

CASS MILITARY STUDIES

# Democratic Civil–Military Relations

Soldiering in 21st Century Europe

Edited by  
Sabine Mannitz



# Democratic Civil–Military Relations

This book examines the ways in which European democracies, including former communist states, are dealing with the new demands placed on their security policies since the end of the Cold War by transforming their military structures, and the effects this is having on the conceptualization of soldiering.

In the new security environment, democratic states have called upon their armed forces increasingly to fulfil unconventional tasks – partly civilian, partly humanitarian and partly military – in most complex, multinational missions. Not only have military structures been transformed to make them fit for these new types of deployments but the new mission types also highlight the necessity for democracies to come to terms with a new image and ethos of soldiering in defence of a transnational value community.

Combining a qualitative comparison of 12 countries with an interdisciplinary methodology, this edited book argues that the ongoing transformations of international politics make it necessary for democracies to address both internal and external factors as they shape their own civil–military relations. The issues discussed in this work are informed by Democratic Peace Theory, which makes it possible to investigate relations within the state at the same time as analysing the international dimension. This approach gives the book a systematic theoretical framework that distinguishes it from the majority of existing literature on this subject.

This book will be of much interest to students of civil–military relations, European politics, democratization and post-communist transitions, and international relations in general.

**Sabine Mannitz** is Senior Researcher and Project Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. She has a PhD from the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder).

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# **Democratic Civil–Military Relations**

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**Edited by Sabine Mannitz**

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Sabine Mannitz, Frankfurt/Main

## **Part I**

# **Introduction**





# Conceptualizations of the democratic soldier in twenty-first century Europe

## Competing norms and practical tensions

*Sabine Mannitz*

### Introduction

This book sets out to make a comparative investigation of the ways in which European democracies are dealing with the new demands being placed on their security policies, and of the effect this is having on their conceptualization of soldiering. Covering the period from the end of the Cold War to 2009, we follow these questions in qualitative studies of 12 countries, our focal point being the particular profile and function of their respective armed forces. In each case, we ask what conceptual ideal-type ‘democratic soldier’ is put forward to represent collective values and satisfy military-specific requirements. This does not only concern equipment and organizational structures; it also requires conceding that soldiers must (be able to) overstep the limits of civility to be ready for the use of lethal force. How do democracies solve this tension? Is the existence of a civil–military value gap appreciated, or should the armed forces resemble civilian institutions as much as possible? Are soldiers drafted to be ‘citizens in uniform’, or should they be functional warriors? And to what extent do democracies succeed in socializing their soldiers in accordance with these normative images?

Profound changes have been affecting democratic civil–military relations in Europe since the 1990s and have driven us to ask about the mechanisms at work within democracies when it comes to the organization, task allocation and control of the armed forces. The former socialist states had to formulate a security policy based on new principles and establish a bond between their armed forces and their young democratic systems. In Western Europe, the end of the Cold War also led to changes in security policy; here, scenarios of unconventional conflicts and asymmetric threats have effected the replacement of classical national defence doctrines by extended notions of security to embrace global crisis management and deployments for peacekeeping, ‘humanitarian intervention’, or even nation-building, widening the scope of what security policy may entail. Due to new mission types, we could observe a rise in the number of military missions undertaken by democratic states. In structural terms, alliance

structures have been subject to altered conditions, and across Europe there has been a trend towards the professionalization of armies (in the sense of contracting rather than drafting soldiers) and to reductions in manpower; the armed forces have become more feminized, and more ethnically diverse. Nevertheless, there are differences between the democracies with regard to the role of the military, the activities in which the latter is authorized to engage and the ways in which democratic control is exercised. One crucial goal of our case studies is to see whether and how this heterogeneity is conditioned by the way in which the image of the soldier is constructed, and vice versa.

The presented cases show that the particular circumstances of democratization shape the basis for a country's civil–military relations. Even though democracy, by definition, always allows for change, the act of establishing democratic rule entails collective traditions that inform all subsequent debates. This act of laying a kind of foundation stone for one's own democratic and political–military culture<sup>1</sup> still takes place in national frames, but is also embedded in an international context: until the Second World War, national defence was the central concern in the maintenance of armed forces. During the Cold War, the function of these forces was increasingly derived from the perception of the threat posed by the opposing alliance. These rather clear-cut friend/enemy patterns were rendered obsolete with the end of the East–West confrontation and the appearance of new strategic discourses such as ‘world domestic policy’. In this vein, many democratic states’ military missions have become more complex, multinational, and less clearly connected with defence purposes. This influences the model of the soldier. One can suspect that it also affects domestic perceptions of legitimacy dilemmas, and that this surfaces in public opinion regarding the structure, equipment and role of the military. Changes over time in preferred military structures indicate related shifts: whereas post-war Germany considered conscription to be the best option since it ensured the democratic integration of its military, scarcely 50 years later the majority of Europe's democracies have decided in favour of volunteer armies because today's central arguments are about efficiency and the global deployability of troops and, furthermore, conscription took on bad connotations during communist times as an instrument of political indoctrination.

