CORE ISSUES AND THEORY IN MILITARY SOCIOLOGY

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The military has been a fertile source of data to address broad sociological theories and problems that cut across several areas of inquiry. Research on the military has contributed to attitude research, small groups, race relations, social change, the family, professions, and political economy. However, missing is a generally accepted core to military sociology, i.e., central issues and theory. This core must be identified and researched so that findings can be accumulated and the field can contribute fully to sociology. Candidate issue areas are: (a) the ethos of the military profession, (b) the military as an institution and organization, (c) civil-military relations, and (d) military relations with other governmental agencies and militaries. These issue areas require clarification and more articulated theories that are addressed by empirical research.

The purpose of this article is to push towards a theoretical and issue-driven center for the sub-field of military sociology. The fear is that without such a center, the sub-field will dissipate when its current leaders retire, as less funding and recognition are available, and as fewer and fewer sociologists have enough experience with the military to adequately define the scope of pertinent research. The importance of maintaining a thriving sub-field of military sociology is due to the centrality of the military to any society and that society's long-term viability and to the unique characteristics of the military derived from its function and technology. In short, the scientific study of society, i.e., sociology, would be grossly incomplete without incorporating the study of the military. The definition of the military in this article is a formally organized entity or set of entities responsive to the governmental leaders heading a nation state (or equivalent government) and whose functions concern the use of arms to defend that nation state or to further its policies in its relations with other nation states or large collective entities. Included in the definition would be (in the United States) Reserve

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and National Guard Components, the Coast Guard, international military coalitions and task forces such as NATO and United Nations commands, independent support organizations such as the Association of the U.S. Army, and military veterans associations. Not within the scope, but not irrelevant, are other organized entities, more or less under arms, such as police forces, private security organizations, local militias not controlled by the federal government, special enforcement agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Fire Arms, and mercenary groups.

MILITARY SOCIOLOGY AND ITS COMPONENT AREAS

While sociological analysis of the military has been around for some time (e.g., Durkheim, 1897/1951), military sociology is primarily an outgrowth of World War II (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965) and the subsequent Cold War. Its defining first books were The American Soldier (Stouffer et al., 1949-1950), The Soldier and the State (Huntington, 1957), The Professional Soldier (Janowitz, 1960), and The American Enlisted Man (Moskos, 1970). The first major textbook focused on the sub-field was a University of Maryland-based work titled, Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965).

In all, military sociology dealt with a large number of topics as it expanded from its World War II beginnings. This can be seen in the wide array of journal articles (see Ender, 1999 and Siebold, 1973), the formation of associations such as the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society in 1961 under the leadership of Morris Janowitz, specialized journals such as the Journal of Political and Military Sociology in 1973 and Armed Forces and Society in 1974, and academic clusters such as the Center for Research on Military Organization, formally started in 1995 at the University of Maryland under the leadership of David Segal. But despite its productivity, military sociology has never had a clear theoretical or issues-driven center. Early articles dealt with sociologists’ experiences in World War II (e.g., the American Journal of Sociology, 1946; Homans, 1946; and Shils and Janowitz, 1948). Subsequent articles dealt with such areas as small group process, race and ethnic groups, women in the military, leadership, policy, individual adjustment, veterans, historical cases, U.S. military organization, foreign military organizations, and international affairs. There was an attempt to build on the World War II research with Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope of "The American Soldier" (Merton and Lazarsfeld, 1950). However, without a center, there has been more of a continuing dialogue than an accumulation of theoretical or practical evidence that one might call the knowledge of the sub-field. In many
instances, the work suggests that military sociologists have undertaken the roles of policy analysts, journalists, or contributors, however notable, to other sub-fields or disciplines rather than being sociological scientists studying the military. Harries-Jenkins and Moskos (1981) euphemistically describe this lack of center as "a field of interest characterized by a considerable flexibility of discipline boundaries" (p. 3).

