

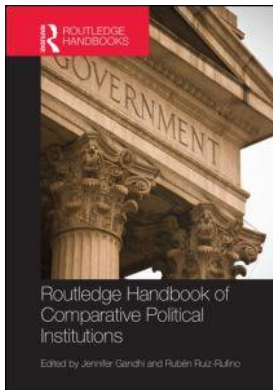
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THE MILITARY'S ROLE
IN POLITICS*Aurel Croissant and David Kuehn***Introduction**

Civil-military relations are a central feature of political life in all nation-states that maintain military organizations. In most liberal democracies, the armed forces support their governments in responding to natural disasters, are involved in border security, and assist the police in dealing with organized crime and terrorism, in addition to their core function of defending the state against external security threats (Bruneau and Matei 2012: 2–3). Civil-military relations are also relevant for many new democracies, which often struggle with the double challenge of creating and preserving a military that is strong enough to fulfill its functions but that is subordinate to the authority of civilian political leaders and institutions (Feaver 1996). Finally, in authoritarian regimes, the armed forces are key components of the regime coalition (Barany 2012: 2) as they are ultimately the only state institution capable of defeating a mass-based, organized, and potentially violent opposition movement (Skocpol 1979).

Studying the military's role in politics is an immensely rich field that falls into a sociological and a political science strand. The former is concerned primarily with the military as a social organization and the social functions of military systems, as well as the ways in which these have changed over time, for instance as the result of broader social changes or the changing nature of warfare (Moskos *et al.* 2000; Caforio 2006). The political science strand of civil-military relations research, in contrast, focuses on the more narrow relationship between the military and the political system. This strand can be distinguished further into an American and a comparative literature. The former is concerned primarily with civil-military relations in the United States, and the way in which military institutions are embedded in American society; how Congress, the executive, and the military interact in the making of national security policies; and how military policy, or practices of civilian control, affect defense policies (Nielsen and Snider 2009).

The comparative literature has moved in different directions. Its initial preoccupation was the question of how to ensure political control of the armed forces while allowing for effective defense policies in Western democracies (Huntington 1957). In the 1960s, the scholarship moved towards analyzing the origins of military coup d'états and military regimes in developing countries, such that by the mid-1980s, a large body of literature on the causes of military intervention in politics had been generated. A second line of research investigated

party–military relations in communist regimes, which operated under societal and institutional circumstances that were quite different from those in liberal democracies and the non-socialist developing world. When the third wave of democratization began in 1974, it inspired a new generation of civil–military studies, which turned to questions of institutionalizing civilian control over the armed forces and security sector reform in the emerging democracies (Agüero 1995; Pion–Berlin 1997; Croissant *et al.* 2013). In the post-Cold War era, the analysis of civil–military relations in Western democracies regained prominence (Born *et al.* 2004). Finally, the investigation of political–military relations in non-democratic regimes experienced a renaissance in recent years.

Definitions and concepts

Two concepts are central to the analysis of the military's role in politics: civil–military relations and political control of the military.

The military, civilians, and civil–military relations

The standard definition for “military” refers to all segments of the state-organized and uniformed armed services that share three defining criteria: (1) they possess the monopoly over weapons of war; (2) their primary purpose is the defense of the nation-state and its citizens against external military threats; and (3) they are legalized and legitimized as instruments of the state (Edmonds 1988).

Based on this definition of military, the term “civilians” refers to all non-military social actors and organizations. In the context of research on the political role of the military, however, the term is used more narrowly and comprehends all organizations, institutions, and actors that formulate, implement, and monitor political decisions and substantive policies, that is, the state institutions of the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of government, but also non-state political actors such as political parties, interest groups, social movements, and associations of civil society as well as certain international actors such as foreign governments, international financial institutions, and international NGOs.

Most generally, therefore, the term “civil–military relations” encompasses “the entire range of relationships between the military and civilian society at every level” (Feaver 1999: 211). Yet most political scientists more narrowly focus on political–military relations, that is, the structures, processes, and outcomes of the interactions between the political system and its actors on the one hand, and the military on the other. This focus has been criticized by scholars who argued that it is no longer able to capture the more complex realities in most societies after the Cold War era and should be replaced by broader analytical lenses such as “security sector” (Hänggi 2003). This includes all security related state-organizations and agencies, such as the police, paramilitaries, the intelligence services, the judicial and penal system, and other ministries and state bureaucracies involved in the formulation or implementation of security-related policies, as well as non-state organizations such as neighbourhood watches, private security companies, rebel groups, and warlords (Edmunds 2012).

Political control of the military

Political scientists who study civil–military relations have always been particularly concerned with the “civil–military problematique”: how to create and preserve a military that is strong enough to fulfill its functions but that is subordinate to the authority of a regime's political

leaders (Feaver 1996: 149). At the core of the problematique, therefore, is the notion of political control over the military.

There is no agreement among scholars on what “political control over the military” entails and how it should be measured. In the early literature, it often had been equated with the absence of military coups. Yet this assumption is flawed since the absence of coups might actually indicate that the military enjoys a high degree of political influence vis-à-vis political authorities that makes coups unnecessary (Feaver 1999). Furthermore, the “fallacy of coup-ism” (Croissant *et al.* 2010) distorts the conceptual continuum of political-military relations, defining the most extreme event as the conceptual benchmark while ignoring other, more discreet, methods by which militaries exercise political power.

In recent years, scholars have advanced gradualist conceptions of political control over the military that share two fundamental assumptions. First, the degree of political control depends on *who* has the authority to make political decisions over a range of political matters—the government or military elites. Political control exists when political leaders have authority over decisions concerning all relevant policy matters, can delegate the implementation of state policies to the military and repeal this delegation, and can effectively oversee the implementation of those decisions that have been delegated to the military (Agiüero 1995: 19–21; Trinkunas 2005). Second, and related to that, political-military relations can best be understood as a continuum ranging from full civilian control to complete military dominance over the political system (Welch 1976: 1–3). Consequently, the degree of political control can be gauged by identifying military challenges to the authority of political leaders, which can take two analytically distinct shapes: institutionalized prerogatives, which include formal rights that allow the military “to structure relationships between the state and political or social society” (Stepan 1988: 93); and contestation, that is, informal military non-compliance with decisions made by the political leadership.