The fact that internal as well as external factors impact the relationship between soldiers and civilians implies that one must look closely at the specific national interconnections between civil society, political leadership and the armed forces. To that end we have conducted in-depth research<sup>2</sup> on 12 European democracies at varying stages of maturity and have systematically studied the following layers: (1) the official concept of the ideal-type national military force; (2) the translation of this into a normative agenda for the institutional socialization of soldiers; (3) the ways in which the members of the armed forces understand their assigned roles

Table I.1 Our sample of countries

Type of democracy	Countries
Traditional democracies	Switzerland, United Kingdom
Consolidated democracies	Germany, Spain
Recent, post-socialist democracies	Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia
Semi-democracy/in the process of democratization	Ukraine

and tasks. Normatively, the model of the ‘good soldier’ that is projected in official political documents and that materializes in national defence structures corresponds to the convictions of the democratic constituency and to that polity’s specific defence requirements. It should therefore be a clue to a country’s definition of its own security needs. Practically, the image of the soldier is also an ideal that lays down moral guidelines for the leadership within the organizational culture of the armed forces, and for the soldiers’ self-conceptions. The latter are of particular relevance in the framework of democratic rule because they reveal whether the members of the armed forces actually perceive themselves as veritable stakeholders in the *democratic* system or not. For instance, if political neutrality were an identity marker in the national political culture, one would expect to find this in the image of the country’s soldiers as well as in their own conceptions, whereas divergences indicate rifts in domestic relations.

As democracies come into being in different contexts and show particularities in their constitutional order, this was one criterion for our choice of cases. Our sample thus represents a variance with regard to democratic regime types, membership of international organizations and other relevant features, such as political neutrality (Table I.1). Further criteria concerned the (minimum) quality of democracy according to aggregated indexation. In view of the importance of the democratic control of the military during system transformations, our main focus is set on post-socialist countries. The West European states, on the other hand, represent distinctive cases and serve as contrasting instances that make it possible to assess the impact of democratic maturity on the shaping of military institutions and on the practical checks on military missions.

## 1 The puzzle reloaded: civil–military relations in democracies

The fact that democratic civil–military relations continue to show a peculiar variance has hardly entered the theoretical discussion. From a theoretical perspective, all democracies are confronted with the principal problem of having to deal with tensions between the norms of their constitutional order and the means of military violence. Yet there are considerable variations in

how democracies shape internal relations with their military. Opinions appear to differ about how the subordination of the military to the political leadership must be organized, and democracies also differ in the ways they employ their armed forces: 'There is tremendous diversity ... which belies any sense of a single model of democratic civilian control' (Forster 2006a: 20). Moreover, the problem of control will obviously take a different form when a country is still in the middle of democratization than it does in a consolidated democracy. In spite of such divergences, older democracies frequently serve as models for transition. However, the question of the appropriate forms of maintaining a military force cannot be answered by copying an existing set-up.

National history and the timing and circumstances of democratization contribute to shaping a country's civil-military relations (see Schiff 2009), meaning that political-military cultures develop in path-dependent ways, despite, for example, the adaptation pressures exerted by alliance requirements. The comparison of a range of European cases that began their democratization processes at different moments in time is especially informative in this regard because of the increasing efforts being made in Europe to institutionalize security and military policy beyond state borders. One possibility is that cooperation 'socializes', i.e. establishes shared perspectives, discourses and practices (Schimmelfennig 1994). But it is also possible that cooperation fails because of the variation in national conceptions. The existing literature on civil-military relationships does not treat this question sufficiently.<sup>3</sup> Since democratic civil-military relations are today subject to fundamentally different conditions compared to the past, one needs to look afresh at the ways in which national societies actually relate with their collective means of violence. Until now, too little light has been shed on the interplay between normative discourses and institutional factors within democracies regarding military culture, although this has been recognized repeatedly as a desideratum (George and Bennett 2005: 45–58; Barkawi and Laffey 2001; Duvall and Weldes 2001). Hence, there are still noteworthy gaps in our knowledge of how institutional regulations and social practices relate to one another in the military, and especially of what kinds of cognitive interactions are involved here. Critics have therefore kept demanding that more attention be paid to this 'subject perspective' (Seifert 1992, 1993; Miller 1998; Klein 1989; Lippert 1992; Kümmel 2002; Vennesson 2003; Naumann 2007).

