

## Introduction: democracy and the military in comparative perspective

### Abstract for chapter 1

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The authors aim, within the context of current discussions of ‘transitions to democracy’, to examine the central concerns of the subject. They approach the topic within the framework of a larger interest in the process of regime change and regime maintenance in Asia and the Pacific since it is clear that the military has played a major role both in bringing about changes of regime and in forestalling change.

The principle questions addressed are first, what role has the military played in regime change and maintenance in the countries of Asia and the Pacific, and second, have differences in the degree of military involvement in politics been systematically associated with differences in the performance of the political system, particularly its performance in relation to democratic criteria?

Their sense is that the military is likely to continue to play an important role in the politics of the countries of Asia and the Pacific, notwithstanding tendencies towards democratisation. They propose a shift in focus of research from the military per se, to the activities of soldiers in the complex of military-civil relations.

### *Keywords*

Bangladesh, Burma, democracy, Fiji, Indonesia, military regimes, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, regime change and maintenance, South Korea, Thailand

# 1

## **INTRODUCTION: DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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From the processes of decolonisation which dominated the political history of Africa, Asia and the island Pacific in the mid twentieth century, most post-colonial states emerged with constitutional structures inherited from, or at least heavily influenced by, the Western democratic models of former colonial powers. Among the principal general features of such constitutions were: separation of the legislature, executive and judiciary; popularly-elected legislatures in which competitive political party systems were expected to provide the basis for a division between government and opposition; and the subservience of the military (whose primary role was generally seen to lie in defending the country against external aggression) to the civil authorities.

In the early stages of decolonisation it was expected that indigenous armies, following the models set by the metropolitan powers which created them, would refrain from direct involvement in politics. Nevertheless, even in those newly independent states in which the military did not gain a political inheritance by virtue of its role in the winning of independence, rather than imbuing the armed forces with a military professionalism which required absolute obedience to the civil authority, colonial rule left behind armed forces more often oriented towards maintaining internal order than to external defence, and therefore implicitly attuned to domestic politics. This was particularly evident in states marked by strong ethnic cleavages, where colonial policies often involved the recruitment of military personnel from those ethnic groups which appeared most compliant (see below).

In fact, shifts from parliamentary democracy to one-party or military-dominated regimes were not long in coming. Africa had its first military coup in 1958 and there were coups in Burma, Thailand and Pakistan in the same year. A torrent of military interventions followed during the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1945 and 1976, Nordlinger (1977:xi) estimated, more than two thirds of the countries

of Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East had experienced varying levels of military intervention. A study of sub-Saharan Africa between 1960 and 1982 alone recorded 90 plots to overthrow governments, 60 attempted coups, and 50 successful coups (Orkand Corporation quoted in Seitz 1991:65). In 1977 La Palombara commented: 'Military coups are now so frequent and widespread they must be considered as significant as elections' ('Foreword' in Nordlinger 1977:x); even earlier, Janowitz (1971:306) wrote:

The intervention of the military in the domestic politics [of non-Western states] is the norm; persistent patterns of civil supremacy are the deviant cases that require special exploration.

Because military interventions were widely seen as a denial of the democratic values and institutions which retiring colonial powers had hoped to establish in the new states, considerable scholarly attention was devoted to explaining why and how military coups occurred. Explanation was sought in the motives of coup leaders, the structure of the military, and in predisposing and facilitating socio-economic, political, and external conditions.<sup>1</sup>

Early scholarship sought the reason for military intervention in the relative 'underdevelopment' of civil political institutions. More specifically, some writers argued that in new states the military typically was more cohesive, better organised, more 'rational', and more strongly committed to modernisation than the rest of society, including politicians, and that military intervention was a predictable response to the inefficient and often corrupt administration, and political fractiousness, which characterised the civil government in many new states.<sup>2</sup> For those who saw a strong state as a necessary precondition for economic develop-

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<sup>1</sup> There have been numerous attempts to review the copious literature on military coups (see, for example Lowenthal 1974; Hoadley 1975; Nordlinger 1977; Perlmutter 1980; Ball 1981; Valenzuela 1985; Kennedy and Louscher 1991). We will not repeat that exercise here, though some features of the debate will be highlighted.

<sup>2</sup> Among a number of studies which broadly pursued this theme, major contributions included Shils (1962); Pye (1962, 1966); Finer (1962); Johnson (1962); Halpern (1963); Riggs (1964); Janowitz (1964); von der Mehden (1964); Huntington (1968); Zolberg (1968); Daalder (1969); Dowse (1969); Lefever (1970); Bienen (1971, 1983); Lissak (1976); Perlmutter (1977, 1981); more recently see Crouch (1985) and Chazan et al. (1988).

For some dissenting views see Lee (1969); Welch (1974a); Mazrui (1976). Mazrui in particular saw the military, in Africa, as likely to 'retraditionalise'; similarly see Crouch (1979) on the 'neo patrimonialism' of the military in Indonesia.

ment, military intervention was not necessarily a bad thing (for example, see Lefever 1970). Such a viewpoint, however, raised some big questions: in particular, if the military intervened because the institutions of civil government were 'underdeveloped' or not working well, what chance was there of civil institutions ever developing? Although military coup leaders frequently presented themselves as intervening temporarily, once out of the barracks they were seldom in a hurry to return; moreover the actions of military rulers – banning political activity, suspending constitutions, imposing media censorship, and so on – were frequently inimical to the development of civil politics.

An alternative line of explanation saw military establishments as motivated less by a culture of rationality, sound management, and modernity than by its corporate interests. Military intervention was especially likely, they argued, when the military was marginalised or fiscally deprived, or its interests, autonomy, or 'professionalism' threatened. (See, for example, Janowitz 1964; First 1970; Bienen 1971; Hakes 1973; Thompson 1973; Nordlinger 1977; Horowitz 1980; Rouquié 1987.)

In both these approaches the military was seen essentially as a cohesive entity with a sense of collective identity. A third school of thought, in contrast, portrayed the military as simply an extension of the larger civil society, subject to the same class, regional and ethnic cleavages, prone to internal friction, and likely to side with particular political factions at particular times. Taking this argument further, Decalo (1976) suggested that the reasons for military coups were to be found in the personal ambitions of coup leaders. The idea that the military was at least potentially fragmented had particular salience in those states in which the military had a specific ethnic bias, often the result of deliberate colonial policies of recruiting from 'martial races' or from ethnic minorities rather than dominant ethnic groups which might thus be given the means to challenge colonial rule (Daalder 1969; Guyot 1974; Kabwegyere 1974; Mazrui 1976; Hansen 1977; Nordlinger 1977; Enloe 1980; Horowitz 1985; also see Gow 1991). The role of social class, on the other hand, was contested: while some saw the military as likely to pursue the interests of the middle class, others saw it as characteristically cutting across class interests. (Major contributors to this debate include Huntington 1968; Lloyd 1973; Halpern 1963; Nordlinger 1977; Alavi 1979; Luckham 1979; Perlmutter 1981; Nun 1967, 1986.) Inter-generational tensions, and rivalries between age cohorts and political factions within the military were seen to be increasingly significant as the number of coups – especially 'second round' coups – increased; Seitz (1991:70) estimated that 'intra-military elite factionalism' accounted for about a third of the plots, attempted coups and coups recorded in the Orkand Corporation study (see above).

Several studies distinguished various *types* of coup and coup attempt, ranging from those (typically first coups) which sought to set up new regimes, through internal military putschs, to ‘coups’ directed against regime change (for example, see Huntington 1968; Hoadley 1975; Chazan et al. 1988; Luckham 1991).

