"Adapting to Democratic Politics: the military in Congress in post-transition Brazil"

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Paper prepared for delivery at the XXIII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Panel DEM09, "The Military and Democracy in Latin America"

Washington, D.C., September 6-8, 2001
1. Introduction*

The literature on democratization frequently relates different modes of transition to different perspectives for democratic consolidation. Brazil represents a paradigmatic case\(^1\), experiencing what has been called a process of transition by transaction or negotiation. This kind of transition, initiated and controlled by the incumbent elites, has contradictory consequences as far as the perspectives for democratic consolidation are concerned. In fact, on one hand, it allows for a relatively peaceful process of democratic transition, usually including military and political pacts as well as, although more rarely, social pacts. Those pacts lead to a politics of compromise and conflict negotiation with higher probability of democratic consolidation. On the other hand, transitions by negotiation offer less opportunities to break with authoritarian legacies. This is because, being in control of the situation, the authoritarian elites are able to include in the transition pacts the maintenance of their authoritarian privileges.

Among the authoritarian legacies that most affect the quality of new democracy are the military prerogatives, especially meaningful in Latin America. The civilian control over the military is considered by many scholars a necessary and crucial condition for the consolidation of democracy. In fact, while a great number of scholars adopt a minimum definition of democracy following the Shumpeter/Dahl tradition - which basically refers to free, fair and competitive elections, explicitly including civil rights and political rights - many others “precise” this definition by adding new defining attributes to the root concept\(^2\). In this regard, Karl\(^3\), based on the Latin America experience, is the scholar that first

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\(\ast\)This paper contains excerpts from a previous work, “Adapting to Domestic Politics: The Military in Post-Transition Brazil”, presented to the BRASA V Congresso International, Recife, June 18-22, 2000.

\(^1\)Spain is the other case of negotiated transition often referred to in the literature. The most cited reference about this type of transition is Share and Mainwaring, 1986.


\(^3\)See Karl, Terry, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America”, comparative Politics, Vol. 23, N° 1, October 1990.
suggested the inclusion of the civilian control over the military in Dahl’s procedural minimum definition of democracy\(^4\), largely adopted by other leading authors.

The basic reference in the civil-military relations literature is still Huntington\(^5\) and, with regard to Latin America, the works of Stepan\(^6\). According to this civilian-control model, Brazil was considered the least promising Latin-American case of successful civilianization. In fact, the first civilian government, did little to reduce the military prerogatives. Those remained very high even after the enactment of the democratic constitution of 1988.\(^7\)

After 15 years of civilian rule, however, the military power has eroded more than it was anticipated by adepts of the Huntington-Stepan model of civil-military relations.\(^8\) In fact,

\(^4\) Schmitter and Karl (1991: 55-56) add another attribute, about self-governing, by which the polity must be able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overarching political system. They also rephrase Karl’s condition in more broad terms, indicating that elected officials should not suffer severe restrictions or have their decisions submitted to the veto of non-elected officials, like entrenched civil servants or state managers, but specially the military. O’Donnell (1996) incorporates the latter, as well as Linz and Stepan’s (1994) requirement of the existence of an undisputed territory which clearly define the voters, and adds two other conditions: elected officials in free, competitive elections should not be ruled out of office before the end of the period of the mandate constitutionally established; and the existence of a generalized expectation that the process of clean elections and the accompanying civil liberties will last indefinitely. This definition of democracy which adds those items in Dahl’s list is referred by the literatures as the expanded procedural minimum of democracy.

\(^5\) Huntington, Samuel, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations. Cambridge: Harvard U n. Press, 1957. For Huntington, the new democracies face the challenge to approach the “objective civilian control”, which characterize the civil-military relations in industrial democracies. This pattern involves: (1) a high level of military professionalism; (2) the effective subordination of the military to the civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy; (3) the recognition and acceptance of that civilian leadership of an area of competence and autonomy for the military; and (4) as a consequence, one should expect the minimization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military. Those characteristics are reproduced in another work of the author, “Reforming the Civil-Military Relations” in Diamond Larry and Marc F. Plattner, Civil-Military Relations and Democracy. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.


