

Latin American Civil-Military Relationships in a Historical Perspective¹

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ABSTRACT

Civil-military relationships constitute a crucial element in the transition to substantive democracy all over the world. During periods of authoritarianism or civil war, the military in Latin America has historically speaking been responsible for extensive violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Since the reintroduction of democracy in the region in the 1980s and 1990s, the military has gradually been brought back under civilian rule. The balance of power between military and civil political actors has shifted. But what is the relationship between the military and civilian governments today? Has the military regained its role as a protector of national borders, and lives a life isolated from the rest of society? Does it participate actively in combatting violence through the use of i.e. military police? Or does it continue to exercise violence against the citizens it is meant to protect?

Based on a review of the literature on civil-military relations in Latin America, this paper explores three main themes: (1) the military as a political actor; (2) the military as an economic actor; and (3) the military’s interaction with ordinary citizens.

¹ This paper forms part of a larger comparative research project entitled “Everyday Manoeuvres: Military-Civilian Relations in Latin America and the Middle East”, anchored at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen and headed by Nefissa Naguib. I thank Catalina Smulovitz for excellent suggestions for how to start digging into the extensive literature on civil-military relations in Latin America and Catalina Vallejo for valuable research assistance.

*“It would be inexcusable not to be prepared.
The raison d’etre of any army is to be ready to
defend the country from internal or external threats”.*²

1. Introduction

About fifteen years ago, Consuelo Cruz and Rut Diamint optimistically noted that “The tanks that not too long ago roamed the streets have vanished from sight, military uniforms seem passé and coups obsolete, and the era of the generals appears finally to have been consigned to the archives” (Cruz and Diamint, 1998). Their conclusion may have been overly optimistic. Although civilian governments dominate the Latin American continent today, the coups in Venezuela (2002), Honduras (2009) and Paraguay (2012) along with the failed coup attempts in Bolivia (2009) and in Ecuador in (2010) remind us that the military are still a force to be reckoned with in politics.³ The military in Latin America is notorious for its interference with civilian government. Indeed, the cyclic alternation of civilians and generals in high office in many countries dates back to the era of independence in the 1860s and 1870s. In more recent times, specifically the period 1970-1990, the Latin American continent was largely dominated by military governments – or suffering civil war.⁴ According to Brian Loveman “in 1979, over two-thirds of Latin America’s people were living under military rule. By 1993, however, not a single military regime remained in Central or South America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean” (Loveman, 1994).

As authoritarian regimes started to break down in the early 1980s, Latin America embarked on what has been referred to as the “third wave” of democracy (Huntington, 1991). Today, most governments in the region are classified as “democratic”, though exactly what this means is open to dispute. One overall trend in the region over the past two decades has been the gradual withdrawal of the military from politics and “back to the barracks”. But how firm is this retreat? To what extent is the military actually under civilian control? Broadening the concept of civil-military relations beyond the political realm: What is the relationship between the military and the civilian population today? Has the military regained its role as a protector of national borders, and lives a life isolated from the rest of society? Does it participate actively in combatting violence through the use of i.e. military police? Or does it continue to exercise violence against the citizens it is meant to protect?

Based on a review of (carefully) selected literature on civil-military relations in Latin America, this paper explores three main themes: (1) the military as a political actor; (2) the military as an economic actor (i.e. the control of natural resources, land, industry etc.); and (3) the military’s interaction with ordinary citizens (and the use of violence in times of peace and democracy). Before delving into these complex issues, a short note on the selection criteria for the literature reviewed in this paper is in order.

² Cited in (Loveman xxx: 144). Originally cited by Zagorski, 1992: 136-137).

³ Vicky Pelaez, “Coup d’etat in Paraguay: A blow to emerging democracy”, the Moscow news, 06/07/12, <http://themoscownews.com/international/20120706/189927018.html> (accessed 21.10.13).

⁴ Democratically governed Costa Rica, and the one-party states Cuba and Mexico are notable exceptions.

2. Selection criteria for literature reviewed

The purpose of this study is to provide a synthesis of how various literatures theorize the militaries' political, economic and social influence in Latin American societies.