Of course, these various ‘explanations’ were not necessarily mutually exclusive: a state in which there was an imbalance in development between the institutions of state control and those of popular participation, for example, was probably more vulnerable to intervention to assert the military’s corporate interests. ‘Isolating “The Cause” of a *coup d’etat*’, Welch (1974a:135) suggested, ‘is a fruitless exercise. Personal, organisational and societal factors are intermingled’. Moreover, as Horowitz (1980:8) suggested, different explanations were sometimes appropriate to different *levels* of explanation (if in fact, they *explained* anything at all). Not surprisingly, then, a growing body of case studies provided support, in varying degrees, for all of these hypotheses, suggesting that while there were some recurring characteristics of military intervention, the explanation of individual cases required an understanding of their particular historical and social circumstances.

With military or civil-military regimes becoming increasingly the norm in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, from around the mid 1970s students of the military began to shift the focus of their enquiry from explaining coups to a second enterprise, that of assessing the relative performance of military regimes. Early writings on military intervention in politics tended, as we have seen, to regard military intervention as essentially anti-democratic, but to see military regimes as probably more capable than democratic civilian regimes of achieving modernisation and development. A series of studies in the 1970s and early 1980s (for example, Nordlinger 1970, 1977; Schmitter 1971; Hoadley 1975; McKinlay and Cohan 1975, 1976; Jackman 1976; Zuk and Thompson 1982) addressed this question in fairly broad terms but found that, in terms of performance (variously defined), military regimes did not form a distinctive regime type. Heeger (1977:247) went further, suggesting that for Africa and Asia in the decade 1965-1975, ‘most military regimes have hindered the development of their countries’. More recently Seitz (in Kennedy and Louscher 1991) has concluded from a study of 38 sub-Saharan African states that there is ‘no significant discernible pattern separating the *economic* performance of military and civilian regimes’ (ibid.:7, *italics added*). Crouch (1985, 1988), addressing the record of the military and development in Southeast Asia for the period 1970-1985, also dismissed the particular role of the military as a decisive factor; he went on to emphasise the significance for economic development of maintaining political stability but concluded that in this respect, too, the military’s record was mixed.

Measures of *political* performance, on the other hand, seem to show a more definite pattern: Nordlinger (1977), for example, looking at four measures of political performance (legitimisation, noncoercive rule, minimisation of violence, and responsiveness to popular wishes), concluded that the performance of military governments 'is significantly and almost consistently poorer than that of civilian governments' (ibid.:197). More recently, Finer (1991), using Freedom House data, notes that all but two out of 36 military governments (i.e. 94 per cent) were ranked as authoritarian and lacking basic civil freedoms, compared to 60 per cent of 73 civilian regimes. Nevertheless, the only safe – if unexciting – generalisation seems to be that, as stated by Luckham (1991:22), 'Military regimes are usually but not invariably authoritarian, and authoritarianism frequently but not always involves rule by soldiers'.

As more and more states came to experience periods of military rule it also became obvious that stereotypical models of military rule were inadequate. In some countries the military, or factions within the military, had simply made a blatant grab for power; in others the military intervened to replace an ineffective or corrupt civilian government with the stated intention of handing power back to civilian rule; in still others the military and civilian authorities established a system of joint participation in government. Consequently, a third major endeavour of the literature on the military in politics has been to differentiate types of military and civil-military regime. Janowitz (1964) made an early distinction between five types of civil-military relations, which he labelled authoritarian-personal control, authoritarian-mass party, democratic competitive and semi-competitive systems, civil-military coalition, and military oligarchy. Welch (1974a) suggested a distinction between personalist, corporatist and interventionary professionalisationist military regimes. Nordlinger (1977) distinguished military regimes by their role, as moderators, guardians or rulers. (Similarly see Perlmutter's [1981] classification of arbitrator and ruler praetorian regimes.) Perlmutter (1980), arguing that, 'The modern military regime is distinctly and analytically a new phenomenon, restricted to the developing and modernising world' (p.96), suggested a fivefold typology, dividing military regimes into corporative, market-bureaucratic, socialist-oligarchic, army-party and tyrannical. Finer (1991), confining himself to countries in which the current regime is the outcome of a previous illegal usurpation and in which the head of state is a member of the military, and adopting a more structurally-oriented classification, divides military governments into three sub-types: the military junta (or stratocracy), the presidential type, and those (perhaps more properly regarded as authoritarian civilian states) which, while founded by a military coup, have a civilian cabinet and a (limited) competitive party system and legislature.<sup>3</sup> What is emphasised

by these (and other) authors, however, is not simply the variety of military regime types (or in *Finer's* terms, subtypes) but the lack of a clear dividing line between military and civilian regimes. As *Heeger* (1977:243) put it:

It has become increasingly apparent that the rigid dichotomy between 'civilian' and 'military' regimes cannot be maintained . . . the transition from military rule can be seen in one sense as a transition from one mixed system to another mixed system.

Similarly, *Finer* (1982:282) argued that 'the class of "military regimes" embraces a number of distinct subtypes which merge, gradually, into civilian regimes', and *Bebler* (1990) proposed a continuum of civil-military relations, whose opposing extremes he called 'civilocracy' and 'militocracy' and whose middle ground was occupied by equal partnership arrangements, dual hierarchies, and 'fused' systems. *Bebler* went on to observe:

Whether officially recognised or not, the military everywhere constitutes an important part of the state apparatus and of the political system, and the soldiers, even when sound asleep in their barracks, participate in the political process and tacitly share political power with civilian rulers (*ibid.*:262-63).<sup>4</sup>

A further aspect of the discussion of military regime types lay in the recognition that the role of the military may change over time. *Huntington* (1968:221) observed:

As society changes, so does the role of the military. In the world of oligarchy the soldier is a radical; in the middle-class world he is a participant and arbiter; as the mass society looms on the horizon he becomes the conservative guardian of the existing order.

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<sup>3</sup> In an earlier paper, *Finer* (1982) presented a 'morphology of [32] military regimes', ranging from 'military-supportive civilian regimes', through 'indirect-military regimes', to 'military regimes proper', based on an analysis of 'who governs'. Also see *Luckham* (1971) and *Bebler* (1990).

<sup>4</sup> Also see *Finer* (1962, 1985); *Lee* (1969); *Lloyd* (1973); *Bienen and Morell* (1974); *Heeger* (1977); and *Perlmutter* (1981); however cf. *Luckham* (1991: 2): 'The more one looks at [the military], the more it decomposes like the vanishing smile of the Cheshire cat, into the turbulent social and political forces that swirl around it. Yet the more one seeks to explain its role in relation to those forces, the more its military specificity is brought (like the smile) back into focus'. Even *Bebler*, having introduced the idea of a civilian-military continuum, argues against those who deny the perceptual validity of the civilian-military dichotomy, that 'in every society, at any given moment, there is a demarcation line considered as "normal" by the leading political forces' (*Bebler* 1990:265). (Also see *Nordlinger* 1977:xii.)

On the other hand, Welch and others suggested that once in power military regimes changed systemically – in Welch's (1974a) analysis from personalism to corporatism to interventionary professionalism; in Perlmutter's (1981) analysis, from arbitrator to ruler and back to arbitrator. Studies of the military in Latin America in 1970s suggested that a more fundamental, secular change was taking place in the military's perception of its role: increasingly, Stepan and others argued, soldiers were taking on civilian roles of administration, management and economic enterprise.<sup>5</sup> Stepan (1973, 1978) referred to this as the 'new professionalism'. Such a military role expansion was evident in Southeast Asia in the 1960s, and Lissak (1976:13), writing about Thailand and Burma, spoke of 'the penetration of the officer corps, either collectively or as individuals, into various institutional fields, such as economic enterprises, education and training of civilian manpower, fulfilling civilian administrative functions, and engaging in different forms of power politics'. In Indonesia, the 'civilianising' of the armed forces had been anticipated even before 1960s.<sup>6</sup>

In part, the role expansion of the military in the Third World has reflected a shift in predominant concern, from external defence to internal security (embracing civic action programs and the growth of paramilitary forces).<sup>7</sup> But in part also it has been a strategy by which military regimes have sought to consolidate and legitimate their role in government, especially where that role has been challenged by civilians or external actors, or threatened by factionalism from within.

