

widened its political leverage and autonomy. The continued politicization of the armed forces was aggravated by repeated attempts of successive governments to co-opt certain factions within the military to ensure regime survival. While formerly under civilian control, several civilian control mechanisms such as military promotion are frequently instrumentalized by civilian elites to foster personal patronage networks with high ranking generals. With regard to Thailand, little, if anything, is left of SSR after the coups in 2006 and 2014. For the time being, the military controls virtually all areas of public policy-making, operates independently of any form of control by civilian, democratically elected institutions, and is likely to do so for some time. The dearth of SSR, however, did not come about through the two coups alone, but is contingent on long-standing

conceptualizations of SSR, within the domestic contexts in Southeast Asian countries, as a tool to alter the power balance in the state, rather than to improve the governance of the security sector, amongst civilian and military elites.

What the three cases furthermore illustrate is that actors in the region generally chose to support or curtail SSR on the basis of their (perceived) particular interests and their institutional background. Therefore, SSR-related reforms in all three cases have quickly become enmeshed in national power politics. Moreover, their scope as well as their success has, albeit to different degrees, relied on inter-personal loyalties and patronage networks between the respective political leadership and the armed forces. As a result, civilian control over the military remains insufficiently institutionalized in all three cases.

The Role of Society in the Control of Armed Forces – Implications for Democracy

Nadja Douglas*

Abstract: Contributing to the on-going debate on the second-generation challenges of civilian control of armed forces, this article discusses the role societal actors play in keeping a vigilant eye on the military organisation of their country. It argues in favour of enlarging the framework of civilian control in order to better take account of the plurality of both civilian actors as controlling body and military actors as referent object of control. Referring to on-going problems of right-wing extremism in the Bundeswehr and ethnic bonding in the Russian armed forces as illustrative cases, deficiencies of existing control mechanisms will be identified. Societal oversight, as outlined, plays an increasingly important role in terms of a compensation mechanism, irrespective of the character of the political regime.

Keywords: Civilian control, societal actors, Bundeswehr, Russian armed forces, democracy

Stichworte: Zivile Kontrolle, gesellschaftliche Akteure, Bundeswehr, russische Streitkräfte, Demokratie

1. Introduction

There is a wide recognition of the importance of civilian control of armed forces for democratisation processes. Civilian control as a necessary condition for democracy has not only been underlined in the respective literature on democratic transition (see for example O'Donnell/Schmitter 1986, Diamond/Plattner 1996, Croissant *et al.* 2011), but has also emerged as an international norm.¹ The abundant literature on civil-military relations has experienced various reconceptualisation efforts in recent years, among them endeavours to elaborate so-called second-generation criteria

of democratic control (see for instance Bland 2001, Cottey *et al.* 2002, Förster 2002, Bruneau/Matei 2008, Lambert 2009).² This strand of literature seeks to go beyond the traditional reading of civil-military relations that views civilian control primarily as the subordination of the military to the political leadership and the prevention of military coups. It abandons the former state-centred view of an exclusive bargaining process between military and political leaders. Instead, there are proposals to (re-) define the “civil” and “military” components of the relationship (see Nelson 2002).³

The central idea of this article is that even if democratically-elected decision-makers formally control the armed forces

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This article has been double-blind peer reviewed.

1 See UN General Assembly Resolution 55/96 from 2000 regarding military accountability to the democratically elected civilian government (Res. 55/96, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/55/96&Lang=E); Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly recommendation 1713 from 2005 on “Democratic oversight of the security sector in member states” (<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta05/erec1713.htm>); OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security from 1994 (OSCE Code of Conduct, Chap. VII, Art. 20, <http://www.osce.org/fsc/41355?download=true>).

2 These approaches share an interest in moving from the institutional level of political control of armed forces to establishing effective structures for the democratic governance of the security and defence sectors (cf. Cottey *et al.* 2002: 32). Furthermore, there is a concentration on what Bland calls the “civil-military relations software”, meaning the “framework of ideas, principles and norms that shape civil-military behaviour in liberal democracies” (Bland 2001: 525).

