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CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA (1989-2004)

Abstract

This paper tries to determine the nature of the post-Communist Eastern European systems of civilian control over the armed forces. In addition to this, it tries to identify why and how most Eastern European countries have adopted since 1989 Western models of civilian oversight of the military, formally abandoning their previous Communist models. The combination of Western paradigms, Communist legacies and pre-Communist patterns of civil-military relations have led since 1989 to new, hybrid forms of civilian control over the armed forces. The continuity of traditional types of civil-military relations (before and after 1989) has clashed during the post-Communist period with the discontinuity created by the adoption of new norms and principles in the interaction between civilian institutions and military organizations. The new Eastern European models include, in addition to Western characteristics, a commonly-agreed civil-military division of labour in policymaking processes dealing with security and defence issues.

Introduction

Acknowledging a direct relationship between systems of control over the military and countries' stability and security is commonsensical. As early as the 19th century, various scholars claimed that the way civil-military relations are organized in various countries influences their political stability, their military presence in the world and, ultimately, their own security. Since then, there has been a growing understanding that different systems of control over the armed forces lead to different security outcomes. This issue, therefore, transcends the area of domestic policies and acquires international significance. On the one hand, the type of relationship between the military establishment and civilian authorities in

a certain polity is important for the latter's political character and its development. On the other hand, it is one of the key elements in assessing a country's place in the international arena, facilitating, delaying or blocking the accession of a country, or a group of countries, to military or political international organizations.

This paper puts this relationship in the context of post-Communist Europe. It argues that most Eastern European countries agreed to adopt Western models of civilian control over the military. Thus, they agreed to abandon their previous Communist models of oversight, due to the transformation of the international strategic environment and the new nature of their domestic political systems. They have promoted the idea of a profound transformation of their civil-military relations, yet that has not happened as smoothly as initially predicted. Nevertheless, in most Eastern European countries, the formal changes have fundamentally altered the way military leaders and civilians interact when dealing with security and defence issues.

The paper, more specifically, clarifies why and how Romania and Bulgaria have adopted, since 1989, new models of civilian control over the armed forces. The research indicates, from a comparative perspective, the way in which these two countries have promoted policies of mimicry in the process of transformation of their national armed forces. It identifies the balance between domestic and external factors affecting the post-Communist evolution of the Romanian and Bulgarian civil-military relations and the process through which these types of factors have affected each other. This paper argues that changes have been triggered in two distinct ways: the willingness of these countries to join Western politico-military structures has led to processes of domestic reform in order to meet the criteria for membership in Western international organizations, while the latter have pushed Romania's and Bulgaria's military reforms in a direction that has best met these organizations' interests. Nevertheless, this process has led to a relatively unexpected situation in which the models of civilian control over the armed forces set up in these countries are based – at the same time – on Western liberal characteristics, Communist traits and national specificities.

This study focuses primarily on the issue of civilian control over the armed forces, not on the broader topic of civil-military relations. It deals with the period from the revolutionary changes of 1989 to March 2004, when

Romania and Bulgaria formally became members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, the interaction between the military establishment and political authorities during the Communist period in Romania and Bulgaria is reviewed in a separate section in order to provide a background for the post-1989 context.¹⁰

This paper presents three main arguments: (i) the transformation of Eastern European systems of control over the armed forces has been achieved, since 1989, mainly by replicating Western models; (ii) the transformation of post-Communist Eastern European systems of civilian control over the military has been triggered mostly by external factors; and (iii) the adoption of Western models of civilian control over the armed forces in Bulgaria and Romania has led to the creation of new, hybrid forms of oversight of the military. The research is explanatory, investigating the causal relations between various domestic and external factors and the achievement of new systems of civilian control over the military, as well as the nature of these systems.

I. Analytical framework

During the Communist period, the patterns in the organization of a system of civilian control over the military varied from country to country in Eastern Europe. Thus, countries such as Romania and Bulgaria followed different paths in setting up and managing systems of civil-military relations. Nevertheless, all these dynamics were consistent with what are usually known as “Communist models” of civilian oversight of the military. Until 1989, despite variations in terms of domestic organization and international relations, countries such as Romania and Bulgaria were

¹⁰ Throughout this paper the concepts of “control” and “oversight” of the armed forces are interchangeable. The group of “Eastern European” countries comprises the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), the *Visegrad* states (Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Hungary), Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and the countries of ex-Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia). The “Western” group comprises the European countries that were not part of the former Soviet area of influence and also includes Canada and the United States of America (USA). By “armed forces” or “military” it is understood in this context the army, the navy, the air force and their General/Defence Staff; therefore, there are not included under the umbrella of “armed forces” or “military,” from the perspective of this paper, paramilitary structures or militarized types of police, gendarmerie, border guards and other similar institutions. Focusing extensively on the military establishment per se is not within the scope of this paper; the focus will be rather on civilian authorities, either interacting with the armed forces or simply making decisions on military roles and functions.

entirely part of the Communist bloc and used typical Communist models of civil-military relations.

When, in the 1990s, Romania and Bulgaria started, more or less shyly, to adopt measures consistent with “Western models” of civilian control over the armed forces, their civil-military relations became blurred. This happened because of the inconsistency between the newly adopted norms and principles (expressed through a Western type of legislation, for instance) and the historically constituted types of practical behaviour (e.g., emphasizing the importance of informal civil-military interactions and disregarding existing legislation). The *discontinuity* in terms of legal frameworks and formal rules of conduct (seen more clearly after the mid-1990s) has clashed with the *continuity* in terms of unofficial, yet very influential types of civil-military relations. This is the main reason why in order to understand post-Communist developments in Eastern European civil-military relations understanding Communist practices is imperative.

This paper proposes two models of civilian control over the armed forces by stating their main characteristics in such a way as to be clearly distinct from each other. This will prove to be particularly useful when analyzing post-Communist types of civilian control, allowing us to identify the elements of continuity and discontinuity in Romanian and Bulgarian civil-military relations as compared with the situation prior to 1989. Communist models of oversight of the military and Western models are defined here based on five fundamental features of each.

Communist (or authoritarian) models are characterized by the following traits:

- a relatively confusing legal framework, meant to consolidate not only the formal, but also the informal power of the Communist Party’s leadership;
- a focus on coercion rather than consent in implementing and legitimizing policies, ensuring the Communist Party’s control over the armed forces;

- a (mostly conscription-based) military establishment whose leaders held significant political influence;
- an authoritarian political system, concentrating the power in the publicly unaccountable leadership of the Communist Party;
- a virtually non-existent civil society.

Western (or liberal) models of civilian control over the military are based on the view that “the armed forces are by nature hierarchical structures and thus inherently undemocratic and, for that reason, have to be brought under *democratic* control.”¹¹ These models are also characterized by several key features:

- a relatively clear legal and/or institutional framework regulating the relationship between civilian authorities and the military;
- a democratic political system, providing the mechanisms to ensure the free expression of people’s will in a majority of situations and to facilitate public scrutiny of military actions;
- a (mostly professional) military recognizing the legitimacy of the political system and the rule of law, and acknowledging the need for its own political neutrality as an institution (i.e., politically non-partisan);
- the subordination of the armed forces (i.e., the General/Defence Staff) to the Government, through a civilian-led Ministry/Department of (National) Defence, and to the civilian Head of State (i.e., a clear chain of command, with civilian leaders at its top), and a significant role for the Parliament in making decisions on military (especially budgetary) issues;
- the existence of a civil society, involved in a public debate on military issues.

¹¹ Heinz Vetschera, “Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control: A European Security Policy Perspective,” in *Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities in Democracies: Case Studies and Perspectives*, edited by the NATO Defense College, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 1997), p. 15.

I.(1) The Communist models of civilian control over the military

During the Communist period, this field of study should more appropriately have been called “Party-military” relations. Yet, although very different from Western liberal models of civil-military relations, the Communist models of political oversight of the armed forces were also based, to a significant extent, on the superiority of civilians (i.e., Communist Party leaders) in the strategic decision making processes dealing with military issues. Key differences between the two models are the lack of a democratic component and the high level of politico-military integration in Communist cases.

Three major theoretical perspectives have been formulated for dealing with civilian control over the armed forces in Communist regimes. They are represented by the work of Roman Kolkowicz, William E. Odom and Timothy Colton. Alternative theoretical perspectives that deal with this same topic in the Eastern European context have been formulated by various other authors, the most prominent of whom is Alex Alexiev. Roman Kolkowicz’s perspective may be called, as some scholars have suggested, the “interest group approach,” William E. Odom’s perspective – the “institutional congruence approach,” Timothy J. Colton’s – the “participatory approach” and Alex Alexiev’s theoretical model – the “evolutionary approach.”

According to the *interest group approach* of Roman Kolkowicz, the relationship between civilian authorities and the military in Communist regimes (especially in the Soviet case) was conflict-prone, thus presenting a perennial threat to the political stability of the polity. This situation would have occurred mainly because of the military’s desire to cultivate its own professional and institutional (i.e., elitist) values and to remain relatively isolated from politics and the larger society. Roman Kolkowicz points to a certain incompatibility between the Communist Party’s endeavour to hold on to its monopoly of power and the armed forces’ need for professional autonomy: “as in zero-sum games, where any advantage of one adversary is at the expense of the other adversary, so the Party elite regarded any

increment in the military's prerogatives and authority as its own loss and therefore as a challenge."¹²

At the same time, the military's effectiveness was essential to the well-being or even the survival of the regime. Nevertheless, the implementation of Communist policies in the military field would have led to "various collectivist schemes whose central objective was to prevent military elitism, but whose major effect [was] to lower discipline, morale, and military effectiveness."¹³ While the armed forces – Roman Kolkowicz argues – seldom opposed the principle of civilian control, they did oppose the type of Party supervision that interfered with the performance of their professional duties. The author of the interest group approach adds that not only the establishment of a multiple control network in the armed forces, meant to indoctrinate and manipulate the military, led to this tense relationship between the Party and the officer corps. The so-called "divide-and-rule" policy, meant to accord preferential treatment to favoured factions within the armed forces, also contributed to this situation.

