

Introduction



On May 23, 2003, Order No. 2 of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the U.S.-dominated transitional government that oversaw postwar Iraq in 2003–2004, disbanded the entire Iraqi armed forces. This was a controversial decision for a number of reasons. While the Ba’ath regime was uniformly hated in Kurdistan and amongst the population in southern Iraq, the military—a conscript army with a large proportion of Shia Muslim draftees and Sunni officers—had enjoyed considerable sympathy and respect in the rest of the country.¹ The dismissal of the Iraqi army created an alarming security and public safety vacuum; produced a large pool of trained, armed, humiliated, and desperate men for whom joining the anti-American insurgency became a logical choice; and destroyed the only national institution in a deeply divided society, an institution that could have actively participated in postwar reconstruction. Indeed, Order No. 2 has been called “one of the greatest errors in the history of U.S. warfare.”²

It was the abolition of the Iraqi army that motivated me to write this book because it aroused my curiosity not so much about what went wrong in Iraq but about the challenges and necessary conditions of building and rebuilding armed forces that would become the loyal servants of democracies. Order No. 2 raised a number of questions regarding the military in changing political environments. Is there ever a good reason to dismiss an entire army? How should democratizers treat the traditions, histories, and cultural factors of the old army? What political-institutional safeguards can state-builders utilize to ensure the military’s reliability? How important are military elites’ political preferences in determining the outcome of regime change in general and of democratic consolidation in particular?

MAIN ARGUMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Developing civil-military relations that are marked by the army’s steadfast support of democratic rule is an indispensable prerequisite without which the democratization project itself cannot succeed. The regular armed forces are one of the most important institutions states maintain; this is especially

so in the case of nondemocratic polities. Because the majority of such states enjoy little popular legitimacy, they must rely on the agents of coercion of which the most powerful and comprehensive is the military establishment. What to do with these institutions in a democratizing sociopolitical environment? How to build a democratic army—that is to say an army that supports democratic governance, *not* one or another political party? One quickly realizes that the answers to these questions largely depend on the sort of political and social foundations upon which democratic armies are to be built.

I started to read what has been written about armies and democratization and found very little that deeply addresses the questions that have arisen about Iraq and militaries in other states experiencing profound political change. A number of leading democratization scholars recognize the imperative of creating democratic armies and accept it as a critical condition of democratic consolidation but they seldom identify let alone discuss the principal issues involved. For instance, Adam Przeworski writes that the army must be placed in an “institutional framework of civilian control over the military [that] constitutes a neuralgic point of democratic consolidation”³ but does not engage the subject further. Robert Dahl argues that wherever military and police forces exist they should be controlled by civilians, and their civilian controllers themselves must be subject to the democratic process, but aside from brief reflections on the military and democracy in ancient Greece and Rome, he does not develop these insights.⁴ And Dahl, like other major figures of comparative politics who study democratization, does not locate an army supportive of democratic rule as a crucial prerequisite of democratization. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with a large number of countries democratizing, Nancy Bermeo, Alfred Stepan, and others observed the “surprisingly little attention in the transition literature” to the study of the military.⁵ Since then the situation has not changed drastically.

To be sure, there are many studies that describe defense reform in different democratizing states. Some more ambitious works, mostly edited collections by groups of authors, have analyzed the same process on a larger scale, comparing the democratization of military establishments in two or more countries of the same region. Insightful single-country and regional analyses like these are indispensable building blocks of an even more general study that aspires to understand democratizing armies and civil-military relations across regions. In short, the scholarly and more popular literature on democratization is both wide and deep, but no broad, cross-regional comparative study exists that explains how armies and civil-military relations are transformed to serve democratic rule.

