

## **International Institutions and the Democratization of Central and East European Civil-Military Relations**

Rachel Epstein  
Graduate School of International Studies  
University of Denver  
(303) 871-3811  
[repstein@du.edu](mailto:repstein@du.edu)

Paper submitted for the 10<sup>th</sup> biennial international EUSA conference, 17-19 May. This paper is Chapter Two from my forthcoming book, *In Pursuit of Liberalism: The Power and Limits of International Institutions in Postcommunist Europe*.

## Chapter 2

### Democratizing Civil-Military Relations

The accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999 and the accession of Romania in 2004 ought *not* to have been a vigorous test of that institution's power to win compliance from candidate states. The proven vulnerability of all four made membership in the world's most successful military alliance a patently logical goal. The rise of democratic opposition movements under communism in at least Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic should have made the idea of democratic civil-military relations attractive. Communist party armed forces that had helped prop up hated regimes might have been sufficiently discredited such that in theory, at least, they would have difficulty resisting new modes of governance.

Despite these seemingly auspicious starting conditions for NATO, compliance with democratic civil-military relations proved to be problematic in all cases and strong compliance was ultimately *the exception*, not the rule. For although central and east European states had historically been vulnerable, publics were not uniformly supportive of membership. Even in the presence of democratic oppositionists, CEE states were unaware of NATO's standards of democratic control in substance. Perhaps most surprisingly, militaries were not uniformly discredited throughout the region. Their continuing legitimacy as symbols of national independence in countries like Poland and Romania—in spite of everything—further complicated NATO's efforts to transform

power relations between the armed forces on the one hand and their would-be civilian overseers on the other.

To be sure, NATO pushed all states that it engaged closer to a model of diffuse democratic civil-military relations than would likely have manifested itself in the absence of an enlargement policy. But the key challenge that NATO faced throughout the region was the CEE sentiment that narrow executive authority over the armed forces, which in turn allowed high levels of military autonomy, was entirely compatible with democratic governance. As postcommunist states, one after another, shifted from communist party control to an executive-led model, NATO officials went about trying to show why this was not democratic enough. But the alliance's reach was uneven for reasons largely consistent with a social context informed by interest demobilization (H1), the desire for NATO's social approbation (H2) and the perceived credibility NATO's core demands (H3). As these conditions varied across countries, so too did the alliance's access to reform processes.

### **Democratic Civil-Military Relations in the Postcommunist Context**

Theorists of civil-military relations have traditionally been concerned with the military's ostensible proclivity to exercise excessive authority at society's expense. What this might mean in practice is the military interfering in matters of policy so as to favor its material or power position relative to other groups in society, particularly civilian leaders and their constituencies. The most extreme version would be the military's full seizure of political power and the establishment of a military dictatorship as we have so

often seen in Latin America and more recently in Myanmar, Pakistan and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In important respects, the record of postcommunist military transformation has departed from these traditional concerns.

Stemming from communist-era legacies, the most serious problems in civil-military relations have generally not been linked to military interference in politics (except in isolated cases) but rather to the armed forces' struggle to win autonomy from civilian authority. Also peculiar to the postcommunist context, this struggle has at times taken place with the active or passive assistance of civilian leaders (Epstein 2005 and 2006). For although state-socialist civil-military relations were quite far from any democratic model, there was rarely any serious breach in the norm of civilian control, even if that civilian control did not provide NATO-style thorough-going civilian and societal oversight.<sup>2</sup> In the postcommunist setting, the challenge to democratization has centered on the need to persuade military personnel and civilians alike of the functional and normative desirability of limiting military autonomy where military autonomy had been a fact of life that civilians and officers alike had taken for granted (Cotter, Edmunds and Forster 2002: 4).

In light of communist-era legacies, democratizing civil-military relations in postcommunist Europe would necessitate the following: that multiple channels of civilian oversight be established and exercised; that civilians in positions of authority over the military be democratically accountable, both to an electorate and to a free press; and that large segments of the military-security apparatus that had previously been the exclusive

---

<sup>1</sup>This was Stepan's central concern (1988).

<sup>2</sup> The 1981 imposition of martial law under General Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland represents a partial exception to the rule (Michta 1990; Sanford 1986). I say "partial" because Jaruzelski and his regime identified strongly with the communist party and acted accordingly, as opposed to acting exclusively with the aim of increasing military prerogatives - even if the latter was also the practical effect (Kramer 1998).

domain of military authority be significantly civilianized. Specific measures include a civilian defense minister to whom the General Staff answers, a civilianized ministry of defense, parliamentary defense committees that exercise military oversight, a transparent defense budget and civilian authority over intelligence services. In sum what NATO was asking for was a system of checks and balances in which the executive, government, parliament and society (through the media and NGOs) all shared in oversight—a system that had no precedent in central and eastern Europe.

NATO membership requirements, including the specific features of democratic civil-military relations that candidates were expected to adopt, began to take shape in 1994 with the Partnership for Peace (PfP). The admission criteria were reinforced in the “Perry Principles” in early 1995<sup>3</sup> and again with the *Study on NATO Enlargement* released in September of the same year.<sup>4</sup> Confounding rationalist expectations that would predict compliance on the basis of security incentives and the increasing clarity of membership criteria, there was hardly a seamless adoption of new rules. In a particularly apt description of the nature of the reform processes, one US official deeply involved in advising CEE states on military reform conceded that “Ninety percent of the battle is showing these countries that there is a problem. Ten percent is fixing it.”<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> US Defense Secretary William Perry, quoted in Craig R. Whitney, “Expand NATO? Yes, Say Most Experts, but What Does the Public Think?” *New York Times*, 10 February 1995: A6. Also see Goldgeier, 1999: 94-95. The “Perry Principles” only came to be known as such in 1996 when Perry enunciated them in June of that year in a speech at NATO’s Supreme Allied Command, Atlantic (SACLANT) in Norfolk, Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> “Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council,” Brussels, Belgium, 1 December 1994, paragraph 6.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication with the author, 24 August 1999, Bratislava.

## **Institutional Influence over Civil-Military Relations: Operationalization**

Chapter one argued that interest demobilization among domestic actors (H1), their perceived status vis-à-vis international institutions (H2) and the credibility of international institutions' policy prescriptions (H3) shape a social context that makes compliance with incentives more likely or less. In the case of NATO and the democratization of civil-military relations, variation in the second and third hypotheses accounts for the differentiation in outcomes.

By contrast, the level of interest demobilization among military personnel across countries was low and posed a barrier to NATO's influence in all cases. This sectoral continuity resulted in a high level of certainty among military personnel on how reform should proceed. Preferred reforms did not include enhanced civilian or societal oversight. Civilians occupying ministries of defense and foreign policy were more open to NATO's counsel, however, and it was through them that the alliance was first able to exercise influence.

Variation in international institutions' social power—defined by the desire among domestic actors for the approbation of international institutions (H2)—explains much of NATO's uneven influence in the 1999 and 2004 enlargements. Operationalized in terms of the quality of political competition, the status variable explains why some communist successor parties were ultimately eager to fulfil NATO criteria and why democratizing reforms in Romania were put off until after the first competitive elections there in late 1996 (Gheciu 2005a and 2005b). Curiously, however, and in contrast to what the status hypothesis would predict, democratic opposition under communism was not a sufficient predictor of NATO's power. Dissident movements under state-socialism, often funded by

the West, used Western ideas as reference points against their own regimes (Garton Ash 1993; Thomas 2001; Vachudova 2005). But even among states that had had such dissident movements, there was substantial variation with NATO's prescriptions—largely owing to different conditions in military-society relations across countries.

Whether publics seek to be affiliated with an international institution by complying with its prescriptions depends on whether a particular society values the functions that the institution in question carries out. Thus in the civil-military relations case, social recognition from the public's perspective proved to be more valuable in Poland and Romania than in Hungary or the Czech Republic largely because the Hungarian and the Czech militaries were held in very low public esteem. In early public opinion polls, severely diminished regard for the military in Hungary and the Czech Republic carried over into low levels of enthusiasm for membership in NATO, although in both cases government campaigns ultimately succeeded in securing majority support. I therefore use military-society relations as an additional proxy for the status variable.

In reference to the third hypothesis, given the level of consensus behind the principle of democratic control through the 1999 enlargement, NATO was acting with a high degree of normative consistency in the civil-military relations case. Turkey was the exception to the rule, and in keeping with the credibility hypothesis, Polish politicians in particular raised the Turkish question with NATO: If Turkey was allowed to have a direct line of authority between the executive and the armed forces and is a NATO member, then why couldn't Poland? Turkey notwithstanding, NATO officials could point to the array of NATO members that did have democratic and diffuse control over the armed forces, imbuing the idea with credibility.

Although the role of uncertainty, status and credibility are at the center of the analysis, this is not to suggest that incentives were at no point critical to outcomes—they were. But as argued in chapter one, those incentives are rarely separate from a social context that imbues them with power. I am not testing for the effects of conditionality versus socialization (Kelley 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Checkel 2001 and 2005) nor am I arguing that changes in personal convictions alone explain democratic outcomes in military governance (Gheciu 2005 and, on human rights, see Checkel 2001). The process of introducing democratic control over the armed forces for the first time in CEE is not one in which the logic of consequences operates independently of the logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1989 and 1998). Rather, the transfer of value-laden knowledge to target states by international institutions provides the social context in which incentive structures make sense.

In the empirical sections that follow, I assess measures on actor uncertainty, status and the credibility of policies in each country. The alliance exercised the most influence in states where it could elevate the status of civilians vis-à-vis the military by bolstering their defense expertise and by corroborating their claims for the need to subject the military to diffuse and democratically accountable civilian oversight. NATO had the most comprehensive access to Polish military reform. Over the course of a decade, NATO helped put elements of Poland's past aside, diminishing the salience of Polish military tradition and centralized authority. In Hungary, poor military-society relations undermined the alliance's power while in Romania the initial lack of political competition resulted in delayed compliance. Eventually, strong military-society relations in Romania facilitated compliance. Ukraine manifested the weakest adoption of



democratic civil-military relations by 2004, lacking most of the conditions that would make the incentives of membership meaningful.

### **Clash of Histories: Military Legacies and NATO's Influence (H1)**

#### ***Poland***

The civil-military relations case is marked by a consistent *lack* of interest demobilization among actors within the armed forces across countries, which posed a barrier to NATO's influence. Polish officers, for example, had a strong military tradition that provided institutional guidance as to how to conduct reform coming out of the Warsaw Pact. Even if their command experience had been limited by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Polish officers were anything but uncertain about the military's role in an independent Poland. Moreover, the Polish armed forces were never purged in the wake of communism (as they had been, for example, in Czechoslovakia), a testament to their perceived independence from the Soviet Union, professionalism, and national loyalty. No doubt, the Polish military's embrace of the transition and Polish independence was essential to the pacific nature of otherwise revolutionary events (Barany 1993: 155). But as NATO encroached and began suggesting reforms, it was more often than not the military that resisted the terms of NATO membership.<sup>6</sup>

By contrast, civilians in the foreign and defense ministries lacked experience in governing the military because under communism, party leaders awarded the armed forces operational autonomy in exchange for political control. Interest demobilization was thus stronger on the civilian side of the defense apparatus and it was through

---

<sup>6</sup> Jane Perlez, "Poland's Top Commander Resists Terms for NATO," *New York Times*, 22 January 1997: A3.

civilians, consequently, that NATO initially exercised the most influence. In Poland, a sharp divide between civilians and military officers emerged, with civilians proving to be susceptible to NATO's arguments about the value of democratic accountability.

Normally, the lack of civilian expertise is judged to be a factor inhibiting constructive reform.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, in Hungary and the Czech Republic, to the extent that civilian ignorance translated into neglect, civilian inexperience initially did harm the reform process and for a longer period than in Poland. But in Poland, where social support for the military was high, the lack of strongly held preconceived ideas among civilians about how to structure reform ultimately bolstered NATO's influence.

