

Huntington, Janowitz, or None of the Above? Conceptions of Professional Norms by Future Army Officers

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Abstract: A substantial tradition in civil-military relations literature takes as given the salience of professional norms in the military, among them a commitment to democratic values, aversion to partisan politics, and relatively inflexible organizational ethics. However, few empirical efforts have kept pace with measuring these normative claims amidst ongoing concerns of military politicization, ethical standards, and civilian intervention in organizational affairs long considered the territory of military leaders. Through a survey of 1,470 cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, we measure the strength and salience of civil-military norms in the midst of their socialization to civil-military values. In addition, we use an embedded list experiment to measure true preferences to controversial questions in civil-military affairs, such as competing loyalties to democratic governance. To analyze cadet adherence to norms we first articulate a framework of various conceptions of professionalism. While cadets do not exhibit adherence to one particular framework, we find limited adherence to a purist Huntington model of civil-military norms, and more of an embrace of a conflicted reading of Huntington, as well as evidence of selectivity and superficiality in their commitment to norms, largely driven by their own partisan preferences. Lastly, we find concerning evidence that a significant number of cadets prioritize following orders over upholding democratic traditions, justifying Janowitz's concerns that a military separate from society could breed attitudes among military personnel antithetical to democracy.

Introduction

A primary purpose of educating students in military service academies is to socialize them to what it means to be part of the profession of arms and prepare them for their roles as commissioned officers. Military professionalism is a key component of officership and central to regulating officers' standards of conduct and behavior.¹ Yet, little is known about what young adults are learning about military professionalism and the lessons that are being imparted at this formative moment in their education. Researching this is especially important because those ideas provide the foundation for the behaviors and mindsets they carry into their military service and careers; what they believe as cadets lays the groundwork for their development as officers.

In this project we explore beliefs about military professionalism through surveys of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy undertaken in December 2019 and January 2020. We pose questions about norms of military professionalism, focusing on two dimensions: the interactions between military officers and civilian policymakers and leaders and the relationship of the military to partisan politics. We also include a list experiment in our survey to explore how much attachment to democratic norms are internalized as part of conceptions of professionalism. With the latter, we seek to understand how much soon-to-be commissioned officers prioritize a commitment to uphold the country's democratic traditions in their military service.

To guide our assessment, we outline several alternative frameworks or expectations about military professionalism, with the aim of analyzing which, if any of these approaches are reflected in survey responses. We intend these as heuristics, or organizing principles, to help guide our

¹ Donald M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as Profession," in Snider and Matthews, eds. *The Future of the Army Profession* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002): 14; Don M. Snider, "Will Army 2025 be a Military Profession?" *Parameters* 45, no. 4. (Winter 2015/2016): 39-51; Nathan K. Finney and Tyrell O. Mayfield, eds., *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018).

assessment of the cadets' survey responses. We characterize these three frameworks as: purist Huntingtonian norms; conflicted Huntingtonian norms; and one based on a selective adherence to norms.

We find that, while no single framework aligns fully with survey responses, there is only marginal evidence for the purist Huntington model, especially given the embrace of partisan behavior and other attitudes evinced by cadets. In contrast, we find some evidence of elements of a more conflicted Huntington model—one that proposes that Huntington supports contradictory beliefs and attitudes about political activity and civilian control—in cadets' responses. We also see evidence of some selectivity and superficiality in their adherence to norms, such that cadet responses are heavily predicated on their own partisan beliefs. Most alarming, in our list experiment, we find some justification for Janowitz's fear that professionalism, especially when premised on the military's separation from society, could breed attitudes among military personnel antithetical to democracy.

This paper proceeds as follows: first, we outline in greater depth the four conceptions of professionalism we anticipate cadets might exhibit. Second, we detail the methodology we used and the parameters of our survey research, including the design of a list experiment we employed, aimed at better probing the true attitudes of cadets on sensitive matters, such as when upholding democratic norms collides with following orders. Next, we provide the findings from our survey of cadet attitudes and how well they align to the four models of professionalism we introduced. We close with a discussion of implications for the adherence to and understanding of professional norms within the officer corps.

Frameworks of Professionalism

Military professionalism at its most fundamental is usually associated with several key properties: the cultivation of expertise, the development of an “organic” ethos and corporate

identity; on-going education; and an ethos of respect and responsibility for society.² It is also sometimes used to distinguish conscript armies, or those built from citizen-soldiers, from those maintained primarily, if not exclusively, from largely self-selected military personnel led by career military officers. While these basic attributes are often cited in definitions, scholars more broadly conceptualize the norms exhibited by military professionals differently; these approaches diverge in their expectations of the character of officers' beliefs, values and behaviors. These alternative conceptions of professionalism provide a template for assessing cadet attitudes. Each suggests that cadets will exhibit a distinctive pattern of beliefs. Below we introduce each approach and then discuss some of its implications for military professionalism.

The first is Samuel Huntington's influential objective control model, which we term the *purist Huntington model*. This model takes at face-value Huntington propositions about what should be observed in the behaviors and mindsets of officers who are military professionals. Many contend that objective control has deeply influenced military culture (whether or not individuals expressly identify that culture with Huntington).³ Objective control, in turn, has particular behavioral and attitudinal implications.⁴ Most prominent is Huntington's contention that professionalism requires a separation of spheres and that officers will focus primarily on cultivating their technical expertise in military affairs. Military and political leaders work in tandem in their respective spheres free from

² According to the publication, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1, The Army Profession*, professionalism encompasses several tenets, including a commitment to and relations of trust with society, the acquisition of expertise, autonomy and self-regulation, and stewardship. Academic research by sociologists on military professionalism stresses other, related values, such as corporateness, responsibility, and expertise.

³ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002); Finney and Mayfield, *Redefining the Modern Military*; Thomas Bruneau, "Impediments to the Accurate Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* ed. Thomas Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 13-21; William Rapp, "Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making," *Parameters* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2015): 13; Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds. *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001); Dayne Nix, "American Civil-Military Relations: Samuel P. Huntington and the Political Dimensions of Military Professionalism," *Naval War College Review* 65, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 88-104.

⁴ For discussion see Risa Brooks, "Paradoxes of Professionalism: Re-Thinking U.S. Civil-Military Relations," *International Security* 44, no. 4 (Spring 2020).

interference from the other. By extension, Huntington also implies a modal form of military advice to civilians that is highly transactional, in which civilians deliver guidance and military leaders supply options.

Huntington also requires and anticipates military professionals will remain apolitical; they will abstain from engagement in politics, leaving the latter to civilians. Note that Huntington's proscription against engagement in political behavior goes well beyond partisan activity and entails an intellectual distance or disinclination to engage with how political factors might bear on the efficacy of strategy or conduct of military operations.⁵

In sum, a purist Huntington model would anticipate that cadets would endorse a clear separation of spheres and a belief that they should focus exclusively on cultivation of expertise in the "management of violence," while civilians exclusively make political decisions with respect to the use of force. Hence, cadets adhering to those norms would reject the idea that the military works on equal footing with civilians in advisory processes and believe it is not their job to worry about domestic political support for the war. They would also disavow engagement in any and all partisan activity. We would, for example, expect to see reticence to engage in political speech on social media.⁶ In addition, partisanship should not be a major predictor of attitudes toward civil-military relations.⁷

Alternatively, critics of Huntington have pointed out that regardless of what objective control explicitly entails, his version of apolitical professionalism has more complex implications for

⁵ Carnes Lord, "On Military Professionalism and Civilian Control." *Joint Forces Quarterly* 78 (2015): 70-74; Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Political Without Partisanship," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Fall 2015), p. 92; Brian Babcock-Lumish, "Uninformed, not Uniformed? The Apolitical Myth," *Military Review*, (September/October 2013).

⁶ Heidi Urben, "Like, Comment, Retweet: The State of the Military's Nonpartisan Ethic in the World of Social Media," *National Defense University Press*, (May 2017).

