



# Against Nationalism: The Positive Role of Civic Virtue in Military Ethics

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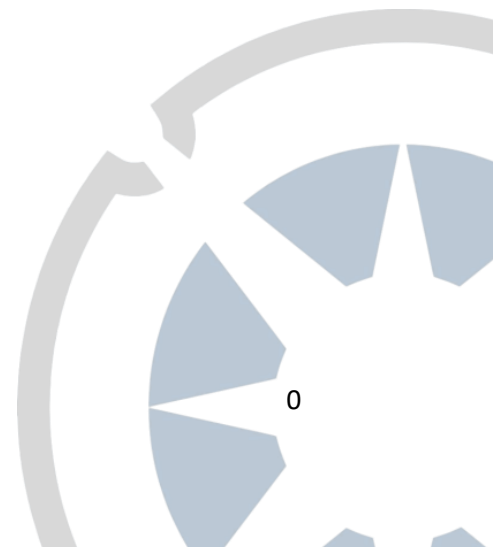
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# **Against Nationalism: The Positive Role of Civic Virtue in Military Ethics**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between civic virtue, military service, and nationalism. One of the central concerns is the troubling affinity between military

service and destructive forms of nationalism. The solution I develop is to frame military service in a way that drives a wedge between military servicemembers and the ultranationalist leaders who might seek to misuse armed forces for domestic domination and international expansion. In particular, military service should be centered around the citizen-soldier. With its roots in classical republicanism, the ideal citizen-soldier embodies both civic and martial virtues. Those two sets of virtues balance one another, and it is the former that ensures the citizen-soldier is not susceptible to the destructive allure of ultranationalists. I will explain how civic virtue is the most effective antidote against ultranationalism. Civic virtue consists of dedication to democratic republican norms and the rule of law – two things that ultranationalists undermine in their bid to dominate and expand. An armed force of citizen-soldiers that embodies civic virtue would not serve as an instrument of blind obedience to a nationalist leader.

In the course of this paper, I will turn to a well-known champion of civic republicanism, Niccolò Machiavelli, to understand the link between civic virtue and military service. Machiavelli praised the citizen-soldier for their role in defending the freedom and security of their republic. However, as Claire Snyder-Hall points out, Machiavelli does not consider the vicious side of military service. After considering Snyder-Hall's critique of Machiavelli and her attempt to rehabilitate the citizen-soldier tradition, I hope to offer some specific recommendations for framing military service in a way that promotes civic virtue. How servicemembers conceive of themselves and their role in society is critically important for civic virtue. When I talk about framing military service, I am focused primarily on the training, education, and development of servicemembers at military academies. I argue that those entrusted with educating and developing servicemembers should avoid appealing to particularly militaristic identities, such as the warrior ethos, and instead focus on the practices that instill discipline. Additionally, those educating and developing servicemembers should promote loyalty to the institutions that enshrine democratic republican ideals and guarantee the rule of law. Any orders that threaten those institutions should be considered beyond the limits of obedience. Knowing when to disobey and deliberating upon what form disobedience should take is a complicated matter that requires practical wisdom. Therefore, military academies must create an environment that allows servicemembers to exercise their judgment and cultivate practical wisdom.

I want to acknowledge that this paper is particularly indebted to Claire Snyder-Hall's book, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors*. In many ways, this paper is an adaptation of the argument she makes in that book. She recognizes, as I do, that military service is a double-edged sword that can cut towards either virtue or vice. We are concerned with ensuring military service promotes virtue – civic virtue, in particular – and avoids vice. However, we focus on slightly different vices. Her main focus is the vice that comes from *armed masculinity*, a precarious type of masculinity produced through military service that is misogynistic and homophobic. As such, it leads to the oppression, domination, and political exclusion of women and homosexuals. She wants to rehabilitate the citizen-soldier tradition in a way that eliminates these features which contribute nothing to military effectiveness. While I agree with most of Snyder-Hall's analysis, I specifically focus on the vices that make military service compatible with ultranationalism. To her credit, she does briefly mention how the vices of *armed masculinity* often end with "nationalistic military conquest" (Snyder-Hall 159). My aim is to better understand the dangers of nationalism and rehabilitate the concept of the citizen-soldier to be immune from those dangers.

