A Controlled but not Restrained Military: Conceptualizing the Control of Militarism

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Abstract
This paper is about a paradox: Strong civilian control of the military may encourage militarism, not lessen it. Existing concepts used in theories of civil-military relations do not adequately resolve this paradox: while they associate civilian control with military restraint or, alternately, acknowledge that civilians can be more militaristic than officers, they have refrained from linking civilian control to militarism and have not scrutinized the extent to which effective civilian control may even encourage the use of force. Therefore, a revised conceptualization of civilian control is needed that distinguishes between two modes of civilian control over military affairs: control of the military and control of militarism. Most students of civilian control concentrate on the former, while the latter, which deals with controlling the legitimacy mechanisms for the use of force, is generally ignored. In the process of state building, an inverse relationship generally developed between these two modes of control, so an increase in civilian control was repeatedly paired with a decrease in control over militarism. As time went on, more mechanisms evolved that often enhanced this inverse relationship.

Keywords: Civilian control, Militarism, State building
Introduction

This paper is about a paradox: Strong civilian control of the military may encourage militarism, not lessen it. Two examples can demonstrate this paradox. In recent years, we have witnessed the rise of a new post-Cold War militarism in the U.S. that values military power for its own sake, with an increased propensity to use force, despite the fact that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union promised demilitarization (Kohn, 2009, 193). Much of the new militarism comes from the empowerment of neo-conservative thinkers, bearers of a purely civilian culture. Paradoxically, this remilitarization thrived in an era of increased political scrutiny of the military. The share of the military command in this remilitarization involved reforming the military structure to make militaristic ideas possible. However, the commanders were not warmongers (Bacevich, 2005). As Bacevich argued, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq expanded the Pentagon's authority at the expense of the military high command in the sense that in the planning and execution of the military campaigns, the Secretary of Defense called the operational tune, not the Joint Chiefs of Staff (2005, 63-65). The Secretary's involvement was explicitly read in what was called Rumsfeld's Rules, namely: "[R]eserve the right to get into anything, and exercise it. Make your deputies and staff realize that, although many responsibilities are delegated, no one should be surprised when the secretary engages an important issue" (Rumsfeld, 2001).

Similarly, in Israel, famous for its strong military establishment, there is increasing civilian intrusion into the military domain, culminating in an overly-subordinate military. As Stuart Cohen (2006) indicated, areas that are conventionally considered as falling within the military's sphere of professional competence became subject to civilian control, such as recruitment policies, investigation of operational accidents, military operations in the West Bank, and more. Despite this intrusion, however, the government has increased its capacity to deploy the military on missions that were hitherto politically disputed. A clear manifestation of this was the launching of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. In the history of the relationship between the political and the military leaderships of Israel, the government had never decided to go to war so quickly, within hours of the incident that set off the crisis (Levy, 2010a, 793). Thus, both examples illustrate that the use of force increased despite increased civilian control of the military, and the tentative inverse relations between these two phenomena is what begs questioning.

Existing concepts used in theories of civil-military relations do not adequately resolve this paradox, as will be detailed further below: civilian control is generally associated with lower
rates of the use of force or, alternately, may rein in the military but not the use of force, as when militarized civilians successfully mobilize the society for war, but civilian control was not claimed to encourage the use of force. Therefore, a revised conceptualization of civilian control is needed. It is argued that a distinction should be made between two modes of civilian control over military affairs: control of the military and control of militarism. As the cases above suggest, control of the military as an organization became more effective but at the same time failed to curb the use of force, i.e., poor control of militarism was exhibited. In the process of state building, an inverse relationship generally developed between these two modes of control, so an increase in civilian control was repeatedly paired with a decrease in control over militarism. As time went on, more mechanisms evolved that often enhanced this inverse relationship.

This paper performs two basic tasks. First, after identifying the scholarly gaps (in the next section), the paper analyzes the difference between civilian control of the military and control of militarism, with an emphasis on identifying factors that help us to determine the degree of control of militarism in a given state. Second, the paper explains (in the following section) why, historically, an increase in the degree of civilian control of the military has been associated with a decrease in control of militarism. Overall, the focus here is on conceptual development rather than empirical study.

**The Theoretical Gap**

Civilian control of the armed forces is associated with lower rates of the use of force. In his classic “garrison state” theme, Lasswell (1941) expressed concern that empowerment of the military establishment in reaction to an external threat would undermine civil-military relations by letting the officers, as “specialists in violence,” run the state and impose their warlike inclinations on politics. Choi and James (2004) statistically validated this concern by concluding that as military influence increases, the likelihood that the state will be involved in a military dispute becomes greater. Similarly, the Lasswellian view was echoed by Snyder (1984), who claimed that the offensive bias is exacerbated when civilian control is weak and when the operational doctrine is leveraged by the military to improve its position in civil-military clashes.

Looking at this question differently, Huntington (1957) famously contended that the military is more conservative than civilians regarding the propensity to use force, largely due to organizational cautiousness. This argument does not seek to discredit the value of civilian
control but to contextualize its merit and to warn against the temptation to limit the military's sphere of autonomy. Similarly, Betts (1991) concluded that military leaders rarely recommend the use of force and their advice was more influential when counseling against military intervention. Along these lines, Feaver and Gelpi (2003) showed that militarily inexperienced leaders in the U.S., more than militarily experienced ones, extend the use of force to deal with interstate conflicts that do not present a substantial threat to national security. Desch (2006), in his criticism of Bacevich, acknowledged that "the most prevalent civil-military relations problem of the post-Vietnam era has not been keeping the dogs of war on the leash, but rather getting them off of it." In other words, civilians may be more militaristic than the military (see also Avant, 1996). Sechser (2004) offered a bridge between these two lines of argument by suggesting that the cautious nature of military officers may be a consequence of strong civilian control. Officers are concerned that strong civilian leadership will punish them for botched military adventures. In short, scholars disagree as to whether effective civilian control that reins in the military actually reduces the use of force, as the equation of the military with warmongering is not clear cut.

