questions of military influence short of a coup, but it is not clear that he successfully overcomes the problem of hidden influence and civilian abdication.

A related problem of the influence DV is that a particular normative claim of what ought to be the proper sphere of military influence is often implicit in the concept. While the normative line may be easy to draw in the coup setting, it is debatable in other settings. Should the military decide tactical questions only? What about tactical questions of special importance, such as nuclear tactics? In some countries, most notably the United States, the challenge of designing the proper division of labor between “military matters” and “civilian matters” has driven much of the civil-military conflict (*Feaver* 1992, 1996). Indeed, the oldest debate in civil-military relations concerns fusionism, the argument that the line between the military and the political has become so blurred that the distinction has lost its meaning (*Boene* 1990).

Fusionism arose out of the public management school as a logical response to the World War II experience of total war, and appeared even more reasonable in the face of such Cold War exigencies as a permanent and large military establishment and the threat of nuclear annihilation (Sapin & Snyder 1954). Huntington (1957) positioned his treatise as a self-conscious rejection of fusionism. Every half decade or so since, someone revives fusionism as the inevitable consequence of whatever military mission seems ascendant at that time: nuclear strategy and limited war (Lyons 1961, Janowitz 1960), counter-insurgency (Barrett 1965, Russett & Stepan 1973, Slater 1977), crisis management (Betts 1977), or peacekeeping operations (Tarr & Roman 1995, Roman & Tarr 1995, Hahn 1997). What is puzzling in fusionism's cyclical rebirth is that it is not clear who is killing it; in other words, why must the fusionist insight be revived every five years? My own answer is that fusionism is self-negating. It overreaches by confusing overlap between the functions of the civilian and military spheres with a merging of the spheres themselves. The spheres are necessarily analytically distinct—a distinction that derives from democratic theory and the agency inherent in political community—and so every fusionist scholar finds him- or herself beginning anew from the same point of departure. The spheres are also necessarily distinct in practice—it matters whether the policy maker wears a uniform or not—and so fusionist scholars find that their subjects repeatedly revive the idea of difference even as they provide evidence of overlaps with the activities of actors from different spheres. In short, what makes the overlap of functions interesting is the fact that it is overlaid on an even more fundamental separation (Williams 1997). This is not to say that fusionism provides no insights. On the contrary, it is a logical point of departure for descriptive empirical work, and some of the best empirical work on the subject is fusionist (Ben Meir 1995, Tarr & Roman 1995). It has, however, proven less fruitful for theory development.

Civil-Military Friction

A focus on civil-military conflict compensates for the difficulties that attend the coup and influence DVs. Even in a coup-free society, there are still likely to be episodes of friction and conflict, so this DV is generalizable. Indeed, the recent renaissance of the study of American civil-military relations discussed in the penultimate section of this essay has been triggered by the heightened acrimony that has characterized the civil-military relationship over the past five or six years. Stepan (1988) makes friction an integral part of his analysis of Brazilian civil-military relations, calling it "military contestation," and it is central to Ben Meir's (1995) analysis of the Israeli case as well. Friction can be measured as the degree to which the military is willing to display public opposition to an announced civilian policy. Moreover, friction is not a trivial con-

cern. Too much friction could be indications and warnings of a coup in the offing. In contrast with “military influence,” it has the virtue of being relatively easy to measure, since evidence of friction and conflict is likely to find its way into the public record.

Yet it seems a second-order consideration, at least in terms of the central civil-military problematique of agency and control. Friction is more a consequence of different patterns of civilian control than it is a civilian control issue itself. It is worthwhile relating different forms of control to the presence of friction, but the presence or absence of friction does not directly capture the problem of civilian control.

Military Compliance

Because of the problems attending these DVs, more recent work focuses on yet a fourth formulation: whether military or civilian preferences prevail when there is a policy dispute (Kemp & Hudlin 1992, Weigley 1993, Kohn 1994, Desch 1999, Feaver 1998a). This DV has the obvious advantage of reflecting the essence of the normative democratic principle that the will of civilians should prevail in all cases. It also has the empirical advantage of varying across different democracies and different periods of time; even in “mature” democracies like the United States, there are instances of the military prevailing against civilian leaders on certain policy questions, as the 1993 debate over gays in the military showed. Moreover, there are many times when civilian governments defer to a military demand rather than test military subordination.

Military compliance is not without analytical limitations as a DV, however. For starters, it suffers from something like the “dog that does not bark” problem afflicting the coups DV. Once a dispute has gone public, it is possible, though not necessarily easy, to determine whose preferences prevail at the decision-making stage. It is much more difficult, however, to determine whose preferences are prevailing on the countless issues that are resolved before a dispute gains public attention. A particularly adept military could enjoy enough political influence to shape policy without the issue gaining salience as a major policy dispute. Likewise, focusing on the policy-decision stage risks missing compliance issues that arise at the later policy implementation stage.

