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Transnational Norms and Military Development: Constructing Ireland’s Professional Army

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This article examines the impact of transnational norms on military development. In so doing, it combines constructivism’s study of systemic norms with culturalist work on unit-level norms. I focus on two transnational norms — norms of conventional warfare and norms of civilian supremacy — and show how they shape military development through a case study of post-revolutionary Ireland. I draw on recent work by constructivists to elucidate the context, process and mechanism whereby transnational norms are diffused and empowered in new national contexts — a process called norm transplantation. Norm transplantation is particularly problematic when transnational norms clash with local norms. Drawing on studies of military culture and military innovation, I identify the conditions necessary for norm transplantation to occur in cases of cultural clash. Returning to the Irish case, I show how transnational norms of military professionalism became encoded in Irish Army culture despite the fact that its predecessor, the Irish Republican Army, practised norms of military sovereignty and unconventional warfare.

KEY WORDS • civil–military relations • Irish Army • military development • military professionalism • transnational norms

Why do militaries in new democracies obey civilian rule, and how do they end up adopting certain organizational structures and strategies? These questions have particular significance with the emergence of new states and new democracies following the end of the Cold War. It is important that these new states choose military structures and strategies appropriate to their
resources and requirements; poor choices in this regard could unintentionally undermine economic well-being and/or regional security.\textsuperscript{1} Equally, those interested in spreading democracy — an explicit policy objective of the Clinton administration — would be well advised to study the causes of military subservience to civilian policy (Clinton, 1995: 2).

In this article, I consider democratic military development in the context of an historical case study, namely, the Army in post-revolutionary Ireland. Ireland achieved a degree of independence from Britain in 1921, after a two-year guerrilla campaign by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the British authorities. The Irish Army was formed by the leadership of the IRA. Whereas the IRA largely ignored the revolutionary government, the Irish Army completely submitted to harsh civilian rule. And whereas the outnumbered and out-gunned IRA relied on unconventional means to defeat the British, the Irish Army prepared a wholly conventional defence in the 1930s against expected invasion by an overwhelming British force. Thus, the Army acted contrary to the expectations of rationalist theories of military behaviour.

Essentially, I argue that the Irish Army acted according to dominant norms — i.e. intersubjective beliefs about identity and behaviour — encoded in organizational culture at the time of its birth. Theoretically speaking, what concerns me is how norms held and practised by military officers shape military choices about organizational structure and strategy, and military responses to civilian policy. I draw on sociology’s new institutionalism\textsuperscript{2} which argues that many forms of social organization and state activity are shaped by transnational norms that define professional identity, standards, and conduct. This approach suggests that military officers in different organizations and states may share many beliefs about the identity and appropriate behaviour of military professionals. My account of Irish military development concentrates on two such transnational norms of military professionalism — norms of conventional warfare and norms of civilian supremacy. In short, in submitting to civilian control and abandoning unconventional warfare, the new Army behaved as it believed a professional army should act and organize itself.

The recent constructivist turn in International Relations (IR) has been matched this decade by a resurgence in culturalist approaches to security studies (Checkel, 1998; Desch, 1998; Farrell, 1998b, 1999; Hopf, 1998). Both literatures examine how norms shape action in world politics. Culturalist accounts of military behaviour have focused on norms that are specific to national communities (Berger, 1998; Duffield, 1998, 1999; Gray, 1986; Johnston, 1995; Katzenstein, 1996) or military organizations (Cameron, 1994; Eden, forthcoming; Kier, 1997; Legro, 1995). However, the Irish case demonstrates the inadequacy of cultural accounts of military
behave based solely on concepts of organizational or (national) strategic culture. As I show, the transnational military norms embodied in Irish Army practice were not indigenous to Ireland, for the IRA (the Army's predecessor) practised norms of military sovereignty and norms of unconventional warfare in its war against the British. Constructivists in IR have concentrated on examining the evolution of international norms and their impact on world politics (Klotz, 1995; Kratochwil, 1989; Nadelmann, 1990; Wendt, 1999). Included in this have been constructivist accounts of how international norms have de-legitimized and thereby eliminated certain forms of military behaviour (Finnemore, 1996a; Price, 1998; Thomas, 2000; Thomson, 1994). However, constructivists have been criticized for failing to show how international norms connect with local agents (Checkel, 1998: 340–7). Some constructivists have recently argued that it is only through institutionalization in national policies, laws and practices that international norms take effect, and this process is mediated by domestic political culture and interests (Checkel, 1997, 1999; Cortell and Davis, 1996, 2000). For security studies, this suggests a need for synthetic cross-level ideational models to show how systemic and unit-level norms interact to shape military behaviour (Legro, 1997: 59). The purpose of this article is to close this constructivist–culturalist gap by offering just such a model.

I do this through a study of how transnational norms of military professionalism are encoded in the cultures of specific organizations (empirically, the organization in question is the Irish Army). The focus of this article is on the end point of the norm diffusion process, i.e. the empowerment of transnational norms in new national and organizational contexts; I call this norm transplantation. I draw on recent work by constructivists to identify the context, process and mechanism for norm transplantation. From this, I distil two basic patterns of norm transplantation — one incremental, the other radical. Incremental norm diffusion occurs in the context of a match between transnational norms and local culture. In such circumstances, transnational norms are readily accepted and the process is one of social learning by the target community. With radical norm diffusion, transnational norms clash with existing local norms, and diffusion only occurs following a process of political mobilization whereby the target community is pressured into adopting new ways of thinking and doing.\(^3\) Such profound culture change takes some explaining. Drawing on the literatures on military culture and military innovation, I identify the conditions for radical norm transplantation as being external shock to the local culture system combined with effective norm entrepreneurs and/or personnel change in the target community.

These conditions are then explored in the case of the Irish Army. The purpose is not to test theory on norm transplantation; indeed, theory-testing
would be perilous with a single case study given the limited possibilities for variance on the dependent variable (King et al., 1994: 119–21). However, the single case study does have a valuable role to play in theory-building, in that it ‘generally provides a better opportunity than large sample research to hunt around for ideas and hypotheses in a new area’ (Mohr, 1985: 66). Similarly, I use the Irish case to flesh out hypotheses deduced from the literatures on constructivism, military culture and military innovation.

**Rationalist Theories and Ireland’s ‘Irrational’ Army**

For the most part, IR theory has concentrated on explaining the military behaviour of developed states. Two rationalist approaches have dominated this literature — neorealism and organizational politics. Both approaches have difficulty explaining military development in new democracies, especially in Ireland. This suggests the utility of constructivism/culturalism in explaining why the militaries of new democracies acquire conventional force structures they can ill-afford or need, and obey civilian rule.

**Creating an All-Conventional Army**

For neorealism, the logic of anarchy drives state practice in military affairs. The competitive nature of the international system generates the imperatives for state action, forcing states to balance power externally through alliance formation and internally through national mobilization and military organization. Adopting an explicit market analogy, neorealism predicts that the need to survive will lead states to organize for war as efficiently as possible. This may involve military innovation by great powers, but lesser powers will rely on emulation of best military practice (Posen, 1993: 82; Waltz, 1979: 127). Best military practice is determined and observed through success in battle. Thus, ‘it is the victorious military system of every great war that sets the standard by which all others measure themselves and which acts as the model imitated by all.’

On the surface, neorealism provides a powerful theory of military development. Developing states will emulate the militaries of victorious great powers and military imitation will occur at times of great need, in particular, following defeat in war. However, there is empirical evidence to suggest that military emulation by developing states may occur at times of little need — in particular, following victory in war — and that the model for imitation may be chosen for its familiarity rather than its proven success (Goldman, 2001). In the Irish Army, emulation was initially driven by desperate need, namely, to form an organization to defeat the IRA rebels. Lacking the time and expertise to invent their own system of organization, Irish officers decided to adopt a foreign system and after looking around

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they opted for Britain’s. However, the British model was not chosen for its military success (after all, the British Army had itself failed to crush Irish rebellion) but for its familiarity.6

There is a second, more fundamental limitation with the neorealist approach. The neorealism account of military emulation provides one explanation for the remarkable world-wide similarity in the basic structure of military organizations. Almost all states have undergone capital-intensive militarization, producing permanent, professionally trained, and technologically dependent, armies, navies and air forces (Wendt and Barnett, 1993). But is this form of militarization appropriate for all states? Arguably some states would be better off relying on labour-intensive militarization which produces militia type forces. This would be true of states with greater human than capital resources, and states facing lesser external threats to their security. Neorealism simply assumes that when it comes to military practice, whatever suits great powers, will suit all states. The problem with this assumption is all too evident in the latest wave of international military modernization. Dramatic US victory in the Gulf War has spurned emulation of the American military model (structured around intensive use of information technology and precision munitions) by 50 states throughout the world, including the likes of Botswana, Monaco and Micronesia (Demchak, nd); tiny states which have neither the money nor the need for American style armies.