Although he has not written such a work either, the shadow of Samuel Huntington looms large over this endeavor, for no other scholar practicing

the art of general comparative politics was more aware of the central role of the armed forces in the modern state. Actually, three of Huntington's classic studies are directly relevant to my book. *The Soldier and the State*⁶ remains, more than fifty-five years after its publication, the landmark statement on modern civil-military relations, one of my key substantive concerns here. The notion of political development is central to the question of what happens to armies during regime change and state formation, so I felt compelled to re-read *Political Order in Changing Societies*.⁷ The book in the Huntingtonian oeuvre that speaks most clearly to this volume, however, is *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*,⁸ the only general assessment of democratization that places the importance of democratizing armies in its proper perspective. Although merely twenty-some pages of *The Third Wave* deal exclusively with the armed forces, throughout the book its author is sensitive to the various challenges that confront those attempting to democratize the military establishment. Huntington did not systematically examine the various political contexts in which democratic armies may be built and he did not produce a comprehensive comparative study evaluating the record of democratizers in these areas, but these were not his objectives.

In sum, there is a long-standing, yawning hole both in the academic and the policy-oriented literature concerning the evolution of military politics in changing states. Only a broadly comparative study that encompasses the different political environments and geographic regions in which democracies may take root can generate the proper appreciation and explanation of the critical necessity as well as the tasks and challenges of building democratic armies. My goal is to fill this gap and to answer some of the important questions that occurred to me as I watched America's efforts in Iraq unravel after the abolition of the Iraqi army.

In this book I will make three principal arguments. First, my central claim is that *democracy cannot be consolidated without military elites committed to democratic rule and obedient to democratically elected political elites*. Put differently, *the political preferences of military elites determine whether democratic consolidation is possible*. "Good" militaries are a necessary, if insufficient, condition of democratization. Regimes undergoing systemic political transitions are particularly vulnerable to domestic instability and threats posed by foreign actors. Whether fledgling democracies encounter dangers that originate from within or from abroad, they need armed forces that obey the commands of the emerging civilian authorities. All polities require at least the passive support of their military elites; for transitioning states, however, this need is even more acute.

Second, *building democratic armies is more difficult to accomplish in some contexts than others. The political and socioeconomic settings in which democratic armies must be built are different and thus pose dissimilar*

challenges to those crafting democratic armies and civil-military relations. Though this point may sound fairly obvious, it ought to be made in view of the insistence of some experts that seeking to build a universal theory of democratization and civil-military relations is a worthwhile pursuit.

Third, *numerous generalizations can be made to help understand the transformation of military politics in different environments* (say, in the wake of civil wars or after communism). *Nevertheless, providing substantive and useful explanations for civil-military relations in such diverse political and socioeconomic environments is virtually impossible for a general theory.* “It would be cruel to recall,” the French political scientist, Alain Rouquié, observed, “the number of carefully documented theories and definitive judgments that history has suddenly refuted and destroyed.”⁹ The great diversity in empirical experiences discourages ambitions of devising “grand theories” beyond my main contention that military elites decisively influence the course of democratization. In the field of civil-military relations we should champion theoretical flexibility and support a variety of approaches with more modest claims but enhanced utility.

Democratization and, thus, the building of democratic armies, usually commences in response to a major change that shocks the political system and sets it on a new path. The pivotal event may have been a long time coming (such as the British hand-over of its colonies to native peoples) or triggered in response to exogenous causes (such as the beginning of democratic transition in foreign, often neighboring, countries). Scholars of historical institutionalism refer to these events as “formative moments” or “critical junctures,” when the path of an organization or institution is set, confirmed, or changed.¹⁰

In this book, I consider three contexts that follow such formative moments: after war, during regime change, and following state formation. I will study each of them in two different settings, as I shall refer to them in the balance of the book. Wars, particularly the two kinds of wars I privilege in this study—cataclysmic wars such as World War II, and civil wars—typically upset the status quo and induce major political changes that include the rebuilding of the armed forces. In the case of major wars, I am addressing the losing side, the country that suffered a devastating defeat. Regime change is another principal reason for building new armies. The old authoritarian regime—here I look at military and communist regimes—was, by definition, supported by antidemocratic armed forces that must be reformed in order to be the servants of the emerging democratic political order. Finally, state transformation poses another sort of demand for a new military. The two subcategories of state transformation I take up in this study are those following colonialism, when a former colony becomes one or more independent state(s), and after (re)unification or apartheid, when two different po-

litical or social entities are joined. Let us briefly consider the three contexts, six settings, and twenty-seven cases of the study.