Polish officers began the transition with long experience in matters of defense. During the Cold War, the Polish military, although by no means entirely, was nevertheless uniquely autonomous within the Warsaw Pact in ways that allowed Polish military tradition to exist alongside compliance with Warsaw Pact requirements.<sup>8</sup> The Polish military's circumscribed "autonomy" from the Soviet Union included the capacity to expel Soviet officers from Poland after 1956 and to limit the number of Soviet garrisons on Polish soil; the use of pre- and non-communist military victories and "glorious" defeats in sustaining Polish military mythology; the rejection of Soviet political indoctrination that concerned the comity of Polish and Soviet interests; the professionalization of the armed forces; the maintenance of an excessive number of officers by purely military standards; the pursuit of independent foreign policy initiatives

---

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Simon makes this judgment in all of his studies on civil-military relations in the region.

<sup>8</sup> But also note that Romania had cut off military ties to the WP by 1964 and developed a national defense capability. Albania abandoned the WP altogether in 1968.

such as the Rapacki Plan;<sup>9</sup> and the 1967 law decreeing the universal commitment to the defense of the Polish “fatherland.”

Perhaps most importantly, the Polish military’s autonomy during the Cold War was manifest in its perceived unreliability, from the Soviet perspective, as an instrument of domestic repression.<sup>10</sup> To the extent that Polish nationalists were able to maintain some room for maneuver from the Soviet Union, it was at least in part by preserving Poland’s military tradition (Jones 1981; Sanford 1986; Michta 1990). Public opinion reinforced the army’s perceived unreliability by continuing to celebrate the life and achievements of Marshal Josef Piłsudski who led Polish forces in the defeat of the Soviet Union in 1920 and who governed the country through much of the interwar period, albeit from behind the scenes, after staging a military coup.

The preservation of military prowess and tradition under even the most adverse conditions long predates the Cold War, and has its origins in the “aristocratic military ideal” that began under the three partitions of Poland beginning in 1772 and evolved through World War I.<sup>11</sup> In the course of resisting foreign invasion and occupation, the Polish soldier demonstrated loyalty first and foremost to the military leader, not to a government. During decades of attempted socialization within the Warsaw Pact by the Soviet Union, the Polish military tried simultaneously to preserve its character while placating a superpower. It is not surprising that for the Polish military, the Soviet Empire’s collapse would represent an opportunity to finally win back Polish

---

<sup>9</sup> The Rapacki Plan was a 1957 initiative to create a nuclear free zone in East-Central Europe. See Prizel (1998: 87).

<sup>10</sup> Although the Polish military was highly reliable in matters of external goals (see Ross et al 1980), internal repression was a different case due in large measure to public resistance to the communist regime and Soviet hegemony (Kramer 1995: 116-126).

<sup>11</sup> The label “aristocratic” dates from the period of extreme decentralization in Polish political organization when land-owning nobles had their own militias to protect their property (Michta 1990).

independence and this did not necessarily include a readiness to submit to either new civilian authorities or to collective security arrangements. Even among civilians early in transition, what would later become accepted in Poland as the NATO standard of civilian control was neither understood nor championed.

Indeed, the first set of civil-military reforms, resulting from the Żabiński Commission report, reflected Polish tradition more than NATO norms in maintaining separate military and political guidance and in failing to make the General Staff accountable to the Ministry of Defense or Parliament (Michta 1997). A series of crises in civil-military relations between 1992 and 1995 in which politicians failed to sanction civilian and military impropriety further strengthened the military's autonomy and signalled the myriad ways in which the idea of democratic civilian control had not yet taken hold.<sup>12</sup>

In the Parys Affair of 1992, Poland's first civilian defense minister, Jan Parys, came to the job intent on de-Sovietizing the forces and consolidating ministerial oversight. But at the same time, President Wałęsa was trying to expand the scope of executive authority over foreign policy and security affairs—in part by exchanging high levels of military autonomy for the loyalty of the General Staff. In 1992, these competing objectives came to head. Parys accused Wałęsa of planning new martial law contingencies and of promising to assign General Tadeusz Wilecki to the post of Chief of General Staff without consulting key civilian bodies, or even the ministry of defense (Simon 1996: 62-65). But the Sejm (parliament) committee concluded that all of Parys'

---

<sup>12</sup> These crises included the Parys (1992), Drawsko (1994) and Komornicki (1995) affairs. Parys and Drawsko are thoroughly covered in the literature. For more on Komornicki, see Jerzy Jachowicz and Paweł Wronski, "Barwy wojska," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 April 1995: 3. On all three events, see Simon (1996: Chapter 4); Michta (1997); and Kramer (1998).

claims were spurious. Wilecki's un-vetted appointment stood while Parys was forced from office. Most Polish politicians still adhered to the idea that the military should be run by military personnel.

The Drawsko Affair in 1994 was also an example of ministerial weakness and parliamentary passivity. High ranking officers were increasingly willing to disregard MoD authority, as in the vote taken by high ranking military officers, at Wałęsa's instigation, on the competence of the then minister of defense, retired Vice Admiral Piotr Kołodziejczyk.<sup>13</sup> Although the vote of no confidence had no legal status (and violated Poland's "Little Constitution" of 1992) Kołodziejczyk felt sufficiently undermined that he accepted Wałęsa's subsequent request for his resignation. There was never any formal reprimand of the generals involved, however, nor any sanction of Wałęsa for his role. Wałęsa was later able to issue promotions and monetary rewards to the very same generals that committed the impropriety (Simon 1996: 82-83; Michta 1997: chapter 4; Michta 2002: 170). Again, the failure to punish this breach in democratic accountability and the circumvention of the MoD's authority demonstrated a lack of recognition for NATO's principles of civilian control.

Between 1989 and 1995, other symptoms of civil-military tensions included attempts to politicize the military during the 1995 presidential election (the Komornicki Affair) and the repeated public criticisms that high-ranking military figures directed at civilian leaders and their policies. While it is true that in many instances civilians were complicit in the exercise of military overreach, as civilians competed with each other over jurisdiction, military leaders exploited that conflict and aggrandized their own

---

<sup>13</sup> Kołodziejczyk speculated that the generals wanted his dismissal because he had repeatedly tried to thwart efforts by Wałęsa and Wilecki to create an exclusive and direct line of authority from the President to the military. Author's interview with Kołodziejczyk.

authority. Simon (1996: 115) argues that by 1995 the military's exploitation of civilian weakness "brought the military an independence not found anywhere else in Central Europe. As a result, the General Staff has acquired enormous influence vis-à-vis the defense ministry in personnel policy, financial policy, military information (intelligence), professional military education and the press."

President Wałęsa's plays a special role here, partly undermining the uncertainty hypothesis, for although he was a civilian, he also resisted what NATO was telling him about the need for diffuse democratic control. This exceptionalism can be explained first by a worldview governed by a sentimentality regarding the Polish military, close to that of Polish public generally. For despite the military's previous role in propping up the communist regime, Wałęsa believed that a competent state needed a strong, effective military and that the armed forces should basically be run by their own people.<sup>14</sup>

But the general pattern of civil-military relations in the early 1990s shows a military eager to exploit civilian conflict and incompetence and civilians generally unaware that either they could or should be exercising more authority. One foreign and defense policy expert, in explaining the difficulties in trying to persuade Prime Minister Olszewski of why Poland should appoint its first civilian defense minister in 1991, noted that at that time, "nobody believed in civilian control in this part of the world" (interview with Kostrzewa-Zorbas). But equally relevant is that fact that no one knew what democratic civilian control was—or at least was not familiar with NATO's definition of it. It would only be after NATO made decisive moves to enlarge its membership after 1994-95 that the alliance would finally begin communicating what it meant by democratic civilian control.

---

<sup>14</sup> These twin convictions were reported to the author by Kołodziejczyk, Grudziński and Kamiński.

### *Hungary, Romania and Ukraine*

The continuity of the armed forces across much of the postcommunist region ensured that NATO would encounter some friction in every state where it tried to democratize civil-military relations. Whether countries had strong military traditions and independent armed forces or not, NATO was consistently dealing with military officers opposed to systems of democratic oversight. Their civilian counterparts were unaware of NATO's version of democratic civil-military relations. And when they ultimately found out they were ill-equipped to implement it due to a lack of authority and expertise. But consistency in sectoral continuity notwithstanding, more minor points of variation among the countries are worth noting.

Hungary's measure on the lack of interest demobilization most closely resembles Poland's. Hungary's military had been firmly embedded in the Warsaw Pact but also had a prior independent military tradition; civilians had been similarly removed from operational control of the armed forces. The most notable difference between them was in the strength of military traditions: Hungary's had been thoroughly undermined by the Soviet Union whereas Poland's had not. But in both cases, the consequences of sectoral continuity were clear: military resistance to democratic innovation and initial inexperienced civilian acquiescence. As in Poland, Hungarian civilians early on supported military reform that left the armed forces with far more autonomy than was acceptable to the alliance. Once NATO's admission criteria became more specific, however, there occurred a struggle in which civilians, backed by NATO training, tried to submit Hungarian officers to a higher level of oversight than they wanted. Poland

registered higher compliance with NATO by 1999 because of poor military-society relations in Hungary.

Romania's military had systems of operation that were also incompatible with NATO's principles of democratic civil-military relations. But compared to Poland and Hungary, Romania's military was more independent from the Soviet Union during the Cold War while Romanian civil-military relations were also more strained than elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact. In the early 1990s, neither Romania's military nor its political leadership was receptive to NATO's coaching on the importance of democratizing civil-military relations. Although the communist successors, the Party of Social Democracy of Romania (PDSR, formerly the National Salvation Front) did appoint a civilian minister of defense in 1994 and the 1991 constitution forbade the military from participating in political activity, little had changed in terms of democratic accountability. Both the ministries of defense and interior were largely militarized and the division of authority between the government, executive and parliament was not clear.

Romania had proved to be more skillful than Poland in securing political and military autonomy under the Warsaw Pact. But autonomy was also more possible, in part because, from the Soviet perspective, Romania was strategically less significant. Romania's growing independence from the Soviet Union took multiple forms: it took a curiously (by the standards of the time) neutral position in tensions between communist China and the Soviet Union; it developed closer ties to Tito's Yugoslavia, even after the Soviet-Yugoslav split; it deployed an extensive territorial defense programme (which the Soviets had prevented in Poland); and it invested heavily in its domestic arms industry in order to limit dependence on Soviet technology and supply. Most exceptionally for a



Soviet satellite, the Romanian Ceaușescu government was openly critical of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia when other regimes in the region had come to the Soviet Union's military aid (Watts 2003).

But while Ceaușescu used the armed forces to insulate his country from Soviet domination, his own political failings also contributed to the dysfunctionality of civil-military relations. By denying the armed forces material support while also deploying them in public works projects, Ceaușescu alienated the military leadership and inadvertently encouraged military institutions to become more autonomous, nationally-oriented and less susceptible to communist party indoctrination (Watts 2002: 14). Mistrust between the civilian leadership and the officers intensified, especially through the 1970s and 1980s.

The continuity in Romanian leadership between the communist period and the postcommunist regime also muted NATO's democratizing power in the early 1990s. Despite the fact that marginalized actors from within Ceaușescu's own cohort exploited public dissatisfaction and managed the revolution (including Ceaușescu's trial and execution), this did not create a unified front between political leaders and military officers. On the contrary, civilian-military mutual estrangement was a powerful legacy in Romania that complicated NATO's agenda. NATO therefore faced enormous challenges in cultivating a new consensus around the desirability of democratic civil-military relations.

Ukraine also had a low level of interest demobilization in the armed forces that would limit NATO's influence. As elsewhere, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) traded complete political control

over the armed forces for operational independence. Due to the Ukrainian armed forces' total integration into the Warsaw Pact, military legacies were an even more powerful barrier to change than in Poland or Hungary. Whereas the Soviets had incorporated Hungarian and Polish armed forces into military plans in ways that would keep national capacities in those states weak, Ukrainian officers were present in some of the highest levels of command, creating not just institutional legacies but also entrenched "attitudes about authority, society, national security and the role of the Military in defending it" (Sherr 2005: 158).