\(^8\) See, for example, the first works of Felipe Aguero, op. cit, and “Toward Civilian Supremacy in South
notwithstanding periods of military unrest, Brazil, in a series of back and forth movements, has taken important steps toward the civilianization of the polity. Demilitarization has been unmistakably in progress, although through a long, slow and peaceful process, just like the usual in Brazilian pattern of democratic transition. To be sure, some authors (Zaverucha, Martins) think that the military prerogatives have not eroded along the civilian governments. Those who disagree on that are now seeking explanations for this outcome. (to be developed in the next section).

I will argue, at this point, that to grasp the whole picture of civil-military relations in the new democracies, it is important to analyze them from the perspective of both the civilians and the military. That is to say, in addition to the important questions about the civilian control over the military in the Huntington-Stepan vein, researchers must also inquiry about the military process of adaptation to the new domestic and international environment.

Looking through the eyes of the military, they face the multiple challenges of adapting their behavior and actions to the domestic democratizing milieu, of enduring their loss of political power and prestige, of accepting and operating under severe budgetary constraints on account of market oriented reforms adopted by the civilian governments. Moreover, with the end of the cold war, the military have been compelled to redefine their institutional role. In fact, not only the military previous mission as guardians against communism in the internal front has to be revised, but also, especially after the Malvinas war, no external enemies or frontier wars are likely to emerge in the Latin American context, with a few exceptions, like Peru-Ecuador long-running border dispute or Argentina-Chile recent contention over the Beagle Channel. The redefinition of their mission in the context of a democratic polity and a new international order is at the core of what some authors have called the institutional identity crisis of the military. Important as it is, this issue will be dealt in a future work.

A major issue overlooked by the analyses that rely on the civilian perspective is the political behavior of the military in Congress and the pattern of relations they have established with politicians in this democratic arena of decision. In those analyses, the rare

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references to Congress are made to remark its weak institutional role in overseeing the military or the lack of interest displayed by congressmen with regard to military affairs.

The objective of this paper is twofold. The first one is to show the importance of complementing the civilian control model and its prerogative approach with the adaptation model and its military perspective approach. My suggestion is that, to better grasp the pattern of civil-military relations in the new Latin-America democracies, one must view both civilians and military in the same wide-angle lens. The second objective is, among the important issues indicated above, to unveil the military political behavior in Congress. There they have learned about pluralist politics with politicians and competently built an institutional lobby, very much like the civilian ministries did. It seems that Brazil, among the other countries of Latin America, displays this unique pattern of relations with politicians.

But should the military lobby in Congress? Is this a sign of increasing military influence? Or, on the contrary, it shows a positive adaptation of the military to democratic politics? Is the glass half full or half empty?

The assessment of the demilitarization process in Brazil along the civilian administrations is beyond the scope of this work. However, references to this process is pervasive along the analysis here provided, there included my analytical point of departure. In fact, I depart from the assumption that some of the military prerogatives did erode. But if this process has advanced in a series of back and forth movements along the civilians administrations since 1985, the military lobby in Congress followed a consistent and linear path, starting during the discussion of the new democratic Constitution, in 1988, and progressing since then. I will argue that the military presence in Congress, with clearly defined routine procedures, recognized and expected by the politicians and the other lobbies, signals a major change in the civil-military relations, something neglected by the analysts who favor the civilian control model and its focus on the military prerogatives.

2. The Civil-Military Relations in Democratizing Brazil: the civilian and the military perspectives
The civil-military relations in post-authoritarian Brazil have been the object of a live debate over the past decade. As indicated, the basic reference is the Huntington-Stepan model of civilian control. Most scholars, following Stepan9 choose the military prerogatives as indicators of the civilian control10, sustained in the new democracies. Stepan has borrowed Dahl’s11 conceptualization of poliarchy based in two theoretical dimensions (contestation and participation) and adapted it to the civilian-military relations in the new democracies (military contestation and military prerogatives). Various possible combinations of the two dimensions are generated, to which correspondingly are associated varying degrees of danger for democratic consolidation.12

As far as Brazil is concerned, the debate over civil-military relations is framed by two polar positions. On one pole is Hunter (1997,1998), who claims that the military power has eroded significantly, on the other is Zaverucha (1997, 1998), who believes that the military prerogatives are today almost the same since the Sarney administration. The other scholars who deal with this subject fall somewhere between these two opposite arguments.