⁷ Michael A. Robinson, "Danger close: military politicization and elite credibility," (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2018).

the beliefs and behavior of military officers.⁸ Its implications for military officer mindsets and beliefs is more complex and different than Huntington expressly posits. This represents a *conflicted Huntingtonian* normative framework. In other words, it allows for officers to agree with some tenets of Huntingtonian thinking, especially those requiring compliance with civilian orders and decisions, the maintenance of military autonomy and formal and explicit rejection of engagement with politics, while also evincing more conflicted views when it comes to actual behaviors and opinions about partisan activity and towards the practice of civilian oversight. Specifically, in the conflicted model, officers should endorse measures that protect their autonomy and ostensible subservience to civilian authority. Yet, as the result of “blind spots” they may also be more willing to resist civilian incursions into their sphere and to engage in partisan activity. In addition, contrary to what Huntington argues, his version of professionalism can create attitudes corrosive to civilian control, including doubts or at times even contempt for civilian leadership and suspicion of civilian motives and capabilities in exercising oversight. We would expect to see this reflected in cadet’s responses if some of the perversities of Huntington’s conception of professionalism are affecting their views.

In addition, the conflicted model suggests that objective control should enable the development of negative attitudes toward society. Huntington argued that military personnel exhibited a distinctive (and monolithic) conservative mindset at odds with liberal societal culture, such as that found in the United States. More controversially, he argued that the former was superior to the latter and that American society should try to emulate the military’s conservative values and mindset. If this model shapes cadet beliefs, officers should exhibit negative, if not condescending, attitudes toward society.

⁸ Brooks, “Paradoxes of Professionalism”; Alfred Stepan, “The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion,” in Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Politics, and Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Bruneau, “Impediments to the Accurate Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations.”

A third argument is that socialization to norms of professionalism is only selectively observed. Military personnel have multiple identities (as do all individuals) and those other identities interact with their adherence to norms, such as they abide them only when they align with other key values or principles. These other identities might be based on gender, race or partisan affiliation. Professionalism is insufficiently socialized, such that military identity remains subordinate to other societal values. When robust, professionalism should override other inclinations based on alternative dimensions of identity, such as partisan identification. As Sam Canter has recently put it. “Professionalism is not creating the illusion that a general is a mindless automaton. Professionalism is the ability to put those feelings aside—to tamp them down as deep as they will go—and honorably serve the Constitution and the duly elected officials of this nation to the best of one’s ability, regardless of political affiliation or outlook.”⁹ In other words, professionalism should suppress other identities, such that cadets identify most strongly with the values of their profession in answering questions about their future career as officers.

⁹ Sam Canter, “Generals are People Too: And Their Involvement in Politics is Part of the American Tradition,” RealClear Defense, July 1, 2020,

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/07/01/generals_are_people_too_and_their_involvement_in_politics_is_part_of_the_american_tradition_115429.html

In contrast, if adherence is selective, we would anticipate that, while cadets do express views consistent with tenets of professionalism, those views are only limitedly informative of their attitudes and beliefs. Here we would expect that demographic factors and those not related to military service might better predict survey responses. Other attitudes override professionalism principles, such as partisan identification.¹⁰ Consequently, we would expect to see divergences and systematic patterns in the normative frameworks or attributes endorsed by cadets according to their partisan or social background; responses reflect systematic patterns, but the biggest predictor of how one responds is partisan identification. For example, support for “water cooler” talk (informally talking about politics at work) would fall upon partisan lines, with those who view their partisan identity as dominant being more likely to endorse such a concept. Responses to questions about

Table 1: Civil-Military Typologies

Category	Division of Labor	Follow Advice	Equal Footing	Timelines	Tactical Intervention
<i>Purist Huntingtonian</i> Strong separation of civil-military spheres	✓				
<i>Conflicted Huntingtonian</i> Uneven application of norms or “blindspots”	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Selective Norms</i> Influence of demographic factors on answers					

Category	Domestic Politics	Cabinet GOFOs	Retired Speech	POTUS Served	SECDEF Served	GOFO Comments	Workplace Politics
<i>Purist Huntingtonian</i> Strong separation of civil-military spheres	✓						
<i>Conflicted Huntingtonian</i> Uneven application of norms or “blindspots”		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Selective Norms</i> Influence of demographic factors on answers							

¹⁰ Heidi Urban, “Party, Politics and Deciding What Is Proper: Army Officers’ Attitudes after Two Long Wars.” *Orbis* 57, no. 3 (2013): 363-64; Robinson, *Danger Close*. Jim Golby, “The Danger of Military Partisanship,” *Small Wars Journal* July 1, 2018 <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/danger-military-partisanship>

whether the president should have served might reflect the party of the president during the time we fielded the survey. In other words, norms are selectively endorsed, according to how they align with partisan and other factors.

These expectations are summarized in Figure 1. Observe that several of the predictions overlap. As noted above, we intend this table to provide a heuristic or a means of organizing expectations about how attitudes might conform, not as a predictive tool.

Research Design

In December 2019 and again in January 2020, we surveyed cadets at the U.S. Military Academy enrolled in the core courses of Introduction to American Politics and Introduction to International Relations – required courses that are typically taken during a cadet’s sophomore and junior year, respectively. In sum, 1,470 cadets participated in both waves of the survey, yielding a 71% percent response rate. Students at the service academies are an attractive sample for researchers seeking to understand officers’ early conceptualizations of the norms of the profession. Specifically, we sought to measure West Point cadets’ views of what the optimal relationship between senior military leaders and civilian policymakers should be, their understanding of what the norm of nonpartisanship and being apolitical entails, and what it means to them to be part of a profession at this early juncture in their military service.

In addition to this descriptive battery of questions, we also included a rank-choice question, asking respondents to sort different potential attributes of “professionalism,” as they understand it, from most to least important. Finally, the survey instrument includes an experimental portion, in the form of a list (or “item-count”) experiment. These types of survey items have historically been used to assess respondent attitudes on controversial subjects, such as racism. We employ this technique to

evaluate whether these future military officers would resist civilian orders that manifestly damaged the country’s democratic institutions – and to what extent they potentially falsify those preferences.

Table 2: Balance Statistics for List Experiment (January 2020)

Respondent Demographic	Control	Treatment
Party Identification		
Democrat	25.53	22.64
Republican	57.52	57.41
Gender		
Male	72.31	75.20
Female	27.68	24.79
Age		
25th Percentile	20	20
50th Percentile	20	20
75th Percentile	21	21
Race		
White	65.86	68.73
Non-white	34.13	31.26

Sample

Our sample was drawn from cadets at the United States Military Academy from December 2019 to January 2020, fielded in two waves to students enrolled in the introductory classes in both American politics and international relations. The survey’s respondents constituted an opt-in panel, who received the survey online through the platform Qualtrics. Table 1 shows demographic and covariate balance statistics for the sample across both conditions of the experimental portion. In addition to a high response rate from the respondents, our sampling was able to exploit the underlying cross-section of the West Point cohorts, which are intentionally drawn from all Congressional districts, providing a representative population for our sample.

We should note that we do not expect that cadets have fully formed conceptions of military professionalism this early in their careers. Nonetheless, given the socialization that occurs among cadets through their West Point experience, we would expect them to reflect some ideas about the meaning of the profession and their roles within it. Some of these ideas are also likely informed by the experiences of their family members (especially given that many come from families with relatives who have served) and larger cultural conceptions of civil-military relations. For example, there are indications that many Americans are attached to Huntington's separation of spheres idea, believing the military should essentially run the wars,¹¹ and that they believe military experience makes for better leadership across a broad range of government roles.¹² We are interested to see what attitudes cadets exhibit, even while recognizing that they are early in their socialization process.