But in other respects the Ukrainian armed forces should have been relatively open to institutional change. Ukraine had very little in the way of an independent military tradition.<sup>15</sup> Having had only a brief period of statehood following World War I, Ukrainians had spent the preceding centuries as either a junior partner in federation with Russia or as minorities within the Polish or Austro-Hungarian empires (Prizel 1998). Adapting Russian military traditions and methods of organization was therefore the most natural course for many senior Ukrainian officers, and almost fifteen years after independence Ukrainian military personnel still failed to understand what Western advisors meant by "civilian control."<sup>16</sup> However, NATO did provide an alternative model given that Ukraine was engaged in a state-building process from 1991 forward and given the country's sporadic efforts to escape Russian hegemony. By 2004, according to one

---

<sup>15</sup> Within the Warsaw Pact, there was very little attention to an independent Ukrainian military tradition. Author's interview with General (retired) Vladim Grechaninov, President, Atlantic Council of Ukraine, 22 February 2005, Kiev.

<sup>16</sup> The Russian or Ukrainian word "kontrol" means simply to check or verify, whereas when Westerners talk about civilian control over the armed forces they are referring to a comprehensive system of "direction, management, administration and supervision." It was only through direct interaction with their Western counterparts that Ukrainian military personnel began to understand that civilian control was about more than simply seeking limited civilian approval (Sherr 2005: 160).

NATO official, at least some of Ukraine's military leaders had developed an interest in reform in connection with NATO standards.<sup>17</sup>

As in Romania, potential civilian openness in Ukraine to NATO was undermined by the continuity in leadership between the communist era and post-independence beginning in 1991. To be sure, Ukraine was not so much a newly liberated state as a new state, implying a degree of inexperience among civilian leaders in how to conduct foreign and defense policy. However, within the Soviet Union, Ukraine did have some of the trappings of statehood, including a seat at the UN and republic-level control over the tools of domestic repression—including the security services. So when Leonid Kravchuk, a former secretary for ideology in the CPU and later its head, perceived the inevitability of the Soviet Union's demise, he quickly acted to ensure his party's survival, albeit in a slightly more nationalist form (Prizel 1998: 359-365). In this case, the lack of a ministry of defense in Ukraine actually worked to Kravchuk's advantage. In the hyper-presidential system that Ukraine subsequently adopted, the executive would be the only body that had the institutional channels to govern the military, however inadequately.

## **Return to Europe: NATO's Social Power (H2)**

States are more likely to comply with an international institution's policy prescriptions when they seek approbation. The status hypothesis suggests that postcommunist states that had democratic opposition movements under communism and political competition in the postcommunist period should have been more receptive to

---

<sup>17</sup> Author's interview with James Greene, Head of Office, NATO's Liaison Office in Ukraine, 25 February 2005, Kiev. General (retired) Vladim Grechaninov was one such pro-reform and pro-NATO military figure. Also see "Ukrainian General Describes Army Efforts Aimed at Joining NATO," *BBC Monitoring*, 7 July 2004.

NATO's principles than those without political competition. Further, states with strong military-society relations should have been more accommodating of NATO given public support for the functions of the armed forces and by extension a military alliance.

The evidence here provides partial support for the status hypotheses. Given variation in compliance between Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, the presence of a democratic opposition under communism alone is not a good predictor of levels of NATO compliance. Post-Cold War political competition (or its absence) does explain some compliance, however, particularly in Romania. Further, military-society relations are a very good predictor of the importance of the status conferred by NATO on states. There is significant variation across countries in the degree to which this variable facilitates compliance. Looking at the data on military society relations, one sees that public confidence in the armed forces is highest in Romania and Poland, lower in Hungary and Ukraine, and quite low in the Czech Republic (see Table 2.1). Evidence of NATO's social power, where it existed, included early and over-compliance, public pressure to comply, and political party platform convergence in response to NATO standards.

**Table 2.1: Public Confidence in the Armed Forces: Selected Postcommunist States**

Country	Years	A Great Deal	Quite a Lot	Not Very Much	None at All	Do Not Know	No Answer
	1990	22.2	40.9	26.1	6.5	0	4.3
<b>Poland</b>	1997	23.4	51.7	15.6	3.7	5.6	0
	1999	18.7	45.7	26.1	4.9	4.5	.1
	1993	36.9	44.6	15.0	2.6	.9	0
<b>Romania</b>	1998	34.7	45.2	14.7	2.8	2.6	0
	1999	35.3	44.9	14.3	2.6	2.2	.7
<b>Ukraine</b>	1996	17.6	44.9	22.2	7.2	8	0
	1999	19.9	44.9	22.3	7.0	5.0	.8
	1991	9.1	41.5	38.7	8.6	0	2
<b>Hungary</b>	1998	12.8	43.7	32	9.1	2.1	0
	1999	5	39.6	38.5	13.9	2.7	.3
	1991	6.9	33.4	48	10.9	0	.8
<b>Czech</b>	1998	2.7	39.5	41.2	13.	3.7	0
	1999	2.5	22.2	60.5	12.5	1.6	.7
	1991	9.9	45.2	34.6	8.9	0	1.5
<b>Slovakia</b>	1998	12.1	53.6	24.6	5.9	3.8	0
	1999	13.4	58.6	17	4.6	6.5	0
	1990	23.2	44.8	22.7	8.2	0	1.1
<b>Bulgaria</b>	1997	35.4	40.4	13	4.4	6.9	0
	1999	11.3	42.3	32.1	7	6.8	.5

Source: World Values Survey, available at: < <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>>. The question asked was as follows: “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot confidence, not very much confidence, or none at all?” The military was one among several institutions listed.

## *Poland*

All dimensions of the status hypothesis receive strong confirmation from Poland. For Poland, the value of becoming more like a NATO member—initially with or without membership—did correspond to democratic opposition under communism and did create valuable incentives to emulate Western models. NATO had enormous symbolic value in Poland stemming from the association between the United States’ leading role in the alliance and its strong public stand against the Soviet Union and communism. While the Germans pursued “normalization” with Warsaw Pact capitals, and West Europeans generally sought accommodation rather than confrontation between East and West, it was the Americans who insisted on funding dissident movements in central and eastern Europe and spending the Soviets into the ground (Garton Ash 1993).

Another such source of legitimacy was the fact that the West had clearly prospered under the conditions of cooperation, peace and domestic transformation that NATO had cultivated and sustained over decades. According to one Polish observer, NATO represented the “civilizational standard” to which he believed Poland should aspire, precisely as a means of escaping what he considered more primitive traditions of military political power.<sup>18</sup> NATO’s status with respect to how a liberal, democratic country should balance authority between the military and civilians was admittedly only relevant to a narrow section of Polish society in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the Polish elites who aspired to institutionalize a range of liberal rules proved instrumental in multiplying NATO’s power.

---

<sup>18</sup> Author’s interview with Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorbas, founding member of Poland’s Atlantic Club, 1 September 1999, Warsaw.

Evidence of an international institution's perceived status can be found in actors' over-compliance with the terms of membership or early, pre-emptive emulation. The Atlantic Club in Poland, founded in October 1991, is an example both of how NATO exercised its social power and of how domestic actors formulate policy when seeking identification with an international institution's values. Although the Atlantic Club was a post-Cold War innovation, NATO had influenced the thinking of Atlantic Club members over decades.<sup>19</sup> One of the Club's leaders was Zdzisław Najder, founder in exile of the Polish League for National Independence during the Cold War and frequent contributor to the subversive journal *Kultura*, a literary, political, and cultural precursor to Solidarity.

At a time when NATO still ruled out enlargement, in large measure because the United States was skeptical of adding new members, the notion of Poland in NATO was still radical—both for Western officials and the Polish public.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Najder and his colleagues used NATO as a reference point for reform and ultimately succeeded in convincing Prime Minister Olszewski in 1991, against his own better judgment and against President Wałęsa's wishes, to appoint Poland's first civilian minister of defense. Certainly the Atlantic Club's emphasis on democratic civilian control was partly in hopeful anticipation of one day joining the alliance. But according to Atlantic Club members, civilianization of the security apparatus was desirable by virtue of its association with Western democracies and they would have pursued it irrespective of NATO's enlargement strategy—but not irrespective of NATO's embodiment of it.<sup>21</sup>

The 1993 Onyszkiewicz/Grudziński reforms, which would have moved Poland away from the more traditional command set up under the Żabiński reforms toward a

---

<sup>19</sup> Author's interview Kostrzewa-Zorbas.

<sup>20</sup> Author's interviews with Sikorski, Parys, Grudziński, Najder.

Western model, are also an example of an attempt at early compliance.<sup>22</sup> Although they were not implemented in 1993 because of the Suchocka government's collapse, these reforms evidenced a growing awareness among Western-oriented reformers that former patterns of military-society relations were incompatible with NATO's "civilizational standard." Importantly, these efforts were made before the Partnership for Peace was announced, before the Perry Principles were articulated and two years before NATO clarified its intention to enlarge. Multiple missions between Brussels and Warsaw in the early 1990s were clearly aimed at sharing information so that Polish reformers would have the necessary tools to begin democratizing military governance.<sup>23</sup>

In another instance of over-compliance, civilians adopted models of command that were better suited for signaling their solidarity with the alliance than they were for governing the Polish armed forces. Based on the U.S. system of separate commands for land, sea and air, their applicability to Poland was questionable given the realities of the Polish military—namely that some commands far outweighed others in number and importance. Polish military personnel resisted, noting that the new command structure was more of a "caricature" of the US system than an effective organizational strategy for the Polish armed forces.<sup>24</sup>

A second determinant of NATO's social power in postcommunist states was military-society relations. I have hypothesized that in countries with strained military-society relations, it was unlikely that publics would rally around the idea of joining an institution that was largely about lending the armed forces additional clout. Even though

---

<sup>22</sup> Michta notes that by this time both Onyszkiewicz and Grudziński were very familiar with Western models and NATO standards (1997: 87-88).

<sup>23</sup> See Bobrowski, Kaźmirski and Waszczykowski (2006).

<sup>24</sup> See Mirosław Cielemecki, "The New Model of Command over the Polish Army Is a Caricature of the U.S. One," *Wprost*, 17 March 1996. Translated in *FBIS-EEU-96-054*, 20 March 1996.



they all lobbied equally hard to join NATO, high public esteem for the military in Poland relative to Hungary and the Czech Republic explains why Hungary and the Czech Republic manifested lower levels of NATO compliance than Poland on everything from democratic oversight to target force goals (Wallander 2002). The variation in public perceptions is particularly important for showing the social, as opposed to exclusively strategic dynamics that facilitate compliance with international institutions, for equally vulnerable states had very different public perceptions of joining NATO—some much more strongly in favour than others [see Table 2.2 for 1995 and 1997 public opinion]. Hungarian and Czech publics in particular were not overwhelming in favor of joining, while Polish and Romanian publics were.

The importance of high and low public support for the armed forces, and by extension for NATO membership, is borne out by two kinds of evidence in Poland. The first is the way in which public opinion and concern about getting into the alliance pressured the military into compliance. Public awareness about the link between military-security reform and admission to NATO had grown over the course of the early 1990s. One indicator was the media reaction to a 1995 US Congressional Research Service report (the Collins/Meyer study) that argued that Poland, while fit for peacekeeping, was not competent to fight a war: that because they never took part in important Warsaw Pact decisions their professional growth thus was stunted, that initiation into NATO hinged on a democratic constitution and the legal basis for civilian control and that the Minister of Defense and many senior officers who set policy and shape opinions had become mired in political wrangling over control of the armed forces (Collins and Meyer: 1995).

**Table 2.2: Opinion Data: A Hypothetical National Referendum on NATO Membership, 1995 and 1997<sup>1</sup>**

Country	In Favor		Undecided		Against	
	1995	1997	1995	1997	1995	1997
Poland*	69	61	12	18	6	4
Romania†	64	67	12	11	4	9
Hungary*	32	47	22	22	22	15
Czech Republic*	33	36	23	21	23	22
Slovakia†	30	31	26	24	18	17
Slovenia†	44	45	16	13	18	23
Bulgaria†	30	37	14	22	28	14
Estonia†	47	32	29	37	13	12
Lithuania†	38	31	23	28	8	16
Latvia†	34	36	29	34	14	10

Source: Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, March 1996 (no. 6), figure 31; 1998 (no. 8), figure 35.

<sup>1</sup>The question asked was: “If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of (our country’s) membership of NATO, would you personally vote for or against membership?” Respondents included only those who have the right to vote. Note that respondents who gave no answer or who answered “don’t know” are not represented in the figures.