Zaverucha, based on the eleven “prerogatives of military as institution in a democratic regime” selected by Stepan, prepared a list of 16 prerogatives updated and adapted to the Brazilian case13. His conclusion is that the civil-military relations did not

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9 Stepan, op. Cit 1988 defines military prerogatives as “(...) the dimension of military institutional prerogatives refers to those areas when, whether challenged or not, the military as an institution assumes they have an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to paly a role within extramilitary areas within the state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil society”. (p.93)

10 For Stepan’s table of selected military prerogative, defined and classified according to to the variables “military contestation”and “military prerogatives”, see Stepan, op.cit, 1988, pp. 93, 94.


12 See Stepan, op.cit. 1988, p. 98 et passim.

improve, and consequently the military prerogatives are basically the same since the first civilian government. Martins agrees pretty much with Zaverucha, although in his last works he recognized important pro-civilian institutional change, especially in the second term of Cardoso in office. He claims, however, that although the military are pushed back successfully in important institutional spaces they do retain significant influence over the internal state structure, exerting new forms of autonomy.

A contrasting position is Hunter’s optimistic view of the civil-military relations. She suggests that “The Brazilian Armed Forces have had mixed success in preserving their initial prerogatives and institutional structures in Brazil’s new democracy.” The challenge is then to explain why some military prerogatives eroded while others did not, or, saying better, the task is to develop theories to explain the variation of civil-military relations across Latin America. Using the rational choice approach, Hunter claims that the democratic electoral process by itself leads politicians to successfully press against those military prerogatives that were believed to impair their electoral prospects. By contrast, the prerogatives that did not directly harm the politicians votes prospects remained basically


15 The pro-civilian institutional changes indicated by Martins are the reinforcement of the transition pact of mutual amnesty with the enactment of Lei 9140, December 1995, known as Lei dos Desaparecidos and the creation of the Ministry of Defense by Lei Complementar 97, June 1999. He misses, however, the equally important reorganization and relative civilianization of the defense structure with the creation of the Brazilian System of Intelligence, as its central organ, The Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN), law 9 883, July 1999.


the same. Differently from Hunter, Aguero\textsuperscript{20} explains the variance of military influence in the new democracies by the mode of transition and the legal-institutional factors in the process of transition (for instance, characteristics of the authoritarian constitution with which the military entered the transition) and the type of institutionalization attained by the military-authoritarian regime.

A good number of scholars agrees with Hunter’s diagnosis and, roughly speaking, with her explanatory variables (democratization and its political competition process). In fact, the third wave of democratization is often cited as one of the causes of demilitarization in Latin America. Democratization is usually combined with other structural variables, such as global economic integration and the shrunk of the State as a consequence of the neo-liberal economic reforms, model and the changing international environment, especially the end of the cold war and the demise of communism, that removes or alters the perception of threat.

Various authors who come closer to Hunter consider that the prerogative approach does not grasp the whole picture of the civil-military relations. Toffelson\textsuperscript{21}, for instance, says that, to begin with, the existence of prerogatives does not mean that they will be activated. Resources, capacity and the will to exercise them are required, otherwise the prerogatives are hollow and meaningless. He advocates, moreover, the use of the issue-area approach, as a complement to the notion of prerogatives, which serves as a useful first step in analysis. Pion-Berlin (2000) calls the attention to the fact that the prerogative approach generally relies on the location and scope of military action to assess civilian control. He claims that this is not enough. To determine whether civilians are able or not to control


their Armed Forces depends on who the decision-makers are. The identification of
decision-makers and the characteristics of the whole decision-making process require
intensive field research. Only then it is possible to assert if the military conduct harm or not
overall civil-military relations.

The focus on decision-making\textsuperscript{22} (Pion-Berlin) and the issue-area approach\textsuperscript{23} (Toffelson) are complementary and most appropriate. The best way to grasp decision-
making patterns, which for sure signals characteristics of the political regime\textsuperscript{24}, is in fact to
selected some issues and follow inductively their process of decision at the operational
microlevel. The task is to identify the principal actors, determine their forms of
representation and their mechanisms of decision. What matters after all, is if, how and how
much the military influence decision.