From a neorealist perspective, continued Irish emulation of the British Army should have been driven by security needs. However, the historical record shows otherwise. As discussed below, the Irish Army was literally starved of resources throughout the late 1920s and 1930s by civilian policymakers obsessed with controlling governmental expenditure. The Army had little over 5000 troops and an annual budget of around £1.5 million throughout the 1930s (in comparison to a budget of £11 million in 1924) (Duggan, 1991: 155–162; Young, 1993–94: 6–7). Fatally under-resourced, the Irish Army was in no shape to mount a conventional defence against foreign invasion, which from the mid-1930s onwards was expected to come from a Britain desperate to secure Irish ports for its naval campaign in the next great Europe war. The Intelligence Branch (G–2) of the Irish General Staff warned that the invading British would easily overwhelm and destroy any force that blocked their path into Ireland. G–2 recommended ‘that badly armed, ill-trained Irish Brigades should [not] be permitted to sit down to be battered up to pulp by vastly superior British forces’, and that the Irish Army should instead deter invasion by promising a guerrilla-style campaign of organized resistance that would raise the cost of British military occupation (GS, 1934, 1936). Organizing along these lines would have involved a serious effort to train and arm the populace. The Irish Army view

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was that this would not have created an internal security problem. Indeed, as early as 1925, the Irish Chief of Staff had called for the creation of a massive reserve force to fill the gap between the 100,000 troops he needed to defend the country and the 10,000 strong force he felt the state could afford (Farrell, 1998a: 76). Moreover, by 1932, the republicans who had rebelled against the state had already seized power by being elected into government!

Yet such an unconventional defence, which would have drawn on the Army’s guerrilla warfare heritage, was roundly rejected by the rest of the Irish General Staff (Boyd, 1945). Instead, Army leaders pushed ahead in the 1930s with a massive programme of modernization and expansion — imagining a 75,000-strong force well armed with tanks, artillery, and aircraft — that ultimately failed for lack of funding (Farrell, 1998a: 71; O’Halpin, 1999: 132–44). By 1940, the predicted threat of a British invasion seemed imminent to the Irish General Staff. However, in preparing to meet this threat, officers in the Plans and Operations Branch (G–1) dismissed (without reason) the earlier recommendations of their colleagues in the Intelligence Branch as having ‘no practical application’ in 1940 (G–1, 1940). Instead, the main body of the Irish Army plonked itself down on the inter-Irish border, and awaited the unwelcome arrival of a vastly superior British force from Northern Ireland (GS, 1940).

Even at the time, it was clear that the Irish Army had no hope of repulsing the British invasion force. Army planners expected the British to invade with three divisions and an armoured brigade from Northern Ireland, and a further two divisions from Great Britain; totalling 70,000–80,000 troops with approximately 1000 armoured fighting vehicles and up to 400 field guns. Against this, the rapidly expanded Irish Army was only 40,000 strong with a mere 73 armoured fighting vehicles and 51 field guns (GS, 1940: 2). As one Irish Army planner admitted: ‘each forward [Irish] Battalion may encounter a force 5 to 9 times its own strength in men alone. In the nature of things unless the enemy blunders badly or we happen to be extremely lucky, the odds are against us’ (Flynn, 1940: 1–2). Reports of divisional exercises carried out by the Irish Army in 1942 indicate that it was the Irish who were likely to blunder, and blunder badly. These reports reveal a catalogue of basic tactical errors by Irish troops which the better trained and equipped British Army would have been able to exploit with devastating effect (GS, 1943). With overwhelming British military superiority, preparing a fluid defence that avoided direct military engagement with the main British force (as suggested by G–2) was simply prudent. Indeed, such a strategy would have offered a considerable deterrent to British attack, given that Britain would not have wanted to have five army divisions bogged down in
Ireland in the midst of a world war. In short, Irish security would have been better served had the Irish Army modelled themselves on their guerrilla predecessors rather than their once and future enemy.

The organizational politics approach provides one possible explanation for why states acquire military structures they can’t afford or don’t need. In contrast to neorealism, it presents state practice as the product of incessant bureaucratic warfare (Farrell, 1996). Here it is the competitive nature of the domestic political system that generates the imperatives for organizational action. Military organizations, like other bureaucratic players, will seek to adopt structures and strategies which promise to confer prestige, increase resources and secure autonomy (Allison, 1973; Halperin, 1974). This translates into military preferences for more forces, newer equipment and offensive strategies (which require more resources and military autonomy than defensive strategies) (Posen, 1984: 41–59).

However, the Irish Army’s rejection of a guerrilla style defence cannot be explained in terms of organizational politics either. Plans for a conventional force posture did not promise to increase Army prestige, resources or autonomy since officials in the all-powerful Irish Department of Finance were staunchly pro-British (indeed many were former British civil servants) and, seeing little threat from Britain, had consistently refused to fund any expansion and modernization of the army. Finance officials never deviated from their view, stated in 1923, that ‘a small infantry force well armed and with adequate transport would suffice and that many semi-spectacular services such as the Air Force and Cavalry should be omitted’ (DoF, 1923). This was precisely the kind of lightly armed and mobile force called for by the Army’s Intelligence Branch in the mid-1930s.

One final approach developed by Barry Posen combines neorealism and organizational politics. Posen draws on organization theory to argue that outside intervention is needed to force major change on recalcitrant conservative militaries. Neorealism suggests that states do respond to security imperatives, and Posen sees this as occurring via civilian intervention in military affairs. In essence, worried about impending war or shocked by defeat, civilians make militaries change their ways (Posen, 1984). However, a conventional force posture was not forced upon the Irish Army by civilian direction. Civilian policy-makers were not all that interested in how the Army organized for war; they were only interested in how much it would cost. Indeed, the Army had to plead for civilian guidance on defence policy some three years after the creation of the Irish Free State (Farrell, 1998a: 78). To the extent that policy-makers and politicians gave any thought to Irish defence, they harked back to the Anglo–Irish War in envisaging some kind of guerrilla campaign (O’Halpin, 1999: 92).
Submitting to Civilian Rule

Rationalist IR theories of military behaviour are particularly unhelpful in explaining military subservience to civilian rule. Neorealism is a systemic theory and is not designed for looking inside the state. Thus, it is unable to explain the structure of civil–military relations within states. The organization politics approach suggests that militaries will act to increase their resource base and protect their autonomy. However, this approach starts from an assumption of military obedience of civilian government, and proceeds to explore how military organizations act to secure their interests within the boundaries of democracy (Weyland, 1995). One variant on this approach, principal–agent theory, has recently been applied to examine ‘how institutionally conditioned civilian choices as to the setting up and monitoring of military organisations affect the strategic relationship between civilians and military organisations over time’ (Avant, 1994: 9). However, with its emphasis on civilian choice, this model assumes democratic rule to start with. There is a well-developed literature on civil–military relations in military sociology some of which suggests that overly firm civilian rule may trigger a backlash by militaries seeking to assert their authority and/or defend their resources.7

However, the Irish Army did little to resist harsh treatment of it by the civilian government of the newly formed Irish Free State. This was curious given that Irish statehood had been secured by the Army’s predecessor, the IRA, in the Anglo–Irish War (1919–21), and defended by the new Irish Army in the Civil War that followed (1922–3). As one commentator notes: ‘In such circumstances one might expect to find the military revered and cosseted by deferential ministers’ (O’Halpin, 1994: 109). Instead the Irish government immediately demobilized most of the Army (cutting it in size from around 48,000 in 1923 to just over 16,000 in 1924) and reduced Army pay (GS, 1927: 6). Some officers felt so aggrieved by the government’s harsh treatment of them that they mutinied in early 1924. The Irish cabinet used this crisis to force military leaders on the Army Council to resign, despite the fact that the Army had, once again, come to the rescue by firmly suppressing mutiny. That the Irish government showed little gratitude, let alone deference, to its army is less puzzling than the Irish Army’s failure to stand up for itself. The Army Chief-of-Staff, General Richard Mulcahy, allowed the government to pass legislation in 1924 that greatly reduced his influence in favour of civilian policy-makers and gave Finance officials complete control over Army expenditure. In addition, acting against their own organizational interests, military chiefs enforced strict obedience of unpopular civilian policy within disgruntled Army ranks (Farrell, 1997: 112–15).
And yet Army leaders had enough support in their own organization and sympathy in the country at large to resist measures by the civilian government designed to vastly reduce the size and influence of the Army (Farrell, 1997: 116–18). Significantly, the Irish Free State emerged from the Civil War without a civilian leader to match the stature of Mulcahy. The Civil War did away with Ireland’s two great revolutionary leaders — Éamon de Valera rebelled against the new state, while Michael Collins was killed in action. Those left behind were ‘a ragbag of obscure lightweights ... who had come to prominence only when the British were leaving and it was safe to do so’ (O’Halpin, 1999: 37). By contrast, Mulcahy enjoyed considerable national status as former Chief-of-Staff of the IRA (Valulis, 1992).

