

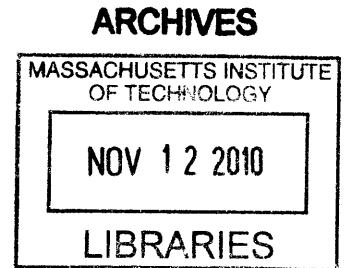
Explaining Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia
by
Jia-Chuan Kwok
BSc London School of Economics (2009)

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Political Science
at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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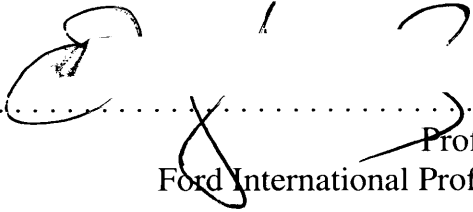


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Author

Jia-Chuan Kwok
Department of Political Science
September 7, 2010

Certified by.


Professor Richard J. Samuels
Ford International Professor of Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Certified by.

Professor Roger D. Petersen
Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science
Chairman, Graduate Program Committee

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Abstract

Civil-military relations describe the interactions and balance of power between the civilians and the military in a nation state. Due to the organizational apparatus and capacity for forcible coercion that the military possesses, it can be an important determinant on whether a civilian government survives or falls, as well as what policies are formulated and implemented.

This thesis analyses Southeast Asian civil-military relations in a comparative perspective. By looking at seven states in the region – Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar – it finds a rich diversity of such relations, ranging from situations of civilian control to civil-military partnerships to military control. The thesis therefore aims to answer the question: why has there been this variance in civil-military relations in the region?

The thesis first examines briefly the history of civil-military relations theory as well as the history of the seven states mentioned above, building an analytical framework and proposing three alternative explanations for variance. Firstly, it asserts that pre-independence legacies created path dependencies that structure the shape of civil-military relations in the region. Secondly, the thesis argues that the structure of the political party environment mattered and assesses the case studies through indicators of concordance and discordance. Finally, the thesis looks at the presence of military entrepreneurship, asserting that variance depends on military capacity to engage in external business activities and civilian willingness to allow such activities.

The thesis concludes by assessing the explanatory power of the three factors above and concluding that a combination of pre-independence legacies and party structure best explains civil-military relations in the region.

Thesis Supervisor: Richard J. Samuels

Title: Ford International Professor of Political Science

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Formal relations between an independent civilian leadership and an independent military one are a relatively new political phenomenon. Up till the previous century the dichotomy between “civilian” and “military” leadership was rare, with leaders of empire or state controlling both military and civilian affairs at once. In this regard, elites were bound up in the trappings of both civilian and military authority, often in the guise of monarchial or tribal leadership positions. Civilian rule was thus equated with military capability and control, without a clear dividing line between the two. Military leaders assumed for themselves the role of governance in times of peace, while civilian leaders were also predisposed to take up arms and lead armies in times of war.

Since the emergence of the modern nation-state in the eighteenth century, a separation between civilian and military elites has become the norm. The relationships between the two groups encompass distinct separations and areas of responsibility. The military therefore exists as an independent institution in itself, contrasted against a civilian polity which provides political leaders as well as bureaucratic actors. Yet the military, as an organized institution bearing weapons of war, possesses the ability of coercive force. The threat to the civilians, or what has been termed the “civil-military problematique”, is the risk of the military directing coercion towards the former: that the institution created to protect the civilian polity becomes the threat instead.

The separation between distinct military and civilian spheres results in the existence of *civil-military relations*: what are the characteristics of the interaction between civilians and the military in the

state? For the civilians, the question is one of “setting limits within which members of the armed forces, and the military as an institution, accept the government’s definition of appropriate areas of responsibility,” as Claude Welch writes.¹ The civilian government cannot do without the military for reasons of protection against external threats; yet if the military is beyond its control, it might become the threat to the civilians itself. For the military, which has the capacity to coerce and compel courses of action by the threat of force, the question is one of independence or obedience to the civilians.

Observing states around the world, wide variations in civil-military relations exist. In some cases the military remains subordinate to the civilian government, carrying out its orders and directives. On the other hand, the military might use its organizations to influence civilian decisions, affecting policy decisions and lobbying for or against certain civilian leaders. Elsewhere, dissatisfied militaries have launched coups to install a replacement or even take control of the state themselves.

1.2 Types of Civil-Military Relations

What are the specific types of civil-military relations? We can divide civil-military relations into three distinct types, based on the degree of control that each side has relative to the other:

Military Control: In this situation, the military has complete control over the state and carries out policy decisions without civilian opposition. Civilian governments have been displaced by military actors, who form the political leadership and are present in the bureaucracy. Civilian political parties are banned or unable to participate in the political process.

¹ Welch, Claude. *Civilian Control of the Military: Theory and Cases from Developing Countries* (Albany, NY: University of New York Press, 1976) p.2

Civil-Military Partnership: In this situation, the civilians and the military exist in a relationship of shared power, each having partial but not complete control of the policy process. The military may use informal links and channels of communication to express its policy preferences, and civilian leaders have to consider the potential of military insubordination or veto of their policies. However, civilian leaders may also lobby for greater military involvement in politics in order to secure a stronger position against their rivals. Welch terms this a situation of dual power - decisions are made by a combination of civilian and military leaders.² This situation might either be cordial or tense – civilians and the military might be in a state of equilibrium and share power or they might be in conflict as both sides attempt to reduce the power of the other.

Civilian Control: The military in this scenario is under civilian control, and obeys the orders of the civilian authority without insubordination. Definite boundaries exist between professional and political roles in the military, and contact between civilians and the military are regulated through accepted channels. Civilian leaders, in a secure position of power, provide top-down directions as to the role and missions of the military, while military leaders provide advice in terms of professional matters such as procurement, technical requirements and force capability.

1.3 The Question: Variation in Civil-Military Relations

This variation therefore gives rise to a puzzle: *why* there are the above three variations in civil-military relations between different states and different time periods? As we shall see later in Chapter 2, academic theory has often focused on a “normative belief that civilian political control over the military

² Ibid., p.2

is preferable to military control over the state”³, and has focused towards prescribing methods and means to that end. If civilian control was the “ideal” form of civil-military relations, one would expect most states to trend towards that end, given time.

Yet there are no shortages of the other two types of civil-military relations around the world; for example, Myanmar and Niger represents situations of military supremacy, where military juntas hold supreme power. Conditions of civil-military partnership exist in Egypt, Colombia and China, where the military exists in an alliance with the civilian leadership. Such situations appear to be entrenched and unlikely to change in the near future. Also, civil-military relations in states have not stayed static over time – for example, Thailand has swung from military domination to a civil-military partnership and back again. Explanations of the factors that led states to adopt different forms of civil-military relations are therefore needed. This thesis attempts to examine the *causes* of variation in civil-military relations in a comparative context, focusing on the region of Southeast Asia.

1.4 Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia

Why should we examine civil-military relations in Southeast Asia? At first sight, the history of the various militaries in the region seems unremarkable. The history of inter-state conflict in the region since decolonization has been confined to mainly brush-fire conflicts and small-scale combat. On a purely military basis, Southeast Asia does not provide an immediate and clear rationale for study. However, the regional variance in civil-military relations is a question that provokes interest.

³ Burk, James. “Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations” in *Armed Forces and Society* 28:1 (2002) p.7

Of the seven states covered in this study, three can be considered states with solid civilian control (Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia). In these states, the civilian polity maintains strict control over the army. In contrast, Myanmar represents the opposite situation: a clear case of military control, where the ruling junta is composed of soldiers and civilians are completely excluded from the political process. Finally, the last three states (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) are in a situation of civil-military partnership. In these states, militaries have at times remained subservient and at times intervened dramatically, ranging from replacing civilian leaders to launching coups directly.

Yet with the exception of Thailand, which had been ruled by a monarchy, the other six countries were all under colonial administration before World War II. All seven states became independent nation-states in the wave of decolonization that followed the war. The empirical question here arises: why have relationships between the civilians and the military in these seven states turned out so differently? Scholars have suggested several factors for this: differing levels of economic development, perceptions of threat, the international context, and factionalism in the military.⁴ However, explanations of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia have often been development- and country-specific, focusing on certain developments and key turning points such as coups, military exit from politics or the establishment of military regimes. Thus rather than explaining *variation*, most studies prefer to focus on analysis of a single state in the region, or even a single event, rather than compare civil-military relations across states. As noted earlier, there is a rich diversity in patterns of civil-military relations in the region, which makes a comparative study of why this diversity exists compelling.

⁴ See Alagappa, Muthiah (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001) and Booth, Anne. *Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HA: University of Hawaii Press, 2007)

1.5 Framework of Thesis

To explain the variation of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia, this thesis puts forward three sets of explanatory propositions. The first set is grounded in a key historical influence of the modern states in Southeast Asia – pre-independence legacies. The states in the region were not created out of a vacuum, but rather built by securing independence from an external authority. In the case of Thailand, which was the only state not under colonial rule in this study, a hereditary monarchy had ruled the kingdom until 1932, which preceded the modern formation of the Thai state. The colonial and monarchical overseers thus affected the initial formation of civil-military relations in each state, causing historical path dependencies to be formed that would provide the foundations of how the civilians and the military in each state would interact.

In terms of pre-independence legacies, this thesis thus advances the following two propositions:

- 1) Civil-military relations vary because pre-independence legacies determined *the legitimacy of force*. The method in which independence was acquired would determine the type of civil-military relations. If independence was achieved by a peaceful transition, the influence of civilians would be stronger. In contrast, if independence was achieved through wars of liberation or by coups, the military's position in the state would be enhanced, making its influence stronger relative to the civilian authority.
- 2) Civil-military relations vary because pre-independence legacies determined *the effectiveness of the civilian state apparatus*. If a strong bureaucratic and administrative order had been left in place after independence, the influence of civilians would be stronger. If the

bureaucratic and administrative order was weak or had been discredited after independence, the influence of the military would be stronger.

Legacies thus attempt to explain how the patterns of long-term civil-military relations evolved upon independence. In this sense, legacies thus provide a long-term historical and structural explanation for the variance in civil-military relations. However, if path-dependent legacies were the only explanation of civil-military relations, states would have been locked into a certain relationship that would stay static and unchanging. In Southeast Asia, some states have stayed static, while others have changed from civilian control to military control and vice versa. We also have to look at the civilian and military actors within the states examined and how their actions determined change or continuity in the specific types of civil-military relationship, which in turn contributed to variation.

A second explanation therefore deals with actors in the civilian side, focusing on party politics. Here, party politics can be defined by the characteristics of the contest for state power between different civilian political organizations. Party politics can therefore be *multi-party* – a large number of civilian parties competing with each other in electoral campaigns – or *single-party* – a situation where one organization is dominant and opposing parties are too weak to oppose its rule. Civil-military literature has often focused on democratic civilian control of the military, looking at the factors by which a civilian government can control the military. However, single-party states, which are authoritarian in nature, still have to establish relations with the military, leading to their own forms of civil-military relations. In Southeast Asia, both single-party and multi-party political environments exist, which provides analytical space to test the effect of party politics on civil-military relations.

In terms of party politics, this thesis advances the following proposition:

- 1) Civil-military relations vary between single-party states and multi-party states due to the strength of the civilian government formed. The argument here is that single-party states generate conditions of concordance and convergence that results in civilian control, while multi-party states generate conditions of discordance that lead to civil-military partnerships or military control.

The third proposition deals with actors in the military side, focusing on military entrepreneurship – the potential ability to engage in independent business activities as well as social development projects. Civil-military theory has often separated the two spheres, preferring to see militaries as independent of economic and developmental activity and more involved in the political arena in the case of military intervention. In Southeast Asia, militaries in certain states are able to involve themselves in business operations while other militaries do not. As such, military entrepreneurship has often been seen by scholars as being detrimental to civilian control and the professionalization of the military, causing civilian control to become weakened.

This thesis thus links military businesses to the variation in civil-military relations due to the provision of a new source of power – independent economic resources outside civilian control – that can be used to achieve the military's own aims and priorities. However, it also argues that not all forms of military entrepreneurship are detrimental, and that in some cases, civilian governments might actually enter into partnerships with the military to allow state developmental processes to occur. The exact nature of the partnership becomes a factor in determining which type of civil-military relations are adopted – whether the military takes a socio-economic role outside of civilian control, or remains subordinate to civilian dictates in developmental projects.

In terms of military businesses, this thesis advances the following two propositions:

- 1) Civil-military relations vary due to the presence or non-presence of military socio-economic activities. How civil-military relations vary depends on two variables: the willingness of the civilian government to allow military businesses and the capacity of the military to engage in such businesses.

- 2) If the military can engage in independent business activities, it acquires an independent source of revenue. By taking budgetary control away from the civilian government, one lever of civilian control is lost. The risks of active military intervention in politics or military coups rises as militaries are incentivized to protect their operations from attempts at restriction from civilians. However, if the civilian government is able to direct the military in projects of its own, civilian control might be reinforced even if the military engages in business activities.

1.6 Division of Thesis

Here, the rest of the thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 details the academic literature on civil-military relations, outlining the key schools of thought and areas of debate in the literature and then fleshing out the analytical framework mentioned above.

Chapter 3 then presents a brief outline of the history of the armed forces of the seven states covered in this thesis, examining the relationships between civilians and the military. It describes how

the relationships between the civilians and the military have formed and changed, setting the ground for the analysis of the propositions mentioned above. For comparison, the case studies are then divided according to the type of civil-military relationship that exists: civilian control (Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam), civil-military partnership (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) and military control (Myanmar).

The next three chapters then assess the explanatory power of the three propositions mentioned above against the empirical evidence. Chapter 4 then analyzes the influence of pre-independence legacies, analyzing how they have influenced civil-military relations along different routes. It argues that these legacies set actors on a path-dependent route by which the costs of exit increase, and so variance in civil-military relations can be explained by the divergent legacies that the newly independent states in Southeast Asia were influenced by.

Chapter 5 examines the role of party and state structure, proposing that multiparty states are actually weaker and more vulnerable to coups than single party states, leading to dominance by the military in the civil-military relationship. Here, it applies Rebecca Schiff's theory of concordance to the Southeast Asian states and tests the conditions of concordance and discordance using the indicators provided.

Chapter 6 focuses on the economic explanation for civil-military relations variance and coup occurrence, examining the role of extra-budgetary expenditures by the military. It follows the model of military entrepreneurship mentioned in Chapter 2, arguing that variation in civil-military relations stems from two variables: civilian willingness and military capability.

Finally, Chapter 7 contrasts the three sets of explanations against each other, assessing their viability to explain civil-military relations in Southeast Asia as well as laying out several areas for further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review on Civil-Military Relations

This chapter explores the evolution of civil-military relations theory. Firstly, it examines the “classical” scholarship on civil-military relations, originating from the end of World War II. Next, it examines the conditions that caused scholars to reconsider those theories, and then presents a survey of recent literature on civil-military relations that have been published. Finally, it looks at the examination of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia specifically. It concludes by expanding on the analytical framework mentioned in the introduction, providing a foundation for comparison of the case studies ahead.

2.1 Early Civil-Military Relations Theory

The earliest literature on civil-military relations developed in what we consider to be “modern” states and “modern” militaries.⁵ Modern states, in the Westphalian sense, are territorial boundaries recognized as sovereign as part of an international system of states. Within these territorial boundaries, the state has control over *governance*: the ability to create and implement policies that affect the lives of the individuals residing in it. Modern militaries, as such, are composed of the citizens of the state in question (instead of mercenaries from other states) and have an organizational structure that bases itself on rank and hierarchy, with a central command from which orders flow down. The French Revolution, which established the contours of a modern nation-state⁶, also saw the introduction of a modern military in the shape of Carnot’s 1793 *levee en masse*, which called for the creation of a citizen

⁵ Taylor, Brian. “Civil-Military Relations Theory and the State” Paper delivered at the *International Studies Association 50th Annual Convention* (2009) p.2

⁶ See Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975) for a description of indicators about the constitution of a modern nation-state.

army led by professional officers. The proper structure of the relations between the civilian rulers of the nation-state and their military leaders became a topic of discussion for political leaders and theorists. The key question here was phrased by Otto Hintze asked in a 1906 lecture, “what place is occupied by the general organization of the army in the general organization of the state?”⁷

After World War II, academics turned their attention to two phenomena: the militarism that had been present in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan, as well as the expansion of the military apparatus in liberal democracies, particularly the United States. In this context, the claim was that the militaries in the Axis states had controlled their civilian counterparts, securing their influence either through placing soldiers in key posts or through coups and assassinations that left governance in the hands of the military. As the end result was aggressive expansionism and the horrors of World War II, classical studies of civil-military relations focused on one key question: how could civilian leaders control the military so that its aggressive tendencies could be curbed? According to James Burk, “The question [of civilian control] reflected a normative belief that civilian political control over the military is preferable to military control of the state, and so it seems that the central problem in civil-military theory is to explain how civilian control over the military is established and maintained.”⁸

The second locus of civil-military relations research was bound up in Cold War politics and the need for states to maintain large standing armies *in preparation* for possible war. As Hans Morgenthau argued, the role of the modern military came to be seen as the *ultima ratio* of state power in an anarchic international where states needed to fend for themselves to survive.⁹ In this regard, civil-military

⁷ Quoted in Bruneau, Thomas C. & Scott D. Tollefson (eds.) *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations* (Texas, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006) p.3

⁸ Burk, James. “Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations” p.7

⁹ Morgenthau, Hans. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knoff, 1973) p.7

relations developed along with the realist school of international relations theory, which emphasized a Hobbesian-type international stage where force was the only guarantee of survival. According to Brian Taylor, civil-military literature “implicitly or explicitly takes military performance at upholding the states’ security as the ultimate ‘test’ of good civil-military relations.”¹⁰ Yet the civil-military theorists were more concerned with the effects on state structure. Hence the second question: how could liberal democracies, with their accompanying values of freedom and based on a representative civilian authority, build a strong military?

Finally, as the “first wave” of decolonization occurred in the 1950s, the prevalence of coups and *internal* military actions were noticed by civil-military theorists. Rather than the military acting as the protector of the state against external threats, it instead became a disruptive force in the internal governance of the state, using its capability of force to effect violent change. As Edward Luttwak wrote, the power to seize control of the state apparatus came directly from the state itself, in the shape of the military.¹¹ As such, a third question arose: why did the military want to intervene in state affairs, and how could this propensity for military intervention be controlled?

These three questions – civilian control, maintenance of democratic values and risk of coup occurrence – dominated early civil-military relations theory. Here, the work of Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz represented the first theoretical discussions in civil-military relations. Huntington, in *The Soldier and the State* and *Political Order in Changing Societies*, posited that the civilian government (assumed to be a democratic one) faced a crucial dilemma: how to retain a strong military and yet keep it under a system of democratic values that emphasized the superiority of the civilian. As such, the ideal state was a system of “objective civilian control”, where the military was “rendered politically sterile and

¹⁰ Taylor. “Civil-Military Relations Theory and the State” p.10

¹¹ Luttwak, Edward. *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968) p.27

neutral”¹² and the civilian government’s aim was “the maximizing of military professionalism.”¹³

Professionalism, in this context, meant that military officers were recognized experts in their own fields of military activity, but remained out of the political debate. This was contrasted to “subjective civilian control”, where the military was co-opted by different civilian groups and hence drawn in political struggles, reducing professionalism.

As such, the professionalism of the officer corps was the key control mechanism, where the military leadership would be recognized “as specialists in the management of violence”¹⁴ but at the same time manage their own domains and submit themselves to civilian authority. For Huntington, the prevalence of military intervention could be attributed to the weakness of the political system in responding to increased social movements, arguing that “the most important causes of military intervention are not military but political... and reflect the institutional structure of the society.”¹⁵ A weak and fragmented political system caused subjective civilian control, at which point the organizational superiority of the military would provide it a powerful incentive in intervene in order to ensure the stability of the state.