As one can see, some authors strictly abide to Stepan’s prerogative approach, adapt
it to the country’s context and even expand the number of prerogatives to better measure
civilian control\textsuperscript{25}. For those authors the military are seen as an immensely powerful,
homogenous and autonomous political actor that civilian leaders are not able to
successfully antagonize with and whose prerogatives are nearly the same as those defined
in the transition pact. Others authors consider the prerogative approach too narrow to grasp
the dynamics and complexity of post-transition civil-military relations. They suggest as a
complement to this approach the use of other analytic models and the investigation of other
variables, such as the democratic political process in itself, especially the electoral process,
the fragmentation of the military in the transition process, the issue-area and the decision-

\textsuperscript{22} See Pion-Berlin, David, “Decision-makers or decision-takers? Military missions and civilian control in

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Toffelson, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{24} My own work relies strongly on this research design determinig (see, for instance, Política e Políticas
de uma Energia Alternativa: o Caso do Proálcool, Rio de Janeiro Ed. Notrya/ANPOCS, 1993,
“Governabilidade e os Poderes Constituídos”, Revista do Serviço Público, Ano 45, Vol. 118, Jan/Jul
1994.

\textsuperscript{25} The best example concerning civilian control in Brazil is Zaverucha. See his consistent and coherent
work since the beginning of the 90’s.
making approaches. Generally these authors recognize that while at least some of the military prerogatives did erode, their fully subordination to civilian rule have not occurred. The military is, therefore, an important political actor, although not as powerful as considered by the first group.

In this work I will assume as well that the prerogative approach is not sufficient to analyze the civil-military relations in full and, in this sense, I am closer to the second perspective outlined above. The two approaches, however, abide to the civilian-control model. In this model, the military are seen from outside and assumed to be full-time power grabbers, permanently resisting the “attacks” from civilians and, therefore, never cooperative with them, unless when a coup d’ état is under consideration.

What I propose here is to assess the civil-military relations of the new Latin American democracies from the perspective of both the civilians and the military. The military perspective approach, contrary to the civilian perspective, leaves room, at least theoretically, for cooperative behavior between civilians and the military (see next section). It allows, moreover, for the historical behavior of civilians, or more precisely, of a group of politicians, who traditionally have called the military to oust from government their political adversaries. The possibility of this civilian behavior, however, is seldom considered in the analyzes military-prerogatives oriented. From the perspective of the military they have to adapt to the new democratizing milieu, to endure their decreasing power and prestige in the domestic realm as well as the budgetary cuts for defense purposes. At the same time, they have to search for a new mission to meet the challenges of the post-cold war era. In the power game, therefore, both types of actors should have their interests and needs taken into consideration. The military, moreover are to be considered a major actor, who traditionally have participated in the political history of the country. They will not change their values overnight. They cannot go back to the barracks simply because they have never been there. But they can abide to democratic procedures,
which is in itself a tremendous advance in civil-military relations of the new Latin American democracies.

To demonstrate that the military approach in combination with the prerogative approach highlights important aspects of the civil-military relations that has been overlooked by the latter, one needs to analyze selected issues from both perspectives. In this work, due to time and space limitations, I will focus on only one issue, although a crucial one: the military political behavior in Congress. In fact, Congress is the representative arena *par excellence*, the major symbol of democratic politics. The civilian control model, whenever refers to Congress is to stress its weak role in overseeing the military, specifically emphasizing the absence of a legislative routine and detailed hearings over domestic military affairs and national defense policy (Zaverucha’s prerogative nº 7). Adopting the military perspective approach, it is possible to show how the military press for their demands and interact with congressmen. The next section will be devoted to such analysis.

3. The Military in Politics.

The military are a strategic privileged political actor who have participated in major political events along the Brazilian history. Their privileged position comes, in addition to the nature of their power resource - the use of force -, from the position they hold in the Executive branch of the government. Up to June, 1999, when the Ministry of Defense was created (Lei Complementar nº 97), the Armed Forces were represented by the chief commanders of the three military Ministries, besides the head of the Military Cabinet and the Armed General Staff (EMFA), the last two stripped from the ministerial status since

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26 The sources of information of this section are, unless explicitly indicated, the interviews with high-ranking officers from the staff of the Congressional Liaisons for EMFA and the Ministry of the Army, Brasília, July 1998 and from the Air Force, the Navy and the Army Commands as well as the Chief and staff of the Congressional Liaison for the Ministry of Defense, in June 2000.
the Collor administration. Active-duty officers held, therefore, five positions in the first-rank echelon of the Executive branch\textsuperscript{27}, by the middle of 1999.