The Irish Army undermined its own self-interests, by submitting to harsh civilian rule, and state interests, by adopting a wholly conventional force posture. This was not the utility-maximizing behaviour predicted by rationalist IR theories, and in this sense it acted irrationally. In this article I argue that there was a rationality all the same behind Irish Army behaviour. To be sure it was not instrumental rationality, whereby ‘actors strive towards rationally calculated goals’, but value rationality, where ‘they seek to realize values, rooted (at least in part) in aesthetic or moral belief’ (Dessler, 1999: 131). In other words, Irish Army practice was the embodiment of norms encoded in its organizational culture. The norms in question were transnational norms of military professionalism.

Transnational Norms and Military Professionalism

Norms are intersubjective beliefs about the social and natural world which define actors, their situations and the possibilities of action. Norms are intersubjective in that they are beliefs rooted in, and reproduced through, social practice. In this sense, norms are both shared beliefs and social practice (or, more precisely, beliefs embodied in practice) (Neufeld, 1993: 44–5; Wendt, 1995: 72–4). Norms constitute actors and meaningful action by situating both in social roles and social environments. In addition, norms regulate action by defining what is appropriate (given social rules) and what is effective (given the laws of science) (Golinski, 1998; Kratochwil, 1984). In short, norms shape behaviour by telling actors who they are, what kind of situation they face and consequently what they can and should do.

Previous work by culturalists in security studies has tended to view actors as ‘cultural islands’ in that national and organizational culture are conceived as reflecting historical experiences and comprising norms peculiar to the state or organization in question. Thus, US and Soviet nuclear strategy were
expected to have differed according to national styles of warfare (Gray, 1986). Equally, British Army culture and the practices shaped by it are perceived as having been quite different from, say, French Army culture and practice (Kier, 1997). In contrast, sociology’s new institutionalism treats actors as ‘open systems’, in that the norms encoded in organizational culture and embodied in organizational practice are seen as coming from the environment in which the organization operates (Scott, 1992). In this way, the environment ‘penetrate[s] the organization, creating the lens through which actors view the world and the very categories of structure, action, and thought’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 13). Norms, in turn, travel out of organization to shape the environment. Thus, organization and environment are mutually constituted.

Significantly, these environments are defined in terms of organizational fields that are roughly coterminous with the boundaries of industries or professions. By defining organizational environments in professional and industrial terms, as opposed to national or geographical, new institutionalists focus attention on norms that are, by definition, transnational and increasingly world-wide. Some new institutionalists place particular emphasis on the role of world cultural models (of Western origin) in shaping world-wide patterns of social organization, such as, bureaucracies, states, corporations and markets (Boli and Thomas, 1999; Meyer et al., 1994: 9–27; Meyer et al., 1997).

New institutionalists argue that organizational fields start out displaying considerable diversity, but once a field becomes established ‘there is an inexorable push towards homogenisation’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 64). Actors in a particular organizational field gradually develop understandings of appropriate form and behaviour. Professionalization is the process whereby these understandings are formed, reinforced and spread, and thereby organizational fields take shape. Understandings of organizational form and behaviour are legitimated through codification in professional literature and the setting of professional standards, and propagated through profession-based formal education and social networks (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 70–4). As organizations fall into line with the prescriptions that flow from these understandings, a prevailing template for organizing emerges and isomorphism occurs within organizational fields (Greenwood and Hinings, 1993). New institutionalists have produced studies of isomorphism in a range of state organized activities including education, environmental protection, and social welfare (Meyer et al., 1992a, 1992b; Ramirez and Meyer, 1980; Strang and Chang, 1993), as well as state organized violence (Eyre, 1997; Eyre and Suchman, 1996; Hironaka, 1998, 2000; Thomson, 1994).
So far, new institutionalists have concentrated on producing correlative studies of the effects of transnational culture. Martha Finnemore points out that the ‘detailed process-tracing and case study analysis to validate and elaborate the inferences based on correlation are missing’. Finnemore argues that this leads new institutionalists to pay insufficient attention to the role of power and politics in their portrayal of ‘world culture march[ing] effortlessly and facelessly across the globe’ (1996b: 339). Jeffrey Checkel makes a similar complaint about constructivists in IR who, to his mind, ‘fail to specify diffusion mechanisms and thus cannot offer a causal argument, verified through process tracing, of how norms are transmitted to states and have constitutive effects’ (1999: 85). This criticism applies to the current new institutionalist work on global military isomorphism, including Dana Eyre’s and Mark Suchman’s study on world culture and the proliferation of conventional weapons (1996), and Ann Hironaka’s work on the evolution of world-wide ‘scripts’ that define and legitimate reasons for war (1998, 2000). Janice Thomson’s fascinating history of the rise of state-based monopoly on violence does examine the politics of this process. However, it does not develop a theory of how new norms de-legitimatizing non-state-based military actors were diffused and embodied in state action. In this article, I seek to build on the new institutionalist approach in two ways. First, I develop a model for examining how transnational norms take root in national contexts. Second, I use this model to explain how transnational norms of military professionalism came to be encoded in Irish Army culture and embodied in Irish Army practice.

The norms that concern me are transnational norms of military professionalism. These are beliefs held by military officers, expressed and codified in military literature, reinforced in military education, and embodied in military practice about how militaries that aspire to be professional should organize themselves and act. I am not referring here to beliefs about specific military practices, precise make-up of military units, or use and usefulness of particular military technologies (Goldman and Eliason, nd). Rather, I mean core beliefs that underlie transnational military practice about the fundamental possibilities of professional organization and action. I distinguish between two core beliefs shared by military professionals — norms of conventional warfare and norms of civilian supremacy. The former functions to rule out the possibility for states (including poorer and less threatened states) to depend on labour-intensive militarization, irregular military forces and guerrilla strategies for their external security requirements. While the latter operates to severely limit possibilities for military disobedience of civilian authorities. These hypothesized causal impacts of transnational norms on military behaviour are represented in Table 1.
Table 1
Impact of Transnational Military Norms

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<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Hypothesized Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Norms of conventional warfare</td>
<td>Military choices about strategy and structure</td>
<td>Prohibits reliance on irregular forces and guerrilla strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms of civilian supremacy</td>
<td>Military responses to civilian policy</td>
<td>Prohibits military disobedience of civilian authorities</td>
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Norms of Conventional Warfare

Conventional warfare refers to warfare by standing, standardization and state-based military organizations. This requires long-term capital investment by states in military structures, equipment and personnel. In addition, the demanding nature of conventional warfare is itself capital-intensive. Conventional warfare is usually highly intensive in fighting and funding because military organizations are able to concentrate large forces in direct engagement. In turn, the demands of highly organized and high intensity war also make conventional warfare technologically dependent, and technology requires capital.

The existence of norms of conventional warfare is strongly suggested by the extraordinary world-wide predominance of capital-intensive militarization, quite out of keeping with the differing resource and security circumstances of states. Almost all states have standing, standardized and technologically dependent armies, navies and air forces. The alternative, to rely on labour-intensive militarization and militia type forces, is very rarely chosen even by poorer and/or less threatened states (Wendt and Barnett, 1993). These norms of conventional warfare are derived from a Western model of military organization which produced, and was reproduced by, the professionalization of war (Van Doorn, 1975: 29–46). The introduction of standing militaries in 17th-century Europe enabled the development of professional skills leading, in turn, to the establishment and emulation of professional standards in warfare (McNeill, 1982: 128–43; Parker, 1996: 16–24). All of this was underpinned by long-term capital investment from the state (Feld, 1975). Professionalization not only provided the certified knowledge base but also the social networks through which professional standards were diffused and adopted. Military knowledge, standards, and networks were institutionalized in a professional officer class from the 18th
century onwards (Huntington, 1957: 19–58; Teitler, 1977: 195–227). The Western military model was either imposed by European imperial powers on their colonies, or it was imported by extra-European states seeking to resist European expansion (Ralston, 1996). Thus, from the 17th century onwards, the Western military model expanded across the world along with the European state (Black, 1998; Parker, 1996: 115–45).

