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## THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN SECURITY POLICY. CONTROL OVER THE ARMY

**Keywords:** Armed forces, security policy, state policy, military control

**ABSTRACT:** Civilian management and democratic control over the army do not only consist in establishing organs and mechanisms of control and optimising their activity. It is significant to determine and respect the role of the armed forces in the society, which would allow making the army a politically neutral instrument of legally functioning forces as well as appropriate organisational structures with strictly defined protection measures allocated to carry out the undertakings of the state and the nation. The position and function of the army in society should be based on the fact that it reflects the features of the society it comes from. In order to facilitate the effective progression of the process, the following aspects should be taken into account: in what manner the army reacts to the decisions and actions of civilian society; whether there are intermediary bodies between these spheres; to what extent the armed forces represent the interests of the society; and whether a soldier-citizen exists or if the two notions should be treated separately

The main foundation for creating the armed forces is defending the independence of the state and its territory, as well as ensuring security to its citizens (Trejnis, 1997, p. 38). In order to fulfil these tasks, the army must be a highly organised and disciplined group of armed individuals, who

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are united by common traditions, customs and military routines, based on the bonds of loyalty, and featuring high uniformity and integrity. However, the armed forces are not left alone in this regard, and they have always stemmed from various spheres of activity of the state (Piątek, Podgórzeńska, Ranke, 2012, pp. 155–156). The function of the armed forces is to fulfil exceptionally significant tasks for the society and the state, having at their disposal specific measures of violence, and unlike other social institutions, being equipped with diverse military techniques and with developed technology of destroying the opponent. Therefore, they are an institution which strives for efficient and effective functioning.

With far-reaching prerogatives, the armed forces may constitute certain group of interest in the socio-political life. This name can also be applied to organisations or social movements, which do not struggle for direct participation in exercising state authority, but influence the centres of power in order to receive the most favourable decisions for particular social groups (Heywood, 2009, p. 336). Groups of interest are a significant element of any political system in democratic states. They aspire to gain influence on the process of preparing and making decisions concerning themselves. They supply the ruling elites and parliamentarians with memoranda, information and a variety of materials indicating the necessity to consider particular issues and solutions corresponding with the interests of given group best. Due to the amounts of financial means assigned to military purposes, the armed forces have become interest groups themselves, and, in certain situations, even pressure groups on their governments in nearly all states (Ehrlich, 1974, p. 15). It is noteworthy that the state authorities and the military-industrial complex are bound by diverse forms of mutual ties and interdependence. They are both the direct influence exerted by the representatives of the military and industrial circles on the executive and legislative institutions, and a sphere of more indirect impact exercised owing to the significant position of the military-industrial complex in state economy.

The armed forces ought to be classified as a public interest group, since they belong to the state apparatus, around which the interests of different branches of economy, education, or culture are organised, as well as the particular interests of the defence industry employees, the military, and

the civilians serving the armed forces (Andrzejewski, Deszczyński, Gołata, 1991, pp. 16–20).

Outstanding researchers of military issues and the influence of the army on non-military sphere of activity of the state, such as S. Erlich or M. Duverger, polemise with each other in their works. The dispute between Erlich and Duverger concerned the classification of the armed forces as a part of the state apparatus. According to Duverger, the army as a whole belongs to it, while S. Erlich stated that only the military bureaucracy and civilian employees ought to be classified as part of state apparatus. However, both of the researchers agreed in one point, namely that the armed forces are one of the largest and most influential interest groups in any state, which might pursue the realisation of their interests and exert influence on political structures (Ehrlich, 1974, p. 52; Duverger, 1966, pp. 444–446). It should also be underlined that both Erlich and Duverger discerned that the process might also take the reverse course, i.e. the military might become the instrument of safeguarding the interests of particular political class. In this situation, it is justified to pose a question how to separate the military circles, lobby and industry milieu operating in the military sphere, from the realm of politics?

