## THE SUI GENERIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ELITES

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#### Abstract:

The relationship between civilian political authority and the armed forces has always been a scholarly endeavour in both democratic developed nations and the developing states that try to get democratized. This paper aims to analyze the issue of militarism and civil-military relationship as a concept from a comparative perspective. Following different theoretical models of civil-military relations, this paper adopts a comparative methodological perspective among different countries. It is argued that militarism makes it hard to recognize the boundaries between what can be seen in the scope of the military and what can be seen as part of the civilian political sphere. Thus it is an important concept while studying democratization literature as well. The politicization of the military elites follows different paths in different contexts emerging from a diversity of factors. This paper also explore these factors in a comparative way. The historical, political, and societal parameters all have a role in shaping civil-military relations. These factors have different impacts in different countries.

**Keywords:** civil-military relations, imperialist militarism, military coup, military intervention, veto coup, guardian coup.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study tries to highlight the basic premises of civil-military relations regarding historical, economic, and political contexts. In other words, under what political and economic conditions the civil-military relations have evolved through history will be analyzed. As known, civil-military relations are not similar in different regions in the world. For example, Latin America's experiences regarding civil-military relations are not similar to the Middle Eastern case. So it can be asserted that certain economic and political conditions have a significant role in the birth of that dissimilarity.

The main objective of the study is to pursue the answers to the following questions: What kind of relationship is there between the military elites and political elites? What are the main causes of military intervention in politics? What are the roots of militarism practices in different countries? How can militarism practices be compared in different countries? What are the main theoretical aspects regarding the civil-military relationship?

Following the above-stated questions, first of all, as the theoretical framework of the study, the concept of "militarism" will be defined concerning its distinguishing features and based on different explanation models. Secondly, models regarding civil-military relations will be highlighted. Also, the politicization of the military elites will be explored as much as possible especially in terms of the causes of the politicization for the theoretical analysis section. Different types of military interventions and coups will be addressed in this section. Next, militarism experiments in different geographical contexts will be evaluated. After that, the Latin American case will be studied as it

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serves as a litmus paper in reflecting the basic characteristics of civil-military relations. Lastly, the liberal-democratic model of civil-military relations will be analyzed.

The main argument of the present study is that the politicization of the military and militarism experiment in every country have different reasons and most of these reasons are not directly related to the Army itself. In some countries, there is civilian control over the Army, and the main reason behind this difference is related to the political and societal characteristics, it is not directly related to the military itself.

Many factors cause military interventions. The politicization of military elites depends on some variables. For instance, if a society has a weakness in social cohesion, this means that there is a need for meaningful elements that can hold the society together. The military in this regard can provide some degree of coherence by force. In addition, the social polarity and the existence of a weak middle class may also pave the way for the politicization of the military elites.

Concerning the political structure, it can be said that if there is a weakness in political institutionalization and a lack of support for political actors, this leads to the politicization of the army as well. Moreover, weak political parties may also cause military coups and military interventions. Apart from that, some historical, as well as socio-cultural factors, have a role in the politicization of the army (In the Turkish case, the political culture has an understanding of seeing the army as a holy entity: "Nation in Arms" -Ordu-Millet- and "Peygamber Ocağı" -House of the Prophet-). This may lead the civilian actors not to show resistance to military interventions. In other words, it can be said that sometimes the idea of questioning the legitimate basis of the military interventions is taken for granted.

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONCEPT OF MILITARISM AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP MODELS

# Militarism: Definitions and Models of Explanation

Militarism assumes the view that difference has incompatibility and this creates competition and finally creates mutual destruction. According to civilian understanding, people do not need to compete with one another however military understanding encourages them to compete. Militarism can be regarded as an internalized worldview that legitimates violence as a tool to reach specific purposes (Adelman, 2003). Militarism can be seen as an ideology and a sum of routines that focus on the mobilization of the masses to be ready for wars. Militarism makes the borders between what can be seen as military and what can be seen as civilian unclear.