The only major theoretical debate (as opposed to policy discussion) has been around what has been labeled the Institutional/Occupational (I/O) Thesis. This debate has been described in several places (e.g., Siebold, 1999b) and is engaged in the question of whether the military is becoming less institutional in nature and more occupational (see Janowitz, 1971, 1977; Moskos, 1973, 1977, 1986, 1988; Moskos and Wood, 1988; Segal and Blair, 1978; Shields, 1993; Sorensen, 1994; Tremble and Brosvic, 1987). The word institutional refers to a military primarily oriented by its traditions, patriotic values, and sense of community; the word occupational refers to a military primarily oriented by "economic man" and general business principles. The general consensus is probably that the military is becoming more oriented to business and economic principles although still retaining substantial institutional features. The debate helped clarify the Thesis by noting that there were problems with terminology, the levels of analysis, and lack of an explicit causality. Perhaps more important than the energizing effect of the debate itself were the undertones of how to approach the study of the military, i.e., as if it were a primary social institution or as a profession (D. R. Segal, personal communication, August 7, 1999).

How then ought the sociological study of the military be approached? Clearly, no single approach is the exclusive, exhaustive, and only effective way. As a start, it may be instructive to look at how some prominent military sociologists have conceptualized the sub-field. The classic four-volume series, The American Soldier (Stouffer et al., 1949-1950), was divided up mostly between substantive topics (Volumes I-III) and methodology (Volumes III-IV). Formally, The American Soldier only consists of the first two volumes, although the whole set of four volumes has commonly been referred to by that title. The substantive topics dealt with individual adjustment in soldiers of different backgrounds and experiences (Volume I), soldier attitudes before, during, and after combat (Volume II), and opinion change (Volume III). More details are presented in Table 1 (also see Schwartz and Marsh, 1999). In short, the general scope of The American Soldier was at the individual level of analysis and on the topics dealing with soldier adjustment and some small group processes.
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<th>The Volume and Authors</th>
<th>Volume Topics</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experiments on Mass Communication, Volume III, 1949, by Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, and Fred D. Sheffield</strong></td>
<td>Orientation film experiments, Alternative presentations, Effects on men of different intellectual ability, Short and long-time effects, Effects of presenting one-side, both sides, and audience participation on opinion change.</td>
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Note. All four of *The American Soldier* volumes were published by the Princeton University Press, Princeton, N J.
As a contrasting approach, *The Soldier and the State* (Huntington, 1957) dealt mostly with topics such as the military as a profession, the military mind and ethic, civilian control of the military, civilian-military relative power, and patterns of civil-military relations. *The Professional Soldier* (Janowitz, 1960) approach is more like that of the Huntington book while *The American Enlisted Man* (Moskos, 1970) leans more towards the approach of *The American Soldier* (Volumes I-II) in terms of topical areas. Several other books followed these themes. For example, as in *The American Soldier* volumes, *The New Military* (Janowitz, 1964) contains chapters on familiar individual adjustment and personnel topics such as cohesion, socialization, and career and retirement issues. Likewise, following *The Soldier and the State* tome, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times* (Perlmutter, 1977) focuses in depth on the professional soldier and his relation to different types of regimes. Indeed, the book has a Foreword by Huntington. However, in other books, military sociology began to expand its scope.

The first major textbook, *Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life* (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965), started using the phrase military institutions in its title. It was later followed by the *Handbook of Military Institutions* (Little, 1971) and *Military Institutions and the Sociology of War* (Lang, 1972). It is with these three books that one begins to see the presentation of the military as a primary social institution as well as some defined scope to the sub-field of military sociology. In *Military Sociology*, Coates and Pellegrin define military institutions "as an organized system of activity directed at the achievement of certain goals... for carrying on aggression against other societies, protecting the society against aggression by others, and providing the means for maintaining domestic order and control" (p. 10). Their book covers topical areas such as the military as an institution in American society, military elites, the military as a formal organization and an informal social system, leadership, the military profession, socialization, small groups, women and minorities, civil-military relations, and social and technological change. In short, in this initial 1965 text, most of the topics one would want to include as military sociology are identified.

In the first entry in the *Handbook of Military Institutions* (Little, 1971), Janowitz (1971) states that "military organization is defined as a comprehensive social system and is analyzed by means of institutional and social-psychological categories" (p. 13). In particular, he said that social scientists must look at organizational behavior, civil-military relations (i.e., armed forces and society), the military as a profession, the impact of technology, and international relations (p. 14). The wider Handbook includes other topics such as the personnel pipeline, education and socialization, the
military family, minority groups, and small group process as well as some operation functions.