While political control of the military is the general term, “civilian control” and “democratic control” over the military are sub-types of political control. In the most minimal sense, civilian control of the military means that political authorities and organizations that serve in government and exercise authority and oversight over the military are not officers in uniform. Democratic control requires that these authorities and organizations must themselves be subject to the democratic process.

Of course, political control is not the only relevant issue in political-military relations. Bruneau and Matei (2008), for instance, have convincingly argued that the military’s ability to achieve the roles and missions assigned to it by political leaders (“effectiveness”) at an acceptable cost in lives and resources (“efficiency”), is of fundamental importance for national security and the legitimacy of both the political order and the military institution (Edmonds 1988: 96; Feaver 2003: 5). Therefore, an exclusive focus on issues of political control must fall short of a complete understanding of civil-military relations as defined previously. Moreover, the idea of political control does not assume an apolitical military. As any other organization, the military has organizational needs and interests, some of which may be legitimate while others may not, and it has a responsibility to advise policymakers on matters of national security. In fact, taking military expertise into account is crucial for effective and efficient defense policies. The question for political control is therefore not whether the military yields political influence, but how and how much (Welch 1976: 1).

The military in authoritarian politics

The scholarship on the military’s role in authoritarian politics is relatively underdeveloped. Much has been written about the causes of military coups and military rule. Overall, however,

military regimes have been studied “more in terms of processes of transition to and from democracy than as a political system in its own right” (Remmer 1989: 23). While there is a rich literature about party–military relations in pre-1989 communist regimes, little attention has been paid to the ways in which contemporary civilian dictatorships organize their political–military relations. This is somewhat surprising as authoritarian regimes lack most of the institutionalized feedback mechanisms that enable the peaceful settlement of social conflicts in democracies and, therefore, autocracies develop strong military and non-military security apparatuses. A strong military is a double-edged sword for autocrats, though: A more powerful military is more effective in repressing political conflicts, but at the same time it is in a better position to demand political and economic concessions in exchange for its role in maintaining the regime (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006: 219).

Studying military coup d'états

One way to analyze the military's role in authoritarian politics is to focus on the issue of coups. Even though military coups occur in all kinds of political regimes, authoritarian regimes, especially military-ruled ones, are particularly prone to this kind of military intervention in politics. The essence of a military coup is the rapid and illegal seizure of government by a group of military officers (Quinlivan 1999: 132). Yet, military coups differ in regard to goals and methods. First, coups can be categorized as “breakthrough,” “guardian,” and “veto” coups (Huntington 1968): the “guardian coup” aims to protect the political status quo against intra-elite conflicts or deepening tensions between vested social interests and newly emerging social groups; “breakthrough coups” are undertaken by military officers who intend to create a new social order; and “veto coups” are usually launched on behalf of the middle and upper classes in order to suppress a mass uprising. Second, there are two basic coup modes, the corporate military coup and the factional coup (Finer 1962). While the latter is staged by a military faction and is often led by mid-level or junior officers, a “corporate coup” is typically conducted by senior military leaders and supported by the military institution. As Paul Brooker observes, the factional coup is “a sign of weakness in a key and distinctive aspect of the military's capacity to seize power—its highly centralised and disciplined organisational structure,” and, thus runs a greater risk that it will fail (Brooker 2009: 200).

As shown in [Figure 18.1](#), military coups have been a common occurrence in the twentieth century. Based on a revised dataset by Powell and Thyne (2011), we count 411 military coups, 211 of which succeeded and 200 failed, for the period between 1950 and 2010, most of which took place between 1950 and 1980. Since the 1980s, however, the number of military coups has declined significantly and successful coups especially have become less frequent.

The literature on the causes of military coups is extensive, but most approaches can be separated into two categories. The first identifies the origins of military interventions in the military's corporate interests (Nordlinger 1977), its professionalization or lack thereof (Huntington 1957; Stepan 1971), or in the operational aspects of military interventions (Luttwak 1968). These “push” elements provide the military the “means and motives” (Finer 1962) for political intervention. The second perspective emphasizes the “opportunity” (ibid.) for the military to intervene into politics, and stresses political causes such as political and institutional structures or social conflicts, which “pull” the military into a “politically pivotal role” (Svolik 2010: 7).

In this research, however, the empirical evidence often has remained inconclusive, and many findings have been the subject of considerable controversy. In recent years, scholars have therefore begun to link the study of background conditions of coups with the analysis of the

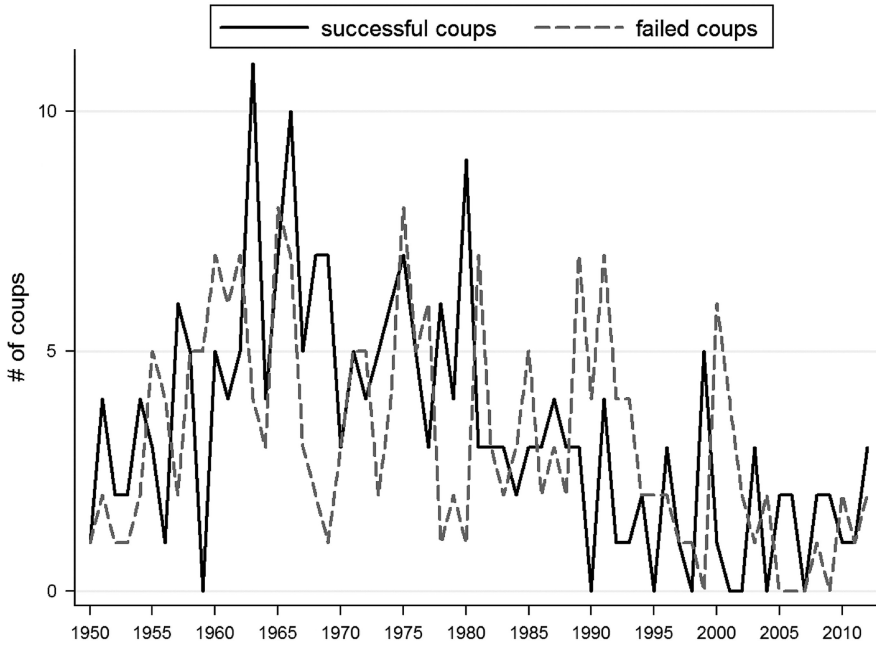


Figure 18.1 The number of military coup d'états, 1950–2010

Note: Powell and Thyne (2011) characterize a coup attempt as successful if the perpetrators seize and hold power for at least seven days. Unsuccessful coups must involve a recorded and recognizable physical and illegal attempt to unseat a government.