I. War

- A. Following total defeat in *a major war*: Germany, Japan, and Hungary
- B. After *civil war*: Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Lebanon

II. Regime Change

- A. After *military rule*
 - 1. in Europe: Spain, Portugal, and Greece
 - 2. in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala
 - 3. in Asia: South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia
- B. Following *communism*: Slovenia, Russia, and Romania

III. State Transformation

- A. After *colonialism*
 - 1. in Asia: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh
 - 2. in Africa: Ghana, Tanzania, and Botswana
- B. Post-(re)unification and *apartheid*: Germany, Yemen, and South Africa

Some key disparities between these environments appear even at first glance. For instance, after defeat in a major war, outside power(s) took on the responsibility to build new armed forces. External influence was also considerable in the postcolonial and post-civil war cases, but in the others the project of building democratic armies was managed mostly internally. And, of course, integrating parts of East Germany's armed forces into the West German *Bundeswehr* and establishing an army free of racial discrimination after white supremacist rule in South Africa presented challenges not experienced elsewhere. The number of contexts might be further increased or subdivided but they are broad enough to present most of the different challenges political, military, and civic elites face as they attempt to democratize their armed forces and, more generally, military politics.

In order to focus the inquiry, I pursue explanations to three general questions:

1. Which pre-democratic settings (state-socialism, colonial rule, etc.) are more conducive to the successful democratization of military politics and why?
2. Should democratizing states dismantle what exists (the old army) first and build from the ground up or should they attempt to integrate the old structures and personnel into the new? Under what conditions?

3. What are the main variables (conditions, policies) that encourage the development of democratic civil-military relations and which ones impede it?

Clearly, it is not possible to answer these queries without detailed knowledge of the relevant countries and their armed forces. In particular, we need to understand the role of the armed forces in the fall of the old regime and how that role influenced the military's post-transition behavior. What are the specific issues encountered while building new armed forces in the given political setting that are different from other settings and cases? What are the concerns unique to the particular countries examined? Under what conditions can civilian authorities utilize the armed forces in a domestic contingency? What institutional arrangements have been implemented? Are outside actors important in shaping the new army—and if so, in what way? We will be able to answer these queries in the conclusion.

Obviously, it does not make sense to consider *all* these variables in every case, and concerns that are essential in one context may be irrelevant in another. On the whole, though, these questions will help to train our sights on issues that matter and to focus on particular problems, such as where country X went wrong and what requirements for constructing democratic armies were absent in country Y, thus preventing its democratic development. At the end of each empirical chapter I summarize my findings in a table that systematically evaluates the relevant variables for the three countries in that particular setting.¹¹

CASE SELECTION AND CHRONOLOGICAL COVERAGE

To evaluate the arguments and to engage the questions I seek to answer, I illustrate them using the experiences of countries in different contexts. Above I identified three of these (after war, regime change, and state transformation) and six settings—that is, postwar, post-civil war, postpraetorian, post-communist, postcolonial, post-(re)unification/desegregation—but elected to write nine case-study chapters for a couple of reasons. First, after World War II so many states in different regions of the world endured military rule or became independent that it seemed like shortchanging the subject to restrict the analysis to single postpraetorian and postcolonial chapters. Second, military regimes and colonial administrations (even by the same colonial power) were very dissimilar in different regions and so were the regimes that followed them. Therefore, I decided to devote separate chapters

to postpraetorian Southern Europe, Latin America, and East Asia, and to postcolonial South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In selecting the individual cases I wanted to do justice to both methodological rigor and flexibility, though in some cases the decision was dictated by sheer necessity.¹² In any event, my main concern was to introduce the reader not only to “crucial” cases but also to portray some outliers whose atypical experiences enrich the analysis in different ways.¹³ For each chapter, then, whenever possible, I chose two main examples that demonstrate the range of experiences—that is, cases that may be considered either successes or failures *or* that produce similar outcomes for different reasons and in different ways. So, for instance, on the one hand, my cases for the postwar context are West Germany and Japan, two political systems in which firm civilian control over the new armed forces was successfully established, but, despite the many similarities of these two countries, there are important differences. On the other hand, for the postcolonial South Asian setting, India and Pakistan practically offered themselves as obvious choices given that they possess a parallel historical background of imperial rule and yet have turned out so differently. Furthermore, I chose to expand the analysis by looking at a third case in every setting whenever possible. Although I devote less attention to these “secondary” cases, I conclude that they exhibited certain atypical attributes or their experiences were more distinctive and thus looking at them yielded new insights and expanded our comparative vistas.