In his *Military Institutions and the Sociology of War*, Lang (1972) provided a valuable service in presenting the first major overview of both classic and modern literature in the developing sub-field of military sociology. For Lang, "military sociology focuses on the permanent structures indispensable to the conduct of organized warfare" (p. 10). He divided the subject matter into five categories: (a) the profession of arms, (b) military organizations, (c) military systems, (d) civil-military relations, and (e) war and warfare. A decade later, Harries-Jenkins and Moskos (1981) built on Lang's work by producing their own bibliographic essay and extensive reference list. They took particular care to justify and establish their classification system for military sociology. They settled on the simple, tripartite division of: (a) the military professional and the military organization, (b) civil-military relations, and (c) the sociology of war and armed group conflict, although they admit that there is considerable blurring along any dividing line (p. 6). While one could go on to examine the category systems for military sociology in other publications, the foregoing examples adequately present the scope of the sub-field of military sociology, more or less, through their definitions and classification schemes. The latter should be looked at not as right or wrong but in terms of the extent to which they are advantageous or useful.

Since the goal of the article is to push towards a theory and issue-driven center for military sociology rather than establishing an exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and fine-grained category system of its component parts, it is sufficient if the key parts or categories within military sociology are identified and generally accepted as key categories. For this article, the historically-derived categories will be used rather than those based on some other scheme or set of dimensions (e.g., qualitative versus quantitative military sociology, as noted in Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, 1981, and Moskos, 1988). The following categories are deemed key and where to find or build the theories and issues central to military sociology.

1. Factors *internal* to the military:

   (a) the military as a profession of arms;

   (b) the military as a social institution, including its values, roles, and organizational structures, and

   (c) the military as an organization, with goals and ways of operating;
2. Interactions *external* to the organizational boundary of the military:

(d) the relations between the military and the wider society(ies) in which it is located, especially civil-military power relations; and

(e) relations with other military, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, including relations with coalition partners and adversaries.

Theories and issues dealing with these component areas need to go beyond description to prediction and to address such factors as level of analysis and how things change. They need to identify viable explanatory factors as well as what is to be explained.

**THE PROFESSION OF ARMS**

At this point in time in more developed societies, the term *profession* most likely conjures up images of the medical profession, the legal profession, and perhaps the clergy. On a secondary level, it probably brings forth images of educators, accountants, engineers, and other groupings such as military officers; on a tertiary level, it may bring up images of policemen, firemen, and military non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Clearly, professions and groups within professional institutions can be ranked in terms of power, prestige, and compensation. Also associated with these professions are popular images of their values and ways the professionals interact with each other and the wider society. The military profession, then, can be viewed in the context of other professions that exist at a given time and in a given society as well as how this has changed. For example, most professions have been increasingly refined both ethically and technically in the democratic nation state and with the advent of modern science.

One clear issue for military sociology is to explain the historical development of the military profession, including non-professional aberrations in the treatment of civilians and conquered countries. As an illustration, one can look at the compensation of the military. In an older era, much of military pay was in the form of plunder (booty on land; prizes at sea), but such plunder was inconsistent with the social control demanded by the modern nation state. Thus salaries (and direct non-monetary support such as food, housing, and medical care) became more prevalent. As Moskos has noted (1977, 1986), there is a continuing trend to increase the proportion of compensation that is in the form of cash money. Special hazards and skills can result in additional cash compensation such as combat
pay and flight pay. The kind, number, and amount of these additional cash compensations vary over time and historical circumstances. Nonetheless, the form and amount of compensation reflect the tensions and concerns within the military profession and between the military and its wider society.

There is certainly room for more theoretical development about the relative power and prestige of (a) the military profession in a society, (b) managers of that profession (officers) compared to more technical members (NCOs), (c) specially skilled members compared to the average, and (d) military members more subject to hazards or difficult situations than others, with amount and form of compensation as dependent variables. For example, is rank the overwhelming basis for relative professional compensation (as in an authoritarian hierarchy) or only one of many bases (as in a more collegial organization or where special pay or bonuses are prevalent)? A profession with fluid upward mobility can afford to attach more compensation to rank than a profession where members spend a substantial time in grade. Presumably, the more that compensation is in cash and portable benefits (e.g., social security and general population retirement plans), the less hold the profession or organization has on a given professional. A conscript or citizen’s Army is cheaper to run than a mercenary Army; the relative deprivation in a conscript’s pay is indicative of the lesser power the conscript has relative to the professional officers and NCOs. In times of war and military success or when the military is led by the social or technical elite, it is likely that the power, prestige, and compensation of those in the profession are higher than in peacetime, or when led by the non-elite.