This suggested a further issue for investigation: the question of 'exit' – how can the army, once in power, be returned to the barracks? As early as 1962 Finer observed that, 'In most cases, the military that have intervened in politics are in a dilemma: . . . they cannot withdraw from rulership nor can they fully legitimise it' (1962:243). In fact, of course, some coup-makers did withdraw; indeed Finer (1985) later acknowledged that, 'Most military regimes . . . have very short lives', and went on to review the practice and theory of military withdrawal in terms of two principal alternatives – institutionalisation (essentially what other writers have termed 'civilianisation') and abdication. Following Sundhaussen (1984,

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<sup>5</sup> An early review of this literature is contained in Lowenthal (1974).

<sup>6</sup> More recent discussions of the 'new professionalism' of the military in Southeast Asia are contained in Soedjati and Yong (1988) and Selochan (1990).

<sup>7</sup> Some recent tendencies are discussed in Sarkesian (1981); Stepan (1988); Goodman, Mendelson and Rial (1990:Part III); Zagorski (1992); Burk (1993), and Ashkenazy (1994).



1985), Finer suggested that the conditions for military withdrawal paralleled, in reverse, those for military intervention, and identified two sets of dispositions and societal conditions for withdrawal; successful abdication, he concluded, required that the personal, corporate and ideological interests of the military be protected, and that the party or party system to which the military handed over be 'organised, not unwise, and in effective control of the country' (Finer 1985: 30). Contemporaneously with Finer's analysis of 'the retreat to the barracks', Clapham and Philip (1985) rephrased the dilemma for military regimes as being to develop a mechanism for succession without jeopardising their own supreme position; they saw six likely alternative outcomes – handback, civilian renewal, authoritarian clientelism, factional clientelism, and military party state, and 'just another impasse' (as when the military, under pressure, hands power back to a weak civilian state). (Also see Finer 1962; Huntington 1968; Welch 1971, 1974b; Bienen and Morell 1974; Heeger 1977; Nordlinger 1977; Needler 1980; Horowitz 1980; *Third World Quarterly* 7(1) 1985; Danopoulos 1988.)

However, as Heeger (1977:244) warned:

... in speaking of the military's withdrawal from politics one risks exaggeration. The transfer of formal political power to civilians may be accompanied by a full-scale return to the barracks on the part of the military. More likely, however, is the emergence of the military in a somewhat less prominent, but no less political, role.

Typically, military personnel, having seized power, sought either to consolidate their position, penetrating civil society (sometimes setting up military-backed parties) and discouraging opposition, or to shift from a 'caretaker' role by restoring civilian governments while maintaining a guardian or veto role and strengthening linkages with civilian politicians and business people. Cases of a single military intervention, followed by consolidation or withdrawal, have in fact been unusual; more common have been cycles of greater and lesser military involvement of politics.<sup>8</sup> 'Proclaimed intentions', Finer (1985:17) observes,

... usually bear little relationship to the outcome. Rulers who intend to hand power back to civilians and do so are rare ... Rulers who say they so intend but in fact hang on to power are more common ... Rulers who make no promises to hand back, or openly propose permanent military rule are very common ... But rulers of this intention who actually succeed in carrying it out are most uncommon.

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<sup>8</sup> Thus, although Finer observes that most military regimes have very short lives, he also notes that: 'Few civilian successor regimes have lasted more than ten years' (1985:29).

At this point the literature on the military in politics converges with the burgeoning body of writing on regime change (see, for example, Linz and Stepan 1978; O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986; Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1988, 1990; Goodman, Mendelson and Rial 1990). Specifically, the recent perceived trend towards democratisation in parts of Latin America, Africa and Asia has revived interest in questions of military withdrawal, though as Luckham (1991: 12) reminds us, 'the installation of a military government [and, per contra, the withdrawal of the military from government] by no means always adds up to a change of regime'.

The questions raised here, and others, have, of course, been substantially addressed both at the theoretical level and in a growing volume of case studies, including comparative Asian and Pacific studies (among the latter, see Guyot and Willner 1970; Hoadley 1975; Zakaria and Crouch 1985; Olsen and Jurika 1986; Soedjati and Yong 1988; Heinz, Pfennig and King 1990; Selochan 1991b). In the light of the current discussion of 'transitions to democracy', however, and especially in view of the recent experience of some Asia-Pacific countries in resisting democratisation (Burma, China, arguably Indonesia, Singapore and Tonga) or moving away from it (Fiji, and arguably Malaysia), it seems worth revisiting some of the central concerns of the literature. More specifically, we have approached the topic within the framework of a larger interest in the processes of regime change and regime maintenance in Asia and the Pacific (see May 1994), since it is clear that the military has played a major role both in bringing about changes of regime and in forestalling change.<sup>9</sup>

The principal questions which this volume addresses, therefore, are, first, what role has the military played in regime change and maintenance in the countries of Asia and the Pacific, and, second, have differences in the degree of military involvement in politics been systematically associated with differences in the performance of the political system, particularly its performance in relation to democratic criteria?

Before turning to the case studies presented in this volume, however, it is necessary to reflect briefly on some key concepts.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Luckham (1991:10): 'Rather than analysing coups as such, we might do better to consider them as part of a much wider process of transformation: firstly as a subcategory of a broader class of regime changes or political transitions; and secondly as one among several different channels through which military power can influence politics'.

## Democracy and the Military

Huntington (1957), in a study based primarily on the history of the military in Western societies, elaborated what was widely accepted as the liberal democratic model of civil-military interaction. '[T]he principal responsibility of the military officer', Huntington said, 'is to the state':<sup>10</sup>

Politics is beyond the scope of military competence, and the participation of military officers in politics undermines their professionalism . . . The military officer must remain neutral politically . . . The area of military science is subordinate to, and yet independent of, the area of politics . . . The military profession exists to serve the state . . . The superior political wisdom of the statesman must be accepted as a fact (Huntington 1957:16, 71, 73, 76).

The idea of the subservience of the military to civilian authority, as Grundy (1968) has pointed out, follows a tradition going back to Plato.<sup>11</sup> Huntington, however, challenged the simple identification of civilian control with democratic government, and military control with absolute or totalitarian government: the military may undermine civilian control in a democracy, he argued, acquiring power by legitimate processes,<sup>12</sup> and within a totalitarian system the power of the military may be reduced by such means as creating competing military or paramilitary units or by infiltrating it with 'political commissars'. 'Subjective civilian control', he concluded, 'thus is not the monopoly of any particular constitutional system' (ibid.:82). Huntington went on to distinguish five patterns of civil-military relations, based on differing relative degrees of military/anti-military ideology, military power, and military professionalism (see ibid.: chapter 4), but as evidenced in his later study (Huntington 1968), for Huntington military 'intervention' represented an essential breakdown of the liberal democratic political order.

While Huntington's concept of military professionalism has remained influential, the spate of post-independence military coups in the new states of Africa and Asia from the late 1950s prompted a more critical examination of the relation between civilian government and the military. Some commentators, indeed,

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<sup>10</sup> In context, Huntington appears to equate 'state' with 'government'; the significance of distinguishing 'state' from 'government' is discussed below.