Our study is, of course, not able to fill in all the gaps mentioned. It does, however, make an original contribution in a number of respects. In addition to analysing institutional aspects of oversight, we take an ethnographic look at the military as a social institution which should ideally be a trustworthy sub-system of the democratic system; however, under the pressure to adapt to changing security political task definitions, and under the particular condition of an ethical dissonance with civilian society. The military is to be prepared to use force and wage war, although with a

normative preference for civil means of conflict resolution. It is the members of this institution who have to cope with the inherent dilemmas in practice, but the accountability norms of democratic statehood demand that electorates keep an eye upon the extent to which this is makeable and reasonable. Hence, what the post-Cold War security environment has brought back to the fore is that democratic control is directed towards two distinct levels. On the one hand, the primacy of political decision-making must be ensured to prevent the possibility that the military may take unauthorized action. This function usually dominates during democratization. On the other hand, the political leadership must also ensure that the armed forces are able to carry out their tasks in the spirit of democratic principles and without taking unnecessary risks. In concrete terms, the military must be equipped and organized appropriately, and the political guidelines must conform to the law. This aspect has become more critical in the past 20 years. It makes a great difference for the relationship between democratic society and its political leadership, on the one hand, and the military, on the other hand, whether the military is supposed to defend the country in a 'war of necessity', or whether political leaders send uniformed citizens into a 'war of choice' (Freedman 2005) to achieve what is seen as the national interest. Finally, compared to the conventional task of defending their democratic homeland, soldiers who are sent into complex multinational operations need to develop a much more differentiated self-image with concomitant ideas about the appropriate moral conduct in a given mission.

## **2 Civil–military relations studied from the angle of Democratic Peace**

The research we present in this book is informed by the theory of Democratic Peace. This is an unusual but valuable starting point since it links the quality of democratic civil–military relations with the international dimension. Democratic Peace theory refers primarily to the driving forces behind the foreign policy behaviour of states, but it also involves assumptions about the internal relations with the military, which we wanted to scrutinize under present day conditions: Immanuel Kant considered standing armies as problematic and pleaded for a citizens' army of defence to realize the assumed human inclination towards peace (Kant [1795] 1977: 197f.). According to what is known as the monadic variant of this theory, democracies are pacific because citizens are sensitive to likely costs and oriented in such a way that they prefer to seek non-violent solutions to conflicts, and because they have at their disposal state institutions to implement these preferences.

Empirical findings, however, show that democracies are no less inclined to wage war than non-democracies, but they do not fight against other democracies (Geis 2001). This indicates that democratic control provisions

do make a difference, and also reflects the fact that democratic states are willing to cooperate and are more capable of doing so. Still, they behave quite differently. Recent research on the differences between democracies regarding their participation in militarized interstate disputes points to national political cultures. The puzzle of ‘democratic peace’ and ‘democratic wars’ may find an explanation in this factor (Müller and Wolff 2006; Geis *et al.* 2012). In short, civil–military relations in democracies do differ in quality from those within their non-democratic counterparts, but at the same time they show path-dependent national idiosyncrasies. This will be shown in detail in the following chapters.

The special feature of democracies’ internal relationships with the military is the primacy of the democratically legitimated political leadership. This is a standard of democratic governance (Schmidt 2000: 450f.), and corresponding reforms to install oversight bodies took place during the wave of democratization, which began with the collapse of the socialist world in 1989–1990. Yet, democratic maintenance of the armed forces requires more than institutional regulations to steer the military power apparatus and give military operations democratic legitimacy. One qualitative particularity of democratic states is that the tasks entrusted to the military should be developed in deliberations on the scope of legitimate action. The genesis of a country’s specific democratic civil–military relations can thus be seen as relying on social constructions which, as collectively produced systems of values and meanings, inform societal discourses, for example on the normative image of soldiering.<sup>4</sup> We argue in this book that the national political–military culture serves as a store of historical knowledge, basic attitudes and communication conventions and as such continues to influence the shaping of particular relationships between the civilian population and the armed forces. In this way, our study connects with the aforementioned findings of more recent Democratic Peace research and challenges the assumption of any uniform direction of change.

The theory of Democratic Peace states two further reasons for democracies’ relative peaceability: interdependence and international organizations. Cooperation, especially in defence alliances, requires a certain preparedness to enter mutual dependencies and to adapt. How could this find an expression in democratic concepts of soldiering? Here, the Kantian assumptions pose a dialectical problem that has gained more relevance in the past two decades: the greater likelihood of democracies cooperating with each other contributes to their inter-democratic peace, but may lower their inhibitions towards entering joint military endeavours, especially under circumstances of a vocationalization of the armed forces. Technological progress and new, post-Cold War threat scenarios have qualified national defence objectives. Membership of international organizations (for example, requests for support for UN missions, or pressure from NATO or the EU to meet certain conditions) has called for a redefinition

of military profiles. In many cases, as we shall see in the empirical chapters, the arguments in favour of conscript armies have reached their limits as a result. Currently, the trend is towards vocational volunteer armies, which runs contrary to Kant's suggestions.

