

## **LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY AUTONOMY: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACIES IN POST-TRANSITION**

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Throughout the history of post-colonial Latin America, one of the most common characteristics of the political landscape has been the seizure of power by the military. Between 1964 and 1978, military regimes overthrew democracies in most of Latin America and tried to restructure their economies and politics (Winn 1995). Since the turn of the century, there have been many flirtations with democracy, some of which were lasting (e.g. Costa Rica and Mexico) and impressive.

Within the last twenty years, there has been another movement toward democratization, or as some have referred to it – a “re-democratization.” The transition from authoritarian rule to democracy has even taken place in countries with a history of strong military-authoritarian rule, the most notable of which were Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, and Peru. Though it is generally accepted that democratic transitions have occurred throughout Latin America, there is still no guarantee that it will last. A case in point, is the brief military takeover in Ecuador in late 1999 and early 2000. Eventually Gustavo Noboa was thrust into the presidency, but the verdict is still out as to whether or not Ecuador will develop into an open democracy.

The involvement of the military in political processes and its institutions is complex and requires one to take into account a variety of causal factors that include the military and political mentality of a country’s leadership, as well as the acceptance and dedication of enforcing constitutional law. Along this line, Aguero (1997) noted that a condition necessary for the successful governance of a system is the civilian control of its military and police organizations. Without this type of arrangement, there will be no democracy.

It is presently viewed that most Latin American countries have made the successful transition from autocratic-military rule to democracy – regardless of how tenuous the transition may be. As a result, the survivability and continuance of democracy in post-transition is still in question. Most of the literature supports the argument that the level to which the civilian government can control the military influences the continuance and development of democracies. Conversely, the military is often seeking to attain as much autonomy as possible. As the level and degree of military autonomy increases, so does the potential (both real and perceived) for intervention and overthrow of civilian rule. It is therefore, the premise of this paper that post transitional democracies can only be strengthened by professionalizing their military to the extent that it will work with and for the civilian government.

## Levels of Democratization

There have been two general approaches used to define what democracy is: substantive versus procedural. Briefly, the substantive approach defines democracy in terms of the democratic outcomes, such as justice, equality, and wealth. Cohen & Arato (1992) observed that this approach has the potential of becoming tautological and is questionable relative to its analytical power. A procedural approach to the study of democracy is more applicable when looking at changes within institutional structures. As such, one does not directly examine the effects of change, but provides analysis based upon political competition, participation, and the extent to which individual rights are guaranteed in that system. In a procedural approach, democracies are characterized as those systems that encourage inclusion, participation, open competition between opposing groups (civil societies), and constraints within political institutions.

One of the standard views of what constitutes a democracy, is the state's ability to have peaceful transitions of power. In other words, through open and free elections, oppositional party control of the government changes. Some have even argued that a single change over of power is insufficient, and that at least two peaceful transitions are necessary for a country to be categorized as a true democracy. The latter criteria, however, may be too stringent a measure, especially since most Latin American nations have become transitional democracies only within the last ten to fifteen years.

The research conducted by O'Loughlin *et al.* (1998) made effective use of the procedural conception of democracy to develop values for delineating levels of democratization, based upon Polity III, which is rapidly becoming the standard dataset of choice in studies of democracy and associated phenomena. The down side of such measures, however, is that they do not tap the democratic notions of justice and development, nor do they directly assess the level of inclusion or extent of political development. Neither do they take into account the level of political and civil liberties.

## Transitional Process to Democracy

Similar to democracies, a common feature of dictatorships is that they do not tolerate autonomous social and political organizations, because they fear organized challenges to their hegemony. When faced with a challenge, they will take one of two tracks. The first, is to incorporate the challenger into the dictatorship by cooping them; or secondly, they will repress them. The political history of twentieth century Latin America is replete with examples of the latter.