In opposition to the interest group approach, the *institutional congruence approach* of William E. Odom states that, in a majority of cases, "the military probably [stood] closer to the Party than [did] any other public institution."¹⁴ Odom rejects Kolkowicz's interest group approach, arguing that the armed forces' elitism was accepted by the Party, the conflict between the military professional autonomy and the subordination to Party ideology was virtually non-existent and the focus in the Party-military relations was not so much on the armed forces' detachment from society, but – on the contrary – on their integration. William E. Odom considers five different perspectives that would underline the validity of the institutional congruence approach (i.e., the lack of incompatibility or disagreement over fundamental issues, which would have characterized Party-military relations). On the issues of (i) economic decentralization, (ii) intellectual dissent, (iii) nationality problems, (iv) political and economic liberalization in Eastern Europe, and (v) de-Stalinization, the Red Army, among other armed forces, tended to agree with the leadership of the Communist Party

¹² Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 105.

¹³ Kolkowicz, p. 13.

¹⁴ William E. Odom, "The Party-Military Connection: A Critique," in *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, edited by Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), p. 32.

of the Soviet Union. Grouping all these points together serves to demonstrate that “there are firm grounds for arguing that a Party-military consensus on a variety of issues [did] exist.”¹⁵ This made the Party control over the armed forces much more effective and easier to implement.

In order to consolidate the argumentation for his theory, Odom tries to prove that the military was just an administrative arm of the Party: “[w]hen there were cleavages in the leadership over military policy, they were intra-Party factional divisions, not just a division of Party versus military.”¹⁶ The author argues that the military was first and foremost a political institution. Furthermore, the Party-military relationship would have had symbiotic aspects in domestic politics, by contributing to the modernization of the Communist societies. The bottom line of the institutional congruence approach is that the military leaders were acting as executants of Party policies; it was no viable rationale for challenging the existing political order.

Timothy J. Colton argues that both the interest group approach and the institutional congruence approach have important shortcomings. The weakness of the former is related to its inflexibility in accounting for change: “to define the question in terms of a single, conflictual issue ... is to limit and even distort the range of possible answers.” Likewise, the latter may also lead to an oversimplified analysis, while it implies “a disregard for civil-military boundaries.”¹⁷ What Timothy J. Colton proposes, instead, is a model portraying the military and the Party as distinct entities with different agendas; nevertheless, the armed forces were not inclined to challenge the political leadership, because the military’s interests were well served by the Party.

The *participatory approach* of Timothy J. Colton retains a notion of civil-military boundary, “one that is permeable, to be sure, but that has a definite shape and location”¹⁸. It argues, however, that the Party and the military were not totally separate institutions. Despite the conflictual nature of their relationship, the armed forces were not inclined to use force against the

¹⁵ Odom, p. 33.

¹⁶ Odom, pp. 41-42.

¹⁷ Timothy J. Colton, “The Party-Military Connection: A Participatory Model,” in *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, edited by Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), p. 70.

¹⁸ Colton, p. 73.

Communist political leadership because of their effective cooperation on matters of interest for the armed forces. The scope of military participation in Communist politics – the participatory approach suggests – was not limited to influencing “internal” military matters or “institutional” issues of broader significance; it ranged through more and more general issues, such as “intermediate” ones, dealing with the interests of military officials, but being also of primary concern to other segments of society, or “societal” issues, affecting all citizens. The military participation in Communist politics (especially in the Soviet case) and the civilian supervision over military issues constituted, therefore, “a complex set of reciprocal interactions, between institutions and across institutional boundaries.”¹⁹

Despite the complexity of these theoretical models, some scholars suggest that none of them by itself can shed light on the Eastern European situation. Alex Alexiev, for instance, argues that all three main models (the interest group approach, the institutional congruence approach and the participatory approach) are very useful in increasing the understanding of *specific phases* in the evolution of civilian control over the Eastern European armed forces. He proposes an *evolutionary approach*, a model which conceives the Party-military relations in Eastern Europe “as proceeding through stages of conflict, accommodation and participation, leading ultimately to a symbiotic relationship.”²⁰ In order to analyze the evolution of types of civilian control over the armed forces in Bulgaria and Romania prior to 1989, employing the evolutionary approach is particularly helpful. It allows researchers to be more flexible in studying these issues and it also allows them to incorporate all other theoretical approaches in looking for patterns of Communist civil-military relations.

Romania was characterized between the end of the Second World War and the late 1950s by a system of civilian control over the military most closely associated with the interest group approach. Between the 1960s and 1989, however, after a short period of transition, the participatory approach seems to more properly describe the Communist oversight of the armed forces in Romania.

¹⁹ Colton, p. 73.

²⁰ Alex Alexiev, “Party-Military Relations in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania,” in *Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats*, edited by Roman Kolkowicz and Andrzej Korbonski, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 201.

Similar to the Romanian case, the period between the end of the Second World War and the late 1950 was generally characterized in Bulgaria by a conflict-prone relationship between the Communist authorities and the armed forces, i.e., by a situation most closely associated with the interest group approach. Unlike the Romanian case, however, the paradigm describing more accurately the period from the 1960s to 1989 in Bulgaria is the institutional congruence approach rather than the participatory approach.

Thus, despite their similar position on the geopolitical map of the time, Bulgaria and Romania were characterized by Communist systems of control over their armed forces proceeding through different stages of development in each particular case and from each other. The essence of the 1989 revolutionary events, in both Bulgaria and Romania, tends to emphasize these patterns of civilian control over the armed forces in the second half of the Communist era.

In Romania, the existing dissatisfaction of the military with Communist Party policies was clearly expressed in December 1989 when the armed forces played a decisive role in the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime. The military, however, only backed the actions of a second echelon of Party leaders involved in staging the uprising against the Ceausescu regime. They did not collaborate with the leaders of the revolutionary movement from the very beginning and when they agreed to collaborate they did so reluctantly (mainly because they sensed an opportunity to improve their status in the new political context). The military were, during the events of December 1989, as before, a relatively distinct institution from the Party, with their own internal agenda.

Unlike the situation in Romania, the overthrow of the Bulgarian Communist leader, Todor Zhivkov, and his clique in November 1989 was accomplished through direct cooperation between the military leadership and Party conspirators. Petur Mladenov, the then Communist Minister of Foreign Affairs, received the crucial support of General Dobri Dzhurov, the Minister of Defence, and of the armed forces per se in fostering the removal of Todor Zhivkov. The bloodless political change in Bulgaria, which allowed the emergence of a reformist regime, was achieved through the same Party-military consensus that had characterized the relationship between the two institutions for several decades.

In sum, the Romanian military's relationship with the Party authorities evolved from a conflictual stage to a participatory, yet tense, one. Although characterized as well by a conflictual relationship after the Second World War, the Bulgarian armed forces and the Bulgarian Communist leaders eventually engaged in a more congruent type of relationship. Depending on the specificities of their Communist civil-military relations, Bulgaria and Romania would undergo, during the post-Communist period, different (but convergent) organizational changes in the field of civilian control over the armed forces.

I.(2) Western models of civilian control over the military

Even more than in the Communist cases, the general Western models of civilian oversight of the armed forces are characterized by heterogeneity. Virtually every Western country has its own system of control over the military, involving different rules and procedures. The types of civil-military interaction in the USA are different from those in Canada, which are again different from the ones in Switzerland, for instance. Nevertheless, the underlying norms and principles shaping the various relationships between civilian authorities and military organizations in the Western world are common for all Western countries. They have been continually discussed over the last two hundred years and more or less systematically implemented (especially after the Second World War). Leading intellectuals have been involved in the debate on the proper and most productive type of interaction between the soldier and the state.

Since the early 19th century, when Carl von Clausewitz wrote his classic work *On War*, Western scholars and practitioners have agreed that the system of civil-military relations promoting in a most effective way the interests of both political authorities and the military is the Western one. Its fundamental thesis is that civilian authorities should be independent from the military establishment and should lead the latter. For instance, “[i]f war is part of [political] policy, policy will determine its character;” nevertheless – and this is the other essential aspect pointed out by most students of this field – policy should not “extend its influence to operational details. Political considerations do not determine the postings of guards or the employment of patrols.”²¹ Carl von Clausewitz underlined that purely

²¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 606.

military major decisions, either in peacetime or in wartime, are not only unacceptable, but also damaging. As Clausewitz put it, “[s]ubordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that creates war [for instance]. Policy is the guiding intelligence and war is only the instrument, not vice versa.”²²

Samuel Huntington adds new nuances to the Clausewitzian perspective. Underlining the need for a professional military establishment, he argues for the necessity that civil-military relations be studied as a system composed of interdependent elements and analyzes the extent to which this system “tends to enhance or detract from the military security of the state.” His model introduces two types of civilian control over the military: subjective and objective. The goal of the former is to maximize the power of civilians in relation to the armed forces; this presupposes, however, a conflict between civilian control and the security needs of the state. Moreover, in this case, “the maximizing of civilian power always means the maximizing of the power of some particular civilian group or groups,”²³ such as governmental institutions and social classes. The second type of civilian control involves the maximization of military professionalism, based on the separation of the political and the military decision making processes. Samuel Huntington recommends the model that emphasizes military professionalism, the objective type of civilian control in this case. “Subjective civilian control – Huntington underlines – achieves its end by civilianizing the military, making them the mirror of the state. Objective civilian control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state.”²⁴

He builds his model based on the assumption that the military institutions of a state are shaped by two forces: a functional imperative (that stems from the threats to society’s security) and a societal imperative (stemming from social forces, ideologies and institutions). Nevertheless, “[m]ilitary institutions which reflect only societal values may be incapable of performing effectively their military function. On the other hand, it may be impossible to contain within society military institutions shaped purely by

²² Clausewitz, p. 607.

