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Abstract: This paper argues that the single most important factor in achieving civilian supremacy over the military is the military’s own ruling ambition -- particularly the source, intensity, and form of this ambition. The emergence of a ruling ambition among the armed forces can derail civilian governments, including consolidated democracies, that have been in place and stable for decades. The implication of this thesis is that reducing or eliminating the Military’s Ruling Ambition must be the focus of efforts to implant and sustain civilian supremacy. By examining South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines, this paper will explore the relationships among democracy, civilian supremacy, ruling ambitions, and the threat of military dominance. Contrary to other approaches, it will argue that the starting point for understanding these relationships must be the ruling ambition inside the military itself, particularly its origins, form, and intensity. A focus on the nature of civilian government (effective or ineffective) and the form of the polity (democratic or authoritarian) is secondary to the importance of the MRA for predicting when and where civilian supremacy will arise and endure.

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The Ruling Ambition of the Military in South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines during the Process of Democratic Consolidation¹

By: Hipolitus Yolisandry Ringgi²

Abstract

This paper argues that the single most important factor in achieving civilian supremacy over the military is the military's own ruling ambition -- particularly the source, intensity, and form of this ambition. The emergence of a ruling ambition among the armed forces can derail civilian governments, including consolidated democracies, that have been in place and stable for decades. The implication of this thesis is that reducing or eliminating the Military's Ruling Ambition must be the focus of efforts to implant and sustain civilian supremacy. By examining South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines, this paper will explore the relationships among democracy, civilian supremacy, ruling ambitions, and the threat of military dominance. Contrary to other approaches, it will argue that the starting point for understanding these relationships must be the ruling ambition inside the military itself, particularly its origins, form, and intensity. A focus on the nature of civilian government (effective or ineffective) and the form of the polity (democratic or authoritarian) is secondary to the importance of the MRA for predicting when and where civilian supremacy will arise and endure.

Introduction

This paper introduces the concept of a military's "ruling ambition" as the most important consideration for understanding the prospects of civilian supremacy over a country's armed forces, in particular by examining these four countries. The main consideration for understanding civilian supremacy over the military is the ruling ambition present in the armed forces and the

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form that ruling ambition takes. A related point is that civilian supremacy over the military does not necessarily mean that the political system is democratic. There are many cases of non-democracies where civilians are fully in charge and the ruling ambition of the military is low or completely absent, such as Malaysia and Singapore. Likewise, there are cases where civilians govern under a procedural democracy, yet the ruling ambition of the military remains moderate or high. The following countries do not represent a single pattern of civilian control of their armed forces under democratic principles. Rather, states in the two regions diverge regarding the extent to which elected government implements control and oversight of the role of the military in political affairs. Most importantly, the ruling ambition of the military in these countries and the constraints upon that ambition vary.

Through an examination of South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines this paper will explore the relationships among democracy, civilian supremacy, and the threat of military dominance. It will argue that the starting point for understanding these relationships must be the ruling ambition inside the military, particularly its origins, form, and intensity. The key finding of this paper is that stable civilian supremacy and democracy depend on first constraining and ultimately eliminating the military's ruling ambition.

It is necessary to exercise civilian supremacy in the democratic consolidation period, but it is not sufficient. Democratic governance does not entirely exclude a dominant, active, and potentially threatening role of the military from daily political, economic, and social life. This research attempts to describe why in the democratic consolidation period, the military still has a ruling ambition, even under a democratically elected civilian government. The ruling ambition to govern or influence the decision-making process in the democratic period is traceable through the types of the military regime to the democratic regime. In three different countries, South

Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines as described further, the military displayed its ruling ambition by playing a “behind the scenes” role.

