

UNIT 15 MILITARY IN POLITICS

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most important force or actors to have emerged out of the wars of independence in Spanish America was the army, led by a great variety of individuals including well-born creoles, priests and the people of more humble background. These ‘generals’ did not come from military academies but were self-selected or chosen by others to lead large and amorphous armed populace, searching for a variety of goals after the Independence. The capability that came out of force-of-arms and the taste for power however made the army one of the first important groups or actors in the politics of independent republics. National armies were established soon after independence; but they were in turn often challenged by the other, the regional armies that were led by strong regional personalities, called caudillos. Caudillos—literally meaning, the men on horseback—were the regional *jefes* (chieftains) who often dominated or at times represented regional landowning and mining interests, and led large armed followers. They were the patrons and their followers obeyed them out of deference, loyalty and their exalted position in the social hierarchy. Patron-clientele relationship was the principal feature of caudillismo. The political history of the 19th Century Spanish America is so often the history of armed struggle for control and domination between the central governments and its armies on the one hand and the regional caudillos on the other. Often caudillos, as in Argentina and Mexico, did come to dominate the central governments also by working out informal arrangements and alliances with other regional caudillos, the land-owners, church, foreign investors and even governments, and whosoever the other power contenders and interests.

Given the pattern of landownership and political domination of the oligarchy, a military career was all that was there for individuals and groups seeking upward social mobility. In countries with large ‘mixed’ populations such as Mexico, force-of-arms enabled the *mestizo* to go up the social and political ladder.

Since Brazil had become a monarchy upon declaring its independence in 1823, developments in that country were different. A royal national army was established under monarchical rule. The military in that country gained its first preeminence only during the Paraguayan war (1864-70); and until 1930s, different Brazilian states had their own powerful militias, which were some times a match to the national army.

15.2 MILITARY IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

Being the most powerful political actor during the 19th Century, two characteristics of military were noteworthy: Firstly, at given times, the militaries were regional or personal organisations; at others, they were part of the dominant oligarchic interests and got involved in conflicts which caused frequent civil wars. In the Central American republics with their small, open monoculture economies, armies were created to defend the political and economic domination of the oligarchies. In Argentina, Mexico and elsewhere, armies had begun evolving as an institution, with its own stakes and share in the political and economic resources of the republics. Secondly, wherever they did evolve as independent political actors, national armies often played the role of a moderating power—staying above factional politics of the oligarchy. In times of such conflicts, the militaries would also assume power but only temporarily till civilians were able to work out new political arrangements for governance. The role of a chief moderator was particularly the feature of Brazilian politics after the abdication of the emperor in 1889.

A major problem was the low level of professionalisation of armed forces, although in most countries military academies had been established within the first quarter of a century after independence. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth, new military academies—patterned after the German and French academies—had begun producing a more professional officer corps. There was another discernible change also. While in the past, officer corps had come generally from the landowning families, now they were increasingly drawn from urban middle class backgrounds. This had political meaning as ‘conservative’ and ‘nationalist’ or ‘progressive’ factions began crystallising in the armed forces of most countries. The professionalism grew but the armed forces continued to engage in politics and to exercise their moderating power, and even stage coups d’état towards these goals. But now, these were ‘conservative’ or ‘reformist’ coups as happened in Argentina in the decade of the 1930s.

By the 1950s, a discernible change had taken place in the nature of the role of military. The context of Cold War, successful consummation of a ‘socialist’ revolution in Cuba and eruption of radical peasant movements in the region, all came to emphasise on a new role for the armed forces viz., counter-insurgency and internal security of the nations against the so-called ‘communist’ threats. Importantly, these roles were deeply influenced by the pattern of relationship that had begun developing between the Latin American armed forces with US in terms of training, indoctrination and weapons before the Second World War. The growing professionalism had also, somewhat paradoxically, meant new concerns of the armed forces in relation to the nation-building processes, importantly economic development and ‘engineering’ a conducive polity for that, and internal security against ‘subversive’—which generally meant ‘communist’—elements. Higher military academies in countries such as Brazil and Peru had even showed concerns for conditions of under-development and the necessity for social and economic ‘reforms’ if long-term ‘internal security’ and economic development of their countries were to be guaranteed.