<sup>11</sup> Also note von Clausewitz (1832/1968:405): '... subordination of the military point of view to the political is ... the only thing which is possible'.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent statement of this theme, drawing primarily on US experience, see Johansen (1992).

suggested that the presumed neutrality and separation of the military from politics was at best a Western concept, if not a complete fiction (see, for example Perlmutter 1980:119; Valenzuela 1985:142; Ashkenazy 1994:178). Not only did military intervention sometimes occur in response to the effective breakdown of democratic civil regimes – with the ostensible aim of *restoring* democracy, and often with substantial popular support – but in some new states, notably the communist ‘people’s republics’ and the ‘guided democracy’ of Indonesia’s President Soekarno, an alternative model of ‘democracy’ was espoused, in which the military was seen as an integral part of the political system rather than, as in Huntington’s formulation, an agency outside the political realm.<sup>13</sup>

That a variety of political regimes, in which the pattern of relations between civilian politicians and the military covers a broad spectrum, should claim to be ‘democratic’ is testimony to the popularity of the term in international political discourse. Such popularity reflects the extent to which the term acts as an agent of political legitimation in a world where democracy is accepted, at least rhetorically, as a universal ‘good’. But can military regimes ever be described as democratic? Or, indeed, are they necessarily anti-democratic? Gallie’s (1956) formulation of democracy as an ‘essentially contested concept’ lends support to a relativist position, the extension of which is that democracy can mean all things to all people. As Hewison, Robison and Rodan (1993:5) point out, this effectively denies the possibility that any universal understandings can be reached and serves to ‘indemnify the most scurrilous of dictatorships and to undermine the legitimacy of democratic and reformist oppositions’. On the other hand, too narrow a definition, especially with respect to institutional forms, is unrealistic.

One way of dealing with this definitional problem is to acknowledge that regimes measure up differently against various criteria of democracy, and that the idea of a continuum from more democratic to less democratic is the most useful and meaningful approach to the problem of analysing and comparing regimes. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1990:6-7), for example, define democracy in terms of three essential and generally accepted conditions: meaningful competition for government office; a high level of political participation; and a level of civil and political liberties sufficient to ensure competition and participation. They recognise, at the same time, that ‘countries that broadly satisfy these criteria, nevertheless do so to different degrees’ and that the ‘boundary between

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Albright’s (1980) critique of Huntington’s ‘conceptual framework’ on the basis of the experiences of sixteen communist states. On civil-military relations in communist states, also see Perlmutter (1982) and Herspring and Volgyes (1978).

democratic and undemocratic is sometimes blurred and imperfect' (ibid.:7; see also Dahl 1989:112; Hadenius 1992; Sørensen 1993; Lawson 1993).

For military rulers, however, the widespread association of democracy with civilian supremacy has created a particular crisis of legitimacy. A central pillar of modern democratic theory is the doctrine of constitutionalism which, in its simplest form, refers to limited government, a system in which any body of rulers is as much subject to the rule of law as the body of citizens. An important corollary to the democratic doctrine of constitutionalism is civilian supremacy (though this in itself is not a sufficient condition for democracy since, as Huntington pointed out, many non-democratic governments maintain civilian control over their military and police organisations). Democracy requires, therefore, not only that armed forces be subject to civilian control, but that 'those civilians who control the military and police must themselves be subject to the democratic process' (Dahl 1989:245). A fundamental principle of the democratic model of civilian supremacy in civil-military relations resides in the important distinction between the state and the legitimate government. It is to the latter that the military owes its primary allegiance, and any implicit distinction that the military might be tempted to draw between the goals of the government and those of the state must provoke a serious legitimacy problem (Harries-Jenkins and van Doorn 1976); this is so because the democracy model insists that the military's power is legitimate only in so far as it has been endorsed by society as a whole and that its practical objectives are those set for it by the government of the day. Van Gils (1971:274) states this succinctly:

Under the conditions of pluralistic democracy, the relations between the armed forces and civilians are, at least theoretically, quite straightforward. Soldiers are public officials. They are not the embodiment of any particular set of values. They are not the chosen defenders of any specific social or political institution. They hold public office on the assumption that they will provide society with a specific set of services whenever society considers itself in the need of having such services performed.

This reflects the deeply embedded assumption of modern democratic theory, that it is the popularly elected government, and no other body or person, that is wholly responsible for deciding what policies are to be pursued in the name of the people. In so doing, the government is constrained by the limits to action set out under the law of the constitution, and is ultimately held accountable for its activities and decisions when it faces the judgement of the people at the polls.

But what if a constitutionally and popularly elected civilian government once in office abrogates the constitution and rejects the democratic values embodied in it (including genuinely competitive elections)? In such circumstances – which

have been not uncommon in post-colonial states – the military may be the only entity within the country capable of reversing such a development and reinstating democratic government.

While contemporary democratic theory appears to be entirely at odds with the notion that the military has any role in unilaterally acting to ‘safeguard the national interest’, the most common justification for military intervention is just this. Such appeals to the national interest have frequently been coupled with references to some perceived crisis or threat involving the security of the state or serious economic or social problems. As Goodman (1990:xiii) observes for Latin America:

The frequent military ascension to power has often been motivated by a perceived need to save their nations from weak, corrupt, and undisciplined civilian leadership.

Numerous commentators on the role of the military in politics have observed the tendency of armed forces to justify their intervention in terms of the national interest, and thereby to identify themselves with the desiderata of nationhood. Most have been sceptical. Lissak (1976:20), for example, notes that the military can acquire a self image as guarantor of the fundamental and permanent interests of the nation, thereby arrogating to itself the requisite legitimacy to assume the right to rule. Similarly, Nordlinger (1970:1137-8) highlights the manner in which the military’s corporate interests can be defined, legitimised, and rationalised by a close identification with the interests of the nation, while at the same time portraying oppositional protests to their actions as ‘expressions of partial and selfish interests’.

Nevertheless, authoritarian rule is not exclusive to military regimes and, as the case studies in this volume illustrate, armed forces have played a role in pro-democracy regime transitions (see also Chazan et al. 1988; Goodman 1990; Rial 1990a). The critical factor for most commentators on civil-military relations concerns the intention of military rulers to return to the barracks.

To legitimise their intervention, military regimes commonly contend that their rule is only a preparatory or transitory (but entirely necessary) stage along the road to a fully democratic political system, and promise an early return to civilian rule, thereby recognising, Dahl (1989:2) argues, that ‘an indispensable ingredient for their legitimacy is a dash or two of the language of democracy’. In some cases, military rule has been justified ‘as necessary for the regeneration of the polity to allow for stable and effective rule’; military regimes have even portrayed their role as that of ‘democratic tutor’ (Huntington 1968; Nordlinger 1977:204-5). Yet once out of the barracks military rulers have seldom been anxious to relinquish power and even where there have been transitions back to civilian

rule the armed forces have typically retained an involvement in politics and have been more likely to intervene again if dissatisfied with the performance of civilian governments.

Observing processes of transition from authoritarian military rule to democracy in Latin America, Goodman (1990:xiv) comments that, 'successful transitions have utilised a process of incremental rather than immediate civilian control'; he goes on to suggest:

For democracy to take root in Latin America, both military men and civilian leaders must take on new roles. ... Recognition that the military is one of the strongest formal institutions in societies that are in dire need of political and social coherence poses challenges to Latin American civilian leaders that are very different from those confronted by their developed-nation counterparts (*ibid.*:xiv; see also Stepan 1988; Rial 1990a, b and Varas 1990).

Goodman, however, is not explicit on the nature of these 'new roles', and other contributors to the same volume suggest that recently democratised regimes in Latin America remain vulnerable to 'the rapid rebirth of military authoritarianism' (Rial 1990b:289).