political strategies with which political leaders attempt to stabilize their rule against the threat of a military coup. Belkin and Schofer (2003), for instance, point out that structural variables, such as the degree of regime legitimacy, or the strength of civil society, do not determine the outcome of political–military relations but rather define the structural “coup risk” of a regime. Yet coups may be rare in both “high-” and “low coup risk regimes,” and regimes at similarly high risk-levels may vary widely in regard to the frequency of coups. Belkin and Schofer (2003: 597) suggest that this reflects the ability of political leaders to use “coup-proofing strategies” to protect their regime. Next to the attempt to “counterbalance” the military’s political power by playing military-internal factions or multiple security agencies against each other (Quinlivan 1999), political leaders in authoritarian regimes employ a wide variety of strategies for preventing military elites from seizing political power (Powell 2012b). Recent research has shown that the concrete set of coup-proofing strategies varies across regime types, with personalist regimes being more likely to use counterbalancing and patronage, whereas political leaders in one-party regimes tend to use institutional or psychological means such as monitoring, sanctioning, or political education (Pilster and Böhmelt 2011). All this suggests that a complete theory of military coups is likely to be much more complex and harder to verify empirically than it seems at first glance.

Studying military regimes

As Huntington (1968: 144) notes, the problem for the military is not to seize power but to organize and keep it. After a successful coup d'état, coup leaders face the problem of what type

of political regime to establish and how to consolidate their rule. By definition, all military regimes share the characteristic that “a group of officers decides who will rule and exercise some degree of control over policy” (Geddes 1999: 121). However, there are a number of institutional differences between military regimes that affect policy outcomes and the institutional evolution of military rule (Falleti 2011: 137). Furthermore, military governments often progress through different stages of institutional development as their tenure lengthens, and there is a tendency among coup leaders to concentrate personal political power (*ibid.*). Moreover, Magaloni and Kricheli (2010: 132) show that “33.33% of dominant-party regimes and 23.33% of the single-party regimes established during 1950–2006 emerged out of military dictatorships.”

Tracing the development of military rule in the post-World War II period depends, therefore, heavily on the classification scheme. Nonetheless, the three most comprehensive recent datasets on authoritarian regimes (Cheibub *et al.* 2010; Geddes *et al.* 2012; Wahman *et al.* 2013) agree that the period from 1962 to 1978 marks the heyday of military rule and that their number begins to decline in the early 1980s (see Figure 18.2). Similarly, despite differences in the concrete distribution of cases, all three datasets agree that military regimes were mainly clustered in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East (Croissant 2013).

In addition, the three data-sets agree that, on average, military regimes tend to be short-lived relative to other forms of authoritarian rule (cf. Table 18.1). However, the average life span across regime types conceals considerable variance within the individual categories. While it is true that 45 percent of military regimes break down within 5 years, and 68 percent within a decade (Geddes *et al.* 2012), there are a considerable number of military regimes such as Myanmar, South Korea, Brazil, Rwanda, and Indonesia that survive for 20 years or more. In addition, there are important cross-regional differences: overall, military rule in Latin America exhibited a significantly lower durability than in Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa (Croissant 2013).

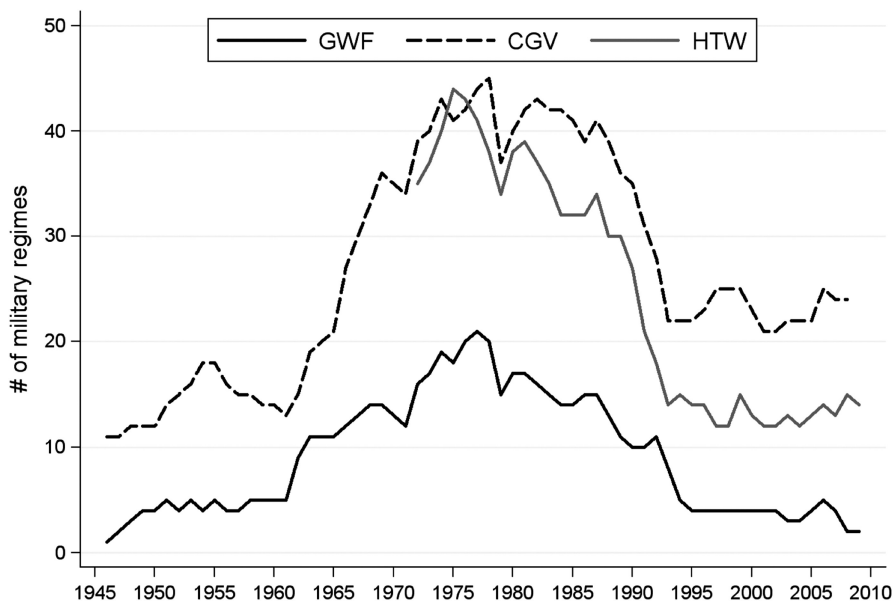


Figure 18.2 The number of military regimes, 1946–2008

Note: GWF: Geddes *et al.* 2012; CGV: Cheibub *et al.* 2010; HTW: Wahman *et al.* 2013.