15.3 MILITARY AND THE DEVELOPMENTALIST DISCOURSE

Since the 1930s, the developmental discourse in Latin America had been that import substitution industrialisation (ISI) is the way out of the conditions of dependence and under-development. If industrialisation and economic growth were seen as the forces for development and independence, a major concern were the sources of capital necessary for these processes. ISI had entailed a central role for the state including the most necessary one of accumulating capital for industrialisation. It was a triple alliance under ISI strategy wherein the state sought to channel both the domestic entrepreneurs and foreign multinationals towards the goals of economic development. Besides its concerns for economic development, state had also to create opportunities of employment mainly in the state-owned sector, enact labour and social security programmes and also undertake redistributive policies. All this had meant (a) a new role for an expanded state bureaucracy which had become an important political actor by itself; and (b) a sufficient degree of state autonomy vis-à-vis all the social classes and economic interests including foreign investors.

The trajectory of economic development in Latin America since the 1930s therefore had been state-centred. A feature of the populist regimes (see Unit 8) was their failure to ensure uninterrupted economic growth and thereby their failure to meet redistributive commitments. Populist coalitions had generally broken down in the face of rising political conflicts and social tensions over state inability to meet the demands of various constituent elements. Developmentalist theories have described it as the ‘second crisis’ of the ‘delayed and dependent’ mode of capitalist development. It was to resolve the underlying economic and political challenges that military regimes came to power in several Latin American countries in the 1960s and the 1970s. These were development-oriented regimes, and the noted Argentine political scientist, Guillermo O’Donnell has described them as Bureaucratic-Authoritarian (BA) regimes.

The onset of military regimes had challenged the prevailing theories of military interventions, which had invariably argued that with economic modernisation including importantly the expansion of the middle class, and with the professionalisation of the armed forces, democratic processes would become strong and military interventions would become rare. Guillermo O’Donnell has shown that precisely those processes, such as the expansion of market relations, industrialisation, and increasing political participation—all evident since the era of populism—which modernisation theories had identified as factors that would lead to the establishment of democracy did in fact pave the way for the rise of BA regimes.

15.4 BUREAUCRATIC AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

BA regimes were the military regimes that had staged the coups in the 1960s and the 1970s and remained in power until the beginning of the democratisation process. Guillermo O’Donnell had used the term ‘Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism’ to describe the military regimes of Argentina and Brazil but scholars soon began using it to explain the behaviour and policies of other military regimes too. A number of scholars had even included the electoral civilian regimes for instance that of in Mexico. The reason is that there were some uncommon characteristics to the BA regimes, which distinguished them from the military regimes of the past and also set them apart from the civilian democratic regimes of recent types.

In 1964, the military had seized power in Brazil, a scenario, which was soon repeated in a relatively more developed and modernised Argentina in 1966. In the same year, Bolivia also fell

to a military coup after enjoying an unprecedented period of constitutional governments. In 1968, Peru experienced a military coup; and in 1973, Chile and Uruguay—two countries with the longest democratic rule—also fell to armed forces. By 1973, as many as ten Latin American countries were under military rule; and those with elected governments such as in Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela saw the civilian governments also veer strongly towards authoritarianism. A distinct feature of the military regimes was that, unlike in the past when military interventions had been in power for a brief period, their stated goal this time was to remain in power and put their countries back on the track of economic growth. Beyond it, and it is important to note, the military regimes intended to reorganise the entire political system.

