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→ This thesis examines the military's tendency to accept or reject civilian control in Brazil and Venezuela. A theoretical model is developed which conceives of the military's propensity for subordination as a function of changes in the level of ideological cohesion between military and civilian elites and in the scope of military responsibilities. This model is then applied to Brazil and Venezuela to explain changes in the existence of civilian control. The study concludes with an assessment of lessons learned and discusses the model's relevance in terms of reducing the likelihood of military intervention in government.

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CONCEPTUALIZING MILITARY ACCEPTANCE OF CIVILIAN CONTROL:
IDEOLOGICAL COHESION, MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THE
MILITARY'S PROPENSITY FOR SUBORDINATION IN BRAZIL AND
VENEZUELA

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Master of Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

by

Patrick Murphy Flood, B.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

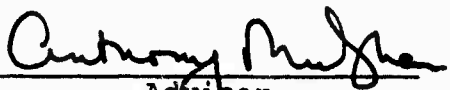
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To My Family:

Dad, Mom, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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INTRODUCTION

Rule by the military appears to be the norm in the less developed states of the world. In countries where civilian alternatives to military government have been chronically personalistic, corrupt, and lacking in unity, standing armies, with their control over the coercive capacity of the state and their relatively high levels of internal cohesion and discipline are, naturally, formidable contenders in the political arena. Latin America has certainly been no exception. Throughout this region's troubled history, the armed forces have been, in Robert Wesson's words, "the strongest single locus of power."¹ Yet, in the last decade, events in Latin America point to a reversal in the established tradition of military government. In 1983, the Argentine military relinquished control after leading an eight year campaign of brutal political and social reconstruction. In Chile, a negative response to General Pinochet's plebiscite in 1989

¹ Robert Wesson, ed. The Latin American Military Institution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), p. ix.

brought an apparent end to one of modern history's longest ²
and most personalistic dictatorships. In Brazil, the
election of a civilian presidential candidate in 1985
heralded the conclusion of twenty-one years of
uninterrupted military rule--one of the longest in the
Western Hemisphere. Events in Peru, Paraguay, Ecuador, and
Uruguay similarly indicate a movement away from generals
functioning as supreme executives. Currently, eighteen of
the twenty Latin American republics enjoy some form of
democracy under civilian political leadership.

The fact that Latin America appears to be leading the
LDCs in democratic transition should come as little
surprise. As the least poor of the Third World nations,
Latin America's developmental progress may only now be
conducive to a serious commitment to democracy. What is
less clear, however, is whether this present wave of
democratization will persist and act as the foundation for
institutionalized and effective government. Will democracy
at last take hold, or is this merely a peak in the
civilian-military cycle of government control which has
defined politics in this region for the previous century
and a half? Is relapse to military rule over the horizon?

In the context of these important questions the
challenge of civilian control of the military is
particularly salient. As an effective precondition for

political democracy, civilian control of the military should rank high on the research agenda of those interested in exploring political development in Third World states. History has shown that active participation of the military in politics can often exact a heavy toll on the society in which it occurs. Military regimes have the potential and the tendency to become repressive, and, despite any short-term success they might have as modernizers, have historically proven to be poor economic administrators in the medium and long term. Additionally, the legacy of military rule, by virtue of the social antagonisms which it invariably creates and fuels, turns back the clock for effective political and social development. In many cases, prolonged military rule also tends to have a degenerative effect on the internal morale, unity, and professionalism of the armed forces themselves. Based on the Latin experience, it can be argued that a country is generally worse off on most accounts after a period of military rule than it was beforehand.

Therefore, a systematic investigation of the causes of and strategies for cultivating effective civilian control of the military is of immeasurable importance to countries afflicted or threatened by military rule. In light of these considerations, this thesis attempts to explore the complex web of variables and relationships that influence

the success or failure of civilian institutions in subordinating the military. Appreciating the realities of time and space, this study will focus primarily on factors within the military institution which affect its propensity for accepting a subordinate position vis-a-vis civilian political elites. A complete analysis of the variables affecting the likelihood of civilian control would also include a treatment of contextual factors such as the level of economic development, and the relative strength of civilian political institutions. These are critical dimensions of cultivating civilian control in the developing world and are widely recognized as such. In contrast, substantially less work has been done on how factors within the armed forces themselves create the preconditions for intervention and impel the military to reject civilian political authority.

Therefore, in this thesis particular attention will be given to the internal disposition of the armed forces to intervene in government. This study will concentrate on the interaction between two independent variables which I have termed "ideological cohesion" and "the scope of military responsibilities." Detailing a two dimensional relationship between these variables, I attempt to describe how their relative strengths affect the military's propensity for subordination, my dependent variable.

Chapter One outlines a theoretical model which seeks to reflect the fluid relationship between the independent and dependent variables. After a brief review of the literature pertaining to civilian control, I propose my own definition of this central concept. With this description in mind, I move on to discuss three essential elements of civilian control. The last of these variables, the military's propensity for subordination, provides the focal point for the remainder of the paper. After describing two central factors affecting the military's propensity for subordination, ideological cohesion and the scope of military responsibilities, I develop a conceptual model which seeks to capture the complexities of the linkages between these concepts and how they relate to civilian control in general. In Chapters Two and Three, I attempt to apply this model to the experiences of Brazil and Venezuela in the twentieth century. These two cases have been selected because they represent polar opposites in terms of military subordination. Chapter Four completes this study by proposing some tentative conclusions based on the Brazilian and Venezuelan cases, and offers suggestions for further research.

Social science models do not aspire to comprehensive explanation. The nature of the object of study constrains our methods which in turn qualify and limit our

understanding. However, some theory is better than none. Given the grave and serious implications of the problem in question, if even the slightest mystery is revealed, much less explained, then the academic exercise will not have been in vain. Therefore, building on the existing work in the field, this thesis attempts to advance our understanding of the complexities of civilian control in two Latin American states whose military's have differed significantly in their propensity to subordinate themselves. This provides an application of the model across disparate cases. If a common pattern of civil-military relations can be deduced from their respective experiences, the general validity of the model may be enhanced and may even have implications for newly democratizing states worldwide. In any event, the possibility justifies the attempt.

CHAPTER I
APPROACHING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

This chapter will provide the theoretical rationale for the proposed relationship between ideological cohesion and the scope of military responsibilities, and the corresponding effect on the military's propensity for subordination. By clearly identifying and defining the variables in question, the author seeks to develop an analytic model that will permit an ordered and coherent investigation of the relationship between military behavior and civilian control in Latin America. Discussion of the relevant literature will assist in establishing the validity of the model as well as provide insight into the complex and often elusive set of conceptual considerations that characterize the existing scholarship on civil-military relations. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the approach that will be followed and an overview of the cases that will be examined.

Simply naming the dependent variable in a relationship requires little intellectual effort. But, in order for that name to be meaningful and to possess a level of scientific significance that makes it useful for one who wishes to observe and explain it, a precise definition must accompany this name. The reason for this is simple: one must be able to recognize with confidence what the name describes when it exists and know with certainty when it does not. Although this fundamental requirement may seem intuitively obvious, it is all too easy to forget its significance and neglect to establish a precise definition and rigorous conditions for that "thing" one seeks to investigate. Obviously, this demands considerably more from the researcher. But without first laying down rules that permit identification of one's dependent variable, any further research or analysis is doomed to ambiguity at best and failure at worst.

Mindful of this pitfall, it is not sufficient to state simply that the object of this study is "civilian control" of the military. A quick search through the literature on this topic reveals that this concept is not as easily defined as one might think. In Samuel Huntington's classic treatise on civil-military relations, The Soldier and the State, the notion of civilian control is of central

importance to his discussion. In attempting to define this⁹ condition, Huntington notes that, in a general sense, civilian control is related to the relative power of civilian and military groups and "is achieved to the extent to which the power of military groups is reduced" vis-a-vis civilian groups.¹ Huntington then goes on to identify two types of civilian control: subjective and objective. The first variety, subjective civilian control, is defined in terms of the maximization of the power of civilian groups over that of the military. The second, objective civilian control, is defined in terms of military professionalism. Although Huntington's treatment of civilian control in this work represents an important conceptual perspective, his definitions remain highly abstract. Lacking objective and observable standards for inclusion, his definitions of civilian control are poorly suited to our discussion.

Since Huntington's initial contribution, others have sought to refine the concept of civilian control. In The Man on Horseback, S.E. Finer speaks of the "supremacy of civil power." Offering a critique of Huntington's thesis, Finer defines civilian supremacy by focusing on determinants of political authority and their relative distribution between civilian and military institutions.

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 80.

Quoting from B.M. Sapin and R.C. Snyder, *Finer conceives of*¹⁰
civilian supremacy as existing when "both formally and
effectively, the major policies and programmes of
government...[are] decided by the nation's politically
responsible civilian leaders."² Whereas Huntington defines
civilian control primarily in terms of factors pertaining
to the military institution, Sapin and Snyder's definition
draws attention to the civilian side of the relationship.
Although Finer concentrates mainly on the military
institution and factors that contribute to or inhibit its
"disposition" to intervene, his use of this definition
suggests that civilian control should not be seen merely as
the absence of military intervention in politics, but also
as indicative of the effective political strength of
civilian institutions. In addition to raising this issue,
the Sapin and Snyder definition represents a move towards
the establishment of observable indicators of civilian
control. Control of key governmental programs, while still
somewhat vague, is significantly more measurable than the
more subjective evaluation of military political power to
which Huntington refers.

² B. M. Sapin and R. C. Snyder, The Role of the
Military in American Foreign Policy, p. 52. Quoted in
Samuel E. Finer, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the
Military in Politics (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p.
24.

Claude Welch continues where Huntington and Finer stop¹¹ by providing an even sharper definition of civilian control. In Civilian Control of the Military, Welch begins by noting that it is easier for scholars to identify where civilian control does not exist than it is to recognize where it does. He attributes this to the distinct nature of military coups. As a specific event, coups are easily identifiable and hence profusely overstudied.³ As a result, Welch contends that we know much more about why civilian governments fail than we do about how they are maintained. This deficiency prompts him to establish a precise definition of civilian control as well as list specific patterns of behavior that indicate its existence. By doing so, he hopes to illuminate strategies that may serve to prevent military participation in politics and reinforce civilian supremacy.

Echoing Huntington, Welch states that civilian control involves a set of relationships "between the strengths of civilian political institutions on one side, and political strength of military institutions on the other."⁴ According to Welch, the issue of central importance for

³ Claude Welch, Jr., ed., Civilian Control of the Military: Theory and Cases from Developing Countries (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976), pp. 1-2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

civilian control is establishing "limits within which members of the armed forces, and the military as an institution, accept the government's definition of appropriate areas of responsibility."⁵ Civilian control, argues Welch, is not a dichotomous concept but a matter of degree. Acknowledging that the military can never be prevented entirely from exercising some degree of political influence by virtue of their duties as managers of violence, Welch conceives of civil-military relations as a continuum. This conception ranges from military "influence" in politics, through military "participation" in politics to, ultimately, military "control" of the political system. According to this, Welch defines civilian control as the state of affairs in which the military institution exercises influence within the political system but does not directly participate in political matters. Next, he identifies four qualities that typify the nature of military political involvement at this stage: 1) if any political decisions are made they are done so at only the highest ranks; 2) clear and integral boundaries exist between military and political roles, with military officers avoiding the latter; 3) political influence is exercised through regularized and accepted channels; and 4) contacts between the military and civilian

⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

political leaders occur only at the top rungs of the military hierarchy.⁶

Beyond these general attributes, Welch also offers several specific characteristics which may indicate the subordination of the military to the authority of civilian institutions. Among these are constitutional provisions delegating a civilian head of government as commander-in-chief of the armed forces as well as permitting the representative assembly investigative authority over military affairs, the power to declare war, and budgetary supervision over the armed forces.⁷ The existence and effective application of these legal constraints tend to confirm the supremacy of civilian authority and the corresponding subordination of the military to civilian directives.

In light of the preceding discussion, it is possible to define civilian control as a condition whereby the armed forces, subordinate to civilian political institutions, abide by the government's definition of appropriate areas of responsibility, and fail to exercise any significant independent political authority apart from what the civilian government grants them.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 3,4.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 6,7.

This definition of civilian control begs clarification¹⁴ in a number of areas. The first element of the definition refers to the subordination of the military to civilian political institutions. The military is subordinate to the extent that they are accountable to key non-military government officials and do not exercise authority over any non-military group. One way to verify this condition is to examine a state's constitution for a description of the political hierarchy. Ultimate authority for military operations must rest with a civilian institution. Another test is to examine the composition and interactions of the cabinet to ascertain the level of power wielded by the military establishment. If civilian control is to be observed, the military cannot be permitted to dominate or intimidate non-military agencies or civilian institutions. Finally, Welch's examples of legal constraints on military power (listed above) may also be useful in evaluating the degree of military subordination. The second element of civilian control as defined here relates to the nature of the military's functional responsibilities. In order for true civilian control to exist, the roles and missions of the armed forces must be approved, if not actually written, by a civilian institution. These roles and missions cannot be altered nor new ones added without the knowledge and approval of a civilian institution. The third element of

clarification involves the exercise of political authority.¹⁵ This condition necessarily requires a definition of precisely what constitutes a "political" decision. For the sake of simplicity the author will defer to David Easton's classic conception of politics as the "authoritative allocation of values in society." Therefore, under the auspices of civilian control, the military establishment may make no decision involving the allocation of societal values without the express approval of a politically accountable civilian institution. Given the width of Easton's definition and the inherently political nature of military operations, there are few areas in which a military may act without the knowledg. and approval of civilian institutions.

Although closely related, an important difference exists between the first two definitional elements and the last. While the first two components of civilian control refer to formal indicators of military subordination to civilian rule, the third is a measure of the effective quality of military subordination. This distinction is made to underscore the reality that the mere existence of laws and legal constraints on military political influence are, by themselves, poor indicators of civilian control. Obviously, laws are largely empty words when not respected or strictly enforced. Therefore, it is essential that some

consideration be given to the actual application of constraints on military political involvement. Civilian control requires both formal and effective subordination of the military to civilian institutions. Without the latter, the former is meaningless.

The Elements of Civilian Control

Having defined civilian control and established criteria for its existence, consideration must now be given to those variables which affect the likelihood of its ascendancy as a mode of civil-military relations within a given country. Focusing on the state as the unit of analysis, three variables can be easily identified as greatly impacting the prospects of civilian control over the military. These are: contextual considerations; the relative strength of civilian institutions vis-a-vis the military; and the military's propensity for subordination. Each will be briefly examined.

Environmental factors can exert great pressure on civil-military relations and may either promote or inhibit civilian control. This variable serves an important function by calling to mind the need to consider each case in its proper social, political, and economic context. Latin American history is replete with instances where the military donned the mantle of authority in the midst of a

crisis that the civilian leadership was presumably incapable of handling. The fragile economies of the developing world are fertile ground for a host of fiscal and financial pitfalls which may precipitate a military "solution". Runaway inflation, dependent and vulnerable export sectors, capital flight, and externally imposed austerity programs are merely a sample of the many economic maladies which create an unfavorable environment for an incumbent government, civilian or military. On the other hand, a well-run and prosperous economy serves as a tremendous boost for those in power and cannot but fail to reinforce an existing mode of civil-military relations. In addition to economic factors a wide range of social, historical, military, domestic-political and international conditions may impact, either positively or negatively, the extent to which civilian control is observed. For instance, the presence of militant social groups opposed to government policies, a history of military political intervention, an ongoing guerrilla insurgency, a succession crisis, ideological polarization among elites, widespread domestic violence, or cases of extreme political gridlock may assist in leading the military towards intervention. Conversely, the lack of social or political violence, a recent military defeat, or a government that benefits from tremendous international support may each serve to

reinforce civilian control and reduce the likelihood of military political involvement. While the various possibilities go beyond the scope of this paper, the importance of this variable should be clear. Although attractive as more conceptually discrete variables, neither civilian institutions nor the military itself can totally account for the existence or nonexistence of civilian control in every case. Neither civilian political institutions nor military organizations exist in an isolated state; both influence and are affected by the greater political, social, and economic systems of which they are a part. A complete and fair evaluation of this topic cannot be achieved without some consideration for the realities of the environment in which the other two variables exist.

The second important variable is the relative strength of civilian political institutions. As the term civilian control itself suggests, the civilian polity must be capable of achieving and maintaining the effective subordination of the military. At a minimum, this presupposes a relative degree of strength on the part of civilian institutions. Used in this context, the notion of strength refers to the capacity of civilian institutions to influence military behavior by providing barriers and disincentives for political involvement. The strength of

civilian institutions is directly related to their legitimacy as perceived by the general population and the military itself. According to Welch, "the most effective barrier against coups d'etat is thus not the absence of military desire to exercise power, but the recognition such power cannot be seized and exercised effectively over a long period."⁸ Rapoport likewise observes that the armed forces cannot wrest political authority for extended periods of time from a government which the populace believes is legitimate.⁹ Therefore, Welch and Smith contend that,

Political legitimacy is the most crucial factor affecting the likelihood of military intervention. Where public support for civilian institutions is strong, military participation in politics is unlikely to extend to the overthrow and outright supplantment of civil authorities. Where public support is weak, expansion of the military's political role seems probable.¹⁰

As this passage illustrates, the most important ingredient for civilian control is generally believed to be legitimate civilian political institutions. Welch later

⁸ Welch, p. 323.

⁹ David C. Rapoport, "The Political Dimensions of Military Usurpation," Political Science Quarterly 83, 4 (1968), p. 569. Quoted in Welch, p. 323.

¹⁰ Claude Welch, Jr. and Arthur K. Smith, Military Role and Rule: Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations (North Scituate: Duxbury Press, 1974), p. 249. Quoted in Welch, pp. 323-4.

argues that any attempt to cultivate civilian control by 20
concentrating exclusively on changes within the military
institution, without also seeking to establish the
legitimacy of civilian rule, will meet with limited
success. He states,

Military intervention is primarily a characteristic of a
certain kind of political system, rather than an outgrowth
of the personnel, ethic, or organizational imperatives of
the military institution itself. For this reason,
strategies for establishing civilian control that focus on
reforming the armed forces are likely to fail unless they
are accompanied by effective measures to strengthen
civilian political institutions.¹¹

Having established the strength of civilian
institutions as a critical element in the civilian control
equation, attention must be given to the way this variable
is measured. In addition to evaluating various
determinants of civilian legitimacy such as the ability to
mobilize public support, administrative efficacy, and levels
of institutionalization, a meaningful measure of the
strength of civilian political institutions must also
include a comparative evaluation of the political strength
of the military. Simply labeling civilian governmental
institutions as strong or weak suggests nothing in terms of
this measurement's bearing on civilian control. Such an
evaluation only becomes significant when compared to the
strength of the armed forces. For example, one may easily

¹¹ Welch, pp. 323-4.

conclude that Argentina's civilian political institutions ²¹ were extremely weak in the period immediately following the Malvinas debacle. However, this statement would have been a poor predictor of the democratic transition that followed because, by comparison, the military institution's political strength was significantly lower.

