The Ministry of National Defence in South Korea: Military dominance despite civilian supremacy?

Kim, Insoo; Kuehn, David

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Kim, I., & Kuehn, D. (2022). The Ministry of National Defence in South Korea: Military dominance despite civilian supremacy? *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *45*(6-7), 865-892. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2022.2127092

JOURNAL OF STRATEGIC STUDIES
2022, VOL. 45, NOS. 6–7, 865–892
https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2022.2127092

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

The Ministry of National Defence in South Korea: Military dominance despite civilian supremacy?

Insoo Kim[a] and David Kuehn[b]

[a]Department of Political Science, Korea Military Academy, Seoul, Republic of Korea; [b]German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, Germany

ABSTRACT

South Korea's transition from military-controlled authoritarianism to consolidated civilian-dominated democracy is widely considered a success story. However, civilians' roles within the MND remain severely limited due to the institutional design of the MND. A decentralised structure emerged in the MND, delegating policy decision-making in critical areas to professional soldiers. Data analysis on 1,060 employees in 21 MND departments shows a clear cut between the military domain and the civilian domain within the MND, which enabled the military to thwart 30 years of civilian efforts to reform the military structure without challenging the principle of civilian supremacy.

KEYWORDS civil-military relations; civilian control; defence ministry; defence reform; South Korea

Introduction

The Republic of Korea's (hereafter, ROK or South Korea) transition from military-controlled authoritarianism to consolidated democracy is widely considered a success story, not least because of elected civilians' ability to establish supremacy over the military after decades of military domination. The South Korean Ministry of National Defence (hereafter, MND) is no more a bastion of retired and active-duty officers due to a thorough civilianisation such that by 2021 more than 70% of all its employees are civilians.[1] Nonetheless, many scholars argue that the sheer numerical superiority of civilians in the MND has thus far not contributed much to the realisation of effective civilian control over the military.[2]

CONTACT David Kuehn david.kuehn@giga-hamburg.de German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Rothenbaumchaussee 32, 20248 Hamburg, Germany

[1]BAI (ROK Board of Audit and Inspection), *Actual Condition of Defense Civilisation* (Seoul: National Audit Report 2018), 4.

[2]Carl J. Saxer, 'Generals and Presidents: Establishing Civilian and Democratic Control in South Korea', *Armed Forces & Society* 30/3 (2004), 383–408; Insoo Kim, 'Political Transition and Promotion Practice: The Case of the South Korean Army', *Res Militaris* 9/2 (2019), 1–15; David Kuehn, 'Reforming Defense and Military Policy-Making in South Korea, 1987–2012', in Aurel Croissant and David Kuehn (eds.) *Reforming Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies: Democratic Control and Military Effectiveness in Comparative Perspectives* (Heidelberg: Springer 2017), 151–69.

Interestingly, despite a great deal of scholarly interest in the demilitarisation of South Korean politics and the depoliticisation of its military, as of now there has been no academic study of the South Korean MND and its role in the day-to-day civilian control of elected decision-makers over the military. In this paper, we evaluate whether the South Korean MND works as an effective fulcrum of democratic civilian control, managing and steering defence policy, ensuring civilian control, and achieving military effectiveness. Based on a multi-dimensional institutional analysis, we show that the South Korean MND cannot fulfil these functions because it is not the core locus of decision-making in most substantive defence and military-related policies. Decisions on strategy and doctrine formulation, joint coordination, military promotion, and military education are the purview of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the three service headquarters. Decisions over weapons procurement are entrusted to the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA), which, while it is a civilian-dominated agency, is organisationally independent from the MND.

We argue that this institutional setting has enabled the military to realise its institutional interests even after the MND had been thoroughly civilianised. Civilian-dominated bureaus within the MND are of relatively marginal relevance to the military's core institutional interests, while the military maintains control over the processes of defence reform. An in-depth analysis of the South Korean defence reform process shows that the military's institutional foothold in the civilianised MND ensures their interests and has contributed to the failure of all democratically elected South Korean presidents to realise their vision of a comprehensive reform of the military's command structure.[3]

The article proceeds as follows. We first briefly summarise the history of the South Korean MND since 1948. The second section outlines the roles of civilians in South Korea's defence policymaking process in the overall command and control structure, across five areas of military organisation, and within the departments and bureaus of the MND. In Section three, we take a closer look at how patterns of civilian or military domination within the South Korean MND work in practice. The conclusion summarises the findings and sets forth implications for future civil-military relations in South Korea.

A brief historical overview of the South Korean MND

Different than many other newly democratised nations, South Korea did not have to build a functional MND from scratch when the country made the

[3]Bruce W. Bennett, *A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan* (Santa Monica: RAND 2006); Hwee Rhak Park, 'South Korea's Failure to Implement "Defense Reform 2020"', *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 12/2 (2014), 379–401.

transition to democracy in 1987 after 30 years of authoritarian rule. Since the beginning, formal control over the ROK Armed Forces rested in the South Korean MND, which had been established along with the new state in 1948.[4] However, the defence ministers, invariably retired lieutenant generals, did not have substantial authority over the military because they were lower in military rank than the active-duty service chiefs, who were full generals. The practice of selecting defence ministers from lower military ranks than the chiefs of staff of the three services continued until 1973, when retired Army General Seo Jong-cheol became the first four-star general defence minister.

In addition to the differences in military hierarchies, presidents' careful balancing and mutual checks among military subunits prevented the defence minister from exercising substantive control of the armed forces. In particular, President Park Chung-hee, who had come to power through a military coup in 1961, used divide-and-rule tactics to keep his military commanders under control. Park sponsored a select group of Korea Military Academy graduates called the *Hanahoe* ('Group One') to become his personal praetorian guard within the military. Under the leadership of the commander of the military intelligence service, Major General Chun Doo-hwan, *Hanahoe* members were systematically recruited into core military and civilian positions, including the presidential secretariat, the military intelligence services, and as commanders of elite combat units.[5] Consequently, when Chun and his fellow *Hanahoe* members staged a military coup in the aftermath of President Park's assassination in 1979, then-Defence Minister Roh Jae-hyun (himself a retired full general) was unable to rein in the rebels.[6] Following the coup, Chun became president in 1980, and was succeeded by his co-putschist and *Hanahoe* member, Gen (ret.) Roh Tae-woo.

In addition to the prevalence of the *Hanahoe*, decades of military rule by ex-Army generals also turned the MND into an institutional resource through which the Army dominated the Navy and the Air Force. For this reason, the MND has often been called the 'ministry of defending the Army'.[7] Even though civilian supremacy over the military had been a consolidated principle since South Korea's democratisation in the early 1990s, the MND was still perceived as a puppet of the Army, not a fulcrum of democratic civilian control. Consequently, there was robust demand for civilianisation of the

[4]ROK Army, 'The Period of ROK National Defense Security Force Establishment', 2021. https://www.army.mil.kr/webapp/user/indexSub.do?codyMenuSeq=219076&siteId=english.

[5]*Hanahoe* was a clandestine fraternity within the ROK Army, whose members were recruited from the ten to twelve most promising students of the classes 11 to 36 of the Korean Military Academy (KMA), and almost exclusively entailed officers from Park's home province of Taegu-Kyongsang. Kim, 'Political Transition and Promotion Practice'.

[6]Won-gon Park, 'The U.S. Carter Administration and Korea in the 12/12 Incident: Concession of Moral Diplomacy', *Korean Social Science Review* 2/2 (2012), 259–60.

[7]Seok-ho Park, 'The Ministry of National Defense Is the Ministry of Defending the Army (in Korean)', *Busan Ilbo*, 3 May 2001.

Table 1. Share of civilians in leadership positions within the MND (2018).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Directors	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	68.8	70.6	70.6
Team leaders	72.1	70.3	70.3	70.3	70.8	70.3	69.7	69.7	70.1	71.4	70.4
Working-level officials	63.9	64.1	64.5	66.3	69.9	69.5	69.3	69.3	69.4	70.0	70.2

Note: Data show the percentage of civilians in leadership positions in the MND. Source: BAI, National Audit Report, 4.

MND. The 2006 Defense Reform Act stipulated that civilians should account for at least 70% of the bureau directors, team leaders, and working-level officials. As shown in the recruitment shares of civilians in the South Korean MND summarised in Table 1, by 2018, this quota had been achieved. However, as we will discuss in the following sections, civilians' actual roles and impact within the MND remain severely limited.

The role of civilians in South Korea's defence policymaking

The MND in South Korea's command and control structure

The military command and control structure of the South Korean military is summarised in Figure 1. At the top of the defence and military policymaking process is the President, who is popularly elected for a single five-year term and is the commander-in-chief of the ROK Armed Forces. Since Roh Tae-woo's departure in 1993, no former military officer has been elected president. In matters of defence policy, the president is advised by his secretariat, which includes one or more special advisors on national security, and the Office of National Security (ONS), which was created in lieu of the former National Security Council (NSC).[8] The president appoints the head of the ONS in accordance with their security policy programme. The preferred career of the head of the ONS varies by the ideological orientation of the administration. Conservative governments, in general, tend to prefer retired generals, while progressive governments tend to rely more on civilians. Since the ONS/NSC is a purely advisory body, the actual political influence of its members greatly depends on the president's willingness to heed their advice.