BA regimes enhanced the centrality of the state in the development process. These were authoritarian regimes that accorded primacy to growth first, and coercively relegated the redistributive goals for the future. Admittedly, these were politically ‘exclusionary’ regimes as they constricted the political arena using coercion and co-optation; and often blamed the populist leaders for squandering the financial resources and excessively mobilising the under-classes particularly the labour. Authoritarian regimes on the whole succeeded in restoring economic growth rates and in fact, during the 1960s and the 1970s, rates of economic growth in Latin America at times surpassed those of the developed nations. However, economic growth came at a considerable social cost in terms of deepening economic and social inequalities and regime violence.

Another noticeable feature was that these were a sort of middle class military coups. Military juntas in the more industrialised countries of Latin America particularly were allied to and enjoyed the support of conservative *status quoist* middle classes. Besides, the ruling juntas had immediately embarked upon the economic modernising programmes. For instance, the Brazilian military junta undertook mega development projects such as developing Amazonia through roads and settlements, major hydro-electric projects and initiated state-owned enterprises for the development of a sophisticated technological and industrial base in fields such as nuclear energy, conventional armaments and heavy industry. This led to the view that military authoritarian regimes were anti-democratic but modernising regimes.

In the 1960s, political scientists were concerned with the world-wide spread of authoritarianism. Explanations for the growth of authoritarianism had first focused on the military. While examining the nature and orientation of BA regimes, O'Donnell and others proceeded from the definition of authoritarianism. The term has been defined variedly but the following definition given by Juan Linz is found to be comprehensive and satisfactory:

Authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilisation (except at some points of their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.

Other main features of ‘bureaucratic-authoritarian’ regimes could be identified as follows: (i) BA regimes were a form of government, which ensured the domination of society, through a class structure, by a bourgeoisie that was externally oriented. (ii) Institutionally, BA regimes were made up of a coalition of coercive and technocratic agencies. Rational bureaucratic and

technocratic solutions were offered and preferred for the myriad national problems and implemented with all the coercive might of the state. (iii) It involved a system of political exclusion, which denied the mass of the people the rights of citizenship. It was argued that excessive politics of populist era is to be blamed for the deep social fissures and economic malaise of these countries. (iv) A tripod of state sector, foreign capital and domestic business—all under the guidance of a bureaucratic state—has become in-charge of developmental process. The strategy of growth first and distribution later won the confidence of foreign and domestic investors but deepened social inequalities as anti-people economic policies such as wage cuts came to be implemented coercively.

O'Donnell's has laid particular emphasis on the role of foreign capital in the development strategies of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes. This brings his analysis closer to the dependency approaches.

Further developing the analyses of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, analysts have emphasised on several more related aspects. For instance, Gerardo Munck has highlighted the technocratic aspect of these regimes. More than bureaucratic, military regimes were technocratic in their outlook and policy designs. Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes saw the rise of public sector technocracy and in this respect, these were not simple military regimes.

James Malloy emphasises on the corporatist character of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes and the relative autonomy of the state vis-à-vis the dominant social classes and economic interests. Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes were relatively autonomous in imposing on the society a system of interest representation based on limited pluralism. These regimes succeeded in eliminating the spontaneous interest articulation and established a limited number of authoritatively recognised groups that interacted with the governmental apparatus. They were able to make even the domestic business to fall in line with the regimes' chosen development strategies. The phenomenon of corporatism had especially become deeply entrenched in the more industrialised countries of Latin America; so much so, Malloy seems to have rightly understood, that post-military civilian regimes will also practice corporatist control over the various organised interests of the society. Malloy relates corporatism of the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes to the 'second' crisis of the 'delayed and dependent' capitalist development process. The failure of populism had signified the 'exhaustion' of the 'easy' phase of import substitution industrialisation. ISI had developed structural bottlenecks by the mid-1950s and redistributive conflicts were threatening the very authority of Latin American states. By 1960s, the crisis of the 'delayed and dependent' capitalist development had brought about a general crisis of public authority. The 'first' crisis had occurred in the 1930s, as the fallout of world-wide depression, when the primary product export growth model had failed. It was the 'first' crisis of public authority and domination; and populist authoritarian regimes had responded by launching an import substituting development strategy under multi-class coalitional governments. Populist regimes had practiced *inclusionary* corporatism. Malloy has argued that populist regimes were only *implicitly* corporatist. Military regimes were a response to this generalised crisis of ISI and the challenges to the public authority of the state. As with populist authoritarianism, so with military authoritarianism, the external stimulus for economic growth and modernisation had accentuated the crisis of public authority in the sense that the multiplicity of societal interests created by modernisation could not easily be integrated into the political structures to guarantee political stability. So, bureaucratic authoritarian regimes were, therefore, *explicitly* corporatist; besides it was an *exclusionary* corporatism.