²³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 80.

²⁴ Huntington, p. 83.

functional imperatives.”²⁵ Huntington’s professional military establishment has a complex relationship with the modern state, based on a clear division of labour. As a consequence of this principle, the armed forces must not only implement state decisions with respect to military security (while being allowed to run their own internal affairs), but also remain politically neutral.

According to S. E. Finer, “[i]nstead of asking why the military engage in politics, we ought surely to ask why they ever do otherwise. For at first sight the political advantages of the military *vis-à-vis* other ... groupings are overwhelming. The military possess vastly superior organization. And they possess *arms*.”²⁶ He argues that the armed forces may enjoy a highly important moral prestige, but, on the contrary, they would lack the “technical ability to administer any but the most primitive community. The second is their lack of legitimacy: that is, their lack of a moral title to rule.”²⁷ This moral title should, instead, characterize the political leadership of a state; otherwise, ruling by virtue of force would invite challenge and would lead to an unstable system of governance.

Finer’s greatest contribution to the debate on the role of civilian authorities and the armed forces in the contemporary state is actually a critique of the professional model of the military, one of whose main proponents is Huntington. Even in a system based on the principle of civilian supremacy – Finer argues – “the military’s consciousness of themselves as a profession may lead them to see themselves as the servants of the state rather than of the government in power. They may contrast the national community as a continuous corporation with the temporary incumbents of office.”²⁸ Moreover, military leaders may think that the armed forces are the only institution able to objectively assess military issues. They may also refuse to coerce the government’s domestic opponents, if asked to do so. All these three tendencies, which Finer considers to grow out of the armed forces’ professionalism, could determine the military to collide with civilian authorities. Finer concludes, therefore, that professionalism is not – as Huntington puts it – the universal solution to ensure civilian control over

²⁵ Huntington, p. 2.

²⁶ S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 4.

²⁷ Finer, p. 12.

²⁸ Finer, p. 22.

the military establishment. “To inhibit such a desire” to intervene – Finer adds – “the military must also have absorbed the principle of the supremacy of civilian power.”²⁹

A related perspective on the issue of political oversight that would both enable the military profession “to perform its national security duties and provide it with a new rationale for civilian political control” is proposed by Morris Janowitz in his well-known *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. His model postulates that the armed forces (or, using his terminology, the “constabulary” forces) are a creation of the larger social structure, that the military establishment increasingly resembles police forces and that the military institution should retain close links with the society. The constabulary model argues for the need of integration of the political and military decision making processes, along with the military’s socialization within the larger society. The officer in the constabulary force, Morris Janowitz argues, “is subject to civilian control, not only because of the ‘rule of law’ and tradition, but also because of self-imposed professional standards and meaningful integration with civilian values.”³⁰

In this context, civilian authorities must find adequate solutions for the problems faced by the military establishment and must formulate standards of performance for the armed forces. According to the constabulary perspective, “[i]n a pluralistic society, the future of the military profession is not a military responsibility exclusively, but rests on the vitality of civilian political leadership.”³¹ This model of civilian oversight of the military is based on the assumption that the political authorities permit the officer corps to develop its professional skills and to maintain its code of honour, while the latter “recognizes that civilians appreciate and understand the tasks and responsibilities of the constabulary force.”³² Like the previous models, the constabulary paradigm assumes the existence of a democratic political system, including clear rules and procedures defining the responsibilities of the Parliament, the Government and the Head of State, and a significant role for the civil society.

²⁹ Finer, p. 24.

³⁰ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, (New York: The Free Press, 1960), p. 420.

³¹ Janowitz, p. 435.

³² Janowitz, p. 440.

These Western models of civilian control over the armed forces have not only proved to be successful over time, in different challenging situations for the Western world, they have also have been adopted by virtually all Eastern European countries after the fall of their Communist regimes. Despite conflicting approaches over specific types of civil-military interactions, the Western models have apparently been the ones best fitting the political and security-related needs of Eastern European countries since 1989. That is, they have been the models embracing “the accountability of the armed forces to democratic institutions and the supervision of military administration and operations by civilian authorities,”³³ which have become the goals of the leaders of both the new Eastern European democracies and Euro-Atlantic politico-military organizations. At the same time, however, the elements of discontinuity in terms of new patterns of civilian control over the armed forces (whose emergence has been facilitated by the will of the new political forces in the region) have not been strong enough to entirely annihilate the elements of continuity in terms of traditional, yet very influential, types of civil-military relations.

II. Factors Affecting the Post-Communist Transformation of Civil-Military Relations in Eastern Europe

The political changes of 1989 imposed a dramatic reconfiguration of the relationship between the military and civilians in Eastern European countries. Several main factors have been identified as influencing this process: Eastern European policies oriented towards integration into Western organizations, a set of conditions imposed by these institutions and a Communist legacy, in addition to traditional patterns of civil-military relations in those societies.

One of the most underrepresented theoretical variables in the analysis of civil-military relations is the geopolitical context.³⁴ Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to look at the impact of global threats and the influence of international institutions on the evolution of national systems of civil-military relations. Since 1989, most Eastern European countries have

³³ Ben Lombardi, “An Overview of Civil-Military Relations in Central and Eastern Europe,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1 (March 1999), p. 13.

³⁴ See: Mark Yaniszewski, *The Comparative Study of Post-Communist (Transitional) Civil-Military Relations in Eastern Europe* [Ph.D. thesis, not published], (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1997), pp. 164-166.

agreed that the best option (if not the only one) to redefine positively their place in the world would be to become full members of Western structures. On the other hand, the Western countries, willing to meet this challenge, but also “to project stability” in neighbouring regions and – sometimes – guided by a sense of duty to reunify Europe, have defined specific criteria for membership in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. Thus, in order to be accepted into organizations such as NATO or the European Union (EU), the candidate countries have at least to initiate extensive programs of reform in most societal fields based on Western guidelines.

The changes in the area of civil-military relations have been formally implemented by domestic political forces. Yet Chris Donnelly, a NATO Special Adviser for Central and Eastern European Affairs, points out: “as all Western countries have had to struggle with this problem over time, there is a value in Western specialists sharing their experience and analyses of the problem, as certain elements may nevertheless be applicable to the new democracies.”³⁵ Consequently, European and Euro-Atlantic politico-military organizations have become directly involved in the process of transformation of the relationship between the military establishment and political forces in Eastern European countries.

Since 1989, when Romania and Bulgaria abandoned their Communist political system, their armed forces have been subjected to a radical process of transformation. During the early 1990s, the two countries acknowledged the necessity to reconsider their membership in the former Warsaw Pact and to look for alternative ways of ensuring their national security. The need for their association to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was expressed by the two countries in the mid-1990s, when they considered much more seriously the idea of formally applying for NATO membership. In order to achieve that status, Romania and Bulgaria had to initiate more radical reforms of their security and defence institutions and policies, to meet the criteria for membership imposed by NATO for its candidate countries. In addition to increasing their cooperation with Romania and Bulgaria, NATO member states underscored at the North Atlantic Alliance’s summits in Madrid (1997) and Washington, D.C. (1999) their “political pledge towards South-Eastern Europe, being aware that, as the developments of recent

³⁵ Chris Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework for Tackling the Problem,” *NATO Review*, no. 1 (January 1997), p. 15.

years have proved, general stability in Europe is closely linked to the stability of this region.”³⁶

II.(1) Eastern European factors

After an initial phase, in 1989-1990, when the control over the armed forces was formally transferred in Eastern Europe from the former Communist regimes to the new governments, the first contacts were established, in 1991-1992, with Western politico-military organizations. Piotr Dutkiewicz and Sergei Plekhanov argue that, at that moment, several options were formulated for reorganizing Eastern European countries' national defence: (1) a reformed Soviet alliance, (2) neutrality, (3) regional security cooperation, (4) pan-European security and (5) integration with the West (i.e., NATO). “On balance, however, the choice for [most Eastern] European governments (supported by the majority of population, as polls indicated) was clearly pro-NATO,”³⁷ as it was for integration into broader Western structures, such as the EU, which have been seen as guarantors of freedom and prosperity. From an Eastern European perspective, as stated in the Vilnius Declaration (2000) of NATO's nine candidate countries (Romania and Bulgaria included), the goal of NATO enlargement would be the creation of a free, prosperous and undivided Europe.

These choices were based not only on what Jeffrey Simon calls “euphoria resulting from the revolutions themselves [and] optimism about a ‘Return to Europe’ by joining NATO and the European Community, now the European Union.”³⁸ They were also based on real or imagined security concerns, given the decades-long subordination of most Eastern European countries to Moscow's interests. There were more immediate reasons as well: Chris Donnelly argues that NATO membership, for instance, would offer these countries an opportunity to “maintain their sovereignty and military systems, but at a low level of strength, and assure their national

³⁶ Claudiu Degeratu, “Civil-Military Relations in Romania: Objectives and Priorities,” in *Civil-Military Relations in South-East Europe*, edited by Plamen Pantev, (Vienna: Institut für Internationale Friedenssicherung, 2001), p. 157.