Norms of conventional warfare have also been institutionalized in law. Unconventional (or guerrilla) warfare by agents of the state was first outlawed in the 1863 Lieber Code, adopted by the Union side in the American Civil War (Hartigan, 1983). This legal prohibition was subsequently codified in international law in the 1907 Hague Regulations on Land Warfare which required all military parties to wear uniforms and carry arms openly (Best, 1980: 190–200). This is very significant from a constructivist perspective as norms are often empowered through institutionalization in international and domestic law (Koh, 1997; Nadelman, 1990). In other words, the Lieber Code and Hague Regulations institutionalized professional norms which defined military identity and the possibilities for military action in terms of conventional warfare.

Norms of Civilian Supremacy

Democracy depends on military recognition of civilian supremacy. This norm is expressed through military non-intervention in domestic politics. By political intervention, I do not mean seeking to influence civilian government through normal constitutional channels or in collusion with actors within government for the purpose of shaping national security policy. Such behaviour is the stuff of organizational politics, consistent with the concept of civilian supremacy, and therefore legitimate within democracies. Political intervention refers to the use or threat of use of violence for the purpose of replacing the policies or members of a civilian government. Taken to extremes, it can result in supplanting the entire civilian government in a military coup. In between the legitimate practice of exercising political influence and illegitimate political intervention, is a grey area whereby the military may seek to blackmail the civilian government into changing policy. When this involves threats of violence, it must be treated as political intervention; when it involves threats of non-cooperation, it may be considered as legitimate exercising of political influence depending on circumstances (e.g. where the military are seeking to reverse an illegal or unconstitutional civilian policy). 8

In his classic study, The Soldier and the State, Samuel Huntington sees the withdrawal of the military from politics as a direct consequence of the rise of military professionalism. Huntington argues that military professionalism
depends on the military maintaining a shared technical competence, very high sense of social responsibility, and corporate identity which distinguishes officers from civilians. This civilian–military distinction leads officers to concentrate on the business of war and leave government to the civilians. Thus, military professionalism produces and perpetuates norms of civilian supremacy (Huntington, 1957: 7–18, 80–97).

Huntington’s conception of professionalism is problematic. For a start, by including social responsibility to a client, in this case the government, this definition of professionalism could lead to tautological generalizations when it is used to explain military non-intervention. This problem is easily rectified by excluding social responsibility, and emphasizing technical competence and distinct corporateness in the definition of military professionalism (Fitch, 1998: 3; Nordlinger, 1977: 47). However, when professionalism is defined in these terms, some scholars argue that it may actually fuel military intervention in domestic politics. For Samuel Finer, this may occur should professionalism lead the military to see themselves as servants of the state rather than the government, should civilians ignore military expertise, and/or should the civilian authorities seek to use the military for domestic political purposes (1962: 24–30). In addition, Eric Nordlinger argues that professionalism may lead the military to consider themselves better qualified to govern the state than incompetent or corrupt political elites (1977: 49–53). In a recent study on civil–military relations in Latin America, Samuel Fitch finds that military professionalization has affected the pattern but not the propensity for military intervention in politics — intervention has become more institutionalized but no less likely (1998: 3).

Many of these scholars look at external factors in seeking to explain political intervention (or lack thereof) by the military. They see civilian action as providing the incentives and opportunities for military intervention in politics. Thus, firm civilian rule can lead to a military backlash (Finer, 1962: 24–30). Equally, the military may intervene to fill a political vacuum created by weak civilian government (Nordlinger, 1977: 49–53). In a later work, Huntington seems to have also shifted to this position, finding no correlation between the level of foreign military training and political intervention by militaries in developing states. He concludes that ‘the most important causes of military intervention . . . reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment but the political and institutional structure of the society’ (Huntington, 1968: 194).

But ignoring the characteristics of the military is not satisfactory either. Since they are armed, what the military think does matter. As Fitch rightly argues, ‘military beliefs about their political role are thus central to the conflict over alternative models of civil–military relations’ (1998: 62). Similarly, in a study of Russian civil–military relations in the 1990s, Brian
Taylor concludes that ‘the most important obstacle [to military intervention in politics] has been the continuing commitment to a norm of civilian supremacy in the Russian officer corps’ (forthcoming). How else are we to explain non-intervention in cases, such as that of post-revolutionary Ireland, where the military have reason and are able to intervene in domestic politics? Clearly, sometimes professionalism does produce military restraint.9

Crucial here is the distinction, originally missed by Huntington, between professionalization as process and professional norms as content. In short, in some cases when a military professionalizes it adopts norms of civilian supremacy as part of its professional identity and practice; just as, in some cases it does not. Established militaries may also change their professional identities over time so as to encompass a normative prohibition on political intervention (Taylor, nd) or even to exclude previously accepted norms of civilian supremacy (as happened in post-World War II Latin America) (Fitch, 1998: 4–17).

Again, the existence of this norm is suggested by transnational military practice. The spread of democracy throughout the Western world from the 19th century onwards rested on military subservience to civilian rule. In many cases, this norm was not expressed in law but rather was shaped by circumstances often peculiar to the state in question. For instance, in Britain it was fostered by a system that relied on retarding the emergence of a separate officer class, whereas in the United States it grew out of the military’s largely self-imposed isolation from society in post-Civil War America. In both cases the constitutional power-sharing arrangement between head of state and legislature gave plenty of scope for military intervention in politics. Thus, norms of civilian supremacy emerged in spite, and not because, of the overarching legal framework (Avant, 1994: 21–48; Huntington, 1957: 163–237).

This picture of transnational norms growing from a variety of national roots is wholly consistent with new institutionalist and social constructivist approaches. Just as norms of conventional warfare developed from circumstances peculiar to certain European states in the 17th century, so norms of civilian obedience owe their origins to various national historical experiences. In both cases, these norms were homogenized and institutionalized in a transnational military field, and were spread through interstate emulation of professional military practices. For most of the post-war period, military intervention in domestic politics was the norm in non-Western states just as non-intervention was the norm in the West (Nordlinger, 1977: 5–6). All this has changed with the recent wave of democratization. Huntington’s explanation for why around 40 states have experienced a transition from authoritarianism to democracy is the ‘broad diffusion and acceptance of the
norms of military professionalism and civilian control by militaries around the world’ (1996: 7).

In conclusion, it should be noted that transnational military norms provide cognitive and normative frames to guide professional practice that are history contingent in two senses. First, there is nothing natural, in the Darwinian sense, about the evolution of norms of conventional warfare and civilian supremacy. They did not evolve in trial and error fashion as the intrinsically ‘best’ way for militaries to organize and act, but rather they are the result of an ongoing process of culturally framed collective learning and social interaction; within the transnational military sector as a whole, this process stretches back centuries.10 Second, the content and application of these norms have evolved over time. For instance, where standardization of conventional armies once meant common weapons, munitions and uniforms (McNeil, 1982: 139–43), it now means joint, combined and integrated command, operations and logistics (Allard, 1990; Demchak, nd). There is also a sense in which these norms have strengthened in application over time, both in particular cases and across the world.11 Where military doctrine and practice in revolutionary China and Vietnam once placed as much emphasis on ‘people’s war’ as on conventional warfare (Wirtz, 1991: 17–50), the militaries of both states are now bent on the acquisition of modern regular forces (Demchak, nd; Lewis and Litai, 1999). Overall norms of conventional warfare seem to have gained almost universal application with the spread of the Western state form from the 16th century onwards. Equally, the successive waves of democratization in the latter half of the 20th century are suggestive of an ever-greater diffusion of norms of civilian supremacy.

**Transplanting Norms**

How do these transnational military norms spread and become empowered in new national contexts? Constructivists have recently begun to explicitly examine the modes and methods of norm diffusion in the international system. I draw on this literature to identify the context, process and mechanism for norm transplantation. From this, I distil two basic patterns of norm transplantation — one incremental, the other radical. I then draw on two other literatures, on military culture and military innovation respectively, to identify the conditions for radical norm transplantation, namely, external shock combined with effective norm entrepreneurs and/or personnel change in the target community. I begin by briefly discussing how we know when norm transplantation has occurred.

