From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War

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> Common sense is a method of arriving at workable solutions from false premises by nonsensical reasoning.
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> Joseph Alois Schumpeter

Mercenaries went out of style in the nineteenth century. States altered the conduct of war by raising citizen armies and eschewing the use of mercenaries in practice or in law.[1] It became common sense that armies should be staffed with citizens. Both realists and sociologists have interpreted this change as a functional response to an international demand, either strategic or normative.[2] Realists assume states act strategically to insure their security in the system, so states choose strategies that win wars. Sociological institutionalists assume that predominant ideas shaping state identity, not just war winning, account for changes in patterns of state behavior, so states act in a way that reflects prevailing notions of state identity. Though both realism and sociological institutionalism provide a rationale for the spread of citizen armies, the historical record reveals an alternative path that also promised to respond to interna-

1. The use of the term *citizen army* in the literature is confusing. Sometimes it refers to an army of conscripts, other times to an army made of up citizens fighting for their own country (even if they volunteer). The changes in France wrought by the revolution and demonstrated during the Napoleonic Wars span both definitions. In the literature, probably somewhat more attention has been directed at citizen armies as armies of conscripts rather than citizen armies as armies of nationalistic fighters; for the purposes of this article, though, the latter definition is more important. The practice that was established internationally was that each state used its own citizens to fight and would avoid foreigners, or mercenaries, in their armies (many countries, the United States and Britain included, never really adopted the conscript army). So, in this article, a citizen army will refer to an army made up of citizens fighting for their own country. I will deal with the issue of conscripts versus volunteers only incidentally. For an excellent treatment of the general problem of conscripts versus volunteers, see Cohen 1985. For a similar distinction between mercenary and citizen army, see Thomson 1994.

2. For realist arguments, see Cohen 1985; Gooch 1980; and Posen 1993. For sociological arguments, see Thomson 1994.

tional demands. Small professional armies, with no restrictions on mercenaries, also won wars and fit with predominant ideas. Why, then, did states become convinced that citizen armies were best and stop using mercenaries? Why did countries increasingly adopt this practice?[3]

To solve this puzzle, I trace the process by which France, Prussia, and Britain moved toward citizen armies. France was the first major power to experiment with a citizen army. Prussia became the model for the citizen army (and ultimately the most widely emulated military organization) in the nineteenth century. Britain, as the last major power to eschew the use of mercenaries, signified the general acceptance of the new practice of war, after which rulers rarely considered using foreigners in their armies.[4]

I argue that material and ideational turmoil provided important antecedent conditions for change. Material shifts raised challenges in the normal course of fighting wars, and new ideas provided the avenues for rethinking past practices. In the cases examined here, liberal ideas associated with the Enlightenment created a particularly important focal point that galvanized military and constitutional reformers to advocate citizen armies as part of a new relationship between citizens and states. Beyond this, I argue that because ideas often have important distributional consequences, they are more likely to be acted upon under certain conditions. First, dramatic reforms are more likely following an exogenous shock (military defeat), which can destabilize the prevailing wisdom, unsettle existing coalitions, and open the way for change. Second, advocates for change will have an easier time constructing a new focal point when their ideas do not promise to exact costs from powerful domestic coalitions or when the dominant coalition is split. Thus I argue that individual states were more likely to move toward citizen armies when they had been defeated militarily and when the ruling coalition was split or indifferent about the reforms tied to citizen armies. At the very least, this argument explains why states in Europe moved toward citizen armies at different times and adopted somewhat different variants of the practice. That is, even if we assume that the citizen army was the eventual efficient choice (as realists and sociologists do), the domestic conditions I outline explain why countries in Europe decided to adopt the practice they did when they did.

There is reason to believe, however, that a small professional army (with no restrictions on mercenaries) was a viable alternative to the citizen army that would have won wars, fit with some emerging ideas, and thus also proved internationally efficient. If we do not assume one efficient course, path dependency suggests that in key instances domestic distributional issues affect not only the timing and outcomes in individual states but also the character of international practices in general. One

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3. I will refer to this change as change in the conduct, or practice, of warfare. The term *practice* refers to the informal rules or guides to action, a subset of a broad definition of *institution*. Despite the fact that analysts use the term *institution* to refer to guidance devices that simplify choices and delineate the factors a decision maker must take into account (for example, Knight 1992, 2–4; and North 1990, 3–10), the term often evokes a notion of formal rules. By using *practice* to refer to informal guidance devices, I hope to avoid confusion between informal and formal institutions. See also Bourdieu 1977.

4. For laws restricting mercenaries, see Thomson 1994, 83, 86.

state's solution to the underlying material and ideational challenges that looks successful (wins wars, fits with prevailing ideas) can become the international model, making the solution more likely to be replicated in other countries. Once a path becomes an international model, it provides a new commonsensical starting point. Though domestic conditions must still obtain to achieve reform in each country, domestic actors are likely to think more readily of the established model. Furthermore, reformers can appeal to its perceived success as part of their coalition-building strategy. Hence, an international model can influence the domestic conditions necessary for its adoption.[5]

At the most, then, this argument suggests that domestic conditions in key states influenced the selection of citizen armies (which precluded the use of mercenaries) rather than small professional forces (which did not preclude mercenaries) as the prevailing practice among states. The French and Prussian experience provided a new focal point. The Prussian successes, for whatever reason, made the citizen army the international model, making it even more likely that Britain (and other countries) would follow suit. If domestic politics is crucial for explaining why ideas inspire change in one country, which in turn influences coalitions for reform in other states, then understanding the link between ideas and interests in domestic politics is fundamental for explaining both when and why individual countries change and why international institutions evolve the way they do. The hypotheses generated here can be tested in other potential shifts in the practice of war.[6]

The following three sections examine the material and ideational shifts that formed the backdrop for change, discuss the predominant alternative path, and sketch the theoretical logic behind my argument. I then turn to an examination of the cases and end with a comparison of the three theoretical approaches for explaining major shifts in the way wars are fought.

Antecedent Conditions: Background to Change

Conventional wisdom has it that the Napoleonic Wars separated the wars of kings from the wars of people. Citizen armies replaced mercenary armies with all the attendant consequences.[7] Significant material and ideational changes preceded the

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5. This is the ''second image reversed'' logic. Gourevitch 1978. For another argument along these lines that looks at domestic institutions, see Rogowski 1987. Alternatively, Finnemore and Sikkink argue that there is an international tipping point after which domestic conditions are less important. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998. This effect could manifest itself in two ways. The new practice could be adopted widely with no preceding domestic adjustment, or domestic conditions could change more easily because of the strength of the international norm. The latter is quite consistent with the argument I make here. Finnemore and Sikkink agree that domestic conditions are most important in the beginning stages of the norm ''life cycle.''

6. The literature on change in the practice of warfare includes a recent interest in the consequences of technology and the potential for a technologically inspired Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). See Biddle 1997; Krepinevich 1994; Toffler and Toffler 1993; and Mazarr 1993. For more general and historical analyses of military change, see Black 1994; Delbruck 1985; Keegan 1993; and Paret 1986.

7. See Palmer 1986, 119; and Rothenberg 1994, 86.

Napoleonic Wars and laid the groundwork for change. William McNeill documents material pressures that arose ultimately from population growth. He argues that territorial expansion and organizational and technological changes in military organizations were required to respond effectively to this growth. Accomplishing change, however, required clearing a number of hurdles. Intermediate attempts at reorganization were challenged by technological limits—it was difficult for a military leader to control an army of more than 50,000 with prevailing communication and topographical technology, and the problems of supplying such an army limited strategic mobility. Also, the conflict between vestiges of the old system of advancement based on property ownership with emerging bureaucratic rationality created confusion. He argues that the countries that could more effectively and quickly overcome these hurdles had greater success in reforming their militaries and expanding their territory.[8]

At the same time the motif of the Enlightenment provided a new way of thinking about these issues. Modern ideas about reason, nature (or natural law), and progress all suggested relevant solutions to the material issues described above. Two major themes of the Enlightenment—the development of the social contract and the prestige of the natural sciences or natural philosophy—were important for developing a new way of thinking about the relationship between states and soldiers.[9]

In the development of natural law, the abstract reasoning capabilities of all people provided the foundation for a doctrine of human and civil rights, which held implications for the treatment of soldiers and the relationship between citizenship and service. Confidence in the power of reason directed attention to merit and education. Hence, new ideas about the treatment of soldiers, the importance of education, and the potential for a broad range of people to become officers all sprang from Enlightenment thinking that reason was the ultimate source of natural law. These conceptions allowed natural law to be separated from the sphere of the state and protected (in theory) natural law from the impositions of state absolutism or an irrational Leviathan.[10]

Unalienable human rights were also basic to the social contract as seen by thinkers such as Grotius and Rousseau. They argued that the limits of civil law were bounded by the power of natural law. The social contract (based on an implicit agreement between rulers and ruled) suggested a different type of connection between citizens and the state than was prevalent in old regime states. It implied the relevance of the political community, rather than just the leader, to notions of sovereignty. If sovereignty rested in the people, the defense of sovereignty was an obligation held by all. These ideas were crucial for inspiring the understanding of a linkage between citizenship and military service. For, as Peter Paret points out, the arming of citizens was looked down on because of not only technical and political problems "but also the

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8. McNeill 1982, chap. 5. McNeill also argues that the preclusion of peasants and merchants from military service limited the populations from which manpower could be drawn.
9. Brinton 1967, 519.
10. Cassirer 1951, 238.

unwillingness of their subjects to take up arms.''[11] Thinking of themselves as citizens fighting for their country rather than subjects fighting on behalf of the crown made people more willing to fight. Finally, the connection between citizens and states implied by the social contract also contributed to new concerns about neutrality. If citizens were representatives of the state—not just more or less willing subjects— their actions became more important for discerning state policy. It thus became logically more difficult for rulers to distance themselves from the actions of their citizens.