In the postwar context, I selected Hungary as a secondary case because of its interesting features and drastically different experience from Germany and Japan. While Hungary was Hitler’s last ally, major domestic political forces there keenly desired a democratic future after the war. Nonetheless, the decisive role regarding the future of the Hungarian state and its armed forces was played by a foreign power, the Soviet Union, and the Hungarian experience with the USSR provides an interesting contrast to the two primary cases of the chapter. It shows how different outcomes can be when the state that dominates the reform of the armed forces is not a democracy—as the United States and its allies in the German and Japanese cases—but a totalitarian dictatorship.

I decided to study how new armies were built in post-civil war environments in three relatively well-known and recent cases: Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Lebanon. Differences in the causes of these civil wars, in their paths to the peace treaties, in the involvement of foreign states and organizations, and in their political traditions all suggested appealing opportunities for substantive comparison. In particular, I wanted to consider a case in which the civil war that preceded democratization was based

on ethno-religious divisions (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and another where the hostilities were produced by political and socioeconomic disparities (El Salvador). Lebanon presented itself as an intriguing secondary case for a number of reasons, most obviously because there exists, aside from the regular military, another armed force in the country, Hezbollah's army, that is viewed as legitimate by a large part of the citizenry.

In the next section of the book we will study the reform of civil-military relations in settings following regime change. We will start with Southern Europe, which had three praetorian or military-dominant polities in the post-World War II era. Though neither Spain nor Portugal was what many experts would call typical of military rule, each was governed by long-lasting authoritarian regimes at roughly the same period of time. In both Iberian states the military was a highly influential political institution for decades, and democratization posed challenges comparable to those in other post-praetorian regimes. The Greek colonels' brief reign is a classic example of military rule and seemed like an appropriate secondary case.

In the Latin American context, Argentina was an obvious choice of a military regime that compiled a poor record of governance and a terrible legacy of human rights violations. On the other hand, both the Chilean and the Brazilian generals were in a strong position when democratization began: they built up reasonably strong economic records, they retained the support of a significant part of the electorate, and, consequently they were in a relatively advantageous bargaining position when negotiating their own withdrawal from politics. Because of these similarities, dropping one of them (Brazil) and including, as a secondary case, the more unusual example of postpraetorian army-building in Guatemala promised to augment the analysis. In the same vein, South Korea and Thailand are cases that show what can go right and wrong, respectively, with the democratization of civil-military relations while Indonesia, for a number of reasons, offers valuable lessons quite different from the other two countries.

Since 1989 nearly three dozen postcommunist states have attempted to build democratic armies. I selected Slovenia and Russia as my primary cases, and Romania as a secondary one. Slovenia epitomizes the postcommunist success story in many ways, including the establishment of democratic armed forces, while Russia, following a couple of hope-filled years settled on an authoritarian political track, a trajectory well traceable from the civil-military-relations aspect as well. Both of these states were part of larger federations but while Slovenia was the smallest of the former Yugoslav republics and had to sit idly by as Serbia divided strategic assets, Russia was the largest member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and in position to set the terms of splitting property and equipment. Romania's

experience is unique because it signifies the only instance where the collapse of state-socialism in a unitary state was accompanied by large-scale violence with the army's participation and where political elites succeeded in constructing democratic civil-military relations in spite of some false starts and setbacks early on.