Certainly, conscript systems have never been the only option available to democracies to increase the care with which decisions on troop deployment are taken. Samuel Huntington (1957) favoured a completely different variant with the 'objective control' of the military. We shall examine the different approaches later. The majority of European democracies are in the process of vocationalizing their armed forces and contracting out functions to private companies in the hope of enhancing efficiency. This erects additional barriers between the military and society and raises questions concerning equity. Vocationalization emphasizes the instrumental character of the armed forces, and alters the meaning of military service in regards to citizenship rights and duties. These impacts need consideration when deciding upon structural reform. The empirical breadth of democratic military structures shows that neither an army of conscripts nor an army of volunteers is the (more) democratic, or else more peace-inclined option per se. A glance at the old debate on democratic control modes nevertheless helps to identify the shortcomings of both solutions.

### **3 Two prominent conceptualizations of the place of the military in democracy – and their dilemmas**

Expert opinion has been roughly divided into two camps regarding how the armed forces can be bound to remain a purposive instrument of the democratic system. Like Immanuel Kant in his day, some experts – and some democratic states – regard universal conscription as the best means. Under this model, democratic control takes a direct form in so far as citizens are considered not only to have the right but also the duty to use force of arms to defend their polity. Samuel Huntington is one proponent of the opposing view: his idea of 'objective control' is based on the volunteer soldier whose service under arms is not derived from his status as a citizen, but from a professionally defined mission. In this concept, control rests at the institutional level alone. Questions of equity of conscription and the societal integration of the armed forces range secondary.

The two concepts deserve to be recalled briefly, because – despite the different circumstances in different countries – efforts are being made to find general model types. This becomes obvious when looking at post-socialist countries where reform of the military sector is of special importance for both democratic consolidation and the peaceful behaviour of the polity as a whole (see Edmunds and Germann 2003; Forster 2006a). The high degree of mobilization, the volatility of the struggle between old and new elites, and the novelty of the democratic institutions create high



risks. The transition opens windows of opportunity in which power-holders of the *ancien regime* (often including the military) might try to establish non-democratic enclaves to retain material privileges, special status, and channels of influence; consequently, the situation is apt to empower political entrepreneurs who may wish to ally with a not yet democratic military in order to advance their personal power agenda (see Snyder 2000; Snyder and Mansfield 2005). Shaping democratic civil–military relations has been additionally difficult in post-socialist countries because democratization took place within a changing world order which created entirely new conditions in exactly those policy fields relevant for security and defence. These transformations were therefore much more interlinked internationally than previous individual democratization processes elsewhere. Nevertheless, consolidated democracies often acted as models for reforms, with resulting problems: there is the question of which external normative catalogue to follow (Bryden and Hänggi 2004). After all, the older democracies by no means provide a single magic formula.

### 3.1 *The integration concept: conscription and identification*

The integration concept dates back to Kant. He was guided by the idea that it would be beneficial to apply the rationality of the categorical imperative in the constitution, and in the mission of the armed forces. This means only allowing the taking up of arms, and possibly even war, for self-defence purposes against completely anomic opponents. This ‘unjust enemy’ is a state that is either completely lawless internally, thus defying the notion of evolution towards a better state through the effects of law-based institutions, or one that is willing to destroy the international order and uphold Hobbesian anarchy, which is thereby preventing evolution towards contractual interstate relationships. In either case, Immanuel Kant accorded other states the right to use ‘all means’. The similarity of this template to today’s enemy image of ‘rogue states’ is striking. Rogue states are characterized by maltreatment of their own subjects, their greedy ambition to acquire weapons of mass destruction in defiance of international norms and their support for terrorism, which obviates any notion of the rule of law or of respect for the sovereignty of others.

The enlightener concluded that democratic states should abolish standing armies and that the ‘voluntary exercise of the citizens in arms at certain appointed periods’ would be sufficient for defence (Kant [1795] 1977: 198). This was based on the contemporary view that the permanent availability of military resources provided the (mainly absolutist) rulers with the structures needed for their ‘cabinet wars’. However, the argument was more than just an observation of bad practice. Kant saw the risk of war increase as a result of the constant availability of the means with which distrustful neighbouring states held each other in check and encouraged a spiral of arms – an early conceptualization of the ‘security dilemma’. In

addition, standing armies together with their contractors and suppliers represented a lobby that was more interested in warmongering than in pacifism; in other words, he recognized the dangers of a military-industrial complex. The military's own hierarchical culture contributed ever more to this situation. Its instrumental action logic ultimately contradicted the Enlightenment's image of man and was judged to pose a risk to the political leadership – the 'state within a state' argument. An army of conscripts was assumed to prevent all this because of the intense bonds with the people, who would be reasonable and cost conscious and, whenever possible, behave according to moral values (Kant [1795] 1977: 198; cited from Müller 2000: 103–6).

Despite the good peace-policy arguments, the militia that Kant proposed never became the sole form of military organization in democratic states. Today, it is the exception, and even general conscription has given way to mixed constructs involving an increasing proportion of career soldiers and fixed-term volunteers and a large proportion of private contractors, even where it has not yet been succeeded by all-volunteer armies (Haltiner and Klein 2002; Haltiner 2003a; Werkner 2003; Szvircsev Tresch 2005). The gradual transitions reflect ambivalent considerations: the main arguments in favour of general conscription are still its integrative effects and fair burden-sharing. But these are not genuine military arguments. What the Prussian military reformers saw in the French post-revolutionary troops as the military superiority of citizen soldiers was an indirect result of military reform, i.e. the fact that the French soldiers identified with the political mission (Østergaard 1999: 42; Joenniemi 2006: 6).