These material and ideational changes are the basis for realist and sociological arguments, respectively, about the demands of the international system. For realists, the material demands (population growth and territorial expansion) led to a new level of competition that required mass armies staffed with committed soldiers. This new systemic demand induced states to adopt citizen soldiers to increase the size and reliability of their forces. For sociologists, the ideas of the Enlightenment introduced the notion of citizens and made states responsible (whether they liked it or not) for the actions of their citizens. Furthermore, states had a collective interest in controlling the people within their territories. Response to one or the other of these pressures (depending on who is making the argument) caused states to act in such a way as to institute a practice of state control of nonstate violence.

The Path Forsaken

A citizen army, however, was not the only proper response to the material demands of the system in the early nineteenth century. In fact, technological limits on order and supply could have meant that smaller, even more professionally oriented armies would fare better. It was not obvious that a large, poorly supplied army would do better than one that was smaller but well supplied. Also, training a small army is less difficult and less expensive. Indeed, Martin van Creveld argues that technological advances have been a consistent impetus for deploying small professional armies rather than mass armies; the French Revolution merely interrupted this trend.[12] John Shy argues that the Prussians eventually returned to this professional organizational style.[13] Professional armies could have remained open to mercenaries. Indeed, it was likely that they would have. Officers in many prominent armies of the late eighteenth century preferred foreign mercenaries to their native equivalent.[14]

In the wake of the French Revolution Prussia pursued this alternate direction toward a small professional army. The Canton Law of 1792 moved away from universal service, allowing exemptions that elevated the importance of mercenaries. Mercenaries were seen as a more convenient tool of diplomacy and a solution that eased the

11. Paret 1992, 43.
12. van Creveld 1989, 145–47.
13. Albeit without foreigners in their army. Shy 1986.
14. See Shanahan 1945, 50; and Kaiser 1990, chap. 3. It has become so commonplace to dismiss the quality of mercenaries that we often forget that native recruits were of equally bad (or worse) quality than mercenaries in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Bayley 1977, 5–15.

strain between subjects and the Prussian state.[15] The king was not the only one who preferred mercenaries, though, William O. Shanahan reports that official stipulations about the correct proportion of foreign mercenaries to conscripted natives were rarely maintained because captains preferred to furlough the natives and retain only the foreigners under arms.[16] In other words, military leaders believed that mercenaries fought better than natives. Finally, mercenaries performed well in the Napoleonic Wars.[17] In the plethora of military publications that flooded eighteenth century Prussia, a prominent perspective focused on formal training, exercise, and supply. High-level military analysts such as Friedrich von Saldern, Christian von Massenbach, and Georg Venturini all advocated this position.[18]

What Enlightenment ideas would mean for the military was also ambiguous because these ideas were not a straightforward package. Professionalization and rationalization were often in tension with democratic processes. For instance, a committee of lieutenant generals working in France from 1780 to 1784 proposed a set of military reforms based on the Enlightenment vision of rationality. These proposals expressed a zeal for professionalism aimed at creating a military caste. This was a far cry from the democratic ideals that informed the revolutionaries in France. Indeed, almost all the committee members ended up siding with the counterrevolution.[19]

The formal professionalism (mentioned earlier as a reasonable response to the material changes of this period) was quite consistent with the portion of Enlightenment ideas focused on rationality. Smaller, more efficient armies (perhaps more mercenary rather than less) that embodied professional standards and attention to merit, and valued selflessness and work as opposed to egoism, idleness, appointment by birth, and self-indulgence, would have looked like new, modern entities even without dealing with the relationship between citizens, soldiers, and states. There is no conspicuous reason to believe that such armies would have proved internationally inefficient.[20] After all, the British fought well with such an army during the Peninsular War (1807–15).[21]

15. Shanahan 1945, 46–48.
16. Shanahan 1945, 50.
17. See fn. 21.
18. Reformers criticized these analysts for emphasizing the army as a machine and attempting to reduce war to a system. Shanahan 1945, 66.
19. Bien makes this argument to demonstrate that much of what we now see as consistent with the Enlightenment is historically informed with lessons that were not available to those acting in the late eighteenth century. Bien 1979, 68–98. A brief review of the period, however, demonstrates that examples like this abound. In Prussia, Enlightenment rationalism (embodied in the new civil code) existed right along side serfdom and a seigneurial system in the countryside. Reason was taken to justify dynastic politics and to undermine it. See Cassirer 1951; Hazard 1954; Cobban 1960; and Meinecke 1972. See also discussion in Kaiser 1990, chap. 3.
20. Many leaders at the time hung on to the idea of professionals. In Austria, Charles dismissed poor generals and focused on small brigades and corps well supplied by an improved military train. He only reluctantly accepted the idea of a militia in 1808 because it was cheaper and his resources were depleted after fifteen years of fighting. He regarded the militia as only temporary. Kaiser 1990. Van Creveld argues that the modern military has struggled to get back to its professional roots. Van Creveld 1989.
21. In fact, many analysts might point out that the British did well with mercenaries despite a lack of real professionalism. Though Wellington's army was battle hardened, it was hardly the model of professionalism. See Bayley 1977; and Gates 1994. See also the discussion of Britain's performance in Black

One could argue that the initial Prussian path away from an army of citizens was discredited by the army's defeats at the hands of the French in the battles of Auerstadt and Jena (1806). To make this argument persuasive, however, one would have to show that it was the citizen army in France (or its absence in Prussia) that led to the French victories. There are two types of arguments realists make about the benefits of a citizen army—one focused on spirit and one on numbers.[22] These battles, however, were lost by Prussian ineptitude as much as won by French spirit or numbers.[23] Though one could point to French superiority in numbers as a factor in the Prussian defeat at Jena, at Auerstadt the Prussians outnumbered the French by almost two to one.[24]

Prominent strategists have pointed to several crucial factors that contributed to the Prussian defeat. First, the Duke of Brunswick has been deemed incompetent (and a Francophile to boot). The time leading up to the battles was wasted debating Brunswick's insistence on a cautious defensive. Second, each prince asserted his own separate command, which complicated unified action and dispersed the troops. Furthermore, the king, Frederick William III (who accompanied the army in the field, causing a whole host of problems), refused to use spies.[25] Therefore, Prussia had inadequate information about French movements. There is ample evidence indicating that the Prussians lost because of these deficiencies in leadership and strategy. Indeed, Henri de Jomini's account of Napoleon's victories suggests that it was Napoleon's strategy that mattered, not the will or number of his troops.[26]

A sensible response to redressing Prussian ineptitude, then, could have just as easily required new leadership, better strategy, and a more professional and highly trained force rather than an army of citizens.[27] Imagining an alternative set of responses to the shock of the defeats at Jena and Auerstadt that focused on these technical and professional issues is unnecessary; conservative officers made just this kind of argument.[28] As Shy argues, ultimately the Prussian army returned to this more formal, systematic approach to war, albeit with an army of citizens.[29] It was not

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1994, 189–93, which discusses Wellington's superior strategy and supply; and Muir 1996. According to Rory Muir, Wellington had 41,000 British and German rank and file by October 1810. Muir 1996, 126. The size of this force was doubled by the inclusion of Portuguese regulars without diluting its quality.

22. For the argument about numbers, see Cohen 1985. For the argument about spirit, see Delbruck 1985; and Posen 1993.

23. See Shanahan 1945, 90–93; and Henderson 1911, 22–29.

24. Shanahan reports 48,000 Prussians to 26,000 French. Shanahan 1945, 93. Bryan Perrett reports 26,000 French to 50,000 Prussians. Perrett 1992.

25. He thought of himself as an enlightened monarch above stooping to such methods. Shanahan 1945.

26. Shy 1986, 180–81. Such a strategy depends on a certain loyalty among army members, but whether a citizen army is the only mechanism for engendering such loyalty is not clear. Indeed, strong bonds of loyalty exist among mercenary bands just as fragging and other instances of disloyalty exist within citizen armies.

27. The other path forsaken, of course, was a continuation of the status quo: relatively unprofessionalized armies (also open to mercenaries) whose performance depended greatly on the stature of their leader. The British held to this course (see later discussion).

28. See Cohen 1985, 53; Craig 1955, 383–89; and Shanahan 1945, 102–14, 127–49.

29. Shy 1986.

necessary to move to a citizen army to redress the inadequacies of the Prussian army's performance.