Huntington’s position was challenged by Morris Janowitz, who argued in *The Professional Soldier* that a politicized officer corps was not only desirable but necessary in civil-military relations. Here, as Emizet Kisangani commented of Janowitz’s theory, “the military is an integral part of a wider social system and one cannot assume that at its training and indoctrination the ideals of discipline and

¹² Huntington, Samuel. *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956) p.84

¹³ Ibid., p.84

¹⁴ Ibid., p.12

¹⁵ Huntington. *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968) pp.194-196

obedience will take precedence over its political and communal ties.”¹⁶ Against Huntington’s assumption that the military would have to be professionalized in order to be under civilian control, Janowitz instead looked towards the broader values of the society as a whole to bring about civilian control.

For Janowitz, the changed security environment after World War II meant that the days of the mass military fighting in wars were over; the military was perceived to become a “constabulary force.”¹⁷ What was required by the changing nature of Cold War politics, however, was the maintenance of a large standing force of professional soldiers for the purposes of deterrence. According to Janowitz, the military would become “a constabulary force when it is continuously prepared to act, committed to the minimum use of force, and seeks viable international relations, rather than victory.”¹⁸ In the Cold War equilibrium of thermonuclear weapons and mutually assured destruction, security rather than victory became the primary objective of the military.

Although the fundamental differences between civilian and military remained present, Janowitz argued that the military could be brought under civilian control by equipping it with the norms and behavioral values of the society that created it.¹⁹ By such methods, the military and civilians would draw closer together in terms of outlook and norms, maintaining both the military’s martial spirit as well as civilian control since the basic values of society originated from the latter and not the former. In his examination of the United States, he postulated methods to diminish the differences between the two sides; for example, advocating second careers in the civilian sector for retired officers and the setting up

¹⁶ Kisangani, Emizet. “Explaining the Rise and Fall of Military Regimes: Civil-Military Relations in the Congo” in *Armed Forces & Society* 26(2) (2000) p.203

¹⁷ Janowitz, Morris. *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960) p.417

¹⁸ Ibid., p.418

¹⁹ Ibid., p.50

of officer training schools at elite universities.²⁰ For Janowitz, the prevention of coups was a byproduct of convergence between civilian and military elites; as their outlooks grew similar, their interests would align and prevent military intervention.

2.2 Later Civil-Military Relations Theory

The Huntingtonian and Janowitzean paths – the former focusing on professionalization, the latter focusing on sociological convergence – laid down two tracks by which civil-military research advanced. Here, we can see a division between a focus on institutions and actors. Huntington argued that the military and civilians represented separate institutions, and it was the strengths and weaknesses of these institutions that determined the balance of civil-military relations. Janowitz, on the other hand, focused on diminishing the differences between civilian and military actors, noting that as their values converged civil-military relations would also stabilize due to the alignment of interests and outlook. As Peter Feaver argues, “the chief focus of the [Huntingtonian] approach is the relationship of the military to civilian political leaders; the chief focus of the [Janowitzean] approach is the relationship of the military to civilian society.”²¹ Subsequent works would attempt to straddle this divide, and provide a more nuanced view of civil-military relations. Given the American-centric focus of both works, further academic study on civil-military relations also started to become more comparative in scope. However, civil-military theorists still continued to focus on the three main areas mentioned above: civilian control, democracy and military intervention in government.

²⁰ Ibid., p.420

²¹ Feaver, Peter. *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) p.10.

2.2.1 Civilian Control

In terms of civilian control, Huntington's institutional dichotomy between a purely professional military and a civilian government was soon questioned. Bengt Abrahamsson argued that the values and aspirations of a "professional" military could be self-serving and on occasion oppose the interests and values of its parent society, pointing out that several coups had been carried out by "professional" officer corps against their civilian leaders.²² This theme was echoed by Eric Nordlinger in *Soldiers and Politics*, who saw military intervention as a reaction against civilian control in order to advance the organizational and material interests of the military.²³ Even if armies were professional in nature, Nordlinger argued, as a rational bureaucratic actor they were inclined to maximize their budgets and power.²⁴ If the civilian government, in its role as a state leader, could not provide adequate resources and organization to the military, the latter had a powerful incentive to intervene and influence policy decisions. As a result, Nordlinger pointed out that in with weak state structures, contrasted to Huntington's analysis of the United States, the inability to provision resources was the rule rather than the exception. As he asserted:

The study of military intervention in non-Western countries from 1945 to the present (1977) is eminently warranted... in fact, given its frequent occurrences in the past, present and presumptive future of most of these countries, military intervention constitutes one of the major characteristics of non-Western politics.²⁵

²² Abrahamsson, Bengt. *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1972) Abrahamsson points out in particular, the 1961 coup against the French in Algiers, which was carried out by "some of the most professionalized officers in the French military" and the 1958 coup in Pakistan, which was initiated by Sandhurst-trained officers.

²³ Nordlinger, Eric. *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Government* (New Jersey, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977) p.43-46

²⁴ Ibid., p.48

²⁵ Ibid., p.6

As such, the notion of “professionalism” came under debate – how best could a “professional military best described? Alfred Stepan argued in *The Military in Politics* that military and civilian institutions could be integrated and still retain their professional ethos.²⁶ Drawing from an analysis of Latin American military establishments, Stepan distinguished between an “old professionalism” – where the military is highly skilled in the management of violence and apolitical – and a “new professionalism” – where the military’s role encompassed internal security and socioeconomic development.²⁷ To fulfill the functions of the latter, the military apparatus required expanded managerial and technocratic skills, hence incurring politicization and therefore close contact with civilian leaders. In this regard, the Huntingtonian model of professionalization did not ensure civilian control; instead, it had the potential to cause tension between civilians and military as the separate spheres failed to understand the needs of each other.

Comparing and contrasting these new models of professionalism and civilian control, a new school of thought focused on the institutional conditions that had *created* specific conditions for civil-military relations. The “new institutionalists” focused on “the ways in which the structures and activities of states unintentionally influenced the formation of groups and the political capacities, ideas and demands of various sectors of society.”²⁸ In this respect, the state itself acted as an institutional constraint, mediating and shaping the ways in which civilians and military interacted. Here, prominent authors included David Pion-Berlin, who used the case study of Argentina to show how “the success or failure of civilian leaders in imposing their policy on the military is a function of the centralization of

²⁶ Stepan, Alfred. *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988) p.10

²⁷ Ibid., p.15

²⁸ Skocpol, Theda. “Bringing the State Back: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research.” in Evans, P.B., D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol (eds) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p.21

policymaking and the insulation of policymakers from external pressure”²⁹ and Felipe Aguero, who argued that the nature of the outgoing regime would impose constraints on the ability of the military to control civilians once the new state structure had been set up.³⁰

As such, a new branch of civil-military relations rose up assessing the means of *democratic consolidation* – how did emerging democracies in new states manage civil-military relations, and did these relations serve to hinder the democratic process or support it? In this context, Taylor argued that “much of this work was in some ways the mirror image of the coup literature, seeking to explain under what conditions the military [did] *not* intervene against the existing regime.”³¹ In this context, the focus was placed on the initial conditions of the new democratic state; lacking the solid democratic foundations that Huntington and Janowitz had adopted in their analyses, scholars of democratic consolidation noted the conditions surrounding the new state and attempt to figure out prescriptive indicators that could strengthen democracy against military influence. A renewed focus was also put on the “building” of capable state institutions to overcome military influence. For example, Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster argued that civil-military relations in new democracies should be focused on a “second generation problematique” – that of building strong enough institutions to execute policy against an intransigent military. In their words:

The problem is not the establishment of civilian control over the armed forces or the separation of the military from politics, but rather that of the effective execution of democratic governance of the defense and security sector-particularly in relation to

²⁹ See Pion-Berlin, David. *Through Corridors of Power: Institutions of Civil-Military Relations in Argentina* (College Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997)

³⁰ See Aguero, Felipe. *Soldiers, Civilians and Democracy: Post-Franco Spain in Comparative Perspective*. (Baltimore, ML: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)

³¹ Taylor, Brian. “Civil-Military Relations Theory and the State” p.11

defense policy-making, legislative oversight and the effective engagement of civil-society in a framework of democratic legitimacy and accountability.³²

2.2.2 Military Intervention and Coup Risk

Finally, scholars noted the increasing number of military coups throughout the 1960s and the 1970s and attempted to provide new theories to explain this phenomenon. As Brian Taylor argues, “if military defeat was the ultimate measure of failure in civil-military relations for international relations scholars, for comparativists the military coup was this ultimate measure.”³³ At the same time, scholars provided a more detailed continuum of civil-military relations by recognizing that coups were only one manifestation – the most extreme manifestation – of military influence. Even Huntington recognized this phenomenon, writing that “the problem of the modern state is not armed revolt but the relation of the expert to the politician.”³⁴

One of the first new works on coups in the developing world was Samuel Finer’s *The Man on Horseback*, which dealt with the propensity of military intervention. For Finer, military intervention meant not just coups, which were its most extreme manifestation, but the military’s “constrained substitution of their own policies and/or their persons, for those of the recognized civilian authority.”³⁵ Finer therefore listed three conditions for military intervention: mood, motive and opportunity.³⁶ The prevalence of military intervention was a two-way process – not only did the military have to have motive and mood to intervene, but it also had to have the opportunity presented to it by civilian

³² Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster. “The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Democracy and Civil-Military Relations” in *Armed Forces & Society* 29:1 (2002) p.31-56

³³ Taylor, Brian. “Civil-Military Relations Theory and the State” p.13

³⁴ Huntington. *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* p.20

³⁵ Finer, Samuel. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988) p. 20

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.20-64

weakness. At the same time, Finer also distinguished between four distinct levels of military intervention: simple influence, pressures, displacement (replacing one civilian party for another) and supplantment (military coup).³⁷ In this regard, Timothy Colton built on Finer's analysis by distinguishing between four types of policy issues over which the military exercised influence (internal, institutional, intermediate and societal) and also creating a different typology of military intervention (official prerogative, expert advice, political bargaining, and force).³⁸

In contrast, other scholars utilized structural theories to explain the level of military intervention. Feaver applied a principal-agent model to explain why the military (the agent) might not comply with the commands of the civilian government (the principal). In this conception, conduct of civil-military relations was based on three variables: the costs of monitoring, the congruence of policy preferences and the ability to enforce punishments for non-compliance.³⁹ If the military leadership had a strong incentive to shirk orders while the civilian government was predisposed to monitor intrusively into military compliance, conflict between the two groups would result, leading to military intervention to protect its organizational integrity. Indeed, in the extreme case, military coups took place when the leadership could no longer tolerate civilian monitoring or when the gap between military and civilian policy preferences became too wide.

Finally, rather than intervention from two separate spheres, theories explaining civil-military fusion were also elaborated upon. As Bernard Boene defined it, civil-military fusion articulated the argument that the line between the military and the political had become so blurred that the distinction

³⁷ Ibid., p.78

³⁸ See Colton, Timothy. *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: the Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979)

³⁹ Feaver. *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil-Military Relations* p.4

had lost its meaning.⁴⁰ Indeed, this was the apex of Janowitz's sociological convergence theory; a state by which military and civilian elites could transfer between roles and were possessed of the same values and norms. This meant that civilian control of the military was solidified, as fusion implied a unity of civilian and military. Here, Rebecca Schiff's theory of concordance attempts to measure fusion along four indicators: the social composition of the officer corps, the political decision-making process, the recruitment method and the military style.⁴¹

Having examined the general research areas in civil-military relations, we then move on to civil-military theory in Southeast Asia specifically and trace the current state of academic study.

2.3 Civil-Military Relations Theory in Southeast Asia

The first academic explanations of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia began upon the post-World War II period, upon the acquisition of independence by the new nation-states in the region. Given the short history of these new states, academic scholarship was generally confined to cross-regional comparisons with other nations or the use of single nations as case studies. As part of the wave of new states that came onto the international arena after decolonization, the nascent Southeast Asian polities were usually viewed as a collection of weak states, vulnerable to coups and military intervention and lacking in strong civilian control. Finer's dismissive evaluation of the Southeast Asian states in 1960 was typical of early scholarship:

⁴⁰ Boen, Bernard. "The Military as a Tribe among Tribes: Postmodern Armed Forces and Civil-Military Relations?" Caforio, Giuseppe (ed.) *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research* (New York, NY: Springer, 2006) pp.167-185

⁴¹ See Schiff, Rebecca. *The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008)

“What is the pattern of rule in Thailand but the rule of absolute monarchy *redivivus*, with a soldier instead of a monarch exercising absolute power over a traditional society? Except for the Philippines (Malaya is too recent an example), no new state in Southeast Asia is stable... Siam and Burma have experienced military rule, and one, Indonesia, is in dissolution.”⁴²

Had Finer returned to Southeast Asia now, he would have found a very different picture and a more optimistic one in terms of civilian control. Indonesia has not dissolved and reverted to civilian leadership (although the military still retained significant influence), Thailand has undergone a sustained period of stable civilian government (only to be interrupted by a military coup in 2006), while Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam are examples of solid civilian control over their militaries. At the same time, the wide variation in civil-military relations in the region still persists, ranging across all three types – civilian control, civil-military partnership and military control.

Correspondingly, civil-military scholarship in Southeast Asia has grown, but analytical scholarship still remains relatively thin for several reasons. Firstly, most studies in the region have often focused on one or two countries in their analysis; examples here include Tim Huxley’s study on Singaporean civil-military relations as well as Katherine McGregor’s analysis of military ideology in Indonesia.⁴³ Also, academic study has focused more on other developing areas such as Latin American and Africa. When Southeast Asian countries are selected as case studies, they are usually considered in isolation against states from other regions and areas. While this trend is not negative by itself, it does mean a reduction in comparative studies within the region.

⁴² Finer. *The Man on Horseback* p.218

⁴³ See Huxley, Tim. *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* (New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 2000) and Katherine McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007)

The focus on single-country analysis means that a comparative perspective on civil-military relations in the region is missing as scholars have often chosen to focus on one country alone or a comparison across several case studies. Indeed, the first comparative studies by civil-military theorists were focused on Asia as a whole; Viberto Selochan's study, while mainly drawn from Southeast Asian case studies, also included other cases such as Fiji, South Korea and Pakistan.⁴⁴ Muthiah Alagappa's extensive study on coercion and governance in Asia probably represents the most comprehensive attempt at a study of civil-military relations in the region, but his analysis covers other parts of the continent in greater depth than in Southeast Asia.⁴⁵

Scholars have more recently begun to view Southeast Asia in a comparative context. In this regard, Mark Beeson and Alex Bellamy as well as Marcus Mietzner have attempted to cover a comparative study of civil-military relations in the region.⁴⁶ However, their analysis has only been confined to several of the larger countries in the region (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand in the first case), which leaves analytical space for an examination of the other nation-states in Southeast Asia.

Secondly, most analyses of Southeast Asia have been referenced against mainstream democratic consolidation theory. As Taylor argues, "an unspoken assumption of much of the comparative literature on coups is that civilian rule is preferable to military rule, and further that democracy is preferable to authoritarianism."⁴⁷ Yet in Southeast Asia, authoritarian regimes are present

⁴⁴ See Selochan, Virebo (ed.) *The military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991)

⁴⁵ See Alagappa (eds.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*

⁴⁶ See Beeson, Mark & Bellamy, Alex. *Securing Southeast Asia : The Politics of Security Sector Reform* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008) and Mietzner, Marcus. *Military Politics In Contemporary Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2010)

⁴⁷ Taylor, Brian. "Civil-Military Relations Theory and the State" p.9

and unlikely to transition to democratic structures any time in the immediate future. In Dan Slater's words, "democratization in Southeast Asia has been more than a mere ripple, but less than a full-fledged wave."⁴⁸ In the region, democracies such as the Philippines and Indonesia co-exist alongside authoritarian civilian states such as Singapore and Malaysia and military regimes such as Myanmar.

The variation of civil-military relations, even in an authoritarian context, matters because of the structure of government – the balance of power between the civilians and the military mean that policy choices that are initiated will be different. For example, the military junta in Myanmar and the civilian single-party state in Singapore might both be autocratic regimes, but the nature of different forms of control mean that the policies undertaken in governance differ drastically. Civil-military relations in an authoritarian state define the institutions and interests of different elites; if the military is in control, institutions might be shaped so as to give predominance to the rule of the gun, while if the civilian authoritarian state controls the military it might see the latter as another policy tool to help retain control through diverse methods such as employment of disaffected youth, economic development or suppression.

In sum, the literature on civil-military relations in the region has expanded slowly since the states in the region acquired their independence. In this respect, most studies of Southeast Asian civil-military relations suffer from two broad problems: that of time and that of breadth. By ignoring the legacies set up in pre-modern state conditions, the analysis of these state risk missing out on important constraints that determined the future conduct of civilians and the military. Moreover, by restricting their focus to one or two countries, broad theoretical findings about the scope of civil-military

⁴⁸ Slater, Dan,. "Democracy and Dictatorship Do Not Float Freely: Structural Sources of Political Regimes in Southeast Asia" in Kuhonta *et al.* (eds.) *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region and Qualitative Analysis*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008) p.69

relationships in the region cannot be drawn. Lastly, given the current theoretical emphasis on democracy as an end of civil-military relations, civil-military relations in an authoritarian context tend to be under-analyzed in the region. As Evan Laksmana asserts, “Southeast Asian militaries... [have] suffered from too little theorizing as the focus thus far has been based on area studies scholarship of military politics.”⁴⁹

In terms of the larger academic debate, an examination of civil-military relation in Southeast Asia could provide some insight on the conduct of civil-military relations in states that are under conditions of “benign authoritarianism” and whether military elites will actively seek to overthrow or cooperate with the civilian leadership. Rather than taking democracy for granted or analyzing its transition or consolidation, the relationships between civilians and the military in states that are not democratic also matter. In this respect, perhaps the lessons learnt when analyzing one-party states in Southeast Asia might also hold valid insights in other countries which exemplify an authoritarian government but still possess distinct civilian and military sphere; for example countries as varied as the People’s Republic of China, Botswana, Uzbekistan or even one-party states in Europe such as the Russian Federation.

2.4 Building an Explanatory Framework

Having reviewed the major theories in the civil-military field as well as literature specific to Southeast Asia, we now attempt to build an explanatory framework in order to evaluate variation in civil-military relations in Southeast Asia. To evaluate the course of civil-military relations in the region, a proper baseline is needed – where a set of initial conditions can be observed and compared. The

⁴⁹ Laksmana, Evan. *Spoilers, Partners and Pawns: Military Organizational Behaviour and Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia* (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Relations, Working Paper 161, July 2008) p.7

baseline selected here is thus the state of civil-military relations at the moment of independence, when the process of modern state formation began. The table below shows the dates in which the seven countries covered in this study acquired independence:

Country	Year of Independence	Former state authority
Thailand	1932	Absolute Monarchy
Vietnam	1945	French
Philippines	1946	United States
Myanmar	1948	Britain
Indonesia	1949	Dutch
Malaysia	1957	Britain
Singapore	1965	Britain

As Alagappa notes, the moment of independence “marks the formal break with traditional and colonial rule and the beginning of an effort to construct a modern state.”⁵⁰ From this baseline, we can examine the influence of previous legacies that were created prior to independence and the interactions between domestic civilian and military actors that have shaped civil-military relations after independence. This means that we can analyze possible factors of variation in civil-military relations both in the long term as well as the short term, looking out for common patterns and trends.

This thesis looks at civil-military relations as an outcome of the interaction between civilian and political actors, who each have their own set of interests and act according to them. At the same time, these actors do not simply emerge out of a “blank slate”; they are also constrained by the conditions

⁵⁰ See Alagappa, “Introduction” in Alagappa (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* pg.31

that they inherited from events and structures that occurred previously. As such, though previous explanations of civil-military relations have emphasized different factors from the perspective of the civilians and the military, there is also a need to look at the long-term influence of these constraints.

To assess the factors of these three competing ideas, this thesis puts forward three explanations for the variation in civil-military relations in Southeast Asia. First, it focuses on the structural constraints laid down by legacies before independence, using a historical institutionalist framework to illustrate the influence of these legacies. Secondly, it looks at the strength and weaknesses of civilian political interaction, looking at the composition of the civilian polity and how the strength and weaknesses of political institutions affect civil-military relations. Finally, from the point of view of military actors, the thesis examines an alternative factor – the presence or non-presence of the military’s socio-economic role.