## **The Varieties of Nationalism**

First, I will explain how I mean by nationalism. This is a complicated matter because there are many competing theories of nationalism. In his book, *Varieties of Nationalism*, Louis Snyder writes that nationalism is obscured by an "almost impenetrable intellectual smog" because of

innumerable contradictions (Snyder 3). The best way to see through this fog is to recognize that there are many varieties of nationalism and concentrate on those that present the biggest threat to peace and stability. For this reason, I focus on irredentist and pan-nationalist movements that feature a component of ethnic or racial identity. In another book, Louis Snyder describes pan-nationalist movements as forms of macro-nationalism which stand in contrast to forms of “mini-nationalism.” Mini-nationalist movements occur when a distinct community wants to break away from the state and establish its own state. They strive for independence and self-determination through revolution. If they achieve independence, they cease to be a mini-nationalist movement when they are recognized as their own nation-state. Macro-nationalism represents the nationalist movements of established states who seek to unite the territories upon which people who share a common identity dwell. These movements exhibit “an aggressive impulse seeking to extend control over contiguous or non-contiguous territory” wherever a diaspora, or irredenta, exists. Louis Snyder writes, “Macro-nationalisms differ in infrastructures, but almost always there is an element of domination – the mother nationalism demands control of her children everywhere,” (Snyder 1984, 3-4).

Militarism is inherent to macro-nationalism. Militarism is an expression of the aggressiveness and expansionism of these movements that aim to unite groups of people that live in the territory of other states. This, of course, requires invasion, conquest, and annexation. According to Louis Snyder, these movements are doomed to fail. He points to pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism as two examples of aggressive macro-nationalist movements that wrought havoc in Europe and failed spectacularly. In spite of seemingly inevitable failure, macro-nationalism persists (Snyder, 1984, 4-5). Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is the most recent reemergence of pan-Slavism. By almost every measure, Russia is worse off because of their invasion. Their military strength is significantly diminished as is their ability to defend their own territory if necessary. Aside from being a blatantly illegal war of aggression, it has been costly and produced no benefit to Russia.

Stephen Saideman and William Ayres examine the costs of these types of wars and why nationalist leaders are willing to engage even when they are aware of the low probability of success. They write, “Irredentist wars produce tremendous costs for both aggressors and defenders, with considerable danger for the state attempting to regain ‘lost’ territories and populations,” (Saideman & Ayres 2). Saideman and Ayres argue that ultranationalist leaders are willing to start irredentist wars and risk the full collapse of their state if it provides them a political advantage. Ultranationalists are motivated by domestic factors and are significantly less concerned by international pressure (Saideman & Ayres 12). What Saideman and Ayres make clear is that ultranationalists often act irrationally for their own political benefit and with little regard for the stability of the state or the welfare of the people. In their rhetoric, they may refer to the common good of the nation, but that is simply rhetoric.

Hannah Arendt recognized how pan-nationalists used rhetoric to justify their aggression. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, referring to pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism, she writes, “The Germanic peoples outside the Reich and our minor Slavonic brethren outside Holy Russia generated a comfortable smoke screen of national rights to self-determination, easy steppingstones to further expansion,” (Arendt 226). She also points to another destructive feature of pan-nationalists – their “open disregard for law and legal institutions,” (Arendt 243). Nationalists undermine international institutions that facilitate cooperation, and they chip away at domestic institutions that guarantee the rule of law. It may seem intuitive why nationalists want to undermine international institutions such as the United Nations or NATO. These organizations represent the globalist worldview that nationalists vilify for supposedly impinging on national sovereignty.