During Cardoso’s second term in office, the Institutional Defense Cabinet substituted for the Military Cabinet, and its head is now a retired high-rank officer. The Ministries of the three Armed Forces were downgraded to the three corresponding Commands, under the authority of the new Minister of Defense, a civilian. The intelligence functions were all absorbed by the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN) created in July 1999 (law nº 9883), under the authority of the Institutional Defense Cabinet, meant to be a non-ideological and non-partisan agency committed to democracy and accountable to Congress. Theoretically, only the Institutional Defense Cabinet has direct access to the Presidency. It remains to be seen, however, how far will the Ministry of Defense manage to integrate the three military Commands under one solely civilian authority. Or, in opposite direction, how far has the Ministry of Defense reproduced the role of the old Armed General Staff (EMFA), which only loosely has coordinated the three military Ministries in the past. So far, civilians are carefully and slowly establishing their presence and authority in the realm of the Ministry of Defense. Interesting enough, the four Secretariats of the Ministry of Defense were sort of divided between the highest rank officers of each Force (Secretariat for Policy, Strategy and Foreign Affairs— a general; Secretariat for Logistic and Mobilization— an admiral; and General Staff for Defense— a brigadier) and a civilian (Secretariat for Institutional Organization), fact that speaks for itself. To be sure, very few civilians are acquainted with military affairs, which leaves room to the military occupy the majority of the positions in the new Ministry. It remains to be seen also how well the intelligence system is going to work. Will it in fact be able to coordinate and control the Forces intelligence services? Will its degree of civilianization really improve?

Differently from other strategic actors (entrepreneurs, workers), the military enjoy direct institutional channels of communication with the Presidency. Even if formally the number of military in the first echelon of government has decreased from five to one, their \textit{de facto} access to the Presidency seems to remains higher than other strategic actors’. Like

\textsuperscript{27} One should note, however, that during the first civilian government the military held 6 active-duty general officers in the Cabinet. The National Intelligence Service (SN1), institutional symbol of repression and torture during the military regime, was abolished only in Collor administration, the second civilian government.
those actors, however, they build up informal relations with civilian Ministries that are in charge of policies that affect them. Even if informally, the military always interact as an institutional actor. Eventually those relations get formalized. They participate in politics, therefore, as an “institutional interest group.” This means, among other things, that the military never press for individual interests, something that they are very proud of.

If it is true that the military holds privileged access to policy formulation at the Executive level, within Congress they participate in decision making very much like the civilians. There they learn about democratic politics.

From the point of view of the civilian-control model, it matters how Congress monitors and controls the military and the defense policies. In this respect one should note that two Commissions of the House of Representatives sometimes call the military for hearings: the Committee for Environmental Issues and the Committee for International Relations and National Defense. Occasionally the Senate also calls them. The Committee for International Relations and National Defense was previously dominated by the PFL, a conservative party among whose members are the civilian leaders who have supported the military regime. By August 2001, the party of the President, in alliance with the PTB, a rightist party, managed to form a strait majority in the Committee. The members of the leftists parties enjoyed at this time, 32% of the total number of politicians in the committee. This Committee is meant to be a forum of debate on military issues and defense policy. It promotes debates on military issues under Congress consideration (e.g. the military welfare rules and their status as public servant) and occasionally calls the military ministers, now commanders, for hearings. For example, the chief of EMFA was invited to present to the Committee the Armed Forces project for the creation of the Ministry of Defense. It also sponsors seminars to discuss the national defense policy with the participation of the military. The Committee can be in the future an important channel of communication between the military, politicians and society, through which the military are supposed to

28 When the issues are complex, like those of the administrative reform or reform of the welfare system, the military typically make preliminary contacts with the Ministry in charge of the policy. Eventually they form a working group, thus opening up an institutional channel of communication and an arena of negotiation.

29 “We never ask for a job for our relatives. We are strictly forbidden to do that” (cited interviews).
make their actions accountable to society.\textsuperscript{30} Despite those positive signs, however, one cannot say yet that routine procedures have been established in the Legislative, neither that Congress monitors issues affecting the Forces structure or new weapons initiatives.

The guiding question of the civilian control model is the extent of control exerted by Congress upon key military issues. According to this model, therefore, Brazil ranks poorly in the Stepan’s item “role of legislature”\textsuperscript{31} or in Zaverucha prerogative nº 7 prerogative (lack of legislative routine procedures and detailed hearings on domestic military affairs and national defense). The model, however, misses an important aspect of the civil-military relations when it neglects other questions, like: how does the military represent their interests in Congress? How does the military influence Congress and press for their interests? How do their modes of interest representation compare to those of the civilians?