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Measuring Norm Transplantation

Andrew Cortell and James Davis use the concept of ‘norm salience’ to investigate when transplantation has occurred. ‘When [an international] norm is salient in a particular [national] discourse, its invocation by relevant actors legitimates a particular behaviour or action, creating a prima facie obligation, and thereby calling into question or delegitimizing alternative choices’ (2000: 69). Cortell and Davis suggest a threefold way of measuring norm salience through the international norm’s appearance in domestic political discourse, domestic institutions (procedures and law) and state policies. Of the three measures, they prioritize political discourse as it may be expected to proceed institutional and policy change, and because it can provide insights into how norms shape ‘non-events’ (paths not taken). The extent to which an international norm appears in discourse, institutions and policy, and the degree of conditionality attached to them, determines whether the norm has high, moderate, low or no salience (Cortell and Davis, 2000: 70–72; see also Checkel, 1999: 87).

My study concentrates on military beliefs about strategy and civil–military relations and, as such, I focus on the organizational cultures of the IRA and Irish Army. I draw on recent historiography to construct a picture of IRA beliefs and practices. I do likewise for the Irish Army, this time drawing on a wealth of primary source documents — including training manuals, professional journals, planning documents — to supplement the limited range of secondary source materials. At the same time, I locate IRA and Army norms within the broader political culture of Ireland, and I do this by examining domestic discourse, administrative procedures, national law and state policies. At both levels of analysis, organizational and national cultures, I assume the possible existence of dichotomous normative structures. In such circumstances, the culture of the community in question (the benchmark for measuring transnational norm salience) is defined by a dominant set of norms, while challenging (sometimes dormant) norms provide possibilities for subversive cultural change (Legro, 2000: 265).

Patterns of Norm Transplantation

For Jeffrey Checkel, ‘the degree of “cultural match” between global norms and domestic practice will be key in determining the pattern and degree of diffussion’ (1999: 86). He notes that ‘Diffusion is more rapid when a cultural match exists between a systemic norm and a target country, in other words, where it resonates with historically constructed domestic norms’ (Checkel, 1999: 87). In our terms, norms of conventional warfare may suit or offend indigenous strategic norms; local political culture may be consistent or in conflict with transnational norms of civilian supremacy.
Studies on strategic culture suggest that common national circumstances and experience can lead a national community of actors to construct and practise shared military beliefs (Gray, 1986; Johnston, 1995). Since ‘the poor and weak and peripheral [tend to] copy the rich and strong and central’, transnational professional norms are most likely to reflect the strategic culture of developed states and have the potential to be inconsistent with the strategic culture of developing states (Meyer et al., 1997: 164). My brief account of the rise of the modern military suggests that this has certainly been the case with norms of conventional warfare. Studies on civil–military relations suggest that local political culture is crucial to the empowerment of norms of civilian supremacy (Danopoulos, 1992; Taylor, nd). This point is emphasized by Finer who argues that the ‘levels to which the military press their intervention (running in our terms from legitimate political influence to illegitimate political intervention) are related to the level of political culture of their society’ (Finer, 1962: 87). His basic point is that local political culture may help or hinder the transplantation of norms of civilian supremacy in new states.

Checkel points out that ‘cultural match is not simply a dichotomous variable (yes, one has it or not): rather, it scales along a spectrum’ running from a positive to negative match (1999: 86–7). In my case study, I look for consistency between transnational norms of military professionalism and IRA culture. I do not aim to precisely plot the degree of consistency between transnational and national norms, but rather seek to determine whether they mostly match or mostly clash with each other.

Norm transplantation may involve nesting transnational norms alongside local norms in existing cultural structures. Richard Price calls this ‘grafting’. Price’s work suggests that grafting occurs when new norms match existing ones (1998: 627–31). When transnational norms clash with local norms, transplantation involves the former pushing the latter out of the cultural nest. In the context of this study, this would entail transnational military norms displacing national strategic and political norms in the organizational culture of the Irish Army.

There are two basic mechanisms for norm transplantation. The first is political mobilization whereby the target community is pressured into adopting transnational norms, and the second is social learning whereby the target community voluntarily adopts transnational norms (Checkel, 1999: 88; 1997: 476–7). Social networks are central to both mechanisms — both in mobilizing support for transnational norms (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Price, 1998), and in transmitting their content (Haas, 1992).

In practice, norm transplantation is likely to proceed via both mechanisms. Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink suggest that norms have a life cycle

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in which political mobilization naturally leads to social learning. They argue that once sufficient support has been mobilized within the target community for a new norm, it crosses a tipping point after which it is widely accepted and learned by the rest of the community — a process they call ‘norm cascade’ (1998). In contrast, Thomas Risse and Sikkink suggest that social learning and political mobilization occur simultaneously. Actors learn about new norms in the very process of resisting them, and as this resistance is overcome so learning proceeds in pace (1999: 17–35). Generally speaking, we may expect the primary mechanism of norm transplantation to be determined by context. In cases of cultural match, it will be social learning because the target community will be receptive to new transnational norms, and their adoption merely involves additions or adaptations to existing local norms. In cases of cultural clash, the primary mechanism is likely to be political mobilization, because the new norms contradict and threaten to replace existing community beliefs and practice.

We may distil two basic patterns of norm transplantation — one incremental, the other radical — from the above discussion. The incremental form of norm transplantation involves grafting new transnational norms on to existing local norm hierarchies. This requires social learning of these new norms by the target community, with content of transnational norms being communicated via a social network. Here there is nothing much to explain. Norm transplantation is uncontroversial and uncontested. As Cortell and Davis argue, ‘when such a cultural match exists, domestic actors are likely to treat the international norms as a given, instinctively recognising the obligations associated with the norm. Domestic salience under such conditions is automatic’ (2000: 74; emphasis added). The radical form of norm transplantation is an altogether different matter. It requires displacement of local norms by transnational norms, involving a much more profound cultural change than norm grafting. The mechanism is a campaign of political mobilization that is likely to be controversial and contested. This raises the question of what causes norm displacement. Since incremental norm transplantation is straightforward by comparison, the rest of this article focuses on elucidating the conditions for radical norm transplanation, which are then illustrated using the Irish Army case study.

**Norm Transplantation and Cultural Change**

Radical norm transplantation requires major cultural change by the target community. Two literatures have already considered the topic of cultural change within military communities, namely, culturalism in security studies
Table 2
Patterns of Norm Transplantation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Primary Mechanism</th>
<th>Social Networks</th>
<th>Necessary Conditions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incremental</td>
<td>Cultural match</td>
<td>Norm grafting</td>
<td>Social learning</td>
<td>Transmitting content</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>Cultural clash</td>
<td>Norm displacement</td>
<td>Political mobilization</td>
<td>Mobilizing support</td>
<td>Shock + effective entrepreneurs and/or personnel change</td>
</tr>
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and studies on military innovation. These literatures suggest three conditions for radical norm transplantation — external shock, norm entrepreneurs, and personnel change (see Table 2).

External Shock

Culturalists in security studies uniformly identify external shock to the local cultural system — in the form of wars, depression and revolutions — as a necessary condition for radical change. Shocks of such a profound nature are widely seen as necessary to undermine the legitimacy of existing norms, shift power within communities, and enable cultural entrepreneurs to construct a new consensus around alternative norms (Avant, 2000: 48–9; Berger, 1996: 326–7; Duffield, 1998: 251; Evangelista, 1999: 7; Legro, 1996: 122). For some scholars, the development of anti-militarist strategic cultures in post-war Germany and Japan was triggered in this manner by the utter defeat of these states in World War II (Berger, 1998; Duffield, 1998: 251; Katzenstein, 1996).

Jeffrey Legro rightly points out that ‘we must understand what it is about a “shock” or event that is likely to undermine an existing orthodoxy and enable a society to reach a new orthodoxy’ (2000: 263). He goes on to suggest two things. First, ‘the fit between social expectations (generated by collective ideas) and events’ — the more unforeseen and/or inexplicable an event is for a cognitive or normative frame, the more undermining it will be for that norm. Second, ‘whether subsequent experience is socially desirable’ — events with undesirable effects are more likely to generate support for change than events with desirable outcomes (2000: 263). Legro’s useful
analysis can be refined by noting that events may also be shocking for their anticipated social undesirability. In other words, communities may be shocked into changing their ways of thinking and doing in order to prevent or ameliorate an event anticipated to have disastrous effects. According to Barry Posen, ‘Simple fear of defeat’ provides an important motivation for civilian led military innovation (1984: 77). Aaron Friedberg offers a similar explanation for the creation of instruments of US military power in the face of America’s anti-statist ethos — ‘Periods of accelerated state-building have generally been preceded either by the anticipation or actual onset of war, or by a growing sense of impending domestic economic and social crisis’ (2000: 19).