\*Acceded to NATO in 1999.

†Acceded to NATO in 2004.

These findings were widely reported in Poland, raising anxiety in the Polish public about whether the country was qualified to join the alliance. There were competing interpretations. While *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the country’s leading paper, founded by leaders within Solidarity, reported that “NATO cannot trust the Polish Army officers, because ... no personnel changes have been carried out since the change of the political system,”<sup>25</sup> the Deputy Minister of Defense, Andrzej Karkoszka, argued that the report contained “more praise than reproof,” and that “the treatment it was given by the Polish media is

<sup>25</sup> “Poland: Holbrooke, Dobrzański Discuss NATO, IFOR,” *Warsaw PAP*, 7 February 1996. Translated in *FBIS-EEU-96-026*, 8 February 1996.

grotesque.”<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the Polish General Staff, recognizing public support for NATO, understood that the ongoing argument over civil-military relations might jeopardize membership.

Public enthusiasm for NATO (if not for the finer intricacies of democratic control) also narrowed the political spectrum. The most powerful communist successor parties of the early 1990s, the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the coalition that would eventually become the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) were initially skeptical of NATO membership.<sup>27</sup> Amidst widespread disillusionment with economic hardship and the sense that Solidarity had betrayed its earlier agenda (Powers and Cox 1997; Orenstein 2001; Ost 2005), in the 1993 elections the postcommunist parties ran on a platform of easing economic reform and slowing integration with the European Union and NATO. With specific respect to NATO, PSL and SLD party members variously argued that such membership should be contingent on Russian approval or that if NATO were to enlarge it should also include Russia and Ukraine. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who would in 1995 become the SLD’s presidential candidate, also favored re-opening the question of NATO membership in 1993.<sup>28</sup> Another SLD member complained that “there was never any debate on Poland’s future security possibilities or about NATO membership and its implications. . . We don’t say no, but we believe it would be wise to explore other possibilities.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Andrzej Medykowski quoting Andrzej Karkoszka, “Washington, Brussels, Athens, Warsaw: Horizons of Security,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 5 March 1996. Translated in *FBIS-EEU-96-046*, 8 March 1996.

<sup>27</sup> Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorbas, “Kameleony i niezłomni,” *Gazeta Polska*, 3 December 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Anna Wielpolska and Zbigniew Lentowicz, “Muzyka przeszłości,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 2-3 October 1993; Pastusiak, Longin, “Polska w bezpiecznej Europie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 October 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz quoted in Adam LeBor, “Polish leaders cast doubt on entry to NATO,” *The Times*, September 21, 1993. Also see Vachudova 1997: Chapter 7.

But the postcommunists' apparent ambivalence was short-lived. Within a month of forming an SLD-PSL-UP (Union of Labor) coalition after the 1993 elections, the new Polish government began expressing its steadfast support for Polish membership in NATO, and the SLD began denying that its members had ever equivocated on the issue.<sup>30</sup> Two developments explain the reversal. First, the leading coalition parties came under immediate pressure from their political enemies and from the press.<sup>31</sup> Those who were willing to debate the issue of whether Poland should join NATO were accused of being against membership.<sup>32</sup> Second, upon coming to power, the postcommunists were assured by their contacts in multiple international organizations that they could continue to work together, as long as the new government protected democratic governance.<sup>33</sup> Although this was distasteful to, among others, Americans working on Polish-U.S. and Polish-NATO bilateral relations, they conceded that cooperation would "make the SLD behave better than it otherwise would."<sup>34</sup>

NATO's perceived status in Poland had both regulative and constitutive effects on actors, including the military and postcommunist parties. NATO's power was regulative in so far as the political context put pressure on actors to reject national tradition. But the alliance also changed the *properties* of actors. The Polish military went from wanting autonomy to wanting NATO membership. The SLD went from wanting to distinguish

---

<sup>30</sup> The PSL admitted to reversing its position, while Jerzy Wiatr of the SLD denied ever having been against it. See "PSL and SLD for NATO Membership," *Polish News Bulletin*, 12 October 1993.

<sup>31</sup> "Onyszkiewicz: Post-Communist Victory Will Hinder NATO Membership," *PAP: Polish Press Agency*, *PAP News Wire*, 26 August 1993; "Democratic Left Alliance victory could affect entry to NATO, Rokita believes," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 9 September 1993; Suchocka: "Leftist Election Victory could Deter NATO," *PAP Polish Press Agency*; *PAP News Wire*, 16 September 1993; "Atlantic Club Concerned Over Election Results," *Polish Press Agency*, 27 September 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Andrzej Karkoszka, who would become a deputy minister of defense in the new administration, was among those who wanted to debate the issue, but recalls that there was intense political pressure not to. Author's interview with Karkoszka.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, "EC and NATO Keep Wary Eye on Poland's 'Communist' Comeback," *Press Association Newsfile*, 20 September 1993.

<sup>34</sup> Author's interview with Daniel Fried.

itself from its political rivals to wanting to cultivate constructive relations with organizations that had been its enemy only a few years earlier. In recognizing new sources of authority, actors were also adopting new political objectives.

### ***Hungary, Romania and Ukraine***

The status hypothesis receives only partial confirmation in the Hungarian case. Hungary is much like Poland in having had a democratic opposition under communism and party turnover in the regime transition. In Poland, competitive political dynamics resulted in a strong identification with NATO's values and pre-emptive compliance with its democratic norms. In Hungary, there was some initial emulation of Western models of democratic civil-military relations including the appointment of a civilian defense minister, attempts to subordinate the military to the government and civilianization of the ministry of defense (Simon 1996: 145-8). But when the socialists returned to power in 1994, some of these apparently pro-NATO reforms were weakened, contradicting what the status hypothesis would predict about the effects of political competition. In particular, whereas the MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) had civilianized many offices in the ministry of defense, the MSzP (Hungarian Socialist Party) re-appointed military officers (Jacoby 2004: 140).

Different levels of societal support for the armed forces help explain the variable responses to NATO policy prescriptions. Poor military-societal relations in Hungary meant that NATO wielded little influence with the Hungarian public, even if a narrow band of Hungarian elites fought to have the country included in the first round of enlargement. Weak public confidence in the armed forces and limited interest in NATO membership allowed the socialists a freer hand in defying NATO standards. In April

1996, less than a year after NATO's commitment to enlarge became firm with the release of the *Study on NATO Enlargement*, a poll showed that only 38 percent of the Hungarian public supported NATO membership while 27 percent held a negative view (Simon 1996: 172; also see Table 2.2).

In World War II, in alliance with Nazi Germany until 1945, Hungary's ill-equipped and outnumbered forces suffered decisive defeats to their then-Soviet enemies (Barany 1993: 31). Military-society relations would never recover. From that time forward, the Hungarian military went from being the "defender of the nation-state to that of protector and guarantor of the continued domination of the Communist party" - a thoroughly illegitimate regime in the eyes of much of the Hungarian public (Barany 1993: 29). The only point at which the Hungarian military might have improved its status vis-à-vis the population was in the 1956 Hungarian uprising. But rather than defend the Hungarian people against Soviet crackdown, the army, not wanting to support the Stalinist regime against the population, simply disbanded (Dunay 2002: 68).

NATO did not enjoy elevated status in Hungary because publics do not seek social recognition from international organizations that confer legitimacy and resources on domestic institutions in disrepute. Hostility and mistrust between civilians and the military also hindered reform. Indeed, only a narrow band of Hungarian elites actively pursued "Western models of military organization" (Jacoby 2004: 134) and it proved difficult to bring high level military officers on board. Whereas Western criticism of civil-military relations in Poland caused a public outcry and conveyed to the General Staff that its conflicts with civilians jeopardized public loyalty, one could not expect commensurate public pressure in Hungary. Instead, NATO and the Hungarian

government had to fund a media campaign to ensure a successful referendum in favour of NATO membership (Jacoby 2004: 144). That public relations campaign resulted in stronger Hungarian support for membership by 1997 [see Table 2.2 for levels of public support before and after the campaign].

Romania provides stronger support for the status hypothesis. The lack of party turnover in the transition and the absence of robust political competition until 1996 initially limited the appeal of democratic civil-military relations in Romania. As previously noted, there was strong continuity between the leadership of the communist era and what came after. Marginalized elements from within Ceaușescu's own apparatus orchestrated his capture, trial and execution. These "managers" of the revolution in December 1989 went on to seek their political fortunes through the newly created National Salvation Front (FSN), prevailed in the first "free" elections of May 1990, and then ruled continuously, sometimes in coalition with other nationalist or communist successors, until late 1996. So even if Romania was among the first countries to express interest in NATO membership, Romania was the least receptive to NATO's principles of democratic civil-military relations in the first half of the 1990s.

With the competitive elections of 1996 and the replacement of the socialists with the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR) in coalition with the Social Democratic Union (USD) and the Hungarian Democratic Federation (UMDR), the salience of international opinion increased. Political competition enhances the likelihood of policy transfer from West to East because international sources of legitimacy matter to contenders. In the absence of political competition, the ruling party can choose the basis on which it cultivates public support. With two or more groups vying for power,

international institutions can take sides, define interstate relations and assign status.

Democratic civil-military relations had no stronger precedent in Romania than anywhere in central and eastern Europe. But it was under the CDR's leadership that the first democratizing far-reaching reforms in line with NATO's prescriptions were attempted (Gheciu 2005a and 2005b).

Once political competition was in place, NATO could also exercise power over Romanian reform by virtue of public support for the Romanian military and by extension, public support for NATO membership. Romanian public confidence in the armed forces was stronger than in Poland and eventually facilitated Romania's compliance with NATO more than in either the Czech Republic or Hungary. Public support stemmed in part from the Revolution and from the longer term perception of the military as guardians of the country's independence. Because it was perceived as having fought valiantly in both World Wars and sustained casualties in the struggle against Ceaușescu, the military was among the most trusted of Romanian institutions (Encutescu in Watts 2002: 46; Watts 2002: 9-13). High levels of social support translated into relatively high levels of defense spending, a keen interest among some defense specialists in learning about NATO, and fairly consistent public enthusiasm for Romanian membership.

By contrast, in Ukraine the lack of party turnover in the transition, the poor quality of political competition until the early 2000s and poor military-society relations all inhibited significant policy transfer. Although membership in NATO had ostensibly been a goal of Ukrainian policy from the 1990s, even by 2004 the country was registering low levels of compliance. There are additional reasons for low levels of Ukrainian compliance that are somewhat removed from the status hypothesis. While it is true that



public support for Hungarian membership in NATO was initially low and conceivably linked to similarly low support for the armed forces, Ukraine's strategic, cultural and economic position is much closer to Russia than in my other cases. In western and central Ukraine, support for NATO membership in 2004 was considerably higher (although still not in the majority) than in eastern and southern regions of the country. But a full third of generals serving in Ukraine at independence were of Russian origin. And while many of them pledged loyalty to the new Ukrainian state, many did so only after thoughtful hesitation.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, in southern and eastern Ukraine, much of the public in 2004 still perceived the alliance as a hostile, aggressive organization.<sup>36</sup> The burning in effigy of a NATO soldier during President Yushchenko's Brussels summit with North American, European and NATO leaders in February 2005 was one indication of the public opinion challenge facing the alliance in Ukraine. Although by 2005 some members of Ukraine's governing elite had developed a desire for NATO's social recognition, much of the public still did not see the country's identity or security as profitably tied to membership [see Tables 2.3 and 2.4 on Ukrainian public opinion].

**Table 2.3: Ukrainian Public Opinion Data on NATO, 1998**

Question	Agree	Disagree
Ukraine must attempt to join NATO as soon as possible	22	30
Ukraine must try to enter in a military union with Russia and other CIS countries, but	34	24

<sup>35</sup> Strekal (1994).

<sup>36</sup> Razumkov Centre (2004: 174-175).

not with NATO		
In the nearest future, Ukraine must remain a neutral country	41	16
The “Partnership for Peace” is the best framework of co-operation for both Ukraine and NATO	35	9

Source: Galin (1999: 25-28). Note that respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know are not represented in the figures.

