CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN ECUADOR: (IN)SUBORDINATION AND CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

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List of Abbreviations:

AVC--	**Alfaro Vive ¡Carajo!**
CFP--	**Concentración de Fuerzas Populares**
CONAIE--	**Confederación de Nacionalidades Indigenas Ecuatorianas**
COSENA--	**Consejo de Seguridad Nacional**
DINE--	**Dirección de Industrias del Ejército**
DNI--	**Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia**
DP--	**Democracia Popular**
EMELEC--	**Empresa Eléctrica Ecuatoriana**
FARC--	**Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia**
FLOPEC--	**Flota Petrolera Ecuatoriana**
FUT—	**Frente Unitario de Trabajadores**
ID--	**Izquierda Democrática**
OAS--	**Organization of American States**
PDC--	**Partido Democrata Cristiano**
PRE--	**Partido Roldista Ecuatoriano**
PSC--	**Partido Social Cristiano**
PUR--	**Partido Unidad República**
SINAMOS--	**Sistema Nacional por Movilización Social**
TAME--	**Transportes Aeréos Militares Ecuatorianos**
TRANSNAVE—	**Transportes Navieros Ecuatorianos**

"*Ecuador needs military discipline to be able to develop. Ecuador is not going to change if a civilian remains in power.*"

Captain Luis Espinoza, 2000[1]

Introduction

Ecuador's transition, in 1979, from military-led authoritarian government to democracy marked the first such shift in Latin America's 'third wave' of democratization.[2] While this transition restored procedural democracy-- reopening political spaces for widespread competition, participation and establishing a framework for governance based on rational-legal norms embodied in a new constitution-- the last two decades of civilian governments have been unable to navigate the second, and more difficult transition toward the consolidation of an effective democratic regime.[3] Indeed, the past twenty years have been marked by recurring bouts with political instability and crisis. Although the first decade and a half of democratic presidential succession were characterized by successful alternation between parties of the left and the right, Ecuador's political arena, in recent years, has been buffeted by crises of increasing intensity. Belying the notion that Ecuador's transition had produced an effective, if

[1] Buck 2000, Center for International Policy website: http://www.ciponline.org/ec000129.htm . Quote attributed to an Ecuadorian Army captain on the day of the *coup d'etat* (Jan. 21, 2000). Interesting in that it echoes the sentiments of the military on the eve of the 1972 coup d'etat and emphasizes the continued perception of military legitimacy as a political actor.

[2] Huntington characterizes the widespread political transitions, starting in 1974 in southern Europe and continuing through 1990, as the third significant wave of democratization. Huntington; 1991

[3] From the notion of two distinct processes of democratization—transition and consolidation— in D. A. Rustow's article "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" which has acted as the foundation for much subsequent transition and consolidation literature.

'unconsolidated', democratic system, the period since 1996 has been marked by the tenure of six distinct presidents in as many years, a major economic crisis, various debilitating political scandals, and two presidential successions of dubious constitutionality—both brokered in the offices of the military's joint command. Increasingly undemocratic civil-military relations, characterized by a movement toward a semi-tutelary regime with the armed forces claiming a role as *de facto* political guardians, have significantly compromised the process of consolidation in Ecuador.

The circumvention of constitutional rules of presidential succession, civilian cries for presidential ouster, and the visible role of the armed forces as political 'arbiters of last resort' in moments of crisis attest to significant erosion of a plurality of Ecuadorian actors' allegiance to democratic rules of the game. There is broad consensus that the process of democratic consolidation is by no means guaranteed to proceed, from the initial transition to democratic governance, in an incremental fashion with linear movement toward an imagined 'ideal type'. In fact, since transition to democracy, many Latin American countries seem to be characterized by governments that, while conforming to the procedural minimums required for democracy, have been caught in a viscous cycle of 'perverse' institutionalization that undermines democratic consolidation.[4] It has been asserted that significant weakening agents—in otherwise democratic systems with periodic elections, universal suffrage and broad guarantees of civic freedoms— include the maintenance of tutelary powers (monarchs, militaries, et al.) that attempt to control government decisions based on a claim to represent the enduring

[4] See J.S. Valenzuela in Mainwaring; 1992

interests of the nation state, the existence of 'reserve domains' of authority which remove specific areas of policymaking from the domain of elected officials, and, finally, the persistence of non-electoral means for the constitution of governments—meaning that coups and insurrections are seen by significant political actors as possible means of substituting governments.[5]

Applying this framework to the Ecuadorian case, one significant obstacle to the process of democratic consolidation has been the role of armed forces vis-à-vis the democratically elected government. The past two decades have produced few successful efforts by either the civilian government or the armed forces to dismantle the semi-tutelary role of the military in Ecuadorian politics. It is this thesis' hypothesis that the armed forces' maintenance and expansion of high levels of institutional autonomy and the military's conditional subordination to civilian authority have undermined the process of democratic consolidation in Ecuador. This is not to say that the military as an institution has actively sought to subvert democratic practice, but that the legal and *de facto* role (or mission) and prerogatives ascribed to and maintained by the armed forces in Ecuador has constrained the breadth of civilian authority over significant policy areas, left open the door for non-democratic, unconstitutional transference of political power, and has allowed the military to exert a semi-tutelary force, thereby diminishing the quality and stability of democracy.

[5] Ibid.; 61-62

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter I will examine the history of civil military relations in Ecuador with particular attention paid to the nature of the most recent military regime and the parameters of the transition brokered between the armed forces and the political actors that inherited the reigns of governance in 1979. The relative instability of Ecuadorian democratic system prior to 1972 and the professionalization of the armed forces are seen as two factors facilitating the Rodriguez Lara regime's successful coup d'etat. Furthermore, once in power, the nature of the regime, often characterized as a *dictablanda*, or 'toothless dictatorship' for its reformist and non-repressive attempts to modernize labor relations and lay the groundwork for industrial development, combined with its relative economic success in exploiting Ecuador's newly found oil reserves, precluded the sort of regime collapse experienced by Argentina's military government. The high degree of bargaining power retained by the armed forces in the transition to democracy facilitated a negotiated withdrawal in which military was guaranteed broad participation in the new civilian government.

Given the leveraged position from which the Ecuadorian military ceded power, and the political context of transition, Chapter II attempts to quantify the normative and *de facto* military prerogatives negotiated in 1979. Furthermore, by identifying changes in military prerogatives negotiated at the transition to democracy up to the present, this thesis hopes to quantify the Ecuadorian military's relative levels of legal and *de facto* autonomy, or 'reserve domain of authority' over the past two decades. This analysis will focus on the changes of the specific prerogatives identified by Stepan's prerogatives-contestation model including: the

constitutionally sanctioned role of the military, civilian oversight of national security policy, the civilian role in military promotions, and the role of the military in state enterprises, among others.[6] While it has been asserted that application of Stepan's prerogatives approach does not adequately define what would constitute a democratic system of civil-military relations except by negation, it is applicable to this thesis in that a high level of prerogatives does constitute a significant reserve domain of authority for the armed forces and can, as such, be interpreted as essential for establishing a rational basis for the autonomous powers exercised by the military and its relative subordination to civilian governments over time.[7] This chapter will demonstrate that the high levels of prerogatives garnered by the armed forces at transition have rarely been contested, and that civilian administrations have been unwilling or unable to promote more democratic civil-military relations by systematically dismantling the military's reserve domain of authority.

Finally, Chapter III turns to the question of 'democratic' civil-military relations in Ecuador by examining the structural factors that have contributed to the Ecuadorian military's maintenance and expansion of the prerogatives examined in the previous chapter. Huntington, in his seminal work on civil-military relations, identified two types of civilian control of the armed forces-- 'objective' and 'subjective'.[8] While useful in a broad sense,

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[6] Stepan, 1988.

[7] Samuel Fitch argues that while the existence of a high level of military prerogatives is necessarily incompatible with democracy, the opposite is not altogether true—democratic civil-military relations cannot be defined as the absence of military prerogatives. In addition, he criticizes Stepan's approach in that all prerogatives in this model are given the same relative weight when, in reality, some (active duty, voting members of the NSC) are more important than others (non-civilian minister of defense) for democratic subordination of the armed forces. Pion-Berlin, 2001; 61

[8] Huntington defines objective control as the method of civilian control of the armed forces in which it grants the military a significant measure of autonomy within its narrow technical sphere in return for complete political subordination to civilian authority. Subjective control, on the other hand, refers to the

these categories cannot be used to explain the nuances of the Ecuador's civil military relationship. Informed by the relative weakness of civilian control over the armed forces in several Latin American democracies, subsequent analyses of civil-military relations have expanded Huntington's notion of civilian control to identify varying degrees and types of military subordination. These models include Fitch's continuum of civil-military relations from outright military control, military tutelage, conditional subordination, to democratic control and Loveman's notion of 'protected democracies' in Latin America.[9] Both of these analyses identify the salience of military missions and the de-legitimation of civilian institutions as reinforcing the role of the armed forces as political arbiters—reserving the 'right' to intervene to protect national interests and guarantee national security in times of crisis.

The Ecuadorian case is examined through these lenses, focusing first on the Ecuadorian military's evolving internal and external missions since 1979. Repeated border disputes with Peru (1981 and 1995) and more recently the spillover effect from Colombia's civil war have defined the parameters of the military's external mission. While the ongoing conflict with Peru defined the military's external mission as defenders of sovereign territory, its redefined role since 1998 has increasingly been focused on—in addition to stemming incursions by armed guerrillas—protecting against the emergence of internal security threats such as transnational narcotics trafficking, coca cultivation and domestic subversive groups. This new internal component to the military's mission combined with the Ecuadorian

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effort of civilians to control the military by politicizing it and making it more resemble the civilian sector. Huntington: 1964

[9] Fitch: 1998; 39 and Loveman: 1997; 366-393

military's historically broad definition of its role in economic and social development projects have reinforced the military's justification for budgetary autonomy, limited civilian oversight and provided spaces for military influence in the political arena. Since transition, the military's role in internal development projects (civic action and military industries) has given the institution an undemocratic political voice that has included direct opposition to attempts at privatization, the 'crowding out' of civilian institutions designed to fulfill these social functions, and played a part in junior officers' involvement in the 2000 coup.

Second, the structural weakness of the Ecuadorian political system and repeated failures of civilian governments to steer the country out of economic and political crises have combined to severely de-legitimate democratic institutions. This de-legitimization, coupled with the largely autonomous and highly esteemed armed forces has created space for increasing military involvement in the political arena. Given the failures of civilian governments, especially since the mid-1990s, the military has interpreted its broad normative duty to ensure national security to justify an unquestionably undemocratic role as political arbiter of last resort. This counterintuitive role as non-elected 'protectors of democracy' has been a response to changes in the international political context. The creation of multinational mechanisms to under gird democracy in Latin America and the United States' pro-democratic foreign policy in the post-Cold War era have undoubtedly played a role in diminishing the emergence of outright military governments in the Western Hemisphere. These same factors have, however, paradoxically contributed to the Ecuadorian armed forces' adoption of a semi-tutelary relationship with civilian governments. Conscious of its own institutional limitations and the repercussions of blatant interference with the constitutional order, the military has, for

the most part, eschewed an overt political role in favor of remaining a powerful ‘behind the scenes’ actor within the country’s democratic system.

Chapter I Civil-Military Relations in His torical Context

The historical trajectory of the armed forces as a prominent, privileged and often independent, institution in Latin America can be traced to its roots in the Spanish tradition. As long ago as the *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula (711 A.D.- 1492) the military was rewarded by the monarchy with "booty, land, tax exemptions, special legal status (*fueros*), and royal privileges"[10]. The use of armed forces as a means of consolidating centralized political control was extended to the formation of American colonies and eventually played an important role in both the liberation of these colonies and the process of state formation following the region's revolutionary wars for independence. In this last century the relationship between the state and the military has been remarkably dynamic in Latin America. The independent political, social and economic evolutions of Latin American states have led to many variations in the role of the armed forces in relation to their governments, but the vast majority of these states have been governed outright by military regimes at various periods in their histories.

Since the early republican era, military intervention and rule have been a recurring phenomenon in the political history of Ecuador[11]. Throughout the first 40 years of the 20th century the Ecuadorian armed forces played the role of propping up unpopular

[10] Loveman, 1999

[11] For a thorough historical treatment of military governments and transition in Ecuador see Isaacs' *Military Rule and Transition in Ecuador, 1972-92:* 1994 and Handleman and Sanders: *Military Government and the Movement toward Democracy in South America*, 1981; Ch. 1-3

Liberal governments. Exceptions to this pattern were the coups of 1925÷½nd 1937. Both coming at times of economic crisis-- in the aftermath of the cacao boom and in the wake of the Depression respectively-- they secured the implementation of the Liberal reforms promised, but never instituted, by the regimes in power. The *Transfomación Juliana* (1925-31) was marked by the installation of a civilian government by a faction of young officers, and witnessed the enactment of broad social legislation including the first extension of suffrage to women in Latin America in 1929. Similarly the 1937-38 dictatorship of General Enriquez saw the introduction of the nation's first labor code. By 1940 the military had returned to the costly practice of maintaining unpopular civilian rule. The 1941war with Peru ended in the loss of one half of Ecuador's eastern territory. Soundly defeated on the battlefield, the armed forces withdrew from partisan politics to turn inward to concentrate on its own technical preparedness through professionalization. This and subsequent conflicts with Peru would continue to resonate throughout the century in Ecuadorian military-lore as justification for a well funded, prepared, and semi-autonomous army.

Twenty years of economic prosperity in the form of a banana boom and the withdrawal of the military from politics after the 1941 war combined to curb military intervention until 1963. Again, stepping in at a time of economic crisis, the military chose to enact another round of broad social and economic reforms. Never having secured the support of popular sectors, and opposed outright by economic elites, by 1966 the military was forced to extricate itself from power.

Unique socioeconomic and political circumstances characterized the next phase of

Ecuadorian military intervention. This being the most recent and longest lasting, the 1972-1979 regime is important to understand in that the legacy of its policies and the pacted transition from power that it was able to orchestrate have had a profound impact on civil-military relations since the most recent transition to democracy. By analyzing the military intervention, its performance, and the manner in which it ultimately participated in the transition back to civilian governance it is possible to more completely understand its role in the political arena in which it operates today.