The president appoints a defence minister to advise him or her on controlling the ROK armed forces, to manage the administration of military affairs, and to command and supervise the chiefs of staff of the three armed services and the Chairman of the JCS, who is the supreme officer and has operational command over the service chiefs. Since the 1960s, the defence minister has invariably been a former military officer. While the recruitment of retired military officers into the defence ministry tends to be

[8]Jong-yun Bae, 'Korean Foreign and National Security Policy: Actors, Structure, and Process', in Chung-in Moon and M. Jae Moon (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Korean Politics and Public Administration* (London: Routledge 2020), 144–59.

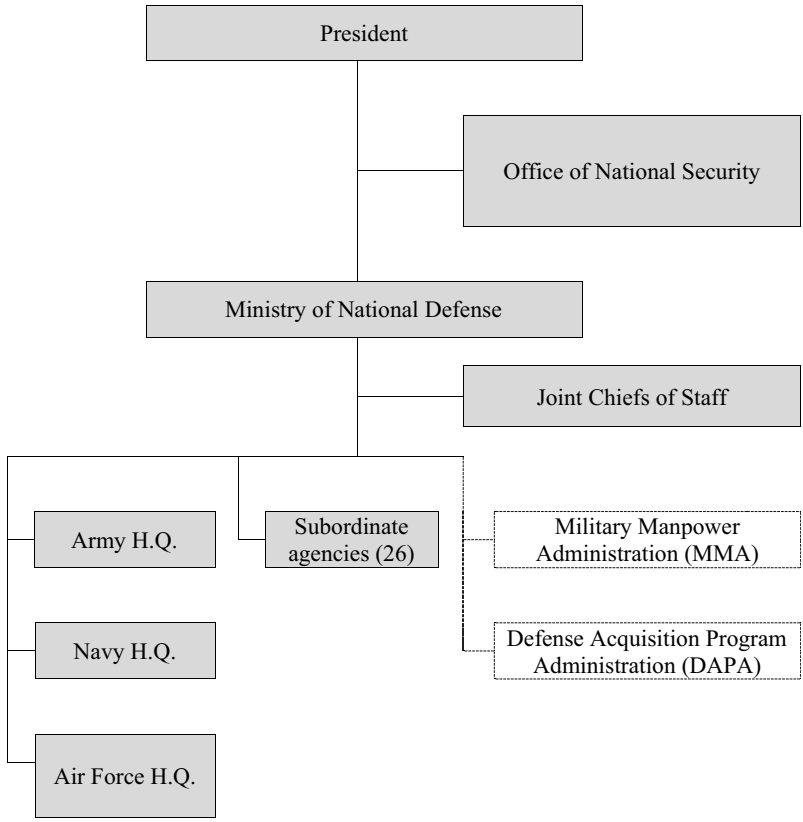

Figure 1. Command and control structure of the military (as of May 2021).
Note: ---- not subordinate but under the MND's coordination. Source: Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense.

the exception in old democracies, it is not uncommon in new democracies in the Asia-Pacific region. This includes emerging democracies such as Indonesia and the Philippines, which are considered partly free according to the most recent Freedom House survey, but also the case of Taiwan, which is consistently rated as one of the most stable and consolidated new democracies.[9] The president also appoints a vice defence minister, who assists the minister in managing military affairs and supervise public officials within the MND. If the minister is unable to perform his or her duty, the vice minister shall act on his or her behalf. However, the position is widely seen as inconsequential and powerless.[10] The vice-minister has been recruited from

[9]Freedom House, '2022 Freedom in theWorld', 2021, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world.
[10]Kijoo Kim, 'Post-Cold War Civil-Military Relations in South Korea: Toward a Postmodern Military?' *State University of New York*, 2009. http://ubir.buffalo.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10477/133/Kim_buffalo_0656A_10210.pdf?sequence=1.

either civilians (mostly politicians, lawyers, and economists) or retired military officers in the past.

The MND's mandate in the South Korean defence and military policy-making process is defined by the Government Organization Act as 'administer[ing] the military and all military affairs relating to national defense'.[11] Its internal structure is defined by the Ministry of National Defense Organization Act and summarised in Figure 1. According to that structure, the MND controls the JCS, the three service headquarters, and 26 subordinate agencies. In addition, the MND coordinates two independent administrative agencies, the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) and the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). The former is in charge of enlistment and mobilisation of conscripts and reserve forces; while the DAPA governs all affairs concerning the purchase of weapon systems.[12] The separation of the DAPA from the MND was a product of President Roh Moo-hyun's (2003–2008) 'Defense Reform 2020 (D.R. 2020)'. Aimed at increasing the military's effectiveness, efficiency and self-reliance, the reform included considerable changes in the MND's institutional structure and the goal of increasing civilian involvement in defence and military policy.[13]

Civilians' roles in core areas of defence and military policy

Because the Government Organization Act stipulates that the MND is in charge of all defence-related affairs, a higher level of civilianisation of the MND seems to allow civilians to exercise factual decision-making power in all relevant areas of military organisations: the promotion of senior officers; the development of defence strategies; weapons procurement; officer education; and joint coordination, planning, and operations. However, decision-making in most of these areas has been delegated to departments that are dominated by professional soldiers, or autonomous agencies not under direct MND control.

First, the Armed Forces Organization Act, which provides the legal foundation for the organisation and structure of the Korean armed forces, stipulates that the JCS shall exercise military command to carry out military operations, establishes defence strategy and devises joint operational plans.[14] The MND tasks the JCS with drafting the Joint Military Strategy (JMS), which provides primary data for the Joint Strategy Objective Plan (JSOP) and Joint Strategy Capability Plan (JSCP), which guide the future purchases of weapon systems.

[11]KLRI, 'Government Organization Act', 2019. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=44197&type=sogan&key=15.
[12]KLRI, 'Government Organization Act'.
[13]Younggeun Kwon, 'National Defense', in Chung-in Moon and M. Jae Moon (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Korean Politics and Public Administration* (London: Routledge 2020), 160–76.
[14]KLRI, 'Act on the Organization of National Armed Forces', 2019. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=26880&type=part&key=13.

The MND convenes the Defense Acquisition Program Promotion Committee, which deliberates on the JCS's budget request for the purchase of weapon systems in line with the JSOP and JSCP. The Committee is formed by the defence minister, vice defence minister, the minister of the DAPA, and delegations from the National Defense Commission of the National Assembly, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Science and ICT, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, and the Agency for Defense Development (ADD). Based on these deliberations, the DAPA finalises the budget request and delivers it to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. In this way, the JCS and the DAPA dominate the decision-making regarding defence strategy planning, joint coordination, and weapons procurement. This implies that regardless of how influential civilians are in the MND, they do not play a role as effective decision-making actors in these areas.

Second, the Armed Forces Organization Act stipulates that the chiefs of staff of the three armed services shall manage promotions, education, and training to prepare the armed forces to carry out their mission.[15] Article 25 of the Military Personnel Management Act prescribes the military promotion procedures as follows: The president shall conduct an officer's promotion. The service chiefs of staff recommend promotion candidates to the defence minister after deliberation with the Officer Promotion Selection Committee, which shall be established at each service headquarters (as prescribed by Article 29). The defence minister shall nominate promotion candidates to the president based on the respective service chief of staff's recommendation. Consequently, professional officers have little incentive to be submissive to civilians in the MND because the service headquarters dominate the promotion processes. In 2004, for instance, the presidential secretary for civil affairs requested Defence Minister Yoon Kwang-ung to revise the promotion list, which included too many Army generals. The minister, however, simply forwarded it to the army chief, who refused to revise the lists.[16]

Similarly, in the area of professional military education, the MND does not play a decisive role. Assuming that effective professional military education (PME) requires a sizable component of civilian faculty in PME institutions,[17] the Moon Jae-in government announced plans to convert 50% of military academy professors and 70% of National Defense University into civilian positions in 2019. In 2021, however, the proportion of civilian professors was far lower than the goal, 12.8% at three service academies (on average) and 36.9% at National Defense University.[18] Furthermore, there are many

[15]KLRI.
[16]Cheol-ho Lee, 'Lee Cheol-Ho's Column', *Joong-an Ilbo*, 9 Jan. 2019. https://news.joins.com/article/23273721.
[17]Anit Mukherjee, 'Educating the Professional Military: Civil–Military Relations and Professional Military Education in India,' *Armed Forces & Society* 44/3 (2018), 476–97. doi:10.1177/0095327X17725863.
[18]Ki-chang Choi, 'A Shortage of Civilian Professors at Military Academies', *Kuki News*, 20 Oct. 2021, https://www.kukinews.com/newsView/kuk202110200097 (Korean).

instances in which the military circumvents existing regulations for greater civilian impact on PME. Article 4 of the Military Academy Establishment Act, for instance, stipulates that 'the curriculum of the Academy shall consist of the course of military training and the course of general studies for bachelor's degree, and the defence minister shall determine the details thereof, but the course of general studies shall be subject to consultation with the minister of education'.[19] However, the service chiefs thus far have never consulted with the minister of education in the adaptation of the general studies course.[20] In the sense of increasing jointness, in 2013, the defence reform also envisioned a joint education program for cadets, which was given up two years after its implementation, however, due to foot-dragging by the service headquarters.[21] At the same time, however, military officers routinely enrol in civilian higher education institutions, which allows them to expand their expertise beyond the immediate military-technical realm (see next section).

