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## REVIEW ESSAYS

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### THE ARMED FORCES AND POLITICS: Gains and Snares in Recent Scholarship

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- MILITARY RULE IN LATIN AMERICA.* By Karen Remmer. (Boston, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, 1989. Pp. 213. \$32.50 cloth.)
- THE MILITARY AND SOCIETY IN HAITI.* By Michel S. Laguerre. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993. Pp. 223. \$29.95 cloth.)
- THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY: THE FUTURE OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA.* Edited by Louis W. Goodman, Johanna S. R. Mendelson, and Juan Rial. (Lexington, Ky.: Lexington Books, 1990. Pp. 326. \$45.95 cloth.)
- MILITARISM AND POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA: PERU FROM SANCHEZ CERRO TO SENDERO LUMINOSO.* By Daniel M. Masterson. (New York: Greenwood, 1991. Pp. 345. \$47.95 cloth.)
- THE TIME OF THE GENERALS: LATIN AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL MILITARISM IN WORLD PERSPECTIVE.* By Frederick M. Nunn. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. Pp. 349. \$50.00 cloth.)
- RETHINKING MILITARY POLITICS: BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN CONE.* By Alfred Stepan. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988. Pp. 167. \$25.00 cloth, \$9.95 paper.)
- VIGILANTISM AND THE STATE IN MODERN LATIN AMERICA: ESSAYS ON EXTRALEGAL VIOLENCE.* Edited by Martha K. Huggins. (New York: Praeger, 1991. Pp. 266. \$47.95 cloth.)
- DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE: NEW MILITARY POWER IN LATIN AMERICA.* Edited by Augusto Varas. (New York: Greenwood, 1989. Pp. 222. \$39.95 cloth.)

DEMOCRACY VS. NATIONAL SECURITY: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA. By Paul W. Zagorski. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1992. Pp. 216. \$35.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

As Latin America continues to pursue the democratic option, questions about the political role of the armed forces are likely to linger until competitive systems become firmly consolidated. Were the setbacks suffered by de facto regimes of the past severe enough and widespread enough to dissuade coup attempts in the future? Has the transition toward democracy already heralded a new era in civil-military relations, or is it prefiguring a cyclical reversion to the past? After abandoning office, did the armed forces nonetheless preserve their capacity to constrain or even undo elected regimes? Are patterns of military political thought changing in step with democratization, lagging behind it, or not changing at all? These and other important questions are raised by the literature under review here.

"La cuestión militar" persists in part because the Latin American military has yet to be transformed into a "Huntingtonian-style" professional force, devoid of political conviction or motivation. Perhaps it never will be. Indeed, this goal is an elusive one for a region marked by decades of military praetorianism. Even the more professionalized armies in Latin America have been neither politically inert nor passive, nor can they be fully cleansed of political bias in the future. As a pressure group with interests and ideologies to defend as well as a near monopoly on defense-related expertise, Latin American armed forces will likely be part of the political equation for some time to come. But how much a part, and on whose terms will this participation occur?

"La cuestión militar" also persists because resolutions to critical intellectual problems have eluded military scholarship for so long. Each new wave of Latin American literature seems to float more questions ashore than it takes away. For example, studies on authoritarian rule came to grips adequately enough with the social, economic, and political currents that swept dictators into power. But those same studies missed the mark when they sought to explain regime persistence or breakdown according to contextual preconditions rather than post-coup and regime-centered political dynamics, institutional arrangements, and strategic choices. Until recently, therefore, scholars have remained largely in the dark about what it is that authoritarian regimes actually do. Scholarship on military intervention dwelled mainly on the institution's defense of corporate or social-class interests rather than on its defense of ideologically derived beliefs and perceptions. The consequence is that specialists know far less about the subjective dimension of military politics than we should. Moreover, our studies have been impoverished by lack of a full range of variables that could help account more persuasively for military

behavior. Finally, the most current wave of studies on the armed forces and democratization focuses much more attention on the problems caused by power-hungry generals than on the opportunities created by self-interested politicians. Consequently, the prognosis for the future of Latin American democracy appears bleaker than it should.

The three issues alluded to above—military rule, military political thought, and democratization—constitute the themes around which this review will be organized. In this manner, the commonalities and differences among the books of one genre or another can be brought to the fore, and these readings can be more easily situated in a broader discussion of the armed forces and politics.