The literature on the military and or/civil-military relations in Latin America is huge – and constantly growing. A crude measure of this is to check hits in Google scholar: “military Latin America” gives 1 230 000 hits; “Latin American military” gives 1 320 000 hits and “civil-military relations Latin America” 20 900 hits. “Civil-military” in combination with individual country names renders many thousands more hits. Needless to say, it is beyond the scope of this paper to give an exhaustive review of all existing literature on the topic. The task must be narrowed down. I have used a combination of three criteria as a point of departure for selecting the titles reviewed in this paper.

(i) Prominence in the field

First, there are some central scholars - considered experts in the field - whose work merit attention. They include, among many others, Felipe Agüero, Craig Arceneaux, Arturo Venezuela, Brian Loveman, Terry Lynn Karl, Philippe C. Schmitter, Guillermo O'Donnell, Alfred Stepan, David Pion-Berlin, Wendy Hunter, and Jorge Battaglini. Some of these scholars have followed the topic of civil-military relations for decades, and bring with them into their analyses the history of a long period of democratization. Other scholars are newer in the field, but have published extensively on the topic; either generally on various aspects of the military, or on the military in specific countries. I have selected a combination of seasoned and younger scholars, and used their citation index as criteria for inclusion in the reading list: In brief, the more cited, the more credible I assume the scholars are in the field. To avoid the fallacy of including only articles that get into the Google scholar citation system, though, I have also gone critically through the bibliography of around 20 widely cited books on the topic of civil-military relations and taken note of those entries that jointly seem to form the crux of this scholarly field.

(ii) Geographical focus

Second, this paper tries to locate the geographical focus of the literature that has shaped our knowledge on civil-military relations in Latin America. Countries in the region are not evenly studied. There is much work done on the militaries in Brazil (Hunter, 1997b), (Skidmore, 1988), (Stepan, 1989); Chile (Nunn, 1976, Huneus, 2007); Argentina ((Burns, 1987, Catterberg, 1991), (Huser, 2002), (Pion-Berlin, 1997) (Rozitchner, 1985)) (Valenzuela, 1986); and Peru (Ellsworth and Green, 1998). There is also quite a bit of comparative work on two or more of these four countries ((Desch, 1998) (Hunter, 1997a), (Hunter, 1998a), (North, 1966), (Pion-Berlin, 1998) (Stepan, 1988)), or the region in general (Remmer, 1989). By contrast, the militaries in Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela have received much less scholarly attention, as has the armed forces in Mexico. (Notable exceptions include, among others, (Isaacs, 1993), (Trinkunas, 2005), (Serrano, 1995), (Walter and Williams, 1993). Last on the list of scholarly attention is the military in Paraguay – in spite of having the longest lasting military regime in modern times.

The general pattern in the literature seems to be that the militaries in more institutionally and economically developed Southern Cone have been more prone to academic analysis than the militaries in other parts of Latin America. This suggests that many of the dominating/central debates on the military in democratization are cast in a particular light, namely that of transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic rule – leaving the transitions from armed conflict (El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia) or from one-party statism to multi-partyism (Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico) relatively understudied.⁵ It is worth bearing this potential bias in mind, as the militaries in the Southern Cone may have different characteristics from militaries elsewhere in the region and consequently may have played – and continue to play – a different role than the militaries in other kinds of post-transition contexts.

(iii) Key debates

Third, the literature search has been furthered narrowed to cover principally the key debates regarding civil-military relations that are relevant for the larger research project that this study forms a part of. In the Latin American context, the debates on civil-military relations centre principally on the military as a political and economic actor, and on the role of the military in the transitions to and consolidation of democracy. Debates that are not covered in this paper include the military's role in religion, specifically its link to the Catholic Church, and its role in food production.⁶

Finally, this review is basically limited to relevant titles in English, with a few Spanish language works being the exceptions. This means that there is much valuable literature in Spanish on civil-military relations written by Latin American scholars, and in particular scholarly writings on Brazil in Portuguese, that are left out of this review. Bearing these caveats in mind, we first turn to key issue number one in the literature on civil-military relations: that of the military in politics.

