

Preface

Why do the militaries of some countries fight hard when facing defeat, while others collapse? Scholars have advanced three kinds of arguments to explain why some countries can create cohesive militaries and other countries cannot. One view argues that military cohesion depends on the bonds of loyalty that soldiers form within small units, that soldiers fight for their comrades in arms instead of grand political causes. This perspective, however, ignores instances where militaries fought hard without small-unit bonds, such as the Soviet Red Army during World War II. A second view contends that a country's ideology motivates a nation's armed forces. Although ideologies sometime rally a nation's armed forces, at other times they fall on deaf ears. France in 1940 represents such a case. A third view claims that democracies produce militaries with unrivaled effectiveness. Despite the popularity of this argument, the historical record suggests nondemocracies fight with equal, if not more, determination on the battlefield. Nazi Germany fought with great tenacity and staying power even to the end of World War II.

This book presents *cohesion theory* to explain why national militaries differ in their staying power. My argument builds on insights from the existing literature on military effectiveness and collective action. According to my theory, the cohesion of national militaries depends on two variables: the degree of control a regime holds over its citizens and the amount of autonomy the armed forces possess to focus on training for warfighting. With a high degree of regime control, governments instill and enforce norms of unconditional loyalty throughout the population, including within the armed forces. A hard-core group of

regime supporters inside the military will fight no matter the strategic circumstances and pressure others to do the same. With a high degree of organizational autonomy, the armed forces can demand and enforce norms of unconditional loyalty as well as trust among its personnel. These norms will motivate most units—even reserve units—to fight with determination and flexibility on the battlefield. Regime control and organizational autonomy interact to produce four distinct types of militaries, each with a different degree of cohesion: *messianic*, *authoritarian*, *professional*, and *apathetic* armed forces. The book's case studies explore each of these types of militaries.

Overall, the goal of the book is twofold: to present a new theory to explain military cohesion while also providing an initial empirical test of the theory's explanatory power. The study, therefore, is one part theory creation and one part theory testing. To demonstrate the plausibility of cohesion theory, as well as to test the proposition that democratic armies fight with the greatest endurance and determination, I present a series of comparative case studies. I test to see if my theory's variables are associated with the predicted degree of military cohesion across different cases.

The question of what motivates a military during war is important to policy-makers and scholars alike. Understanding why armed forces differ in their cohesion should help U.S. military planners better assess the military capabilities of potential adversaries, such as Iran and North Korea. Such estimates might have improved the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom, where the tenacity of the Baathist regime's most ardent supporters, the Fedayeen Saddam, surprised coalition forces.

The book also makes two contributions to the field of international security. First, it helps explain how countries create military power and win wars, which is a central puzzle in the field of international relations. Second, the book's theory helps identify which national armed forces could fight with enough cohesion to adopt the doctrine and tactics required for success on the contemporary battlefield, what Stephen Biddle calls the "modern system." Although scholars have paid increasing attention to issues of military effectiveness, they have focused on skill, not will. Cohesion represents a crucial determinant of who wins and loses on the battlefield. Militaries might understand what the "modern system" requires for victory but nevertheless lack the determination and discipline to employ it.

Finally, scholars can employ cohesion theory to explain the staying power of groups other than national militaries, including insurgencies, terrorist or-

ganizations, and social movements. Cohesion theory bridges two literatures on collective action: rationalist accounts that emphasize the use of incentives to motivate individuals in a group, and constructivist arguments that focus on the ability of norms to shape how strongly members identify with a group's interests.