Table 18.1 Average lifespan of political regimes and coup frequency (1946–2008)

Dataset	Regime type	N	Mean duration (in years)	# coups	# failed coups	# of successful coups	Mean # coup per regime
CGV	Parliamentary democracy	83	26,4	32	11	21	0,39
	Semi-presidential democracy	40	17,2	11	5	6	0,28
	Presidential democracy	73	15,3	63	34	29	0,86
	Cvilinear dictatorship	145	18,3	101	42	59	0,70
	Military dictatorship	137	12,4	164	88	76	1,20
	Royal dictatorship	26	29,9	15	7	8	0,58
GWF	Democracy	165	19,8	90	40	50	0,55
	Military	78	7,4	105	54	51	1,35
	Monarchy	19	31,3	15	7	8	0,79
	Party	82	27,6	62	25	37	0,76
	Personal	101	11,4	97	52	45	0,96
HTW	Democracy	164	17,3	27	12	15	0,16
	Military	97	9,9	100	62	38	1,03
	Monarchy	18	26,7	2	0	2	0,11
	Multi-party	154	8,5	50	23	27	0,32
	No-party	2	18	0	0	0	0
	One-party	56	14,7	18	4	14	0,32

Note: Other regime types in GWF and HTW excluded; regimes coded since 1946 for CGV and GWF; but coups since 1950.

Finally, there are considerable differences between sub-types of military rule: the mean durability of personalized military dictatorships is twice as long (11.4 years) as for direct and indirect military regimes (5.9 and 6.1 years, respectively). Traditional, junta-led military regimes survive for 5.3 years on average, which is significantly lower than military regimes with multi-party elections (6.7 years), without political parties (9.3 years), or one-party military regimes (11.9 years) (*ibid.*).

The reasons for this are many and probably not systematically known. One view argues that the short life span of military dictatorships results from the fact that military regimes face a much greater risk of being toppled by another military coup than any other regime type (see Table 18.1), because most members of the elite coalition in military dictatorship have control over at least some parts of the security forces, which reduces the coordination costs for coup-plotters (Frantz and Ezrow 2011: 23–24). Other scholars point to the initial deficit in legitimacy of military regimes and their difficulties in creating loyalty or support among the broader populace. For example, Samuel Finer (1985) argues that the major hurdle coup-plotters confront after seizing power is how to legitimize the usurpation of power. However, military dictators “rarely elaborate full-blown regime ideologies to justify long-term authoritarian rule.” As a result, “they tend to enjoy less of a cushion of ideological legitimacy to help them weather [...] tough times” (Lai and Slater 2006: 116–117). Moreover, most military regimes have weak roots in society, which means they find it hard to control or withstand popular protest.

This, finally, is also the case because military regimes are constantly challenged by the inherent conflict of interest between the regime leaders’ preference for staying in power and the military’s institutional demand for autonomy and the maintenance of internal cohesion and hierarchy (Geddes 1999). Military intervention into politics creates military-internal fissures, such that

“[m]ilitary regimes thus contain the seeds of their own destruction” (Geddes 1999: 131). Confronted with mass protests, military leaders usually prefer returning to the barracks before risking the breakdown of the military institution. Consequently, the shorter life expectancy of military regimes correlates with a higher likelihood of democratic transitions if compared to other non-democratic regimes (Ulfelder 2005).

Another major shortcoming in the literature is the lack of inter-regional, quantitative and qualitative-comparative research on policy and policy outcomes under military rule. There is an important but small, and somewhat outdated, literature on the policy consequences of military rule, mostly in Latin America (Stepan 1988; Remmer 1989; Biglaiser 2002). Its findings do not lend much support to the old argument, brought forward in the modernization literature of the 1960s, that the military as the most advanced, unified, and “modern” institution in most of the developing countries, is a force of societal modernization and economic development (Huntington 1968). While it may be true that the military as an institution is in a better situation to initiate, accelerate, and monitor processes of socio-economic modernization, it seldom does so. There is anecdotal evidence from countries where the military forcefully initiated successful modernization from above, i.e., South Korea, Chile, Brazil, Turkey, and Ghana under military-president John Rawlings in the 1970s and 1980s (Straßner 2013). However, more often than not, military regimes are conservative and status quo-oriented and, hence, they lack the political motivation to introduce large-scale modernization programs (Janowitz 1964). Or they have the motivation to do so, but as “experts in the management of violence” they lack the skills and know-how to successfully manage economy and society (Nun 1967). Often, the circumstances which favour military rule hinder economic development and modernization (Remmer 1989). Finally, as Wintrobe explains in his *Political Economy of Dictatorship* (1998), military organizations are budget maximizers. After the military come into power, their objective is to raise the military budget, and the salaries of military personnel. Therefore, it is difficult for them to find solutions to the economic problems of their societies (cf. Bowman 2002).

Yet, in recent years there has been an emerging scholarly literature investigating the output and outcome performance of different types of dictatorships in terms of social performance, ecological sustainability, the protection of property rights, the provision of domestic security, the management of internal conflict and foreign policy performance, the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies, etc. (cf. Croissant and Wurster 2013). While this literature is not specifically interested in military rule, it helps to understand how military regimes perform relative to other forms of non-democratic rule and relative to democracies. However, the causes for the variance among military regimes and if there are different patterns among the various forms of military regime, remain unclear (see also Falleti 2011).

Studying political-military relations in civilian-led authoritarian regimes

Political-military relations are also relevant for regime security and leadership survival in civilian-led autocracies, as evidenced by the recent regime crises in the Middle East and North Africa. Nonetheless, political-military relations in civilian-led dictatorships—either personalist, royal, or one-party—remain understudied. This is especially true for those post-communist countries that remained or reversed to authoritarian rule after 1990 (except Russia), and authoritarian regimes in Africa and in the Arab world (Barak and David 2010; Basedau and Elischer 2013).

In comparison to these regimes, political-military relations in communist one-party regimes before 1990 are well studied. Scholars have attempted to capture party-military relations and communist rule in a number of different analytical models. Huntington’s model of

“subjective control,” for instance, emphasized the ideological penetration of the armed forces and the installation of monitoring and oversight devices within the military institution (Huntington 1957: 81–84). Kolkowicz (1967) argued that communist parties ensured the military’s strict subordination through powerful and effective instruments of control, especially the political commissariat. Colton (1979) criticized this view and argued that political-military relations in the Soviet Union were characterized by a “symbiosis” of military and party elites, and the military’s loyalty was mainly guaranteed by the co-optation of military leaders into the party leadership. Similarly, Odom (1978) stressed that party elites and military elites cooperated because their specific interests converged towards the same national goals. As Perlmutter and LeoGrande (1982) have highlighted, however, these different models must not be understood as mutually exclusive, but rather capture different aspects of party-military relations in the Soviet Union at different periods of time.