According to Przeworski (1991), transition requires that there is a split within the dictatorship. Here, an individual or group, within the authoritarian power structure, serves as a "liberalizer" who is willing to tolerate autonomous social and political organizations. The question might arise as to why these liberalizers would want to tolerate change within the authoritarian structure. This is usually the result of one of two conditions. The first, is that there is a change in dictators. Here, the new dictator would assume power with a set of values that are different from other members within the structure. Perhaps the best example of this situation is the frequent overthrow of military dictators by younger groups of colonels. What occurs here, is the establishment of differences in values between generational lines. In Latin America, these

rebellious colonels are usually groups who attended military academies together. Not only do they share a common value system, but often have more allegiance to each other than to the government in office.

The second, and most important in recent transition countries of the region, is the evolution of social change. By the late 1980s, most non-democratic governments realized that to have vibrant economic development, the state needed to “open up.” That is, competitiveness in a “post-industrialized” economy requires a certain amount of autonomy. Ultimately, traditional forms of repression become too expensive. Economic opportunity costs effect investment, in that, as repression costs increase, opportunity for investment decreases.

Democratization only results if the liberalizers are really “proto-democratizers” – “closet democrats,” such as found in Argentina and Venezuela. In reality, these liberalizers prefer democratic transition to alternatives – broaden repressive power of the dictatorship, create a new dictatorship, or have open revolt and insurrection. To accomplish their transitional goals, they must first misrepresent their preferences to the autocratic hard-liners. During this time, they are in negotiations with outside autonomous political and social organizations. What is dangerous here, is the fact that the proto-democratizer can miscalculate the willingness of moderate members of the civil society and autocratic reformers to negotiate a transition to democracy. At this stage, the military autocracy will either negotiate from strength (e.g. Chile, Peru, and El Salvador), weakness (e.g. Argentina), or on parity (e.g. Uruguay).

### Post Transition Democracies

Democracy in post-transition includes the strengthening of basic civil rights, which implies the protection of individuals from the whims of the government, permitting them to politically compete freely and openly, and to have a meaningful voice and influence on the policies and workings of that government. Or, as O’Donnell & Schmitter (1986) noted, “Democracy’s guiding principle is that of citizenship.” (p. 7) However, one of the most fundamental conditions for democracy is the absence of military intervention. For as long as military intervention remains as a realistic possibility, and its influence exceeds that of any other state institution, the certainty of democracy will always be questioned.

Mayall (1999) argues that the end of the Cold War tended to reduce the rate of nationalist insurgencies. Perhaps the reason for this was the fact that many transitional civilian governments saw the need to control the military. Basically, there are two ways in which the military can be politically controlled – subjectively and objectively. Subjective control refers to maximum civilian power in relationship to the military, where the power of the military is minimized. In other words, in the subjective realm, the military is “civilianized,” making them the “mirror of the state.” When civilian political control is the objective, military professionalism will be maximized, and political control is distributed between military and civilian institutions. Within this calculus, it is believed that there will emerge a more professional attitude and behavior among the military hierarchy. This may not always hold true, for it has been shown that military professionalism and economics were the causes of the Buenos Aires coups – *los carapintada*.

Perrmutter and Bennett (1980) observed that the state of professionalism, which is based upon the classical tradition of administrative theory, should remove the military from politics. Within this context, Stephan (1973) identified two types of military professionalism. The first,

which he called the “old” professionalism, is where the military is politically neutral and concerns itself only with extreme threats. The second is “new” professionalism, and is characterized by military organizations that address themselves to internal security and national development. The old professionalism is highly correlated with advanced democracies (e.g. the US and established Western democracies), while the new professionalism is correlated with pre-transitional structures (e.g. military and authoritarian governments).

In advanced democracies, the function of the military takes on the characteristics of all other state institutions. It competes and negotiates for influence and resources, and seeks to protect its own interests through political lobbying. In most Latin American democracies, however, the military institution has played by different rules, because they are frequently perceived as the government’s most threatening competitor. The reasons for this are that they have historically been an integral part of the political system, and in some cases, more so than individual political parties. Secondly, it is often difficult to separate the military from human rights violations that were part of counter-subversive activities during the Cold War era. Finally, with the emergence of several highly articulate human rights groups, the military were identified as a hostile and belligerent institution within society.