Total separation of these two fields would lead to the situation in which, in the course of time, the military would assume the dominant role in political decision-making or simply would take over the power, thereby destroying the democratic system and directing it towards military dictatorship. Therefore, the most effective model of functioning of a state is the one in which the army has its autonomy, is not marginalised by the political elites and is subjected to civilian control.

The scope of this discussion might be extended to include the army's role and impact on the political system that does not comply with democratic standards. In this case, one ought to address the issues of dictatorships, authoritarian and totalitarian systems, and a variety of hybrids possessing some attributes of democracy but impossible to be classified as democratic after a comprehensive analysis.

However, the majority of authors who are concerned with research on the models of governance in a state, make a distinction between the democratic and the authoritarian model, where the latter *de facto* implic-

itly denotes any system other than democratic one. For the purposes of this work, the division into these two categories has been adopted, based on the assumption that actual methods of governance take the forms which are similar to one of these models or have features of one of them. However, the model which the author will refer to while discussing the role of the army in the political system will be the one generally acknowledged as the best developed thus far, i.e. democratic system, since there is a fundamental difference between functioning of the armed forces in a democratic state and in an authoritarian or totalitarian one. (Wojtaszczyk, 1992, pp. 16–49). As regards the model of functioning of the armed forces in a democratic state, it is, to put it in a simplified way, limited to the role of the defence of the state, while the army is subjected to civilian control.

The issue of control over the army is one of the biggest challenges which a democratic state has to face. The challenge is an arduous one, since political class originating from general election, representing the society, not having any coercive measures at their disposal, is to exercise control over the group which has this power. High-rank military officials and army institutions are obliged to serve the state and not to govern it. While considering the issue of the relationship between the state, its democratic institutions and the army, one can reach some kind of a paradox. Thus, the army, which was formed in order to protect the state, being in possession of means of coercion and force, pose the largest threat to this state (Baker, 2007, p. 114).

As history shows, since the very beginning of statehood formation, it was the army or groups supported by the army, have decided to take over the governance of the state (Piątek, Podgórzeńska, Ranke, 2012, pp. 156–159). All the acknowledged political systems, from the most democratic to authoritarian ones, have to find the means to secure the subordination of the military. Analysing the civilian control over the army in the democratic system, one needs to emphasise two aspects. The first of them, in relation to mature democracies where the civilian control over the military is strict and the military circles primarily focus on the defence of the state against external threats, the most striking question is to what extent the civilians are capable

of improving their management of the army and take decisions related to it. In such situation, the military might be concerned whether the civilians fulfil their mission properly in the decision-making process as regards the military. On the other hand, in case of states which commenced the process of democratisation only recently, the challenge is even more demanding, since they are not experienced as regards exerting control over the military by political power. Such state of affairs might lead to a situation in which the army will oppose to the power, or what is even worse, will decide to seize it as a result of a military coup d'état (Kohn, 1997, pp. 141–142).

The research on the civilian control over the military in a democratic state flourished in the 1950s, starting from two fundamental works by outstanding political scientists – S. Huntington and M. Janowitz. The work of the former, *The Soldier and the State*, in the course of time became the essential methodological interpretation in the analysis of the relation between the army and the state. According to Huntington, the army is the most effective when it is the closest to the ideal of professionalism, if proper autonomy is provided. Making reference to professionalism, the American political scientist meant features such as: the quality of the expertise, responsibility, and corporateness or the sense of community. The above-mentioned characteristics, maximised, would at the same time strengthen the civilian control over the military, since professional soldiers ought to distance themselves from politics. The theory put forward by Huntington is based on the assumption that civilian control over the army can be exercised in an objective or a subjective manner, which are presented as “mutually exclusive options”. Subjective control makes the civilian institutions create unequal distribution of power which gives more competences to the civilians, thereby strengthening their position in relation to the military. By contrast, objective control would be founded on broad autonomy of the military, which would result in safeguarding civilian control by professionalisation of the army (Huntington, 1981, pp. 11–86).