Ideas, Interests, and Change

Realist and sociological accounts both provide functional explanations (material or ideational) of the shift from mercenary to citizen armies. Functional analyses, however, have a hard time explaining choice for two reasons. First, sometimes actors misunderstand the situation and make choices that do not look efficient.[30] Functional analyses do not help us understand when and why people (or states) make poor choices. If we assume that a selection mechanism will punish those who make bad choices, functional analysis should still be able to explain broad, historical outcomes but have problems predicting the timing of particular outcomes.[31] The larger problem arises if we do not feel confident assuming a selection mechanism. If there is more than one natural or efficient solution to a problem, functional analyses cannot tell us which will be chosen.[32]

Furthermore, these analyses tend to be either drawn from economics and emphasize material variables or from sociology and center on ideational and social variables.[33] Focusing on one element exclusively is counterproductive in the quest to grasp important processes in international relations; in the real world, both ideational and material variables interact to affect choice. Thus in the following section I draw on recent analyses that have attempted to integrate the two approaches to suggest some general principles about how ideas and interests interact to affect choices in times of flux.[34]

First, external shocks—big failures, wars, revolutions—often facilitate the questioning of established institutions.[35] Such shocks can shift power, open minds to new alternatives, affect the legitimacy of institutions, and shatter worldviews. All of these matter because they give political entrepreneurs fodder to call into question and/or delegitimize established perspectives. Shocks help reformers make the case that the

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30. The question of why people make seemingly irrational economic choices has informed the work of Douglass North and Robert Bates. See North 1981 and 1990; and Bates 1981.

31. Savvy functional analysts would respond that understanding these specific timing issues is unimportant because they are interested in explaining a more general phenomenon. Many people (myself included) are interested in explaining why Britain—the dominant state in many ways and far more liberal than Prussia—lagged behind others in instituting liberalizing reforms in its army. If you are interested in explaining timing, you need to look at other variables.

32. For a similar argument about the problems with functional analyses, see Thomson 1995.

33. Brian Barry noticed this as well. Barry 1978.

34. This is a motivating question for the constructivist literature. See Ruggie 1993a,b; Wendt 1992; and Katzenstein 1996. Because much of the constructivist literature is aimed at unseating realism, however, it sometimes ends up being a call for more sociological analysis rather than a true attempt to integrate ideational and material variables. Recently there has been a renewed effort to integrate material and ideational variables. See Ruggie 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Kahler 1998; and March and Olsen 1998.

35. External shocks are more prevalent in the literature drawn from economic theory; see, for example, Binmore and Samuelson 1994.

system is broken and thus open the way for them to construct new ways of thinking in order to fix it. External shocks are rarely sufficient conditions for effecting change, but they are often necessary for unsettling the status quo.

Second, in the wake of an external shock, ideas help actors formulate options.[36] When many people share ideas, a focal point can emerge spontaneously.[37] People who hold similar ideas tend to frame problems in a like way and reach parallel conclusions about the solution that seem natural and obvious in the end.[38] Shared ideas are more likely to engender similar behavior in a new situation.[39] Spontaneous focal points are likely to be automatic, commonsensical, and therefore conservative. They fold new problems into old solutions. The lack of reform in the first two British cases reflects this dynamic (see Table 1). Focal points, however, do not always emerge spontaneously; they can be *constructed*.[40] Because the implementation of ideas can have important distributional effects, if people do not share ideas (or interests) and a spontaneous focal point does not emerge, actors often have incentives to try and bring about ideas that include themselves as beneficiaries.[41] Coalitions for reform almost inevitably result from the construction of a new coalition around new ideas.

As Table 1 suggests, the construction of a coalition around new ideas is most likely to occur when divergent interests or ideas are represented in the dominant coalition. Beyond this, the role of interests and ideas in the construction of new coalitions can vary. Sometimes the distributional consequences of new ideas are unclear. As we shall see in the French case, before the revolution the aristocracy's lack of commonality led the dominant coalition to have a very narrow sense of its interests and allowed significant reforms to take place without seeming to contradict the coalition's interests. In the end, Enlightenment ideas seemed more innocuous than they really were. Proposals for reform changed the way some members of the military aristocracy identified themselves and therefore the way they articulated their interests, which ultimately undermined the dominant coalition and opened the way for the French Revolution.[42] At other times the distributional consequences of different ideational paths are very clear and become part of the political battle. If there are large power asymmetries and competing "equilibria" offer vastly different distributional consequences, actors have incentives to fight over how best to think about a problem.

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36. See, for instance, North 1990; and Garrett and Weingast 1993.
37. Binmore and Samuelson 1994, 45–63, 51–53.
38. Tversky and Kahneman 1981 and 1988. Both experiments and empirical case studies have spelled out an important role for shared ideas. See Risse-Kappen 1994; Garrett and Weingast 1993; and Binmore and Samuelson 1994.
39. This is similar to Cortell and Davis's argument that suggests it is easier for an international norm to gain salience in the domestic context if it fits well with (or does not conflict with) existing domestic norms. Cortell and Davis 1996.
40. The classic analysis of focal points is found in Schelling 1978. Garrett and Weingast suggest how ideas can shape focal points. Garrett and Weingast 1993, 176.
41. See Bawn 1996; Knight 1992; North 1990; and Garrett and Weingast 1993. To reach this conclusion we do not have to assume actors think strategically. Arguments about motivated bias suggest that people will subconsciously prefer ideas that pay off for them in the end. See Jervis 1976.
42. Kennett 1967. For arguments about how ideas can affect interests, see Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; March and Olsen 1998; and Ruggie 1998.

TABLE 1. *Conditions for reform*

Case	Antecedent conditions	Exogenous shock?	Domestic conditions	Outcome
France				
Pre-Napoleonic/ Napoleonic France	Material and ide-ational changes	Yes: Defeat in the Seven Years War	Divergent interests on military issues among dominant coalition	Reform
Prussia				
Pre-Napoleonic Prussia	Material and ide-ational changes	No	Divergent ideas on military issues among dominant coalition	Plans, but no reform
Napoleonic/Post-Napoleonic Prussia	Material and ide-ational changes	Yes: Defeat to France at Auerstadt and Jena	Divergent interests and ideas on mili-tary issues among dominant coalition	Reform
Britain				
Pre-Napoleonic Britain	Material and ide-ational changes	Yes: Defeat in American Revolu-tion	Conservative focal point, shared inter-ests and ideas on military issues among dominant coalition	Little reform
Post-Napoleonic Britain	Material and ide-ational changes	No	Conservative focal point, shared inter-ests and ideas on military issues among dominant coalition	No reform
Britain in the 1870s	International model: Citizen army in Prussia	Yes: Embarrassment in Crimean War, Indian Mutiny	Divergent ideas on military issues among dominant coalition	Reform

In other words, when some actors are already powerful, or see the potential to gain or lose power if a particular solution is chosen, they will be more likely to exert the effort to construct a solution that will serve their interests. This was the case in Prussia after the battles of Jena and Auerstadt.[43]

The cases examined here suggest that focal points tend to be conservative in the absence of an external shock. Even when there has been an external shock, conservative reactions are more likely when the dominant coalition uniformly sees new ideas as a

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43. Garrett and Weingast suggest that ideas have a greater impact when their distributional conse-quences are unclear. Garrett and Weingast 1993, 186. The contrasts between the French and Prussian cases support this point.

threat to their interests. When an external shock is joined by a disjuncture in the dominant coalition—either a split in how they see the world or few common interests—it is more likely that a constructed focal point based on new ideas will take hold.

Thinking about how new ideas take hold moves us to path dependency. Path dependent arguments, increasingly common in both microeconomic and sociological theories, tell us that an initial outcome, even if it is only one of many potentially successful possibilities, is privileged in subsequent interactions. Both economists and sociologists point to sunk costs (material or cognitive, respectively) to explain why this is so.[44] Material and cognitive costs can be seen as additive; path dependent cues are strongest when both are present.[45]

We see the effect of path dependency in the subtle differences between the process of reform in France, Prussia, and Britain. Reformers in France worked to invent (or put into practice) military reforms based on Enlightenment ideas after the defeats of the Seven Years War. Advocates for reform in Prussia could use the French success with a citizen army to bolster their interpretation of Enlightenment ideas in the political battle over how to understand their recent defeats. Even though there were many other factors at work, reformers argued that the French won (and the Prussians lost) because of the commitment of citizen soldiers that made citizen armies a more formidable force. Conservative opponents in Prussia argued against this interpretation but were unsuccessful. When the Prussians adopted this model and then won, both early in the century and, much more spectacularly, toward the middle of the century, the force of the model became even stronger. By the time the British debated the Cardwell reforms in the 1870s, the argument centered not on which model was best, but on how to best adapt the model to political realities in Britain. Thus, as Table 1 depicts, the antecedent conditions had shifted. The debates in Britain did not contest the proper model of a modern army; the citizen army had become the model, even in a state that had yet to endorse it.

Neorealists claim that none of this matters because the international system "selects" winners; states are punished for the wrong choices.[46] However, the logic of this argument relies on an objective selection mechanism. "Selection" in the international system, though, depends on the actions of other states. Thus we cannot predict the efficient outcome—this is why policy debates are often so vociferous. What proves to be efficient depends on what other states do, and this, in turn, depends on their interpretations of the system's demands (and, continuing with this rationale, their interpretations should be influenced by their domestic politics).[47] If selection is not automatic or predictable, and if what one state does can affect the way other states see themselves and the terms of their competition, it is important to understand what motivates these actions.