Other scholars have neither adopted nor directly challenged the linkage between civilian control and the propensity to use force. For Michael Desch (1999, 4-6), for example, the level of civilian control can be determined by whether or not civilians prevail in disagreements with the military. Here the focus is on the principle of subordination even when not related to limiting the use of force. Significant in this argument is that "civilian control allows a nation to base its values, institutions, and practices on the popular will rather than on the choices of military leaders" (Kohn, 1997, 141), so the military cannot involve the polity in wars and conflicts contrary to society's interests or expressed will (Feaver, 1999, 214).

However, it is possible for civilians to prevail but at the same time adopt and absorb the military mindset, albeit not necessarily the specific approach offered by the generals (see Avant, 1998, 382-383; Michael, 2007). Thus, civilian control may enable dominance of the military mindset when militarized civilians successfully mobilize the society for war. Combining this situation with one in which officers act out of fear of punishment by politicians may lead militaristic politicians to drive the military to use force against its will. As Feaver showed (2009), President Bush's decision-making, which led to the surge strategy in Iraq and involved an increase in the number of U.S. troops there, ran counter to the advice of the President's key military advisors. This is another example of how effective civilian control can rein in the military, but not the use of force.
A similar problem emerges from theories that focus on understandings between officers and civilians. Schiff's (2009) theory of concordance, inspired by Janowitz's (1976) argument about the importance of shared norms and symbols among the parties involved, emphasizes agreement among the political elites, the military and the citizenry regarding critical aspects of military conduct. Mutual accommodation and shared values between the military and civilians are thus the keys to reducing the probability of domestic military intervention and to maintaining and sustaining democratic values (Burk, 2002). Concordance, however, may be confined to the boundaries of military thought, namely controlling the military within the limits of a climate that favors the use of force. It is no coincidence that Schiff applied the notion of concordance to the militarized reality in Israel.

It follows that the linkage between patterns of civilian control and the propensity to use force is not significant when restraint of the military takes place within a militaristic mindset. Proponents of militarism, such as Bacevich (2005), Shaw (2000) and others, implicitly recognized this deficiency but did not link it to the broader issue of what type of civilian control may restrain the use of force, aside from a cultural process of demilitarization. More significantly, schools of civilian control and of militarism have not linked civilian control to militarism and have not scrutinized the extent to which effective civilian control may even encourage the use of force, or in other words, that civilian control may not only fail to restrain militarism but also promote it. Even those who acknowledge that civilian control and military restraint do not necessarily go hand in hand have not asked whether civilian control promotes – and not only allows – bellicosity.

Against the background of this scholarly gap, a revised conceptualization of civilian control is needed. This new conceptualization will distinguish between the institutional level of control through which the state's military apparatus, first and foremost its armed forces, is politically controlled, and the essence of this control with regard to restraint in the use of force. This breeds another distinction, between two modes of civilian control over military affairs: control of the military and control of militarism. Most students of civilian control concentrate on the former, while the latter, which deals with controlling the legitimacy mechanisms for the use of force, is generally ignored. In the process of state building, an inverse relationship generally developed between these two modes of control, so an increase in civilian control was repeatedly paired with a decrease in control over militarism. As time went on, more mechanisms evolved that enhanced this inverse relationship. I will proceed with an analysis of the distinction between civilian control of the military and control of militarism.
Two Modes of Control

A distinction should be made between control of the military and control of militarism. *Control of the military* focuses on joint institutional arrangements aimed at restraining the military’s capacity for autonomous action in the main areas of activity that have political implications, such as military doctrine and policies, operational plans, weapons systems, organization, recruitment, and promotion of officers. Such control is effective when civilian state institutions (primarily the executive and legislative branches of government) are able to set limits on the freedom of action of the military in a manner that corresponds with political objectives that are autonomously shaped by politicians, and the military abides by these civilian directives (see mainly Feaver, 1999). Yet, as noted above, regimentation of the military may yield politically-imposed belligerency.

Control over the army operates mainly through institutional mechanisms that have an effect on the manner in which policy-makers deploy the military. In addition to the politicians' monitoring of the military, collective actors working outside formal institutions, mainly social movements and interest groups, often affect institutional policy-making through lobbying, protests, court appeals and the media. For example, sensitivity to casualties, voiced by public opinion, anti-war movements, parents and veterans, has played an important role in re-shaping military policies in democracies. Peace movements during the Vietnam War and Israel’s first Lebanon War (1982-2000) were instrumental in curbing their governments. In both cases, these had an impact on the nature of the restrictions that politicians imposed on the military, though the military may also internalize the changing modes in their civilian environment without waiting for directions from politicians. The adoption of casualty-averse policies by the American military is an example of the latter case (Feaver & Kohn, 2001).