In Asia and the Pacific armed forces have played a role in both democratising and anti-democratic transitions, and though, as elsewhere, their tendency as rulers has been towards authoritarianism, patterns of civil-military relations and degrees of authoritarianism/democracy in governance have varied widely. Any attempt at understanding this variety must begin with an appreciation of the particular historical and cultural circumstances under which military involvement in politics has developed in different countries.

## **The Case Studies**

Within this volume we have selected nine countries for detailed study. All but one – Thailand – were former European colonies, and in all but the Thai case the liberal democratic model of military professionalism (the model elaborated by Huntington 1957) has at some stage been dominant. Not represented are those communist states of Asia in which the party and the military have dominated politics in such a way as to negate the essential conditions for democracy listed above. In all but two of the case studies (the Philippines and Papua New Guinea) there have been successful military coups, over a period stretching from 1932 (Thailand) to 1987 (Fiji) and 1991 (Thailand). In the two exceptional cases, there have been several unsuccessful coup attempts in the Philippines and occasional rumours of prospective coups in Papua New Guinea.

Of those which have experienced military intervention, all but Indonesia have made the transition back to at least nominal civilian rule and, with the arguable exception of Fiji, back again to military domination; Thailand has experienced several such cycles. While the Philippines has not experienced military rule since independence, it has experienced martial law and repressive authoritarian rule, under Ferdinand Marcos, and the military played a critical role both in maintaining Marcos in power and later in the transition which removed Marcos and restored democracy. The Philippines has not been alone in the experience of an authoritarian civilian regime; such regimes have also been experienced in (South) Korea, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Papua New Guinea alone has been able to maintain a robust democracy (notwithstanding several localised states of emergency and recent military action to suppress a rebellion on Bougainville), and it has been able to do so even though it has displayed most of the social and political features which coup theorists have suggested as preconditions and motivating circumstances for military intervention. In four cases (Thailand, Korea, Pakistan and the Philippines) the military, or sections of it, have been actively involved in pro-democratic transitions, and in another (Bangladesh) the military's non-intervention facilitated a pro-democratic regime change. In all cases the military itself has been subject to some degree of factionalism, and in most, ethnic divisions in society have had an influence on the role the military has played.

The case studies presented here thus provide a rich variety of military-civil interactions, ranging from the classic military coup to displace a civilian government, through military coups against military regimes and military intervention to change civilian regimes, to successful popular uprisings against military regimes.

In Indonesia the armed forces (ABRI) trace their origins to the revolution against Dutch colonialism. Following the surrender of the occupying Japanese forces in 1945, Indonesian nationalist leaders declared their independence and began a protracted battle against Dutch and Allied forces which ended with the formal recognition of the Republic of Indonesia in 1949. The Indonesian armed forces, created in 1945 to support the revolutionary struggle, were recruited largely from the military force, *Pembela Tanah Air* (Defenders of the Fatherland, PETA), recruited from amongst nationalist elements by the Japanese in 1943, but included also elements of the pre-war Dutch colonial army, *Koninklijke Nederlandsche Indische Leger* (KNIL), and spontaneously-formed, politically-aligned militia units (*laskar*). Although lacking an effective centralised command, the military played a major role in the revolutionary war; it also inherited a distrust of civilian politicians, who, it believed, had been too ready to negotiate the nation's political status with the Dutch. Not surprisingly, given its origins,



the military in the 1950s was a highly politicised and fractious organisation.

The early post-independence years saw growing tension between those (primarily ex-KNIL officers) who sought to build an apolitical, professional military along Western lines, and those (mostly ex-PETA and *laskar*) who favoured a continuing active role for the military in politics. This resulted, in the early 1950s, in a series of 'coups' within the armed forces, which shifted power towards the more politicised groups. At the same time, a series of local rebellions, and divisions within the government in Jakarta, produced political instability and led to the imposition of martial law in 1957, and the abnegation of the constitution and inauguration of a regime of 'Guided Democracy' two years later. Despite a greater centralisation of authority, however, political fractiousness and economic deterioration continued into the 1960s, and following the assassination in 1965 of several generals by middle-ranking officers associated with the Left, the military leadership moved against President Soekarno and his left-wing supporters; about half a million Communist Party supporters were killed, the president was removed from office, and a 'New Order' government, headed by General Suharto, was established. Suharto was installed as president in 1968.

Already in the 1950s army chief-of-staff, Colonel Nasution had put forward the idea of a 'Middle Way' for the armed forces, which combined their conventional role in the defence of the country with participation in government. After the overthrow of Sukarno this idea was formally embodied in the principle of *dwifungsi* (dual function); in the 'New Order' regime of President Suharto, ABRI is formally represented at all levels of government, military officers head many state enterprises and have business enterprises, and political support for the president is organised through Golkar, an effective 'state party' which was organised in the first place within the armed forces. With the assistance of foreign aid and investment, and a firm attitude towards political dissenters, the Suharto regime has achieved a fairly high level of political stability and economic performance, and as such has won some measure of legitimacy. But despite suggestions that the regime is becoming more open, it remains authoritarian, showing little tolerance of opposition, and there is a general consensus that when Suharto eventually goes his successor will have to be a person approved by ABRI.

The Burmese experience parallels that of Indonesia in a number of respects. As in Indonesia, nationalism flowered in Burma during World War II and Burma's post-independence leadership had been closely associated with the anti-colonial Burma Independence Army recruited and trained by the Japanese. Under somewhat different circumstances, but with common elements of ethnic fragmentation and class division, Burma also went through a period of considerable turbulence following independence in 1948 and in 1958 Prime Minister Nu stepped down,

inviting the armed forces to set up a caretaker government. Elections were held again in 1960 but the political party which the military supported was defeated and two years later a military coup brought an end to parliamentary democracy and reinstated army commander General Ne Win as head of government. With some parallels to Indonesia's Golkar, the military's Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) became an effective state party (other parties were banned in 1964) and Ne Win and his military associates maintained tight control over what became – notwithstanding the semblance of a parliamentary system after 1974 – one of the most repressive and personalised regimes in Asia.

As in Indonesia, the Burmese army was initially composed of diverse elements. During the British colonial period the Burmese army was recruited predominantly from among the ethnic minorities, especially the Karen. During World War II, when Burmese nationalists joined the Japanese-trained Burma Independence Army and initially fought alongside the Japanese, many of the ethnic minorities fought with the Allies. There was also (comparable to the Indonesian *laskar*) a spontaneously-formed, largely-politically-affiliated Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO) in the countryside. By the end of 1948, however, the PVO had split and declined. With the outbreak of communal violence between Burmans and Karens, the Karen head of the army was removed; Ne Win was given command, and the multi-ethnic composition of the army gave way to Burman domination. Indeed the suppression of ethnic minority revolts became the army's principal task.

Unlike the Suharto regime in Indonesia, however, that of Ne Win achieved neither political stability nor economic progress. Civil rebellion has threatened the Burmese state virtually since independence and its economy has deteriorated to the point that Burma has become one of the world's poorest countries. In 1988 a popular uprising occurred which seemed likely to topple the Ne Win regime; Ne Win in fact resigned the presidency (though initially remaining as BSPP leader) and some liberalisation seemed imminent. But in contrast to the Philippines, where two years earlier the 'People Power' revolution, supported by elements of the armed forces, had removed President Marcos, in Burma the army held firm; although Ne Win stepped down and the country briefly had a civilian head of state, when the government promised multiparty elections and other reforms the military staged another coup. Since then, Burma has been ruled directly by the military through a State Law and Order Restoration Council. Elections, which in 1990 gave an overwhelming majority to the pro-democracy National League for Democracy (NLD), have simply been ignored; the NLD's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was placed under house arrest and political repression has intensified.

