Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Recession in the Third Wave Democracies: Explaining the Multidimensional Militarization in Brazil

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Abstract

This study aims to identify how civil-military relations affect a democratic recession in Third-Wave Democracies. Multiple problems have been pointed out in previous studies. First, the role of the military during a democratic recession, breakdown, and militarization are not adequately classified. Second, the potential weakening of civilian control during a democratic recession has not been adequately examined. Third, the scope of the analysis of militarization has mainly focused on political aspects. This paper especially looks at Brazil, one of the 19 countries that were once under military rule and where the military does not openly take control of political power, although there are signs that democracy has been undermined. By examining changes in civil-military relations, it evaluates whether militarization accelerated, especially during Brazil's democratic recession. The implications derived from this analysis differ from the simplistic view that civilian control remained stable despite Brazil's experience of a democratic recession. First, the socio-political context and civilian agency are crucial for explaining why civilian control is incomplete in civil-military relations in third-wave democracies. Second, the military's influence could increase as democracy was weakened by the emergence of a president with a military background. Third, militarization involves the interconnectedness of different material, political, and social dimensions of the military's role.

Keywords:

democratic recession, civil-military relations, militarization, third-wave democracies, Brazil

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Introduction

The worldwide collapse of undemocratic regimes, known as the “Third Wave of Democratization” (Huntington, 1991), began in Portugal in 1974. They led to a trend in civil-military relations (CMR), where the military started to withdraw from politics and reduce its presence and influence. It was expected that the economic growth of developing countries would lead to democratization of their political systems. However, since the 2010s, there has been a global trend of democratic backsliding. Most studies during these periods focused on civil-military relations in democracies, and only a few have looked at the military's role in countries on the borderline between democracy and autocracy. The literature on civil-military relations, especially in countries that have undergone a “Third Wave of Autocratization”(Lührnmann & Lindberg 2019), is growing because these situations do not fit into the existing typologies of coups d'état or theories of democratic breakdown (Linz, 1978; Mainwaring& Pérez-Liñán, 2013).

This paper examines several points that have not been adequately discussed in previous studies. It addresses how civil-military relations affect democratic recession in emerging democracies that have experienced the third wave of democratization, known as the “third wave democracies” (Kuehn & Croissant, 2023). First, the effects of the military's role in a democratic recession, breakdown, autocratization, and militarization are not adequately classified. We view militarization as a process in which a society’s institutions, policies, behaviors, thoughts, and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war or other emergencies (Kohn Richard, 2009:182). While some have suggested that democracy has receded, this militarization trend is increasing in countries where the military has not overtly seized political power. Second, the potential weakening of civilian control during a democratic recession has not been adequately examined. This point is critical in third-wave democracies where institutions and norms of democracy are generally less well-established and, therefore more vulnerable. Third, the scope of the analysis of militarization has mainly focused on political aspects.

To fill these gaps, this study adopts a multidimensional approach to explain how the different aspects of militarization are interconnected, including material and social aspects. We specifically argue that the bargaining power of civilians and the military influences the outcome of their struggle over decision-making authority between civilian and military leaders. We empirically evaluate how militarization accelerated during the democratic recession in Brazil, which had weak civilian control in the first year of democracy and was not fully established until 2022. Using data published by news articles, statistics, and other sources, we also find that the socio-political context and civilian agency are essential for explaining why civilian control is incomplete in civil-military relations in third-wave democracies.

To anticipate the conclusions of this study, this analysis challenges the simplistic argument that civilian control remained stable despite the experience of a democratic recession. First, the military's influence could increase as democracy is weakened by the emergence and operation of a president with a military background. Second, high levels of political militarization are interrelated to allocating resources to the military and the military's role by popular demand under political polarization, such as elite conflict and mass discontent.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section discusses what the existing literature can and cannot explain about militarization under a democratic recession. We explore possible models and hypotheses that can be shared. Based on this, the militarization hypothesis was tested through case studies of third-wave democracies. Finally, focus on Brazil, one of the 19 countries that were once under military rule and where the military does not openly take political power, although there are signs that democracy has weakened. We will use Brazil as a typical case to understand how conditions and mechanisms work in militarization. This paper concludes with policy and theoretical implications.

Civil-Military Relations on the Boundary between Democracy and Autocracy

Existing studies on democratic recession, represented by "How democracies die (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018)", have cast strong skepticism on optimism about the future of democracy. However, we often confuse the multiple terms related to democratization and (de-) democratization. Democratic recession means a gradual decline in the democratic quality of a democratic system. It means "a change in formal political institutions or informal political practices in a direction that significantly weakens the ability of citizens to make their demands known to the government." (Diamond, 2015). On the other hand, democratic backsliding refers to a regime change process that leads to autocracy. In this process, backsliding degrades the qualities associated with democratic governance within any regime. In democratic governments, there is a decline in the quality of democracy; in autocracies, there is a decline in democratic governance quality (Walder & Lust, 2018). Such democratic recessions can lead to the collapse of a democratic system toward an authoritarian one (Democratic Breakdown), but this is not always the case. A democratic breakdown always means an erosion of democratic principles and institutions; however, whether it also means the beginning of a transition to autocracy depends on the severity of such deterioration (Franz, 2018).

While a democratic recession does not necessarily mean a transition to autocracy, autocratization guarantees a transition to autocracy. Broadly speaking, autocratization refers not only to the diminution of democratic qualities in any democratic system that may lead to its weakening or collapse but also to the regression of democratic qualities in authoritarian regimes. "It is a substantial

de facto decline in the core institutional requirements of electoral democracy" (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019: 1096). Autocratization is a form of democratic regression resulting in authoritarianism.

As a result, the extensive literature on the military's role in democratic recession, breakdown, and backsliding has not been adequately classified. Most studies on civil-military relations in developing countries have focused on Latin America. Nowhere in the developing world is the military's influence more severe than in Latin America. This region can inform a broader understanding of civil-military relations in Third-wave democracies. Democratic Breakdowns due to military coups have occurred frequently in Latin America (Linz, 1978; Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2013). However, since the 2000s, there has been progress in reforming civil-military relations under democratic regimes in Latin America and beyond because democratic systems have become relatively stable (Pion-Belin & Martinez, 2017).