The 1972 Coup and the Military Regime

Many scholars have attempted to formulate explanations for the widespread incidence of military intervention in politics around the world. Focusing on the contexts, motives and justifications common among countries with a history of military intervention these scholars have come up with various models that attempt to explain its prevalence. While these theories on military intervention are not always consistent in their ability to explain the Ecuadorian case, it is helpful to use them as an analytical 'jumping-off point' in examining the 1972 coup.

Models of military intervention have concentrated on the context in which military interventions tend to occur. Agreeing on the relevance of an analysis based on the context of crises, scholars have diverged on the nature and origins of these crises. While Samuel Huntington's notion of 'praetorianism'-- focusing on the breakdown of civilian government at times when political institutions are unable to capture and channel the interests of newly mobilized groups in a modernizing society—is applicable to the

intervention of military regimes in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, the context in which the Ecuadorian military staged its 1972 was quite different. Having only recently begun to industrialize its economy, and locked into the oligarchic political phase, Ecuadorian politicians did not face a mobilized popular sector demanding access to political power. Traditional conservative and liberal parties dominated the Ecuadorian political arena throughout the first half of the 20th century. The middle-class reformism that had initiated the rupture of oligarchic politics in other countries under populist leaders did not take place in Ecuador. The slow growth of Ecuador's "middle-class and working-class groups meant that there was no early constituency for democratization and reform."[12] Populist Velasco Ibarra, five times elected president (only once serving out an entire term), frequently negotiated with the traditional parties and never drastically altered the pattern of oligarchic control.

Guillermo O'Donnell's 'bureaucratic-authoritarian' model suggests that there existed a strong correlation between military intervention and a lack of political stability deemed necessary for economic development in the Southern Cone. Untenable political coalitions between the modern sector's working class and industrialists, created under populist leaders such as Brazil's Getulio Vargas and Argentina's Juan Perón, prompted military intervention in order to 'deepen' industrialization and neutralize greater demands for state-led economic distribution, again, do not explain the context of 1972 Ecuador. The prospect of an economic upturn in the form of recently discovered petroleum reserves, perennial president Velasco Ibarra's antagonistic stalemate with Congress

[12] Conaghan; 140

which climaxed with the president's dissolution of Congress by *autogolpe* in 1970, and the perceived lack of political leadership- a key factor in Juan Linz's theory of democratic breakdown- provided further impetus for military intervention.

As in many Latin American countries, politicians in Ecuador often sought to secure the loyalty of the armed forces by tampering with military promotions and budgets. Military intervention in defense of its corporate concerns resonates with the Ecuadorian case. Velaco Ibarra's promotion in 1970 of General Julio Sacoto Montero to the post of army commander "over the heads of numerous senior officers who were subsequently forcibly retired" set off an internal struggle between Montero supporters and opposition that led to fragmentation and military distrust of the civilian government.[13] Also important in the motivation to intervene was the military's interest in managing the oil economy- a task that it felt the civilian government could not handle. Informed by an increased emphasis on military professionalism, modernization theory, and in light of rampant political corruption and the predicted unwillingness of civilians to efficiently utilize petroleum export profits, the military came to see itself as the "political actor best poised to … fulfill the development promise provided by oil"[14].

In line with Alfred Stepan's concept of 'new professionalism,' the Ecuadorian armed forces- though to a lesser extent than in other Latin American countries- established the ideological expansion of traditional national security objectives to include socioeconomic reform. The erosion of political legitimacy produced by political

[13] Isaacs.; 23
[14] Ibid.; 25

deadlock and exclusion had created a climate in which popular support for civilian government declined. Historically the actor seen as best equipped to reorganize the political arena, the armed forces' intervention was facilitated, in part, by popular appeals for action. The newly professionalized Ecuadorian military's anti-oligarchic, pro-development ideology, influenced by Peru's regime, justified the intervention of Lara's reformist authoritarian government. Also important in the context of the 1972 coup d'etat was an international political climate that tacitly accepted (and often promoted) military rule. The nature of international politics in the Cold-War era was one that placed utmost priority on stemming the threat of communist insurgence in the hemisphere. The United States and other international actors were far less concerned with the promotion and consolidation of democratic principles than they are today.

Taking power in this context of political instability and intransigence, motivated by a desire to guarantee control over the petroleum industry, and emphasizing a strong rhetorical commitment to social change, the military sought to imitate the Peruvian 'revolutionary' and 'nationalistic' model of authoritarian rule. Openly opposed to unprogressive oligarchic control of political society and the economic means of production, the armed forces attempted to institute a five-year development plan (1973-1977) based on the promotion of industrialization and agricultural modernization. The structural changes promised by the Lara regime, however, failed to materialize 'except in

foreign policy, where it aligned Ecuador with OPEC and the Third World bloc, and on petroleum where it increased the public control and share of the profits.'[15]

The Transition to Democracy

By 1975 the cracks of internal military factionalism and civilian opposition had created the stage for an abortive coup attempt on the Rodriguez Lara regime. Initial support of the Lara regime within the military eventually proved to be but a veneer of institutional solidarity.[16] The external appearance of military cohesion eroded in time with Lara's inability to stem increased politicization within the military and was exacerbated by his attempts to personalize the regime. Ultimately even the coup, led by Gonzalez Alvear, was politicized and aborted. The military's decision to withdraw has been attributed to the internal realization that its professional capacities had been undermined by its own politicization and that consequently the country's security—still the military's ultimate responsibility-- was at risk. Also an important factor in the withdrawal of the regime was significant popular pressure for reform. It has been noted that this pressure, coming in the form of both general strikes organized by the *Frente Unitario de Trabajadores* (FUT) and the lobbying of economic elites through the powerful *Camaras de la Producción* (Chambers of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry), was not aimed at creating a change in regime, but rather at affecting specific government strategies and pushing for the implementation of the regime's reformist promises.

[15] Handelman; 15
[16] Isaacs; 95

In his attempts to capitalize on the oil boom to institute social and economic reforms Lara's regime failed to create channels to organize potential civilian supporters. The Ecuadorian dictatorship's distrust for politics, similar to that of Velasco's Peruvian regime banned political parties and failed to include a participatory alternative—such as SINAMOS-- to counter opposition.[17] Lara's government displayed an intolerance for party politics and civilian mobilization typical of what Brian Loveman describes as a typical attitude of anti-political regimes: " …outright rejection of politics, which is perceived as being the source of underdevelopment, corruption, and evil"[18]. While the Ecuadorian regime's attempted reforms are comparable to other authoritarian experiments in the region and around the world, Lara's unique aversion to the use of repression to stifle growing civilian dissatisfaction with development policy hastened the process of transition. The "soft" approach used by the Lara *dictablanda*, although ultimately accelerating the return to civilian governance, "helped to ensure that in Ecuador military rule would remain a viable political alternative"[19].

Officially initiated in January 1978, the Ecuadorian transition, labeled the "Process of Juridical Restructuring of the Nation," aimed to enact political reforms that would give 'strengthened' democratic governments the means by which to resume the reform project initiated under Rodriguez Lara. The military officials and civilians involved in the elaborate three year process engaged in extensive dialogue through which

[17] The Peruvian regime's mechanism for popular participation, Sistema Nacional por Movilización Social (SINAMOS), is discussed and assessed at length in C. McClintock's "Precarious Regimes, Authoritarian and Democratic" in Diamond et al., 1999; 324-325.
[18] Loveman, 1997; 13
[19] Isaacs, 1994; .95

participants—including representatives from virtually every organized social and political force—discussed the path to effective civilian rule. The initial process of transition began with the appointment of three commissions by the government. One would revise the 1945 Constitution and another would draft an entirely new Charter, both of which, upon completion, were submitted to a referendum.[20] The third was to define new rules and procedures governing political party organization and the electoral process.

The transition also encouraged two sets of pacts- one that dealt with the relationship among the newly established political parties, and another that sought to establish the "political role of the armed forces once they abdicated their formal political power."[21] The negotiations that followed, given the leveraged position of the outgoing regime, allowed the military to retain significant political influence by securing important prerogatives. The negotiated transition guaranteed a relatively smooth, stable process, resulting in a system that would conform to the Dahl's institutional requirements for democratic society.[22] Yet, as noted by many consolidation scholars, those arrangements, agreements and institutions that facilitated the initial transition to democracy are often inimical to its consolidation.[23] The context of Ecuadorian transition and subsequent democratic stagnation provides a clear examples of the types of pacts that ease the initial

[20] With the support of nearly all existing political parties, the new Constitution was overwhelmingly ratified by popular vote in January of 1978

[21] Isaacs; 120

[22] Robert Dahl's eight institutional requirements for the existence of democracy include: "(1) freedom to form and join organizations; (2) freedom of expression; (3) right to vote; (4) eligibility for public office; (5) right of political leaders to compete for support [and votes]; (6) alternative sources of information; (7) free and fair elections; and (8) institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference" Dahl; 3

[23] See Rustow's "Toward a Dynamic Model of Democracy" and J.S. Valenzuela's contribution in Mainwaring et al., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation* for a more profound assessment of the relationship between transition and democratic consolidation.

transition to democracy, but by ceding significant reserve domains of authority to the armed forces, have ultimately undermined its consolidation.

The Ecuadorian transition to democracy bears the marks of what O'Donnell identifies as the 'paradox of success'. The relative economic success and low levels of repression during the military regime, while easing the process of transition, created a more difficult context for future democratic consolidation.[24] The absence of the intense and extensive antiauthoritarian sentiment characteristic of the Argentine and Uruguayan transitions allowed the military to secure a high level of autonomy that, in conjunction with subsequent bouts with economic and political crises, led to widespread disenchantment with civilian governments and the ineffective functioning of democratic regimes.[25] As we will see, this environment of military strength and legitimacy vis-à-vis weak and ineffective civilian administrations has arguably led to the 'slow death' of democracy in Ecuador by progressively diminishing existing spaces for the exercise of civilian power and eroding guarantees of liberal constitutionalism.[26]

[24] The Ecuadorian economy grew steadily from 1972-1976 with income from petroleum export increasing from $US282m in 1973 to $US565m in 1976. Agricultural products also benefited from increased sales and prices with banana exports increasing from $US74-$US137m and coffee from $US65-205m over the same period. Per capita income (according to Central Bank figures) also rose from $US291 to $US658 during the period 1972-1976. Handelman; 17.

[25] Dr. Jorge Maldonado, in a presentation on Ecuadorian civil-military relations given at the IX USARSA Latin American Conference at Fort Benning, cites Ecuadorian Col. Patricio Haro: "the political notion according to which 'the worst democracy is better than the best dictatorship' is not adjusted to reality because, in the Ecuadorian case, in the opinion of the public and of history, military governments have been progressive, honest and patriotic; they have fostered national development and have guaranteed the survival of the State."

[26] For more detailed discussion of the 'paradox of success' and obstacles to democratic consolidation in countries characterized by 'successful' military regimes, see O'Donnell in Mainwaring et al.: 1992

Chapter II Military Prerogatives

In his book, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone,* Alfred Stepan emphasizes the importance of the prerogatives retained by the military in the transition to civilian governance. Because the subordination of the military is seen as a central element in the process of democratic consolidation, those prerogatives that have been maintained by the armed forces must be recognized, he says, as "a form of latent independent structural power within the polity," and are, therefore, essential for any analysis of the relative autonomy and influence of the military vis-à-vis the elected government.[27] In his model Stepan proposes a two-dimensional model to measure civilian control over the military. One axis serves to measure military prerogatives on the continuum between high and low, and the other axis the high/low level of military contestation of civilian control. Theoretically, where prerogatives and contestation are low there is outright civilian control and, at the other end of the spectrum, where prerogatives are high and contestation is high one would expect to see a "near untenable position for democratic leaders"[28].

This method of analysis is applicable to the Ecuadorian case insofar as we can determine the prerogatives retained by the military at the time of transition. Furthermore, determining quantifiable changes in the level of prerogatives ultimately serves as a tool

[27] Stepan, 1988; 98
[28] Ibid.; 100

with which to establish the direction of change with respect to the relative subordination of the military over time. Stepan's institutional prerogatives refer to "those areas where, 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 play a role with in extra-military areas within the state, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil-society."[29] Thus, in a context of high military prerogatives, the armed forces are often ceded *de facto* and *de jure* tutelary powers and are able to maintain and expand significant reserve domains of authority within the political arena, creating an inherently limited foundation for democratic consolidation.

The selected prerogatives suggested by Stepan as important in the analysis of civil-military relations include: the existence of a constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in the political system; the military relationship to the chief executive; the coordination of the defense sector; active-duty military participation in the Cabinet; the role of the legislature (in affecting military budgets, force structures, etc.); the role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees (in designing and implementing defense and national security policy); the role of the military in intelligence agencies; the role of the military in police; the role in military promotions; role of the military in state enterprises; and the role of the military in the legal system.[30] Each of these items can be examined individually and are assessed in terms of their conformity to

[29] Ibid.; 93
[30] Ibid.; 94-97

what would be considered instances of "high", "moderate" and "low" prerogatives. [31] (See Appendix A) In order to establish changes in these prerogatives over the past two decades, it will be imperative to first examine—one by one—the relative level of the aforementioned prerogatives at transition, and then note significant changes up to the present. Because many of the Ecuadorian prerogatives do not fit neatly with the criteria proposed by Stepan's matrix, levels of each prerogative will be assessed on a scale of 'low', 'medium/low', 'medium', 'medium/high' and 'high'. The relative weight of these will then be utilized—after detailed analysis of any changes-- to evaluate military prerogatives at transition in relation to subsequent moments since the first democratic administration from 1979-84.

Critics of the this approach have cited that Stepan's analysis failed to assign each of his prerogatives a relative weight in order to determine those whose elimination are more important to the process of military subordination and democratic consolidation. It is evident that the elimination of several of the prerogatives in Stepan's list is more essential than others for fostering democratic civil-military relations. Thus, it is necessary to identify those prerogatives whose high level of expression will most severely limit civilian governments' ability to effectively eradicate the non-democratic influence of the armed forces in the democratic process. For the purposes of this analysis the key prerogatives that must be constrained are the following (in order of decreasing weight): the constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in the political

[31] Stepan's matrix of prerogatives and his rating criteria can be found on pages 94-97 of *Rethinking Military Politics.*

system, the military's high level of autonomy vis-à-vis the legislature, the armed forces independent role in state enterprises, and the military's relationship to the chief executive. While elimination of the remaining prerogatives is certainly imperative for the long run establishment of democratic civil-military relations, the Ecuadorian case exemplifies that retention of these four prerogatives has played a central role in the armed forces' expanded influence in the political arena. Thus, this chapter will begin by first examining the relative levels of these prerogatives and any changes in the military's ability to exercise the political leverage that they provide.