In sum, this overview suggests that most of the key defence and military decision-making areas are in the hands of the JCS and the service headquarters. In this, the South Korean case highlights great similarity to the French case, where the defence ministry has long functioned merely as an administrative arm for the military brass. At the same time, it stands in contrast to Argentina, which shares Korea's fate of being another 'third wave' democracy and former military dictatorship, but where the MND – and civilians within the MND – have much greater impact on a broad range of crucial issue areas (see the articles by Antoine Maire and Olivier Schmitt and Jorge Battaglino and David Pion-Berlin in this Special Issue). This means that the powerful trend towards a civilianisation of the MND documented in Table 1 did not have a meaningful influence on actual civilian decision-making power. Only in defence procurement do civilians play a meaningful role, but the agency that controls arms procurement is independent of the MND.

Civilian and military domains within the MND

As David Knoke puts it, 'the basic units of any complex political system are not individuals, but positions or roles occupied by social actors and the relations or connections between these positions'.[22] This suggests that we need to look closer into the structure of the MND and the roles and relations between

[19]KLRI, 'Act on the Establishment of the Korea Army Academy at Youngcheon', 2017. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=43590&type=part&key=13.

[20]Korea Military Academy, *The 50 Years History of KoreaMilitary Academy* (Seoul: Korea Military Academy 1996).

[21]Insoo Kim, and Wonkwang Jo, 'The Effects of Joint Education Programs on Cohesion among South Korean Military Academy Cadets', *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 26 (1 Dec. 2014), 505–19.

[22]David Knoke, *Political Networks: The Structural Perspective*. Transferred to digital printing. Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1994).

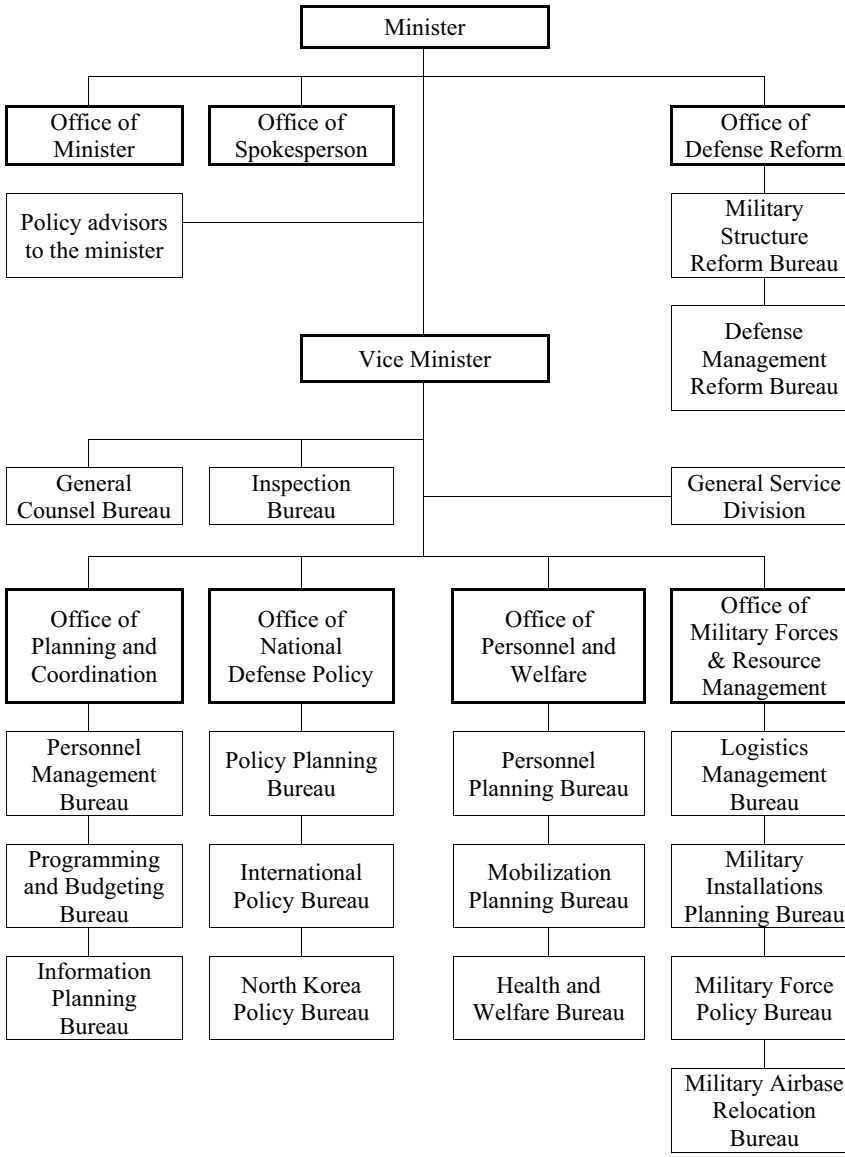

Figure 2. Organisation of the MND. Source: https://www.mnd.go.kr/mbshome/mbs/mndEN/subview.jsp?id=mndEN_010500000000

civilians and military officers in the MND.[23] Figure 2 presents the organigram of the MND. The MND itself is made up of 21 professional offices and bureaus

[23]Peter Bachrach, and Morton S. Baratz, 'Two Faces of Power', *The American Political Science Review* 56/4 (1962), 947–52. doi:10.2307/1952796.

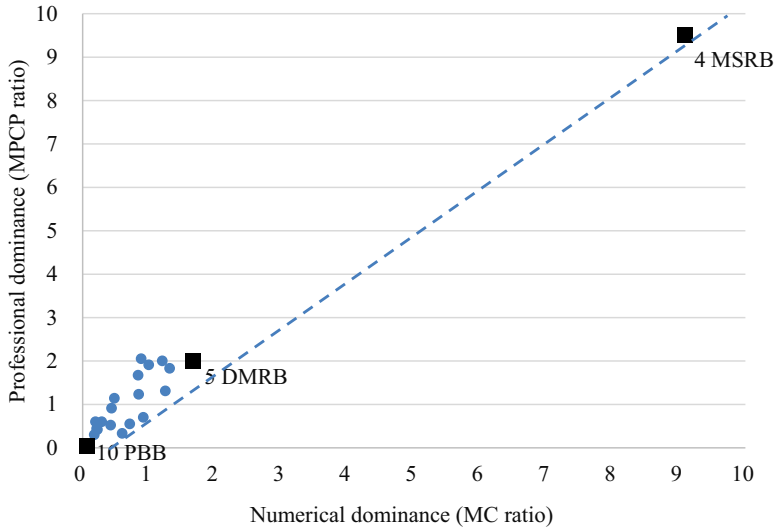

Figure 3. Distribution of MND bureaus by numerical and professional dominance.Note: Numbers and acronyms identify the individual bureaus, we do not show (see Table A1 in the Appendix). Source: the authors based on data from MND, 'MND Phone Directory'.

charged with developing and implementing defence policies. To identify the boundaries of civilian and military domains within the MND, we collected data on 1,060 employees in all 21 departments from a phone directory on the MND intranet (data as of May, 2021; see Table A1 in the Appendix).[24]

To evaluate whether a given bureau is to be considered part of the civilian or the military's jurisdictional domain, we draw on two dimensions of dominance: numerical and professional. To capture the numerical dimension, we calculated the ratio of military officers compared to civilians in each department (Military/Civilian ratio, MC). A high military/civilian ratio indicates a numerically military-dominated department. To identify professional dominance over each department, we compared the seniority of department employees, calculating the ratio of senior military officers (military rank of major and above) vis-à-vis the comparable civilian official rank (seniority rank of Grade 5 and above) in each department (Military Professional/Civilian Professional ratio, MPCP).[25]

Figure 3 visualises the levels of similarity of the 21 individual departments of the South Korean MND along these two dimensions of dominance: the Military/Civilian ratio (MC), and the Military Professional/Civilian Professional

[24]MND, ROK, 'MND Phone Directory', 2021. https://www.mnd.go.kr/cop/dept/deptInfo2.do?siteId=mnd&id=mnd_060501000000.

[25]Grade 5 refers to a seniority rank in the South Korean public servant system, which is equivalent to a manager-level and comparable to the military rank of major.

ratio (MPCP). It shows four noteworthy insights. First, most bureaus cluster along the diagonal, meaning that the MC and MPCP ratios are closely correlated (Pearson correlation coefficient: .981, sig .000). In other words, bureaus in which military officers outnumber civilians also tend to be professionally dominated by military officers.

