DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN BRAZIL

Advances in accountability mechanisms and regression in civil–military relations

Thomas C. Bruneau

Introduction
The doyen of democratization studies and American policies in support of democratization globally, Professor Larry Diamond, recently published an article in *The American Interest* entitled “The Liberal Democratic Order in Crisis”. The header correctly states the main message of the article: “We are at a tipping point. Around the world, many democracies are hanging by a thread and autocrats are preparing more savage assaults on what remains of freedom.” This chapter focuses on Brazil, primarily on how democratic politics ironically have led to vast improvements in accountability mechanisms while also leading to regression in civil–military relations. It is important to emphasize from the outset that the regression in civil–military relations, with implications for democracy, is due mainly to the dynamics of democratic politics and not to the supposed nefarious plans and plots of the Brazilian Armed Forces.

The Constitution of 1988
To understand the current political situation in Brazil, including accountability mechanisms and civil–military relations, one must begin with the Constitution of 1988 which marked the formal consolidation of democracy following 21 years (1964–85) under a military regime. Scholars who study the process whereby the Constitution of 1988 was formulated, and the resulting document, are extremely critical. In my writing I argue that the Constitution did not represent an “elite settlement” ensuring democratic consolidation, as was the case in Spain, for example. Law professor Keith S. Rosenn states the following: “The process by which Brazil’s 1988 Constitution was adopted practically assured that the end product would be a hodgepodge of inconsistent and convoluted provisions.” Despite 3 years of work, resulting in a document of 245 articles and 70 transitional provisions, the 559 framers were unable to resolve whether Brazil would be a monarchy or a republic, and, if the latter, a presidential or parliamentary regime. These fundamental decisions were left to a referendum
in 1993 that favored a presidential republic. The framers of the Constitution, who were the 559 members of the Brazilian Congress, maintained intact both the institutional defects of the political system and the extensive prerogatives of the armed forces that governed Brazil between 1964 and 1985. Whereas the institutional defects of the political system continue to the present, accountability institutions have become robust and active. The prerogatives of the armed forces were diminished, but recently have increased depending on a political situation dominated by civilians.

Although the Constitution of 1988 included a great many items that could lead to an improved socio-economic situation for Brazilians, it changed nothing regarding the political institutions that put those 559 politicians in the position of writing the constitution, and have made only minimal changes in the intervening 28 years. As Rosem states, “The constituent assembly also did nothing to reform the malfunctioning of the political party system, which is one of the world’s worst.” They did not establish a minimum number of votes for a party to be recognized, resulting in the current situation: 35 political parties at the national level, with 19 having deputies in the lower house, the Câmara. They did not change the open-list system of proportional representation in which each state is a single, and at-large, multi-member district. They did not change the gross misrepresentation whereby all states, and the federal district, have three senators, or the provision stipulating that all states, regardless of population, would have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 70 deputies in the Câmara.

There was supposed to be a wholesale revision of the Constitution in 1993 that would require only an absolute majority of the deputies. That revision never happened. Instead, there have been piecemeal revisions. In reviewing the various initiatives to revise the Constitution between 1988 and today, we find that they amount to very little. This is the consensus of recognized experts on the issue, including David Fleischer, Alfredo Montero, Timothy Power, and Keith Rosem. The Constitution of 1988 was full of contradictions. The issue of parliamentary vs. presidential form of government was never fully resolved, neither in the constituent assembly nor after. On the one hand, the Constitution gave the Congress a role in approving annual budgets and allowed them to overrule presidential vetoes with absolute majorities rather than a two-thirds vote. On the other hand, it gave the presidency the exclusive right to initiate and execute annual budgets and to force 45-day limits on the Congress to review bills defined as “urgent” by the president; the power to appoint a cabinet, subject to Senate approval; and the power to issue executive decrees (medidas provisórias) which had the force of law while Congress had 30 days to review the measure. Post-1990 presidents utilized these measures, and others, to govern.