Military Prerogatives—From Transition to 2001

This chapter will attempt to both quantify the individual and aggregate level of prerogatives afforded the Ecuadorian armed forces during the administration immediately following the transition to democratic rule, and again at key moments during the subsequent twenty years. The goal of this quantitative approach is to trace the trajectory of military prerogatives over time in an attempt to illustrate movement toward increasing autonomy and influence in the Ecuadorian political arena. At the time of transition to civilian governance the Ecuadorian military's relative influence on the process (as discussed in Chapter I) allowed it to retain a relatively high level of both normative and de facto prerogatives. Given the broad normative parameters of military autonomy at transition and an absence of civilian contestation over the past two decades the armed forces have increasingly interpreted their legal and de facto role in the Ecuadorian political system to include an active voice in government policy and have, on several

occasions, taken on the task of political arbitration in times of crisis. The end result of the military's high prerogatives has been movement toward a more tutelary arrangement with civilian governments in which the expanded reserve domain of authority for the armed forces has curtailed the consolidation of democratic institutions and policy making.

1. Constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in political system:

At Transition-- (*high)*

The new Ecuadorian constitution, approved in 1978 by referendum, formed the basis for return to democratic elections and civilian rule in 1979. This transition was marked by pacts established between the military and the political party leadership that centered on a protracted, if circumscribed, political role for the armed forces.

From the outset, the military was able to retain a degree of political influence including a constitutional clause that guaranteed a somewhat ambiguous right to participate in the process of national development.[32] In Stepan's matrix, a 'high' designation for this prerogative is given in those situations in which the "constitution allocates primary responsibility for internal law and order to the military and implicitly gives the military great decisional latitude in determining when and how to carry out their responsibility." The somewhat open-ended wording of this article gives the armed

[32] Article 128 of the 1979 constitution: "La Fuerza Pública [the police and the armed forces] está destinada a la conservación de la soberanía nacional, a la defensa de la integridad e independencia del Estado y a la garantía de su ordenamiento jurídico..." *ConstituciónPolítica de la República*, Quito, 1981.

forces a broad mandate to conserve national sovereignty, defend the independence and integrity of the State, and guarantee its juridical order. The ambiguity inherent in the wording of Article 128, while inconsequential in terms of direct military intervention during the first—relatively stable—democratic administration, would prove important in the future as the military took advantage of this normative latitude to act as political arbiter and de facto guarantor of democracy in times of crisis. We will return to this point later as it will be crucial in the analysis of military prerogatives and *de facto* political power in subsequent years.

The transition in 1979 saw the candidates backed by hard-liners within the armed forces—Raul Clemente Huerta in the first round of presidential elections and Sixto Durán Ballén in the second-- soundly defeated by the center-left *binomio* of Jaime Roldos (CFP) and Osvaldo Hurtado (PDC). The military had barred the participation of CFP leader and election favorite Assad Bucarám, and although Roldos campaigned with the slogan 'Roldos a la Presidencia, Bucarám al poder', the future president had "provided the necessary assurances that once elected he would distance himself from CFP boss Bucarám."[33] Thus, the initial, wary acceptance by the military of the Roldos administration created a context of mutual accommodation. This period—even following Roldos' death and Hurtado's constitutionally mandated ascension to the presidency in 1981-- was characterized by a tacit policy in which the military refrained from active participation in policy matters beyond the scope of national defense and the government went to great lengths not to provoke the armed forces throughout its tenure.

[33] Isaacs; 123

1984-2001 *(high and increasing)*

The armed forces have expanded their role in the political arena since the first civilian administration. This process has been facilitated by the military's interpretation of its broad mandate to conserve national sovereignty, defend the independence and integrity of the Sate, and guarantee its juridical order. In a move toward a more tutelary relationship with the civilian government, the armed forces have increasingly acted as political brokers in times of political stalemate and economic crisis. This process of increasing guardianship can be attributed to the military's interpretation of its ambiguous legal directive to include its acting as the ultimate political arbiters in times of crisis. Indeed, the last two presidential successions have been settled within the grounds of the Ministry of Defense.

The phenomenon of expanding military influence in the political system is exemplified by the tumultuous years following the election of populist Abdalá Bucarám (PRE) in 1996. His opponent, the PSC's Jaime Nebot, having openly advocated the deepening of the previous administration's free-market reforms to include military industries among possible privatizations, had alienated the armed forces and forced their hand. Despite early grumbling on the part of the military, Army Commander General Francisco "Paco" Moncayo—hero of the 1995 war and leader of the nationalist-reformist sector of the military—"pledged publicly that the armed forces would respect the election results." With wary acquiescence, the military refused to intervene, seeing Bucarám as

the lesser of two evils and "given his unstable support, less likely… to challenge military prerogatives."[34]

The short-lived Bucarám administration, beset by repeated corruption scandals and damaged by the president's erratic personal behavior, was doomed for failure. Compounding the various claims of rampant nepotism and the president's penchant for public appearances 'unbefitting' the Chief Executive (including the recording of a CD and highly publicized episodes of public drunkenness) was the populist leader's unpopular economic plan calling for austerity measures and a proposed currency board that would peg the value of the sucre to the US dollar. Massive mobilized protests and staunch congressional opposition to the president's policies reached an apex with the dubiously constitutional legislative decision to declare the presidency vacant on the grounds of Bucarám's 'mental incompetence,' nominating congressman Fabian Alarcón as the interim Chief Executive. Demonstrating his characteristic intransigence, Bucarám failed to recognize Congress' declaration and barricaded himself inside the presidential palace. Soon after, Vice President, Rosalía Arteaga's claim to the presidency exposed ambiguity in the constitutional succession process and created a political morass which saw three individuals simultaneously claiming the nation's highest office.

The confusion that ensued centered on both the means by which Bucarám was deposed and the appointment of his replacement. The military, led by General Moncayo, played an integral role in the brokering of a deal in which Arteaga presided for a matter of days until Congress was able to legally appoint Alarcón. Although the military

[34] Fitch; 90

eventually mediated this solution, a key moment in the debacle came when then Minister of Defense Victor Manuel Bayas resigned and the military High Command ignored Bucarám's declaration of a state of emergency—effectively withdrawing its crucial support and ensuring that Bucarám would not remain in office.

The conspicuous fact that the armed forces acted as political arbiters—deliberately defying a presidential order and supporting the circumscription of legal constitutional succession-- made evident the military's increasingly broad interpretation of its normative prerogatives vis-à-vis the elected government and the further erosion of 'democratic' civil-military relations. The pattern of conditional subordination to the Chief Executive underscores the fact that Ecuadorian democracy has not been able to eliminate the threat of military tutelage and coup politics identified as significant barriers to democratic consolidation. Further evidence of this phenomenon can be seen during the last five years with the repeated interference of the military in the political arena as *de facto* arbiters—a role justified by a significant portion of the armed forces' perceived constitutional duty to maintain internal order in times of political crisis.

The short-lived interim government of Fabian Alarcón ended in 1998 with the election of center-left candidate Jamil Mahuad (DP). Mahuad, faced with burgeoning fiscal deficits and international debt inherited from previous administrations, pushed for economic reforms including cuts in government spending through the elimination of subsidies on cooking gas and gasoline, attempts to increase revenue with an elevated value-added tax and the privatization of government owned telecom and electricity companies. Reform was stymied by the collapse of the PSC-DP coalition and the

emergence of mobilized popular opposition—including indigenous-led transportation strikes that effectively paralyzed commerce for weeks at a time. Compounding the political and economic crisis, since March of 1999 there had been rumors of military discontent with the government—including speculation of an impending coup d'etat.

On January 21st, 2000, hundreds of Ecuadorians stormed past permissive military guards and occupied the empty Congress building proclaiming victory for a new "Parliament of the People". Later that day thousands of protesters rallied around the presidential palace to demand that the president step down. By the next morning the armed forces had withdrawn security forces guarding the presidential Palace and Ecuador's government had been occupied by a three-person junta in a bloodless coup d'etat. The triumvirate, headed by recently appointed defense minister General Carlos Mendoza[35], Carlos Solorzano, a former Supreme Court judge, and Antonio Vargas, the leader of the highly mobilized indigenous group, CONAIE, demanded the resignation of President Jamil Mahuad. The movement within the armed forces to remove the president was the product of deep divisions characterized by a split between radical junior officers led by Colonel Lucio Gutierrez (and later joined by Gen. Mendoza and army commander Gen. Sandoval) who advocated military action on the premise that the government itself had threatened the security of the nation, and those loyal to a strict interpretation of the institution's constitutional subordination.

[35] Originally the three-man junta included unknown Col. Lucio Gutierrez, but as the day progressed Gen. Mendoza appeared as the military representative in the triumvirate that demanded the removal of President Mahuad.

Eventually persuaded by calls from the U.S. Department of State that threatened economic and political isolation, within hours the junta had succumbed to the pressure for a return to constitutional order and agreed to install Vice President Gustavo Noboa as Chief Executive. Once Mahuad had been deposed and stability returned, General Mendoza characterized his role in the coup d'etat as a calculated measure to "prevent a social explosion"[36] and explained that he agreed to join the coup only as a "stall tactic until democratic order could be restored"[37]. Still, the collective (in)action of several high-level military officers and many junior officers in facilitating the ouster of the nation's elected executive, the proclamation of a "National Salvation" junta, illustrate the armed forces' expanded *de facto* interpretation of its constitutional role to include deliberate action in the defense of internal order in times of crisis.[38]

2. Role of legislature:

At Transition-- (*high*)

Under the original post-transition constitution and national security laws, the Congress had no standing committee on defense or the armed forces. Mechanisms for legislative oversight of the armed forces were not institutionalized at the time of transition and the relationship was characterized by a lack of interest and civilian

[36] The Associated Press, January 25, 2000.
[37] The Associated Press, March 29, 2000.
[38] It is important to note that the Ecuadorian Constitution adopted in 1998 did not alter the military's role, stating in Article 183: 'Las Fuerzas Armadas tendrán como misión fundamental la conservación de la soberanía nacional, la defensa de la integridad e independencia del Estado y la garantía de su ordenamiento jurídico.' *Constitución Política de la República,* Quito, 1998.

oversight capacity, and a wary accommodation on the part of civilian lawmakers.[39] In practical terms, the Congress' role vis-à-vis the military was one of near-complete separation in policy spheres with legislative issues divided between military and non-military components.[40]

The military was also able to secure partial autonomy over its budget by means of a fixed 23 percent share of annual petroleum export revenues and the retention of military owned and operated enterprises under the *Dirección de Industrias del Ejército* (DINE). The military budget, therefore, was divided into three distinct categories; the budget authorized by the Ministry of Finance that covered salaries, clothing, food and other equipment; the budget of the *Junta Nacional de Defensa*, of which the regalías were a part, used for the purchase of armaments; and finally, the revenue generated by military participation in the economy (originally funded from earmarked petroleum revenue) including ownership of munitions factories and other suppliers of military supplies, partnerships in metalworking, chemical, cement and ceramic producing enterprises, and a "near monopoly on transportation through control of air and sea transport" run by the Navy's merchant marine fleet (TRANSNAVE), an oil tanker fleet (FLOPEC) and the Air Force's control of a cargo and passenger airline (TAME).[41] The proceeds generated by unsupervised military investment and operation of these diverse enterprises were never funneled into the federal treasury and can be considered as augmenting the military's fiscal autonomy.

[39] The lack of oversight capacity is often cited as a result of the dearth of civilians trained in security issues.
[40] Fitch; 80
[41] Martz; 44

1984-2001-- *(high, and decreasing)*

In the period since the first civilian administration from 1979-84, there have been very few changes to the legal relationship of the military to Ecuador's legislature. As mentioned above, the Congress has had no standing committee on defense or the armed forces. Instead, under current regulations, defense matters are considered within the congressional International Relations committee. The only significant change in the relationship between the military and Congress came in 2001 when the legislative body rejected an Executive proposal to extend (and expand) the military's share of petroleum revenues, thereby subjecting the armed forces entire budget to closer congressional scrutiny.

In the wake of the events of January 2000, the Noboa administration was able to follow through with Mahuad's dollarization plan and successfully garner enough political support to maintain his position. The government's decision to decorate General Mendoza with a medal of "professional excellence" and a congressionally granted blanket amnesty for all officers involved in the coup demonstrated, however, a strong lobby to 'close the book' on the coup and allow the military to regroup.[42] Perhaps reflecting a combination of growing civilian concern about the growing political role of the armed forces and a sense that the military was at least temporarily vulnerable,

[42] According to S. Fitch, one of the reasons that the trials of rebel officers were shut down and Congress passed an amnesty was that generals began testifying against each other and revealing various other machinations in progress at the time of the junior officers' coup. Arnson; 66. Former Minister of Defense, Jose Gallardo publicly denounced the involvement of both Gen. Mendoza and Sandoval and was openly reprimanded by the Noboa administration for airing the military's 'dirty laundry.' Financial Times Global News Wire, Jan. 25, 2000.

Congress took a definitive step toward curtailing the military's budgetary oversight prerogatives by deciding in November of 2000 to eliminate the institution's claim to a fixed percentage of state petroleum revenues, or 'regalías.'

Despite initial reactions from the military high command decrying the move as irresponsible and claiming that congressional oversight would negatively politicize the budgetary process, several officers interviewed one year later expressed the view that the process would create "more advantages than disadvantages" for the armed forces. These officers claimed that the prestige of the military and its powerful lobby would allow the institution to successfully demand larger sums while Congress would no longer be able to use the generous petroleum 'regalías' as justification for smaller appropriations from the federal budget.[43] Nevertheless, the legislature's decision has acted to make military funding more transparent and has at least afforded the Congress increased budgetary oversight capacity. Still, the role of the legislature in supervising the armed forces is limited. The relationship has been one characterized by a lack of civilians trained in matters of security and defense, a fact that has had the effect of effectively granting the military free-reign in formulating its policies and eschewing civilian scrutiny on the grounds of congressional incapacity and lack of interest.

