

CHAPTER 1

An Integrative Approach to the Military in Divided Societies

This chapter discusses the relationship between the civilian and military/security spheres in divided societies. This relationship is best understood by focusing on three types of civil-military exchanges and their constant interplay: first, the relationship between the country's pattern of intersectoral relations and the military; second, formal and informal exchanges between actors operating within the country's political and military spheres; and, third, the role of the military in the process of state formation and its facets and the impact of this process on the military's legitimacy and status. I will now discuss each of these dimensions of the civil-military interface in divided societies and then present my working hypothesis regarding their interplay.

THE MILITARY AND INTERSECTORAL RELATIONS IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

Before war became a national enterprise, determining the social composition of the military was the sole privilege of the state's ruler and the oligarchy, which preferred to hire foreign mercenaries with no discernable stake in the state's politics, society, and economy to recruiting their own subjects. Indeed, introducing universal conscription at this stage was unfeasible: the necessary infrastructure was lacking, disciplinary techniques could not be applied on a wide scale, and the country's inhabitants "had not yet been fooled into thinking that it was their own interest that they were fighting for."¹ But the late eighteenth century saw the rise of popular demands for military institutions that would reflect their respective societies. Since these demands were congruent with the state's efforts to enhance its war-making capacities, national armies based on conscription gradually became the norm, especially among the Great Powers.²

However, in divided societies, where the nation is composed of two or more societal sectors (communities, tribes, regions, etc.), building a national

army was complex, and in these contexts two general patterns have emerged. In some states, one societal sector dominates the military in the same way that it controls the political system and the state bureaucracy, and the national army is thus “national” only in name. However, since authority in divided societies is legitimate only if it is acceptable to all major societal sectors, and since the agencies enforcing this authority must also enjoy a broad consensus, states that correspond to this model are necessarily only partially legitimate in their citizens’ eyes. A telling example is found in the well-known satirical novel, *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1923), which recounts the adventures of Czech veteran soldier Josef Švejk in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War. In addition to its general antiwar sentiment, the book recounts the communal grievances of the army’s Czech soldiers against their Austrian superiors, who, despite the official rhetoric of a “national army,” treat them in a derogatory way.

But in other divided societies where no sector dominates the military, the latter reflects the state’s embedded pluralism by recruiting members of all societal sectors; by introducing power-sharing mechanisms in its command and in the controlling civilian-political bodies; and by adopting a consensual identity, missions, and tasks. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, Lebanon has, in the course of time, shifted from the first to the second models—namely, from control to power-sharing in security matters—albeit with great difficulties.

The first model presented is theoretically developed and has been identified in quite a number of cases, especially outside the West. Examples include South Africa during the period of Apartheid, Singapore, and many Middle Eastern states including Israel, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.³ However, the second model, which is found in pluralist democracies in Western Europe and North America (e.g., Belgium and Canada),⁴ and, to an extent, in democratizing states such as post-Apartheid South Africa,⁵ is theoretically undeveloped and empirically understudied. A glance at the relevant literature demonstrates this.

“Classic” works on power-sharing in divided societies do not address the question of how these mechanisms are introduced into the security sector—and not only to the political system—despite the fact that in divided societies that are dominated by one societal sector the security sector plays a pivotal role in the exclusion of the subaltern sector(s) from power.⁶ More recent works, which debate the utility of power-sharing settlements after state failure and intrastate conflicts,⁷ also focus on the political system while overlooking the bureaucracy, the judiciary, and the security sector.⁸ This despite the fact that in divided societies these ostensibly professional and nonpolitical institutions can play a pivotal role in enforcing and reinforcing political and social inequalities. Moreover, recent evidence has shown that states

possessing a greater degree and more dimensions of power-sharing—including in the security sector—are more likely to remain stable after intrastate conflicts.⁹ Finally, works that discuss possible solutions to intrastate conflicts and debate the merits of partition and power-sharing overlook the question of how to build a security sector that could help ameliorate the “security dilemmas” of the country’s various societal sectors.¹⁰

Kindred fields of study also neglect this topic. Apart from a few exceptions,¹¹ studies on Security Sector Reform (SSR) are mostly concerned with making the security sector more accountable and competent; they do not dwell on the introduction of power-sharing mechanisms into the security sector in order to make it more acceptable to the country’s various societal sectors.¹² The related subfield of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is mainly concerned with the disbanding of armed groups (or militias) that proliferate during periods of intrastate conflict and the reintegration of their members into society; it rarely asks how to reform the security sector in way that would alleviate the mutual fears that foster the emergence of these organizations in the first place.¹³