### *Military Rule Revisited*

It would seem that after three decades of scholarship on military intervention and authoritarian rule in the Latin America, there would be little else to say on the topic. Since the publication of Alfred Stepan's *The Military in Politics* in 1971, countless books and articles have followed detailing the breakdown of democracies and the rise of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. Why revisit the theme in the 1990s? Paradoxically, despite all the attention devoted by the academic community to dictatorships, few studies ever provided so much as a glimpse of the inner structure or workings of these regimes. Why did some dictatorships collapse while others endured? Why did some use terror as a first resort while others seemed more tolerant? And why did some exhibit huge policy successes while others failed? Attempts have been made to answer these questions, but nearly all analyses focused on societal factors that caused and conditioned the installation of authoritarian regimes rather than on the regimes themselves.

That pattern was finally broken with the publication of Genaro Arriagada's *Pinochet: The Politics of Power* in 1988<sup>1</sup> and Karen Remmer's *Military Rule in Latin America* in 1989. Both these excellent studies made the much-needed transition in focus from society to state and from pre-coup to post-coup developments. As Remmer explains, the transition was necessary because analyses that sought to account for regime behavior in terms of prior conditions had proven to be inadequate. For instance, Guillermo O'Donnell had argued that military regimes were bound to display greater unity where higher levels of popular activation had posed more serious threats to the ruling coalition.<sup>2</sup> But despite the steep escala-

1. Genaro Arriagada, *Pinochet: The Politics of Power*, translated by Nancy Morris (Boston, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

2. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Modernization and Military Coups: The Argentine Case," in *Armies and Politics in Latin America, Revised Edition*, edited by Abraham F. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch (New York: Holmes and Meier), 114–18.

tion of guerrilla violence, labor unrest, and student militancy just before the Argentine coup in 1976, the Proceso Militar regime that followed had no more success than its predecessor military regime of 1966–1973, which had taken over in a climate of comparative political tranquility. Furthermore, the greatest examples of regime durability in South America during the 1960s and 1970s were found in Brazil and Chile, countries experiencing low and high levels of pre-coup threat respectively.

Remmer argues, "The forces that shape authoritarian rule are not fixed at the time of regime emergence" (p. 31). She therefore counsels, "It might be more appropriate to begin thinking about authoritarianism in terms that are less societal-centered and less preoccupied with the conditions associated with the installation and breakdown of democracy" (p. 31) and more preoccupied with institutional arrangements instead. How regimes are organized impacts directly on the strength and cohesion of the armed forces, which in turn affect the durability of the regime itself.

In the Chilean case, stability was forged by concentrating authority in the hands of a single dictator, fusing military and governmental roles, and intimidating or eliminating the opposition. Policy continuity was insured by providing fewer entry points for political or military rivals to derail the neoliberal project. According to Remmer, Pinochet succeeded in these tasks because he could draw on a Chilean tradition of military nondeliberation, social isolation, and rigid hierarchical organization. Hence, in her view, historical and institutional traits account largely for the personal successes of Augusto Pinochet.

Although Remmer de-emphasizes the role of personal leadership, she does not ignore it in recounting the specific strategies that Pinochet deployed to protect and enhance his power. Likewise, Arriagada devotes considerable attention to the Chilean leader's machinations, detailing the ways in which he manipulated promotions, retirements, appointments, and rank to his own advantage. It is important to keep sight of the fact that what started as an institutionalized authoritarian regime in 1973 was transformed into a personalistic dictatorship in short order. Although the thought is counterfactual, one can hardly imagine another general with much less cunning, imagination, and tenacity having been able to transform so dramatically and solidify the regime to the extent that Pinochet did. Without strong leadership, who is to say that the Chilean regime would not have degenerated into a feudal-like arrangement as happened in Argentina? For this reason, it is worthwhile for scholars to explore the interactions among individual leadership, institutions, and regime structure when seeking to account for variations in regime durability and performance.

