



Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution

NEWSLETTER

September 2025

Letter from the President

Dear RC01 colleagues,

Since the last newsletter, the ISA Sociology Forum took place in Rabat, Morocco, in July. Our RC01 was represented at several academic activities: 11 sessions (9 RC01 and 2 joint sessions with 37 presentations).

Furthermore, at our business meeting, we were able to advance several ideas and initiatives. Among them, we aim to promote the production of a research paper on the history of RC01, which will be supported by a research grant we have funded. We also received confirmation of our participation in the project, coordinated by Professor Stephen Saideman, within the Civil-Military Relations Network (CMRN), and a suggestion to share part of the program for the next ERGOMAS conference, to be held in Amsterdam from June 1 to 5, 2026. In 2027, we will have the XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gwangju, South Korea (July 4–10).

I would also like to highlight the growth in the number of our members in good standing (i.e., whose ISA dues are currently paid). We currently have a total of **82 members**. As you are aware, the number of members in each RC is the primary criterion used by ISA for various activities, including resource allocation and attendance at association events. We rely on the collaboration of all members to promote our activities and recruit new members.

All the best,

Celso Castro

News from the Editor

RC01 Business Meeting's Minutes at ISA Forum 2025 Rabat

During the recent Business Meeting of RC01 in Rabat, we discussed several important points that we would like to bring to your attention.

We are pleased to report an increase in our membership numbers, although there remains significant potential for further growth.

One suggestion that emerged is to engage the ISA Secretariat in negotiations to lower membership fees. Although we are skeptical about the likelihood of success, we believe it is worthwhile to collaborate with other RCs to form a united front in advocating for this change.

Additionally, we addressed the need to establish points of contact, especially among our long-term members, in each country. Our experience has shown that when senior members leverage their networks, it often leads to positive outcomes.

- We'll send invitation emails to the old (expired) members.
- We encourage our members to consider organizing panels or joint events with ERGOMAS, ISMS, or other relevant societies.
- We also invite members to host webinars through the ISA website (see this example: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/uploads/imagen/2201-recowwg-sociology-policy-interfaces.pdf>).

We are also planning to reach out to former and current members from South Korea to arrange a visit to a military facility during the 2027 Congress.

We are seeking a volunteer to write a comprehensive history of RC01. We have already obtained archival documents from the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam, as well as additional documents from the ISA Secretariat. One idea is to transform this project into a Master's thesis. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to propose one of your MA students for this task, please let us know.

Lastly, although not part of the business meeting, based on recent email exchanges among board members, we intend to draft a letter to the ISA expressing concern about the suspension decisions affecting national associations and asking for clarification.

RC01 Letter Concerning the Suspension of National Associations

Prior to the ISA Forum 2025 in Rabat, the Israeli Sociological Society (ISS) was suspended by the ISA Executive Committee. In 2022, the Russian Sociological Society (RSS) faced suspension. As a research committee focused on conflicts and their broader implications, RC01 emphasizes its dedication to the freedom of research worldwide, as well as the importance of objective and transparent criteria for suspension decisions. To address these concerns, we have sent a letter to the ISA Presidency. The complete text of the letter is provided below.

Dear ISA President and Vice Presidents,

Prior to the ISA Forum 2025, we have taken note of the suspension of the membership of the Israeli Sociological Society (ISS). We are also aware Russian Society of Sociologists (RSS) was suspended in 2022.

On behalf of RC01 Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution, we wish to reaffirm our strong commitment to the principles of open and transparent science. While RC01 firmly opposes war in all its forms, we believe that appropriate academic inquiry into war and conflict must be supported where possible. Such inquiry requires an environment that enables sociological dialogue across borders, including with scholars from countries currently engaged in conflict. It is our position that the suspension of the ISS by the ISA potentially undermines the fundamental principle of academic openness and



solidarity and sends a problematic signal by isolating academic organizations and scholars under political pressure instead of protecting them.

We therefore respectfully request that our position be taken into account during the deliberations of the Council of National Associations (CNA) meeting in December 2025, in reviewing the suspension of ISS and RSS.

We call for greater transparency around what evidence was used to make the decision of suspension. Specifically, we ask if there is evidence of ISS leadership or a large number of its members having violated ISA ethical codes, for example, the ISS explicitly endorsing war or promoting unnecessary violence? In the absence of such evidence, we consider the suspension or revocation of ISA membership in this instance to be inappropriate. In our view, academic debate should not be restricted based on national affiliation.

