

## BOOK REVIEW

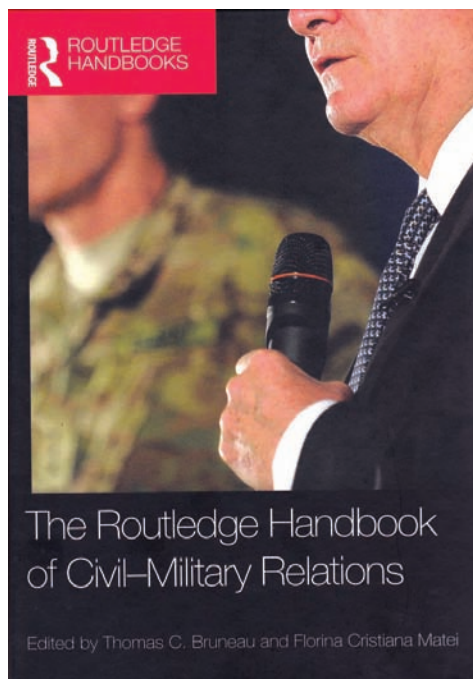
# THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Edited by:

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### REVIEWERS:

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The editors of the **The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations** are two reputable specialists in the field. **Thomas C. Bruneau** is a Distinguished Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California and **Florina Cristiana (Cris) Matei** is a Lecturer at the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) at the Naval Postgraduate School. Both have been involved in extensive research projects on the topic of civil-military relations and, what is more important, succeeded in engaging fruitful discussions and debates with other experts and key thinkers not only from the USA, but also from Europe, South America, Middle East, South Asia and Africa. All chapter authors have proven extensive experience on civil-military relations or defense policy in the country or region they are writing about, know the language, have access to scholars and policy-makers, and have honed their ideas with local experts and decision-makers. Consequently, the outcome of the editors' scientific endeavors and work commissioning for this volume is a wide-ranging internationally focused overview of the civil-military subject both at conceptual and practical level.

The **major thesis** of the book is that a “*new conceptualization*” of the civil-military relations is necessary. The arguments presented by Bruneau and Matei in this respect fall into two main categories. First, they highlight the impediments to a good theoretical understanding and practical approach to the field under discussion raised by an outdated and more often than not normative literature very little anchored in the New Institutionalism approach to conceptualization. Second, and in my opinion most importantly, the two editors demonstrate the inadequacy and insufficiency of Huntington’s model on CMR in the context of the latest developments in social sciences and of the contemporary challenges to the relationships concerning democracy and security forces.

The handbook takes both a theoretical and practical approach to the subject of CMR. Consequently, it succeeds in framing the conceptual tools characteristic of the field, and in providing relevant updated information through a number of case studies that prove or disprove the validity of instrument choice depending on the subject of analysis, namely non-democratic/nominally democratic countries, democratic countries and democratizing states.

First, it presents in a well-documented dialogic manner the need for a **new framework** to be used in the analysis of the twenty-first century civil-military relations (Part I, Chapters 1 to 6, Bruneau, Matei, Edmunds and Olmeda). The conceptual dimensions identified as necessary to underpin the proposed model go beyond those suggested by similar analyses of CMR and they are as follows: **democratic civilian control; operational effectiveness; and the efficiency of the security institutions (i.e., the armed forces, the intelligence community, and police) in their use of resources.**

The **novelty of the approach** suggested by Bruneau and Matei in **Part I** consists in the balanced three-dimensional view on the field, and in the alternatives provided to those dimensions that cannot actually frame the current state of affairs in certain countries. In this respect, they highlight the difficulties of actually employing the concept of efficiency in the analysis of the national security and defense sector of a given state due to its methodological and instrumental intricacies. In this respect, Bruneau and Matei suggest that the goal underlying the concept of efficiency, namely the maximization of the probability of using resources in accordance with a government’s policies and goals, could be better achieved by resorting to Supreme audit institutions (SAIs).

Using a **comparison and contrast method** that actually allows the reader to draw the conclusions, the editors commission Chapter 5, Part I to Timothy

Edmunds in order to implicitly highlight the major similarities and differences between their **three-part framework** and the **concept of security sector reform**, which is another approach to CMR.

Second, by drawing on **an extensive set of case studies** which are the result of research conducted in North America (the United States), South America (Argentina, Venezuela, and Chile), Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, and Moldova), the Middle East (Lebanon and Iraq), Africa (Egypt and South Africa), and Asia (India, Mongolia, and North Korea), the editors alongside with a corpus of experts use the framework they proposed and described in Part I to discuss in **Part II** and **Part III** the status of CMR in a wide range of states. Their **stated goal** is to unveil under what circumstances common patterns and trends can be identified, or at least to understand the dynamics of the relationship created between the armed forces and other security instruments. For this, the case studies are grouped in two categories using democracy (i.e., absence of democracy, non-functional democracy, democratic transition, and democratic consolidation) as a guiding criterion. Consequently, **Part II** focuses on **civil-military relations in non-democratic or nominally democratic countries**, and **Part III** on **civil-military relations in democratic and democratizing states**.

The **most important contributions** made by the case studies analyzed and presented in this handbook to the field of civil-military relations can be summarized as follows

1. Part II of the handbook focuses on non-democratic and nominally democratic regimes and that allows readers to better understand the mechanisms underlying the behavior of states that are part of this category in terms of the role the armed forces play.

2. Part III warns against any attempts at making generalizations, or at identifying patterns of behavior in the case of democratic transitions given the multifarious reasons underlying them and, hence, the impossibility of imposing valid criteria for assessment and forecast.

3. Part III, while using the framework proposed in Part I, addresses a deficiency manifest at the level of analytical literature and official government programs in terms of the place allocated to civil-military relations in consolidated democracies. Thus, the handbook reinstates the field of CMR in its due place by providing a thorough analysis of the issues and institutions in functioning democracies.

In conclusion, the framework proposed by the handbook and its validation through the series of case studies presents the necessary features to be later

transformed into an updated theory of CMR and, hence, model of analysis. It is our firm belief **The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations**, edited by **Thomas C. Bruneau** and **Florina Cristiana (Cris) Matei** is a valuable addition to the existing literature in the field of civil-military relations. In this respect, it will make an **essential reading** for students and practitioners in the fields of civil-military relations, defense studies, war and conflict studies, international security, and international relations in general.

### **REVIEWERS (CV IN BRIEF)**

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