3. Role in state enterprises:

At Transition-- *(high)*

[43] This sentiment was expressed in interviews with retired Col. Alberto Molina, former Minister of Defense Jose Gallardo, and active Col. Luis Hernandez. Interviews were conducted June 17th,19th and 21st, 2001 respectively.

Due to the nature of the military tenure and its policy emphasis on state-led industrialization, the armed forces at transition already acted, through the DINE, as owners, operators, and majority share holders in an extensive set of enterprises including factories for the production of munitions and military supplies as well as non-military production (agricultural properties, etc.) and transportation (shipping, airlines). The first civilian—center-left—administration did not openly oppose the military involvement in the productive sector through privatization, and the constitutionally mandated role of the armed forces in the country's 'economic development' reflects the maintenance of the *status quo.*[44] Although individual active duty officers did not routinely own these enterprises, active-duty and retired military officials often played managerial roles and occupied high positions within their corporate structures. In addition, the profits from these endeavors were not channeled into the federal treasury , but rather, were used by the military to augment civilian appropriations.

1984-2001— (*high and increasing*)

The armed forces' active role in state enterprises since transition has afforded the military a privileged position of economic autonomy and has increasingly limited economic policy options for civilian administrations. The revenue generated from the military's various economic endeavors were initially used for reinvestment in diverse

[44]Article 128 of the 1979 Constitution asserts: '…. Sin menoscabo de su misión fundamental, la ley determina la colaboración que la Fuerza Pública debe prestar para el desarrollo social y económico del país y en los demás aspectos concernientes a la seguridad nacional.' *ConstituciónPolítica de la República*, Quito, 1981.

projects (and to cover losses from not so profitable investments), but as the economy became less and less stable in the 1990s, "the services began tapping those revenues to augment the regular budget… in the late 1990s… a portion of the revenues—perhaps all of them—went to funding the Social Security Institute of the Armed Forces which was separated from the more or less bankrupt state pension fund."[45]

Furthermore, in following the neoliberal economic model prescribed by Washington technocrats, various administrations have initiated privatization drives during the 1990s in order to generate much-needed funds for the federal budget and liquidate inefficient state-run enterprises. The military, faced with the possibility of losing its control of the aforementioned business, acted publicly on several occasions to block government's attempts to sell off enterprises under their control.

The first overt evidence of the armed forces' influence in traditionally non-military policy decisions arose during the tenure of Sixto Durán Ballén. Elected in 1992, Durán Ballén, running as a 'nonparty' alternative, defeated Jaime Nebot (PSC). Soon after taking office the moderate president and his free-market economist running mate Alberto Dahik attempted to combat rising inflation with strict austerity measures that included cuts in public spending. The resulting levels of unemployment and recession created rifts between the administration and the legislature, compounded when Durán Ballén lost his coalition majority in congressional elections of 1994 (mid-term elections were held until 1998). Stymied politically and facing rising popular protests, the

[45] Dr S. Fitch, personal communication, March 19, 2002.

administration continued to pursue its economic reforms through the privatization of major state enterprises.

In 1995 and 1996, the armed forces actively opposed bids submitted for the construction of a second oil pipeline, charging that national security concerns had been sacrificed in the rush for lucrative contracts and payoffs. Under pressure from high-ranking officers, the Durán Ballén government asked for new proposals from the two consortia involved in the bidding process that was eventually scrapped. Furthermore, military opposition to the privatization of Ecuador's state-owned electric company (EMELEC) was clearly voiced and the Association of Retired Generals and Admirals made it clear "that they opposed the inclusion of any strategic or military-owned enterprises in the privatization program."[46] The leveraged position of the armed forces, congressional deadlock, and sagging presidential popularity, compounded by a major corruption scandal implicating Dahik in the use of a secret slush fund to buy votes in the legislature, put an end to the administration's privatization plans. The frailty of Ecuador's political system and the military's success in a brief border war with Peru in 1995— both of which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter— provided the armed forces with added ammunition to exert an expanding *de facto* role in major economic policy decisions and provided leverage for maintaining economic autonomy.[47]

[46] Fitch; 152
[47] "FF.AA. Confirman Pocisión," Diario Hoy, September 25, 1996.

Since the Durán Ballén administration, subsequent civilian governments have avoided privatization altogether, or, as in the case of the Mahuad and Noboa governments, have entered into a tacit pact with the military. This pact has created the understanding that economic activities of the armed forces will not be expanded, particularly where they might generate competition with the private sector, but conversely the government will not attempt to meddle with existing military industries. Seemingly, the military has been able to wield significant political clout to maintain its corporate interests since transition, a fact that necessarily garners the institution significant autonomy and has facilitated the entrance of the armed forces into the undemocratic role of leveraging the government's choices of economic policy.

4. Military relationship to the chief executive:

At Transition-- *(medium)*

The relationship of the armed forces to the chief executive at the transition was characterized by both *de jure* and *de facto* limitations on the president's authority over the military. Although the 1979 constitution explicitly named the chief executive as the maximum authority of the armed forces, the government "accepted legislation decreed by the military government that restricted the president's ability to choose senior military commanders and reserved the head of the Ministry of Defense for a (retired) military officer."[4849] The President's authority to name the service commanders and Chief of the

[48] Article 127 states: 'Las Fuerzas Armadas se deben a la Nación. El Presidente de la República es su máxima autoridad y puede delegarla en caso de emergencia nacional, de acuerdo con la ley.' *ConstituciónPolítica de la República*, Quito, 1981.

Joint Staff was circumscribed by military regulations that limited his nominations to a short-list of the three most senior officers in each force.

1984-2001— (*high)*

Perhaps the most dramatic and visible incidence of civil-military conflict since the transition occurred during the Febres Cordero administration led to the capture of a Quito military base and ultimately to the kidnapping of then president Febres Cordero in 1987. Air Force General Vargas Pazzos publicly denounced corruption within the military high command (indicting, among others, the very same Minister of Defense appointed extra-constitutionally by Febres Cordero) and exposed an internal rift in the armed forces. Febres Cordero promised to dismiss the accused officers, but when he reneged Vargas occupied the base. The brief rebellion was put down at the cost of several lives and Vargas was court-martialed and placed under house arrest. Several months later, in January 1987, air force paratroop commandos loyal to Vargas took the president hostage and successfully demanded that Febres Cordero sign an amnesty for Vargas.

While the incident did not lead to unified military action against the government, Vargas' stand revealed the tenuousness of the civil-military relationship and informed subsequent administrations that active politicization of the armed forces and constraints on their significant autonomy could constitute a real threat to democracy. Indeed, the Febres Cordero administration's attempt to reign in the military to pursue its partisan

[49] Fitch; 150

political agenda was the only moment of civilian—albeit 'undemocratic'--contestation to military prerogatives in the first two decades of civilian governance.

The military's obvious lack of adherence to the constitutional clauses—present in both the 1979 and 1998 constitutions—declaring the armed forces as subordinate, non-deliberative institution, has been a factor in the aforementioned cases of military intervention during the Bucarám and Mahuad administrations.[50] In Ecuador there exists an apparent incongruity between the military's legally subordinate role and its *de facto* role as political arbiter. This contradiction had been evidenced by officers' repeated acts of conditional loyalty to the elected president, and has been justified by the armed forces' who have placed their duty to maintaining the integrity and juridical order of the State above obedience and non-deliberation.[51] In addition, threes of the last four Ecuadorian presidents have owed their positions, at least in part, to political arbitration of the armed forces, a fact that has often placed the executive in a position of relative weakness vis-à-vis the military and has mitigated against executive-led attempts to subordinate the institution to civilian control.

5. Role in military promotions:

[50] Both constitutions (1979 and 1998) include clauses codifying military subordination to the chief executive and its role as a non-deliberative institutions, acting only on orders coming from the president: 'La Fuerza Pública no es deliberante…' and 'La fuerza pública sera obediente y no deliberante…' (Articles 129 and 184 in the respective charters)

[51] Samuel Fitch has noted that in extensive interviews "a non-trivial number of [Ecuadorian] officers…have spontaneously brought up the 'obedient and non-deliberative' clause for explicit rejection as a norm for civil-military relations." Fitch's comments found on the World Wide Web at: http://callmail.army:89.

At Transition-- *(high)*

Military promotions through and including the rank of general have been the exclusive, internal prerogative of the military. As mentioned above, the armed forces' subordination to the Chief Executive was limited by the stipulation restricting the president's ability to name the three force commanders (Army, Air Force and Naval) and the Chief of the Joint Command (Jefe del Comando Conjunto) from outside a list of the three most senior officers Constitution.[52] Thus the military at transition enjoyed *de jure* control over promotions and were constrained by minimal executive and legislative oversight. The military justification for this autonomy was that the armed forces could better resist politicization by limiting government "manipulation" of the promotion process. As discussed in Chapter I, the armed forces' negative experience with this phenomenon under the Velasco Ibarra administration acted to guide military demands for significant control over internal promotions.

1984-2001— (*high)*

The election of León Febres Cordero, the conservative PSC candidate, in 1984 initiated the second civilian administration and would set the stage for a dynamic period in Ecuadorian civil-military relations. Most significantly, the new president's attempts to

[52] The President's role in military promotions is codified in the 1979 Constitution (Art. 78**.** Son atribuciones y deberes del Presidente de la República:... i) otorgar el grado militar y policial y los ascensos jerárquicos a los oficiales de la Fuerza Pública, de acuerdo con la ley;..."). The 'ley' mentioned in the Charter refers to the Organic Law of the Armed Forces which is a reserved document specifying the structure and (general) territorial deployment of the Armed Forces, and thus, inaccessible for research on this project.

circumvent the military promotion standards established at transition in the Organic Law of the Armed Forces ultimately created a rift within the military and threatened to destabilize his government While Febres Cordero's political manipulation o f the armed forces temporarily diminished the military's prerogative for control of internal promotions, the destabilizing effects of his tampering ultimately acted to dissuade subsequent administrations from similar contestation.

Febres Cordero, an entrepreneur and self-made millionaire from Guayaquil, had been an outspoken critic of the Lara regime's economic model and as congressional deputy had frequently clashed with President Hurtado's reformist administration. Not surprisingly, Febres Cordero, once in power, charted an economically conservative course that met with significant popular opposition including the emergence of a small guerilla groups, *Alfaro Vive ¡Carajo!* (AVC) and *Montoneros Patria Libre* (MPL). Cordero's hard-line on counterinsurgency included the use the police and military intelligence services to eradicate the internal threat—a strategy that drew the attention of international human rights groups and served to politicize civil-military relations.

In stark contrast to the Roldos and Hurtado governments, the administration's attempted manipulation of the armed forces was characterized by a return to a clientelistic strategy of military co-optation. The President, in order to ensure that those loyal to his administration were appointed to the Minister of Defense and Army Chief of Staff posts, violated the military amended constitution by restoring a recently retired

general to active service.[53] His administration, plagued by opposition from the majority *Bloque Progresista* (led by Hurtado's DP party) in Congress, Cordero also used military force to block entry to the Supreme Court building in order to bar new justices appointed by the legislature. While garnering a basis of support within the armed forces for his economic support, Cordero's attempts to use the armed forces as his personal tool for political leverage "created significant resentment among more professional military officers" and produced internal cleavages that threatened to destabilize Ecuadorian democracy – the most visible being Gen. Vargas' revolt and the eventual kidnapping of the president himself.[54]

The administrations following Febres Cordero, no doubt informed by the undermining effects of his clientelistic relationship with the military, have been cautious not to tamper with military promotions and have often gone out of their way to assure the armed forces of their intentions to avoid confrontation. For example, President Durán Ballén, in his inaugural speech expressed his 'hands off' policy with regard to the armed forces, stating:

> "Como Presidente de la República y como Comandante en Jefe expreso mi voluntad de garantizar y velar por el fiel cumplimiento de las leyes y reglamentos militares, así como las formas bajo las cuales se estructuran las Fuerzas Armadas, obediciendo a sus necesidades de fortalecimiento institucional y evitando influencias políticas que perturben la vida de la institución y la carrera militar de sus miembros"

[53] Martz gives a much more detailed account of Febres Cordero's repeated violations of military promotional procedures to 'personalize' support from the armed forces. Martz; 52-54.
[54] Isaacs; 139

This position, although not asserted explicitly, has been maintained throughout the subsequent administrations, none of which has attempted to alter the existing arrangement of military promotions.

6. Coordination of the defense sector:

Transition through 2001 *(medium-high)*

While the "service commanders and the Chief of Joint Staff were theoretically subordinate to the President as Commander-in-Chief, in reality they enjoy[ed] substantial autonomy from civilian control in both defense policy and management of the defense sector."[55] This relationship of *de jure* military subordination and *de facto* autonomy in formulating national security policy has been noted in the operational structure of the Ecuadorian National Security Council's (COSENA). Although the Chief Executive was legally the maximum authority and presided over the Council and while its members included the president of the Supreme Court, the president of Congress, and other non-military actors, it was not an instrument of civilian control over the armed forces. In fact, the civilian role in coordinating the defense sector was minimal, with its participation generally characterized by deference to the policies formulated by the Joint Command (Comando Conjunto). The brief border disputes and armed skirmishes with Peruvian forces on Ecuador's southeastern border in 1981 and 1995 illustrated this point in that

[55] Fich's comments found on the World Wide Web: http://callmail.army.mil:89

deployment and strategy were guided by military-led policy, in effect "rubber-stamped" by the executive.

7. Active-duty military participation in the Cabinet:

Transition through 2001 *(low)*

The Ecuadorian constitution crafted for the transition process, while falling short of reserving cabinet positions for active-duty military officials, did, in practice, secure the Minister of Defense (MOD) position for a retired officer. And while the Minister of Defense was, de facto, a retired military officer, the Constitution made no explicit mention of ministerial disqualification for active-duty officers until the adoption of the 1998 Constitution.[56] The Minister of Defense's role is, in practice, that of intermediary between the government and the armed forces. This is to say that the agency has been used to convey the government's policy priorities and decisions to the military but, more often, to lobby the civilian government on behalf of the armed forces for implementation of its autonomously derived security policies and priorities.