2.4.1 Pre-Independence Legacies: Path Dependence and Increasing Returns

Historical institutionalism looks at the ways in which institutions affect the choices of actors, causing the latter to be constrained by events that have happened in the past. The experiences and traditions so imposed upon actors play a part in their choices. According to Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, institutions represent “the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy.”⁵¹ As such, it is important to note that institutions are not merely formal administrative structures in a layman sense, but rather encompasses both formal (constitutional and administrative) as well as informal (traditions and norms) areas.

⁵¹ Hall, Peter A. and Rosemary C.R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." in *Political Studies* 44(5): p.938

Historical institutionalism is therefore “historical” because it conceptualizes a particular political phenomenon as being the result of a process that unfolds over a certain period of time. It is “institutional” because, as Paul Pierson argues, “it stresses that many of the contemporary implications of these temporal processes are embedded in institutions – whether these be formal rules, policy structures, or norms.”⁵² In regards to civil-military relations, these formal and informal experiences help to determine which type of civil-military relations were adopted because they set structural limits by which actors existed in. While the “new institutionalists” mentioned above looked at the role of the state in setting structural constraints, historical institutionalism examines the role of previous legacies – the processes that happened before the state was formed – set these constraints.

Two separate ideas within historical institutionalism are important for our study: path dependence and increasing returns. *Path dependence* can be defined as how past actions constrain present choices. According to Adrian Kay, “Path dependency occurs when a process, which has moved down to a particular track, is followed by additional moves on this same track.”⁵³ More importantly, the potential of changing tracks become far more difficult as actors become entrenched in the path they have gone down. As Skocpol and Pierson argue, “once actors have ventured far down a particular path, they are likely to find it very difficult to reverse course... the ‘path not taken’ or the political alternatives that were once quite plausible may become irretrievably lost.”⁵⁴

⁵² Pierson, Paul “The Path to European Integration: A Historical Institutional Analysis” in *Comparative Political Studies* 29(2) (1996) pp.124

⁵³ Kay, Adrian. “A Critique of the Use of Path Dependency in Policy Studies” in *Public Administration* 83(3) (2005): p.555

⁵⁴ Pierson, Paul & Skocpol, Theda. “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science” in Katznelson, Ira & Helen V. Milner (eds.) *Political Science: State of the Discipline* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2002) p.695

As such, the concept of *increasing returns* comes into effect. As actors embark upon a certain path, the relative benefits of continuing down that particular path increase since the costs of changing paths become higher. Without an exogenous incentive to reduce the costs of moving away, the inclination of actors will be to remain on the path already taken. In practical terms, this means that “institution or policy structure has locked itself in equilibrium for extended periods.”⁵⁵ Pierson argues further that positive feedback loops – where an initial decision results in momentum for further decisions along the same path – generate a self-reinforcement process that creates further incentive for continuing down the path.⁵⁶

Historical institutionalism thus extends the scope of the “new institutionalism” found above; while the authors above look at the state as a structural constraint, here we look at the role of historical processes that also give rise to structural constraints. Given the baseline of the moment of independence, this thesis explores a factor which has not been covered in depth in the civil-military relations literature: the idea of pre-independence legacies. With reference to Southeast Asia, these legacies included the state structures laid down by colonial occupiers, as well as the monarchy in Thailand. The history of how each state was formed thus laid the foundation for a specific type of civil-military relationship. In a comparative perspective, path dependence and increasing returns arising from these legacies caused variation in civil-military relations.

Legacies affected civil-military relations in two observable effects. Firstly, legacies set an informal structural constraint in *the legitimacy or non-legitimacy of force*. Independence was acquired in one of two ways – either by a peaceful transition from the former authority to indigenous leaders, or by

⁵⁵ Pollack, Mark. “Theorizing the European Union: International Organization, Domestic Polity, or Experiment in New Governance?” in *Annual Review Political Science* No.8 (2005) pp. 357-398

⁵⁶ Pierson, Paul & Skocpol, Theda. “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science” p.695

means of force that compelled the former authority to give up their power. The main structural constraint here was the normative belief in the right of the military to intervene in governance, which in turn determined the type of civil-military relations. The method in which independence was acquired therefore created a path dependency by assigning the primary role of nation-builder to either the civilians or the military in terms of legitimacy. If the military had a key role to play in securing independence, it would view (and be viewed) as being able to intervene and take an active role in political development. Moreover, as the initial process of national development started, a situation of increasing returns was created where the side already entrenched in legitimacy continued to consolidate its position.

As such, if independence was achieved by a peaceful transition, the influence of civilians would be stronger as the military's role in independence was circumscribed. In this context, a condition of civilian control is predicted. In contrast, if independence was achieved through wars of liberation or by revolutions, the military's position in the state would be enhanced, making its influence stronger relative to the civilians. A condition of civil-military partnership or military control would therefore be more likely to happen.

Secondly, legacies set a formal structural constraint in *the effectiveness of the civilian state apparatus*. The structures of governance that the newly independent state used did not come out from nowhere but were instead bequeathed to them by the previous authorities. Whether these structures were effective for a new civilian government helped to determine the course of civil-military relations. If the new civilian government was able to harness effective structures and implement policies, the military would be unable to intervene in governance. On the other hand, if the apparatus was weak the military, having a superior organizational capacity, would be incentivized to intervene in governance.

This proposition builds on Huntington's point that strong state structures are necessary for civilian control, as well as Aguero's assertion that the nature of the outgoing regime mattered.

As such, path dependence was set up by whether the new government adopted or rejected the existing state structure. Moreover, if the military already assumed a role in state governance due to civilian weakness, increasing returns would see the military protecting and extending its influence, leading to the possibility of a civil-military partnership becoming full military control. If a strong bureaucratic and administrative order had been left in place after independence, the influence of civilians would be stronger, leading to a higher possibility of civilian control. If bureaucratic and administrative officers were weak or discredited after independence, the influence of the military would be stronger, leading to civil-military partnerships or military control.

2.4.2 Party Politics and State Structure

The previous section looked at the structural constraints that were imposed upon actors in the newly independent states. However, the responses of the various civilian actors also need to be considered in examining variation in civil-military relations. For Huntington, the opportunity for military intervention lay not only with the military but also with the relative weakness of the civilian polity. This was reflected in Finer's notion that the military would have a higher propensity to intervene when faced with low levels of civilian "political culture" – "where the public is relatively narrow and is weakly organized, and where the institutions and procedures of the regime are in dispute also."⁵⁷ The organization of the civilian polity becomes a crucial factor in determining the type of civil-military relations that exist in a state. If the political environment is fragmented, with weak civilian governments ruling, the window of opportunity for the military to extend its influence (Finer's conception of

⁵⁷ Finer. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* p.79

opportunity) is present. Conversely, if the state is strong and civilians can enforce their policies and legislative dictates, the military will not only lack the opportunity but also the legitimacy to intervene. Given that the civilian government comes to power through a system of political parties, the *party structure* of the state matters in terms of civil-military relations.

The second set of explanations in this thesis therefore focuses on the party structure of civilian actors in the state. However, civil-military relations literature has not yet compared the relationship between civilian and military actors *across* different party structures in depth. Rather, comparative studies of civil-military relations tended to focus on states with similar party environments. We identify two types of party structure:

Multi-party: This political situation is characterized by the presence of two or more competing political parties, with solid but varying bases of support. Elections are contested competitively and these parties have the capacity to form a government either by themselves or in coalition.

Single-party: A dominant-party system is one where only one political party (or individual leading a party) can realistically form the government. Opposition parties may or may not be legally allowed to operate, but are too weak or ineffective to seriously challenge power in both cases.

Here, we observe a proposition regarding the influence of party structure on civil-military relations. Party structure thus affects the type of civil-military relations in terms of *concordance* or *discordance*. In a single-party state, civilian political actors exist in a sole dominant party, which is correspondingly stronger in terms of governance as it does not have to deal with any civilian rivals. In contrast, multi-party states see multiple civilian actors compete for power, leading to a fragmented

polity. Building on Schiff's theory mentioned previously, single-party states are predicted to have situations of concordance with the military, leading to civilian control. With a single-party state, there is an attempt to fuse the military and civilian leadership together, as both find mutual benefit in working together to maintain their interests. In contrast, multi-party states might generate conditions of discordance as different political actors possess different policies regarding the military, leading to situations where the military inserts itself into a partnership with whichever party is in control or even supplants the civilian party structure entirely.

2.4.3 Military Entrepreneurship and Civil-Military Relations

Having looked at structural constraints (pre-independence legacies) and the different responses of civilian actors in terms of party structure, the last set of explanations in this thesis focuses on military actors. To explain variation of civil-military relations, previous studies have focused factors such as the military's possession of coercive force and the motivation to initiate coups and supplant civilian governments. Indeed, all these explanations form part of the motivations for militaries to intervene. However, focus on the political motives of the military overlooks an important point – the resources needed by the military to intervene and how it acquires them.

Militaries also require resources to fund and maintain organizational coherence. While the primary method of funding comes from the civilian government, militaries may also seek to engage in activities that generate revenue outside their official activities. From the perspective of the civilian government, this can be seen as an expansion of military influence. As such, the presence of military activities in the socio-economic side of the state, together with the exact nature of these activities if they are present, play an important role in determining the type of civil-military relations.

The argument that the military should be separated from economics originates from Huntington's view that the ideal professional military, being technical experts in their field, should steer clear of economic affairs. In this context, the civilian government is responsible for controlling the sources of revenue assigned to the military, drawing up a budgetary plan and possessing control over the procurement of equipment and the distribution of resources. Control of military finances is thus a significant indicator of civilian control as the civilian government is able to indirectly control how the military can operate through allocation of the defense budget.

However, the military can seek to raise its own sources of revenue by engaging in business activities with the private sector, for example in the extraction of natural resources, barter trading and transportation levies. Given that these activities do not appear in the governmental budget, such revenue streams are termed *off-budget expenditures*.⁵⁸ In effect, the military trades on its organizational expertise and material capacity in order to strike deals that might secure it material resources that are outside the purview of the civilian government. Military personnel thus become not just professional officers but also *military entrepreneurs* – social and economic actors in the state. The structure of these business operations can range in scale from corporations that are owned by the entire military (e.g. the Thai Military Bank) to enterprises run at the regional command and unit level (e.g. logging companies in Java and Sumatra).

Off-budget expenditure for the military represents a way to increase its revenue and its influence as a direct result. Simply put, more resources mean more capacity for military equipment, recruitment, and maintenance. In terms of control, alternative revenue streams mean that the military

⁵⁸ Sköns, Elisabeth. "Understanding Military Expenditure: The SIPRI Experience" (The Military Expenditure and Arms Production Project, The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)) Paper presented at the *Workshop on Budgeting for Defence in Africa* (2002)

can undertake independent actions which might normally be rejected or frowned upon by the civilian government. By not being forced to disclose its expenses in an official defense budget, the military can use the revenue any way its leadership deems fit.

The presence or non-presence of military entrepreneurs thus becomes important in two respects in determining the type of civil-military relations. First, if the military can engage in independence business activities, it acquires an independent source of revenue. By taking budgetary control away from the civilian government, one lever of civilian control is lost. Secondly, the risks of active military intervention in politics or military coups rises if military entrepreneurs are present as militaries are incentivized to protect their operations from attempts at restriction from civilians. Indeed, Nordlinger has gone so far to claim that “the defense or enhancement of the military’s corporate interests is easily the most important interventionist motive,”⁵⁹ thus linking economic factors to the propensity of military intervention. Building on Feaver’s principal-agent model, here the agent (the military) attempts to escape the oversight of the principal (the civilian government) and establish their own independent operations. Thus, one variable which affects civil-military relations is the capacity of the military to engage in entrepreneurship.

The prevailing assumptions have been that the civilian government will view off-budget expenditures as negative, and view it as a threat to civilian control. However, given a weak state and a strong military, the civilian government might actually welcome the presence of off-budget expenditure activity by the military in some cases if it is in alignment with civilian developmental goals as well. Indeed, if the civilian sector does not have the capacity to provide public goods and state services, it might actually direct the military to engage in such activities in order to maintain its own level of

⁵⁹ Nordlinger. *Soldiers and Politicians* p. 75

support. How civil-military relations vary due to the presence or non-presence of military socio-economic activities therefore depends on the two variables mentioned above: the capacity of the military to engage in such businesses and the willingness of the civilian government to allow military businesses.

The table below summarizes a simple model of variance in civil-military relations given off-budget expenditures. Here, the vertical axis represents the civilian government while the horizontal axis represents the military:

Civil-Military Relations Given Military Economic Activities

Willing to allow off-budget expenditure activities	<p>Civil-Military Partnership (Harmonious)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians and military work together in state-sanctioned projects • “dual role elite” of military and civilian 	<p>Civilian Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilian-led development plans involving the military.
Unwilling to allow off-budget expenditure activities	<p>Civil-Military Partnership (Tension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict as civilians try to scale back military economic activity • Possible Military Control 	<p>Civilian Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight civilian control of military spending • Civilian Control
	Capacity for Military Entrepreneurship	No capacity for Military Entrepreneurship

Thus when the military engages in off-budget expenditure activities but the civilian sector attempts to clamp down on such activities, tensions in civil-military relations and potential coups might emerge as the military reacts against a perceived restriction of activities (the lower left-hand corner). In contrast, when the military has capacity to engage in off-budget expenditure activities and the civilian leadership is willing to allow it in order to aid state development, a situation of harmonious civil-military partnership occurs (the upper left-hand corner). In this case, the military works with the civilian on a mutually beneficial basis: the former gains a source of revenue that is unlikely to come from the latter due to its already weak state capacity, while the latter harnesses the organizational capacities of the military for economic and social development. For a weak civilian government, the military might sometimes represent the obvious and only way for state development to take place.

When the military has no capacity or no motivation to engage in off-budget expenditure activities and the civilian authority also clamps down on such activities, a situation where the military is beholden to civilian budget control arises (the lower right-hand corner). This represents the classic “civilian control” situation where the military must seek its revenue allocation from the civilian authority. Finally, when the military has no capacity to engage in off-budget expenditure activities but the civilian authority seeks to use the capabilities of the military in state development, a situation where civilian control is enforced results (the upper right-hand corner). In practice, however, this situation might turn out to be rare as the civilian authority might instead divert resources into its own bureaucracies for developmental purposes instead of expanding the military’s authority.

In terms of military businesses, this thesis therefore argues that military entrepreneurship affects variation in civil-military relations in different ways depending on two key variables: the willingness of the civilian government to allow military businesses and the capacity of the military to

engage in such businesses. Depending on the congruence or division between these two variables, the type of civil-military relations that a state adopts can be ascertained as military actors might be incentivized to protect their operations from attempts at restriction from civilians. However, if the civilian government is able to direct the military in projects of its own, civilian control might be reinforced even if the military engages in business activities.

2.5 Conclusion

In sum, the thesis has reviewed the theoretical literature on civil-military relations and presented above three potential explanations for potential variation. The next chapter will look at the history of the seven states covered in this study, focusing on how the relationships between civilian governments and the military evolved and therefore providing a foundation by which to test these explanations.

Chapter 3: Background of Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia

This chapter introduces the militaries of the seven states covered in this study, noting the incidences of clashes between civilians and the military as well how civil-military relations in each state have evolved. It describes how the evolution of the structure of government within each state occurred and how the relationship between soldier and state evolved. Following the description of the case studies, the chapter concludes by dividing the seven states into the different types of civil-military relations mentioned in the Introduction.

3.1 Thailand: Ebbs and Flows in the Civil-Military Balance

The formation of modern Thailand began in 1932 with a revolution that overthrew the absolute monarchy, followed by Japanese occupation in World War II. After the war, a series of coups and counter-coups occurred as various factions within the military attempted to assert control over governmental policy. Though most of the coups were small and easily crushed by civilian authorities, several incidents demonstrated the influence of the military in Thai politics. The 1951 “Silent Coup” was perhaps the most important of the early post-war military coups, as a group of military officials led by Police General Phao Siyanon forced Phibun – by this time a civilian leader – and King Bhumibol Adulyadej to reinstate the 1932 constitution over the 1949 draft, which contained clear stipulations barring the military from political posts.

Phao was in turn overthrown by Army Commander Sarit Thanarat in 1957, who consolidated his power through control of the Thai military and then passed on political leadership to his deputy Thanom

Kittikachom upon his death in 1963. Thanom presided over a decade of military rule, which lasted until a democratic uprising in 1973 and three brief years of parliamentary rule. In 1976, dissatisfaction from the military at the repressive policies of Prime Minister Thanin Kraiwichian sparked yet another coup. Yet after the 1973 democratic uprising, the Thai military began a trend of moving away from overt intervention and instead focused on building indirect influence through governmental policy. As James Ockey observed, “since the 1970s no military government [in Thailand] has lasted for much more than a year, whereas civilian rule has increasingly endured for longer periods and been more stable.”⁶⁰

Ultimately, the military seemed content to bring civilian leaders to the forefront of power, while at the same time maintaining influence over the state in the background. This trend was crystallized in the 1980s as a decisive shift in the Thai military’s role and mission was formalized in Prime Ministerial Order 66/2523, which asserted the crucial need for “democratic development” and envisioned the need for a civil-military partnership to combat the threat of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). While democratic reform saw increased civilian participation and a reduction in the military’s overt role in politics, Suchit Bunbongkarn notes that the order was actually a means of role expansion for the military, as it served to legitimize the latter’s role in rural economic development, build mass-based institutions and spread military ideas of democracy.⁶¹ Democracy was not an end but a means to help defeat the CPT as the greatest existential threat to the Thai state.

By the 1990s, civilian leadership had asserted itself as the primary method of political discourse in Thailand. Yet as the military adjusted itself to its new position, clashes between the two spheres of power continued to rear its head. A dramatic moment was the events of May 1992 (also known as

⁶⁰ Ockey, James. “Thailand: The Struggle to Redefine Civil-Military Relations” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.195

⁶¹ Bunbongkarn, Suchit “The Military and Democracy in Thailand” in Selochan (ed.) *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.70

“Black May”), where Army Commander Suchinda Kraprayoon overthrew the civilian government of Chatichai Choonhavan and cracked down on the mass protests that took place. According to Michael Connors, this event was the “defining moment” in terminating the military’s leadership role in politics.⁶² Indeed, the removal of the military’s image as a force for national leadership forced it to retreat again to the background of Thai politics, and the subsequent rule of civilian Prime Ministers (until the 2006 coup) was the longest stretch since 1932. Yet as Beeson and Bellamy argued, “the temporary return to the barracks was forced upon the military by the crisis of legitimacy, not entered into willingly.”⁶³

This temporary retreat lasted for a decade and a half, during which a measure of civilian control was able to exist in the Thai political system. Yet in September 2006, the military’s resumption of its role in civilian politics was dramatically asserted in a bloodless coup headed by Army General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, in which Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was deposed and a “Council for Democratic Reform” (which consisted entirely of military figures) set up to rule the country before fresh elections were called. Since the 2006 coup, the Thai military has kept a low profile. Instead, the political crisis has been played out between civilian factions, most notably between supporters of Thaksin, who reorganized themselves into the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), and supporters of the opposing Democrat and People’s Power Parties. Indeed, civilian control over the military was confirmed during the 2010 street protests, where the military obeyed Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva’s orders to move into Central Bangkok and use force against street protesters.

Ultimately, civil-military relations in Thailand have been marked by a series of ebbs and flows between the two sides, resulting in periods of military dominance followed by civilian dominance and

⁶² Connors, Michael. “Political reform and the state in Thailand” in *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29(2) (1999): pp.202-226.

⁶³ Beeson & Bellamy. *Securing Southeast Asia : The Politics of Security Sector Reform* p.202

shifting alliances and conflicts within these groups. In Thailand, coups and counter-coups not just across but also within factions have been the norm, rather than the exception, as levers of governmental change.