**Table 2.4: Ukrainian Public Opinion Data on NATO Membership, 2000**

<b>Question: “Ukraine should join NATO. .</b>	<b>Public Response in Percentage Terms</b>
. . .in 5 to 10 years	23
. . .in 10 to 15 years	9
. . .never	51
It’s hard to say	17

Source: Bychenko and Polyakov (2000: 15).

### **NATO’s Democratic Credibility: Assessing Normative Consistency (H3)**

Through the first post-Cold War enlargement in 1999, NATO maintained strong, though not complete normative consistency around the ideal of democratic civil-military relations. Both the consistency in democratic practice across NATO members (with the exception of Turkey) and NATO’s efforts to portray enlargement and compliance as democratic choices among candidate states bolstered its credibility in Poland and Hungary. Normative consistency and its absence explain much about whether and how the process of policy transfer is likely to unfold. In civil-military relations, the credibility hypothesis predicts the grounds on which actors were likely to resist and how the alliance ultimately diminished dissent.

### *Poland and Hungary*

Even for Polish leaders with roots in Solidarity and a strong Western orientation, making NATO membership an official objective too early was risky. In September 1991 on his trip to Washington, Polish Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki did argue for formal links to the alliance.<sup>37</sup> But NATO was still undecided on enlargement and parts of the U.S. government were hostile to the idea. Few in Poland were eager to publicly pursue membership only to be rejected by the West and left diplomatically exposed in a historically dangerous region. But in early 1992, Polish officials received the signals that some had been hoping for. Jan Parys recalls that as Polish Minister of Defense, he first found strong encouragement for pursuing membership from US Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, German Minister of Defense Volker Rühle, and NATO's Secretary General Manfred Wörner.

When Wörner visited Poland in March of that year, he told Parys privately that the Cold War division of Europe had been “artificial and misguided” and that any new security architecture in Europe should include those states unjustly exiled by Yalta (interview with Parys). But early Western supporters of enlargement also coached Poles on how to broach the question. Because the Americans, Germans and NATO itself were unable to credibly raise it first (interviews with Parys and Najder), the initiative would have to appear to come from sovereign states acting on their own volition. It was important not to project an image of NATO wanting to expand, but rather of sovereign states wanting to join.<sup>38</sup> Following these private revelations, Parys publicly pressed Wörner on NATO reform and enlargement at a conference on central European

---

<sup>37</sup> See Asmus (2002) and Bobrowski, Kazimirski and Waszzykowski (2006).

<sup>38</sup> Author's interview with NATO's Public Relations and Press office, Bratislava 24 August 1999.

security.<sup>39</sup> The Secretary General finally conceded—for all to hear—that NATO’s doors were open to Poland.

NATO efforts to project normative consistency, by orchestrating a series of exchanges in which CEE states would ask to join and NATO leaders would say yes, produced two kinds of results—one domestic and one international. Domestically, adhering to an open door policy (consistent with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty) showed Poles that they were not “knocking on closed doors”—one early critic’s claim.<sup>40</sup> It also organized the debate in Poland’s public sphere about how best to achieve membership and further provided the foundations on which reformers could argue their case for security sector democratization. Internationally, Wörner and Parys’s combined strategy created a context in which it was hard to argue with the legitimacy of NATO enlargement. The order of events and the respective roles of actors, coupled with the spreading belief—even to Russia—that sovereign states should have the right to formulate foreign policy independently, belied claims that NATO was an imperialist organization.

NATO’s reluctance to openly coerce candidate states, and its refusal to shame them publicly for transgressions of basic principles of civilian oversight, bolstered the impression that postcommunist states were entering a democratic organization that would not bully even its weakest members (interviews with Parys and Sikorski). Similarly, NATO’s insistence that there was no single model of democratic civil-military relations (even if there were core concepts) suggested that the alliance would uphold the principle of national autonomy. Finally, NATO’s repudiation of Western arms manufacturers’

---

<sup>39</sup> This was the Warsaw seminar on “Security in Central Europe” 11-12 March 1992.

<sup>40</sup> Janusz Onyszkiewicz argued that Poland should not take this risk absent some assurance that NATO would expand its membership.

claims that new weapons systems were essential for East European membership demonstrated that NATO's apparent preoccupation with democratic governance was not simply a subterfuge for concealing commercial interests.<sup>41</sup>

The objective of such normative consistency was to elicit national ownership of policy. In this regard, NATO officials explicitly acknowledged their efforts to produce interests at the elite and public levels that might not otherwise come about. For example, Target Force Goals - the process whereby new members essentially redesign their force structures and develop new capabilities - were upgraded only incrementally, and at the alliance's behest. NATO encouraged slow change in this area, in part for technical reasons, but also because "from the political perspective too, nations need to be persuaded that changes are necessary for them. National governments may then have to begin a process of explaining the reasons for change to their publics."<sup>42</sup>

NATO often pursued normative consistency even at the expense of efficiency. CEE reformers eager for rapid modernization expressed frustration at the alliance's timidity. Even when NATO officials had ample opportunity to shame those obstructing reform into complying, more often than not, the alliance failed to act by any public means.<sup>43</sup> Even some from within CEE militaries, eager to use NATO membership as a vehicle for internal renovation, were disappointed that the alliance was not more insistent on better and quicker technical assimilation.<sup>44</sup> While publicly stated directives might

---

<sup>41</sup> Despite the voluminous literature that makes the opposite claim, NATO did not encourage post-communist states to invest in new weaponry as a way to demonstrate their readiness to join the alliance. In fact, NATO put more basic, less costly reforms first. See Jorgen Dragsdahl (1998).

<sup>42</sup> Frank Boland (1998: 33) Available at <<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1998/9803-09.htm>>

<sup>43</sup> Interviews with Parys, Sikorski, Kołodziejczyk, Grudziński. In private settings, however, NATO did resort to shaming (author's interview with Simon, Katsirdakis, Dale).

<sup>44</sup> Author's interview with Sikorski and Parys.

have produced more immediate compliance, the alliance nevertheless framed its prescriptions merely as suggestions.

The almost universal institutionalization of democratic civil-military relations among NATO members had the most immediate effects on CEE structures of military governance. In direct response to Western models, for example, Hungary appointed a civilian defense minister, formally subordinated the General Staff to the government and civilianized the ministry of defense—all with the backing of the Hungarian constitutional court (Szenes 2001: 79). Admittedly, the MSzP (the socialists) began undermining these reforms in 1994 by downsizing the civilian presence in the MoD, by resisting the merger of the General Staff with the army command and by appointing a retired colonel as minister of defense. Even as the MSzP tried to re-assert its authority over the military, however, it was careful not to reject the formal democratic premises on which the original reforms had been based. And before the end of their tenure in government, the socialists relinquished part of their agenda in response to Western pressure (Simon 1996: 169; Szenes 2001: 84).

The presence and absence of normative consistency also set the parameters for how actors would argue their case. Given the notable lack of diffuse democratic civilian control over the Turkish military and that country's simultaneous membership in NATO, Wałęsa defended his own predilection for executive authority by pointing to the inconsistency in the alliance's position.<sup>45</sup> CEE leaders also portrayed NATO's early reluctance to expand the alliance as normatively inconsistent with the West's own claims about wanting to transcend Europe's Cold War divisions (Schimmelfennig 2003). Normative inconsistency also explains why military-to-military contacts between CEE

---

<sup>45</sup> Authors interviews with Kołodziejczyk, Kamiński, and Katsirdakis.

officers and their Western counterparts failed initially to have the desired effect (from NATO's perspective) of persuading the former of the necessity of democratic civilian control. Instead, given ongoing tensions between Western military authorities and their own civilian interlocutors, postcommunist officers concluded that civilians everywhere were insufficiently competent to govern the military and should be excluded from sensitive matters such as defense planning and intelligence gathering.

### *Romania and Ukraine*

The degree of NATO's consistency changed during Romania's bid to join the alliance. A strong Western (if not international) policy consensus still underpinned the idea of a decentralized and democratically accountable system of civilian oversight through the 1999 enlargement. In fact, the alliance increased its efforts at socializing new security elites in candidate states by boosting training and educational programs and by creating or expanding programs aimed at achieving inter-operability, including the Membership Action Plan (MAP) after the 1999 enlargement. This was because the alliance learned from Hungary and the Czech Republic that liberal, democratic values in the military security apparatus were not obvious to even Western-oriented reformers in postcommunist states (Gheciu 2005: 158). But by the early 2000s, largely in response to 9/11, the alliance's conception of security was shifting, as were its standards of the optimal balance between democratic accountability and security maximization. According to NATO officials, the definition of security broadened as a consequence of the perceived terrorist threat. 9/11 sharpened the alliance's concern about mental

interoperability - that is, the shared commitment to particular values that makes possible consensus-based decision making within large organizations.<sup>46</sup>

But if NATO's emphasis on mental interoperability was increasing in the early 2000s, its substance was different than in the run-up to the first round of enlargement. As the West's, and particularly the United States', sense of vulnerability increased, the alliance became less demanding of democratic accountability and more solicitous of foreign policy solidarity (Barany 2003: 144 and 173-4). Although the post 9/11 shift did not imply a new *de jure* policy on democratic civil-military relations, NATO's emphasis changed such that more energy was devoted to bolstering CEE support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Jacoby 2005). This meant that less attention was paid to thoroughgoing domestic reform (Gheciu 2005). In addition, NATO became less concerned with ensuring broad operational compatibility in favor of encouraging each new or candidate state to produce something—no matter how small—for multilateral missions (Jacoby 2005: 232-255; Watts 2002: 22). The partial erosion of the Western consensus around democratic principles of military oversight and NATO's failure to apply the same expectations to Romania as to Poland would lead one to expect a lower level of Romanian compliance with democratic civil-military relations.<sup>47</sup>

As for Ukraine, there is little doubt that by the early 2000s Ukraine could have exploited the alliance's willingness to forego some democratic accountability in exchange for increased foreign policy solidarity. Indeed, NATO was courting Ukraine on this basis. The alliance was highly motivated to bring Ukraine into the Western fold, believing that

---

<sup>46</sup> Author's interview with James Greene, 25 February 2005, Kiev.

<sup>47</sup> In contrast, however, Watts offers a different assessment, stating in 2001 that: "From the perspective of implementing democratic control, Romania stands well ahead of where the new NATO members were at their invitation [in 1997] and, in several important respects, quite close to where they are now" (2001: 38).



converting one Slavic state with deep ties to Russia could mark the beginning of a more sweeping transformation of the entire postcommunist region (interview with Greene). The fact of the matter was, however, that Ukraine was still so far out of compliance with minimum NATO standards on democratic civil-military relations and most other measures that the alliance, although keeping its doors open to Ukraine, was also rebuking the country for particular policies (interview with Duray).

Kuchma, for example, might have sensed that the terror attacks of September 11 altered NATO's priorities to favor strategic allies over like-mindedness among NATO members. His embarrassing exclusion from the Prague summit changed not only Kuchma's perceptions, however, but also those of his ministers, and brought to their attention NATO's insistence that it had democratic standards.<sup>48</sup> And, in addition to the problems implied by the Kolchuga scandal over selling radar equipment to Iraq and the murder of the investigative journalist Heorhiy Gongadze, NATO was still concerned in 2002 about Ukraine's commitment to democratizing civil-military relations, enforcing the rule of law, and subjecting both the security services and interior ministry to parliamentary and democratic oversight. Even as the Ukrainian government was frustrating NATO's efforts to Westernize Ukraine's policies, the alliance was having an impact, in part through a growing group of NGOs that by the mid-1990s was interested in what they perceived as NATO's transformative capacity.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> See Taras Kuzio, "NATO Summit Commits to 'Big Bang' Enlargement," *Kyiv Post*, 28 November 2002. NATO withdrew its invitation to President Kuchma from the Prague Summit in November 2002 because of allegations of the government's role in the Kolchuga scandal, in which Ukraine was alleged to have sold early warning radar systems to Iraq (Gallis 2005). Kuchma attended the Prague summit in any case, only bringing Ukraine's low international standing into sharper relief.

<sup>49</sup> One example is the Razumkov Centre, established in 1994 and focusing on a range of economic issues as well as on Ukrainian foreign and security policy. By early 2005, there were at least 50 NGOs supporting Ukrainian cooperation with NATO—all of which were in association through the Ukraine-NATO Civic League.