The example of Germany corroborates the fact that conscription was maintained for non-military reasons. The positive effect was frequently doubted and the pros and cons of conscription were discussed. Ultimately, however, the prevailing diagnosis has been that of a largely successful integration of the armed forces. More recently, the integration argument was joined by the manpower argument that only conscription provided the *Bundeswehr* with the personnel needed for the higher ranks (Kümmel 2006: 223). Yet Germany's continuation of conscription had a symbolic character for years: the share of conscripts compared with professional soldiers and longer-term volunteers was under 50 per cent and only one in three German men were called upon to perform his military service. It was a 'pseudo-conscript army' (Haltiner 1999: 23f.), and the suspension of conscription in 2011 was an overdue consequence. Germany scores most positively with regard to the success of the citizen soldier concept in anchoring the armed forces in the second German democracy (see Bake and Meyer in this book; Mannitz 2011), but also conversely in stabilizing this democracy through the construction of a pronouncedly 'civil' army (Bald 2005: 25). However, conscripts are only suitable for contemporary military operations to limited extents and – seen in this light – the draft is expensive. Many European countries have

abolished conscription for this reason (see Werkner 2003; Szvircsev Tresch 2005).

### 3.2 *The professionalization debate and 'objective control'*

The question of how to organize civil–military relations in modern democracies gained new impetus in the 1950s with the experiences of two world wars, the confrontation between the power blocs and the onset of an arms spiral. An influential discussion developed in the USA, guided by the aim of enhancing military efficiency. The core question was how fully professional armed forces could be installed without jeopardizing democracy. In *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington (1957) described the modern military as an institution of specialized experts with a professional ethos. According to his reading, modern corps of officers in a democratic order would not pursue political objectives of their own but share responsibility for the community. They must subordinate themselves to the civilian authority and maintain absolute political neutrality; by the same token, they may not be used by civilian stakeholders for domestic policy ends. Yet, to perform their tasks professionally and efficiently, armed forces must be granted autonomous, i.e. ultimately non-democratic, structures and institutional culture. The 'civil–military gap' in norms and values is seen as a functional necessity in this approach (Huntington 1957: 62). Huntington thus favoured a clear division of labour that subjected the military to legalistic control but segregated them as an organizational unit.

Morris Janowitz in *The Professional Soldier* ([1960] 1971) and later Charles Moskos (2000) employed other arguments to endorse the professional specialization of the military as unstoppable. Modern weapon systems need fewer and fewer personnel, but these must be all the better qualified; thus, hordes of armed men are no longer required (Haltiner 2003b: 55). However, Janowitz drew on organization theory to emphasize an increasing *correspondence* between military and civilian working worlds: military and civilian leadership require modern management techniques, and nowadays the administrative and organizational functions within military institutions are differentiated to such a degree that many soldiers spend their days in offices and do a similar kind of work to people in civilian white-collar occupations (see Resteigne and Soeters 2009; Rietjens 2008). Janowitz regarded this 'rise of the military manager' and of 'military intellectuals' ([1960] 1971: 430) as a positive trend towards a civil and political socialization of the military, whereas Samuel Huntington rejected it as dysfunctional. Despite their opposing assessments of the civil–military gap, both Huntington and Janowitz focussed the discussion on linking professionalism to the maintenance of armies of contracted volunteers.<sup>5</sup>

Although more and more democracies have been switching to volunteer armies and are subjecting these to 'objective' control measures, this is by no means undisputed. The seemingly mechanistic reduction of

democratic control to institutional provisions meets with particular criticism. Following on from Max Weber's theory of modernization and system-theoretical considerations, sociologists in particular contend that in a democracy the military is not a separable institution but participates in exchange and is itself subject to social transition. This is shown, for example, by changes in the perception of the soldierly profession and military habitus over the years, by the integration of women, and by the recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity or of homosexuality, albeit to varying degrees (Wachtler 1983; Lippert 1992; Seifert 1992, 1993; Kernic 2001; Burk 2002; Soeters and van der Meulen 2007). In addition, it is questionable whether under present day conditions efficiency could actually increase if the military led a separate existence from civilian society and cultivated an ethos of professional instrumentality. While such an understanding stresses purely military skills, contemporary missions are extremely complex and require highly competent soldiers with manifold skills. A practical weakness which in any case aggravates civil-military rifts is the fact that all-volunteer forces are imbalanced in socio-structural terms since the military offers particularly attractive career options for those who are otherwise at a disadvantage in the labour market.

