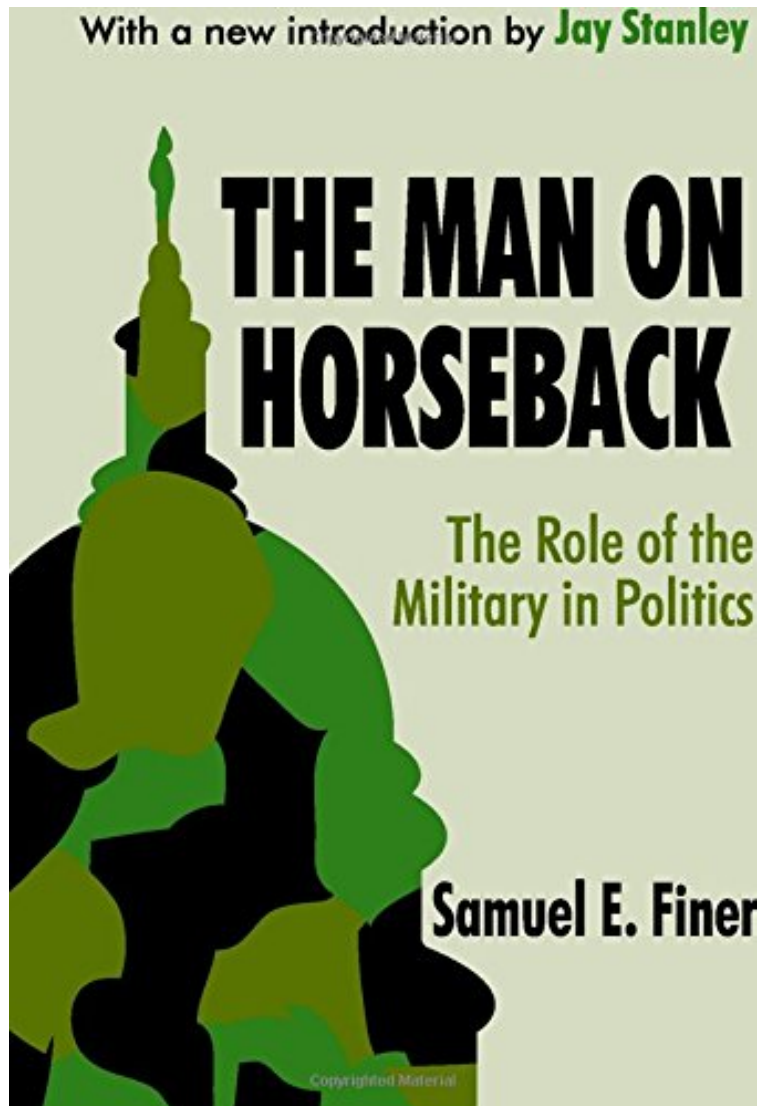


The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics

Samuel Finer

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Samuel Finer : The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Intelligent and informative, could have been better organized By Richard L. Scott In "The Man on Horseback," Samuel E. Finer discusses military intervention in civilian governments. Finer uses historical examples throughout the book to reinforce his thesis. This reader highly recommends Jay Stanley's introduction for an overview of Finer's personal background, the historical context and structure of the book. Finer organizes his book into twelve chapters. He sets up the those chapters by identifying four orders to political