The case of Iraq since 2003 is telling. Prior to its invasion and occupation by the US-led coalition, Iraq had a military that was dominated by its Sunni Arab community, and specifically by natives of Tikrit, the birthplace of President Saddam Hussein, and members of his extended family. This was particularly the case with regard to the elite units of the Iraqi Army (especially the Republican Guard), which received preferential treatment in salaries, equipment, and tasks. After the occupation of Iraq, US officials, which considered the Iraqi Army to be Saddam’s army, sought to replace it with a new military institution—the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)—and ordered the disbandment of the Iraqi Army. But this move, which was supposed to facilitate the process of democratization in Iraq, ultimately helped obstruct it. Instead of an army dominated by Sunni Arabs, Iraq now had an army dominated by Kurds and Shi’is, which, moreover, alienated the Sunni Arabs, a fact that reflected negatively on intersectoral relations in Iraq and, ultimately, on building a viable democracy there.¹⁴

Developments in related areas of research also suggest that power-sharing in the security sector of some divided societies ought to be considered as means to regulate conflict among their various societal sectors. Recent contributions to the study of civil-military relations, and especially the notion of a “post-modern military,”¹⁵ suggest that in recent decades the armed forces of several Western states have become—or are facing increasing demands to become—more reflective of their societies in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation.¹⁶ “Diversity in the military,” in other words, has become part and parcel of the Western pattern of state formation, which, historically, has been exported to—and emulated by—other regions of the

world.¹⁷ Another relevant theory is that of “concordance” in civil-military relations, which describes and prescribes a cooperative relationship between the military, the political elites, and the citizens, where these three partners agree on “the social composition of the officer corps, the political decision-making process, recruitment method, and military style” in order to prevent domestic military intervention.¹⁸ However, although concordance theory is attentive to non-Western patterns of civil-military relations, it has been applied (and prescribed) also to divided societies such as Israel where one societal sector (the Jewish majority) dominates the state and the security sector, raising the question of whether in some cases intrasectoral concordance coexists with—and facilitates—intersectoral domination.¹⁹

A second relevant area of research are studies on public institutions in multiethnic (or multiracial) settings, which indicate that representative institutions are more legitimate than nonrepresentative ones, though their relative efficiency remains contested.²⁰ According to Selden and Selden, “The central tenet of the theory of representative bureaucracy is that passive representation, or the extent to which a bureaucracy employs people of diverse social backgrounds, leads to active representation, or the pursuit of policies reflecting the interests and desires of those people.”²¹ That this observation may also apply to the realm of security is suggested by the occurrence of “race riots” in US cities where the police force is predominantly white (e.g., Los Angeles in 1992 and Cincinnati in 2001) compared with their relative absence in cities where the police force and other public services are more diverse.²²

Finally, one could mention the decline of major interstate war since 1945,²³ and especially since the end of the cold war, and the fact that the security sector in most states is currently engaged in law-enforcement tasks (even in the War in Iraq, the most significant interstate conflict since the turn of the millennium, the US-led coalition quickly turned to policing missions). This seems to warrant, on the one hand, a reevaluation of the existing criteria for assessing the effectiveness and competence of militaries that now perform policing tasks, and, on the other, a greater focus on the extent to which these institutions are legitimate in the eyes of the various sectors of their societies. In other words, unlike in the established democracies in the West, where the security sector is the last area to democratize,²⁴ in the democratizing divided societies in the non-Western regions, the security sector is, perhaps, one of the first areas that should undergo such a transformation. Indeed, this has been the case in South Africa, where nonwhites were introduced into the South African Defence Force (SADF) before the demise of Apartheid.²⁵ As I will show, this has also occurred in Lebanon.

The military (and the security sector in general) is thus an important arena for intersectoral relations in divided societies. But it also influences,

and is affected by, the political system and the state formation process in these contexts. These two dimensions of the civilian-military interface in divided societies will now be discussed.

THE MILITARY AND POLITICS

The military can play quite a number of roles in the political system, and, in turn, can be affected by political developments. But in order to comprehend the political-military interplay, a distinction ought to be made between the established states in the West (and to an extent in other regions) and the “new states” or “postcolonial states” in the third world.