Delegation and Monitoring

Some recent work also considers yet another aspect of civil-military relations, the degree of delegation and the types of monitoring mechanisms used by civilian society (P Feaver, unpublished manuscript). This DV is tailored for the American case, where many of the traditional DVs (e.g. coups) simply are not very interesting. Therefore, a theoretical focus on delegation and monitoring may be a particularly fruitful line of analysis for newly stable democracies, of-

fering explanatory leverage over civil-military relations even (or especially) in cases where the basic problem of ensuring civilian rule seems to be solved. At the same time, conceptualizing the DV as delegation and monitoring may sidestep questions of direct policy interest, such as whether the military is going to coup and/or whether the military is going to comply with civilian direction. The delegation and monitoring focus is not irrelevant to those questions—indeed, different patterns of delegation and monitoring influence the degree to which the military has incentives to comply with civilian direction—but its relationship is indirect. To the extent that the study is motivated by a desire to answer those questions, one of the other conceptualizations of the DV may be more profitable.

WHAT ARE THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES?

Explanatory factors can be differentiated according to whether they are external or internal to the country. External factors that require a large army (such as the presence of a security threat), or pressure in the form of targeted aid and “advice” from particularly influential great powers, can influence the shape of a country’s civil-military relations. Internal factors include such determinants as the nature of dominant cleavages in society, whether the society faces an internal threat or civil war, the nature of the domestic political system, and the distribution of wealth. A few scholars, notably Huntington (1957), Lasswell (1941, 1950), and Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson (1995), emphasize the importance of external systemic factors in shaping civil-military relations. Similarly, Aguero (1995) concluded that the presence of an external threat against which transitional civilian leaders could focus defense policy was an important factor explaining the success of transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes. In general, however, political scientists (including Aguero) have found greater explanatory leverage from internal factors (Colton 1979, Colton & Gustafson 1990, Finer 1962, Horowitz 1980, Horowitz 1985, Janowitz 1960, Nordlinger 1977, Perlmutter 1977, Rouquie 1982, Stepan 1971, Stepan 1988, Vagts 1937, Welch 1976), and some of the most interesting recent work attempts to integrate both internal and external factors (Desch 1999).

Explanatory variables internal to the state can be further differentiated according to the civilian/military distinction itself: Does the causal factor relate to features of civilian society or to features of the military? For instance, Huntington’s (1957, 1968) two classic works touching on civil-military relations constitute something of a debate between explanatory variables; his early work emphasizes a military factor, namely the degree of professionalism in the officer corps, and his later work emphasizes a civilian factor, namely the degree of institutionalization within civilian society. Nordlinger (1977) locates the primary causal factors for coups in the political sociology of the officer

corps. In contrast, Welch (1976) emphasizes the legitimacy and efficiency of civilian government as an important deterrent to coups.

Within the civilian sphere, it is possible to distinguish still further between ethnocultural, economic, ideological, and political factors. Enloe (1980) emphasizes ethnic identity and ethnic cleavages as the dominant shaping force in civil-military relations. Campbell (1990), on the other hand, emphasizes the economic pressure of fiscal stringency and its impact on Soviet civil-military relations. Huntington (1957) emphasizes the different ways in which three competing ideologies, liberalism, conservatism, and Marxism, conceive military affairs and how these conceptions lead to different patterns of civil-military relations in liberal, conservative, and communist societies. Aguero (1995) combines a variety of economic and organizational factors into an index of relative civilian and military political power.

A final set of IVs deserves mention: factors arising from the transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Danopoulos 1988a,b, 1992).⁵ The conventional wisdom holds that the age and robustness of the democracy are important in determining the country's pattern of civil-military relations. At least where civilian control of the military is concerned, success breeds success and failure breeds failure. But the nature (as distinct from the newness) of the transition to democracy may also be a causal factor shaping civil-military relations. Frazer (1994) offers the counterintuitive finding that, at least in Africa, a peaceful transition from the colonial period to independence augurs less well for enduring civilian control than does a violent transition. She argues that civilians who inherit power peacefully have not developed the necessary institutional counterweights to forestall future coups by the military. In contrast, a state resulting from an armed struggle with the colonial power will have sufficient experience in maintaining political control over the military or, more importantly, may have inadvertently created strong armed counterweights to the traditional military and so will be able to keep the military in check. A similar logic may also hold in transitions from authoritarian regimes; institutional solutions developed during the transition in response to civil-military conflict, in the form of contested policy goals, can ultimately strengthen the hand of civilian authorities over the long run (Trinkunas 1999).