3.2 The Philippines: From Patronage to Growing Military Independence

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) played a relatively minor role in the politics of immediate post-independence years, being largely overshadowed by the Philippine Constabulary (PC) in terms of size and prestige. Indeed, the energies of the AFP were largely concentrated on defeating the Communist Hukbalahap movement in the 1940s and early 1950s. Yet all this was to change with the election of Ferdinand Marcos in 1965. Indeed, Marcos had cultivated strong ties within the AFP even before assuming the presidency. As Richard Kessler asserted, Marcos “built a political career by currying the military’s favor.”⁶⁴ Under President Manuel Roxas, he had been appointed as special assistant on veterans’ affairs, which provided him with ties and connections to prominent military figures and as a congressman was given a seat on the Committee of National Defense. Even when he assumed the presidency, Marcos initially served concurrently as the Secretary of National Defense for the first two years of his administration, building up ties to the AFP that would enable him to hold onto power in the future.

Marcos thus oversaw a simultaneous expansion of the AFP’s size – from 60,000 in 1972 to more than 250,000 by the time he was overthrown in 1986 – as well as a system of personal patronage and institution-building that ensured the primacy of the AFP in politics. One of the key methods used by Marcos was the manipulation of promotions and appointments to ensure personal loyalty; a stark

⁶⁴ Kessler, Richard J. *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989) p.218

example being the promotion of his cousin and chauffeur Fabian Ver from captain to brigadier general within five years. Moreover, he centralized and expanded the institutions of the military, building a National Defense College in Manila in 1966 and establishing centralized security and intelligence services. Under the Marcos regime, Viberto Selochan noted that “many officers had a stake in maintaining the government in office since they benefited from the practices the president permitted in the armed forces”⁶⁵ in both personal (patronage) and professional (institutional prestige) terms. As Eva Hedman concluded, “such initiatives enabled Marcos to consolidate control as they drew into his orbit a peculiar but powerful combination of an older generation of [generals] and an informal, clandestine, command structure within the armed forces to execute special operations.”⁶⁶

Given the narrow, patronage-based structure of the APF under Marcos, dissatisfaction against the regime started to mount by the 1980s both within and without the military. The Reform the Armed Forces (RAM) movement originated in Mindanao and initially started from younger, middle-level officers. Quickly spreading to the higher ranks, the RAM movement sought reforms for the AFP in a bid to depart from Marcos’ system of patronage. Indeed, in the wake of Senator Benigno Aquino’s assassination in 1985, mass protests broke out that eventually resulted in snap presidential elections and the return of a democratic civilian leadership under his widow Corazon Aquino. Again, in an echo of the Thai coup of 1932, the Filipino “People Power” movement that toppled Marcos in 1986 was a partnership between military and civilian factions. For all the power of the civilian movements in 1986, the military played just as critical a role in Marcos’ fall by withdrawing its support. The heads of the military then – Secretary of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and General Fidel Ramos – both harbored

⁶⁵ Selochan, Viberto. “Professionalization and Politicization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines” in Selochan *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.95

⁶⁶ Hedman, Eva-Lotta. “The Philippines, Not so Military, Not so Civil.” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.175

personal grudges against Marcos and made it clear that the military was not prepared to suppress civilian protests, which effectively removed Marcos' only hold on power.

Yet Marcos' institutional reforms would ensure that the influence of the AFP outlived his hold on power. As the Philippines undertook a transition from dictatorship to democracy, the military undertook a process of redefining itself in state governance. According to Hedman, "as certain military officers succeeded in making the transition to second careers in electoral politics, the military as an institution underwent a decisive re-subordination to the national legislature and local politicians as well as a marked reorientation from an internal political role to an... external defense role."⁶⁷ In this respect, the AFP was not about to surrender its privileges and institutional power gained but rather redefined the political rules of the game as a partnership between itself and the civilian parties.

Selochan notes that rather than viewing the "People Power" movement as a return to civilian "normality", the military viewed its relative supporting role as indicative of restraint and magnanimity on its part.⁶⁸ Here, Beeson and Bellamy point out that the only sustained period of economic and political stability came under the administration of Fidel Ramos, who was an ex-military general himself.⁶⁹ In the other three administrations (Corazon Aquino, Josep Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo), the military continued to be an important destabilizing force in politics. Both Corazon Aquino and Gloria Arroyo had to contend with multiple coup attempts while in power; the Aquino administration faced down six attempted coup attempts by Marcos loyalists and rebel soldiers in the first eighteen months of its existence. In a more extreme case, Josep Estrada's resignation in 2001 came

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.181

⁶⁸ Selochan, Viberto. "Professionalization and Politicization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines" in Selochan (ed.) *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.7-12

⁶⁹ Beeson & Bellamy. *Securing Southeast Asia : The Politics of Security Sector Reform* p.163

about when the AFP Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes withdrew his support in the face of civilian protests. As such, the AFP's role as an essential partner in Filipino governance was established.

3.3 Indonesia: The Military Fulfilling a "Dual Function"

Given the Indonesian military's (known as the Tentara Nasional Indonesia [TNI]) crucial role in securing independence from the Dutch, the first years of the Indonesian state were surprisingly marked by an assertion of civilian control and authority over the military. The Provisional Constitution of 1950 marked the formation of a parliamentary system of government, clauses for human rights and equality and a federal system of regional administration. However, a wide range of political parties based on ethnic, religious and geographical lines meant that a succession of weak civilian governments were established, with no consistency in policy implementation. Indeed, there were 17 cabinets between 1947 and 1958, with none lasting more than two years in power. Also threatening the unity of the state were the rise of various separatist movements, particularly the *Daru Islam* (Islamic Domain) in West Java, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in Sumatra and the Maluku independence faction composed of ethnic Ambonese. The need for military force to suppress these movements gradually saw the TNI ease itself into a position of power, especially when contrasted against continual civilian weakness.

Faced with a political situation in deadlock and the prospect of a continually weak civilian government, President Sukarno accepted the army commander General Nasution's appeal to declare martial law in 1957. Building on the executive powers conferred upon him, Sukarno set out a new form of governance by the imposition of "guided democracy", justifying it as an Indonesian form of democracy. One of the most important facets of this system was that it assured the military of

representation alongside political parties, by which “functional groups” from each faction would come together as part of a system that maintained Sukarno’s position at the top and ensured loyalty from the representatives of a broad spectrum due to the diffuse nature of these groups.

However, while the military was placed in a prominent position during Sukarno’s rule, there was no doubting the latter’s control – Sukarno utilized the military as one of many pillars to maintain his regime. When General Nasution attempted to coerce Sukarno to grant greater autonomy to the military in October 1952 by pointing cannons at the presidential palace, Sukarno was able to rally loyal units to his cause and force Nasution’s resignation.⁷⁰ Yet with the military given the authority to set up its own functional groups, a massive expansion of the military into the economic and political spheres of the nation began.

As such, a rivalry quickly began to develop between the military and Sukarno’s main political party, the Indonesian Communist party (PKI). This resulted in a military coup in October 1965 that destroyed the latter, forced Sukarno’s resignation and brought to power Major General Suharto, who would rule Indonesia until 1998 under a “New Order”. Suharto’s military background translated into the entrance of the military into all aspects of Indonesian government even as he shed his own military role to assume a veneer of democratic rule. Indeed, his ruling Golkar party was effectively buttressed by a formal and informal alliance with the military; party branches were headed by retired officers and directorates of “socio-political affairs” were incorporated under the purview of the TNI. On a constitutional basis, the role of the military in politics was shown by the guaranteeing of a certain number of seats in the bicameral parliament – reaching as high as 20% (100 out of 500) in the 1970s. As

⁷⁰ Laksmana. *Spoilers, Partners and Pawns: Military Organizational Behaviour and Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia* p. 10

Harold Crouch observes, "in the final analysis, [the TNI] backed Golkar and helped to ensure that it won overwhelming majorities in each election."⁷¹

Suharto's rule blurred the lines between the military and civilian leadership, with the former expanding its influence at the expense of the latter. At the Army Seminar in 1996, he articulated the key elements of a national role for the military - what would become known as *dwifungsi* (dual function). *Dwifungsi* meant that the military's role in state development was twofold: not only were they guarantors of the nation's security from internal and external threats, but they would also involve themselves in the economic and social development of the state. According to Robert Elson, "Suharto's track record demonstrated an enthusiasm for the military to embed themselves in business activity and a proclivity to allow close associates who demonstrated energy and entrepreneurial flair to have their way."⁷² Moreover, without a serious existential threat, the TNI's focus was mainly on combating internal security threats such as separatist movements in East Timor and Aceh, which required it to have a role in development in these areas and thus saw a concomitant expansion in its role.

The fall of Suharto in 1998, which was mainly caused by discontent over economic conditions in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, also brought about massive changes in the TNI. Indeed, the TNI had already begun to reform itself before Suharto's fall, led by Army Commander General Wiranto, who authored a "New Paradigm" that called for the retreat of the military from politics. According to Sukardi Rinakit, "the Indonesian new paradigm emerged as a response to intensifying normative pressures from civil society and the sheer complexity of running a modern economy."⁷³ Aiding the retreat was the fact that the TNI as a military had not always been a cohesive unit. Here, Robinson notes several lines of

⁷¹ Crouch, Harold *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988) p.20

⁷² Elson, Robert. *Suharto: A Political Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p.479

⁷³ Rinakit, Sukardi. *The Indonesian Military After the New Order* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005) p.481

tension that began to rear its head in the late New Order era: corrupt versus clean officers, generational lines between revolutionary-era and academy-trained officers and Islamic (“Green”) versus secular (“Red and White”).⁷⁴ These fault lines thus made it easier for a succession of civilian presidents (B.J. Habibie, Abdurraahman Wahid, and Megawati Sukarnoputri) to increase civilian control over the military, especially in its internal security role in the East Timor and Aceh crises. Most recently, the administration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (himself a retired general) has continued to rein in the military, curtailing its constitutional privileges.

However, results to exert civilian control over the military have been mixed. Yudhoyono’s “new paradigm” seems to be one of civilian partnership but not supremacy; as Beeson argues, the administration has been reluctant to reform the deep-rooted patterns of economic distribution and political patronage that the military possesses.⁷⁵ Though the TNI may have retreated from politics formally, its informal influence still remained strong. In the 2009 elections, all three electoral tickets included a retired general for either the president or vice-president.

3.4 Singapore: The Military as a “Civil Service in Uniform”

The origins of the Singaporean Armed Forces (SAF) came from the wake of separation with Malaysia in 1965, where the newly independent state was forced to reconsider its plans for national defense. Previously, military responsibilities had been undertaken by the British colonial administrators, who viewed Singapore as a strategic asset due to its geographical location and had built a naval base

⁷⁴ Robinson, Geoffrey. “Indonesia: on a new course?” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.245

⁷⁵ Beeson, Mark. “Civil–Military Relations in Indonesia and the Philippines: Will the Thai Coup Prove Contagious?” in *Armed Forces & Society* 34:3 (2008): pp.481

and air facilities there. Even upon the assumption of full internal self-government in 1959, the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) had assumed that defense responsibilities would not be an immediate priority in the future.

Indeed, the PAP had viewed merger with the Federation of Malaya as a natural path due to both economic and political reasons; it held that Singapore's economy was too small to survive on its own and that the strong anti-communist government in Malaya would help to suppress communist elements within the PAP itself. As Tim Huxley argued, with the presence of the British defense umbrella in both Singapore and Malaysia, there "was no serious expectation that the larger Federation, including Singapore, would need to accept the major share of responsibility for defending itself against external threats in the near to medium term."⁷⁶ In this regard, the only indigenous military units present in Singapore in the 1950s were volunteer militia units.

Once separation from Malaysia had occurred, the picture changed entirely for the PAP. In 1968, the British confirmed their intention to withdraw the bulk of their military forces out of the region by 1971 due to costs and the end of the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation, which would have left Singapore essentially defenseless without a rapid development of an indigenous military. The PAP thus turned to Israel for advice in terms of developing a military capability. Here, Huxley asserts that the Israeli influence on the SAF was "evident in the crucial decision... to transform the SAF from a relatively small force of regulars supplemented by volunteer reservists into an Israeli-style mass citizen force based on conscription and long-term compulsory reservist service."⁷⁷ To the PAP, Singapore's position as a Chinese-majority state amid Malay-majority neighbors was similar to Israel's strategic position – being surrounded by Arab states – which made the latter's model an attractive one to follow. Moreover,

⁷⁶ Huxley. *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* p. 2

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 11

universal conscription represented a way in which a low-cost military could be built up by avoiding the expense of maintaining a large standing army, allowing resources to be diverted to economic development.

The Israeli influence was not just confined to operational affairs; the close civil-military ties in Israel as well as the tradition of strong civilian control over the military was also noticed and absorbed by the PAP as an ethos. Indeed, the SAF was intended from the earliest stage of its development to become a purely apolitical military. According to Sean Walsh, “the fact that the first senior leaders of the SA were told explicitly that their task was not to create a professional army but rather a ‘civil service in uniform’... this [meant that] the military often is seen and even advertised as a means towards participation in politics.”⁷⁸ Given the PAP’s political domination of the Singaporean government (it has never lost more than 4 seats in the 94-seat parliament since independence) an apolitical military suited and complemented its political dominance precisely because the latter has had to adhere to the status quo.

To further emphasize the subordination of the military to civilian politics, the PAP introduced the concept of Total Defense, laying out five principles of security – Military, Civil, Economic, Social and Psychological – for Singapore. In this regard, the doctrine of Total Defense implied that the military was but one of the guarantors for National Security, and that its decision-making process ultimately rested with the civilian leadership. As Tan Tai Yong writes, “Under the doctrine of [Total Defense], the defense of Singapore rests ultimately on the entire society, not just the military establishment. And because national security is not the exclusive domain of the armed forces, there is no justification for the military

⁷⁸ Walsh, Sean P. “The Roar of the Lion City: Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture in the Singapore Armed Forces” in *Armed Forces & Society* 33(2) (2007) pp.272

whatsoever to lay claim to political power and material resources even in the severest of circumstances.”⁷⁹

The fusion between the civilian and military leadership in Singapore has also been reflected in the closeness between civilian and military elites. Having faced no external threat and a relatively stable internal situation, the military has become linked with the bureaucracy in terms of career paths. Indeed, there have been a high number of retired military personnel in the highest echelons of the PAP leadership as well as the civil service. At the other end of the spectrum, the SAF also offers scholarships to the best and brightest of each annual intake in order to attract talent into the ranks; these scholars are given the opportunity to study overseas expense-free in return for a 6-year bond to the SAF. Upon return, they are offered fast-tracked careers as well as an opportunity to move to the civilian administrative service should they so desire.

Here, Tan suggests that “the movement of ex-military figures into the civilian polity merely represents the [party’s] efforts to create a common pool of national elites who can be deployed *interchangeably* (italics added) in all institutional fields.”⁸⁰ Rather than exclusively concentrating on military skills, scholars in the SAF are trained for civil administration as well and given opportunities for assignment into the civil service. The movement of scholars and military elites represents a method to maximize the use of talented individuals in a small population pool but at the same time also binds them together. Instead of reinforcing separation based on personal patronage, the system has instead reinforced fusion among military and civilian elites of the same level.

⁷⁹ Tan, Tai Yong “Singapore: Civil-Military Fusion” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.287

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.290

3.5 Malaysia: Ethnic Civilian-Military Fusion

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), much like the SAF, was borne out of a smooth colonial handover instead of a revolutionary conflict. Given the British military presence in the Malaysian Peninsula until 1971, the Malay-dominated Barisan National party saw no pressing need for developing indigenous military forces and instead diverted resources into economic and social development under its first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. Until 1971, the prime mission of the MAF was anti-insurgency operations, first against communist insurgents on the Peninsula and then Indonesian guerillas in the short-lived Confrontation following merger with Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. In both these conflicts, the British forces assumed a lead role in planning and operations, with Malaysian soldiers and officers mainly confined to front-line roles. This top-down approach from the British in guiding the early evolution of the MAF led to a situation where the MAF absorbed the British military tradition and ethos – chief among which was the professionalization of the military and the principle of non-intervention in politics. Here, K.S Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy assert that “the evolving professionalism of the colonial armed forces was virtually adopted by native political elites upon the transfer of sovereignty in the period after World War II.”⁸¹ In this regard, the British colonial authorities were treated by political leaders not as an enemy but rather as a mentor by which institutional forms could be learnt from.

Being circumscribed in the early years of independence by the continuing presence of British and Commonwealth forces, the MAF’s importance as in national development was brought to importance by two factors: the race riots of May 1969, and the withdrawal of British forces in 1971. Riots sparked by minority anger at governmental policies that favored *bumiputras* (indigenous Malays),

⁸¹ K.S Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, “Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.261

were the first violent expression of internal dissent since independence and forced the Barisan National to reconsider the policy of inattention that had been paid towards the MAF previously. Yet even at the high point of civil disorder in 1969, the military was disinclined to intervene independently and instead placed itself under the command of a civilian led-National Operations Council. The tension generated by the riots led to the reinforcement rather than separation of ties between civilians and the military; as Crouch argues, “in the aftermath of the riots, the government forged closer links with high-ranking officers in order to obtain the backing of a predominantly Malay military to re-establish Malay political supremacy.”⁸²

According to Crouch, by the end of 1969 alone the number of infantry battalions had increased from ten to sixteen, with a concomitant expansion in the Police Field Force.⁸³ More significantly, Malays continued to maintain their dominance in the ranks of the MAF; as Chandran Jeshrun argued, the numerical expansion of the military was not matched by socially inclusive policies and the dominance of Malays already present in the higher ranks of the MAF “worked effectively to perpetuate the continued lopsidedness in the ethnic composition of the officer corps.”⁸⁴ In this regard, the internal security situation in 1969 forced the MAF to expand because it was viewed not just as a guarantor of stability but also a nation-building device where ethnic Malays could consolidate their power.

Upon the withdrawal of British forces in 1971, the MAF was forced again to redefine its mission and roles. Previously only accustomed to the maintenance of internal security, the MAF now had to equip itself against external threats with the loss of the British defense umbrella. Indeed, the British

⁸² Crouch. “The Military in Malaysia” in Selochan (ed.) *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.123

⁸³ Ibid., 123

⁸⁴ Jeshrun, Chandran. “Development and Civil-Military Relations in Malaysia: The Evolution of the Officer Corps” in Djiwandono, J. Soedjati and Yong Mun Cheong (eds.) *Soldiers And Stability In Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988) p.257

withdrawal was accompanied by a worsening of the security situation in the 1970s due to the fall of Saigon to North Vietnam, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 and Thailand's conflict against southern separatist movements in its territory on the border with Malaysia. Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak initiated a five-year military plan named *Perkembangan Istimewa Angkatan Tentera* (PERISTA) in 1978 in an effort to modernize the military. By the end of the plan in 1983, the size of the MAF had increased from 52,500 to 80,000 men, while a marked qualitative improvement was also present in the acquisition of armor, artillery, armored personal carriers, and fast attack aircraft.⁸⁵ PERISTA thus transformed the MAF from an anti-insurgency force into a modern military, capable of responding to any potential external threat. More importantly, the fact that top military leaders submitted to a civilian-led plan to modernize the armed forces was a sign of healthy civilian control in Malaysia.

The structure of solid civilian control over the MAF has endured to the present day. With a Malay-dominated leadership in both the military and civilian elites, both sides obviously see more advantages in working together instead of factionalism and internal conflict. Indeed, both factions cooperated in advancing the economic interests of Malays; under the New Economic Policy promoted by the government, the MAF was involved in aid and civil development projects under the doctrine of *Keselamatan dan Pembangunan*, or KESBAN (Security and Development). In this sense, developmental projects were also seen as a responsibility of the MAF. Moreover, because most of the projects were directed at communities with lower standards of living, the main beneficiaries of MAF developmental efforts were Malays. According to Nathan and Govindasamy, "[KESBAN] was very much in line with the government's goal of reshaping the political economy to benefit Malay interests."⁸⁶ Another demonstration of the MAF's importance was seen in 2003, when it began a program of selective

⁸⁵ K.S Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, "Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests" p.262

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.267

conscription where about a fifth of each batch of 17-year olds would be enlisted for a three month program of military service.