Obviously, the profession of arms can be described in ways typical of any profession. One can examine how members of the profession are recruited, selected, socialized, indoctrinated, assigned, trained, promoted, educated, and retired. One can examine how the profession controls, promotes, and defends its occupational boundaries and is likewise confined by other professions and the state. One can examine how the profession controls its members (including dual-profession members) and leaders internally or defends them from external threats. And one can examine how a profession builds and protects its special expertise or knowledge. However, for military sociology, two things are important in examining the profession of arms. One is the need to get beyond simple description so that the research identifies associations, makes predictions, and posits satisfying explanations. The other is to be explicit about the unique characteristics of the military profession and their impact on the profession.

For example, the military deals with the application of lethal violence. Therefore, the amount of professional control and accountability is very high. Military "work" can be very arduous and life-threatening and
can require aggressiveness and physical fitness. Therefore, it is a young person's profession. The inexperience of youth, then, means that even more control and accountability are required. Military professionals work, for the most part, within large groups. Medical practices, hospital staffs, or law firms are dwarfed in comparison. Therefore, control is needed to coordinate and synchronize these large numbers of professionals. Thus the military profession is very hierarchical (as a means of control), formal (to reinforce control), heavily socialized (for internal control), and full of explicit rules, regulations, checks, and counter-checks (for external control). This results in the fit, self-disciplined, controlled, outward-looking, professional military man.

One of the interesting tensions in the American military concerns the extent to which the military profession controls the education (as opposed to job-specific training) of its members. There are in the United States, for example, military academies for the entry level to the officer corps, staff colleges for mid-level officers, and senior military colleges (e.g., the Army War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces) for high level (colonel, lieutenant colonel) officers. While these institutions provide level-appropriate education, they are also centers of military enculturation and peer bonding. Because these institutions are expensive to operate and take leaders and teachers away from duty in regular units, there is frequent pressure to eliminate the institutions, decrease attendance at them, or replace their military staffs with civilians, to the extent feasible. The pro and con arguments concerning these institutions reflect the relative power and prestige of the military profession, how the profession is viewed by the parties involved, and its relations with the wider society.

Perhaps at the center of the profession of arms, for military sociology purposes, is what might be referred to by a cluster of such terms as: the military mind, the warrior spirit, the calling of arms, professionalism, and military ethos (e.g., see Watson, 1999). They represent the question for the profession of what it means to be a military person in a given time and society—what the profession stands for. As Huntington (1957) noted, the profession focuses on the skill and capability to apply (measured, lethal) violence. And the violence is that which is applied in carrying out the monopolistic responsibility for the military security of the larger society (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965).

If indeed the military ethos of a given time and society is at the sociological center for the study of the profession of arms, it is important to consider what questions one might ask about a military ethos and what would be appropriate kinds of answers. For example, what are the variables that define a given ethos? How prevalent is the ethos, and to what depth is it held by whom in the profession? How and when is the military ethos
made manifest, and what is its impact on the profession and the society? Where did the ethos come from, how is it changing, and why? One might suggest that what is called for is the study of a particular ethos that parallels the examination that Max Weber (1920/1958) conducted on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. As a start, for example, Shamir and Ben-Ari (2000) posit that models of military leadership in the post-modern world should be changed from the heroic model to that of the leader as a center-of-gravity in a loosely coupled open system with enhanced requirements to manage images, meaning, and purpose.

What is being suggested here is something that goes into more depth than previous studies of the professional soldier (e.g., Janowitz, 1960) or just historical descriptions of a particular military ethos (e.g., of the medieval Christian knight or of the Japanese Bushido). What is needed is more than identifying a central kernel of a profession such as the Hippocratic oath in medicine or the "right to an attorney" in law. What is central in military sociology to the study of the profession of arms is a sociological theory of the military ethos—which the military profession stands for at a given time, with associated causal explanations and impacts.

THE MILITARY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The topic of the military as a social institution, of course, overlaps to some degree with the topic of the military as a profession. Nevertheless, the two topics can be addressed as separate areas of research. For this discussion, the topic of the military as a social institution will include the topic of the military as an organization. Previous comments about the need to go beyond description to variable association, prediction, and explanation still apply to these and the other topics.