Nowhere is the role of the cunning dictator more apparent than in the case of Haiti under the Duvaliers. Like the studies by Arriagada and

Remmer, Michel Laguerre's *The Military and Society in Haiti* makes important contributions to knowledge of how authoritarian regimes consolidate themselves, based not on preconditions but on institutional arrangements and strategic decisions made by those at the centers of power. If any nation has been marred by regime instability, it is Haiti. Between 1902 and 1957, Haiti had twenty-two military and civilian presidents, each lasting an average of only two and a half years. Almost all these heads of state failed to serve out their full terms because they were overturned by insurrectionary coups d'état. This history contrasts sharply with the first and second Duvalier administrations, which together ruled Haiti unobstructed for twenty-nine years. How could François and Jean-Claude Duvalier have survived for so long within a profoundly unstable political system? Laguerre's book, along with Arriagada's and Remmer's, helps to unravel the mystery.

The gulf separating Haiti from Chile—whether expressed in terms of economic development, human capital, or military professionalization—is huge. Yet despite the obvious differences, striking parallels emerge on comparing these accounts of the two personalistic dictatorships and the explanations offered for their longevity. Both Augusto Pinochet and François Duvalier specialized in the art of divide and rule. Duvalier personally supervised the dismissal of officers he feared and the assignment of those he trusted. Like Pinochet, he short-circuited the path of communication that traditionally had prohibited subordinates from initiating direct contacts with senior government officials. He did so by creating a dual hierarchy that permitted slightly lower-ranking officers to keep tabs on the activities of superiors and report directly to Duvalier in return for increased incomes and other privileges. Like his Chilean counterpart, Duvalier also dispersed power within the military institution while concentrating power in his own hands. For instance, he first decreased the power of the army's general staff and then created rival organizational units that were all answerable to him. Second, Duvalier's use of intelligence networks to keep both army and society off balance paralleled Pinochet's deployment of the DINA (Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia).

One fundamental difference in strategy emerges between the two cases. Whereas François Duvalier weakened the Haitian military professionally, Pinochet preserved it (albeit in a tarnished state, according to Arriagada). Having observed the way the army had overrun the government of Dumarsais Estime (1946–1950), Duvalier vowed to emasculate the institution so that a similar fate would not befall him. He accomplished this goal in three ways: by allowing poorly trained but highly loyal non-commissioned officers to rise quickly through the ranks; by closing down the military academy and thus depriving highly trained officers of career opportunities; and by establishing a feared parallel force made up of

civilians and soldiers, the Tonton Macoutes. The surprising durability of these two regimes speaks to the unique advantages that sultanistic dictatorships seem to possess over others. Able to dispense with institutional checks and balances and to avoid bureaucratic encumbrances, such dictators have great freedom to maneuver. They can thus respond quickly, adroitly, and efficiently to problems as soon as they emerge.

All dictatorships, whether personalistic or institutionalized, must concern themselves with the inherent contradiction between the military as an institution and the military as a profession. As María Susana Ricci and Samuel Fitch argue in the edited volume entitled *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, "In military regimes, the critical question is the relation between those officers that hold governmental office and the rest of the armed forces" (p. 56). If those with political power keep the rest of the military at arm's length, then it becomes difficult for members of the military to reflect and represent accurately the corporate interests of their own institution. Conversely, if the lines between government and profession become blurred as they are when the armed forces becomes the government (as in the Argentine Proceso) or when military and political roles are otherwise fused (as in Pinochet's Chile), then the officer corps may unwittingly be forced to choose sides in policy disputes that can erode professional unity and discipline. In the end, Ricci and Fitch conclude, "military government is a contradiction in terms; the armed forces cannot govern without subverting their own essence" (p. 68). Remmer argues, however, that the tensions inherent in blending military and political roles were rather well muted by Pinochet for an extended period of time, so much so that those tensions never become serious enough to cause a regime crisis. This apparent success contrasts sharply with the Argentine Proceso, where the tripartite division of governmental functions among the three branches of the armed forces only widened preexisting institutional rifts.