3. The Military and Politics

According to David Pion-Berlin, a veteran in the scholarly field of civil-military studies, the question of the conditions under which civilian leaders can or cannot establish effective

⁵ For instance, according to Mexico scholar Monica Serrano, "It was only with the uprising in Chiapas in January 1994 that the place of the armed forces in the liberalisation process entered the public debate. Since 1988 not only the debate and analysis of political change, but also the various proposals for political reform had practically ignored the question of the armed forces." SERRANO, M. 1995. The Armed Branch of the State: Civil-Military Relations in Mexico. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 27, 423-448.

⁶ The larger research project of which this study forms a part suggests that the military's role in the Middle East is closely linked to the role and power of religion and religious alliances. Since a cursory reading of the literature leaves me with the impression that this appears not to be the case in Latin America (which is predominantly Catholic, but with important enclaves of Protestantism/evangelisms), I have chosen to leave this out of the discussion here. Also, the military in the Middle East appears to have a much more prominent role in food production than its Latin American counterpart. See, for example, Dr. Zeinab Abul-Magd. 2013. "The Egyptian military in politics and the economy: Recent history and current transition status", CMI INSIGHT, October, No. 2, pp. 1-5. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.

control over their armed forces has been the main theme of the research field, from the origins of modern civil-military studies in comparative politics to the present (Pion-Berlin, 2011: 222).

The scholarship on the military in politics dates back to the 1950s, where Samuel Huntington's ground-breaking book, *The Soldier and the State*, set the tone for the debates on which much of more recent scholarship on civil-military relations draws (Huntington, 1957). In his discussion of the praetorian state, Amos Perlmutter defines the crux of the matter as follows: "Many civil-military combinations are possible: the army can take over the government with or without the consent of civilian politicians, on their behalf or against them, in order to eliminate one civilian group and establish another, or to eliminate rivals in the military" (Perlmutter, 1969: 382). Almost any scholarly discussion about the military in Latin America is intrinsically linked to discussions of democracy, democratic breakdown, democratization, and democratic consolidation. Perhaps not surprising, as most of the continent was governed by military governments in the 1970s and 1980s, giving way to civilian governments in the 1980s and 1990s. In spite of the recent democratic set-backs in the region briefly mentioned in the introduction, this overall, though greatly simplified, picture suggests that the military is "back in the barracks". A great deal of scholarship on the Latin American military has focused on the transitions from military to democratic rule (O'Donnell, 1986c, O'Donnell, 1986b), and in the wake of this, on the process widely referred to as "democratic consolidation" (Becker, 1999, Boeninger, 1997), (Diamond, 1999) (Linz, 1996a), (Linz, 1996b), (Mainwaring, 1992), (Valenzuela, 1992).

In this part, I deal with the following main issues which have been of particular concern to scholars working on the military in politics in a post-transition setting: (1) how the "modes of transition" affect and define military power; (2) how the process of democratic consolidation has been challenged by at least three contentious issues: (i) accountability for human rights violations; (ii) civilian attacks on military prerogatives; and (iii) civilian control over defense issues.

(1) Modes of transition and types of democracy

Inspired by the breakdown of authoritarian regimes that started in the Latin American region in the 1970s, scholars concerned with democracy were forced to rethink the definition of democracy itself. The Schumpeterian definition of political democracy as one in which citizens could freely choose between elites in regular and competitive elections turned out to be inadequate in the Latin American context. Terry Lynn Karl proposed to settle for a middle-range specification of democracy defined as "a set of institutions that permits the entire adult population to act as citizens by choosing their leading decision makers in competitive, fair and regularly scheduled elections which are held in the context of the rule of law, guarantees of political freedom, *and limited military prerogatives*" (Karl, 1990: 2) (italics mine).