The military's propensity for subordination represents the third major variable in the civilian control model. While acknowledging that the institutional disposition of the armed forces is, at best, second to the civilian dimension in terms of explanatory significance, the military variable plays an important part in influencing the potential for civilian control. While not the most important factor, it likewise should not be dismissed as irrelevant. Owing to the complex nature of the topic in question, the relationship between civilian control, contextual considerations, the strength of civilian institutions, and the military's propensity for subordination defies a comprehensive explanation in a document of this length. However, assessing the impact of one of these independent variables represents a somewhat more manageable task. By narrowing the object of study, a thorough discussion can be attained without sacrificing analytical depth. As such, this paper will attempt to concentrate its discussion on the institutional

characteristics of the armed forces and their affects on 22
the likelihood of civilian control.

The Military's Propensity for Subordination

The military's propensity for subordination refers to a set of relationships between the military institution and civil society which affect the former's willingness to accept a pattern of civilian control. Evaluating this variable as defined requires that two conditions be met: first, that the military be observed in relation to civilian political institutions; and secondly, that the exact dimensions of analysis be specified.

No military institution exists in a vacuum. Rather, it too is a part of the intricate web of relationships that connect the constituent organs of a society's political and social systems. Therefore, if an accurate evaluation is to be made of the military and its ability to influence a pattern of civilian control, then it must consider selected military dimensions in light of their relation to relevant civilian sectors. Mere descriptions of military ideology or professionalism within a given country are meaningless without an account of how civilian political institutions compare along the same dimensions. For example, simply observing that the Brazilian military adhered to the National Security Doctrine prior to the 1964 reformist coup

says little about the military's support for civilian control. However, the picture becomes much clearer when one learns that the conservative National Security Doctrine valued order and progress over individual freedom, led to deep philosophical divisions between the military and civilian politicians, and eventually served as a moral justification for anti-democratic behavior on the part of the armed forces.

The second guideline highlights the need for precision in the treatment of this topic. Within the literature pertaining to civil-military relations, it has been common practice to refer to the quality of the boundaries which distinguish civilian and military elements. As defined above, the military's propensity for subordination is closely related to the study of civil-military boundaries. However, caution must be observed. For the sake of convenience, one may be tempted to characterize the state of civil-military boundaries in an absolute sense as either integral, fragmented or permeated. Such unidimensional aggregations tend to be imprecise and should be avoided. In classifying boundary relations as integral, fragmented or permeated, it is important to specify the dimension of civil-military relations to which one refers. In using the general term "boundary", one is apt to ignore important variables at work below the surface. A single

classification cannot possibly account for even the most 24
fundamental elements of civil-military relations in a given
case. By failing to appreciate the multi-dimensional
character of civil-military interaction, unnecessary
constraints are placed on the quality of observations one
is able to make.¹² For example, civil-military boundaries
in Argentina during the late 1970s were integral in terms
of military professional autonomy, while they were also
fragmented in terms of areas of traditional civilian
responsibility which became subject to military influence.
As such, any attempt to subsume the character of civil-
military relations under a single boundary evaluation would
be meaningless. Hence, as a variable, "boundaries" leave
much to be desired. Important civil-military relationships

¹² In his article, "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations," Government and Opposition 6, 1 (1971): 5-35, A.R. Luckham bases the typology on an assessment of boundary types as being either integral, fragmented, or permeated in nature. Although his generalization proves somewhat useful for the short term task of ordering models of civil-military relations, one must realize that this conceptual scheme potentially obscures more than it clarifies. Simply classifying boundary relations as integral or permeated fails to appreciate the fact that a given relationship may exhibit elements of both. While Luckham attempts to confront this contingency by establishing the category of "fragmented" boundary (that which exhibits both integral and permeable characteristics), this heading holds little scientific value when no effort is made to specify those dimensions of civil-military relations to which it refers. Accordingly, absolute generalizations of the integral-permeated-fragmented variety are poorly suited to explanatory analysis.

exist in a variety of dimensions. Although a systematic treatment of all of these borders on the impossible, an attempt will be made to account for what are, in my assessment, two of the more significant dimensions of civil-military relations impacting the military's propensity for subordination.

Keeping these two caveats in mind, the military's propensity for subordination may be further defined in terms of a two dimensional relationship between ideological cohesion and the military's scope of institutional responsibilities.

Ideological Cohesion

Ideological cohesion refers to the degree to which the military establishment and the civilian political leadership are in agreement on matters concerning the administration of defense forces, national security, and basic political philosophy.

This variable is critical to any analysis of civil-military relations because it provides some measure of cognitive dispositions independent of actual observed behavior. As such, it may provide clues for evaluating latent moods and dispositions within the armed forces, as well as offering explanations for past behavior. In their respective works, Welch, Huntington, and Finer all

acknowledge the need to consider ideological currents when²⁶ studying military actions. Ideological cohesion is a continuous variable measured from low to high. In its present context, however, the concept of ideological cohesion requires further qualification in three areas.

First, ideology is essentially an elite phenomenon. That is, for the purposes of this study, ideological dispositions will only be accounted for among those actors who have the capacity to exercise political influence. This entails the officer corps, particularly the high command, and civilian government officials. Generally speaking, enlisted personnel and the civilian populace are not in a position to influence directly the actions of either the military or the government. While they certainly maintain ideological beliefs, their ability to act independently and effectively on these beliefs is diminished as a result of the non-deliberative nature of military organizations and the unresponsive character of republican democracy and large bureaucracies. Additionally, the beliefs held by non-elites are largely the product of their respective military and civilian leaders. Consequently, only the ideology of military officers and their civilian political counterparts will be evaluated.

Secondly, it will be assumed that the ideological position of the civilian political leadership is consistent with a policy of civilian control of the military. As such, the term ideological cohesion refers to the extent to which the military's ideological tenets diverge from this standard. In addition to political beliefs, ideological divergence or convergence will also manifest itself in outlooks on defense policy, definitions of national security, and disputes over the internal administration of governmental agencies (including the armed forces).

Finally, it is important to consider ideological unity within the military itself. Ideological divergence between the military and civilian leadership may be characterized by one of two situations. On the one hand, the armed forces may exhibit a high degree of uniformity in their opposition to civilian attitudes. On the other hand, the armed forces may be sharply divided among themselves. In the latter case, the significance of the schism varies according to the size and overall influence of the faction which opposes the civilian view. If a relatively large and influential group of military officers stands opposed to the civilian political leadership, then the result will be a fairly low degree of ideological cohesion between military and civilian elites. If, however, only a small and comparatively weak faction of the armed forces stands

in opposition to civilian elites, then the level of ideological cohesion will remain relatively high. Appreciating the fact that organizations rarely enjoy unanimous support on matters of policy, one must give thoughtful consideration to the extent and intensity of the disagreement among military officers.

The Scope of Military Responsibilities

The second dimension of the military's propensity for subordination attempts to provide a qualitative assessment of the activities in which a military institution is involved. By definition, the scope of military responsibilities refers to the degree to which the actual tasks of the military are clearly differentiated from those traditionally performed by civilians. Like the ideological dimension, this variable is also continuous. Unlike the ideological dimension, however, it is measured from narrow to broad. Narrowly defined responsibilities consist exclusively of traditional military missions, while broadly defined roles will include these duties as well as functions normally reserved for non-military organizations and existing outside the range of traditional military roles. By evaluating the nature of military responsibilities, this variable seeks to account for observable measurements of military political involvement.

Implicit in this is the hypothesis that, other things being²⁹ equal, the greater a military's involvement in politically related activities, the lower will be its tendency to accept a position of subordination relative to civilian institutions.

At first glance, using the scope of military responsibilities as a predictor of military subordination may seem problematic in terms of keeping the independent variable clearly differentiated from the dependent variables. Indeed, restrictions over the scope of military actions may themselves presume a certain level of civilian control of the military.¹³ However, by concentrating on the nature and extent of military duties, independent of whose design they serve, the potential for circularity can be avoided. For example, it is quite possible that a military may, without regard for the wishes of the government, decide to restrict its activities to those directly relevant to its primary mission of external defense. Rather than being an indication of civilian supremacy, such a situation may be taken as evidence that the military simply does not perceive itself as "guardian of the entire political system."¹⁴ Likewise, simply

¹³ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

because a nation's armed forces are heavily involved in the³⁰
administration of major sectors of the economy and state
bureaucracy does not necessarily prove that civilian
control does not exist. It is conceivable, therefore, that
civilian control, or its opposite, may obtain under either
condition, depending on what institution, civilian or
military, possesses ultimate authority in assigning
military missions. The mere scope of military roles, be
they broad or narrow, does not provide sufficient
information from which to deduce the presence or absence of
civilian control.

Like ideological cohesion, a discussion of the
political content of military functions in society
presupposes an analysis of civil-military boundary
relationships. Existing literature on the subject of
military roles has traditionally centered on the notion of
professionalism. However, much like boundaries, the
concept of professionalism performs poorly as an
explanatory variable because it fails to account for
several critical dimensions. The following critique holds
that, contrary to earlier theories, the extent to which a
military is professional reveals little about its
propensity for subordination. The shortcomings of
professionalism, therefore, necessitate the creation of an

independent measure of military roles under the rubric of 31
professionalism.

Generally speaking, the degree of permeability across boundaries separating military from civilian spheres of responsibility has traditionally been considered an important factor in explaining military behavior. In keeping with Huntington's early contribution to this topic, integral relationships are vastly preferred over permeable ones for a pattern of civilian control which maximizes military effectiveness. Huntington's thesis argues that the recognition of an autonomous military profession will all but eliminate conflict between the armed forces and the civilian polity, and, hence, ultimately lead to military acceptance of a pattern of civilian supremacy. Huntington contends that, assuming a state of ideological convergence between soldiers and civilians, the more professionally autonomous a military establishment, the more politically neutral it will be. By rejecting the mutual exclusion of military and civilian institutional goals, Huntington's subjective/objective dichotomy is, in one respect, useful.¹⁵ However, his excessive reliance on

¹⁵ In The Soldier and the State, Huntington conceives of two competing models of civilian control. The first, subjective civilian control, emphasizes permeable boundary transactions between military and civilian groups, while the second, objective civilian control, is based on integral boundary maintenance between the two. According to Huntington, subjective civilian control exists when the power of the armed forces is limited by civilian groups.

professionalism as the wellspring of military acceptance of³² civilian control has since been largely discredited. As an analytic concept, professionalism fails to establish itself as the prime indicator of integral civil-military relations. It likewise failed to become the sufficient

Here, civilian and military objectives exist within the same political space and are hotly contested as the two groups compete against each other in an attempt to maximize their respective influence. As such, this model establishes a unidimensional balance of power between the two groups and presumes a zero-sum relationship between military and civilian objectives. Accordingly, the success of one group is measured by the corresponding loss of the opposing group. Therefore, subjective civilian control is generally achieved at the expense of national security objectives and military effectiveness. The reverse of this is, of course, military domination of the political space and the associated ascendancy of military institutional objectives to the detriment or outright exclusion of civilian interests.

In contradistinction to this model and the inherent limitations of the political order which it describes, Huntington advances his theory of objective civilian control. Unlike the subjective control model, objective control presupposes the natural independence of civilian objectives from those military. Rather than achieving civilian supremacy at the expense of military interests, under the objective model, both a reduction of military political influence and the retention of military effectiveness are possible. According to Huntington, this is achieved by recognizing the "existence of a separate military profession with its own outlook on national policy" (pp. 84-5). Once the boundaries between the military profession and civilian functions are firmly established, Huntington claims that the likelihood of military political involvement will be reduced while simultaneously serving the ends of military security. Professionalism, asserts Huntington, results in the relegation of the military establishment to an autonomous, yet subordinate, position vis-a-vis civilian political institutions. pp. 80-85.

condition for Huntington's goal of rendering the military 33
"politically sterile and neutral."¹⁶

In his theoretical justification for civilian control, Karl Von Clausewitz notes that the practice of war is at once autonomous from and subordinate to the dictates of civilian politicians. However, he later qualifies this definition by noting that war in theory is vastly different from war in practice. Reason requires that war, by its very definition, must necessarily be waged in totality and without restraint. However, the social-political realities of the environment in which war is pursued demand that limits upon its conduct be imposed.¹⁷ A similar analogy may be drawn between Huntington's notion of professionalism and military subordination. While in theory, professional autonomy may presume military acceptance of civilian control, in practice professional autonomy may actually serve to facilitate military intervention in political affairs.

Along these lines, Finer identifies three ways in which professionalism may actually undermine civilian control. The first regards the tendency for ostensibly professional armies to distinguish between their duty to

¹⁶ Huntington, p. 84.

¹⁷ Karl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 75-92.

the nation, and their duty to the government in power.

Doing so, he reasons, may allow the armed forces to justify disobedience to civil authorities by claiming a higher loyalty to the interests of the state. Says Finer,

The moment the military draw this distinction between nation and the government in power, they begin to invent their own private notion of the national interest, and from this it is only a skip to the constrained substitution of this view for that of the civilian government...¹⁸

The second anti-civilian consequence of professionalism stems from what Finer refers to as "military syndicalism". A professionally autonomous fighting force may eventually conceive of itself as exclusively competent to make decisions regarding the composition, material supply, posturing, and employment of military forces. As such, professional militaries, in pursuit of geopolitical aims, may feel impelled to take from the state those items that the civilian leadership will not grant them. Related to this is the potential for the military to abuse its position of trust. As recognized experts in matters of war, military leaders may use their elevated status to misrepresent deliberately security assessments to civilian officials in order to further institutional objectives.¹⁹

¹⁸ Finer, pp. 22-3.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

Thirdly, misuse of a professional military by civilian³⁵ officials may incite anger and resentment among soldiers towards their civilian masters. Finer cites internal security considerations as a principal source of friction between civilian politicians and the armed forces. The decision to employ military force against the domestic population imposes a tremendous strain upon the loyalties of soldiers whose essential mission is to defend against external aggression. In response to their employment in domestic police actions, the armed forces may vent their resentment by disobeying orders or by directly retaliating against civilian decision makers.²⁰ The events in Peru leading up to the 1968 coup provide a case in point. After conducting counter-insurgency operations in Peru's rural areas for several years, soldiers had developed "a genuine sympathy for the long-oppressed peasantry,"²¹ and a deep resentment for the oligarchy whose interests the military served. Later, officers used their identification with the rural masses as a pretext for a revolutionary coup under military supervision. Conversely, as exhibited in several other Latin American cases, the failure of civilian authorities to maintain domestic order in light of a

²⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

²¹ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, Modern Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 210.

perceived insurgency threat may also prompt a professional ³⁶
military to take independent political action. In both
instances, failure on the part of civilians to appreciate
fully professional military values may result in the
disruption of civilian control by the armed forces.

As Finer's objections illustrate, professional
autonomy does not always equate with subordination. The
history of Latin America offers convincing proof that
military intervention may occur with high or low levels of
professionalism. This fact has been recognized throughout
much of the recent scholarship on civil-military
relations.²² Therefore, a more influential component of
the propensity for military subordination is required--one

²² In his classic review essay, "Armies and Politics
in Latin America," Abraham Lowenthal asserts that military
involvement in politics and professionalization vary in a
curvilinear fashion. Here, Lowenthal argues that the
military institution is more prone to play an overt role in
politics when levels of professionalism are either very
high or very low. However, at the intermediate stage of
professional development he reasons that officers are less
apt to participate in politics because they are "protecting
their still fragile corporate autonomy" (p. 19).

In a rejoinder to Lowenthal's review entitled "Armies
and Politics in Latin America: 1975-1985," J. Samuel Fitch
makes a related observation in his discussion of the
"institutionalization hypothesis". By conceptualizing
military intervention in terms of the relative level of
institutionalization of civilian political organizations
versus the armed forces, Fitch also concedes that military
political involvement can occur at any level of
professional development. These two articles are reprinted
in Abraham F. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch, eds., Armies &
Politics Latin America (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986),
pp. 3-25; 26-55.

that indicates subordination as well as autonomy. In Authoritarian Brazil, Alfred Stepan identifies a "new" professionalism evident in the military doctrines of several Latin countries. By distinguishing between traditional and modern interpretations of military professionalism, Stepan calls attention to a new set of factors contributing to the politicization of the military institution. Focusing primarily on the quality of missions performed by ostensibly professional armed forces, Stepan reveals the scope of military action to be a critical variable affecting the degree of military political involvement. Contrasting old with new paradigms of military thought, Stepan characterizes old professionalism as emphasizing external defense missions and new professionalism as highlighting internal security and national development concerns.²³ Arguing that the latter leads to military role expansion into politically sensitive areas of responsibility, Stepan concludes that the "new" professionalism directly contributes to military violation of civilian control patterns.

²³ Alfred Stepan, ed., Authoritarian Brazil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 47-65. Reprinted in Abraham Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch, eds., Armies & Politics in Latin America (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), pp. 134-150.

Welch also recognizes the merits of considering the roles and missions of the armed forces in devising strategies for civilian control. He states: "The narrower the range of responsibilities...the easier the establishment and maintenance of civilian control."²⁴

Extensive and prolonged involvement by the armed forces in non-military affairs such as public works, economic management, and law enforcement and adjudication may breed associations, relationships and professional prerogatives which are inherently non-military in character. In addition to this, exposure to the demands of managing institutional, governmental, or economic affairs may alter self-perceptions within the military such that officers come to believe that they possess the capacity to administer governmental programs more efficiently than civilians. The source of this new confidence may add legitimacy to claims that the military act to assume independent control over the affairs of state. Consequently, broadly defined areas of military responsibility greatly increase the potential for military expansion into spheres of responsibility normally the preserve of civilians. Leaving matters of internal security to non-military police units, encouraging functional specialization within the armed forces, focusing

²⁴ Welch, p. 32.

the military's attention on external threats, and generally³⁹
"keeping the armed forces within a relatively narrow,
circumscribed set of responsibilities" all serve to
facilitate the "disengagement" of military officers "from
active political roles."²⁵

In summary, it is not enough to create an autonomous
military profession whose members and missions are clearly
differentiated from society. Effective military
subordination also requires that the quality of an army's
formal and informal duties be divorced from *de facto*
political content and remain accountable to civilian
oversight. Therefore, rather than examining the extent to
which a military establishment is professionalized, a more
precise evaluation of its tendency to accept a subordinate
role within society may be obtained by studying the type of
operations it conducts. Other things being equal, the more
narrowly defined a military's range of responsibility, the
greater its propensity for accepting a subordinate role in
society.