Only in South Korea, however, was there relatively stable civilian control of the armed forces’ desire for political power. In South Korea, the ruling ambition was prominently high when these countries were in the authoritarian regimes, whether under the military regime or the military-authoritarian regime. After entering the consolidation period of democracy, South Korea could achieve more manageable control over its civil-military relationship by constraining the ruling ambition of the military through an institutional approach. By contrast, in Indonesia and the Philippines, the ruling ambition of the military remained moderate and high despite both countries’ having passed through the democratic period more than a decade after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes.

There are three elements to a military’s ruling ambition: its intensity, its form, and its origins. The ruling ambition of the military is the desire, whether stemming from the armed forces as an institution or from individual officers, to play the dominant roles or to influence policies within the government. It can emerge from various sources, ranging from the “birth right” principle, where the armed forces or key figures play a prominent role in achieving national independence; personal politicization; the needs of a state to defend aggressively from external and internal threats; to the “competence principle” in which the military presume themselves to have superior organization and resources than the elected civilian government.

The ruling ambition of the military has two important features, the institutional characteristic and individual characteristic. Both characteristics can emerge when the military as a state institution takes over and launches a coup against the government, influences government

policy, or exercises other prerogative rights. Thus, there is a two-step consideration: can the civilian government constrain or control the armed forces as an institution, and can the institutions of the military effectively constrain the ruling ambitions of officers within its ranks? If the desire of both the institution and the powerful individuals within it to control or influence the government is low, the democratic consolidation process can be entirely exercised. But if the ruling ambition within the military is high, it will endanger the democratic consolidation process.

For understanding the challenges of civilian supremacy after a democratic transition, this research focuses our attention much more on the key variable of the ruling ambition of the armed forces. The key consideration is not necessarily how powerful or effective civilian leaders or institutions are (though this matters), but rather whether a ruling ambition exists within the military and how intense that ambition is. This research also directs attention to a major question not well studied in the democratic transitions scholarship: how is a military's ruling ambition reduced and finally eliminated?

The process of bringing stable civil-military relationship as one of the prominent prerequisites of democracy is not necessarily reached, even after ousting the authoritarian regime. This research will track the different forms of rule of the military that affect whether democratic values will be rejected or installed into the civil-military relationship. In this regard, the line is traceable from one extreme, in which there is a military government with active officers in charge, to full civilian supremacy (whether democratic or non-democratic) in which the military has no ruling ambition or the military ambition is fully constrained.

Literature Review

Two terms should first be clearly defined before discussing the role of the military in the democratic consolidation period in further detail. First, the “civil” part of the term “civil-military” normally refers to the state (minus the military), political society, and civil society. It is used in this study to refer to the non-military apparatus of the state, especially the political, administrative, and juridical institutions, as well as the civil society groups. In general, the administrative refers to the three main branches of government--executive, legislative, and judicial--as well as other branches.

The ‘military’ refers to the army, navy, and air force whose task is to maintain national security and defense from external and sometimes internal separatist threats. The term ‘prerogative’ refers to those areas where, whether challenged or not, the military as an institution assumes it has an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over the state’s internal governance and to play a role within the state apparatus in the process of consolidating democracy.³ With all of these civil-military terms, my concern is with the leadership, especially those individuals and groups who formulate and execute policy in issues relating to civil-military interaction.

Civil-military relations have long been a complicated issue. Scholars have many disagreements about definitions, concepts, values, and measurement of the relations. In general, however, the civil-military relation refers to interactions between military and civilian actors. In one way, these relations involve the power to make political decisions. In another way, the term

³ Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Core*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 93.

refers to the ideological compatibility of the professional military ethic with the political ideology prevailing within the society.⁴

The military is a prominent agency engaged directly in the use of coercion or physical force. The challenge is how an elected government can position and use the military as the instrument for coercion based on the sufficient agreements that have to be reached in a democratic system. Huntington, in *The Soldier and The State*, argues that civilian control of the armed forces occurred in two prominent ways: subjective civilian control and objective civilian control. In order to achieve stability, the civilian and the military must establish an equilibrium in which the military undertakes its professional function under the objective control of the civilians (Huntington, 1957). However, this objective civilian control cannot constrain the military to have their autonomy or prerogatives to influence the policy-making system even under the democratically elected civilian government and this type of control is applicable mostly for well-established democratizing countries.