Naturally, the military is a semi-autonomous political actor pursuing a political agenda in which institutional and ideological motives and interests defined by them continue to be at stake. The military's political role and militarization endured or re-emerged in Latin America (Kruijt and Koonings eds., 2023) and elsewhere (Kuen and Levy eds., 2020). Although it is misleading to assert that the democratic recession has increased with the military's influence, there is optimism about the military's political role in Latin America and pessimism that sees it as a threat to democracy. Pion and Berlin Acácio (2020: 152) point out that the current wave of military activism in Latin America did not threaten civilian control or the survival of democracy: “There is a range of military behavior, most of which occur at the behest of the democratically elected executive.” In general, this literature barely notes what drives interaction between political leaders and the military, as they focus mainly on civilian institutional dynamics among executives, legislatures, and the judiciary (Mani 2024: 379-380)[2].

On the other hand, Akoyunlu and Lima questioned Pion-Berlin Acácio’s argument. Akoyunlu and Lima (2022) state that this degree of expanded presence of military officers in civilian institutions represents a “stealth military intervention”—which, unlike the past bureaucratic authoritarian regime in Brazil, has not involved breaking the law, suspending the democratic process, or overthrowing the government because it fits neither the typology of military coups nor the literature on democratic backsliding theory. Besides, Bauer et al. conceive “bureaucratic miliarization,” which finds its expression in the direct militarization of the civilian bureaucracy and the indirect privileging of the military class by new legislations and regulations that benefit them, as a specific case of democratic regression(Bauer et al. 2024).

[2] Mani also mentioned that some of their most fruitful findings points to executive aggrandizement as the most robust factor leading to democratic backsliding (Mani 2024: 380.)

While these existing studies may be able to explain the political impact of the military's activism on civilian control, they are inadequate in their attempts to account for the erosion of civilian control and possible changes in other dimensions of militarization during periods of democratic recession. First, initial conditions, praetorial legacies, and the degree of military control over the process and outcome of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy impact the trajectories of post-authoritarian civil-military relations. However, they do not determine the outcomes of military reforms in new democracies (Kuehn & Croissant, 2023: 44). Second, whether political leaders affect the military's influence as democracy is weakened by security threats such as economic and social crises and the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be examined more objectively. Studies assessing the impact of political leadership and civilian demands on increased military activism have been inconsistent. Third, studies of civil-military relations attest that strategic support from the civilian side is essential to sustain military rule. Historically, civilian support for the military, both from ordinary people and political leaders, has helped sustain authoritarian regimes, maintained general power after democratization, and brought them back into political prominence.

Civil-Military Relations on Militarization

To understand how militarization accelerated under the democratic recession in third-wave democracies, we need to go beyond a country's initial conditions and closely examine other factors that enabled or restrained civil-military relations. First, we argue that civilian and military bargaining power determines militarization. Kuehn and Croissant (2023) describe the factors of civilian bargaining, which include the degree of institutionalization of the democratic system, the strength of civil society, and international support for democratic reforms in civil-military relations. The larger the bargaining power, the more likely civilians are to employ robust control strategies successfully against a resistant military. On the other hand, military bargaining power includes security threats, economic development and inequality, and political polarization at elite and mass levels. The military's bargaining power vis-à-vis civilian leaders is affected by how citizens support the existing political regime and its representatives and whether mass protests or demonstrations signal widespread public dissatisfaction with the incumbent democratic regime, its lack of political legitimacy, and the alienation of key social groups. In sum, civilian and military bargaining power affects the outcome of the bargaining struggle over the distribution of decision-making power between civilian and military elites (Kuehn and Croissant, 2023; 44-49).

Second, we expect interdependence between the material, political, and social dimensions of militarization. Bayer et al. (2023: 4) conceptualize militarization as a three-dimensional process and opened new research areas with Multidimensional Measures of Militarization (M3) datasets regarding

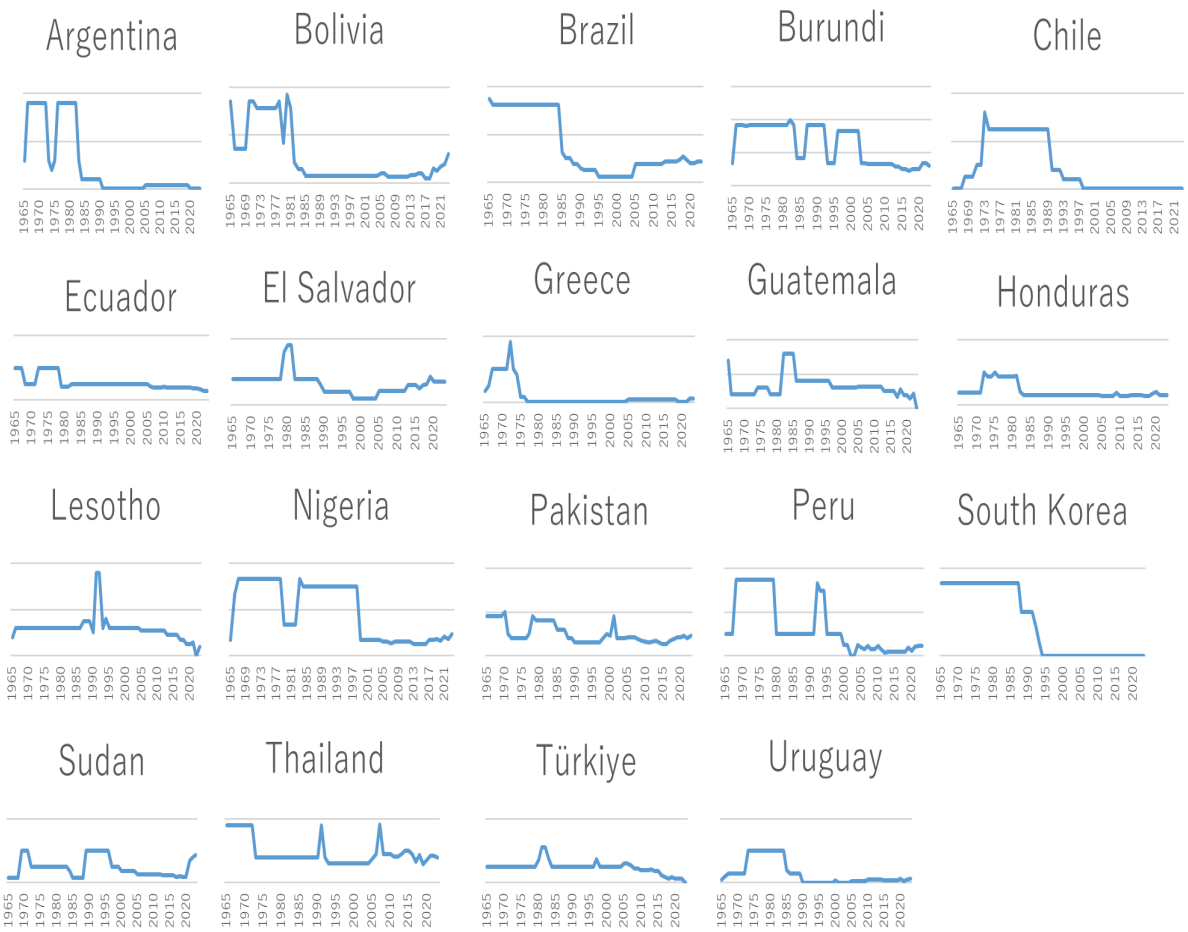
the interdependence between different forms of militarization[3]. The military budget was often an important political issue during the transition from military to civilian rule. Stepan (1988) pointed out that reductions and increases in the military budget during the initial phase of an emerging democratic regime can increase or decrease tensions between civilians and the military, which should be given special attention. These findings may also apply to periods of democratic recession. If so, we can derive the following hypothesis:

High levels of political militarization are interrelated to material militarization(the higher allocation of resources to the military) and social militarization (the increased role of the military in social institutions in response to citizens' demands due to elite conflicts and popular discontent).

To be clear, explaining the causal mechanism of militarization in third-wave democracies is not derived from institutionalist theories of civil-military relations with actor-centered arguments of military reform in post-authoritarian democracies. Instead, the scope of the analysis of the multidimensional process of militarization and interdependence within these dimensions plays an important role. As policy recommends, to prevent militarization, it is crucial to reduce the allocation of resources to the armed forces, the degree to which the military holds prerogative and decision-making powers, and promote democracy resilience, especially, limiting military operational autonomy and enabling judicial intervention and oversight.

Figure 1. Military Dimension Index about 19 countries that were once under military rule

[3] M3-dataset brings together 30 existing and newly developed indicators and a total of 140,000 observations on three dimensions of material, political, and societal militarization from 1990 to 2020. See: Multidimensional Measures of Militarization (m3) Dataset (m3-militarization.com)



Source: V-dem Institute

Empirically, we explain how militarization accelerated during the democratic recession in third-wave democracies, which have been actively engaged in civilian control reform on countless occasions. Therefore, we explain how civilian and military bargaining shaped the initial conditions for democratic transition and persistence and what aspects of militarization accelerated during the democratic recession. We surveyed news articles, statistics, and other data published by international and governmental organizations, as well as primary and secondary sources. Although our theoretical scope covers a universe of third-wave democracies of 66 countries," we limited our analysis to Brazil as a significant case. Following the 66 counties in the dataset (Appendix 1), 19 countries had military governments in former authoritarian regimes. According to the V-dem Institute's Military Dimensions Index data (Figure 1), most countries have gradually increased their degree of civilian control since the 2000s. However, some countries have not done so in recent years. Civilian control is not complete in third-wave democracies, but some countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, and Sudan characteristically weaken their civilian control.

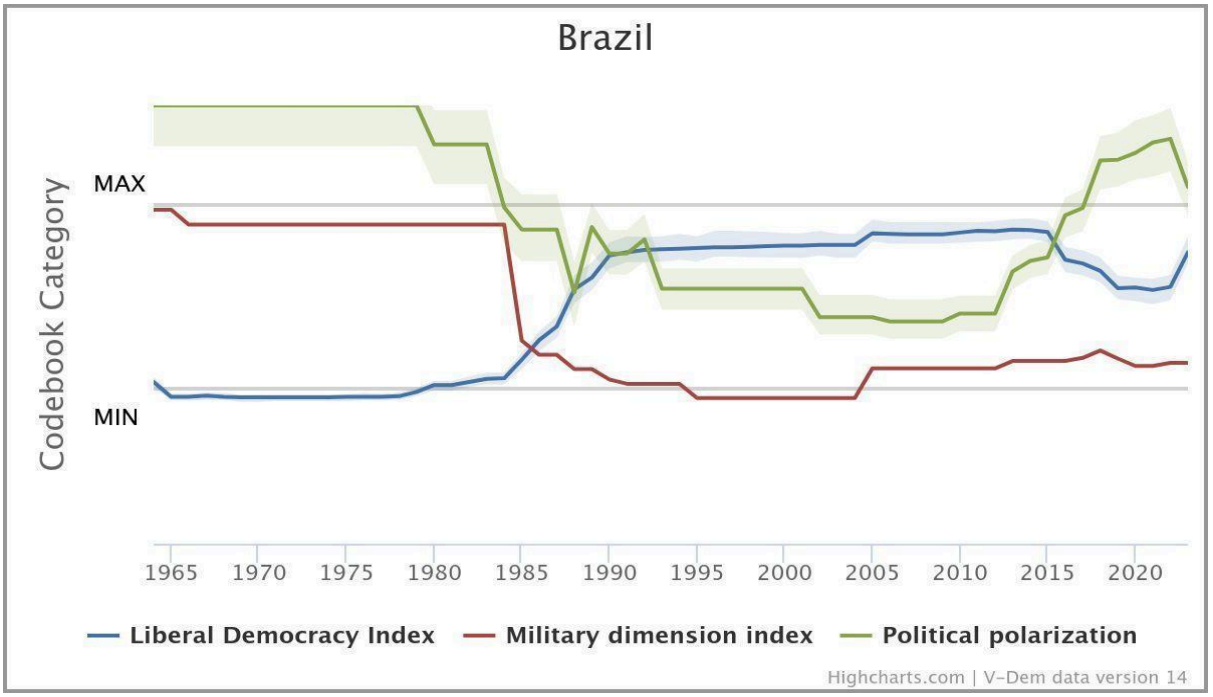
Civil-Military Relations under Democratic Recession: Lessons from Brazil