³⁷ Piotr Dutkiewicz and Sergei Plekhanov, “La politique du << mimétisme >> : les relations civilo-militaires en Europe de l'Est,” *Études internationales*, vol. XXXII, no. 2 (June 2001), p. 288.

³⁸ Jeffrey Simon, “East Bloc Military Must Be Civilian Led,” *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, September 4, 1995, p. 10.

security at lower cost.”³⁹ A *Reuters* analysis of the reasons determining Romania and Bulgaria to actively promote the idea of their NATO membership adds some other elements to this equation: “[f]or both, joining NATO has significant symbolism, anchoring them in the West, providing stability for foreign investment and rewarding painful if not complete reforms.”⁴⁰

At a time of general readjustment, with time and money strictly limited, most Eastern European countries, “sure of their national reorientation, but without a clear idea of how to achieve it, first looked at NATO as an organization which would come and solve all their problems.”⁴¹ From a more general perspective, Piotr Dutkiewicz and Sergei Plekhanov point out, the Eastern European countries “understood that the liberal-democratic regime [represented by NATO and the EU] was the only game in town for countries really wanting to gain access to Western institutions. No other alternatives were officially offered or (if existing at expert level) permitted to be officially articulated.”⁴² As a consequence, incorporating liberal-democratic principles and practices in most areas of their societies, including in the field of civil-military relations, has been perceived as a necessity by most Eastern European countries.

Similar to most of its Eastern European neighbours, Romania has promoted, since 1989, the idea of its national and regional security interests being best advanced by its integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. As Monica Szlavik, one of a handful of post-Communist Romanian journalists focusing on security and defence issues, emphasizes, Romanians understood as early as 1990 that “the world [was] changing, that the underlying principles of classic warfare – Warsaw Pact-like, based on the defence of national borders with the involvement of the entire population – [were] changing, that the risks and challenges [were] no longer classic ones, but new, asymmetrical.”⁴³ The new nature of global threats, on the one hand, and the opportunity to escape a political and military system they had

³⁹ Chris Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies,” *NATO Review*, no. 6 (November 1996), p. 20.

⁴⁰ Dina Kyriakidou, “NATO Hopeful Romania Offers Intelligence on Iraq,” *Reuters*, November 11, 2002.

⁴¹ Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies,” p. 21.

⁴² Dutkiewicz and Plekhanov, p. 289.

⁴³ Monica Szlavik, “Armata romana si provocarile razboiului contemporan,” *Jurnalul national*, October 25, 2001.

called into question for decades, on the other hand, pushed Romanians towards the West, in their search for security and defence cooperation.

Since 1989, Romania's commitment to NATO membership and its integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures have been the cornerstones of its foreign policy. An internal political consensus on the objective of joining NATO, for instance, has ensured a wide support for reform processes, especially in the military field. The Social Democracy Party of Romania (SDPR), successor of the former Romanian Communist Party and the country's leading political force from 1990 to 1996, actively promoted the idea of Romania's integration into the West. This process was intensified after 1996, when a coalition led by the Democratic Convention of Romania won the country's parliamentary and presidential elections. Since 2000, the new ruling political force, the Social Democratic Party, whose driving force is the former PDSR, has reinforced its commitment to Western integration.

A declaration of all political parties represented in the Romanian Parliament was adopted in March 2001, in support of the country's NATO membership aspirations. As a *Washington Post* analysis suggested compellingly, "[t]hirteen years after it cast off Communism, Romania is still struggling with poverty, corruption, dysfunctional politics, incomplete economic reforms – the list goes on and on. But Romania now sees a one-stop cure for many of its ills: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization."⁴⁴ The goal of EU accession followed shortly after the goal of NATO membership on what most Romanians perceive to be a list of almost magical steps that would provide the country with long-expected well-being.

Unlike Romania, whose political leaders have declared since the early 1990s their desire to join most European and Euro-Atlantic structures, post-Communist Bulgaria has had a not so linear evolution in terms of shaping its foreign policy orientation. The first years of the last decade were marred by inconsistency in defining its place on the geopolitical map of a reborn continent. The Bulgarian Socialist Party, which almost monopolized the country's new political life until 1997, was clearly reluctant to commit Bulgaria to integration into NATO and even into the EU. In the early 1990s,

⁴⁴ Robert G. Kaiser, "Romania Sees NATO Membership as Remedy for Post-Communist Ills." *Washington Post*, October 21, 2002.

the Atlantic Club and the MRF (the Turkish minority's party) were some of the few promoters of the idea of Bulgaria's NATO membership, although their influence on the country's political life was slim.

Nevertheless, the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, the diminishing influence of Russia in Eastern Europe and the increasing involvement of the West in post-Communist countries' processes of reform, as well as the dramatic degradation of the security environment in the Balkans, were factors determining Bulgaria to review its military doctrine, its economic plans and its foreign policy. In late 1993, the Bulgarian Parliament announced the country's willingness to join key European and Euro-Atlantic politico-military organizations, such as NATO and the Western European Union (WEU); the steps taken towards Western integration were, nevertheless, unconvincing. The elections of 1997, bringing the Union of Democratic Forces to power, represented the actual starting point on the road to NATO and EU membership. As Emil E. Mintchev points out, "[i]n contrast to domestic policy, where controversy prevailed over how to manage the transition, consensus on the need to work for closer cooperation with the European Union and NATO [became] the dominant feature of Bulgarian foreign and security policy."⁴⁵

The political victory, in the 2001 parliamentary elections, of a coalition led by the Simeon II National Movement, a party founded by former King Simeon Saxe Coburg Gotha, guaranteed the continuity of Bulgaria's Western-oriented foreign policy. Today's Bulgaria sees its national security "as being directly linked to regional and European security. In this sense, accession to the European Union and NATO, and the stabilization of South-Eastern Europe are matters of national, regional and European interest."⁴⁶ As indicated by the official and private discourse in both Bulgaria and Romania, one of the reasons for high-level enthusiasm about these countries' Western integration is the hope of improving not only their security situation, but also their domestic economic and social conditions.

⁴⁵ Emil G. Mintchev, "Democratic and Civil Control over Armed Forces in Bulgaria," in *Democratic and Civil Control over Military Forces – Case Studies and Perspectives*, edited by Ernest Gilman and Detlef E. Herold. Rome: NATO Defense College, 1995, p. 48.

⁴⁶ "Бяла книга за отбраната на Република България," 2002, <http://www.md.government.bg/white_book/wb.html>, March 08, 2002.

II.(2) Western factors

Interested in accepting post-Communist countries as members in various European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, the West has defined relatively clear criteria for accession to these structures. “The strategic aim,” Javier Solana, the EU’s chief diplomat, points out, is “to finalize the reconstruction of Europe after almost a century of ideological division, dictatorship and war.”⁴⁷ One of the reasons for NATO and EU enlargement, as many analysts argue, is the consolidation of democracy and stability in Europe.

Regarding more specifically the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the German envoy to NATO, Gebhardt von Moltke, argues that accepting new democracies such as the two countries would offer the current NATO member states “a larger degree of influence over their development.”⁴⁸ For the candidates, meeting the conditions related to their Western integration has translated into complex transformations in the realms of civilian administration, legal frameworks and structure of the armed forces. NATO has equally asked for clear evidence of civilian oversight of security and defence activities. Allen L. Keiswetter, a former NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, underlines that from the very first stages of NATO’s cooperation activities with Eastern European countries one thing was undisputed: the role of the military in the new democracies would be a major subject on the Alliance’s agenda.⁴⁹

Civilian and democratic oversight of the military has become, therefore, a key component of Eastern European countries’ efforts to meet the Western organizations’ requirements for membership. As military activity increasingly takes place at the international level – Hans Born adds – civilian and democratic oversight of the armed forces, of international military cooperation and of politico-military institutions is also becoming increasingly relevant: “[w]ithout the democratic oversight of the military,

⁴⁷ Robert G. Kaiser and Keith B. Richburg, “To Join the Club, Applicants Strive to Meet the Standards,” *Washington Post*, November 05, 2002.

⁴⁸ “Romania va participa la falanga mobila a NATO,” *Mediafax*, November 6, 2002.

⁴⁹ Allen L. Keiswetter, “The Partnership for Peace and Civil-Military Relations in a Democracy,” in *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist States: Central and Eastern Europe in Transition*, edited by Anton A. Bebler, (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1997), p. 4.

these countries were not permitted to become members of Western international organizations.”⁵⁰

Western policymakers have developed an interest in Eastern European civil-military relations since 1989 – Reka Szemerkenyi argues – primarily because “they needed to determine how the Soviet-trained officer corps would react to the political changes ... and whether they represented any challenge to democratization.”⁵¹ Therefore, organizations such as NATO defined in relatively straightforward terms what they considered to be desired models for the transformation of the Eastern European armed forces and for the interaction between the military establishment and civilian authorities. From a broader perspective, “[h]ealthy civil-military relations are an essential element of [Western] security; this is why the Alliance has made the promotion of democratically controlled military a major part of its cooperation agenda,”⁵² Allen L. Keiswetter adds.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization started to promote the idea of increased cooperation with Eastern European countries as early as 1991, when NATO’s Rome Ministerial Meeting led to the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which has had an important role in establishing links between the Alliance and the post-Communist democracies. NATO “emphasized the role of shared democratic principles by East and West. As establishing democratic civil-military relations was one of these newly shared values, NATO began actively promoting it.”⁵³ Although presenting Western-type civilian control over the armed forces as a fundamental criterion for NATO membership, the North Atlantic Alliance made it clear that meeting this requirement is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for accession to Western politico-military structures.