Moreover, the problem of developing countries that are attempting to be democratic after the collapse of an authoritarian regime is to make a sufficient agreement with the past leadership and thereby rule the society.⁵ One prominent prerequisite for building stable civilian control over the military in the transition period is institutionalizing the policy-making process that involves both the civilian and the military. In this sense, the institutionalized process of making

⁴ According to Huntington, besides the different level of power between the civilian and the military, there is a difference in the number and types of ideology. The civilians are fragmented into various ideologies or ethics, namely liberalism, fascism, Marxism, and conservatism, whereas the military has a single ideology. These particular civilian ethics are aimed at maximizing military professionalism. Instead of searching for a united civilian ideology, Huntington proposes choosing a particular civilian ethic to offer a comparison with the military ethic. For further explanation see Samuel Huntington, *the soldier and the state: Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations*, p. 86-94.

⁵ Juan J. Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation.: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, (United States: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.6-13.

policy regarding the civil-military relationship focuses on the formal mechanism through which the civilian sector controls the military, such as constitutional arrangements and chains of command.

The importance of civil-military discourse recurred with the military coups and military regimes taking power in many developing countries from the 1970s to the 1990s. This period of transition is a determinant factor of the “praetorian problems” that emerge along with the initiation of a democratically elected government. In this period, the problem of civil -military relationships involves what Cotey *et. al.* called *first generation problems* in which many challenges emerge in securing a democratic civilian regime against military intervention and institutionalizing civilian decision-making power over the political center (Aguero 1995; Beeson 2008). Furthermore, once these countries go through a democratic consolidation period, they will face *second generation problems*. These problems refer to the extent to which civilians engage in the formerly exclusive domains of the military, in particular the policy-making process regarding military issues (Kuehn, 2009). Additionally, Alfred Stepan emphasizes reducing military prerogatives in order to build stable civilian control over the military as one of the prominent prerequisites in the democratic consolidation process.

A constant problem is that militaries in developing countries often intervene in daily political life and in some ways can assume the role of ruler. Research regarding the dominant role of the military in developing countries is provided by Jeongsok Woo, Jian Chuan Wook, Aurel Crossant, and David Kuehn.⁶ These scientists explored the question of why civilian

⁶See Jongseok Woo, *Security Challenges and Military Politics in East Asia. From State Building to Post Democratization* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011); Jian-Chuan Kwok, Explaining Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia, as a *Thesis* for getting Master Degree in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (September 2010); Patterns of Civilian Control of the Military in East Asia’s New Democracies (*Journal of East Asian Studies*, 1/2009).

government cannot control the military effectively. The focus was not necessarily always about the military itself but also concerned the inadequacy of the civilian government for ruling governance. In the Philippines under Marcos, for instance, the military was involved for the first time in political life to protect the regime and was used to support national development policy. In Indonesia, the military was deeply involved in the struggle for independence against the Dutch; it was excluded from ruling during the Soekarno period but was heavily engaged in direct rule during the regime of General Soeharto. After the transition to democracy in 1998, the military was formally removed from rule, but their ruling ambition and prerogatives have persisted.

As noted in the previous arguments about the civil-military relationship, the constant variable is the military's ruling ambition. There is no strong discourse to trace the initial interest of the military to intervene or replace the government. In the present research, however, it will be examined in four developing countries. The military's ruling ambition is the driving force for the military to involve itself in the political sphere in these countries. In this regard, the ambition of the military is grounded in the understanding that civilian supremacy does not automatically lead to a democratic system in terms of controlling the military. As previously noted, civilian supremacy over the military is one of the prerequisites for a democratic system, but it is not sufficient. The democratic transition and consolidation period do not guarantee the ruling ambition of the military can be eliminated entirely. Thus, democratic government and civilian supremacy are not the main conditions to build stable civilian supremacy, but reducing the military's ruling ambition is the prominent condition to build a stable civil-military relationship.