In this sense, the MAF has evolved from a small anti-insurgency force to an important part of the state apparatus, with roles both in terms of external and internal security and development. Yet given the Malay domination in politics and the higher ranks in the military, ethnicity is still an important factor in the stability of civil-military relations in Malaysia. Crouch concludes by highlighting that “of particular importance in the Malaysian context is the communal make-up of society that places the Malay-dominated military on the same side as the Malay-dominated government and bureaucracy.”⁸⁷ Given that ethnicity is the most important and visible social cleavage in Malaysia, the absence of overt ethnic conflict between the military and civilians means that civil-military relations have been and are likely to be peaceful for the immediate future.

3.6 Myanmar: Democracy Turned Military Junta

Myanmar is the only state in the region with a purely military regime controlling the political system of the country. In this respect, civil-military relations cannot be examined in terms of control because it is clear that the military holds all the levers of governance; civilian political expression is mainly measured in terms of opposition rather than any involvement in governance.

Yet in the wake of securing independence of the British, Myanmar seemed to be the state in Southeast Asia with the greatest prospects of democratic governance. Under the 1947 constitution, a federal system of governance, with provisions for civilian control over military spending and

⁸⁷ Crouch. “The Military in Malaysia” p.136

appointments under a secretary of defense, was promulgated and free and fair elections were held four times between 1947 and 1960, with contested elections and a healthy opposition party. Even in 1960, the election of U Nu as Prime Minister had come against the military's preferred candidates U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nye. Until 1962, the Myanmar armed forces (also known as the Tatmadaw) were largely held accountable to their civilian superiors, focusing both on handling external threats in the form of the Chinese Kuomintang's arrival in 1950 and internal violence by insurgents from the ethnic Karen minority.

Yet by 1962, a military coup, led by the military chief of staff General Ne Win, had overthrown U Nu and changed the dynamic of civil-military relations in the state entirely. The twin threats of the Chinese Kuomintang invasion and internal insurgencies had forced the Tatmadaw into a process of institutional transformation and expansion, seen most clearly in a military buildup that expanded its strength from 2,000 in 1948 to more than 100,000 in 1962. As Mary Callahan notes, "the process of planning brought about significant realignments of influence, loyalties and resources within the Tatmadaw."⁸⁸ The numerical expansion of the Tatmadaw was matched by an administrative consolidation that strengthened the organizational capabilities of the military and allowed it to compete against a civilian state apparatus weakened by political infighting and corruption. Indeed, Callahan notes that "improvements in civilian bureaucratic capabilities did not keep pace with the transformation of the army,"⁸⁹ which spurred on elements in the Tatmadaw to push for the military to become the architect of state governance instead of civilian control.

The 1962 coup saw Ne Win confirm his hold on power, exiling U Nu and forming the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP), which would rule Burma for the next 25 years. Though essentially a front

⁸⁸ Callahan, Mary. "Burma: Soldiers as State Builders." in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.419

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.421

for Tatmadaw rule, the BSPP did attempt to evolve into a mass political party after 1971, introducing a new constitution three years later that formally declared it to be the only legal political party in the state. As Robert Taylor notes, the main transition between the periods of direct military rule (1962-1974) and BSPP rule (1971-1988) was in terms of formalities; the central Revolutionary Council and Security and Administration Committees were replaced by BSPP party offices.⁹⁰ However, the two different structures of power created opportunities for patronage networks and vertical divisions of authority to flourish; Callahan noted a conflict between regular military officers and party leaders in the 1980s where the military and “civilian” leaders clashed over the level of influence and power in the regions.⁹¹ In 1976, the chief of staff and defense minister General Tin Oo was sacked by Ne Win over disagreements over how to manage the Burmese economy.⁹²

These rivalries between the military and the BSPP led to demonstrations and a military backlash in August 1988, where Ne Win was forced to resign and General Saw Maung assumed power. Ultimately, civilian opposition was crushed by the military and the BSPP was replaced by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In stark contrast to the 1960 elections, the SLORC refused to recognize the results of the elections and instead continued military rule upon the victory of Aung San Su Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD). What followed instead in the SLORC was a series of coups *within* the military that saw different factions competing against each other for patronage and power. Indeed, Saw Maung himself was forced to resign in 1992 by his deputies Than Shwe, Khin Nyunt and Tin Oo.

⁹⁰ Taylor, Robert. “The Military in Myanmar” in Selochan (ed.) *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.140

⁹¹ Callahan. “Burma: Soldiers as State Builders.” p.423

⁹² Lintner, Bertil. *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency Since 1948* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994) p. 178.

Yet even as factions in the military vied for power, the civilian opposition was largely muted, exemplified in the NLD leader Aung San Su Kyi's continual detention since 1990. As Win Min argues, "the immediate, critical impact of [Saw Maung's purge] was to dash all hopes of a transfer of power to the elected [civilian] NLD."⁹³ With the need to consolidate their own control over the military, the new generals ensured that civilian leaders would not possess any substantial power in the post-1988 political scene. As Taylor writes, "the establishment of the SLORC government and the continuation of martial law government have been justified in terms of the necessity to establish law and order in the country so that democracy can be established."⁹⁴

With civilian opposition non-existent, struggle for power and control came from within the ranks of the military. As Mary Callahan notes, the Myanmar military was not a monolithic institution but rather a messy collective of factions and groups organized around personal and structural dynamics.⁹⁵ Andrew Selth details the rise of the regional commanders in the 1980s and 1990s, showing that infighting at the centre forced commanders in Rangoon to secure the loyalty of regional commanders, causing the latter group "to gain tremendous political and economic power and begin operating like warlords."⁹⁶ As Win Min shows, these groupings have formed out of *saya-tapyit* (patron-client) relations where the loyalty of officers is determined by where they have served and opportunities for career advancement.⁹⁷ Indeed, Than Shwe's base of power was built on his former subordinates from 88 Light Infantry Division and the Southwest Regional Command, which he previously commanded.

⁹³ Win Min "Looking Inside the Burmese Military" in *Asian Survey* 48:6 (2008) p.1018

⁹⁴ Taylor, Robert. "The Military in Myanmar" in Selochan (ed.) *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific* p.148

⁹⁵ Callahan. "Burma: Soldiers as State Builders." p.427

⁹⁶ Selth, Andrew. *Burma's Armed Forces: Power Without Glory* (Norwalk, CT: Eastbridge, 2002) p. 262

⁹⁷ Win Min "Looking inside the Burmese Military" p.1020

By 1997, the growing power of regional commanders worried the central military government in Rangoon (now called the State Peace and Development Council [SPDC]), who decided to purge several of the commanders and create new administrative boundaries to reward supporters and dilute the power of individual commanders. The same year, three of the most powerful regional commanders (Tun Kyi, Kyaw Ba and Myint Aung) were charged with corruption and put under house arrest.⁹⁸ A second round of purges followed in 2001, where regional commanders were no longer automatically made members of the SPDC and their authority was tightly controlled to their respective regions. With the power of the regional commanders at its lowest ebb, attention turned to infighting at the central leadership level. In 2004, Khin Nyunt and the military intelligence department he headed were purged by Than Shwe, leaving him and his protégés at the centre of power in Rangoon. At the same time, Maung Aye, who Than Shwe had handpicked for the position of army chief in 1992, began building up his own political power through the distribution of appointments and patronage, leading Than Shwe to do the same in two major reshuffles in 2005 and 2008.

As of 2010, Myanmar remains the only country in the region with an overt military junta. Even though the SPDC has promised to hold elections in October 2010, the military will still possess the power to nominate its representatives to 25% of the seats in parliament. It remains to be seen whether an unfavorable result will cause the 1990 crackdown to be repeated again, or whether the military will back down as they did in 1960. Myanmar provides an interesting counterexample for this study – rather than civilians attempting to control the military, the military attempts to control the civilians both through coercion as well as constitutional maneuvers. In a region with civilian control established throughout other states, Myanmar's structure of governance gives rise to questions of how the military has managed to maintain control over civilians.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.1026

3.7 Vietnam: Revolutionary Struggle and State-Building

Of all the militaries covered in this study, the Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) has been the most battle-tested, having fought three great powers (France, the United States and China) and also undertaking campaigns in Laos and Cambodia. As with the Indonesian military, the VPA's origins could also be found in a post-World War II revolutionary struggle for independence, in this case against the French. As Greg Lockhart argues, the origins of the VPA cannot be separated from the birth of the modern Vietnamese nation.⁹⁹ Indeed, the VPA was built from a bottom-up rather than a top-down process – while the Ho Chin Minh government and the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) sanctioned the formation of a regular army, its limited resources and lack of control meant that its main contribution to the building of the VPA was through providing a coordinating mechanism for decentralized efforts at military organization.

Given the initial guerilla nature of its combat operations, the VPA was initially a makeshift amalgamation of irregular volunteers, self-defense forces, “national salvation” units and peasant conscripts. Military-building efforts were done on a provincial level where military units worked closely with the people and acted not just as national liberators but also state builders. Here, Thaveeporn Vasavakul argues that “Following the strategy for a people's war, by 1954 mobilized peasants had formed village guerillas that in turn formed quasi-regular units of regimental strength and ultimately main-force divisions.”¹⁰⁰ As the development of the country proceeded apace, the VPA gradually

⁹⁹ Lockhart, Greg. *Nation in Arms: The Origins of the People's Army of Vietnam* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989) p. 339

¹⁰⁰ Vasavakul, Thaveeporn. “Vietnam: From Revolutionary Heroes to Red Entrepreneurs” in Alagappa, (ed.) *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* p.340

became a regular military, culminating in the victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 that effectively broke French control in Vietnam. The bottom-up process was again repeated in the insurgency in South Vietnam, where the Viet Cong (National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam) initially started out as a guerilla force before becoming a quasi-regular army coordinating with the VPA against the United States.

This close relationship between civilians and the army assured the latter of an important place in Vietnamese governance following the unification of the country in 1975. Moreover, after the invasion of Cambodia in 1978 to remove Pol Pot's regime and the accompanying border conflict with China, the VPA was still seen as crucial to state security. However, its decentralized origins were soon turned into a centralized decision-making process under the VCP, who had transformed themselves from a grassroots movement to a governing party in the country. In contrast to the decentralized model of control in the 1950s, by the 1970s the VCP had come to exert tight control over the VPA. Rather than civil-military relations, Carlyle Thayer has used the term "party-military relations" to describe the chain of control in Vietnam.¹⁰¹ In this regard, the VCP set a large number of oversight committees to ensure party control of the VPA, including party committees attached to military units as well as the Central Military Party Committee which implemented central VCP directives in the military.

The spread of influence between the VCP and the VPA was not just a one-way process. William Turley argues that the conditions in which the VCP came to power – carrying out an almost constant violent struggle for national liberation – necessitated a close fusion of party and military.¹⁰² As such, the importance of the VPA led to a commensurate amount of influence within the VCP itself. According to

¹⁰¹ Thayer, Carlyle. *The Vietnam People's Army Under Doi Moi* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994) p.3

¹⁰² See Turley, William. *The Second Indochina War: A Short Political and Military History 1954-1975* (New York, NY: Signet, 1987)

Thayer, about 70 percent of all VPA officers concurrently held party membership and almost all the officers in the VPA from company level upward were party members.¹⁰³ Many of the top political leadership – General Vo Nguyen Giap, Nguyen Chi Thanh and Hoang Van Thai – were ex-VPA leaders, while civilian party leaders such as Ho Chin Minh and Le Duan also participated actively in VPA campaign planning. Moreover, with the party's weaknesses in terms of civilian administration and economic development – thirty years of almost continual warfare with the French, the United States and the Chinese had devastated the economy – the military was seen by the VCP as the ideal organizational entity to help develop the nation. Even as the party strictly controlled the roles and missions of the VPA, the latter was still assigned considerable responsibility and power in state-building activities in a two-way relationship between party and military.

In 1986, a key shift in the VPA's role in state policy occurred at the Sixth National Party Congress in 1986, where the VCP leadership endorsed the policy of *doi moi* (renovation). Emphasizing domestic market reform and rapid economic development, the VCP resolved to secure peace with its neighbors and reorient the VPA towards national development. Accordingly, Resolution 2 of the 1987 Congress called for a complete withdrawal of forces from Cambodia and Laos and normalization of relations with China. Between 1988 and 1993, the size of the armed forces was also cut by half, and the defense budget by two-thirds.¹⁰⁴ As Vasavakul notes, the policy of *doi moi* was also spurred on by the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet aid.¹⁰⁵ The most important practical expression of the *doi moi* philosophy was the formation of military-owned enterprises (MOEs), where VPA units involved in production and defense industries could term themselves MOEs. At one stroke, the VPA's position in the Vietnamese economy had been legalized; a

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.54

¹⁰⁴ Vasavakul. "Vietnam: From Revolutionary Heroes to Red Entrepreneurs" p.345

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.345

new General Department of Defense Industry and Economy was set up to structure VPA activities and fit them into the overall developmental framework articulated by the VCP. By 1995, the VPA operated more than 335 MOEs, with a sixth of its personnel employed in them.¹⁰⁶ Here, Vasavakul characterizes the transition of the VPA as one from “revolutionary fighters to state entrepreneurs”.¹⁰⁷ From the most battle-tested military in Southeast Asia, the VPA undertook a subtle transition into an agency that possessed influence in both defense and state development.

3.8 Summary and Conclusion

Thus far, the thesis has presented three alternative explanations in Chapter 2 for explaining possible variance in civil-military relations. From the description of the seven case studies in this chapter, we see that this phenomenon of variance exists in Southeast Asia. Returning back to the three types of civil-military relations noted in Chapter 1, we can group these case studies into those three categories:

Civilian Control: Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam represent the examples of this situation in Southeast Asia. As seen above, coup attempts have not happened in these countries, and the military unquestionably obeys the orders of the civilian government.

Civil-Military Partnership: Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines represent the examples of this situation in Southeast Asia. In these countries, the military has exerted varying degrees of influence upon the civilian government, making its policy preferences known. Policy decisions have been decided

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.345

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.345

upon both by military and civilian leaders. On occasion, the military has launched coups to displace civilian rule.

Military Control: Myanmar represents the example of this situation in Southeast Asia. The military junta has complete control over governance and state functions, and civilian political expression is strictly suppressed.

Having established both the existence of variance in civil-military relations and presented several explanations for it, the thesis attempts to link theory and evidence in the following three chapters. Going forward, the thesis tests the explanatory power of the three sets of propositions mentioned in Chapter 2 against the empirical evidence presented in the case studies in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Pre-Independence Legacies in Southeast Asia

In attempting to explain the variation of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia, one is initially struck by the complicated scale of these relations. At first, the relationship between civilians and the military in the region seems a vast tangle, bound together with many different threads. The militaries are not the neat and professional armies that Huntington posited, yet also not entirely convergent with civilian society in the Janowitzean sense. Militaries in Southeast Asia have built vast corporate empires, established their own unique doctrines of state-building and launched coups in the name of the national interest. Indeed, as James Ockey asserts, “Each military is a unique institution, with its own historical memory, and its mindset is shaped by that memory.”¹⁰⁸ This argument could be extended to the civilian government as well – the different civilian leaders in each state in the region possess different ideas of a normatively “ideal” relationship between the civilians and the military.

Douglas Bland’s theory of shared responsibility argued that civilian control of the military is “managed and maintained through the sharing of responsibility between civilian leaders and military officers *conditioned by a nationally evolved regime of principles.*”¹⁰⁹ As such, this thesis traces the evolution of different civil-military relations in the region to the legacies that molded the mindsets of civilian and military leaders – specifically, pre-independence legacies. These experiences, left behind by the former colonial authorities for indigenous elites, would lay down paths that structured the initial shape of civil-military relations in each state according to the different types mentioned in the Introduction: civilian control, civil-military partnership or military control. By building path dependencies

¹⁰⁸ Ockey. “Thailand: The Struggle to Redefine Civil-Military Relations” p.189

¹⁰⁹ Bland, David. “Managing the ‘Expert Problem’ in Civil-Military Relations” in *European Security* 8:3 (1999): pp.25-43

that created increasing returns for actors to stay on the path already established, different patterns of civil-military relations were established, explaining the initial variation in civil-military relations.

4.1 The Legitimacy of Force

The first path dependency of pre-independence legacies involved the method in which the independence was achieved by the state - was it achieved through violent revolutionary struggle, or through a peaceful handover? In the first case, the military would emerge as the vanguard of the independence movement due to the presence of conflict, while in the second case the civilian leadership would be at the head of the transition due to a peaceful transition from the former authority to the indigenous government. As Carolina Hernandez argued, “[uprisings] conferred upon the military a great deal of popular legitimacy, which induced the general population to accept military intervention in politics.”¹¹⁰ Here, the popular acceptance of leadership was conferred upon the group which had been seen to be more successful in leading the nation to independence. Whether the pre-independence authority chose to resist or cooperate with independence movements resulted in *the legitimacy or illegitimacy of military force* as a tool to effect policy change in the newly formed states.

In the seven states covered in this study, we initially divide them into states that achieved independence by violent or peaceful means:

Country	Year of Independence	Former state authority	Method of Achieving Independence
Thailand	1932	Absolute Monarchy	Violent
Vietnam	1945	French	Violent

¹¹⁰ Hernandez, Carolina G. “ Political Institution Building in the Philippines” in Scalapino, Robert A., Seizaburo Sato and Jusuf Wanandi (eds.) *Asian Political Institutionalization* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, California, 1986) p.67

Philippines	1946	United States	Peaceful
Myanmar	1948	Britain	Peaceful
Indonesia	1949	Dutch	Violent
Malaysia	1957	Britain	Peaceful
Singapore	1965	Britain	Peaceful

Here, we see three states that achieved independence through violent means, and four that achieved independence through peaceful means. As seen in Chapter 3, Thailand's monarchy was overthrown by a coup in 1932, while Indonesia and Vietnam fought wars of national liberation against the Dutch and French respectively. In contrast, the Philippines achieved independence from the United States in 1946, while Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore achieved a peaceful transition from British colonial rule in 1948, 1957 and 1965 respectively. As such, this section proposes that:

- 1) If independence was achieved by a peaceful transition, the influence of civilians would be stronger as the military's role in independence was circumscribed. In this context, a condition of civilian control would be predicted.

- 2) In contrast, if independence was achieved through wars of liberation or by revolutions, the military's position in the state would be enhanced, making its influence stronger relative to the civilian authority. A condition of civil-military partnership or military control would therefore be predicted.

4.1.1 Peaceful Transitions

The states which had a peaceful transition in the region were Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Myanmar. As was seen in Chapter 3, in Malaysia and Singapore, the British colonial

authorities were careful to grant autonomy to indigenous civilian elites in stages, and at the same time continued to assume the responsibility for external defense until a decade after both states had declared independence. Moreover, the rules and regulations regarding non-intervention in politics had been laid down by the British prior to their withdrawal and then embedded in the civilian authorities who shaped their militaries according to this mentality. The path here was laid by the British decision not to contest independence, but rather to manage it in a way that prioritized the civilians over the military.

Since the British continued to assume responsibility for external defense until 1971 in both cases, there was no space for an independent military path to be established. In both cases, the military as an institution was essentially built *after* independence, not before it. Upon independence, the militaries in both states were composed of anti-insurgency and constabulary forces rather than regular armies. The military could not compete with civilian institutions for influence, hence adopting a subordinate position under civilian control.

As such, the path of decolonization laid down by the British meant that the military in both states were unable to exert dominance over the civilian authorities since the latter's authority had already been entrenched by the path of peaceful transition laid down by the British. In terms of increasing returns, the political alternative of an influential military thus became too costly for military figures to contemplate. The legitimacy of force was direct toward the preservation of the state, rather than displacing civilian authority. This therefore led to a situation of stable civilian authority, with the Huntingtonian model of professional militaries and objective civilian control which has existed to the present.