Even before the coup d’état in 1964, the military created Congressional Liaisons (Assessorias Parlamentares) for the Forces. It was, however, during the National Constituent Assembly that those Liaisons received a great boost, being completely restructured. Very actively and efficiently, by all accounts, the Assessorias Parlamentares pursued the Armed Forces interests. Donning civilian attire, they were seen in the corridors, in the Commissions and in the floor of Congress dutifully persuading legislators to support their interests on constitutional issues deemed to affect the Forces.

They organized four Congressional Liaisons, one for each Force and one for EMFA. Like the civilian ministries they have offices in the Congress building. Retired and/or active-duty officers, depending on the service branch at stake, staff those Congressional Liaisons. The Liaison for the Army seems to be the best structured and organized. There, all the members are active-duty officers. They work with four coordinated groups: one that follows the bills for constitutional amendments (PEC), two others that monitor the legislative process in the House and in the Senate and the fourth, located at the Army

\textsuperscript{30} A good example is the episode of the explosion in the marines headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. Following the explosion, the Minister of the Navy on his own initiative came to both the committees on environmental issues and on defense matters to explain what has happened and why there was no longer danger of further incidents.

\textsuperscript{31} See table of military prerogatives in Stepan, 1988, op. cit.
headquarters, that gives support to the other groups.\textsuperscript{32} The Army has also regional offices to follow military issues in state legislatives.

The military career does not prepare for this kind of job. The members of the \textit{Assessorias Parlamentares} attended courses offered by the University of Brasilia for legislative assistants. They eventually attended as well graduate courses in the social sciences area. But they say that “it is here, in Congress, that we really learn”. So, they basically get trained to the new job in practice, with the civilians, i.e., politicians and other legislative assistants, in the day to day activities of the legislative process.

Since the days of the National Constituent Assembly (1986-88) have been perfecting their working procedures. Until the recent creation of the Ministry of Defense, the four Congressional Liaisons for EMFA and the three service branches follow basically the same \textit{modus operandi}. The military legislative officers identify among the bills submitted to Congress those that interfere with the Armed Forces interests. They send them to the evaluation of the corresponding Ministry (or EMFA), and since the creation of the Ministry of Defense, to the evaluation of the Commands. After a short while they receive a technical and juridical assessment and an indication of what should be done for getting the bills approved, rejected, amended, or simply monitored along the legislative process. With this clear indication from the superior ranks the members of the \textit{Assessorias Parlamentares} set up a “strategy of action”, somewhat different for each case, but pursuing the same basic procedures.

They follow up all the steps of the legislative process, from Committee to Committee until the bill reach the floor of Congress. They get to know the greatest possible number of congressmen, no matter their party affiliation or ideology, and build the most cordial relations with them. They try to persuade the legislators to support their interests out of technical (never political) arguments.\textsuperscript{33} “We have nothing to exchange”, they say, “we can only offer the credibility of our institution”. Many times they hand the legislator a written report, which “is a very efficient way to influence the process”. They argue that their profession entails some especial features\textsuperscript{34} and therefore they should be treated

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32]For a detailed account of the Congressional Liaison for the Army see Costa, op. cit.
\item[33]This is the so-called \textit{corpo a corpo} procedure, very much used by civilian lobbies
\item[34]For instance, the military work full time, with no payment for extra hours or the chance to take a
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differently in some issues, like welfare and public servant status. They distribute booklets explaining those especial characteristics or their preferences on other issues at stake, like conscription. They bring the representatives to a visit to their minister or to a technical department of the Ministry so that all the information on the issue is provided.

These procedures are followed for each bill submitted to Congress that affects the Armed Forces interests. Sometimes only a small part of the bills affects the military. But all of them are monitored. The most important issue is, not surprisingly, the budget. Here the work of the Assessorias Parlamentares is to avoid by all means cuts in the budgetary items already negotiated at the Executive level. Aside from that they follow bills on sensitive issues - like indemnification for the family of opponents to the military regime who disappeared, nuclear and chemical weapons, conscription, the use of the Armed forces in the combat to drug trafficking - as well as on minor issues like the free entrance of religious sects in military hospitals or the interference of the Regional Councils of Medicine in the military hospitals.