In addition, we petition for the ISA to improve its processes for such consequential decisions. It is critical that there be clear, fair, and consistent criteria for justifying such action (e.g., Is it applied consistently across cases? What evidence is required of ethical codes being violated? What information is to be used to make such decisions, and what parties should be consulted and a consensus attained?

It is our position that there should be full transparency and open communication with the RC's leadership and members, including at the early stages of consideration of such extreme actions, and with continued regular communication leading to and including final decisions.

RC01 Board

Sincerely,

Celso Castro

President, RC01

Recent Publications

Journal articles:

1. Garnett, H. A., Leuprecht, C., & Caal-Lam, S. (2025). Officers and Civilians: A Civil–Military Gap in Canadian National Security? *Armed Forces & Society*, 0(0) 10.1177/0095327X251331545

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0095327X251331545>

Abstract

This research note measures the political attitudes held by Canadian Military Colleges (CMC) graduates, as compared with the general population on issues related to Canadian democratic life. It employs survey data from a sample of over 1000 alumni of CMCs, complemented by data on the general population from the 2021 Canadian Election Study. The results show that CMC graduates

tend to be more interested in politics and have higher levels of political efficacy than a comparable sample of civilians. However, they are no more satisfied with democracy in Canada. They tend to favor personal, rather than institutional responsibility, and tend to be slightly more right-leaning than their peers. These results show some differences between the military population and the Canadian population, although the differential is insufficient for it to have a material bearing on civil–military relations in Canada. CMC graduates are neither alienated from nor dismissive of Canadian society.

2. Levy, Yagil. "The Conceptual Failure of the Israeli Military." *Israel Studies Review* 40.1 (2025): 35-42.

<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/israel-studies-review/40/1/isr400106.xml>

Abstract

The prevailing assumption in the media discourse is that on 7 October, Israel was taken by surprise when Hamas squads launched an attack on the Gaza–Israel border. This event challenged the intelligence community's perception that Hamas had been effectively deterred. It also raised questions about the efficacy of border defenses backed by technological systems. To better understand the origins of these perceptions and the failures they created, it is necessary to delve into the unique role of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Israeli politics.

3. Libel, Tamir and Ateş, Barış (2025). Academic–Military Relations in U.S. and Allied Professional Military Education Organizations, 1991–2024: A Comparative Analysis and Proposed Typology, *Armed Forces & Society*, 10.1177/0095327X251371307.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0095327X251371307>

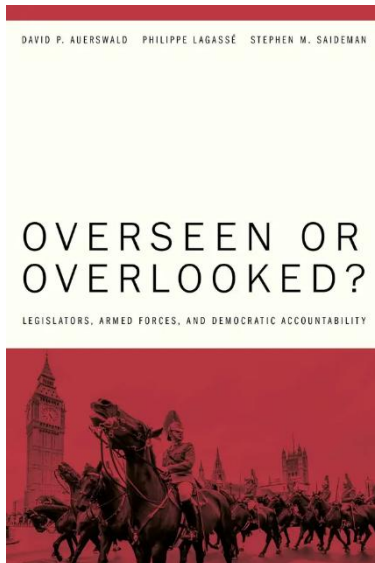
Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of academic-military relations within professional military education (PME) organizations and between them and higher education authorities in Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Turkey, the UK, and the USA. Traditionally distinct from universities in governance, curriculum quality, and faculty composition, PME organizations have increasingly aligned with academic standards, practices, and norms since the end of the Cold War to enhance officer competence. The paper outlines these transformations, introduces a typology of academic-military relations, and examines their implications for the legitimacy of officership as a profession amid shifting control over education and commissioning processes. The main findings of the paper reveal that the cooperation with civilian universities and accreditation requirements have facilitated the diversification of curricula and teaching staff, successfully dismantling the traditional military monopoly over the PME. Furthermore, it is increasingly administered under the auspices of joint-level headquarters, indicating a decline in the influence of any single service on PME.

Books and Book chapters:

1. Auerswald, D. P., Lagassé, P., & Saideman, S. M. (2025). **Overseen or Overlooked?: Legislators, Armed Forces, and Democratic Accountability.** Stanford University Press.