Assuming this to be true, how does one adequately
evaluate the scope of military responsibilities? Although
the terms "narrow" and "broad" label the extreme ends of
the scale, precise definitions are required to make these
endpoints, and those between, meaningful for comparison.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 317, 320.

In Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority, Timothy 40
Colton outlines a continuum of military participation in
politics. While primarily designed to assess the political
behavior of the Soviet military, his conceptualization is
ideally suited for a variety of cases. Colton's scale
ranges from narrow to broad and specifies four distinct
sub-levels of military political participation: internal,
institutional, intermediate, and societal.

According to Colton, "military participation in
politics is narrowest when confined to internal military
matters".²⁶ He defines these internal issues as those "of
intense concern only to army officers and usually capable
of resolution within the boundaries of the military
establishment."²⁷ Combat effectiveness, operational
procedures, tactics, training, discipline, promotions, and
administrative concerns would be included under this
heading. Slightly broader in scope is participation in
what Colton terms institutional issues. Such matters "bear
directly upon officers' ideological self-image, material
well-being, status, and professional concerns."²⁸ Examples

²⁶ Timothy Colton, Commissars, Commanders, and
Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military
Politics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,
1979), p. 233.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

of this type include defense appropriations, weapons procurement, manpower levels, force structure, strategic planning, as well as pay and benefits. Next, according to Colton, are intermediate issues. While these matters "touch in some way on the interests of some army officials", they are of "primary concern to other specialized segments of society."²⁹ Participation on this plane might include leveling trade restrictions on companies conducting business with foreign interests, imposing controls over organized labor practices, and security measures such as the imposition of martial law within a given province, or restricting the personal freedom of certain citizens. Finally, military participation is at its broadest when characterized by direct involvement in societal issues. These matters affect "all citizens and...[deal] with the basic goals and needs of society as a whole."³⁰ Political participation at the societal level might presumably include ministerial level influence over such areas as the economy, health care, social programs, education, law enforcement, and the justice system.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Military roles must range between two possible extremes. On the one hand, the scope of military involvement may be so limited that it is virtually impossible for the armed forces even to contemplate opposition to their civilian masters. This would likely result in a situation where the armed forces focus exclusively on "internal" concerns, and even their participation in these matters are subject to strict civilian oversight. Under these conditions, a military would generally lack the interest, the capacity and the legitimacy to mount an effective challenge to civilian rule. In sharp contrast to this is the opposing scenario whereby the involvement of the armed forces in society is so extensive that it obviates the very need to oppose civilian control. In this case, the armed forces have penetrated society to such a degree that they effectively possess enough authority to realize their institutional objectives; confrontation with the civilian elite would yield nothing that they do not already possess. Variation in military roles, then, occurs between these polar opposites. In this context, Colton's typology is useful in providing objective criteria by which to gauge the extent of military political involvement. However, one must appreciate the inherent limitations of this scale. Clearly, these general classifications are not discrete,

self-contained measurements--substantial overlap between them is unavoidable. A given case may exhibit elements of two or more of the four levels of involvement. Therefore, exact placement on Colton's scale is a virtual impossibility. However, this should be of no great concern. Without providing stringent criteria for the absolute measurement of the scope of military responsibilities, Colton's typology does provide a useful framework for comparison. Using the definitions associated with each level, it is possible to obtain a relative measurement of the extent to which the military's responsibilities are broadly or narrowly defined.

Relating Ideological Cohesion with Military Responsibilities: The Calculus of Subordination

Having set forth the definitions and theoretical premises of the analytic model, an attempt will now be made to explain the relationships between key variables. By charting the effect of variation between ideological cohesion and the scope of military responsibilities, the author intends to illustrate how these factors impact the propensity of military subordination, and, ultimately, the likelihood of civilian control of the military.

It is the central contention of this paper that the propensity of military subordination is positively related to ideological cohesion and the narrowness of military

responsibilities. This relationship may be graphically represented by a two dimensional graph with the degree of ideological cohesion on one axis and the scope of military responsibility on the other (see Figure 1).³¹

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³¹ At first glance, my diagrammatic representation may seem reminiscent of Huntington. However, I argue that it possesses five crucial differences. First, Huntington attempts to relate military power, professionalism and ideology. I, on the other hand, seek to probe the relationships between the military's propensity to accept subordination, ideological cohesion, and the scope of military activities. While the ideological components share some similarities, the remaining concepts are, as I have argued, qualitatively different from Huntington's. Secondly, this approach permits a two-dimensional treatment of civil-military boundary relationships on the basis of ideology and military roles. Huntington, on the other hand, focused his discussion primarily on the consequences of professional autonomy. Thirdly, my model allows for variation in the military ethic. Huntington assumes this to be constant in a "professional" military. This is an approach which I tend to reject based on my own experience and the work of Alfred Stepan, J. Samuel Fitch, Genaro Arriagada, and others. Given the model's concentration on variables within the military institution, I feel it is more appropriate to consider civilian attitudes towards the military as relatively fixed and measure the extent to which those of the military institution differ from them. Fourth, unlike Huntington's analysis, this approach allows for the treatment of the dependent and independent variables as continuous rather than discrete. This allows for variation between extremes and improves the model's capacity to accommodate incremental change within the key variables. Finally, this model differs markedly from Huntington's because it assumes a prior state of military professionalism. Given the evolution of Latin American militaries in the second half of the twentieth century, the professional/unprofessional dichotomy fails to remain relevant. According to Huntington's definition of professionalism, virtually all Latin militaries are professional to the extent that they exhibit expertness, social responsibility, and corporate loyalty to their fellow practitioners. Yet in the majority of these cases, evidence of a professional military has failed to serve as an accurate predictor of military behavior. In light of this, Stepan, Fitch, and others have argued that there are

It is the thesis of this paper that the narrower a military's responsibilities, and the higher the level of ideological cohesion between military and civilian elites, the stronger the military's propensity for accepting subordination to civilian political authorities. Whether civilian control will exist or not is a separate question--one whose answer, it has been argued, also depends on the contextual climate and the relative strength of civilian institutions. Yet based solely on factors internal to the military institution, the military is more likely to accept freely subordination when ideological cohesion is high, and the scope of its responsibilities is narrow.

Generally speaking, high ideological cohesion will result in a high propensity for military subordination, other things being equal. Similarly, the narrower a military's sphere of responsibility, the more likely it is to exhibit subordinate behavior, assuming all other variables are constant. Conversely, respective measurements of low and broad for each of these variables indicate a reduced tendency for the military to accept a subordinate role relative to civilian political

different varieties of professionalism--with each type impacting the state and society differently. To account for this, I have consequently used the scope of military responsibilities instead of professionalism in an attempt to provide a more meaningful measurement of civil-military interaction.

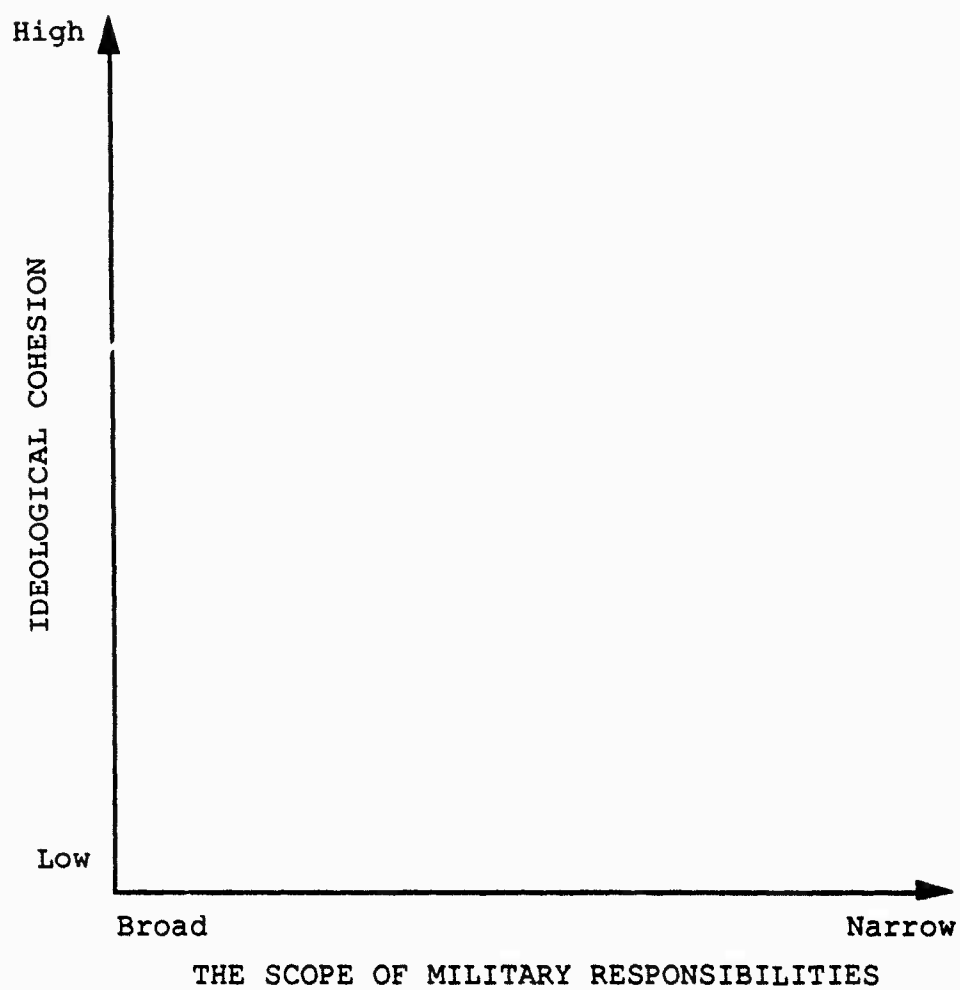


Figure 1.

THE MILITARY'S PROPENSITY FOR SUBORDINATION

institutions. However, as Figure 1 illustrates, it is not⁴⁷ enough simply to consider one variable to the exclusion of the other. Based on the two dimensional nature of the relationship, both variables must be simultaneously evaluated. As will subsequently be shown, the benefits afforded by strong positive placement (high cohesion or narrow responsibilities) in one dimension may be effectively negated by significantly weak placement (low cohesion or broad responsibilities) on the other dimension. Therefore, failure to give satisfactory treatment to both dimensions invites the formulation of misleading conclusions. In light of this, several remarks are in order about the properties of the space contained within the diagram.

As Figure 2 illustrates, the subordination diagram may be roughly divided into four quadrants. Quadrants II and III represent the respective positive and negative extremes of the military's propensity for subordination. Quadrant II, the positive extreme, is characterized by high ideological cohesion and narrow military responsibilities. Militaries falling within this space exist in a state of strong subordination. This simply means that, based solely on conditions within the military institution, the armed forces choose to remain subordinate to civilian political

authorities. Barring catastrophic contextual considerations like civil war or macroeconomic collapse, or the absence of legitimate civilian political institutions, this scenario will likely result in a pattern of civilian control.³² At the negative extreme lies quadrant III defined by low ideological cohesion and expansive military roles. Militaries falling within this space exists in a state of weak subordination. This essentially means that, based solely on conditions within the military institution, the armed forces will tend to oppose or even reject subordination to civilian political authorities. Without the assistance of amazingly favorable contextual considerations, or extremely powerful civilian political institutions, this scenario will likely result in military control of the state.

Occupying the turbulent space between the extremes, quadrants I and IV represent scenarios with very dynamic properties. Labeled as regions of instability, the

³² The desirability of a scenario characterized by high ideological cohesion and narrowly defined military responsibilities is mentioned by Morris Janowitz in his discussion of the obligations of civilian leaders in fostering effective civilian control. He states, "the following requirements must be met by authorities:...to limit military goals...[and] to assist in the formulation of military doctrine, so that it becomes a more unified expression of national political objectives..." The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p. 435. Quoted in Welch (1976), p. 322.

propensity of subordination of militaries falling within these two areas is tenuous and subject to rapid change. In these quadrants, military acceptance of subordination is difficult to maintain in the long term and may quickly degenerate into weak subordination. Quadrant I is characterized by high ideological cohesion coupled with broadly defined military responsibilities. In an abstract sense, a military may accept subordination under these conditions as long as the level of ideological cohesion is high enough to withstand the politicizing effects of expansive military roles. Similar to Rapoport's nation-in-arms model, the politicizing tendencies of broadly defined military roles are offset by extraordinarily high levels of ideological cohesiveness between soldiers and civilians.³³ However, when the extent of military involvement in societal affairs becomes so great that it surpasses the capacity of a given level of ideological cohesion to

³³ Welch, p.319. Any nation possessing consensus on political philosophies and threat assessments is a likely candidate for this category. Yet, the rarity of such cases precludes this as a relevant possibility. Such extreme levels of ideological unity are normally possible only within relatively homogeneous societies, or among those countries dominated by monistic, totalitarian-style parties, neither of which exists in Latin America. For more thorough discussion of the nation-in-arms model see David C. Rapoport's article, "A Comparative Theory of Military and Political Types," in Huntington, ed., Changing Patterns of Military Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1962), pp. 71-100.

counteract its effects, the result will be a corresponding⁵¹ reduction in the propensity for subordination.

A similar relationship is evident in quadrant IV. Militaries existing within this area are defined by low ideological cohesion and narrowly defined missions. While the military may temporarily accept narrowly defined roles within society, the level of ideological divergence suggests that they do so reluctantly and with great reservation. This is a potentially explosive situation for civil-military relations. Conceivably, the consequences of weak ideological unity may be counteracted by the military's strict adherence to narrow role definitions. If this is the case, then the military will be inclined to accept subordination. However, when the degree of disassociation from politically-related duties can no longer ameliorate the effects of ideological divergence, a weak propensity for subordination will manifest itself in a military decision to resist civilian authority. Figure 3 illustrates these relationships for quadrants I and IV.

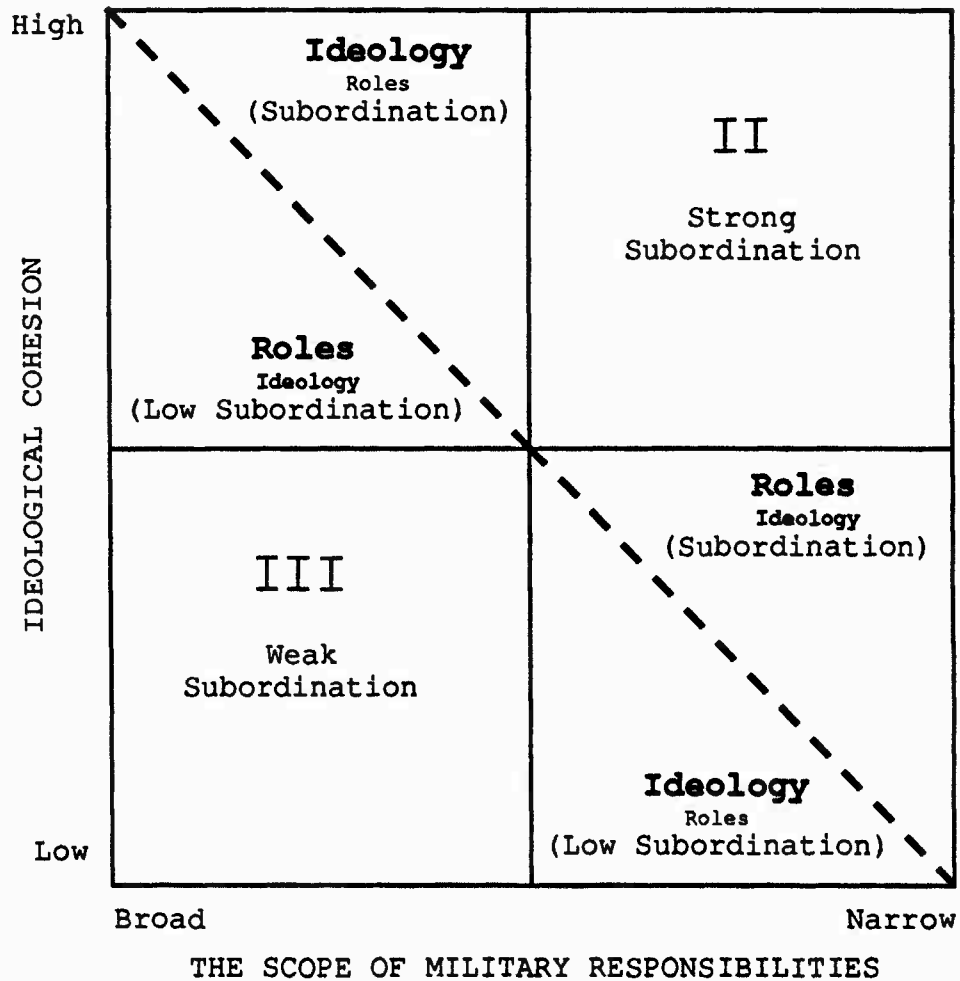


Figure 3.

THE MILITARY'S PROPENSITY FOR SUBORDINATION
(Regions of Instability)

Whether or not civilian control will actually exist in a given case is dependent upon external factors in addition to the military's propensity for subordination. As was argued at the beginning of this chapter, civilian control is the result of a set of complex relationships between multiple variables. These variables were organized into three general categories: contextual considerations; the strength of civilian institutions vis-a-vis the military; and the military's propensity for subordination. Although this study focuses attention on two specific dimensions of the third variable, a host of others figure into the final equation. Because a comprehensive analysis of these other variables defies adequate evaluation in a paper of this length, the focus has been narrowed to accommodate treatment of only the military's propensity for subordination. However, in order to place the subordination model in proper perspective, a brief discussion of the relationships between civilian control and military subordination is offered.