It is less intuitive why ultranationalists aim to erode domestic legal institutions especially when so many emphasize the importance of law and order. In using the rhetoric of law and order, ultranationalists are more concerned with order, namely imposing a certain order that restricts the rights of citizenship to those who share an ethnic or racial identity and excluding others. In order to do this, they must corrupt, or as Arendt puts it, pervert the state and the rule of law. She writes,

“Nationalism is essentially the expression of this perversion of the state into an instrument of the nation and the identification of the citizen with the member of the nation,” (Arendt 231). Here, the nation refers to the group of people who share some ethnic, racial, linguistic, or cultural identity. Nationalists leverage identity politics to exclude and persecute others who do not share that identity. Anyone who does not share that identity is seen as a threat and described as an enemy. The nationalist’s aggression is rooted in a belief that they are surrounded by enemies who are trying to undermine the purity of their national identity (Arendt 227). These enemies take many forms. In some instances, enemies are citizens who defy cultural norms such as sexual orientation or gender identity. Nationalist leaders demonize these groups to instill feelings of disgust and resentment in the masses towards those groups. Immigrants are cast as enemies who threaten the supposed cultural and linguistic superiority of the nation. Other states are also seen as enemies and particularly those states in which members of their group live.

The rule of law includes checks and balances that ensure no group can dominate another group. This poses an obstacle because at the root of these macro-nationalist movements is a drive to dominate. Pan-nationalists seek to dominate and oppress minority groups at home, and then, they turn their sights abroad. Macro-nationalism is best characterized as an agenda of domestic and international domination. Macro-nationalist movements are led by people who are primarily concerned with their own political power and act to the detriment of the common good.

### **Civic Virtue and Military Service**

Civic virtues are those characteristics that define excellent, active citizens of a republic or a political system that allows for a relatively high degree of self-governance (Burt 361). Civic virtues are typically associated with classical republicanism, a political tradition that is vigilant against forms of corruption and domination. Richard Dagger explains that of a virtuous citizen has six characteristics:

- 1) They respect individual rights.
- 2) They value autonomy.
- 3) They tolerate the beliefs of others.
- 4) They play fair.
- 5) They cherish civic memory.
- 6) They are active in the community (Dagger 196).

Many of these traits condense into the civic virtue par excellence, civility. We typically understand civility as an ability to maintain decorum and exercising restraint during disagreement. There is more to it than this. Civility is necessary to maintain the rule of law (Petit 245-250).

The dangers of nationalism that I mention above can be attributed to the absence of civic virtue and civility. The nationalist leader is the embodiment of the corruption that civic virtue is supposed to resist. The nationalist’s “open disregard for law and legal institutions” is antithetical to civic virtue and its reverence for the rule of law. At every turn, the nationalist leader seeks to dominate and hinder the autonomy of individuals whose group identity is different. They would fail to meet a single characteristic that Dagger attributes to a virtuous citizen. They do not respect individual rights or value autonomy. They are intolerant of different beliefs. They certainly do not play fair. They distort civic memory and promote mythical origin stories. They prefer their citizens (perhaps it would be more precise to say “their subjects”) to be passive because an active citizenry would reject their attempts to destroy the rule of law and oppress other members of the community.

My claim is that maintaining civic virtue and promoting civility could prevent the dangerous varieties of nationalism from emerging. However, many republicans from Machiavelli to Rousseau recognize that maintaining civic virtue in any population is difficult. How is it possible to maintain

these virtues or introduce them into a society where they do not already exist? Benjamin Barber suggests that participating in national service is one way of creating strong bonds amongst citizens and instilling civic virtue (Barber 298-305). Military service is one among many forms of national service. For Machiavelli, military service played an especially important role in forming civic virtue. He drew a strong connection between military effectiveness, self-governance, and the citizen soldier. He makes the connection apparent in *The Discourses* and *The Prince*. In *The Discourses*, he attributes the success of the Roman Republic to military virtue and equates military organization with a well-ordered society (Machiavelli 113). He suggests that a society and its laws reflect its military. Speaking more generally in *The Prince*, Machiavelli writes, "The principal foundations of all states, whether new, old, or mixed, are good laws and good arms, and since there cannot be good laws where there are not good arms, and where there are good arms, there are bound to be good laws..." (Machiavelli 38). One possible interpretation of this passage would be that there is some authoritarian aspect to military organization that lends itself well to establishing the authority of laws or perhaps vice versa. This is not the case. JGA Pocock explains that the connection between military organization and governmental effectiveness is grounded in freedom, but only if the society is well educated and embraces civic norms. He writes, "Freedom, civic virtue, and military discipline seem to exist in a close relation to one another," (Pocock 196). Those three things come together and are embodied in the citizen-soldier. Claire Snyder-Hall describes the citizen-soldier as the "linchpin" in Machiavelli's political framework (Snyder 18).