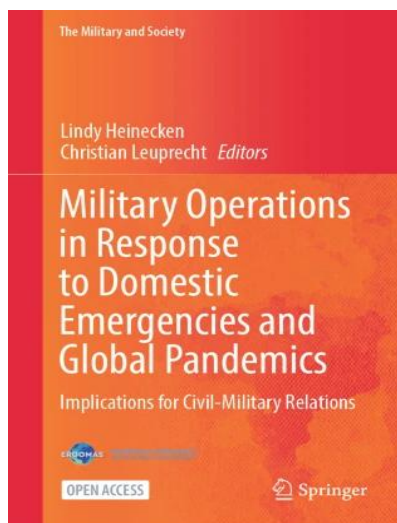
<https://www.sup.org/books/politics/overseen-or-overlooked>



"War is too important to be left to the generals," declared French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau over a century ago. But which civilians, exactly, play the most important roles in controlling the armed forces? When civilian control is studied, the focus is typically on those in the upper echelons of the executive branch: presidents, prime ministers, or defense secretaries. Yet, because civilians in the executive may be tempted to hide problems or use the military in controversial ways, researchers must extend Clemenceau's dictum: if war is too important to be left to the generals, civilian control is too important to leave with the executive. This book aims to understand the similarities and differences among the world's democracies regarding the role of legislatures in democratic civil-military relations. Drawing on over a dozen cases from across the globe, the authors examine how most legislatures face capability and motivational impediments to conducting truly robust oversight and

propose realistic reforms to strengthen military accountability to elected officials and the public—the heart of the civil-military relationship.

2. Heinecken, L., & Leuprecht, C. (2025). **Military Operations in Response to Domestic Emergencies and Global Pandemics: Implications for Civil-Military Relations.** Springer.



<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-86741-5?page=2#toc>

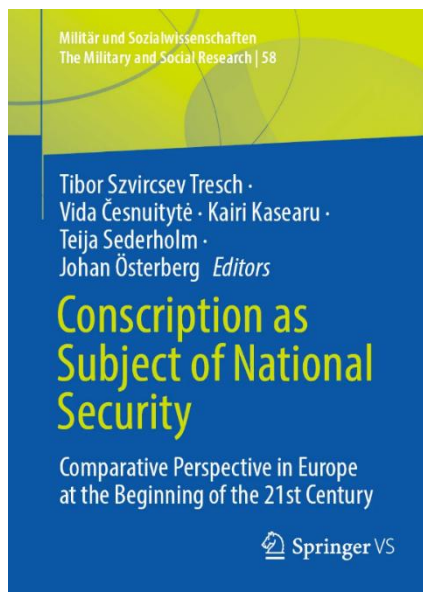
This open access book provides a comparative analysis of the deployment of the military in domestic operations, the use of the armed forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of that deployment on civil-military relations in 26 countries worldwide. The book examines the legal and constitutional regulations under which the military can serve in domestic roles, and the extent of domestic deployment before the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on the roles in which the military served during the pandemic, the resources available, and the readiness and effectiveness of the military response. The volume addresses whether or not the pandemic response was securitized, the extent of civilian oversight and control, the accountability measures in place, and the impact of the COVID-19 deployment on the military's image. The volume captures the

lessons learnt from the COVID-19 deployment and the implications for future force design, structure, and organizational transformation. Since almost all countries used their military in some capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, this volume offers an opportunity to compare use of the armed forces to provide domestic humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

3. **Tibor Szvircsev Tresch, Vida Česnuitytė, Kairi Kasearu, Teija Sederholm, Johan Österberg (Eds.). (2025). Conscription as Subject of National Security: Comparative Perspective in Europe at the Beginning of the 21st Century (Vol. 58). Springer Nature.**

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-47545-1>

The book series is published by the German Working Group on Military and Social Sciences, which Dr. Markus Steinbrecher chairs.



The volume presents analysis of conscription models in six European countries, four of which continuously kept conscription (Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Switzerland), and two re-established conscriptions in recent years (Lithuania and Sweden). The first part of the book provides a description of country-specific aspects related to conscription. The second part is dedicated for an in-depth analysis of the following topics: attitudes towards defence forces; adaptation to conditions during conscription; motivation to do initial military service; unit cohesion during conscription; leadership in the context of conscription; intentions to move from conscription to military professionals. Empirical data was collected in 2021-2022 by 8783 recruits. The book is an outstanding source of knowledge and a practical tool for conscription models suitable for the certain country. The volume is of interest to defence practitioners and policy makers, researchers, teachers and students who focus on

military sociology and defence politics.