Because of the extreme conditions in which quadrant II and III militaries exist, the strength of the subordination variable is relatively high. In quadrant II the strength of the propensity for military subordination positively enhances the prospects for civilian control. Although the

nature of the model allows for substantial variation in the⁵⁴ strength of the propensity of subordination within a quadrant, a military falling within this space cannot help but push a society in the direction of civilian control. However, this is not to say that civilian control is an inevitable outcome for a nation with a quadrant II military. One may easily imagine a situation whereby a military with a strong independent desire to remain subordinate to civilian rule is nonetheless forced to violate a pattern of civilian control due to a national crisis, a civilian power vacuum, or perhaps both.

The reverse is true of quadrant III militaries. A weak propensity for subordination will work against the possibility for civilian control. However, even though highly disposed to reject subordination, the military may in fact remain obedient to its civilian masters by virtue of favorable contextual considerations, extraordinarily strong civilian institutions, or both. For example, an immensely successful economy, one that accommodates the military's every budgetary wish and facilitates the economic dependency of its military rivals, may serve to maintain the armed forces' acceptance of civilian control, especially if they realize they would be incapable of achieving the same success. Likewise, despite severe ideological cleavages and extensive penetration of civilian

roles, the military may be disinclined to oppose the civilian elites if the latter stand firmly unified and enjoy overwhelming public support. In this case the military would likely refrain from intervention if it concludes that any attempt to remove forcibly the civilian leadership would precipitate a costly civil war.

Extreme deficiencies or strengths in the external variables are required to overturn a vote for or against civilian control by militaries existing in quadrants II and III. In contrast, quadrants I and IV are hypersensitive to even the slightest change in external conditions. Because of the delicate balance between ideology and military roles normally present in these quadrants, a military decision to accept (or reject) subordination is highly conditional and relatively weak compared to one made under quadrant II (or III) conditions. Consequently, the propensity for subordination in quadrants I or IV will have a potentially negligible impact on the civilian control equation. Here, more so than at the extremes, the prospects for civilian control depend greatly on environmental conditions and the relative strength of civilian institutions.

Overview

The remainder of this paper consists of an application of the subordination model to two real world cases. These

examples are intended to demonstrate the validity of the hypothesized relationship between ideology, the scope of military roles, and the propensity of military subordination. Each case will seek to illustrate how change in the dependent variable of military subordination can be explained as a function of change in the independent variables of ideological cohesion and the scope of military functions. The subordination model detailed within this chapter will provide the analytic lens through which the issue of military behavior in Latin America will be viewed.

The events in Brazil surrounding the 1964 coup serve as an effective illustration of a quadrant I scenario. By examining the changes in the state of ideological cohesion and the scope of military responsibilities, the author hopes to demonstrate how the impact of expansive military roles eventually eroded the high ideological cohesion between the military and and civilian authorities, and contributed to the military's subsequent intervention. Venezuela in the 1940s permits an examination of the military's propensity for subordination under quadrant IV conditions. In this case it will be argued that substantial ideological divergence eroded the subordination dispositions of an army fairly restricted in its institutional responsibilities, and ultimately led to the coups of 1945 and 1948. A discussion of events since 1958

will reveal how measures to bridge the ideological gap between civilians and the armed forces, as well as attempts to keep military missions narrowly defined, have resulted in one of Latin Americas most subordinate militaries.

CHAPTER II

PRELUDE TO AUTHORITARIANISM: ELITE COHESION, AND MILITARY ROLES IN BRAZIL

Introduction

This chapter seeks to demonstrate how changes in ideological cohesion between military and civilian elites as well as the extent of military political involvement have affected the tendency of the armed forces to accept their subordination to civilian authority. First, some general characteristics of the Brazilian armed forces will be examined, paying special attention to patterns of civil-military ideological cohesion, the extent of pre-coup military involvement in civilian affairs, and the nature of military subordination to civilian rule. This is followed by an examination of how changes in ideology accompanied by a persistent expansion of military roles resulted in a reversal of the military's subordinate disposition shortly before the reformist coup of 1964.

The Brazilian Military Prior to 1964: An Overview

The Brazilian military has been intimately involved in the political affairs of state since the early days of

Brazil's independence from Portugal. In fact, the armed forces have historically been granted constitutional authority to intervene in politics in each of Brazil's three republican periods (1889-1930; 1934-1945; 1946-1964). Official recognition of the Brazilian military's role as arbiter has resulted in numerous enforced changes changes of political leadership at the hands of the armed forces. Consequently, support from the armed forces has always been an essential ingredient of success for any civilian regime. However, for most of Brazil's history, the military's assumption of political power has been of short duration since the army routinely supervised the immediate transfer of power to a new civilian regime. This fact led Alfred Stepan to characterize Brazil's brand of military political involvement as being typical of the "moderator model" of civil-military relations:

[T]he relevant political actors grant legitimacy to the military under certain circumstances to act as moderators of the political process and to check or overthrow the executive to avoid the breakdown of the system...¹

In such a system, military activism is seen as the norm rather than the exception in political life. However, while civilian elites may bestow legitimate political authority upon the military for limited periods of time in

¹ Alfred Stepan, The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 64.

order to facilitate a system-saving transfer of power, Stepan notes that officers and civilians alike believe it to be categorically "illegitimate" for the armed forces to exercise supreme executive authority for extended periods of time.²

The history of civil-military relations in Brazil up to 1964 supports Stepan. As early as 1889 the Brazilian military claimed

the undeniable right of the armed forces to depose the legitimate powers constituted by the nation when the military understands that its honor requires that this be done, or judges it necessary and convenient for the good of the country.³

This "undeniable right" has been institutionalized in Brazilian politics since its first republican constitution. Successive modifications of republican rule since 1891 (1934 and again in 1946) have established specific provisions for the political role of the military.⁴ These institutional mandates are embodied in two important phrases in each of Brazil's three republican constitutions prior to 1964. The first labels the armed forces as "permanent national institutions" charged with maintaining

² Ibid.

³ Robert Wesson, ed., The Latin American Military Institution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), pp. 186-87.

⁴ Ibid., p. 188.

law and order and the effective functioning of the government. This wording effectively secured for the military an enduring position of influence in the affairs of the Brazilian state.⁵ The second provision subordinated the military to the constitutionally established government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches), but only "within the limits of the law." This controversial phrase has permitted the armed forces substantial latitude in determining exactly what those limits are.⁶

From the time of the First Republic to the 1964 reformist coup, the armed forces have attempted to exercise a direct role in determining the fate of the nation no fewer than eight times.⁷ However, in each instance the extent of military involvement was limited to the temporary seizure of power during a civilian leadership crisis. These interventions were generally intended to replace regimes which had lost their legitimate claim to rule with an ostensibly more legitimate successor, and enjoyed widespread support among civilian groups who found

⁵ Robert A. Hayes, The Armed Nation: The Brazilian Corporate Mystique (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Latin American Studies, 1989), pp. 82-3.

⁶ Ibid., p. 83.

⁷ Walter Little, Military Power in Latin America: An Overview (Liverpool: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1986), p. 3.

themselves temporarily out of political favor. However, 62
from 1894 until 1964, the military, though always retaining
substantial political influence, never challenged the
legitimacy of civilian politicians' right to rule. Despite
frequent usurpations of executive authority by the armed
forces, military officers believed themselves to be doing
no more than executing their official responsibilities as
"guardians" of the nation. This power was promptly
returned to civilian hands after every coup.⁸ This
peculiar quality of the "moderating" role played by the
army in its relations with civil society suggests that
Brazilian society and the military have enjoyed a
relatively high level of ideological unity regarding the
proper role of the armed forces. Although several factors
may account for this, two in particular seem to have had a
significant impact on this ideological unity: the
universal draft system, and the National War College (ESG).

As World War I approached, Brazil's neighbors,
especially its geopolitical rival Argentina, began to
modernize their armed forces by participating in foreign
military assistance programs. Brazil's strategic
vulnerability became a topic of great concern around the
turn of the century and the decision was made to build a
military capability similar to that of the European

⁸ Stepan (1971), p. 115.

powers.⁹ However, the political and popular support required to raise such an army necessitated a drastic change in the existing attitudes of the Brazilian masses. Recognizing the large but disaggregated middle and lower classes as a potentially limitless fount of support for a well-organized and powerful army that could speak and act on behalf of the underprivileged, the military high-command established a national draft lottery in 1916. Under a system of mandatory military service, recruits would receive a minimum of one year of training and then return to their homes to "spread the good work of citizenship."¹⁰

Viewed by many as a way to bridge the gap separating the privileged classes from the impoverished masses, universal military service represented

the complete triumph of democracy; the leveling of the classes; the school of order, discipline, cohesion; the laboratory of individual patriotism and dignity...¹¹

For the newly formed Brazilian general staff, the draft lottery provided the raw material with which to forge

⁹ Frank D. McCann, Jr., "Origins of the 'New Professionalism' of the Brazilian Military," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 21 (November 1979), pp. 510-11.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 512.

¹¹ Clavo Bilac, A Defesa Nacional (Discursos) (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, 1965). Quoted in McCann, p. 513.

an effective, professional fighting force on a par with other armies in the region. For the middle class, general military service, with the officer corps now being drawn increasingly from its strata, held the promise of shaping the future in accordance with its vision of Brazil's national destiny. But even beyond these effects, mandatory military service helped to instill and perpetuate what Robert Hayes calls the "corporate mystique" of the Brazilian military. The fact that every eligible male spends some part of his life serving the state by wearing the uniform of the Brazilian armed forces has had the critical effect of firmly tying the destiny of Brazil to that of its armed forces. In addition to serving as a common bond extending from citizen to citizen, service in the Brazilian military has also succeeded in bringing together citizen and soldier. As Hayes observes, a mythical element surrounding the Brazilian military has evolved over a period of years which has served both as a justification of and rationalization for "the intrusion of military officers into the arena of national politics."¹² Certainly the draft system has been an important bridge between the armed forces and the nation they have sworn to protect. In an interview with General Ernesto Geisel, former Brazilian president (1974-1979) and architect of the

¹² Hayes, pp. 1-2.

abertura¹³, Paul Boeker, President of the Institute of the Americas, asked: 65

...it is said that Brazilian military officers, either because of their background or because of their education, feel much more comfortable with their civilian counterparts. In other words, the dividing line between civilians and the military is less clear in Brazil and less marked by social distinction, much less resentments.

Geisel replied,

In Brazil the military has always been linked to the people, which is where we all come from. A majority of our officers have rather humble origins. From the beginnings of the empire and the republic, the Brazilian armed forces have always identified with the sentiments of the people. We have obligatory military service for a period of at least a year, so our soldiers are literally representative of our population.¹⁴

Stepan's observations regarding this issue offer a revealing interpretation of the significance of universal military service in Brazil. Says Stepan,

the "popular" origins of the military, in comparison to other elites, has helped foster the belief that the military is merely *o povo fardado* ("the people in uniform"). This concept of identity between the people and the army has given some psychological legitimacy to appeals to the military from civilians to intervene in politics in their defense at times of crisis....it has given sanction to the belief that it is the duty of the military to come to the defense of civilians if called.¹⁵

¹³ This word refers to the "opening" of Brazil's political system to forms of limited contestation in preparation for a return to civilian rule after nearly two decades of government by the military.

¹⁴ Paul H. Boeker, Lost Illusions: Latin America's Struggle for Democracy, as Recounted by its Leaders (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, 1990), p. 270.

¹⁵ Stepan (1971), pp. 43-44.

In addition to its identification with the "people", 66 facilitated in part through the draft, the Brazilian military also shares a bond with the nation's civilian elite. Indeed, some have even described the Brazilian armed forces as the critical link between the masses and the power elite. According to Hayes, Professor Jose Honorio Rodrigues, a "giant" in Brazil's intellectual community, credits the armed forces with "bridging the gap between the isolated elite and the disdained masses in a way that spared the society the necessity of choosing between inertia and revolution."¹⁶ Up to the reformist coup of 1964, civilian elites and military officers displayed remarkable agreement on matters regarding the role of the military in the political affairs of the nation. The ultimate testimony to this is the institutionalized authority of the armed forces mandated in three of Brazil's former constitutions.

This high degree of ideological cohesion is likely the result of many factors. The social origins of military officers may be a partial explanation of this phenomenon. Based on Stepan's analysis of data regarding the occupations of fathers whose sons entered the Brazilian Military Academy (1941-1943 and 1962-1966), it is starkly

¹⁶ Hayes, p. 7.

apparent that roughly 77% of the cadets entering the Academy during this time were of middle class background.¹⁷ Inasmuch as civilian politicians originate from and retain middle class values, Stepan's findings may serve as a partial explanation of the similar political beliefs held by military and civilian elites. However, since the vast majority of Brazil's political and economic leaders originate from the upper class, this premise is far from being uniformly true. In terms of social background and class interests, most military officers feel they have little in common with the country's power elite.¹⁸ Furthermore, the sons of many upper-class families find ways of escaping conscription.¹⁹ Therefore, additional factors must account for the high level of ideological agreement between military officers and their civilian political counterparts.

Brazil's National War College deserves special attention for its role in bridging ideological gaps between military officers and the civilian leadership. Functioning as an engine of military-civilian ideological consensus, the ESG is also, in some respects, a consequence

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 32-36.

¹⁸ Stepan (1971), p. 42.

¹⁹ Robert Wesson, The Latin American Military Institution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), p. 12.

of the long-standing perception of collegiality between the⁶⁸
Brazilian military and society.

Founded in 1949 by presidential decree, the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG) was officially established to prepare "*civilians and the military* [emphasis added] to perform executive and advisory functions, especially in those organs responsible for the formulation, development, planning, and execution of national security."²⁰ The ESG favored a very broad definition of "national security" that encompassed all determinants of national power, not simply military strength. The ESG curriculum included courses in political affairs, psychosocial affairs, economic affairs, military affairs, logistical and mobilizational affairs, intelligence and counterintelligence, and doctrine and coordination.²¹ The doctrine of national security which emerged in varied form throughout much of Latin America from the 1950s to the present has been greatly influenced by this Brazilian institution. Founded on the principle that military security and national development were

²⁰ Alfred Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," from Alfred Stepan, ed., Authoritarian Brazil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 47-65. Reprinted in Abraham F. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch, eds., Armies & Politics in Latin America (New York: Holmes & Meijer Publishers, 1986), p. 139.

²¹ Stepan (1971), p. 176.

necessarily dependent on each other, the ESG's national security doctrine provided the blueprint for the role the armed forces would play in shaping Brazil's national destiny for the two decades following the 1964 coup.

Non-military persons wishing to attend the ESG were required to have a university education in addition to having attained a level of achievement in their profession. Consequently, those civilians who did attend the ESG were, for the most part, from Brazil's elite strata. Professions represented included key members of Brazil's economic and political power elites. In addition to high ranking military officers, the ESG's alumni included civilians from principal government agencies, private industry and commercial sectors, members of the national legislature, federal and state judges, lawyers, doctors, university professors, economists, writers, and a few members of the Catholic clergy.²² Reading like a "Who's Who" of Brazilian society, the ESG's commencement lists testify to the extensiveness of the high-level civilian-military interaction facilitated by this institution. As Stepan notes,

The decision to include civilians as a central part of the ESG proved to be crucial for the development of the

²² Stepan (1973), p. 140.

school. It brought military officers into systematic close²³ contact with civilian leaders. 70

By 1966, over 53% of the total number of ESG graduates were civilians. This inclusion of civilian elites in the formulation of national security doctrine at the ESG had several important consequences for Brazil's future. Using the ESG as a forum in which students and faculty could draw upon diverse backgrounds and experience, the high-command sought a multi-faceted approach to the security and developmental problems facing the Brazilian state. By insuring that civilian elites, as well as military officers, were given substantial input into the strategies the ESG proposed to solve these problems, the ESG faculty also succeeded in cultivating a high degree of ideological consensus among civilian elites. According to Riordan Roett,

The ESG provided a framework for the armed forces to work with members of the civilian elite to extrapolate a fairly sophisticated conception of Brazil's future development...A common understanding of the political, social, and economic needs of the nation and a determination to defend the permanent national objectives of Brazil became deeply ingrained...through the functioning of the ESG.²⁴

Ronald Schneider, in The Political System of Brazil, also observes that the "esprit de corps" of the ESG alumni

²³ Stepan (1971), p. 176.

²⁴ Riordan Roett, Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), p. 89.

greatly reinforces the function of the ESG as a vehicle for the co-optation of groups from all social sectors of the elite into the ideological and programmatic outlook of the military technocrats.²⁵ 71

Two important qualifications should be made, however, regarding the overall impact of the draft and the ESG as forces for elite cohesion. First, it is interesting to note that linkages between military and civilian groups can have a dual effect on cohesion. On the one hand, measures such as recruitment and education bring the military and civilians together to improve communication and promote mutual understanding. On the other hand, diffuse penetration of the military establishment by civilians may form the basis for internal fragmentation in the armed forces. Heightened contact between civilians and the military increases the possibility that members of the armed forces will adopt conflicting allegiances. Although, the ideological distance separating the military from civil society may be narrowed in a general sense as a result of increased contact, these same channels may, in fact, worsen relations between the two groups. Regional affiliations, political involvement, and clientelistic relationships may exact a heavy toll on the internal cohesion of the military. For example, it has been surmised that Brazil's

²⁵ Ronald Schneider, The Political System of Brazil: Emergence of a "Modernizing" Authoritarian Regime, 1964-70 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 250. Quoted in Roett, p. 89.

Third Army refused a direct order to march on Porto Alegre⁷² during the succession crisis of 1961 as a result of their emotional attachment to the people of the region.²⁶ It is also conceivable that close contact between military officers and civilians at the ESG may have forged relationships and loyalties that challenged military norms of professional conduct regarding the strict adherence to civil-military separation. The potential clearly exists for these forms of contact to result in the factionalization of the armed forces. Therefore, the double-edged quality of civil-military interaction should be fully appreciated; increased contact with civilians, instead of facilitating ideological cohesion, may actually erode the internal cohesion of the armed forces.