In the former type of states, the civilian and military spheres have become differentiated as part of the process of state formation (see below) and the civilian institutions, which are generally robust, have the capacity to control the military, although not always successfully.²⁶ But in the less-established states, where the differentiation between a civil and military/security sphere is partial or nonexistent and the civilian institutions are weak, the military can evade civilian control and become a political actor in its own right. Under these circumstances, the military may well opt for establishing a political order,²⁷ albeit under its own guidance; but it can also assume the role of mediator, arbiter, or holder of the balance between rival political factions. This is in addition to its attempt to secure the resources that it deems necessary for its performance, to gain control over recruitment, training, and promotion of its officers, and to protect itself against outside challenges to its integrity.²⁸ When less-established states perceive themselves as facing an existential threat, and when outside powers provide them with generous military aid, the domestic position of the military and its influence over politics, society, the economy, and the public discourse are significantly enhanced.

Western theories of civil-military relations, which were developed during the cold war, have identified and prescribed “objective control” of the military—that is, a professional army separated from society by integral borders and supervised by the state’s political institutions, or a society of “citizen-soldiers” in which the armed forces are effectively woven into the social fabric and thereby influenced by the civil society.²⁹ But in many non-Western states, these models are inapplicable and what have sometimes emerged are military governments, various forms of military guardianship,³⁰ or informal but nonetheless very potent “security networks”: hybrid agglomerations of actors from the security and civilian realms whose members have a significant impact on policymaking and actual policies.³¹ This factor can help explain why democratic transitions in the established states in Central and Eastern

Europe have been relatively smooth, especially insofar as the imposition of civilian control of the military was concerned,³² compared to the problems facing such transitions in the third world (e.g., in Iraq).

The extent to which the state is established is, in sum, a critical factor in determining the role of its military in its political system, and this requires an inquiry into the process of state formation, including the role of the military in it.

THE MILITARY AND THE PROCESS OF STATE FORMATION

Although the state has been the dominant form of political organization for centuries, little consensus exists on its nature, emergence, and remarkable endurance. Drawing on the continuous debate of these issues, it can be concluded that the process of state formation can be comprehended in full only if seen as comprising three interrelated and often-overlapping subprocesses: (1) *state-building*, which consists of measures that produce “territorial consolidation, centralization, differentiation of the instruments of government, and monopolization of the means of coercion,”³³ (2) *statecraft* (or state-construction), defined as the “processes or mechanisms whereby a state enhances its power and authority,” and, ultimately, its autonomy vis-à-vis society, making use of its formal agencies but also of an array of informal, including cultural, means,³⁴ (3) *national integration* (or nation-building), which involves centrally based efforts to inculcate the state’s citizens with a common identity based on national myths.³⁵ While states that make considerable headway in all of these spheres are considered as “strong states,”³⁶ a lack of progress in some or all of these areas will result in low degrees of “stateness,” and, in extreme cases, in “state failure.” In the next paragraphs, I discuss the various facets of the process of state formation and the pivotal role played by the military in them.

The first subprocess—*state-building*—focuses on the physical-structural aspects of state formation: consolidation of the state’s territory, centralization, differentiation of the instruments of government, and the monopolization of the legitimate use of physical force. These tasks require a number of conditions: the establishment of powerful centralized institutions capable of extracting vast human and material resources, such as a bureaucracy, a military, and a police force; the development of sophisticated large-scale information-gathering and resource-extracting techniques; and finally, the building of the physical infrastructure needed for the optimal performance of the state’s agencies. In Western Europe, where the modern state emerged and developed, such efforts have led to the gradual but steady increase in the state’s power, including, first and foremost, its war-making capacities.