Institutions that have met with success (even by sheer luck or accident) become a "past practice" and are thus more likely to become models for reformers in other

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44. For economic arguments, see Binmore and Samuelson 1994; Downs 1957; Dawes 1988; Nisbett and Ross 1980; and North 1990. For sociological arguments, see Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Price and Tannenwald 1996; and Risse-Kappen 1994.

45. Sugden 1986.

46. Waltz 1979.

47. As Ruggie argues, "what constitutes institutional inefficiencies or costs is not entirely independent of the attributes of states making the calculation." Ruggie 1993a, 30.

countries. A particular way of doing things may become the commonsensical starting point and may be considered best even though other equally good (or better) solutions are possible. As Douglass North points out,

> Then, not only can both divergent paths and persistently poor performance prevail; the historically derived perceptions of the actors shape the choices that they make. In a dynamic world characterized by institutional increasing returns, the imperfect and fumbling efforts of the actors reflect the difficulties of deciphering a complex environment with the available mental constructs—ideas, theories, and ideologies.[48]

Mercenary to Citizen Armies

Looking at ideas, distributional issues, and path dependency focuses our attention on the processes of how the battles of the Napoleonic Wars became understood as a victory for citizen soldiers. In a nutshell, the story of how the lessons of the French Revolution were learned in Prussia and then how the lessons of Prussia were learned internationally is a story about how distributional issues shaped the impact of ideas and how interpretations in the first instance affected assumptions later on. These processes are crucial for understanding why countries in Europe largely abandoned mercenaries and adopted citizen armies.

Defeat provided an external shock in all the countries examined here. How people responded to defeat depended on prominent solutions and their effect on political interests. Obvious responses to defeat tended to be conservative when important domestic actors shared a worldview and stood to benefit from the status quo. This was the case in Britain. Reformers had greater potential when elites had less in common (France) or were split on significant ideas (Prussia).

In the absence of a conservative focal point, interested actors had more leeway to construct a new way of thinking. The chances that a new solution would be chosen increased with the number of actors who shared ideas about why the solution should work and stood to benefit if it was enacted. Once a citizen army was created in France and demonstrated success against the Prussians, such an army became a more appealing solution. Those advocating a citizen army in Prussia could make more credible arguments because the French won. When Prussia created a citizen army and won, not only against Napoleon but also later in the century, the Prussian army became the international model of a modern army.[49]

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48. North 1990, 95–96.

49. Emulation is a concept used by a variety of accounts from structural neorealism to sociology. The impetus for emulation differs, however. In Waltz's account the implication is that emulation represents an adjustment to the demands of the system. Waltz 1979, 126–28. A more recent perspective along these lines can be found in Resende-Santos 1996. In the story sociologists tell, emulation is often represented as a blind copying of other entities regardless of inefficiencies. Indeed, emulation sometimes has serious deleterious effects on state security; see, for instance, Eyre and Suchman 1996. The approach here suggests something in between. See also the discussion of "demonstration effect" in Ikenberry 1990.

Domestic actors in Britain who sought institutional change used the Prussian model and its perceived success in their arguments for reform. Though the British still had to deal with the distributional effects of reform, the weight of the argument for reform was enhanced because of the Prussian army's apparent success.[50] The British had accepted the citizen army as the model for a modern military. This both affected how reformers in Britain thought about the options for reform and helped them make the case for change.[51]

Pre-Napoleonic Reforms

The new material challenges discussed by McNeill tended to be noticed by countries that lost wars. However, defeat was not a sufficient cause for a serious reform effort. Although the Seven Years War prompted reforms in the French army, the British were less responsive after their defeat in the American Revolution. The types of reforms people thought of were undoubtedly attributable to the Enlightenment. Across all three cases there was attention to merit, skill, rationalization of the bureaucracy, and new ideas about mapping, supply, and so on. Significant differences in the relative strength of Enlightenment ideas in different countries as well as which ideas received more attention, however, suggest that ideas alone cannot explain reform efforts. Interpretations of Enlightenment ideas and the degree to which the exogenous shock of military defeat was a catalyst to significant change in pre-Napoleonic Europe were molded by the strengths, ideas, and interests of domestic coalitions.[52]

France

Although France was not considered a pacesetter in military matters during the late eighteenth century, it was the first country to institute many military changes.[53] Reform began before the revolution. Indeed, the French army's performance after the

50. For an argument about how claims of international effectiveness can be used to generate domestic coalitions, see Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno 1988.

51. Thomson discusses a similar dynamic in her analysis of the spread of the new norm. Thomson 1994. The approach suggested here differs in its focus on domestic coalitions to explain the timing of the state's new behavior and the degree to which the behavior conforms to the international model. Not all states adopted precisely the same policies; Britain resisted conscription even when it adopted the notion that its army should only include British citizens.

52. I do not mean to denigrate differences in geography or financial resources between these different countries. Clearly the fact that Britain was an island and Prussia sat in the middle of Europe influenced their preparations for war. Britain's ability to raise funds through loans to pay for mercenaries also undoubtedly had an effect. These geographical and economic differences were not determining, however. Also, in the case of economic resources, it is hard to separate variables affected by domestic institutions and those affected by the international system. Was the superior British system of finance a product of its domestic institutions, the demands of its geographical position, or its particular historical development? North argues that it was its system of property rights. North 1981. Downing argues that war preparations led to different systems of finance that had implications for the regime type in each country. Downing 1992. It may be that we can tie British (or Prussian or French) choices back to a number of variables, international and domestic, that interacted in times past to create a particular way of thinking about the choices for war preparation. That would not be at all inconsistent with the argument I make here.

53. Black 1994, 153.

revolution owed much to the pre-revolutionary reformers who brought Enlighten-ment ideas to bear on the structure of the army.[54] France undertook more reform than other states in Europe before the revolution because it had experienced a recent defeat in the Seven Years War and because its heterogeneous aristocracy shared little in the way of interests or ideas and thus did not coalesce around a conservative focal point.[55] The reforms that were successful in the army were those that did not disturb the one issue over which the aristocracy agreed: maintaining the officer corps in the army.[56]

The aristocracy in France (embodied in the *parlements*) was a diverse group and included old-line nobles, the newly rich (mostly from commerce and finance), and those who lived off seigniorial properties.[57] The various backgrounds of these people kept them from having uniform preferences on many issues and thus left these issues open to reform by interested parties. Most pre-revolutionary reform advocates, such as Jacques, Count Guibert, Pierre Bourcet, and Louis-Alexandre Berthier, had served in the Seven Years War. Undoubtedly, the French army's defeat in that war was instrumental in the reformers' efforts. The reform proposals were also steeped in the Enlightenment with their attention to standardization and the inculcation of merit. Successful revisions included technical advances in mapping and road building, the enlistment of soldiers for fixed terms and pay, an end to the purchase of commis-sions, promotions based on public and uniform rules, standardization of artillery, and the reorganization of the army into divisions.[58] Merit (based on a notion that it could be learned) and equality were pursued throughout the army reforms, though in very different ways than ultimately became the case during the revolution.[59]

The aristocracy did share an interest in the officer corps and successfully resisted proposed changes that targeted the officer corps. For instance, Saint Germain at-tacked sinecures in the "fashionable household troops" and caused a storm of protest that drove him from the ministry. Also, Guibert's attempt to rid the officer corps of waste and abuse produced a wave of anger and eventually failed.[60]

The old regime in France undertook reforms that improved the post-revolutionary army, and successful proposals laid the groundwork for efficiency. Even unsuccess-ful attempts such as Guibert's, however, were important because they demonstrated fissures in the coalition supporting the old regime and provided a rallying point for the revolutionaries vis-à-vis the army. This effort caused selected officers to have sympathy for the opposition and thus (some have argued) facilitated the revolution.[61]

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54. See Bien 1979; McNeill 1982; and Blanning 1996.

55. McNeill 1982, 164.

56. Kennett 1967, 58.

57. Skocpol 1979, 62.

58. The division allowed all elements of arms to be represented in one entity instead of having the different arms in separate organizations.

59. See Black 1994, 148–54; Blanning 1996, 17–18; and McNeill 1982, 163–64. See also Kennett 1967; and Bien 1979.

60. Kennett 1967, 143.

61. Kennett 1967.

The revolutionaries in France chose to organize an army of citizens both because this institution would better reflect the rights of citizens in the New France and because it presented an organization with which they could fight against the old regime. After the revolution those in power, and thus the constraints on reform, changed. Reflecting this, the officer corps was radically democratized. Also, the National Assembly declared in 1789 that "preservation of the rights of man and of the citizen requires the existence of a public force."[62] This proposal was consistent with the revolutionaries' ideal of a connection between citizens and sovereignty. They hoped that the army would inspire volunteers, but volunteers were not forthcoming and conscription was introduced, first temporarily and then as a matter of policy.[63]

By 1793, when France was again at war, the policies that have come to be attributed to the French Revolution were in place. Citizens (all French men and women) were called on to serve their country in the war effort, unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five could be inducted (and, if necessary, additional groups would be called up), and no longer could an inductee offer a replacement.[64] The divisional structure of the army combined with the technical changes mentioned earlier enhanced the success of the citizen-based revolutionary army. By early 1795, the French had conquered Belgium, the Dutch Republic, and the left bank of the Rhine.