Findings

Civil-Military Relations Norms

Figure 2 displays the results of a 11-question battery on the propriety of the advisory process, accountability for wartime decision-making, and civilian control of the military. These were designed to evaluate whether there were systematic patterns observed in cadets' beliefs about professionalism. Two questions resulted in strong majority responses from cadets and provide great insights into how they conceptualize civil-military interactions at the highest levels of government. First, 70 percent of respondents agreed that the best strategies in wartime result from military and civilian leaders working closely together on equal footing in the advisory process. Few would contest the working closely together part, but the operative phrase of this question was "on equal footing." Eliot Cohen's counter to Huntington's objective theory posits that military and

¹¹ Ronald R. Krebs and Robert Ralston, "Civilian Control of the Military is a Partisan Issue," *Foreign Affairs* July 14, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-07-14/civilian-control-military-partisan-issue>

¹² Jost & Kertzer, unpublished ms.

civilian leaders function in an “unequal dialogue,” where despite whatever technical expertise the military brings, fundamentally, they are subordinate to civilian authority and never operate on equal footing – a formula that the cadets we surveyed would likely protest.¹³ This answer is suggestive that cadets reject the purist Huntington model, in which they would abstain from engaging in discussion with civilians about politics and policy.



Figure 2: Descriptive Results (Civil-Military Integration Battery, Full Sample)

¹³ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002): 4-10, 209, 225-248.

The second question that elicited near unanimity from cadets was in regards to the sequencing of civilian guidance and military options. Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed with the statement that military leaders should expect to receive clear guidance about goals and objectives at the beginning of the planning process. Difficulties associated with adhering to this Huntingtonian sentiment in practice have been well chronicled and highlight an enduring aspect of civil-military friction, but cadets we surveyed remain strong adherents to the linear notion that before any military planning can commence, civilians must provide clear guidance on goals and objectives.¹⁴ This is suggestive of endorsement of a Huntingtonian purist model.

One of the most enduring features of Huntington's objective theory is the concept of separate spheres and a clear division of labor: civilian policymakers make the decision to use force, and military leaders provide options on how force can be best employed—with each side, in turn, refraining from interfering in the other's sphere. Cadets we surveyed were split on the issue, with 42 percent agreeing that a clear division of labor between civilians and the military is the ideal approach and 40 percent disagreeing. The embrace of this approach by such a large number suggests that the separation of spheres concept associated with both the purist and conflicted Huntingtonian model is gaining some traction among these future officers. Given that there is no obvious reason why they would endorse the segmented approach to military advice absent socialization to these norms, this is suggestive that at least some are absorbing those ideas.

¹⁴ Janine Davidson, "Civil-Military Friction and Presidential Decision-making: Explaining the Broken Dialogue," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, 1 (2013), 131-136; Rosa Brooks, "Thought Cloud: The Real Problem with the Civil-Military Gap," *Foreign Policy*, August 2, 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/02/thought-cloud/>; James Golby and Mara Karlin, "Why 'Best Military Advice' is Bad for the Military – and Worse for Civilians," *Orbis* 62, 1 (2018): 143-145.

Cadets were not ambivalent on the issue of accountability during wartime, contrary to what the Huntingtonian approaches would anticipate. Only 11 percent of cadets we surveyed agreed with the statement that whether the country wins or loses its wars is the responsibility of civilian policymakers, not the military. This is an encouraging finding, as it presumes accountability for the military's performance in wartime should rest with its generals, or at least in some sort of shared responsibility between military leaders and their civilian overseers. In the early aftermath of the Iraq War and while the war in Afghanistan was still muddling along, journalist Tom Ricks warned of an emerging "stab-in-the-back" narrative, where military leaders would avoid taking responsibility for failures in both wars and instead point their finger at civilian policymakers for getting the military into such intractable conflicts in the first place.¹⁵ Any evidence of such sentiments being held by cadets years later would have confirmed the uncomfortable truth that such a narrative was being carefully passed down by one generation of members of the military to the next. That we did not find evidence of that suggests cadets' concept of professionalism includes a healthy accountability for the institution's performance in wartime. This result is consistent with a Janowitzian view of military professionalism.

Other responses provide some support for the possibility that cadets adhere to conflicted Huntingtonian norms. In particular, there is evidence of blindspots about military roles in decision-making that are contrary to the purist model. While cadets were divided on the issue of whether or not presidents should "basically follow the advice of the generals" during wartime, with 36 percent in favor and 32 percent opposed, the fact that more than a third agreed with this statement suggests

¹⁵ Tom Ricks, "Can the Military Learn From Its Mistakes?" *Washington Post*, October 25, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/can-the-military-learn-from-its-mistakes/2013/10/25/ce8df7e6-3b31-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html

a belief that military expertise should trump civilian capacity to make decisions about the conduct of war.

Similarly, cadets we surveyed also indicated strong support for retired general and flag officers to play important roles in politics and government. Respondents believed 5-to-1 that more retired general and flag officers serving in the cabinet was “good for the country” (50 percent agreeing compared to 11 percent disagreeing).¹⁶ And while only 15 percent believed that the President should have served in uniform in order to be respected, 57 percent of cadet respondents believed this should be true for the Secretary of Defense. Certainly, this finding on the surface is concerning, as it suggests a majority of cadets believe that civilian control of the military and stewardship of the Defense Department can only be optimally performed by veterans of the armed forces. To be fair, in practice, presidents of both parties have typically appointed veterans to the post. Of the 27 defense secretaries in U.S. history, only seven did not serve in the military.¹⁷ And while cadets we surveyed probably did not have that factoid in mind at the time, they very well may have been thinking of Secretary James N. Mattis, who occupied the cabinet post at the time most of them entered West Point but who required a waiver from Congress to assume the post. This aligns with anecdotal evidence that there is growing support for the belief that past military service is a necessary prerequisite for civilians occupying policymaking and oversight roles in the Pentagon.¹⁸

¹⁶ The issue of retired generals serving as senior political appointees during the Trump Administration was a salient issue during the time the cadets we surveyed entered West Point. See James Kitfield, “Trump’s Generals Are Trying to Save the World. Starting With the White House,” *Politico*, August 4, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/08/04/donald-trump-generals-mattis-mcmaster-kelly-flynn-215455>

¹⁷ Charles E. Wilson, Neil H. McElroy, James R. Schlesinger, Harold Brown, Richard B. Cheney, William S. Cohen, and Ashton B. Carter were the seven Secretaries of Defense who did not serve in the military. For reference, see <https://history.defense.gov/DOD-History/Secretaries-of-Defense/>

¹⁸ Nora Bensahel, remarks at “Blurring the line: Politics and the military in a post-9/11 America,” American Enterprise Institute, November 7, 2019.

These beliefs are suggestive that some of element of conflicted Huntingtonian professionalism has taken hold among cadets. It implies some disrespect for civilian expertise and perhaps even doubt about their legitimacy, by proposing that officials should only merit “respect” if they are veterans. The idea that military culture is superior to societal culture supports this sort of litmus test approach to the qualifications of the Commander in Chief or Secretary of Defense. In addition, the strong support for military service as a prerequisite to serve as Secretary of Defense foreshadows the primacy with which cadets assign technical expertise as a critical component of the military profession.

Partisanship and Professionalism

Figure 4 presents the findings for a battery of nine questions relating to cadets’ views of partisanship and politics within the military. Most of the questions in this battery were aimed at gauging to what degree cadets thought certain partisan or political behavior within the ranks was appropriate. While only 13 percent of respondents thought it was acceptable for military servicemembers to talk about politics on social media, more than twice as many (33 percent) thought it was acceptable to complain about politicians in the workplace. This finding may reflect the very particular instruction on social media do’s and don’ts, which cadets receive early on in their education at West Point.¹⁹ From a normative standpoint, the finding is encouraging, as cadets are showing evidence of socialization to a norm of the profession. Nonetheless, the finding is also somewhat incongruous compared to the willingness by some to tolerate or engage in criticism of politicians in the workplace. The majority of cadets we surveyed seemed to implicitly acknowledge that political discussions on social media were public by nature and should be avoided. Yet, one-

¹⁹ In fact, West Point’s campaign to sensitize cadets about prudent social media behavior starts before they are admitted as students, evident by this post by West Point Admissions Office, entitled, “Social Media Tips to Present Your Best Self at West Point and in the Military,” available at <https://www.blog.westpointadmissions.com/single-post/USMA-Social-Media-Tips>.

third of cadets viewed discussions that occur in the barracks, office, or foxhole to be private in nature – even though they occur in uniform and on duty – and even when those discussions turn towards politics. This receptivity to partisan behavior is suggestive that either norms are not well socialized, or of the blind spots associated with Huntington’s objective control.