Case Selection

The paths of political development to democracy consolidation in South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines show interesting similarities and differences both among the different countries and during different historical stages.⁷ The most obvious variation is in the role the armed forces played in achieving national independence. In the Philippines, civilian supremacy was strong from the outset, with the armed forces having no national “birth right” claims. In Indonesia, the armed forces has made national “birth right” claims since the struggle against the Dutch (1945-1949), and in South Korea the military has had a prominent (but changing) role since the end of WWII.

Initially, the three countries embarked on the task of establishing sovereign statehood, particularly during and at the end of the Cold War. During the process, they had to cope with severe internal and external security threats with the onset of Cold War confrontations and the expansions of communism throughout these four developing countries. Furthermore, the three countries reveal the same starting point in terms of the rise and fall of the military’s political roles. They all fought external and/or internal wars until they attained a completely sovereign state and government, during which the armed forces played roles as influential as their civilian counterparts. These three countries proceeded to democratization, and the military was depoliticized in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet, although these countries are on track for consolidating democracy in which the military has little influence in day-to-day political life, they still have a possibility of the military’s executing what is termed “quasi-civilianization” (Finer 2006, p. 90), in which leaders retire from the military and run direct or indirect competitive elections, such as in Indonesia, and also the Philippines.

⁷ Ibid, p. 4-5.

In addition to the similarities in terms of the military's political influence at different stages, each case also demonstrates several noticeable distinctions at different stages. First, in terms of security threats, South Korea mobilized enormous numbers of military forces to deal with both internal and external threats, while the Philippines and Indonesia had a relatively small number of military personnel during state building and state sovereignty. In South Korea, security challenges came from both domestic and international arenas, whereas the other two countries--Indonesia, and the Philippines--dealt primarily with communism and violence at home, and insurgency. Second, South Korea (in 1961) and Indonesia (in 1965) experienced military coups and the installation of military dictatorial regimes. In contrast, the armed forces in the Philippines did not go through military dictatorship, but the top brass nevertheless participated in civilian political affairs under the guidance of authoritarian rulers. Third, the three countries pursued different paths of democratic regime transition. South Korea was a successful democratizer, maintaining stable civilian control of the military, whereas democratization in the other two countries suffered from highly unstable regime transition, and politicized officers were unwilling to relinquish their political prerogatives.

Methodology

In this paper, I am using path dependence to highlight the rise of the military ruling ambition and the degree that it applies in three specific countries. The crucial component of path dependence is historical institutionalism through which structural constraints and the role of previous legacies provide certain options that the elites may take to form new institutions.

Historical institutionalism is the way in which institutions affect the choices of actors, causing the latter to be constrained by past events. Mahoney argues the certain policies made by

actors at critical periods lead to the formation of institutions that persist and produce a series of reactions and counter reactions that culminate in regime change (Mahoney, 2005). According to Jia-Chuan Kwok, institutions are not merely formal administrative structures in a layman sense, but rather they encompass both formal (constitutional and administrative) and informal (traditions and norms) aspects (Kwok, 2009). In regard to civil-military relationships, particularly the military ruling ambition, these formal and informal characteristics help to determine the degree of intensity applying in these three countries, because they set the limits by which actors may function. The set of institutional patterns that endure over time are formed at critical junctures.

Mahoney outlines sequential stages: antecedent historical conditions, critical juncture, structural persistence, reactive sequence, and outcome. Structural conditions determine the availability of options that actors make at critical junctures. “The choice made during a critical juncture is consequential because it leads to the creation of institutional patterns that endure over time. In turn, institutional persistence triggers a reactive sequence in which actors respond to prevailing arrangements through a series of predictable responses and counter responses. These reactions then channel development up to the point of a final outcome, which represents a resolution to the conflicts marking reactive sequences (Mahoney, 2005).”