culture (mature, developed, low, and minimal), each having corresponding levels of military intervention (influence, blackmail, displacement of civilian cabinets, and supplanting of a civilian regime) and then cites six modes of intervention (normal constitutional channels, collusion or competition with the civilian authorities, intimidation of the civilian authorities, threats of non-cooperation with or violence toward the civilian authorities, failure to defend the civilian authorities against violence, and outright violence against the civilian authorities). For Finer, everything interconnects in a way that results in six types of regime: civilian; indirect, limited; indirect, complete; dual; direct, military; and direct, quasi-civilianized. In chapter one, Finer lists a series of successful and failed military interventions and then draws two conclusions: The class of country where a military can intervene in government is distinct and the military as a political force is a distinct and peculiar phenomenon. Finer cites five factors (two primary and three derivative) which emerged from the French Revolution. Two primary factors are: nationalism and popular sovereignty; and three derivative factors are: popular armies, professionalization of armies, and colonial independence. Finer focuses chapters two and three on the military's political advantages and disadvantages. He cites three political advantages: superior organization, highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms. The political disadvantages of the military are technical inadequacy and a lack of legitimacy. Finer explains the modern army and its peculiarities when compared to civilian organizations, namely the particular features that come from its central purpose (to fight wars) in order to provide a context for the rest of the discussion. In chapters four and five, Finer discusses the factors concerning the disposition to intervene. These factors are motive (chapter 4) and mood (chapter 5). In the discussion of motive, Finer points out his disagreement with Huntington's claim that professionalism inhibits the motive to intervene. Finer believes that the understanding of civil supremacy is the most important factor and that military professionalism could in fact be a motive for military intervention. In chapter five, he discusses the elements of mood and the psychological aspect of frustration and how they factor into the military's ability to overthrow its civilian government. In chapter six, Finer discusses factors of intervention. These factors are an increased civilian dependence on the military and the popularity of the military. Finer identifies subjective and objective factors of intervention and lists several possible situations that may or may not set the stage for a military intervention. Chapters seven through eleven are structured as follows: In chapter seven, Finer discusses the four levels of political culture identified previously as well as the levels of intervention in countries of developed political culture. Chapters eight, and nine follow suit with an introduction of the levels of intervention for countries of low and minimal political culture respectively. In chapter ten, Finer introduces the four levels and six characteristic methods of intervention. In chapter eleven Finer ties all these levels and characteristics together to explain when and where military intervention in civilian government might take place and what types of regimes may result. Finer utilizes chapter twelve to address three reasons for military intervention and notes that military intervention is a characteristic of new, not older, states. Finer believes that there are four prospects for new states, civilian quasi-democracy, civilian 'open' democracy, civilian totalitarianism (communism), and military intervention. He apparently does not seem to believe a new state may become a full-fledged democracy from the start due to the low or minimal political culture of the new state. Finally, Finer raises the issue of when values should be addressed and answers by providing four points. First, the frequency of military intervention in a country is a proof that the society is politically immature and unfit for representative institutions; second, corporate self-interest of the military is a significant contribution to political immaturity; third, no matter what the motive, the result is always some form of corporate despotism; and fourth, one should be highly critical of the common excuses for military intervention. Finer summarizes by pointing out that sometimes, when civilian organizations and political structure are unable, the military may be the only organization that can govern.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Civil-military relations made clear
By Koo Tat Kee
The most important issues in the civil-military relations are covered thoroughly. Concepts are illustrated with a lot of examples, making the book informative and highly readable. Layman and students of politics alike are led to understand 'the role of the military in politics'.

“The Man on Horseback is ‘old school’ in ‘new clothes.’ In the current era of renewed interest in civil-military relations, it is important to revisit previous work on this important topic. Finer’s thesis is dynamic and raises a much needed ruckus in the civil-military debate....Indeed, the interdisciplinary nature and comparative features of *The Man on Horseback* makes it especially exciting and timely.” – Morten G. Ender, United States Military Academy

“Stanley’s masterful introduction paints a lively portrait of Finer’s life and work and instructs us all on the increasing relevance of Finer’s arguments. It will shake the complacency of those who do not know or cannot say when, why, and how militaries intervene in the politics of countries they are supposed to defend.” – James Burke, Texas AM University

About the Author Samuel E. Finer (1915-1993) was professor of government at Manchester University and Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford University. His published works include the monumental *The History of Government from the Earliest Times*. Jay Stanley, professor of sociology at Towson University, is a member of the advisory council of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, and on

the board of editors of its journal *Armed Forces Society*. He is the editor of *Essays on the Garrison State*, and co-editor of *Challenges in Military Health Care*, both published by Transaction.