Second, most bureaus are relatively similar in terms of their MC and MPCP ratios, with 20 bureaus clustering within ratios between 0 and 2. In terms of numerical dominance, 15 bureaus are civilian dominated (with an MC ratio smaller than 1) and five are military dominated (MC ratio larger than 1). Civilian-dominated bureaus (eleven) also outnumber those dominated by the military (ten) in terms of professional dominance (see also Figure A1 in the Appendix).

Third, in terms of contrasting outliers to this general trend, two bureaus stand out. While still clustering in the lower right quadrant of the graph in Figure 3, the Defence Management Reform Bureau (5 DMRB) is clearly military-dominated, with officers substantially outnumbering civilians on both dimensions (MC: 1.67, MPCP: 2.0). The most glaring outlier, however, is the Military Structure Reform Bureau (4 MSRB). The military-civilian ratio in the MSRB is 9.09, and the ratio of military professionals to civilian professionals is 9.50, meaning that military personnel outnumber their civilian counterparts by almost 10-to-1.

Fourth, the Programming and Budgeting Bureau (10 PBB) is situated in the opposite direction from the MSRB: only four out of 60 employees (6.7%) in the PBB are military officers, and only one of 30 professional personnel in the PBB is a military officer.

In sum, this suggests that the general drive towards a civilianisation of the MND has also been reflected in the patterns of numerical and professional domination: across the 21 bureaus, civilians outnumber military officers on both dimensions of dominance. In terms of substantive areas, civilian-dominated bureaus are mainly in charge of administrative and supportive functions, while military-dominated bureaus focus on technical-military aspects (see Table A1 in Appendix). Most importantly, civilians are firmly in charge of managing the MND's finances and budget. This suggests a division of responsibilities between civilians and military officers according to functional expertise.

In fact, there is evidence that in the South Korean MND military officers continue to have an expertise advantage over civilians. Table 2 presents data on military officers' enrolment in civilian universities and civilians' enrolment in the military-run National Defense University. The data show two relevant insights. First, many military officers are trained at civilian universities, thereby receiving civilian education. Each year, the MND selects approximately 300 officers who will work in the policy-making department in the future and sends them with financial support to leading civilian universities at home and

Table 2. Military personnel in civilian universities and civilians in National Defense University.

	Military Personnel			Civilians
	Full-time education		Part-time education	Full-time education
Year	Overseas civilian university	Domestic civilian university	Domestic civilian university	Domestic National Defense University
2011	65	235	5,305	16
2012	57	227	5,590	22
2013	44	184	4,987	15
2014	48	189	4,908	15
2015	50	202	4,649	11
2016	47	240	4,828	14
2017	52	249	5,069	39
2018	59	242	4,391	26
2019	59	242	4,499	14
2020	46	288	5,282	7

Data: ROK Army, *Army Statistics Year Book 2021* (ROK Army, 2021), p. 91; pp. 113–114.

abroad to obtain master's or doctoral degrees. The MND also supports those who want to continue their study while serving in the military. About 5,000 military officers earned master's or doctoral degrees in civilian universities through this program. These large numbers of military officers with higher academic degrees imply that civilians in the MND are less likely to claim intellectual or technological superiority over military personnel. This is in stark contrast to France's military education system as described by Antoine Maire and Olivier Schmitt in this Special Issue, where PME is effectively siloed from civilian educational channels, but similar to the Argentinian case, where civilians play an important role in educating military officers. Second, no civilians, including government officials, have earned a doctoral degree in security studies at National Defense University and only a dozen civilians have earned a master's degree at National Defense University, implying that there are very few civilian officials with a deep understanding of military affairs.

Given that defence policy and military structure reforms are genuine political endeavours and include both civilian-administrative as well as military-technical aspects, the military's potential expertise advantage cannot explain that civilians remain by and large excluded from the planning and implementation of reforms in defence policy and military structures. Moreover, our quantitative survey of numerical and professional dominance has not yet shown the substantive impact civilian or military domination makes on the South Korean MND's ability to function as a 'fulcrum of civilian control'. This shows similarities with the Indian case, where military officers enjoy considerable degrees of decision-making autonomy despite the numerical and hierarchical superiority of civilians in the defence bureaucracy (see Anit Mukherjee in this Special Issue). In the following section, we, therefore, trace the processes of budgeting and defence reform planning to

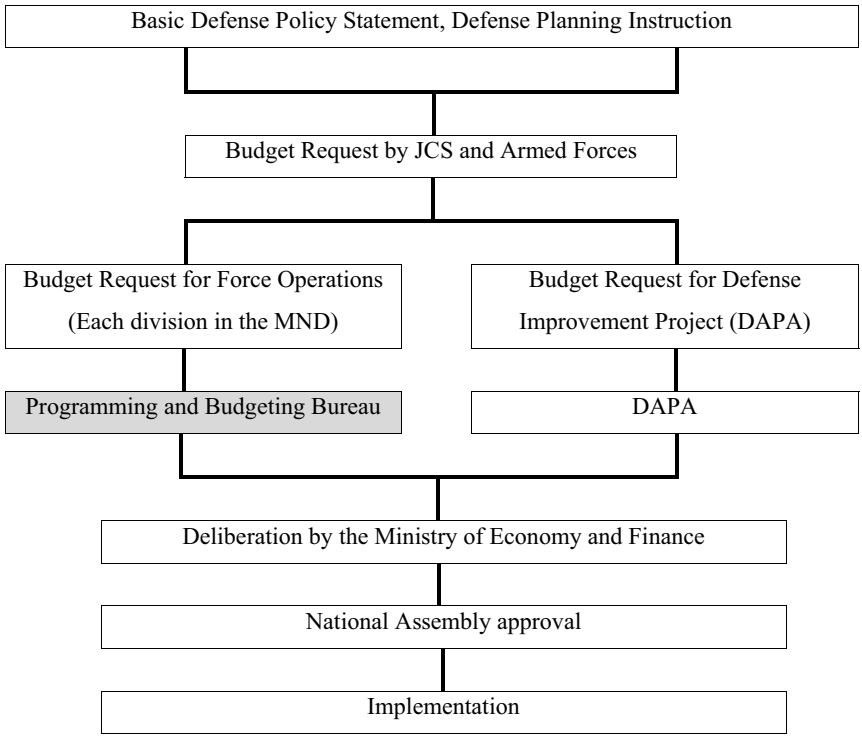

Figure 4. Defense finance and budgeting process. Source: Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense, "Defense Planning Management Basic Instruction," 2019.

identify the reasons for the existing patterns of civilian and military domination and their implications.

Civilian and military domination in practice: Finance and budgeting, and defence reform

The finance and budgeting process

Figure 4 summarises the defence finance and budgeting process in South Korea. It shows that among the MND's bureaus, the Programming and Budgeting Bureau (PBB) maintains a core position as it processes the budget request of all divisions in the MND (excluding weapons procurement, which is the exclusive domain of DAPA) before the total budget is submitted to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. As we have shown above, the PBB is clearly dominated by civilians, both numerically and professionally. This, however, does not mean that this is to the detriment of the military's interests. While the Bureau is responsible for about 70% of the overall defence budget, those expenditures are relatively static as they mainly cover the running costs of

maintaining the force. Because the autonomous DAPA is responsible for those parts of the defence budget that cover major new budget items related to weapon system procurement and force improvement,[26] the bureau's tasks, budgeting and accounting, are considered less relevant from a military officer's view.

Moreover, considering the rampant interservice rivalry in South Korea, it may be more advantageous for professional soldiers not to oppose the appointment of civilians to decision-making positions. Notably, the Army, which had been the dominant service since the Korean War, had an existential interest in maintaining its veto ability over any aspect of defence reform aimed at reducing the size and importance of the ground forces. Active-duty soldiers from the Army, Navy, and Air Force are deployed to departments in the MND on temporary positions for two years. However, the MND is dominated by Army personnel, who account for 88% of all active-duty soldiers and reservists employed by the ministry and 92% of all military-held director positions.[27] Since neither a prior military career nor any topical expertise or educational qualification is required for civilians to be recruited into the MND, civilians seem to be less partial to their interests than military officers in other service branches.

Finally, the MND had a clear incentive to make civilians occupy the PBB. By recruiting staff from civilians, and including women, the ministry can draw on a vast pool of highly educated experts trained in South Korea's excellent higher education system or abroad. Attempting to recruit accounting and budget experts from within military ranks would require building up the equivalent training resources within the military education system and reduce the pool of potential recruits without any benefit in terms of expertise. Moreover, since military personnel rotate into other positions after two years, it would be counterproductive to spend resources on training officers for these specialised tasks. The fact that civilians staff the PBB also facilitates interactions with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which is in charge of preparing the government budget and submitting it for approval to the National Assembly. Having experienced civilian specialists in long-term positions staff the PBB instead of military officers on short-term rotations, makes it easier to establish stable inter-ministry working relationships and, thus, reduces transaction costs.