Politics as usual

Even with these gimmicks, the need to assemble a coalition remained: no president since the first directly elected, Fernando Collor de Mello in 1989, has belonged to a party with a majority in either house of Congress, all presidents would have to obtain the support of other parties. Brazil has one of, if not the most fractured, party systems of any democracy. This form of government – commonly called coalitional presidentialism (presidencialismo de coalizão) – could, and did, easily evolve into corruption. The most famous, but not the only, corruption scandal of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva’s administration (2003–2010) was the “big monthly” (mensalão) scandal – as in big monthly payments to members of Congress to support his government’s policies. Alfred Montero has this to say on the topic. “The need to engage in vote-buying emerged from the limited options the Lula administration had for
Several top Workers’ Party (PT) officials were implicated in this vote-buying scheme. The scandal ultimately led to the convictions of 25 people, including Lula’s former chief of staff, José Dirceu de Oliveira e Silva, who has more recently been sentenced to 23 years in jail in the Lava Jato (car wash) corruption scheme.

There are so many corruption scandals currently in play in the investigation and sentencing phases that only experts can keep straight the modalities of Mensalão, Lava Jato, Petrolão, Zelotes, and Operation Aequalis, to mention only the biggest and most recent. So far the wave of illegal, extralegal, and simply corrupt practices has resulted in the impeachment of President Dilma Vana Rousseff, the conviction of ex-President Lula, the conviction of 84 persons for crimes associated with Lava Jato, and dozens more in other corruption scandals. While not all of the crimes involve politicians, most of them do; and virtually all of them involve sources of funds, as in Petrobras, under the control of the Brazilian State, and thus of necessity involve politicians.9

It must be acknowledged that corruption is nothing new in Brazil. In fact, according to the late Samuel Huntington in his influential Political Order in Changing Societies, corruption was seen in positive terms in the process of modernization, and Huntington called specific, and positive, attention to Brazil.10 Further, there is a highly influential article by Anna Maria Campos, published in 1990 in the important Revista de Administração Pública of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, which argues in great detail why there is no concept or meaning for the term “accountability” in Portuguese.11 Most Brazilian and foreign authors refer to the Brazilian propensity to use “angles” or “gimmicks” (jeitinhos) to get around laws. Or, as was said in positive terms of a mayor of São Paulo, “he robs but he accomplishes things” – Rouba mas faz.

Accountability mechanisms to the fore

While politics has not changed, including the use of corruption to govern, what is now permissible in politics and business in general in Brazil is changing. There is no single cause for the change, and I have identified at least five.

First, the 1988 Constitution created, or recreated, a large spectrum of oversight and investigation mechanisms, and these have been expanded in number during the intervening 29 years. Today they include the Comptroller General, the Accounting Tribunal, the Federal Police, the Public Ministry, and the courts. There is a huge literature on these institutions in both Portuguese and English, and the approach that I find most convincing to explain their increasing influence, culminating in the current wave of imprisonments, is that of Sérgio Praça and Matthew Taylor, who demonstrate that the capacity of these institutions increases not by a single event or factor, but through bureaucratic interaction.12 The increase in capacity is thus contingent and interactive. In short, these oversight, investigatory, and punishment institutions can only be understood in a specific national and international context, which is why I include the following four factors.

Second, whereas in the past the main weakness of the accountability mechanisms was the inability or unwillingness of the courts, especially the Supreme Court, to process and convict individuals, today this is changing given personalities and the gradual modification of processes similar to those noted in the preceding paragraph. This change is best highlighted by the actions of Judge Sérgio Moro of Curitiba, who has taken the lead in the Lava Jato scandal. He is extremely active not only in pursuing corruption, but also in writing on the importance of plea-bargaining (delação premiada) and the Italian experience in countering the Mafia. He is also something of a hero in Brazil today, as described in Watts’ article. In addition to
the changes in this point, the use of plea-bargaining is also a key mechanism for enhancing accountability.