Busza (1996) has compared the experience of Poland and Russia and traced how leaders make key policy choices during the transition to democracy about the rules that will govern civil-military affairs. The institutional rules then shape civilian and military preferences, creating incentives either for subordination or for insubordination. Aguero (1995) likewise emphasizes the policy

⁵The transition literature is vast, and reviewing it is beyond the scope of this essay. I discuss only the literature of greatest relevance to the civilian control question, narrowly defined. For a broader treatment of the transition literature, see O'Donnell et al (1986).

trajectory established during the transition, tracing the endurance of civilian supremacy to the following five factors: whether the authoritarian regime had been militarized or civilianized; whether the transition was gradual or precipitous; the relative degree of internal unity of the civilian and military actors; the degree of mass public support for emerging civilian structures; and the extent to which civilians were able to develop expertise on defense matters. The record of the various former-Warsaw Pact countries suggests that another important issue may be whether establishing civilian control structures becomes a *de facto* prerequisite for the transitioning state to join a desirable organization such as NATO (Danopoulos & Zirker 1996, Michta 1997).

One of the weaknesses in the civil-military relations literature is that there are relatively few efforts to systematically compare explanatory factors or to identify the conditions under which one set of factors has more explanatory leverage than another. Even where different sets of factors are pitted against each other, it is rare for the analyst to do more than give rough comparable weights to one or the other. Zimmermann's (1983) excellent review of the literature on coups catalogues 18 determinants of coups, ranging from economic factors to social mobilization to external military aid. Although he stops short of providing clear weighting for each factor, he does show that the study of coups has progressed the farthest in comparing explanatory variables, perhaps because for that issue area the DV is relatively easy to operationalize. Desch (1999) is another compelling example of an effort to specify rigorously the conditions under which one set of factors has better explanatory leverage over civil-military relations than another.

It is worth noting that civil-military relationships can themselves serve as explanatory factors, IVs explaining other political phenomena of interest. Of course, inherent in the civil-military problematique is the notion that different patterns of relations differentially contributed to military effectiveness and the provision of adequate national security (Huntington 1957); more recently, this idea has been operationalized in a study comparing the abilities of states to exploit advantages in military technology (Biddle & Zirkle 1996). Studies show that different patterns of civil-military relations lead to different forms of nuclear command and control and therefore to differentially dangerous forms of nuclear proliferation (Feaver 1992, 1992/1993; Sagan 1994). Other studies argue that pathologies in civil-military relationships may make a state prone to war, or at least likely to adopt offensive strategies (Snyder 1984, Van Evera 1984). Still others have explored whether different patterns of civil-military relations lead to differential propensities to innovate in doctrine (Avant 1994; Kier 1997; Posen 1984; Rosen 1991, 1996; Zisk 1993). And, of course, patterns of civil-military relations can be used to explain defense spending and weapons procurement decisions (Rosen 1973, Jackman 1976, Zuk & Thompson 1982, Londregan & Poole 1990).

WHAT ARE THE CONTROL MECHANISMS?

As the preceding sections document, the literature has progressed from the original DV of coups and the original IV of military professionalism. Yet, while empirical and theoretical treatments of civil-military relations have progressed, the normative focus underlying the field has remained remarkably constant: How can civilians exercise better control over the military? This normative impulse begs the prior question of how civilians do exercise control over the military. Although political science has not produced the definitive answer, it has assisted the effort by cataloguing and evaluating different control mechanisms.

Civilian control techniques can be grouped into two broad categories: (a) those that affect the ability of the military to subvert control and (b) those that affect the disposition of the military to be insubordinate (Finer 1962, Welch 1976).

The options under the first category are inherently limited. Most countries employ some sort of constitutional and administrative restraints that legally bind the military in a subservient position (Damrosch 1995). These measures, however, only restrain the military insofar as the military abides by the measures. They are legal frameworks for civilian control, but they are not really mechanisms that affect the ability of the military to subvert. In an effort to force potentially reluctant militaries to respect the legal framework, the civilian government can choose to deploy the military far from the centers of political power, as in the ancient Roman practice of garrisoning troops on the periphery of the empire. Alternatively, or in tandem, the civilian government can keep the army divided and weak relative to the civilian government. Societies that do not face grave external threats may choose to keep the regular army small in size or rely on a mobilized citizenry for defense; this was the preferred option of the United States until the twentieth century. This approach is risky, however, for (depending on geography and/or technology) it may make the country vulnerable to outside threats.

Countries that face an external threat, or regimes that feel the need for large forces to preserve power, may deploy sizable armed forces but keep them divided, perhaps by setting various branches against each other or using secret police and other parallel chains of command to keep the military in check (Frazer 1994, Belkin 1998). In fact, the use of countervailing institutions such as border guards, secret police, paramilitary forces, militias, presidential guards, and so on is one of the most common forms of control, used both by autocracies (the Ottoman Empire) and democracies (Switzerland and the United States). Of course, even this effort may erode the ability of the military to execute its primary function of defending the society against external threats (Biddle & Zirkle 1996).

Welch (1976) suggests that, by developing a high degree of specialization in the army, a country may reduce the military's capacity to intervene without affecting its capacity to defend the republic. A large and highly specialized military might find it difficult to pull off a coup simply due to coordination problems. Thus, modern armed forces might be optimized for battlefield performance—each specialist performing his or her role in synchrony with the others—and yet be unable to execute a domestic power grab because all the parts would not know how to coordinate in this novel operation. Welch is correct only if the specialized military does not decide to devote training time to such power grabs. As Welch himself notes, increased functional specialization only increases the complexity of a coup plot. There is nothing inherently limiting about size or role specification that would frustrate a determined military.