It must be remembered that all Latin American military institutions have their roots deeply imbedded in Iberian military foundations – where officers considered themselves to be the “paragons of gentlemanliness,” that represented everything that was good in manhood. Iberian militarism, then, was considered a vocation akin to that of the priesthood. Within this aura of professionalism, it can easily be understood why Latin American militarists have seen, and continue to see, themselves as a nation in arms, or a citizenry in uniform, especially in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Chile.

### Military Professionalism

The concept of military professionalism has been used to describe numerous situations within Latin America. Two examples of what are considered to be of major concern to military organizations are 1) the ability to be properly equipped and trained for armed conflict, and 2) the preservation and defending of what is “best” for the national interest. The problem arises, however, when military professionalism and autonomy turn inward to “face internal threats.” When it comes to the political role of the military, some suggest that it may be better to think of them in terms of their autonomy rather than professionalism, because the degree of autonomy defines the level of military influence. The argument here is that institutional autonomy delineates the level of military professional independence and exclusivity. Pion-Berlin (1992) stated that “(i)n the interests of its own professional development, the military asserts its corporate autonomy by maintaining a ‘sense of organic unity and consciousness’ that sets itself apart from lay institutions.” (p.84)

Unfortunately, in the Pion-Berlin treatise, autonomy, like professionalism, takes on two disturbing features that are not addressed. The first, is that autonomy can be political in that they will try to limit the state’s options by strengthening its own decision-making powers and challenge the government for influence or control over various policy matters. Second, autonomy can strengthen military institutions because they are always trying to protect their core functions from interference by “non-military types.” As a result, military institutions try to

shield themselves from political meddling with their aspirations for professionalism and modernization.

Within the framework of transitional and post-transitional democracies, Latin American military institutions may not yet have been convinced that a liberal democracy is the best path to take. Instead, they are more concerned with protecting their own corporate advantages within the government – protectionism, and not democratization, becomes the primary concern. Finer (1988) observed that rather than work for the weakening of the state, the military may opt to become autonomous, or at least isolate itself, for the purpose of maintaining absolute control and authority over itself. Without question, most militarists are driven by both institutional and political objectives, and the more control that they have in directing the two, the more promising their future survivability and development.

It has been argued that the military's ultimate strategy is to destabilize newly formed democracies and democratic development. This is not a necessarily valid argument for two reasons. First, a return to authoritative rule is not always in their best interest. It has been shown that many within the military would prefer to disassociate themselves from their past authoritarianism that resulted in failed economic policies and human rights violations. In countries such as Argentina, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, the military stature, unity, and self-confidence declined as a result of incompetence, self-aggrandizement, and/or repression.

Secondly, the military can no longer coalesce around a single common ideological theme. Old real, and unreal, fears of communist subversion was once the constant of military coalescence that have been eliminated and rendered obsolete with the fall of the USSR and its Eastern European allies. Accordingly, this condition eliminated the central premise of national security that only a permanent military institution with a strong presence in the government could protect the nation from external threats.

What must be clearly understood in this study of democratic development, within the context of a professional military, is the difference between military professionalism and professional militarism. The first is a state or condition, while the second is a set of attitudes towards the state and is based upon a military ethos. Military participation in political affairs is the result of professional militarism, politicizing of the military, and a lack of civilism.

Studying the history of political development in Latin America, one can recognize a sequence of governance. At the time of independence, *junta* rule was prevalent. Out of this came the leadership of individuals, most of which were autocratic. Within this context, the *junta* might be inferred as an institution suited to the confusion, turbulence, and political dichotomies of a new state. Prior to the recent period of democratization, the *junta* proved to be an effective method of military influence on states suffering from political upheavals or abrupt changes of leadership. Like most entrenched institutions, the Latin American military ethos tended to change slower than those of the civilian political culture. Hence, the military is often expected to be less receptive to transition than civilian institutions.

