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Theoretical Perspectives on Democratic Civil Military Relations

Dr. Vinay Girotra

Assistant Professor

Doaba College Jalandhar

girotravinay@gmail.com

Contact: 9041887477



Abstract

The nature of civil-military interactions is a critical factor in determining the success of any democracy. If civilian leadership is able to maintain its supremacy over the decision-making process, democracy will flourish. On the other hand, if military leaders are able to establish a garrison state and begin dominating the decision-making process, democratic structures will be weakened, and the likelihood of military rule or dictatorship will increase. This is evident from the situation in Pakistan. Various academics have presented a variety of theoretical ideas in order to maintain a healthy democratic connection between the military and the civilian population. Classical and modern thinkers disagree on a number of issues, but they are in agreement on one significant point: the military forces need to become more professional, and there is a great need to make sure that the military does not develop corporate interests.

Key Words: Elite, Democracy, Corporatism, Professionalism, Pakistan, Judiciary, Institutions

The complex interplay between the armed forces and the communities to which they are a part is what is known as civil-military relations. In the framework of democratic civil-military relations, the word refers to the efficient command and control of military forces by civilians who are committed to democratic values. In this arrangement, civilian officials make decisions, and military leaders follow orders to the letter. While most industrialised nations have been able to successfully preserve democratic civil-military ties, many developing nations have had a much more difficult time doing so for longer periods of time. When this occurs, the military frequently steps up to the plate as a source of authority.

The academic community on a global scale has produced a number of different ideas; these theories propose a variety of different solutions for maintaining democratic civil-military relations in industrialised states. In addition, these theories provide insights into prospective applications that could be used to create civilian supremacy in states that are located in third-world countries. These academicians and academics are distinguished by the presence of famous figures such as contemporary democratic theorists like Feaver and Schiff, as well as classical liberal philosophers like Huntington, Finer, and Janowitz. Their contributions offer insightful thoughts on the upkeep of democratic civil-military interactions in a variety of geopolitical circumstances, which are particularly significant.



Classical Theoretical Perspectives

A democratic state is tasked with the primary responsibility of protecting the rights and liberties of its individual citizens, according to the liberal view. A social compact, in which the rule of law is given the highest priority and is obligatory on all citizens, is the means by which this is envisioned. On the other hand, the state is also responsible for managing its interactions with foreign entities that are not bound by this contract. This is especially true in the international arena, where conflict can be generated easily. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary to keep a powerful military in order to safeguard civilians from dangers that come from other countries.

The issue lies in striking a balance between the requirement of keeping the military from becoming a source of internal challenges to sovereign power and the fact that it is necessary to have a strong military. There is a potential threat to the state posed by the military if it is allowed to pursue its own goals without being regulated. On the other hand, if the state were to completely dominate the military, particularly in a democratic society that represents civilian interests, there is a possibility that military decisions would be subject to the whims of civilian elites, which may potentially undermine the efficacy of the military.

Samuel P. Huntington offers a solution to this predicament by offering the paradigm of Objective Civilian rule, which is based on his theory of civilian rule through professionalism. Within the framework of this model, civilians are the ones who dictate the policy on military security, while the military is the one who decides the operations that are necessary to accomplish the policy objectives. An acknowledgment of autonomous military professionalism and an independent military sector is necessary for the establishment of objective civilian supervision on the military. Professionalism in the armed services is defined by Huntington as the combination of knowledge and responsibility, and he asserts that this places constraints on the political authority of the military. On the other hand, academics have cast doubt on the notion that professionalism necessarily ensures that the military is shielded from political influence.

Samuel E. Finer challenges the conception that professionalism guarantees harmony between the authority of the military and those of the civilian government. His contention is that those in positions of power within the military can consider themselves to be servants of the state rather than the government, which could result in conflicts. There is also the possibility that military syndicalism, which is the view that only



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military specialists are qualified to make decisions regarding defence, will emerge. Abrahamson cautions that an excessive level of professionalism might result in the formation of a powerful military-social structure, which can hinder civilian oversight in the event that citizens and the military have different values and goals.

There is empirical evidence from practical experiences that demonstrates that various armed forces, which are regarded professional by their own standards and by external evaluations, have been implicated in subverting civilian authority, including coup d'états. A reevaluation of the concept of civilian control has been brought about as a result of this discrepancy. Morris Janowitz has taken the position that societal control is more important than state or institutional control. According to Janowitz, the internal features of the military, which include things like mission cohesion, skill, recruitment, organisational pattern, and hierarchical structure, play a significant effect in predicting the possibility of the military's engagement in internal politics. For instance, a military that has a mission that is focused on the internal system is more likely to participate in political activities within the system than a military that has a clear role and orientation towards the external world.