Since most efforts to reduce the *ability* of the military to subvert civilian government simultaneously weaken it vis-à-vis external threats, theorists have emphasized instead efforts to reduce the military's *disposition* to intervene. Any military strong enough to defend civilian society is also strong enough to destroy it. It is therefore essential that the military choose not to exploit its advantage, voluntarily submitting to civilian control. Finer (1962), noting that civilian control of the military is not "natural," argues that, given the political strengths of the military, the real puzzle is how civilians are able at all to exercise control—and the key to the puzzle, Finer says, is military disposition.

Under this category, the most prominent mechanism is the principle itself, which is variously called the "cult of obedience," the "norm of civilian control," or simply "professionalism" (Welch 1976, Smith 1951, Huntington 1957). Hendrickson (1988) concludes that no amount of institutional tinkering can ensure civilian control; the real basis of civilian control is the ethic that governs the relationship between civilians and the military. This is what organizational theorists call nonhierarchical control (Bouchard 1991).

The necessity of focusing on the military's disposition to intervene turns the civil-military problem into what can be understood as a form of the classic principal-agent relationship, with civilian principals seeking ways to ensure that the military agents are choosing to act appropriately even though they have the ability to shirk (Feaver 1998a). To develop this norm of obedience, civilians can employ two basic techniques, which follow the traditional principal-agent pattern: efforts to minimize either the adverse selection problem or the moral hazard problem. In civil-military terms, this translates to (a) adjusting the ascriptive characteristics of the military so that it will be populated by people inclined to obey, and (b) adjusting the incentives of the military so that, regardless of their nature, the members will prefer to obey.

Virtually all societies have used accession policy to influence ascriptive features of the military. For instance, European countries restricted military service, and especially officer commissions, to privileged castes such as the ar-

istocracy or particular religious groups (e.g. Catholics in France). Americans adopted the mirror opposite approach, expanding military service through the militia in order to have the military reflect as much as possible the republican virtues of citizen-soldiers.⁶ Different mixes of selected service, short-term universal service, and merit-based commissions are likewise effective in reducing the military's disposition to subvert civilian control by changing the character of the people that make up the military. The sociological school of civil-military relations embraces this tool and operationalizes it in terms of integrating the military with society (Larson 1974, Moskos & Wood 1988, Moskos & Butler 1996). A variant of this approach is prominent in communist and fascist countries, which have used party membership and political commissars to shape the attitudinal structure of the senior officer corps, if not the lower ranks (Kolkowicz 1966, Herspring & Volgyes 1978, Colton 1979, Herspring 1996).

There are limits to the accession tool, however. As Huntington (1957) argues, tinkering with ascriptive characteristics, an element of what he calls "subjective control," can politicize the military such that it becomes an arena for the political struggle of the various civilian groups represented or not represented in the accession policy. Without using the term, Vagts (1937) goes into more detail on these "subjective" measures of civilian control and shows how they can politicize the military in unhealthy ways.

One way to gain some of the benefits of restrictive accession policy without the negative side effects of subjective control is through training. Thus, every recruit, regardless of social origin, is molded by careful training to adopt the characteristics desired by society—in this case, every recruit is indoctrinated with the ideal of civilian control. This approach is implicit in Huntington's (1957) emphasis on professionalism. Training is also the long pole in the civilian control tent of Janowitz (1960) and the sociological school.

Yet, there is considerable difficulty in operationalizing civilian control of the military by changing the ethic of the military. Arguably, training officers in liberal arts colleges as a complement to the official military academies constitutes an important, albeit subtle, form of civilian control. Officers so trained are likely to bring to their jobs a wider world view, certainly more "civilian" in perspective than their purely military peers. However, as opposition to ROTC programs in the United States shows, it is possible to view these programs not as instruments of civilian control but as evidence of creeping militarism in civilian society: enshrining military influence and opportunities for propaganda within the walls of the liberal (civilian) bastion (Ekirch 1956, Sherry 1995). A strong ROTC program can either be an indication of subtle civilian control

⁶As noted above, the militia also serves to reduce the ability of the military to subvert by creating a competing power source.

over the composition of the military or weak capitulation of civilian society to an all-pervasive military value structure.

If the civilians cannot completely change the nature of the military, they can seek to adjust the military's incentives to encourage proper subordination. Some versions of this are particularly base. For instance, the Romans essentially bribed the capitol garrison to keep it out of politics. Political loyalty is similarly bought among many developing world armed forces, where substantial corruption opportunities give them a stake in the survival of the civilian regime. Guarantees of wages and benefits function much like these bribes—guarantees that, if broken, are a likely trigger for coup attempts. Bribes are very problematic as a tool of civilian control (Brooks 1998). At some level they are inherently corrupting of the military institution, and the loyalty they buy may be allegiance to the bribe, not to the civilian institution doing the bribing.