The theory proposed by M. Janowitz in his book *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* is divergent from Huntington's

one. On the one hand, Janowitz agrees as regards the necessity to pursue a model which allows enlarging civilian control over the military, yet expresses concern whether it will fulfil the primary assumptions concerning the security of the state (Janowitz, 1964, p. 6). However, in his reflections Janowitz goes a step further, and he definitely disagrees with Huntington about the apolitical character of the army, describing it as “unrealistic to be achieved”. He gives the example of the United States, where the military circles are involved in some decision-making processes, especially those concerning the defence of the state. Janowitz acknowledges that it is impossible to avoid the military circles being subjected to different forms of pressure by other interest groups. Yet, he does not consider it to be a problem as long as the actions of the military remain responsible, to certain extent limited, and are at civilian bodies’ disposal. One of the fundamental guarantees which are to maintain civilian control over the army is, according to Janowitz, the militaries’ identification with the values of the civilians. Other steps which should be taken to increase civilian control would be improving supervision as regards legal acts, expanding civilian control onto lower levels of military bodies, and larger involvement of the civilians in the training process of the officer corps (Janowitz, 1964, pp. 342–439).

The two above-mentioned theories revolutionised the studies on the civilian-military relations and the civilian control over the military in a democratic state. Since the 1960s (Huntington’s theory of army professionalisation is published in 1957, while Janowitz formulates his theory in 1960), they have been the canon in the research on the relations between the military and the states’ civilian institutions. In the following decades, a number of researchers, putting forward their own views on this issue, still treated these two fundamental as a starting point to their own reasoning. It should be remembered, though, that each of the theories created by the researchers until the early 1990s was considerably influenced by Cold War politics. Nevertheless, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world entered the era of profound political transformation, which also influenced the studies on security and the impact of the armed forces on politics.

In the course of animated analyses in the late 1990s, the most noteworthy views were presented by two political scientists – M. Desch and

P. Feaver. The former, in his book *Civilian Control of the Military*, states that the best indicators of effective civilian control over the military in a state are crises, i.e. situations in which there is a divergence of positions between the armed forces and the institutions of the state. The key question in such situations is which of the parties will emerge victorious from such dispute and will manage to force through their rationing. Desch clearly indicates that a democracy crisis might be defined as a situation when the military turns out to be stronger in such conditions. The core of this theory is the state when the combination of internal and external threats – Desch calls them independent variables – determines the quality of civilian control over the military. According to Desch, civilian control is a dependent variable – dependent on the crisis situation which the state has to cope with. Therefore, he proposes that in case of high level of external threat and low level of internal threat, civilian supervision over the military should be the strongest, whereas in the opposite situation, when the state has to face high internal threat and low external threat, civilians might be vested with fewer powers. Desch's theory might be called revolutionary, since it opposes the existing attitude to the question of control over armed forces in a democratic state. Nevertheless, he gives a fairly legitimate example to support his thesis, which clarifies his point of view to some extent. He believes that the latest history of the United States precisely reflects his theory. During the Cold War, which was the time of the largest external threat and relatively smaller threat on the internal level, complete civilian control over the army proved to be the best solution. However, Desch observes that after the collapse of the USSR, in the 1990s and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was weakened and the military circles gained more influence on the decision-making processes in the state. Summarising his reflections, he states that a smaller threat from outside in the post-Cold War definitely weakened the civilian supervision of the army in the United States of America (Desch, 1999, pp. 4–36).