Another definition of militarism refers to the view that a state should have a powerful military capacity and be ready to use it to maximize interests (Hallagan, 2012). Militarism can also be defined as a glorification of military and protecting a strong army. Militarism means that the whole of society becomes permeated with military values and principles. The term "militarism" is used for both theoretical and propagandistic objectives working as an adjective for different processes (Skjelsbaek, 1979). A generally-accepted definition of militarism is hard to make due to the numerous approaches that emerge as a consequence of the military and its role in society. Moreover, historical settings have a major influence on the militarism experience, making the defining attempt

harder. For example, militarism in industrialized societies is different from agrarian ones. Militarism as a doctrine attaches primacy to the armed forces rather than the society. It promotes the use of violence and the military establishment as an institutional structure. It refers to both a policy and a power configuration (Skjelsbaek, 1979).

On the other hand, the concept of militarism can be seen as a social experience. Militarism was born with the separation of society into classes. Defining militarism from other class-oriented perspectives, the bourgeoisie adopted the reactionary parts of it and used them based on their needs. In the imperialist stage of capitalism, militarism reached an unprecedented scope (Stargardt 1994, 69). In the post-Cold War era, militarism lost most of its ideological steam. Today, it is rarely used to describe contemporary political systems but instead it is viewed as a phenomenon of the past addressed by historians.

In his research about the history of militarism, Vagts (1959, 12) stated that militarism refers to the domination of the military over the civilian actors, it emphasizes military demands, and on military concerns. In a similar way to Vagst, Klare also reflected the popular meanings of "militarism" in the twentieth century. Klare (1978, 121) defined the concept of militarism as the following:

the tendency of a nation's military apparatus (which includes the armed forces and associated paramilitary, intelligence and bureaucratic agencies) to assume ever-increasing control over the lives and behavior of its citizens; and for military goals (preparation for war, acquisition of weaponry, development of military industries) and military values (centralization of authority, hierarchization, discipline and conformity, combativeness and xenophobia) increasingly to dominate national culture, education, the media, religion, politics, and the economy, at the expense of civilian institutions.

# Models of Explanation for Militarism

There are different models of explanation regarding militarism. One of them is known as the *Western-liberal tradition*. The emphasis put on military considerations can be seen as the defining principles of militarism in liberal theory. In the liberal tradition, many scholars underline the notion of excess (like military budget), while in the Marxist perspective militarism is evaluated as linked to imperial motives (Huntington 1981, 69).

Another model of explanation militarism is known as the *Marxist tradition*. Marxist theory adopts a different approach to militarism. From the perspective of Marxist theory, each class is by definition militaristic (Aspaturian, 1972; Milovidov and Koslov, 1972). Marxists do not have a fixed theory of militarism, they have theorized the links between the specific dimensions of militarism, society, and the economic system (Smith, 1983). According to Marxist scholars, militarism is a social phenomenon that has emerged as a result of the division of society into classes (Vagts, 1959).

*Imperialist militarism* is another perspective adopted for explaining militarism ideology. Imperialist militarism has a meaning that comprises a system of financial and ideological concerns. Imperialist militarism notes that military measures are taken by capitalist states for starting wars (Savkin 1972, 58). It is applied by the capitalist oligarchic class to consolidate its power, to protect the capitalist order, and to provide big profits.

# Military Intervention and Military Coup Classifications

There are some main concepts while analyzing the theoretical framework regarding the civil-military relationship. The first one is the concept of military intervention. A military intervention refers to the military's sudden or gradual intervention into the political scene in an illegal way. Another concept is a military coup. A military coup is defined as the removal of a government through the use of force or the threat of using force (Thompson 1973, 6).

There are different forms of coups. One form is known as a *breakthrough coup*. This kind of coup is carried out by a revolutionary army that overthrows an elected government. In the *guardian coup*, the aim is usually improving public order, efficiency, and ending corruption, whereas, in the *veto coup*, the army vetoes the actions of the incumbent government.