**Norm Entrepreneurs**

Studies on military innovation point to entrepreneurs as a condition for cultural change (Evangelista, 1999; Posen, 1984; Rosen, 1991; Zisk, 1993). The importance of norm entrepreneurs has also been identified by constructivists (Finnemore 1996a; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Nadelman, 1990; Price, 1998). In terms of what makes an entrepreneur effective, these two literatures point in different directions.

Studies on military innovation suggest that entrepreneurs’ proximity to the leadership of the target community is critical to success. The closer entrepreneurs are to the decision-making apparatus of the target community, the better able they will be to communicate and push through new ideas. Proximity may be defined in terms of community membership and policy access. For Stephen Rosen successful entrepreneurs are visionary leaders able to mobilize change within their own organizations (1991); here Rosen was countering Posen’s view that innovation was led by outsiders — military mavericks backed by civilian leaders. For Kimberly Zisk (1993) and Matthew Evangelista (1999), civilian reformers only became effective when they gained access to Soviet defence policy communities in the mid to late 1980s.

In contrast, constructivists focus on the ability of norm entrepreneurs to interpret events, frame the discourse, and construct a new consensus. This view highlights the role of entrepreneurs as ‘skilled users of culture’ who are able to use culture as a ‘tool-kit’ to ‘construct strategies of action’ (Swidler, 1986) around which debate is closed (Engelhardt and Caplan, 1987). Constructivists recognize that occupying positions of authority can aid norm entrepreneurs by conferring legitimacy on their cognitive observations and normative pronouncements (Cortell and Davis, 2000: 76). However, constructivists do not make this a condition of success. For instance, constructivists have produced a number of studies where the norm
entrepreneurs have been non-governmental actors and the target communities are states (Finnemore, 1996a: 69–88; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Price, 1998; Risse and Sikkink, 1999).

**Personnel Change**

New beliefs and ideas can travel with people in to and out of communities. The literature on military innovation suggests that this can result in radical norm change when there is a turnover in key people or in a large portion of the community membership. Failing organizations typically seek to turn things around by bringing in new managers. This is as true in war as in business — thus, the US Navy sought to improve the effectiveness of its submarine fleet during World War II by replacing overly-cautious submarine commanders with young aggressive officers (Rosen, 1991: 130–47). Equally, Lynn Eden’s work on how the US Air Force retained and lost knowledge about nuclear weapons effects shows how organizational culture can change when people with key technical knowledge leave the organization (forthcoming). Large-scale changes in community membership can also affect cultural change. Zisk notes that preceding Soviet military innovation in the late 1980s, ‘there was almost a complete turnover in top-level Soviet Officers’. For Zisk, ‘such an influx of young officers to top positions and a high level of personnel turnover is bound to bring in people who are receptive to innovative thinking’ (1993: 173–4).

**Explaining Radical Norm Transplantation**

Radical norm transplantation involves profound cultural change by the target community. The literature on military culture identifies external shock as a necessary condition for such change. However, in itself, external shock does not explain cultural change. Change does not follow automatically in the wake of shock (Avant, 2000: 49). For this reason, Legro conceives cultural change as a two-stage process — shock induced cultural collapse followed by consolidation of cultural change. In the absence of consolidation, new norms may not take root and, when the effects of shock have worn off, cultures may change back. The phenomenon of transitory cultural change is illustrated in Friedberg’s study. He records each crisis induced state-building episode in the United States as being followed by a period of Congressional enforced state-shrinking when the crisis has passed (Friedberg, 2000: 30–2).

What is needed, therefore, is a more dynamic model that restores agency to cultural change (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992: 15). This can be done by incorporating the role of norm entrepreneurs and personnel change. Most accounts of shock induced change assume that shock takes effect by creating
political space for entrepreneurs to challenge the existing norm hierarchy. Missing are hypotheses about when this challenge will succeed. A survey of the constructivist and military innovation literatures suggests that the degree to which norm entrepreneurs will succeed in shaping radical cultural change will be determined by — (1) their proximity to the decision-making apparatus within the target community; and (2) their effectiveness in framing debate and achieving closure. We may also expect that changes in personnel are likely to come about as a direct consequence of external shock (such as, war losses, or resignations/reassignments following organizational failure). The military innovation literature suggests that the extent to which personnel turnover results in cultural change will be determined by — (1) whether or not the people leaving/arriving have key skills and/or knowledge; and (2) the scale of the turnover.

**Norm Transplantation in Ireland**

Let us explore the transplantation of transnational military norms by returning, once again, to early 20th-century Ireland. Military and political leaders of the Irish Republican movement attempted to socialize the IRA into norms of conventional warfare and norms of civilian supremacy. This effort at radical norm transplantation failed because there was nothing to shock the IRA into abandoning its own norms of unconventional warfare and norms of military sovereignty. Norm transplantation succeeded in post-revolutionary Ireland when the new state was plunged into Civil War. The struggle to defend the new state against IRA rebels produced the necessary shock, which combined with large-scale personnel change and effective entrepreneurial leadership, mobilized support for the new norms.

**Cultural Clash in Revolutionary Ireland**

Initially, transnational norms of military professionalism clashed with the strategic and political norms of revolutionary Ireland (the period from 1916 to 1921). The IRA did not recognize civilian supremacy, and its field units did not practise conventional warfare.

The IRA considered themselves to be a moral elite who, by their struggle and sacrifice, had earned the right to govern Ireland. These themes of heroic struggle and blood sacrifice are traced in Irish Republican mythology back to the Easter Rising of 1916, which was launched by Irish rebels in Dublin against impossible odds in order to ignite a revolutionary impulse in the Irish people (Garvin, 1996: 37–41; Smith, 1997: 10–23). The IRA was also elitist in attitude, in part, because it was elitist in membership. Ireland was predominately rural, working class and landed. IRA members were mostly young, urban, skilled, middle-class men who were unmarried, unpropertied
and socially mobile (Hart, 1999). As an elitist organization, the IRA did not always enjoy popular support. Indeed, often public support was given reluctantly and under intimidation (Townshend, 1987: 327–9). In addition, the IRA financed and fought their war independent of political control. The first Dáil (Irish parliament), set up in 1918 during the revolutionary struggle against Britain, and the first Irish Minister of Defence were largely ignored by the IRA. Indeed, IRA members resisted taking an oath of loyalty to the Dáil which the Minister of Defence sought to impose on them and, in return, the Dáil did not take responsibility for IRA actions until 1921 (Mitchell, 1995: 65–79). Since there was only mixed support for the republican cause throughout Ireland, it is small wonder that the IRA distrusted the ordinary Irish voter (Fitzpatrick, 1978: 113–44). Equally, it is not surprising that ‘the guerrillas thought of themselves as sovereign’, since ‘They had organized and armed themselves and paid their own way’ (Hart, 1998: 269).

Ironically, the Irish rebels who rose up in 1916 wore military uniforms and acted like regular soldiers. This was their undoing — the British had little difficulty in locating the rebels and blasting them out of their static defensive positions. The Anglo–Irish War was a wholly different ball game. The IRA were harder to find because many were part-timers who blended back easily into the populace, while full-timers in IRA Active Service Units formed highly mobile ‘flying columns’. Instead of directly engaging the British military, IRA units favoured assassination, sniper attacks and hit-and-run raids. Notwithstanding this mix of unconventional units and tactics, the IRA General Staff attempted to professionalize their organization by establishing standards of dress, conduct, training, planning and operations. In so doing, it promoted military practices more closely associated with conventional than guerrilla armies, such as the Close Order Drill (GHQ, 1920). Driving this was a norm entrepreneur, in the shape of IRA Chief-of-Staff, General Richard Mulcahy. Mulcahy was particularly concerned with developing a professional officer corps for the IRA. To this end, he ordered all IRA field divisions to set up training camps for the purpose of providing uniform training for IRA officers as laid down by GHQ (GHQ, 1921). The volume of directives flowing from IRA GHQ in Dublin out to field units lent the impression of a ‘unified’ and ‘cohesive’ fighting organization (Bowden, 1973). In reality, the responsiveness of IRA field units to GHQ directives varied greatly from unit to unit, and from directive to directive. Certainly, nothing like a standard officer corps was achieved. In many cases units kept the incompetent and lazy officers they had elected precisely because these officers kept their units out of action! And the most militarily active and hard-pressed IRA field units in the South and West of Ireland were also unresponsive to GHQ direction because they were resentful of the

Thus, the process of norm transplantation in revolutionary Ireland was one of political mobilization. The Dáil and Minister of Defence attempted to force the IRA to recognize civilian supremacy. Equally, the IRA General Staff formed the social network through which pressure was exerted on IRA field units to adopt and comply with professional military norms. Radical norm transplantation failed at this stage — the Dáil was not taken seriously by the IRA leadership, while IRA field units were either not bothered or too busy to professionalize themselves along the lines of conventional armies.