3 This can be done on a narrow to broad continuum, implying on the one side a wide range of national security structures (from the military officer corps to an all-encompassing view including police, intelligence agencies, border control, paramilitary troops etc.) and on the other, civilian side, a spectrum ranging from few top decision-makers to a society-wide public sphere (cf. Nelson 2002: 161-162).

to the degree that the risk of military intervention in state politics is contained, intra- and extra-organisational violence⁴, malpractices within the armed forces structure and improper use of military force by decision-making elites can still undermine civilian control. In the extreme case, actors on the institutional level are not even aware of this. This indicates that taking into account other problems in the relationship between civilians and the military is paramount. The primary objective of this article is therefore to attach a greater weight to the aspect of “societal oversight” in terms of a compensation mechanism or a “corrective” for deficient control on the institutional level.

To show that this problem is virulent both in consolidated democracies and authoritarian states, Germany and Russia have been chosen as illustrative cases. At first glance this comparison might seem not very convincing, as Russia is generally considered a problematic case, for its civilian control structures are still largely influenced by members of the military and security apparatus. Yet, both countries have in common that their armed forces struggle with a problematic historical legacy, that there have been renewed attempts to (re-) define the corporate identity of their respective armed forces and, lastly, that both militaries are currently undergoing major reforms, especially with regard to the restructuring of recruitment, in order to adapt to a changing international security environment.

Of course there is a qualitative difference or normative change between purely civilian and democratic control, since the former is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the latter (Born 2006: 126). Civilian control can be exercised by state institutions in authoritarian states from the top down, while democratic control implies oversight of the security sector also from the bottom up, which means by democratically elected and legitimated state organs.⁵ In the relevant literature, certain political institutions and societal conditions are enlisted that help to enhance democratic control, such as: a clear legal and constitutional framework, a significant role assigned to the parliament in defence and security matters, responsibility of the military to the government through a civilian Ministry of Defence, the existence of a developed civil society with consensus on the role and the mission of the military, and, finally, the presence of a non-governmental expert community (cf. Joó 1996: 8-9). The only drawback of approaches focussing on democratic control is that they are often normative in nature and, at least during the last decade, geared towards states in transition, enabling them to orient themselves towards the liberal democratic model of civilian control (see e.g. Joó 1996, Bland 2001, Burk 2002). As a result, they do not account for the possibility of the malfunction, failure or even regression of democratic institutions.

4 “Intra-organisational violence” involves violations of civic and human rights during military socialisation and training or transgressions in the relationship of soldiers among each other. By contrast, “extra-organisational violence” implies infringements on rights and norms that occur outside the structure of the armed forces, in times of armed conflicts and deployments abroad, inflicted on enemy civilians for instance (cf. Klein/Kümmel 2013: 79-83).

5 It must be noted, however, that in practice the degree of democratic control varies considerably, also among consolidated democracies. In fact, studies show that in a majority of states, parliaments do not hold the governments accountable, for example, in the case of foreign deployments of armed forces (see Wagner et al. 2010).

2. Enlarging the framework of civilian control

In accordance with the already mentioned second-generation challenges, civilian control and monitoring efforts should not concentrate solely on the subject of military officers (in the Huntingtonian sense, the assurance of “military professionalism”) but instead take into account the entire, very heterogeneous, organisational structure of the military right down to the lower ranks. On the control side, it should be acknowledged that societal actors⁶ play an increasingly important role overseeing the armed forces. In case actors on the institutional level fail to fulfil their responsibility and mandate to adequately submit the military to civilian control, or if there is a risk of an improper use of the armed forces and no reaction to it (one reason might be that a parliamentary opposition is simply not strong enough to impact decisions made by the executive), societal actors can seek to compensate this shortcoming. They can try to obtain information, ensure transparency, raise awareness and hold those that are in charge accountable⁷ *vis-à-vis* the citizenry.

2.1. “Internal leadership” as control mechanism

It is the responsibility of political decision-makers to respond to the strategic context by ensuring an effective and moreover efficient military organisation. However, armed services need to also be responsive to social values and, thus, to the society that they are supposed to protect and whose support they need. One of the key challenges is to ensure that a balance is struck between these, sometimes competing, demands (cf. Kuhlmann/Callaghan 2002: 1). With reference to theories of military professionalism, the distinction is drawn between “external mechanisms of control” and “internal mechanisms of control”. The former implies enforced control from the outside by state institutions, societal organisations, and the general public⁸, and the latter is based on values and standards held by the individual inside the military structure (Larson 1974: 65). In the present argument, emphasis will be laid not only on the individual’s personal judgement, but also on possible sources of influence for internal mechanisms of control.