On the other hand, there are control models that explain the conditions which are characterized by civilian superiority. One of the control models characterized by the military elites' being subject to the civilian authority is the *traditional-aristocratic model*. That model means that the military elites and the civilian authority are shared by the same class and because of the professionalism of the army, the politicization of the military elites is not easy (Hale, 1996).

In the *totalitarian model*, the military elites act harmoniously with the political elites. The military is rewarded for the harmony with the political elites. China has had this model (Janowitz, 1977). Another model characterized by the military's being away from politics is the *liberal-democratic model*. In this model, the military elites are totally distinct from the political elites and the army is highly professionalized and subject to civilian authority. On the contrary, the countries lacking powerful political institutions experience different typologies. The duration and scale of the military intervention determine the types of typologies (Nordlinger, 1977).

One of these military interventions is known as the *Veto Regimes*. Veto regimes do not directly take over the political rule but exercise veto ruling. Another typology refers to the practice that the military can take over the rule in a direct way. This type is known as the *Guardian Regime*, the military elites argue that they must clean the mess of the politicians in such regimes.

Another form is known as the *Dominating Regimes*. Under this regime, the military elites exercise more authority than the earlier ones. The military elites exercise political rule for a longer period. The army sees itself as a radical modernizer. Dominating regimes usually witness the closure of political parties (Hale, 1996).

# **Civil-Military Relationship Models**

It should be noted that there are theories formulated to explain the sui generis nature of civil-military relations for different contexts and different types of military rules. One of them is the *Institutional Theory*. Samuel P. Huntington (1981) described the differences between the two worlds. According to him, there is a contrast between the values held by the military and civilians. Each world has its own norms. With a more conservative worldview, the military world is illiberal in various ways, and it is necessary to ensure that the civilian world will be able to keep control over the military. Huntington's approach to this issue is called *military professionalism*. Professionalizing the officer corps, who are responsible for the decision-making in the army

emphasizes the useful aspects of the military such as discipline. According to Huntington, such an organization provided a focus on a neutral and professional Army (1981, p. viii).

Another theory about the civil-military relationship is the *convergence theory*. In 1960, Morris Janowitz agreed with huntington that separate military and civilian worlds existed, but they were different, since the military was conservative, it would resist change.

It should also be noted that Janowitz (1960) agreed with Huntington regarding the differences between the civilian and military spheres. He stated that clashes would emerge between the two parties. He encouraged the use of conscription. Moreover, he encouraged the use of more Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programmes to ensure that the military academies did not hold a monopoly on the type of military officers.

Janowitz (1960) encouraged the development of ROTC programmes in universities. The more such societal influences exist in the military, the smaller differences between the two worlds become (Rudolph, 2017). Inline with Huntington's ideas, Janowitz (1960) believed that the civilian world and military world were not similar. Huntington made a theory to control the difference, whereas Janowitz made a theory to weaken it.

Another model is known as the *Institutional/Occupational (I/O) Hypothesis*. Moskos developed this model to make studies of military organization. This model turned into the *Postmodern Military Model* to predict the course of civil-military relations in the post-Cold War era (Moskos, Williams, & Segal, 2000). The I/O hypothesis noted that the military was moving away from an institutional model to an occupational model. It is to be noted that Moskos (1977) did not argue that the military was completely different and distinct from the civilian sphere.

On the other hand, Rebecca Schiff (1995) provided an alternative theory. Her theory regarding the civil-military relationship is known as the *Concordance Theory*. After observing that many of the civil-military relationship theories note that the civilian and military worlds must be separate, she stated that there are three institutions: (1) the military elites, (2) political elites, and (3) the citizens.

#### MILITARISM IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS

Militarism practices in industrialized states are different from those in developing ones. Militarism also has different reflections in different societies. For example, German militarism is different from the Japanese militarism experiment. Moreover, there are debates about the definitions of militarism depending on time and context.

#### Germany

The roots of German militarism go back to Prussia era during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the unification of Germany. During the Weimar Republic, a coup attempt took place. Some of the more radical militarists got into the Nazi Party, while more moderate actors of militarism declined. Nazi Germany had been a militarist state; then militarism in Germany steadily reduced (Bacevich, 2005).