In the Philippines, the transition from American rule was also peaceful, with independence being granted in the Treaty of Manila in July 1946. As with Malaysia and Singapore, the colonial authority maintained responsibility for the defense of the newly independent state, with the United States still assuming responsibility for external defense. Given the geographical proximity of the Philippines to China and Taiwan, the United States saw it as a useful point for military bases as well as a strategic bastion that could back up the Seventh Fleet in Taiwan and American forces in Korea. Indeed, under two agreements signed in 1947 (the Military Bases Agreement and the Military Assistance Agreement), the United States “assumed de facto responsibility for securing the Philippine Republic against external threats or challenges.”¹¹¹ As such, the energies of the AFP were not directed towards external threats but rather towards internal cohesion and state development. In this regard, one would expect a path-dependent situation of civilian control to occur as the elements of a peaceful transition from the colonial authority was in place. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Philippines remained a model of civilian supremacy over the military, leading Carolina Hernandez to conclude that it was “one of the last strongholds of civilian control over the military in the Third World.”¹¹²

However, the Filipino state of civil-military relations soon departed from the path of civilian control with the rule of Ferdinand Marcos. For Marcos, the route to consolidating his support was through ensuring the military’s loyalty, which necessitated both a material as well as legal expansion of the AFP’s role in the state apparatus. As Beeson and Bellamy noted, “the pivotal moment in independent Philippine history that entrenched and institutionalized a dominant, more politically interventionist, less disciplined role for the military was the declaration of martial law by Ferdinand Marcos in 1972.”¹¹³ As seen in Chapter 3, the Marcos reforms saw the entry of the AFP into politics, a

¹¹¹ Hedman. “The Philippines, Not so Military, Not so Civil” p.170

¹¹² Hernandez, Carolina G. “ Political Institution Building in the Philippines” p.67

¹¹³ Beeson & Bellamy. *Securing Southeast Asia : The Politics of Security Sector Reform* p.158

role that it continued to maintain even after the fall of Marcos. Indeed, the civilian coups that toppled Marcos and Joseph Estrada could more correctly be described as civilian-military coups: popular demonstrations combined with military withdrawal of support. The subsequent multiple coup attempts faced by the Aquino and Arroyo administrations cemented the role of the military in politics, thus showing how the situation in the Philippines transitioned from civilian control to civilian-military partnership.

In Burma, the initial transition from British colonial rule was peaceful, with the British handing over internal self-government to an Executive Council in 1947 and full independence in 1948. As in the other three cases, initial patterns of civil-military relations were marked by a path of civilian control. Under the 1947 constitution, a federal system of governance, with provisions for civilian control over military spending and appointments under a secretary of defense, was promulgated and free and fair elections were held four times between 1947 and 1960, with contested elections and a healthy opposition party. Even in 1960, the election of U Nu as Prime Minister had come against the military's preferred candidates U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nye. Indeed, civilian control of the military lasted until the abrupt coup of 1962, which laid the path for the subsequent military junta to take power and form a situation of military control.

As such, we observe that in the four case studies that involved a peaceful transition from pre-independence authorities, a situation of initial civilian control was present in all four cases. However, the Philippines entered a situation of civil-military partnership after Ferdinand Marcos took power and declared martial law in 1972, while Myanmar turned into a situation of military control after Ne Win's coup in 1962. In this respect, while Malaysia and Singapore continued on a path of solid civilian control,

the Philippines and Myanmar diverged from it. In the latter two cases at least, the legitimacy of force was not sufficient to predict the course of civil-military relations.

4.1.2 Violent Transitions

On the other hand, we observe three states that had a tradition of violent revolutionary struggle: Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

In Indonesia, the military underwent a baptism of fire in the struggle for independence against the Dutch, placing it in an uncontested and essential role in the new national structure. Even though militia groups and other military bodies formed by the Japanese occupiers in World War II existed prior to the revolutionary period (from 1945-1949), it was only as a result of revolution that a truly national military was formed. By the successful acquisition of independence through military victory, the essential attitudes and mentality of the Indonesian armed forces were formed, especially among its leaders. According to Geoffrey Robinson, by the conclusion of the struggle for independence “many military officers had developed a deep contempt for the country’s civilian leadership... and believed that by continuing to fight the Dutch they had saved the nation and thereby earned the right to play a central role in political life.”¹¹⁴ In sum, the TNI’s role in the development of the Indonesian state was established *before and within* the state-development process rather than after it, giving it a source of authority and legitimacy that its civilian counterparts could not match.

As Beeson and Bellamy noted, “Unlike the Malaysian experience, the decolonization process in Indonesia was violently opposed by the colonial power, a reality that gave a particular intensity to the

¹¹⁴ Robinson, Geoffrey. “Indonesia: on a new course?” p.230

independence struggle and a concomitant authority to the ultimately victorious indigenous forces as a consequence.”¹¹⁵ As such, the military was looked towards as a source of stability by the new civilian governments, and eventually used by Sukarno and Suharto to consolidate their regimes. Given the strong position of the military in Indonesia, it found itself in a role as the guardian of the state as well as the beneficiary of its development after defeating the Dutch.

According to Nico Schulte Nordholt, “the [Indonesian] military considered themselves to be the protectors of the revolution... contributions from politicians and diplomats were systematically ignored and diminished, and those of the army put on an ever-higher pedestal.”¹¹⁶ Hence, the Indonesian military considered itself responsible for the development of the nation, and assumed important roles in both the political and economic spheres of the nation. In this regards, the situation of civil-military partnership that existed in Indonesia was laid down in the initial struggle for independence. Moreover, as the Indonesian military’s influence in the country grew, there were increasing incentives to protect its position, which only reinforced its movement down the path of a civil-military partnership.

In Thailand, the role of the military in domestic politics was enshrined as a result of the violent revolution in 1932, when a group of mid-ranking military and civilian officials formed the *Khana Rasadorn* [The People’s Party] and overthrew King Prajadhipok, turning what had been an absolute monarchy into a constitutional democracy. In this regard, as Bunbongkarn argues, the coup of 1932 was not a purely military coup but rather one where “government authority rested in a coalition of military and civilian bureaucrats; they were oligarchic in nature.”¹¹⁷ This partnership between the military and civilian elites was also noticed by Ockey, who wrote that the 1932 was a decisive event that “cemented

¹¹⁵ Beeson & Bellamy. *Securing Southeast Asia : The Politics of Security Sector Reform* p.131

¹¹⁶ Nico Schulte Nordholt “The Janus Face of the Indonesian Armed Forces” in Koonings, Kees & Dirk Kruijt (eds.) *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy* (Urecht: Zed Books, 2002) p.136

¹¹⁷ Bunbongkarn, Suchit “The Military and Democracy in Thailand” p.50

the relationship between the bureaucracy and military.”¹¹⁸ Yet the military soon began to exert its influence over its civilian partners; as Eji Murashima argues, “in [1932] Thai military men and their thinkers substituted their main political thought for constitutionalist and economic thought.”¹¹⁹ By 1938, Phibun Songkhram, an ex-artillery officer, had become Prime Minister, together with fifteen other military figures in his first cabinet¹²⁰.

By overthrowing the ineffective King Prajadhipok, the Thai military’s actions paralleled Indonesia’s regional efforts to overthrow their colonial masters. As Ockey notes, “the [Thai military in 1932] entered politics in support of democracy, and the military came to believe itself a democratic force.”¹²¹ As such, the effect on the military was similar to the Indonesian military: legitimacy of the use of force for reasons of national security. For this reason, the Thai military felt able to intervene in politics without entrenching itself in the political system, which again saw the situation of a civil-military partnership develop. Once the initial coup attempt had been undertaken successfully, the military’s use of force was legitimized, causing the pattern of a civil-military partnership to develop. Thus in these two states, where the military was instrumental in gaining independence, colonial legacies played an important part in explaining the initial trend of civil-military relations as they created certain paths that the new states found easier to follow than resist.

For Vietnam, the key role of the VPA in securing independence – having first fought the French, and then the United States – meant that the military’s position in Vietnamese society was dominant. Given that the use of force had been legitimized, one would expect that the military would have a key role to play in governance. Yet instead of separation and military domination, the Vietnamese military

¹¹⁸ Ockey. “Thailand: The Struggle to Redefine Civil-Military Relations” p.191

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Bunbongkarn, Suchit “The Military and Democracy in Thailand” p.63

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.65

¹²¹ Ockey “Thailand: The Struggle to Redefine Civil-Military Relations” p.191

elite instead crossed over to the civilian side, giving up their uniforms for political power. Just as the French colonial legacy had mandated the separation of civilian and military groups, so the new Vietnamese state, having violently ejected the French, embraced the opposite: a fusion of civilian and military, with individuals from both sides acting in dual roles under the banner of a socialist ideology.

Rather than a civil-military partnership, the result was the civilian control of the military. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the VCP set a large number of oversight committees to ensure party control of the VPA, including party committees attached to military units as well as the Central Military Party Committee, which implemented central VCP directives in the military. The path-dependent process here was therefore the reverse outcome: given a legacy of military conflict that had been rejected by indigenous leaders due to the contestation of independence, civilian elites asserted control and instead co-opted military leaders into the civilian branch by means of Party participation.

So far, we have observed some evidence that pre-independence legacies did affect the variation in civil-military relations. However, the evolution of civil-military relations in certain states cannot be explained. For example, why did the Philippines and Myanmar slip away from civilian control, or Vietnam move towards it despite their pre-independence legacies? To answer this, we look at another legacy: the effectiveness of the civilian state apparatus.

4.2 The Effectiveness of the Civilian State Apparatus

The second effect of pre-independence legacies involved what the colonial authorities left behind: *the effectiveness of the previous state apparatus*. After independence, the new indigenous governments had no clear model of governance, and often simply followed whatever structure had

been left behind by the former authority. In this regard, path dependencies were laid down by the existing state structures. Whether or not those structures proved to be durable were critical in the leverage civilians had with the military, as the civilian government's provision of public goods depended on a solid state apparatus. If the civilian government was unable to provide such goods, the citizenry would turn to the military, which often represented a credible alternative with its superior organization.

As such, this section predicts that if a strong bureaucratic and administrative order had been left in place after independence, the influence of civilians would be stronger, leading to a higher possibility of civilian control. The presence of increasing returns meant that once a strong state apparatus had been adopted and entrenched by indigenous civilian elites, the power of the military would be correspondingly reduced. If bureaucratic and administrative officers were weak or discredited after independence, the influence of the military would be stronger, leading to civil-military partnerships or military control. How can a "strong" state apparatus be measured? This thesis proposes two indicators:

1. *Centralization of power.* If the administrative structure was strong and centralized, civilian authority would be correspondingly more effective. Conversely, if the administrative structure was decentralized or faced challenges from rival centers of power such as separatist movements, it would find itself weaker and unable to exert as much authority.
2. *A trained indigenous civilian administration.* If there was a civilian bureaucratic elite trained to take over the functions of the former authority, the administrative structure would be stronger. Conversely, if the civilian bureaucratic elite had been eliminated because of war or had not been trained, the administrative structure would be weaker.

4.2.1 Cases of Strong Administrative Legacies

In the cases of Malaysia and Singapore, both states were left with a strong administrative structure. In terms of centralization of power, the British administration created a system that left power in the hands of an English-educated elite who had training within the civilian bureaucracy prior to entering politics. Indeed, the first Prime Minister of Malaya (Tunku Abdul Rahman) had worked in the British district offices in Kedah province prior to entering politics, while almost all of the PAP leadership in Singapore had been educated in Britain. Moreover, by defeating the Communist insurgency movements that had existed in Malaysia and Singapore in the 1960s, the British made sure that no rival centers of power existed against their chosen successors.

In both cases, the British made sure that one group of indigenous elites (the Barisan National in Malaysia and the PAP in Singapore) were trained in civilian administration and slowly handed over political power to them, thus ensuring that there would be replacements in the civilian government. Indeed, Malaysia's full independence in 1957 was preceded by the formation of the Malayan Union in 1946 and the Federation of Malaya in 1948, giving the civilian elites under the Barisan National and Tunku Abdul Rahman increasing measures of self-government. In Singapore, full internal self-government was first granted in 1959, before merger with Malaysia in 1963 and then eventually independence in 1965.

As such, Malaysia and Singapore possessed a combination of both peaceful transition and strong administrative legacies – an ideal combination for civilian control of the military. In both cases, the path dependencies reinforced the power of the civilian authority versus that of the military, which was forced to take a subordinate role in political affairs.

4.2.2 Cases of Weak Administrative Legacies

In contrast to British actions in Singapore and Malaysia, the British colonial legacy in Myanmar left the new state with an extremely weak civilian administration. As R.B. Smith writes, the British could afford to let Burma declare independence along with India after World War II; in the harsh realities of the post-1945 world, it had little economic value to Britain. Yet the Malayan Peninsula, with its British military bases and quick economic recovery post World-War II, represented an area of economic value for Britain.¹²² The end result was a quick British retreat from Burma (with independence being gained in October 1948), while Malaysia took a decade later to gain independence, in a slow process towards self-government. Yet the hasty withdrawal by the British in Burma meant that the civilian administration that they had left behind was weak and unable to exert a unifying force. As Anne Booth shows, in Burma “Aung San, the only [civilian] leader to command broad support among his rivals, had already been assassinated by political rivals.”¹²³

More importantly, Alex Mutebi argues that “the haste with which the British had fled coupled with the fact that a largely indigenous Myanmar personnel had run the civil administrative machinery... helped to ruin both the latter’s prestige as well as the Burmese’s continued acceptance of British political, economic and cultural thought.”¹²⁴ The repudiation of British traditions and civilian administration and support for an indigenous alternative to provide strong leadership sparked the eventual 1962 military coup by Ne Win, which resulted in the military junta that has existed till this day.

¹²² R.B. Smith. “Some Contrasts between Burma and Malaya in British Policy Towards South-East Asia, 1942–1946” in Smith R. B. and Stockwell A. J. (ed.): *British Policy and the Transfer of Power in Asia: Documentary Perspectives* (London: School of Oriental Studies, 1988)

¹²³ Booth, Anne. *Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HA: University of Hawaii Press, 2007) p.162

¹²⁴ Mutebi, Alex. “‘Muddling Through’ Past Legacies: Myanmar’s Civil Bureaucracy and the Need for Reform.” Hlaing et. al. (eds.) *Myanmar: Beyond Politics to Social Imperatives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005)

The path dependency laid down by a weak civilian state apparatus therefore explains why Myanmar slipped towards military control even though there had been a peaceful transition to independence; without a strong administrative legacy, the weaknesses of the new civilian government allowed the military to intervene. Here, the contrasting experiences of the three British colonies showed how legacies shaped a path that defined the future state of civil-military relations. .

The Philippines also initially represented a case of peaceful transition from the United States. However, the legacy bequeathed by the latter was decidedly more conducive towards greater military influence because the structures of civilian administration were fragmented and weak. In this regard, John Seidel writes that the American legacy of decentralization “produced a peculiarly American experience of state formation distinguished by a subordination of a weakly insulated bureaucracy to elected local politicians.”¹²⁵ Moreover, even as the United States gradually withdrew from the Philippines, the structure of the treaties agreed meant that the Filipino military was gradually trained due to American base agreements but the civilian bureaucracy was not. As such, there was no equivalent counterpart of an indigenous civilian bureaucracy that could properly take over the state apparatus the Americans left behind.

The path dependency of a peaceful transition was therefore weak because the costs of moving down the path were low – with a weak administrative order, the civilian governments could not exert authority from the centre. For a period of time, civilian control of the military did exist in the Philippines until the rise of Ferdinand Marcos in 1965. Indeed, the declaration of martial law by Marcos in 1972, which brought the military into politics, was partly conditioned as a response to problems of social order and the lack of authority in the civilian government. By dominating the bureaucracy and co-opting the

¹²⁵ Seidel, John. “Coercion, Capital and the Post-Colonial State: Bossism in the Postwar Philippines.” (Ph.D Dissertation, Cornell University, 1995) p.168

military through patronage, Marcos took advantage of the weak administrative legacy that the United States had bequeathed to establish a situation where the military was able to influence politics to a greater degree. Indeed, the multiple coup attempts against the civilian administrations that followed Marcos' regime were proof that the AFP, which was previously subordinate to civilian control had embarked on a new path of partnership with civilians after 1972.

In the Indonesian case, the violent transition was accompanied by the breakdown of the Dutch administrative service, as the Dutch retreat also saw the evacuation of the entire civil service. With the retreat of Dutch administrators, the indigenous civil servants were treated as "collaborators" and denied a role in nation-building by the revolutionary forces, which resulted in a lack of trained personnel to fulfill state services after independence. Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 3, separatist movements such as the *Daru Islam* (Islamic Domain) in West Java, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in Sumatra and the Maluku independence movement presented competing centers of power to the civilian government. A situation of civil-military partnership in which the military's role in the nation was formalized was cemented; given a weak civilian government, both the incentives and returns for the military to extend its influence aligned towards this path.

In the case of Thailand, the presence of an absolute monarchy before the 1932 coup meant that the any form of modern administration was weak before independence – rather, the victorious coup leaders had to shape their new administrative structure. As such, this represented the case of a weak administrative legacy. However, given that civilians and military had come together to overthrow the monarchy, the pattern of a civil-military partnership was laid down. As shown above, the military's role in politics was structured in terms of partnership and not control – the Thai military believed that it was their right to intervene when the perceived needs of the nation demanded it.

The Vietnamese case remains a puzzle for this set of propositions. Indeed, any trace of a colonial administrative structure was clearly repudiated during the wars against the French and the United States; yet as shown above the civilian party-state still managed to control the military effectively throughout independence and set up its own bureaucratic apparatus. In this respect, the explanation of path dependence is not sufficient to explain why civil-military relations turned out as it was in this state.

4.3 Analysis of Propositions

The table below summarizes how pre-independence legacies impacted the states covered in this study:

Peaceful Transition	Malaysia Singapore	Philippines Myanmar
Violent Transition		Indonesia Thailand Vietnam?
	Strong Administrative Legacy	Weak Administrative Legacy

It can be seen that states with peaceful transitions and strong administrative legacies adopted a model of civilian control in civil-military relations (Malaysia and Singapore). These legacies represented the ideal paths of civilian control; as can be seen above, both processes reinforced each other to create conditions where military influence was limited. At the same time, initial models of civilian control existed in the Philippines and Myanmar, but they quickly turned into conditions of civil-military partnership and military control respectively without the steadying effect of a strong administrative legacy. Finally, the combination of a violent transition into independence and a weak administrative

legacy was seen in Indonesia and Thailand, where the civil-military partnership was cemented from the start of independence.

However, as mentioned above, pre-independence legacies seem to have failed in predicting the pattern of civil-military relations in Vietnam. Indeed, the combination of a violent transition and the absence of any administrative legacy meant that a situation of military control or civil-military partnership should have resulted; yet the Vietnamese party-state has managed to maintain control of the military.

Moreover, a second and more serious flaw arises; pre-independence legacies predicted these initial conditions, but not what happened afterwards. Indeed, some states such as the Philippines and Myanmar saw dramatic reverses in civilian control, while in Thailand the civilians started to dominate after 1992 after a period of military control. This seems a flaw in using pre-independence legacies as a single-factor explanation – it can explain initial conditions of civil-military relations, but not the subsequent change if there was one.

4.4 Conclusion

Pre-independence legacies provide a useful starting point in explaining variation in civil-military relations. While civil-military literature has focused on examining factors that exist within the state, this chapter argues that conditions that existed *before* state formation are just as important. In examining the states of Southeast Asia, we see that states with a peaceful transition and strong administrative legacies maintained civilian control, while states that had to engage in conflict to secure independence

as well and had weak administrative legacies allowed the military to insert itself as a partner in the process of governance.

Useful as this explanation might be, it cannot provide the entire picture. While pre-independence legacies can explain the variation in civil-military relations at the baseline, it fails to address the problem of change and continuity in the region. Some states such as Malaysia and Singapore have had stable relations throughout their history. However, other states such as Myanmar and Indonesia swung from extremes of military control to civilian control and vice versa. Colonial legacies therefore seem only able to predict a certain path in which civil-military relations might take place but cannot predict potential conditions that might cause deviations from these paths.