It was believed that the type, or "mode", of transition would determine the relative power of the military in the new democracy, and hence the type and quality of democracy that was established. Karl operates with four main types of transition, where transition by rupture (like

the defeat of the Argentine military in the Malvinas war against Great Britain in 1982) would wield the least power to the military and so-called “pacted” transitions (where the military negotiated its way out of power, like in the case of Chile in 1990, where Pinochet lost free and fair elections and was forced to step down) would leave the military with most power vis-à-vis the democratic government after the transition (Karl, 1990). Pacted transitions dominated the continent. According to Loveman, “with the partial exception of Argentina during the early years of the Alfonsín regime, the birth of new democracies was made possible only (1) by conceding via “pacts of transfer,” formal or informal impunity for crimes committed in the name of national security, (2) by accepting military-imposed limitations on candidates, parties, and procedures in the transition elections, and (3) by observing significant constraints to the authority of the incoming governments. Nowhere in Latin America did transition to elected civilian government eliminate the principal constitutional, juridical, and political impediments to consolidating civilian-controlled constitutional democracy”(Loveman, 1994: 116).

Like Karl, many scholars writing at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s saw the balance between civilian and military forces as relatively static – and used this balance of power argument to speculate on democratic stability and the risk of democratic breakdown (O’Donnell, 1986c, O’Donnell, 1986b, O’Donnell, 1986a). But as observed by other scholars, this civil-military balance was all but stable (Hunter, 1997a), (Pion-Berlin, 1998). Changes in the balance of power brought new opportunities with respect to how the democratic government could challenge the military – for example in the field of human rights, without risking democratic breakdown (Skaar, 1999).

(2) Reigning in the military: The process of democratic consolidation

A central question of concern to scholars of Latin American democratization processes has from the onset of democratic transition to the present been to what extent the military is reigned in under civilian rule (Schedler, 1998) (Desch, 1999, Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux, 2000, Trinkunas, 2005). Different scholars use different terms here, such as establish “civilian control”, “civilian supremacy”, “civilian direction” (Bland, 1999). Irrespective of vocabulary, the crux of the matter is whether the military is willing to submit control and authority in areas where they feel that their interests, power, or integrity is at stake.

Alfred Stepan in the early period of transition identified three areas as potential areas of conflict between the armed forces and democratic governments: (i) accountability for human rights abuses committed against citizens under military rule; (ii) the policy-making processes whereby democratic political actors exert control over the military, and, (iii) the policy-making processes whereby democratic political actors establish criteria for the structuring of defence budgets and their post-allocation supervision (Stepan, 1988). Wendy Hunter echoes these ideas in her work. According to her, authority over the military has been established in different ways: by holding the military accountable for the human rights violations committed during the authoritarian period; determining the type and extent of institutional military

prerogatives that will be maintained under democracy; and deciding on which priority defense spending should have in the national budget (Hunter, 1998a:300).

Each of these three contentious areas listed by Stepan and Hunter has received extensive scholarly attention, either separately, or jointly, and will be discussed below.

(i) Human rights violations

One of the most contentious issues in transition from military rule to democratic rule in the region was how to deal with gross and systematic human rights violations committed by the military forces during periods of authoritarianism ((Correa Sutil, 1997, De Brito, 1997); (Loveman, 1994); (Roniger, 1999); (Zalaquett, 1989); (Panizza, 1995, Pion-Berlin, 1994, Pion-Berlin, 1998) (Walsh, 1996, Zalaquett, 1992). The argument that dominated the literature at the time of transition was that prosecuting the military for human rights violations would potentially provoke a new military coup and hence risk democracy (Correa Sutil, 1997). Indeed, in all of Latin America, only Argentina successfully prosecuted its army right after the transition to democracy, though this did provoke a series of unsuccessful military revolts and forced the president to issue first laws that limited the prosecutions, and then later pardoned the high-level officials that had actually been convicted to serving sentences in jail. The legacy of human rights abuses committed by the military is still a hot topic today, several decades into democratic rule though prosecuting the military is no longer perceived to be a threat to democratic governments (Skaar et al.).⁷

(ii) Civilian control over the military: Military prerogatives

Scholars seem to agree that the issue of military prerogatives is central for our understanding of to what extent, and in which ways, the military is subject to civilian control (Desch, 1999), (Karl, 1990), (Hunter, 1998b), (Stepan, 1988). Reigning in on military autonomy is an important case in point for democracies. According to Cruz and Diamint, “Democratic states, like all others, depend on organized coercive power. Hence the unavoidable need for armed forces endowed with sufficient institutional autonomy to perform their duties well. At the same time, democracies are democracies in part because their armed forces remain both functionally integrated with the state and subordinated to legitimate authority. Put another way, civilian authorities bar soldiers from making independent forays into civil and political society, or even into the international arena, and subject the military to the state's internal rules of accountability”(Cruz and Diamint, 1998).