#### Japan

Japanese militarism began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This was the time when samurai warlords played a major role in Japanese politics. Japan's militarism started with the Meiji Restoration, with the policy

of a "rich country, strong military" (Gordon, 2000). Japan's experience in militarism is rooted in the samurai tradition. The civil wars have brought military rule and provided a basis for the militarization of politics until the end of the Second World War.

#### **United States**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a reform in the US government. In this process, economic militarism was supposed to support the new economic system (Zakaria, 1998). The US shifted to neo-militarism after the Vietnam War. This kind of militarism is distinguished by the reliance on a small number of volunteer fighters; and the government advertising to promote military service (Bacevich, 2005).

#### India

The rise of militarism in India dates back to the British Raj with the rise of Indian independence movement armed organizations such as Indian National Army (INA) led by Subhash \_Chandra Bose. The INA played a crucial role on pressuring the British Raj after it occupied Andaman and Nicobar Islands with the help of Imperial Japan. But the movement lost momentum due INA's dramatic defeat during Battle of Imphal (Bakshi, 2015).

After India became independent, tensions with Pakistan over Kashmir dispute has been one of the crucial parameters that motivated militarism in India (Kundu, 2008). India has never witnessed serious military coups and the army did not attempt to take over full control. India is one of the countries in the developing world which has never witnessed a military intervention. The only intervention was seen in the years of 1975-77 but there was no single instance of the soldiers in uniform toppling a government. The Indian army today has got the world's largest army (Ganguly, 2015). India faced big challenges when the country achieved independence, however, India was able to protect her democracy despite facing major challenges.

#### **Israel**

Israel's politicians have been former military elites. The culture of Israel has been affected by the military culture to an important degree. Israeli culture is less formal; this has spilled over into the army, especially since the majority of the officers bring their civilian background into the army when they get mobilized (Eliezer 1995, 264-85).

#### **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA**

In the Cold War period, Latin American countries witnessed military interventions against elected governments. Military coups have become almost some kind of political choice in Latin America. When the regimes of Latin American countries in the hinterland of the USA are not compatible with the interests of the USA, this led to the use of political and sometimes military intervention options. Intervention tools to form domestic and international interest groups have been used. The most dominant domestic interest group is military juntas, and the most competent foreign interest groups are economic lobbies. These interest groups have provided the necessary economic and social conditions for the harmonization of the country according to American interests.

Colombia is an important case while analyzing military interventions in Latin America. In Colombia, the self-appointed task of the army to define the national needs represented a challenge against civilians creating a dangerous balance within the society by vastly increasing "the power of the gun over the ballot" (Fishel 2000, 51-8). Colombia's weak military has become more political compared to other countries. According to Watson (2000), Colombia cannot be certain if it would not face military interventions.

It can be said that, in Latin America, coups often broke out around election times and in periods with a crisis in the economy. Military coups in many instances contributed to triggering off coups in neighbouring countries (Fossum, 1967). By the mid-1990s, all Latin American states except Cuba had held the forms of a democratic government.

#### PATTERNS IN LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC MODEL OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Civilian control of the army is not just a problem for the liberal democracies of the twentieth century. The dilemma that an armed institution to protect the state can be a threat to the people dates back to ancient times. "Who will guard the guardians?" Plato asked this question 2500 years ago (Feaver, 2003).

In a country, the defense minister's interaction with the military may be one of the determinants of the civil-military relationship in that country. An important question asked at this point is this: "How can a civil minister really control soldiers with a monopoly over technical knowledge and traditional responsibilities backed by law?" The answer to this question, perhaps paradoxically is given by powerful ministers who have authority over their employees and at the same time provide their staff's voluntary cooperation and assistance in subordinating the military to civilian authority.

The national defense planning process in liberal democratic states involves soldiers in the political decision-making system to a minimum degree. The superiority of the civilian political authority depends on the form, scope, and nature of soldiers' participation in political processes. For this reason, the central theme of civil-military relations in democratic liberal systems is the issue of the full control of the form and intensity of military participation in political processes by the civilian authority (Porter 2010, 4).