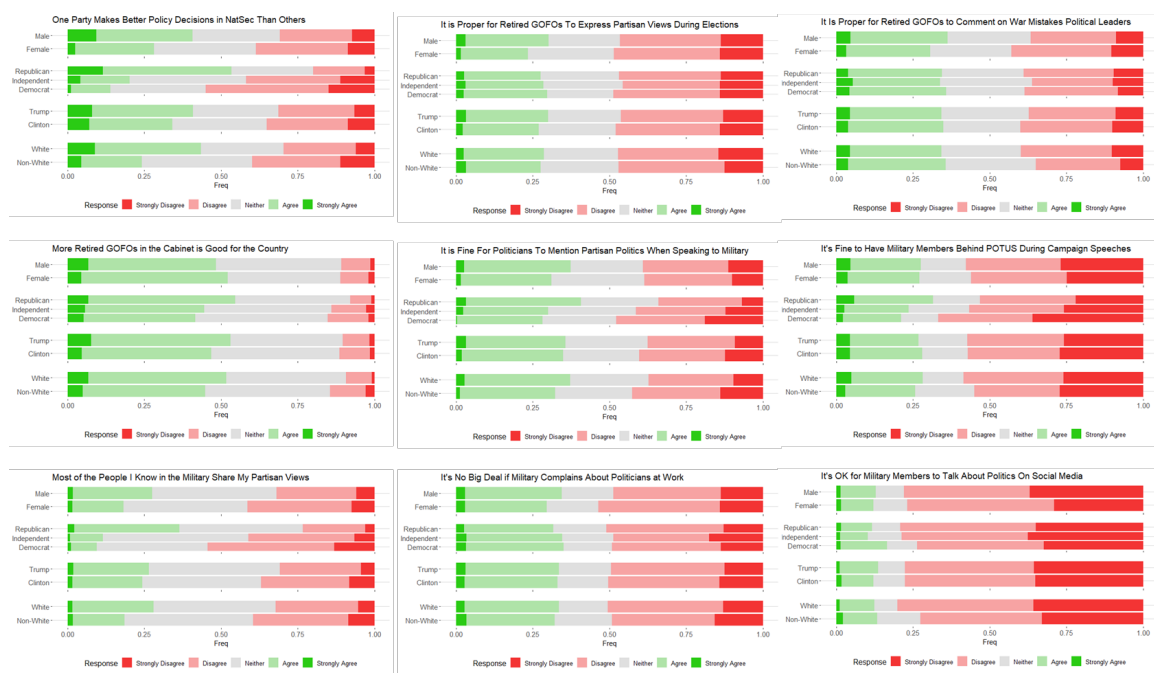


Figure 3: Descriptive Results (Partisanship Battery, Full Sample)

We also asked cadets what they thought about politicians wading into partisan politics during speeches to military audiences. Respondents were nearly split, with 36 percent agreeing such speeches were fine and 39 percent indicating they were inappropriate. Cadets were less sanguine about the president using members of the military as a backdrop during campaign speeches, but 28 percent nonetheless felt it was appropriate.

Cadets were less sure about the appropriateness of politically vocal retired generals and admirals. On the question of whether or not they felt it was proper for retired general and flag

officers to publicly criticize political leaders for mistakes made during wartime, respondents were split, with 35 percent in agreement and 38 percent disagreeing. Cadets were less supportive of retired generals expressing partisan views during elections, with only 28 percent indicating such behavior was proper and 47 percent in opposition. This is a departure from past survey research of Army officers, where strong majorities of those surveyed voiced support for retired generals publicly expressing their political views.²⁰ To what extent cadet attitudes on retired generals' partisan endorsements are a reaction to the 2016 nominating conventions where both Lieutenant General (Retired) Mike Flynn and General (Retired) John Allen were widely criticized for their partisan speeches or a response to the cumulative effect of political endorsements by retired generals and admirals over the past twenty years is unclear and can only be borne out with additional survey research.²¹ It is also possible that the fact that Donald Trump is president and that many of the retired officers who have spoken out in recent years have been critical of him, is conditioning this response. Recent work by Ralston and Krebs (2020) finds that responses to answers about civil-military relations are heavily shaped by who is occupying the office of the president. In that case, we would expect a suppressed affirmative response to partisan commentary by retired GOFs among cadets identifying as Republican.

A similar dynamic may account for why there is such a divergence in responses to the question about whether the president should have served, relative to responses about the Secretary

²⁰ A 2009 survey conducted by Heidi Urben found that 68 percent of active duty Army officers felt it was proper for retired generals to publicly express their political views. See Heidi Urben, "Wearing Politics on Their Sleeves? Levels of Political Activism of Active Duty Army Officers," *Armed Forces & Society* 40, 3 (2014): 584.

²¹ See Martin E. Dempsey, "Military Leaders Do Not Belong at Political Conventions," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/military-leaders-do-not-belong-at-political-conventions/2016/07/30/0e06fc16-568b-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd_story.html; Peter D. Feaver, "We Don't Need Generals to Become Cheerleaders at Political Conventions," *Foreign Policy*, July 29, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/29/we-dont-need-generals-to-become-cheerleaders-at-political-conventions/>; Elliott Ackerman, "What to Make of Military Endorsements?" *The New Yorker*, September 8, 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-to-make-of-military-endorsements>

of Defense, which is at odds with previous findings. If so, we would expect that cadets that identify as Republicans would more reticent to require service for a president to be respected, given that Donald Trump did not serve in the military. As the “selective norm” approach might expect, divisions along partisan lines were frequent for many of the questions we asked. Democrats were slightly more likely than Republicans to say it was acceptable to complain about politicians at work (35 percent of Democrats compared to 31 percent of Republicans). But Republicans were more comfortable than Democrats with the idea of politicians talking about partisan politics in front of military audiences (41 percent of Republicans compared to 28 percent of Democrats) and with presidents having members of the military as a backdrop during their campaign speeches (32 percent of Republicans compared to 21 percent of Democrats).

Some of this might be evidence of partisan rationalization, of the kind we discuss with respect to Ralston and Krebs’ research, where partisan cadets formulated their responses based on Donald Trump as sitting president. Had we asked the same questions during a Democratic presidential administration, it is fair to hypothesize that cadets who self-identified as Republicans might be more comfortable with workplace conversations that criticized politicians and less comfortable with a Democratic president who had uniformed military in the background of campaign speeches. Of note, when the same question about whether the president should have served in uniform to be respected was posed to a random-sample survey of Army officers early in the Obama Administration (Urban 2010), 57 percent of Republican lieutenants (cadets were not surveyed) answered affirmatively, compared to just 26 percent of lieutenants who self-identified as Democrats. Regardless, however, these findings are contrary to the prescription in purist Huntington, Janowitz and nearly all approaches to military professionalism that partisan behavior is inconsistent with the obligations of officership. The fact that answers seem to skew on partisan lines suggest support for selective adherence approach to norms. Norms against partisan activity are only

superficially abided, and conveniently set-aside when other identities, such as partisanship override them.