Third, much of the momentum to impeach President Rousseff is related to allegations of corruption involving the Workers’ Party, established by the information provided by Senator Delcídio do Amaral, who was the leader of the party in the Senate. He was arrested, and in plea-bargaining he provided information on the spread of corruption throughout the Brazilian government. Those familiar with criminal law in the United States emphasize that plea-bargaining is the single most important mechanism for gathering evidence on white-collar crime. Plea-bargaining was established in Brazil only in 2013 with law 12,850/2013. I have been informed by Brazilian lawyers involved in the introduction of plea-bargaining that it was one of several laws that were required for Brazil to reach Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) standards. Since June 2015 there has been a Co-Operation Agreement in place between Brazil and the OECD, which has been followed by an OECD–Brazil Programme of Work. Ironically enough it was implemented by President Rousseff, who was later impeached.13

Fourth, Brazil’s population of over 200 million is increasingly invested in the system. An important indicator of this is their paying taxes. According to one source, in 2013 over 50 percent of those who declared income paid income tax, whereas a decade earlier only 36 percent paid income tax.14 Just as important, according to data analyzed by the Instituto Brasileiro de Planejamento e Tributação, of the 30 countries where taxes are the highest, Brazil is the worst in terms of return to the population of investments in the quality of life.

Fifth, Brazilians today are keenly aware of the low return on investment for their high taxes. Indeed, the huge anti-government demonstrations in June 2013 were mainly caused by public awareness of high taxes and mediocre public services in health, education, and transportation, failures of allocation which took place while the government invested massively in stadiums and other infrastructure for global prestige sporting events – the soccer World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. In addition to all-pervasive radio and television stations there is today extremely high penetration by social media. According to Comscore, which claims to be the global leader in digital analysis, Brazil led the world with a 99.9 percent reach of social media. And, with 8.8 hours of use in the month of June 2015, Brazil was the world leader in that similar data for Europe, for example, was 6.1 hours and the U.S. 5.2 hours.15

In sum, traditional politics, in which the lubricant is public funds, has now encountered a wide spectrum of accountability mechanisms, supported by processes and attitudes that no longer tolerate the traditional lackadaisical approach to ethics in politics. While the incentives to reform politics are not as obvious, they are nevertheless present in the expectations of the Brazilian population and international organizations.

**Prerogatives of the Brazilian armed forces**

Both Rosenn and I detail the extensive prerogatives of the armed forces that resulted from the very long and negotiated transition from military to civilian rule and the reliance of President José Sarney on the armed forces during his five-year tenure (1985–90). The most extensive work on this topic, however, is found in Alfred Stepan’s *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, where he demonstrates, by describing 11 prerogatives, that Brazil had progressed little between military and civilian rule.16 More recently, 26 years after Stepan published his book, my colleague Scott D. Tollefson and I demonstrated that the prerogatives that were mainly high when Stepan wrote became either low or moderate.17 Some of the main developments of the process whereby the prerogatives were diminished or eliminated.
include the creation of a civilian-led ministry of defense in June 1999, which resulted in the decrease of military-led ministries from six to zero; and a large package of laws in 2011 which further delimited and restricted the autonomy of the armed forces.

Illustrative of the change from the military regime was President Collor’s abolition in 1990 of the National Information Service (Serviço Nacional de Informações, SNI), which was the intelligence arm of the military regime, and the creation, only after nine years, of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Agência Brasileira de Inteligência, ABIN). ABIN is prohibited from conducting intercepts, has a minimal budget, and lacks a direct link to decision-makers. In short, the politicians had incentives to diminish the influence and roles of the armed forces, thereby increasing their own. Table 14.1 describes the progress of these prerogatives.