Along these same lines, it is important to realize that the general cooperation between civilians and the armed forces, fostered in part by the draft and the ESG, was never absolute. Ideological cohesion between these two groups has always been tempered by significant fragmentation within the military. Since the days of the Paraguayan war (1865-1870), Brazil's armed forces have been divided into hardline and softline elements. Initially, this conflict was waged between the *tarimbeiros* who favored military intervention in national politics to gain power

²⁶ Wesson, p. 12.

and prestige at the expense of civilian elites, and the *doutores* who perceived themselves as citizen soldiers and approved of military intervention only as a means to achieve political reform.²⁷ During World War II this fragmentation had evolved into an ongoing disagreement between officers who approved of Brazil's support for the Allies, the *febianos*²⁸, and those who were sympathetic to the Axis powers.²⁹ Throughout the 1950s and 60s inter-military dynamics centered on disputes between the *verde-amarelos*, extreme nationalists, the *azules*, neoliberals, and the *legalistas*, who favored strict adherence to the Constitution and maintained a non-interventionist stance.³⁰ This fragmentation made any degree of cohesion between the armed forces and a civilian regime suspect and highly conditional based on which military faction possessed the upper hand.

As a result of this internal division, the military faced the possibility of massive rifts within its ranks on several occasions. Indeed, problems of internal cohesion

²⁷ McCann, pp. 508-9.

²⁸ The word comes from the acronym, FEB, which is Portuguese for Brazilian Expeditionary Force. The FEB was deployed alongside Allied units during World War II.

²⁹ Hayes, pp. 195-6.

³⁰ Hayes, pp. 195-213.

expanded during the period of military rule from 1964 to 1985 and contributed to its failure as a viable alternative to civilian government. In light of this, it is also important to qualify any assertion of civil-military ideological cohesion. Rarely does any organization operate with the unanimous support of its members and the Brazilian military is no exception. Differences within the armed forces have existed and persist even to the present. However, despite this fragmentation, extreme and pervasive disagreements over fundamental political values within the military, prior to 1964, were rare. Thus, a general sense of cooperation between the armed forces and their civilian counterparts was preserved.

These caveats notwithstanding, civil-military relations in Brazil have been characterized by a climate of mutual respect throughout much of the twentieth century. Although the armed forces intervened in politics periodically prior to 1964, such intrusions were short-lived, entailed minimal violence, and were ostensibly executed to preserve the duly constituted political order. A tacit agreement seemed to exist regarding the rules of the game. Brazil's system of universal military service and the ESG were two means by which the relatively high degree of ideological convergence between military and civilian sectors of society was cultivated and maintained.

The acceptance of military involvement in political life as normal was also evident in the extensive penetration of Brazilian society by the armed forces. Beginning in the 1930s, the Brazilian military began to extend its institutional involvement in society by performing an ever widening range of non-military functions. Even before the doctrine of national security justified the military's expansion into areas that were traditionally non-military in nature, the Brazilian armed forces were heavily involved in performing services far removed from its primary duty of defending against foreign aggression. After Getulio Vargas' rise to power in the 1930s, military involvement in Brazilian life increased steadily. In 1937 Vargas launched his program of "preemptive modernization" known as the *Estado Novo*.³¹ Intended as a means of preventing a destructive social revolution among the underprivileged classes, this program called for the institutionalized modernization of Brazilian society on a grand scale. The military was mobilized to head the reconstruction effort. Acting as an agency of "national reconstruction and development", the armed forces undertook a variety of public works projects. Roads and railroads were built throughout Brazil's vast interior

³¹ Wesson, p. 188-89.

under military supervision.³² Additionally, Vargas staffed⁷⁶ large numbers of governmental administrative positions with military officers. Industrial sectors were likewise subject to the same type of encroachment: both the National Steel Company and the National Petroleum Council were headed by active duty military officers.³³ Frank McCann observes,

During the war, the officer corps acquired a wide variety of experiences, as administrators, businessmen, planners and combat leaders, which increased the officers' knowledge of economic and political forces and of technocratic methods, resulting in them becoming more compromised than ever with national development. It came to be normal to find military men occupying civilian posts.³⁴

In addition to the extensive involvement of the army in the reconstruction and development programs, the armed forces also became heavily involved in the maintenance of domestic order. By order of President Vargas, the state police were placed under the command of the military.

According to Robert Hayes,

The bringing of state police forces under army control held considerable importance. Historically, such forces had served as paramilitary counter-poise to the army...Now for

³² Ibid., p. 189.

³³ Hayes, p. 172.

³⁴ Frank D. McCann, Nacao Armada (Recife, 1982), p. 103. Quoted in Hayes, p. 172.

the first time, and irreversible, the army had attained complete supremacy over the nation's coercive apparatus.³⁵ 77

This trend of military role expansion was continued throughout the years of the Kubitschek administration (1956-61). President Kubitschek devised a formula for maintaining the legitimacy of his rule in the eyes of the armed forces. This essentially involved a strategy of using "spoils appointments" in exchange for military support. In this way Kubitschek was able to build ideological cohesion between his administration and the armed forces by expanding the influence of the military establishment in civil society. Hayes states,

Abuses in the regulative area and the distributive area exposed the Kubitschek administration to potential intervention by officers convinced that such activities in fact exceeded the limits of the legality formula. Kubitschek, however, was able to weather these threats by allowing the EMFA (General Staff of the Armed Forces) to have a voice in "all the problems relative to the technical and economic development of the country" and thus providing somewhat of an escape valve for dissatisfaction which tended to build up within the officer corps. In addition, Kubitschek coopted many military leaders by providing them with a broad variety of civil administrative assignments to tap their administrative skills. This also satisfied their patriotic urges in the military statesman tradition of contributing to the solution of national problems in ways that exceeded the purely military range.³⁶

As these illustrations suggest, during the early and mid-twentieth century the Brazilian armed forces began to

³⁵ Hayes, p. 169.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 204.

expand their influence in society. Gradually, the military⁷⁸ grew in size and importance. From 1930 to 1944, the size of the armed forces increased more than 400% from 47,997 to 171,300.³⁷ This growth in manpower was also accompanied by a substantial rise in military expenditures. In 1930 military outlays comprised 19.6% of the national budget. By 1946, this figure grew to 35.8%.³⁸ As I have attempted to demonstrate, this growth in size was met with a corresponding increase in the scope of military responsibilities. No longer restricted to the tasks of defending Brazil's borders from external threats, the armed forces began to acquire extensive interests in the management and administration of key industrial sectors as well as important governmental agencies. In terms of Colton's typology, military functions during this time may be evaluated as being somewhere between "intermediate" and "societal" in focus.

In terms of the two dimensional relationship espoused in Chapter One, the Brazilian armed forces up to 1961 fit the characteristics of a quadrant I military: high ideological cohesion with civilian elites accompanied by broadly defined military functions. Based on the quality

³⁷ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 170.

of military intervention up to this period, I further argue⁷⁹ that the Brazilian armed forces exhibited a moderately high propensity for subordination. In light of Stepan's argument that the Brazilian military assumed the role of "moderator" in its relations with civil society, I feel it reasonable to conclude that, prior to 1961, the Brazilian military generally accepted the supremacy of civilian institutions. However, in the next section I will argue that this propensity for subordination was highly unstable due to the broadly defined scope of military responsibilities. As stated in Chapter One, high levels of ideological convergence may counteract the negative impact (i.e. the tendency to reject civilian supremacy) of expansive military involvement. However, any appreciable loss in ideological cohesion will likely result in the military's rejection of subordinate behavior, other things being equal. The ascension of Joao Goulart to the Brazilian Presidency in 1961 provides a dramatic test of this hypothesis.

The Breakdown of Subordinate Behavior:
Ideological Cohesion and Military Roles 1961-1964

The rise of Joao Goulart in 1961 to the Presidency initiated a series of profound changes in Brazilian civil military relations. Beginning in 1961 the conditions of fundamental ideological agreement between the armed forces

and the governing civilian elite that had characterized political life in Brazil throughout much of the twentieth century deteriorated rapidly. The military's growing perception of Goulart as having communist tendencies combined with significant changes in the ESG discourse to widen steadily the ideological gap between the military and the government. In addition, the military's extensive involvement in the administration of key civilian sectors eventually began to have a decisive effect on the way in which the armed forces perceived themselves. By 1964, the steady erosion of basic ideological consensus regarding civilian control, combined with the politicizing impact of expansive military roles, resulted in the military's overt rejection of civilian supremacy. The low propensity for subordination, taken in the context of a widening socio-economic crisis, ultimately resulted in a military-authoritarian government and an end to republican rule in Brazil for twenty years.

The Kubitschek years (1956-1960) were among the most stable since the overthrow of Vargas in 1946. However, this era of political tranquility came to an abrupt end with the election of Janio Quadros to the Presidency in 1960. Elected with a broad base of popular support, Quadros initially ushered in an atmosphere of optimism among soldiers and civilians alike. Running on a

reputation of incorruptibility and political pragmatism, 81
Quadros soundly defeated Kubitschek and his clientelistic
practices. However, Quadros' self-proclaimed image of
being above partisan politics quickly immobilized his
administration.³⁹

Quadros had been elected largely because he rejected
partisan associations. While this was sufficient to please
the electorate in the 1960 presidential election, his lack
of partisan support in the Congress became a liability soon
after. Unable to marshall the political support necessary
to approve his initiatives, Quadros formulated a risky plan
to enhance his powers as president. Adopting a tactic
similar to the one used by Charles De Gaulle of the French
Fifth Republic, Quadros gave Congress the ultimatum of
granting him broad powers as president, or accepting his
resignation.⁴⁰ According to Robert Hayes, Quadros reasoned
Congress would choose not to accept his resignation since
he enjoyed widespread popular support. Additionally, he
felt that the military would sooner intervene and establish
authoritarian rule than allow Vice-President Joao Goulart
to assume the presidency. However, much to Quadros

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 206-7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 207.

surprise, the plan backfired--Congress accepted his resignation and the military remained passive.⁴¹

Goulart's promotion to the presidency touched off a chain of events that persistently drove the military and the government apart from each other. The Brazilian armed forces had long distrusted the populist leanings of Goulart. Preferring to draw on the urban labor movement as his primary base of support, Goulart tended to alienate the military and deny its traditional role as a national institution. Additionally, his becoming president revealed a deep division within the officer ranks. Shortly after Quadros' resignation, a reactionary segment of military officers clamored for Goulart's removal from office. This motion was vehemently opposed by military "legalists" who insisted that Goulart, no matter how distasteful he might be to conservative elements of the military, was the legally elected successor to Quadros and, as such, must be permitted to assume the presidency. When it was realized that any attempt to prevent forcibly Goulart's succession would result in a severe ideological rift within the military establishment, the conservative faction ultimately acquiesced in order to preserve the unity of the armed

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 206-7.

forces. Goulart was sworn in as President without incident⁸³
on 5 September 1961.⁴²

During the two and one half years of Goulart's term as president, the military and the government became increasingly antagonistic. This divergence was exacerbated by a number of factors. First were the immediate conditions under which Goulart assumed office. When Quadros tendered his resignation, Goulart was on a diplomatic mission attempting to improve relations with socialist countries. During his visit to China, the vice-president made a speech that conservative elements of the military later used as evidence of his radical anti-military leanings. Notes Hayes,

While in mainland China...[Goulart] announced his intention to establish a *people's republic* in Brazil but added that, in order to do so, it would be necessary to use the enlisted men to *smash the officer corps* which he characterized as *reactionary* [emphasis in the original].⁴³

With the memory of the fate suffered by the Cuban officer corps in 1959 still fresh in their minds, many Brazilian officers became defensive. Viewing Goulart as a threat to their privileged status, they grew increasingly suspicious of his intentions. In the eyes of the military, these fears were confirmed again and again during Goulart's

⁴² Roett, p. 90.

⁴³ Hayes, p. 207.

tenure of the presidency. In September of 1963, hundreds 84
of enlisted men from each service staged a revolt in the
Brazilian capital. Although quickly put down, the
resulting investigation revealed that the enlisted men
involved in the incident were incited to rebel by Goulart's
followers. When members of the Workers General Command
(CGT) announced their alignment with the recalcitrant
sergeants, even the legalist supporters of Goulart within
the military became concerned over the connection between
Goulart, organized labor, and enlisted soldiers. The
commander of the Second Army, General Bevilacqua, once a
staunch supporter of Goulart on legalist grounds, rejected
the combination of "syndical super power and political
infiltration of the barracks."⁴⁴

In addition to posing a threat to order and
discipline, Goulart also reneged on his promise not to
"play politics" with the army. His behavior in this area
illustrates the paradox surrounding civilian penetration of
the military discussed above. Using promotions as a way of
co-opting opportunistic soldiers, Goulart was able to move
politically loyal officers into several key positions.
Although intended to improve his relations with selected
members of the armed forces, Goulart's actions backfired as

⁴⁴ Mario Victor, Cinco anos Que Abalaram Brasil (Rio
de Janeiro: Livaria Civilizacao Brasileira Editora, 1965),
p. 454. Quoted in Hayes, pp. 210-11.

they became a source of intense resentment among a majority⁸⁵ of officers. His intrusion into internal military affairs was a blatant violation of professional norms of behavior and, as such, was considered by many as an overt "breach of legality".⁴⁵ Legalist support for Goulart in the military was further weakened by evidence that various sectors of Brazilian society were becoming radicalized. Peasants in the northeast were showing signs of increased political mobilization, while a national student organization intensified efforts to form a union of "peasants, urban workers, students, and soldiers for revolutionary purposes."⁴⁶ The creation of urban and rural militias throughout Brazil as potential "counter-poises" to the national army also served to reinforce in the minds of many officers that Goulart was exceeding the boundaries of legitimate rule.⁴⁷ According to Roett, at this time [s]enior officers, previously unwilling to believe the president would act unconstitutionally, began to prepare to resist further executive initiatives that they considered illegal. Gradually, a large number of officers became convinced that Goulart posed a real threat to public order.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Hayes, p. 210; Stepan (1971), p. 55, pp. 165-68.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 211.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Roett, p. 92.

As this passage illustrates, the dramatic loss of ideological convergence between the military and the civilian government during Goulart's administration was accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the military's propensity for subordination. As Goulart moved further to the left, the military was less inclined to accept his legitimate claim to authority over them. Some may argue that these military attitudes were no different from those which immediately preceded coups that were consistent with the "moderating" tradition--despite rejecting an individual's right to rule, the military still accepts subordination to legitimate civilian leadership. However, largely due to changes within the ESG doctrine, these ideological differences were patently "anti-civilian control" in nature.

By the early 1960s, a distinction between national policy and government policy had emerged within ESG discourse. According to Roett, "national" policy referred to the "development and security doctrines of the ESG", while "government" policy corresponded to the "specific decisions of the civilian government in power at the moment."⁴⁹ This distinction is significant because it signaled the elevation of ESG proscriptions as objective standards for judging regime effectiveness. Roett notes

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

that by ESG standards, the Goulart administration was "off⁸⁷ the mark" considerably by 1964. Stepan also observes that [a]mong members of the ESG there was a growing sentiment in the face of the 1961-1964 crisis that President Goulart was tolerating and implicitly encouraging anarchy and subversion and that Brazil needed a basically new political approach for development and security.⁵⁰

As events subsequently revealed, this "new approach" implied much more than simply the military's removal of Goulart from power. As faith in Goulart's legitimacy and his regime's ability to maintain order waned, civilian elites outside the government, as well as military intellectuals within the ESG, increasingly looked to a purely military solution to the predicament Goulart had engineered. Interestingly enough, despite the fact that ESG doctrine represented a wedge between the Goulart administration and the armed forces, it also served as a bridge unifying military ideologues with many civilian elites in agreement with the position advocated by the ESG. The seriousness of Brazil's socio-economic crisis in 1964, the inclusion of important civilians in the formulation of ESG doctrine, and the gradual expansion over the years of the military into major sectors of Brazilian society led an overwhelming majority of military officers and key civilians to conclude that the armed forces alone had the

⁵⁰ Stepan (1971), p. 183.

strategy, the resources, and the resolve necessary to rescue Brazil from ruin. Writes Roett,

In 1964, then, the feelings of inadequacy within the armed forces over their capacity and legitimacy to assume power had dramatically decreased. With the support of the civilians with whom they worked, the military were prepared to implement their controversial development doctrine...the feeling of the armed forces and of their civilian collaborators was that the military alone had the qualities of leadership needed to guide the nation.⁵¹

This general expression of faith in the ability of the armed forces to save Brazil was critical to the military's rejection of civilian supremacy. In addition to the antagonistic policies and events of the Goulart administration highlighted in the preceding discussion, two additional sources of military insubordination are identifiable: the ESG doctrine and the extent of military participation in civilian affairs. Beyond introducing ideological distance between the armed forces and the Goulart government, the ESG was an important vehicle for building cohesion between the military institution and selected civilian elites. The ESG forged a new consensus between the military and civilian elites opposed to the Goulart regime by generating confidence in the military's administrative abilities, and cultivating support for its reformist, security-oriented strategies. Complementing this was the practical experience of military officers in

⁵¹ Roett, p. 89.

working with various governmental agencies. The extensive⁸⁹ involvement of military units and officers in administering civilian affairs served two ends. In addition to demonstrating to civilians the ability of the armed forces to administer efficiently non-military affairs, more importantly, these broadly defined roles also served to provide a measure of self-confidence for the military in its own institutional capabilities.

Deepening penetration of Brazilian society by the armed forces had a decisive effect on the military's propensity for subordination. As legitimate military functions steadily expanded into non-military areas of responsibility, a dramatic shift occurred in the way officers perceived themselves. With increased experience in the management of civilian agencies and enterprises came a heightened awareness of and confidence in their own potential to assume a greater share of responsibility for running the Brazilian state. The more heavily involved the military became in managing the state bureaucracy, the more convinced it was that it had the skill, discipline, and organizational structure to do the job more efficiently than its civilian counterparts. As these dispositions evolved, they were successively reinforced by ESG doctrine which legitimized and intensified advocacy of expanded military involvement in political and economic affairs. By

1964, perceptions regarding military capabilities had been⁹⁰ altered substantially: once untested and insecure about their capacity to govern as an effective alternative to civilians, the armed forces now believed they had the legitimacy and the capacity to enforce a military "solution" in establishing a new era of order and progress for Brazil.⁵² To this end, the extensive involvement of the armed forces in non-military roles prior to 1964 facilitated the critical change in self-perceptions which precipitated the 1964 coup and shaped the events which were to follow.⁵³

Summary

Without the expansion of the Brazilian armed forces' non-military capacities, the loss of ideological cohesion between the military and the government may not have resulted in the categorical rejection of civilian supremacy by the armed forces in 1964. As Alfred Stepan notes, even up to the last days in March of 1964, the execution of the coup was far from an inevitability.⁵⁴ Based on the military's historical respect for civil control, it is likely that, without the impact of ESG doctrine as well as

⁵² Stepan (1971), p. 172.