The crisis of the delayed dependent model had become acute by the 1960s. Under populism, state had expanded in size and responsibilities but not in its efficiency or power mainly because of continued conditions of economic dependence. Rather, the dependence on external sources of finance, technology and managerial skills—now operating in the form of multinational corporations—had become more acute as with the exhaustion of the ‘easy’ phase, ISI struggled to move forward where industrialisation could begin producing ‘intermediate’ and ‘capital’ goods. The domestic business, which was supposed to be the main beneficiary of ISI, could not, despite all state support and protectionism, rise to the occasions and play an independent role in the industrialisation strategy. It continued to remain weak, inefficient and, more important, content playing second fiddle to the foreign capital. While, on the one hand, the bourgeoisie could not fill the vacuum left behind by the declined oligarchy, the radicalisation of Cuban revolution had, on the other hand, opened new opportunities for Latin America’s under-classes to push for more radical structural change. Under the guise of nationalism and security, the military stepped into the gap, seizing control of the extensive state apparatus that the populists had previously set up.

The seizure of power by the armed forces had represented a move from the potentially democratic corporatism of the populists to the authoritarian corporatism of the soldiers and the technocrats. The bureaucratic authoritarian regimes were committed to the goals of state-sponsored industrial growth and in order to achieve this, they had to increase the power and autonomy of the state over various groups particularly the popular classes. The economic growth strategy required a clear and conscious preference of industry over working class. Status quoist and not wanting to lose its privileges, the opportunistic middle classes—that had been the backbone of populist regimes—also sided with the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes. The state became even more expansive with public sector particularly in countries such as Brazil and Mexico expanding manifold. The large state bureaucracy and technocracy had come to closely identify its institutional interests with an expanding state apparatus and domain. Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the end became large, powerful and autonomous, but these could not prevent the domination of the foreign multinationals over the economy, or, in political terms, the hegemony of the foreign capital and conditions of dependency.

While Malloy has focussed more on the process of modernisation, O’Donnell had been particularly concerned with the social cost of the modernisation effected by the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes. Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes intensified the patterns of economic inequalities and income concentration in the region. The growing polarisation of wealth was more vigorous in Brazil and Mexico in the 1970s. Real wages experienced a secular decline all over Latin America. The strategy to promote economic growth brought in not only more foreign capital but also led to state borrowings both at home and abroad. There were external variables that accentuated the debt problem in the 1980s, but external loans of various types to maintain the growth rates brought the burden of external debt over the entire region. Most governments had supposed that growth momentum would be sufficient to cover the debts incurred from borrowings. International trends, among others, thwarted these expectations but, at the same time, it is undeniable that economies had remained highly protected and cocoon, characterised by low productivity and inefficiency.