While control of the military is aimed at restraining the organization, control of militarism works to restrain the use of force. Control of the military has less merit when the political controllers are warmongers. Therefore, *control of militarism* is concerned with controlling the mechanisms for legitimizing the use of force. Militarism, according to the combined definition of Lutz (2002, 723) and Mann (1987), refers to the extent to which war and preparations for war are regarded as normal and desirable social activities through a discursive process, involving a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force, the organization of large standing armies and their leaders, and the higher taxes or tribute used to pay for them. In its most extreme form, and thus far less ubiquitous, militarism is "a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions, and thought
associated with armies and wars yet transcending true military purposes" (Vagts, 1959, 13-14). Society then regards the use of force as part of the natural state of affairs (see Cock, 2004) and its institutions, policies, behaviors, thought, and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war (Kohn, 2009, 182), to the that civil society organizes itself for the production of violence (Geyer,1989, 79).

This Lutz-Mann definition that captures processes taken place in many industrial societies during the past 60 years, is favored over alternative definitions, as it moves beyond the narrow focus on military institutions and resources and the attitude toward the use of force, to address militarized political cultures that are often generated outside of the military. At the same time, this definition gives less weight to cultural patterns of militarism as such, as this paper is less concerned with the civil-cultural aspects of militarism and more with policy implications.

While "militarism" embodies an extreme situation, "militarization" represents a process, a matter of degree that can be measured along a continuum of demilitarization/militarization. By making this distinction, we can avoid one of the problems with conventional definitions, according to which nearly all Western states can be seen as being militaristic at some point in their history. While 'militarism' scores societies by differentiating between militaristic and non-militaristic societies according to any specific definition, 'militarization' refers to a process, a transition from a lower level of militarism to a higher one.

Control of militarism draws on political discourse by seeking to guarantee that the implementation of military force follow a deliberative process of decision-making in which the citizenry takes an active role. Huysmans (2004) has suggested that relative slowness in decision-making is a virtue in a liberal democracy. Decision-making should be made through argumentation, in which everyone's opinion is in principle equally valuable and equally fallible; such deliberation takes time and can always be questioned again. Thus, a sufficient condition for maintaining a high level of control over militarism is thorough, deliberative decision-making conducted through wide and open discourse. Yet, this process should not be confined to the operational aspects of military deployment but should extend to the broader logic and rightness of the action; namely, the very legitimacy for using force.

It is important to note that this condition for control does not imply the assumption that the general public is less militaristic than its leadership. On the contrary, the leadership can manipulate the public into opposing the use of force. Control of militarism is not a synonym for pacifism; the use of military force may be necessary to protect national security. Important is the deliberative process that yields a conscious decision to act. Therefore, also, free and fair
elections are not sufficient to sustain the condition for efficient control of militarism unless the deliberative requirement is met by thoroughly debating the critical issues during a campaign.

The agents of control are almost exclusively collective actors, journalists and politicians mainly from the fringe (as mainstreamers tend to have less interest in questioning the legitimacy of using force). These agents may work to manipulate the public to support the use of force, or alternately, may promote subversive discourse that challenges military thought. Either way, their actions largely determine the profile of the control of militarism.

If the conceptualization of control of militarism seems abstract, particularly in contrast to the readily observable process of asserting civilian control over the military, operationalization of this type of control is even more complex. While the former is tangible and evident through observed organizational conduct, the latter is shrouded in abstract and even tentative policies. Several forms of public debates do however offer a window to control of militarism; common to these is their potential impact on the legitimacy for using force:

1. Debates on the essence of the use of force. The more the polity is militarized, the more the legitimacy for using force is unquestionable, culminating to an irrational value system that espouses war as a goal in itself, as Vagts (1959) suggested from his experience in the collapse of the Weimar Republic. This is the lowest level of control of militarism. Political disputes are confined to issues of performance or resources but not to the justification for using force. Members of the political community are denied the opportunity to participate in a substantial, open discussion of the use of force. Mid-level control of militarism is represented by a lower degree of militarization, when the use of force is legitimized and yet evaluated simply in rational, instrumental terms.

In general, the more the use of force is wrapped in symbols, the less likely it is for there to be open debate in which everyone may participate. For example, discourse concerning the "war on terror" in the U.S. employed gendered metaphors that associated masculinity with war, in a manner that seemed natural. This restricted the discussion of alternatives to binary choices, with the "less" masculine portrayed as feminine (Christensen & Ferree, 2008). Points of view and attitudes considered to be weak and unacceptable are often discussed in terms of feminine metaphors, while the prevailing accepted culture is masculinized (Cohn, 1993).

In a different way, debates that review the use of force as a rational act aiming to promote political goals are typical of societies undergoing demilitarization, mainly in Europe. Part of this process is the redefinition of war goals so as to reflect core liberal values, such as
humanitarian wars with human rights invoked to justify such wars. Public debates then focus on this definition and its implementation (Freedman, 2006).

(2) Debates on the nature of the threat. As the level of militarism rises, the external threat that the use of force is designed to eliminate is portrayed in less instrumental terms. For example, interstate competition on the eve of World War I was imagined in Germany in connection with the concept of the "survival of the fittest" and entailed the complete physical and spiritual destruction of a competitor, which is different from imagining the competition as a competition over market shares. With this total imagination of the threat, society submissively organized itself for war preparation (Domansky, 1996).

Another example is the U.S. during the Cold War. Political discourse portrayed the response to the Soviets as a predetermined pattern. The American approach was therefore accepted as a policy forced on the country by an external entity, with America lacking any real options for shaping the situation autonomously. Consequently, as Paterson’s (1986) analysis indicates, only a few groups could really challenge the dominant approach and suggest alternatives. Cultural barriers, rather than formal, institutional restraints, accounted for these limitations. However, their partial elimination since the 1960s has opened the door to wider debate on the essence of the Soviet threat.