The Chilean experience also contrasts distinctly with that of Peru, as recounted by Dan Masterson in *Militarism and Politics in Latin America: Peru from Sánchez Cerro to Sendero Luminoso*. He portrays a set of difficulties arising from the mingling of professional and political roles. A long line of Peruvian autocrats, spanning nearly half a century, attempted unsuccessfully to solidify their hold on executive office by fashioning a politically loyal officer corps in their own image. This tradition began with President Augusto Leguía, who ruled Peru in an eleven-year period called *el oncenio* (1919–1930). As Masterson relates, "Rather than risk dealing with the existing army establishment, the autocrat cunningly built a cadre of army supporters through selective and often unscheduled promotions and transfers" (p. 30). This approach seemed effective, at least in the short run. Like Pinochet decades later, Leguía demanded utter political loyalty: those who gave it were advanced; those who did not were

purged. But whereas Pinochet's manipulation of the promotion and retirement system enhanced his command over the forces, Leguía's eventually undermined his control. Politicization of the process adversely affected morale and stirred up dissent, especially among junior Peruvian officers who finally teamed up with Lieutenant Colonel Luis Sánchez Cerro to overthrow Leguía in 1930.

Similar fates befell a long line of Peruvian leaders who could not harness the power of the armed forces to advance their own interests. Military factionalism and rebellion seemed to plague one administration after the next, whether it was the more personalistic variety of General Manuel Odría, (1948–1956) or the more institutionalized variety of General Juan Velasco's *Revolución de Arriba* (1968–1975).

Why were efforts to bond soldiers politically to the government so lethal to regime maintenance in Peru yet so successful in Chile? The books under review provide no clear-cut answers, although some plausible hypotheses emerge. For one, the Chilean armed forces, as Remmer states, were traditionally well insulated from civil society, which made it more difficult for interest groups and parties to penetrate the organization's boundaries and establish political beachheads of alliance with one faction or another. In Peru the armed forces were more permeable to societal influences. As Masterson demonstrates, for decades the APRA party (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*) effectively exploited cleavages within the services, cultivating support among junior officers that often precipitated reform-minded revolts against the military command or hard-line coups that sought reprisals against APRA for its meddling. Another helpful finding is that it was the combined manipulation of promotions for political gain and the adroit utilization of terror and surveillance that allowed Pinochet to survive. DINA's watchful eye kept potential adversaries in check, inside and outside the military organization. Masterson's account suggests that in Peru, executive leaders never unleashed the full powers of the intelligence or security arms of the state. Thus rival centers of power within military and civil society could more easily develop and did.

The scholarship reviewed here does not singularly or collectively solve the puzzle as to why some authoritarian regimes succeeded while others failed or why institutional cohesion was preserved in some instances but not in others. Nevertheless, the greater attention to regime-level variables displayed in these works begins to throw more light on subjects that have escaped the glare of scholarly scrutiny for years.

### *Military Political Thought and Professionalism*

For too long, the subject of military political thought was a kind of forgotten and maligned stepchild to the more favored analysis of military

corporate interests and behavior. In some instances, the military's own reticence to be interviewed and speak candidly about political issues dissuaded many scholars from pursuing this avenue. Yet as those of us who have worked hard to develop contacts within the armed forces will readily attest, recently retired officers (who are still well placed to know official military thinking) are often quite willing to be interviewed and can be surprisingly candid in their responses to questions. Moreover, information has long been available in military journals, speeches, and conferences, a situation suggesting that for many other scholars, the subject was simply distasteful and unworthy of consideration.

Another misguided assumption pervading the literature has been that military ideology is nothing more than jargon concealing the "real motives" for political action. These supposedly rhetorical disguises have been viewed as having no inherent value because they either originate in the underlying pursuit of political and economic advantage or are ad hoc rationalizations for behavior motivated by self-interest rather than by demonstrations of conviction. Hence comes the old adage that if you want to understand the armed forces, observe what they do, not what they say they will do. It would perhaps be more accurate to assume that the military can be and has been driven by both ideas and interests. Motives vary, and only careful empirical investigations across regimes and time periods would reveal when and where ideological commitment prevailed over political expediency, vice versa, or the two were joined.

In theory, a case could be made for the primacy of ideology. Empirically, scholars would then observe cases where ideas were not conveniently invented just prior to a coup but had permeated the ranks years before and were consistently elaborated in military writings and by instructors within key superior war colleges. Second, scholars would note that military institutions and governments did not instantly jettison their views when they were no longer needed. And third, scholars would observe carefully the time sequence between doctrinal innovations and reformulations on the one hand and changes in military behavior on the other in order to establish some cause and effect. Fortunately, several of the authors under review here have paid attention to these and other related patterns.