Thus, discipline, high *sprit de corps*, prompt technical and juridical back up, coordinated actions that follow one clear directive, planned follow-up of the legislative process, the promotion of institutional (never individual) interests are typical characteristics of the military lobby. Altogether those characteristics make the military lobby more efficient than their civilians counterparts. Aside from that, the Assessorias Parlamentares of the Armed Forces enjoy greater flexibility of action vis-à-vis those of the civilian ministries. Because the military ministers do not belong to any political party, the members of the military lobby can freely negotiate with congressmen of the whole ideological spectrum. Moreover, the staff of the Assessorias Parlamentares has been working up a complementary job. Because they move several times along their carrier from one region to the other, their wives cannot pursue a career of their own. Those facts are used to justify separate rules for welfare and for wage increases.

35 Dep Neiva Moreira, who had been put in prison and outstripped of his political rights during the military dictatorship, living in exile for 15 years, was invited by the Assessorias Parlamentares to visit the military ministers and the chief of EMFA. He reported that he had the opportunity to discuss most important issues with the ministers in a most cordial environment. Neiva Moreira says, “we have to have in the Committees deep discussions on national defense and national sovereignty issues” (cf. “Ex-cassado preside comissão”, Jornal do Brasil, 4/12/98).

36 The Congress Liaison for EMFA was, at the time of the interview, July 1998, monitoring 160 bills, while the Liaison for the Army was following up about 300 bills.

37 When interviewed, the military legislative assistants stressed this point, emphasizing how well they
bridge between the political and the military worlds, two rather separated domains. Working inside Congress, the military learn about democratic politics and try hard to teach the civilians about the barracks. All this points to an important change in the civil-military relations.

What did change with the creation of the Ministry of Defense? EMFA disappeared, and coordination is now provided by the Congressional Liaison of the Ministry of Defense. The procedures didn’t change much, but it seems that now the Congressional Liaisons of the Forces work less independently. The modus operandi is the following. Every month each Force identify the bills, constitutional amendments proposals and decrees of their interest, ranking them according to their priority. Almost every 15 days representatives of the Congressional Liaisons of the Forces meet in a technical committee chaired by the chief of the Congressional Liaison of the Ministry of Defense. There they discuss, negotiate and define the priority projects of the Ministry of Defense. As of June 2000, 44 projects were selected to be followed and acted upon, out of around 600 to 800 bills of interest. The bills are selected according to the degree of conflict they raise in Congress, within the Forces or at the national level. The most important bills to be followed are still, not surprisingly, those referring to the annual budget and the external credit operations. Other bills relate to the role of the Armed forces in the Amazon, amnesty and indemnification to the victims of repression, conscription, welfare and health policies. The Congressional Liaisons of the Forces enjoy liberty to act as they choose to press for their interests. To be sure, this liberty sometimes is excessive. Although the interviewed representatives of the four Liaisons stress that they are going through a period of transition and adaptation, it seems that the

relate with the parties of the radical left: “it doesn’t matter if we think differently from them, we try to make our point with purely technical arguments”. They like to particularly stress their good relations with the communist party (PC do B) and with Dep. José Genoíno (PT), ex-member of the guerilla movement against the military regime. Genoíno is one of the few representatives that show great interest in discussing the Armed forces role and the national defense policy.

Interviewed military members of the Assessorias Parlamentares call the attention to that important part of their job. “The military don’t know anything about the way the congressmen think and behave. So, we come here, learn about it and “translate” it to our colleagues”. Conversely, they think that bringing legislators to visit military units and talk to the military officers helps them to understand the military life and professional characteristics.

During the last budgetary process, the Minister of Defense was surprised by a change in the previous agreed distribution of resources among the Forces and their defense programs. It turned out that this change was the consequence of an individual action of a member of one of the Forces Congressional Liaisons (interview with a civilian member of the Defense Ministry, Brasília, May 2001).
creation of the Ministry of Defense did not affect the basic operational procedures of the so-called military lobby in Congress.\textsuperscript{40}

The military, therefore, follow predictable procedures to press for their demands in the major representative arena.