Similar scenarios often repeated themselves. Democratic leaders in the post-WW II era have tended to rally their citizens to war by portraying it as a battle of “good versus evil” (Everts, 2002). Framing the threat in apocalyptic terms is part of this. Apocalyptic narratives, according to Philip Smith (2005, 27), who drew, inter alia, on the case of the Suez Crisis of 1956 in Britain and France, “are the most effective at generating and legitimating massive society-wide sacrifice and are today the only narrative form that can sustain war as culturally acceptable.” Part of this involves dehumanizing the enemy. As the U.S. policy in Iraq and Afghanistan under President Bush demonstrated, demonizing the enemy within the framework of the “war on terror” helped to cripple democratic processes (Krebs & Lobasz, 2007), and thus proved effective in quelling opposition. Conversely, an instrumental approach to the definition of the threat entails its calculation in rational terms, through which the threat is weighed against its actual severity and the possible use of non-lethal means to eliminate it. It is no accident that military failures give rise to a public review of threats and methods for eliminating them.

(3) Debates on the conditions under which the country will go to war. The Powell Doctrine is a case in point. Powell’s doctrine suggested that, in order for the country to be prepared to commit sufficient resources to ensure victory, the massive use of force should be reserved for
military disputes that threatened national security, while avoiding the unrestricted use of force in less critical arenas (Powell, 1992/3). This doctrine can be viewed as a case of generals defining the criteria for when and how the U.S. would fight its wars (Bacevich, 2007), or at least the subordination of political thought to military thought.

The Israeli peace movements that protested Israel's invasion of South Lebanon in 1982 prompted this type of debate and hence also increased the control of militarism. For the first time in Israeli history, a significant protest movement questioned the very purpose of a war. Central to this discourse was the definition of the first Lebanon War as a “war of choice,” as distinguished from previous wars that had always been described as “wars of no choice,” thus instilling the notion of an alternative to bellicosity (Helman, 1999). New criteria for legitimizing the use of force were shaped and had immediate implications on the deployment of Israel's armed forces on Lebanese soil, as well as on the conduct of future wars.

(4) Debates on the status of the bearers of force. Such debates may address the status of soldiers or the recruitment policy. Either way, these debates may also affect the military's status and, hence, willingness or readiness to use force.

In general, the republican ethos ascribed great value to active participation in democratic politics in order to promote the common good, with military service at the center of this active participation. Thus, the more the status of military personnel is imbued with symbolic merit, the higher the status of the military, and hence also that of military thought. In addition, greater attention is paid to the opinions of those who speak in the name of their military sacrifice than to the opinions of “ordinary” citizens.

For example, the remilitarization of American society is entwined with the flourishing of the republican rhetoric of the citizen-soldier tradition, praising soldiers and veterans as paragons of patriotism and good citizenship, and hailing the fallen as model citizens devoted to the political community (Krebs, 2009). Regardless of the origins of this trend, one of its implications is that when social “hugging” of soldiers takes place, the syndrome of “supporting the troops” may hinder the political debate on military deployment.

Questioning the status of soldiers is therefore essential to improving the control of militarism. With the demise of the citizen-soldier ethos in most industrial democracies, and the portrayal of soldiers as professionals rather than as following a calling, military personnel are stripped of their symbolic shields, thus making their actions, as well as their opinions, more open to scrutiny. Furthermore, the universalization of the armed forces is among the mechanisms that place it above political debates, thereby increasing its influence and muting
the open debate about its deployment (see more below), a factor that lends meaning to attempts to de-universalize the military and thus expose its political bias.

Debates on the manpower system are even more critical. Provided that social arrangements (de)generate militarism, revealing such arrangements serves the control of militarism, and more specifically, the conditions that facilitate the growth of militarism. Historic examples of such a process include political struggles over the mode of recruitment, which determined the military's impact on the structure of social power (see, for example, Kier, 1997 on the debate in France and Britain during the interwar period). Mode of recruitment is more than only a recruitment policy; it refers to the social composition of the armed forces and the power entailed in access to arms. Regardless of the scholarly controversy over the Kantian question concerning which type of manpower system – conscription or all voluntary – constrains leaders from dispatching troops on military missions (see for example Choi & James, 2003; Pickering, 2010), a debate focused on the linkage between the manpower system and the propensity to use force represents a high level of control of militarism. It indicates an awareness of the reality that the key issue is not civilian control of the military but the political mechanisms that affect the legitimacy to use force by affecting the power distribution in society and the level of society's permeability to militarism. In contrast, debates dominated by practical, operational, economic, or moral considerations reflect a lower degree of control of militarism, as typified by most of the countries that phased out the draft.

(5) Debates on costs. Given that costs and the political monitoring of the armed forces are strongly linked (Lake, 1992), heavy costs in terms of lives and money may encourage collective actors to question the cause that demands these sacrifices. For example, the more bellicose posture of the U.S. in the 1980s, with the increased military spending that this entailed, provided an incentive for moderate forces to begin anti-nuclear protests (Meyer 1993). Likewise, protest against the Vietnam War was nurtured by anti-draft sentiment as much as by media coverage of atrocities in the post-Cold War campaigns.

Similarly, growing military costs in the Soviet Union in the 1970s that was not correlated with the economic stagnation increased the military burden and hence also increased pressures in the mid-1980s, not only to restrain the growth of defense outlays but also to increase the civilian monitoring of the military. Civilian voices were raised, demanding information about defense costs and insisting that economic considerations be taken more seriously into account in defense policy-making, and a Committee on Defense and State Security was established. The long-term impact was that defense and the position of the military was placed lower on the list of national priorities and the public was no longer the
passive recipient of military-patriotic propaganda, resulting in some degree of demilitarization (Holloway, 1989/90). A higher level of control of militarism was at work.