Frederick Nunn is one of the few specialists on the Latin American military who have taken the military mind-set seriously. With his landmark study *Yesterday's Soldiers: European Military Professionalism in South America, 1890–1940* (1983) and now his companion volume titled *The Time of the Generals: Latin American Professional Militarism in World Perspective*, Nunn has established himself as one of the leading students of the development of military political thought. Based on his encyclopedic review of writings in sixty-five defense-related professional journals, he finds far more continuity than discontinuity in military political thought over



time. Today's soldiers are yesterday's soldiers, enamored with the same ageless concepts of national interest, national security, geopolitical domination, and development. The problem is that the rush of events has rapidly altered the environment in which today's officers live. In response, they valiantly cling to an idealized past rather than adjust their mentality to a new day. Thus military thought reveals a timelessness that transcends particular periods and reflects an ongoing military desire for stability and continuity.

These themes persist across space as well. According to Nunn, "National security, as conveyed in Argentine military literature, was much the same as it was in Peruvian and Brazilian journals" (p. 217). In reviewing military literature throughout the region, he found no essential differences in the self-justifying circularity of military logic that links geopolitics to national security and to development. Here Nunn may exaggerate the extent of uniformity in military thinking. Fundamental differences in logic and emphasis can be found in military writings that may help account for divergences in military behavior. The point is not whether the themes of geopolitics, national security, and development mattered to Latin American soldiers but rather how each group of officers proposed to effect those objectives. In Peru the argument was made that by alleviating the social and economic stresses generated by underdevelopment and inequitable patterns of landownership, national security would be secured. According to Edgardo Mercado Jarrín, Peru's leading theoretician and interpreter of national security ideology, the prevailing idea was that "development implies well-being and well-being implies security."<sup>3</sup> The logic was reversed in the Southern Cone: there national security was to be imposed first via repression; only then would the groundwork have been laid for development. The contrast in direction of influence takes on added significance when it corresponds to the divergent policy paths taken by these military-led regimes.

Because the Brazilian, Peruvian, and Argentine militaries shared the same French mentors, their writings took on a "comparable tone of self-justification and self-legitimation," according to Nunn (p. 214). Yet once in power, their interpretations of French doctrine differed markedly. The Peruvian generals, who called themselves revolutionaries, were ready to nationalize the economy in pursuit of a nondependent formula for development. Brazilian officers, in contrast, were more conservative and internationalist in their approach, preferring state involvement but within a neoliberal economic framework. The Argentine leaders of the Proceso were even more conservative and market-oriented, advocating (although not achieving) minimal state involvement in economic affairs. In a similar

3. Mercado Jarrín is quoted in David Pion-Berlin, "Latin American National Security Doctrines: Hard- and Soft-line Themes," *Armed Forces and Society* 15 (Spring 1989):417.

vein, Masterson argues that the Peruvian soldiers (like their Argentine counterparts) took the lessons of French counterrevolutionary tacticians seriously. Both armies went on to engage in counterinsurgency wars of their own, with French manuals in hand. Why then did a hard-line version of the national security doctrine evolve in Argentina in contrast to the soft-line version in Peru?<sup>4</sup> If the French influence was as important as claimed, then why the contrasts in economic and security-related policies?

At this juncture, the baby need not be thrown out with the bath water. The ideological dimension can be easily salvaged by suggesting that each military organization practiced selective vision, magnifying those components of the doctrine it liked and losing sight of the rest. Moreover, how each group chose to translate doctrine into praxis was undoubtedly mediated by its own country-specific experiences and consequently differed.

Jack Child, writing in *The Military and Democracy*, the volume edited by Louis Goodman, Johanna Mendelson, and Juan Rial, perceives more intraregional variation in military political thought than Nunn does. Child notes that within Southern Cone geopolitical writing, "two distinct currents of geopolitical literature were evident: a highly nationalistic and aggressive current . . . and an integrative current" (p. 158). Although the nationalistic current dominated the literature during the 1960s and 1970s, a shift toward the integrative has occurred since the war over the Malvinas in 1982. Changes of this kind are significant because they occasionally foreshadow or even stimulate behavioral adaptations. For example, Child detects a more aggressive tone emerging in the Argentine and Chilean writings just prior to and during the crisis over the Beagle Channel in 1977 and 1978.