Radical Norm Transplantation in Independent Ireland

In contrast to the IRA, the army of the Irish Free State practised norms of civilian supremacy and norms of conventional warfare. Norms of civilian supremacy led Army leaders to accept unfair and harsh treatment by the civilian government (Farrell, 1997). Norms of conventional warfare led the Army to adhere to a wholly conventional force posture in circumstances which strongly suggested the efficiency of an unconventional strategy and force structure (Farrell, 1998a). The pressure for cultural change came from the same sources in Free State Ireland as in revolutionary Ireland — civilians sought to impose norms of civilian supremacy on the new Army, while the Army General Staff promoted norms of conventional warfare within their own organization. Only this time, they succeeded.

The national political discourse of post-revolutionary Ireland show a firm belief in norms of civilian supremacy. Typical of the dichotomous structure of most cultural systems, Irish political culture contained two traditions — one revolutionary, the other constitutional. Clumsy British reprisals following the failed rising of 1916 reinforced public support for the revolutionary tradition, and with it the IRA. However, with independence, the constitutional tradition reasserted itself once again leading to the creation of constitutional democracy in Ireland (Farrell, 1971; Garvin, 1996: 123–55). The government were quick to institutionalize civilian control of the Army in administrative procedures and national law. From 1922 onwards, the Army had to first seek permission from the Department of Finance before spending any money (even on something as minor as a couple of extra telephone lines) or making any appointments. This procedure was encoded in the Ministers and Secretaries Act of 1924. This Act also emasculated the Army leadership in a number of other ways. It designated the Minister of Defence ‘commander-in-chief’ of the Army, and made the three other senior Army generals directly accountable to the Minister instead of the Army Chief-of-Staff. Furthermore, it limited the
Army Chief-of-Staff to a three-year term of office; as a result there were eight chiefs-of-staff in the first 10 years of the Irish state, as against only four Ministers of Defence. Civilian control was further enhanced in 1924 in another procedure whereby the Army could only communicate with Ministers through civil servants (Farrell, 1997: 114–15; O’Halpin, 1999: 86–8). To be sure, Army leaders complained bitterly about these various measures, but they accepted them nonetheless (Mulcahy, 1922; O’Duffy, 1924).

Norms of civilian supremacy were evident in national policy in the government’s handling of the 1924 Mutiny Crisis. In public, the government pursued a tough line and did so with widespread public and political support — here policy reflected discourse. In private, it attempted to negotiate a settlement with the leaders of the Mutiny, but the Army Council went ahead anyway and arrested the Mutiny ring-leaders. Up to this point, norms of civilian supremacy were embodied in government and Army words but not deeds. The government entered into secret talks with the mutineers in order to minimize the political fallout from the crisis in an election year, while the Army Council’s tough action breached Ministerial instruction and was motivated by the desire to remove a faction that threatened its control of the organization. However, what happened next dramatically illustrated norms of civilian supremacy in action. Infuriated by the Army’s independent action, the government demanded the resignation of the Army Council — three of the four members resigned with little fuss, including Mulcahy, leaving only one general to be dismissed (O’Halpin, 1999: 46–53; Regan, 1999: 163–97). Norms of civilian supremacy are illustrated both in the government’s expectation that the Army leadership would resign, and in the resignations themselves. It so happens that Army officers were surprised at the deference of the Army Council; some suggested that the Council ignore the government’s order — a suggestion met with sharp rebuke by Mulcahy. Instead, in resigning, Army Council members ordered their officers to ‘stand loyal to the Government and forget us’ (Valiulis, 1992: 216).

As noted earlier on, politicians and policy-makers gave little thought to how the Army should organize and fight. For the first 15 years, policy on national defence, insofar as it existed, amounted to keeping the Army small and obedient. This contrasted sharply with the Army’s own policy, stated boldly in 1925, for national defence to be based on ‘a standing Army of infantry supported by artillery, armoured cars, tanks’, and including an ‘Air Force’, ‘Chemical Warfare Service’, and ‘Coastal Defence System’, possibly equipped with submarines (DoD, 1925: 15). Given the government’s unwillingness to fund anything like such a force, staff officers in the intelligence branch toyed with the idea of incorporating guerrilla warfare into Ireland’s defence posture (Bryan, 1928). However, as already noted,
these ideas were roundly rejected by the General Staff. Army discourse at the
time shows an obsession with professionalizing the organization along
conventional lines, combined with a complete disinterest in guerrilla
warfare. Out of around 300 substantive articles on military matters
published in the Irish Army’s professional journal An t-Óglácht, only two
were on guerrilla warfare — one was reprinted from the British Army’s
journal (Dening, 1927), and the other was an unfinished paper originally
written shortly after the Irish War of Independence (O’Connell, 1930).13
Equally, in preparing Ireland’s defences at the outbreak of World War II,
Army planners studied carefully the recent experiences of foreign armies
(particularly in mechanized warfare) all the while ignoring Ireland’s own
experience in guerrilla warfare. This neglect of guerrilla warfare in favour of
conventional warfare was institutionalized in Army training. Less than 1% of
the Army’s Command and Staff Course in the 1930s was devoted to
guerrilla warfare. In contrast, chemical warfare took up 6% of the course,
despite the fact that the Army had no ability to defend against, let alone use,
chemical weapons. A similar total concentration on conventional field
operations is contained in the Army’s training directives in the early 1940s
— guerrilla operations gets a cursory three-line mention in one three-page
directive only (Farrell, 1998a: 80–1).

How did transnational norms of military professionalism come to displace
IRA norms? The Irish Civil War provided the necessary external shock for
radical norm transplantation to take place. While the IRA General Staff were
pro-Treaty, most IRA field units were opposed to the Treaty with Britain
and the Free State that was born of it. Thus the IRA General Staff, which
formed the General Staff of the Free State Army, had to urgently pull
together a new army to defend the new state against IRA rebels. The British
model was adopted out of necessity, and this provided the primary
mechanism through which professional norms were encoded in Irish Army
culture. Lacking the expertise to devise their own organizational structure
and routines, the General Staff later explained that ‘it was essential that we
adopt some foreign system as a model, to train and experiment with, and as
our armament and equipment was British this was as good a model to adopt
as any other’ (GS, 1934: 55). As this quote suggests, the Irish General Staff
intended to use the British model as the basis from which to evolve a
military system suitable for Irish strategic circumstances. But, as things
turned out, the British model provided the blueprint for the enduring
pattern of Irish military organization and behaviour.

The Civil War also produced a large-scale turnover of Army personnel
with key beliefs, in that it led to the exclusion of those members of the IRA
with most commitment to norms of military sovereignty and norms of
unconventional warfare. These were the most active fighting units of the
IRA in Southern and Western Ireland who rebelled against the Irish Free State. In consequence, less than one-tenth of the new Army were former IRA members. Furthermore, many officers with IRA experience were demobilized following the Civil War while at the same time a number of ex-British officers, valued for their professional expertise, were commissioned in the Irish Army (Costello, 1924: 10–12). The change in personnel brought a change in attitude — these new recruits did not consider themselves to be sovereign but rather servants of the state, and were not particularly attached to guerrilla warfare given that they had no experience of it.

The urgency of the Civil War combined with the formation of a new Army, gave Mulcahy the political space to act as an effective norm entrepreneur. Mulcahy was not as close to the decision-making apparatus of the IRA as suggested by his formal office of Chief-of-Staff. As we noted, the appearance of a centralized decision-making hierarchy in the IRA belied the reality of a highly decentralized organization. In fact, most field units owed loyalty to and took direction from local commanders before the Dublin Headquarters (Valiulis, 1992: 73–5). With only 4000 former IRA troops staying loyal to the Free State government, a brand new Army of over 50,000 was raised to fight the Civil War. The General Staff of this new Army were the same staff officers who had worked under Mulcahy in the GHQ of the IRA. Accordingly, they formed an effective social network through which Mulcahy was able to exert control, frame debate and mould a professional organization (Valiulis, 1992: 73–5, 160–1).