It was at its Brussels Summit (1994) that NATO proposed the most important organizational arrangement facilitating the Eastern European countries’ accession to the North Atlantic Alliance: the creation of the Partnership for Peace (PfP), involving both Western and post-Communist countries in various politico-military projects. “During 1994, [reforming]

⁵⁰ Hans Born, “Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector. What Does It Mean?” *DCAF Working Papers*, no. 9 (April 2002), p. 2.

⁵¹ Reka Szemerkenyi, *Central European Civil-Military Reform at Risk*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 64.

⁵² Keiswetter, p. 7.

⁵³ Szemerkenyi, p. 64.

civil-military relations came to be seen as a fundamental requirement for NATO enlargement, partially in response to [Eastern] Europe's request for the criteria to be clarified," Reka Szemerkenyi points out.⁵⁴ Some Eastern European leaders feared at that time that PfP was an alternative to NATO membership, not a necessary step towards that goal, as Romanian Chief of the General Staff, General Mihail Popescu, later admitted.⁵⁵ Criteria for enlargement were formally proposed by NATO in 1995. They included the existence of a civilian and democratic system of oversight of the armed forces as a necessary condition for NATO accession, alongside "active participation in NACC and/or PfP, reasonable demonstration of successful performance in democratic political institutions, individual liberty, the rule of law, and so on."⁵⁶

In 1997, at NATO's Madrid Summit, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1999, at NATO's Washington Summit, where these three Eastern European countries were formally welcomed into NATO, the Alliance committed itself to at least a new wave of enlargement and launched a program called Membership Action Plan (MAP)⁵⁷, whose role has been to better prepare NATO candidate countries for future membership. In 2002, at NATO's Prague Summit, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia were invited to join the Alliance. In 2004, all seven countries became full members of NATO by depositing their instruments of accession with the United States Government.

III. Compatibility between post-Communist Eastern European systems and Western models of civilian control over the armed forces

The idea of borrowing Western models to induce changes in the post-1989 Eastern European civil-military relations has been consistent with the entire evolution of relations between post-Communist countries and Western organizations such as NATO and the European Union. Adopting Western

⁵⁴ Szemerkenyi, p. 66.

⁵⁵ See: Ion Petrescu, "Gata pentru Enduring Freedom," *Observatorul militar*, no. 20 (May 21-27, 2002), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶ Jeff Simon, "Central European Civil-Military Relations and NATO Expansion," in *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist States: Central and Eastern Europe in Transition*, edited by Anton A. Bebler, (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1997), p. 117.

⁵⁷ See: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Membership Action Plan*, April 24, 1999, <<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-066e.htm>>, December 12, 2001.

models for the Eastern European countries' processes of reform has been, for both parties, easier than proposing new paradigms: not only that these models have been available and successful, they have also provided a common platform for discussion. In addition to the Eastern European countries implementing by themselves Western guidelines, the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations and their member states have been directly involved in assisting or even directing the post-Communist democracies' evolution in the area of civil-military relations.

This raises, however, a question about the extent to which Eastern European countries, especially Romania and Bulgaria, have actually implemented the Western models of civilian control over the military they declaratively adopted. To answer this question, an investigation into the compatibility of the provisions of post-Communist legal and institutional frameworks in Romania and Bulgaria, and the provisions of a Western system of oversight of the armed forces is necessary. Also required is the examination of relationships between legislatures, executive branches and civil societies, on the one hand, and military organizations, on the other.

III.(1) Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The law, according to a Western model of control over the military, should be “an instrument that subordinates the civil authority to the people and the military to the civil authority.”⁵⁸ The existence of a clear legal framework defining the relations between the armed forces and civilian authorities is a fundamental requirement of democratic civil-military relations. As Rudolf Joó, a former Hungarian Minister of Defence, puts it, “on the one hand, this provides an important prerequisite of the functioning of the rule of law; on the other, it reduces the risks of uncertain jurisdictional claims.”⁵⁹ From the perspective of control over the armed forces, a Western legal framework requires inter alia a clear chain of authority linking civilian structures to the military command.

⁵⁸ Douglas L. Bland, “Civil-Military Relations in Liberal Democracies: Principles, Norms, Rules, and Decision Making Procedures,” paper presented at *The Democratic Civil-Military Relations Program (DCMRP)*, organized by the Department of National Defence of Canada and AUCC, Ottawa, Canada, January 26, 2000.

⁵⁹ Rudolf Joó, “The Democratic Control of the Armed Forces,” *Chaillot Paper*, no. 23 (February 1996), p. 10.

The transition from Communist to Western legal frameworks has not been an easy process in Eastern Europe since the revolutionary events of 1989. The results of this transformation are sometimes hazy and the effectiveness of the new legal provisions in terms of ensuring civilian (and democratic) control over the military is not always clear. When analyzing post-Communist civil-military relations in Romania and Bulgaria, one has to take into consideration both the existence of appropriate legal instruments meant to regulate the various relationships between civilians and the military establishment, and the degree to which the legislation is applied in a manner consistent with its design.

Since the early 1990s, both Romania and Bulgaria have been engaged in reforming their legal frameworks dealing with security and defence issues. In both cases, the principle of democratic civilian control over the armed forces was incorporated into their constitutions, adopted in 1991. Nevertheless, more specific legal provisions were provided several years later. Except for the laws on defence (of 1994 and 1995 in Romania and Bulgaria, respectively), more significant changes have been made only in the late 1990s and early this decade. The pace of change during the post-Communist period has been slow and the content of the legal frameworks resulting from this process, although democratic in essence, has been relatively vague.

Identifying the necessity of their integration into Western structures (such as NATO and the EU), Romania and Bulgaria have promoted policies whose aim has been to meet the requirements imposed by these organizations. Among these policies, reforming their legal frameworks regulating the activity in various fields according to Western principles has been a very important element. NATO's *Membership Action Plan* (section V, article 1), for example, states, "[i]n order to be able to undertake the commitments of membership, aspirants should examine and become acquainted with the appropriate legal arrangements which govern cooperation within NATO; this should enable aspirants to scrutinize domestic laws for compatibility with those NATO rules and regulations."⁶⁰ Similarly, the EU's basic set of laws, usually known as *acquis communautaire*, has to be incorporated into the Eastern European states' national legislations as a precondition for membership in the European

⁶⁰ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Union. Nevertheless, in Eastern Europe the outcomes have tended to be slightly different from Western ones, since the old work procedures, informal networks of influence or poor civilian levels of expertise in the military field have continued to survive.

Legal frameworks in both Romania and Bulgaria are supposed to define inter alia the spheres of activity of the institutions involved in national systems of oversight of the military establishment. They do provide important guidelines for the roles of these institutions, stipulating some of their responsibilities and setting up a system of relationships between them. Nevertheless, their shortcomings are significant. Neither the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria nor the Constitution of Romania, for example, as fundamental legal instruments, defines the concept of “armed forces.” This creates a series of problems in terms of conceptualizing the relationship between civilian authorities and the military establishment. Both Constitutions also lack a clear division of power between the various actors involved in the system of civilian control over the armed forces. This leaves enough room for the military to impose their viewpoints on defence issues. Moreover, this situation creates confusion about the precise responsibilities of civilian institutions in the fields of security and defence.

As Ognyan Avramov, legal adviser and later head of the administrative staff to former Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev, points out, the Bulgarian Constitution gives the President the power to proclaim a state of war or emergency whenever the National Assembly is not in session and cannot be convened, but it says nothing about what should happen when the National Assembly would not endorse the President’s decision.⁶¹ A similar problem appears in the Romanian case, when the President may declare partial or general mobilization of the armed forces with prior approval of the Parliament. The decision would have to be discussed, however, some legal experts argue, by the country’s Supreme Council of National Defence, which, according to the Romanian Constitution, is supposed to conduct the unitary coordination of the activities concerning the country’s defence and its security.

⁶¹ O. Avramov, “Management of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria,” *Bulgarian Military Review*, vol. 1, no. 2 (April 1993), p. 28.

The situation is complicated in both cases by the existence of several relatively similar institutions. In Bulgaria there can be included in this category (i) the Consultative Council of National Security, headed by the President, (ii) the National Assembly's permanent National Security Committee, (iii) the Security Council, assisting the Council of Ministers, employing both civilian and military staff, and (iv) the Supreme Headquarters in wartime. In Romania, it is about (i) the Supreme Council of National Defence, headed by the President, (ii) the Parliament's Committees on Defence, Public Order and National Security, and (iii) the Grand General Staff in wartime. The responsibilities of these institutions, compared with the ones of the National Assembly/the Parliament, of the Council of Ministers/the Government or of the President, are loosely defined by the two countries' legal documents.

The fact that the legal frameworks have been set up during the post-Communist period based on Western requirements in the fields of security and defence is obvious when one scrutinizes them. The frequent references to organizations such as NATO, the WEU and the European Union, and to their standards are relevant indicators of Romania's and Bulgaria's efforts to adapt their legal frameworks regulating civil-military relations to the Western type of legislation in these fields. However, their lack of precision and unity, expressed by their confusing provisions, undermines the very idea of an efficient civilian system of control over the military. They do not only make civilian oversight of the armed forces a difficult process, they also encourage the involvement of the military establishment in a larger discussion of Eastern European countries' security and defence policies.