The other country included in this volume with a long history of military in-

volvement in government is Thailand. But unlike Indonesia and Burma, Thailand was never a colony and its first military coup took place in 1932 when the army intervened to replace Thailand's absolute monarchy with a constitutional system. Since then Thailand has gone through cycles of military and civilian rule, in which military intervention has been sometimes 'anti-democratic' (as in 1947, arguably 1958, 1976 and 1991) and sometimes 'pro-democratic' (as in 1932 and 1977), but consistent in seeing the military as having a 'guardian' role in the political system. That the military was able to mount a successful coup in 1991 after about fourteen years of parliamentary government and political liberalisation suggests, as Suchit Bunbongkarn observes below, that popular commitment to democratic norms and procedures is not strongly developed; however, the reversal of the military takeover (albeit with the intervention of the king) suggests the growing strength of civil society in Thailand, a development which is often identified with processes of democratisation.

The lack of a developed liberal democratic tradition has been even more obvious in the case of Korea, and Yung Myung Kim argues below that postwar attempts to impose Western-style democracy upon an unprepared nation simply did not work. Instead, the imported institutions of liberal democracy gave way to the authoritarianism of the Rhee Syngman regime. In 1960 Rhee was overthrown in a popular uprising, but in the ensuing political turbulence the army stepped in to reestablish control. What emerged, however, was not direct military rule but what Kim describes as a system of 'quasi-civilianised party politics' headed by Park Chung Hee. Between 1961 and his assassination in 1979 Park's regime became increasingly authoritarian and personalised. Referring to communist threats from the north and from within, Park denounced Western democracy as inappropriate to Korea's 'emergency' security situation. But the removal of Park Chung Hee did not bring fundamental changes in the political system. From the struggle between conservative military elements and popular pro-democracy forces, the New Military Group of Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo emerged victorious. This group was committed to the continuation of a dominant role for the military in politics and saw democracy as a potential threat to political stability and rapid industrialisation. Confrontation between the repressive regime of Chun Doo Hwan and a growing democracy movement eventually produced a shift towards constitutional democracy in 1987-88, though conflicts within the opposition allowed Roh Tae Woo and a faction of the ruling party to achieve electoral victory, and divisions within the military enabled Roh to extend his authority there. The outcome, Kim suggests, has been a 'limited democratisation', producing a system 'somewhere between military-authoritarian and civilian-democratic'. But with the reversal of the relationship between the military

and civil sectors – from one in the 1950s and 1960s where an ‘overdeveloped’ state, in which the military occupied a critical position, dominated civil society, to one in which the military is ‘underdeveloped in comparison to the civil sectors’ – Korea appears to have moved, tentatively, towards democracy.

In the two South Asian nations, also, the interaction between military and civil politics has been complex. Pakistan inherited the British traditions of military professionalism and non-involvement in politics, but the military became increasingly involved in decision making and eleven years after independence intervened, ostensibly to end the squabbling of civilian politicians and oversee the rehabilitation of parliamentary democracy. For the next decade Mohammed Ayub Khan, the first commander-in-chief of Pakistan’s armed forces, ruled initially as chief martial law administrator and later as the country’s first elected president, before resigning and handing over power to the then army commander, Yahya Khan. Two years later, following the defeat of the Pakistan army and the secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), Yahya Khan stepped down in favour of a civilian martial law administrator, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. But in 1977 a further coup removed Bhutto and again placed the country under a martial law regime, headed by Zia ul Haq. Having ‘legitimised’ his position in a referendum in 1984, President Zia lifted martial law and introduced a system of ‘controlled democracy’, in which political power was, at least nominally, shared between the military and civilian politicians. Four years later, following the death of Zia, elections were held under the supervision of a military-dominated Emergency Council. The victory of Benazir Bhutto ended the military’s direct role in politics, though it continued to play an active indirect part both during Bhutto’s period in office and in her removal in 1990. After 1990 Pakistan was governed by a pro-military civilian government until 1993 when Benazir Bhutto was re-elected as prime minister. However, the military clearly still sees itself as having a ‘guardian’ role.

Indirectly, Bangladesh also substantially inherited the British Indian tradition of military professionalism, though as in Indonesia and Burma, the circumstances of the birth of the independent state left a division in the armed forces, between the professionalism of the former members of the Pakistan military and the politicisation of the former Mukti Bahini militia, reorganised after independence as a national security force attached to the ruling Awami League. But following a brief period of increasingly authoritarian civilian rule, and growing antipathy between the military and paramilitary forces, the army entered politics in 1975, ostensibly as guardians of parliamentary democracy. Having achieved power and initiated a partnership between the military and civilian politicians, General Ziaur Rahman moved to establish a multi-party system and to civilianise and democratise Bangladesh politics. However, splits with the ruling party following the assass-

sination of Zia by a group of military officers, and opposition from within the military to the democratisation process initiated by Zia, led to another military intervention in 1981-82 and demands for a constitutional role similar to that enjoyed by the military in Indonesia. Martial law was lifted in 1986 but Chief Martial Law Administrator General Ershad continued to preside over an authoritarian regime until 1990 when a popular uprising forced his resignation and re-established parliamentary democracy.

In all of these Asian states military intervention came at a fairly early stage, generally in a context of political instability or popular discontent, and not entirely unexpectedly. In the Pacific island state of Fiji, on the other hand, the military coups of 1987 came unexpectedly after seventeen years of stable parliamentary government. As Lawson argues below, the coups had less to do with praetorian challenges to civilian politics than with the army's reassertion of the dominant traditional-aristocratic pattern of Fjian politics following the electoral victory of an opposition coalition dominated by Fiji Indians and ethnic Fijians from outside the chiefly establishment. In the wake of the coups, Fiji's constitution was rewritten to further entrench the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests and consolidate the position of the chiefs. That achieved, the country returned to civilian rule and in elections in 1992 coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka was popularly elected as prime minister.

The remaining two countries, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, have not experienced military rule since independence. Both inherited from their colonial regimes (US and Australia, respectively) a tradition of military professionalism which has been reinforced by close ties with their former mentors with respect to training and financial assistance.

In the case of the Philippines, the armed forces were involved at an early stage of the post-independence period in domestic security operations, and in subsequent years seemed at times on the verge of involvement in civil politics. The military did not become a significant actor, however, until 1972, when, faced with communist and Muslim insurgencies, and the prospect of being constitutionally unable to stand for a third presidential term, Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law. As Marcos sought to consolidate his authority he appointed loyal officers to senior positions and in doing so politicised the armed forces and created a division between the professional officers who had graduated from the Philippine Military Academy and the 'intégrés' officers whose careers rested largely on political patronage. When a popular uprising occurred in 1986, protesting the declaration of a fraudulent election, senior military personnel, including the then deputy commander of the armed forces, Fidel Ramos, broke with Marcos and joined the opposition; this split within the armed forces (in

contrast with the pattern of events in Burma in 1988) was critical to the success of the so-called People Power Revolution which removed Marcos and returned the Philippines to parliamentary democracy. After her victory in 1986, however, the incoming president, Corazon Aquino, had to survive seven coup attempts from elements within the armed forces, notably among the younger professional officers who had supported the move against Marcos in 1986 and sought a role in post-Marcos government. Ramos, reinstated as commander of the armed forces, remained loyal to Aquino, however, and in 1992, as her chosen candidate, was elected to succeed her. Rebel former military leaders continue to pose a minor challenge to the Philippine government but the prospects of military intervention now seem remote.