Certainly the military can be studied as any other primary social institution (e.g., family, religious, economic, educational, and governmental institutions) in terms of a system of roles based on beliefs and norms, structures, functions, patterned behavior, and adaptation for change. That study can expand to include how the various institutions intertwine and intersect one another (e.g., the military family, chaplains, the military-industrial "complex," military schools, and the House and Senate Armed Services Committees). The military can be studied in terms of how it deals with general social issues of the day (e.g., the rise of women in the work force, the diversity lobby, environmentalism, and inter-generational attitudes). The military can be studied as a large organization in terms of such features as bureaucracy, intra-preneurship and innovation, the nature of workers, the impact of technology, and boundary spanning and management. However, the goal here is to concentrate on that which is
relatively unique to the military as an institution rather than what it has in common with other institutions or large scale organizations. As an example from another institution, the family deals with a unique cluster of concerns: small group economics, intimacy, nurturance over the individual life cycle, inter-family cohesion (kinship), and especially the care and rearing of the society's young.

The statement that the purpose or primary orientation of the military, as an institution, is the defense of the society or sovereign is basically true, but it is too abstract. More concrete and useful is the assertion that the primary orientation of the military as an institution and as a set of organizations is to take raw "materials" such as recruits, weapons systems, and doctrine and work with them to produce capable combat units (land, sea, and aerospace) ready to engage the enemy on the battlefield (or carry out alternate military missions). For example, the development of leaders and small unit cohesion and performance would be clearly within the scope of that orientation at the individual and small group levels of analysis (e.g., see Siebold, 1999a). Thus, the center for military sociology in this area could be a theory that addresses how that orientation to produce combat units dominates the institution and organizations of the military. Military sociology must ask how that orientation permeates the visions used for planning (e.g., Joint Vision 2010), formal and informal values, structures, and processes. How do the details of that orientation change over time (see, for example, Coates and Pellegrin, 1965)? What are the variables that relate to system inputs and tradeoffs among the raw materials? What are the variables that relate to system processing and outputs? How do these variables interrelate with one another; where are there feedback loops?

At first glance, such a theoretical center might seem to be too much like economics' theory of the firm. However, for any given size society, the military engages in a struggle for its relative importance among institutions, its survival, and the broad ability to shape itself to carry out its purposes. The institution must justify the resources allocated to it (e.g., people, money, laws, and equipment) and account for them in a political rather than an economic marketplace. For example, the military must deal with the political sphere in recruiting a specific number of personnel with their specific characteristics. It must justify its policies concerning motivational inducements to join and filters for selecting applicants. These justifications rest mainly on cost and unit combat capability, with subordinate justifications that may rest on values, moral stances, and important pragmatic factors such as efficiency, feasibility, and representation. While many institutional aspects of the military and their changes have been investigated (e.g., Moskos, 1986; Moskos, Williams, and Segal, 2000), research findings have not been presented or integrated as part of a non-vague, wider theoretical approach.
Recently, research seems to be driven by and findings reported in the context of the sub-field of social problems. Thus in the popular mind and as reported in the popular media, for example, military sociology may appear to be mainly the study of women or minorities in the military or whether overt homosexuals should be allowed to serve (C. C. Moskos, Jr., personal communication, April 11, 2000).

**CIVIL-MILITARY AND EXTERNAL AGENT RELATIONS**

These two topic areas are presented here together for brevity. They have in common a focus that is mainly external to the military. The civil-military relations area is especially concerned with control by the sovereign (state or governing entity) over the military, including as the military changes in relative power, prestige, and funding. The military-to-external-agent relations area is concerned with a broader array of relationships and problems with: (a) competition and cooperation among equal military and non-military agents of a sovereign, (b) relations between the military and other sovereigns and their military, (c) subrogation of sovereignty to collective (e.g., NATO) or global entities (e.g., the United Nations), and (d) allegiance to dual sovereigns (as when one sovereign "loans" its military units to another). There are issues in both these topic areas where sociology and political science overlap. Nonetheless, each topic area has components of concern to military sociology.