Therefore, even as we consider the constraints that these legacies set, we must also look at the actions of civilian and military actors and how their responses helped to shape variation in civil-military relations. The next chapter goes on to look at the role of party structure in shaping civil-military relations.

Chapter 5: Concordance and Discordance – Party Structure and Civil-Military Relations

The previous chapter left us with an unexplained question in the variation of civil-military relations: why did some states, despite the presence of path-dependent legacies, have changes in their type of civil-military relations occur? Legacies by themselves could predict the path for the state in question, but why did certain states diverge from these predictions? For states like Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore, which have stayed static in terms of civil-military relations since independence, legacies might be a satisfactory explanation for the type that they adopted. Yet for states like Myanmar, which swung from civilian control to military control in 1962, what happened to cause a change *against* the path laid down by pre-independence legacies?

Variation in civil-military relations within the state must therefore involve an examination of the civilian and military actors inside it. This chapter looks at the structure of the civilian polity in determining variation in civil-military relations. As noted in Chapter 2, Huntington theorized that the opportunity for military influence in government lay not only with the military but also with the relative weakness of the civilian polity. This thesis asserts that in Southeast Asia, a key factor in explaining variation is the organization of the civilian polity. As mentioned before, if the political environment is fragmented, with weak civilian governments ruling, the window of opportunity for the military to extend its influence is present. Conversely, if the state is strong and civilians can enforce their policies and legislative dictates, the military will not only lack the opportunity but also the legitimacy to intervene. Given that the civilian government comes to power through a system of political parties, the *party structure* of the state matters in terms of the strength of the civilian government, and thus determining the type of civil-military relations that surface.

In Southeast Asia, we find states with different party structures over time, ranging from single-party states to multi-party ones. From the histories of the states in Chapter 3, the table below summarizes the changes between regimes in the seven states covered in this study:

Country	Political Situation	Periods of Rule	Year of Independence
Thailand	Single-Party Military Control Multi-party Military Control Multi-party	1932-1951 1951-1973 1973-1976 1976-1977 1976-present	1932
Vietnam	Single-party	1975-present	1975
Philippines	Multi-party Single-party Multi-party	1946-1965 1965-1986 1986-present	1946
Malaysia	Single-party	1957-present	1957
Singapore	Single-party	1965-present	1965
Myanmar	Multi-party Military control	1948-1962 1962-present	1948
Indonesia	Multi-party Single-party Multi-party	1949-1959 1959-1998 1998-present	1949

Civil-military relations vary between single-party and multi-party time periods due to the strength of the civilian government formed. The argument here is that single-party states generate conditions of concordance and convergence that results in civilian control, while multi-party states generate conditions of discordance that lead to civil-military partnerships or military control.

To measure how the level of civilian fragmentation affects civil-military relations, this chapter utilizes Rebecca Schiff's theory of concordance in civil-military relations and applies it to the states in this study. Concordance is relevant when considering party structure because it shows how civilians and the military converge in terms of outlook and action. In this regard, *conditions of concordance* indicate civilian control in the Janowitzean conception: a sociological convergence of civilian and military. On the

other hand, if the military overrides civilian authority and inserts itself into governance, *conditions of discordance* are generated instead, which results in civil-military partnerships or the possibility of military control as the military seeks to protect its interests versus the divergent aims of the civilian government. Here, Schiff lists four indicators of concordance: the social composition of the officer corps, the political decision-making process, the recruitment method and the military style. The chapter goes on to examine each of the four indicators in turn.

Here, the prediction is that single-party states generate these conditions of concordance which leads to civilian control, while multi-party states generate conditions of discordance leading to civil-military partnerships. As such, concordance is a form of convergence by which the civilians control the military, while discordance on the other hand represents military influence in governance.

5.1 Composition of the Officer Corps in Southeast Asia

The officer corps represents the elite leadership of the military – responsibility for planning and managing the military lies with them, as well as providing a link between the civilian government and the rest of the military. Schiff argues that “particular historical and cultural traditions prevails in nations, and that those traditions can affect agreement or disagreement over the composition of the officer corps.”¹²⁶ In this regard, if the civilian government and military can agree on the composition of the officer corps, the possibility for concordance is higher. In contrast, if the civilian government tries to block appointments or if the officer corps feels that the civilian government is meddling in its

¹²⁶ Schiff, Rebecca. *The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008) p.14

composition, the generation of conditions of discordance and the propensity to intervene might increase due to the interests of the former being threatened.

Looking at the single-party states – Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam – it can be seen that the officer corps has been drawn from an elite that encompassed both civilian and military domains. In the case of Malaysia and Singapore; the officer corps followed the majority ethnic lines, being Malay dominated in the former and Chinese-dominated in the latter. As of the present, the entire general staff of both militaries were both composed of Malays and Chinese respectively.¹²⁷ To the civilian political elite, who were also organized along ethnic lines, concordance was achieved as the officers recruited and advanced had a similar outlook and mindset based on ethnic as well as socio-political lines.

This also had the reverse effect; the officer corps was not inclined to intervene militarily as they realized that they possessed a congruence of interests with the civilian elite. In the case of Vietnam, the officer corps was drawn from the bond of nationalism and socialism; both civilians and the officer corps identified themselves with a certain ideology, which generated conditions of concordance. In this sense, there has been a consensus of civil-military concordance as the officer corps not only managed the military but also made the transition into civilian political life. Moreover, there has been a consensus over the representation of the officer corps that has not been actively challenged by the military. In this regard, concordance showed why civil-military relations in these three states stayed static in a situation of civilian control throughout their history – with the civilian government and the officer corps having similar outlooks and interests, the former was able to control the latter and keep it in a subordinate position.

¹²⁷ See Huxley, *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* and Jeshrun. “Development and Civil-Military Relations in Malaysia: The Evolution of the Officer Corps”

In contrast, in the states where periods of multi-party rule existed – Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Myanmar (before 1962) – the officer corps was often plagued by factionalism as well as patronage politics by civilian actors who sought a base of support, which rendered certain sections of the corps opposed to the civilian authority and therefore generating conditions of discordance. Indeed, this made the potential for military influence more likely as discontented factions plotted to gain power at the expense of others. In Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra “repeatedly interfered with the annual military promotions, systematically assigning supporters, family members, and military academy classmates to key military positions”¹²⁸ to consolidate political power against his civilian rivals, according to Ukrist Pathmanand. The Thai military saw him as a threat to the integrity of the officer corps, and elements disaffected by the shuffling of officers promptly launched the coup that removed him from office in September 2006. The multi-party structure in Thailand thus contributed to discordance between the civilian leadership and the military which led to military intervention in the state.

In Indonesia, personal rivalries between the officer corps as well as between civilian and the military dominated the scene after the fall of Suharto, when a multi-party system came into existence. As Robinson notes, the most conspicuous rivalry in the post-Suharto era was between two senior generals, General Wiranto and General Prabowo, and later there would be a rivalry between loyalists to General Wiranto and loyalists to the then-President Wahid.¹²⁹ In 2001, factionalist competition manifested itself in state governance when political violence sparked by Prabowo loyalists occurred and targeted Wiranto. In Myanmar, the constant competition between the civilian parties in the 1950s and 1960s led the Tatmadaw to eventually step in, displacing civilian government for military control. Finally, in the Philippines multiple coup attempts helped force the resignation of Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada, as well as presenting threats to the administrations of Corazon Aquino and Gloria Arroyo. The

¹²⁸ Pathmanand, Ukrist “A Different Coup d’Etat?” in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38:1 (2008) p.127

¹²⁹ Robinson. “Indonesia: on a new course?” p.244

potential for military influence and military control was therefore increased by discordance as the officer corps was disunited, which generated incentives to for individual factions to compete for power, and faced distrust by the political leadership, which spurred the military on to intervene in governance to effect their policy preferences.

Yet within the states which had experienced multi-party systems, the corresponding periods of single-party rule also generated conditions of concordance. Indeed, in Indonesia Suharto and Sukarno were careful to maintain the support of a united officer corps, while in the Philippines, the single-party rule of Ferdinand Marcos was based upon the co-option of the military as seen in Chapter 3. Indeed, discordance in these states emerged only at the end of single-party rule. Yet the retention of senior officers by Marcos that were personally loyal to him in the 1980s spurred resentment and discontent among the officer corps, eventually manifesting in the RAM movement that would topple him in 1986. According to Hedman, “[Marcos] failed to deliver promises of a ‘Revolution from the Center’ but also to insulate the military as an institution from political – rather than professional – considerations intruding upon the recruitment, promotion and rotation of serving officers.”¹³⁰ It took the rise of a competing military figure in Suharto to break Sukarno’s rule, while Suharto himself was only toppled by discontent generated by the 1998 financial crisis. Indeed, a key part of why single-party rule in these states could exist so long was that the officer corps was able to reach an agreement of concordance with these leaders.

As such, we see that concordance could generally be found in states with single-party conditions, which helped to explain variation as concordance meant a form of civilian control. At the

¹³⁰ Hedman, Eva-Lotta “The Philippines, Not so Military, Not so Civil” p.178

same time, multi-party state structures generated periods of discordance, leading to military influence as well as the possibility of military control.

5.2 Political Decision-Making Process in Southeast Asia

The political decision-making process, Schiff argues, “refers to the specific channels that determined the needs and allocations of the military”¹³¹ – for example budgets, procurement of weaponry and manpower size. To her, “the critical issue is that agreement occurs among the political elites, the military and the citizenry over the political process that best meets the needs and requirements of the armed forces.”¹³² In essence, this variable of concordance is measuring the intrinsic demands of the military against civilian priorities: is there a middle ground on which both parties can agree upon?

Again, we see a divide between single and multi-party states in this regard. The single-party states in Southeast Asia are usually in concordance upon defense policy; although there might be some leeway in terms of allowing the military to voice their priorities, decisions are usually taken at a top-down level and originate from the civilian hierarchy. Most importantly, the military itself accepts the policy decisions and does not show signs of insubordination. Examples here include the VPA’s drastic downsizing after the policy of *doi moi* was declared by the VCP in 1988, and the MAF’s decision to cut the military budget by 10% after the 1998 financial crisis. In both cases, the militaries of both nations accepted the civilian decision without question, thus reinforcing the concept of civilian control.

¹³¹ Schiff. "Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance" p.15

¹³² Ibid., p.15

In the multi-party states, divisions between the civilians and the military are far more prevalent. Indeed, the Indonesian military has overtly challenged the civilian government in the governments of President Megawati and President Yudhoyono, especially over regulations that would threaten its interests. In the Philippines, defense budget reductions in the wake of the Asian financial crisis sparked coups in 2003 and 2004, with the military afraid that their influence would be reduced by President Arroyo. In Thailand, the military justified military intervention in 1992 against democratic protestors as a necessary role to protect the nation and in 2006 over Thaksin's restriction of military corporate interests. As such, the political decision-making processes in multi-party states not only indicated a degree of civil-military conflict, but also a military that was strong enough to challenge the civilian government. The conditions of discordance were thus laid down, leaving state structures that were open to military influence or military control.

5.3 Recruitment Method in Southeast Asia

According to Schiff, recruitment of citizens into the military forms another indicator of concordance, depending on whether it is voluntary (permissive) or coercive (conscription). In her conception, conscription works against concordance as the citizens are forced to join the military against their will. However, as we shall see below, in Southeast Asia conscription is almost a universal state policy. The table below shows the recruitment methods of the seven states in this study:

Country	Recruitment Type	Recruitment Method
Thailand	Conscription	21 years of age for compulsory military service; 18 years of age for voluntary military service; males are registered at 18 years of age; 2-year conscript service obligation
Singapore	Conscription	18-21 years of age for male

		compulsory military service; 16 years of age for volunteers; 2-year conscript service obligation, with a reserve obligation to age 40 (enlisted) or age 50 (officers)
Malaysia	Selective conscription	18 years of age for voluntary military service, 30,000 youths selected each year for random draft for basic military training
Indonesia	Selective conscription	18 years of age for selective compulsory and voluntary military service; 2-year conscript service obligation, with reserve obligation to age 45 (officers); Indonesian citizens only (2008)
Vietnam	Conscription	18 years of age (male) for compulsory military service; females may volunteer for active duty military service; conscript service obligation - 2 years (3 to 4 years in the navy); 18-45 years of age (male) or 18-40 years of age (female) for Militia Force or Self Defense Forces
Philippines	Conscription	18-25 years of age (officers 21-29) for compulsory and voluntary military service; applicants must be single male or female Philippine citizens
Myanmar	Voluntary (in theory)	18 years of age for voluntary military service for both sexes

(Source: collated by author)

As such, this indicator seems to be of limited usage in measuring concordance in Southeast Asia as the recruitment methods of nearly all of the countries are by conscription. Concordance, in this conception, is probably built negatively with the citizens of the various states accepting that they are compelled to serve in the military temporarily. Even in Myanmar, recruitment is more often than not done by force, especially in the case of child soldiers.

5.4 Military Style in Southeast Asia

The final indicator of concordance according to Schiff is “military style”, or “the external manifestations of the military and the inner mental constructions associated with it: what it looks like, what ethos drives it, and what people think about it.”¹³³ Essentially, style means the institutional image of the military as seen by the civilians. If the military, political leadership and the citizenry can reach accord on what constitutes an ideal military style, then concordance can be achieved to a greater extent as it means the norms and networks formed between both sides are the same. However, Schiff makes no obvious reference as to how to test the concordance level of “style”, merely asserting that “it manifests itself within, among and throughout the substance of the other variables.”¹³⁴ With the lack of variables to test, this thesis proposes that the propensity of military coups occurring represents the degree of concordance or discordance between the civilians and the military.

The motivations for a coup therefore happened when there was discordance between the civilians and military over their motives and actions. Simply put, there was a clash over the role the military is supposed to represent. Here, the table below shows the list of coups that have occurred in the countries studied in this thesis, and the subsequent result of the coup. In this context, “Military Domination” meant that the coup resulted in a military regime coming to power, while “Civilian Control” meant that the civilian government continued to hold on to power.

Incidence of National-Level Coups in Southeast Asia		
Country	Year of Coup	Result
Thailand	1932	Military Domination
Thailand	1951	Military Domination
Thailand	1957	Military Domination

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.16

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16

Myanmar	1962	Military Domination
Indonesia	1965	Civilian Control
Thailand	1976	Military Domination
Philippines	1986	Civilian Control
Philippines	1989	Civilian Control
Thailand	1992	Military Domination
Philippines	2003	Civilian Control
Philippines	2004	Civilian Control
Thailand	2006	Civilian Control

(Source: collated by author)

We observe here that the multi-party states have been the ones that suffered occurrences of coups. At the same time, the single-party states in the region have had no occurrences of coups; namely Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. Yet when contrasted to the party-political structures of each state, the empirical evidence seems clear. The single-party states have far avoided any form of coups and have the military subordinate to civilian control, while the multi-party states have suffered from military intervention and often see the military assuming conditions of civil-military partnership or military control.

5.5 Conclusion

The role of party structure thus helps to explain the puzzle left behind by pre-independence legacies: how and why did civil-military relations depart off the supposed path in some states but not in others? In this sense, civil-military relations varied not only across states but also within them. Here, the chapter looked at one supposed explanation, noting the role of single-party and multi-party state structures. Indeed, by observing the empirical evidence across time periods, single-party conditions generated indicators of concordance that led to civilian control, while multi-party states generated conditions of discordance that led to civil-military partnerships or eventual military control. As such, this

chapter makes an interesting finding: in Southeast Asia, authoritarian states rather than democratic states seem to equal civilian control of the military.

At the same time, civilian actors are only one part of the overall picture. Having looked at how civilian actors respond within a party structure system, we now turn our attention to military actors. In the next chapter, the thesis attempts to advance an economic explanation to determine variation in civil-military relations: the role of the military in business.

Chapter 6: Military Entrepreneurship and Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia

Having looked at the role of party structure, this thesis then looks at the military actors in the region. In this chapter, we examine how these actors move beyond a nominally professional role to become a part of the economic and social fabric of the state. Military figures, in this context, become *military entrepreneurs* – actors that extended their areas of influence outside of the traditional domain of war. Rather than the Huntingtonian conception of a professional military specializing in war, these actors have extended their “professional” responsibility into areas that would traditionally be considered the domain of the civilian.

There is no doubt that military entrepreneurship exists in certain states in Southeast Asia. Indeed, in 2001 the official Indonesian defense budget only accounted for one-quarter to one-third of real military expenditures¹³⁵, with the rest being covered by business activities under the control of the military. Yet the analysis of such business activities in the theoretical literature has often been seen in the context of civilian control; military engagement in economic affairs is seen as a *result* of the civilian government’s inability to check military influence. This thesis argues otherwise, asserting that military entrepreneurship, as well as the civilian response to it, might actually be an explanatory variable in determining variation in civil-military relations.

As such, the presence or non-presence of military entrepreneurship can either sustain a current pattern of civil-military relations, or result in a swing towards the other end of the spectrum, which

¹³⁵ Hu, Timothy. “Forces in Business” in *Jane’s Defense Weekly* (14 February 2001)

explains the variation in civil-military relations. For civilians, a military actively engaged in business activities means that the latter's increasing influence might present a threat to civilian control. At the same time, attempting to scale back the military's activities might lead to opposition from the latter, and even run the risk of a coup in extreme circumstances. As such, military entrepreneurship becomes another factor to explain the variance of civil-military relations, as well as the phenomenon of change and continuity.

As mentioned in the analytical framework found in Chapter 2, the exact effect of military entrepreneurship on civil-military relations depends on two variables: the capacity of the military to engage in such businesses and the willingness of the civilian government to allow military businesses. Here, the prediction is that the presence or non-presence of military entrepreneurship results in one of a few possible outcomes.

1. Civilian control is achieved when the military has no capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities and when the civilian government is unwilling to allow it.
2. In contrast, civil-military partnerships occur when the military has the capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities. However, the exact nature of the civil-military partnership depends on whether the civilian government is cordial or hostile towards military entrepreneurship.
3. Military control occurs when conflict arises between the civilian government's unwillingness to allow military entrepreneurship and the military has the capability to do so, which prompts a coup to protect the military's interests.

Below, we examine whether these propositions hold in the states covered in this study.

6.1 Civilian Control: Military Entrepreneurship Restricted

In Singapore, the military's access to potential entrepreneurship opportunities was cut off by a solid roadblock of civilian institutions and intentionally designed hierarchies. As Huxley asserts, the SAF did not have any control over economic affairs as access to resources was mediated by an intervening civilian polity.¹³⁶ Indeed, the ruling PAP set up a multiplicity of civilian institutions to control defense spending and procurement. The Ministry of Defense (MINDEF), headed by a civilian permanent secretary, acted as the controller of budgetary expenditure and financial overseer, while the Defense Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) handled procurement and commercial transactions with civilian groups. Indeed, the SAF as a military institution was surrounded by civilian agencies which handled its business functions, thus denying it the chance to build strong business links of its own. The SAF, far from being entrepreneurs, were treated as customers instead. In fact, the SAF has had to depend on private civilian operators for several of its military activities, including transport for conscript training exercises and provision of in-camp meals.¹³⁷

Not only was the Singaporean military unable to engage in off-budget expenditure, but the civilian government was also unwilling to countenance any kind of independent military entrepreneurship. As Tan argued, "despite consistently generous budget allocations, the Singapore government nonetheless sees its budgetary limits as a sort of disciplining mechanism to drive the military organization to use its allocated resources in a more productive and efficient manner."¹³⁸ Defense budgets were tightly controlled by the PAP, and military leaders had to seek approval from

¹³⁶ Huxley. *Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore* p. 56

¹³⁷ Author's interview with SAF soldiers.

¹³⁸ Tan. "Singapore: Civil-Military Fusion" p.284

MINDEF before funds were released for use. If one of the methods of civilian control over the military was control over the allocation of defense spending, the Singapore government had its hands firmly on the tap. The Singaporean military thus represents the typical example of a military held strictly to civilian budgetary control. By controlling all the mechanisms of financial support, the SAF was unable to operate any form of independent financial activity. This corresponded to a situation of tight civilian control of the military – a structure where the military is subordinate and civilian control reasserted.