In the liberal-democratic model, soldiers accept civilian control in all areas - including their areas of expertise - such as force structuring, defense planning, military operations, and modernization. The military elites cannot produce policies on their own, even in their own profession and specialty. On the other hand, civilian political authorities also take into account their suggestions on protection, defense, and security issues. It is accepted that civil-military relations in developed countries are shaped depending on the established democratic culture in these countries (Joo, 1996).

The democratic model of civil-military relations is known as control over the army, but according to Bland (2001) this kind of relationship should have certain features as the following:

- must be voluntarily accepted by both parties;
- must not be based on abuse or fear;
- must be governed by constitutional requirements;
- open to become revised when necessary.

The execution of civil-military relations in a way that does not harm democracy and the interaction between military power and civilian power in an environment where democratic values are not ignored is the point that most researchers working in this field are trying to reach. The democratic control model includes the participation of civil society actors in setting defense strategies. Besides, the military expenditures must be under the control of political elites. Political elites obviously play a major role in defining the rules governing the relationship between civilian actors and the military elites, and balancing the financial needs of the army with the needs of other sectors. According to Bland (2001), the civilian control of the military should be regulated because civilian authorities also tend to motivate civilians to control the military for their own purposes. In addition, as a norm in the democratic control of the armed forces, the application of military justice should be limited to military offenses.

In the liberal democratic regimes, the military elites are subordinated to the civilian political authority and the army cannot have a say in politics (Burak, 2011). In all liberal democracies, there should be two priorities. The first is the establishment of effective mechanisms by which the national security system will be responsible for what it does on behalf of the community and to ensure that the national security system functions in a manner that does not threaten the rule of law and fundamental rights of individuals (Dandeker, 1994). These are the basic conditions necessary for democratic institutions to function in a way that causes the least harm to national security and to ensure security with the least harm for democracy.

#### CONCLUSION

This study attempted to address civil-military relations from a comparative point of view. In this context, the concept of "militarism" has been put under scrutiny. Civil-military relationship models and different types of a military coups have been parts of the theoretical framework of this study.

It can be said that depending on the historical, cultural, and political conditions, civil-military relations change from country to country. Following the insights of this study, it can be argued that not the army itself is enough to shape the civil-military relationship in a country. What matters the most is related to the political and historical settings and actors.

It is known that there are important differences between the values promoted in the past and today in the armies. For example, even the primary position of the discipline in superior-subordinate relations in armed forces is gradually being replaced by more modern concepts. The concern of high-ranking commanders is not to maintain strict discipline anymore, but to maintain a high level of initiative power and morale. This is a crucial dimension of the slow but continuous change of military organizations since the emergence of large armies. The civil-military relations have inevitably changed over time, depending on the evolution of the military system as well as the change in the civilian political system.

Today, this relationship has reached different aspects and dimensions. The armed forces are seen as a driving force leading the direction of modernization in some countries, while in some countries it can be effective in making some political and economic decisions due to its political weight.

The term "democracy" is the most important norm in world politics and the relationship between the civilian and military elites plays a key role in determining the democratic condition of a country.

Armies whose main task is to fulfill the repressive function of the states are equipped with coercive tools. Since this equipment has the potential to function outside of the purpose for which it was established, the concept of "democratic control" has been critical since the establishment for the functioning of modern democracies.

The issue of "democratic control of armies" is a highly important subject in social science literature. The critical issue that can be agreed upon within the general framework of the subject is that control of the armies must be carried out by the political authority that has been elected within the framework of the democratic process of the country and whose legality and legitimacy are accepted.

Finally, while analyzing army and political relationship, it should be noted that a society's view of the military profession involves civil-military relations, recruitment activities, citizens' personal relations with the military, and civilian and military attitudes towards each other. In order to understand the armed forces better, it is required to look at the perception of the institution in that society as well.

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