As interpreted by many professional military officers, the internationalization of civilian political culture, via the market economy, poses a threat to traditional military nationalism and its values. The new wave of democratization caught by many military officers by surprise, especially in Chile and Paraguay. Some of the research suggests that these “new times” might actually be of benefit for the military, in that it has taken them out of the arena of solving difficult economic and social problems. However, it is important to realize that whenever the military is “...surprised or threatened [by democratization], they fall back to tradition, vocation,

religion, national values, geopolitics, defense, and national security to justify [their] continued existence.” (Nunn 1995, p. 27)

### Military Transitions to Democracy

Fitch (1998), Loveman & Davis (1997), and Ali Camp (1996) have studied various Latin American countries, relative to levels of autonomy enjoyed by their military. It was generally found that there were definite differences in the levels of military professionalism and autonomy. The research pointed out that regardless of high or low autonomy, that the military usually had absolute controls over recruitment, officer training, philosophy, and military reform, while the states tended to have greater control over functions such as budgeting, force levels, and defense programs.

In Brazil and Chile, where the historic level of military autonomy was high, they were able to demonstrate a high degree of success in influencing policy decisions by the government. During transition, political retaliation against the military was avoided because of the military's strength and political influence during transition. They were also able to increase their prestige via policy successes, and were able to make the transition to democracy by negotiating pacts that assured the survival of their corporatism. In contrast, Argentina's military government failed to govern effectively and suffered significant setbacks that left the officer corps weakened, demoralized, and at odds with one another. Both Uruguay and Peru were described as having a moderate degree of autonomy prior to democratization.

Between 1968 and 1979, Brazil's military leaders are credited with successfully implementing state led capitalism. It has been observed that the economic success of these programs laid the groundwork for political change early on, so that liberalization preceded democratization by more than ten years. Even though pressures for change came from below, the military managed to come out of the process quite well.

Chile saw significant human rights violations, but these were offset by the regime's ability to lower inflation and maintain consistent economic growth rates between 1976-1980 and 1984-1989. Though Chile is sometimes described as Latin America's purest application of free market economics, it did not have the same rate of growth as did Brazil. Nevertheless, its success is demonstrated by the fact that the military's programs have been left intact by the succeeding democratic government.

Uruguay and Peru shared similar legacies and transitions. The military leadership of both countries experienced poor economic performance and declining support. They both had periods of severe economic recession – Peru in 1974-1977 and Uruguay in the early 1980s. The military establishment in both countries could neither prevent nor control their countries' democratic transition, but they were able to co-manage it and did preserve some leverage over the new governments by negotiating various degrees of institutional autonomy.

Comparatively, in Argentina, where the military proved to be a disaster in the running of the state, especially in terms of its economic policy that resulted in hyperinflation, military autonomy was low. During the transition period, there was significant political divisiveness that proved to be harmful to the military during negotiations, so that the civilian government was able to bargain from a position of strength. The high degree of civilian control over the military in Argentina can be attributed to the military's humiliating defeat in the Malvinas (Falkland Islands). As a result, they were not only a weakened institution, but were also a devastated

entity, unable to speak with a unified voice, nor able to extend any significant input into the democratization process. The only area where they did negotiate a favorable outcome, was their ability to gain immunity from prosecution for their role in Argentina's "dirty war."

### Research Methodology

Military policy in this research is defined as asset of governmental policies that deal with civil-military relations – between the military, state, and society. As a result, military policy is distinct from a national defense policy, where the objectives are to provide for the "defense" of the country from outside incursions. Military policy for democratic development is based upon a system of civil-military relations that insure, and support, democratic control of the armed forces.

It is a fact that each civilian government in Latin America operates under different systems of civil-military relations. The common goal among all countries, however, is the same – to move toward a more democratic relationship with the military. Since democratic transition, most countries have moved towards a more civilian controlled military, a condition essential for strengthening democracies in post-transitional Latin America. In the short run, more civilian control is often viewed as a threat to the best interests of the military. To assure that democracy progresses, a special armed forces calculus has to be derived that will clearly show that the cost of strengthening democracy will result in a lower cost than a military coup.