A more noble version of incentive adjustments forms the heart of traditional civil-military relations theory: a social contract between civilians and the military enshrined in a "proper" division of labor. By this division of labor, the civilians structure a set of incentives for the military that rewards subordination with autonomy. Some division of labor is inevitable; indeed, the very term civil-military relations assumes that there is something called civilian and that it is different from the thing called military. However, as used here, the division of labor is more a normative than a descriptive concept. It derives from Clausewitz's (1976) principle that war is the continuation of politics by other means. This is what Clausewitz meant by the aphorism, "[War's] grammar, indeed, may be its own but not its logic." The logic of war must come from the political masters of the military.

Clausewitzian logic assigns a role for civilians and implies, in turn, a role for the military. The military are, in Clausewitzian phraseology, the grammarians of war. This makes operations the exclusive province of the military. The argument asserts that some issues are not political; that is, some issues are purely technical, best decided by the experts, in this case, the military.

This division of labor is implied in Huntington's (1957) preferred method of civilian control, "objective control." Objective control means maximizing the professionalism of the military; because obedience to civilians is at the heart of professionalism (Huntington claims), this will insure civilian control. Maximizing professionalism is best achieved by getting the military out of politics and, similarly, getting the politicians out of the military, that is, getting the politicians out of directing tactical and operational matters. Welch (1976) is even more explicit about the quid pro quo aspect of the division of labor. He advocates a hands-off approach as the most effective and achievable path to civilian control. Civilians grant autonomy to the military in matters of lesser import in exchange for military acceptance of the ethic of subordination. Such a

deal was crucial, for instance, in preserving civilian control during the early French Republic; the army was granted autonomy over accession policy (which the army exploited to limit commissions to the aristocracy and to Catholics) in exchange for a cult of obedience.

The disposition of the military to intervene can be reduced in yet another way—by strengthening the legitimacy of the civilian government (Holsti 1996). A vigorous and effective civilian government eliminates a powerful coup motive, namely the military conviction that they can rule better than incompetent or corrupt civilians. Such a government also makes insubordination and coups more costly because it raises the expectation that the mass civilian society will support the civilian leaders against the military.⁷

Finally, civilians can adopt numerous monitoring mechanisms, which, while not making insubordination impossible, nevertheless raise the costs and so may affect the military's disposition to intervene (P Feaver, unpublished manuscript). Monitoring mechanisms include such activities as audits, investigations, rules of engagement; civilian staffs with expertise and oversight responsibilities; and such extragovernmental institutions as the media and defense think tanks. Essentially, monitoring mechanisms enhance civilian control by bringing military conduct to the attention of responsible civilians. Monitoring mechanisms like this presume a certain level of civilian control—they are not going to secure civilian control in the face of a coup-prone military. They are essentially the practical implementation of the constitutional/legal provisions discussed above, suffering from the same limitations. Indeed, they may even be self-limiting; monitoring mechanisms can take the form of “getting in the military's knickers,” provoking more harm in military resentment than benefit they gain in civilian oversight. Properly implemented, however, monitoring mechanisms can raise the costs of military insubordination or noncompliant behavior simply by making it more difficult for such action to go unnoticed.

The greater the willingness of civilian leaders to punish noncompliant behavior, the more effective the monitoring mechanisms are in securing civilian control. Yet, even with weak and uneven punishment, the monitoring mechanisms can support civilian control. Especially in the face of a global norm supporting democratic traditions, it always costs the military more to disobey in public than to do so in private. Although monitoring mechanisms may not ensure compliance in cases where military interests dictate large benefits from noncompliance, they can affect cost-benefit calculations at the margins.

⁷Although this affects the perceived ability of the military to be insubordinate, its primary causal relationship is with the military disposition to intervene. The military may decide not to coup because they calculate they cannot govern, even though they have the wherewithal to seize power temporarily.

More to the point, they are the critical arena for civil-military relations in mature democracies. As the norm and the fact of civilian control become more deeply entrenched, the day-to-day practice of civil-military relations (and hence the focus of the study of civil-military relations) will increasingly center on monitoring and oversight of the delegation relationship. As the field shifts in this direction, however, care should be taken to make precise and sufficiently limited claims. Conclusively establishing which monitoring mechanisms are more effective than others—or identifying the conditions under which one kind of monitoring mechanism is superior to another—is notoriously difficult. Just as it is difficult to know whether deterrence is working, the absence of civil-military problems may be evidence for the effectiveness of the control mechanism or it may reflect the underlying stability of the political structure, or luck, or indeed all three factors.