Since military norms and culture are determined by education, indoctrination and specific historical and ideational references, it is of crucial importance for civilians to be vigilant that these references correspond to general democratic and societal norms, as well as to the rule of law. This is despite the fact that there will

6 See also Caparini 2003 for the debate on the inclusion of civil society organisations into the control of the security sector. Instead of referring to the term “civil society”, an inherently Western concept with normative connotations (e.g. that all types of societal cooperation and engagement are *per se* democracy-inciting), the notion of “societal actors” has been chosen here deliberately. It is a more comprehensive term that includes all actors that are neither affiliated with the military organisation nor directly with state institutions.

7 The literature on accountability informs us that “accountability [...] always implies the obligation to explain and justify conduct” (Bovens 2007). However, in order to be applicable, it requires a certain degree of willingness of those in power to be subjected to supervision and monitoring.

8 The military has a tendency to evade from external scrutiny due to the so-called *sui generis* argument. This is linked to a specific (self-) understanding of the military as a unique organisation that in order to fulfil its tasks is eligible to special rights and the principle of secrecy. Yet, this self-understanding of armed forces impinges upon the fundamental societal and democratic principle of transparency (cf. Dandeker 2001: 34-37).

always be tension and discrepancy between a democratically constituted society, on the one hand, and a hierarchically structured military on the other (see Bredow 2000). In post-war Germany, it has become the task of “internal leadership” (*Innere Führung*⁹) to minimise this tension as far as possible (Groß 1998: 5). In Russia, leadership education still depends very much on Soviet legacies of moral-psychological conditions of soldier training rather than on ethical leadership standards.

2.2 Aligning democratic control mechanisms with societal oversight

It is beyond question that the control of the armed forces is primarily the task of the political executive. It is part of what can be described as control on the institutional level, with civilian institutions ideally based on popular sovereignty. In liberal democracies, parliaments as such and, more specifically, their defence committees are supposed to fulfil the role as an accountability mechanism or “guards of the guardians” (Joó 1996). Elected parliamentarians in turn are accountable to the citizenry and, therefore, equally exposed to scrutiny. In fact, these processes represent a form of power delegation or principal-agent relationship. Agents may have better information than their principals. Furthermore, they often develop specialised expertise, crucial to carrying out their functions, that gives them bargaining advantages over their principal and advantages regarding information access. However, as Avant formulates it: “...agents may not do what their principals want them to” (Avant 2007: 81).

Actors on both sides of the relationship (society and military/state institutions), due to social and political transformations, are undergoing changes which can affect their interests and behaviour (see Dandeker 2001). On the military side, behaviour and discourses today are much influenced by the changing international security environment and foreign deployments of multinational integrated units. The trend towards professional all-volunteer forces has confirmed the occupational model (Moskos 1977) as an explanatory construct. On the civilian side, there is a greater demand today for the right to information, transparency, public scrutiny and oversight of power structures. Indeed, as Cottey et al. (2002) argue, if the concept of participation is to have any meaning, it is important that those participating have the potential to shape and contribute to debates on public policy issues such as security and defence policy as well, since these are – due to an expanded concept and notion of security – no longer matter of the armed forces alone (cf. Cottey et al. 2002: 46). According to Forster (2006), societal actors can directly or indirectly affect the formation of policy on the armed forces by exposing malpractice, forming critical judgements on policy, and mobilising public opinion (cf. Forster 2006: 36). The media as a watchdog plays an important role here as well. It takes the role of a connecting link between armed forces, government and the citizenry. Society needs to be

able to judge governmental action in the sphere of security and defence (both in times of war and peace) by means of media coverage. In fact, media coverage is often the key to whether society supports the objectives of the government, also in the longer term (cf. Carrell 1997: 40).

In sum, the enlarged framework of civilian control implies the alignment of democratic control mechanisms with societal oversight, thus ensuring accountability and transparency, averting intra- or extra-organisational violence and at the same time maintaining a reasonable degree of effectiveness and efficiency in order not to put national security at stake.

3. Exemplary problems in democratic and in authoritarian contexts

The existing literature provides ample evidence for the assumption of a link between regime type and the choice of control mechanisms (see for instance Werkner 2006, Avant 2007). However, as illustrated in this section, deficiencies in control mechanisms may result in problems, irrespective of the type of political regime.