Table 14.1 Selected prerogatives of the military as institution in a democratic regime, Brazil 1946–2014

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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Constitutionally sanctioned independent role of military in political system</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Military relationship to chief executive</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coordination of defense sector</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Active-duty military participation in cabinet</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Role of military vis-à-vis legislature</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Role in intelligence</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Role in police</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Role in military promotions</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Role in state enterprises</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Role in legal system</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: “Close to high” for 1969–72 is interpreted as “high”. For 1985–87, variables 8 and 10 “were reduced”, according to Stepan (p. 103), and are placed here in the “moderate” category.
Utilizing a conceptual framework that includes not only democratic civilian control, as exemplified by the prerogatives listed in Table 14.1, but also military effectiveness, Scott D. Tollefson and I documented how control had been asserted by diminishing the prerogatives. Military effectiveness, however, had not been achieved. We demonstrate that Brazil lacks a national security strategy; does not have a functioning joint staff that could interface with the civilian-led ministry of defense; and invests only 1.29 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in defense, 73 percent of which goes to salaries and pensions. This minimal military effectiveness is not a popular or political issue, however, since Brazil is situated in a “zone of peace” with no obvious enemies. For example, the Introduction to the National Defense Strategy of 2008 states: “Brazil is a peaceful country, by tradition and conviction. It lives in peace with its neighbors”; and its guidelines section notes that “Presently, Brazil does not have any enemies.”

The lack of effectiveness would not matter if Brazil did not harbor aspirations to be recognized as a global power. It is commonplace to state, as President Lula did in 2003, that Brazil is ready to “assume its greatness”. There is a huge outpouring of reports and documents giving evidence of Brazil as a regional, if not global, actor, a BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), an important interlocutor with the United States, and more. For example, then U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, and Brazilian Minister of Defense, Nelson Jobin, signed a Security of Military Information Agreement on November 21, 2010. Significant and recent U.S. government documents highlight Brazil’s importance. As President Barack Obama’s National Security Strategy stated, “We welcome Brazil’s leadership and seek to move beyond dated North–South divisions to pursue progress on bilateral, hemispheric, and global issues.” In its most recent 20-year prospective, the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) states, “Brazil will play an outsized role on the region’s future. Its resources and scale could offer benefits and insulation others lack.” In addition to the Congressional Research Service, which issues periodic reports on Brazil, many important U.S. and European think tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) publish reports heralding Brazil’s emergence into greatness. The issue whether any country – even Brazil, with the 5th largest population and 5th largest area – can realistically aspire to global status without credible “hard power” is responded to in the negative by many observers.

Regression in military prerogatives

Currently, nothing has changed regarding military effectiveness. If anything, with the economic crisis the armed forces have fewer resources, which results in fewer ships, airplanes, and tanks available for deployment. What has changed, however, is regression concerning the prerogatives, or democratic civilian control. Today, for the first time since its founding in June 1999, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) is headed by an army general. The Secretariat for Institutional Security (Gabinete de Segurança Institucional, GSI) has been recreated, and is also headed by an army general; and the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Agência Brasileira de Inteligência, ABIN) is under the GSI. Another army general heads the Civilian Household (Casa Civil) of the President of Brazil; and another army general is the president of the Indian Foundation (FUNAI). In addition to these important changes in leadership of key security and domestic policy institutions are changes in the legislation whereby military personnel accused of crimes that occur in pacification programs will be judged by military justice rather than normal, civilian, justice.

These are all major changes, for the worse, in terms of military prerogatives, and thus civilian control of the armed forces. These could have been short-term changes in that, with
another president after the elections in October 2018, these important security positions could again be filled by civilians. However, the MOD was never really staffed by civilians, and the GSI, until it was disbanded between 2014 and 2016, was always under the leadership of a general. The precedent of staffing of what were civilian positions by senior military officers is very serious.