[56] This provision was not included in any amended versions of the 1979 constitution, but was added to the new charter of 1998: Aticle 178—' No podrán ser ministros:… 4) Los miembros de la fuerza pública en servicio activo.' *ConstituciónPolítica de la República*, Quito, 1998

8. Role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees:

Transition through 2001-- *(high)*

The role of senior career civil servants or appointees in Stepan's matrix of low-to-high prerogatives reserves the "low" designation for those governments in which there is a professional cadre of highly informed civilian civil servants who play a major role in designing and implementing defense policy. As mentioned to above, the Ecuadorian case does not conform to this category. The Ministry of Defense (led by a retired military officer) plays a role of interlocutor between the Joint Command and the Executive rather than that of active policy planning and coordination agency. Furthermore, the civilian role in COSENA, though legally significant, in practice is limited and generally characterized by acquiescence to military demands. In addition, the lack civilian bureaucrats trained to competently design and oversee defense policy has led to the predominance of military and retired military officials in national security and defense policymaking positions.

9. Role in intelligence:

Transition through 2001-- *(high)*

Unlike the previous military regimes of Brazil Chile, the Ecuadorian authoritarian regime of 1972-79 did not have a powerful, centralized intelligence agency. Instead, each branch of the armed forces operated its own intelligence services with duties including data gathering, operations, and internal and external security. Thus, in the

transition to democratic governance, it was not deemed necessary to dismantle or subordinate a preexisting powerful intelligence apparatus. Perhaps because the pervasiveness and power of a military intelligence was a non-issue in the transition, the civilian government did not alter the diffuse structure of the intelligence services. Consequently, military intelligence remained divided between the forces. The intelligence arms of each military branch are centralized under the national security council's (COSENA) *Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia* (DNI). While legally subject to institutional oversight by non-military authorities—represented by a nominal civilian majority in the COSENA—the permanent DNI staff is, in practice, military controlled. The director of the DNI is a retired general who works closely with the armed forces' Chief of Intelligence within the Joint Command in order to centralize intelligence information and operations.[57]

10. Role in police:

Transition through 2001-- *(medium-low)*

In Ecuador's 1979 constitution the National Police and armed forces were considered the two constitutive components of the *Fuerza Pública* (Public Force), and the role of the police was as an auxiliary force to the military.[58] Unlike other Latin American countries where the police operate under the umbrella of military command, Ecuador's

[57] Paraphrased from Fitch's comments found on the World Wide Web at: http://callmail.army.mil:89
[58] Article 126: 'Las Fuerzas Armadas y la Policía Nacional constituyen la Fuerza Pública. Su preparación, organización, misión y empleo se regula en la ley.' And Article: 136. La Policía Nacional tiene por misión fundamental garantizar el orden interno y la seguridad individual y social. Constituye fuerza auxiliar de las Fuerzas Armadas.' *Constitución Política de la República de Ecuador*, 1981.

National Police operate independently of the armed forces and are under an official chain of command originating in the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerio de Gobierno*) rather than the Ministry of Defense. The military, on several occasions, however, has been called to perform what would be considered police duties during government decreed states of emergency. These assignments have been most often in response to mobilized protests and strikes deemed threatening to internal security. Over the first twenty years since transition, the armed forces have been called on twenty-five times to augment police forces during states of emergency declared on grounds of 'internal commotion,' 'disruption of the public order,' and 'anti-delinquency.' The military's participation in maintaining internal order include: an eight-day state of emergency declared by Hurtado in response to mobilized protest of his economic policies in October of 1982; a two week state of emergency declared to put down indigenous protest to president Durán's agricultural reform package in June-July 1994; and the regional state of emergency (in the province of Guayas) to combat increasing delinquency from January to November of 1999.

11. Role in legal system:

Transition through 2001-- *(low-medium)*

Since transition the Ecuadorian armed forces have maintained a significant *fuero* giving military courts broad jurisdiction over its own officers and soldiers as well as civilians implicated in infractions committed under national states of emergency. Both the 1979 and 1998 constitutions stipulate that members of the armed forces are to be tried

in military courts for crimes committed in the practice of their profession, but are subject to prosecution in civilian courts for ordinary infractions.[59] The existing national security laws allow for the processing of civilians in military courts, but these laws have rarely been applied except in unusual circumstances. Still, the potentially expansive normative legal jurisdiction of military courts is enough to merit a 'low-medium' assessment.

11. Role in society:

Transition through 2001 (*medium*)

The military, having instigated the transition to civilian governance in a context of widespread popular support, led the process of democratic opening in a position of relative strength. The relatively successful economic growth of the military tenure (although seen, in retrospect, more as the product of the significant increase in oil production than of particularly effective macro and microeconomic policy), the regime's non-repressive policies vis-à-vis opposition, along with its benign attempts at restructuring land distribution and liberalizing suffrage laws garnered the armed forces a high degree of institutional legitimacy. More accurately, perhaps, the military's policies during the 1972-79 regimes did not produce an institutional "collapse" like that of the Argentine regime, nor did it totally alienate traditional elites to the degree of their

[59] The 1979 constitutions states: 'Art. 131. Los miembros de la Fuerza Pública gozan de fuero especial, no se les puede procesar ni privar de sus grados, honores ni pensiones, sino por las causas y en la forma determinada por la ley, a excepción de las infracciones comunes que las juzgará la justicia ordinaria.' And the 1998 charter asserts the following: 'Art. 187.- Los miembros de la fuerza pública estarán sujetos a fuero especial para el juzgamiento de las infracciones cometidas en el ejercicio de sus labores profesionales. En caso de infracciones comunes, estarán sujetos a la justicia ordinaria.' *Constitución Política de la República de Ecuador*, 1981

Peruvian neighbors. Consequently, the military was held in high regard in the years following the transition, and while the political and economic elite would not have considered even high-ranking military officers as among their social peers, individual retired officers managed private businesses and later have successfully transitioned into political careers.

It is interesting to note that several military officers involved in the aforementioned civil-military crises have subsequently thrown their hats into the political ring. General Vargas, after his release from custody in 1987, later presented himself as a candidate for president and came fourth in the first-round election of 1988[60]. Similarly, General Francisco "Paco" Moncayo- considered a hero of Ecuador's 1995 war with Peru and personally involved in the ouster of Abdala Bucaram- was expelled from congress for his support of the 2000 coup, but in May of the same year was elected mayor of Quito.

Furthemore, the armed forces have successfully maintained their popular image as trustworthy and disciplined—in stark contrast to elected civilian politicians repeatedly accused of corruption and incompetence. Consistently receiving high marks for trust in popular polls, the military and its officers are generally regarded as national models of efficiency, uprightness and organization.

Taken in aggregate, military prerogatives during the first civilian administration reveal a relatively high level of autonomy. Coupled with the practice of mutual

[60] Library of Congress political profile: Ecuador. On the World Wide Web: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ectoc.html.

accommodation that characterized the relationship between the Roldos and Hurtado administrations and the armed forces, the Ecuadorian civil-military dynamic reflected a state of 'unequal civilian accommodation.' The military stuck to the conservative interpretation of its constitutional role and the government was careful not to antagonize the armed forces.[61] Still, the framework for civil-military relations laid out in the new Constitution and carried out in practice was tantamount to creating a reserve domain of authority for the armed forces—a domain that would increasingly be used to indirectly influence policy decisions through conditioned support of weak civilian regimes.

The high level of institutional prerogatives granted the Ecuadorian armed forces at transition have rarely been challenged by subsequent civilian regimes. With the partial exception of the Febres Cordero and Noboa administrations, civil-military relations have been characterized by a weak and fragmented political system beset by near-perpetual crisis, unable to effectively dismantle the military's significant autonomy. The framework of military prerogatives established in 1979 has hardly been altered and the government structures—such as congressional oversight of military operations and the mechanisms and capacity for civilian-led security and defense policy formulation– necessary to subordinate the armed forces have never been implemented.

Unchallenged in their seemingly paradoxical role as the 'protectors of democracy,' the armed forces have not only maintained a reserve domain of authority in the political arena, but have both increased their visible role as viable arbiters and used significant leverage to hedge against reforms that run counter to the institution's

[61] Fitch; 150

corporate interests. The next chapter will address the obvious weaknesses of the Ecuadorian political system and the military's internal and external missions in an attempt to explain the persistence of 'undemocratic' civil-military relations and their impact on the country's inability to consolidate an effective democratic system.

Chapter III The Military and Democracy in Ecuador

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Ecuadorian civil-military relationship, since transition, has been one marked by the maintenance and expansion of military prerogatives. The trajectory of military autonomy toward a semi-tutelary role of political arbitration, especially since the mid 1990s, can be explained by the structural weaknesses in the Ecuadorian political system coupled with the military's liberal conception and execution of its internal mission. The combination of prolonged political instability and ineffectiveness with a strong military presence in traditionally non-military spheres has created a civil-military relationship incompatible with the consolidation of democracy.

Consolidation literature converges on the crucial role of military subordination in process of deepening democracy. This literature invariably points to the importance of a 'democratic' civil-military relationship as a facilitating factor for the evolution of effective civilian institutions. Civilian governments must find a delicate balance between giving the military a voice and incentives for the armed forces to work within the system but that avoid military prerogatives that make that system undemocratic. The key, it is argued, is to create a healthy civil-military relationship characterized by what Samuel Huntington calls *objective control* mechanisms. In this scenario, generally seen as emerging when the armed forces' mission is defined by an external challenge, the military is granted substantial autonomy in the narrow military realm "in return for

complete political loyalty."[62] Conversely, when the military mission is defined by significant internal threats, civilians often attempt to control the military by politicizing it and the armed forces adopts an internal orientation. Huntington identifies this type of civil-military relationship as *subjective control* and asserts that this type of relationship is more likely to produce destabilizing forces within the armed forces and makes military intervention in politics almost inevitable.

Ecuadorian military missions have been defined by both external (border conflicts with Peru) and internal (military-led social and economic development projects) components. The ability of the Ecuadorian armed forces to define and control its missions—a consequence of both minimalist mechanisms for civilian oversight and the lack of a constituency for military subordination-- has led to the expansion of its societal role to include political arbitration in what Samuel Fitch would call a context of 'conditional subordination' to civilian authority. Taken in broad perspective, a seemingly paradoxical and certainly problematic situation exists in Ecuador. The military's high level of political influence—acquired through its expansive prerogatives and internal missions-- hampers the consolidation of democracy, and Ecuador's unconsolidated political institutions are limited in their ability to effectively subordinate the military. This chapter will examine Ecuador's military missions and political system to explain the increasingly undemocratic trajectory of civil-military relations.

Military policy for democratic consolidation takes as its ultimate objective the creation of a system of civil-military relations insuring democratic control of the armed

[62] See Desch in Diamond and Plattner; 14

forces. It has been asserted that some of the pacts that have facilitated transition, especially in a case like Ecuador where the legacy of military rule is regarded as 'successful' by a large segment of the population, must be broken to facilitate democratic consolidation.[63] The previous chapter has illustrated that civilian governments have been incapable of asserting their authority over the armed forces by dismantling the legal and practical framework that has allowed for the expansion of military autonomy and political influence. While important in establishing the normative and *de facto* parameters of the armed forces 'reserve domain' of authority in the political arena, the prerogatives approach does not go so far as to explain the persistence of military autonomy or the structural factors that have allowed for its expansion over the past two decades.

To understand the complexity of Ecuador's civil-military relationship it is imperative that one examine both the nature of the political context in which it has evolved and the changing mission of the armed forces. As we will see, the inability of civilian administrations to generate the institutional capacity and leadership necessary for effective governance has reinforced the armed forces' claims to a rightful role in the political arena that, in turn, stunts the growth of the very same democratic procedures and institutions necessary for their consolidation. Similarly, it can be argued that the various military missions initiated and controlled by the Ecuadorian armed forces —especially the broad interpretation of their internal duty to promote social and economic

[63] The recognition that democratization involves two separate processes—transition and consolidation-- the latter requiring both a decision on the part of leaders (civilian and military) in the aftermath of polarized political struggle to institutionalize democratic procedures and their habituation (consolidation) has been discussed in D. Rustow's "Toward a Dynamic Model of Democracy" and expanded in Mainwaring et al., 1992.

development—have effectively undermined civilian control by constraining policy options and 'crowding out' civilian institutions capable of fulfilling these same functions. This chapter will examine the Ecuadorian armed forces' evolving internal mission and weakness of the country's political system to explain the military's move toward an increasingly tutelary relationship with civilian governments and the persistence of coup politics—both factors contributing to the stagnation of Ecuadorian democratic consolidation.

Political Context

Although the transition to democracy facilitated pact making and produced a new institutional framework and procedural rules designed to govern the behavior of political elites, many of the problems that had plagued Ecuadorian democracy before 1972 have returned. Most notably, "the Ecuadorian transition failed to create a stable and workable party system, effective political leadership, [or] a strong civilian democratic commitment…."[64] If the military's broad internal mission and unchallenged prerogatives have undermined the consolidation of democratic institutions and have shaped a civil-military relationship that allows for conditional subordination of the armed forces to elected officials, then the instability and ineffectiveness of the Ecuadorian political system is at least partly to blame.

Political leadership in Ecuador has been beset by a blatant disregard for the rules of the democratic game, with presidents and legislators refusing on many occasions to

[64] Isaacs; 119

engage in accommodation and compromise as a means of resolving political conflicts. Battles between the executive and legislative branches have been the hallmark of a system in which a zero-sum mentality has often led to crisis inducing deadlock. Significant congressional opposition and brinkmanship have characterized the presidencies of Febres Cordero, Durán Ballén, Bucarám, Mahuad and Noboa. The lack of political leadership has led to presidents overriding congressional decisions and abuses of the democratic process have been a persistent feature of Ecuadorian politics since the transition.