In sum, then, civilians dominating the PBB must not be interpreted as a loss of military power over the MND but as actually beneficial for the military's ability to realise its preferences. This is different for those MND bureaus

[26] Jae Ok Paek, 'Analysis of 2021 ROK Defense Budget and Its Policy Implications', *ROK Angle: Korea's Defense Policy* 232 (2021). http://www.kida.re.kr/cmm/viewBoardImageFile.do?idx=29643.
[27] BAI, 'Actual Condition of Defense Civilisation'.

charged with defence reform, which our analysis has identified as dominated by professional military personnel.

The defence reform process

The necessity and practice of defence reform has been an important and recurrent issue in the South Korean political arena. In the South Korean context, the term 'defence reform' encompasses a broad range of issues, including the re-definition of strategic goals (especially concerning the threat from North Korea, but also from China), the necessary structural and financial adjustments in the defence and military infrastructure to achieve those goals, and the political, administrative and material resources and processes how these necessary adjustments should be achieved. As such, defence reform in South Korea is a highly politicised topic, with different administrations and political parties championing different defence reform agendas.[28] Moreover, to understand the reasons for and impact of military domination over the defence reform process, we need to consider both the interests of the South Korean armed forces and the institutional structures under which they operate.[29] First, as do all bureaucratic institutions, the military prizes autonomy and maintaining control over administrative agencies, especially if that control allows them to influence present and future attempts at curtailing their autonomy or enforce decisions that violate their institutional preferences.[30] The main concern related to defence reform among military officers is troop reductions due to their negative effects on job opportunities within the defence establishment. Already in the late 1980s, the congestion of senior officer ranks had been identified as a crucial problem for the establishment of civilian control. During the 1990s and 2000s, this problem intensified with the 1993 revision of the military service law, which pushed back the retirement age of colonel and general-grade officers and thus caused a bottleneck for field grade officers to be promoted into higher positions.[31]

Second, realizing these interests required a powerful, institutional foothold that allowed the South Korean military, and especially the

[28]Kiwon Kim, and Sanghyun Lee, 'Analysis and Evaluation of Factors Affecting the Success of Defense Reforms: Focusing on Major Defense Reform Cases Since the Roh Tae-Woo Administration (in Korean)', *Korean and Japanese Military Culture Studies* no. 29 (2020), 115–43.

[29]Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2003); David Kuehn, and Philip Lorenz, 'Explaining Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies: Structure, Agency and Theory Development', *Asian Journal of Political Science* 13/5 (2011), 231–49.

[30]David Pion-Berlin, 'Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America', *Comparative Politics* 25/1 (1992), 83–102.

[31]Chung-in Moon, 'Democratization, National Security Politics and Civil-Military Relations: Some Theoretical Issues and the South Korean Case', *Pacific Focus* 4/2 (1989), 5–22. doi:10.1111/j.1976-5118.1989.tb00068.x; Yong-sup Han, 'Analyzing South Korea's Defense Reform 2020', *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 18/1 (2006), 111–34. doi:10.1080/10163270609464101.

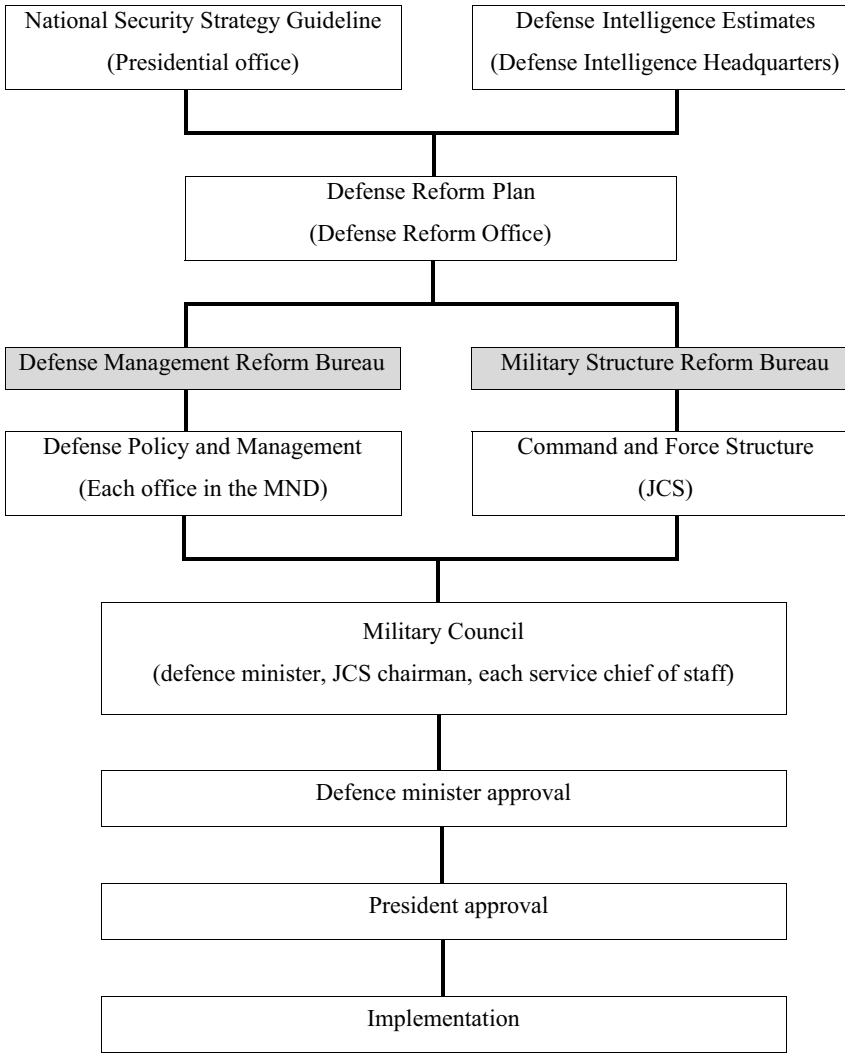

Figure 5. Defence reform planning process.
Source: Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defence, "Defence Planning Management Basic Instruction," 2019.

Army, to control the scope and content of defence reform. Before D.R. 2020 established the goals of civilianising the MND, professional soldiers dominated the ministry. Thus, the president and the defence minister had to rely on professional soldiers in the JCS and the service headquarters to plan and implement the individual defence reform

steps.[32] However, even after the civilianisation process had begun and the Defense Reform Office (DRO) was established to coordinate and drive reforms in 2007, the MND-internal defence reform decision-making process still ensured that military officers maintained control over the substance, scope, and pace of defence reform.

Figure 5 visualises the DRO-focused defence reform process that has been in operation since 2007. The DRO consists of the Defense Management Reform Bureau (DMRB) and the Military Structure Reform Bureau (MSRB), which we have shown to be the two most militarised bureaus within the MND. The DRO requests from the Defence Intelligence Headquarters information on the security environment, including North Korea's military threats, and updates and revises the defence reform plan every year based on this information. The updated defence reform plan is then delivered to the MND's subordinate units for their input. Each office in the MND submits action plans for reforming defence management in its areas of responsibility to the DMRB, and the JCS reports action plans for restructuring the force structure to the MSRB. Finally, the consolidated defence reform plan is submitted to the Military Council, which is constituted by the defence minister, the Chairman of the JCS, and the three service chiefs. If approved by the Military Council, the DRO forwards the plans to the defence minister and president for approval for the revised defence reform plan.

This decision-making structure gives the military, and especially the Army, de facto veto power over those aspects of defence reform crucially relevant for their institutional and functional interests, most importantly force structure. For one thing, the Military Council, which is dominated by active-service officers, is the final gatekeeper of all defence reform plans of the DRO. Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 5, responsibilities for the contents of defence reform planning within the DRO are bifurcated. The DMRB is responsible for reforms in the areas of general defence policy and management. It is led by a civilian director and includes two sub-units: the Personnel and Education Reform Division (PERD), and the Resource Management Reform Division (RMRD). Both divisions are headed by a civilian professional, and civilians account for 25% of the PERD's and 50% of the RMRD's employees. Yet, overall, the DMRB remains heavily military-dominated, and given that the authority related to military

[32]Doo-Seung Hong, 'The Military and Civil Society in Korea', in Giuseppe Caforio, Gerhard Kümmel, and Bandana Purkayastha (eds.), *Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution: Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 7. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing 2008), 239–56; Wooksung Kim, 'The Conditions for Successful Civilian Control over the Military in New Democracies: The Case of South Korea', *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 24/4 (2008), 151–75.