South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines each experienced critical junctures that led to regime change and, in particular, the formation of institutions that endure over time. In South Korea, the incapability of civilian government under President Rhee Syngman to manage internal conflict caused the coup led by General Park Jung-hee and General Lee Jong Chan. The antecedent conditions arose when the Rhee government could not provide stability within the country and low economic performance increased the number of poor people. These structural

conditions provided an option for certain actors, particularly the military, to take over the government in 1961; this period can be categorized as the first critical juncture. Once the military regime was established, it politicized its military officers. The officers' subsequent involvement in the political sphere also extended to other spheres, such as social and economic.

Military involvement in political affairs forms the structural pattern for military behavior as the institution. This pattern led to reactions from various civil society groups, such as students and professionals. The civilian groups rejected the option made by those military officers, and they launched protests across the country that ended with the national election in 1987. Another critical juncture that shaped the relations between the civilian and the military followed in the same year. The newly elected President Roh Tae Woo began reforming civil-military relations to constrain the military ruling ambition. However, little progress was made, leading to mass protests that culminated in a general election that in 1988 produced a newly elected civilian government led by Kim Young-sam. Kim launched strict efforts to constrain the military ruling ambition. He established many policies to reduce military influence. His government created another structural persistence that led to a new structural pattern for reducing the military ruling ambition to a low level.

Another picture of path dependence can be seen in Indonesia. The antecedent condition arose as the military struggled side by side with civilians for the country to attain its independence in 1945. This condition gave the military a self-perception as an essential component in the building of the nation. This perception was fortified by the forming of the middle way conceptualized by General Abdul Haris Nasution in 1958. This concept was introduced shortly after the military intervention following the policy by President Soekarno to appoint a certain group to create a new Constitution to replace the 1945 Constitution. Some

military officers felt that a new constitution might increasingly reduce the role of military in the political sphere.. Consequently, the critical juncture arose in 1956 when the military manipulated the civilian government to launch a huge protest against President Soekarno in order to diminish the new constitution group.

By the enforcement of the middle way concept, the TNI was more likely to engage in the Indonesian political landscape. This structural persistence allowed the TNI to create its own pattern of influence over the national and local policy making system. This pattern in turn fortified the military ruling ambition that existed since General Soeharto officially replaced President Soekarno in 1967. The Soeharto ruling period was another critical juncture in describing the relationship between the civil government and the military in Indonesia. During his 32 year reign, President Soeharto used the military as his own “guard,” to maintain his power. However, this pattern led to a reactive sequence from distinct civilian groups in the late 1990s. The crucial period of the civil-military relationship in Indonesia occurred in 1998 when mass protestors overthrew Soeharto. . Since 1998, the TNI has reformed its institution by withdrawing its political position in the parliament and focusing instead on building its professional duty.

Even now, however, the Indonesian military still has its own privilege, particularly in managing its businesses and continued involvement in the local policy making process. In addition, since 1998 some retired generals still display their interests to run as presidential candidates. The absence of a radical policy by the Indonesian president since the collapse of the new order renders the opportunity for the military to play a behind-the-scenes role. Though there have been significant internal reforms, the Indonesian military still exercises its ruling ambition character.

The critical juncture in the Philippines in terms of building stable civil-military relations arose in 1986 when the People Movement overthrew Ferdinand Marcos after his 14 years of power. The antecedent condition in the Philippines emerged when Marcos started to impose martial law in 1972 in order to suppress his political opponents and maintain power. Furthermore, he politicized the military, marking the beginning of the AFP's involvement in political affairs. His decision to politicize the military created the structural persistence that led to the military pattern in the national political landscape. This policy led to a response from the civilian government in 1986. However, the incapability of the civilian government after Marcos to deal with the AFP's ruling ambition leaves the latter with a large opportunity to maintain power by holding many key positions within the government, running for presidential election as shown by former general Fidel Ramos, giving regular endorsements to the certain political candidates, and even frequently launching coups.