## **The Social Context and Transnational Coalitions: Compliance with NATO**

Interest demobilization within a sector, domestic actors' desire for social recognition and the credibility of policies that international institutions prescribe all contribute to a social context favorable to compliance. The stronger the measures, the more robust the coalition in favor of policy transfer. In the civil-military relations case, no country had consistently strong measures and in no country was there a seamless transition from state-socialist methods of military governance. In this section, I assess the degree to which measures on uncertainty, status and credibility contributed to the power of transnational coalitions, the contours of conflict over policy, and the timing and extent of compliance with NATO's standards of democratic civil-military relations.

### ***Poland***

The evidence from Poland supports the relevance and effects of all three hypotheses. The Polish armed forces did not experience interest demobilization through the transition, in part because they had maintained their own military tradition. Civilians were relatively more open to NATO's educational efforts on the benefits of diffuse democratic control. A strong desire for the alliance's approbation also encouraged some compliance that was pre-emptive or even in excess of what NATO would have required for membership. And finally, the perceived normative consistency of NATO's policies helped strengthen the pro-reform coalition and marginalize those opposed to democratization. All help explain why Poland developed a particularly strong coalition in support of democratic civil-military relations, why civilians supported reform and the military resisted, and why Poland registered strong, but not complete, compliance by the time of accession in March, 1999.

Some of the means through which NATO mobilized a transnational coalition in support of its policies have already been examined. Putting Polish accession on the agenda by merely conceding the possibility of NATO enlargement signalled to members of the Atlantic Club and Solidarity sympathizers that they should become more like alliance members. NATO responded by providing seminars for civilians, funding for officer training, and multiple missions between Warsaw and Brussels.<sup>50</sup> One Polish official recalled that in closed educational seminars on improving civil-military relations, Poland was repeatedly used as a model that should not be emulated.<sup>51</sup> The CRS report that was sharply critical of Poland's failings also spurred defense and foreign policy personnel to action while putting Poland's military commanders on notice.

NATO at times also inadvertently undermined its own supporters. The Partnership for Peace (PfP), launched in 1994, has since come to be recognized as a useful tool for training a range of militaries in technical compatibility and NATO's operational procedures.<sup>52</sup> At the time of its initiation, however, PfP was an argumentative weapon for those opposed to reforming the armed forces and their governing structures. PfP appeared to create second-class affiliates rather than represent a commitment to enlarge and sparked bitter disappointment among civilian leaders.<sup>53</sup> For experienced officers for whom Polish independence and military tradition served as central reference points there seemed little reason to adopt a new and unfamiliar system of power relations in light of the fact that PfP did not make a clear commitment to admit Poland.

---

<sup>50</sup> For a survey on U.S.-sponsored educational and training programs, see Ulrich (1995 and 1999); and Gheciu (2005).

<sup>51</sup> Author's interview with Polish official A, Department of Strategy and Policy Planning, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 August 1999, Warsaw.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Koziej in *Poland's Security Strategy* (2001: 438).

<sup>53</sup> For branches of the US government, PfP served competing objectives—to provide both a road to membership (for the State Department) and a delaying tactic (for the Pentagon). See Goldgeier (1999).

Starting with the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*, however, the alliance more often empowered civilian reformers than it undermined them. Earlier statements that enlargement was a question of time, not of fact, were finally concretized in a document that clearly articulated the “how and why” of expansion. Like the CRS report, the 1995 Study backed up Polish civilian claims about the desirability of reform against officers who had resisted compliance with NATO norms. The Study’s plainly-stated aims put pressure on those who favored military autonomy to stop making their case, both publicly and privately.<sup>54</sup>

More decisive to the internal workings of the Polish defense establishment, however, was the early release to Poland of the “Defense Planning Questionnaire” (DPQ) in mid-1996.<sup>55</sup> Although initially a dry-run, this NATO-restricted document had until that time been reserved for NATO members only. The DPQ required that respondents be forthcoming about force structures, capabilities, the country’s commitment to democratic values, civilian control, and collective security procedures—all of which structured Poland’s reform agenda thereafter. That it was civilians who had the authority to author the responses raised their stature relative to military officers—and also strengthened the imperative for the armed forces to accurately inform civilians about Polish military holdings.<sup>56</sup> NATO was thus according civilians the authority to earn a prized place in the alliance—an authority they would have otherwise not enjoyed.

---

<sup>54</sup> Author’s interviews with Kostrzewa-Zorbas, Grudziński and Karkoszka.

<sup>55</sup> Dated April 4, 1996, this is a memo from the Acting Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs in NATO to the Members of the Political Committee at the Senior Level (Reinforced), entitled: “Intensified Dialogue with interested partners on the enlargement study: questions for partners,” signed by Allen L. Keiswetter. Note that the public record reports that the release of the Defense Planning Questionnaire to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic was only after these countries had been formally invited to join the Alliance at the Madrid Summit in July 1997. See Boland (1988).

<sup>56</sup> Author’s interview with Karkoszka.

The Law on the Office of the Ministry of Defense, vetoed by Wałęsa in 1995 but then signed soon after by his post-communist successor, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, was among the most important developments in recasting Polish civil-military relations. NATO accession criteria structured its content. Its passage reflected a consensus among politicians that the military should be subordinated to broad-based civilian authority and led to a number of other critical changes in the way civil-military relations were structured. The new consensus was also reflected in the 1997 Constitution that carefully specified the division of powers between the executive and government, rendering any future president's grab for power commensurate with Wałęsa's impossible. It was NATO guidelines that shaped many of the Constitution's new provisions, including the subordination of the armed forces to elected leaders across the governing apparatus.<sup>57</sup>

The consensus in favour of decentralized and democratic civilian control was shared by a range of governing bodies that together, through 1996 and 1997, conveyed a consistent message to the General Staff. Among the changes imposed was Defense Minister Stanisław Dobrzański's resubordination of intelligence to the defense minister, which in 1993 had been subjected to General Staff authority. Dobrzański also undermined the General Staff's powers in finance and acquisitions, reduced the size its bureaucracy, established the NATO Integration Department that would be embedded within the Ministry of Defense, and created a new commander of Land Forces. Other key figures who cooperated in the broad-based efforts to improve civilian oversight were

---

<sup>57</sup> Kramer (1998: 429).

Jerzy Milewski of the National Security Bureau, Jerzy Szmajdziński of the Sejm Defense Committee, and Danuta Waniek, Head of the President's Office.<sup>58</sup>

In the face of continuing resistance to some reforms, however, Polish and external actors alike exploited the transnational coalition in support of a new model of civilian control. In cultivating and directing NATO assistance, First Deputy Minister of Defense Andrzej Karkoszka was among the most important figures. He was a principal mediator between NATO and the Polish armed forces through the mid-1990s and uniquely prepared for the job. During the Cold War, Karkoszka was repeatedly nominated by the Polish Communist Party to attend NGO arms control conferences in the West, where he played the role of a scholar pursuing military-strategic research. In an unusual case of inadvertent interest-formation, even as a Communist Party member, Karkoszka's thinking and experience had been shaped by NATO over decades. He was able to serve as Poland's main liaison to NATO through the 1990s, including at the Madrid summit, July 8-9, 1997, precisely because he was so familiar with Western civil-military structures and norms. He was also adept at inspiring the trust, confidence and respect of NATO officials because of his extensive experience in talking to and dealing with the Western academic and policy-making elite throughout much of the Cold War.<sup>59</sup>

Most importantly, with the backing of Kwaśniewski, Dobrzański, Szmajdziński and Western officials, Karkoszka implemented the legislation that finally broke the lock on military autonomy over the course of his two years as Deputy Defense Minister. The Dobrzański/Karkoszka reforms came into force on February 14, 1996, and substantially recast governing institutions. Karkoszka was the defense ministry point person who had

---

<sup>58</sup> On the broad-based nature of this consensus and the people involved, see Simon (2004: 57-67). For additional outcomes that Poland achieved with NATO assistance, see Michta (2002).

<sup>59</sup> Author's interview US diplomat A, 23 July 1999, Warsaw.

to cajole the military into accepting reforms that imposed a new command structure designed to weaken the General Staff. Based on the US model of separate commands for land, sea and air, this new structure re-subordinated the General Staff to the MoD, “forcing it to relinquish its most immediate control over the armed forces, thereby also losing its relative weight in the country’s domestic politics” (Michta 1997: 105).

Karkoszka, who had the sympathy and support of many in the alliance, had also repeatedly requested the removal of the Chief of the General Staff, General Tadeusz Wilecki. Because of Wilecki’s role since his appointment in 1992 in trying to shield the military from political control, Karkoszka was convinced that continuing reform of the armed forces required Wilecki’s dismissal. Thus Karkoszka, using the social context and transnational support for greater democratic control over the armed forces in Poland, brought about one more dramatic change before the Madrid Summit in 1997.

Like Wałęsa, President Kwaśniewski was somewhat politically dependent on the military because of the vast network of political support it has traditionally represented. Kwaśniewski’s reluctance to heed domestic and international calls to remove Wilecki led NATO officials to apply their own pressure. Insisting that the decision was out of his hands, one senior US official who had advised Poland on how to restructure civil-military relations in compliance with NATO’s expectations repeatedly told President Kwaśniewski that if the General stayed, he could not guarantee that Poland would be included in the first round of NATO’s enlargement.<sup>60</sup>

The actual proximate cause of Wilecki’s removal, however, was a *New York Times* article that detailed the ways in which Poland’s generals, and specifically Wilecki,

---

<sup>60</sup> Author’s interview with U.S. advisor A to the Polish government, 24 August 1999, Bratislava.

were resisting the terms of NATO membership.<sup>61</sup> Without President Kwaśniewski's knowledge and fully aware of the pressure it would generate, Karkoszka served as the main source for that article.<sup>62</sup> Kwaśniewski was then left with a choice. Months before the Madrid Summit where NATO would issue invitations to join, Kwaśniewski could fire Deputy Minister Karkoszka, who, in NATO's estimation, was essentially responsible for Poland's preparedness for NATO. Or, he could dismiss General Wilecki, who, since his appointment as Chief of the General Staff in 1992, had done little other than to rupture relations with the West. Kwaśniewski "rotated" Wilecki out of office in the spring of 1997.<sup>63</sup>

Institutional reform of the kind outlined above is of course not the same as thorough-going behavioural compliance. And, in keeping with what the hypothesis on sectoral continuity would predict (H1), selected members of the armed forces continued to subvert the emerging consensus in favour of NATO prescriptions. Even after accession in 1999, military leaders were failing to carry out some NATO directives, were reluctant to promote younger, Western-trained officers, and would play different branches of the MoD off one another as a means of shielding the military from civilian oversight. Hazing of conscripts also continued despite NATO prohibitions.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> The article reported that "the Chief of General Staff, Gen. Tadeusz Wilecki, was fighting rules that give civilians in the ministry the final say." The article goes on to say that "For a variety of reasons, Poland, the largest and strategically the most sensitive of the likely new members, has had more difficulty introducing civilian control than the other two." See Perlez, "Poland's Top Commander."

<sup>62</sup> Author's interview with Karkoszka.

<sup>63</sup> Kwaśniewski portrayed the dismissal as a routine "rotation" in a continuing effort to protect the support of the military constituency. The Polish media reported that it was a thin veil, however.

<sup>64</sup> Author's interview with Boyce, U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, 1994-1998, Berlin, April 21, 1999; and author's interviews with Karkoszka and Kamiński. According to one source, even in 1999, a small group of Polish generals still held exclusive control over the military. Author's interview with Olaf Osica, journalist with *Polska Zbrojna* and scholar at the Warsaw Center for International Relations, 26 November 1999, Warsaw.