⁷ A separate paper on transitional justice in Latin America is planned for 2014 as part of the larger project of which this paper forms part.

According to Hunter, military interests in the new democratic era include institutional preservation⁸; retaining autonomy over areas considered to fall within the military's own corporate domain (such as education, socialization, and career advancement of officers); maintaining or improving their professional standing (reflected in salaries, budgets, equipment, training, and organization); *and to retain institutional prerogatives* that enhance their leverage over broader political, society and economic matters (Hunter, 1998a) (italics mine). All these areas have, according to Hunter, served as sources of conflict between the military and civilian governments in a post-transitional setting. In the rest of this section I focus principally on military prerogatives.

Loveman's list over military prerogatives remaining after the transitions from military to democratic rule is probably the most comprehensive in the literature on Latin American civil-military relations. These prerogatives include: "(1) regimes of exception as basic elements in Latin American constitutions; (2) prohibition of judicial protection of civil liberties and rights during regimes of exception and/or in applying national security laws; (3) explicit constitutional definition of the internal security and political roles of the armed forces, making the armed forces a virtual fourth branch of government guardians of the nation; (4) organic laws ("constitutive laws") further embedding the political role and relative autonomy of the armed forces in the legal foundations of the nation; (5) security legislation (laws pertaining to internal security, anti-terrorism, and maintenance of public order) that criminalizes certain types of political opposition (for example: "Marxists," "undemocratic elements," and "totalitarians") and expands military functions and jurisdiction even further (frequently including ample, autonomous internal intelligence roles for the armed forces); (6) restrictions on the mass media justified by "national security" concerns; (7) criminal codes with special provisions for political crimes and "crimes against the state," or against "the constituted government"; (8) military jurisdiction (trial by courts-martial or military courts) over civilians for "crimes against internal security," "terrorism", or even "insulting" officers; (9) restriction (or full exclusion) of the jurisdiction of civilian courts over military personnel (as, for example, in the case of allegations of kidnapping, torture, and murder "while in service"); (10) formal corporate representation for the armed forces in policymaking (for example, in congress, the judiciary, executive agencies, public administration, and public enterprises); (11) partial autonomy of the armed forces over its budget (for example, constitutionally fixed minimum budgets in real terms, percentages of export revenues, or revenues from particular public enterprises or taxes, unsupervised [by the legislature] off-the-books enterprises used to support intelligence services or special military functions); and (12) broad constitutional and statutory autonomy for the military from oversight by the legislature and/or the president over "professional" and "internal" matters, such as military education, promotions, retirements, reassignments, and tenure of service commanders. Together, these special rights and prerogatives interwoven into the political fabric of protected democracies seriously impair

⁸ According to Hunter, institutional preservation is first among military concerns. This includes protecting the military from prosecution for human rights violations and to resist civilian efforts to transform the military into a qualitatively different institution, such as a regional defense force HUNTER, W. 1998a. Civil-Military Relations in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. In: AGÜERO, F. & STARK, J. (eds.) *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transitional Latin America*. Miami: North-South Center Press of the University of Miami., p. 301.

civil authority, constrain civil liberties and rights and, to a greater or lesser extent, impede democratization throughout the region, from Guatemala to Chile” (Loveman, 1994: 123-125).