The insights that can be gleaned from this body of research for the military’s political role in other types of non-democratic regimes are, however, limited. Political-military relations in “electoral authoritarian regimes” (Schedler 2006) in post-Soviet countries and in sub-Saharan Africa, or in the autocracies of the Middle East, differ starkly from those of the pre-1990 communist one-party regimes. While all these countries maintain militaries that are capable of executing coups, the declining numbers of coups and military regimes suggest the consolidation of political-military relations in these countries. This is particularly obvious for the Middle East and North Africa, where military coups or direct military rule have disappeared almost completely since the early 1980s. The military’s formal retreat from the centers of power did not, however, end their political influence. Rather, military officers now pursued their political interests through informal channels and personal contacts into the political leadership (Kamrava 2000; Cook 2007). Some leaders, such as Tunisia’s Ben Ali, or Libya’s Muammar al-Ghaddafi succeeded in neutralizing the political power of the military. In general, however, post-1980 political-military relations in the Arab world saw a high degree of stability and intra-elite cohesion, which is often evoked to explain the seeming immunity of the Near and Middle East from the ripples of the third wave of democratization (Bellin 2012).

While there are considerable differences between the individual cases, recent research has highlighted the importance of effective coup-proofing mechanisms for regime persistence in the region (*ibid.*; Quinlivan 1999). The rebellions of 2010/2011 suggest, however, that not all these coup-proofing instruments were equally successful. For example, as a relatively autonomous institution, the military played an essential role in the breakdown of authoritarian rule in Tunisia and Egypt (Droz-Vincent 2014). In Syria and Bahrain, however, military elites stayed loyal to the regime, whereas in Libya and Yemen the military institution fractured. These varying outcomes can be explained, *inter alia*, by the different strategies the political regime elites employed to control their armed forces. On the one hand, anecdotal and systematic evidence suggests that counterbalancing, monitoring, and the selection of officers along sectarian lines, as in Bahrain and Syria, have been effective instruments to secure the military’s loyalty despite anti-regime mass mobilizations. On the other hand, maintaining policies to protect military institutional autonomy, prerogatives, or economic benefits (e.g. in Egypt), or to marginalize the armed forces and discriminate them from the non-military security forces (e.g., Tunisia) had negative, unexpected consequences for regime survival as it increased the autonomy of the military institution from the regime and created incentives for military leaders to defect from the regime (Frisch 2013).

Furthermore, recent research finds that coup-proofing, especially ethnic purges and counterbalancing, is indeed an effective strategy for preventing successful coups, but also produces other, unintended, consequences that put at risk the political survival of dictators. For example,

Philip Roessler's (2011) analysis of coup-proofing and civil war in sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates that ethnic exclusion reduces the probability for military coups from within the regime coalition, but raises the risk of ethnic insurgency and civil war. Similarly, Jonathan Powell finds that coup-proofing reduces a dictator's ability to initiate diversionary tactics and inter-state disputes, and at the same time increases the probability for authoritarian leaders to face an insurgency, at least when high levels of counter balancing coincide with what Belkin and Schofer identify as high levels of coup risk (Powell 2012a). This is true for all forms of authoritarian regimes but especially for civilian-led dictatorships because military regimes are less willing to employ tactics of structural coup-proofing or ethnic purges compared to non-military regimes, as coup-proofing by definition has an eroding effect on the cohesion of the military institution.

The military's political role in new and established democracies

The "civil-military problematique" is also crucially important for the inner workings of democratic regimes (Croissant *et al.* 2010; Barany 2012). Consequently, there is a large body of literature on the civil-military relations in democracies, which falls into two major strands: the study of the emergence of civilian control in new democracies, and research on civil-military relations in established democracies.

Studying the military's political role in new democracies

Regarding the mode and outcomes of transition from military rule, Talukder Maniruzzaman (Maniruzzaman 1987: 22–23) observed that from 1948 to 1984, 26 out of the 71 total cases in his sample took place by means of planned elections held under the auspices of the outgoing military regimes, whereas another 36 cases occurred when the military was forced to relinquish power due to internal quarrels, social revolution, or mass uprisings. In contrast to his findings, analyses of the many transitions from military rule during the third wave of democratization since 1974 suggest that military governments are more likely than other forms of dictatorships to negotiate orderly transitions (Agüero 1998). Moreover, until the 1980s, the military's disengagement from politics was often only temporary (Welch 1992: 325). With the onset of the third wave, however, military withdrawals became more permanent, especially in Latin America and Southern Europe (Agüero 1998). Despite their retreat to the barracks, however, military leaders often successfully carved out political niches within their new political orders, a process that Samuel Valenzuela (1992) called the "perverse institutionalization" of reserved domains of policymaking and the military's assertion as a tutelary power.

In explaining these developments, Felipe Agüero (Agüero 1998) emphasized the military's political power during the transition to democracy: The stronger the military's influence, the better able it was to maintain its prerogatives and stifle post-authoritarian reforms. Of the third wave democracies, only a small number of military regimes (e.g. Greece and Uruguay) were so thoroughly weakened that they were unable to carve out significant privileges during the transition. Not only in Latin America, where 13 out of 16 transitions took place from military-dominated regimes from 1979 to 2000, but also in Asia military leaders were often able to assert political and institutional niches (Croissant and Kuehn 2011: 181). In this, military leaders were better able to safeguard their prerogatives the longer the regime had existed, the deeper the military's rule was institutionalized, and the greater was the military's internal cohesion.