III.(2) Legislatures and armed forces

Legislatures have a very important role in the framework of a Western model of civilian control over the military. According to a 2001 *Model Law on the Parliamentary Oversight of the State Military Organization*, for instance, drafted and submitted to the *Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Participant States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)* jointly by the Geneva-based *Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces* and the Moscow-based *Centre for Political and International Studies*⁶², the

⁶² This model law was adopted by the 18th Plenary Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Participant States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Resolution no. 18-13 of November 24, 2001).

parliamentary oversight of the armed forces is regarded “as the central component of a broader democratic civilian oversight of the state military organization.”⁶³ Based on a Western perspective, the document more concretely identifies the parliamentary oversight of the military as “activities aimed at the establishment and the insurance of the adequate application of the system of legal provisions and administrative measures put in place by the Parliament in cooperation with other bodies of state power and institutions of the civil society.”⁶⁴

The legislatures discuss and adopt laws on security and defence issues, decide on budgetary matters and control spending, request information from other institutions, control the activity of the government, ratify and denounce international agreements, and have the power to declare or suspend mobilization and the state of war. One of the most important means by which they exercise civilian oversight of the armed forces – alongside setting up the legal framework regulating the military activity – is the parliamentary control of expenditures. Nevertheless, this may prove to be a rather ineffective way of approaching the issue of oversight. Morris Janowitz calls it an “outmoded technique of rather limited consequence,” arguing that “[i]ts effect on the military profession seems to be that of generating hostility and tension, rather than effective control and political consent.”⁶⁵ Organizing hearings and requesting information on security and defence issues are other important mechanisms allowing legislatures to gain knowledge and make decisions more effectively when dealing with the military establishment. In post-Communist Eastern Europe the role of the legislatures in the oversight of the armed forces has been considerably increased by the need to provide a new legal framework for security and defence activities.

Parliamentary oversight of the military field, Andres C. Sjaastad argues, involves two elements: accountability and influence, i.e., “holding the government accountable for the defence funds it requires and for the way it spends these funds, ensuring, in other words, that defence resources are used in the most efficient and cost effective manner; and influencing the

⁶³ Commonwealth of Independent States, *Model Law on the Parliamentary Oversight of the State Military Organization*, 2001, <www.dcaf.ch/publications/DCAF_Documents/DCAF.DOC1.1.pdf>, April 11, 2002.

⁶⁴ Commonwealth of Independent States.

⁶⁵ Janowitz, p. 354.

development and implementation of defence policy.”⁶⁶ However, the degree to which different parliaments are able to shape the content of the defence budgets presented to them by the governments, the ways the funds are spent and the nature of various military activities varies widely. Alfred Stepan, for instance, in his well-known *Rethinking Military Policies: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, identifies different responsibilities of the legislatures. These responsibilities vary because they with the level of military institutional prerogatives in different societies. The dimension of these prerogatives refers to those areas where “the military as an institution assumes they have an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extra-military areas within the state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil society.”⁶⁷

This means that in a society where the military institutional prerogatives are high, the legislature “simply approves or disapproves the executive’s budgets; there is no legislative tradition of detailed hearings on defence matters; [and] the military seldom if ever provides the legislature with detailed information about the defence sector.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, when the military institutional prerogatives are low, “most major policy issues affecting military budgets, force structure, and new weapons initiatives are monitored by the legislature; [and] cabinet-level officials and chief aides routinely appear before legislative committees to defend and explain policy initiatives and to present legislations.”⁶⁹ The latter situation is the one best describing the role of the legislatures according to a Western model of civilian control over the armed forces. The extent to which the Romanian and Bulgarian legislatures have managed to exercise their prerogatives in the military field has probably placed them in a situation characterized by medium military institutional prerogatives, rather than low ones.

The Romanian Parliament comprises 485 members (its Chamber of Deputies comprises 345 and its Senate – 140 members), while the Bulgarian National Assembly comprises 240 members. As institutions directly representing the political will of the two peoples, they are supposed to have

⁶⁶ Anders C. Sjaastad, “Parliament – Control and Oversight or Spoilers of Ministerial Ideas?” paper presented at *NATO Workshop on Civil/Democratic Control of Armed Forces*, Warsaw, June 13-15, 1994.

⁶⁷ Alfred Stepan *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 93.

⁶⁸ Stepan, p. 95.

⁶⁹ Stepan, p. 95.

one of the most important roles in ensuring the existence of a democratic type of civilian type of control over the armed forces. A major weakness, however, of both the Romanian and the Bulgarian legislatures regarding oversight functions lies in their lack of continuity. Only a relatively small part of the Romanian and Bulgarian MPs (about 25-40%) have represented their constituencies in more than one legislature. In the period 1997-2001, for instance, about 60% of the Bulgarian MPs were at their first mandate with the National Assembly; moreover, “[i]n contrast to other transition states where parliamentary expertise is slowly expanding with each Parliament, Bulgaria’s seems to be shrinking.”⁷⁰

This situation contributes to a lack of parliamentary expertise in the fields of security and defence. This is noticeable – Marina Caparini indicates – “in the absence of sustained or in-depth parliamentary debate on crucial defence issues and in the often low-prestige and acquiescent behaviour of parliamentary defence committees.”⁷¹ Not only that these committees consist of insufficiently prepared MPs, but the staffs affiliated to them are [themselves] usually unable to “undertake deeper analyses and independent assessments of defence issues.”⁷²

Thus, although intended to play a very important role in the oversight of the armed forces, the post-Communist Romanian and Bulgarian legislatures have been rather superficially involved in these processes. The weak parliamentary control over the military can be explained by MPs’ lack of expertise on military issues, but also by the limited audience for military issues, and, subsequently, by the generally unsatisfactory parliamentary interest in the fields of security and defence. At the same time, as Marco Carnovale puts it, “a parliament limited to a rubber-stamp role betrays poor democratic control of defence.”⁷³ The Romanian and Bulgarian legislatures have exercised a limited degree of control over the military due to a relatively inadequate application of the system of legal provisions – that is, they have been little involved in debates over defence issues, voluntarily and informally accepting to delegate some of their responsibilities to executive institutions and the military establishment.

⁷⁰ Rachev, p. 69.

⁷¹ Marina Caparini, “The Challenge of Establishing Democratic Civilian Control Over the Armed Forces of Central and Eastern Europe,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Winter 1997), p. 18.

⁷² Caparini, pp. 18-19.

⁷³ Marco Carnovale, “NATO Partners and Allies: Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of the Armed Forces,” *NATO Review*, no. 2 (March 1997), p. 33.

III.(3) Executive institutions and armed forces

The executive institutions having responsibilities in the fields of security and defence are represented in Romania and Bulgaria by the Head of State (President), the Government/Council of Ministers – i.e., Prime Minister, Minister of (National) Defence, Ministry of (National) Defence staff, the armed forces' General Staff – and other related institutions (e.g., various security councils). The President is in Romania and Bulgaria the Commander-in-Chief and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief respectively of the armed forces; the President is also the Chair of the Consultative Council of National Security (Bulgaria)/the Supreme Council of National Defence (Romania). The Government initiates legislation, directs and coordinates the activity of the armed forces, submits to the Parliament the draft defence budget, allocates financial resources to the military establishment and negotiates treaties and agreements concerning international military cooperation.

The Government controls the military through one of its departments, the Ministry of (National) Defence. The operational activity of the military is coordinated by the General Staff, which is directly subordinated to the Minister of (National) Defence. A distinct executive body is an institution whose title is Consultative Council of National Security in Bulgaria and Supreme Council of National Defence in Romania. These institutions are specialized authorities of the central public administration, whose tasks include coordinating policies of national defence and national security, and formulating recommendations on security-related issues.

The executive institutions do not only provide efficient means of control over the armed forces, they are also essential links ensuring the legitimacy of a democratic civilian system of oversight of the military. The continuous supervision by the executive institutions in the military field is achieved through various devices, such as mechanisms of budget control, allocation of missions and responsibilities, and the administration of foreign affairs.⁷⁴ The post-Communist period has marked a controversial transition of the Romanian and Bulgarian executive institutions from a Communist model of organization, based on the subordination to the authoritarian leadership of a Communist Party, to a Western liberal one. In both cases, the

⁷⁴ Janowitz, pp. 361-365.

transformation has been complex and difficult, while the practical results have not always been satisfactory.

The fact that the legal frameworks regulating their activity are Western-like is not enough to justify Romanian and Bulgarian official arguments that these institutions are similar (if not identical) to their Western counterparts. Setting up limitations on the powers exercised by democratically elected Presidents or appointing civilian Ministers of (National) Defence does not mean acquiring democratic civilian control according to Western standards. As many students of the post-Communist Eastern European civil-military relations have emphasized, “[t]hese attempts [have] achieved only an illusion of civilian control.”⁷⁵

As the Romanian and Bulgarian cases demonstrate, the lack of enough civilian experts dealing with military issues has been one of the greatest problems faced in setting up a system of democratic civilian control over the armed forces. This leads to, and is reinforced by, the lack of a professional civil service, “a corps of administrators whose political neutrality is unquestioned and who are competent and expert enough to execute governmental policy,”⁷⁶ upon whose existence depends an effective implementation of civilian decisions in the fields of security and defence. The political instability and the virtual absence of an educational system to prepare civilian experts in the military field, have only exacerbated the problem over the years. Rudold Joó says, “the image the [armed forces] have of civilian politics suffers: politicians are seen as very temporary creatures, whose impact on defence policy is, after all, negligible. Last but not least, democracy itself is discredited. To some, the division of power can be seen as equating to weak government, pluralism as synonymous with disorder.”⁷⁷

Even when the democratic system does not suffer, it is generally difficult to call the system of control over the military “civilian.” If most advisers to security and defence policymakers are military, and the latter are not

⁷⁵ Laura Richards Cleary, “Defence Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe,” in *Civil-Military Relations: A Guide*, edited by Laura Richards Cleary, (Sofia: The Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, 1999), p. 102.