AN AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

The casual observer might be surprised to learn that the civil-military problematique is the focus of renewed attention among scholars and observers of the American case. An outsider might assume that if any country has solved this problem, surely it must be the United States, which boasts unchallenged superpower status and a 200-plus-year record without a coup or attempted coup. In fact, however, the question of the robustness and efficacy of civilian control in the United States is very much a live issue in policy-making circles, and this has precipitated a renewed interest in the academic subfield.

Shortly after the end of the Cold War, and well before President Clinton's much-discussed problems with the military became manifest, a number of scholars and analysts began to express concern about the health and direction of civil-military relations. The alarms were somewhat ironic because the peaceful end of the Cold War and the operational success of the coalition forces in the 1990–1991 Gulf War seemed to augur nothing but good things for the future of the national security establishment. Nevertheless, experts found things to worry about: an overly vigorous Joint Staff with a politically savvy Chairman who seems to dominate defense policy debates (Campbell 1991, Weigley 1993, Kohn 1994); a civilian society that overutilizes the military for missions that politicize the military and divert them from their primary war-fighting focus (Dunlap 1992/1993, 1994); a growing gap between the experiences, outlook, and ideology of the military and those of civilian society, especially civilian policy makers (Ricks 1997; Holsti 1997; Kohn & Bacevich 1997; Gibson & Snider 1998). Of course, the Clinton problem exacerbated these concerns in the form of an apparently weak and vacillating civilian leadership, personified by a president who had avoided military service and knew little about military affairs (Bacevich 1993, 1994/1995, Luttwak 1994, Owen 1994/1995, Lane 1995, Johnson & Metz 1995, Johnson 1996, Korb 1996).

The basic political questions of “who decides?” and “what should they decide?” played out in a variety of well-publicized policy fights and scandals: debates over whether or how to use force in Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, Iraq, and Rwanda; the debate over whether to allow homosexuals to serve openly in the military; the debate over whether to open combat duties to women; and the various sexual harassment and sexual peccadilloes scandals (charges of sexual harassment at the 1991 Tailhook Convention, allegations of sexual harassment at the Aberdeen training facility, the issue of Kelly Flinn’s adultery and fraternization, the withdrawal of General Ralston’s nomination for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after his own adulterous affair came to light, etc) (Snider & Carlton-Carew 1995).

The newsworthiness of American civil-military relations has naturally attracted the attention of a new generation of scholars, who, expressing frustration with the old Huntington and Janowitz theoretical frameworks, have offered a range of broad-gauged alternatives.

Avant (1994, 1996/1997, 1998) offers a principal-agent interpretation, contrasting divided-principal settings like the United States, where military agents have the opportunity to play civilian principals off of each other, with unified principal settings like Britain, where such opportunities are more limited. Militaries in the former setting are less likely to embrace civilian-led doctrinal innovations than are militaries under a unified principal. My own work (P Feaver, unpublished manuscript; 1998a) also draws on the principal-agent literature. I develop a deductively grounded model of civil-military relations as a game of strategic interaction between civilian principals, who must decide how intrusively to monitor the military, and military agents, who decide whether to work or shirk in light of the monitoring regime and exogenously determined expectations of punishment. Weiner (1995), Zegart (1996), and Brooks (1999) also use the principal-agent approach to explore variations in how political-military institutions are formed and reformed. The framework has particular appeal because it is deductively grounded (and therefore able to generate parsimonious hypotheses) and because it nests the civil-military relationship within other political institutions and political relationships (and therefore offers opportunities to link the issue of political control of the military to concerns about the political control of other institutions).

Desch (1998a, 1999) offers a structural theory that treats military compliance with civilian directives as a function of the configuration of external and internal threats confronting a state; in the US case, Desch argues, moving from the Cold War setting of a high-external/low-internal threat environment to a post-Cold War low/low environment eroded the external orientation of the American military and encouraged them to engage in internal political squabbles. Dauber (1998), coming from the field of communications studies, offers an interpretation of civil-military relations as a contest in which standards of

argumentation—public, private, or expert—will dominate policy making. Schiff (1995) offers “concordance theory,” which explains changes in military subordination as a function of different patterns of relations among the governmental elite, the mass public, and the military. In a rare example of competitive theory testing, a number of the different frameworks have been applied to a common case in the hope of clarifying the uses and limitations of each framework (Bacevich 1998, Burk 1998, Desch 1998b, Feaver 1998b).⁸

The recent work is distinctive for its explicit emphasis on theory building, theory testing, and building bridges to other debates within political science. The traditional emphasis in the civil-military relations subfield has been on rich description and inductive case studies. It has been ideographic rather than nomothetic in orientation. This has had the advantage of producing a body of common knowledge accessible to a variety of disciplines, including history, sociology, and area studies. It has had the disadvantage, however, of limiting the theoretical development of the subfield. In contrast, the new work has generated clear, falsifiable, and generalizable hypotheses grounded in a consistent deductive logic: Patterns of military compliance vary according to different configurations of internal and external threat; the costs of monitoring and prospects for punishment influence the way the military responds to civilian direction; divisions among principals make the military less responsive to innovation; and so on. It is too soon to know whether future research will reinforce or undermine these hypotheses and the broader theories from which they derive, but the focus on theory, rather than description, opens the door to the kind of cumulation expected in normal science. Moreover, the recent work offers the chance to integrate the subfield more profitably with the rest of political science. Much of the new work in civil-military relations makes use of concepts and methods common in other political science literatures (structural theory, the principal-agent framework, game theory, etc) and thereby enhances the possibility for fruitful interactions between those who study civil-military relations and those who study other political phenomena.