Case studies illustrate how civil-military relations affected the democratic recession in Brazil. The extensive literature on democratization in Brazil provides further insight into the fact that Brazil has put relatively little effort into clarifying the crimes committed by the military regime from 1964 to 1985 (Schneider, 2010). Its guided transition has led to significant military prerogatives, which have only been partially rolled back by civilian governments (Bruneau & Tollefson, 2014). Armed forces have played a central and all-encompassing role in the state's political, economic, and social development. Brazil placed the military as a critical development actor, and over time, this process led to consequences for civil-military relations, public policies, and democracy (Mariano de Carvalho& Lima, 2023).

In sum, Brazil had "extremely low" civilian control in the first year after becoming a third-wave democracy, which also affected the quality of democracy (Kuehn & Croissant, 2023; 74). Since its transition to a democratic system in 1985, Brazil has sustained a liberal democracy. However, establishing civilian control over Brazil's national armed forces was slow and incomplete. From 2016 to 2022, democratic regression was evident due to several events. In 2016 President Dilma Rousseff was impeached. In 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, the right-wing conservative and former army captain, won the presidential election, and by the following year, a president with a military background was leading the government (Hunter and Timothy, 2019). This president obstructed the judiciary and the media, and political polarization has accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hunter and Vega, 2021) (Figure 2). During the same period, Bauer et al. mentioned that bureaucratic militarization in Brazil represented a "most likely case" as a mode of democratic backsliding (Bauer et al.2024). Hence, it is relevant to use Brazil as a case study to focus on the change in civil-military relations from the transition to the civil government until 2022[4].

Figure 2. Liberal democracy, Military dimension, and political polarization index

[4] According to the 2024 V-Dem Democracy Report, Brazil is highlighted as the "top democratizer" as a "U-turn case" with the inauguration of the Lula administration in 2023 (V-dem Institute, 2024). In addition, president Lula decided to recreate "the Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances(CEMDP), taking over from the previous 'National Truth Commission', which was shut down at the end of Bolsonaro Administration in late 2022.



Source: V-dem Institute

Transition and Sustaining Democracy: The Initiation and Reform of Civilian Control over the Military

Since the late 1970s, a moderate political elite has negotiated with moderates in the military to consolidate the democratization process. Brazil passed an amnesty law in 1979 stipulating that no military officer could be tried for any alleged human rights abuses during the era of military rule, thereby weakening the prospect that Brazil's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations would not be implemented[5]. Civilian transition was achieved peacefully in 1985 through *a Political Pacto* between moderate elites, including the military, and moderate democratization forces. However, since the end of the military regime, Brazil has failed to establish effective mechanisms for civilian oversight of the military or create influential forces in the defense sector.

The initial conditions of change in Brazil's civil-military relations after the transition to civilian government can be categorized into three periods. The first period was 1985-1988—the transition period. The military complained about losing its privileged position and retained significant informal power. The new civilian government was supposed to allow amnesty for political prisoners and not to prosecute military personnel involved in human rights violations. It was also decided not to create a

[5] Commission Hemispheric Affairs, Brazil's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Small Step in the Right Direction – COHA, November 7, 2011. Assessed to May 29th, 2024.

Ministry of Defense or to place the military under civilian control. The military continued to make decisions regarding personnel and other aspects of its organizational management. After the transition to civilian rule, the first government had six of its 22 cabinet members in the military, and other critical positions in the government after the transition were filled by active-duty military personnel (Hunter, 1994). Hence, even though the transition to civilian government was achieved by controlling the transition process, the military elites held "indirect veto power" over civilians and continued to be systematically excluded from any meaningful oversight over defense and military matters. Civilians continued to be systematically excluded from any meaningful oversight of the defense and military policy, which was concentrated in the military's ministries and the National Security Council(CSN) (Kuen et al. 2023:190-191).

The second period was from 1989 to 1998. This period began with the establishment of the new Constitution of 1988. The constitutional Assembly also debated the role of the national military. In the constitution, the role of the national armed forces was changed from (1) subject to the president's command authority to the extent provided by law and (2) maintaining public order to "subject to the president's command authority to the extent provided by law" and "subject to the constitutional guarantee of power and to the maintenance of law and order at the initiative of any of the three powers. The military intended to prescribe its "guardian" role over the state to maintain a constitution that legally recognized its political influence. Significant steps were taken to reduce the military's political influence in other areas of the state. President Fernando Collor abolished the National Information Service (SNI) and transferred its functions to the newly established Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (SAE), which did not have ministerial status and was headed by civilians. In 1997, the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration released the basics of the National Defense Policy (PDN) for the first time in Brazilian history. However, the Ministry did not have the authority to command the military（Pion-Berlin and Martínes, 2017).

The third period was from 1999 to 2013 when the military was forced to retreat from daily politics. Cardoso was reelected president in 1998 and began strengthening civilian control. The Inclusion of active-duty military officers in government came to an end when the three service ministries were abolished and the Ministry of National Defense was established. Furthermore, in 2003, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva proceeded with Cardoso's civil-military relations reforms toward civilian control. Lula introduced the 2008 National Security Strategy and enacted the 2010 Defence Law based on the National Defense Strategy (NDS), National Defense Policy, and Defense White Paper[6]. However, military and civilian crimes against the military are to be tried in courts held by the army, with no

[6] The first was the *Estratégia Nacional de Defesa* (END), or *National Defense Strategy*, a decree law drafted by Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim and Minister of Strategic Affairs Roberto Mangabeira Unger and signed by President Lula in December 2008 (Bruneau & Tollefson, 2014).

judicial intervention allowed（Pion-Berlin and Martínes, 2017). Building on the achievements of these two stable administrations, the Rousseff administration attempted to expand the reform of civil-military relations and established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2013. The establishment of the Commission was significant because Brazil was one of the lagging countries in achieving transitional justice after the democratic transition from a military regime[7]. Although the truth-reconciliation outcomes were modest, the NTC achieved three main goals: improving historical accountability, promoting international human rights norms, and challenging veto power still held by the military (Torelly, 2018).