There were other dimensions too of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes. Bureaucratic authoritarian

regimes set up 'national security' states. Military regimes in Argentina and Chile had used coercion and violence as a tool of state policy to ensure the 'internal security' against the perceived threats of 'subversion' by the 'anti-national' and 'communist' elements. They carried out indiscriminate violence and terror against the suspected opponents of the regimes leading to the killing and 'disappearance' of several thousands. In Brazil and Mexico, violence was more 'selective' and was used often as a 'means of last resort'. Be that as it may, BA regimes relied on strengthening the role of internal intelligence agencies everywhere. Everywhere, military budgets also went up several folds and were protected from the economic downturns. A noteworthy dimension of 'national security' syndrome was the grand indulgence of BA regimes in geo-political planning for their countries. 'National interests' were defined more militaristically and the grand national destinies including development were to be attained by building military prowess of the armed forces. Geo-political thinking had also sharpened regional conflicts and border disputes. The historic rivalry for preeminence and regional leadership between Argentina and Brazil had also sharpened; and the two regimes had begun viewing neighbouring countries as potential allies or adversaries. BA regimes had also started laying national claims over large areas of oceans either as national territorial waters or exclusive economic zones. Geo-political thinking had also made these regimes lay over-lapping claims over the Antarctica.

BA regimes in many respects had similar outlook and composition; they had also formulated identical economic and political policies; and there were similarities in the defined missions of the armed forces. However, there were deep national variations and differences between BA regimes. Two contrasting models of economic development and regime behaviour can be seen in the context of the BA regimes in Peru and Brazil.

15.4.1 Peru: A Revolutionary Military, 1968-1980

General Juan Velasco Alvarado, heading middle class-oriented officers' corps, staged a military coup in Peru in 1968 that has been described as 'reformist' and, some time as a 'revolutionary' military regime. The military junta itself described the coup as 'revolution from above' and embarked on a path of development which they declared was neither capitalist nor socialist. A distinctive feature of the military regime was its autonomy from both the dominant classes including the powerful landowning oligarchy, industrialists and foreign capitalists as well as the dominated classes of Peru. The autonomy of the military junta from the given social forces has made analysts describe the regime as 'Nasserite' or 'Bonapartist' for the regime embarked on a path of development that seems to have been worked out by the junta itself without undue influence of any powerful social or political actors.

The military authoritarian regime professing radical aims introduced a variety of structural changes that intended to weaken the economic and social position of the landed oligarchy and strengthen the hold of modern industrial capitalism in Peru. Some times, the military coup has also been described as a 'bourgeois revolution', which became state capitalism benefiting the bureaucratic-managerial class, professionals and white collar workers.

The middle class-oriented military officers had seized the opportunity to capture state power in a period when Peru was facing the 'crisis of hegemony'. Velasco regime ushered in structural changes in order to break the hold of the semi-feudal landowners and moved Peru towards becoming a more capitalist-dominated society. One important structural change was the

introduction of the land reform, which meant expropriation of large landholdings and land distribution among the landless. The expropriated landowners were compensated in the form of state bonds, which could be exchanged for shares of stock in industrial enterprises belonging to the state or as investment in new industrial plants. The goal was to free resources from the unproductive to productive and from feudal to modern capitalist economic sectors. The traditional landed elite were at a stroke converted into industrial capitalists.

The expropriated lands were converted into agricultural cooperatives, which were linked to government bureaucracy and so involved an expansion of administrative middle class occupations. Agricultural credit banks and procurement agencies were set up—all in the end benefiting the peasantry. Land reform however did not benefit in any way the subsistence peasantry, which continued to till their small plots of land. The net result was to expand and aid the middle levels of rural society and to offer little assistance to the really poor in the rural areas.

Similar policies were pursued towards the urban sector of the society. State came to own basic industries and economic infrastructure leaving the modern dynamic sector of the economy in private hands. This involved expropriation of foreign capital in areas such as land and mining whereas both foreign investment and domestic enterprises were encouraged in the industrial and banking sectors. The aim was to encourage domestic entrepreneurs to participate with the state in areas of economic activity previously monopolised by the foreign capital and in the dynamic manufacturing sector. Analysts have argued that the military had intended to strengthen the weak and dependent bourgeoisie and enable it to make a break both from semi-feudal forces and the foreign capital so that there could evolve an independent and strong class of modern industrial capitalists in Peru. All in all, the outcome of various structural changes was large-scale state ownership of banking, manufacturing and mining sectors. It was state capitalism, and by 1975, two-third of banking sector was state-owned, half of the total productive investment came from the state, and a fifth of industrial production and more than 50 per cent of mining output came from state-owned enterprises.