According to T. C. W. Blanning, many have been too quick to attribute France's success to the motivation of a citizen army.[65] The old regime armies France fought, he points out, were also capable of feats of heroism; thus either ideological commitment had little to do with fighting effectiveness or old regime values could also inspire soldiers.[66] A more convincing argument for French success, he argues, is that the French made a virtue of necessity. They used their severe material constraints to their advantage. After the revolution, the French state was in no better shape financially than it had been before it and thus had little capacity to supply its troops. France's lack of funds paradoxically freed the army from a supply train and allowed it much greater flexibility and room for maneuver than the Prussians.[67]

As Blanning also argues, however, revolutionaries created myths from the start about the spirit of citizens in the French army. The whole basis of the revolution—

62. Quoted in Blanning 1996, 28.
63. Paret 1992, 44–45.
64. Paret 1992, 65. Eventually replacements were allowed again. There were provisions for exemption based on moderate financial means. Those who could contribute to the country in some other way could fulfill their military obligation by finding a substitute or paying a moderate sum. See Rothenberg 1980, 100–102; and Addington 1984, 24.
65. In fact, the French army also made use of foreign troops. The Batavian Republic, the newly created state of Westphalia, and the Kingdom of Naples all contributed troops to Napoleon's efforts. Rothenberg 1980, 158–62. John Lynn argues, in his detailed study of the Armée du Nord's campaigns before 1795, that focusing on motivation alone cannot explain French success. If one has to focus on only one element, he argues, it should be the army's tactical system, not motivation. Lynn 1984.
66. Blanning 1996, 119.
67. Of course, this was not good news for civilians subject to supplying the needs of the soldiers, often at gunpoint. Blanning 1996, 124–25. Van Creveld argues that the logistical break that Napoleonic armies made with the other armies of Europe has been overemphasized. Van Creveld 1977.

liberty, equality, fraternity—suggested that citizens should be involved in protecting their sovereignty. This was the motivation behind the reliance on citizen soldiers, even if they had to be conscripted. The revolutionaries had an incentive to emphasize the spirit of the French forces to enhance the legitimacy of the revolution and their place in power.

This myth making only intensified as Napoleon rose through the army and relied much more heavily on military success for his political legitimacy.[68] The argument that a citizen army was an effective fighting tool allowed Napoleon to justify his connection to the revolution. When the army saved the Directory in 1796–97 by defeating the Austrians in Italy and the royalists at home, Blanning argues that it tore away the last shred of legitimacy on the revolutionary frame and laid the groundwork for a military dictatorship. Napoleon realized that his legitimacy and authority would be dependent on his feats in battle and took pains to augment his legend and the legends of his men. After the battle of Marengo, for instance, Napoleon not only over-estimated the win and the number of enemy deaths but also put words into the mouth of his general, Desaix, who was reported by Napoleon to have died in the arms of his aide-de-camp, saying, "Go and tell the First Council that I die regretting not to have done enough to live on in the memory of posterity"; in fact, eyewitnesses report that he died instantly.[69]

Thus, the French army began to change even before the revolution. France's loss in the Seven Years War was important for the reform effort. Also important, however, were the Enlightenment ideas that inspired reformers and the fact that the bulk of the proposed reforms did not appear threatening to the ruling coalition. The heterogeneity of interests represented in the coalition made it silent on the issue of military reforms on all but a small set of issues (such as reform of the officer corps). After the revolution, the coalition in power changed, leaving it open to the more radical changes often attributed to the revolution—democratization of the officer corps and an army of citizens. The revolutionaries, and then Napoleon, had an interest in enhancing beliefs that these ideas made the French army strong and exerted efforts to foment traditions (or construct a focal point) to that effect.

Britain

Britain's defeat in the American Revolution was not enough to prompt reform; its failure to respond to defeat can be traced to domestic factors. The dominant coalition in Britain was more homogenous in its perspective on the military and evinced more hostility to Enlightenment ideas than did the dominant coalition in France. These factors caused the British to react less intensely to defeat in the American Revolution than France to defeat in the Seven Years War. Although the Enlightenment provided an obvious focal point in France, it did not hold the same appeal in Britain. Edmund Burke's indictment of such ideas as dangerous and radical is an example of the

68. Blanning 1996, 180.
69. Ibid., 225.

arguments in Britain that complicated application of Enlightenment themes to military plans.

Support for a conservative focal point in Britain was widespread—in the military and Parliament and among the populace. The application of ideals such as attention to merit and standardization of promotions was quite threatening to the elite in Parliament as well as in the military. Military and political elites shared an interest and belief in the officer as a gentleman. Parliament saw this as a mechanism of civilian control: a shared identity with the ruling class should cause military leaders to act as Parliament would like. The purchase of commissions ensured that (a good portion of) officers were men of means who had an economic stake in the country. It also provided a source of revenue for the army. Meanwhile, officers in the British military saw themselves, first and foremost, as members of their social class. This made it less likely that a professional military perspective would form and fueled resistance to many Enlightenment ideas.

Furthermore, the levee en masse was not popular among either the political elite or the population at large. It reminded Parliament of Cromwell's army in the English Civil War and the monarchy's past attempts to restore its power; it worried the public that they would be called on to sacrifice more profitable and honorable professions to serve in the army.[70] The hostility to the levee en masse caused even William Pitt's attempt to man the navy through the Quota Acts of 1795–96 to be unsuccessful.[71] Instead, Britain dealt with the manpower issue in a more traditional way—by mobilizing substantial numbers of foreign soldiers.

Only as war broke out with France after the French Revolution did the British army put itself on a track toward reform. Although the reforms that were undertaken can be linked to Enlightenment ideas, the link is not as strong or consistent as in France. This is because those in power and what they believed mattered for the interpretation of what was necessary for success. For instance, although much criticism initially directed at the British army focused on the purchase of commissions, which undermined professionalism and merit in the promotion process, little thought was given to eliminating this practice. Both Parliament and the officers were well served by the institution. For Parliament, the purchase system assured that the military would be led by officers who had an economic stake in the country, saw themselves first and foremost as gentlemen, and would contribute to the support of the army with their purchases. The officers in Britain saw the removal of purchase as a threat to their identity. Instead of abolishing the purchase system, reformers such as

70. Though Cromwell did not mobilize a mass army per se, and the army was never as large as Prussia's, he did exert central authority over local militias in a way that threatened (some) parliamentary control. Cromwell's army was the closest thing to a citizen army that Britain had seen and it left Parliament fearful of any movement in this direction. Downing argues that Cromwell and the Protectorate Parliaments did not overwhelm constitutionalism, but put an end to the drift in Parliament that might have led to a new royal uprising and led to the undoing of Parliament itself. Downing 1992. Regardless of the academic lessons Downing draws, the political lessons drawn by members of Parliament in the early nineteenth century from the new model were less benign. Members of Parliament regarded Cromwell's example with concern.

71. Gates 1994, 134–35.

the Duke of York tried to ensure that the purchase system would not interfere with professional competence by requiring some assessment of skill and a minimum age for officers.[72]

The British did institute some reforms, particularly in training and in the creation of light infantry; for example, training manuals were standardized and made available to all units, several line regiments were converted to light infantry and given special equipment, and a number of new units were formed.[73] Finally, administrative reforms eased supply problems and laid the groundwork for Britain's eventual success in the Peninsular War. Here, some analysts argue, France's strategy of stripping the land was less successful, and the British competence in supply paid off.[74]

So, for historical reasons born in the English Civil War, Parliament worried that removing the purchase of commissions (a mainstay application of the Enlightenment focus on merit) would open the way for the crown to use the army against Parliament's wishes. This history also affected the British army's identity. Unlike the aristocracy within the French military, British military elites saw themselves as tied to a particular form of gentlemanly officership that would be threatened by promotion by merit or opening officership to commoners. Finally, the population was not interested in trading their prospects in private enterprise for duties in the army. In such an atmosphere, Enlightenment reformers such as Sir John Moore and the Duke of York had rougher terrain to cultivate despite the British army's failures in the American Revolution, and the reforms they contemplated were not inconsistent with the continued use of mercenaries.

Prussia

In the absence of a recent defeat, the idea of a citizen army was nascent in Prussia before the French Revolution despite some reform-minded officers. Prussian leaders were somewhat more open to Enlightenment ideas but had less pressing reasons to worry about reform; indeed, Prussia had performed well in the Seven Years War.[75] Furthermore, Frederick II thought of himself as an ''enlightened monarch'' not subject to the same concerns as other European powers. Albert Sorel argues that Prussia was an artificial power projecting a facade that hid the same shakiness found in the rest of the old regimes in Europe.[76] Nonetheless, Prussian reforms undertaken in the years immediately before the French Revolution—such as establishing a constitutional state, removing the purchase of office, and introducing ideas of equality before the law—appear to have skirted the need for changing the organization of the Prussian army.