The weakness of the Ecuadorian political system can also be traced to its fragmented and unresponsive party system. The new parties that emerged to replace the traditional conservative and liberal parties after 1979 lacked important experience in the political arena and have been prone to fragmentation and a lack of loyalty. The electoral regulations that were imposed at the transition hoped to curb the proliferation of parties, but there was a steady increase in competing parties from 1979 through 1998. Whereas six parties competed in the first presidential elections after transition, nine competed in 1984, ten in 1988, and twelve in 1992. Since the mid nineties, the number of parties participating in presidential elections has hovered between ten and twelve. Similarly, the Ecuadorian Congress has consistently been composed of nearly a dozen parties whose lack of discipline has repeatedly created unstable coalitions since transition.

With non-concurrent legislative elections held until the drafting of a new constitution in 1998, electoral coalitions were not easily sustained and often were formed

to maintain opposition to the executive rather than support the government in power.[65] Also working to undermine democratic governability has been the lack of party loyalty. Legally unbound to the parties that presented their candidacy, members of congress, once elected, have not hesitated to defect to rival parties or sit as independents. This rampant 'shirt switching' and opportunistic political behavior has undermined party credibility and has added to the ineffectiveness of democratic participation.

Even since the reforms of 1998 that provided legislation aimed at reforming political 'rules of the game' in an attempt to curb party proliferation and strengthen the power of the executive vis-à-vis the legislature, the characteristic political deadlock and lack of compromise have continued to plague Ecuador's political system. The legislation drafted to abolish the mid-term elections often blamed for decimating governments' support bases in Congress and impeding the passage of legislation in the second half of the presidential term has been undermined by the lack of party loyalty and fragile pacts. Furthermore, although electoral law requires that any party that fails to win five percent of the national vote in two successive elections will be struck from the party register, the intended effect of decreased party plurality has been diluted by the proliferation of independent candidates. (Table 3.?)

[65] Although it only survived for one year, the *Bloque Progresista*, a multiparty coalition formed after the election of President Febres Cordero, was established to provide consistent opposition to the administration. Similarly, the governing coalition formed between the DP and the PSC in the aftermath of Mahuad's ouster quickly broke down during the Noboa administration. A DP splinter group (*Movimiento de Integración Nacional)* formed and the DP-PSC alliance dissolved. Since 2000, congressional-executive relations have been characterized by protracted struggles to find consensus on policy issues.

Table 3.1 Party Representation in Congress (March 2002)

Political Party	Number of Seats
Partido Social Cristiano (PSC; center-right)	24
Partido Roldosista Ecuatoriano (PRE; populist)	21
Izquierda Democratica (ID; center-left, soical democratic)	16
Movimiento de Integracion Nacional (MIN, ex-DP)	13
Independents	13
Democracia Popular (DP centrist)	12
Pro-Hurtado faction (ex-DP)	8
Movimiento Pachakutik-Nuevo Pais (MP-NP)	6
Frente Radical Alfarista (FRA)	6
Movimiento Popular Democratico (MPD)	2
Partido Conservator (PC)	2
Total	**123**

Source: Latin Finance, Latin American Financial Publications Inc.

For concrete examples of the political infighting, brinkmanship and corruption characteristic of the Ecuadorian political culture, one needs look only as far as the recent developments on the issue of tax reform and privatisation. Having quickly capitalized on Congressional support in the wake of Mahuad's removal from the presidency in early 2000, current president Gustavo Noboa pushed through major economic reform packages including the dollarization of the economy and the *Ley de Transformación Económica* (Economic Transformation Law, or Trole I) that was designed to speed up privatisation. The passage of the new law was "achieved through an alliance with the Democracia Popular (DP)—still implicitly the party of government, despite the ousting of Mr. Mahuad—with the backing of the Partido Social Cristiano (PSC) and a collection of smaller parties aligned with the centre-right."[66]

[66]The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), 2001; 27

The political consensus facilitating the implementation of dollarization and Trole I, reached in the wake of Mahuad's ousting, quickly unravelled as a result of a lack of congressional support. Noboa's successor bill to Trole I, the *Ley para la Promoción de la Inversión y la Participación Ciudadana* (Investent Promotion and Citizen Participation Law or Trole II), was submitted to Congress. The legislature substantially altered the bill and Noboa responded to the changes by vetoing the version of Trole II passed by Congress and promptly submitted an amended third package of reforms-- Trole III-- to modify provisions made in Trole II. The presidential veto strained Congressional relations with the executive; the end result of this political tug-of-war was the postponement of privatisations of electricity and telecom companies and the successful judicial challenge of many Trole II articles on grounds of unconstitutionality.

The government's struggle over the tax reforms conditioned to IMF loans has been another example of the inability of the executive and Congress to find middle ground on issues of economic reform. Early in the year, the Noboa administration submitted to Congress proposals to improve the corporate tax regime, overhaul customs by putting it under the control of the Internal Revenue Service, and raise the rate of the value added tax (VAT) from 12 to 14 percent. Congress, in typical fashion, rejected the VAT increase and made changes to other portions of the bill. Noboa's reaction was to veto the amendments, effectively leaving the VAT hike in place. The president's version was implemented after the Congress failed to come up with the two-thirds necessary to overturn the veto. Political wrangling, especially over the VAT increase, continued until September when the Constitutional Court ruled the increase unconstitutional. While the

government abided by the court's decision, again, the inability of the courts, the Congress and the President to come to a mutually beneficial decision had the aggregate effect of weakening further Ecuador's fragile democratic institutions by tarnishing the image of both political branches and the country's highest judicial body.[67] The inability of the government to find this consensus and the growing level of popular contestation to economic reform have been significant obstacles in Ecuador's recent tax reform and privatisation drives and illustrate the dire need for the "deepening" of democratic institutions in Ecuador to create the necessary "socio-economic pact" between civil and political societies.[68]

The Ecuadorian governments' inability to consolidate effective state apparatuses to channel the interests of its citizens has been complicated by several cross-cutting ethnic and regional (coast vs. sierra) cleavages. These fissures in civil society have been evidenced by increasing popular mobilization and the emergence of the indigenous movement (led by CONAIE), the products of diminishing popular support for democracy. Indigenous demands for a participation in policy decisions have been manifested by both mobilization and strikes and the attempt to create an institutionalized political voice through the creation of a pan-indigenous party-- Movimiento Pachakutic. First listed on national ballots in the in 1996 general elections, Pachakutic has grown into

[67] In the wake of the Constitutional Court's decision to repeal the VAT increase, Noboa first refused to obey the tribunal's decision claiming, "the Constitutional Court voted twice on the same motion and imposed an opinion that breaks the legal certainty that the Constitution itself guarantees."
[68] O'Donnell, 1994; 66. A socioeconomic pact between civil and political societies is difficult to achieve in a context of high Presidential vs. Congressional contestation on key legislation as these "squabbles promote a sharp decline in the prestige of *all* parties and politicians… [and] the resulting institutional weakness makes it ever more difficult to achieve the other magical solution when the packages fail…"

a viable party with significant local and national representation. Currently holding 6 seats in the national legislature and 71 provincial and parochial posts, Pachakútik is the first legal party assembled in Ecuador to represent indigenous communities in the formal political arena. While this engagement of the previously marginalized indigenous population the political arena bodes well for Ecuadorian democratic consolidation, the prolonged inability of successive civilian governments to implement policies to effectively increase the population's (especially rural, indigenous) standards of living, curb inflation and decrease income inequality has diminished confidence in and loyalty to the democratic system and—as we will see-- has bolstered the military's justification for political intervention. (Table 3.2)

Table 3.2 Poverty and Regional Inequality Indicators-- 1995

	Poverty Measured by Consumption %	Years of Schooling %	Level of Illiteracy %	Level of Functional Illiteracy %	Level of Unemployment %	People Without Health Insurance %
City	42.4	8.8	6.0	11.6	8.5	79.1
All languages	42.4	8.8	6.0	11.6	8.5	79.1
Country Side	75.8	4.4	17.9	34.8	5.9	78.1
Indigenous Languages	82.5	2.2	44.3	58.8	1.6	88.5
Other languages	75.1	4.6	15.3	32.5	6.4	77.4
Country	55.8	7.1	10.5	20.4	7.5	78.7

Source: Survey of Conditions of Life 1995- INEC

The de-legitimation of the democratic government has rapidly increased since the nation's worst-ever economic crisis in 1998-2001 and has been contrasted by increasing military legitimacy and expanded role in politics. From 1996 to 2000, support for democracy declined from 52 percent to 40 percent, while support for dictatorship

increased from 18 to 23% (Table 3.3). Samuel Fitch writes about the period before and after the 2000 coup:

> "The military and the Catholic Church remain virtually the only institutions in Ecuador that inspire public confidence. 'No confidence' responses for Congress rose markedly during the Mahuad administration. The only institution[s] with lower ratings than Congress are the political parties. Less than 10 percent of those survey[ed] expressed confidence in political parties before or after the coup."[69]

Indeed, the armed forces have received 60 to 70 percent confidence ratings in Ecuadorian polls, and have been the most trusted institution in the country since 1995, a fact that has informed officers of their legitimate 'right' to a political voice and facilitated the military's intervention in political matters.

The Ecuadorian armed forces have undoubtedly moved, since the mid-1990s toward a more tutelary role in the political arena. Although the Ecuadorian regime is nominally democratic, "the armed forces have assumed an increasingly active policy voice on matters of concern to senior officers, including the future of the current system."[70] As discussed earlier, the military involvement in the ouster and replacement of presidents Abdala Bucaram and Jamil Mahuad have made evident the trend toward military tutelage. Mindful of the politicizing effects of the institution's overt political role in 1996 and 2000, however, "Ecuadorian proponents of a tutelary military role tend to favor a softer, semi-tutelary system, with active military 'advice' on matters related to national security but not military imposition of policies especially on non-military

[69] From Fitch's article on Ecuador in Arnson, 2001; 64
[70] Fitch; 89

matters. Nevertheless, in a regime where many officers are still only conditionally loyal, military 'advice' is a subtle but powerful form of pressure." [71]

Table 3.3 Which of the following statements do you agree with most? %*

	Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.					In certain circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one.				
	1996	**1997**	**1998**	**2000**	**2001**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**2000**	**2001**
Ecuador	52	41	57	54	40	18	23	19	12	23

Source: Latinobarómetro *Not including those who answered "it doesn't matter" and "I don't know

International Context

The international political context since the 1980s has been marked by a significant shift toward the valorization of democracy around the world. An increasing international concern with democratic governance, especially in the Western Hemisphere since the end of the Cold War, has produced a proliferation of diplomatic and economic mechanisms implemented to prevent a resurgence of outright authoritarian governments. The United States independently, and in its important role with the Organization of American States (OAS), has taken the lead by backing multinational mechanisms that serve to under gird frail democracies. Signed in Santiago in 1991, resolution 1080, the OAS's 'democracy clause', was designed to reinforce Latin America's new elected governments-- emerging in the wake of the 'third wave' of democratization-- by threatening economic and diplomatic sanctions against any member state in which there was a break with the constitutional order. Taken in contrast to the Cold War era, US policy on hemispheric democracy has been forcefully pro-democratic since the late

[71] Fitch; 88

1980s. The vigorous denunciation of Haiti's September 1991 coup by the first Bush administration, and the pressure put on Ecuador's would-be civilian-military junta to relinquish power under Clinton have made clear that the US would no longer tacitly trade stability for democratic governance.[72]

Furthermore, an explosion of international non-governmental organizations has emerged to actively promote adherence to democratic electoral procedure, strengthen civil society's links to the political system, and strengthen democratic institutions. This pro democratic trajectory no doubt makes military governance less likely, but has produced the unintended consequence of pushing the armed forces into a politicized tutelary role where overt power is inaccessible. In situations like Ecuador where the external environment demands formal democracy but civilian leaders are considered incapable of effectively managing a democratic regime, the military is inclined to act politically within that system to defend both its corporate welfare and defend the nation's 'permanent national interests.'[73] An extreme case in point, during Ecuador's economic and political crisis of late 1999 and early 2000, military officers, divided between constitutionalists and those who aligned themselves with civilians protesting President Mahuad's economic policies, were forced to choose between adherence to their

[72] The Organization of American States (OAS), too, announced its "full and determined backing" for Mahuad's government, and warned that if the military took power, it would urge all international lenders to halt loans to Ecuador.

[73] To underscore this notion, Samuel Fitch's extensive analysis of military role beliefs in Ecuador revealed significant ambiguity among officers interviewed on the topic of institutional subordination to constitutional authorities: "…Ecuadorian respondents had a substantially higher degree [compared to Argentine counterparts] of contradiction and ambiguity among officers who argued for the subordination of the military to constitutional authority….only 30-35 percent… could be classified as clear and consistent defenders of democratic role beliefs" Fitch; 70.

institution's legal, 'non-deliberate' role, or take action against the elected government. While a majority of the highest-ranking officers have remained loyal to a strict constitutionalist interpretation of the military's societal role, factions within the armed forces have increasingly voiced their distaste for the country's political system and its civilian leadership—most notably through their involvement in the 2000 coup.

Dissuaded from imposing outright military governance by a combination of international pressure and internal self-doubt, the military has instead maintained its presence in the political arena through its involvement in projects for internal security and development. The armed forces' perceived duty to ensure social stability through political 'guardianship' has effectively undermined the consolidation of democratic institutions by constraining civilian policy choices and inhibiting the emergence of effective civilian institutions. Historically seen as the institution best equipped to implement positive social and economic reforms, the military has used its leverage to maintain a presence in the country's economic sphere and has continued to expand its role in the area of social development. As we will see, an increasing focus on its internal security and developmental missions—roles explicitly granted in the Ecuadorian Constitution-- has effectively ensured the armed forces a voice on typically non-military policy and has contributed to the erosion of democratic civil-military relations.