Since it is the premise of this research that post-transitional democracies can only be strengthened by professionalizing their military to the extent that it will work with, and for, the civilian government, it is only logical that an analysis be conducted on military policies within successfully developing democracies. Quantitative and inferential modeling of these policies are difficult without first establishing a theoretical basis upon which data can be collected. Hence, it was the purpose of this research to conduct a case study analysis on those countries that are considered to be the most successful in the development of liberal democracies. The procedure used here, was an attempt to identify commonalities of military policies in countries moving rapidly towards civilian control.

### Case Study Selection

The literature on military autonomy suggests that there are specific military policy attributes that are conducive to the development of democracy. It was, therefore, the intent of this study to conduct case studies to ascertain whether or not such attributes existed. The point here, was what constituted a high level of democratization, and how to identify countries that meet this criteria. Realizing that there was no single, absolute, and universally accepted measure of democracy, specific cases were selected upon two major criteria.

The first, is the peaceful democratic transition of power from party to an oppositional party. The country that has historically had the highest frequency of political power transference was Costa Rica. Unfortunately, for the parameters of this study, this case could not be used because Costa Rica does not have a standing army. The country with the next frequent level of peaceful power transition was Argentina.

After the fall of the military government, Alfonsín took office on 10 December 1983. After completing his final year in office, Carlos Menem, from an opposing political party, was elected president and took office in 1989. In 1999 Fernando de la Rúa, of the *Alianza* (a political union of two parties – *Union Civica Radical* and *Fre-Pa-So*), was elected president and assumed

office in December of that year. To date, Argentina has become the only post-transitional democracy to have a peaceful transference of power between two opposition parties – not once, but twice.

The second criteria used for case study selection was the level of stability of a country's civilian political institution. Research by Ackroyd (1991) observed that "...compared to other Latin America countries, Mexico has been a model of civil-military tranquility." (*ibid.*, p. 81) Unlike other Latin American, Mexico has not had a coup since 1920, and no serious threat to its civilian political institution since the 1930s. Furthermore, its national politics has had no significant interference from the military, and has been dominated by civilians.

### Case Studies: Mexico and Argentina

It has been shown that the success of democracies is dependent upon institutional arrangements and the resources that their participating members bring into the process. Przeworski (1991) noted that this depends upon the power of individual actors bring to the table to either support or undermine the government. Initially, the military will have little incentive to support democratic development. But, within a utility maximizing framework, if they perceive more gains with democratization than other systems, they will support its development.

#### Mexico

Unlike other Latin American countries, Mexico followed a different path to a civilian controlled military. This process was set against the framework of its fight for independence from Spain that left a devastated economy and politically weak institutions, which were all attributed to military leaders. The military's support of the constitutional government has been a positive force in the democratic sustainability that the country has experienced since the early part of the twentieth century -- "In fact, the Mexican military has remained fiercely loyal to the legitimate government since the 1930s." (Wagner 1995, p. 103)

The traditional political power of Mexico has been with the central government since the Constitution of 1917. At times, this relationship has tarnished the image of the military, yet, the image of the armed forces has generally been that of a protector from external and internal threats. The demilitarization of Mexico's political institutions did not occur in a single revolutionary moment, but was a long and difficult process. It is generally recognized that two important factors contributed to the military's depolitization: 1) formation of a singular powerful national political party, and 2) the development of a unique military ideology.

Though the military has supported the constitutional government of Mexico since the revolution, initially, its generals did play an active and dominant role in the administration of every day affairs. A role as frequently conducted openly as well as behind the scenes. The process of removing the military from its management role began in 1920 when General Alvaro Obregon assumed the presidency. To remove the threats of the *caudillos*, that was partially made up of members of the revolutionary army, and posed a threat to the creation of a centralized government, he immediately cut the size of the army in half to bring about order to the politically divided institution. He succeeded only because he was able to set up special military agricultural colonies for the ousted soldiers. To gain support from the generals and influential officers, he used financial payoffs..

Obregon's successors were able to further reduce the autonomy of the military and keep them out of politics, though they had to put down a number of minor rebellions initiated by disgruntled officers. Calles' greatest contribution to Mexico was the founding of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR), which was the predecessor of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). Though Calles could not keep the military entirely out of politics, he did manage to make significant inroads in this area. It wasn't until the administration of President Lazaro Cardenas (1934-1940), however, that significant changes were made. Under Cardenas' guidance, the military was incorporated into the country's official party, so that he would be the legal head of the army, and not the generals. The result of this strategy was that Cardenas increased government (civilian) control over the military, that enforced a political discipline on them.