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72. Barnett 1970, 240.
73. Throughout the eighteenth century, the infantry stood in lines, shoulder to shoulder and three men deep. As the enclosure of the countryside (into towns and fields) complicated the success of this formation, the French experimented with deploying light infantry in swarms, making use of whatever cover was available, to weaken the opposing army's line. See Gates 1994, 149–50; and Barnett 1970, 242–45.
74. Barnett 1970, 261–62.
75. Particularly in the battles of Rossbach and Leuthen, see Perrett 1992.
76. Sorel 1971, 86.

Even in Prussia, however, there were reform-minded officers. Although Scharnhorst was the most prominent, others also led the way in thinking about reform and reorganization in the army. Gordon Craig and Shanahan credit these thinkers for laying the groundwork for the changes that the Prussian army instituted during the Napoleonic Wars. Though they had little impact on politics before the Napoleonic Wars, the development of their ideas provided a lens through which the eventual defeats to France could be viewed. These officers' concerns echoed the concerns of those in France and (to a lesser extent) Britain in their emphasis on reason, rationalization, and the spirit of the Prussian army.[77] The combination of recent military success (rather than failure, as in France and Britain), a monarch uninterested in military reform, and a significant portion of military advisors entrenched in the idea of a mercenary army, however, prevented reform ideas from becoming policy.[78]

In these three cases we see patterns suggesting that domestic distributional concerns are important variables in explaining changes in the structure of militaries. Neither international strategic concerns (rising threats or defeat in war) nor new ideas explain behavior across all three countries. Both of these issues were important, but their impact on behavior was defined within the domestic political context. Enlightenment ideas for reform had the most influence when defeat provided an exogenous shock and the aristocracy was not uniformly resistant to military reform.

Post-Napoleonic Reforms

Prussia

Prussia interpreted the French victories at Auerstadt and Jena as a testament to the value of citizen soldiers rather than the consequence of poor leadership or bad strategy. Politics in Prussia mattered for this interpretation. The split in the military aristocracy between conservatives and reformers (equipped with well-conceived plans for military reform) led to rival interpretations of the defeat. Reformers struggled for, and won, the right to the official interpretation. When Prussia won with a citizen army in 1813, the model became more appealing to reformers in other countries and enhanced the perception that this was the preferred mode of organization, engendering the spread of citizen armies elsewhere in the world.

The Prussian defeats at Auerstadt and Jena disrupted the illusion of Prussian military prowess. As mentioned earlier, however, there were many potential explanations for the Prussian military failure, ranging from poor leadership to bad choices by the king. Frederick William III refused to use spies, and Prussia therefore had poor information on enemy movements. In addition, poor field command, problematic communications, and poor morale among the troops all contributed to the Prussian defeat.[79]

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77. For a discussion of Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst, Heinrich Dietrich von Bulow, Scharnhorst, Knesebeck, and others, see Shanahan 1945, 64–80.

78. Ibid., 86–87.

79. See ibid., 90–94; and Henderson 1911, 22–29.

There were at least two potential responses to the defeats: (1) a conservative approach focusing on punishing incompetent leaders and enhancing the professionalism of the Prussian military, or (2) a reformist approach using the defeats as a catapult for changing the whole basis of the Prussian military by connecting the idea of citizenship to military service. The military old guard, political conservatives, and portions of the aristocracy advocated the conservative approach. This perspective was justified by a portion of Enlightenment ideas about merit and professionalism without unseating old regime notions of the proper relationship between rulers and ruled. The reformist approach was backed by the military reformers allied with proponents of constitutional reform and the new middle class and was justified by the more democratic ideas of the Enlightenment.

The split in the military aristocracy opened the path toward reform. High-level officers offered both conservative and liberal views. Those advocating liberal reforms were well represented in the upper echelons of the military and had articulated a clear plan for reform even before the Prussian defeats. The defeats at Auerstadt and Jena nearly led to the collapse of the state and were therefore a strong impetus for reform; the defeats also undermined the king's confidence in his conservative military advisors, including, most prominently, General Yorck. In the aftermath, the king appointed reform-minded officers to the Military Reorganization Commission, which was charged with investigating the reasons for the Prussia's defeat and punishing those responsible.[80] Baron von Stein, Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst, Neidhardt von Gneisenau, Hermann von Boyen, and Carl von Grolman, all appointed to the commission, believed that certain social and political changes, especially within the military, were necessary in order to free Prussia from French domination.[81] The commission's proposed reforms were designed "to raise and inspire the spirit of the army, to bring the army and the nation into a more intimate union, and to guide its characteristic and exalted destiny."[82]

The military reformers did not work alone but allied with other liberal reformers focused on constitutional reform. This coalition dominated discussions about the lessons Prussia had learned from its losses. It specified moderate military changes as part of an agenda of social and political progress, including abolishing hereditary serfdom, instituting local government in the cities, and, ultimately, establishing some sort of national representation.[83] It proposed a system of examinations that (theoretically) opened the way for commoners to enter the officer corps, worked on the assumption that the army would be staffed with Prussian citizens, provided a theoretical basis for universal service, and abolished corporal punishment (at least the most severe).

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80. Anderson 1939, 279.
81. One of the more telling examples they used was the fact that the Prussian people had so quickly disassociated themselves from the army and the government after the debacle. A greater identification of citizens with the army and the state may have led French troops to encounter resistance from the local magistrates and merchants. Craig 1955, 21, 40, 41.
82. Ibid., 1955, 41, quoting Ernest Huber.
83. Ibid., 41.

However, the idea of a citizen army in Prussia was not universally accepted as an effective means for the state to control society. In fact, conservatives disapproved precisely because they feared that citizen soldiers would weaken the state through increased citizen input and decreased aristocratic control. The king, however, seemed to recognize "for the moment the power of ideals and of spiritual forces, acknowledging the necessity for awakening the 'feeling of community' and 'love of country' " and approved the reforms.[84] Unfortunately for the reformers, his embrace of their proposals lasted only as long as the crisis, and increasing acrimony between the king and the reformers undermined their long-term constitutional agenda. Nonetheless, the proposals of the Military Reorganization Commission brought to the fore the benefits of a professional army of citizens and constructed a new focal point consistent with the more democratic portion of Enlightenment ideas.

This new focal point offered leaders a different way to think about arming their citizens. Instead of worrying only about potential revolts if the citizenry were armed, leaders could also view citizen armies as providing a potentially greater fighting capability. It was also important, however, for changing the way citizens thought about their involvement in war. Rather than viewing themselves as cannon fodder, citizens could envision themselves as an essential part of the state. The connection between the military reformers, the constitutional reformers, and these new ideas gave credence to the notion that it was worthwhile for citizens to think differently about their relationship to the state.[85]

In summary, the perceived success of the French citizen army was the impetus for the more democratic ideas of the Enlightenment to affect the Prussian army. Prussian defeats during the Napoleonic Wars provided evidence for the belief that citizen-based armies were an effective force in modern warfare and bolstered the arguments made by reformists that armies of citizens ought to fight wars in a modern nation-state. The fact that these defeats also weakened the arguments of the opponents of reform enhanced the reformers' chances for success.

An empirical test for these new ideas arose when tensions between France and Russia in 1812 opened space for Prussian maneuver. Drawing on the reform commission's proposals, the East Prussians put into effect a defense system for their province.[86] Their success encouraged such a system in Prussia more generally. During Prussia's revolt against France in 1813, foreign recruitment was eliminated and universal military obligation was established.[87] Boyen solidified the reforms (including universal service, first in the regular army and then in the Landwehr) after he was appointed minister of war in 1814.[88]

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84. Anderson 1939, 279.

85. For an argument that rulers (or states) must be compensated when they mobilize society and that conscription often happens alongside new representative institutions, see Barnett 1992. Though I am not talking about conscription per se, Barnett's logic is similar to the logic here.

86. See Shanahan 1945, 190–97; and Craig 1955, 58–59. At Stein's urgings the East Prussian Landtag organized a Landwehr of all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

87. Delbruck 1985, 451.

88. Craig 1955, 69–71. The king had created the position of minister of war in 1808 to unify the consideration of all military matters but refused to appoint a minister until 1814.

As Eliot Cohen points out, however, when Prussia reentered the war in 1813, the citizen militia (numbering about 20,000) was poorly trained and disciplined, and the regular army (about 65,000) was not much larger than it had been in 1806.[89] Also, in the interim the king had acted on some of the conservative proposals put forward by General Yorck.[90] So, even though the army preformed better, it is not clear that its citizen basis was responsible.

After the Prussian victories in 1813, the reform coalition attempted to incorporate the constitutional change that had always been a part of its program (reformers argued that the duty of military service should be balanced by the right to share in the politics of the state). They met, however, with significant opposition from conservatives. Partly because of this opposition and partly because of political miscalculation, the reformers began to lose influence and Boyen ultimately resigned when the king took steps in 1819 to bring the Landwehr under closer scrutiny of the regular army.[91] Even then, however, the military reforms (embedded in institutions ranging from the new schools of war to the minister of war) had created actors with a stake in their continuation. These worked as institutional returns to scale and remained to leave Prussia with an increasingly professionalized and citizen-based army.