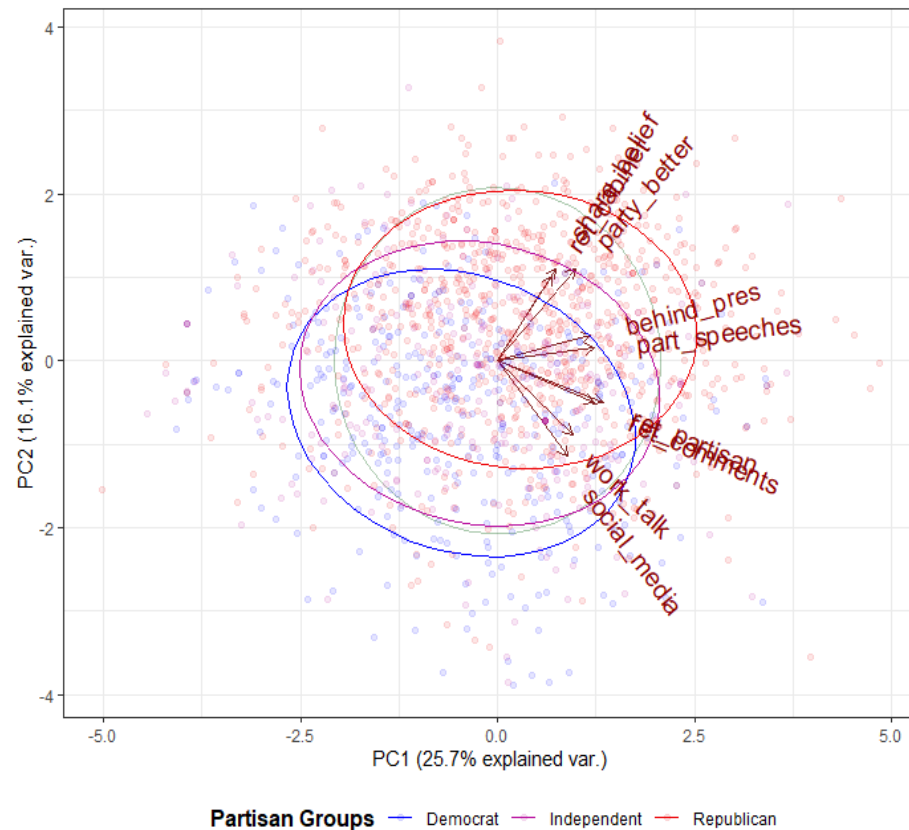


Figure 4: Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Respondent Answers to Partisanship Battery, Full Sample (2019-20)

Specific differences emerge between partisan subgroups within this sample of future military officers, particularly on questions pertaining partisanship and civil-military propriety. One way we can analyze underlying trends like this is through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which is a form of dimensionality-reduction designed to uncover patterns and correlation in complex multi-variable datasets. Our descriptive battery contained many different questions, but some of these are likely to be correlated with one another; as a result, reducing the dimensionality of the answers to

only a few principal components can help us understand the sources of variation, as well as how answers to particular questions correlate with one another.

Figure 4 reveals some of the most important results of PCA in a graph called a biplot.

First, respondent answers to thematically-similar questions correlated along logical lines. The factor loading of a particular question (depicted a vector from the origin) reveals how the principal component is related to an answer for that item. For example, the vectors for approval of retired partisan commentary and retired critical comments load heavily onto PC1; the higher the PC1 value for a score is, the higher the approval for these comments. But these two vectors are also very close in magnitude and direction, indicating answers to them amongst our respondents were highly correlated. This makes sense, given the similar theme of the questions. The same was true for answers on partisan speeches and campaign speeches in front of the military and discussion of politics at work and social media.

Second, graphically depicting the subgroups onto the biplot also tells us how positive loadings and partisan identity are linked and correlated. In our sample, positive answers to questions on whether most of the military “shares my beliefs,” on whether one party performs better at national security, and whether retired GOFOs in the cabinet was good for the country, are tightly correlated, loading heavily on PC1 and PC2. However, the direction of these vectors points towards the cluster of observations that identify as Republicans, and away from the cluster of Democrats. This makes sense given the wide separation among partisans on these questions, while potentially revealing a more partisan thought process on these questions, orthogonal to other normative questions like talking about politics at work. Perhaps more importantly, the joint belief that (1) the military shares Republican views, (2) Republicans do better on military issues, and (3) retired GOFOs in government is a positive, potentially indicate more than partisan bias, but a belief in the

military as extension of a conservative partisan constituency. This pattern seems to be especially apparent among cadets that identify as Republicans. In other words, those who are Republicans are more likely to see the military as their co-partisan and therefore to support greater influence in government, even beyond the national security domain. This partisan rationalization is consistent with the selective adherence normative framework, in which cadets' partisan identity is in tension with or overrides any principled beliefs about the military role as confined to cultivating expertise in its specific area of professional responsibility.

Other partisan divisions were less indicative of partisan rationalization and more of a commentary on the partisan make-up of the cadets we surveyed. Cadets who self-identified as Democrats were almost four-times less likely to say that most people they knew in the military shared their views (10 percent of Democrats compared to 36 percent of Republicans). This is consistent with past survey research throughout the All-Volunteer Force era, which has found Army officers, to include cadets and junior officers, who self-identify as Democrats to be a minority in the officer corps.²² The fact that a majority of cadet respondents could even determine whether or not members of the military shared their partisan attitudes in the first place is noteworthy, as it suggests partisanship within the ranks is observable, if not known. Alternatively, it suggests perhaps that cadets perceive the military to be partisan with a gloss of nonpartisanship, rather than a place where the nonpartisan ethic of military professionalism is deeply socialized and suppresses partisan affinity.

²²Jason Dempsey's 2004 surveys of West Point cadets and Army officers found 12 percent of cadets and 19 percent of lieutenants self-identified as Democrats. Urban's 2009 survey of Army officers found 18 percent of Army lieutenants self-identified as Democrats, but her 2015 survey of West Point cadets found 28 percent self-identified as Democrats. While the proportion of cadets and lieutenants who self-identify as a Democrat may be increasing over time, Democrats are still a distinct minority in the officer corps. See Jason K. Dempsey, *Our Army: Soldiers, Politics, and American Civil-Military Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 166; Urban, "Wearing Politics on Their Sleeves? Levels of Political Activism of Active Duty Army Officers," 574; and Urban, Like, Comment, Retweet: The State of the Military's Nonpartisan Ethic in the World of Social Media, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2017), 14.

If professional norms of nonpartisanship were overriding partisan identities, we might expect more uncertainty or neutral responses in answers to this question.

Democrats were also four-times less likely to believe that one party makes better decisions about national security (14 percent of Democrats compared to 54 percent of Republicans). This finding carries real implications for healthy civil-military relations, especially as these cadets advance throughout their careers as Army officers. If officers who self-identify as Republican—who constitute a majority in the officer corps—believe one party is better at national security than the other, will those officers fully implement policies directed by their Democrat civilian overseers?

Aspects of Professionalism

Each of the aforementioned batteries aimed to gauge cadets' views civil-military relations norms, but we also wanted to explicitly ask them what they thought were the most defining characteristics of being part of a profession. Figure 5 displays the results of cadets' rank-ordered components of professionalism by importance. "Technical expertise" was the top overall choice, with 31 percent of cadets listing it first, and 72 percent including it in their top three. "Protecting national security" (25 percent listing as their first choice) and "Placing the military's interests above own" (21 percent) came in second and third. "Being apolitical" ranked much lower, with only 9 percent of respondents listing this as their top choice.