In *Rethinking Military Politics*, Alfred Stepan treats military political doctrine similarly as an evolving body of literature rather than an intellectually static set of ideas. The Brazilian national security doctrine, as formulated within the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG), was a transitional one. What started out in the 1950s and 1960s as a conceptual vehicle for coup-minded officers evolved in the 1970s into a justification for political liberalization that included some forms of opposition, participation, and elections. Through a shift in its ideological discourse, the ESG allowed those in power to "appropriate meanings used by civil society" and in that manner neutralize their societal opposition while narrowing the alternatives available to hard-line officers (p. 50).

As important as the Brazilian Escola Superior de Guerra and the Peruvian Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (CAEM) were in shaping the military mind-sets in those countries, their influence over military government policy per se has been greatly overstated, according to Stepan

4. *Ibid.*, 411–29.

and Masterson. In Brazil, the ESG lost considerable influence soon after the coup in 1964. And by the early 1970s, when Generals Ernesto Geisel and Golbery do Cuoto e Silva were busy formulating the plot to liberalize Brazil, the ESG was lagging well behind. According to Stepan, it never constituted the intellectual nerve center for policy initiative or innovation during the "*abertura*," although it remained the "authorized source of military ideology" for years (p. 47).

In the Peruvian case, the findings are similar but more unexpected. Masterson's *Military and Politics in Latin America* disputes the conventional theory about CAEM influence, arguing that it never really established the doctrinal underpinnings of the Velasco reforms. Instead, nearly all those intimately involved in both the plot to overthrow Belaúnde Terry and the subsequent military government had spent their formative years as commanders in the army intelligence service. According to Masterson, "The intelligence service was heavily involved in the conspiracy, [while] CAEM's influence was negligible" (p. 231). More surprising is his contention that this intelligence-gathering agency served as the institutional hub for ideological radicalism in the Peruvian military. Why would this be so, when intelligence agencies in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and elsewhere have historically harbored the most right-wing officers? Masterson does not address this intriguing question.

### *The Armed Forces and Democratization*

The completed transition to democratic rule in South America has necessarily shifted the center of scholarly focus from military regimes to civil-military relations. The rebirth of democracy in the region has also prompted special interest in the civilian control aspects of that relation. But the historical traditions of military praetorianism in the region, the legacy of authoritarian rule, and the terms of transitions toward democracy all seem to have raised doubts among scholars about whether Latin American governments can ever subject the armed forces fully to their political will. Most of the books under review certainly reflect that apprehension to one degree or another, but how warranted is it? Although few would dispute the fact that the military retains influence despite having left office, its power is neither limitless nor uniform nor directed toward a single end. Moreover, civilian leaders have achieved significant victories in the battle to win military allegiance, triumphs that have often escaped the notice of these authors and thus rendered some of their relatively recent volumes outdated.

Three problem areas need to be addressed. The first is the issue of continuity versus discontinuity. The heavy hand of Latin American history always appears at work among Latin American specialists, who seem to believe that the armed forces, after having sampled the fruits of

political influence and conquest for so many years, are unlikely to lose their taste for them. Scholars presume either that the transfer of authority from military to civilian hands may have been more superficial than real or that the military's formal departure from power might represent not the end of a political cycle but rather its continuation. They also argue that acceptance of democratic transitions by antidemocratic forces, whether transacted through political pacts or not, is predicated on preserving corporate prerogatives or retaining repressive features of the state or both.

These and other authoritarian carryovers are fully discussed in *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence*, edited by Martha Huggins. She and her contributors generally contend that legal reforms preserve the façade of democratic rule while extralegal violence grows unchecked. They claim that military and police forces, death squads, and lynch mobs continue to torture and murder with impunity, leading them to question "whether such a transition [from authoritarian to democratic rule] is really occurring" (p. 3). The contributors also note that legally protected police violence is rationalized by its practitioners as a "war on crime" rather than as a "war against radical subversion." But although the discourse has changed slightly, the line between crime control and repression is hardly visible in practice when military or police units launch unrestricted sweeps through lower-class neighborhoods to liquidate the "internal enemy." Thus for these authors, the terrorist state is once again rearing its ugly head, veiled only thinly by democratic rhetoric.