Another view which left its imprint on the studies of security in the context of the relations between civilian institutions in a democratic state and the army, is the standpoint proposed by P. Feaver, who originally called it Agency Theory, or commission of authority theory. For the needs of this article in Polish, a similar term has been used, as it reflects the idea

better. When translated directly into Polish, Agency Theory could both be called “mediation theory” or “representation theory”. However, owing to the studies of international political and economic relations, the term Principal-Agent Theory is more widespread in Polish (in direct translation exactly “delegation of authority”). Its application in the above-mentioned studies and research on security has visible analogy; therefore the author adopted the same nomenclature (Ruszkowski, 2007, pp. 110–133). According to Feaver, the relations between civilian institutions in a democratic state ought to be based on two fundamental assumptions. The first of them is the fact of absolute supervision exercised by the civilians over the armed forces. Secondly, the supervision ought to be founded on the policy of the day-to-day control of all the decisions concerning the army, which means that the civilians are to have final say on every subject, even concerning the army in a direct way. Such point of view stems directly from the idea of democracy, in which the government is elected by the sovereign – the nation. The sovereign elect their representatives so that they make decisions as regards all fields of the state’s activity, even those requiring expertise, such as the knowledge of the army and defence. The military frequently claim their right to play a greater role in the decision-making process, justifying it with their expertise on this subject. However, Feaver points out that in democratic system civilians have the right to be mistaken (Feaver, 2003, p. 65).

The main assumption of P. Feaver’s Agency Theory is distributing certain prerogatives resulting from the relationship of dependency between the superior (civilian authority) and the subordinate (the military). A classic example of such affiliation is the relationship of the employer (principal) and the employee (agent), whose essence is that the employees are to do what their boss wants them to, or the opposite – the employees, with their work, are to ensure the employer that their duties are fulfilled properly. According to Feaver, such framework can be easily applied in the discussion on the relationship between the military and the civilian institutions of the state. This theory describes the interactions in which it is the civilians who decide on the selected method of controlling the military. Which methods are chosen depends on the requirements of the civilian institutions as regards the extent to which the army is to be



subordinated to them. To put it in rough terms, the civilians have full authority, and therefore, they decide on the manner and the extent of the military circles' dependency on their decisions. Subsequently, they issue a decision on distributing certain part of their prerogatives to the military, at the same time supervising the most significant issues (such as the military budget) and maintaining the capability to influence the decisions of the military or make final decision.

In the course of the whole debate, the majority of researchers agree on one issue: army ought to be subject to civilian control in a state, since it is one of the most significant determinants of democratic system and its indispensable element (Caparini, 2004, p. 1). On the other hand, one should keep in mind that it is not as simple as that, since gaining absolute control over the military by democratic institutions involves the risk of weakening the army, which might result in serious threat to the security of the state from outside (Baker, 2007, p. 115). Therefore, the following questions should be posed: what makes civilian control over the military effective, and how to define healthy, democratic relations between the armed forces and the state's government.

The issue of civilian control over the army can be defined in a simple manner as the lack of the risk that a military coup will occur (Edmonds, 1988, p. 93; Croissant, Kuehn, Chambers, Wolf, 2010, p. 954). However, such point of view is only apparently definite, since there are other forms of exerting influence on state politics by the armed forces, such as excessive separation the domestic matters concerning the army from civilian supervision, or considerable dependency of democratic organs of the state on the dictate of the military circles usurping the right to participate in the decision-making process regarding security or other domestic affairs of the state (Croissant, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, effective control over the army requires civilian institution to possess knowledge on the subjects concerning the military, the resources (staffing and financial ones), as well as proper attention. Even in authoritarian regimes, a number of civilian institutions participate in certain decision-making processes concerning the military. For that reason, it seems justified to state that one of the elements of effective civilian control is integration of political and military elites, which is to promote reinforcing the power of the state and thus its

protection against being overthrown by domestic armed forces (Trinkunas, 1999, p. 4). When analysing the issue of the relations between the army and the civilian organs of the state, it is crucial to avoid understanding these bonds as a rigid division or duality, since it is a process where two parties are interconnected by constant state of decision distribution between the civilians and the military (Welch Jr., 1996, pp. 323–342).