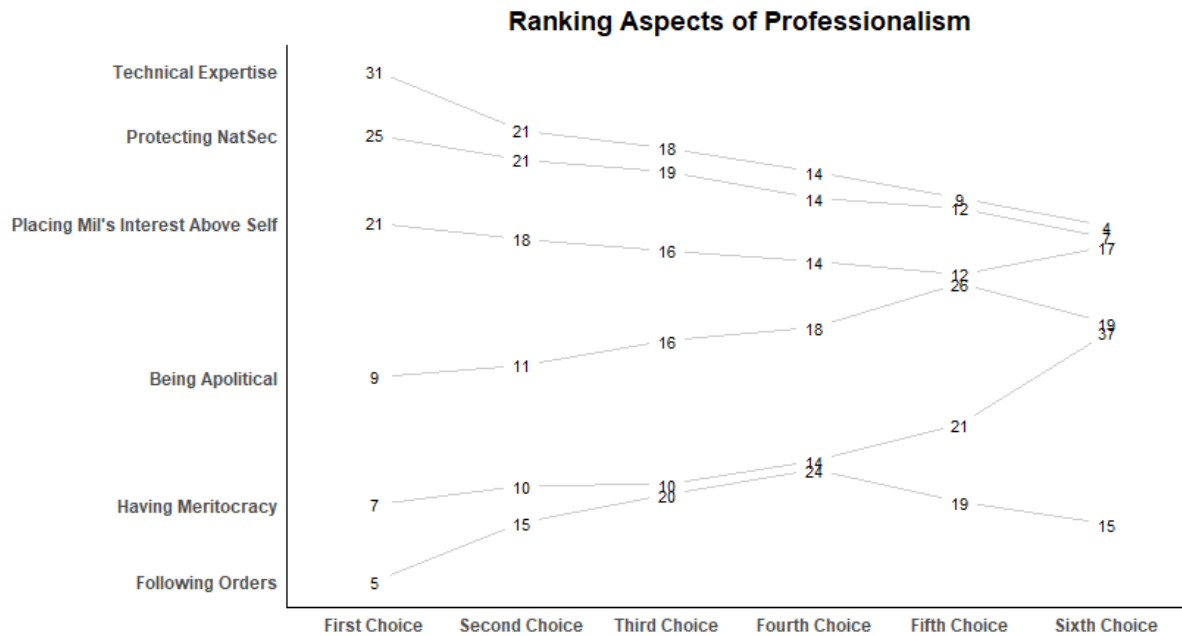


Figure 5: Rank-Ordering Aspects of “Professionalism”, Full Sample (2019-20)

These findings too are suggestive that purist Huntingtonian norms explain cadets’ beliefs. He argued that professionalism would impart a sense of value for expertise and respect for cultivating it, and this seems to be clearly indicated in their ranked ordered responses. Yet, the fact that apolitical remained so low on the cadet’s responses is contrary to the purist framework. It might be possible that cadets are simply unaware that they should remain apolitical, but their responses to other questions, such as that on social media behavior, belie such an argument. Rather, it appears that it is simply not a high priority for cadets in assessing the meaning of professionalism, a finding that may be more consistent with the conflicted Huntingtonian framework. Huntington contends that professionalism will naturally reinforce a commitment to an apolitical stance in domestic politics. Cadets’ rank-ordering of technical expertise so high could mean the lessons they most internalize from Huntington relate to the autonomy accorded to the military to develop their skills, but in prioritizing this, they have not internalized the condition that Huntington says enables such autonomy and expertise in the first place—the military being apolitical. Huntington does not

encourage reflection or discussion among military personnel of why remaining apolitical with respect to partisan politics is so important (Brooks 2020). This may be reflected in the results, which suggest a low prioritization of a value that is today, according to many military leaders, a defining feature of American military culture.

Notably, in his videotaped apology following his appearance in a photo-op with President Trump in Lafayette Square, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Mark Milley reflected, “...we must hold dear the principle of an apolitical military that is so deeply rooted in the very essence of our Republic. And this is not easy. It takes time and work and effort. But it may be the most important thing each and every one of us does every single day.”²³ The public debate over the politicization of the armed forces that followed the Lafayette Square photo-op—punctuated by the teaching moment of the Chairman’s sincere apology—may underscore a broader theme of professionalism that is also evident in cadet responses: the officer corps may not truly reflect on the importance of being apolitical until it finds that norm in jeopardy.

List Experiment

In the survey’s experimental portion, we utilized the “item-count” or list experiment techniques to probe respondent attitudes on controversial civil-military issues. This technique has been used to measure responses to issue areas in which “social desirability bias” may pose a problem to accurate measurement, such as racism or sexism (Sniderman and Carmines 1997, Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998, Corstange 2009). Given the high amount of social pressure or institutional norms surrounding civil-military relations, this design technique has seen increasing use

²³ Amanda Macias and Dan Mangan, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Milley Apologizes for Appearing with Trump at Church Photo-Op,” CNBC, June 11, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/11/george-floyd-joint-chiefs-chairman-milley-apologizes-for-appearing-with-trump.html>.

in the field breaking through similar desirability bias concerns (Kleykamp, Hipes, and MacLean 2017). As we expect certain areas of civil-military affairs will be controversial to future officers in the principal phase of their socialization to these organizational norms, we employ this technique to achieve the same result.

Rather than ask the entire sample a direct question to which the answer may be unreliable, we provide a list of statements, asking respondents to state with how many items do they agree. Our survey randomized respondents into both *control* and *treatment* groups. The control group receives a baseline list of 5 items, while the treatment group receives that same list, plus a controversial item around which the analysis is based. Since we believe that these future officers are likely to be highly sensitive to the notions of civilian control, unified command structures, and following orders, we expect that introducing the prospect of resisting these orders should be a subject about which they are unlikely to be honest. The experimental module was presented as follows (in randomized order), with the controversial item received only by the treatment group italicized by the authors:

*Now I am going to read you six statements about government, politics, and the military. After reading all six statements, tell us **HOW MANY** of them you agree with. For example, if you agree with three items on the list, enter choice "3". Remember, we will not know which answers you agree with, just how many.*

1. I believe it is important for Congress to conduct oversight of military spending.
2. I believe the government should provide a universal health-care program for its citizens.
3. I believe the military should make the climate challenge a top priority for national security.
4. I believe it is acceptable for the President to use the military to enforce immigration policy.
5. I believe the country would benefit if more people were deferential to authority.
6. *I believe it is important for the military to resist civilian orders that threaten the country's democratic traditions.*

In order to provide a statistical baseline for subsequent analysis, after the control group provides an item-count response, we directly ask them the controversial item regarding resisting

civilian orders. This should in many cases provide a ‘lower-bound’ for agreement with the controversial item, as we expect that respondents that are directly asked are more likely to conceal a willingness to push back on orders from civilian leaders than those that conceal those preference in the treatment group.

In a fashion similar to Kleykamp et al. (2017), Figure X displays the principal statistics and results of this experimental module. The nature of the list experiment prevents individual-level inference due to its design, which allows for item counts to conceal specific answer choices; as such, we use several established and newly-developed techniques to understand not only the extent of preference falsification, but demographic predictors for it.

As is customary for list experiments, we first conduct a simple difference in means calculation between the item counts from both groups, listed as “mean item counts”. The difference between these figures (“true %”), is the first important baseline statistic for our consideration. This represents an estimate of the share of the population that would answer the controversial item honestly, if they were relieved of social desirability concerns. We then compare the true value to the direct value, the proportion of respondents who *actually* answered in the affirmative to the controversial item when asked. The difference between the two values represents the effect size of the experiment, the degree to which support for the controversial item is over- or under-expressed by the sample.

Table 3: Key Statistics and Item Counts for Affirmative Responses by Condition

Items, y	Control		Treatment	
	N	%	N	%
1	73	9.9%	53	7.2%
2	287	39.1%	195	26.6%
3	294	40.1%	283	38.6%
4	68	9.3%	158	21.5%
5	12	1.6%	44	5.99%
6			1	0.1%
Total	734	100%	734	100%
Mean Item Count	2.53		2.93	
True % [Treatment - Control x 100]				39.9%
Direct % y				72.8%
Effect % [Direct - True]				32.9%

In examining the results from Table 3, two significant findings emerge: first, the effect size of the experiment is high, at 32.9%, and second, it is in the opposite of the expected direction. Despite our expectation that respondents would disagree with resisting anti-democratic civilian orders when asked directly, but express a willingness to do so when given the concealment of the treatment group, the results indicate the opposite. While 72% of respondents directly agreed with this idea, the true percentage value reveals that only 39% would actually agree with the statement. The size of the effect and its unexpected direction are both remarkable findings in this experiment, leading us to investigate further.