By the time Papua New Guinea became independent in 1975 many of the newly-independent states of Africa and Asia had succumbed to military rule, and there were many who foresaw the likelihood of a similar development in Papua New Guinea. The classic preconditions for military intervention were there: a high degree of 'modernism' and coherence in the military relative to the institutions of civil society; threatened corporate interests as expenditure on the military lagged and the size of the force was reduced; personal ambition, and a highly fluid pattern of party politics. That a coup has not been attempted probably owes something to the successful working of Papua New Guinea's essentially Westminster-style political institutions and the fact that dissatisfied or ambitious officers (including the defence force's first three commanding officers) have chosen to resign from the military and contest elections (one becoming deputy prime minister); but it probably owes a lot, also, to the intensely fragmented topography and ethnic composition of Papua New Guinea. In recent years a growing perception that the military's likely role in defence against external aggression is less significant than the role it has come to play in maintaining internal security has led to a shift in attitudes towards the military, which has also become more politicised. Tensions have occasionally arisen in relations between the military and the civilian government, particularly in relation to the handling of the ongoing rebellion on Bougainville, but while the possibilities of a more substantial civil-military confrontation cannot be entirely ruled out, the prospects of military intervention seem remote.

### **Comparing experiences**

It is tempting to conclude from this overview that each country's experience is explicable in terms of its particular historical and cultural circumstances, and to proceed directly to the individual country studies.

Certainly the range of civil-military interactions seems to be greater than that among the states of Africa and Latin America, a factor which might be at least partially explained by wide variety of colonial experiences.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, some common patterns, and some contrasting patterns, invite comparison.

Three countries – Burma, Indonesia and Pakistan – experienced fairly conventional military coups in which the army intervened after several years of fractious parliamentary politics, ostensibly to restore ‘political order’. In Burma the army reinstated civilian politics after two years but soon after again intervened and has remained in power since, becoming one of the modern world’s most durable military regimes. In both Burma and Indonesia the military had played a prominent part in the achievement of independence and soldiers had played an early role in government. In both countries, having intervened decisively, the military consolidated its position by expanding into civilian administration and business and by establishing a military-dominated political party. Both regimes have maintained strong central control, repressing opposition (especially on the ethnic peripheries), and both have had a poor record in terms of civil and political liberties.<sup>15</sup>

But there the similarities end. In Indonesia at least some of the trappings of a democratic system have been largely maintained, with three effectively state-approved parties contesting elections (which have been consistently dominated by the military-backed Golkar); fairly purposeful policy making has achieved an impressive rate and reasonable distribution of economic development, and since the late 1960s a fairly high degree of political stability has been maintained. This has contributed to a degree of performance legitimacy that has enabled President Suharto to remain in power for almost thirty years, despite criticisms of what Filipinos might have labelled cronyism and frequent predictions of his regime’s imminent demise. In contrast, Burma abandoned any pretence of participatory politics after 1962 and has waged an ongoing war against non-

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Sundhaussen (1985). Sundhaussen begins with the proposition that ‘South-East Asian armies have failed to follow the trend in other regions to withdraw to the barracks’, and seeks the explanation for this (following the lead of Huntington 1968:237) largely in cultural terms: ‘... there has never been a significant democratic tradition among the people of South-East Asia ... Thus the principle of civilian supremacy over the military ... was hardly ever a focal point in the politics of these countries’ (ibid.:270, 277-78).

<sup>15</sup> In the 1994 Freedom House ‘Comparative Survey of Freedom’, on scales of 1-7 (best to worst) for political rights and for civil liberties, Burma scored 7 and 7 and Indonesia 7 and 6. See *Freedom Review* 25(1) 1994.

Burman ethnic groups as well as, for some time, a communist insurrection. These factors, coupled with a record of economic performance which by 1987 had reduced Burma to one of the world's poorest countries, and a high degree of political repression, has severely undermined the legitimacy of the regime. This culminated in the unsuccessful popular uprising of 1988, from which emerged a more repressive military regime. In both cases the lack of pronounced divisions within the military (once Burma had effectively purged the army of its non-Burman elements) has been a factor in regime maintenance, though in Burma in 1988 it looked for a while as though a people power movement along the lines of that in the Philippines two years earlier might force a regime change with military acquiescence. Explaining the differences in regime performance is more difficult, though the serious ethnic cleavages which independent Burma inherited from the colonial period probably imposed greater obstructions to national unity than Indonesia's (not inconsiderable) ethnic diversity, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Burma's opting for virtual economic isolation largely accounted for the disastrous economic record which denied any claim the military regime might have made to legitimacy based on performance.

In Pakistan, also, a politicised military intervened ostensibly to restore political order. But after a decade as martial law administrator, General Ayub Khan became elected president and what Pakistan has seen since is an increasing interpenetration of military and civilian politicians, compounded by ethnic divisions, and a succession of regimes on both sides of a mid point on Bebler's (1990) proposed 'militocracy'/'civilocracy' continuum. And there seems to be nothing to suggest that this pattern will change substantially.

In Bangladesh, on the other hand, the military initially intervened not to restore order among fractious politicians but to remove an increasingly authoritarian civilian regime. And having gained power the military proceeded to civilianise and democratise Bangladesh politics. Factions of the military again intervened, however, and though there were suggestions that Bangladesh was moving towards a fused system similar to Indonesia's *dwifungsi*, opposition to the authoritarianism of the Ershad regime instead led in 1990 to a popular uprising to restore democracy (though for how long remains to be seen).

In the two South Asian cases, as also in Thailand, the military (or factions of the military) has emerged as one of several key players in a fluid political system. Having expanded its role into civil administration, business and politics, and having formed linkages with non-military players (including linkages along established ethnic/regional and class lines), the military seems likely to continue to play a role in a broadly civilian-military mixed system, the nature of the role varying over time according to the political and economic performance of the



government of the day. Much the same might be said of Korea, where an initially authoritarian civilian regime was overthrown by popular uprising and the military stepped in to impose order. Since 1961 Korea has experienced a series of mixed military-civilian, civilian-military governments, alike in their tendencies towards authoritarianism, though civil society seems to have become stronger since the 1980s.

In Thailand, and perhaps Korea, there seems to be some validity in the general proposition that military intervention is less likely as societies become more complex and the middle class expands; the proposition seems less relevant to Pakistan and Bangladesh – despite the often-cited common military professionalist heritage of British colonialism.

Fiji presents another example of decisive military intervention, but in this case not so much to restore ‘political order’ – since Fiji had enjoyed a considerable period of orderly parliamentary government – as to maintain ethnic Fijian (and chiefly Fijian) dominance. Once this had been achieved, by introducing a new constitution and holding new elections which returned coup leader Rabuka as prime minister, civilian rule was restored and further military intervention seems unlikely.

The Philippines under Marcos presents one of a number of cases of an authoritarian, repressive regime (yet one which largely preserved the formal semblance of democracy – elections, parties, a legislature and judiciary, a reasonably free press) in which the military played a relatively minor role. As in Bangladesh, the military’s substantive entry into politics came in support of popular demands for the restoration of democracy. Having played a part in the removal of Marcos, elements of the military clearly saw themselves as having a continuing role in government, but notwithstanding a series of unsuccessful coup attempts the model of military professionalism was substantially maintained. Thus, what has to be explained in the Philippines – as in Papua New Guinea, where despite occasional rumours of an imminent coup military intervention has never been attempted – is why successful coups have not occurred. In both countries most of the classic preconditions and motives for coups have been present: imbalance between the military and civil political institutions and at least periods of arguable political instability, threatened corporate interests of the military, and personal ambition; factionalism within the military has also existed, though not on the same scale (and without the obvious ethnic or class divisions) that has been experienced elsewhere. Both countries inherited strong traditions of professionalism, but in that they were no different from Fiji or Pakistan. An attractive line of explanation perhaps lies in the vitality of civil politics in both countries – a vitality which in the Philippines even the repressive regime of President Marcos failed

to stifle – and in the sheer logistical difficulties of maintaining centralised control. But in varying degrees both these arguments might be applied to other cases (for example, Pakistan and Indonesia) in which coups *have* occurred.