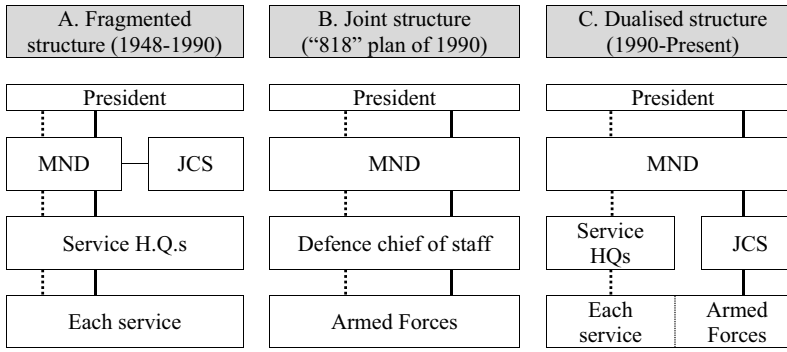

Figure 6. Changes in the military command structure.
Note: --- Military administrative control; — military command control. Source: authors

professional education and promotion is delegated to each service headquarters, the role of the DMRB in defence reform is marginal.

Moreover, reform issues that touch upon the military's core institutional interests discussed above – those concerning force size and command structures – fall under the responsibilities of the MSRB. The Bureau is headed by an active-duty major general and includes two sub-units: the Military Force Structure Reform Division (MFSRD) and the Command and Force Structure Reform Division (CFSRD). While the latter is led by a civilian, both bureaus are overwhelmingly in the hands of active-duty military professionals, which account for 90% of all posts in the two divisions. Moreover, while according to law, it is the MSRB that instructs the JCS in drafting reform plans, there is a close personnel interrelationship between the two agencies, with those working in the bureau having worked in the JCS before, making the two institutions de facto inseparable. As we will discuss in detail in the following, this institutional setting has enabled the military to realise its institutional interests even after the MND had been civilianised and the DRO had been established.

The history of South Korea's command structure reform: The irony of civilian supremacy

The above has shown that despite the overall and thorough civilianisation of the MND, the patterns of domination within the ministry still very much favour the interests of the South Korean military. However, we have not yet shown how these processes unfold in practice. Moreover, in a consolidated democracy such as South Korea's, MND-internal bureaucratic structures are not the only factors to determine the outcome of defence policies. In addition, the civilian political elites play a crucial role. To illustrate the interplay between the military's institutionalised interests within the MND and the impact of civilians, we trace 30 years of command structure reform attempts

since the transition to democracy until 2021. Command structure reform is a particularly valuable case-study. First, as part of broader defence reforms, it is a highly visible item, which makes a prominent civilian involvement more likely than more technical issues. Second, because it fundamentally affects the military-internal power structure, command structure reform impacts directly on the military's core institutional interests. As such, command structure reform constitutes what Seawright has termed an 'extreme case', which from a methodological perspective facilitates uncovering causal pathways and the interplay of institutional structures and the agency of civilians and military actors.[33]

Figure 6 summarises the development of the South Korean military command structures since 1948. In 1990, the conservative Roh Tae-woo government pushed for the so-called '818 Defence Reform' to turn the fragmented force structure under which the service headquarters exercised both administrative and command control over the military (A in Figure 6) into a more integrated joint force structure under a unified Defence Chief of Staff (B in Figure 6). This reform plan was to dismantle the Army, Navy, and Air Force headquarters and concentrate their responsibilities within a newly created Defense Chief of Staff. However, the reform faced strong resistance from inside and outside the military. The Navy and Air Force were concerned that they would be subordinate to the already dominant Army.[34] In addition, opposition party leaders refused the reform, fearing that the integration of the three services into a single, unified command was an attempt to consolidate and maintain the *Hana* faction's control of the military. In light of this fear, the National Assembly revised the Armed Forces Organization Act in 1990 to establish a command structure under which the JCS is in charge of operational command while the service headquarters exercise military administrative control.[35] This dualised command structure, depicted as C in Figure 6, is still in effect today, weakening the jointness and the interoperationality of the South Korean armed forces.

As the first genuine civilian president after decades of military rule, conservative President Kim Young-sam did not push for a substantive reform but focused on ensuring the demilitarisation of politics and the depoliticisation of the ROK armed forces. This involved reducing the recruitment of retired military officers into the state, bureaucracy and businesses, and cutting back on the role of military intelligence in domestic security operations.[36] In contrast, the 'military and national security establishment remained

[33]Jason W. Seawright, 'The Case for Selecting Cases That Are Deviant or Extreme on the Independent Variable', *Sociological Methods and Research* 45/3(2016), 493–525.
[34]In-Bum Chun, 'Korean Defense Reform: History and Challenges', The Brookings Institution, 2017. https://www.brookings.edu/research/korean-defense-reform-history-and-challenges.
[35]Kwon, 'National Defense', 163.
[36]Kuehn, 'Reforming Defense and Military Policy-Making in South Korea, 1987-2012'.

substantially independent of civilian control'.[37] This was in part because the security situation deteriorated sharply after North Korea declared its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in March 1993. As the Kim Young-sam government had pursued a confrontation policy with the North, maintaining the current military readiness based on the South Korea-U.S. alliance was a more important task than defence reform.

The first civilian president to address defence structure reform was the progressive Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003), who was elected promising a 'Sunshine' approach towards North Korea that combined engagement with robust military deterrence. Moreover, in the late 1990s, South Korea was hard-hit by the East Asian Financial Crisis, which forced the president to control expenditures across all aspects of the state. This included a cut in defence spending as part of the president's 'Five Year Defense Reform Plan'.[38] Kim Dae-jung recruited civilian experts into the MND and in 1998 re-established the NSC as the primary presidential advisory body on security and defence affairs, which had been effectively dormant under the former presidents.[39] However, further reform initiatives were blocked from within the Army-dominated MND, which was charged with realising the reform plans, because of concerns that a large-scale reduction in defence spending, and especially a downsizing of the ground forces, would lead to unemployment among former officers.[40] In the light of these failures, in 2007, progressive President Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2008) had the Defense Reform Office (DRO) established within the MND to plan and implement his 'Defense Reform 2020', which was enacted in 2006 and was to be the most comprehensive defence reform program in the history of the ROK armed forces.[41]

However, the situation changed sharply when a conservative government with different ideas on defence reform took power. Under the conservative Lee Myung-bak government (2008–2013), D.R. 2020 was effectively scrapped. Under the impression of two high-profile violent North Korean provocations in 2010, the sinking of the Navy vessel *Cheongan* in March and artillery shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November, President Lee declared that his predecessor's reform attempts had failed and replaced it with the 'Defense Reform 307

[37] Larry J. Diamond, and Doh Chull Shin (eds.), *Institutional Reform and Democratic Consolidation in Korea* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).
[38] Sanghyun Yoon, 'South Korea's Kim Young Sam Government: Political Agendas', *Asian Survey* 36/5 (1996), 511–22.
[39] Min Yong Lee, 'South Korea: From "New Professionalism" to "Old Professionalism"', in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Military Professionalism in Asia: Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives* (Honolulu: East-West Center 2001), 47–60.
[40] Kim, 'The Conditions for Successful Civilian Control over the Military in New Democracies: The Case of South Korea', 170.
[41] Bennett, *A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan*; Hwee Rhak Park, 'South Korea's Failure to Implement "Defense Reform 2020"', *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 12/2 (2014), 379–401.

Plan'.[42] The Lee Myung-bak government appointed General Lee Sang-hee, who as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under the Roh Moo-hyun government had formulated the D.R. 2020, as defence minister. Faithful to the principle of civilian supremacy, Minister Lee followed his president's orders, discarded the D.R. 2020 and became an advocate of the '307 Plan'.[43] While the major institutional goals of the D.R. 2020 were unaltered even under the new reform, at the core of the '307 Plan' was the strengthening of the position of the Chairman of the JCS, who would become the operational and administrative superior of the service chiefs. In consequence, under the '307 Plan' the JCS chairman would have rivalled the defence minister's authority, which caused criticism of violating the Constitution and favouring the Army at the expense of other services.[44]

In 2013, conservative President Park Geun-hye (2013–2017) proposed the 'Defense Reform 14–30 Plan', which was mainly a continuation of her predecessor's plan and merely included cosmetic changes in the planning for the transfer of operational wartime command in the US-ROK military alliance. No progress was made in the reduction of troop numbers and the rebalancing between the armed services until President Park was impeached in 2016.[45]

In 2018, progressive President Moon Jae-in (in office since 2017) announced 'Defense Reform 2.0' as a further development of D.R. 2020. Its main goals are stated as strengthening the military's capabilities to counter asymmetric threats from North Korea; an early return of wartime operational control from the U.S. to Korea; a further strengthening of civilian control of military affairs; eliminating procurement-related fraud and further developing a domestic defence industry; and improving human rights and service conditions especially for enlisted soldiers.[46] To address South Korea's low birth rates, the total size of the armed forces is to be reduced from 618,000 to 500,000, which also includes a cut in the number of generals and admirals by 100.[47]

These wide-ranging changes were criticised by important segments of the military leadership, and especially by the Army, which would have had to bear the brunt of the personnel reductions.[48] It is too early to evaluate the fate of President Moon's defence reforms. Some progress in restructuring the armed forces has been made, as evidenced by the successful integration of the First Field Army and the Third Field Army into the Ground Operation Command in

[42]Bruce W. Bennett, 'The Korean Defense Reform 307 Plan', AsianInstitute for Policy Studies, 2011.http://en.asaninst.org/wp-content/themes/twentythirteen/action/dl.php?id=25331.
[43]Jong-dae Kim, 'Controversy over Defense Reform 2020', *Monthly Chosun*, Jan. 2009, http://monthly.chosun.com/client/news/viw.asp?nNewsNumb=200901100011.
[44]Park, 'South Korea's Failure to Implement "Defense Reform 2020"', 389.
[45]Chun, 'Korean Defense Reform: History and Challenges'.
[46]Chun, 'Korean Defense Reform: History and Challenges'.
[47]Chang-kwoun Park, 'The Moon Jae in Administration's Defense Reform 2.0: Direction and Considerations', *ROK Angle: Korea's Defense Policy* no. 184 (2018).
[48]Kim and Lee, 'Analysis and Evaluation', 129–32.