Mexico's process of demilitarizing its politics was atypical of the rest of Latin America. However, there was a contributing factor that permitted the civilian heads of state to accomplish this – the anti-sentiment of the general population toward the military that grew out of the violence of the Mexican Revolution. Even the military leaders realized that in order for the political structure of the country to survive and develop, it was dependent upon a non-interfering armed forces. To compensate the military for its acquiescence to civilian control, government leaders strongly encouraged the professionalization of its officer's corps (which also meant the military's continual exit from politics).

Though the inclusion of the military in the government's political party institutionally demilitarized politics, there was another factor that facilitated this process. Commencing with the military changes of the 1920s to 1940s came the evolution of a unique military ideology that was the foundation upon which army leaders based their practice of non-political interference. The reforms taken by the government established guidelines, values, and behaviors for all members of the armed forces, and defined those conditions under which they would take military action. At times, this allowed the army to keep its distance, and intrusion, from the injustices of individual administrations. "Because the army defends the constitution and assiduously pursues the goals of the revolution, it also must support the legitimate government, even though it may not always be in accord with specific policies or actions." (Wagner 1996, p. 109)

As an ideology, it is difficult to explain in concrete terms, and has often been referred to as a belief-system, or what Huntington (1957) has referred to as a "professional military ethic" that evolved into a creed. This creed, then, establishes the framework that dictates the military's activities. Throughout military publications, speeches, and reports by high-ranking officers, the creed has often been expressed in terms of *la patria es primero* (the country comes first) – words that were spoken by the Mexican revolutionary and president, Vicente Guerrero.

At the core of this ideology are six components: heritage, loyalty, discipline, patriotism, nationalism, and apoliticism. Though other Latin American countries, values of discipline, patriotism, and nationalism; heritage, loyalty, and apoliticism is a true Mexican character. Mexico's revolutionary past is the "heritage" of the military's ideology, and perhaps its most distinguishable characteristic. Hence, military officers see themselves as "guardians of the revolution" who strive daily for the attainment of its goals. (Knight 1987) This devotion and faith to its revolutionary democratic ideals is the single characteristic that differs Mexico from its Latin American counterparts.

Another interesting feature of Mexico's military, is its persistent rejection of any type of formal partnership with the U.S. military. Not only has this increased its prestige with the

civilian population, but also tended to increase its support for national democratic development. Similarly, the government has exhibited a trend towards independence and commitment to nationalism.

Military apoliticism is another ideological feature of the military, and is the most distinctive feature of the Mexican army. Over the past sixty years, in all of Latin America, Mexico is the only country where the military has not intervened directly in politics. The constitution subordinates the army to civilian rule, and they have dutifully complied with it. It is agreed that officers do not make political policy, they comply to it -- the process of policy-making is left to elected civilian officials.

The autonomy that the military does have is in the professional development of its members that implants its operational ideology. Within its military academies, cadets are inculcated with the ideals of democracy, civilian rule, and their role as defenders of the revolution and constitution. This training is so ingrained, that the officer corps carries this ideology with them throughout their careers. As noted by Zinser (1990), the Mexican army has always supported two political principles: that military force is not an acceptable method for implementing political policy and advancing the goals of the revolution, and democratic development is not dependent upon buttressing by the armed forces.

### Argentina

Of all Latin American countries, no other can point to a single event that resulted in the depoliticization of the military as was experienced by Argentina. Within a decade following the Falkland/Malvinas War, the role and position of the military had changed dramatically. In 1982, the military was in direct control of the government, as they had been in most years since 1930. At the same time, the military was concerned with protecting its sovereignty along its borders with Brazil and Chile. Additionally, after the end of the Cold War and the bipolar hegemony world system, there arose a challenge to its civilian government – with a new international order how could the military be used in the best interests of national democratic development?