3.1 Neo-nazi tendencies in the Bundeswehr

Year after year, reports are issued by the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces (*Wehrbeauftragter*), as well as the German Military Counterintelligence Service (*Militärischer Abschirmdienst-MAD*)¹⁰, that provide evidence for a consistent number of incidents related to right-wing extremism within the German armed forces. As inquiries to the German government by the opposition have shown in recent years, the MAD has registered on average 620 (309 in 2013) suspected cases per year and as a result identified on average 42 right-wing extremists (German Bundestag, Drs. 18/2234, 17/14670 and 17/8543). The traditional explanation, that the majority of suspected individuals are conscripts or soldiers completing their initial military service (cf. Gareis et al. 2001: 25), can hardly be maintained today, because compulsory military service was suspended in 2011 and the percentage of voluntary-service-conscripts is still lower than expected.¹¹ The issue gained public awareness in 2013 when the results of the parliamentary investigation committee in charge of clarifying crimes committed by the “Nationalsozialist Underground” (NSU) were presented. Among others, it was revealed that in the 1990s a number of affirmed right-wing extremists and accused persons in the NSU trial had served in the Bundeswehr. They had been promoted and trained in various weapon systems, despite having talked about their ideological orientation to superiors (German Bundestag, NSU Investigation Committee, final report, Drs. 17/14600: 236-255). Notwithstanding these latest findings and insights, hardly any consequences or perceptible measures were taken

9 There is no explicit definition of *Innere Führung*. It reflects a unique German norm of inner guidance, leadership and civic education that is geared towards reconciling both the identity of a citizen in uniform and the identity of a soldier within every member of the German armed forces (see for example Reeb/Többicke 2014).

10 The MAD (*Militärischer Abschirmdienst*) is responsible among others for the detection of “anti-constitutional activities” within the armed forces.

11 In 2013, 80 per cent of the incidents of right-wing extremism submitted to the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces involved regular soldiers (German Bundestag, Drs. 18/2234).

to increase civilian control mechanisms in this area of concern in Germany¹².

3.2 “Zemlyachestvo” in the Russian armed forces¹³

It is a well-known fact that there are ample problems within the Russian armed forces. Rampant human and civil rights violations, hazing, forced labour, crime and corruption are an indicator of a general lack of civilian control. Besides, the phenomenon of *dedovshchina* (a form of hazing that involves physical and psychological harassments of young recruits by older ones) that existed already in the Soviet army has become known also beyond Russia. Since conscription was reduced to one year in 2008 and conditions altered, fewer incidents were reported. Nevertheless, another type of “unduly relations” (*neustavnye otnosheniya*), *zemlyachestvo* (literally “territorial association”) exercised by ethnic collectives, has led to a deterioration of the situation of violence in Russian military barracks today. The phenomenon is tightly linked to general inter-ethnic violence in Russia. Young men from ethnic republics, which are discriminated against within the larger societal context, try to inverse the situation within the barracks and practice collective violence against ethnic Russians. Their logic is one of mutual protection and profit by means of racketeering and extortion of money (since many young men from Caucasian republics need to pay in order to join the army as places for them are limited – in contrast to ethnic Russian conscripts who do not pay). Societal activists that monitor the armed forces in the Russian Federation also speak of everyday xenophobia in Russian barracks (Interview Polyakova, 13 Nov. 2012). There are several explanatory factors; one of them is the demographic growth of the Southern predominantly Muslim federal subjects since the 1990s.¹⁴ Military commanders turn a blind eye to these problems since the individual soldier is rarely at the centre of their concern and neither are civilian authorities concerned with these problems. As a result of *zemlyachestvo*, many ethnic Russian recruits leave the army and turn into fierce nationalists.¹⁵

12 It needs to be stated that compared to other states, Germany disposes of a strong system of civilian and parliamentary control instruments (anchored in the German Constitution are the accountability of the defence minister to the parliament, the budget and information rights of respective parliamentary committees and the control function of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces). Moreover, the Parliamentary Participation Act of 2005 (based on a Constitutional Court decision of 1994 regarding the compatibility of so-called ‘out-of-area missions’ with the German Constitution) requires the prior approval of the German Bundestag concerning the deployment of German armed forces abroad. However, there are on-going discussions concerning the revision of this law, which may result in restricting the involvement of the parliament (see Douglas 2014).

13 The empirical data on the Russian case originates in part from interviews conducted by the author between October 2012 and March 2013 in the Russian Federation.

14 According to recent figures of the Moscow Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, 10 per cent of Russian youth today lives in the North Caucasus (Chablin, Kavpolit 2014). Since the two wars in Chechnya, no more recruits have been drafted from the Chechen Republic. For some time also the numbers of recruits from other Caucasian republics were cut down, but due to the shortage of conscripts this measure was revoked again.