Recent research on civil-military relations in new democracies, and especially former military regimes, seems contradictory, however. On first sight, the successes in establishing civilian

Table 18.2 Civil-military relations in 42 third wave democracies (as of 2010)

	<i>Military dominance</i>	<i>Military tutelage</i>	<i>Limited military subordination</i>	<i>Civilian control</i>
Southern Europe				Greece, Portugal, Spain,
Eastern Europe			Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia	Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay
Latin America		<i>Ecuador,</i> <i>El Salvador,</i> <i>Guatemala,</i> <i>Honduras</i>	<i>Bolivia, Brazil, Chile,</i> <i>Dominican Republic,</i> <i>Nicaragua, Paraguay,</i> <i>Peru</i>	
Asia	<i>Thailand,</i> <i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Philippines,</i> <i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>Indonesia, Timor Leste</i>	<i>South Korea, Taiwan</i>

Note: Countries in italics are former military regimes.

Source: Croissant and Kuehn (Croissant and Kuehn 2011: 225); (Croissant *et al.* 2013: fig. 1.2)

and democratic rule during and after the transition to democracy are astonishing. While democracies that had developed out of military rule had been particularly prone to authoritarian reversal and renewed military intervention during most of the twentieth century (Svolik 2012), in the last three decades successful military coups have become rare in new democracies. This is a remarkable finding, which suggests a new-found stability in civil-military relations in many formerly coup-prone countries of Latin America (Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas 2010), and Asia (Croissant *et al.* 2013). But the picture is much more complex if one employs a more comprehensive and fine-grained conceptualization of civil-military relations than the coup d'état. Building on proposals by Peter Smith (2005) and Alan Siaroff (2009), we can classify new democracies along a continuum of four degrees of civilian control: military dominance, military tutelage, limited military subordination, and civilian control (Table 18.2).

In 20 out of the 42 cases depicted in Table 18.2 civilian control was successfully established, such that today the armed forces are subordinate to the democratically elected civilian elites and act according to democratic norms and procedures. This cluster includes Greece, Spain, and Portugal as well as most democracies in East Central Europe, but only four formerly military-dominated regimes. A total of 14 cases, amongst them six former military dictatorships, have made substantial success in strengthening civilian control but effective oversight over the armed forces remains tenuous and the military continues to enjoy significant degrees of institutional autonomy and political influence in political arenas such as internal security. Within this group there is considerable variation, with Chile having made great strides toward civilian control despite highly unfavorable initial conditions, while other cases, such as Bolivia, Peru, or Indonesia, still have a long way to go. The remaining two clusters include a total of eight states, seven of which are former military regimes, where the institutionalization of civilian control has failed and the military remains a crucial political player that continues to be involved in the making and breaking of governments (e.g. Honduras, Bangladesh) or has even toppled the democratic regime (Thailand, Pakistan).

One major factor to explain these differences are the initial conditions the new democratic regimes were faced with during and after the transition to democracy. In contrast to most cases

in Latin America and East Asia, the civilian elites in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were not only confronted with militaries whose political prerogatives were much less pronounced, they also had at their disposal a well-established set of effective instruments to control the military. Therefore, the military's coup potential was all but irrelevant and in 1989/1990 the militaries did not interfere with the institutionalization of democracy (Barany 1997). A second aspect that helped in establishing civilian control over the military in Eastern Europe was the civilian democratic elites' interest in joining NATO and the EU, which provided a powerful incentive to reform civil-military relations that was absent in other regions (Croissant and Kuehn 2011: 232). With the exception of Yugoslavia the peaceful nature of political transition further facilitated civilian control because civilians did not have to rely on the military in order to establish the new politico-economic order. Finally, the civilian institutions continued to enjoy high degrees of legitimacy throughout the transition process, such that the military could not have justified an autonomous political role for itself (Mares 1998).

In Latin America, the end of the anti-regime wars in Central America and the decline of the revolutionary movements in the Cono Sur have enabled the military's withdrawal from politics as much as the post-1980 changes in Washington's policy towards the region. In addition, the often conflictuous relationship between the President and Congress, which in the past had triggered military coups in many Latin American countries, today are settled either within constitutionally sanctioned procedures, through cross-party negotiations, or by public mass mobilizations without military involvement (Pérez-Liñan 2007). Finally, the low (but recently increasing) trust of most Latin American citizens into their armed forces has strengthened the position of civilian elites vis-à-vis the military (Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005).

In Asia, on the other hand, the situation is less clear-cut. In most countries in the region, the military continues to be the most highly trusted public institution, while the weakness of democratic institutions, political parties, and civil society lead to repeated cycles of political violence. In countries such as Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan, this allows military officers to assume the position of power broker and expand their political influence while hampering the strengthening of civilian control (Barracca 2007; Croissant *et al.* 2013).

Overall, the recent scholarship suggests three important conclusions concerning the reasons for the success or failure of civil-military reforms in new democracies. The first is that the acceptance of the democratic institutions by the political elites and the mass public is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for successful civil-military reforms. Where democratic norms and procedures are supported by broad segments of the citizenry, and where civilian elites are unified in the goal of keeping the military out of politics, the institutionalization of civilian control is possible. Where there is no agreement between political parties to not seek the military's support for their respective stances, it is extremely difficult to implement reforms for civilian control over the military (Serra 2010: 239).

Second, contrary to earlier traditions of civil-military relations theory (e.g. Huntington 1957, 1995), the existence of pro-democratic norms and values *within* the military seems not to be a necessary condition for the establishment of civilian control in new democracies. While there is wide agreement in the literature that in the long run stable democratic civil-military relations can only be guaranteed if the military accepts the norm of civilian supremacy (Cottey *et al.* 2002; Taylor 2003), in new democracies such intra-military normative consensus on the subordination to civilian leadership still has to develop (Barany 2012). In the short to medium term, the military's acceptance of civilian control in new democracies is the result of rational calculations of the military leadership and depends on the establishment of effective institutions such as formal rules, regulations and bureaucratic agencies of civilian authority, and oversight in all relevant policy matters including defense and military policy (Agüero 1995; Hunter 1998; Feaver 2003;

Croissant *et al.* These institutions reduce the military's propensity for "shirking" by reducing the civil-military information asymmetry and raising the costs for military insubordination. The military's self-interest and the civilians' ability to reward loyalty to the democratic regime and punish insubordination also explain the military's behavior during the transition and in the civilians' attempt to make use of, establish, or strengthen these institutions of civilian control: This will only occur if civilians are able "to co-opt, recruit, or intimidate a sufficiently large number of military officers into supporting the government's agenda so as to prevent the armed forces from acting cohesively to oppose civilian control in a new democracy" (Trinkunas 2005: 10).

