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Military Justice in Russia

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G. Caforio (ed.), Social Sciences and the Military: An Interdisciplinary Overview, London: Routledge (Cass Military Studies), 2007, 320 pages.

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- 1 The military field in the social sciences has from the start involved all disciplines. Furthermore, not content to juxtapose disciplinary angles of attack, it has often articulated them – witness Samuel Stouffer's *The American Soldier*, Raymond Aron's work or that of Morris Janowitz. Another distinctive feature of the field is that it is one of the most internationally integrated in the social science community. The reason is that except for the United States, the numbers of social scientists specializing in military issues in each country are too small to permit peer dialogue and evaluation on a viable scale: international associations have taken up that role. Comparative cross-national research is thus habitual in it.
- 2 The latest collective volume edited by Giuseppe Caforio illustrates those various points, and takes them as its starting line. It brings together an international cast of contributors from the various disciplines (all except economics) to offer a useful overview of state-of-the-art "military" social science. Its underlying theme, stated by the editor in his introduction to the volume, is that due to increased diversification and fragmentation within disciplines, the old interdisciplinarity has been lost, and needs to be restored.
- 3 Part One of the volume is devoted to, in Caforio's words, "*verifying, through the contributions of specialists in the individual disciplines, the status of studies on the military in each one, in order to create a common platform of knowledge for scholars and organizations interested in the interdisciplinary approach to the subject*". The first seven chapters present a truly cross-national description of the themes and approaches that have prevailed to this day in most disciplines. This is an extremely useful exercise in a field whose central issues have been almost entirely renewed in the post-Cold War era.
- 4 Vladimir Rukavishnikov sets the ball rolling by placing the salient facts of change on the international scene in the last two decades. David Segal (sociology), John Allen Williams (political science) and Donna Winslow (anthropology) brilliantly follow up with overviews of how, against the background of their particular histories, their respective disciplines have tackled recent structural, organizational, sociopolitical or cultural developments. Slawomir Magala takes up the issue of civil-military relations in both East and West from the standpoint of social history. Key to control of military power – a problematic challenge, he avers, if the past is any guide – is the way officers and citizens are socialized into the values and norms of democracy, a process in which history should have pride of place. Jacques Mylle, having staked out decisive turning points in the history of general psychology and the behavioral sciences, compares old and new approaches to a number of standard military issues. Finally, Enrico Maria Piras breaks new ground in proposing to concentrate on sensory knowledge "*under the lens of aesthetics*", to account for the role of artifacts and beauty in processes of identification to the group as shared *pathos*, or (after Foucault) for power and control as realities continuously "felt" by the body.
- 5 Part Two turns to the study of concrete issues in self-conscious interdisciplinary fashion as the only effective way to address them. Wilfried von Bredow tackles the conceptual difficulty of defining the military's missions and identity in a "post-Westphalian" system where sovereignty, borders, territory, population and internal order are no longer as clear-cut as they had gradually become after 1648. Globalization, threats that transcend national borders, new

(ethnic, religious) wars among the people fought along "asymmetric" principles, the peace support or crisis response missions imposed by status quo powers on their militaries, all call into question the relevance of the Clausewitzian view of war and the primacy of politics in it. Upon inspection of the empirical evidence, however, von Bredow advises skepticism as to the supposedly radical novelty of "new wars, new missions, new militaries". Erik de Waard and Joseph Soeters go on to assess the rewards of applying management science to military settings. Having evaluated the uses and impact of networking, modularity and "ambidexterity" on the degree of organizational flexibility made necessary by new environments and missions, they conclude that armed forces ought to look more closely at insights developed in the private sector.

- 6 Marian Zulean discusses the military in post-communist societies. He finds that imposing Huntington's model of civil-military relations on Eastern Europe was ill-advised: dynamic "path-dependency" theories allowing for the weight of history were better adapted. Western models may have worked in nations which eventually became NATO members, but mostly failed elsewhere. They also missed a central point: a focus on effective civilian control of the military was misleading since Communist regimes had already achieved it, while it was much less in evidence with regard to intelligence or internal security agencies on which those regimes more decisively depended. Zulean ends on an optimistic assessment of the capacity of future interdisciplinary CMR research to widen its geographical horizons, and integrate its findings into a single theoretical model, which he dubs *The Soldier and the Globe*.
- 7 Caforio's own chapter on the changes affecting the military profession provides a useful synthesis of both the literature and recent empirical trends. Based on the successive cross-national surveys he has directed since 1992, Caforio traces perceptual and attitudinal change among officers in response to the dramatic alterations brought to their roles and environments. His conclusion sees future contexts as justifying more acute interest in political control issues. Marina Nuciari follows with an update on women in the military, noting that cross-national differences are to be ascribed to societal and cultural factors: the countries with the highest ratios of female participation in the armed forces are all highly industrialized nations of the West. The book ends with a chapter by Hans Born and Ingrid Beutler on the democratic accountability of defense activities. Parliamentary powers and procedures – the authors say nothing of other forms of control – are shown to be crucial, but also to vary considerably even among democracies. The topics on which control is weakest are procurement, oversight of peace support operations, and the fine print of defense policy. Unsurprisingly, the sampled new democracies of Eastern Europe grant their militaries more autonomy than long-established democratic regimes, and parliamentary systems are better at legislative oversight of military activities than presidential systems (though with the US stronger and the UK and Canada weaker at it than expected, there are interesting deviations from type).
- 8 All in all, when one first closes the book, the dominant feeling is that the editor and contributors have fully achieved their dual objective of offering an updated overview of the field and bearing out their thesis that a return to interdisciplinarity is of the essence in it. Subsequent readings, however, reveal three possible weak spots. First, the absence of a contribution penned from the perspective of defense economics is a matter for regret. A second weakness resides in the book's failure to identify the politics of interdisciplinarity as a problem: there is no lack in the volume of explicit or implicit claims by contributors that discipline X is *the* core discipline in the military field – which may render cooperation difficult... Closely related to this difficulty is a third lacuna – the lack of a chapter on the epistemology of interdisciplinary research. Samuel Stouffer himself was keenly aware of the costs and implications of bringing together social scientists from widely different theoretical/ disciplinary traditions: in *The American Soldier*, conceptualization took a back seat to the collection of data that were often unrelated to any hypotheses. The problem becomes much worse if one believes that science

requires hypothetico-deductive models. In that case, unless social scientists can rely on a strong, unified body of theory pragmatically (but coherently) articulating research data and the postulates of several disciplines (as was the case with the work of Aron and Janowitz), interdisciplinary endeavors may advance piecemeal empirical knowledge, but not theoretical formulations. Implying neutralization of axiomatic differences, they are fraught with the risk of producing a common-denominator type of knowledge, with a low degree of precision, hence of reduced scientific worth. This seems to corroborate this writer's hunch (not unlike, though less sanguine than, Marian Zulean's) that beyond the string of edited volumes, however useful, which have appeared in the last decade to probe new trends, what the military field now needs – if it is serious about interdisciplinarity – is a powerful new theoretical synthesis based on sufficiently comprehensive, consistent and plastic core axioms to accommodate differences in disciplinary outlooks.

- 9 One should hasten to add that the volume's identified shortcomings are of omission rather than commission. They hardly make *Social Sciences and the Military* a bad book: quite the contrary – hopefully a harbinger of great things to come!

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