Indeed the case studies in this volume produce little to support systematically any of the common ‘explanations’ for military intervention, although elements of all such explanations can be invoked. In explaining the individual cases, history (especially concerning the role of the military in the colonial regime and its part in a struggle for independence) is obviously important, as is ethnicity in some cases (notably Burma and Fiji) and factionalism within the military (for example, Indonesia, Bangladesh).

On the question of performance, also, generalisation is difficult. In terms of economic performance, military or military-civilian fused regimes have performed well in Korea and, to an extent, Indonesia (though perhaps not as well as non-military regimes in the region such as Singapore and Malaysia), but have performed poorly in Burma and Bangladesh (though no more poorly than the civilian administration of the Philippines under Marcos); Thailand’s record (as in many other respects) is mixed.

In terms of political performance, measured against the three criteria listed above – competition, participation, and civil and political liberties – there is stronger evidence of a military/non-military divide, but again the evidence is not clear cut. Comparing countries, Burma and to a lesser extent Indonesia have performed poorly against all three criteria, as have Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Korea under military rule. In Fiji, also, during the brief period of military rule there was a decline in political competition and a deterioration of civil and political liberties, though not to the extent experienced in the Asian states. On the other hand, the essentially civilian regime in the Philippines under Marcos also performed badly against the competition, and civil and political liberties criteria and, with some qualifications, against the participation criterion, for at least part of the period of the Marcos administration. Within the region, the civilian governments of Singapore, Malaysia and Tonga also have far from unblemished records.

As a rough comparative measure, the nine countries covered in this volume, together with nine other Asian and Pacific countries, are ranked below (Figure 1) on the basis of the 1994 Freedom House ‘Comparative Survey of Freedom’ (the two Freedom House gradings, for political rights and civil liberties, ranked on a scale (best to worst) of 1-7, have been averaged; those with a rating of 1-2.5 are categorised by Freedom House as ‘free’; those scoring 3.0-5.5 as ‘partly free’ and those above 5.5 as ‘not free’). The Freedom House ratings are not beyond question (it is not obvious, for example, why Papua New Guinea is classed as

‘partly free’, below Western Samoa and South Korea), but they are probably the most widely accepted measure available of comparative freedom, and thus of the degree of democracy (or relative ‘democracidity’). They show the two long-time military-dominated regimes of Indonesia and Burma at the bottom of the list, along with Brunei and several communist states; most of the rest (including the two states – the Philippines and Papua New Guinea – in which coups have either failed or not been attempted) are grouped around the middle of the range, with Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea performing better and Thailand and Pakistan worse – but all outranking the civilian regimes in Singapore and Malaysia. South Korea alone is listed (contentiously, perhaps) among the ‘free’ countries.

**FIGURE 1: Freedom House, ‘Comparative Survey of Freedom, 1994’**

1.0	(Australia)
1.5	South Korea
2.0	(Western Samoa)
2.5	
3.0	Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea
3.5	Philippines, Fiji
4.0	Thailand, Pakistan, (Tonga)
4.5	(Malaysia)
5.0	(Singapore)
5.5	
6.0	
6.5	Indonesia, (Brunei)
7.0	Burma (North Korea, PRC, Vietnam)

(Source: *Freedom Review* 25(1) 1994:14-15).

What is more pertinent, however, is how *changes* in regime within a single country affect political performance. Here the evidence is less opaque, but still not unambiguous. In general, military intervention has resulted in restrictions on both competition and participation and, sometimes with a lag but usually increasingly, in limitations on civil and political liberties. The arguable exceptions are Thailand in 1932, Korea in 1960-61 and Bangladesh in 1975, where the military ostensibly intervened to restore civil and political liberties and increase competition and participation, though even among these cases (notably Korea) it may be argued that the tendency to democratisation was shortlived.

It should also be observed, however, that the impact of military intervention

on different parts of the population is uneven. Typically, the impact of military intervention is heaviest on those most actively engaged in politics, and these are often (but not always) a social as well as political elite. When military intervention does something to restore 'political order' and promote economic development, large segments of the population may perceive themselves (as the proponents of bureaucratic authoritarianism and its variants once argued) to be better off. It is this, perhaps, that helps explain the longevity of the Suharto regime and the acceptance, by much of the population, of martial law in the Philippines in 1972. Similarly, it has been argued by some that the Fiji coups of 1987 were welcomed by most ethnic Fijians as a reassertion of the paramountcy of Fijian (over Indo-Fijian) interests (although Lawson's analysis below suggests that this is an oversimplification). The broad question of who gains and who loses from military intervention has seldom been adequately addressed, either for the larger civil society or for those within the military itself.

Beyond these restricted comparisons, generalisations are hazardous. Nevertheless several low-level generalisations suggest themselves.

First, by virtue of their monopoly (or at least dominant control) over the means of coercion, and frequently because they are a relatively coherent organisation in a fragmented society, militaries can play a major role in bringing about changes of regime, not just in fluid political situations (such as in Burma in 1958 or Indonesia in the mid 1960s) but in fairly stable ones (Fiji in 1987 [though the 1987 coups were essentially regime maintaining], Korea in 1960-61). They may also play an important role in forestalling changes of regime (as in Burma in 1988).

Second, in 'explaining' military intervention, it is evident that the relative strength of civil and military institutions, larger divisions in society, corporate and factional interests of the military, personal ambitions, and external factors may all be relevant in different proportions, but none provides a reliable indicator of military intervention (as the Papua New Guinea and Philippines cases show).

Third, while a shift along the continuum from civilian to military regime is not strongly correlated either with economic performance or with the degree of democracy, there is, not surprisingly, substance to the general proposition that military regimes are oriented more towards maintaining 'order' – against which criterion, however, they perform variably, with Indonesia and Thailand providing polar examples of regime stability – and to maximising their corporate (or perhaps more correctly their collectively individualised) interests, than to promoting the liberal democratic values of competition, participation, civil and political liberties, and more egalitarian distribution of wealth.

Fourth, although these case studies provide varying instances of military withdrawal, the general conclusion seems to be that having once intervened

military leaders are likely to seek to maintain a political role, either as guardians, with the implication that further interventions are likely, or by the interpenetration of the interests of military and civilian personnel in politics, civil administration and business. This conclusion, which is amply recognised in a growing body of literature on the morphology of civil-military regimes, suggests there is scope for further research in at least two major areas of civil-military relations. One of these concerns the role of the military in civilian administration and in the military/civilian borderland of paramilitary, internal security, and law and order type operations.<sup>16</sup> The other has to do with the involvement of militaries institutionally, and soldiers individually, in business. In both these areas, the almost universal tendency towards expansion of the role of the military suggests the possibility of gradual change in regime type without major discontinuities in government.

The military seems likely to continue to play an important role in the politics of the countries of Asia and the Pacific, notwithstanding predicted tendencies towards democratisation. To comprehend that role it will be increasingly necessary to shift the focus of research from the military *per se* to the activities of soldiers in the complex of military-civil relations. It is towards this endeavour that our volume is directed.

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<sup>16</sup> 'Paramilitary forces' are a major concern of Janowitz (1977) and 'military civic action' is the subject of a volume by de Pauw and Luz (1991). The role of officially-recognised 'vigilantes' in the Philippines is discussed in May (1992).