What is very unlikely to change, and can have an ongoing impact, is both the creation of the Ministry of Security (Ministério Extraordinário da Segurança Pública) – now headed by Raul Jungmann, who was previously Minister of Defense – and the federal intervention in Rio de Janeiro. The interventor (one who intervenes) designated by former President Michel Temer, is an army general; essentially the Brazilian army is now in charge of security, including control over the Polícia Militar (state police) and the prisons in Rio de Janeiro. The media reports that this military intervention may be extended to other cities and states.24

Utilizing the same table of prerogatives, and updating those changed by recent decisions by President Temer regarding the Brazilian military, will better document the regression in democratic civil–military relations. The most relevant ones, while all to a greater or lesser degree regress, are 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11 (see Table 14.1).

Prerogative #2: Military relationship to the chief executive. Stepan writes that this prerogative is low when “The Chief executive (president, prime minister, or constitutional monarch) is de jure and de facto commander-in-chief” (p. 94).25 This was low in Brazil in 2014. Since 1985 all presidents of Brazil have been civilians. Since 1989 the presidents have been elected by the population in national elections every four years. However, President Rousseff was impeached in August 2016, and Vice-President Michel Temer, also accused of corruption, assumed the presidency. The MOD was headed by a civilian between its creation in 1999 and February 2018, when General Silva e Luna was appointed Minister of Defense by President Temer. Today this prerogative would be high.

Prerogative #4: Active duty military participation in the Cabinet. This prerogative is low, in Stepan’s analysis, when there is normally no active duty military participation in the Cabinet. This rating was low in Brazil in 2014. None of the 27 members of the cabinet were military. Today the Minister of Defense is a general. Of the 14 officials in the expanded cabinet, the head of the Secretariat for Institutional Security, GSI, is a member of the military, as is the National Secretary of Public Security and the Chief Secretary of the Civil Cabinet (Casa Civil). Today this prerogative is high.

Prerogative #6: Role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees. To Stepan, this prerogative is low when a “Professional cadre of highly informed civil servants or policy-making civilian political appointees play a major role in assisting [the] executive branch in designing and implementing defense and national security policy” (p. 95). In 2014 this prerogative was moderate. The civilian bureaucracy in Brazil is unequivocally strong. However, as there is neither a civilian career nor the required concurso (public academic competition) in the MOD – and with the paucity of civilians with expertise – the military fills the vacuum, and thereby assumes larger roles in the MOD itself. The Planning Ministry is the entity that could create civilian career positions, but it has not done so to date, alleging the lack of funds. From what we have been able to determine, the issue is mostly financial, and not political. Today, with the Minister himself a general, and with other generals in key positions – GSI, FUNAI, Casa Civil, and Public Security – this prerogative is high.

Prerogative #7: Role in intelligence. For Stepan, this prerogative is low when “Peak intelligence agencies [are] de jure and de facto controlled by civilian chains of command.” In addition, there are “Strong civilian review boards” (p. 96). This prerogative was moderate in 2014. The National Information Service (SNI), which was the military regime’s intelligence
service, was abolished by President Collor in 1990. The Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN), which is led by a civilian who is nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, replaced it in 1999. In 2015 and 2016 ABIN reported directly to the president. Today, the GSI has been recreated, and ABIN reports to the Chief Minister of the GSI, who is a general officer in the Brazilian Army. Then too, the Brazilian military intelligence system is generally intact. Today this prerogative is high.

Prerogative #8: Role in police. This prerogative is low when, according to Stepan, “Police [are] under control of nonmilitary ministry or local officials” and there are “No active-duty military allowed to command a police unit.” In 2014 this prerogative was moderate. The control of the Polícia Militar (Military Police, PM) is a state responsibility, under the democratically elected civilian governors of the states. The Polícia Federal (Federal Police, PF) is under the Ministry of Justice. The domestic roles of the armed forces in Brazil are defined in Article 142 of the Constitution of 1988 and in subsequent laws. The conditions are very precisely defined in Complementary Law 97 of June 9, 1999. Specifically, a state governor, who is responsible for security in the state, can request of the president of the Republic that the armed forces be used to support the police. In February of 2018 President Temer named General Braga Netto as interventor for security in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This is the first intervention under the 1988 Constitution, and Temer could have named a civilian. The intervention is distinct from, and far more serious than, the frequent deployment of the Brazilian armed forces under Article 142 of the Constitution, which provides for the military to guarantee law and order (GLO).