The 'reformist' military regime also brought into effect new labour laws entailing profit-sharing and workers' participation in the management. The military government also set up state-run workers' cooperatives with their management in the hands of the workers under the principle of 'subordination of capital to the labour'. The social property sector however remained limited and often lacked necessary funding from the state. But like land reforms, it benefited only those with a permanent job and left out the vast number of self-employed. To the credit of the regime, government expenditure however also went up in terms of extending urban facilities to the towns.

The regime maintained its autonomy from the underlying economic forces; and by introducing structural changes sought to change the pattern of class formation and societal balance in favour of national bourgeoisie, state bureaucracy and the white-collar workers. The military authoritarian rule was based on 'inclusionary' corporatism; and, unlike military authoritarian regimes in Argentina and Chile, did not resort to violence and repression as a tool of state policy. Its stated goal to form a multi-class coalition under the aegis of the state and introduction of social welfare programmes have also led to the regime being described as 'authoritarian populist' regime. In several respects, the military government was different from the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the neighbouring Brazil, Argentina and Chile. In terms of its character, orientation, and policies, the military regime came closer to the authoritarian populist regimes of the 1940s.

15.4.2 Brazil: A Modernising Military Regime, 1964-84

The military regimes in Peru and Brazil have often been presented as contrasting models of bureaucratic authoritarianism. The 'modernising authoritarian' regime in Brazil pushed for strong economic growth with heightened economic inequalities under the leadership of a strong state. More mature and developed as compared with other Latin American countries, the national bourgeoisie by the 1960s had become extremely apprehensive of the 'cyclical' populism that had continued under the presidencies of Kubitschek and Goulart. The support of the big business and middle class was there when Brazilian military staged a coup, invoking its historic role as the 'guardian' of national sovereignty and interests. The military coup of 1964—described by the armed forces as a 'revolution'—had some kind of a salvationist mission to restore law and order and economic growth pattern which evidently the weakling civilian populist regimes had failed since the days of Vargas.

The military coup was brought about by two groups: the so-called 'hard-liners' and the 'moderates'. Though General Humberto Castelo Branco, a 'moderate', had become the president, it was the more authoritarian elements that gradually came to dominate, and making the regime adopt some clearly hard-line policies. Over the next years after the coup, the regime policies evolved in a somewhat systematic fashion. Foremost of its characteristics, however, was the nature of corporatist control the state came to establish over all the vital sectors of society. It was also a highly centralised federal government controlled by the military that was dominating the weak provincial governments. Military officers were appointed to all influential and leading roles in the state machinery and public enterprises. A large and well-paid civilian technocracy was put in charge of economic policy making and implementation with no interference from the military. The regime took steps to establish the dominance of business interests over rest of the societal interests. While the regime evolved a system of presidential succession from within the junta, it maintained usual political institutions including the federal congress and congressional elections to gain both legitimacy and the support of the select civilian elements. Many civilian organisations were debarrred, disbanded or simply repressed thus maintaining tight regime control of the political process.

The political system was dominated from above, allowing for no genuine representation from grass-roots levels by relying on certain interests such as the business community. Such interests were vertically linked with the government machinery. As for the urban and rural labour unions, these were mostly disbanded often by employing state coercion. In 1969, federal congress and the judicial branch were both closed down making the military president and the ruling junta exercise unrestricted powers. Civil liberties and fundamental rights of the citizens were suspended and a strong wave of repression had ensued. A powerful control mechanism in the form of internal security agencies had emerged. This followed tighter governmental control over the labour unions and their subordination to the ministry of labour. At first, political parties, being considered nuisance, were banned. Later, realising the need to have a 'popular' image, the regime in an act of high corporatism floated two political parties—the 'official' pro-government National Renovating Alliance (ARENA) and the 'official' opposition Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB).