A number of public institutions, including the military services, are primarily concerned with safeguarding and advancing their own interests, according to the argument put forth by Eric A. Nordlinger. Among these shared concerns are the provision of sufficient financial assistance, the maintenance of autonomy in the administration of internal affairs, the protection of responsibilities against encroachments from competing institutions, and the maintenance of institutional continuity. It is possible that civilians who refuse to meet budgetary interests do not always arouse strong interventionist impulses; nevertheless, interference in the internal affairs of the military virtually always does. It is possible that even moderate intrusions into the territory of the military could be interpreted as an assault on the military's financial interests. According to Nordlinger, military autonomy includes the exclusion of civilian government in the process of formulating defence plans, as well as the formation of educational and training curricula, officer assignments, promotions (with the exception of the most senior officers), and the development of educational and training programmes. Additionally, attempts to incorporate political ideas or persons into the officer corps or enlisted ranks are prohibited to the extent that autonomy is present.



In current circumstances, such as Pakistan, El Salvador, and China, where armies have enormous resource bases, they are developing into some of the largest corporate companies in their respective countries. Others, such as China, are also experiencing this transformation. Relationships between the military and civilians that are corporatist place an emphasis on professionalism not only among military elites but also among civilians. If civilian elites respect the military's corporate interests and offer military elites independence in certain topics relating to both the military and society, then the military is more likely to concentrate on its primary defence mission, which is to defend against external attack.

Modern Theoretical Perspectives

Taking into account broad exogenous factors such as external threats, prevalent ideologies within civilian society, and the level of integration between civilian and military elites, traditional democratic theories, such as those exemplified by the Huntingtonian and Janowitzian schools, provide an explanation for the changes that have occurred in the relationships between the civilian administration and the military. According to Peter D. Feaver, the standard theory does not adequately account for the microfoundations of these interactions. This is something that has not been thoroughly investigated. According to Moskwitz (1997):11, he advocates for an understanding of the internal logic of the civil-military interaction itself, which is the mechanism via which any exogenous input would have the effect that was projected that it would have.

Having its roots in the field of microeconomics, the agency model that Feaver has suggested is an attempt to provide an explanation for the strategic interaction that occurs between civilian principals and military agents. This principal-agent model of civil-military relations begins with civilians attempting to strike a balance between the advantages of specialisation and the disadvantages of agency. One of the benefits is that civilian leaders are able to devote their time and attention to other duties because military functions are carried out by professionals. According to Feaver (2003:55), the disadvantages focus around the inherent problems that are present in any political relationship. These challenges include the following: Will my representative genuinely serve my best interests, or will they simply exploit their position for their own personal gain?



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It is suggested by Feaver that there are ways to prevent military intervention. He contends that the likelihood of a coup will decrease if the civilian administration is able to effectively monitor the conduct of military agents, who are the armed servants of the nation-state. There is no such thing as automatic obedience in the military; rather, it is contingent on strategic judgements regarding whether or not civilians will detect and punish misbehaviour. There will be no possibility for agents to disrupt democratic civil-military relations if the principals, who are the civilian elites, are able to exercise their supervisory duty in an effective manner.

Rebecca L. Schiff provides an alternative concordance theory, which is in contrast to views that place an emphasis on the physical and intellectual separation of political and military institutions. She proposes that the military, political (civilian) elites, and the general populace should work towards a cooperative relationship that does not require them to be separated from one another (Schiff, 1995:7). Praetorianism, also known as military coups, the effective management of the military by civilian leadership, the protection of the military from civilian politicians who intend to use it for partisan interests, and the lack of ability and experience in ministers responsible for military management are the four issues that Bland identified as being problematic in democratic civil-military relations (Bland, 1999).

In newly independent states where military elites wield major influence in governance, the aforementioned theories recommend a variety of different ways to the process of launching civil-military reforms. On the other hand, there is a widespread absence of standards that are universally acknowledged for evaluating civilian control. To put it simply, the establishment of a democratic civil-military partnership that is durable requires a number of important measures, including the professionalisation of the military, the control of society, the recognition of the military's corporate interests, increased monitoring, and shared duties. Civil-military reforms can be identified by a number of critical indicators, including the rule of law, civil liberties, stable procedures for peaceful power transition, effective practises for electing officials, and a government and governing process that is recognised legitimate by both key elites and the general people. An essential component of civilian control is the integrated Ministry of Defence, which acts as a vital hub.

One of the most serious obstacles that stands in the way of the democratisation of civil and military elite relations is the counterproductive role that ruling elites in a state play. In the event that the elites in power are unwilling to promote civil-military changes, these reforms will certainly face hurdles. When compared to



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elites in the former Soviet Union, those in Central Europe demonstrated a better willingness to improve their civil-military ties within the context of a democratic framework with greater openness. It is possible to use Pakistan as an example of a state in which the ruling elites generally lack the will to advance democratic principles.



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