### ***3.3 Reality: hybrids and grey areas***

What our case studies evidence is that, empirically, the pronounced model types are barely theory: some democratic states have armies of conscripts, others armies of volunteers; most recruitment systems are hybrids and contracting out is increasing. Control modes also differ. Some consider democratic control to be adequately solved if the armed forces are subject to the supreme command of an elected head of state. Other democracies provide for an obligation to inform parliament, and yet others make decisions on military operations by the executive subject, with only a few exceptions, to approval by the legislative. Democracies also differ with regard to the political mission of their armed forces. Whereas some former colonial powers traditionally deploy their military resources outside their own state territories to project their power and enforce their political interests abroad, other democratic states maintain an army for defence purposes and require a special mandate for international operations. Some also emphasize their defensive attitude with a policy of neutrality (in our sample, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine); others subordinate their doctrines to collective security systems and their criteria for legitimate military operations. There is also a wide range of different concepts regarding the question of the legal position of soldiers: in Germany they possess extensive civil rights even when on duty, but Great Britain, Poland and Spain impose obligations of political neutrality on their soldiers, which limit their basic rights and extend beyond their terms of duty. In these latter countries, members of the armed forces are not allowed to become members of

political parties as this is considered too political an activity (Nolte and Krieger 2002: 72–7).

This book shows that such different political–military preferences result from the countries’ histories (inclusive of democratization). Specific experiences and foreign policy circumstances were pressing when the Swiss cantons united, at the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, when the Federal Republic of Germany was founded, or when the former Yugoslavia collapsed. Different priorities are set in the respective restructured constitutions, particularly with regard to the military. Although this may seem completely idiosyncratic, commonalities become visible in comparison: as far as Western Europe is concerned, small traditional democracies (Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland), large traditional democracies (Great Britain, France) and post-authoritarian democracies (Austria, Germany, Greece, Spain) form clusters with regard to the extent of the institutionalization of the democratic control organs governing their military and deployment decisions. Post-authoritarian democracies tend to have stronger measures in place, i.e. show a tendency towards parliamentary control, whereas the executive has greater decision-making powers the longer and more smoothly the democratic system has existed (see Nolte and Krieger 2002: 20, 34–9, 72–7; Peters *et al.* 2008).

These differences have come under a certain pressure of standardization since the end of the Cold War. In all our cases, the armed forces have been, or are still being, transformed to become more capable of acting in the context of global crisis management (Howorth 2006; Resteigne and Soeters 2009). Under the aegis of the OECD and NATO, the shift in security policies away from territorial defence was also demanded from the post-socialist states. Nevertheless, this has led neither to the promotion of just one ideal-type ‘postmodern’ democratic military as proposed by Moskos (2000) nor to uniform real types. Post-socialist democracies have picked up specific traditions and images of their armed forces from pre-socialist times. In the Lithuanian and the Czech cases, for example, the official memory discourses reverberate of the inter-war periods with their rather weak democracies, producing particular problems for the present formulation of the military’s tasks and self-conception. In Romania, on the other hand, adoption of the proposed democratic norms has been supported by the population’s desire to continue with the country’s Westernization, which had been interrupted from 1938 onwards.

Furthermore, there are *de facto* links between political and military decision-making levels in the practice of almost all democracies that, according to the abstract ideal, are supposed to undermine the objectivity of the control organs. In view of these grey areas, Peter Feaver (2003) pleads for more realistic control norms, for example to legitimate the political consultation of military experts, that would not necessarily harm the civil decision-making primacy. Feaver emphasizes that a realistic concept would have to apply a less credulous image of civilian society. One

should take into account the interest-based preferences in the citizenry, be they economic or party-political, and – increasingly – the influence of external players (Feaver 1996: 167). A different line of criticism is that control by a democratically legitimated state leadership is no longer adequate in view of the complexity of today's security policy. Political decisions regarding the design and use of military instruments should therefore be taken on a broader basis. This may at least mean parliamentary participation (Meyer 2004, 2006), or else more transparency regarding decisions on deployment and mission mandates, more public deliberation and, if need be, collective action (Cottey *et al.* 2002b: 36; Forster 2006a: 31–8).

To summarize, mixed systems emerge in practice and contrast with the theoretical ideal types of democratically controlled armed forces. The hybrids reflect attempts to meet the weaknesses of a given situation and steer an independent course against the background of different national experiences and differing societal and defence policy priorities. Despite the undeniable advantages of training, operational capability and cost efficiency, 'all-volunteer forces are not suited to every national circumstance' (Williams 2006: 23).