Authoritarian corporatism was justified in the name of economic growth. In its vision, the military was supported by a bureaucracy, composed of technocrats, which emphasised on the need and

efficacy of 'technocratic' and not 'political' solutions to the economic and social challenges. The technocratic view had emphasised upon the need to introduce advanced technology and modern methods of management to run the society. The technocratic solutions admittedly could be introduced, not in democratic, but only in an authoritarian context. As economic growth took off from 1968 onwards, the alliance between military and technocracy became stronger, and made many analysts argue that modernisation including rapid economic growth is compatible with authoritarianism. Economic growth for about ten years was stupendous making it a 'Brazilian miracle'. By mid-1970s, Brazil had become the tenth largest economy, having the thirteenth largest industrial sector. The economic transformation was deep and far-reaching and soon had its social and political fall-outs.

One discernible effect was the social cost of rapid economic growth under conditions of authoritarianism. Wealth had become even more concentrated in fewer hands. Some redistribution towards urban salaried sectors took place but the share in national wealth of the lower 50 per cent of the population actually fell. Another discernible aspect was the monetary and fiscal policies of the government. The stabilisation programme introduced in 1964 had meant government control over wages especially among the lower paid. With the real value of minimum wage falling and no recourse left in terms of labour rights, a mass of cheap and disciplined labour was made available to the multinationals and Brazilian enterprises. With all protections withdrawn, rural workers suffered even more at the hands of landowners; and this drove great number of unskilled rural labourers to the cities in search of work. While wages were controlled and their real value reduced, prices of food and other essentials rose, with the redistributive consequences of a transfer of wealth from the working class to the middle class. By mid-1970s when the 'Brazilian miracle' was at its peak, the proportion of the indigent and the poor, the unskilled and the rural-to-urban migrant was correspondingly also at its peak. The promised 'trickle down' never took effect. Yet, another discernible change was in the area of the rise of multinationals and large Brazilian firms. Small and inefficient Brazilian firms were put out by governmental policies. It was the multinationals in the automobile, electronic household goods, plastics, tyre and rubber, and pharmaceutical sectors that dominated the dynamic sector and had brought about the 'miracle'. The prosperous middle class provided a market for these goods and the personnel to manage new industries and firms. Exports also increased during the boom years with coffee replaced by soya as the main agricultural export and the export basket becoming varied with manufactured goods, processed goods and minerals. The economic growth that took place was prompted not simply by the multinationals. State intervention was pervasive and its ownership expanded. Some 200 new public sector enterprises were established between 1966 and 1975 with many of them really mega firms. The goal of the modernising military regime was eventually to make Brazilian national bourgeoisie strong and independent, capable of competing at the international level. In the tripod of domestic private business, multinationals and state, the state was the lynchpin of growth but the domestic private business was the intended principal beneficiary of all modernisation.

Brazilian state, under the military authoritarian rule, had gained considerable autonomy vis-à-vis all the socio-economic classes and forces. It was able to negotiate successfully with foreign capital, offering the latter the most conducive economic and political environment for investments. It was the state ability to invest and manipulate investment in various sectors that gave it preeminence over both domestic business and foreign capital and thus shape the nature of capitalism in Brazil. The flaw in the development strategy was however massive external borrowings, which created

towards the end of the 1970s, severe debt obligations for the state. The 'Brazilian miracle' slowed down and came to a halt as international prices of petroleum and other adverse international developments from the mid-1970s impinged adversely on the growth strategy.