In sum, during the transition and persistence of democracy, there appeared to be a trend toward a prolonged period of democratic rule and a gradual weakening of the military's political presence. However, the military continued to exert influence, and civilian control piled up. In Brazil, which has been in economic turmoil and mass protests since 2013, the Rousseff administration met resistance from conservatives in Congress, and civil-military relations showed signs of reversing course as increased military spending and increased military-related spending occurred. Moreover, limited transparency and insufficient citizen oversight of the military and defense sector have contributed to political corruption in Brazil (Pion-Berlin and Martinez 2017, 318-320).

Democratic Recession: Weakening Civilian Control of the Military (2016-2019)

The beginning of Brazil's democratic recession coincided with the start of the militarization of politics: Starting before and continuing after President Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, which caused political and social turmoil in Brazil, the Temer administration, entrusted with running the Brazilian state, granted autonomous military decisions to officers seeking political influence. This threatens civilian control and democracy.

Akkoyunlu and Lima (2022) analyzed the characteristics of Brazilian civil-military relations and provided evidence of a recession in civilian control of the military in Brazil in 2016. The weakening of civilian control following Rousseff’s impeachment in May 2016, illustrated in Table 1, appears dramatic even in Brazil, where complete civilian control has never been established. Autonomous military decision officers took on a quest for political influence beginning under the Michel Temer presidency, and the incremental yet systematic attempt to redesign politics without causing a rupture

[7] The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was significant in two ways: first, to promote an explanation of the past that would support the previously established reconciliation narrative (the expectation of maintaining the status quo), and second, to challenge that path by mobilizing society against impunity (the expectation of victims). This tension influenced the agenda and outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Torelly 2018).

in the areas of elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defense, and military organization threatened civilian control of the military.

Table1. Civilian control of the military before and since Rousseff's impeachment

	Pre-May 2016	Post-May 2016
Elite recruitment	-Office eligible for public office	一Officer eligible for public office. 一Officers in the cabinet. 一Military advisors in the Supreme Court. 一Military manipulation of the electoral and judicial process. 一Informal support for a presidential candidate
Public policy	-Immunity from prosecution for historical crimes (Amnesty Law) -Military influence over the defense budget. -Civilian control of all non-security-related ministries. -Privilege pension scheme.	-Immunity from prosecution for historic crimes. -Increased military influence over defense budge. -Defense first in line in public spending. -Military control of non-security related ministries. -Exemption from national pension reform.
Internal Security	-civilian control of defense and intelligence functions. -Law and Order(GLO) operations. -Military crimes against civilians tried in civilian courts.	-Military control of defense and intelligence functions. -Expanding the scope of law and order (GLO) operation(Rio state, Amazon region). -Military crimes against civilians tried in military courts.
National Defense	-civilian control of defense and intelligence functions. -shared civilian-military control over creation of the National Defense Strategy document. -Shared civilian-military handling of international security issues.	-Military control of defense and intelligence functions. -Increased military influence over National Defense Strategy document. -Increased military influence over international security issues(e.g. Amazon, Venezuela).
Military Organization	Military autonomy over hardware and software issues	-Military autonomy over hardware and software issues.

Source: Akkoyunlu and Lima (2022)

Democratic Recession: The Inauguration of the Bolsonaro Administration and "Armoured Democracy"

The weakening of civilian control during the Temer administration, a period of democratic regression, continued into the Bolsonaro administration, which won the 2018 presidential election. During the 2018 Brazilian presidential elections, political polarization, particularly "affective polarization," became virtually evident. This is because, when Bolsonaro emerged as a presidential candidate, liberals were worried that he would implement illiberal policies, while conservatives were hopeful that he would reform the country's politics.

Three main features characterized militarization during the Bolsonaro administration. The first is the increased presence of retired or former officers in the government. Bolsonaro favored the military and appointed an estimated 8,450 military personnel to government administrative positions (Penido et al. 2021). The appointment of these military positions was due to the Bolsonaro administration being established in opposition to political establishment-centered Brazilian politics, which made it impossible to cooperate with politicians and appoint suitable personnel from influential politicians and civilians[8]. Nevertheless, as the Bolsonaro administration's term of office progressed, it was forced to work more closely with the political establishment than at its inauguration. The military's influence decreased as the COVID-19 disaster subsided, so its participation was no longer needed.

The second is the military's expanded role in security and national defense during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020.3-2022). Bolsonaro appointed military personnel to key positions in the civilian government, including the Minister of Health and Crisis Committee for Supervision and Monitoring of the Impacts of COVID-19. Furthermore, the 2010 defense law mandated the quadrennial defense review. The administration's management of COVID-19 and the military's increased role in the COVID-19 response did not promote a democratic recession but intensified the patterns observed before. Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic affirmed the military's expanded role in maintaining security during emergencies.

The third was President Bolsonaro's political use of the military. The political use of the military refers to the use of armed forces for political purposes or for political gain, which is considered contrary to democratic principles. The defense minister's dismissal was followed by the heads of the three army and navy forces to defend senior military officers who supported curbing furloughs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic[9]. Unlike Bolsonaro, whose words and actions have glimpsed political intervention by the military, such as a "return to military rule" and a "military coup," the

[8] According to an interview by Professor Danilo Marcondes, Superior War School on March 8th, 2024.
[9] Ernesto Londoño and Letícia Casado, "Brazil's Armed Forces Chiefs Resign Abruptly Amid Cabinet Shake-Up, *The New York Times*, March 30. 2021. accessed to May 29, 2024.

military has maintained a role of distancing itself from politics to gain the trust of citizens, based on its reflections on the period of military rule. The de facto ouster of the defense minister, who had defended these ideas, led to the simultaneous dismissal of the heads of the three armed forces, as the commanders, who had not been informed in advance, protested. Furthermore, President Bolsonaro was said to have proposed a coup plan at a meeting held at the presidential palace in Brasilia on December 7 after his defeat in the 2022 presidential election had been decided. In response, both former commanders refused to participate in this plan to prolong the life of the regime and warned them that they would arrest Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro denied involvement in the attack on the national congress on January 8, 2023. However, it is important to examine the factionalism in the Brazilian military, the evolving relationship between the military and its auxiliary units such as the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the roles of retired and active officers, junior and senior officers, and even the military police, which strongly support Bolsonaro (Castro, 2021). The attack on Congress manifested the persistent militarization of Bolsonaro supporters (military) and society. Additionally, this shows that the Bolsonaro administration accelerated the militarization of politics in Brazil.