15 While officially this problem is not recognised (see statement of former Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov: <http://top.rbc.ru/society/16/01/2007/99062.shtml>), the former Human Rights Commissioner, Vladimir Lukin, organised a roundtable in 2011 with representatives from both authorities and civil society, discussing the severity of the problem (see website of the organisation “Citizen and Army”: <http://www.realarmy.org/ekstremistov-v-armiyu-ne-vozmuzt/#more-1668>).

4. Compensating for deficiencies in the control of armed forces on the institutional level

Societal oversight of armed forces can be regarded as a social practice in cases where control by state actors fails to recognise or to acknowledge existing deficiencies. So far, this is certainly much less the case in the military than in other policy fields. Yet, some tendencies show that various societal groups, ranging from thematic NGOs, media watchdogs and research institutes to unions, religious groups and social movements endeavour to monitor security sector organisations more intensively.

4.1 The role of societal actors in the case of Germany

In Germany, the measures to attract young people for service in the Bundeswehr have been the subject of criticism by societal actors in recent years. There were complaints about a missing seriousness in recruitment campaigns that tend to place emphasis on emotional aspects (“strong team”), pleasure (“spirit of adventure”) and the technocratic-functional side (fascination with technics and career opportunities). Children rights groups and organisations from the peace movement have complained repeatedly that the German armed forces would not comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by continuing recruitment campaigns targeted at minors and not raising the general recruitment age to 18.¹⁶ In addition to these recent campaigns that risk recruiting unsuitable persons, the importance of the concept of *Innere Führung* seems to have lost significance. Sceptics say that the concept conveys little to young soldiers today (*if-Zeitschrift für Innere Führung*, 2013). Although the principle of *Innere Führung* and the “citizen in uniform” still represents an important component of the curriculum of the officer candidates and future non-commissioned officers, the concept does not meet the objective of adopting to new circumstances and transformation processes taking place in the armed forces. Despite a revision of the service regulation ZDv 10/1 in 2008 (a parliamentary subcommittee had dealt with the matter for several years beforehand), the Ministry of Defence had refrained from any substantial changes. A persisting discrepancy between theory and practice and lack of reference to contemporary operational realities is still criticised (cf. for example v. Rosen 2009 and Naumann 2013). Another problem is that the concept of *Innere Führung* falls short of a comprehensive layout for ensuring democratic control of security politics and armed forces, since it is unilaterally oriented towards the armed forces and does not include civilian actors. Nevertheless, more attention should be dedicated by societal actors to developments of the principle of *Innere Führung* and the institution in charge of its facilitation and educational programmes, the *Zentrum für Innere Führung*.

16 See e.g. demands of the German Alliance Child Soldiers: <http://www.kindersoldaten.info/Forderungen.html>.

4.2. The role of societal actors in the case of Russia

In Russia, ministerial authorities and military prosecution services¹⁷ have recognised the need to fight both *dedovshchina* and *zemlyachestvo*. They have understood that these represent the major reason why military service remains highly unpopular with young people in Russia. Due to the failure of military commanders and local military commissariats to render account of the high degree of violence in many units, both civilian authorities and military prosecution officials increasingly collaborate with societal actors that engage in military monitoring. Civic rights organisations are often the first to receive information about malpractices in the military units or in enlistment offices through parents, relatives or directly from the conscripts themselves who come for consultation. As a result, they visit military units, take part in enlistment commissions, talk to commanders in charge and are thus capable of estimating the extent of the problem. They contact the authorities that are actually in charge of overseeing the respective military unit or commissariat and urge them to act. The scope of influence of civilian oversight in Russia is, however, limited by a number of factors: actors are increasingly facing restrictive laws, lack of resources (personnel, time and above all finances) and the challenge of moving on the thin line between co-operation with and co-optation by the state.

5. Conclusion – Implications of military reforms and relevance of societal oversight for democracy

Both the German and the Russian armed forces have undertaken unprecedented reform efforts in recent years. In Germany, as part of the “reconfiguration of the Bundeswehr”, the number of military and civilian personnel in the armed forces was cut down drastically. Since 2010, a new stationing concept and a new concept for reservists were elaborated. Centre piece of the German reform endeavour is the restructuration of recruitment. Conscription was suspended in mid-2011; however, it is hard to say whether the Bundeswehr can already be considered an accomplished all-volunteer force since it still struggles to attract young professionals in order to reach its target numbers. Problems with recruitment and retention have resulted in controversial recruitment campaigns, as mentioned above. While concentrating on the personnel structure of the armed forces, the reform of *Innere Führung* was postponed to a later stage, which according to Elmar Wiesendahl, former division leader of the German Armed Forces Staff College, has been acknowledged to be a mistake (*if* 2013). On the one hand, there are doubts that the concept is still applicable to armed forces that are transforming from a territorial defence into an interventionist army; on the other hand there is criticism that this leadership philosophy of post-war Germany has gradually been cut back, misinterpreted and become devoid of meaning (Bald et al. 2008).