Hence, summarising the information on civilian-military relations collected so far, civilian control over the military can be defined as follows: we are dealing with civilian control over the military, when civilians have the exclusive right to make decisions on the issues of the state politics, including all army-related aspects, while the military are entirely excluded from this process, unless the civilian authorities vest them with particular prerogatives (Croissant, 2011, pp. 948–978). In other words, civilian control in a set of legal norms, rules and certain institutions” predestination, which shape the relationships between civilian and military organs, balancing the potential of political institutions on one side, and the political power of the army on the other. These relationships occur in five dimensions of the political decision-making process: electing the state authorities, state politics, internal security, external defence and organisation of the army (Colton, 1979; Trinkunas, Chapel Hill 2005).

As regards electing state authorities, the question is to exercise power by the possibility of taking unhampered decisions in complete autonomy in relation to the army. This process starts from appointing state offices. To talk about full civilian control, there should be no influence of the military as regards this aspect. However, the acceptable situations include appointing military officers to take charge of ministries (e.g. the Defence Ministry) or posts in various security-related institutions, e.g. the National Security Council. It is not corrupt in any way and it does not distort the democratic system as long as these remain within the field of security, president elected in free elections exerts real power over the army, and civilians form the majority of staff on the highest levels of power, also army-related ones.

Exercising state politics, as above, ought to be free from military component, without any exceptions in this field. Matters are different in the following three aspects. As far as domestic security is concerned, partici-

pation of the military is approved. However, one should mention the issue of intelligence and counter-intelligence which ought to have civilian and military divisions. The civilian one ought to be subject to civilian authority, despite military ranks and clearly defined hierarchy functioning in certain countries. Yet, the notion of domestic security covers wide range of affairs and includes, among others, operations aiming at maintaining public order, controlling riots or domestic unrest, anti-terrorist operations, military aid as regards logistics or in case of natural disasters (Rasmussen, 1999; Collier, 1999; Fehler, 2012). And despite the army participates in all the above-mentioned processes, the final decision as to how these operations are to be conducted and designating their aim, course and scope, all should be the civilian authorities' responsibility. The military circles can only serve as an advisory body.

External defence is the only dimension of political power, in which the armed forces can possess a wider scope of autonomy in decision-making. In this aspect, the military have the advantage of expertise over civilians. The knowledge often stems from the experience gained in the battlefield during armed conflicts or during various kinds of peacekeeping or stabilisation missions or humanitarian aid provided abroad. To ensure effective defence of the state, it is a frequent practice to admit the military to the decision-making process in the issues concerning the scope of military actions, their audit and the objectives the army faces. Yet even in these cases, the state ought to educate civilian staff who will take part in these processes and co-decide on the shape of these operations.

The last aspect in the civil-military relations is the organisation of the army, understood mainly as the structure of the army, its staff, the course of the decision-making process, logistics, training, the question of promotion and equipment of the army. Here, there is also a possibility to delegate certain decisions strictly military level, but the presence of civilian staff must be nonetheless visible (Croissant, 2011, p. 6).

To sum up, civilian management and democratic control over the army do not only consist in establishing organs and mechanisms of control and optimising their activity. It is significant to determine and respect the role of the armed forces in the society, which would allow making the army a politically neutral instrument of legally functioning forces as well as

appropriate organisational structures with strictly defined protection measures allocated to carry out the undertakings of the state and the nation. The position and function of the army in society should be based on the fact that it reflects the features of the society it comes from. In order to facilitate the effective progression of the process, the following aspects should be taken into account: in what manner the army reacts to the decisions and actions of civilian society; whether there are intermediary bodies between these spheres; to what extent the armed forces represent the interests of the society; and whether a soldier-citizen exists or if the two notions should be treated separately (Cottey, Edmunds, Forsters, 2000, pp. 9–10; Wichłacz, 2008, p. 194).

The essence of civilian control over the army is granting security the status of a secondary issue or at least not more significant than other, more commendable objectives of the state. The main commission of the armed forces in a state is defending its society, not governing it. The relations between the army and civilian institutions of a country should be characterised by the dependence of the armed forces on the governing bodies. And although since a state may possess civilian control over the army, still not being a democratic state, it cannot be entirely democratic without civilian control over the armed forces (Kohn, 1997, p. 142).

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