Discussion

This study's empirical discussion of the Brazil case shows the changes in civil-military relations during the democratic transition, persistence, and recession. We present three new arguments for the changes in civil-military relations after the civilian government transition. The first is the acceleration of political militarization in recent years; Figure 3 shows the number of militaries occupying functions in the federal executive. The increase can already be seen in the transition from Rousseff to Temer before the Bolsonaro administration came to power, from 2925 military personnel in January 2019 to a peak of 3104 as of April 2020. Bolsonaro took office with 1,793 active-duty military personnel in the armed forces commissioned for government positions[10]. In July 2022, the number of active duty uniformed commissioner positions reached 2,206, a new record (+23%). However, the number has decreased since the end of the Bolsonaro administration and the inauguration of the Lula administration. From October, when the elections were held, to February, the latest data show that the total number of reductions was 319. If only Lula's term in office had been considered, the number of military personnel would have decreased by 196（Cavalcanti, 2020).

[10] In June 2023, in the first year of Lula’s administration, 27 military were occupying civilian positions in regulatory agencies, special nature positions and Senior Management and Advisory Position(DAS), in opposition to 802 in these position in 2021under Bolsonaro (Baure et al. 2024: 6) and Appendix 2 and 3.

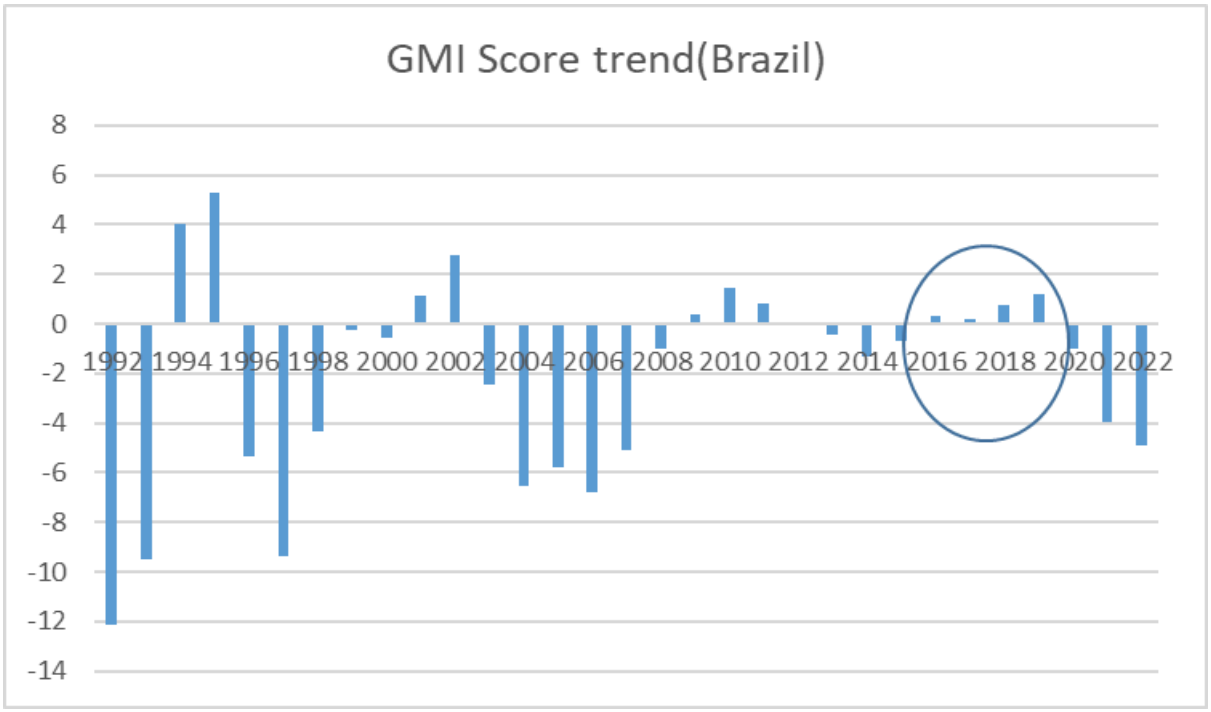
Figure 4. Under Lula, military presence in government decreased by 6.5 %

Source: Montedo.com.br

Second, material military budgets trended upward from 2016 to 2019, when Brazil was in a democratic recession. The GMI is a data set related to the military budgets of countries worldwide based on budget items related to military expenditure, military personnel, heavy weapons, etc., and military budgets as a percentage of national budgets (Figure 5)[11].

Figure 5. The Trend of Global Militarization Index Score (Brazil)

[11] Our data on material militarization is taken from the Global MIlitarisation Index(GMI) of Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies (Von Boemeken et al., 2022). GMI offers variable that measures expenditure, personnel, and heavy weapons not in absolute but in relative terms, which makes the measure particular suited for connecting the material militarization dimension to elite preferences and the broader population and consequently to the two dimensions of political and societal militarization (See:Bayer et al., 2023).