The Russian Federation has engaged in military reorganisation and reforms of the strategic command and control system since 2008. The main reform measures involved a shift from

the territorial mass army of skeleton units manned by officers and conscripts relying on reservists to more flexible standing forces. It was decided to gradually increase the number of non-commissioned officers at the expense of a disproportionate number of officers. Much emphasis was placed on increasing the number of contract soldiers in order to reduce the dependence on declining number of conscripts. The shift to a contract system turned out to be thwarted due to various reasons, ranging from corruption to reluctance of certain military elites and, finally, a distrustful attitude towards civil-military relations that is still nurtured by Soviet legacies (on Russian recruitment policies see McDermott *et al.* 2012, Thornton 2013, Golts 2014). As a consequence of the shortage of both conscripts and contractors, recruitment procedures have been tightened with human rights defenders reporting increasing numbers of malpractices during recruitment times (for example drafting of unfit recruits, denying the right to conscientious objection or alternative civilian service).

In both the German and Russian cases (bearing in mind the problematic nature of this comparison) it is striking that reforms have implied an overhaul of the “material” but not the “human” conditions with regard to making ethical standards and education within the armed forces accountable to contemporary military reality. This has problematic repercussions for the emergence of civic values and norms, especially in Russia, since the decision to keep the conscription system for yet some time entails a continuing preponderance of military values transported by conscripts back into civilian society. The risk in Germany concerns the emergence of a hermetic military subculture with distinct military values as part of the reorganisation of the Bundeswehr into an interventionist, or so-called expeditionary, force.¹⁸

To conclude, this article has tried to show that societal oversight, especially with regard to the internal military organisation of armed forces¹⁹, represents an important aspect of sound civil-military relations. It is paramount that, wherever armed forces undergo structural reforms, also cultural, ideational and ethical aspects have to be accounted for. These can only be safeguarded in liaison with the respective society. The Russian example proves that the phenomenon of *zemlyachestvo* is symptomatic not only for a lack of civilian control over the internal structures of the Russian armed forces but also – and this is even more disturbing – for an unsound societal climate. The role of societal activists in compensating institutional control deficits in Russia requires constant interaction and work with officials and state agencies that are still unaccustomed or reluctant to demands like transparency, accountability and legitimacy. In Germany, on the other hand, the lack of political will to publicly debate about a meaningful ethical concept and univocal mandate for the German armed forces currently represents the most critical issue. In fact, right-wing and nationalist views are shared only by a small minority; however, in an impermeable environment of an intervention force, these tendencies remain potentially

18 For the risk of the development of right-wing sub-cultures or military counter-cultures with values and lifestyles estranged from society as consequence from transformation into all-volunteer forces see Haltiner 2002: 4-5.

19 Of course there are also other important spheres of civilian oversight, like monitoring of the defence budget, getting involved in debates on foreign deployments etc. that cannot be covered here.

17 The *Prokuratura*, a specific Russian institution, is a public prosecuting organ in charge of overseeing the observance of the constitution and execution of laws.

undetected²⁰ – unless societal actors show more interest for what happens within the armed forces. In fact, there is a need to counteract the prevailing “benign indifference” of a large part of society towards the German armed forces.

Societal involvement, in particular in questions of security and defence, has the potential to ensure a vigilant and critical, but constructive, stance towards the armed forces. Ideally, societal oversight becomes a formal element of democratic control and can thus contribute to democratisation. However, even in mature democracies, as some of the exemplary problems presented here suggest, democratic control cannot always be taken for granted. This is why the permanent engagement of society in the control of armed forces remains a matter of concern.

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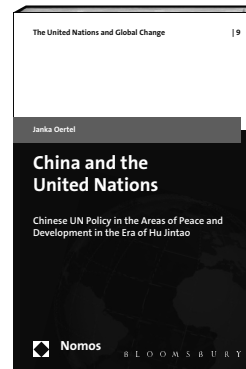
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