Many of the contributors to *Vigilantism and the State* seem to jump from describing widespread vigilantism to concluding either that the authoritarian state persists or that the democratic state is under siege. Neither conclusion seems advisable. Certainly, many of the region's security forces resort to excessive violence, are vulnerable to all forms of corruption, and have little regard for legal niceties. But rather than signaling a dangerous continuation or reversion to authoritarianism, these realities underscore the more limited problem that the newly democratic governments have been unable to properly fund, train, or control their security forces. Huggins is closer to the mark in observing how the fiscal crisis of these debt-ridden capitalist states leaves financially strapped governments without the wherewithal to reign in renegade police. Moreover, although it is regrettable that vigilantism has produced unprecedented levels of individual insecurity and anxiety in many Latin American societies, urban dwellers in Detroit, Los Angeles, and other major U.S. cities are certainly familiar with these experiences.

The second conceptual problem with the literature has to do with usage of the term *military autonomy*. *Autonomy* refers broadly to the independence with which political actors behave. Often unnoticed in the liter-

ature is the fact that there are benign as well as malignant forms of military autonomy. The benign manifestation is both institutional and defensive, aimed at furthering professional advancement while insulating officers from interference from societal and governmental actors. The malignant form is political and offensive, designed to strengthen the military's decision-making powers by attempting to encroach on the governing authority's sphere of influence. Although reversion to dangerous and politically offensive projects cannot be ruled out, recent research indicates that in the last decade, Latin American armed forces have become more interested in self-governance within the confines of their own institutional sphere rather than in political governance or deliberation outside their sphere. A new ceiling to power exists that the armed forces cannot or prefer not to break.<sup>5</sup>

In failing to disaggregate this concept, many of the authors under review here identify only the malignant variety of military autonomy. They mistakenly presume that all accretions in military power are political in intent and destructive in their consequences. For example, in *Democracy under Siege*, Augusto Varas speaks of the armed forces gaining greater independence from social forces and the state as providing them with "new sources of political power," which has already weakened civilian control (p. 3). The "autonomous adjustment" that he describes extends veto powers to the military and entails high levels of state militarization. In a similar vein, contributors to *The Military and Democracy* warn about new armies in the region that are autonomous from the state and segmented from society. Elsewhere, Paul Zagorski's *Democracy vs. National Security: Civil-Military Relations in Latin America* identifies a postnational security state in which the military has managed to preserve and defend a broad array of prerogatives accumulated over past eras. All these studies share the presumption that military corporateness stands in the way of civilian control and ultimately in the way of democratic consolidation.

The skeptics want to have it both ways. On the one hand, they lament the past, when civilian meddling in military affairs resulted in more fragmented and politicized armed forces. For example, in the years leading up to the Uruguayan coup in 1973, the Partido Nacional tried to bolster its support within the military through clientelist relations that merely turned the military into a more political animal. On the other hand, these same scholars now criticize military insularity, arguing that it can only isolate the military and cultivate what Juan Rial terms in the Goodman volume a "closed socialization and harmful ideological orientation" (p. 16). Although partially true, these contentions ignore the fact

5. See David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America," *Comparative Politics* 25 (Oct. 1992):83–102.

that boundary maintenance is also a normal, even a desirable component of military professional evolution. Insularity has the distinct advantage of closing the military off to the very forms of governmental predation that these scholars have previously criticized. Where military insulation from state or societal influences is merely a defensive tactic to protect against divisive interventions that could disrupt professional growth, then this form of institutional military autonomy should work in favor of—not against—civilian efforts at control.

The final issue has to do with preconditions for civilian supremacy. It is now more than a decade since redemocratization first took root in Latin America. Despite severe economic hardships, policy setbacks, and military grumbling about everything from human rights trials to declining salaries, poor equipment, and the lack of new missions, the democratic seed has slowly grown into a young sapling. The authors under review here grudgingly acknowledge this growth but are quick to advise that the consolidation of these gains is a long way off and will only be achieved if political leaders fulfill some specified set of conditions. Those conditions usually have to do with either catering to military corporate interests or overcoming military intransigence.

