

Introduction

The post–Cold War world has witnessed a virtual explosion of efforts at democratization within the former Soviet bloc. The proliferation of postcommunist states has challenged the advanced democracies to contribute in appropriate ways to the task of democratic consolidation across all aspects of these transitioning states. The United States’ historic commitment to the promotion of democracy abroad, coupled with the increasing acceptance of the idea that the expansion of democracies in the international system increases the likelihood of global peace, has made democratization a top priority of U.S. post–Cold War foreign policy.

Most scholars have focused on the role of civilian institutions in their analyses of the democratic transitions of the postcommunist states, but the democratization of the military institutions of these states should not be ignored. Postcommunist armed forces are key actors in the process of democratic consolidation. The successful democratic transition of postcommunist military institutions is essential to protecting the democratic gains achieved by society overall, and for ensuring that coercive force is not used to reverse them.

The U.S. military along with the militaries of other developed democracies has attempted to positively influence the process of military democratization in the postcommunist states of the former Soviet bloc. However, these efforts have been undertaken without the benefit of being informed by democratic theory or the recognition that professionalism forged within an authoritarian political system must adapt when it is practiced in a democracy. This book develops a theory of civil–military relations for postauthoritarian political systems. Its aims are to provide a theoretical basis for the military democratization currently under way in the region and to shape the policy agenda so that its foundation is supported by the mortar of democratic theory, empirical data, and a normative direction appropriate for states in the process of democratic transitions.

The existing civil–military relations literature contributes little to understanding the problem of the democratic transition of postcommunist armed forces. The classic argument of civil–military relations theorists has been that military professionalism is easily transferable across political systems. Since a hallmark of military professionalism is allegiance to civilian governments that

come to power through legitimate means, civil-military relations theorists assume that transitioning political regimes pose no particular problems for military professionals. The general characterization of civil-military relations proposed by Huntington and seconded by the field is that the focus of civil-military relations is “governmental control” of the military.¹ Neither the type of political system exerting governmental control nor the special problem of transitioning between political systems is taken into account.

However, field research across many of the postcommunist states between June 1994 and March 1997 revealed that the assumptions prominent in the existing civil-military relations literature about the static nature of civilian supremacy and military professionalism do not fit the realities of the states undergoing democratic transitions. Although officers serving within the Soviet bloc may have been “professionals” in the traditional sense of having a high level of expertise, feeling a sense of corporateness, and being generally apolitical, specific norms of behavior developed within an authoritarian system of government are inappropriate when transferred to a democratic political system. This work specifies the professional norms that must be adapted when officers trained within an authoritarian political system transfer their service to a democracy.

The main thesis of this study is that political systems matter and are, indeed, determinants of patterns of civil-military relations. Authoritarian and democratic political systems produce different forms of civilian control and military professionalism. Consequently, shifts in political systems necessarily result in changed patterns of civilian control and military professionalism. A new form of military professionalism is needed to ensure that the armed forces in the postcommunist states become democratically accountable and reflect democratic principles while also functioning as effective instruments of national security. Armed forces in transitioning states must set their sights on achieving these goals although they are burdened with the weight of institutional norms formed while in service to authoritarian states.

Concentrating on two critical dimensions of the military democratization problem—democratic political control and democratic military professionalism—addresses the democratization needs that transitioning militaries face. This study explores the dimensions of democratic political control and military professionalism in depth and identifies specific issue areas on which both internal and external policymakers can focus to further the democratization of postcommunist armed forces. Distinct patterns of *democratic* political control and *democratic* military professionalism must be built. Building these patterns should be the aim of all involved in the military democratization process in the postcommunist states.

A general framework that links professional norms with the infusion of democratic values and recognizes the need for democratic socialization in transitioning states is developed. While drawn primarily from American practice,

it has potentially great applicability to the postcommunist states, when adapted to their historical experiences, habits, and current needs. The model attempts to delineate the norms and habits that must be developed within these armed forces as they progress toward the goal of democratic consolidation.