A significant feature of bureaucratic authoritarian regime was its time-table for gradual 'opening' of the political process from the mid-1970s. In a reorganisation of the party system, the regime allowed the formation of multiple parties. When abertura (opening) began, electorate voted heavily for the opposition candidates in the elections of 1974. Other forms of popular opposition also began to gel such as students' strikes, industrial workers' movements that led to the formation of the Brazilian Workers party, and church-inspired grass-roots movements. Wage cuts and cuts in state expenditure on health and education had deteriorated the conditions of vast numbers but at the same time gave a fillip to the self-help and voluntary movements that were usually issue-specific. Towards the end of the military rule in 1984, the real issues were those of poverty and income inequalities. At the end of the military rule, one could argue that Brazil had achieved, notwithstanding sliding economic performance and deteriorating external situation, a First World-looking economy but the society had remained, in fact had worsened, in its Third World indices. When the second stage of the political 'decompression' began in 1979, adversely affected societal forces had come into their own forcing the military regime to reschedule its time-table for political liberalisation. This was most evident in the demand for *diretas ja* (directly-held presidential elections) in place for indirect election of a civilian president that the regime had planned in 1982 but which took place finally in 1984.

15.5 MILITARY UNDER CIVILIAN RULE

Military authoritarian regimes of the 1960s were not pure military regimes. Civilian bureaucracy and technocracy and the business sector—both domestic and foreign—were also closely allied to the development strategy of the armed forces. Authoritarian regimes which were civilian such as in Mexico had come to rely on internal intelligence agencies for governance, preponderant role of the president and the state had armed itself with extreme arbitrary powers; and, like the military regimes, brooked no opposition to the economic development strategies. It was the presence of civilian technocratic class that made these regimes being described as BA regimes.

In fact, since the times of populist regimes, coups in Latin America have not been purely military affairs. Military regimes have seen strong support and participation of powerful civilian groups and business interests. Particularly in Argentina, civilian political opposition has invariably hobnobbed with the military encouraging the latter to intervene to realise the objectives of out-of-power political party. This is how, since the coup of the 1930, Argentina military came to assume the role of 'arbiter' among competing civilian parties and politicians. It is difficult to compare the Latin American militaries cross-nationally but it is undeniable that Latin American governments have often been coalitions of certain military factions and certain civilian ones.

It is also to be borne in mind that military has exercised varied types and level of influence in politics. The military is one of the traditional pillars of the Latin American society with rights (*fueros*), responsibilities, and a legal standing that can be traced back to the colonial times. It is therefore imperative to examine the role of military in any country in the context of the interaction of these traditions with the problems that each individual country faces. For the democratic regimes since the 1980s, the question of how to deal with the military is a critical one. The 1988

Constitution in Brazil has retained the traditional role of military as a 'moderating' force in national politics. It was in the exercise of the responsibility vested by the 1946 constitution to maintain law and order that the military had brought the 'revolution' in 1964. Castelo Branco himself had never doubted that he had acted constitutionally in staging the coup. In Chile, military has been able to guarantee its institutional interests and protect its budgets from structural adjustment programmes. Elsewhere, immunity for the armed forces was one of the conditions; retreating military regimes were able to impose on 'transition' democracies. Militaries may have returned to the barracks heralding the era of democratisation but in very powerful ways they remain one of the most powerful and unified actors in the politics of even the democratic regimes.

15.6 SUMMARY

After independence in Latin America the army emerged as an important actor in politics. During the 19th Century, the militaries were regional or personal organisations but the national army often played the role of a moderator between factional politics. At the beginning of the 20th Century, new military academies started training more professional officer corps. In the second half of the 20th Century by a combination of circumstances including importantly the paramount role of the United States in the region, the military assumed roles as modernising, developmentalist political agents/actors, though two case studies of the role of the military—Peru and Brazil—offer contrasting perspectives. The final section deals with the dawn of the democratic process in late 1980s and how the military functions under civilian administrations.

15.7 EXERCISES

1. The high incidence of military intervention is a feature of Latin American politics. Discuss.
2. What are the institutional changes that have been witnessed in the armed forces since the second half of the 20th Century?
3. Discuss critically the role of the military regime in any one Latin American country of your choice.
4. What role does the military play in the civilian regime of contemporary Latin America?