(6) Debates on interests. Militarism is not only a state of mind; social arrangements can generate or curb militarism in domains such as gender relations, the structure of the labor market and the reward system for those bearing the brunt of war (such as soldiers and their families) (Levy, 2010b). It follows that revealing interests that lead key social and political actors to advance militaristic values is vital to upholding control of militarism. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's warning about the dangers of “the military-industrial complex” in his inspiring farewell speech (in 1961) is one example that highlights the need for such exposure. Another example is the debate over “gendered militarization.” The feminist demand to allow women access to all areas of combat in western militaries inadvertently leads to reaffirming both the traditional masculine-dominated connection between combat and citizenship (see Giles & Hyndman, 2004) and the masculine construction of gender relations, which conventionally regards militancy as a culturally-endorsed way to be manly (Cock, 1991). Both nurture militaristic values. It is not surprising, therefore, that radical feminists call for exposing the agendas that “gendered militarization” promotes.

These are a few of the frames for operationalizing the control of militarism. In short, the wider the scope of debates on military affairs in terms of issues on the agenda, boundaries of discourse, and the cycle of speakers, the higher the level of control of militarism. Against this backdrop, enhancement of control of militarism often signifies a process of demilitarization, through which traditional symbols and veracities are effectively questioned and challenged.

It follows that control of the military deals with concrete, observable behavior and with decisions and non-decisions made by the military and its political supervisors as their agents; that is, the first and second dimensions of power in Lukes’ (2005) well-known argument. On the other hand, control over militarism is largely concerned with the third dimension of power; namely, the manner in which actors can challenge deeply ingrained ideological perceptions and attitudes that may change the role of the people as carriers and maintainers of militaristic values in the existing order. Insofar as militarism is generated by social arrangements, the level of militarism in society can be affected by raising people's awareness of it. As we shall see, the media plays a major role here. However, precisely because the control of militarism is related to this dimension of power, we can expect the control of militarism to be the outcome of subtle group processes for which no specific agent can claim responsibility, unlike the institutional system of control of the military.
Another useful tool for delineating the difference between the modes of control is Cox's (1981) distinction between the critical approach and the problem-solving approach. The critical approach stands apart from the prevailing world order and asks how that order came about, without taking existing institutions and power relations as given. It is directed toward the social and political complex as a whole and seeks change by comparing alternative orders. Thus, the critical approach challenges the order that established militarism, while the problem-solving approach takes this order for granted and focuses on how to improve the politically-controlled performance of the armed forces within the existing order, i.e., focuses on control of the military.

The two modes of control may overlap. As the examples of both the Vietnam and the first Lebanon wars suggest, anti-war protest has a dual impact when it focuses on the conditions under which the country will go to war. In the short term, it restrains the military by encouraging politicians to augment institutional mechanisms of control of the military but in the long-term, and in a more unintended manner, it establishes the criteria for using war. In this spirit, the flawed performance of the U.S. military in Vietnam that the protest movement highlighted yielded the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. The Act endeavored to draw lessons from Vietnam by clarifying the command and informational relationships within the military and between the military and civilians, and improving the military advice given the President (Chiarelli, 1993). At the same time, the impact of the protests on institutional arrangements went beyond the direct, immediate and intentional results, by establishing the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine that set the criteria for using force (Campbell, 1998). Similarly, protests during Israel’s first Lebanon War in 1982 generated, in 1992, an amendment to the "Basic Law: The Government," according to which the state may only begin a war pursuant to a government decision (article 51(a)). This amendment was inspired by the claim that Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon manipulated the cabinet into launching a full scale war while only asking for authorization for a limited operation (Hofnung, 1996, 203). However, antiwar activity also had the unintended consequence of establishing the criteria for a just war as noted above.
**Table 1:** presents the distinction between the modes of control.

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<th>Control of the military</th>
<th>Control of militarism</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The focus</strong></td>
<td>The operational aspects of the organization’s performance, mainly with regard to expected political implications. Focus on military organization</td>
<td>Controlling the mechanisms that legitimize the use of force. Focus on political culture</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The goal</strong></td>
<td>Restraining and regimenting the military by limiting its autonomy</td>
<td>Restraining the use of force by delegitimizing it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How it works</strong></td>
<td>Institutional mechanisms that affect policy-making and collective actors that seek to affect decision-making</td>
<td>Collective action and media that promote political discourse on issues of war and peace: the political culture and the level of legitimation it awards to the use of force</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dimension of power</strong></td>
<td>Mainly first and second dimensions; the observable dimension of institutional action with a problem-solving bias</td>
<td>The third dimension; political discourse that questions and shapes social power relations affecting the legitimation to use force. A critical approach is paramount</td>
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In short, a heavily monitored military acting on behalf of its political supervisors and carrying out a highly militarized policy signifies a high level of civilian control over the army but a low level of control of militarism. Mechanisms that are capable of decoupling this relationship deserve some attention.

**Decoupling Mechanisms**
Historically, the decoupling of modes of control emerged as part of state building. At the heart of the state formation tradition lies the mutually generating mechanism of war and state formation, or, in Tilly's (1992) pithy words, “war makes state.” With the extensive introduction of artillery and gunpowder into sixteenth and seventeenth century warfare, state agencies were encouraged to recruit resources for military build-up, provided that geopolitical competition justified such build-up. State activities that aimed at preparing for and
legitimizing war became a lever for internal state expansion by means of administrative concentration (Barnett, 1992; Giddens, 1985; Porter, 1994; Tilly, 1992).