The social network supporting norms of conventional warfare in the Irish Army was reinforced when the Irish General Staff sent a military mission to the US Military Academy at West Point in 1926. The purpose of this mission was to learn more about foreign military systems, ostensibly to enable the Army to devise its own doctrine and training. To this end, returning officers formed a temporary Defence Plans Division (DPD) two years later (O’Halpin, 1999: 97–99). However, rather than coming up with a new force posture, the DPD concluded — ‘It seems that the doctrine laid down in the British Field Service regulations has sufficient in common with the doctrine suggested to us to warrant the adoption of the war organization evolved in England’ (Costello, 1928). Since it also emphasized conventional warfare, American training confirmed the validity of the British military model. Ten years on, the Irish Army was still thoroughly British in character. One founding member of the DPD noted, ‘Much of our present organisation, and almost all handbooks and manuals approved by the [Irish] Department of Defence, are British’ (Costello, 1938). It was around this time that the Intelligence Branch proposed that the Army prepare an inventive scheme of national defence that drew on its past experience in guerrilla warfare. It is noteworthy that the chief authors of this proposal,
Colonels Liam Archer and Dan Bryan, had received no foreign military training beforehand. Given that conventional warfare norms were so well entrenched in Irish Army culture, it is no wonder that their proposal fell on deaf ears.

Radical norm transplantation took place in post-revolutionary Ireland because external shock, personnel change and effective entrepreneurship operated in synergy to effect rapid and profound cultural change in the Irish Army. By itself, external shock would probably not have been enough; had the IRA split differently in the Civil War, and most of the IRA including those from Southern and Western Ireland remained loyal to the state, then there would have been a considerable body of support for norms of military sovereignty and norms of unconventional warfare within the new Army, and more resistance to Mulcahy’s leadership as well as harsh civilian rule. The Irish case suggests an important correlation between personnel change and effective entrepreneurship, even if it does not provide conclusive evidence that both are necessary for external shock to produce cultural change.

**Conclusion**

Culturalist approaches to security studies often take as their target puzzling military structures and strategies. Culturalists present such puzzling behaviour as the embodiment of military norms which happen to be incongruous with prevailing strategic or operational circumstances. (Berger, 1998; Cameron, 1994; Duffield, 1998, 1999; Eden, forthcoming; Katzenstein, 1996; Kier, 1997; Legro, 1995). Such a focus is reasonable in terms of validating the culturalist research programme (Farrell, 1999). At the same time, instrumental calculations can and do affect norm development and diffusion (Porpora, 1993). As Cortell and Davis note, ‘international norms are more likely to become salient if they are perceived to support domestic material interests, whether economic or security’. While norms create interests, it is reasonable to expect that international norms will be better received where they re-create existing national and/or domestic interests. In addition, coercion can also play a role in norm diffusion. Powerful states can impose norms on weaker states, either through external inducement or direct intervention to effect internal reconstruction (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990).

Interests and inducements clearly play a significant role in the diffusion of the transnational military norms. States may meet certain military standards of behaviour in order to be accepted into the international community. This is what Eyre and Suchman get at when they argue that states acquire conventional weapons for the same reason that they acquire national airlines, in order to affirm their identities as modern states (1996). For example,
since gaining independence from Russia in 1993, Lithuania has acquired a tiny army (including air force and navy) that is conventionally equipped and structured. All the evidence suggests that the main function of the Lithuanian Army is to affirm Lithuanian statehood. Officially, it is supposed to defend the state against external aggression. However, Lithuania has yet to produce a plan for national defence, and since the main potential aggressor is Russia, nobody seriously expects that the army will be able to fulfil this role anyway (Zaccor, 1997).

The point is that international acceptance may bring concrete as well as emotional benefits, and in this sense it is instrumental to seek it. In terms of norms of conventional warfare, this is most evident for communities aspiring statehood. Thus both Palestine and Kosovo are creating conventional armies which will be more vulnerable than guerrilla forces to attack from Israel and Serbia respectively, but which nevertheless legitimate their respective bids for statehood.\(^{15}\) Observing norms of civilian supremacy may also enable states to enter advantageous alliances with powerful and rich democracies. The defining example is the requirement for post-communist states to institutionalize norms of civilian supremacy as a prerequisite for entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There is no doubt that the promise of NATO membership is driving many post-communist states to explicitly change their militaries in order to meet NATO standards (on interoperability as well as civil–military relations) (Fields and Jensen, 1998; Simon, 1995).

This article has deliberately examined a case where norm transplantation was not driven by self-interest nor external imposition. This is because it seeks to build on a literature — constructivism and culturalism — that give independent causality to norms in international and domestic politics.\(^{16}\) As it happens, the concrete benefits of observing transnational military norms are not at all evident in the case of early 20th-century Ireland. Irish statehood was legitimated by the Treaty with Britain in 1921 and through membership of the League of Nations, and so a conventional army was not needed for this purpose (Kennedy, 1996). It is equally difficult to see the material benefits for Ireland in observing norms of civilian supremacy. As a neutral state, Ireland had no interest in allying with anybody. Indeed, it refused to side with the Western democracies against fascist states in World War II (Fisk, 1983). Moreover, as I have shown, a conventional army did not suit Irish security needs, while submitting to civilian rule did not serve the Army’s interests. Accordingly, the Irish case illustrates the causal autonomy of transnational military norms in shaping national military behaviour.

Further research on other case studies across space and time is needed to test the hypotheses developed in this article. Obviously, this is particularly
important given that we are dealing with the impact of transnational norms on national military development. Such research should look at cases of incremental norm transplantation, to confirm if the process is as smooth — with norm grafting proceeding uncontested social learning — as suggested in the theoretical literature. Cases of attempted radical norm transplantation following shock but in the absence of personnel change would also be fruitful in isolating the role of norm entrepreneurs in mobilizing support for cultural change.

Notwithstanding the need for theory-testing, there is sufficient evidence in the theoretical literature (and explored in the Irish case study) to suggest some tentative policy implications regarding the diffusion of norms of military professionalism to new and democratizing states in the current world system. First, the material incentives for such behaviour (i.e. international recognition, international aid and, in the case of Eastern European states, possible admission to Western security institutions) are heavily reinforced by powerful transnational norms. In other words, material incentives are not alone in driving military professionalism in these states. Second, where transnational professional norms match local culture, we may expect their adoption to proceed rapidly and with ease. Third, where transnational norms and local culture clash, radical norm transplantation is likely to require an external shock combined with effective entrepreneurs and/or personnel change in the target community. Fourth, once norms of military professionalism are transplanted into new and democratizing states, adherence to these norms may be expected to outlive any initial material incentives for their adoption.

Notes

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1. See Ball (1988). Of course, states may intentionally seek to undermine regional security. For example, South Africa deliberately implemented a ‘Total Strategy’ to destabilize neighbouring states (Davies and O’Meara, 1985).
2. There are three schools of new institutionalism in the social sciences — rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and sociology’s new institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 1996). All references to new institutionalism in this article refer to the third variety.

3. ‘Incremental’ and ‘radical’ are used to denote patterns of cultural change that differ in scale rather than pace. Thus radical norm diffusion does not necessarily occur any more quickly (or slowly) than incremental norm diffusion — shock may induce rapid cultural change, but it may also be preceded by a lengthy period of resistance to new norms by the indigenous cultural system. However, radical norm diffusion does, by definition, require cultural change on a large scale since the new norms conflict with existing community norms; equally, with incremental norm diffusion, cultural change is on a smaller scale since the new norms fit in with existing ones.


6. The Irish Army also examined the American, French and German systems (GS, 1928: 11).

7. See Finer (1962); Nordlinger (1977); Hunter (1996); Fitch (1998). For a study combining insights from the organizational politics and civil–military relations literatures, see Brooks (2000).

8. While my definition of political intervention differs from Samuel Finer’s, this discussion is based on his ‘modes and methods of intervention’ (Finer, 1962: 140–63).


10. See Avant (2000: 51–2). This distinction between the natural evolution and social evolution of military knowledge and practice is highlighted in the sociology of technology literature. See MacKenzie (1990); Spinardi (1994).

11. This echoes a similar finding with regard to the application of human rights norms (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 19–22).

12. The existence and reassertion of a constitutional tradition in Irish political culture does not, in itself, explain why an organization that had previously thought of itself as sovereign should pay much heed to civilians. The IRA thought little of Irish voters and their representatives, a fact revealed in the IRA rebellion against the democratically elected Free State. The question then becomes, how was the Irish Army different from the IRA? External shock, personnel change and effective entrepreneurial leadership help us to explain these differences and how they came about.

13. *An t-Óglásb* was originally the journal of the revolutionary IRA. It was revived in 1927 as the professional journal of the Irish Army, and published monthly until 1933.


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