Source: Global Militarisation Index

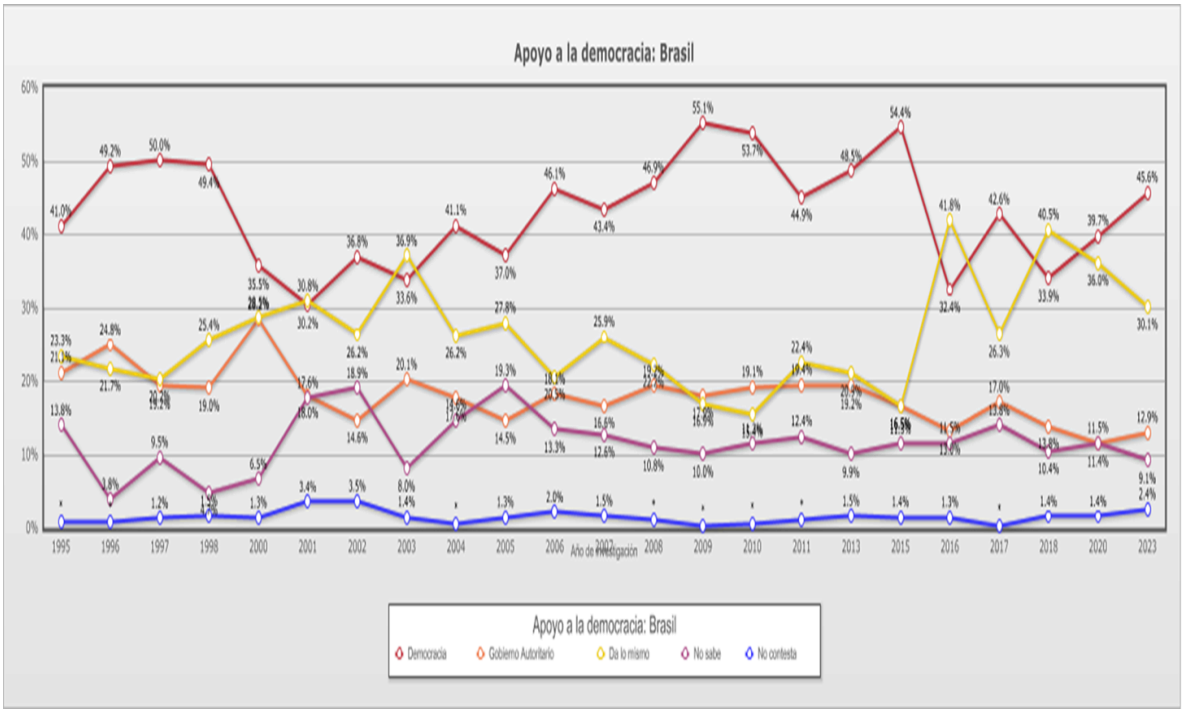
The main expenditure is the budget increase in personnel costs. In Brazil, active duty military personnel are compensated for up to the administrative salary ceiling for senior positions in the federal administration. Furthermore, as the military's internal role in security became more normalized, the military became more politically demanding and increasingly drawn into politics. Brazil's military spending during the transition from military rule was initially meager by world standards relative to the GNP, and the absolute decline in military expenditure was astonishing. The new administration did not immediately find itself in an acrimonious and explicit confrontation with the military over its bloated spending (Stepan, 1988).

Furthermore, it was less likely for there to be a conflict between the administration and the military over the budget. It was perceived that the new regime would be more responsive to budgetary demands than the outgoing regime, and the new government would also be more willing to reduce its budget.[12] Thus, the national armed forces were not satisfied with the legal framework of internal deployment and sought to influence the political decision-making process. In response, President Temer and Bolsonaro seized broad public support for the military's political involvement and made a clear commitment to increasing the presence of military personnel in the government.

[12] On the other hand, from 2020 to 2022, the GMI declined; although the GMI was represented in the first 100 days of the administration, the percentage of GMOs declined after 2020.

Third, there is a connection between social and political militarization. The level of trust in democracy can also be used to measure support for democracy in Brazil. Data analysis on this level of trust can reveal the effect of Bolsonaro's supporters on military intervention and the militarization of politics. A survey conducted by Latinobarometro, a public opinion research institute, confirms that voters' support for democracy tends to decline during the democratic recession, such as Rousseff's impeachment and the rise of Bolsonaro(Figure 6). However, popular support for democracy recovered in 2023 from the New Lula administration. Cruz (2024) demonstrates that the outsized role of the Armed Forces in the Bolsonaro administration harmed public perceptions of the Brazilian military, using data from his survey.

Figure 6. Democracy support: Brazil

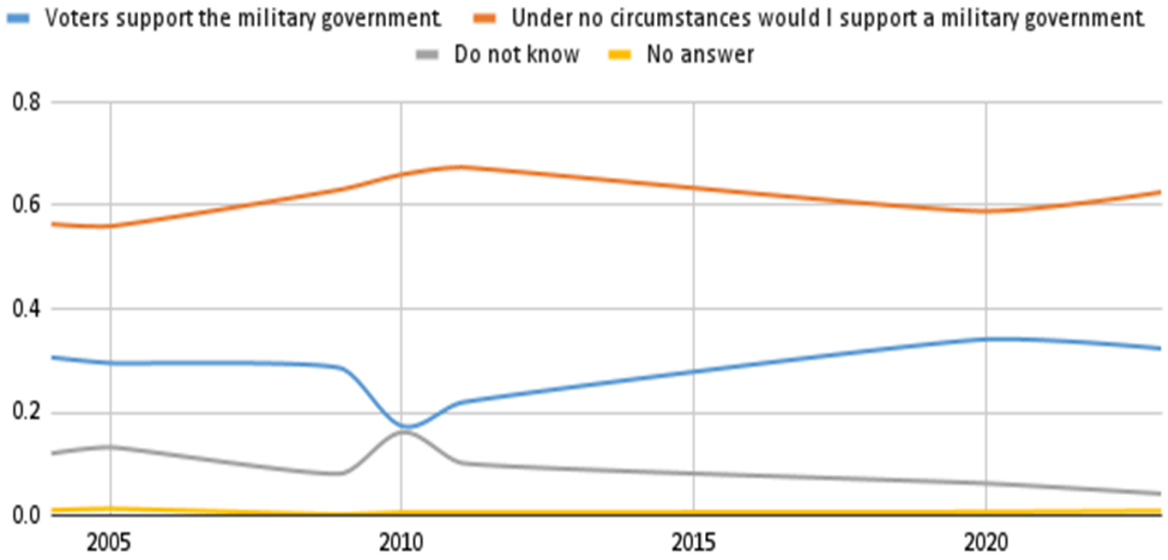


Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project(LAPOP)、www.LapopSurveys.org.