(iii) Military defence budgets

Establishing criteria for the structuring of defence budgets and their post-allocation supervision is one of the areas through which civilian governments can exercise power over the military. One of the central ways of curbing military power after the return to democracy was therefore to make severe cuts in the defense budgets of many countries in the region. This, naturally, reduced the military’s potential to carry out their missions. But what do we mean by defense? According to Jorge Battaglino, defense issues are defined as “the set of actions taken by a state to ensure its survival against perceived threats.... defense policy has normative and material dimensions. While the first is related to the establishment of a strategy or defense doctrine; the second of concerned with the material consequences of the first, for instance in terms of the deployment of new military units or the acquisition of weapons” (Battaglino, 2013: 13. Note 1).⁹

Although defense is the primary function of the military, the literature on the politics of defense in Latin America is very scarce. According to (Battaglino, 2013) it is in fact limited to one single article by Trinkunas and Pion-Berlin. They argue that “Interest in defense issues among Latin American politicians has faded with the advent of widespread democratization in the region and the retreat of the armed forces to their barracks” and that this lack of civilian politicians’ inattention can be explained by a function of three factors: “a historical path that has produced armed forces with limited capabilities that are more often a threat to their own governments than their neighbors; a relatively benign international threat environment in Latin America that makes neglect of defense policy a lowrisk proposition; and the low importance that voters assign to the provision of the national defense as either a public or a private good. Under these circumstances, it is rational for most civilian politicians to ignore defense policy and focus their attention instead on coup avoidance” (Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas, 2007: 76). Whether or not this scenario is generally true five years down the lane remains subject to empirical scrutiny.

In the case of Argentina, Battaglino argues that there has been a marked shift towards increased concern with defense spendings and defense policy in the last few years. This has resulted in a marked increase in the military budget, the reconstruction of the defense industry, and the establishment of a new military doctrine. Battaglino argues that this in many ways surprising development is due to some factors that have been traditionally neglected in the scholarship on civil-military relations: political commitment to a neo-developmental strategy and the pursuit of a new type of civilian control by the Argentine government (Battaglino, 2013).

⁹ Battaglino 2013 is actually citing or summing up the ideas of NORDEN, D. 2008. ¿Autoridad civil sin dominación civil? Las relaciones político-militares en la Venezuela de Chávez? *Nueva Sociedad* 213 213.. Better find the original and cite this instead! May have it in my folder prepared by Catalina.

To briefly summarize, a large part of the scholarly literature on democratic consolidation in Latin America focuses on the normalization in civil-military relations and the extent to which civilian governments have succeeded in establishing greater authority over the armed forces. The key question that scholars have raised for quite a while is whether Latin American democracies (now) are stable (i.e. consolidated), or whether the period of democratic governance witnessed over the past two or three decades is just a democratic interlude in historical cycles of alternations in civilian and military governments. The issue is whether “many of the changes experienced are close to being just facades, behind which authoritarian structures remain well entrenched, albeit in disguise, or ready to resurface at any sign of crisis” (Aguero, 1998a). An important point made by Aguero is that whether one considers the glass half empty or half full depends on which dimensions of democracy one looks at: “studies focusing on civil-military relations ... are likely to yield different evaluations than those resulting from studies of electoral politics ...” (Aguero, 1998a). Although scholars disagree widely on the meaningfulness of “democratic consolidation”, there seems to be general agreement that “the identification of legacies and enclaves from the authoritarian past” forms at least one important yardstick with which to contrast how far different countries have come on their road to (full) democracies.

Aguero and Stark identify three important fault lines in the study of democracy in Latin America: the changes of representation of societal interests (and hence accountability); the rule of law and transformations in the judiciary; and – important for our purposes – “the area of organized force and violence, which is approached through analysis of the military and civil-military relations” (Aguero, 1998b).

4: The Military and the Economy¹⁰

Political power is not the only kind of power historically wielded by the military in Latin America. They have also been prominent economic actors in many societies. Indeed, some scholars are prepared to argue that while the political power of the military has been reclining in recent years, its economic power has remained constant or even increased in some countries. According to Kristina Mani, despite the recent shift to democratic regimes and market based economies, the military retains important economic roles as owners, managers, and stakeholders in a variety of economic enterprises (Mani, 2011: 25). This section focuses on how the literature has analyzed the role of the military as an economic actor across time, with emphasis on the post-dictatorship era and the implications for civil-military relationships. A brief comment on the larger historical role of the military in the economy is in order to appreciate the more recent scholarly debates.