In contrast, the Malaysian government allowed the MAF to undertake limited developmental projects in the state, but under the direction of the civilian government. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, the MAF was involved in aid and civil development projects under the KESBAN doctrine of security and development, which was part of the New Economic Policy promulgated by then-Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak. By providing security and manpower to these projects, the military was engaging in development activities directed by the civilian state, but not in any overt form of military entrepreneurship – rather, the military was focused on non-profit social development. Indeed, Nathan and Govindasamy note that the MAF has continued its involvement in state-led development projects such as the *Jiwa Murni* (Hearts and Minds), which involve construction of public amenities such as schools, roads and electric generators in impoverished communities.¹³⁹ In this regard, Malaysia thus represented a case where civilian influence was actually enhanced through the absence of independent military entrepreneurship – the civilian government diverted resources to the military to help national development, thus underscoring its capacity to command the military to undertake its directives.

¹³⁹ K.S Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, "Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests" p.263

Ultimately, these two cases showed that when the military had no capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities and the civilian government was unwilling to allow it or exerted complete control over it, a situation of civilian control over the military resulted.

However, the Philippines represented an outlier in this set of propositions. In the Philippines, the military did not have the capacity to engage in formalized entrepreneurial activities; as Beeson notes, “the military is unable to autonomously address [economic constraints] because its involvement with the economy is more opportunistic, less regularized and a source of continuing conflict within the military itself.”¹⁴⁰ Yet given the military’s inability to secure independent sources of revenue, the civilian government should have been able to control it by way of this set of propositions. As it was, the civilian government was too weak itself to control the military fully; Beeson continues by arguing that “many in the [AFP] consider that they have a right to intervene in domestic politics and the government has a limited capacity to stop them or punish them when they do.”¹⁴¹ The explanations of military influence in the Philippines should thus focus more on civilian weakness rather than military strength. Indeed, for the Philippines, the previous explanations of pre-independence legacies and multi-party weakness would probably have more explanatory power than the factor of military entrepreneurship.

6.2 Civil-Military Partnerships: Military Entrepreneurship Resisted or Accepted

The Indonesian military, from the inception of independence in 1946, has exerted both formal and informal influence in the economy. As a Human Rights Watch report pointed out, the military’s role in the Indonesian economy took several forms: military-owned foundations, collaboration with the

¹⁴⁰ Beeson, Mark. “Civil–Military Relations in Indonesia and the Philippines: Will the Thai Coup Prove Contagious?” p.484

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.485

private sector and criminal enterprises such as illegal logging.¹⁴² Under the name of establishing “foundations” (*yayasan*), the Indonesian military established more than 20 different foundations that in turn served as holding companies through which individual business operations were started. As such, Indonesian military entrepreneurship permeated nearly all layers of society.

Here, Lesley McCulloch argued that the doctrine of *dwifungsi* – which had given the military a role in society and politics – evolved with the presence of military entrepreneurship to become a *trifungsi* (triple function) as the military has become an economic actor as well.¹⁴³ Under Sukarno and Suharto, little was done to check the military’s expanding influence in economic activity. In this case, the military possessed a clear capability for military entrepreneurship, and the civilian governments under Sukarno and Suharto were more than willing to let the military expand its business operations in return for the latter’s support. Indeed, a situation of comfortable civil-military partnership existed under these two leaders as the civilian government traded lack of oversight for military support.

However, the potential for conflict between the civilians and the military was also demonstrated by the attempts of the Indonesian government to rein in military entrepreneurship. Before Suharto’s daughter Megawati ended her presidential term in 2004, the civilian government approved Law 34/2004, which gave the Indonesian government power to assume control over all military foundations and businesses by 2009.¹⁴⁴ Fierce opposition from the TNI, whose handpicked figures dominated the Ministry of Defense, meant that no substantive action was taken and the status quo remained the same

¹⁴² Misol, Lisa. *Unkept Promises: Failure to End Military Business Activity in Indonesia* (Human Rights Watch, 2010) p.2

¹⁴³ McCulloch, Lesley. “Trifungsi: The Role of the Indonesian Military in Business” in Brommelhorster, Jorn and Wolf-Christian Paes (eds.) *The Military as an Economic Actor: Soldiers in Business* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p.94

¹⁴⁴ Misol. *Unkept Promises: Failure to End Military Business Activity in Indonesia* p.3.

even as the 2009 deadline expired. Here, we see a case of the military with capacity to engage in business activities protecting their interests, correspondingly limiting civilian influence.

In Thailand, military entrepreneurship had begun from the days of the 1932 coup, when the military assumed control of key companies so as to deny the monarchy control of material resources. In the same vein, the military continued its control of these companies even throughout periods of civilian rule. According to Johan Karabi, the Thai military elite has maintained control of private enterprises (e.g. Thai Airways International and Thai Military Bank).¹⁴⁵ Indeed, as Beeson asserts, corporate reasons were the key motivation behind the 2006 coup that overthrew Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand and the multiple coup attempts faced by Presidents Aquino and Arroyo.¹⁴⁶ After the 2006 coup, military leaders were placed in charge of key state enterprises, including telecommunications and transport. The defense budget was correspondingly raised, showing that the military, as in Indonesia, was prepared to intervene in order to protect its capacity to engage in business activities.

In contrast to these two countries, Vietnam's military was recruited by the state to help in national development. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Vietnam embarked on a path of state-dictated development after the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) announced the policy of *doi moi*, declaring that the military had both a duty as well as a responsibility to help the economic development of the state. Thus even as the defense budget was drastically cut – from US\$ 2.5 billion in 1988 to \$720 million in 1992 – and the number of military personnel decreased, the VPA began a rapid expansion in military entrepreneurship. As Thayer noted, these activities ran the gamut of economic activity.¹⁴⁷ At both the national level – for example, the 12th Corps became the road-building Truong Son Construction General

¹⁴⁵ Karabi, Johan. "The Thai Military: A Political Role" in *Asian Journal of Public Affairs*, 3(1) (2010) p.27

¹⁴⁶ See Beeson "Civil–Military Relations in Indonesia and the Philippines: Will the Thai Coup Prove Contagious?"

¹⁴⁷ Thayer, Carlyle. "The Economic and Commercial Roles of the Vietnam People's Army" Paper presented at the 52nd Annual Meeting, *Association of Asian Studies* (2000) p.21

Corporation – and at the unit level - with the setting up of nightclubs, bowling alleys and hotels – the VPA managed to exert tremendous economic influence, making revenues of US\$600 million in 1998 alone.¹⁴⁸

Yet its off-budget expenditures were done in full knowledge of and indeed supported by the state. In fact, the VCP lent the VPA institutional support, giving it the political mandate to engage in economic activity as seen in Chapter 3. In response, the VPA deferred to the VCP as the supreme body of state policy and also undertook national developmental activities; Thayer asserted that “the VPA has assumed responsibility for the implementation of social welfare projects that no other ministry [wanted] to undertake. Indeed, the VPA has undertaken programs both in healthcare, education and forest preservation – hardly profit-making activities.”¹⁴⁹ In the VPA’s experience, we observe that given the congruence of civil and military opinions, a symbiotic relationship in terms of military entrepreneurship developed.

Hence, in situations where the military was able and willing to initiate off-budget expenditure, the reaction of the civilian government dictated the course of civil-military relations. When the civilian leadership was amiable to military entrepreneurship – such as in Indonesia under Sukarno and Suharto and in Vietnam after *doi moi* – civilians and military existed in a cooperative partnership. Yet when civilian governments attempt to reduce the influence of the military, the latter often rushed to protect its privileges, as seen in the Thai coup in 2006. As such, the variation in civil-military relations here can be explained by the differing reactions of the civilian authority to the presence of military entrepreneurship.

¹⁴⁸ O’Mora, Frank. “Military Business : Explaining Support for Policy Change in China, Cuba, and Vietnam” in *Problems of Post-Communism* 51(6) (2004) pp.44-63

¹⁴⁹ Thayer, Carlyle. “The Economic and Commercial Roles of the Vietnam People’s Army”

6.3 Military Control: A Case of Junta-Military Relations

The Tatmadaw in Myanmar were able to, while still under a civilian government, to expand their influence into economic activities. A critical development in this context was the setting up of the Defense Services Institute (DSI) in 1951 – initially created to centralize previously unit-run military canteens, the DSI was by 1960 running banking operations, shipping lines and import export operations.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, in response to criticism by the civilian government that the defense budget requested was too high, the military simply justified their expenditure by branching out into military entrepreneurship operations in the name of “national morale.” The Psychological Warfare Department, set up in 1952, provided another branch of military entrepreneurship by setting up radio stations, magazine lines and theatre performances that glorified the nation and by extension the military which had brought access to these goods.

Yet as the Tatmadaw’s influence in economic affairs grew more powerful, the civilian government under U Nu began measures to reduce the prevalence of military entrepreneurship, leading to military discontent and the eventual coup in 1962 by Ne Win. As Shelby Tucker argued, Ne Win mounted a coup ostensibly “to save the Union as [Prime Minister U Nu] was about to grant autonomy to the Shans and other ethnic groups. But it should also be pointed out that Nu had used his brief return to office to nationalize Burma’s import and export trade *at the DSI’s expense.*”¹⁵¹ Here, we thus see a situation of military capability for entrepreneurship and subsequent civilian hostility, leading to a coup.

¹⁵⁰ Callahan. “Burma: Soldiers as State Builders.” p.420

¹⁵¹ Tucker, Shelby. *Burma: The Curse of Independence* (London: Pluto Press, 2000) pp.189-190

Post-coup, the military junta led by Ne Win continued the trend of military entrepreneurship – only this time, there were no civilians in the way. Given the domination of the military in politics, there was no effective barrier to check the military expansion into the economic realm as well. As such, the junta created the Burma Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), which assumed responsibility for all economic affairs in the country. This was thus military entrepreneurship writ large onto the entire state. As U Thaung detailed, the junta under the BEDC nationalized the overwhelming majority of private firms; from oil companies to mining operations to printing presses, most private firms were absorbed into the military.¹⁵² Tucker wrote that the vacuum of private sector positions “created thousands of new posts, which [the regime] in deference to its pledge to eliminate ‘exploitation’, filled all of them with soldiers.”¹⁵³ By 1985, only six private firms (compared to 446 state-owned firms) employed more than 100 workers, showing how complete military entrepreneurship had become.¹⁵⁴

Myanmar’s situation post-1962 thus represented a civil-military partnership in the mold of Vietnam’s; the key difference was that junta, in its various leaders and names, cooperated with the military – in the form of regional commanders – to extrapolate military entrepreneurship into state entrepreneurship. Callahan notes this divide when she argues that “the junta asked regional commanders to... negotiate new administrative and economic arrangements... accordingly, the regional commanders rearranged urban and rural populations to accommodate tourism and other industries.”¹⁵⁵ At the same time, the junta also established national-level off-budget sources such as the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (UMEH), which was controlled by the Directorate of Defense

¹⁵² U Thaung. *Ne Win and his Hang Men* (Rego Park, NY: International Network for Democracy in Burma, 1990) p.50

¹⁵³ Tucker. *Burma: The Curse of Independence* p.191

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.191

¹⁵⁵ Callahan. “Burma: Soldiers as State Builders.” p.425

Procurement and military personnel and possessed a monopoly over the gem trade in Burma.¹⁵⁶ The junta-military partnership therefore held both the economic and political levers in the country, meaning that any form of civilian opposition would find it difficult to mobilize resources, since they were in state – and thus military – hands. In turn, this consolidated the situation of military control.

The case of Myanmar thus proves useful in explaining variation in civil-military rule both within and across states. Before 1962, the civilian government’s unwillingness to allow military entrepreneurship combined with the military’s capacity for such activities to precipitate intervention. After the coup, the willingness of the junta – who represented the “civilian” political authority in Myanmar – instead transformed the situation into one resembling a civil-military partnership, where the military’s role in the economic and social sector expanded.

6.4 Analysis of Propositions

Ultimately, the table below sums up the position of the seven states in the study:

Willing to allow off-budget expenditure activities	Civil-Military Partnership (Harmonious) Vietnam	Civilian Control Malaysia Philippines?
Unwilling to allow off-budget expenditure activities	Civil-Military Conflict (Tense) Thailand Indonesia Myanmar (pre-military rule)	Civilian Control Singapore
	Capacity for military entrepreneurship	No capacity for off-budget expenditure

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.426

The critical factor here therefore seems to be the capacity of the military for business activities – at a first cut, the presence or non-presence of capacity seems to indicate whether states will adopt civilian control or not. However, the other variable that then determines whether civilians and the military will remain in partnership or in conflict is the willingness of the civilian government to accept it. It is no surprise that the states at the lower-left hand corner, where civilians and the military are in tension over military entrepreneurship, are the states which have suffered the most coups.

Given the lack of restrictions on allocation and spending and lack of civilian oversight, militaries are likely to guard their off-budget expenditures jealously if they can hold on to it. Indeed, the militaries might even form strategic political alliances with the private sector in order to maintain their lucrative links in the face of political opposition. The key examples here are the Thai and Burmese militaries. As mentioned earlier, Thaksin's economic policies had threatened military interests, leading to the 2006 coup against him in the name of "national security". Moreover, according to Callahan, by the last days of the Burmese civilian government in the late 1950s "the army was displacing weaker state agencies and financial interests... the commissariat, the Defenses Services Institute, expanded to take over most import-export operations for the whole country."¹⁵⁷

However, military entrepreneurship can also decrease the risk of coup occurrence if civilians tacitly accept the presence of military entrepreneurship. In this regard, continuity is more likely than change as a compliant civilian polity is met with a military content with its operations and unwilling to risk a potentially hostile civilian government by virtue of military intervention. Hernandez thus argues that "[civilian] transition and consolidation are more likely to go forward if the armed forces are reassured that the military's budget will be maintained at an acceptable level and military elites will

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.492

continue to receive their share of the economic pie.”¹⁵⁸ Beeson notes that Indonesia’s relatively stable political situation, despite the weakness of its multi-party structure and the heavy presence of the military in civilian affairs, exists due to the fact that Indonesian civilian leaders have implicitly let the military do as they pleased. As he writes, the Indonesian military corporations, “left undisturbed to operate their networks of patronage and privilege... [mean that] there is little reason to fear that the military will seek to overturn the current regime.”¹⁵⁹ As seen above, since Suharto instituted the doctrine of *dwifungsi*, the Indonesian military has resisted all attempts from the civilian government at controlling military off-budget expenditure.

However, the potential of military entrepreneurship as a factor in determining variance in civil-military relations is also limited to an extent in the case studies above. Here, the Philippines sits uneasily in the top-right hand corner of the table above – even though the military has no capacity for entrepreneurship, it still manages to exert control over the civilian government. In this respect, military entrepreneurship, while being able to determine the course of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia, might be not entirely relevant in determining civil-military relations – there is also a need to examine other factors such as the impact of legacy or the presence of party structure.

6.5 Conclusion

Off-budget expenditures have not been analyzed in great detail thus far in the civil-military literature since most modern militaries in developed countries do not engage in such activities. Nevertheless, for militaries in developing countries the practice of military entrepreneurship may be

¹⁵⁸ Hernandez. “Political Institution Building in the Philippines” p.77

¹⁵⁹ Beeson. “Civil–Military Relations in Indonesia and the Philippines: Will the Thai Coup Prove Contagious?” p.481

crucial in sustaining military operations or complementing revenue streams from the official defense budget. Yet this engagement in economic activities represents a concomitant expansion of the military's influence in society, with implications for the variation civil-military relations.

Military entrepreneurship thus can explain the variation in two ways – how the relations are structured given the two variables of military capacity and civilian willingness, and why the type of civil-military relations might change given the incentives for the military to protect its interests. In the case of Southeast Asia, we find that militaries that engage in off-budget expenditure might do so in two ways. The first way is one that is officially sanctioned by the state and under state directives, leading to increased civilian control or cooperation between the military and civilians. On the other hand, militaries in Southeast Asia also engage in unauthorized economic activity, which might lead to tensions between the military and civilians as the latter group attempts to restrict the military's actions.

Examining the empirical evidence in the region, we find that military entrepreneurship does play a role in determining civil-military relations, although being focused solely on the role of military actors it seems to be a single-factor explanation which is limited in scope. To properly analyze the variation of civil-military relations, an integration of other factors is required as well. The final chapter will analyze the effectiveness of the three explanations as a whole and point out areas for further study.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Conclusion

This thesis started out with an observation and a question: why had there been variation in civil-military relations within the states of Southeast Asia? To answer this question, it proposed three alternative explanations: the impact of path-dependent pre-independence legacies, single-party versus multi-party political structures and the role of military entrepreneurship. Which explanation offers the most convincing account then? As mentioned earlier, pre-independence legacies offer a convincing explanation of variance at the moment of independence, but fail to address the problem of change and continuity in the region. Party structures are able to predict variation within states, but leaves out the potential motives available to military actors. Military entrepreneurship, on the other hand, gives an account of military motives for variance but also ignores the potential civilian responses and incentives that might direct their actions.

Ultimately, perhaps the strongest explanation of variance is to be found in a combination of legacy and party structure. In a historical sense, pre-independence legacies give us a good grasp of civil-military relations at the origins of the modern state. As the states covered in the case study are all relatively young, it provides a compelling reason to trace the initial variance. However, the future changes in civil-military relations seem to be rooted in the party structure of civilian actors. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 5, authoritarian states rather than democratic states seem to equal civilian control of the military. The party structure of these states therefore affect variance in civil-military relations because they determine the strength or weakness of the civilian government, at the same time also generating conditions of concordance or discordance that explain why the military might

or might not be granted the motive and opportunity to influence state governance. At the same time, the motives of the military can be explained as first being legitimized or hindered by legacies that existed prior to independence, and then as a response to the state structure that civilian actors found themselves in.

Military entrepreneurship, while serving as a useful complement to the other two explanations, seems too isolated a factor to properly explain variance. Although protecting their economic interests has been a reason for increasing their influence or intervening in governance, militaries have had other reasons to intervene beyond economic reasons, for example in terms of ideology. Also, the scope of military entrepreneurship might be region-specific. Military businesses are prevalent in certain states in Southeast Asia, but are rare elsewhere in the world. As such, while a useful complementary factor in explaining variance, the general utility of this factor seems limited.

This thesis does not claim to have dismissed all the competing explanations of variance in civil-military relations. Indeed, the traditional theories of civil-military relations are still relevant in explaining the reasons for military intervention and how civilian control of the military can be achieved. What this thesis has attempted to do is to cover the history of civil-military relations in a region – Southeast Asia – in a comparative context geographically and attempt to explain variation instead of evolution. By bringing together the impact of long-term legacies as well as the short-term responses of civilian and military actors, the thesis attempts to build a framework by which a comparative study of different states can be undertaken.

7.2 Areas for Future Study

This thesis has attempted an initial thrust to explain the variation of civil-military relations in Southeast Asia. Below are two areas in which it could be further expanded in terms of the study of general civil-military relations theory.

Going against the literature on democratic consolidation, this thesis has found that in Southeast Asia authoritarian (single-party) states are actually the states that have exerted the strongest measures of civilian control. It would be interesting for future study to find out whether authoritarian states were truly more effective at enforcing civilian control than democracies – in this sense carrying out a comparison with state structures as the independent variable. Also, another potential area of study could be whether party structures were the only factor that led authoritarian states to enforce civilian control, or whether other factors such as the ability to coerce or the monopoly on patronage and resource allocation played a part in enforcing civilian control.

Another natural area of further study could be an extension of the analysis of pre-independence legacies in a cross-regional comparison. Southeast Asia was not the only region with colonial or monarchical backgrounds; examples of other regions include Africa and Latin America. This would allow a further comparison of the propositions made in Chapter 4. Moreover, the paths laid down by pre-independent legacies could then be used to explain other questions in the civil-military literature – for example, coup occurrence or military influence in politics.

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