⁷⁶ James Sherr, “Civil-Democratic Control of Ukraine’s Armed Forces: To What End? By What Means?” in *Army and State in Postcommunist Europe*, edited by David Betz and John Löwenhardt, (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p. 66.

⁷⁷ Joó, p. 99.

experts in the military field, then “the army, not the government, is controlling defence policy.”⁷⁸ This situation is related to an unwillingness of the countries’ political forces to challenge the military establishment: “[t]he apparent trend among ... Eastern European ministries of defence ... is to wait for a new generation of administrators to emerge, leaving the current qualified but overwhelmingly military ministry staff in place.”⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Romania and Bulgaria function based on a hybrid system of control over the armed forces, characterized by both a democratic legal framework giving civilians a final “say” in military matters and a commonly accepted practice of military influence on security and defence issues.

III.(4) Civil society and armed forces

Whereas in a Communist regime the involvement of the civil society⁸⁰ in a system of control over the military is virtually non-existent, in a Western one the civil society usually plays a very important role in a public debate on security and defence issues. The role of the civil society in a democracy is very important given the fact that agreements reached by its component groups with official bodies in discussions of security and defence issues confer further legitimacy to decisions made by a political regime in the military field. Ben Lombardi underscores that the role of the civil society is “to foster public discussion of defence and security matters, as well as to create a pool of interested and qualified specialists whose expertise can be drawn upon by policy-makers.”⁸¹

Public discussion of military issues and the civil society’s awareness of these matters facilitate public accountability. From a more functional

⁷⁸ Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework for Tackling the Problem.” *NATO Review*, no. 1 (January 1997), p. 18.

⁷⁹ Caparini, p. 18.

⁸⁰ The term “civil society” used in this paper refers to the combination of different groups such as mass media, NGOs (including unions of reserve military officers), pressure groups, academia, research institutes, think tanks, advisers to political parties, local government personnel and churches. Their involvement in discussions of military issues is facilitated by the information provided by Government’s public relations services, mass media subordinated to the Ministry of (National) Defence, various officials and civil servants (e.g., members of Parliament), and by their interactions with the previous groups. The most important players belonging to the first category are, nevertheless, mass media, NGOs and academia. Together, all are supposed to form what – in the Western world at least – is known as a “strategic community,” one dealing primarily with security and defence issues. Such a community would provide, among other things, the link between policymakers and the general public.

⁸¹ Lombardi, p. 27.

perspective, Reka Szemerkenyi argues that “[p]ublic support for the military is a prerequisite for stable civil-military relations in a democratic society;” nevertheless, this public support “requires an understanding of the military and of its professional and social needs.”⁸² The problem in Eastern Europe is that, although the civil society, with most of its component parts, has tended to be actively engaged in public debates on military issues since 1989, its expertise in this field is extremely weak and its involvement ambiguous. Thus, academia is still isolated and is perceived as a purely educational establishment, the mass media are superficial and “can become easily politicized, independent research institutes and NGOs are only nascent at best, pressure groups tend to focus on a single issue – mostly conscientious objection – and government public relations is in its infancy.”⁸³

Efficient programs aimed at improving public expertise and involvement in the fields of security and defence are necessary if the Eastern European states are really committed – as they say they are – to implementing Western models of oversight of the armed forces. Academia could play a significant role from this perspective, not only through involvement of qualified academics or academic units in discussions of military issues but also through specialized programs offered for students interested in these fields. Nevertheless, either aspect is marred by lack of expertise in the fields of security and defence, lack of interest in the academic activity or lack of proper funding. Acknowledging the need for improving the competency of civilians and military personnel, Laura Richards Cleary contends that not only educational institutions or mass media, but also “NGOs can provide an independent forum for the discussion of international or institutional problems.”⁸⁴ They can significantly contribute to the public debate on military issues and to the efficiency of the “strategic community.” But NGOs’ occasional involvement in political life or the interest of some of them in funding opportunities rather than in the activity for which they have been set up make Eastern European non-governmental organizations qualitatively different from their Western counterparts (especially less efficient).

⁸² Szemerkenyi, p. 54.

⁸³ Szemerkenyi, p. 54.

⁸⁴ Richards Cleary, p. 105.

The mass media should have one of the most important roles in involving the civil society in a discussion of military issues. Nevertheless, journalists' lack of expertise in the fields of security and defence, mass media's tendency to focus on superficial and spectacular, mostly negative, aspects of military activity, or their lack of accurate information make them in – at least in Eastern Europe – inefficient instruments of oversight of the armed forces. A specific category of media, the ones specialized in military matters, are still subjected, formally or informally, to direct control by the Governments (usually the Ministries of Defence). Some of them were the armed forces' propaganda machines during the Communist period and they still maintain their identity as instruments of public relations for the military. Independent media specialized in military issues are virtually nonexistent in Eastern Europe. But “to be effective, the media need to have as much information as possible from domestic sources, within the limits of national security. The military tends only to provide positive information and to delay giving out negative information.”⁸⁵

Therefore, in addition to an informed national discussion of security and defence issues, in which a special role is played by civilian experts at various levels, in a Western system of control over the armed forces there is a need for “sufficient transparency of decision making to allow for a thorough public scrutiny” of military matters, Marco Carnovale points out.⁸⁶ A public relations service set up by the Ministry of (National) Defence, for instance, should provide accurate information and should avoid propaganda as much as possible. From a Western perspective, Eastern European Ministries of Defence should avoid abusing the concept of military secrecy in order to deny information inquiries formulated by various groups or individuals. Nevertheless, as Chris Donnelly puts it, “[p]ost-Communist military society is still a society closed to civilians and which resists civilian interference ... The military fears depredations by ignorant civilians. It has a strong sense of its own loyalty and, in defence matters, it is convinced that it knows best.”⁸⁷

An analysis of the relationship between the armed forces and the civil society in Romania and Bulgaria reveals the immature nature of the civil society and its weak degree of influence in decisions concerning military

⁸⁵ Szemerkenyi, p. 63.

⁸⁶ Carnovale, p. 33.

⁸⁷ Donnelly, “Defence Transformation in the New Democracies: A Framework,” p. 19.

affairs. This situation seriously challenges the idea of a Western system of control over the military in the two countries. A comparison of the two case studies shows that, overall, there are also differences between the Romanian and the Bulgarian case: civil society structures dealing with security and defence issues are more developed in Bulgaria than in Romania.

By focusing on the civil society, executive institutions, legislatures, and legal and institutional frameworks in Romania and Bulgaria leads us to the conclusion that although the models used by the Eastern European countries in order to reform their field of civil-military relations have been Western ones, the outcomes are only to a certain extent similar to the situation in NATO member states, for instance (the source of these Western paradigms). The continuity of patterns of interaction between civilian institutions and military organizations since 1989 has been a constant reminder of the difficulty to implement Western models of civilian oversight of the armed forces in Eastern Europe. The role of the Romanian legislature seems to be slightly more important in a system of control over the military than the Bulgarian National Assembly's role (a positive aspect according to a Western paradigm of civil-military relations). Similarly, the Bulgarian civil society seems to be better organized in an attempt to articulate a community of independent voices expressing alternative perspectives on security and defence issues than the Romanian civil society. Nevertheless, the situation in both countries suggests that, in the current context, an attempt to subordinate the armed forces exclusively to the will of civilian forces (i.e., political forces outside the military establishment per se) is not only difficult to materialize, but also undesirable.

IV. Conclusion

Encouraging the emergence of democratic systems of control over the armed forces in post-Communist Eastern Europe is part of a larger Western concern "to project stability" in the world (especially in neighbouring regions), through implementation of democratic principles. A review of the main characteristics of post-Communist Eastern European systems of civilian control over the military reveals, nevertheless, a relatively unsuccessful attempt to transform civil-military relations in this part of the world according to Western standards.

Analyzing comparatively the findings from the perspective of both Communist and Western models of control over the military suggests that the new Eastern European system of oversight of the armed forces are characterized by both Communist and Western traits. Thus, although the legal and institutional frameworks in Romania and Bulgaria are based on democratic principles, they are still relatively confusing when it comes to describing specifically how the armed forces are controlled and, even more important, who exactly is responsible for that. The Romanian and Bulgarian political systems, democratic as they are, do not manage to aggregate the interests of various groups potentially interested, or already active, in the fields of security and defence. Although it would be somewhat inappropriate to say that most decisions taken in military areas are imposed illegitimately (on the military establishment by a few political leaders or on the civilian authorities by the military), they certainly do not reflect a broader societal consent, obtained through public and informed debates, since no such consent can be achieved. The formal subordination of the armed forces to the Government, to the Head of State and to the Parliament is only partial, while it is still the military itself providing the civilian authorities with professional advice on most security and defence matters. Regarding the involvement of an emergent civil society in the discussion of military issues, this process is hardly significant in Romania and Bulgaria.

The research seems, therefore, to be consistent with the idea that the transfer of Western liberal norms in the area of civil-military relations in Eastern Europe, even through policies of mimicry, has not led to the achievement of Western systems of control over the armed forces. Although the transformation of the Eastern European systems of oversight of the military has been carried, since 1989, mainly by copying Western models and has been triggered to a large extent by external factors, these systems are, so far, stuck in a grey area, being characterized by both Communist and Western features.