Machiavelli extols the citizen-soldier, strictly speaking. He had a deep distrust for professional soldiers and mercenaries and saw them as dangers to the republic. When war is a person's sole profession, they are more likely to be warmongers. The mercenary and professional soldier are happy to see wars persist so they can find purpose in exercising their craft. When "soldier" is the only identity a person has, they are likely to neglect the civic duties of a citizen. Focused strictly on the militant realm, they contribute nothing to the civic realm. Only the citizen-soldier fulfills both civic and military duties. The citizen-soldier has a profession other than war, and they have an identity other than soldier. They are eager to win a war as quickly as possible to return to their civic, as well as private, roles and responsibilities (Pocock 199-200). Their dual identity is mutually reinforcing as military service instills civic virtue, and civic virtue ensures that military service is truly in service of the public good.

How exactly does military service instill civic virtue? Ultimately, it is the practice of cooperating for a common goal that makes military service conducive to instilling civic virtue. Snyder-Hall writes, "Participation in the civic militia requires soldiers to act together for the common good and to sacrifice particular goods to universal ends. In this way military service forms a type of civic education that teaches individuals to act together for the common good during legislation. And in this way civic and martial virtue are interconnected," (Snyder 23). Citizen-soldiers "learn patriotism, selflessness, and fraternity, all of which coalesce into civic virtue." She explains that republican civic virtues can and do deteriorate into vice. This is especially likely when military service is the privileged form of service or civic activity. Patriotism deteriorates into nationalism; selflessness becomes blind obedience; fraternity becomes exclusion and xenophobia (Snyder 16). The soldier then withdraws from civil society and perhaps society at large. When this occurs, the military poses a threat to the very people it is supposed to defend. It is susceptible to becoming an obedient instrument of violence for a nationalist leader intent on destroying the rule of law, marginalizing minority groups, and embarking upon aggressive wars of expansion.

Military service is a double edge sword. On the one hand, it can instill the virtues that sustain a democratic republic, but on the other hand, it can lead to the vice and corruption in which the most dangerous varieties of nationalism thrive. What, then, is the difference between a military force comprised of citizen soldiers who embody civic virtue and a force comprised of soldiers who feel no civic responsibility and are isolated from society? How can we guarantee the former and avoid the latter?

## Toward Virtue

In this section, I suggest five practices to ensure military service works toward civic virtue. These suggestions aim to identify the key features of military service and isolate those which are unnecessary and detrimental. They focus on the character development of servicemembers and how they understand their service in relation to society at large. These practices would be most effectively enacted at military academies where the primary objective is training, educating, and developing servicemembers. In an effort to instill civic virtue in servicemembers, military academies should:

- 1) Focus on discipline, the military virtue that tempers self-interest for the benefit of the common good.
- 2) Avoid promoting militaristic identities, such as the warrior identity, which subvert discipline. Instead, focus on the practices and experiences necessary for instilling discipline.
- 3) Promote loyalty to institutions that guarantee the rule of law and enshrine democratic norms.
- 4) Emphasize the limits of obedience when a leader issues orders that undermine the rule of law.
- 5) Instill practical wisdom so officers can determine when and how to disobey illegal or immoral orders.

There is one military virtue that Snyder-Hall hints towards but does not explicitly state – discipline. Discipline is the cardinal martial virtue that connects military service to civic virtue. Max Weber discusses the importance of discipline for the modern military. He recognized that warfare of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was waged on a scale not previously seen. Development in techniques and technology required newly specialized training. The distance across which forces needed to be supplied, as well as the sheer quantity of supplies needed, was not possible under older forms of organization. It brought new demands that, according to Weber, required militaries to organize into bureaucracies (Weber, 1946; 221-222). He was particularly interested in the bureaucratic organization of the Prussian military. Intrigued by its effectiveness and efficiency, Weber concluded military discipline was the reason for the success of Prussian bureaucracy.