Using newly-developed computational statistics techniques for analyzing item-count experiments, we explored what individual-level characteristics might predict this type of preference falsification. Using the `list` package in R, developed and employed in Imai (2011), we conduct a series of multivariate regression models designed to measure which of these predictors most strongly predict alignment with the controversial item. While a list experiment would typically look for strong

positive coefficients in this regard, the direction of effects from our survey points us to coefficients with significant negative coefficients

Table 4: Estimated coefficients from the item-count regression models where the sensitive item is to “resist civilian orders that violate democratic traditions”

Variables	Least Squares Estimator						Maximum Likelihood Estimation					
	Linear			Non-Linear			Constrained Model					
	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE
Sensitive Item												
Intercept	0.47	0.06	-0.84	0.86	-0.10	0.27	-5.51	3.97	-0.32	0.62	-38.7	15.9
Male			0.10	0.11			0.48	0.53			-6.47	2.81
White			0.05	0.11			0.28	0.53			-5.57	2.29
Age			0.06	0.04			0.24	0.18			2.34	0.87
Independent			-0.10	0.19			-0.14	0.87			9.38	3.65
Republican			-0.01	0.20			0.02	0.94			5.83	2.97
Liberal			0.05	0.21			0.17	0.96			-4.90	2.67
Moderate			-0.07	0.16			-0.36	0.74			-7.20	2.87
Trump District	-0.19	0.10	-0.20	0.10	-0.82	0.46	-0.91	0.48	-2.05	1.11	-7.81	2.55
Control Item												
Intercept	2.49	0.04	3.12	0.56	-0.001	0.03	0.49	0.44	0.02	0.06	0.66	0.49
Male		0.07	0.06	0.07			0.04	0.05			0.22	0.06
White		0.07	0.04	0.07			0.02	0.06			0.15	0.06
Age		0.02	-0.03	-0.02			-0.02	0.02			-0.04	0.02
Independent		0.09	-0.15	0.12			-0.12	0.09			-0.34	0.09
Republican		0.08	-0.27	0.13			-0.21	0.10			-0.34	0.10
Liberal		0.16	0.15	0.13			0.12	0.10			0.25	0.10
Moderate		0.12	-0.97	0.10			0.07	0.08			0.21	0.08
Trump District	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.05	-0.09	0.05	0.13	0.08	0.21	0.05

NOTE: The variable of interest is (Trump District), a binary variable for which candidate in the 2016 presidential election won the individual's home district, ascertained by geo-locating the individual's zip code with existing boundaries for congressional districts.

Table 5 displays the results of these regression models, including both non-covariate and multivariate specifications. Similar to Imai (2011), we conducted both standard linear least squares and non-linear least squares (NLS) methods for their computational simplicity, but also included a constrained maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), which increased statistical efficiency and increases the precisions of the estimate. Of particular importance is the top portion of the table, which indicates the predictive weight ascribed to each regressor in agreeing with the sensitive item. Across all model specifications, partisan identity and expressed political ideology display larger and more significant coefficients than considerations of race or gender.

Using zip code information provided by the respondent, we were able to geo-locate each individual's Congressional district (using the larger area for zip codes across multiple districts) and merge this information to district-level political data from the Cook Partisan Voting Index (CPVI).²⁴ As we noted above, given the direction and magnitude of effects from the experiment, regressors with high negative coefficients predict where preference falsification was likely to emerge. A binary indicator variable for the winner of the 2016 presidential election in the individual's home district proved a consistently negative and significant predictor *against* agreeing with the sensitive item.

In addition to the robustness provided by multiple model specification in Table 5 (in which the `winner` variable was significant at the conventional 5% level for all covariate specifications), we depict this graphically by predicting the estimated proportion of respondents who would agree with the sensitive item according to each model specification. In Figure X, we display these estimates and the difference between Trump and Clinton district individuals with 95% asymptotic

²⁴ A map showing the density of respondents across Congressional districts in the 2019-2020 sample can be found in the Appendix.

confidence intervals, averaging over all other covariate values. In all cases, the difference between Trump and Clinton district individuals remains statistically distinguishable from zero, including a significant difference in the highly-efficient MLE covariate model. Controlling for political ideology, partisan identity, gender, and race, individuals coming from Trump-won districts in 2016 proved to be significantly less likely to agree with the sensitive item.

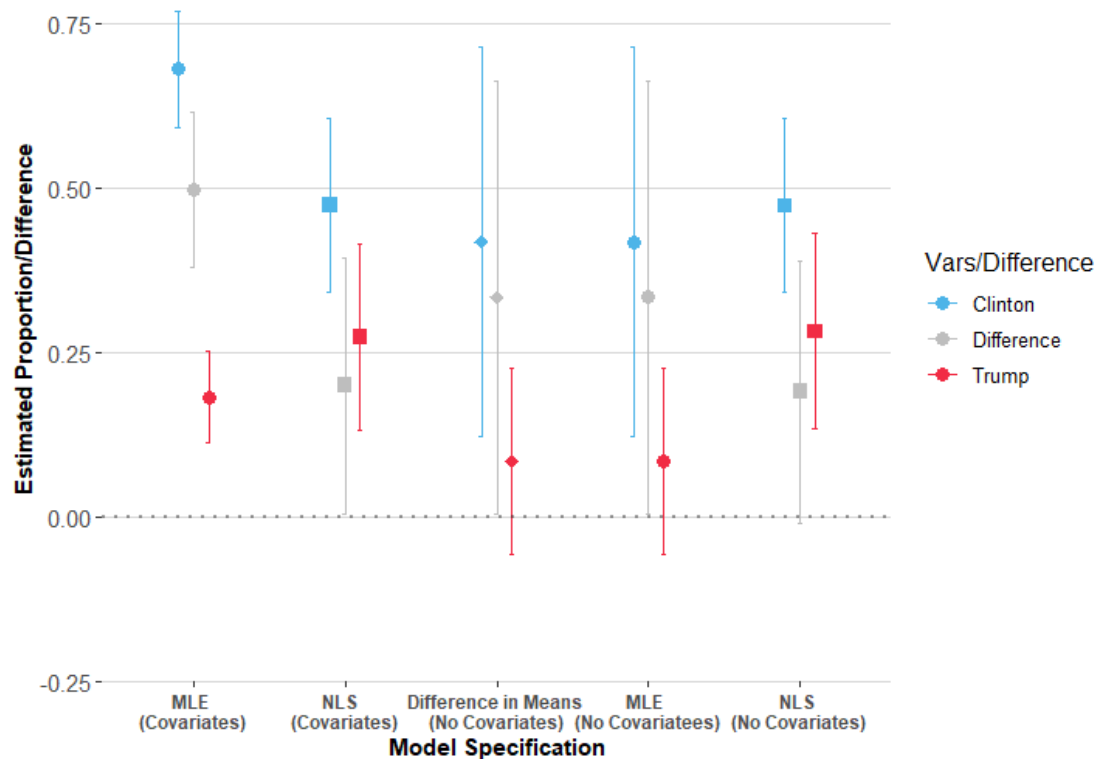


Figure 6: Estimate Proportions of Individuals Who Agree with Sensitive Item

This finding is striking, in two ways. First, it suggests that large numbers of cadets consistently prioritize following orders over respect for the democratic institutions they will soon take an oath to protect. Second, it suggests that cadets realize that they are violating the spirit of that oath. When asked directly, cadets know the normatively appropriate response and respond accordingly. Yet, when provided an opportunity to reveal their true preferences through the mechanism of the list experiment, they indicate a clear lack of regard for that norm.

How can we make sense of this alarming finding? One possibility is that cadets simply care more about keeping their jobs, than for upholding the principles of democracy. Yet, the fact that there is a partisan skew in responses to the experiment cast doubt on this hypothesis. It is unclear why Republicans should care more about their jobs than other cadets. Something more seems to be afoot than self-interest.