Ironically, after Boyen's resignation the liberal constitutional reformers that had started the Prussian army on the path toward reform increasingly perceived the army as their nemesis. The gap between the army and the liberals was greatest in the crisis of 1848 and the events that followed. Bismarck's policies eased the divide and enabled the possibility of a truly mass army. At the same time, however, officers in the Prussian army continued to be a tight group dominated by conservative ideas. Many analysts have commented that although officers no longer had to be born into military leadership, officers from the middle class were more devoted to the Junker cause than those who had been born into the aristocracy.[92] In the end, Craig argues, this led to leaders with great physical courage, technical skill, and professionalism but devoid of the patriotism, spiritual independence, and moral courage of their forefathers.[93]

What is crucial for our purposes here, however, is that it was well within the realm of possibility that the defeats at Jena and Auerstadt could have been written off to poor leadership or some other deficiency not corrected by fundamental military reforms.[94] The coalition between those advocating military reform and those pursuing constitutional reform placed reformers in a position to dominate the understanding of these defeats and enhanced the possibility that a citizen army would be seen as necessary for military success. Proposals that had been bandied about for some time garnered official sanction and framed the issue in terms of the value of a citizen army. The fact that an army based on these proposals successfully repealed French domina-

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89. Cohen 1985, 53.
90. Ibid. See also Shanahan 1945.
91. Craig 1955, 71–81.
92. See Craig 1955; and Holborn 1986.
93. Craig 1955, 503.
94. See Shanahan 1945, chap. 5, fn. 6; and Craig 1955, chap. 2, fn. 14.

tion in 1813 contributed to beliefs about their effectiveness and reinforced at least the military portion of the reforms.[95]

The new focal point in Prussia was important for military reform in that country. It also provided another example that citizen armies were the wave of the future. The fact that two important countries in Europe coalesced around this institution made the institution more obvious to the rest, and the Prussian military's successes throughout the nineteenth century only solidified this perspective. The Prussian army, composed of Prussian citizens, became the model, or commonsensical alternative, for other countries.

Britain

Despite the lessons Prussia had drawn from the Napoleonic Wars, the British resisted a move away from mercenaries and toward a citizen-based army until the 1870s and later.[96] Domestic forces explain both Britain's initial hesitation to adopt a citizen-based army and, later, its decision to embrace one. The way in which domestic processes changed the minds of those in power though was influenced by the Prussian model of a citizen army.

Britain did not worry about reforms in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars for several reasons. Its army performed well against Napoleon, its major task in the first part of the nineteenth century was in India rather than in Europe (where using foreign soldiers was less of an issue), and domestic political circumstances made reforms on the scale undertaken by Prussia politically unpalatable. Correlli Barnett argues that Wellington's victory at Waterloo bought the British decades of influence in Europe. Certainly, France's loss and Prussia's preoccupation at home left Britain with relatively little to do on the Continent. The need to secure and protect its garrisons oversees led to unprecedented army expansion, but thanks to continued reliance on mercenaries, this expansion went largely unnoticed by the British people as a whole.[97]

The domestic political concerns that motivated Britain's resistance to reform before the Napoleonic Wars remained after the wars were over. The long-enduring resistance to a standing army not directly under parliamentary control made Parliament leery of an army of citizens—particularly because an army of this sort would remove the system of purchase—until royal control was undermined and parliamentary control solidified.[98] These concerns were reinforced by worries that maintaining such an army would be expensive.[99]

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95. The reformers pointed not only to the defeat of Napoleon but also to the popular enthusiasm and support for the army in 1813. Craig 1955, 61.

96. There were moderate changes between 1795 and 1805, most of them trying to instill merit into a system where commissions were purchased. See Barnett 1970; and Bond 1972.

97. Barnett 1970, 272–73.

98. Although parliamentary control over the army had grown steadily in the eighteenth century, the command of the army still resided in the commander in chief, who was appointed by the crown. See Barnett 1970; Biddulph 1904, 114; Huntington 1964, 23; and Omond 1933.

99. O'Gorman 1982, 85.

By the time Parliament debated the Foreign Enlistment Bill for the Crimean War in 1854, however, sentiments had begun to change. The conservative opposition voiced serious objections to recruiting mercenaries. They feared that British recruitment in Europe would annoy other countries and dim the prospect for allies. Also, they argued that British attempts to hire foreigners would signal desperation, that other countries would only allow the dregs of their societies to fight for the British, and that mercenary troops would diminish morale among the British forces.[100] Liberals held that Britain had always used foreign soldiers and that any attempt to raise an army internally would upset labor markets and force new recruits into war too soon; they also accused conservatives of being irresponsible in their efforts to oppose reinforcement of British soldiers in the Crimea.[101]

The British army's sorry performance in the Crimean War and soon afterward in the Indian Mutiny, however, elevated interest in military reforms among liberals.[102] Unlike the period after the American Revolution, there was now a new international model of an effective military. Howard Bailes argues that there were three strains of military thinking in the British army. Traditionalists were quite backward looking and very suspicious of reform. The two other strains, continentalists and imperialists, both spoke of the need for reform and looked to the Continent for ideas (the primary difference between the two being that the imperialists argued for the need to temper continental lessons for the particular needs of British security).[103] Eager reformers (continental and imperial alike) focused, first on France and then on Prussia, after the Prussian army's performance in the Austro-Prussian War and the Franco-Prussian War.[104] According to Bailes, "British observers wrote with awe of 'that prescient organization which all the world is admiring' "[105] As with Prussia's reaction to the French army during the Napoleonic Wars, then, British politicians responded to the Prussian model because of its perceived effectiveness. Also, as in Prussia, external concerns allowed the mobilization of a coalition for change. Lord Cardwell was brought into Gladstone's new liberal administration as secretary of state for war to increase efficiency and save money rather than to create a more powerful military. After all, liberals had been perfectly content with using mercenaries during the Crimea War if it would save money. The disasters of Crimea and the Indian

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100. Bayley 1977, 48–52.

101. Ibid., 48–66.

102. The problems in the Crimean War ranged from the supply system to the recruiting system to muddled orders. Men were underfed, unhoused, and cold, and recent advances in the printing press made information about these problems readily available to the British public. Britain could not put enough men in the field and was forced to recruit foreign mercenaries despite politics, which made such recruitment difficult. In the end, the war was over before the foreign troops reached the field; and by midsummer 1855, Britain, having only 6,500 troops to France's 90,000, was embarrassed. In additional, mishandled orders caused mistakes, such as the charge of the Light Brigade in Balaclava, which acted as an important symbol of British incompetence even though it was not a terribly important part of the war. Barnett 1970, 283–92.

103. Prominent writers in the "continental" tradition include F. N. Maude and Colonel Lonsdale Hale. These analysts, Bailes argues, lost favor to the imperialists (such as Colonel George Furse, Lord Wolseley, and Lord Roberts) because of their slavish devotion to German lessons and lack of attention to the wars Britain was fighting. Bailes 1981.

104. Ibid., 30–31.

105. Bailes quotes, "Reports written during a continental tour in 1871." Bailes 1981, 42, fn. 6.

Mutiny, combined with the impressive German performance, however, persuaded reformers such as Cardwell that Britain would need a better military in order to influence events on the Continent.[106]

Prussia's performance in the Franco-Prussian War underscored the importance of the reform effort and was used by Cardwell to organize a coalition for change. Cardwell and his war office reformers introduced policies that simultaneously removed royal control over the army (which had been a political stumbling block to reform for centuries) and opened the way for an army controlled by Parliament. They argued that taking advantage of Prussian lessons required removing the vestiges of royal control over the army. Then, with no more worries that a standing army could be a tool for the crown, Parliament was willing to remove the system of purchase and proceed with a merit-based system of officership in the army.[107] Furthermore, in keeping with other coalitional requirements, the reforms never lost their cost-saving mission. The Cardwell reforms established a system of short service recruitment on the continental model, hoping that this would alleviate further need for foreign troops by providing a large number of men who had previously served in the army who could be called on to serve at a later time. Reflecting some realities that had not changed in Britain, however, the system was based on voluntary enlistment rather than conscription. The Army Enlistment Act of 1870 also made it illegal for British citizens to enlist in foreign armies.[108]

The Cardwell reforms significantly altered the British military and personnel system. The changes, however, did not allocate adequate resources for recruitment, partly because of the cost-saving commitment that was a necessary part of the reform coalition. Indeed, many analysts have argued that British military reform was not complete until after the Boer War.[109] Still, the Cardwell reforms represent the turning point in British policy with respect to British perception of who was appropriate to fight British wars. The reforms all aimed at a better system of recruitment and better treatment of soldiers so that British citizens could be induced to fight for British interests while making it illegal for its citizens to fight for other interests.

106. Cardwell wrote a paper on the subject before being appointed secretary of state for war in 1868. Biddulph 1904.

107. The major pieces of legislation include the Army Enlistment Act of 1870, the Regulation of Forces Act of 1871, and the localization and linked battalion scheme of 1872. See Barnett 1970; Bond 1966; Biddulph 1904; and Omond 1933.