In turn, the need to extract resources led to patterns of bargaining with the groups that controlled the human and material resources needed for waging war. Citizens agreed to bear the burden of war by sacrificing their bodies and wealth in return for the civil, social and political rights granted them by the state, including security and welfare (Burk, 1995; Porter, 1994; Skocpol, 1992; Tilly, 1997, 193-215).

Containment of the military and its subordination to civilian control, in the sense that greater areas of military activity became politically monitored, were part of this bargaining process (Tilly, 1997, 193-215). At first, the establishment of representative institutions helped to monitor the military organizations, as parliaments allocated money from the citizenry to modernized armies (Downing, 1992). For example, the bitter debate between the German military and the Reichstag, with the mediation of chancellors from Bismarck onward, over control of the military budget, testified to the political attempt of a representative institution to curtail the autonomy of the military when the need for military spending increased (Kitchen, 2006, 143-144). Political representation was translated into civilian control. Another aspect of restraint was what Giddens (1985) termed the “internal pacification” of the state; namely, the military was distanced from domestic policing (Mann, 1993, 403-443).

An increase in civilian control of the military was tied to militarization; namely, a reduction in control over militarism. As military build-ups fostered increased participation in mass armies funded by high local taxes, political discourse was inevitably militarized. Only militarization could legitimize the rising levels of sacrifice for war in monetary and human terms, by contextualizing the level of the threat and demonstrating the determination to removal it by force. States could then increase the demand for protective services by leveraging external threats, either artificially or realistically (Tilly, 1985), and even exaggerate threats by supplying incomplete information or engaging in outright deception (Lake, 1992). In other words, the state could sell – or oversell – protection. Militarization shapes the subjective dimension of the external threat to the same extent that it reflects the political-cultural dimension of that threat. An external threat is not an objective entity, but rather a discursive construction (Wendt, 1992) or, at least, may be subject to politicians' domestic considerations (Levy & Thompson, 2010, 58-59). The structural conditions that allowed the rise of militarism together with the enhancement of civilian bureaucracies that managed military policies were not unique to Europe. They also characterized the American experience (Hooks & McLauchlan, 1992) as well as that of Israel (see Kimmerling, 1993).
In short, militarization promotes civilian control. Yet, this rule does not work when militarization is confined to the cultural sphere and does not entail military buildup and war-making (Latin-America), or when the burden, especially the fiscal one, is borne by an external power (typical in many post-colonized societies), or when the military creates mechanisms of self-funding (like in China). There, the sort of state-civilian bargain that accounts for the subordination of the military to civilian control could not show itself, thus militarization could evolve without civilian control.

These inverse relationships – an increase in control of the military and a decrease in control of militarism – are mutually reinforcing beyond the historical, structural conditions that established the linkage between them. Several mechanisms create the relationships by which civilian control can increase militarism:

(1) Civilian control as depoliticization. Here Huntington's (1957) concept is very useful. In exchange for a large measure of autonomy in a narrow, technical sphere (Desch, 1999, 9-10), the military agrees to limit its autonomous space of action so that its natural, self-interested role will become that of a self-policing, non-political organization that focuses on its expertise and responsibilities (Snider & Watkins, 2000, 8). In turn, the more the military is portrayed as a universal entity – derived from the extent to which it is regarded as politically controlled – the greater its ability to influence decision-making. Military thought is then depicted as professional advice devoid of political bias.

As C. Wright Mills (1956) explained, politicians use the advice of the military to back their support for or opposition to specific policies, or even to shirk their duty to scrutinize the administration’s decisions. Thus, from the standpoint of a party politician, a well-trained general or admiral is an excellent legitimator of policies; making careful use of him often makes it possible to lift policy 'above politics', which is to say, above political debate (1956, 200). In this way, the military profession gains ascendancy, which may signify a low level of control of militarism, especially when the military's stance is utilized to legitimize the use of force, as Mills implied.

Furthermore, depoliticization of the military can be seen as part of a greater process associated with securitization. Securitization, as introduced by Buzan, Wæver and De-Wilde (1998), implies identification of an existential threat and matching the use of extraordinary measures to deal with it. In other words, securitization is one of the forms of modern militarism. Here what matters is the distinction between securitization and politicization, as clarified by the authors:
Politicization means to make an issue appear to be open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and that therefore entails responsibility. By contrast, securitization means to present an issue as urgent and existential, and so important that it should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues. (1998, 29)

Securitization thus helps to conceptualize security as being 'beyond politics'. It distances militarism from political monitoring. To this end, a seemingly-deopoliticized military is instrumental. On the other hand, in societies where the military is less controlled, the political role of the military cannot be ignored and thus militarism is portrayed as politically biased and even associated with the regime.

A similar pattern of universalization can also be seen in the Soviet Union in the post-Stalinist era, especially under Brezhnev. On one hand, Brezhnev sponsored the professional pride of the military and its autonomy. Yet precisely because the professional autonomy of the commanders was more established, it was also made very clear that the internal political control of the military would be retained by the party. At the same time, militarization was on the rise and extended to military-patriotic education with the emergence of a military-educational complex (Bialer, 1986, 283-300). Provided that, as Holloway (1989/90, 7-8) concluded claimed, scholars agree that militarization had to be explained not in terms of the influence of the military, but rather in terms of the civilian leader-determined priorities of the state, it may be surmised that civilian control promoted militarization. It universalized the military by blurring the boundaries between it and the party and allowed it to serve more effectively as a civilian agent.