There have been a substantial number of valuable research themes addressing civil-military relations. These themes include problems with militarism in certain societies, concerns over the penetration of military elites into civilian sectors, the life cycle of revolutionary military regimes, and establishing effective mechanisms of control. These mechanisms of civilian control include the budget, law, approving senior promotions, inter-service rivalry, civilianizing some military functions and personnel slots, encouraging military participation in relevant decision-making, growing civilian military experts to offset military expertise, supporting the quality of life in the military, backing norms of an apolitical military, and restraining participation in outside organizations such as political parties. A thoughtful literature review on the topic of civil-military relations was done by Harries-Jenkins and Moskos (1981). An attempt at articulating a broad-ranging conceptual theory of civil-military relations based on shared responsibilities was made by Bland (1999). For Bland, the shared responsibilities are based on a foundation of principles and norms and carried out through rules and decision-making procedures. His emphasis is on the civil direction of the military rather than its control. However, Bland takes a broad-brush approach and does little in terms of identifying what is central to the topic.
area or not, what kinds of components or variables need to be included in relevant theory, how they are expected to interrelate, and what kinds of measurement are needed or possible.

Much of the research in the area of civil-military relations tends to be nebulous and qualitative. Partially this is due to the abstract nature of the subject matter, the degree of learning required before one is capable of addressing it well, and the limited population of societies from which to draw samples. Nevertheless, there is room to increase quantitative methods and to obtain greater precision. More important is the need to increase the clarity and consensus on what is meant by the phrase civil-military relations. What about civil-military relations is to be explained? Is it the degree of conflict, harmony, or cooperation, or maybe whether the relations are distant or close? Will the explanation be of a one-time event, changes in the relations over time, or differences in cross-sectional comparisons of different societies? What is supposed to be the impact or outcome of different kinds or levels of relations? Is it efficiency in governmental and military operations, reduction or increase in the distance of the civil-military gap, prevention of a coup d'état, suppression of a rebellion by the military, or stability of the regime? What is the scope of the concept? Does it only apply to advanced or democratic societies?

What are appropriate explanatory variables? Is it historical events, organizational structures, the logic of a situation, the ethos of the time, relative power and prestige, or personalities? Finally, what positions or groups are included as the civilians or as the military who are in the relations? Is it executive leaders such as presidents, prime ministers, and ministers of defense; legislative bodies; other civilian agencies such as the diplomatic corps, those who negotiate commerce, or intelligence groups; and influential military leaders such as high-ranking officers, service heads, younger officers, or NCOs? Should the more civilianized groups with influence such as veterans, militia/reserve members, non-governmental military associations, and defense contractors also be considered in civil-military relations? Clearly, the military sociology (and wider) community has not worked through the topic enough to lay out the scope and details of a potential theory. For example, can civilian control or civilianization go too far?

A hypothetical theory can be posited that is central to the topic area of civil-military relations. It describes and interrelates: (a) variables that affect the relative strength and strains on the senior civilian and military leadership in a society, (b) variables defining the strength of these senior leaders and their relations over a short or longer time frame, and (c) variables depicting the impact or outcomes of the relations (for somewhat of an example, see Sarvas, 1999). Relative power, prestige, and resources are key variables that
affect the relative strength of each grouping. The senior leaders in each grouping are the main players; subordinate leaders are mainly important to the extent that they strengthen or weaken the senior leaders by giving or withholding support. Penetration of the military into the civilian leadership and society strengthens the influence of the military. Penetration of civilians into the military strengthens civilian influence. Inter-penetration has a dampening effect on conflict between civilian and military leaders. Lack of penetration or isolation increases the extent of that conflict. The civil-military relations are multi-dimensional, with issues that change over time. The outcomes of those relations are, most importantly, the relative power, prestige, and resourcing of the military. Different kinds of regimes, cultures, histories, and structures, including control mechanisms and temporal roles and responsibilities, operate on the relationship by influencing relative power, prestige, and resourcing. The image of the military, for example, as an isolated unknown entity, a bureaucracy, a coercive force, an oppressor, or a savior (see Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, 1981) in different parts of a society operates likewise.

Similar to civil-military relations, the topic area of military-to-external-agent relations is about relations external to the military. As in civil-military relations, it is critical to clarify and obtain a consensus on what are military-to-external-agent relations, what is to be explained about them, and what are appropriate explanatory factors. On the one hand, these relations can be examined in terms of the relative power, prestige, and resourcing between the entities over time. On the other hand, it is probably more important to look at these relations in terms of their inter-penetration, creation of a joint working culture, and operational effectiveness.