The goal of achieving democratic political control of the military can be advanced by focusing on specific aspects of the civil-military relationship. First, what constitutional provisions are in place to ensure that the mechanisms for civilian control are sufficient and clearly codified? Second, do democratically accountable civilian leaders control the budgetary authorizations of the military, and is sufficient authority and expertise vested in both executive and parliamentary bodies, as applicable, to adequately exercise democratic oversight of the military? Is there a group of civilian experts in military affairs to advise civilian democratic decision makers and balance the opinions of the military chiefs? Are the operations of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) transparent, and is the MOD accountable to civilian authorities with legitimate authority to oversee its work? Finally, is the military responsive to the democratic expectations of society at large? Does the military have the trust of society to be its guardians of societal freedoms?

The second part of the model focuses on achieving the goal of democratic military professionalism. Specific criteria are enumerated that ensure the presence of democratic norms and practices in the development of postcommunist military institutions. This framework weighs heavily the transitioning military's objective of defending the democratic state while remaining true to democratic societal values, such as the observance of basic civil rights and the just treatment of military personnel.

Specifically, patterns of recruitment and retention, promotion and advancement, officership and leadership, education and training, norms of political influence, prestige and public relations, and the compatibility of military and societal values are addressed. Concentrating on the development of democratic norms in each of these elements of military professionalism enhances both the democratic accountability and competence of the armed forces of transitioning states.

Building these patterns of *democratic* political control and *democratic* military professionalism should be the focus of policymakers who seek to influence the military democratization process in postcommunist states. An examination of the U.S. military's democratization programs in place in the former Soviet bloc, however, clearly shows that no such understanding of the scope of the military democratization problem exists among U.S. policymakers.

The case-study method is used to explore the specific problems of military democratization and democratization assistance in Russia and the Czech Republic. These cases were chosen for both theoretical and practical reasons. The cases represent vastly different paths of democratization in terms of the success to date of their economic transitions, their geostrategic aspirations, and their

diverse patterns of civil-military relations in the Soviet era. However, these differences allow for the comparison of contrasting authoritarian systems in transition within a generally common framework of Soviet norms of military professionalism. Additionally, there are practical policy considerations and implications for the selection of the cases. Of the specific military democratization programs analyzed in chapters 3 through 5, one program includes the states of the former Soviet Union (FSU) as its participants and the other effort is aimed at the democratizing states of the former Eastern bloc. The programs themselves represent varied approaches to facilitating the emergence of democratic norms within postcommunist militaries. The Czech Republic and Russia represent significant cases from each program. Russia is obviously the most influential and potentially the most troublesome state in the FSU, while the Czech Republic, as among the first to receive an invitation for NATO membership, is a key state within the former Eastern bloc.

The dimensions of the military democratization problem are applied to the case countries' postcommunist military institutions in order to assess progress made and democratization needs that remain as the transitions continue. However, an analysis of the activity of the U.S. military democratization programs shows negligible progress toward achieving the goal of military democratization. Policymakers have weakly operationalized the concept of military democratization and have consequently designed unfocused and inappropriate solutions to the continuing democratization needs of the cases.

This book is an attempt to contribute both a diagnosis and a prescription for the problem of military democratization in postcommunist states so that policymakers can address it effectively. First, specific theoretical shortcomings in the classical civil-military relations literature have been identified and adapted to the problems of postcommunist states. Much work remains, however, for theorists to build the concepts needed to guide the successful democratic transitions of authoritarian military institutions. Second, the identification of particular issue areas and desired behaviors across the dimensions of democratic political control and democratic military professionalism offers policymakers specific suggestions for making their democratization programs in the region more effective. Third, an analysis of specific military democratization programs under way in the former Eastern bloc illustrates the gap between theoretical and actual prescriptions to facilitate democratic transitions in postcommunist militaries. The hope is that this study will assist both theorists and policymakers to better understand the problem of military democratization. The models developed and the conclusions drawn in this endeavor may be imperfect, but its undertaking is a beginning toward solving the problem of military democratization in transitioning states and, consequently, may make some contribution toward their democratic consolidation.