

Controlling the Armed Forces During Dictatorship and Democratization

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As societies emerge from the oppressive grip of dictatorship and embark on the transformative journey toward democratization, the delicate task of controlling and reforming the armed forces presents itself as a critical challenge. This comprehensive study explores the intricate relationship between armed forces and political power in transitional contexts, drawing upon case studies from various regions such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia.



Iberian Military Politics: Controlling the Armed Forces during Dictatorship and Democratisation by Richard Doherty

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Dictatorship and Military Rule:

In many dictatorships, the military serves as the backbone of the regime, maintaining internal security and suppressing dissent. However, as popular demands for change intensify, the military may face a dilemma: continue to

support the repressive government or align itself with the pro-democracy movement. Case studies reveal that the military's response to such situations is influenced by factors such as the level of internal cohesion, the presence of external pressure, and the perceived legitimacy of the regime.

Challenges of Democratization:

Once a dictatorship has fallen, the new democratic government must address the complex task of bringing the armed forces under civilian control. This process involves disarming and demobilizing irregular forces, establishing a professional military ethos, and developing mechanisms for civilian oversight. The challenges of democratization are often compounded by the legacy of authoritarian rule, which may have fostered a culture of impunity and resistance to civilian authority.

Strategies for Civilian Control:

Various strategies have been employed to establish civilian control over the armed forces. One common approach is the creation of a Ministry of Defense led by a civilian minister who oversees the military budget and operations. Another strategy is the establishment of independent commissions or oversight bodies that monitor military activities and investigate cases of misconduct. Additionally, promoting a culture of military professionalism, where loyalty to the constitution and the state takes precedence over personal or ideological considerations, is crucial for ensuring long-term civilian control.

Case Studies:

This study examines specific case studies to illustrate the complexities of controlling the armed forces during dictatorship and democratization. The

military's involvement in the fall of the Chilean dictatorship and its subsequent role in the transition to democracy offer valuable lessons. The experience of African countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria, demonstrates the challenges of bringing post-coup militaries under civilian control. The analysis also explores the role of international organizations, such as the United Nations, in supporting democratic transitions and promoting civilian control over the armed forces.

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Controlling the armed forces during dictatorship and democratization is a multifaceted challenge that requires a deep understanding of the political, social, and economic dynamics of each transitional context. The strategies and approaches discussed in this study provide a roadmap for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to navigate the complex terrain of civil-military relations in transitional societies. Only through sustained efforts to establish civilian control, promote military professionalism, and foster a culture of mutual respect and cooperation can democracies thrive and endure.



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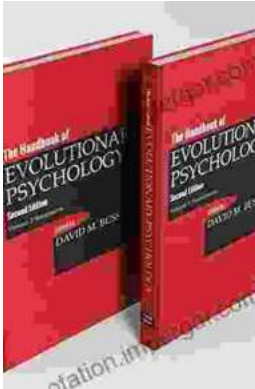
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