Military Missions

Internal Missions

Along with the traditional role as defenders of sovereign territory, the Ecuadorian military has—not unlike other Latin American armed forces—defined its mission in terms of stemming internal threats through civic-action and economic development. Since the 1960s the Ecuadorian armed forces, informed by modernization theory and the Cold War, interpreted the security and development nexus in a manner more closely linked to the Peruvian than other Latin American models. "Underdevelopment viewed as primary structural cause of revolutionary insurgencies, but obstacles to development were defined as excessive foreign domination of the economy, unjust distribution of agricultural land, and elite-dominated political systems incapable of carrying out necessary reforms."[74] The implementation of a reformist strategy during the Lara regime reflected this vision and it was codified post-transition in the new constitution in which elevated its role in socioeconomic development to an institutional duty.[75] This internal mission, described as 'preventive' counterinsurgency, includes assistance in rural health centers, education, transportation, agricultural development and reforestation among others.[76]

Also included under the broad rubric of development assistance are the military's independently owned and operated enterprises. The armed forces' economic interests have been expanded to include a role as minority and majority shareholders in economic activities including, shrimp farms, tourism, and agro-industry. Furthermore, the military

[74] Fitch; 15
[75] Art. 128 "….Sin menoscabo de su misión fundamental, la ley determina la colaboración que la Fuerza Pública debe prestar para el desarrollo social y económico del país y en los demás aspectos concernientes a la seguridad nacional." *ConstituciónPolítica de la República*, Quito, 1981.
[76] For a complete list of the Ecuadorian military's social projects, see the armed forces' website: http://www.fuerzasarmadasecuador.ec-gov.net/espanol/apoyoaldesarrollo/indapoyoaldesarrollo.htm

benefits from the revenue generated by one of Quito's professional soccer teams (El Nacional) and the Ecuadorian airline TAME[77]. Although the military's involvement in numerous social and economic projects has become a primary focus of the armed forces' overarching societal mission and has facilitated the redefinition of its professional responsibilities, it has facilitated the military's increased role in the political arena.

While often providing laudable services, employment and training, the military's internal mission has been one that has, nevertheless, created "serious tensions with the ideal of democratic civil-military relations."[78] Louis Goodman has asserted that two criteria should be used to assess whether nontraditional missions by the military enhance or diminish the prospects for the consolidation of democracy. It can be said that military involvement in social and economic development is appropriate for democratic civil-military relations if 1) it does not 'crowd out' other actors who could deliver needed services more efficiently or 2) the military gains no political advantage from its involvement in civic-action, education or economic activity.[79]

The Ecuadorian military's involvement in non-combat, internal missions have failed in the two tests put forth by Goodman. First, the armed forces varied involvement in Ecuador's industry and investment has, in some cases, provided much needed support for the creation of national infrastructure, transportation and services to remote areas of the country, but it is hardly accurate to suppose that its ownership and operation of

[77] Efe News Services (U.S.) Inc. Nov. 23, 2000.
[78] Ftich; 121. In addition, in several interviews with retired and active military officers, all asked brought up the fact that 90% of the nearly 25,000 employees of military enterprises were civilians and that education and environmental projects had contributed to Ecuador's national development.
[79] See Goodman's article "Military Roles Past and Present" in Diamond and Plattner, 1997; 37-38.

agricultural, mining, other non-military production units are functions best suited to its expertise. At best, the case can be made that the lack of transparency of military accounts makes it difficult to assess the efficiency of these enterprises, and at worst the military's involvement in economic endeavors have occupied "arenas where civilian public or private entities could emerge and develop critical expertise if the social or political space was not already occupied by the armed forces."[80]

Similarly, the civic-action, education and environmental projects initiated and maintained by the armed forces over the past two decades have been justified by the rationale that government ministries have been neither able nor willing to provide these same services. Although increasingly unstable administrations with burgeoning fiscal deficits have had little extra in the way of federal funds to apply to some of these projects, the 'crowding out' effect is certainly in evidence. Furthermore, the goals and specific activities of these projects are derived by the armed forces themselves and are generally not overseen or directed by civilian agencies—"…typically the initiative comes from the military seeking civilian participation in military projects rather than vice versa."[81] In sum, these internal missions effectively broaden the scope of autonomous military action and work to undermine democratic consolidation by limiting the development of civilian institutions capable of fulfilling the same social functions.

Furthermore, the Ecuadorian military has garnered political advantage from its involvement in non-combat activities. The severe de-legitimization of democratic

[80] Diamond and Plattner; 39.
[81] Fitch; 121

political actors and institutions that has accompanied Ecuador's nearly continuous string of political crises, economic instability and corruption scandals since 1979 has been balanced by public trust in the armed forces—garnered, at least in part, by its visible role in social development projects. The expanded role of the armed forces in civic action programs in the sierra has often involved the armed forces in complex alliances with religious and indigenous groups. Initially allied with evangelical groups against progressive sectors of the Catholic Church who promoted grass-roots indigenous organization, the involvement of lower-ranking military officers in the 2000 *coup d'etat* marked the alliance of a faction within the armed forces and the leaders of CONAIE. While the coalition of military officers and indigenous activists seen in the most recent coup may seem odd, it has been described as one of "conjunctural convenience" whereby unexpected coincidences or accidents of political life place actors together despite opposite histories or interests[82]. The military's involvement in internal development projects combined with the deleterious effects of the 1999-2000 economic crisis served to politicize the armed forces, creating an institutional dilemma. Faced with the task of defending the public order against the members of indigenous movement, unions, and taxi drivers that had paralyzed the country, a sizable faction of officers decided to defy the government and threw their support behind the strikers.

One of the biases often expressed in studies of civil-military relations is the notion that the armed forces are isolated or autonomous from the rest of society. This is certainly not the case in Ecuador. The fact that the military draws its ranks primarily

[82] Delgado, 2000; 6

from middle and lower middle class families—those disproportionately effected by the economic crisis—certainly shaped the antidemocratic tendencies demonstrated by lower ranking officers in the 2000 coup.[83] The economic crisis of 1999-2000 saw the combination of increasing inflation and a dramatic decline in government expenditure on the military. The fact that the number of military conscripts was not diminished in response to these conditions had the net effect of a significant drop in the real wages for all military personnel. (Table 3.4) Thus, the dire circumstances faced by friends and relatives in civilian society whose bank accounts had been frozen and wages decimated by inflation, along with the rapidly declining personal economic situation of military personnel, combined to push a significant number of officers toward a rejection of the democratic regime. The social proximity to and intimate knowledge of the hardships faced by average citizens resonated with low-ranking officers and gave them the legitimacy needed to align with the protesting masses for a successful coup.

Table 3.4 Ecuador: Economic and Military Indicators 1995-2000

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
GDP*	$15.6bn	$17bn	$20bn	$20bn	$15bn	n/a
Growth	7.9%	2.0%	3.3%	0.9%	-7.0%	n/a
Inflation	22.9%	24.4%	30.7%	36.1%	52.3%	n/a
Debt	$14bn	$14bn	$15bn	$15.1bn	$16.1bn	n/a
Defense Expenditure**	$531m	$612m	$692m	$532m	$339m	n/a
Defense Budget	n/a	n/a	n/a	367m	339m	400m
Total Armed Forces	57,100	57,100	57,100	57,100	57,100	57,500

[83] Samuel Fitch writes of the Ecuadorian case that "military officers are heavily recruited from the middle class, particularly the public sector middle class, and in recent years, increasingly from the lower middle class." Arnson; 64

Source: Compiled from *The Military Balance 1995-2000* *all dollar amounts in 1998 US$ **includes extra-budgetary funding.

Finally, the military's involvement in economic development has given it a powerful lobby against economic reforms proposed by civilian governments. The previous chapter outlined several successful attempts by the military high command to derail privatization drives of the Durán Ballén administration. Similarly, the armed forces have actively opposed a wide range of neoliberal reforms and have openly criticized democratic leaders—significantly diverging from its constitutionally non-deliberate, apolitical role. For example, hosting a two-day conference of military officers and various civilians in 1995**,** top army officials were openly critical of the neoliberal economic model espoused by the Durán government. Officers emphatically condemned widespread civilian corruption and the absence of political leadership and the chief of Army General Staff argued that 'democracy' had brought neither justice nor development nor security.[84]

There is no doubt that the military's corporate interests have colored officer's assessment of civilian economic policy and that the armed forces' role in economic development has been incompatible with the achievement of a balance between public and private power needed to deepen democratic development. In sum, the military's broad internal mission has effectively enlarged scope of military autonomous action. Its role in socioeconomic development projects, justified by its perceived overarching

[84] Fitch; 89

mandate to defend the national interests of '*la Patria'* has lead to the military's assuming the task of political arbiter in absence of functioning democratic system.[85]

External Missions

The Ecuadorian armed forces, for nearly the entire twentieth century defined their external mission on ongoing border disputes with Peru. A war between the two countries in 1941 resulted in the loss of nearly half of Ecuador's eastern territory and served as a catalyst for the military's withdrawal from partisan politics and a concentration on professionalization. Renewed hostilities in 1981 and 1995, after the return to democracy, were used to justify the armed forces' budgetary autonomy and, in the absence of a cadre of highly trained civilian specialists, to direct the terms of military deployment and strategy. Exemplifying this trend, in 1982 the Ecuadorian Minister of Defense endorsed a suggestion by then president Hurtado for national debate on setting conditions for end to border hostilities with Peru. The Army Council of Generals expressed its opposition to the proposal that led to the hasty resignation of the Minister and Hurtado quickly dropped proposal. More recently, having brokered peace with Peru, the military has looked to the ongoing civil war of its northern neighbor, Colombia, for the definition of its 'external' mission. Concerned with the threats of armed incursions by guerrilla and paramilitary groups and the spread of transnational crime within Ecuadorian territory, the armed forces' new mission has increasingly focused on internal security and development. The insertion of the armed forces into the 'globalized' Colombian conflict—including

[85] The notion that Latin American armed forces have consistently justified political intervention in defense of the 'Motherland' or *la Patria* against any number of internal 'threats' including the chaos created by elected leaders' inability to effectively govern is examined in great detail in Brian Loveman's *For la Patria, Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America.*

significant monetary, diplomatic and humanitarian support from the U.S. and other Latin American countries—combined with the maintenance of operational autonomy has undermined the adoption of more democratic civil-military relations.

External conflicts, fought in the defense of sovereign territory have historically provided the armed forces with symbols and deeds that resonated with civilians and officers alike, serving as a basis for the rhetoric of national unity.[86] By successfully defending its border and avoiding ceding territory in the 1995 war of the Alto Cenepa, the Ecuadorian military claimed a moral victory that reinforced its institutional popularity and provided leverage in the bargaining for an increased budget. Even before the war, Ecuador's defense-related spending had been augmented as a response to border tensions. Between 1985 and 1994 there was a 57% real increase in defense spending, while the armed forces increased in size by 35%[87]. While these figures are high in comparison to both Brazil and Colombia during the same period, the defense budget of Peru was four times greater per-capita[88]. The 1995 border war and Peru's high level of military spending combined to reinforce the military's important mission as that of the protector of national sovereignty and afforded the armed forces added leverage in maintaining high economic prerogatives through 1998. (Table 3.5)

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[86] The author, over two years living in Ecuador (1997-00), observed the slogan "Ecuador es y siempre será país amazonico" (Ecuador is and will always be an Amazonian country) publicly displayed on the walls of military establishments. This slogan refers to the Ecuadorian claim to access at the headwaters of the Amazon River that has been the historic source of contention with Peru. Furthermore, ostensibly all political maps used in Ecuadorian public schools defined national territory extending to its pre-1941 limits with a dotted line demarcating the border as stipulated in the Rio Treaty.

[87] The Economist Intelligence Unit, Oct. 1996.

[88] U.S. Dept. of State from the World Wide Web: http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/economics/commercial_guides/Ecuador.html

Table 3.5 Ecuador: Military Expenditures 1985-1995

Year	Military Expenditures (ME) in 1995 US$ millions		Armed Forces	ME/GNP	ME/Central Government Expenditures
	Current	Constant (1995)	(Thousands)	%	%
1985	257	352	43	2.8	16.9
1986	282	376	44	2.9	16.7
1987	259	336	44	2.7	16.2
1988	301	376	46	2.7	18.5
1989	289	347	46	2.5	16.4
1990	392	450	53	3.2	20.4
1991	475	525	53	3.5	24.6
1992	515	554	57	3.5	25.4
1993	467	490	57	3.0	21.0
1994	574	589	57	3.6	21.8
1995	611	611	58	3.7	18.3

Source: US Department of State, Bureau of Verification and Compliance[89]

The signing of a permanent peace treaty (the 'Acta de Brasilia') with Peru in 1998 during the Mahuad administration, eliminated the direct external threat on the southeastern border but strained civil-military relations and required that the military redefine its external mission. With the signing of the permanent peace agreement President Mahuads' popularity soared, but the terms of the agreement created a source of contention with the military. Hailed as heroes for their successful defense of Ecuadorian territory in the 1995 armed conflict, the military perception that Mahuad's dealings had

[89] True expenditure on defense may not be accurately reflected due to unreported non-budgetary spending. Real spending may have in fact been doubled by the use of revenue from military owned/controlled businesses.

conceded too much to the Peruvian side weakened civil-military relations early in the administration.[90]

Since 1998, the rapidly intensifying internal conflict in Colombia and reports of incursions by members of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) into Ecuadorian territory served as a basis for increased military presence on the northern border and has facilitated a shift in the armed forces' mission toward an emphasis on internal national security. The threat of 'spillover' of armed groups, coca cultivation and drug trafficking from Colombia border has allowed the armed forces to lobby for increased government and international support and has redefined the military's internal-external mission.[91] The cumulative effect of the military's refocus on incursions by Colombian insurgents and the proliferation of illegal activity within Ecuador has been to increase the armed forces' focus on a mission based on the maintenance of internal security. In this context, military policies and funding have increasing moved into the political realm with the signing of a controversial accord with the United States for the use of a costal Air Force base, increased military aid from the U.S. as a part of the multinational Plan Colombia, and pressure on the Ecuadorian government for increased funding.

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[90] Describing the terms of the peace brokered in 1998 under Mahuad, Col. Alberto Molina writes the following: "Sin duda, resultó lesivo a los intereses históricos del país. La resolución fue aceptada por el pueblo ecuatoriano y por sus Fuerzas Armadas con verdadera resignación, forzados por las circunstancias." Molina; 10.

[91] In the article "Las FF.AA y su razón de ser" from the 130th edition (2000) of the military's journal—*Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas del Ecuador*—a perceived necesity for increased military presence and expenditure is articulated: "Está claro, puesto que con guerrilla y narcotráfic nunca más habría paz en nuestro país, y, consiguientemente, para que la paz acutalmente existente persevere es menester el constante y patriótico fortalecimiento de nuestro Ejército, de nuestra Marina y de nuestra Aviación Militar."