Today, Argentina's military has evolved into a civilian controlled institution in a political environment where unemployment and economic concerns far outweigh the concerns of the armed forces. After the latest round of presidential elections in 1999, the country's democratic regime has become more secure, and no longer fear the potentials of military intervention. The use of military force as changed from its infamous military security model to a tool used to strengthen its critical international alliances (Norden 1996).

Prior to 1983, Argentina's major military concerns were generated by the nature of the region's unstable political environment. Domestically, the army was determined to protect the country from actual and perceived threats to its political order. Internationally, it continued to be involved in long standing disputes with its contiguous neighbors and sovereignty over "*Islas de Malvinas*." During this time, the geopolitics of the area dominated the country's approach to defense, where neighbors were perceived as potential enemies. In regards to the national state of the Union, economic and social development were considered to be inextricable components of national security, and as such, essential components of the military's ideology. Hence, the armed forces took over political control of the government with the goal of governing and reconfiguring Argentine society.

The Falklands/Malvinas War not only resulted in the collapse of the military government, but also led to a crisis within the armed forces itself, where they were not only questioning the competence of their leaders, but their role in the future development of the country. Alsfo

became the first democratically elected president of the democratization era. His administration was adamant about what roles the military should not carry out, but was less certain about what roles they should be involved in. On the one hand, it was obvious that the end of the Cold War eliminated the threat of revolutionary communism. On the other hand, the failures of the military generated significant doubt within that institution about their ability to govern successfully.

Alfonsín had developed a three-pronged military policy that was generally successful. The first was to reduce both the size of the standing army, and the military budget. Though budget cuts appeared to be significant, they were established at pre-war levels. However, with the rates of inflation exceeding 100 percent annually, salaries dropped below levels that the armed forces were accustomed to. The second policy, was the limiting of the military's role by juridical means. In 1988, the Argentine Congress passed the National Defense Law that outlined those areas in which the military could be involved, and more importantly, those that were out-of-bounds. The Law stated that the military would be exclusively limited to matters of external defense, and that "Questins relative to the internal politics of the country shall under no circumstances constitute working hypotheses of the military intelligence organizations." (Congreso Argentino 1988, p. 1427) Though this may appear to have been a slap in the face of the military, the issue of national defense played an important role in bolstering the image of the military. Additionally, it was also an important symbol to the population that told them that the armed forces would no longer be involved in civilian affairs (i.e. the government would no longer condone any future intervention by the armed forces). Similarly to Mexico, the Argentine army was given greater autonomy in the recruitment, training, and modernization of its forces.

The last component of Alfonsín's policy was the conducting human rights trials. Shortly after taking office, the new president gave orders to begin investigations into the disappearances of individuals thought to be a threat to the government (the number of the disappeared has been estimated at between 9,000 and 27,000). Of all his policies, this was the least satisfying, for human rights organizations note that they did not go far enough. Furthermore, when Alfonsín was succeeded by Carlos Menem, all convictions were nullified.

Perhaps the most positive aspect of the Alfonsín administration was in the area of regional diplomacy. Political relations with Brazil was dramatically improved, largely due to the efforts of Ambassador Oscar Camilión who negotiated agreements that led to trade expansion between the two. Relations with Chile also improved with the signing of a peace treaty that was hammered out by the Vatican and settled its ongoing dispute over the Beagle Channel. Relations with England has been much more difficult to resolve, though the country has reverted to diplomacy to settle their disagreements. Alfonsín also created a basis upon which future administrations built an improved relation with the military. Because he was able to weaken the military, subsequent administrations were given greater freedom to reshape them.

Carlos Menem completely changed the nature of the military by transforming Argentina's concept of security. Since the government placed great emphasis on economic issues and its importance in fiscal security, traditional defense and security issues no longer dominated the political landscape. Internationally, Argentina began to develop a close relationship with the U.S. and became one of the United Nation's most active members by contributing troops to various UN missions. Thus, instead of dictating national policy, the military became a tool in the execution of it.