The newsworthiness has also generated at least three major collaborative research projects, involving scores of researchers from academia, the military, and the civilian policy arena. Harvard’s Olin Institute sponsored a multiyear Project on US Post–Cold War Civil-Military Relations that resulted in some 30 books, articles, book chapters, and working papers. The Triangle Institute for Security Studies has a follow-on project, *Bridging the Gap: Assuring Military Effectiveness When Military Culture Diverges from Civilian Society*, that will

⁸The revival within political science has been matched by several equally ambitious efforts within the sociological school to reorient the study of civil-military relations. Miller (1994, 1997a,b, 1998) has explored changing attitudes on class, gender, and sexual orientation, and the impact of those attitudes on military operations (see also Miller & Moskos 1995, Harrell & Miller 1997).

produce several original surveys of civilian and military opinion as well as over 15 article-length analyses of the nature, origin, and significance of any differences or similarities between civilian and military cultures. The Center for Strategic and International Studies is conducting a companion study, *American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century*, that will explore how the traditions, values, customs, and leadership behaviors of the military influence military effectiveness. As the project titles suggest, one of the key points of emphasis for current research is the role of culture (both military and civilian), the extent to which those cultural forms are immutable, and the ways in which they interact with the challenge of ensuring the need for protection from and by the military (Burk 1999).

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

These separate but reinforcing investigations ensure that the American case will receive due attention. In the broader civil-military subfield, future research might profitably focus on at least three additional faultlines in the existing literature. One concerns whether measures targeting the ability of would-be military insubordinates are more effective than those targeting the disposition. The conventional answer is that measures aimed at reducing military leaders' ability to be insubordinate are inherently limited because they also leave a state more vulnerable to external threats. Thus, traditional theorists such as Huntington (1957), Janowitz (1960), and Welch (1976) all emphasize various (and sometimes contradictory) measures aimed at the disposition of the military: professionalizing it and/or keeping it integrated with society, establishing social contracts that delineate spheres of influence, and so on. Recently, however, some political scientists have given greater weight to measures designed to check the ability of military organizations to intervene. As noted above, Frazer (1994) explicitly advocates that civilians establish competing institutions with coercive capabilities (such as separate paramilitary groups), which can serve as counterweights deterring military insubordination and/or compelling military compliance with civilian authorities. Likewise, Belkin (1998) concludes that all alternative strategies are inadequate and so a coup-prone state will perforce rely on these institutional counterweights, what he calls counterbalancing. This debate provides an interesting contrast with the trend elsewhere in political science. The fad in other subfields is the constructivist project, exploring ideational and norm-based explanations for political phenomena. The civil-military field has been dominated by ideational and norm-based explanations for 40 years, and some of the best new work is instead exploring the rationalist and interest-based aspects of civil-military relations. This debate also has obvious policy relevance, especially in transition-

ing democracies, where civilian control measures are still in their infancy. Thus far, these analyses have focused on coups, and so one priority is to apply the interest-based approach to the other dependent variables discussed in this essay.

A second faultline, also of great relevance to the vast democratization project, concerns whether to focus reforms on the civilian or on the military side of the relationship. Perlmutter (1977:281) concludes that a "stable, sustaining, and institutionalized political regime can hardly succumb to military pressure and rule," whereas no degree of professionalism can be counted on to guarantee military compliance in the face of the utter collapse of the civilian regime. By implication, any effort to improve civilian control must focus on improving the civilian side of the house. Stepan (1988), although not necessarily sympathetic to Perlmutter's approach, nevertheless pursues the civilian-side agenda even further. He argues for the strengthening of civilian military expertise by creating independent think tanks and stronger permanent committees in the parliament with routinized oversight responsibilities and sufficient staff to carry them out.

Welch (1976), in contrast, emphasizes efforts aimed at the military institution itself. Although he concedes that civilian legitimacy is important, he argues that efforts to improve civilian legitimacy (what he calls Strategy 1) are doomed by forces well beyond the control of most states: the vitality of the economy, the dominant social cleavages, and the general weakness of civilian institutions. Hence, Welch favors Strategy 2, tailoring the boundaries, mission, values, organization, recruitment, and socialization of the military so as to foster "a mutual sense of political restraint on the part of officers and politicians alike" (1976:317). The debate so far has taken the form of dueling anecdotes and competing laundry lists, however, and the field would greatly benefit from carefully specified theory testing. Special emphasis should be placed on identifying the conditions under which civilian-based or military-based reforms are more fruitful, and, if both are pursued simultaneously, the circumstances under which one set of reforms can undermine efforts in the other area.