Third, the differences between countries such as Indonesia or Chile, which despite unfavorable initial conditions have made significant if incomplete advances toward robust civilian control, suggest that the development of civil-military relations in new democracies is not determined by the initial conditions during and after the transition from authoritarian rule. Democratic transitions are rather characterized by "structured contingency" (Schmitter and Karl 1991), which allows for political entrepreneurship. The political will and ability of civilian decision-makers to strategically engage the military are, therefore, crucial for their chances to challenge the military's political prerogatives (Trinkunas 2005). This has important implications for theory-building in the field of civil-military relations research, which we will address in the conclusion of this chapter.

Studying civil-military relations in established democracies

The study of civil-military relations in established democracies such as the United States and in Western Europe is not so much concerned with the institutionalization of effective mechanisms of civilian control. Instead, it is premised that in these regimes the hierarchical relationship between the civilian "principal" and the military "agent" (Feaver 2003) is normatively and factually accepted by both sides of the civil-military equation. The main questions of interest in this body of research are how civil-military relations play out within the confines of established institutions of civilian control, and what explains civil-military conflict and cooperation in established democracies. As noted, the literature on the military in established democracies is strongly skewed. Most studies focus on civil-military relations in the United States. Moreover, the literature on civil-military relations beyond North America tends to be weaker in terms of theoretical reflection and innovation, and is often more strongly policy-oriented than its American counterpart (Nelson 2002). Consequently, we will focus our attention on literature that is concerned primarily with civil-military relations in the United States in the following.

For more than four decades, research on American civil-military relations was overshadowed by Huntington's seminal work, *The Soldier and the State* (Huntington 1957), in which he proposed the "objective" model of civilian control, which clearly separates civilian and military spheres of responsibility, and maximizes military professionalism. Soon after its publication, Huntington's theory had become the analytical and ideological point of reference for both researchers and practitioners of civil-military relations (Feaver and Seeler 2009), despite serious criticisms of its underlying assumptions, logic of argumentation, and policy conclusions (e.g. Bruneau 2012).

It was only in the 1990s that the Huntingtonian paradigm of military professionalism and "objective control" of the military was successfully challenged by a new and innovative "wave" of research that combined more robust empirical evidence against his theorem with alternative analytical approaches and theoretical models. Next to the ongoing dissatisfaction with the

explanatory power of Huntington's theorem, the renewed interest in U.S. civil-military relations was motivated by real-world events, most notably the end of the Cold War and the resulting re-calibration of the U.S. military's goals and missions, the ongoing "revolution in military affairs," and particularly the—at least perceived—"crisis of civil-military relations" (Kohn 1994) under the Clinton administration (1993–2001), which some observers have identified as the most contentious period of civil-military relations in American history (Kohn 2002).

In his book *Armed Servants*, Peter Feaver (2003) highlights the inability of Huntington's theory to explain American civil-military relations after World War II. Instead of a clear separation between civilian and military spheres, civil-military relations were characterized by a "convergence" of civilian and military roles and the intrusion of civilians into military affairs. Consequently, Feaver proposes an alternative theoretical explanation. His game theoretic model of the day-to-day interactions between civilians and military leaders assumes that the degree of civil-military friction and the military's propensity to violate civilians' demands in a specific conflict of interest depend mainly on the civilians' willingness and ability to monitor the military and punish its misbehavior, and on the severity of the conflict of interest: the more intrusive the civilians' oversight over the military, the higher the likely costs of punishment for military "shirking," and the smaller the differences between civilian and military interests, the greater the chance that the military will do as the civilians wanted, and the more harmonious civil-military relations will be. Feaver's empirical analyses of civil-military relations in the Cold War, and in the post-1990 "crises" under the Clinton administration, demonstrate the explanatory power of his argument. Following his model, the "crisis" in the 1990s can be explained by the increasingly severe civil-military clash of interests regarding the core military reforms on force restructuring and reduction of troops, the expansion of military roles and missions to include non-traditional missions, and the inclusion of homosexuals in the military, all of which were interpreted as deep incisions into the military's core sphere of expertise and autonomy. At the same time, President Clinton suffered from idiosyncratic weaknesses of authority vis-à-vis the military while the military was led by a strongly charismatic and popularly supported Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell, which reduced the willingness and ability of civilians to monitor the military intrusively and punish military transgressions.

A different theoretical argument was proposed by Michael Desch (1999) to explain the significant changes in civil-military relations in the United States after the end of the Cold War. Similar to Feaver, Desch is mainly interested in the causes of civil-military conflict within the confines of the robustly established institutions of civilian control in the U.S., and he agrees that both the conflict of interests and the concrete mode of civilian oversight and direction of military activities are important for civil-military relations. Different than in Feaver's model, however, Desch stresses that civil-military frictions are determined mainly by structural factors, which civilians and military leaders cannot easily influence: the severity of external (international) and internal (domestic) threats the state is facing. According to Desch, civil-military relations will be harmonious if external threats are high and internal threats are low, because the interests of civilian and military elites will converge toward the common goal of defending the state against the external aggression. In a situation of low external threats and high internal threats, in contrast, civil-military relations will be contentious, as there is no external incentive to "rally round the flag," and civilian elites will split and jockey for the military's political support, while the military can exploit politically its increasing importance for the regime elites to uphold social order and regime survival. While the internal threat dimension remained inconsequential for the U.S. all through the twentieth century, Desch identifies the end of the Cold War as the crucial turning point in civil-military relations: With the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States lost its clearly defined external threat, which not only incited conflicts about the military's future

missions, but also made room for the Clinton administration to challenge the military's policies on homosexuals without having to fear that civil-military frictions would endanger national security.