(2) Militarism is exchanged for civilian control. The Dreyfus Affair of the 1890s attested to gaps between the military and politicians, with the military supporting a more autocratic regime. Nevertheless, the civilian institutions were effective in restraining the military. In this framework, the political elite indulged the military by allowing its autonomy and militaristic spirit to go unchecked, especially in the conquest of overseas colonies. Such adventures cultivate militarism. In return, the military left politics to the civilians (Ben-Eliezer, 1997, 363). In other words, militarism was under the auspices of civilian politics and as such was more subtle. Ben-Eliezer recognized a similar pattern in civilian-military relations in Israel, which can largely explain the paradox with which this paper opened: tightening civilian control of the military encouraged militarization that expanded the civilians' freedom to dispatch the military in Lebanon. Clearly, in societies where the military is less curbed, the
dogs of war may be less restrained, but again, their action is perceived as more politically biased and as such can be monitored, even if it takes time for this to happen.

(3) Military Downsizing and Commodification. Intense monitoring of the armed forces leads to budgetary limitations that exert pressure to downsize the military (including phasing out the draft), in order to spend more on non-military goods, thus inevitably changing the military's internal organization (Dandeker, 1994, 645-648). Military downsizing, however, has produced “isolated enclaves” that to some degree have become relatively sheltered from political scrutiny because of the shrinking rates of military participation, which reduce political participation in military affairs (see Vasquez, 2005). In particular, the ability to wage war with so little call for personal sacrifice from the general public may reduce the high threshold for starting wars by neutralizing the traditional republican-type bargaining over the wars’ goals and expected utility (see Starr 2010, 65-66), that reduces the likelihood of a deliberative process. No wonder that, as the examples presented in the opening suggest, governments regained more freedom to deploy their militaries with militarized sentiments that emerged in the civilian environment, giving precedence to the use of force.

A particularly striking example of the impact of downsizing and commodification is increased reliance on private forces, as the U.S., Britain and others did in Afghanistan and Iraq, to supplement the downsized military. Reduction in the burden of war, especially in terms of casualties, helped to alleviate public opposition to these wars (Avant, 2005). However, commodification, which relies on contractors instead of the politically-active middle class, also reduces citizens' interest in military affairs and their bargaining power vis-à-vis the state (see McCoy, 2010, 687). Thus, in limiting the deliberative process of decision-making by narrowing the stakeholder community, downsizing and commodification enhance the autonomous power of the state in the military realm, thereby limiting control of militarism. With less civilian control-incited pressure to downsize the military, this process is less likely to occur.

(4) Setting ambitious war goals. Civilian control of the military is nurtured in an environment that is less inclined to legitimize human and monetary military sacrifices. As noted earlier, costs and political monitoring of the military are strongly entangled. Framing the threat in more apocalyptic and less instrumental terms, typified by the militarized political discourse as noted above, and thereby deriving ambitious war goals, therefore serves the political leadership’s need to galvanize support among skeptical middle-class groups. Less ambitious goals are less appealing and may provoke political defiance (Smith, 2005). In other words, the same social process that leads to improved control of the military also generates
imperfect control over militarism. Such political mobilization was less necessary when citizens were excluded from military decision-making in less democratic societies.

Furthermore, setting ambitious goals not only serves political mobilization for war but also limits the government's ability to exit the war. As Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues (2004) contended, democratic leaders (more so than autocratic ones) are inclined to produce public goods from war that they can allocate to the domestic war coalition in return for its sacrifice. Therefore, democratic leaders are more likely to make an extra effort to win the war by increasing the resources devoted to the war effort. In other words, the more state performance is monitored, the more its leadership tends to increase the threshold for exiting, which can be accomplished only by militarizing the public discourse. As the war in Iraq demonstrates, portraying the war as an experiment in imposing democracy transformed the task from foreign policy restraint to “nation building,” culminating in a legitimacy crisis brought about by a lengthy war of attrition (Eichenberg, 2005). The ambitious goals, however, impeded exit.

(5) Commercially motivated media. Since the 1970s, the flood of information, a consequence of a multi-channel communications system and market-oriented competition between information brokers, has encouraged the media to cover episodes, rather than convoluted processes. Thus, the media takes complicated problems and simplifies them into personal stories, events and technical processes, i.e., part of the problem-solving approach. This is a one-way street: the media does not reassemble these bits into abstract problems, which can encourage policy debates that lead to clear political conclusions. As Christopher Lasch (1995) noted,

What democracy requires is public debate, not information…. Information, usually seen as the precondition of debate, is better understood as its by-product…. Otherwise we take in information passively—if we take it in at all…. From these considerations it follows that the job of the press is to encourage debate, not to supply the public with information…. It is no secret that the public knows less about public affairs than it used to know. (1995, 81)

Public debate is essential to the control of militarism. As Lasch implied, with the help of the media, the citizens of democracies know more than ever before about their armed forces but can do less with the information. This inverse relationship between increased access to information and lower civilian control has been noted by Kohn, who claimed:
Issues of civilian control seem to escape the press; time after time, events or issues that in past years would have been framed or interpreted as touching upon civilian control now go unnoticed and unreported, at least in those terms. (2002, 12)

Control over militarism needs to focus on processes and structures, rather than episodes, such as military operations and weapons acquisition. It is designed to relate episodes to their broader, long-term implications about the legitimacy of using force and to reveal the power relations that maintain that legitimacy. Unfortunately, these implications are indiscernible, not only to the public but often also to those who make policy as well as those who report on their activities, namely, journalists. Social structures are not “reducible to what agents think they are doing, since agents may not understand the structural antecedents or implications of their actions” (Wendt, 1987, 359). In a like manner, the long-term consequences of military activity are barely discernible. Just as the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of class relations facilitates class mobilization (Wright, 2002, 842), so too may the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of military activity help encourage political action focused on controlling militarism.