A third faultline concerns the other side of the problematique, the linkage between patterns of civil-military relations and military effectiveness (Biddle & Zirkle 1996). Most American military officers accept as an article of faith the general Huntingtonian assertion that respect for military autonomy is necessary for military effectiveness, but it has never been established through rigorous empirical testing. It relies on anecdotes, like the botched Iranian hostage rescue mission, and myths, like the belief that President Johnson's micromanagement of the bombing campaigns prevented air power from deciding the Vietnam War (this myth has been rather convincingly rebutted in Pape 1996). A priority for future research would be to subject this and related claims to serious empirical study. Does civilian meddling uniformly result in disaster, or

is such assertive control conducive to better strategy and operations under certain conditions?

Likewise, scholars should explore more fully the linkages between patterns of civil-military relations and the propensity to use force. The linkage has been investigated in the case of World War I (Van Evera 1984, Snyder 1984), especially the possibility that inadequate civilian control let military strategists push Germany and France into adopting inappropriately offense-oriented doctrines. The existing political science literature, however, is not very sophisticated in its understanding of civil-military relations. It tends to treat civil-military relations as a dichotomous variable—civilians in control/not in control—and does not explore the different causal effects of other forms of societal-military relations. For instance, is a country more prone to use force if it has an all-volunteer army, which can be deployed almost as mercenary force, or does the existence of mass-based conscription constrain leaders to follow swings in public opinion rather than the more prudent dictates of *raison d'état*? What if civilian decision makers increasingly come to positions of power without any personal experience with the military? Will they be ignorant of the limits of military power and prone to use the military in inappropriate ways or under unnecessarily dangerous circumstances? Or will they be overly sensitive to casualties, fearful that they lack the moral authority to order other men into danger, and thereby underutilize force when its application is called for? And if strategists are correct about a coming revolutionary change in war and military practice occasioned by the integration of advanced information technology into the armed forces, what does this portend for the way civilian decision makers control military institutions and for the way the armed forces relate to society?

Finally, I argue that one longstanding line of inquiry is not fruitful and should be abandoned: the linkage between professionalism and military subordination to civilian control. Huntington (1957) inaugurated this line of study with his argument that professionalism was the key to civilian control. But he included in his definition of professionalism acceptance of the ethic of subordination, so his argument (at least on this point) was in some sense tautological and defined away the problem. For this he has been roundly criticized (Finer 1962, Abrahamsson 1972). Janowitz (1960), however, did much the same thing, hinging political control on “professional ethics,” and has received much less criticism for it (Abrahamsson 1972, Larson 1974). In my view, the analytical utility of the umbrella concept has been exhausted, and it now serves to obscure interesting debates—for instance, whether rational-interest factors are more influential than values-based factors in determining military behavior—rather than to illuminate them. Future research should focus on teasing out the explanatory force of the different component factors of what has been called professionalism and leave the synthetic concept at the rhetorical level,

where it belongs. Sociologists have already embraced this approach, tracing changes in the nature of professionalism with the switch from draft-based service, which produced a traditional or “institutional” model of service, to an all-volunteer form of ascription, which produced an “occupational” model of service (Moskos 1977, Segal 1986, Moskos & Wood 1988).

The foregoing underscores the relatively weak cumulation in the political science theory of civil-military relations. The field has simply not produced a large body of consensus findings that enjoy widespread support and that would apply with equal force to a wide range of countries. Part of the problem may be an epistemological one that bedevils all of political science, the problem of self-negating predictions. Unlike electrons and atoms, the subjects of political science are themselves volitional actors. It makes sense for physicists to assume that particles are simply reacting to forces affecting them. The subjects of political science theory, however, are acting, reacting, and counteracting. And just as physics has its Heisenberg principle, which acknowledges the confounding influence of human measurement, so too does political science, but at an even more fundamental level.

Civil-military theorists must recognize that our subjects are thinking about the same problems, perhaps drawing similar conclusions about cause-effect relationships, and adjusting their behavior accordingly. Even a sensible policy prescription based on a reliable prediction that is itself based on a robust theory of cause and effect can be wrong if the political players understand the process and adjust their behavior successfully. Thus, seemingly weak civilian governments can compensate for their weakness to preserve civilian control, just as seemingly weak military actors can compensate to threaten even an apparently stable civilian regime. In short, even the best political science will offer only tentative predictions and qualified assessments.

Yet, the literature could be stronger than it is. The literature offers a rich resource of civil-military case studies but relatively few rigorous attempts to test hypotheses against these data. The sophistication and methodological self-awareness of the more recent studies augurs well in this regard, however. And the confluence of two trends in the real world—the spread of democracies and the remarkable disharmony within America’s political and military elite—has made the study of civil-military relations more interesting and more salient than at any time since the end of the Vietnam War.

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