A third, sociological explanation for the worsening of U.S. civil-military relations in the post-Cold War era argues that civil-military conflicts were the expression of a cultural gap between civilian and military elites. Following this thesis, the establishment of the all-volunteer force in the 1970s, the lack of military experience among civilian political leaders, value changes in the American society, and the increasing isolation from civilian society of the military have led to an increasing and self-reinforcing divergence of norms and values between civilian and military, which, in turn, led to the drastic instances of civil-military conflict (Kohn 2002). Different than Feaver's and Desch's explanations, however, the "gap" thesis is neither built on convincing theoretical foundations, nor corroborated empirically (Feaver and Kohn 2001). Research using a survey-based dataset prepared and administered by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies in 1998/1999 does identify diverging political attitudes between civilians and soldiers, with significantly larger shares of military officers than civilians expressing socially conservative values, preferring the denial of access to the military for homosexuals, and sharing the political positions of the Republican Party. At the same time, these studies cannot show convincingly how the existing cultural "gap" was related to the observable conflicts between civilians and the military. In fact, concerning the most crucial questions related to civil-military relations and the subordination of the military under civilian authority, the survey results show remarkable degrees of agreement between civilians and military officers (Feaver and Kohn 2001; Szayna *et al.* 2007).

Conclusion

The last five decades or so of research on the political role of the military have produced important insights on political-military relations in different regime settings. However, a number of oversights and lacunae remain in the literature that should be addressed in future research. In this, we see three broad areas in which progress will be particularly productive for the accumulation of knowledge in the research field. The first pertains to the degree of theoretical development. Past research on the military's political role has been criticized repeatedly for its tendency to ignore the theoretical progress made in the broader social science disciplines (Pion-Berlin 2001). In addition, the lack of theoretical development in the field is attributed to the dominant modes of theorizing in civil-military relations research, which is characterized by inductive generalization of case study findings, and the attempt to identify individual causally relevant factors, without theorizing the processes of actors' agency that link these factors to the outcomes to be explained (Feaver 1996). Of course, these characterizations are extremely broad-stroked as there are considerable differences within the field. Recent research on military coups, for instance, is theoretically highly developed and derives its propositions from clearly specified theoretical models of the political interactions of civilian and military elites (Acemoglu *et al.* 2009; Svobik 2012). Similarly, and as noted, scholars of civil-military relations in established and new democracies have taken up arguments from the new institutionalism (Avant 1994; Pion-Berlin 1997), International Relations structuralism (Desch 1999), and game theory (Feaver 2003), and have proposed integrated theories that include convincing causal mechanisms. In general, however, the field would benefit greatly from being more receptive to the innovations of the broader disciplines of social science, and paying greater attention to clearly specified causal mechanisms as it would allow the integration and comparative evaluation of the hitherto unconnected and ultimately untestable plethora of "partial theories" (Kennedy and Louscher 1991) and "theoretical eclecticism, sometimes bordering on anarchy" (Fitch 1977: 206). In addition, much more

conclusive tests of the arguments, as from complete causal arguments that integrate arguments on both causal effects of structural variables and the causal mechanisms of human agency hypotheses can be derived for a number of different analytical levels, which can be tested with a variety of methodological tools (Kuehn and Lorenz 2011).

Of course, consolidating the body of theory and improving the quality of explanatory frameworks will remain meaningless if they are not coupled with solid empirical testing. However, in the past, the field has often suffered from narrow methodological approaches and the focus on a few select geographical regions. Concerning the former, much empirical research on the political role of the military has been limited to case studies and small-n comparative analyses. Systematic, inter-regional comparisons of political-military relations are rare. Large-N, cross-national studies play a role only in the subfield of coup studies (Belkin and Schofer 2003; Powell 2012a), but even here methodological innovations such as fuzzy-set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin 2000), and the systematic combination of large-n methods and case studies (Lieberman 2005) are mostly absent. Moreover, recent innovations in qualitative and case study methodology (Brady and Collier 2010) have not been adopted in the field. In addition, research on the political role of the military has suffered from its limited geographical breadth and sampling variance. For example, research on political-military relations in authoritarian regimes has mainly focused on the military regimes of Latin America, while the states of the former Soviet Union (except Russia), Africa, and the Middle East are mostly unstudied. The same is true for research on civil-military relations in new democracies: there are a large number of studies on the former Latin American military dictatorships and the former communist regimes of Eastern Europe, while we still know little on the establishment and consolidation of civilian control in the new democracies of Asia and Africa. Finally, and as noted, the study of civil-military relations in established democracies has been mainly focused on the U.S. and a small number of European countries, with military sociologists accounting for the few truly comparative studies (Moskos, *et al.* 2000; Caforio 2006). Together, these characteristics have limited the conclusiveness of empirical analyses, and hampered the accumulation of robustly tested and general theoretical knowledge on the political role of the military in various regime types. In order to address these shortcomings, future research should, for one thing, broaden its methodological perspective, open itself up to methodological innovations and make use of the whole toolkit of social science methods, both qualitative and quantitative. For another thing, future research should consciously address civil-military relations in hitherto understudied cases and regions in order to broaden the empirical basis of our theories.

A third suggestion for future research would be to further open up the agenda of civil-military research to understudied research questions. In this, we see two particularly promising topics. First, scholars should pay closer attention to political-military relations in authoritarian regimes, especially in the “new” forms of non-democratic rule that have developed after the end of the Cold War, e.g. “electoral authoritarian” or “hybrid” regimes. It is substantively important to comprehend how electoral authoritarian leaders maintain their militaries’ cooperation, in order to fully understand the internal dynamics of these regimes and their likelihood to withstand crises, such as the recent mass protests in the Arab world. However, as noted, this research is still in its infancy, such that researchers are likely to make a meaningful and original contribution even if they focus their research on a limited set of cases. The second agenda in which we see great future potential treats the military’s political role as the independent variable and asks for the effects of political-military relations and the mechanisms of political control on various aspects of politics and public policy in authoritarian and democratic regimes, including the ability of dictators to generate output legitimacy and stabilize their rule (Croissant and Wurster 2013), and the complex interplay and potential trade-offs between the degree and concrete

mechanisms of civilian control, and military effectiveness and efficiency (Bruneau 2012). All this suggests that the military's political role will remain a substantively important and intellectually rewarding research topic in the foreseeable future.

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