4. **Resteigne, D., Belpaire, G., & De Roeck, M. (2025). Belgium. In L. Heinecken & C. Leuprecht (Eds.), Military operations in response to domestic emergencies and global pandemics (pp. 217–232). Springer.**

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-86741-5_13

Chapter's Abstract

Since the 2016 terrorist attacks in Brussels, the Belgian Defence has undergone a significant shift in operational focus, increasingly taking on domestic missions. This evolution has been reinforced by major crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the floods of 2021, which expanded the military's

presence and visibility in civilian life. This chapter examines the broader transformation, emphasizing how the BAF has moved beyond traditional military roles to assume internal responsibilities, including counter-terrorism, disaster response, and public health support. While this reflects a wider evolution in the military's role within democratic societies, the chapter focuses specifically on the COVID-19 crisis. In Belgium, the pandemic response emerged within a complex federal governance structure and exposed the lack of a clear legal framework for domestic military involvement, resulting in largely improvised, “ad hoc” arrangements. Despite institutional and financial constraints, the Belgian Defence offered vital support while mobilizing medical personnel, providing logistical assistance, and coordinating repatriations. Ultimately, the chapter highlights the importance of building societal resilience through coordinated responses, emphasizing that effective crisis management relies not solely on the military but on the vital collaboration with civilian and political actors.

5. **De Roeck, M., & Resteigne, D. (2025). Study attrition motivations among cadets at the Royal Military Academy: A quantitative content analysis through a gender lens, 2013–2019. In B. Warunzyski, Y. Yanakiev, & D. McDonald (Eds.), Team diversity and inclusion in defence and security: International perspectives. Springer.**

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-61125-4_2#citeas

Chapter's Abstract

Study attrition is a costly problem for military academies, especially the attrition of women, who remain underrepresented in militaries. This chapter investigates the changing attrition motivations of cadets at the Royal Military Academy (RMA) in Belgium over multiple academic years through a gender lens. The method is a quantitative content analysis of exit interviews (N = 290) with all cadets leaving the RMA between 2013 and 2019. The findings reveal that military culture constitutes a key attrition motivation, one that becomes increasingly salient in later academic years. Moreover, preliminary evidence suggests that men are more likely than women to indicate military culture as an attrition motivation. Study-related issues provide another reason for cadet attrition, though as much for women as for men. Finally, physical and psychological problems and discrimination are less common attrition motivations; nevertheless, these constitute “gendered” incentives to drop out, disproportionately affecting women. This chapter adds to the literature on attrition within Western armed forces by highlighting differential cadet attrition motivations by academic year through a gender lens.

Symposiums/Conferences

1. **Brad West (host), Contesting Military Identities, Monday 22nd September 2025 (participation is both in person and online)**

<https://militaryculture.org/events/>

Themes:

Increased geo-strategic competition, the return of conventional warfare in Europe, the global rise in religious nationalism and the current US administration's weaponisation of equity initiatives raises important questions around the diversity of identities within the military and current public sentiment towards the armed forces. Whereas Foucault famously cast the soldier as an ideal type of the docile body and sociologists commonly see the military as the ultimate example of a total institution, recent sociological research on the military has increasingly pointed to a variety of different military cultures, often existing in tension and competition with each other, with the service person, veteran and their families active in advocating for political and organisational change. This Australian Sociological Association sponsored one day conference brings together Australian and international sociologists and scholars in adjunct fields around this topic of "contesting military identities".

Sociology needs new ways to comprehend the military, with the sociological study of armed forces and society traditionally being marginal within the discipline. Where the military is analysed sociologically, it is often done so in ways that selectively utilise rather than advance sociological theory and method. However, with a rise in the political prominence of military effects and debates in how a widening gap shifts in civil-military relations may influence capability with the return of Great Power competition, there is a pressing need for a new sociology of the military. Whilst sociologists face enduring difficulties in attaining access for research in the area, we arguable are seeing Defence and Department of Veterans' Affairs in Australia being increasingly appreciative and involved in funding sociological research and more current serving Defence personnel, veterans and their family members undertaking PhD study in sociology based on their experience of the armed forces. At this critical point of time, including in the aftermath of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide and the ongoing investigations into war crimes allegedly committed by the Australian Defence Force in Afghanistan, this conference attempts to raise intellectual and public debate in the area while strengthening ties between those studying military culture.

Ongoing Projects

1. Ikem Godspower UJENE, Ph.D.

"Engaging Victim Communities in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Boko Haram Members and Peacebuilding in Northeast Nigeria" (see <https://nai.uu.se/opportunities/scholarships/awarded-scholarships.html>) at the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) of Uppsala University, Sweden, under the African Scholarship Programme.



Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution

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We hope that you enjoyed reading this issue of RC 01's newsletter.