Goodman, Mendelson, and Rial state that the military will become reluctant partners in democratic construction through what they call a “negative integration” that can be achieved only if all “threats aimed directly at the corporation” are eliminated and if a “tacit pact of support” for the democratic regime is agreed upon (p. 289). Varas cites eight necessary and four sufficient conditions for a new civil-military relationship compatible with democracy, which include reconceptualization of defense, isolation of antidemocratic elements, cultivation of professional military unity, effective mass support, and a new civil-political culture. Zagorski in turn warns politicians against antagonizing the military by failing to honor military rights of self-governance, stripping them of caste privileges, lowering their budgets, negatively affecting their self-image, or denying them the power to control civilian populations.

Alfred Stepan defines different civil-military relations according to varying and combined levels of military contestation and prerogatives. At one end of the spectrum, civilian control is diluted where the armed forces fight for wider spheres of political influence and ultimately prevail. At the other end, civilian control is strongest and democracy more secure where the military accepts limited prerogatives. In between are numerous positions that define significant trade-offs between the stability and quality of the new democratic order. Stepan’s framework improves on other conceptual formulations but does not reveal what steps political leaders must take to improve their positions.

The emphasis on preconditions but not processes means that much of this literature on civil-military affairs lacks a strategic and tacti-

cal thrust that, if present, would provide the connective tissue to join objectives, means, and ends.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, when prerequisites are grouped together, consequences frequently become confused with causes. Factors often end up as basic characteristics of civilian control when fully realized but also as causes of the same phenomenon. These tautologies confound explanations by failing to distinguish among initial conditions, interim processes, and final results.

To figure simply whether political leaders have complied with a "shopping list" of prerequisites for civilian control is to leave the logic of choice unexamined. What is proposed instead is a kind of artificial threshold that every democratic regime must cross if it is to achieve supremacy over the armed forces. Aside from being mere artifacts of social science seldom encountered in the real political world, thresholds disguise the point that what usually paves the way for military compliance with democratic authority is a sequence of intelligent moves rather than a simultaneous fulfillment of conditions. Civilians coping with military issues face a formidable array of challenges. Once they are separated and prioritized, it becomes evident that certain challenges are more pressing than others and that their early resolution may invite easier settlements later on. Once combined, however, these problems constitute a hurdle so intimidating that it becomes unlikely that any government could clear it. Inevitably, analyses that rely on tough preconditions foster a profound but misguided skepticism among scholars. The skeptics attach so many necessary and sufficient conditions to redemocratization that, as Albert Hirschman observed, "the point of departure of any serious thought about the chances for the consolidation of democracy in Latin America must surely be pessimism."<sup>7</sup>

Taken together, the scholarship reviewed here demonstrates a continuing and vital interest in the political role of the armed forces in Latin American society. The transition toward democracy has only intensified that interest. This trend is a welcome one indeed because "la cuestión militar" should remain at center stage in any larger discussion of regime change and consolidation. Civilian control of the armed forces must become as integral a component to any definition of democratic society as the traditional hallmarks of participation and contestation. Similarly, the historical past should not be forgotten because intriguing questions persist. As these works on military rule make plain, earlier "waves" of scholarship left unexamined the dynamics of regime maintenance: what went on within the state and between the state and society that could

6. For other examples of these deficiencies, see Ulf Sundhaussen, "Military Withdrawal from Government Responsibility," *Armed Forces and Society* 10 (Summer 1984):543–62; and Samuel E. Finer, "The Retreat to the Barracks," *Third World Quarterly* 7 (Jan. 1983):16–30.

7. See Albert O. Hirschman, *Rival Views of Market Society and Other Recent Essays* (New York: Viking, 1986), 176.

account for the endurance of a despotic regime or its premature demise? The books under review go a long way toward answering that question, but more research needs to be done. In particular, it would be useful to have more structured comparative inquiries, utilizing either most different or most similar system designs, which would find general explanations for variations in regime structure and behavior. Contemporary scholarship on civil-military affairs and democratization would profit even more from comparative research designs that could hone in on the critical variables that account for why some democracies seem to be on better footing than others. Avenues for creative research into military-political affairs in Latin America are wide open, and it is to be hoped that a significant number of scholars will continue to explore them.