⁵³ Roett, pp. 93-4; Stepan (1971), pp. 183-7.

⁵⁴ Stepan (1971), p. 187.

the confidence gained by the military through its extensive⁹¹ involvement in various governmental agencies, the 1964 coup would have simply been another example of the "moderator pattern" of civil-military relations in Brazil. In and of itself, the loss of ideological cohesion between the military and the Goulart government would have not been sufficient to result in a low propensity for military subordination. However, in consideration of the fact that the reduction in ideological cohesion occurred in the context of a military institution that was in possession of practical experience as well as a doctrine mandating intimate involvement in a wide-range of non-military activities, the resulting insubordination is much more understandable. Military involvement in Brazil's civil affairs provided both the confidence and the capacity necessary for the armed forces to provide a viable alternative to civilian rule. By significantly reducing the level of ideological agreement between the armed forces and the civilian political leadership, Goulart's radical exhortations and the anti-civilian rhetoric of the ESG served to make an already unstable situation virtually untenable in terms of military subordination. In the context of a weak and fragmented civilian leadership besieged by economic and social crises, the reduction in the military's propensity for subordination was enough to

bring Brazil's tradition of civilian control to an abrupt **92**
end in the spring of 1964.

CHAPTER III

MILITARISM, DEMOCRACY, AND THE EVOLUTION OF MILITARY SUBORDINATION IN VENEZUELA

Introduction

The Venezuelan experience provides a second illustration of the hypothesized relationship between ideological cohesion, the scope of military responsibilities, and the military's propensity for subordination. In this chapter I propose to discuss how changes in ideology and military roles in Venezuela led, first, to a decade of military rule and, later, a tradition of military subordination that is one of the longest in Latin America.

After presenting a brief history of civil-military relations in Venezuela up to 1941, I will provide an analysis of how events from 1941 to 1948 conspired to produce a ten year military dictatorship in Venezuela. Here, special attention will be given to how the drastic loss of ideological cohesion resulted in the military's rejection of civilian supremacy and its subsequent intervention, despite a trend of decreasing military involvement in civilian affairs. Following this,

consideration will be given to how measures promoting ideological cohesion in conjunction with efforts to limit military roles have helped in producing thirty-three years of uninterrupted civilian rule in Venezuela. Thus, by the end of this chapter I hope to demonstrate how the subordination of the armed forces corresponds to comparable changes in both ideological cohesion and the scope of military responsibilities.

The Political Role of the Military to 1941

Well before the 1948 coup that led to a ten year period of military rule, the Venezuelan armed forces had an established tradition of using force to advance the political power of various military and civilian leaders. Dubbed the era of "caudillism", from 1830 to 1935 governments rose or fell based on their ability to retain the favor of the military. The Venezuelan army was characterized by low morale, poor discipline and weak cohesion as it assumed the role of political mercenary. However, when Venezuelan presidents later learned that a strong, disciplined, and cohesive military establishment would greatly enhance their ability to secure and maintain power, they quickly set upon the task of reforming the armed forces in order to make them a bulwark for regime preservation. This period of praetorian tendencies reached

its zenith from 1908 to 1935 with the rule of Venezuela's 95
most infamous strong-man, General Juan Vicente Gomez.

Under Gomez the army became recognized as the "sole road to power."¹ In the absence of national institutions like viable political parties, the Venezuelan armed forces tended to fill the vacuum. During this time the military evolved as a vehicle for the advancement of politically ambitious military officers. With its secure hold on the coercive capacity of the state as well as its possession of relatively high levels of organization and discipline, the Venezuelan military became the object of manipulation by opportunists like Juan Gomez. Selected by Gomez to be the strong arm of the regime as well as his personal guard, the military grew to exercise tremendous influence in the affairs of the Venezuelan state. In addition to buttressing the Gomez regime through force by maintaining domestic order and eradicating elements of the opposition, Venezuelan army officers also controlled the bureaucracies and occupied the presidencies of most provinces.² However, even though the armed forces came to exercise significant influence in civilian affairs during this period, the

¹ Winfield Burggraaff, The Venezuelan Armed Forces in Politics, 1935-1959 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1972), p. 25.

² Ibid., p. 17.

military never sought to assume exclusive, independent political authority. According to Winfield Burggraaff,

It is important to understand that the Army did not take over the state under Gomez. Venezuelan militarism differed significantly from the European variety, in which society became oriented toward and controlled by a professional military caste...In essence the Venezuelan Army was not master, but servant, of the state. It was the instrument of power for one man, Gomez, the only important "military politician." Under him the Army served as a tool of the traditional elite and foreign business interests by preserving order, quelling opposition, breaking strikes, and maintaining in general a propitious climate for private enterprise to flourish.³

The basic pattern of civil-military relations in Venezuela at this time is somewhat similar to the Brazilian "moderator" pattern in that the armed forces did not attempt to exercise direct and independent political authority. However, these two cases differ in that the motives of the Venezuelan military at this time were not as ostensibly beneficent as those of the Brazilian military. Rather than justifying political intervention on the basis of a constitutionally mandated "duty", the Venezuelan army exchanged political loyalty for personal gain and institutional prestige. Hence, the allegiance of Venezuela's armed forces was much more personalistic than Brazil's.

The impact of Gomez's reign on the Venezuelan armed forces is somewhat paradoxical. Although Gomez fostered a

³ Ibid., p. 25.

praetorian relationship between the military and the state,⁹⁷ the foundations of military professionalism were also laid during this time.

Vestiges of caudillism were pervasive throughout the Venezuelan armed forces. The military swore allegiance only to Juan Gomez; not to the national government and not to the Constitution.⁴ To ensure this brand of loyalty Gomez threaded the ranks of his senior officers with "kinsmen, friends,...fellow *Tachirans*"⁵, and anyone else who displayed intense devotion to him. Gomez preserved the personalistic loyalty of key officers in the army by rewarding them with promotions and choice assignments. The younger, less "connected" officers meanwhile performed a host of non-military duties in the personal service of the Supreme Caudillo. Supervising farm chores and other "menial" labor on Gomez's vast haciendas were typical assignments for junior officers lacking ties to the dictator.⁶ During his reign Gomez had successfully penetrated the armed forces at nearly every level. By making sure that no important command positions were

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Tachira is one of Venezuela's Andean provinces. Used in this context the word *Tachiran* refers to a sort of regional loyalty.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

bestowed without his approval, he effectively transformed ⁹⁸ the Venezuelan armed forces into his personal guard.

These praetorian inclinations, however, were tempered by Gomez' insistence on a program of limited professionalization. Admitting that "minimum professional standards"⁷ were required for an effective and loyal military service, Gomez introduced several reforms. Foreign military missions from France, Germany, Belgium and Chile (who themselves had received their training from the Prussians) began instruction in Venezuela shortly after World War I. These missions provided training for a core of military instructors in addition to organizing a rudimentary general staff and command structure. Changes in professional officer training were also initiated with the opening of the Academia Militar de Venezuela in 1910.⁸ However, Gomez' motives for these changes were far from virtuous. Rather than reshaping the military to protect better the nation from foreign invasion, his interest in professional reform grew solely from his intention to use the army in eliminating domestic opposition, thereby defending his own political power.⁹ Despite these advances

⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

in military education, Gomez saw to it that his campaign of⁹⁹ professionalization did not progress too far. His strict control over promotions and assignments ensured that the armed forces remained loyal to him alone.

While the early Brazilian army was no less praetorian in its penetration by civilian elites, a qualitative difference existed between it and the Venezuelan military in their general motives for intervention. The Brazilian armed forces demonstrated repeatedly that their allegiance to the head of state was a conditional and fleeting thing. When a leader had lost his legitimate right to rule, the armed forces, on behalf of various civilian groups, would intervene to oversee a transfer of power. Meanwhile, the peculiar content of the Brazilian constitution permitted them to justify their actions in the name of national defense. Although the Brazilian military on occasion acted as an instrument of civilian interests, their failure to offer perpetual loyalty to any individual allowed them to nurture semi-professional values (e.g. determining the nation's best interests and then acting to protect them). In contrast, when the Venezuelan military exercised political influence it could claim no moral interest higher than that of Juan Gomez or whoever else happened to hold the title of Supreme Caudillo. The personalistic quality

of its devotion kept the Venezuelan military from realizing¹⁰⁰ its full potential as a professional fighting force.

After Gomez's death in 1935, the professionalization of the Venezuelan armed forces was permitted to advance unimpeded.¹⁰ Emerging as Gomez' successor, General Eleazar Lopez Contreras was admired and well-liked by military and civilians alike. Shortly after assuming the presidency, Lopez Contreras initiated a series of changes designed to move the nation towards a more democratic system of government. Central to his program of reform was an attempt to continue the professional development of the military, which, he hoped, would divest it of praetorian inclinations and remove it forever from its role as political arbiter.¹¹ A national guard was created under the Ministry of the Interior which freed the regular armed forces from performing non-combat related duties such as public works construction and the maintenance of domestic order. Consequently, the armed forces were able to focus their attention exclusively on matters of external defense. The military academy was also reorganized and divided into autonomous naval and army components. Additionally, Venezuelan cadets began foreign exchange programs with

¹⁰ George Philip, The Military in South American Politics (Dover, New Hampshire: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 108.

¹¹ Burggraaff, p. 40.

Italy, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Peru, and the United States.¹²

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In addition to these changes, Lopez's campaign of encouraging military professionalism included a major effort to depersonalize the armed forces and reduce its political influence. Although he held the rank of general, Lopez exchanged his uniform for a business suit. While primarily symbolic, this act served as visible testament of his commitment to demilitarize the government and depoliticize the military. Next, Lopez set about the "delicate" task of reducing the number of military officers in possession of civilian posts. At the conclusion of Lopez's five year term only four of the original nineteen officers appointed to these posts by Gomez retained their titles.

The ideological disposition of military officers from 1935 to 1941 was generally supportive of Lopez Contreras and his military and democratic reforms. Although some senior officers resented having been removed from positions of political importance, the military's propensity for subordination was generally strong. Burggraaff notes that this was probably due to military officers' personal feelings of loyalty to Lopez.¹³ A successful and highly-

¹² Ibid., p. 41.

¹³ Ibid., p. 42.

respected career officer, Lopez always dealt honestly and¹⁰² openly with the armed forces. Even though his policies were not always popular with the military, they were never regarded as unfair or unduly harsh. Scattered rumors of potential military uprisings were quickly reported and suppressed by duty-conscious officers. However, undercurrents of discontent were present throughout the military and continued to gain strength throughout Lopez's tenure as president.

This dissension proved disastrous for Lopez's successor, General Isaias Medina Angarita. Failing to enjoy the respect and admiration awarded to his predecessor, Medina was unable to maintain a minimum level of ideological consensus in the face of mounting opposition to "civilian" rule within the military. From 1935 to 1941, the Venezuelan armed forces evolved as a quadrant II military establishment: relatively high ideological cohesion, a relatively narrow scope of professional military duties, and, consequently, a fairly high propensity for subordination. However, from 1941 to 1948 dramatic changes occurred in the relationships between these variables, leading to the military's seizure of power.

The erosion of the Venezuelan military's propensity for subordination occurred in two phases. The first was precipitated by the succession of General Medina to the presidency in 1941. This directly resulted in the 1945 coup and the subsequent governing alliance between the military and the political party Accion Democratica (AD). Furthermore, the 1945 intervention also served to set up a second, more extreme lapse in the military's subordination ethic which led to the 1948 coup which, in turn, was followed by a ten year period of direct military rule.

The collapse of ideological cohesion between the government and the military during the tenure of President General Medina may be viewed as indicative of a more general absence of consensus within Venezuelan society itself. Since the death of Gomez, Venezuelan society had existed in a state of transition from patrimonial caudillism to a more open and participatory form of government. However, as events later revealed, society's desire for reform soon outdistanced the government's willingness to accommodate it. Civilians as well as soldiers became disenchanted with the pace of reform during the Medina regime and sought more aggressive alternatives to the status quo. The Medina regime's failure to adapt to rising demands from new political organizations as well as

from the military ultimately resulted in the formation of a¹⁰⁴
new consensus between reform-minded civilians and the
younger generation of military officers.

After assuming the office, Medina embarked on a
strategy of political liberalization. By legalizing the
formation of political parties, Medina "opened the doors to
massive political organization."¹⁴ During this time many
organizations were created including the political party
Accion Democratica. However, like Lopez, Medina too was
criticized for being too slow to open the system.¹⁵ Despite
Medina's efforts to expand the scale of independent
political organization in Venezuela, the rules of the game
were only slightly less exclusionary than they had been
during the Gomez years. Levine observes,
Although the potential for participation had expanded
greatly, the political system remained restrictive of
actual participation. Indirect election remained the rule,
female suffrage was denied, and in general mass
organizations yielded little in the way of effective
power.¹⁶

¹⁴ Daniel H. Levine, "Venezuela Since 1958: The
Consolidation of Democratic Politics," in Juan J. Linz and
Alfred Stepan, eds., The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes:
Latin America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University
Press, 1978), p. 88.

¹⁵ Philip, p. 109.

¹⁶ Levine, p. 89.

For the large, highly organized parties, especially 105
AD, the pace of change under Medina had become "profoundly
frustrating".¹⁷

It is important to understand that the growing
impatience of *adeco* (Accion Democratica) leaders and other
reform-minded civilians with the government during this
time occurred in the context of rising animosity in the
armed forces towards the Medina regime. Two sources of
this hostility are of prime importance to our discussion.
First, the military had become increasingly displeased over
matters of material compensation and institutional
prestige. Secondly, a decisive rift had emerged within the
officer corps between senior and junior officers. These
factors, combined with the level of civilian discontent
mentioned above, resulted in an unlikely alliance between
Accion Democratica and a group of junior military officers.
This merger all but dissolved the once high degree of
ideological cohesion which had characterized state-military
relations since 1935.

During Medina's administration, significant
disagreements between the military and the Venezuelan
government erupted over a number of matters that had first
surfaced under the Lopez Contreras government. Despite

¹⁷ Ibid.

efforts to enhance the professional military education of ¹⁰⁶
officers, chronic deficiencies in equipment, pay and
benefits remained. For example, a second lieutenant was
commonly paid less than an average skilled laborer.¹⁸ Slow
career advancement was also a sore subject among junior
officers. According to one source, it was not unusual for
an academy-trained officer to remain a lieutenant for his
entire career.¹⁹ However, such dissatisfaction was not
limited to junior officers. Many general and flag officers
also indicated strong disapproval of Medina's treatment of
the military during this time. Military expenditures under
Medina failed to meet the expectations of professional
soldiers serving while the rest of the world waged a war
unprecedented in scale. Burggraaff relates the following
example:

[F]ormer National Guard Commandant Oscar Tamayo Suarez,
states that General Medina was unable to keep the
development of the armed forces in step with the over-all
development of the country. The armed forces "cannot
remain static while the country advances." Tamayo adds
that the "President had practically severed his connection
with the Armed Forces...He attempted to relegate the Armed
Institution to the function of a simple praetorian guard."
This, naturally, was not in line with the junior officers'
more grandiose image of the role of the Army in a world at
war. Tamayo asserts further that General Medina, by
neglecting his military colleagues, forgot the history of
his country, in which the military had always served a

¹⁸ Burggraaff, p. 55.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

"directive function." The officer corps refused to have their institution relegated to a secondary status.²⁰ 107

In addition to institutional concerns like these, the Venezuelan military was also apprehensive of Medina's departure from the conservative policies of General Lopez. During his regime, Medina rescinded a prohibition on radical parties and many types of political expression. The subsequent emergence of a legal Communist party infuriated both the military and conservative civilians alike. Anticipating the continued loss of allegiance from conservative factions, Medina sought to expand his base of political support by seeking an alliance with the Communists and the center-left Partido Democratico Venezolano (PDV).²¹ In addition to polarizing civilian attitudes, this move succeeded in alienating the armed forces--traditionally the foundation of political power in Venezuela.

The loss of ideological cohesion between the armed forces and the Medina government was further exacerbated by a deep division within the armed forces themselves. Pitting older officers against the younger, more professionally trained officers, this rift had its roots in

²⁰ Oscar Tamayo Suarez, De frente a la realidad venezolana, p. 38. Quoted in Burggraaff, p. 55.

²¹ Burggraaff, pp. 49, 54.

the professionalization of the Venezuelan military under 108
Gomez. The immediate cause of this division in the
Venezuelan officer corps is similar to that in Brazil's
military under Goulart. In both cases, the president
violated professional norms of conduct by using promotions
and assignments to place loyal officers in key positions.
While these measures improved the government's relations
with a select number of officers, they created resentment
among more professionally inclined soldiers.

In the Venezuelan case, with the inculcation of
professional values brought about through Academy education
came a bifurcation of the officer corps: younger, more
professional and technically competent, junior officers
grew resentful of less professional senior officers. Many
important command and staff billets were occupied by older
officers solely by virtue of personal loyalty to the
president or the chief of staff. Little regard was paid to
their military expertise, combat experience, or
professional competence. Nepotism, corruption, and
incompetence were rife among senior officers while the
better-trained junior officers were relegated to obscure
postings with poor prospects for future career
advancement.²²

²² Ibid., pp. 18,22.

