The Evolution Civil-Military Relations and Democratization in the Balkans

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Abstract: Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, in addition to the political and economic orders, the structure of civil-military relations also began to change. The paper will provide an insight into the patterns of civil-military relations from a historical perspective. The main argument of the paper is that even though serious and mostly successful first generation reforms are made in the field of democratic civil-military relations, there are still some problems regarding the second generation reforms. In order to address these problems, the evolution of civil-military relations in the post-Communist era will be analyzed with a focus on successes and failures. After sorting out current problems, it will secondly try to answer the question what should be done in order to establish a more democratic structure of civil-military relations.

Keywords: civil-military relations, Balkans, security sector reform

Introduction

The modern state concept is based on the premise that only the state has the monopoly over the legitimate use of force in a country. Its first duty is to provide security to its citizens. The state fulfils this mission mainly by its armed forces. However, creating a strong body as such brings some risks together: “through its management of organised force, the military contains the potential to pose a threat to the democratic polity itself or the values on which it is based.”

With the advance of democratic regimes in many parts of the world, no matter how mature they are, the course of civil-military relations has also begun to change. Tax-paying citizens who finance the expenditures of military, started to question the role of military in the society.

Civilian democratic control of the armed forces has become one of the vital and essential aspects of democracy. This principle has become almost universal norm by finding its place in the acquis of many international organizations. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)\(^2\) has identified this norm as a condition for its members and NATO also included it in Membership Action Plans. It can be described as:

\(^1\) Born et al. 2006, 4.
\(^2\) OSCE 1994.

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