Since in much of the region, from the 1870s onwards, the armed forces developed ahead of state institutions, “this evolution made Latin American militaries not only defenders of the nation but also agents of the state- and nation-building processes” (Mani, 2011: 32). Partly to

¹⁰ This section is very unfinished. To be expanded.

compensate for weak state capacities or a weak private sector (Brömmelhörster and Paes, 2003), in the 20th century, militaries were involved in developing corporations, welfare foundations, and unit-level commercial operations to generate resources that accrued to them (Mani, 2011: 28). In the period between 1930s and 1980s, the military ruled in many countries, frequently accompanied by military ownership, management or stake-holding of economic enterprises. Although the military has in many countries managed the national defense industry, their economic reach has often been much broader. As Mani demonstrates, the military in Latin America has been involved in a diverse range of economic activities: development of national oil and steel companies (in Brazil and Argentina); business enterprises (Ecuador); key economic sectors like tourism and agriculture (Cuba); public companies and national infrastructure (Honduras); and construction and finance (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua).

The question that many scholars have posed is to what extent this military power in the economic sphere has interfered with, or been detrimental to civilian control over the military. Many scholars have perceived military economic power as an important challenge to strengthening and deepening democracy in the region.

The systematic studies of the military as an economic actor can be dated to the classic by Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 1957), which has inspired scholars to think of modern militaries as “state-based institutional actors with collective interests and professional standards” whose “interests are fundamentally corporate rather than individual” (Mani, 2011: 27). The core claim from theorists on civil-military relations and of international relations is that the armed forces pursue economic ventures to secure resources for institutional benefit (Brömmelhörster and Paes, 2003: 13).¹¹ The question posed by Mani is why militaries become entrepreneurial in the first place, and why it matters. Is it positive or detrimental to democracy? Mani usefully distinguishes between two major types of military entrepreneurs in Latin America: industrializers, determined to build national defense capabilities and compete for international prestige; and nation builders, seeking to promote economic development that can foster social development and cohesion (Mani, 2011: 25).

5. The Military and Ordinary Citizens¹²

As noted in part 1 of this paper, one of the topics that have received much scholarly attention is the exercise of military power against its own citizens during periods of military rule/authoritarianism. Another strand of literature focuses on the role of the military vis-à-vis ordinary citizens in periods of democracy/peace. In this part I review some of the literature that addresses how the military in different countries deal with social violence and interact with ordinary citizens in a democratic setting. In many countries, there is a continuation of violence committed against ordinary civilians from times of authoritarianism and civil war to

¹¹ Cited in MANI, K. 2011. Military Entrepreneurs: Patterns in Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 53, 25-55.. Note that in this section I have shamelessly drawn on Kristina Mani’s excellent review of the scholarly literature conceptualising military entrepreneurship *ibid*.

¹² This section is very unfinished. To be expanded.

the present. Sadly, the military is responsible for many of the abuses. But this is not the only arena in which civilians and the military meet.

Beyond what Pion-Berlin refers to as “the micro world of civil-military relations, the key points of contact between political and military elites and their staffs” lie other arenas “where civilians and soldiers may interface”, such as congressional hearings and parliamentary defense commissions; and courts (where civilian judges and lawyers prosecute defendants accused of human rights offences) (Pion-Berlin, 2011: 223).

6. A Military with a Mission: Changing Military Self-Perceptions¹³

Fifteen years ago, Agüero and Stark contended that “while civil-military relations have clearly improved in recent years, difficult questions remain concerning the proper role and function of the military in the context of what are obviously major changes in the international system and the political scenarios of Latin America” (Agüero, 1998b: ii). This is still a question of high political importance, as well as academic concern. A number of scholars have been concerned with the appropriate as well as the actual role of the military in politics. It is clear that the military’s self-perception and their perceived mission in society have undergone substantial transformation over time. Historically, the armed forces have frequently given the armed forces explicit responsibility for functions that go well beyond national defense, “including maintaining internal order and security, defending the constitution and the republican form of government, preventing usurpation of authority by presidents or other government officials, and even supervising elections. Over eighty percent of 19th century, Spanish-American constitutions assigned a constitutional mission to the armed forces, thus making them, in some sense, into an almost fourth branch of government (Loveman, 1993: Chapter 10) (Loveman, 1994: 131).