The continuity in patterns of civil-military relations in Romania and Bulgaria (before and after 1989) has clashed, during the post-Communist period, with the discontinuity represented by the adoption of new models of civil-military interaction. Romania, characterized by participatory relations between the Communist Party's leadership and the armed forces during the last decades of the Communist period, has been able since 1989 to more easily adopt Western models of civilian control over the military. The

Western focus on a professional, politically non-partisan military establishment, for instance, has been relatively compatible with a Romanian notion of civil-military boundary, whereas in the Bulgarian case the post-Communist transformation has been complicated by the country's previous type of civilian control over the armed forces. The post-1989 influence of Bulgaria's institutional congruence approach, analyzed in the first section of this paper, has been one of the factors preventing a radical transformation of the type of its civil-military relations. The larger the extent to which a country's political authorities and military institutions were integrated during the Communist period, the more difficult the transformation of their civil-military relations based on Western models after 1989.

Nevertheless, as the previous section underlined, Eastern European countries' decision to join European and Euro-Atlantic structures, combined with the requirements for membership in various Western organizations have led, since 1989, to specific dynamics involving systemic changes in Eastern Europe, based on Western recommendations. The changes have not been superficial, as some analysts suggest; nevertheless, the processes of transformation have not led every time to the expected outcomes designed by Western and even Eastern European political architects. Often, the programs of reform have been set up and implemented because the West has required them, "not because they [have been] seen as intrinsically necessary and worthwhile."⁸⁸ Regarding the issue of oversight of the military, most researchers tend to agree that Eastern European governments have promoted it as a priority specifically because European and Euro-Atlantic organizations have defined it as such. Although finding the assessment harsh, Marina Caparini acknowledges that Eastern European governments (often composed of leftist or former Communist parties) "have been [repeatedly] accused of valuing civilian control mainly as a means to the end of NATO membership, rather than inherently attaching value to the concept as a hallmark of democracy."⁸⁹

Piotr Dutkiewicz and Sergei Plekhanov propose an original approach, the "politics of mimicry," to explain these developments. They argue that the Western models adopted for the post-1989 transformation of the Eastern European countries are only occasionally compatible with the models

⁸⁸ David Betz *et al.*, "Conclusion," in *Army and State in Postcommunist Europe*, edited by David Betz and John Löwenhardt, (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p. 149.

⁸⁹ Caparini, p. 23.

previously used by those societies, which has the potential to lead to a situation in which the new paradigms are adopted primarily as “a cover for the intractable old norms.”⁹⁰ Moreover, as the field of civil-military relations is “an especially persuasive case study of the politics of mimicry, [involving] institutions which are deeply conservative by nature,” the synthesis of old and new norms, even (or especially) in cases of low compatibility between them, would “allow a society to protect from external challenges, through mimicry, its search for an indigenous path of transformation.”⁹¹ The approach proposed by Dutkiewicz and Plekhanov suggests that the Western models adopted by the Eastern European societies in the field of civilian control over the military have been used not only as vehicles for the integration of these countries into the Western world. They have also been used as instruments facilitating a smooth transition from Communist models to new paradigms regulating the relationship between post-Communist political forces and military organizations in Eastern Europe.

Most researchers focusing on the issue of post-Communist transformation of Eastern European civil-military relations have noticed a significant degree of incompatibility between the Western models officially embraced by the new Eastern European political forces and the previous patterns employed by these countries in the military field. Mentioning the different social and political traditions, “as well as the elites’ habits and proclivities” separating the West and Eastern Europe, Anton A. Bebler argues that “[t]hese discrepancies should warn against the mere copying or simplistic transplanting of the Western institutions and procedures to the East.”⁹² Adding to this view, Ben Lombardi tries to explain the rather rhetorical adoption of Western norms through the existence in Eastern Europe of political cultures “unable to provide adequate support for Western beliefs – beliefs that run counter not only to those views officially sanctioned by the former Communist regimes, but also to societies that preceded World War II.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Dutkiewicz and Plekhanov, p. 277.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Anton A. Bebler, “Postscript,” in *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist States: Central and Eastern Europe in Transition*, edited by Anton A. Bebler, (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1997), p. 135.

⁹³ Lombardi, p. 29.

Both the Romanian and the Bulgarian armed forces have tended to be involved, since 1989, in various debates concerning not only the two military establishments' future development or the two countries' military involvement in international affairs, but also issues affecting the society as a whole, from a broader perspective (which are, in a Western context at least, the responsibility of political leaders alone). Civilian attempts to subordinate the armed forces have been successful to a certain extent only.

The Western models of oversight, underlying the need for military's political neutrality and its strict subordination to the state's political authorities, have proved to be rather inappropriate for describing the civil-military relations in the two countries and unsuccessful as a basis for changing these relations since 1989. The need for fresh approaches became obvious in both Western and Eastern European circles, especially in the mid-1990s, when the first significant problems of implementing the adopted models suggested a possible incompatibility between the new paradigms and local practices in the area of civil-military relations. Three new approaches may be particularly useful in this context.

Trying to overcome the lack of an appropriate theoretical basis able to describe, and to be used in reorganizing, the interaction between civilians and the military in other parts of the world than the West (represented primarily by the USA), Rebecca L. Schiff proposes a so-called "theory of concordance." She argues that the physical and ideological separation between political institutions and the militaries is historically and culturally bound to the West, especially to the American case. By contrast, her theory argues that "three partners – the military, the political elites and the citizenry – should aim for a cooperative relationship that may or may not involve separation, but does not require it."⁹⁴ Taking into account the cultural and historical conditions that may encourage or discourage civil-military institutional separation, the theory of concordance "highlights dialogue, accommodation and shared values or objectives among the military, the political elites and society."⁹⁵

Nansen Behar proposes the "paradigm of partnership," an approach based on three key ideas: "distributed responsibility, mutual trust and support in

⁹⁴ Rebecca L. Schiff, "Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance," *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 22, no. 1 (Fall 1995), p. 7.

⁹⁵ Schiff, p. 12.

defence management. Partnership suggests not merely control over the military on the part of civilians, but a policy of building inner consensus.”⁹⁶ He argues that the models currently employed in Western democracies are not only unadjusted to processes of transformation of the kind undergone in Eastern Europe, but to the conditions of the 21st century themselves. He adds that “[t]he trend to impose the Anglo-Saxon meaning of the notion ‘control’ [in countries like Bulgaria and Romania, for instance] is an inadequate purpose.”⁹⁷ The notion of civil-military partnership proposed by Behar would solve the problem of an “exhaustion” of the Western models in providing valuable outcomes for Eastern European countries.

Douglas L. Bland proposes his own perspective, the “theory of shared responsibility;” it argues that most of the previous theories “are too narrowly conceived and miss critical aspects of the problem [of civilian control over the armed forces], and they are too bound by the culture and national politics of their proponents.”⁹⁸ Instead, the essence of his approach is that civilian oversight of the military is “managed and maintained through the sharing of responsibility for control between civilian leaders and military officers. Specifically, civil[ian] authorities are responsible and accountable for some aspects of control and military leaders are responsible and accountable for others.”⁹⁹ Their interaction would be regulated by sets of rules and sanctions, different from country to country, placing constraints on both civilians and military organizations. Bland sees the proposed approach as a useful instrument for organizing Eastern European civil-military relations in the historical, cultural and political context of that part of the world: before Western models – he suggests – can be transferred to Eastern Europe, “leaders require the support of a theory of civil-military relations that more closely resembles their own experiences and that transcends ethnocentrism, political systems and time.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Nansen Behar, “Civil-Military Relations and the New Defence and Security Legislation in Bulgaria,” paper presented at the seminar *Legal Framing of Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Security Sector: Norms and Reality/ies*, organized by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva, Switzerland, May 4-5, 2001, p. 13.

⁹⁷ Behar, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Douglas L. Bland, “A Unified Theory of Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Fall 1999), p. 8.

⁹⁹ Bland, “A Unified Theory,” p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Bland, “A Unified Theory,” pp. 22-23.

The analysis of post-1989 Eastern European civil-military relations tends, therefore, to suggest that neither the Communist models of control over the armed forces nor the Western ones are appropriate to describe the interaction between civilian institutions and military organizations in post-Communist democracies. New models, based on the idea of *cooperation* between the two parties, according to clearly defined standards, may more objectively express the post-1989 type of civil-military interaction in Eastern Europe and constitute the basis for its healthy future development. Therefore, although similar to the Western models of civilian control over the armed forces, new post-Communist Eastern European systems of military oversight could be further conceptualized as based on both (i) a relatively clear legal and institutional framework regulating civil-military relations and (ii) a significant level of involvement of the military establishment in the general discussion of security and defence issues. While (iii) the political system would be democratic and (iv) the civil society would be involved in a public debate on security and defence issues, a commonly agreed civil-military *division of labour* in policymaking processes dealing with military matters could more appropriately describe the post-Communist situation in Eastern Europe.

The armed forces' involvement (although not a violent one) in Eastern European countries' political processes since 1989 has suggested not a risk of military coup d'état, but a tendency of military organizations to express their views on security and defence issues. Especially in a volatile political context and in a European area where military organizations have traditionally provided expertise on military matters, the armed forces have expressed the need for the integration of these institutions into the larger society, according to their qualifications; this would be the opposite of a situation characterized by civilian policies of assimilation or segregation. If efficient, these Eastern European models of civilian control over the armed forces may become new paradigms used in the transfer of liberal norms to the countries of today's Commonwealth of Independent States and even other newly democratic polities.

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