In addition, the Brazilian armed forces have police powers along the border, to a distance of 150 kilometers from it. This police power is exercised especially in the Amazon, where the Brazilian Army is often the sole representative of the state along the porous borders. The total amount of land that corresponds to the 150-kilometer corridor is actually larger than any other single country in South America, with the exception of Argentina. This prerogative is high today.

Prerogative #11: Role in legal system. According to Stepan, this prerogative is low when the “Military have almost no legal jurisdiction outside of narrowly defined internal offenses against military discipline.” In all areas outside this domain, civilians and military are subject to civil laws and civil courts. In 2014 this rating was low as the military’s legal system was changing. Today, however, the military still have their own legal system, and in October of 2017 President Temer decreed the law that transferred from civil law to military law crimes committed by military personnel during public security operations. Consequently, this prerogative is moderate today.

Whereas in 2014 the ratings on the 11 prerogatives were 6 low and 5 moderate (with no highs), in early 2018 they were 3 low, 3 moderate, and 5 high.

These presidential decisions, illustrated by the 11 prerogatives, can have very serious and long-lasting negative consequences. They must be seen in terms of political dynamics. As stated by ex-president and famous political sociologist, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, “it is mainly weak governments that end up appealing for military [support]”. President Michel Temer apparently wanted to run for election for the presidency in October 2018 on a public security platform. Temer suffered a major political setback in his inability to reform the pension system, and one of the leading candidates for the presidency was Jair Bolsonaro, a very conservative retired military officer. Furthermore, when asked in surveys to evaluate Temer’s administration, whereas 14 percent of respondents said good or excellent in July 2016, in January 2018 this figure was 6 percent; on the other hand, whereas 31 percent said bad or terrible in July 2016, in January 2018 this was 70 percent. In opinion polls for the Democratic politics in Brazil
October 2018 presidential elections (including simulations), of 11 potential candidates, Temer had the third lowest amount of support (0.9 percent) and by far the highest rejection rate, at 88 percent (Table 14.2).²⁸

Michel Temer was, in short, a very unpopular president who also carried a huge amount of baggage for graft and corruption. In the end he declined to stand in the 2018 election and was succeeded by Bolsonaro. Temer, like all politicians in Brazil, was aware that public security is by far the most important issue concerning the population. In addition, according to all public opinion polls, the military, in stark contrast to politicians, is highly regarded. Even before the most recent scandals, in 2014, 44 percent of the population trusted the president and 43 percent the federal government, whereas 62 percent trusted the military. And, in a World Values Survey (WVS), 58.6 percent stated they had confidence in the armed forces, while only 41 percent had confidence in the government.³⁹ Further, according to a very credible poll by the Brazilian Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Institute of Applied Economic Research, IPEA), when asked about using the military for public security, whereas 92 percent of respondents said always or in some situations (47 and 45 percent), only 8 percent said never.³⁰

**Conclusions: the Bolsonaro presidency**

The 1988 Constitution in Brazil was formulated by politicians who sought to guarantee their own welfare. In the intervening decades the prerogatives of the Brazilian military were gradually reduced, thereby increasing the control of civilians over the military. Brazil’s strategic landscape and domestic politics never required military effectiveness, and the civilian politicians – while utilizing rhetoric to the contrary – never provided strategy, institutions, or

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<tr>
<th>Candidate (Party)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Rejection Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lula (PT)</td>
<td>33.40%</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>46.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haddad (PT)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsonaro (PSC)</td>
<td>16.80%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>50.40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marina (Rede)</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td>53.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alckmin (PSDB)</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>8.60%</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Gomes (PDT)</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>47.80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Dias (Podemos)</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collor (PTC)</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temer (MDB)</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>88.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D’Ávila (PCdoB)</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Maia (DEM)</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>55.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank/Null</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
<td>28.20%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/NR</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
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Source: Information provided by David Fleischer, March 7, 2018, drawn from poll results released by the Brazilian National Transportation Confederation (CNT), March 6, 2018.