Figure 7 confirms the trend of increasing voter support for the military government even before the democratic recession. Particularly in the Bolsonaro-led government, the military attacked critical media and citizens, actively disseminated false information, and divided citizens into supporters and opponents. Harig (2022) proposes a framework for analyzing political and military leaders' public "demand" for and the supply of internal military roles. Although high support for the internal deployment of the military does not in itself threaten democracy, the combination of low support for democracy, high support for military coups, and a significant gap in distrust between the political

system and the military can create a dangerous situation in the relationship between democratic citizens and the military.

Figure 7. Percentage of voters supporting military government



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project(LAPOP)、www.LapopSurveys.org.

This implies that the likelihood of electing candidates who pledge to increase the military's role is high when politicians determine the supply side. Suppose that the military or politicians associated with the military take advantage of the military's increased internal role for political gain. The results confirm that citizens' growing demands have been a factor in advancing the militarization of politics (Harig, 2022). Meanwhile, survey data (2018-2020) from “Cara de Democracia” (The Face of Democracy) suggest that lower trust in the Armed Forces is robustly associated with dissatisfaction with Brazilian democracy (Cruz, 2024).

Conclusion

This paper assesses civil-military relations among third-wave democracies during the regression in Brazil. The paper's findings have three important implications for the study of militarization and democratic recession. First, the sociopolitical context and civilian agency are crucial for explaining why civilian control is incomplete in civil-military relations in third-wave democracies. Increased mission execution by the military has occurred in the past, not only on the left and right sides.

Therefore, this alone is not determinative of a lack of civilian control over the military, nor is it evidence of a democratic recession. Indeed, the democratic system has been painstakingly maintained, but the militarization of politics challenges the norms of civilian control.

Second, the emergence of a president with a military background would undermine democracy and may increase the influence of the military. It intensifies existing patterns because "civilian" leaders can exercise control over institutions while distributing institutional privileges and choosing when to delegate authority to the military (Feaver, 2003). Hence, the operation of a presidential administration with the support of the military by the electorate could undermine trust in the military and accelerate a democratic recession. The challenge ahead is to determine the timing of whether the military will assert official prerogatives or informally seek to counter civilian authority (Brooks, 2019: 38).

Third, militarization considers the interdependence between different material, political, and social dimensions of the military's role. The reasons for the militarization of politics, in terms of material and social militarization, include not only the institutions that control the military but also the environment in which material militarization occurs. The effects of the military and its cooperation with the government cannot be explained solely by the relationship between politicians and the military, or by focusing on the role of civilians, such as the media and the legislative and judicial branches of government.

The analysis in this study contributed to providing new insights into civil-military relations at the boundary between democracy and autocracy. The study is versatile in analyzing the dynamics and impact of democratic recession and civil-military relations in other third-wave democracies. Specifically, it can be compared to the positive case of El Salvador, where militarization increased due to the Najib Bukele government's success in using the national army to maintain public security, and the negative case of Turkey, where political militarisation ceased, and civil-military relations stabilized due to the decline in public trust in the military during Recep Erdogan’s government.

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Appendix 1 Third-wave democracies in the dataset (66 countries)

Former authoritarian regime	Sub-Sahara Africa	East and South Asia	Southern Europe	Post-Communist Eurasia	Latin America and the Caribbean	Middle East and North Africa
Military	**Burundi, Lesotho, *Nigeria*, Sudan**	**S Korea, Pakistan, Thailand**	**Greece**		**Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Equador, El Salvador, Guatemala, *Honduras, Peru,* Uruguay**	**Turkey**
Military strongman	Benin, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, *Madagascar*, Mali,	Bangladesh	Spain			
Personalist	Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone	Philippines	Portugal	Georgia, Serbia	Dominan R.	
Party	Kenya, Senegal, Zambia	Indonesia, Mongolia, *Sri Lanka,* Taiwan		Albania, *Armenia,* Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech R., Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, *Russia*, Slovakia, Slovenia, *Ukraine*	Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay	
Ruling Monarchy		Nepal				
Others	Namibia, South Africa					Lebanon

Source: Kuehn and Croissant (2023): Former authoritarian regime types, according to Geddes et al. 2014[13]

[13] Notes, Italics: at least one autocratic reversal of three or more years during time span. 66 countries from six different regions that have made at least one transition to democracy between 1974 and 2010.This dataset excluded the cases where democratization was the result of foreign intervention (such as Iraq, Cambodia, East Timor), and countries without permanent armed forces (Haiti, Panama). Thailand from 1992 to 2005 is included in the dataset. Bold letters (Military) indicate the 19 countries covered in this paper.

Appendix 2. Number of appointed military personnel per type of position, 2013-2021

Type of Position/Year		2013	2014	2015	2016	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Number of Military in Civilian Position		370	441	467	564	686	636	942	1044	1069
Number of Military in Military Positions		1539	1628	1737	1729	1629	1728	1819	1945	1954
Total positions occupied by military		**1909**	**2069**	**2204**	**2293**	**2312**	**2364**	**2761**	**2989**	**3023**

Source: Bauer et al. (2024).

Appendix 3. The main civilian position occupied by the military, 2013-2021

Position		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Positions in Regulatory Agencies		27	27	28	31	27	21	28	32	38
Special Nature Positions (NS)		6	6	6	7	7	8	21	22	22
Senior Management and Adviory Positions (DAS)		303	345	345	346	335	381	623	743	742
Positions in State-Owned Enterprises		8	15	25	136	152	138	163	188	190
Total Positions occupied by Military		**344**	**393**	**404**	**519**	**520**	**546**	**826**	**976**	**984**
Total Positions DAS and NS		22535	22906	22758	20905	20402	22819	21606	22125	22708
Participation of Military in total positions DAS and NS		**1,37%**	**1,53%**	**1,54%**	**1,69%**	**1,68%**	**1,70%**	**2,98%**	**3,46%**	**3,36%**

Source: Bauer et al. (2024).