The type of discipline which is necessary for military effectiveness is also necessary for bureaucratic effectiveness. Overcoming individualism is necessary for a bureaucratic organization, and it is achieved through discipline which Weber suggests has its origins in military organization (Weber 1946; 255). Discipline produces the impartiality and, most importantly, the obedience necessary for a bureaucracy to fulfill its purpose. This is true in the military as well as any other administrative bureaucracy. In “Politics as Vocation,” Weber says discipline and obedience are important characteristics of any government official. The honor and reputation of civil servants depends on them faithfully obeying their leaders and impartially carrying out the administration of government. It is not within the scope of an official to engage in partisan politics to advance their own interest. To engage in the political “fight” would violate the honor of a civil servant and imperils the government. Weber writes, “Without this moral discipline and self-denial, the whole apparatus would fall to pieces,” (Weber, 1946; 95).

By connecting military effectiveness and governmental effectiveness through discipline, Weber draws the same connection as Machiavelli. Of course, the modern, bureaucratic state that Weber explored is a far cry from the Italian city-state that Machiavelli had in mind. Be that as it may, Weber offers an account that is more appropriate for the present day which provides a more tangible connection between the nature of the military and laws. Discipline, a central feature of any military organization, strengthens a republic by enabling citizens to set aside their personal interests in pursuit of shared goals and the common good.

Lieutenant General John Schofield sheds a different light on the connection between discipline and civic virtue. He was quoted saying, "The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment." General Schofield encourages leaders to be mindful of their tone and to treat servicemembers with respect. Doing so does not command obedience; it inspires obedience. This requires a heightened level of trust that only a citizen-soldier deserves because they serve the common good. They must be seen – and taught to see themselves – as rational agents and responsible citizens. They must be treated with dignity so they can see the dignity inherent to all others. None of this can be achieved through "harsh or tyrannical treatment."

General Schofield's words are particularly relevant for those who train, educate, and develop servicemembers. They are a reminder that one must be careful to instill the right kind of discipline in the right way. It is a process that must be done differently in a republic. There is another aspect to this process that I would add. Those entrusted with the training, education, and development of servicemembers should avoid cultivating distinctly militaristic identities. Barber and Snyder-Hall warn about the instability of certain identities. They are skeptical about conceptions of citizenship that are based on identity. Such conceptions of citizenship tend to be exclusionary and more prone to the vices of chauvinism and nationalism. It is best when citizenship is associated with civic practices. The same can be said about servicemembers – there does not need to be a strong identity associated with being a soldier. Discipline, and the practices that produce it, should be the primary focus.

Emphasizing certain identities can actually undermine discipline. Lieutenant Colonel Peter Fromm criticizes the United States Army's appeal to a warrior identity. In their training, soldiers cite the warrior ethos and are encouraged to think of themselves as warriors. The most recent Army recruiting efforts continue to glorify the warrior identity and even seek to expand its use. The idea of a warrior is antithetical to that of a citizen soldier. Fromm says that a warrior is "an advocate of war, one not only skilled but also bloody-minded and primitive...who fights for his own glorification, indulgence, and even visceral satisfaction," (Fromm 20). He further describes the warrior as unreliable and undisciplined. They might embody the type of virtue needed to win in combat, but they are completely lacking in the civic virtue of a citizen-soldier (Fromm 19-26). A warrior, with their passion for fighting, will not care what they fight for or whether it is for the common good. The warrior also embodies the counter-productive traits of masculinity that Snyder-Hall warns will lead to vice (Snyder 22-26). This "armed masculinity" is problematic because not only does it lead to the misogynistic exclusion of women, but it also engenders behaviors that are incompatible with military ethics.

Some might argue that cultivating a professional identity is an integral part in the development of servicemembers. The practices that lead to discipline might not be enough to forge a sense of camaraderie or esprit de corps. This is a legitimate concern for a military force where strong bonds of loyalty between members is necessary for unit cohesion. There are, however, other ways of achieving this cohesion while avoiding strongly militaristic identities. Appealing to common objects of love and loyalty strengthens cohesion. Promoting loyalty to institutions that enshrine democratic republican values is the most effective way of accomplishing this in a way that avoids the vices of nationalism. It is a way of achieving unit cohesion that limits the reliance upon national, ethnic, or militaristic identities that can be detrimental to democratic republican values. When developing servicemembers, emphasizing the importance of institutions that guarantee the rule of law ensures that the "citizen" remains in "citizen-soldier." A citizen-soldier who remains loyal to institutions and respects the rule of law is vigilant against threats to those institutions. Whereas soldiers are typically looking outward, focused on external enemies and ready to fight abroad, citizen-soldiers realize the most significant threats to institutions and the rule of law come from domestic enemies within. Corruption, misinformation, and the erosion of democratic norms are far more damaging than the bullets and bombs of foreign actors.