During the era of authoritarianism, the military was concerned with protecting national security and defending the nation; “la patria” (Loveman, 1999). The introduction of the National Security Doctrine and cross-national military networks of cooperation and exchange of intelligence (like that of Operación Condor in the Southern Cone) were established to fight the threat of Communism. Human rights violations were carried out on a large scale under the pretext that the military was defending the nation from Communism and the “threat of the left” – which legitimized the killing, torturing and disappearance of tens of thousands of people across the continent.

The (re)introduction of democracy in Latin America since the 1980s has forced the military to reorient themselves professionally and redefine their roles as protectors of “la patria”. Fernando Bustamante makes the important point that historically, from the time of the Conquista to the present, the Latin American militaries have defined themselves by defending Christianity and fighting “the other”. As long as the Cold War went on, “the other” was

¹³ This section is very unfinished. To be expanded.

Communism and the threat of the left.¹⁴ With the Cold War over, who “the other” is has become increasingly unclear, and the military has been forced to reorient itself. Bustamante points out that the Latin American armies “seem much more consistent in their preparation and deployment for peacetime tasks rather than those of conventional border defense. Latin American armies are organized, trained, deployed and equipped in ways that reveal a notorious lack of actual concentration on conventional warfare” (Bustamante, 1998), pp. 349-50. This suggests that the military has always perceived that they have an important role to play in internal affairs: not only in defending their countries against external aggression.¹⁵ Since the military perceive themselves as political, not only military, actors, it would be dangerous, argues Bustamante, to alienate them completely from politics and thereby make them feel useless. Although scholars have been overly concerned with ranging in the military under civil control, Bustamante correctly observes that civil control is not always of democratic character. What role should the military play when democratically elected leaders display authoritarian traits – like Alberto Fujimori in Peru?

While most scholars have assumed that periods of high international threat – such as the Cold War – increase the influence of the military and therefore make it harder for civilians to control it, Michael D. Desch, taking on an international relations position, makes the opposite point: “a challenging *external* threat environment leads to relatively good civil-military relations – defined . . . primarily in terms of civilian control over the military – while a challenging internal threat environment undermines civil-military relations” (Desch, 1998).

According to Wendy Hunter, the relationship between civilian government and the military are subject to constant negotiations after the return to democratic rule, and “military role beliefs and attitudes shape the extent to which the officer corps remains an important political actor” (Hunter, 1998b). In her opinion, there are three questions that are central to examining the attitudes of the military. For instance, “deeply rooted attitudes among officers about their own immunity are unlikely to change auguring poorly for democratic norms” (Hunter, 1998b: 313). Yet, we know that there have been important changes in the military over time, partly because of generational change, but also because of education and changing self-perceptions of the military’s role in a democratic setting.

7. Conclusions¹⁶

¹⁴ Not all scholars agree on this point. For instance, Desch argues the opposite: that in the case of Latin America “it was the real or perceived internal threat from indigenous leftist groups – not always closely aligned with the Soviet Union – that led to military interventions and other manifestations of bad civil-military relations during the Cold War” DESCH, M. C. 1998. *The Changing International Environment and Civil-Military Relations in Post-Cold War Southern Latin America*. In: FELIPE, A. & STARK, J. (eds.) *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transitional Latin America*. . Miami: North-South Center Press of the University of Miami., p. 323.

¹⁵ Historically, the armies in Latin America have been much more often involved in internal wars and in guaranteeing “security” for their citizens than involved in cross-border skirmishes (see BUSTAMANTE, F. *Ibid.* Democracy, Civilizational Change, and the Latin American Military.).

¹⁶ To be added in the next version.

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