Certainly, there has been significant research in the topic area. A lot of it addresses military-to-military relations such as in coalitions and joint task forces conducting peacekeeping operations. An interesting and useful foundation for this was laid by Elron, Shamir, and Ben-Ari (1999). In examining multinational peacekeeping forces, they noted issues that can lead to problems, such as ambiguous missions, multiple authority structures, lack of joint training, and transiency. They found that multinational forces could work together, in part, due to a common military culture, similar organizational structures, shared conditions, and a common purpose. Particularly useful integrating mechanisms were joint and cross-cultural training, a division of labor in what each force was responsible for, formal and informal coordinating mechanisms and information flow, and overt cohesion-building activities.

The topic area covers an extensive array of relations such as international military equipment sales, strategic arms limitations, interagency and military relations carrying out disaster relief, coalition warfare,
international military schooling, mutual defense treaties, and containment and surveillance operations as in Iraq. Generally, there are problems with issues such as commitment to the task or mission, cohesion of the agents involved, fully resourcing the commitments, cultural differences (even within the same government), different or hidden agendas, command and control, meddling by outside agents, rules of engagement, news media distortions, dual allegiance, and squabbles among sovereigns.

Sociological research can investigate the impact of domination by core state militaries over those of nations or entities at the periphery. It can examine the structures of organization that have the flexibility and adaptability to be particularly effective in complex and ambiguous situations. Research can look at how civilian and military agents can best work together to carry out a common task. Sociologists can research how cross-cultural efforts create a common mission culture and organizing structure, and so forth. However, what should be at the core or theoretical center of military sociology in this topic area?

Goffman (1969, p. 140) suggests that we must distinguish between social relations among agents, the constructed world of social occasions, and the perspective of strategic interaction, which is neither social relations nor occasions but illuminates both. Strategic interaction is an approach that recognizes the interacting agents are strongly inter-dependent in creating an outcome and mutually aware of that fact. Through strategic interaction, agents together create, sustain, repair, and terminate social relations. Through strategic interaction, agents together create a social occasion or event, which they define (or frame), establish the rules for, and participate in to the extent they wish. **Military-to-external-agent relations** are mutually created and maintained with the full awareness of the parties. The relations are carried out by means of constructing an ongoing series of social occasions or events. Approaching these relations and series of occasions through the perspective of strategic interaction is uniquely sociological.

One theory at the center of the topic area of military-to-external-agent relations pertains to the strategic interaction among the players. To be explained are the actions of the agent-players and subsequent actions, reactions, or counter-actions. They are to be explained by the mutually-adjusted game plans, i.e., strategy. A secondary factor to be explained is the ultimate set of outcomes or impacts resulting from the pattern of interaction, which, for example, may vary in implied trust, dominance, sociability, stability, or frequency of interaction. Applicable constraints on the interaction include the limits imposed by social forms, the number of players, and external structures (e.g., see Simmel, 1890/1950). The theory might be used to explain actions of a given military in assisting in a disaster relief effort. The choice of what units and equipment to send might be based on which
units needed additional real-world practice rather than what would be most effective to the relief. The military would be framing (defining) the event as a training/relief mission rather than just a relief mission. Such a viewpoint would be expected to permeate their entire mission performance as well as other relief agencies’ views of the military’s behavior. This view might be expected to carry over to future situations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Kane (2000, p. 1) noted the relevance of the title of one of Paul Gauguin’s last paintings, "Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?", in describing developments in particle physics research. Likewise, this article addresses Gauguin’s questions in its push towards a theoretical center for military sociology. Military sociology was defined, and its historical component topic areas were identified and structured as either internal or external to the military. A revised set of topic areas were circumscribed and presented with a sketch of a candidate theory at the core of each topic area. Obviously more work needs to be done to delineate the various topic areas, to further develop the candidate theories and present better ones, and to provide a more coherent whole to military sociology, with less fuzzy boundaries. Appropriate theories may be bottom up or top down; probably they should be theories of the middle range.

Certainly military sociology will and should benefit from the mutual penetration of research with other sub-fields and general sociology. Military personnel and units often can provide unique and interesting subject pools that can help extend and contrast general theoretical approaches and theories from other sub-fields. The argument in this article is not for exclusive military sociology theories or for an isolated sub-field but for one with more central substance. It is time for military sociology to stake out its central issues and theoretical core, or it may become even more fractionalized like wide areas of sociology and perhaps, like an old soldier, just fade away.

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