Given that the media is commercially motivated, the goal of creating such abstractions is beyond the scope of its priorities. Control of militarism can be exercised without intruding into the military organizations’ ranks and command centers. On the contrary, such intrusions may make the news the center of attention. Therefore, long-term processes are analyzed, if at all, by publicists. Again, a lower degree of civilian control would not face this phenomenon, as high civilian control, democracy, and commercial media are correlated.

To tie together what ensues from this discussion on the inverse relations between the modes of control, governments have more freedom to use force, but the manner in which the force is used is more politically monitored.

While these five mechanisms exemplify the inverse relationship between the modes of control, the list is far from complete. Other mechanisms can be identified. Furthermore, an inverse relationship is not the only way in which these variables interact. As the cases of post-World War II Japan and Germany attest, both modes can be strengthened simultaneously when deep-seated demilitarization is combined with holding the armed forces accountable for traumatic military failures. Coups represent another case in which both modes are simultaneously and temporarily weakened until military control is reinstated. Another option is tightening civilian control over militarism without reining in the armed forces, but this is
probably doomed to failure, as the case of the Weimar Republic suggests. However, the structure of the relationship established as part of state building, with the mechanisms that sustain it, make the inverse relationship widespread, especially in the post-Cold War period, as militaries became more monitored politically. Hence also the focus of this study on the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Conclusions

This paper opened with a paradox: strong civilian control of the military may encourage militarism, not lessen it. Yet, existing concepts used in theories of civil-military relations cannot adequately resolve this paradox. They either associate the low propensity to use force with high civilian control, or recognize the possibility that effective control may rein in the military but not the use of force, as when militarized civilians successfully mobilize the society for war, so restraint of the military may take place within the limits of a militaristic mindset. Other scholars repudiate the linkage between these variables. However, neither students of civilian control nor of militarism have linked civilian control to militarism, and they have refrained from scrutinizing the extent to which effective civilian control may not only fail to restrain the use of force, as many admitted, as when civilians tend to be more cavalier about military force than soldiers, but may even encourage it.

As shown in this study, civilian control impacts the standing of the military in society, allowing the military to proclaim neutrality and depoliticization, or isolating it from influence of the citizenry, thereby perversely enhancing its influence rather than undermining it. Likewise, civilian control may create a climate that furnishes the civilians with more freedom to deploy the military owing to the nature of militarized, problem-solving focused, political discourse.

Herein lies the contribution of this paper. To tackle the gap in the literature, a distinction between two modes of control was proposed: control of the military versus control of militarism. While the former focuses on the armed forces as an institution, the latter focuses on the political culture that legitimates the use of force. Controlling legitimation mechanisms is the key to military restraint, rather than only restraint of the military. Inverse relationships between these two modes of control originated in the historical process of state building, through which militarization entwined with the subordination of the armed forces to civilian supervision. Such relationships were encouraged through the work of other mechanisms, the most recent of which are commercialization of the media, the downsizing and
commodification of militaries and the way threats are framed. The manner in which civilian control impacts the standing of the military in society and the public's view of military affairs is more significant than processes that take place within the "black box" of the dialogue between officers and decision-makers, on which many students of civilian control focus. We would expect militarism to rise in non-democratic regimes, but the argument here is that democracy, with its high level of civilian control, cultivates a new type of militarism – civilianized, universalized, depoliticized, commodified and commercialized – and as such, far less monitored, as well. Here again, this argument does not overwhelmingly reject the use of force, but the spotlight is on the process that yields this use.

By distinguishing between two modes of control, this paper provides conceptual tools to deal with the paradox presented here. In both cases that exemplified this paradox, control over militarism declined concomitantly with an increase in civilian control of the military. As the discussion of decoupling mechanisms suggests, these mechanisms – the downsizing and commodification of the army, the role of the media, the apparent depoliticization of the military, the mode of political mobilization for war – can explain at least part of this development in both countries (an explanation that exceeds the scope of this paper).

However, these examples and the illustrations offered provide tools to test the argument presented here. The distinction between modes of control also identified factors that can help us determine the degree of control of militarism in a given state. The decoupling mechanisms presented suggest processes that scholars should examine in order to identify increased civilian control of the military together with decreased control of militarism. When we are aware of the militarization that develops in a democratic society that regiments its armed forces, the distinction between modes of control may work and the discussion offered here may offer tools to analyze the linkage between the two. Beyond this challenge, an important venue for future research would be testing additional mechanisms that create inverse and other types of relationships between the modes of control in these and other cases.

The significance of the proposed concepts goes beyond the purely scholarly realm. The paper should be read as a call to pay more attention to the need to control militarism and reduce the weight attached in the literature to the relationship between generals and civilians. Military coups are no longer the focus of the literature on civilian control. Today, such literature deals with the military's influence on decision-making, the military's public support for or opposition to an announced civilian policy, and the degree to which the will of civilians always prevails over that of the military command (Feaver, 1999). However, more important issues are at stake, such as restructuring and increasing the diversity of types of military
forces in the wake of commodification, and the re-rise of mercenaries and pirates (Kaldor, 2002, 160). Therefore, even demilitarization fails to perfectly monitor militarism because new forms of militarism emerge from the process itself, central to which is the contraction of institutional forces. Thus, attention to this issue has political as well as academic merit.

References