While the foundation of this internal fragmentation was laid during Gomez's rule, it wasn't until Medina's tenure that the depth and intensity of the rift assumed political significance. The professional reforms initiated by President Lopez alleviated some of these problems. However, in the minds of the younger generation Lopez did not go far enough. Many "ill-trained, semiliterate Gomecista caudillos" remained in control of important commands.²³ Says Burggraaff:

This imbalance in education and professional attitudes brought about an intensification of the generational conflict within the officer corps. The younger officers resented the President's stopping as half measures in the professionalization process.²⁴

Somewhat paradoxically, Lopez's and Medina's efforts to professionalize the military contributed in large part to the uprising of junior officers in 1945. During Lopez's administration, junior officers began to acquire a sense of corporate pride both in their profession and in the superior quality of the training which they were now receiving. From this arose an "esprit de corps" that, prior to this time, had been notably absent from Venezuelan officer ranks.²⁵

²³ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

Under Medina, the generational gap widened at the same¹¹⁰ time that the cohesion of the younger officers solidified. One significant event at this time was the establishment of a program to send the top graduates of Venezuela's senior military staff college for advanced studies at Peru's War College of Chorrillos. Its curriculum closely resembling that of Brazil's ESG, Peru's senior war college was recognized as one of the premier military schools in Latin America. While at Chorrillos, several Venezuelan officers who would later become key members of the 1945 coup union were exposed to new currents of military thought. Acting as a conduit for theories advocating the expansion of military influence in society, the Peruvian exchange program infused Venezuela's junior officers with a revolutionary spirit. Upon their return these new ideas were quickly disseminated among younger officers. Soon, a secret military lodge, the Union Patriotica Militar (UPM), was formed and the plans for a coup by junior officers were put into motion. By October of 1944, UPM committees existed in all major barracks and installations throughout the country.²⁶

According to the Central Committee of the UPM, the primary purpose of their movement was not to install a

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 55-8.

military government. On the contrary, they were seeking 111
drastic reforms for the political system at large as well
as for the military. Beyond establishing the conditions
necessary for the creation of a truly professional army,
the UPM also sought to establish a more democratic system
of government based on constitutional reform, universal
suffrage, and direct election of the chief executive.²⁷
Claiming to have only "the nation's interests at
heart"²⁸, the UPM desired to erase forever the legacy of
incompetence, corruption, and patronage, and to replace it
with a government of able, honest, and patriotic
representatives committed to progress. This second
objective required that civilians be included as part of
the UPM movement. Consequently, an effort was made to
cultivate civilian support for the UPM and its objectives.
Because of ideological proximity, elements of Accion
Democratica were selected as accomplices by the UPM's
central committee.²⁹ As in the Brazilian case, the loss of
ideological cohesion between the armed forces and the
government was accompanied by the formation of a new
consensus between military reformers and civilian elites

²⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

outside the established power structure. On October 18, 112
1945 the UPM-AD alliance successfully toppled the Medina
government.

Similar feelings of frustration ultimately led the
junior officers into conspiracy with the adecos. In the
midst of rising expectations and increased mobilization
within military and civilian circles alike, the slow pace
of reform had become intolerable. According to George
Philip,

As with the military, the democratic civilian opposition
felt that the reforms offered by the post-Gomez governments
were too little too late...By 1945 the regime, despite the
undoubted fact that it had moved some way from the old
dictatorship, came to be regarded by its civilian
opponents, no less than by junior officers, as a
frustrating legacy of the past.³⁰

While the armed forces were the chief architects of
the 1945 coup, they did not initially reject civilian
supremacy. Although markedly lower than before, the
military's propensity for subordination at the time of the
coup remained high enough to preclude the possibility of
direct military rule. Ideological cohesion between the
government and the military had steadily declined since
1941 as result first of disaffection with Medina's
treatment of the military, and second of deepening
divisions in the armed forces.

³⁰ Philip, p. 109.

The Medina government proved to be no match for the AD-UPM alliance and it crumbled surprisingly quickly. However, despite its intervention, the military remained reluctant to assume direct political control over the Venezuelan government. Undoubtedly, part of this stems from the armed forces remaining far removed from the affairs of state up to the time of the coup, indicating they had not the interest, the confidence, or the capacity necessary to assume supreme political authority.

Based on the events preceding the coup, a convincing case can be made that by 1945, the Venezuelan armed forces had changed from a quadrant II military (high ideological cohesion, narrow roles) and assumed the qualities of quadrant IV (low cohesion, narrow roles) as the "previous near-consensus surrounding Venezuelan politics fell apart".³¹ This shift precipitated a corresponding reduction in their propensity for subordination. Although not rejecting civilian supremacy outright, the Venezuelan armed forces had demonstrated a willingness to involve itself in political affairs by deposing one civilian government in favor of another. These events hinted at a dangerous development in Venezuelan civil-military relations. By 1945, the catastrophic loss of ideological

³¹ Ibid., p. 141.

cohesion had created a highly unstable situation. Failure¹¹⁴ to forge adequate ideological cohesion with the new AD government coupled with an appreciable expansion in the scope of military responsibilities could drive the military's subordination ethic past the critical point. As events from 1945 to 1948 illustrate, this is precisely what transpired.

The coup which ushered in a ten year period of military rule occurred a scant three years after the 1945 reformist movement. This event can be largely explained by changes in two conditions: the collapse of ideological cohesion between the military and their AD coalition partners and an increase in the military's institutional prerogatives. These factors combined to reduce further the military's propensity to subordinate itself after 1945.

The *trienio*, referring to the three years which followed the 1945 coup, saw the introduction of a party system in Venezuelan politics. These three years were characterized by a "pattern of intense and bitter conflict."³² As per their agreement with the UPM, the government which evolved immediately following the coup was composed primarily of *adecos*. Shortly after assuming the control of the state, AD lifted all suffrage restrictions

³² Levine, p. 89.

and instituted direct presidential elections.³³ A

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proliferation of new parties and social groups combined with a surge in political mobilization to produce a dramatic rise in demand articulation. Being the only party capable of meeting these demands, AD had established a wide base of electoral support in the first year of the trienio.³⁴

However, AD soon came to monopolize its control over the Venezuelan state. Through resounding victories at the polls, AD justified its adoption of an exclusionary stance towards almost every major social sector. Having secured an unassailable electoral position, AD wielded executive, legislative, and judicial authority with virtual impunity, showing scant regard for non-adecco interests. Ruling in an "aggressively populist manner",³⁵ AD had succeeded in alienating nearly every major power center in Venezuelan society by 1948--opposition parties, the church, business interests, and, most importantly, the military.³⁶ The depth of the hostility felt by those opposed to AD rule cannot be underestimated. Notes Levine:

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Philip, p. 141.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 142.

³⁶ Levine, pp. 90-1.

Secure in their majorities, AD's leaders discounted the need to compromise with intense minorities, no matter how small in size...Older elites felt threatened in their values, ways of life, and survival, while new elites [AD] saw a challenge to the revolution in any opposition. The result of this mistrust and continuous mutual provocation was that the military coup of 1948 was greeted in many sectors as a deliverance from persecution.³⁷ 116

Despite AD's abusive treatment of many important interest groups, it was the loss of ideological cohesion between them and the Venezuelan military throughout the trienio which proved critical in terms of the military takeover in 1948. Burggraaff notes,

At the core of civil-military conflict was not only the issue of military intervention in "civilian" politics but also that of civilian intrusion into the military sphere for partisan purposes. In speeches and publications, armed forces spokesmen attacked this alleged interference, no matter from what source it came, but they singled out AD for attempting to undermine military professionalism.³⁸

In an effort to cultivate support in the barracks, nearly all of Venezuela's political parties made persistent attempts to court the military. AD sought the allegiance of officers to bolster military support for the regime. Furthermore, because Accion Democratica failed to share power with any rival political factions, similar campaigns by their opponents aimed at inciting the military to depose AD's monopoly of political power.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

³⁸ Burggraaff, p. 95.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 98.

Political maneuverings and propagandizing extracted a¹¹⁷ heavy toll on civil-military relations. The military greatly resented these attempts to pervert the professional inclinations of the officer corps. Although several civilian organizations engaged in the politicization of the armed forces, the military held AD primarily accountable. Its relations with AD were strained even further when allegations surfaced that the party was creating its own paramilitary force.⁴⁰ After realizing that the military was becoming increasingly hostile to the AD regime, the party supposedly began arming its own members to counter any potential military opposition. Additional rumors that AD was compiling lists of officers to be used for meting out political favors or reprisals exacerbated hostilities. Although never conclusively proved, these claims were believed by many and were subsequently cited as principal justifications for the 1948 military intervention.⁴¹

The fact that the loss of cohesion between AD and the military was accompanied by a dramatic expansion of the military's role in political matters is of critical importance to our discussion. Although the military itself occupied no official posts in the new government, the armed

⁴⁰ Levine, p. 91.

⁴¹ Burggraaff, pp. 98-9.

forces came to exert substantial influence over the affairs¹¹⁸ of the Venezuelan state. Because it had been largely responsible for the design and execution of the 1945 coup, the military once again came to be regarded as the decisive power center in the new regime despite a facade of political neutrality. The scope of military responsibilities underwent significant expansion in two areas.

The first of these involved the military's dramatic seizure of control over its own administrative oversight. In accordance with the coup's stated objectives, military reform was given top priority. Within two years military expenditures had increased nearly 200%.⁴² Troop strengths, salaries, training, and weapons procurement received massive boosts as the nation's financial resources were funneled into military programs. In addition, the Ministry of Defense underwent fundamental changes as leading members of the UPM supervised its overhaul.⁴³ Finally, by order of the UPM's central committee, all officers who had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel or above prior to the coup were retired from service.⁴⁴ Within months the military,

⁴² Ibid., p. 81.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

now led by the younger generation of officers, had secured¹¹⁹ a measure of control over its own affairs never before attained. This administrative independence was significant because it assisted in altering the military establishment's perception of itself. The importance of this should not be underrated. In attaining this level of autonomy over institutional matters, the military received an important boost in self-confidence. Similar to the Brazilian military shortly before the 1964 coup, the military's expansion of institutional responsibilities generated faith in its organizational abilities and enhanced feelings of its own self-importance. According to Burggraaff, inflated egos partially account for later reductions in the military's propensity for subordination: Administering the military institution undoubtedly planted the notion in the minds of certain military leaders that they could administer the government as well and, as an added benefit, without the constant agitation, campaigning, demagoguery, and other luxuries of civilian democracy that a developing country like Venezuela could ill afford.⁴⁵

A second example of expansion in the military's scope of responsibilities occurred on its relationship with the adeco junta. In addition to consolidating its influence over military affairs, the armed forces, more importantly, exerted tremendous political influence on the governing civilian junta. As relations between adecos and the

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 110-11.

military grew steadily more antagonistic, the armed forces¹²⁰ responded by leveling a series of demands at the fledgling government. Despite the fact that the 1947 constitution prohibited military members from serving in political capacities,⁴⁶ the military wielded substantial *de facto* political power. This became evident in at least two areas. The first example concerned the appointment to cabinet posts. Although not occupying these posts directly, after 1945 the armed forces considered it their right to have a voice in who should hold these positions. By threatening to withhold support for the civilian government, the military was able to influence the composition of key ministerial offices.⁴⁷ Secondly, when military dissatisfaction with the regime had risen to an "intolerable" level, the armed forces issued an ultimatum to the government consisting of several demands. Should President Gallegos have failed to accept the conditions specified in the ultimatum, a military revolt would appear increasingly imminent. To avert this possibility, negotiations between the government and the military high command were initiated. This second example further highlights the expansion of military influence in

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 99.

Venezuelan politics. Within three years of the 1945 coup¹²¹ the armed forces had enlarged their focus from purely military concerns to encompass fundamental political interests. Demands, ultimatums, and an eleventh-hour negotiation between the military high command and the Gallegos regime illustrate the military's evolution into a principal political actor. The very fact that the armed forces maintained political prerogatives and were successful in communicating these to the government indicates the broadening of military roles from 1945 to 1948. This fact combined with the collapse of ideological consensus between the military and AD precipitated a further negative shift in the military's subordination ethic.

By 1948 the AD-military rift had assumed critical proportions. As in 1945, ideological cohesion between the military and the government had diminished to a dangerously low level. However, the 1948 military adventure differed greatly from its 1945 precursor. In 1945 the military had maintained tightly circumscribed roles, showing little interest in or familiarity with political matters. When cohesion between the armed forces and the Medina government disappeared, the military was thus inclined to depose the government in favor of another civilian-led regime. The 1945 movement, however, brought the gradual expansion of

the armed forces into political affairs, thus creating an ¹²² unstable environment for the maintenance of military subordination. Due to their pivotal role in bringing about the 1945 reformist coup, military self-perceptions underwent a corresponding modification. By 1948 the armed forces had expanded their institutional prerogatives to include political as well as military affairs. Although holding no official positions in the regime, the military wielded significant *de facto* political authority and was able to exert substantial pressure on the civilian government. When serious ideological antagonisms again arose between the armed forces and their *adeco* civilian counterparts, the military, by virtue of its role expansion, was more disposed to reject civilian rule altogether. This finally occurred on November 24, 1948 with the ouster of the Gallegos-AD government, and the installation of a ruling junta consisting exclusively of military officers.

Civil-Military Relations Since 1958:
Enhancing the Military's Propensity for Subordination

Nearly ten years later on 23 January, 1958 the Venezuelan military once again acted to remove the nation's supreme executive. However, this time the military supported its own removal from political office. A ten

year period of military rule in Venezuela came to an end 123
with the downfall of General Perez Jimenez. Reliance on
the armed forces for the management of governmental affairs
was abandoned in favor of a civilian-controlled political
democracy. Commonly regarded as one of Latin America's
success stories, Venezuelan democracy has operated for
thirty-three years uninterrupted by military intervention.
Close examination of civil-military relations since 1958
offer several interesting observations regarding the
military's propensity for subordination and the maintenance
of civilian control.

The success of civilian control over the military in
Venezuela is the result of many factors. Perhaps the most
influential of these is the remarkably high level of
civilian consensus in the post-authoritarian period.
Political infighting and other disputes were temporarily
submerged immediately after Jimenez's downfall as
Venezuela's political parties, as well as the general
population, voiced a united, categorical denouncement of
military political involvement. Gene Bigler observes:

The military might have become more institutionally
involved in politics after Perez Jimenez fell if the
officer corps had been able to retain control of the new
junta, but the overwhelming civilian rejection of such a

role removed both the institution and officers from a formal political position.⁴⁸

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In another work he also states,

...the civil population massively, repeatedly, dramatically, and often violently displayed its rejection of military domination and various attempts to restore military rule.⁴⁹

Widespread rejection of military rule offered a common denominator for civilian politicians and provided them with an appearance of resolve and cohesion reflecting the national will. Supporting Claude Welch's assertion that strong civilian institutions are the best defense against military usurpation of political authority, the appearance of a coherent, organized, and committed civilian alternative contributed greatly to the armed forces' speedy retreat to the barracks following the 1958 rebellion. In contrast to the highly factionalized military that was a product of the Jimenez dictatorship, the civilian political elite had since agreed to put an end to the divisive, uncompromising behavior exhibited during the *trienio* and instead presented a broadly based unified front that was

⁴⁸ Gene E. Bigler in Robert Wesson, ed., The Latin American Military Institution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), p. 172.

⁴⁹ Gene E. Bigler, "Professional Soldiers and Restrained Politics in Venezuela," in Robert Wesson, ed., New Military Politics in Latin America (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 176.

committed to the success of democracy.⁵⁰ The newly established guidelines for civilian political behavior were summarized and agreed upon in the Pact of Punto Fijo. They included conciliatory provisions designed to improve state relations between the Catholic Church, business interests, organized labor, rural sectors, and the armed forces. Furthermore, this document also formalized a commitment on behalf of party elites to end partisan violence, abide by agreed-upon norms of political conduct, and to preserve the unity of the civilian front until the democratic process had been firmly institutionalized.⁵¹ The success of democracy in Venezuela over the last three decades is largely due to the restraint and leadership exercised by civilian elites in the post-dictatorial period.

Although somewhat less decisive, the successful maintenance of civilian control in Venezuela over the last three decades may also be attributed to factors which have strengthened the military's propensity for subordination. Measures initiated by successive civilian administrations have served to bridge ideological differences between the

⁵⁰ Felipe Aguero, "The Military and Democracy in Venezuela," in L. W. Goodman, J. Mendelson, and J. Rial, eds., The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1990), pp. 7-8.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 8-10.

armed forces and the government, in addition to reducing 126
the scope of the military's political involvement. These
actions on the part of Venezuela's political leadership
reiterate the importance of the relationship between
ideological cohesion, the scope of military roles, and the
military's propensity for subordination.

Ideological cohesion between military and civilian
elites since 1958 has been advanced through a variety of
mechanisms. Like Brazil, improvements in civil-military
integration have been facilitated through the national war
college as well as the national draft system. Founded in
1972, Venezuela's war college, IAEDN (Institute for Higher
Studies in National Defense), actively seeks the enrollment
of qualified civilians. Like Brazil's ESG, civil-military
interaction at this institution has led to the formulation
of national security objectives and strategies that are the
result of a cooperative effort between senior military
officers and civilian elites. However, as Bigler notes, an
important distinction exists between IAEDN and its
Brazilian counterpart:

...general consciousness raising about national security
and defense led to the institutionalization of this
activity [the study of defense issues] in the national war
college....IAEDN is a very Venezuelan institution based on
concepts evolved in the process of Venezuelan thinking
about national defense. Although superficially like its
Brazilian counterpart, the Higher War School (ESG), in its
inclusion of civilian participants, IAEDN does not appear
to be destined to create either cliquishness or a military

ideology. It is dedicated to encouraging contact between military leaders and democratic public servants.⁵² 127

In addition to this, the institution of a national draft in 1978 also shares several similarities with the Brazilian case. Exposing the middle classes to mandatory military service for the first time, the draft serves an important purpose by fostering improved relations between the military and society. Bigler states,

The draft, which has served to increase literacy, upgrade manual skills, and as a channel of upward mobility primarily for the rural population, is now also seen in terms of a harmonizing and integrating function....[The draft] seems to please most military men because it restores (or brings) the middle class to candidacy for compulsory military service...which has up to now been largely exempt.⁵³

Beyond these channels, ideological convergence between the government and the armed forces has also been promoted through the competent handling of military affairs by Venezuela's civilian presidents. In the years immediately following the return to civilian rule Venezuela was shaken by a series of military revolts. Although none were successful, these events were testimony to the depth of the fragmentation in the armed forces: some officers sought to oppose the democratic reform movement while others offered vigorous support. Romulo Betancourt, the first president

⁵² Bigler (1982), p. 185.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 185-86.

of the post-Jimenez period, was pivotal in laying the foundation for effective military subordination by establishing strict norms of professional conduct for the military during his tenure. Refusing to tolerate subversion of civilian authority, actual and suspected military revolts provided Betancourt with an excuse to purge large numbers of officers known or thought to hold disloyal sentiments.⁵⁴

However, in addition to his strict enforcement of military subordination to civilian authority, Betancourt also established a tradition of "delicacy" in handling the military. Under him, the military retained significant autonomy in managing internal affairs such as discipline and promotions. He was also careful to remain "attentive" to the institutional needs of the services.⁵⁵ Throughout his administration, Betancourt displayed a high degree of deference towards the military institution by respecting the judgment of senior officers on professional matters.⁵⁶ In addition, Betancourt also cultivated military support

⁵⁴ Robert J. Alexander, Venezuela's Voice for Democracy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), pp. 87, 111. The importance of these purges is documented in Agüero, p. 11; and in Levine, p. 97.

⁵⁵ Bigler (1982), p. 177.