Table 3.6 US Security Assistance to the Western Hemisphere; By Country

Country	Estimated grant military and police assistance*			
	1997	1998	1999	2000
Ecuador	**$2,757,250**	**$5,270,000** 1,355 trained	**$12,243,068** 681 trained	**$24,428,000**

*These estimates are only educated guesses; these numbers should not be regarded as exact figures. Some programs included in these estimates pay for more than just military and police aid, but cost breakdowns are not yet available. Other programs, such as training exercises and deployments, are not included in these amounts because cost estimates are not yet available. These figures do not include arms sales.
Source: http://www.ciponline.org/facts/country.htm

The international monetary and technical assistance provided the Ecuadorian armed forces in reaction to the 'regionalization' of the Colombian conflict has served to buttress the military's redefined mission to both protect its borders against incursions and increase its involvement in internal development activities. Despite initial reactions against the concession of the costal Manta Air Force base to the United States for counter-narcotics reconnaissance missions on the premise that cooperation would draw the country into the Colombian civil-war, the military top brass has embraced the use of the base on the grounds that cooperation will provide much needed material support and intelligence information for troops stationed on the northern border.[92] U.S. aid to Ecuador's armed forces and police has grown from nearly $3 million in 1997 to over $24 million in 2000, and US investment for renovation of the Manta base's airstrip and other infrastructure has been estimated at $63 million. (Table 3.?)

The lack of congressional oversight of the armed forces has given the military autonomy in reshaping its mission and has mitigated against civilian attempts toward the

[92] General Jose Gallardo, personal communication, July 23, 2000.

subordination of the institution necessary to democratize the country's civil-military relationship. Repercussions of the military's redefined mission, formulated to adapt to the apparent disappearance of an external threat from its southern neighbor, has been a marked shift toward an increased role in maintaining internal security. While there is no doubt that the presence of the Ecuadorian military is needed to curb the deleterious effects of spillover from Colombia's civil war and the spread of international criminal elements into the country, the military's redefined mission, international support for counter-narcotics initiatives and its maintenance of autonomy from government oversight portend an increasing political role for the armed forces in the political system.

Conclusion

Historically, Latin American militaries have occupied an overtly political role in society. The Ecuadorian military's political role during much of the twentieth century was characterized by intermittent intervention of military factions to enact social and economic reforms in times of crisis. It is necessary to examine the periodic intervention of the armed forces in Ecuador as products of particular political and economic contexts, shaped by unique justifications and motivations.

Particularly salient in the analysis of Ecuadorian civil-military relations at present is the analysis of the military's intervention in 1972 and the subsequent transition to democratic governance. Coming on the eve of predicted oil boom and acting on the recently 'professionalized' military's perceived duty to promote the county's development through economic and social reforms, the Lara regime displaced the stalemated civilian government. The regime was only partially able to meet its goals of development due to internal and external pressures on its economic and social plans. Internal factions arose in politicized reaction to disagreements over the regime's reform policies that convinced the armed forces of the need to cede control of the government to elected officials in1979. The military's unwillingness to use repression to push through rapid reforms during its tenure had earned it a reputation of being a *dictablanda,* or "soft" dictatorship. This fact, in combination with the economic prosperity of the period, allowed the military regime significant leverage in the subsequent transition to civilian rule.

Using Stepan's model to measure the prerogatives retained by the military in the transition, it appears that Ecuador's armed forces were allowed a moderate to high level of *de jure* and *de facto* concessions. The military underwent a process of internal redefinition in the transition to civilian governance, but, rather than becoming a totally subordinate institution, the armed forces have carved themselves a niche as the "protectors of democracy"- a role that reserves the institution significant power in the political process. Recent evidence of the military's role as arbiter of political processes was particularly pronounced in its influence in the constitutionally questionable expulsions of both presidents Abdalá Bucarám and Jamil Mahuad.

While an analysis of the armed forces' expansion of *de facto* and *de jure* prerogatives provides a foundation upon which to understand the parameters of military political influence, it is necessary to examine the institution's missions and the political context in which these missions have evolved in order to understand the persistence of military autonomy and the structural factors that have allowed for its expansion over the past two decades. The inability of civilian governments to create a democratic civil-military relationship through subordination of the armed forces, the product of both the military's ability to protect its reserve domain of authority and the weakness of democratic legitimacy in the country, have combined to undermined the consolidation of Ecuadorian democracy.

The Ecuadorian military's mission, since the 1960s has included an internal component legitimizing its role in economic and social development projects. This constitutionally sanctioned internal mission has allowed the military to maintain

independent economic activities, the defense of which has led to overt military influence on policy that threatened the institution's corporate interests. Furthermore, through extensive civic-action, rural health and education projects, the military's internal mission has both crowded out effective civilian participation in these activities and provided the military with added political advantage vis-à-vis the civilian government.

The military's high level of political influence hampers the consolidation of democracy, and Ecuador's unconsolidated political institutions are limited in their ability to effectively subordinate the military. Since transition, weak leadership, instable and unresponsive political parties, and the inability, through electoral reforms, to create a strong civilian commitment to democracy, have created political deadlock and failed attempts at economic stability and growth. The aggregate effect of the Ecuadorian political system's ineffectiveness has been to de-legitimize democratic institutions and bolster the armed forces' claim to a political voice. Until the elected government is able to consolidate its power and gain the trust of its constituents, and until the military can somehow de-politicize its political role and shore up its destabilizing fractures, Ecuador's undemocratic civil-military relationship will continue to undermine the consolidation of an effective democratic regime.

It is evident that to achieve democratic civil-military relations in Ecuador will require supreme efforts on the part of the civilian leadership. It will be imperative that democratic actors work together to reduce the political power of the military over the government and extend civilian authority to include control over defense policy and incorporating the armed forces within the rule of law. Similarly, it will be necessary to

create an institutional framework through which this democratic control is actively maintained. Given the current state of instability and lack of an antimilitary constituency within the Ecuadorian political system, there is very little optimism that these measures will be taken. While the restrictions placed on military budgetary autonomy—eliminating fixed petroleum revenues—was an encouraging sign, the military, even when at its weakest in the aftermath of the 2000 coup, has been able to avoid any other efforts to curtail its prerogatives and further subordinate it to the civilian regime.

In the long run, the Ecuadorian democratic consolidation will require profound changes in the political system to regain legitimacy through effective governance. While Noboa's ability to steer the country through the dollarization process and engage leaders of the indigenous movement in meaningful dialogue with relative success have been an hopeful signs, his administration has missed opportunities to further strengthen democratic governance by subordinating the military to civilian control. The blanket amnesties granted those officers involved in the 2000 coup underscored the government's inability or unwillingness to subject the armed forces to the rule of law and have emphasized the strength of the military vis-à-vis the civilian government. Similarly, a recent military 'payola' scandal has drawn public attention to issues of civil-military relations, but while weakening the armed forces' claims to institutional honesty and discipline, has hardly produced a significant constituency for military subordination to elected officials.

Ecuador's upcoming elections—to be held in October 2002-- hold an uncertain future for civil-military relations. At present, former-president Leon Febres Cordero

(PSE) and the PRE's candidate Alvaro Noboa (who lost by a narrow margin to Jamil Mahuad in the second round of the 1998 elections) are leading the polls. Both parties have historically had tenuous relationships with the military and are the most likely to challenge the armed forces' autonomy. With the recent resignation of the commanders of all three branches of the military following a well-publicized scandal implicating several high ranking generals, the military—through the Ministry of Defense—has recently pushed a campaign to initiate dialogue with civil society leaders concerning their societal role.[93] Given the current context, the opportunity exists to begin a reevaluation of the civil-military relationship. Whether this step will be taken by the incoming government remains to be seen.

Ecuador's road to democratic consolidation is fraught with obstacles. Since transition, the consequences of repeated, deep economic crisis, increased social inequalities and a political system that has failed to provide the necessary channels for meaningful and widespread participation have combined to de-legitimate the democratic system. Exacerbating these weaknesses in the democratic system is the military's significant reserve domain of authority and increasing political influence. Ecuador has witnessed a vicious circle in which democratic consolidation has been undermined by the combination of a weak political system and autonomous armed forces with important resources, power and a self-defined internal 'duty' to protect the greater interests of the 'Nation.' The military's increasingly paternalistic approach to the civil-military

[93] The Ecuadorian newspaper, El Comercio, reported on March 25, 2002, the initiation of a project to reassess civil-military relations in the wake of recent scandals: "En Ecuador, este enero, la elaboración del 'Libro Blanco' pasó de ser un ingrediente de un plan a largo plazo, a una prioridad urgente; motivada por la serie de denuncias lanzadas en los últimos tiempos contra altos militares de FF.AA."

relationship can be likened to that of an over-bearing parent—dubious of the government's 'maturity,' the armed forces repeated intervention in moments of political crisis have, in turn, stunted the growth of effective democratic processes.

In conclusion, Ecuador's particular civil-military relationship has created what S.J. Valenzuela identifies as a cycle of 'perverse institutionalization' inimical to democratic consolidation. The armed forces' maintenance and expansion of a reserve domain of authority and its increasingly tutelary role in the Ecuadorian political area have undermined the development of the institutions and political culture necessary for effective democratic governance. Furthermore, the message sent by the armed force in its role as political arbiter is that compliance with the electoral, constitutional procedure for substituting governments is merely conditional—that the armed forces can and will act deliberately to create 'order' when civilian leaders reach a political impasse.

APPENDIX A

Selected Prerogatives of Military as Institution in a Democratic Regime

Prerogative	Low	Medium	High
Constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in political system;	None. Military actions to bolster internal or external security only undertaken when ordered by the appropriate executive officials within a framework established by legal system and legislature.	Despite legal and constitutional restrictions, military has a de facto independent political role as the result of unilateral actions, executive and/or legislative passivity, or tacit approval because of perceived domestic or foreign security threats	Constitution allocates primary responsibility for internal law and order to the military and implicitly gives the military great decisional latitude in determining when and how to carry out their responsibility
Military relationship to chief executive:	Chief executive (president, prime minister or monarch) is de jure and de facto commander in chief	De facto control of the armed forces is in the hands of the uniformed active-duty service commanders	De jure and de facto control of the armed forces is in the hands of the uniformed active duty officer, who serves as chief executive.
Coordination of defense sector;	De jure and de facto, done by cabinet level official (normally a civilian appointed by chief executive) who controls a staff with extensive participation by professional civil servants and/or civilian political appointees	De jure done by cabinet level official, de facto done by service chiefs with weak or nonexistent supervision by joint general staff and with weak comprehensive planning by chief executive	De jure and de facto, done by service chiefs separately, possibly with significant supervision by joint general staff.
Acitve-duty military participation in the Cabinet:	Normally none.	Active duty commanders of each service serve in Cabinet in ministers of their service.	Uniformed military officers head a variety of ministries, especially those associated with national security (e.g.. Intelligence, internal affairs, etc.).
Role of legislature:	Most major policy issues affecting military budgets, and force structures are monitored	Legislature has de jure oversight and appropriation authority but	Legislature simply approves or disapproves executive's budget. No legislative tradition of

	by the legislature. Cabinet-level officials and their chief aides routinely appear before legislative committees to advocate and defend defense policy.	routinely defers to civilian defense and uniformed military chiefs on defense matters. Legislative committees consist of pro-military representatives.	detailed hearings on defense matters. Military rarely provide legislature with detailed information and top defense officials rarely testify.
Role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees:	Professional cadre of highly informed civil servants or policy-making civilian political appointees play a major role in designing and implementing defense policy.	Defense civil servants and civilian political appointees play a pro-forma role in making and executing defense policy.	Active duty military officers fill almost all top defense sector staff roles. Civilian participants normally do so as employees of the military services.
Role of intelligence:	Peak intelligence agencies de jure and de facto controlled by civilian chains of command. Strong civilian review boards.	Peak intelligence agencies divided between civilian and military chains of command. Legislative oversight largely pro forma.	Peak intelligence agencies controlled by active duty general-level officers who combine intelligence gathering and operational functions. No independent review boards or legislative oversight.
Role in police:	Police under control of nonmilitary ministry and/or local officials. No active-duty military allowed to command a police unit. Military performs police function only temporarily in declared emergency situations.	Police under control of non-military ministry and/or local officials. Active duty military officers allowed to serve in police. Military performing police functions in portions of country where local police require assistance for prolonged period.	Police under overall direct command of military and most local police chiefs are active-duty military.
Role in military promotions:	Promotions governed by legislative act. Uniformed military promotion boards make recommendations to Cabinet-level officials who in turn make recommendations to executive. Executive can exercise great discretion in approving recommendations.	Promotions governed by legislative act, but recommendations by uniformed military promotion boards are rarely challenged by civilian defense officials and chief executive.	Military services have de jure and de facto control over promotions. Executive constrained in choosing from promotion lists forwarded by military services.

Role in state and commercial enterprises:	Only exceptionally does an active-duty military officer head a state enterprise. Military services do not have commercial enterprises that augment their appropriations.	Military reserve, but not active-duty officers routinely found in high positions in state enterprises. Senior military officers may own commercial enterprises or operate military transport or other units on a commercial basis.	Active-duty officers traditionally control key state enterprises. Senior military officers routinely own commercial enterprises and operate military transport or other units on a commercial basis.
Role in legal system:	Military have almost no legal jurisdiction outside of narrowly defined internal offenses against military discipline. In all areas outside this domain, civilians and military are subject to civil laws and civil courts.	Military jurisprudence has been temporarily or selectively extended to specific areas of political activity and civil society in response to national or local emergency.	National security laws and military court system cover large areas of political activity and civil society. Domain where military can be tried in civil courts is very narrow.
Role in society:	Citizens and elite's do not regard military as the most important institution or profession. Other public and private organizations/professions are perceived as more important in developing national leaders/managers, and loyal and productive citizens.	Citizens and elite's hold military in high regard, but view it as an attractive profession for a small segment of society. Military service is not required for personal advancement. Retired senior military officers well represented in civilian elite.	Citizens and elite regard military as one of, if not the most important organization in society. Military has major socialization role in society and former military officers dominate political/economic/social elite's.

Based on information from Table 7.1, "Selected Prerogatives of Military as Institution in a Democratic Regime," in Alfred C. Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, 94-97.

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