108. Burmester 1978, 50.

109. One could argue consistent with the realist functional argument that Britain did adopt a "mass" citizen army when it had to, that is, when it was forced to play the continental game in World War I. It resisted until then because of its geographical isolation. Of course, whether or not Britain was forced to enter World War I is under dispute. Ferguson 1999. Regardless, there are two problems with this argument. First, the claim points to the indeterminacy of the realist argument. Had Britain created a citizen army after the Napoleonic Wars, would realists have claimed that it was acting irrationally? Or that it was responding to the new demands of warfare? I think the latter. But if an argument claims to explain both timings, it is nonfalsifiable. Waltz makes a logically consistent argument when he claims that he does not explain timing, only broad sweeps of history. Waltz 1979. If that is true, though, and we want to explain timing, we must look to other theories. Second, the Cardwell reforms were significant in that they changed the way Britain thought about its army by removing the option of using mercenaries and shifting politicians' focus to an army of citizens. Therefore, the Cardwell reforms are the crucial turning point away from the consideration of mercenary options. As I explain earlier (footnote 1) I am trying to explain the movement to citizen-based armies, not the shift to conscription.

These cases demonstrate that nineteenth century European states opted to use citizens to staff their armies because they expected the practice to be effective in wartime. The practice also reflected a new identity for states based on Enlightenment ideas. We cannot explain the path that Europe took, however, without examining how ideas and interests became connected in the domestic politics of key states.

The institution of a citizen army in France provided the first model of its sort. It was made possible not only by the revolution and the ideas behind it but also by the heterogeneity of aristocratic interests that allowed reforms to the old regime army and myth making (or focal point construction) by both the revolutionaries and Napoleon. The interpretation of Prussian defeats at Auerstadt and Jena as victories for France's citizen army was a crucial moment and set the stage for the citizen army to be established as the international model. The interpretation of Prussian defeats was tied to politics in Prussia, particularly a split within the military aristocracy and the existence of a high-level faction of military reformers with a well thought-out plan for military and constitutional reform. Finally, Britain provides an example of how politics can preclude dominant interpretations for some time. The fact that many ideas for reform based on the Enlightenment threatened the interests of Parliament and the military leadership alike made the British army less fertile ground for reform. In the end, a change in the structure of the British army first required changes in the relationship between the crown and Parliament. Only then were reforms agreeable to Parliament. The British experience also demonstrates that once practices became international models, the weight of international variables become greater. The model provided a commonsensical starting point and gave additional resources to political reformers.

Comparing Explanations

The realist account is, in many ways, quite plausible. In retrospect, the adoption of the citizen army looks like an internationally efficient outcome; many examples appear to demonstrate that citizen soldiers fight better than mercenaries or that large armies fare better than smaller ones. Janice Thomson's sociological argument about the identity of states in the modern system (tied to the norm of state control over nonstate violence) that made rulers embarrassed to hire mercenaries, or to not even consider their use, also makes sense.

Neither argument, however, is particularly good at explaining when and why individual states chose the options they did. For the realists, it was not at all clear at the time that the French successes in the Napoleonic Wars were due to either the fighting quality of the citizen soldier or the size of their forces. Why did the Prussians decide they needed citizen soldiers instead of better leaders and more information? This question is particularly significant because Britain, equipped with many mercenary soldiers, performed well against Napoleon's army.[110]

Thomson argues that rulers entered international agreements to delegitimize the use of mercenaries because they were concerned with being drawn into war by the

110. For a discussion of the foreign legion's performance during the Napoleonic Wars, see Bayley 1977, 47–48.

actions of their citizens.[111] This concern led states to make it illegal for their citizens to fight abroad, thus eroding the supply of mercenaries. Thomson also asserts that states had a common interest in building state power vis-à-vis society. Both concerns led to the establishment of the principle of state control over nonstate violence.

Thomson's focus on neutrality issues fits very well with the experiences of the United States in the late eighteenth century, but it fits less well with Prussia in the nineteenth century. Because Prussia became the model of a modern army in the nineteenth century and affected the development of military institutions in both Europe and North America, the Prussian case is the crucial case to explain. The belief that citizen soldiers fought better (on which the realist account is based) emerged simultaneously with the rising concern over neutrality on which Thomson focuses. Prussia stopped using mercenaries not because the supply dried up, but because of the belief that a citizen army would fight better.[112] So, though Thomson is not wrong to argue that neutrality and state-building issues were important, the simultaneous changes in beliefs about the fighting capacity of citizen soldiers versus mercenaries were also of great importance.[113] Finally, although states may have had a common interest in controlling their societies that drove them to control nonstate violence, this did not translate easily into support for citizen soldiers. Old regime rulers initially resisted citizen soldiers because they feared it would weaken their hold on power. They had to be convinced that the fighting qualities of citizen soldiers would be worth the potential destabilizing effect of having a citizen army.

My argument accounts more fully and clearly for the process by which change occurred. It suggests that change is more likely after an external shock, when powerful domestic actors are divided enough to remove a conservative focal point. The direction change takes depends on other prominent ideas and the potential for coalitions to form around them. Although we may be able to identify a general change in the practice of warfare (like the move from mercenaries to citizen armies), different states are likely to have different permutations of the institution based on the preferences and strength of political coalitions.

At a minimum, these conditions are important for explaining why states in Europe adopted citizen armies at different times. That is, even if we assume that establishing citizen armies was the efficient response to Enlightenment ideas and/or material changes, this argument explains why some countries adopted this institutional form much earlier than others did. I argue, however, that it was not a foregone conclusion

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111. Thomson 1994, 84–88.

112. Also, if supply issues were crucial as Thomson argues, we should see countries trying to buy mercenaries and failing; but there is little evidence of this phenomenon. Indeed, many states had made the recruitment of foreigners illegal before they made it illegal for their citizens to fight for some other country. France and Prussia both restricted foreign recruitment before they restricted the activities of their citizens. Britain had restrictions against citizens fighting for particular armies but only passed a blanket restriction at the same time that it restricted foreign recruitment in 1870. For data on restriction of citizens, see Thomson 1994, 82–83. For foreign recruitment in France, see Blanning 1996; in Prussia, see Craig 1955; and Shanahan 1945; and in Britain, see Barnett 1970.

113. The same Enlightenment ideas about the proper relationship between citizens and states underlay the rationale that states could be held accountable for their citizens' actions.

at the turn of the nineteenth century that citizen armies would be the wave of the future. Small, professional, mercenary armies could have also fit with prevalent ideas and material challenges. If we do not assume the citizen army was the only efficient course, the implications of the domestic struggles are greater. This is the case because once a new practice is inaugurated and looks successful, it begins to shape behavior in a commonsensical rather than a purely strategic manner. Whether new models become widely emulated depends on their perceived success and the degree to which they become the focal point in peoples' minds, which, in turn, depend on the tests the models encounter and the interpretation of the results—both of which are influenced by politics.

The interpretation of the French victories as victories for citizen armies was influenced in France by the pains to which revolutionaries and Napoleon took to foster that interpretation, and in Prussia by the existence of a group of officers who believed in citizen armies. Success, for whatever reason, is also consequential. Had the French (and then the Prussians) not won key battles with citizen armies, the practice may not have gained such credibility. In any event, by the time Britain reformed its army in the late nineteenth century, the Prussian army and the associated idea that armies should be staffed with citizens was the clear institutional model.

My argument is unlikely to win a competition over parsimonious justification for broad international changes. The dynamics uncovered by my approach, however, suggest that a quest for parsimony may come at too high a price. If the element of human choice makes it unreliable to assume that an a priori efficient selection mechanism exists, understanding the process is crucial for explaining even broad, structural outcomes. We should not look to domestic politics to explain only the margin of variance as realists and sociologists do. Without the Prussian interpretation of the battles of Jena and Auerstadt as demonstrations of the superior fighting capability of citizens, the path toward small professional armies might not have been abandoned. Perhaps we would think of citizen armies as a distant and unsuccessful experiment of the French Revolution.[114] If Prussia had not moved to a mass army, perhaps other countries would have learned different lessons from the Napoleonic Wars—that citizen armies were too unruly in the end and that states should instead work to emphasize mobility, audacity, and skill rather than mass.[115] Had this been the trajectory, perhaps neutrality concerns would have been resolved differently.[116] Perhaps the relationship between military service and citizenship would not have developed the way it did.

Ultimately, it is unknowable what might have happened had a different interpretation of the value of citizen armies won out. Thinking of the variety of possibilities,

114. Although we now think of it as natural that democracies have armies of citizens, an element of tension exists between the freedom associated with democracy and a commitment to military service. This tension is evident in the British case discussed earlier. For an extensive treatment of this issue in the United States, see Cohen 1985.

115. For a description of Liddell Hart's analysis of World War I, see Shy 1986.

116. In the 1990s military firms are increasingly seen as a way of conducting foreign policy without violating neutrality. See Avant 1999; and Shearer 1998.

however, suggests how important politics is for structuring the way people see material and ideational issues and for determining which successful outcomes we later see as efficient. Realists who argue that success is important for the longevity of an institution have it halfway right. But because what counts for success is rarely unquestionable, we have to look at the politics by which credit for success is apportioned. Similarly, sociologists are right that new identities carry with them new ways of thinking that affect the development of institutions. Again, however, politics often intervenes as ideas are translated into political identities. Thus, I have examined politics to identify the conditions under which new ways of war emerge and spread.

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