Menem's new model of security had three major components. The first was regional integration that was designed to improve relations with its neighbors, and resulted in the most

stable and supportive situation than a any time in recent history. At the center of this was the creation of a regional common market known as MERCOSUR (*Mercado Comun del Sur*). With improved relations, came a decrease in the perception of external intervention in national affairs. The second component was the development of alliances with the U.S., which has resulted in a close working relationship between the two countries. Menem made clear his intentions to develop an unlimited friendship with the country, which was counter to past policies that sought to maintain a high level of political autonomy. An area of major compliance to U.S. desires has been in the war on drugs. Since 1992 Argentina has found it necessary to militarize counter-narcotic efforts. In turn, Argentina's allegiance to the U.S. has been rewarded with the lifting of "...the freeze on the supply of military equipment which had been in place since the Falklands war of 1982." (Latin American Weekly 1993, p. 77)

The last component of Menem's policy was his willingness to accept an active role in United Nation's policies. Many policy-makers view this as a continuation of good relations with the U.S. where commitment of military personnel was a sign of support of U.S. policies abroad. For example, Argentina sent troops to Croatia, Angola, and Haiti.

Democratization efforts did manage to dramatically reduce the military's autonomy, and improved the chances for sustainability and development. Likewise, it also left the military without a mission. Participation in UN missions has provided a partial solution. These military missions have not only helped with the funding of the military, but has also been valuable in their professionalism. "Argentina found in the United Nations a relatively low-cost aid to the nation's security problems, which smoothly complemented the government's other goals." (Norden 1996, p.257)

### Conclusions

The verdict is still out as to whether or not liberal democracies will survive and develop throughout Latin America. The political positions of the military in these countries have had a major impact on the political transformation process. In some cases, such as in Ecuador and Venezuela, military intervention has become so intrusive that there is a question as to whether or not they are true democracies. In other countries, such as Chile and Brazil, initial democratic elections have been heavily controlled by the military.

As presented in the case studies of Mexico and Argentina, there are positive signs that show that democratization not only has a good chance for survival, but can develop with minimal threats from the military. The subordination of the military to democratic regimes is the cornerstone of democratic development. Where they are able to maintain a high level of autonomy, political leaders have become leery as to the reaction of military leaders to their policy-making decisions. Additionally, the likelihood of military intervention is increased in those countries where the economic situation is poor and has the potential for the creating of austere budgeting practices that ultimately result in reduced military expenditures.

There are conditions that can be created by the government to improve civil-military relations. Beyond the obvious "end to autonomy," there are specific actions taken by civilian governments that have demonstrated the ability to create an environment conducive to democratic development. With the end of direct military involvement in political matters, military institutions have lacked a sense of mission. Though the two case studies illustrate different role objectives for their military, they have, nevertheless, given their armed forces

specific goals to attain. The Mexican army has the responsibility to defend the ideals of the revolution and democratic constitution, and the Argentine army has become the means by which the government can carry out its foreign policies and alliances.

There is a general tendency of transitioned democracies to purge the armed forces of the upper-ranking officer corps from the old regime. Though both countries dramatically reduced the size of their standing armies, they left intact, under public protests, the core of their military leadership. Early on, Mexico retained its top military officers and was able to reduce their objections with financial payoffs. Menem, to the protestations of human rights activists, issued blanket immunity to his country's military leaders. In both cases, the civilian government gained the allegiance of the officer corps by eliminating (or at least greatly reducing) the threat to individual and institutional existence.

Przeworski (1995) noted that in order for democracies to survive "democratic leaders must have a policy of constitutional control, where they integrate military and strategic policies into the overall policy of the government." (p. 48) To this end, Mexico and Argentina have succeeded. In the first case, the military was made part of the central party, and under the direct control of the elected president. By contrast, the weakened Argentine military was subsumed under civilian control by legislative action.

There is little evidence that supports the contention that the nature of past regimes will dictate the future success of post-transitional democracies. To the contrary, the history of Mexico's and Argentina's military involvement in civil politics are different, yet they have been examples of positive post-transitional democracies. What appears to be more relevant was the ability of these two countries to dramatically reduce the levels of military autonomy by defining their future roles within the framework of the nation's constitution.

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