Nevertheless, the dramatic scope of the perceived changes was reflected in the 1998 report submitted by the US Senate Committee of Foreign Relations that recommended that the US Senate vote to confirm the accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949. In contrast to the CRS report of 1995 that had called the quality of Polish civilian control into question, the Senate Foreign Relations assessment found that all three countries were “meeting the requirements laid out in the ‘Perry Principles.’” Further, the report noted the range of institutional changes that Poland had undertaken to codify democratic civilian control over the armed forces.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Hungary***

The evidence from Hungary confirms the relevance of the uncertainty and credibility hypotheses (H1 and H3) and provides partial support for the status hypothesis. As in Poland, the hypotheses reveal how powerful the coalition in favor of NATO’s democratizing reforms would be, the contours of conflict over policy and the degree and timing of compliance. It is only with respect to political competition in the post-communist period that the status hypothesis is not thoroughly confirmed. Whereas the theory would predict that the Hungarian socialists would be sensitive to NATO’s assessment of the quality of military reform between 1994 and 1998, the socialists were more concerned with consolidating power over the armed forces. In sum, Hungary registered weak compliance with NATO’s prescriptions by the time of accession in 1999, but then strengthened compliance thereafter.

---

<sup>65</sup> United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic* (6 March 1998): 16-17 and 10-11.

In Hungary as elsewhere, military continuity through the transition resulted in a high level of certainty about how civilian-military power relations should be organized and therefore little regard for NATO's opinion on the issue. That sentiment essentially said that, aside from the General Staff, "nobody should interfere with military matters" (Dunay 2002: 68). The 1989 Miklos Nemeth defense reforms restructured the military-security apparatus such that the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff were separated. The MoD was subordinated to the prime minister while the General Staff and an additional body, the "defense staff," were subordinated to the president. These reforms limited the possibility of civilian oversight of military affairs.

With the president's powers limited, this arrangement not only laid the foundation for military autonomy (as in Poland) but also cut the MoD out of the chain of command. The 1989 reforms constituted a tactical move, taken without reflection on the long-term implications—either for joining NATO or for ensuring democratic civilian oversight (as NATO would have defined it). Rather, the short-term concern of the still-governing communist Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSzMP) was simply to prevent the government from controlling the armed forces and to ensure executive authority instead, assuming they would win the Presidency (which they did not) (Szenes 2001: 83; Dunay 2002: 70).<sup>66</sup>

The contours of conflict over policy in Hungary, as in Poland, were largely between military officers and their would-be civilian overseers. Through the 1990s,

---

<sup>66</sup> The MSzMP presided over the defense reforms at a time when it was believed the next president would be popularly elected, in which case it seemed likely that the reform-minded socialist Imre Pozsgay would prevail. Instead, however, parts of the opposition (including the Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Alliance of Free Democrats) succeeded in putting the electoral rules to referendum in November 1989. The opposition succeeded in their aims, securing a system by which the parliament, rather than the population directly, would elect the president. Thus Árpád Göncz of the Free Democrats became the first postcommunist president. See Rothschild and Wingfield (2000: 243-244 and 278).

civilians attempted to increase civilian oversight while both retired and active military personnel tried to prevent it. For example, the first civilian defense minister, Lajos Für, claimed as early as 1991 that rather than preserve an Army Command alongside the General Staff, Hungary should look to other European models of civil-military relations in which this redundancy did not exist (Simon 1996: 146). But Hungary's generals resisted. Parliamentarians on the defense committee were similarly stymied in their efforts to exercise authority, at least through the mid-1990s. Lacking military expertise, the defense committee was unable to ask the kinds of questions that would encourage greater transparency on the part of the military. As a consequence, parliamentarians would find themselves in a position of having to go along with whatever the military was proposing or risk their credibility further by raising obstacles without sufficient knowledge to justify their misgivings (Simon 1996: 165). Lack of parliamentary oversight was manifested in two surprising revelations during the mid-1990s: the deployment of 8 MIG-29s (combat aircraft) to Poland for a PfP exercise and the purchase of T-72 tanks from Belarus, neither of which had passed through proper legal procedure.

If the contours of conflict in Hungary were the same as in Poland, and if NATO was subjecting both countries to the same kind of accession process, then the question arises as to why the civilian coalition in Hungary failed to benefit from NATO's backing and overcome resistance to democratization as it had in Poland. As the status hypothesis would predict, NATO's power was limited by poor societal-military relations in Hungary. Low public support for accession translated into less civilian leverage. In addition, mistrust between civilians and the military hindered cooperation.

Another condition working against compliance was the fact that political competition did not elicit political party sensitivity to NATO opinion about defense reform, contradicting what my theoretical framework would predict. When the socialists returned to power in 1994, they appointed retired colonel György Keleti as minister of defense. He reversed earlier civilianization of the MoD by replacing civilians with retired military and by appointing officers to lead nearly all the departments in the MoD (Szenes 2002: 86-87). In a political bid to remove Democratic Forum (MDF) appointees, Keleti was not only putting military figures in, but also replacing “their people with ours.” Keleti also resisted earlier plans to merge the General Staff with the MoD. Instead, he consolidated the military’s power by allocating additional authority over military planning and intelligence to it (Simon 1996: 159). By contrast, the FIDESZ-led government that came to power in 1998 did show greater sensitivity to NATO’s prescriptions, but too close to the time of accession to advance compliance before joining the alliance.

Growing civilian competence in parliament, political competition that brought parties to power that were sensitive to NATO’s appeals, and NATO’s own sustained attention to issues of both mental and technical compatibility elicited moderate levels of compliance with NATO’s standards of democratic civil-military relations, but not until *after* accession in 1999 (Simon 2003). A strong consensus around the non-participation of professional military personnel in political activity was established in both law and practice in the 1990s. The parliamentary defense committee and all of the sub-committees attached to it turned out to be among the most active and effective in the postcommunist region. By 2001, the formal integration of the General Staff with the

Ministry of Defense that had been debated throughout the 1990s was finally underway. The MoD-General Staff integration as well as other reforms were a consequence of the thorough review and prioritization of Hungary's defense reform goals set out in the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) of 1999, initiated by the FIDESZ-led government beginning in 1998.

The most significant area of Hungary's non-compliance with NATO's preference for democratic civil-military relations at the time of accession was in the structure and functioning of the MoD and its relationship to the General Staff. Because the MoD and the General Staff were separated from 1989 until late 2001, the MoD was unable to exercise effective military oversight. Protracted force reviews, repeated renegotiation with NATO over Hungary's Target Force Goals and even the lengthy SDR are all evidence of the fact that the MoD did not have the channels of authority to ensure the armed forces' compliance with its directives. In addition, even by the early 2000s, the MoD was still mostly staffed with either military or retired military personnel. The martial character of the MoD meant that very little civilian expertise has developed there and a fortress mentality prevailed. Links to the media, NGOs, and the parliament and public therefore remained weak (Simon 2003: 95-98).

Despite its failure to fully comply, NATO admitted Hungary in March 1999, in part because Western advisors did not perceive the lack of readiness until after an invitation was issued. In addition, Hungary had actively contributed to PfP exercises and had provided useful staging areas in the IFOR and SFOR missions in Bosnia (Szenes 2001: 87), all of which contributed to a favorable assessment of Hungary's readiness to join the alliance. The Hungarian case is not an explicit test of conditionality because

conditionality was not strictly applied. However, Hungary's willingness to increase compliance even after accession supports the argument that a social context, rather than incentives independent of a social context, facilitate compliance.

### ***Romania***

Evidence from Romania confirms the relevance of the three hypotheses tested here. Romanian democratization of civil-military relations was delayed until the first competitive elections and political party turnover. Thereafter, political competition and strong military-society relations facilitated higher levels of compliance with NATO's prescriptions. But changing NATO standards after 9/11 also ensured that Romania never came under the same kind of pressure to reform as Poland had even a few years earlier.

Consistent with what the uncertainty and status hypotheses (H1 and H2) would predict, Romania undertook virtually no reform that could be construed as consonant with NATO's policy prescriptions in the early 1990s. Military continuity was a powerful force for stasis because the armed forces' role in securing Romanian independence from the Soviet Union left the armed forces' legitimacy largely intact (Watts 2003). Moreover, Romanian officers were "capable military professionals comfortable with planning, decision-making, and implementation" and "could undertake reform without civilian involvement" (Watts 2002: 15). Military expertise contrasted with civilian inexperience. Although the alliance might have wielded influence through civilians, regime continuity limited NATO's power in the first half of the 1990s. Having had no organized opposition to the communist regime and no political competition in the transition, international legitimacy was not a source of power for the postcommunist National Salvation Front (FSN), later the PDSR, among the major winners in the 1990 and 1992 elections. In

addition, the West was generally wary of Iliescu and his regime and failed to provide even modest military assistance to Romania until late 1993. Given the low levels of compliance through the first seven years of transition, NATO did not issue an invitation for the country to join at the Madrid Summit in July 1997.

Both democratization of civil-military relations and efforts to improve technical interoperability with NATO accelerated as a consequence of the electoral change in 1996 that finally provided NATO greater access to Romania's defense reforms. To the surprise of many, an agglomeration of opposition parties, including greens, liberals and Christian democrats, prevailed in the national elections of November 1996 after having also done well in a number of local elections five months earlier. The opposition's victory over their postcommunist counterparts essentially amounted to a change in the measure on social recognition. For not only had members of the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR) campaigned on a platform that was in part dedicated to improving Romania's international standing, but the new competitive dynamic meant that the socialists would ultimately also become more attentive to Romania's status vis-à-vis a range of international institutions when they took power again in 2000.

The CDR-led government initiated a number of changes aimed at improving democratic oversight and Romanian interoperability with the alliance, starting with the appointment of a number of Western advisors to the Romanian Ministry of Defense (Gheciu 2005; Watts 2001a and 2001b). NATO's central areas of concern were the civilianization of the MoD, apportioning power between government bodies in their oversight of the military, ensuring media and civil-society access to information about the military-security apparatus and recasting the power and functions of a still heavily

militarized and opaque interior ministry. By 1999, the CDR had, with NATO assistance, approached NATO's criteria with respect to all of these issues. Through an August government decree, Romania improved cooperation and communication between the MoD, NGOs, the media, and parliament. The decree also directed the MoD to equalize the professional status of civilians and military personnel, implement a merit-based promotions system and increase the civilian presence to 40 percent by 2004. A separate government decree in 1999 also set out rules on the imposition of a national state of emergency, institutionalizing checks, balances and limits designed to protect a democratic, constitutional order. The 1999 Annual National Plan (ANP), one of several planning reform documents that Romania used in its preparation for NATO membership, outlined a process in which the interior ministry would be restructured and civilianized (Gheciu 2005: chapter 5).

The aforementioned democratizing initiatives notwithstanding, the CDR was in many respects either unwilling or unable to follow through on the reforms. The CDR's reign was marked by as much fragmentation, corruption and mismanagement as the preceding period (Barany 2003; Watts 2001b; 2003: 146 and 2005). Indeed, the manifest lack of commitment to the logic underpinning NATO norms was the CDR's method of implementing NATO prescriptions. In anticipation that the parliament might reject many of the reforms that the alliance was suggesting, CDR leaders skirted democratic procedure by resorting to government decree—a practice for which members of the CDR had been sharply critical of their socialist predecessors. In addition, perhaps out of fear that the military's loyalty more naturally rested with the socialists than with the liberal



coalition, CDR leaders tended to politicize the armed forces through appointments and promotions.<sup>67</sup>

By the time the PDSR (socialists) returned to power in 2000 - and subsequently re-named themselves the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in 2001 - they had also become susceptible to the approbation and condemnation of international organizations. During their first term in power, the PDSR had been content to limit compliance with NATO's democratizing norms to the appointment of Romania's first civilian minister of defense in 1994. But after 2000, the center-left coalition arguably advanced democratization of the defense sphere even further than the CDR. In particular, the newly appointed minister of defense, Ioan Mircea Pascu, took steps to empower parliamentary defense committees in both houses, civilianize the ministry of defense, and to smooth relations between the ministry of the defense and the General Staff that had broken down under the CDR. An increased role for civilians in military oversight coupled with a program of reversing politicization paved the way for civilian-led joint planning and budgeting as well as the implementation of a merit-based human resources management system that contributed to professionalization and downsizing in the armed forces (Watts 2001). Favorable military-society relations that translated into strong public support for NATO membership also exerted pressure for compliance (Watts 2001b: 39 and 2003).