Indeed, many works stress the close interconnection between state-making (in effect state-building) and war-making.³⁷

Theories of *statecraft* (or state-construction), for their part, call attention to the more perceptual-cognitive aspects of the process of state formation. The emphasis here is thus on the modern state's continuous efforts to enhance its power and authority vis-à-vis society by constructing itself as a separate and autonomous entity that stands and operates "outside" or "above" society. Through the development and application of sophisticated knowledge-gathering and supervision techniques, such as the meticulous division of time and space, the state, over the course of time, has managed to discipline its inhabitants by manufacturing them as loyal, law-abiding citizens. Unlike the emphasis on the state's physical attributes in theories of state-building, here the focus is on its unrelenting quest "to control the symbolic world."³⁸

Finally, theories of *national integration* underscore the efforts to achieve a maximum overlap between the boundaries of the state and those of the political community that resides within it—the nation—to the extent that no meaningful separation could be made between the two (this fusion is embodied in the concept of the "nation-state").³⁹ These efforts appeal to the *sentiments* of the state's populace,⁴⁰ and include inventing or reinterpreting myths and symbols; writing an official history; disseminating a popular culture; publishing official bulletins and maps; building national museums and monuments; and carrying out population censuses.⁴¹ Migdal explains that by evoking the concept of the nation, the state's leaders have sought "to eliminate the perception that the state stands above society and to foster an alternative view, that the state and the society are indistinguishable in purpose, if not in form."⁴²

If, despite their different emphases and theoretical underpinnings, these perspectives are seen as complementary, then their convergence allows for a more holistic view of the state, its power, and its robustness. The state, in sum, not only sought to develop the physical means through which to extract vast and unprecedented material and human resources from its inhabitants, but it also endeavored to master their bodies and embed itself in their consciousness, while nurturing the belief that its interests, and indeed its destiny, necessarily overlap with theirs.

Yet, as suggested earlier, the process of state formation has not made the same headway everywhere, and quite divergent experiences of statehood emerged in different regions of the world. In Western Europe and North America (and also in Russia and Japan), the process of state formation gave rise to "strong states" that managed to conquer nearly all other parts of the globe and whose defeat came, if at all, only after unprecedented mobilization, bloodletting, and destruction.⁴³ But in the new/postcolonial states in Asia and Africa, the process of state formation was far less successful, resulting, in

some cases, in weak and failed states that lacked effective territorial control and the capacity to deliver basic services, were also partially internalized by their citizens, and elicited popular resistance as much as identification.

It should be emphasized, however, that these “quasi-states,” whose sovereignty was recognized by the international system after 1945 regardless of their actual capacities,⁴⁴ were not of the same skin: some of them, including those regarded as colonial artifacts, developed a distinct national identity and a notion that the state was somehow “there” *despite* its ineffectiveness. At the same time, some “strong states” such as Yugoslavia and the USSR ultimately failed to ingrain themselves in their citizens’ hearts and minds and disintegrated. This apparent paradox of the power of the weak and the weakness of the powerful warrants a deeper inquiry into concrete cases of failed-but-not-disintegrated states in order to account for their survival. Indeed, through the discussion of such extreme cases, the process of state formation and its facets, as well as the causes for and manifestations of the failure and success of states, would be better comprehended.

A common thread running through the literature on the process of state formation is the pivotal role of the military in its various facets. This makes this institution an excellent venue for assessing this process and its impact.⁴⁵ In recent years, the study of the military has made considerable advances beyond merely considering its performance and war-making capacities. Important works thus examine its efforts to discipline soldiers—and the soldiers’ response to these attempts—and to indoctrinate and inculcate them with collective identity, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. And further, they consider its role in the inclusion and exclusion of various societal sectors and thereby in the determination of the nation’s boundaries.⁴⁶ As far as the non-Western regions are concerned, these studies, which highlight the military’s pivotal role in state formation, encourage a reconsideration of its role in this process and its various facets, as well as the notion, held by some authors, that the war-making/state-making dialectic identified in Western Europe is inapplicable elsewhere, and particularly in the Middle East.⁴⁷

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

My working hypothesis regarding the interplay among the three dimensions of the civil-military interface previously discussed is as follows. In divided societies, the military can promote the process of state formation and, moreover, has a vested interest in advancing it because it is liable to enhance its own cohesiveness, legitimacy, and status. However, if the military’s actions in this respect are seen as disguised sectoral domination or manifestations of its own corporate tendencies—or both—its legitimacy can become contested.

Similarly, the military can mediate or arbitrate between rival political factions or between the central government and deprived societal sectors. But a more assertive political role on its part, even when the political system and the civil society are weak and fragmented, can arouse widespread resentment and, ultimately, impinge on its status. However, a military that is reflective of society and its divisions and is careful to abide by the formal and informal “rules of the game” of the political system would enjoy a broad consensus and be able to perform its tasks without eliciting resistance.