This might appear counter-intuitive to those who have fallen out of touch with the ideal of the citizen-soldier. Many believe that the only function of a soldier, like mercenaries, is to fight and win wars. This might be right, but a citizen-soldier has at least one other function: to support and defend the institutions that enshrine democratic values and guarantee the rule of law. Snyder-Hall expresses this pointedly when she writes, "Situating military service within a broad array of civic practices should remind us that a democratic society has a military not just to defend its borders but also to defend its democratic principles, including equality and participatory citizenship," (Snyder-Hall 8). When servicemembers in the United States take their oath, they are reminded of this. The oath is to the Constitution, and it recognizes the threats of both foreign and domestic actors. An oath to support and defend the Constitution is also an oath to support and defend those norms and institutions.

As outlined above, the nationalist leaders who pose the largest threat to domestic and international security begin by undermining the institutions necessary for the rule of law. Their efforts are facilitated when the military is sympathetic or complicit with their cause. Preventing that is the central concern of this paper. How do we prevent the military from being an instrument of blind obedience in the hands of a nationalist leader? Instilling civic virtue in the military, I argue, is the most effective way of accomplishing this while, at the same time, ensuring civilian control of the military. Civilian control of the military is a crucial institution that must also be preserved. That control is not absolute, though. Civilian control is only desirable when we assume that the civilians in control adhere to democratic norms and respect the rule of law. The fact of the matter is that assumption is no longer a safe one. I am not advocating that the military take drastic steps; it must still obey the rule of law. This does not mean, though, that it must be complicit in the corruption of nationalism. When confronted with a nationalist leader who issues orders that undermine the rule of law, disobedience is the citizen-soldiers most effective weapon. Although, to call it disobedience is misleading because, ultimately, they are upholding their oath. Disobedience, in this context, is a civic virtue insofar as it serves the common good.

Discipline and disobedience can coexist in the citizen-soldier. This points to an important qualification of Weber's thoughts on discipline, particularly his emphasis on obedience and self-denial. There are obvious dangers when soldiers are blindly obedient and unconditionally deferential. Understood in its relationship with virtue, obedience has its limits. Soldiers must still be able to act autonomously when obeying orders. Their agency can never be fully, or some would even say partially, relinquished. Pauline Shanks Kaurin relates obedience, in the military context, to Aristotelean virtue. If obedience is to be regulated by virtue, it must involve deliberation and reflection. More importantly, it must account for the goods at stake, namely the common good (Kaurin 62-72). An obedient citizen-soldier with civic virtue would have the good judgment to disregard any orders that betray the common good. They would not be complicit in any attempts to dominate others or subvert the rule of law.

This requires a degree of political literacy and historical awareness that comes with civic education. The steps nationalists take to subvert institutions and the rule of law are sometimes discreet and subtle. They slowly chip away at the rule of law as they gradually concentrate power. Citizen-soldiers must understand how civic institutions function, how the parties in civil society relate to one another, and how democratic norms are necessary for running a democratic republic. This knowledge, supplemented with an historical awareness of how nationalist leaders have succeeded in the past, enable citizen-soldiers to detect corruption and early efforts to pervert the state into an instrument of domination.