2019.[49] In light of the military's initial resistance to the implementation of D.R. 2020 this must be interpreted as a meaningful achievement. However, just like the Moon Jae-in government discarded the direction of force building set by the previous conservative government, there is no doubt that a conservative party, if it takes power after the end of Moon's tenure, will thwart the progressive government's attempts to reconfigure the command structure through the DR 2.0. Because it is not likely for conservative and progressive politicians to break this vicious cycle due to political polarisation, too much optimism might be misplaced.

Conclusion

Thirty years after the democratic election of the first civilian president after decades of military rule, South Korea has developed a consolidated and stable democracy. Civilian supremacy over the formerly all-powerful military is established in principle and practice. Even the MND, traditionally a bastion of active-duty officers, has undergone a thorough civilianisation such that today more than 70% of all its employees are civilians. Moreover, the majority of MND bureaus are civilian-dominated. However, our in-depth analysis of the MND-internal decision-making processes has shown that the institutional design of the MND still caters to the interests of the military. Decisions on strategy and doctrine formulation, joint coordination, military promotion, and military education are controlled by the JCS and the service headquarters. Moreover, civilian-dominated bureaus within the MND are of relatively marginal relevance to the military's core institutional interests, while the military maintains control over the processes of defence reform. The two MND bureaus in charge of planning and implementing defence reform are the most heavily militarised in the whole MND. This has given the military an institutional foothold to ensure their interests in the defence reform process, including the crucially important military command structure reform.

However, the lack of progress in 30 years of command structure reform is also due to the role of civilian politicians, especially the differences between conservative and progressive governments and between the president and the legislature. Given wide-spread consensus that command structure reform is necessary to ensure military effectiveness and efficiency in the light of potential alterations in the ROK-US alliance, rapid changes in technology, and South Korea's demographic development,[50] this raises the question how the necessary changes could be achieved, and command structure reform could succeed.

[49]Kwon, 'National Defense', 167.
[50]Park, 'The Moon Jae in Administration's Defense Reform 2.0: Direction and Considerations'; Kim and Lee, 'Analysis and Evaluation of Factors Affecting the Success of Defense Reforms: Focusing on Major Defense Reform Cases Since the Roh Tae-Woo Administration (in Korean)'.

Disregarding a fundamental change in the institutional structures of defence reform policymaking, which are unlikely in the foreseeable future, we see three factors that are crucial for realizing the ambitious goals of any force and command structure reform. First, force and command structure reform must be bolstered by sufficient resources to fund technological upgrades and to signal to military officers that it does not necessarily mean material losses or a reduction of defence readiness. Previous reform attempts had been insufficiently funded to finance the technological and structural changes in the ROK armed forces, giving defence officials an "excuse of there being a limited defence budget to reduce the scope of reform and the speed of change".[51] The need to provide sufficient resources also relate to proper civilian education opportunities in military and defence affairs. Not only will this help balancing the lack of civilian expertise in military-technical affairs outlined above, but also might foster the development of greater civilian cohesion within the MND. In fact, contrary to military personnel sharing strong esprit de corps, civilians in each MND department are not a cohesive collective body. They have never been educated and trained together in pursuit of consolidating civilian dominance over the military before taking positions in the MND.

Second, civilians, especially the president who in South Korea's political system is extremely powerful, need to press for force and command structure reforms. In the past, presidents had initiated ambitious reform plans yet failed to maintain the momentum throughout their term, such that implementation got stuck in institutional inertia.[52] What has made the situation worse is the incongruity of the defence reform plans suggested by conservative and progressive governments, respectively. As the evaluation of North Korea's military threats and the strategic importance of the South Korea-U.S. alliance changes according to the administration's ideological orientation, the military comes to have the opportunity to reverse the direction of force and command structure reform whenever the government changes. Despite the importance of security in South Korea, politicians have not agreed on what type of command structure is needed to achieve security. For one thing, civilian governments of both ideological camps, have preferred a united force command structure to the current joint force command structure in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. However, politicians in the legislature have been concerned that a unified structure in which one military leader monopolises command over the entire military will weaken civilian control, thus crippling the government's reform policy toward a unified command structure. For another thing, conservative and progressive governments have different security perspectives.

[51]Park, 'South Korea's Failure to Implement "Defense Reform 2020"', 388.
[52]Kim and Lee, 'Analysis and Evaluation of Factors Affecting the Success of Defense Reforms: Focusing on Major Defense Reform Cases Since the Roh Tae-Woo Administration (in Korean)'; Kwon, 'National Defense', 174.

Conservative politicians believe that the U.S. military war-time command control over the South Korean military is a necessary condition to deter North Korean threats and thus want to maintain the Combined Forces Command (CFC) based on the ROK-U.S. military alliance. This view was consistent with the Army's understanding that South Korea should strengthen the Army first, relying on the U.S. military to provide naval and air power. On the contrary, progressive politicians tend to contend that the U.S. Forces in South Korea (USFS) threaten North Korea's security. Therefore, progressive governments have sought to turn the CFC into a more independent force command based on a nationalist discourse. Because each civilian government proposed a different blueprint for achieving security according to their respective ideological orientation, civilians encouraged the military to discard defence reform policies implemented by the previous administration whenever the governments changed, thus making defence reform policies return to the status quo in the long run.

Third, and closely related, veto points and vested interests within the defence administration need to be identified and circumnavigated, for instance by establishing an independent reform committee external to the MND. This strategy has been used by President Roh Moo-hyun when he concentrated foreign and defence decision-making in the presidential secretariat and the NSC, and thus outside of the traditional institutional channels prone to foot-dragging.[53] However, original plans by the Moon Jae-in administration to put responsibility for defence reform into the hands of a Special Committee for Defense Reform directly under the president, were 'cancelled [. . .] a few months later and instead [the president] decided to let the MND lead the reform. This meant the MND was to set to execute agendas for the reform as had been the cases in most previous ROK administrations'.[54]

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the editors of this Special Issue and the anonymous reviewer for their kind suggestions that helped improving this paper. Special thanks are due to Sophia Merkel for excellent research assistance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

[53]Bruce E. Bechtol, 'Civil-Military Relations in the Republic of Korea', *Korea Observer* 36/4 (2005), 603–30.
[54]Kwon, 'National Defense', 168.

References

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz, 'Two Faces of Power', *The American Political Science Review* 56/4 (1962), 947–52. doi:10.2307/1952796.

Bae, Jong-yun, 'Korean Foreign and National Security Policy: Actors, Structure, and Process', in Chung-in Moon and M. Jae Moon (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Korean Politics and Public Administration* (London: Routledge 2020), 144–59.

BAI, (ROK Board of Audit and Inspection), *Actual Condition of Defense Civilisation* (Seoul: National Audit Report 2018).

Bechtol, Bruce E., 'Civil-Military Relations in the Republic of Korea', *Korea Observer* 36/4 (2005), 603–30.

Bennett, Bruce W., *A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan* (Santa Monica: RAND 2006).

Bennett, Bruce W. 'The Korean Defense Reform 307 Plan', Asian Institute for Policy Studies, 2011. http://en.asaninst.org/wp-content/themes/twentythirteen/action/dl.php?id=25331.

Borg, Ingwer, Patrick J. F. Groenen, and Patrick Mair, *Applied Multidimensional Scaling and Unfolding* (Heidelberg: Springer 2018).

Bruneau, Thomas C., and Richard B. Goetze, 'Ministries of Defense and Democratic Control', in Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott D. Tollefson (eds.), *Who Guards the Guardians and How. Democratic Civil-Military Relations* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2006), 71–100.

Chun, In-Bum. 'Korean Defense Reform: History and Challenges'. The Brookings Institution, 2017. https://www.brookings.edu/research/korean-defense-reform-history-and-challenges.

Diamond, Larry J., and Doh Chull Shin (eds.), *Institutional Reform and Democratic Consolidation in Korea* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press 2000).

Feaver, Peter D., *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard UP 2003).

Freedom House, '2022 Freedom in the World', 2021. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world.

Hamm, Taik-Young, *Arming the Two Koreas: State, Capital and Military Power* (London: Routledge 1999).