The third context we will be studying is the transformation of not just the regime but the state itself. We will consider two main categories of state change, the emerging new independent state in the wake of colonialism on the one hand, and the integration of two political entities, two former states in the case of unification or reunification and of two or more social groups following the apartheid regime on the other. In South Asia, Bangladesh appears to be a logical secondary case given that it was a part first of British India (along with India and Pakistan) and, after partition until 1971, Pakistan itself. This distinctive background practically begged for an explanation of the trajectory of post-independence Bangladeshi military politics. In the chapter on postcolonial Africa I settled on countries that were under predominantly British colonial rule—both to facilitate library and field research and to enhance their comparability with the South Asian cases. I selected Ghana, which endured a variety of praetorian governments, and Tanzania, which has never been subjected to military rule. I decided on Botswana as my secondary example because it had a very different experience both with British rule and with developing an army after independence, given that it did not have one until 1977.

In terms of transforming military establishments after the unification of two states, the choices were clear: Germans and Yemenis became the citizens of one state following decades of separation during the Cold War. (While Germany was reunified, the Yemeni case is one of unification, since no unitary Yemeni state existed prior to 1990.) The profound differences between these two cases undoubtedly render them less comparable than might be desirable. Still, issues such as how political elites approached processes of reunification and how they dealt with the dominant position of one military force versus the much weaker other divulge interesting contrasts. I included South Africa in this chapter because while nothing like the unification along the German or Yemeni lines took place there, in an important sense South African society and its armed forces were brought together. In this respect, then, all three militaries were integrated, although, to be sure, in rather different ways. Even though the South African case cannot offer a strictly comparative dimension, it may nonetheless reward our attention with insights of a different sort.

I placed all my cases in the post-World War II era. I could have chosen different historical periods—say, some nineteenth-century Latin American

countries for the postcolonial setting or the United States for the post-Civil War context—but it seemed prudent to embrace the one major commonality among an all too disparate set of states. All of my cases were affected by the Cold War and its aftermath one way or another. Another variable I considered relates to the time period for the treatment of individual case studies. Clearly, to cover the entire democratic era of Germany or Japan would make little sense as it would not significantly contribute to the book's objectives. Even cursory treatments of the case studies' entire post-transition histories would result in a tome that no publisher would want to publish and, quite possibly, no reader would want to read. What I am particularly concerned with is the process of establishing armies in changing polities and not the history of civil-military relations in any given state.

The matter to resolve, then, was how to establish a cutoff point, that is to say, where to stop the narrative. Such a date offers itself quite conveniently in some cases (say, NATO's membership invitation to Slovenia and Romania) but in other settings it is not nearly so evident. For instance, the end of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War and the subsequent resignation of President Yahya Khan seems a reasonable juncture at which to conclude the story on Pakistan, but in 1973, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced important reforms that have affected Pakistani military politics ever since. India, on the other hand, firmly established a legal and institutional environment for its civil-military relations soon after independence in which no transformative changes have transpired for decades. Setting a hard and fast rule to standardize coverage (such as the first decade of democratization) would be a disservice to the analysis; it makes more sense to consider the issue on a case-by-case basis.

OBJECTIVES AND CAVEATS

This book features twenty-seven case studies and my main ambition is not to reveal astounding new findings about individual countries to experts who spent their careers studying the military politics of, say, Japan, Portugal, or Tanzania. Entire volumes have been devoted not only to the military politics of each of my case studies but in many instances to various aspects of the civil-military relations of that case. Naturally, I am building on the accumulated wisdom of my past and contemporary colleagues as it is imparted in their books, articles, and in our discussions. Rather, I have two main objectives:

First, I want to show that building democratic civil-military relations may be the most fundamental prerequisite of the transition to and the consolida-

tion of democracy. Along the way I hope to offer the reader concise accounts of the post-regime-change military politics of my cases. Second, through the case studies, I want to illustrate how different the political contexts are when democratic armies are built, so that the reader can appreciate the divergent tasks and challenges for political and military elites. To be sure, we will identify several patterns among the three different contexts and across geographical regions. For example, we will learn that drawing the legislature into deliberations on defense affairs usually improves civil-military relations or that the out-going military government's record will go far in determining the generals' bargaining position vis-à-vis the civilian successor regime. Still, at the end of the day, I agree with Narcís Serra's contention that "no theoretical model exists which can explain these kinds of processes and anticipate outcomes."¹⁴

I also wish to state at the outset what is beyond the aspirations of this book. Within the framework of this study, I do not have the opportunity to concentrate on important matters like defense doctrines, strategies, tactics, weapons systems, debates on nuclear weapons and their proliferation, or alliance politics except to the extent that they directly bear on the democratization of military politics. The field of civil-military relations is rightly considered to be at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations but since in most democratization processes domestic political considerations outweigh international ones, even in the case of democratizing military establishments, I view this book primarily as a contribution to comparative politics.