Note: The CNT-commissioned poll was carried out by the MDA polling organization between February 28 and March 3 among 2,002 voters in 137 municípios in 25 states with a 2.2 point margin of error. A and B are different scenarios, different simulations.
resources that could result in military effectiveness. The nature of Brazil’s political institutions, in combination with a culture of impunity, resulted in mass graft and corruption. Due to a series of domestic and international factors, however, a robust set of accountability mechanisms emerged, which resulted in massive penalties for corrupt politicians, bureaucrats, and prominent businessmen. In this context, when even a president who took office on the impeachment of his elected predecessor in August 2016 defined public security as the main issue of concern to the Brazilian population, he turned to the only security institution with its reputation intact – the Brazilian military – to take on important roles at all levels of government in an attempt to achieve public security. The challenge – in view of a lack of demand for an external role and the weakness of the institutions of civilian control of the military – would become whether civilian control could be reasserted in a future political context.

In the wake of a succession of scandals involving his predecessors, Brazilian voters elected Jair Bolsonaro to the country’s presidency in 2018. Bolsonaro, an ex-army officer, ran as a self-described outsider, although he had spent years as a member of the country’s parliament. Some have described Brazil’s president as the “Trump of the tropics” because of his contempt for the rules of liberal democracy and his right-wing nationalism. Illustratively, at one point Bolsonaro expressed nostalgia for Brazil’s military dictatorship (1964–1985), as well as contempt for women’s rights and the concerns of the country’s indigenous Amazonian population. An advocate of “law and order”, with a strong emphasis on the latter, Bolsonaro at one point endorsed the extra-judicial killing of suspected drug dealers in Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere.

In office, despite worldwide condemnation, President Bolsonaro supported the decision of large-scale landowners to burn down significant parts of the Amazon rain forest to make way for more farming. After the COVID-19 pandemic struck Brazil, Bolsonaro expressed contempt for those, including a succession of health ministers, who warned the public about the threat of the disease. As a consequence, Brazil, like the United States and India, has developed one of the world’s worst rates of infection. Despite what appear to be calamitous decisions, Bolsonaro continues to enjoy high approval ratings (2020) in public opinion polls.

Notes

1 The views expressed here are the author’s alone and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense.
6 Ibid.
7 In 2001 this was changed to 60 days.
9 For a very thorough, if somewhat sensational, review of this issue see Jonathan Watts, “Operation Car Wash: Is This the Biggest Corruption Scandal in History?” Guardian, June 1, 2017. Available at www.


13 According to Jonathan Watts, 2017, President Rousseff implemented it in an attempt to placate an angry public in the wake of nationwide anti-corruption demonstrations in June 2013.


23 For concrete data on this see Juliano da Silva Cortinhas, “Brazil and the Construction of Its Power to Defend the South Atlantic,” in Érico Duarte and Manuel Correia de Barros, eds, Navies and Maritime Policies in the South Atlantic (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 151–185. According to a media report on information provided by Professor Octavio Amorim Neto, in 2011 only 48 percent of Brazilian Navy ships were operational, as were 55 percent of Brazilian Army tanks and 41 percent of Brazilian Air Force planes. See Valor Econômico June 9, 2015.

24 As David Pion-Berlin and Rafael Martinez state in their recent book: “A military (Brazil) that exploits its constitutional right to enforce internal law and order and can, under certain conditions, exert command authority over the police is not one consistent with a mature polyarchy.” Soldiers, Politicians, and Civilians: Reforming Civil-Military Relations in Democratic Latin America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 381.

25 This and other quotations from Stepan in the following paragraphs on prerogatives draw on Rethinking Military Politics, Table 7.1.


28 Information provided March 6, 2018 in e-mail from David Fleischer.