Merely understanding when a nationalist leader is corrupting the state is not enough. Citizen-soldiers must also know how to act in these situations. How and when do they disobey? What form does disobedience take? There are no regulations or rules that tell someone how to act in these circumstances. When there are no rules, practical wisdom guides action toward the common good. As such, civic virtue must also involve practical wisdom. Practical wisdom, in the civic realm, allows servicemembers to take stock of the political reality of a situation and act

appropriately. Practical wisdom is important because soldiers, who often rely heavily on doctrine and regulations to determine how to act in a given situation, are not often given the opportunity to exercise their own judgment. Consequently, they do not develop practical wisdom. This is especially true in many military academies where daily life is highly regimented and governed by extensive rules. The intent behind these rules is to promote uniformity and instill discipline. Is it the type of discipline about which General Schofield speaks, though? Perhaps it is. It might not constitute harsh or tyrannical treatment, but it fails to foster the practical wisdom that is so crucial for virtuous citizen-soldiers. Barry Schwartz explains that strict rules or fixed principles degrade practical wisdom. Rules and principles offer people an easy solution which prevents them from taking a look around, assessing the situation, and determining if and how those rules apply. He writes, "If rigid rules and dogmatic principles marginalize the practical wisdom we need to interpret and balance, we are prevented from choosing well," (Schwartz 128).

Not only does a reliance on rules prevent people from choosing well, but it also undermines autonomy and civility – two important ideals for civic republicanism. Philip Pettit explains that fostering respect for the rule of law is not simply a matter of instituting rules that govern every facet of public life. He warns that "heavy handed patterns of control" undermine the "autonomous mode of regulation" associated with civility and civic virtue (Pettit 253-254). A virtuous citizen feels an intrinsic duty to obey the rule of law. Introducing an expansive system of rules interferes, potentially shifting the source of motivation away from internal to external sources. If this occurs, and Pettit suggests that it is bound to, then citizens no longer act from a stable intrinsic duty but rather from a desire to avoid external coercion. This, in effect, robs a society of its civility and robs citizens of their dignity (Pettit 255). If a military academy also relies upon "heavy handed patterns of control," we can expect the same thing to occur. Future officers are unable to choose well on their own, especially in complex environments. Their autonomy is diminished, making it more likely that they follow ineffective rules or obey immoral orders. They are unable to differentiate between following rules and respecting the rule of law. For those entrusted with the task of training and educating future officers, the decisive mission is to foster practical wisdom and respect for the rule of law without overly relying on rules to regulate their behavior.

## **Conclusion**

The world witnessed the destructive force of fascism, militarism, and totalitarianism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Underlying those toxic ideologies are forms of ultranationalism that inspire blind obedience, unquestioning loyalty, and xenophobia. Nobody wants to repeat those mistakes, but some of the same disturbing patterns are reemerging. Decades of globalization and recent waves of immigration have triggered a nationalist backlash in many countries. Some exhibit the open disregard for legal institutions while others reveal the aggressive, expansionist tendencies of pan-nationalist movements. The conflicts in Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh are examples of pan-nationalist aggression. There are ultranationalist governments elsewhere in Europe which are actively working to undermine their democratic institutions. The United States is confronting its own challenges with white Christian nationalists. These groups played an important role in the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection in which scores of former military service members participated. This event re-exposed the troubling affinity between the dangerous varieties of nationalism and military servicemembers.

This paper explored one way of dissolving that dangerous affinity: cultivating civic virtue in servicemembers. It explained how, on the one hand, military service can be a form of civic education that leads toward virtue while, on the other hand, it can strengthen that affinity by producing vices that are compatible with ultranationalism. The difference between virtue and vice comes down to the way military service is framed and how its relationship to society is defined. I argued that reinvigorating the ideal of the citizen-soldier, and teaching servicemembers to see themselves as

such, is the best way to ensure servicemembers defend the rule of law against ultranationalist leaders.

The citizen-soldier has a type of discipline which enables them to overcome their self-interest in pursuit of shared goals and the common good. This contributes significantly to their civic virtue. The citizen-soldier is shaped by the education, habits, and practices that instill discipline; shared identities or attributes minimally influence how the citizen-soldier sees themselves. They do not associate with particularly militaristic identities or warrior ethos. They see themselves as an individual, a citizen of a free country, and a servicemember with a mission to accomplish. They are united with others by loyalty to shared democratic values and institutions that guarantee the rule of law. They understand the limit of obedience is reached when leaders issue orders to undermine those institutions. The citizen-soldier also has the sound judgment and practical wisdom to know how and when to disobey illegal orders. These are the types of servicemembers that military academies should strive to develop – servicemembers who are insusceptible to nationalist agendas and dedicated to preserving democratic institutions.

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