Two terminological caveats need to be entered here. I am well aware that, strictly speaking, "democratic army" may sound like an oxymoron since armed forces are inherently hierarchical and nondemocratic institutions. Military personnel do not vote for their superiors, and their compliance with orders is seldom optional. I want to underscore that by "democratic armies" I mean *armies that are supportive of democratic rule*. Similarly, when I speak of "democratic civil-military relations" I am referring to the triangular nexus between state, society, and the armed forces that rests on democratic principles. Second, for stylistic reasons I use the terms "army," "armed forces," and "military" interchangeably. In instances when I refer specifically to the army as the land-based force—as opposed to the air force, navy, or some other branch of service—I make that unambiguous.

Finally, I am mindful of the ideological partiality of this book. To say that "more democracy is a good and desirable objective" is to take an ideological position. I make no apologies for taking this position and I wish to register my pro-democracy bias at the outset.

A ROAD MAP TO THE BOOK

Chapter 1 invites the reader to think seriously about the armed forces as an institution, its place in the state, and its role in politics and society. To understand how democratic armies may be developed and the complexity of the tasks and challenges involved, we ought to be acquainted with the armed forces as a political institution and civil-military relations as an important component of the universe in which the myriad of political and societal interactions occur that make up politics in the modern state. This is a vast subject and the scope of the chapter does not permit an exhaustive examination of many arguably relevant issues. My objectives are limited to sorting out the essential normative, theoretical, and empirical concerns pertaining to the building of democratic armies. The principal dilemma a potent military force poses for the state—it has to be strong enough to protect the state and yet it must not be tempted to destroy the state—already occupied thinkers in ancient Greece. I will briefly explain what they and their successors elsewhere thought about the matter, note some germane theoretical contributions to the study of military politics and democratization, and then outline the basic standards and institutional arrangements of democratic civil-military relations.

Chapters 2 through 10 are empirical chapters organized by the three contexts that provide the impetus for democratization. In these chapters my goal is to explain how democratic armies are built and civil-military relations are developed in a wide variety of environments, to contrast the experiences of individual countries, to assess the differences between the six settings, and to find answers to the questions posed above. I did not impose on myself a unitary chapter outline because I wished to save the book from turning into a dreary checklist and to allow the topics and specific settings to influence the layout of individual chapters. Having said this, in all the chapters, I summarize the main contours of military politics prior to the beginning of the transition process so we can have a sense of their points of departure. Furthermore, I offer a background sketch on the particular cases so that once the analysis moves to specific questions, the reader will be familiar with the essential attributes of the countries in question.

For the most part, the empirical chapters consist of comparative analyses of civil-military relations structured by the relevant research questions. I try to find the answers to some of the same questions (e.g., is there institutionally balanced civilian control over the armed forces? are there organizations of politically independent expertise on defense issues?) in every chapter, though to a degree the issues I take on are specific to the given context. For instance, deciding what traditions to maintain from the legacies of the

colonial army would be a relevant concern in the newly independent states of Africa and South Asia but not in postpraetorian Latin America. In the last part of each empirical chapter I will reiterate the main differences and similarities between the individual cases, how we can account for them, and, as noted above, sum up our findings in a comparative table.

In the conclusion I want to compare not so much the individual cases but, rather, to learn from the contrasts that have emerged from the six different settings we examined. In other words, my objective is to draw all the strings together and summarize what we have learned from the book. I will review what we have discovered about the importance of the armed forces as a politically relevant institution of the modern state, the major findings yielded by the comparative analysis, and the lessons they hold for democracy activists and policy-makers. I conclude with a set of policy recommendations that those interested in the democratization of the armed forces and military politics should find valuable.