#### **4 The ongoing reshaping of the military**

Recalling the Democratic Peace argument, the theory of an interrelationship of interstate peace and democratic statehood has proven to be quite robust. If Immanuel Kant's reservations about standing armies rang true to that extent, the trend towards vocational volunteer forces would be cause for alarm. However, his assumption that conscript armies would not be sent to conduct wars of aggression does not stand ground. Not only the greatest dictators of the twentieth century used conscript armies: democratic states have also sent their conscripts to fight wars that at most have only had an indirect defensive motive.<sup>6</sup> The US armies in the Vietnam and Korean wars were made up of conscripts for most of the time: at least conscription was abolished in reaction to the military disaster in Asia (Müller 2000: 107–9; Callaghan and Kernic 2001: 195f.). The high losses incurred reduced public support and can be interpreted, with Kant, as an ethical concern of democratic society for its children.<sup>7</sup> Parallel criticism is voiced in the United States about the purpose of the latest war against Iraq – conducted with volunteers and reservists from the National Guard and with contracted personnel. Military and military-sociological authors publicly doubt whether the decision-makers (most of whom no longer have any military experience) demonstrate sufficient responsibility in dealing with the lives and health of what are now contracted soldiers. James Burk's criticism of his government's irresponsible interventionism includes the hypothesis that personal experience of military service strengthened pacifist sentiments (2002: 19; see also Huntington 1957: 31–3). However

plausible the idea may sound, Choi and James found in cross-national analyses that, over time, a growing political influence of the military *does* increase a state's involvement in militarized interstate disputes (Choi and James 2004, 2008; see also Sechser 2004).

According to current knowledge, there is just as little to substantiate a sweeping negative appraisal of vocational armies as there is to justify an optimistic assessment of citizens' militias (Müller 2000; vom Hagen 2003: 14f.). The impact of military structures on democratic peaceability remains inconclusive. Rather, the phenomenon of 'cosmopolitan' military operations (Elliott and Cheeseman 2004) and the increased international cooperation in security policy raise questions on the actual interplay between structural reforms, democratic supervision and political decision-making regarding military operations.

#### *4.1 Reasons for military structural change*

Two arguments are currently used for the establishment of largely vocational volunteer armies. On the one hand, technology requires expertise, which conscripts would be unable to gain in basic military training (Janowitz [1960] 1971: xi; Moskos 2000: 15; Kernic 2001: 568; Cote 2004).<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the internationalization of operational forces calls for appropriate training. In summary, it is the departure from territorial defence concepts that is a major driving force behind the restructuring. This is by no means obvious.<sup>9</sup> The classical threat scenario of an attack on a country's territory led to different conclusions in the various democracies regarding the required military apparatus (Nolte and Krieger 2002; vom Hagen 2006). Moreover, even in a changed global security environment, the interpretations, political diagnoses and consequences continue to compete for democratic majorities. Surely, the new threats are not from nation to nation. Yet defence necessities apply at best if seen as the defence of those values on which the legitimacy and functioning of the political system depends. All of those democracies that expanded the security concept in their defence doctrines are today facing the problem of defining criteria for the legitimate operation spectrum of their troops. All too vague definitions confront members of the armed forces with ambiguous operational risks, and the less clearly a military mission relates to defence, the more difficult it is to call in the armed forces.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, even without participation in politically or legally dubious missions, the military operations of the democratic states today are in fact multinational undertakings that embrace inter-military and civil-military cooperation and demand correspondingly skilled forces (Cote 2004; Callaghan and Schönborn 2004; Haltiner and Klein 2004; Forster 2006a; Soeters and Manigart 2009). The high qualification requirements have made the cost-benefit ratio shift in favour of smaller professional armies supported by civilian service providers (Moskos 2000: 15f.; Werkner 2003; Boëne *et al.*



2004: 406). This new configuration questions the established assumptions about the causalities of the civil containment of military means in democratic systems. While it makes more economic sense to have a small(er) number of well-trained contracted soldiers who can be expected to actually perform well in missions, the fact that the cost of training the individual is high may also increase inhibitions about his or her deployment. In the long term, societies can anyhow only succeed in recruiting volunteers with the necessary educational background needed for military leadership functions if they do not irresponsibly entrust their armed forces with (excessively) risky operations.<sup>11</sup>

#### ***4.2 Possible effects of all-volunteerism on democratic checks on deployment***

The military was once an institution of domestic national and/or democratic integration. Today priority is given to operational capabilities for expeditionary missions. Soldiers from democratic states are now performing duties that may range from former domains of humanitarian aid organizations to conducting so-called pre-emptive wars. They are expected to be just as capable for peacekeeping as for combat. The multifaceted image of a soldier – the ‘constabularization’ of the military (Janowitz [1960] 1971) – is altering the relationship between civilians and the military, is affecting individual skill requirements and is making it all the more difficult to recruit suitable personnel. In fact, the widespread ‘without me attitude’ (Haltiner 2005: 3–8) creates both functional and normative dilemmas for the democratic checks on deployment decisions (see Coker 2002; Callaghan and Schönborn 2004; Haltiner and Klein 2005; Mannitz 2006, 2007).

Countries with established volunteer armies such as the United States, Great Britain or France show signs of a growing social and educational rift between the class of political decision-makers and the armed forces because all-volunteer armies tend to lose the contest to recruit the highly competent personnel, who are needed so much more today (Magee and Nider 2002). The military is thus even less representative of society than under a ‘pseudo-conscription’ system which only recruits a small part of an age cohort. Moreover, decision-makers whose own children are not members of the military to any notable extent may be less reluctant to deploy troops. The transition to an all-volunteer army thus subjects the mutual responsibilities of civil society, political leadership and military organizations to a severe endurance test.