A second possibility is that it has something to do with the ideological inclinations of cadets. Conservative political philosophies are associated with more regard for hierarchy or authoritarian forms of social order. Recent survey research by Drutman, Goldman, and Diamond (2020) found that while few Americans support authoritarian alternatives to democracy, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to favor a strong leader in the abstract and unilateral action by the president. Similarly, Federico, Feldman, and Weber (2017) found that Republicans scored 26 percentage points higher than Democrats on American National Election Studies' authoritarianism index in 2016.

A third possibility is that we are seeing more evidence of selective adherence to norms. When able to keep their views private, cadets who identify as Republicans are especially likely to discount the importance of democratic norms, perhaps because they view them as antithetical to the arguments or positions held by their co-partisan president at the time the survey was taken. Given that Donald Trump's critics often decry his actions as contrary to democratic practices and traditions, cadets may privately reject adherence to those norms out of partisan support for the president. This is a significant finding because it suggests that partisan affinity is more important for many cadets than their professional commitments, even to the point of discounting the importance of a core tenet of their future oath. This finding is also significant in light of other findings that suggests selective adherence to other norms among some self-identified Republican cadets, such as

their favorable response that one party is better at national security, and that “water cooler” talk about politics is okay in work contexts.

A final, not incompatible, possibility relates a core concern of the renowned sociologist, Morris Janowitz.²⁵ Janowitz argued that it was imperative that the military maintain the ethos of a citizen-soldier. Doing so was essential to ensure it remained connected to society and supportive of the virtues of the republican form of government. He argued doing so was possible even for a professional military partly through the civilianization of the military and broadening the base of officer recruitment, but also through explicit training and education. Burk has argued that Janowitz’s model was unrealistic; in the absence of mass mobilization of an army from the citizenry it would be difficult to sustain these core values.²⁶ Others have argued that the self-selection to military service that occurs with the all-volunteer and the demographic gaps between society and the U.S. military intensifies the social distance between the military and American society, manifesting in a civil-military gap. As William Rapp²⁷ and Robert Gates have articulated, the concern is that the military will become distant from society, and consequently, its personnel will come to view themselves as better or superior to average Americans. As Gates put it in a 2011 speech at West Point, “it is off-putting to hear, albeit anecdotally, comments that suggest that military is to some degree separate and even superior from the society, the country, it is sworn to protect.”²⁸

Janowitz reflects a deeper current of historical thinking: fears that professionalization could lead to a sense of distance. This is one reason why late nineteenth century advocates of a citizen-

²⁵ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1960).

²⁶ Burk, “Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations.”

²⁷ See William Rapp, “Crisis in the Civil-Military Triangle?” in Lionel Beehner, Risa Brooks and Daniel Maurer in *Reconsidering American Civil-Military Relations: the military, society, politics and modern war* (Oxford 2020).

²⁸ <https://www.westpointaog.org/page.aspx?pid=4843>, Also quoted in Heidi A. Urban and James T. Golby “A Matter of Trust: Five Pitfalls That Could Squander the American Public’s Confidence in the Military,” in Beehner, Brooks and Maurer *Reconsidering American Civil-Military Relations*.

army, such as General John McCauley Palmer, opposed the model of professionalism espoused by General Emory Upton, from whom Huntington built his conception of objective control. As James Burk argues, Huntington's model neglects the importance of ensuring the military's commitment to democracy and the need to inculcate such values.²⁹ As he puts it, "Huntington focuses on the problem of protecting democracy [via creating an effective military], but neglects the problem of sustaining democratic values and practice."³⁰ In fact, Huntington's embrace of the concept of the "conservative military mind" that is fundamentally antithetical to liberal societal culture, suggests that adherents of Huntington's norms might express ambivalence toward the importance of democracy, given its roots in liberal political philosophy.

Hence, one way to interpret the results of the experiment is that Janowitz's worst fears have been realized. He was correct to worry that professionalism, especially of the Huntingtonian variety, would erode respect for democratic institutions and practices. Perhaps of all our findings, this looms as potentially the most unsettling.

Conclusions

This paper examines results of a survey of cadets taken in December 2019 and 2020 in an effort to assess their conceptions of military professionalism. The findings suggest that there is limited evidence of the purist model of Huntington norms taking root among cadets—that is, the behaviors and mindsets Huntington proposes should characterize the military professional are only weakly evident. While a significant number do explicitly endorse the separation of spheres concept, other responses belie that they believe that the military should focus on cultivating its expertise in isolation from politics, or even that it should be clearly subordinated to civilian authority, such as the

²⁹ James Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no. 1 (October 2002): 7-29.

³⁰ Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," 14.

notion that military leaders should have equal footing in strategic decision-making and cadets' overwhelming endorsement of more retired GOFOs in the cabinet. There is more support for the conflicted Huntingtonian model, in which respondents formally endorse Huntington's prescriptions, but then simultaneously express contradictory attitudes at odds with them with respect to civilian authority and engagement with politics. This is evident in the 36 percent who support politicians making partisan comments to military audiences, or the more than one quarter that think it is fine for retired officers to make partisan comments during elections. There is also significant evidence of selective adherence, in which partisan identity shapes when cadets support particular norms; cadets seem to engage in significant partisan rationalization when choosing to endorse particular norms. Whether one focuses on the conflicted Huntingtonian model, or the selective adherence approach, however, it appears that socialization of West Point cadets is lacking with respect to their views about the military's engagement with partisan politics—a finding we surmise is not unique to West Point, but also probably evident in other pre-commissioning sources and the Army officer corps at large. In addition, the list experiment's stunning findings about the primacy of following civilian orders over maintaining the country's democratic traditions—and even more importantly, that cadets knowingly obscure this preference—suggests a superficial appreciation, if not blatant disregard, for the Constitution to which cadets will upon their commissioning take an oath to uphold.

Appendix

Table A1: Randomization Check for List Experiment Condition Assignment

	<i>Dependent variable: Experimental Assignment</i>	
	Control	Treatment (1) (2)
Democrat	0.040 (0.192)	0.040 (0.192)
Independent	0.221 (0.205)	0.221 (0.205)
Male	0.136 (0.172)	0.136 (0.172)
Age	0.019 (0.060)	0.019 (0.060)
White	0.140 (0.167)	0.140 (0.167)
Constant	0.620 (1.218)	0.620 (1.218)
Observations	743	743
Log Likelihood	513.483	513.483
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,038.967	1,038.967

*Note: Logit regression
on binary treatment indicator
for treatment status*

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

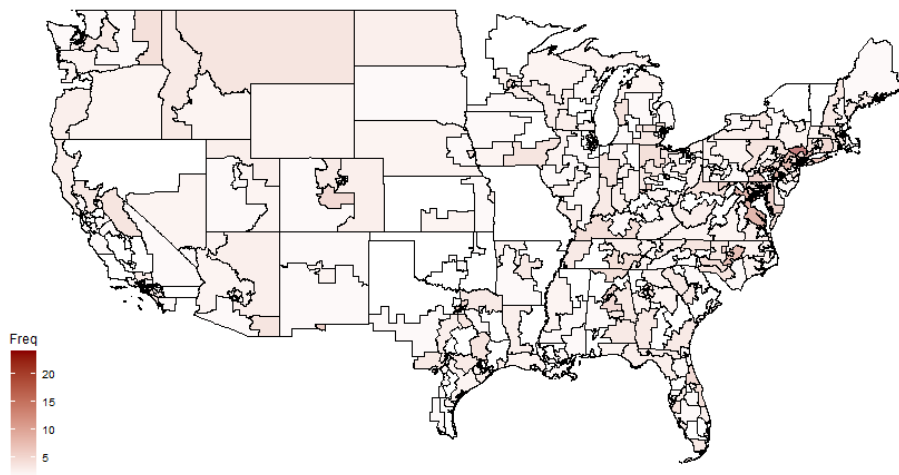


Figure A2: District Map of Respondents in 2019-2020 USMA Sample