4. Conclusions: Civil-military relations in Brazil. Is the glass half full or half empty?

In the Conclusions of her book (\textit{Eroding the Military Influence in Brazil}), Hunter says that:

“(...) civilians have made progress in reducing military interference in politics. To use a simple metaphor, rather than seeing the glass as still half empty, the perspective I adopt tries to account for why it has become half full”\textsuperscript{(p.142)}

Zaverucha and Martins, in contrast, see the glass half empty. To be sure, in his article “O governo Fernando Henrique e as Forças Armadas: um passo à frente, dois passos atrás”\textsuperscript{(dez.2000)}, Martins recognizes the advances of civilian control in Cardoso administration. However, says the author, it is possible that the military relinquish control over important institutional spaces, and still exert new forms of autonomy (p.105).

From my point of view, the glass is both half full and half empty, given that I propose to work with both perspectives, that of the civilians and that of the military. Using both approaches, I try now to answer the question: can we say that the civilian-military relations in Brazil are changing?

All in all, it is fair to say that if there is no homogeneous commitment to the democratic values among the Brazilian military, they indeed abide to democratic procedures, a fact extraordinarily important in itself\textsuperscript{41}. There is no threat of coup d’état and

\textsuperscript{40} Interviews with members of the Assessorias Parlamentares of the Army, Air Force and Navy (Brasília, June 10, 2000) and with the Chief of the Congressional Liaison of the Ministry of Defense and his assistant (Brasília, June 5, 2000).

\textsuperscript{41} Aguero makes a similar argument. “(...) transitions have succeeded without the military becoming committed to democratic values overnight” (Aguero, Felipe, “Toward Civilian Supremacy in Latin
there are, indeed, important signs of change in the civil-military relations, especially along the two Cardoso administrations. A major indicator is the decrease of the number of active-duty general officers in the Cabinet from six, in the first civilian government to one, in the present Cardodo’s second term in office.

Cardoso treated the military as a strategic actor whose interests and needs should be taken in consideration. He was able to pass and implement the Lei dos Desaparecidos, in 1995, to promote the first National Defense Policy of the country, in 1996, to create the Ministry of Defense as well as the Brazilian Intelligence System (ABIN) three years later. All those issues faced the resistance of the military and were negotiated between the Forces and the Executive (or the bureaucratic arena), the outcome being a bill to be sent to Congress. The legislative process, as described above, was then followed carefully by the Assessorias Parlamentares of the Military Ministries and later of the Commands.

The military keeps being a powerful and privileged actor, especially in the bureaucratic arena. However, the institutional changes that the Cardoso government was able to implement, with outcomes that did not favor the military preferences in full or were totally against their interests (Lei dos Desaparecidos), points to a diminishing influence of the military in politics.

It is in Congress, however, that the military political behavior indicates a major change in the civil-military relations. In fact, their insertion in the congressional politics is surprising. There they learned about democracy and press for their interests in the same way civilians do. They play the game that has been played by civilians and abide to procedures. This is completely new in the Brazilian history and signals to a deep change in the civil-military relations.

But should the military lobby in Congress? By the civilian control model, the lobby of the military in Congress is seen as a negative point. The military would be exerting unduly pressure upon the Legislative. However, one should not forget that they are playing exactly the same game as the civilian lobbies. That is to say, they abide to procedures and their actions are predictable according to the routine of the Congressional Liaisons. Their tanks are not surrounding Congress or parading in the

streets every time a bill of their interest is under consideration. This signals an impressive adaptation to the pluralist polity, with no parallel that I know of in any other Latin American country.\textsuperscript{42} One should not forget, however, that there are various areas that keep being of entire responsibility of the Armed Forces, such as, among others, their structure, preparedness, and new weapons initiatives.

Paradoxically, a further improvement of civil-military relations is hindered by the lack of civilian interest in defense and military affairs. This is particularly true at the congressional realm. If society gets interested in military affairs, if in the next-year presidential elections social groups as well as politicians start discussing the national defense policy, if defense policy turns to be an important issue in the candidates electoral programs, there is a chance that civil-military relations greatly improve in the democratic direction.

\textsuperscript{42} In fact, this point deserves more attention in future communications. In old democracies, and this is certainly the case of the United States, the military pressure for their interests in Congress through non-formalized, indirect means, like pushing former military congressmen or members of the Defense Committee that have a significant number of military in their district. The general question to be put to the democratic theory is then: how can civilians best control the pressure of the military in Congress? Doesn't the institutional military lobby in the Brazilian way provide better ground for the civilian control over the military?