Han, Yong-sup, 'Analyzing South Korea's Defense Reform 2020', *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 18/1 (2006), 111–34. doi:10.1080/10163270609464101.

Hong, Doo-Seung, 'The Military and Civil Society in Korea', in Giuseppe Caforio, Gerhard Kümmel and Bandana Purkayastha (eds.), *Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution: Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 7. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing 2008), 239–56.

Huntington, Samuel P., *The Soldier and the State. The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Belknap 1957).

Kim, Wooksung, 'The Conditions for Successful Civilian Control Over the Military in New Democracies: The Case of South Korea', *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 24/4 (2008), 151–75.

Kim, Jong-dae, 'Controversy Over Defense Reform 2020', *Monthly Chosun* (Jan. 2009). http://monthly.chosun.com/client/news/viw.asp?nNewsNumb=200901100011.

Kim, Kijoo, 'Post-Cold War Civil-Military Relations in South Korea: Toward a Postmodern Military?' State University of New York, 2009. http://ubir.buffalo.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10477/133/Kim_buffalo_0656A_10210.pdf?sequence=1.

Kim, Insoo, 'Political Transition and Promotion Practice: The Case of the South Korean Army', *Res Militaris* 9/2 (2019), 1–15.
Kim, Insoo, and Wonkwang Jo, 'The Effects of Joint Education Programs on Cohesion Among South Korean Military Academy Cadets', *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 26 (1 Dec. 2014), 505–19.
Kim, Kiwon, and Sanghyun Lee, 'Analysis and Evaluation of Factors Affecting the Success of Defense Reforms: Focusing on Major Defense Reform Cases Since the Roh Tae-Woo Administration (In Korean)', *Korean and Japanese Military Culture Studies* 29/29 (2020), 115–43. doi:10.47563/KJMC.29.5.
KLRI, 'Ministry of National Defence Organization Act', 2018. https://law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=83244#0000.
KLRI, 'Act on the Establishment of the Korea Army Academy at Youngcheon', 2019. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=43590&type=part&key=13 .
KLRI, 'Act on the Organization of National Armed Forces', 2019. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=26880&type=part&key=13.
KLRI, 'Government Organization Act', 2019. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=44197&type=sogan&key=15.
Knoke, David, Political Networks: The Structural Perspective. *Transferred to Digital Printing*. Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1994).
Korea Military Academy, *The 50 Years History of Korea Military Academy* (Seoul: Korea Military Academy 1996).
Kuehn, David, 'Reforming Defense and Military Policy-Making in South Korea, 1987–2012', in Aurel Croissant and David Kuehn (eds.), *Reforming Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies: Democratic Control and Military Effectiveness in Comparative Perspectives* (Heidelberg: Springer 2017), 151–69.
Kuehn, David, and Philip Lorenz, 'Explaining Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies: Structure, Agency and Theory Development', *Asian Journal of Political Science* 13/5 (2011), 231–49.
Kwon, Younggeun, 'National Defense', in Chung-in Moon and M. Jae Moon (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Korean Politics and Public Administration* (London: Routledge 2020), 160–76.
Lee, Min Yong, 'South Korea: From "New Professionalism" to "Old Professionalism"', in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Military Professionalism in Asia: Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives* (Honolulu: East-West Center 2001), 47–60.
Lee, Cheol-ho 'Lee Cheol-Ho's Column'. *Joong-an Ilbo*. 9 Jan. 2019. https://news.joins.com/article/23273721.
MND, ROK, 'MND Phone Directory', 2021. https://www.mnd.go.kr/cop/dept/deptInfo2.do?siteId=mnd&id=mnd_060501000000.
Moon, Chung-in, 'Democratization, National Security Politics and Civil-Military Relations: Some Theoretical Issues and the South Korean Case', *Pacific Focus* 4/2 (1989), 5–22. doi:10.1111/j.1976-5118.1989.tb00068.x.
Mukherjee, Anit, 'Educating the Professional Military: Civil–military Relations and Professional Military Education in India', *Armed Forces & Society* 44/3 (2018), 476–97. doi:10.1177/0095327X17725863.
Paek, Jae Ok, 'Analysis of 2021 ROK Defense Budget and Its Policy Implications', *ROK Angle: Korea's Defense Policy* 232 (2021). http://www.kida.re.kr/cmm/viewBoardImageFile.do?idx=29643.
Park, Seok-ho 'The Ministry of National Defense is the Ministry of Defending the Army (In Korean)'. *Busan Ilbo*, 3 May 2001.

Park, Won-gon, 'The U.S. Carter Administration and Korea in the 12/12 Incident: Concession of Moral Diplomacy', *Korean Social Science Review* 2/2 (2012), 259–60.
Park, Hwee Rhak, 'South Korea's Failure to Implement "Defense Reform 2020"', *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 12/2 (2014), 379–401.
Park, Chang-kwoun, 'The Moon Jae in Administration's Defense Reform 2.0: Direction and Considerations', *ROK Angle: Korea's Defense Policy* no. 184 (2018).
Pion-Berlin, David, 'Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America', *Comparative Politics* 25/1 (1992), 83–102.
ROK Army, 'The Period of ROK National Defense Security Force Establishment', 2021, https://www.army.mil.kr/webapp/user/indexSub.do?codyMenuSeq=219076&siteId=english.
Saxer, Carl J., 'Generals and Presidents: Establishing Civilian and Democratic Control in South Korea', *Armed Forces & Society* 30/3 (2004), 383–408.
Seawright, Jason W., 'The Case for Selecting Cases That are Deviant or Extreme on the Independent Variable', *Sociological Methods & Research* 45/3 (2016), 493–525.
Shin, Kyu-jin 'A Serious Conflict Between Soldiers and Civilians, and Between Officers and NCOs (Korean)'. *Dong-A Ilbo*, 30 Mar. 2021, https://www.donga.com/news/Opinion/article/all/20210329/106145835/1 (Korean)https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=26880&type=part&key=13.
Yoon, Sanghyun, 'South Korea's Kim Young Sam Government: Political Agendas', *Asian Survey* 36/5 (1996), 511–22.

Appendix

Table A1. Military-Civilian personnel ratios in 21 departments of the MND.

ID	Unit	MC	MPCP
1	Office of the Minister	1.20	2.00
2	Office of Spokesperson	0.48	1.14
3	Policy Advisor to Minister	0.60	0.33
4	Military Structure Reform Bureau	9.09	9.50
5	Defence Management Reform Bureau	1.67	2.00
6	General Counsel Bureau	1.25	1.31
7	Inspection Bureau	0.23	0.42
8	General Service Division	0.20	0.60
9	Planning and Management Bureau	0.18	0.30
10	Programming and Budgeting Bureau	0.07	0.03
11	Information and Planning Bureau	0.44	0.91
12	Policy Planning Bureau	1.32	1.83
13	International Policy Bureau	0.92	0.70
14	North Korea Policy Bureau	1.00	1.91
15	Personnel Planning Bureau	0.88	2.05
16	Mobilisation Planning Bureau	0.29	0.60
17	Health and Welfare Bureau	0.43	0.52
18	Logistics Management Bureau	0.85	1.23
19	Military Installation Planning Bureau	0.21	0.44
20	Military Force Policy Bureau	0.84	1.67
21	Military Airbase Relocation Bureau	0.71	0.55

MC: ratio of military to civilian personnel; MPCP: ratio of military professional (major or above) to civilian professional (Grade 5 or above). Data as of May, 2021. Source: Authors calculations based on MND, 'MND Phone Directory'.

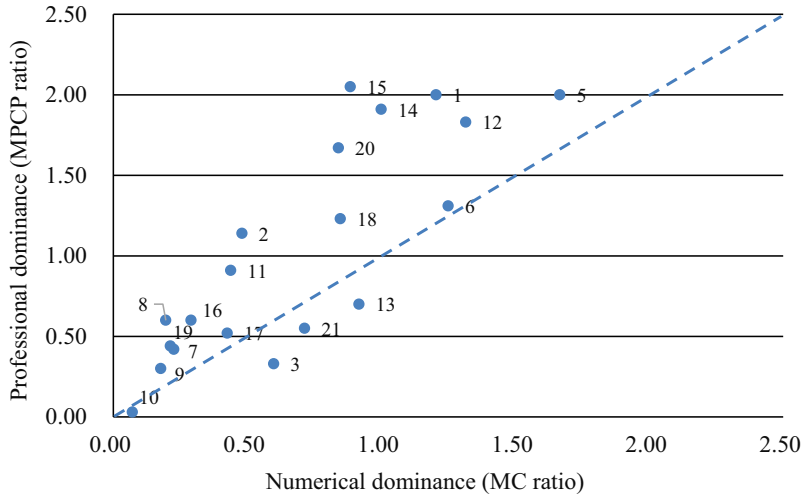

Figure A1. Distribution of MND bureaus by numerical and professional dominance, without extreme cases. Source: The authors based on data from MND, 'MND Phone Directory'.