⁵⁶ Alexander, pp. 87, 115.

for the government by ensuring that the armed forces were¹²⁹ always kept in the "loop." By meeting frequently with senior officers to keep them informed on all matters affecting the armed services, Betancourt displayed respect for the military and its corporate position in society.⁵⁷

Finally, Betancourt adroitly used the threat of Cuban subversion as an anchor for military loyalty.⁵⁸ In late 1961 elements of Venezuela's political Left, weakened from concessions made during the democratic transition, withdrew from the united front, rejected the party system as illegitimate, and commenced an armed insurrection.⁵⁹ The initiation of guerrilla operations precipitated a redirection of military resources. Quickly forsaking residual political interests in favor of traditional military duties, the armed forces immersed themselves in the campaign to eliminate the insurgent threat. Under the strong and able leadership of President Betancourt, the military failed to use internal security concerns as a pretext for an expanded political role. While maintaining the unity of the civilian political front, Betancourt conveniently used the leftist insurgency

⁵⁷ Alexander, p. 74; Bigler (1982), pp. 177-78.

⁵⁸ Bigler (1982), p. 176.

⁵⁹ Levine, p. 100.

and the threat of Cuban adventurism to give the military an¹³⁰
active interest in the preservation of democratic values.⁶⁰
This strategy served to forge closer ties between the armed
forces and Venezuela's civilian leaders. Since Betancourt,
these tactics have been successfully employed by presidents
of subsequent administrations.⁶¹

As ideological cohesion has been enhanced, the
military's responsibilities have likewise been narrowed.
This is evident in a number of areas. Perhaps the most
obvious of these involves the degree of control exercised
by the armed forces over military expenditures. Reversing
a trend initiated by the 1945 coup, the Venezuelan military
no longer has control over the national purse strings.
Procurement, and other military expenditures have been
placed under the control of elected officials and cease to
be a function of "dictatorial whims" within the military.⁶²
Defense spending has since fallen to roughly half of its
pre-1958 level.⁶³

In addition to suffering a reduction in its control
over institutional matters, the armed forces have also

⁶⁰ Aguero, pp. 13-14.

⁶¹ Bigler (1982), p. 176.

⁶² Ibid., p. 187.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 177.

undergone a dramatic reorientation in terms of mission. As¹³¹

Bigler notes,

the threats perceived and responded to by the armed forces up to 1958 dealt primarily with presidential succession or the maintenance of public order.⁶⁴

However, since then, these preoccupations have been deemphasized in favor of more ostensibly military concerns such as defense against external threats. Article 132 of the 1961 constitution specifically lists the mission of the armed forces as one of securing "national defense", "the stability of democratic institutions", and "respect for the Constitution and Laws, whose compliance will always be beyond any other obligation."⁶⁵ Resource security, particularly that of Venezuela's lucrative petroleum reserves, subversion by Cuban-backed guerrillas, and territorial disputes with its neighbors now comprise the bulk of military intrigue.⁶⁶ The shift in institutional focus from domestic politics to security challenges from abroad has contributed significantly to the enduring quality of the military's apolitical disposition. According to Bigler,

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 183-84.

the new emphasis on national defense rather than who should¹³² be in the Miraflores Palace has completely changed the criteria for perceiving and interpreting objectives...Threats perceived today, whether real or potential, are understood primarily as foreign in origin and affect both national policy generally and the functions of the armed forces.⁶⁷

Similarly, occupation of civilian posts by military officers has also declined since 1958. Within the cabinet, only the minister of defense is an active duty general. A few active duty and retired military officers oversee a handful of state enterprises such as the petroleum, steel, and aircraft industries. However, in view of the approximately 300 enterprises run by the state, the dozen or so controlled by the military are considered to be of relatively "minor" importance.⁶⁸ As of 1986, defense-related employment accounted for roughly less than 1.5% of the total work force.⁶⁹

These factors indicate a trend in the military towards adopting a more narrowly defined conception of "proper" institutional concerns. Since 1958, military intrusion into civilian areas of responsibility has all but ceased. Certainly, the fact that the armed forces have become increasingly concerned with traditional military functions and less so with the affairs of government has served to

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶⁸ Bigler (1986), p. 177.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

reinforce their disinterest in domestic politics. Based on¹³³ the past success enjoyed by this approach, maintaining efforts to hold the military's attention on purely professional matters will likely continue to assist in preserving its current acceptance of civilian supremacy.

Summary

The history of Venezuela in the twentieth century covers the full spectrum of civil-military relations. From praetorianism to military dictatorship to civil democracy, the military has displayed a wide range of subordinate dispositions in relation to the civilian polity. As I have attempted to demonstrate, each shift in the military's tendency to accept civilian control has been preceded by important changes in the state of ideological cohesion between military and civilian elites, as well as differences in the scope of military roles. The breakdown of military subordination which culminated in ten years of military rule occurred in two phases. Initially, the collapse of ideological cohesion between the Medina government and the armed forces resulted in the 1945 intervention. Although bringing to power a civilian regime led by AD, this intervention led to a significant expansion of military prerogatives and influence in the new government. This proved to be an untenable situation when

ideological cohesion between the AD regime and the military¹³⁴ deteriorated sharply after 1945. The military's propensity for subordination fell off proportionately and in the absence of a strong, unified civilian alternative, the armed forces assumed independent control of the state in 1948.

In a similar vein, the consolidation of civilian control and military subordination since the downfall of the Jimenez dictatorship in 1958 highlights the significance of the ideological and military role dimensions. Military acceptance of civilian control since 1958 has been facilitated by strategies designed to reduce ideological friction between the military and the government, while at the same time gradually narrowing the professional concerns of the armed forces. As one of Latin America's longest standing democracies, the Venezuela experience provides a provocative argument for a serious examination of the connection between ideology, military roles, and the tendency of the armed forces to accept the supremacy of civilian institutions.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

At present, Brazil and Venezuela represent Latin America's extreme cases of military acceptance of civilian control. While Brazil's constitution has rendered its armed forces officially subservient to an elected civilian leadership since 1988, the military has continued to exercise such overwhelming influence in the political arena that the term "civilian control" is applicable only in a loose, highly qualified sense. This contrasts sharply with the success of democracy in Venezuela over the past three decades, largely due to the military's acceptance of civilian supremacy and the democratic process. However, as the preceding discussion has illustrated, the respective histories of civil-military relations in these two countries share a common pattern indicating that the military's propensity for subordination is function of its ideological cohesion with the governing regime on the one hand, and the scope of its responsibilities on the other. Despite their contemporary differences, the Brazilian and Venezuelan cases

provide an interesting and useful application of the subordination model outlined in Chapter One of this thesis.

In addition to portraying the general validity of the model, these case studies also suggest several tentative conclusions. First, reinforcing the standard critique of Huntington's thesis, mere professionalization of the armed forces is not necessarily conducive to a pattern of civilian control. Though perhaps the least insightful of the lot, the importance of this truism should not be underestimated. Reforms in military education, training, administration, and organization, while ostensibly making the military more professional, do not always dissuade the armed forces from political intervention. Indeed, depending on the nature of the reforms, one can convincingly argue that professionalization itself may even lead to military intervention.¹ The experiences of Brazil and Venezuela tend to support this assertion.

Secondly, this study highlights the need to analyze civil-military relations on more than one dimension. Although a two-dimensional approach was adopted for the purposes of this study, several other might have been

¹ This point is raised by S. E. Finer in The Man on Horseback (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 22-24. For a more thorough discussion of this topic see J. Samuel Fitch, "Military Professionalism, National Security and Democracy: Lessons from the Latin American Experience," Pacific Focus, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Fall 1989), 99-147.

included had the study been more comprehensive. Reiterating¹³⁷ a remark made earlier in the text, this second point calls attention to a weakness of so-called "boundary" oriented analyses. Boundaries that separate the military from civil society occur at many levels and encompass a wide array of elements. Attempting to aggregate multiple dimensions into a single concept often obscures important variables at work below the surface. On the other hand, successfully evaluating civil-military relations on two or more dimensions promises greater intellectual gains. This analysis of two important dimensions of civil-military boundaries, ideological cohesion and military roles, provides a case in point.

Evidence of this is apparent in the third conclusion. The analysis of events in both Brazil and Venezuela reveals that military subordination can exist in situations of either broad military responsibilities or low ideological cohesion. Previously referred to as quadrant I or IV scenarios, each existed in Brazil and Venezuela respectively at various times. However, events later revealed that the military's propensity for subordination was very unstable in both cases. This suggests an important link between the two independent variables, ideological cohesion and the scope of military roles. The loss of ideological cohesion in Brazil under quadrant I

conditions, and the expansion of military roles under quadrant IV conditions in Venezuela was in each case accompanied by the armed forces' rejection of civilian supremacy. This further supports the claim that reliance on single-variable explanations will rarely provide an adequate explanation of political behavior.

Fourthly, the cases examined each call attention to the role of national war colleges in influencing the prospects for military acceptance of civilian control. According to this study, institutions of higher military education can have either positive or negative consequences for military subordination. For example, since the early 1970s Venezuela's IAEDN has functioned both as a forum for civil-military interaction and as a platform for constructive cooperation. By encouraging joint efforts in the development of national security objectives and strategic policy planning, advanced war colleges may serve to bridge the gap between military and civilian elite cultures. This has proven very beneficial in post-1958 Venezuela. Conversely, an institution like Brazil's ESG can hinder the advancement of these goals despite the inclusion of civilians in its classes. As evident in Brazil since the 1960s, excessively radical critiques of current government policy can serve as a wedge between influential military intellectuals and the regime in power.

Improving relations between the government and the war¹³⁹
college itself either through increased oversight,
enrollment of government leaders, or similar mechanisms
could possibly prevent a repetition of the Brazilian
experience. Recognizing the importance of maintaining
ideological cohesion between the military and its civilian
counterparts, Gabriel Marcella remarks that
"[p]hilosophical differences are the reflection of the
deeply-rooted problem of communication between civilians
and the military."² According to Marcella, one way to
bridge the "communication gap" is for more civilians to
take an active interest in defense planning as well as in
the institutional concerns of the armed forces.³ He argues
that by demonstrating interest in professional military
matters, civilians may take the first important steps in
narrowing the distance commonly found between the military
and civilian spheres in Latin societies. Furthermore, this
adds immeasurably to the credibility of civilian
governments in the eyes of the armed forces. By proving to
the military that select civilians are literate in defense
matters, the armed forces will be less inclined to fear

² Gabriel Marcella, "The Latin American Military, Low Intensity Conflict, and Democracy", Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Vol. 32 (Spring 1990), p. 51.

³ Ibid., p. 50.

oversight by incompetent civilians. Clearly, as in the case of Venezuela, national war colleges can play an important role in facilitating this kind of mutual understanding, thereby potentially strengthening a military's disposition to subordinate itself. 140

From the standpoint of building ideological cohesion between civilians and the military, civilian expertise in defense matters is critical if the armed forces are to accept oversight and leadership by civilians in a democratic context. Fitch remarks,

...many Latin american officers will object to the idea of the professional subordination of the armed forces on the grounds that civilian government cannot be trusted not to endanger national security...Because the military has virtually monopolized defense and military policy in Latin America, there is indeed a serious deficit of trained, experienced civilian personnel with the ability to exercise civilian oversight of the armed forces.⁴

However, military war colleges can only provide a partial solution to the problem of improving the competency of civilians in national security affairs. By virtue of the corporate perspective of the military officers who set the "intellectual agendas",⁵ these institutions are

⁴ J. Samuel Fitch, "Military Professionalism, National Security and Democracy: Lessons from the Latin American Experience," Pacific Focus, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Fall 1989), p. 137.

⁵ Alfred Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 129.

intrinsically biased in their approach to security issues.¹⁴¹

Therefore, non-military independent research institutes are essential for the formulation of intelligent, alternative strategic assessments. In detailing the need for increased participation of civilians in the formal study of national security topics as an important step in facilitating military disengagement from politics, Stepan notes,

...if an alternative, less interventionist "democratic professional" model of civil-military relations is to gain acceptance within civil society and eventually by the military...it will require intense technical, conceptual, and ideological work by many groups in civil society... [I]n the absence of a forum for high-level discussions of national security, the traditional military argument that the only members of the polity who are deeply concerned with national defense and security are the military gains weight.⁶

A final conclusion may be drawn regarding the effects of expansive military roles. Although perhaps not as obvious as the relationship between a low propensity for subordination and low ideological cohesion, an important connection also exists between the military's acceptance of civilian supremacy and the nature of its role in society. Brazil and Venezuela have each had similar experiences of extensive military involvement in civilian affairs. In both cases, military expansion into civilian areas of responsibility led to a dramatic rise in the military's level of self-confidence and self-importance as well as

⁶ Ibid., pp. 132, 141.

increased interest in political matters. In Brazil, the 142
extent of the military's involvement gave it both a
capacity and a yen for administering large organizations
outside the traditional military sphere. This in turn
generated serious misconceptions regarding its own ability
to run a government. In Venezuela, modest expansion of
military duties and areas of administrative control
precipitated a vast proliferation of institutional
prerogatives which ultimately resulted in the 1948 military
takeover.⁷ These examples indicate a correspondence
between insubordinate militaries and those with roles
extending beyond traditional military missions.

The subordination model as applied in this study
provides a general sense of the requirements for achieving
and maintaining military acceptance of civilian control.
Beyond being a useful tool for cross-national comparisons
between militaries or longitudinal studies within them, the
model also represents a potential guide for policy
planning. Using the relationship between ideological
cohesion and military responsibilities, it is possible to

⁷ Alfred Stepan evaluates the significance of military
prerogatives, and contestation in Rethinking Military
Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
For a related discussion of other forms of de facto
military influence and their impact on the process of
democratization in South America see Felipe Aguero, "The
Military and the Limits to Democratization in South
America".

account for the current state of military subordination in¹⁴³
Brazil and Venezuela. In Brazil, the presently dubious
quality of the military's subordination ethic may be
conceived of as resulting from the "expansive entrenchment"
of the armed forces across a wide range of civilian areas
in the context of lingering, and divisive, national
security attitudes.⁸ By contrast, three decades of
uninterrupted democracy in Venezuela has occurred in the
face of substantial philosophical convergence between the
military and civilian leaders while the armed forces have
remained focused primarily on external defense. In short,
Brazil represents a situation to be avoided, while
Venezuela provides an example of what works. By helping to
explain the past and present, the subordination model can
also assist in predicting and planning for the future.
Therefore, using the model as a template, one can
tentatively begin to identify what must change as well as
what should remain in order to cultivate military
subordination.

The critical linkages between military subordination,
civilian control, ideological cohesion, and military roles
explored in this study touch upon some of the most
insightful contributions by social scientists in the field

⁸ Felipe Aguero, "The Military and the Limits to
Democratization in South America", forthcoming, pp. 16-19.

of civil-military relations. In many respects, the observations made here echo those of Stepan in Rethinking Military Politics. In his closing remarks, Stepan overtly recognizes the importance of limiting the political content of military functions while pursuing efforts to cultivate civil-military consensus.

Within the state, a paradoxical mix of fewer military appointments that are inherently political in character, and more systematic professional incorporation of the military into civilian-led national-security councils and national-defense colleges, might reduce the military's sense of isolation and create a more effective system of mutual exchange of information and grievances, and thus enhance the capacity for democratic control.⁹

Fitch's work in establishing the conceptual imperatives for a model of military professionalism that is consistent with democratic control of the armed forces also highlights many of the same themes discussed here.¹⁰ According to Fitch, lasting democratization in Latin America can only occur in the context of substantive modifications in current conceptions of military professionalism. Like Stepan, ideological and role dimensions of military subordination form a central part of his attempt to construct strategies

⁹ Stepan, p. 145.

¹⁰ See J. Samuel Fitch, "Military Professionalism, National Security and Democracy: Lessons from the Latin American Experience," pp. 99-147, and "Theoretical Model: Core Assumptions; Assessment of Civil-Military Tensions and Short-term Coup Risk." Working draft prepared for the Inter-American Dialogue, Washington, D.C. (May 1987).

for effective civil control in Latin America. Key elements¹⁴⁵ of his "democratic professionalist" alternative include moving military men from positions where they exercise voting rights into those where their principal function is to advise, and gradually distancing the armed forces from their internal security functions.¹¹ Fitch also recognizes the need for increased cooperation between civilians and the military in matters of strategic importance. He observes that in countries facing real or perceived security threats, "subordination of the military will be doubly difficult, unless civilian and military leaders can develop a common strategy for defense of the democratic regime."¹²

This discussion has attempted to provide an initial examination of factors that influence military propensities for subordination. While I have hopefully raised some interesting issues, further research remains necessary in a number of areas. Devising viable strategies for civilian control requires that the semi-abstract hypothesis discussed here be successively focused and applied to additional cases throughout the region and elsewhere. Expanding the scope to include other variables such as the

¹¹ Fitch (1989), p. 140.

¹² Ibid., p. 139.

strength of civilian institutions and the relative impact¹⁴⁶ of contextual considerations is also required to probe the relationship between the military's propensity for subordination and others variables in the civilian control equation. What are the societal conditions necessary or most propitious for achieving and maintaining civilian control?¹³ How do international relations enhance or degrade subordinate dispositions within the military and impact the prospects for civilian supremacy? What is the role of economic considerations in promoting or retarding the ascendancy of civilian institutions over the military? What role can political parties play in building cohesion between civil society and the military? These and other questions deserve thoughtful consideration in the days ahead. Finally, these findings must be translated into practical policy proscriptions which may then be implemented in a controlled fashion while closely observing the results.

¹³ S.E. Finer in "The Retreat to the Barracks: notes on the practice and the theory of military withdrawal from the seats of power," Third World Quarterly 7 (January 1985), pp. 16-31, attempts to relate military dispositions and societal conditions in terms of defining the conditions necessary for military withdrawal. Although I find his conclusions somewhat prosaic, his treatment of this topic is significant in that he endeavors to relate how external societal conditions like foreign policy failures, economic mishaps, and the presence or absence of viable civilian leadership affect internal military dispositions and create the conditions necessary for military abdication to civilian rule.

This study represents one small step in the journey to¹⁴⁷ understand better the notion of civilian control and how it may be captured and preserved. In an era of emerging yet vulnerable democracies both in Latin America and around the world, the consequences of military intervention remain devastatingly high. The better equipped we are to understand those factors which contribute to or detract from military acceptance of civilian rule, the better prepared we will be to protect the world's democracies, both young and old.

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