Romania's admission to NATO depended as much on the changing international strategic context as it did on democratization, however, as the terror attacks of 9/11 led the alliance to undermine the credibility of its own commitment to democratic civil-military relations. Despite serious lapses in interior ministry and security service reform, Romania secured its membership in any case (Barany 2003: chapter 4; Gheciu 2005:

---

<sup>67</sup> Pascu (2000: 2).

chapter 5). Even as NATO was inviting Romania to join the alliance at the Prague Summit in November 2002 and perhaps even after accession in March 2004, Romania had failed to curb the activities of the secret police in compliance with democratic standards. Moreover, successive governments had contributed to the creation of new secret services in several of the ministries since the communist regime's collapse.<sup>68</sup> Carrying out surveillance in the absence of any public scrutiny, these secret services were, according to Romanian human rights activists, acting with impunity against the population in clear contravention of democratic norms.<sup>69</sup> And, although NATO had demanded that personnel with ties to the *Securitate* (the communist-era security services) be dismissed from government organs, the PSD leadership instead assured its NATO's allies that even those individuals with one-time dubious connections were nevertheless of the highest integrity.

Although the alliance redoubled its efforts after 1999 to enhance mental interoperability with candidate states, the substance of mental interoperability shifted toward foreign policy solidarity and a demonstrated ability to contribute militarily, particularly after 9/11. Romania's fully compatible rhetoric on democratic civil-military relations notwithstanding, American and NATO assessments of Romanian reform in the run-up to the 2004 enlargement were decidedly ambivalent.<sup>70</sup> Both NATO Parliamentary Assembly and Congressional Research Service reports were generally up-beat. But the

---

<sup>68</sup> *Delegation to the EU-Romania Joint Parliamentary Committee*, 5 July 2001: 18.

<sup>69</sup> Author's interview, anonymous, Bucharest, October 2004.

<sup>70</sup> For examples of how compatible Romania's drafting of national security strategies had become, see sections of the *White Paper of Security and National Defence*, The Government of Romania, 2004.

positive assessments focused more on what Romania had achieved in terms of technical capability than in terms of a thorough embrace of democratic values.<sup>71</sup>

### *Ukraine*

Negative measures on nearly all the conditions that facilitate compliance with an international institution's policy prescriptions severely limited the democratization of Ukraine's civil-military relations according to NATO's standards, despite the fact that NATO was clearly interested in bringing Ukraine into its sphere of influence. Sectoral continuity, low quality political competition until 2004, and NATO's shifting standards after 9/11 boded poorly for Ukrainian compliance in the first fifteen years of its transition. Ukraine was the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member to join the PfP in 1995 and signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with NATO at the Madrid Summit in 1997. In theory, Ukraine could have used potential NATO membership as a way of securing greater independence from Russia (Kuzio 2000). But that incentive alone did little to motivate the democratization of civil-military relations.

By 2004, Ukraine had developed a model of civilian control in which authority was concentrated in the executive, the ministry of defense had no real oversight capacity beyond what a guarded General Staff would allow, and parliament exercised very little power with respect to budgeting or planning. Executive control stemmed from the 1991 presidential decree according to which the President of Ukraine should coordinate security and defense policy and chair the seventeen-minister National Security and Defense Council (NSCD). The President appointed the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff, both of whom were subordinated to the executive.

---

<sup>71</sup> See the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Report of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities. 'Military Preparations of NATO Candidate Countries,'" 2002, articles 70-75; and Woehrel et. al (2003).

Ukraine, like Romania in the early 1990s, made some perfunctory reforms in response to NATO's counsel. But although the formal legal structures would qualify Ukraine as having a decentralized civilian model of military oversight, checks and balances, accountability and civilian participation were still missing in the early 2000s. For example, by NATO standards, the Ministry of Defense's role in planning and oversight was under-realized by the early 2000s. The General Staff, although formally an integral part of the MoD in 1997 by presidential decree, nevertheless acted largely of its own accord, making defense policy and relegating the MoD to mostly administrative capacities (Mychajlyszyn 2002: 462). Even by early 2005, the NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine was consulting with the Ministry of Defense on how to assist the latter in asserting its authority over military leaders.<sup>72</sup> In addition, although civilianization of the MoD had ostensibly been the aim of successive governments, the transition was more one of form than of fact. All but one minister of defense between independence and 2002 had been a retired officer. And to the extent that the percentage of civilians in the MoD increased, it was mostly due to retired officers who held generally negative views of civilian competence. Moreover, converted military took up civilian posts of low policy impact (Grytsenko 1997: 30-31; Mychajlyszyn 2002: 463).

Parliament's authority was also minimal. Although the Verkhovna Rada had been active in the early 1990s in legislating into existence a range of national security institutions, the 1996 Ukrainian constitution re-established executive authority. As commander-in-chief, the Ukrainian president oversaw the armed forces in addition to other military formations, had the power to declare states of emergency and war, managed foreign, security and defense policy, and was responsible for all senior military

---

<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with Greene.

appointments (Sherr 2005: 159). Because the range of tasks was too unwieldy for an executive to effectively manage on a day-to-day basis, Ukraine had a “President’s Administration” of one thousand employees that served the president directly, without accountability to any other government institution. Moreover, the military had acquired significant autonomy within this model that officers have welcomed (Sherr 2005: 160). In many respects, the system of civilian oversight in Ukraine is what President Lech Wałęsa and the Chief of the General Staff, Tadeusz Wielecki, sought to establish in Poland.

The Parliamentary Committee on Defense and National Security was supposed to approve the defense budget, confirm appointments to the Ministry of Defense and General Staff, and ensure that Ukraine’s military planning and missions were consistent with the country’s constitution. By the late 1990s, however, the Verkhovna Rada was exercising less authority over defense issues than it had in the early 1990s around the time of independence when the Parliament had been a key player in implementing the legislation that created many of Ukraine’s national security structures (Mychajlyszyn 2002: 461). In addition, the defense budget remained largely non-transparent. While in a NATO member state literally thousands of articles to the defense budget would be public information, in Ukraine the military kept the number of defined articles to a minimum.<sup>73</sup> In short, there was no civilian consensus on the desirability of democratic control and in that connection, still very little civilian defense expertise more than a decade after the declaration of independence.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, there is the issue of “multi-dimensionality” in Ukraine. Like Romania, Ukraine’s post-independence period has been marked by the proliferation of various

---

<sup>73</sup> Author’s interview with General (retired) Vladim Grechaninov.

<sup>74</sup> Grytsenko (1997).

security services. The number of people under arms in Ukraine working in security services other than the armed forces reached into the hundreds of thousands by 1997, outnumbering by far the armed forces themselves. Although Ukraine had internal security forces under the Soviet Union, new security services emerged after 1991, including the Border Troops, the Interior Troops, the Ministry of Internal Affairs troops, the Tax police, and so on (see Grytsenko 1997: 7 for a complete list). Although in theory such forces are subordinated to the executive, control is in reality fragmented—often among ministries to which the forces are assigned. Democratically accountable civilian control does not exist with respect to these newly formed security services any more than it does with respect to the normal armed forces.

In a clear signal that Ukraine still had significant changes to make in the eyes of Western civil-military relations experts, one observer noted that if Ukraine was going to join NATO, it would have to “implement parliamentary control of the Armed Forces and the security sector, as [civilian control] is understood everywhere in Europe” referring to practices and competencies in personnel oversight, financing oversight and co-ordination of ministries. He also noted that all the soothing language in NATO documents about shared values notwithstanding, it was clear to him at least that between the alliance and Ukraine there was so far no meeting of minds on basic issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.<sup>75</sup>

Ukraine’s longer-term strategic orientation in light of eastern and southern Ukraine’s perception of NATO as a hostile and aggressive organization puts the country’s membership in doubt, however. In addition, Russia’s sensitivities could prove more salient to NATO’s policy with respect to Ukraine because of the two countries’

---

<sup>75</sup> Fluri (2004: 138-139).

historic ties. Nevertheless, NATO officials in early 2005 viewed the possibility of Ukrainian reform as a particularly potent testament to the power of the alliance and the appeal of its values. As an unmistakably eastern, Slavic country with close ties to Russia, Ukraine's conversion to mental interoperability with NATO, including the institutionalization of democratic civil-military relations, would suggest that the alliance could break through cultural and historical barriers that had long constituted Europe's east-west divide.<sup>76</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Three kinds of alternative explanations might account for variation in the democratization of civil-military relations according to NATO's prescriptions. Domestic politics, competition among interest groups or external incentives provide competing hypotheses against which to compare my own argument that suggests the social context, as defined by uncertainty, status and credibility, accounts for variation. While each alternative on its own can explain part of the story, attention to the social context reveals more about why we observe particular outcomes and the causal mechanisms at work.

Domestic political explanations, particularly those focused on the importance of democratic opposition under communism, electoral dynamics or reforming communist parties (Fish 1998; Vachudova and Snyder 1997; Grzymała-Busse 2002; Vachudova 2005) would have predicted the highest levels of compliance from Poland and Hungary. Democratic opposition movements should have been interested in developing democratic accountability in the armed forces and in subduing the former guardians of hated regimes. Similarly, at least one scholar concluded that NATO did not contribute to

---

<sup>76</sup> Author's interview with Greene.

democratization anywhere in postcommunist Europe and that outcomes were exclusively domestically driven (Reiter 2000).

It is unlikely, however, that CEE states would have settled on the diffuse model of democratic accountability shared between the government, executive, parliament and the media if NATO had not actively intervened. Even in Hungary and Poland, the consensus that emerged from state socialism was that political and military guidance should be separate, the military should retain control of planning, budgeting and procurement, and that civilian control should be concentrated within the executive. These sentiments were manifest in both the *Żabiński* and Nemeth reforms early in the transition, before the alliance presented its own preferred version of power relations between the military and society. Domestic explanations also fail to explain why there was so much variation between Poland, a strong complier, and Hungary, a weak complier, at the time of accession in 1999. Domestic explanations, particularly those predicated on the power of democratic opposition legacies, also have a hard time explaining why Romania ultimately rivalled Hungary's moderate compliance by 2001.

Two kinds of interest group explanations also suggest alternatives. First, there was a consistent battle between the military, which sought greater autonomy, and civilians, which sought to maximize their power. The general conflict between officers and politicians was not inevitable, however, in so far as NATO's interventions provoked the conflict by informing civilians that they were not exercising enough control over the armed forces. Again, the *Żabiński* and Nemeth reforms illustrated the prior assumptions concerning the appropriateness of military autonomy in which civilians and officers alike believed the armed forces should exercise autonomous authority.



Alternatively, it could be the case that where there was strong public support for NATO membership, compliance was higher. Variation in public opinion does not consistently correspond to democratization of civil-military relations, however, except in Ukraine where public support for membership has been low along with compliance. Romanian support for membership was consistently high through the 1990s and yet compliance did not really begin until 1997. Similarly, Hungarian public opinion ultimately embraced NATO membership in 1997 (albeit after a government campaign) and yet this did not put pressure on the General Staff to submit to government authority. A more precise measure of whether states will adopt democratic civil-military relations, I have argued, is the strength of military-society relations, which is a more stable variable and one that, in connection with other variables, explains NATO's uneven access to reform processes.

The third group of explanations centers on external incentives. Neoliberal institutionalism and realism would expect vulnerable states to comply with NATO's accession criteria because of the security incentive (Wallander 2000). Extrapolating from arguments about European Union (EU) leverage, the threat of exclusion (as NATO exercised it against Romania in 1997) should have motivated compliance (Vachudova 2005). Security guarantees are no doubt important in states' calculations, but wide variation in the democratization of civil-military relations signals an uneven interest in winning the security guarantee, even among similarly vulnerable states. Poland tested the limits of NATO's patience right up until the Madrid Summit in 1997 when invitations were issued and Hungary failed to subordinate its General Staff to civilian oversight until the early 2000s. I do not dispute the fact that resistance to the terms of NATO

membership is natural given that it required altering basic assumptions about the appropriate balance of power among groups in society. But whereas neoliberal institutionalism oversimplifies the process through which such assumptions shift by pointing to the objective power of incentives, I have argued that incentives have variable power depending on actors' certainty about the best reform trajectory, their perceived status relative to external actors and the credibility of the policies under consideration. It was the social, rather than the exclusively geostrategic position of actors vis-à-vis NATO that accounted for the motivating force of incentives.