Added to this, the everyday practice in many democracies of involving military elites in drafting political concepts cannot be regarded as entirely unproblematic. Military professionals appear as competent advisers, and they position themselves as defenders of democratic values. The impact assessment remains ambivalent, however. Peter Feaver has pointed to the



phenomenon of ‘civilian hawks and military doves’ (1995: 129f.) facing each other in the United States, and calls the inadequate competencies of political decision-makers a central problem of today’s civil–military power relations. Although this may be true, as many of the post-socialist case studies show in particular, one must consider that members of the armed forces demonstrate a significantly higher willingness to actually make use of the available means of military force (Sechser 2004). Todd Sechser’s study concludes that it is the *practised* mechanisms of control<sup>12</sup> that reduce the inclinations of democratic states to intervene and prompt military leaders to adopt reserved positions. Such restraints can disappear if the opportunities for public involvement and/or the interest of the political public in exercising control diminish (Sechser 2004: 770f.). There is more scope for discretion and thus also a greater risk of reckless decisions if control bodies are incompetent or where an indifferent public opinion prevails towards the operations and mandates of the armed forces. Regrettably, we found the latter to be the case in a host of countries we portray in this book.

#### 4.3 *Internationalization of missions – and of control?*

Domestic alienation effects are possible consequences of the internationalization of security policy with its retrenchment of sovereignty (see Wagner 2006). How can and should legitimacy, responsibility and control be organized when soldiers are supposed to be acting less on behalf of their national sovereign and increasingly as the bringers and guardians of the order of a transnational (be it European or world) society? Military missions of the kind will probably increase, be it within NATO or under the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. Democratic control is precarious in security communities where decisions are negotiated without involving national parliaments. State institutional concepts of democratic control have therefore become subject to criticism. It is all the more important to watch whether democracies which deploy their military forces under conditions of internationalization succeed in controlling their operations in such a way that the emphasis remains on civilizing conflicts, and on ensuring that the – in all probability primarily vocational – armed forces are not degraded to mere instruments of foreign policy. Lacking transparency and accountability of political decisions makes effective democratic controls difficult in the same way as imprecise defence policy guidelines do: ‘How [do] we know when national survival is at stake in the absence of direct territorial attack?’ (Forster 2006a: 8f.).

If the conceptual elimination of national boundaries with regard to security is understood as the obligation to intervene – as the UN-approved ‘Responsibility to Protect’ suggests (Brock 2007) – this changes the conceptualization of soldiering fundamentally. Apart from the trend of an increased merging of civilian with military role sets in the troops’ task

allocations, seemingly ‘unmilitary’ operations are often justified by appeals to the value community of a civilized world society. The legitimacy of several military operations since the end of the Cold War has been claimed on such grounds, which are respected in democratic societies. The shift, as such, to more international mandates is not detrimental, but requires that democracies develop criteria to distinguish between mission types they want to support and those they do not – in the interest of promoting peaceful conflict resolutions. Without the mutual confidence that civilians and soldiers agree on and share responsibility for defending their polity’s objectives, the relationship is susceptible to flaws and the claim that democracies demonstrate particular responsibility in dealing with their military is just a pious wish.

## **5 Relevance of the case studies**

The impact of national political culture on civil–military relations and on the changes in the social constructions of soldiering has rarely been addressed country for country within a systematic framework. This is understandable against the background of academic desires to formulate general recommendations. However, the different circumstances in national democracies raise the question of whether such generalization is at all possible (see Hänggi 2003: 12–17; Forster 2006a: 40). The dilemmas and problems of adjustment confronting the young democracies that we present in this book urge us to favour context sensitivity first and foremost. Recent work by Rebecca Schiff confirms that ‘civil–military relations involve the drama between the armed forces of a *particular* nation, political elites, society at large, and institutions’ (2009: 2; emphasis added). The argument Schiff raises in her concordance theory of civil–military relations is that institutional analyses alone fail to take into account the historical and cultural conditions of successful, democratic civil–military relations.<sup>13</sup> She uses four indicators for the latter, i.e. social composition of the officer corps, recruitment, military style and political decision-making, and argues that the military, the political elites and the citizenry must agree upon the interconnections of these to reach concordance. Schiff takes political culture seriously and points to the relevance of democratic deliberation in the search for consensual solutions. In order to contain the potential for violence of the armed forces, on the one hand, and to prevent possible interventionism on the part of the political leadership, on the other, a practice of democratic control is necessary which reaches beyond operative supervisory mechanisms and which also comprises confidence-building within society and responsible partnering.

Traditional research on democratic civil–military relations has given little attention to this aspect. The same holds true for transformation studies. Research on military reforms in post-socialist states concentrates mostly on institution building, which is a necessary, but only a first, step.