Path dependence is a way to look the historical legacies at a critical juncture period to shape the initial conditions of the military involvement in political affairs. Certain structural conditions that lead actors to make a choice provide a path for the military to shape its own pattern that in turn will trigger a reactive sequence of challenge from other actors, with the end result being the characteristics of the civil-military relationship.

The Origins of the Military's Ruling Ambition

The military's ruling ambition to engage in the political sphere can be shaped through four different factors, namely the historical legacy, personal politicization, its self-perception as a guard of the nation, and the national leadership. Historical legacy is grounded in the argument that the military has a tight relation with the birth of the nation and thus played a large role in

attaining independence. This “birthright principle” reflects foundational myths that the army was ‘present at the birth’ of the nation, or the idea that were it not for the sacrifices made by the military, the nation itself could not have been formed nor have long survived (Koonings and Kruijt, 2002: 19). This factor emerges, for example, in Indonesia’s nation-state building in which the military lays claim to having achieved the country’s sovereignty in the 1940s after a long and painful military campaign against Dutch and Japanese colonial troops. From this contribution, the Indonesian military believes it has earned an eternal right to be involved in political affairs.

The personal politicization of the civilian government is the second way to shape the military’s ruling ambition. In this situation, the elected civilian leader relies on the military’s back-up to obtain and maintain power. The political and social circumstances surrounding the leader are viewed as harmful and lead to politicizing the military as a junior partner in governing the country. In this regard, the civilian leaders view the military as a crucial element within the state to establish a long-term tenure of presidency. The military engages in the political, social, and economic affairs of the state. As a result, the military builds its own interests to influence or even rule the government by cooperating with the civilian leaders.

After attaining power in 1972, Ferdinand Marcos used the military as his main instrument in ruling the country. Though Marcos was elected democratically, he exploited limitations of the constitution to strengthen his power. His reign was marked by the imposing of martial law in 1972 to maintain national stability. Martial law was basically used as a justification to extend his tenure beyond the constitutional limit and to further centralize political power in his hands (Woo, 2011: 43). Marcos extended his power by politicizing the military. He knew that threats stemmed from the military, and therefore he made army officers dependent upon his authority in order to prevent them from developing into a politically autonomous institution. He designed a delicate

personalistic control mechanism over AFP officers. However, by engaging the military, Marcos gave the officers positions in the government and involved them in the national policy-making process. This arrangement created a precedent of self-interest within the ranks of AFP officers that continued in future regimes.

The self-perception of the military to engage in the political sphere is grounded in its role in defending the country from either external or domestic threats. “The traditional paradigm treats military guardianship as a kind of disposition of the armed forces; that is to say, as a sacred mission that the military assumes in its dealings with political elites and society that reflects principally its own self-perception as savior and guardian of the nation” (Watmough, 2012: 2). “Moreover it has typically been expressed in some form or another as a specific typology in the elaboration of taxonomy of military regimes.” (Luckman, 1971: 22; Perlmutter, 1969, 1977; Nordlinger, 1977; Alagappa, 2001: 33)

The South Korean military involved itself deeply in efforts to defend national territory and sovereignty during the Korean Conflict in the early 1950s. The external security threat generated a structural condition for the military to be politically influential. A general motive as described by Finer for the military to get involved in political realms is the incapability of the national government to rule effectively (Finer, 1962). This factor is caused by what Koonings and Kruijt call the *competence principle*. This principle is based on the idea that the military is best placed to take care of national interests and hence the affairs of state because of their superior organization and resources. “The concomitant ‘principle of civil inadequacy’ states that civilians may be anything from inefficient, through divided, self-interested, and corrupt, down to disloyal and anti-national, especially in times of crisis” (Koonings and Kruijt, 2002: 20). The failure of national leadership, particularly civilian, tends to be a prominent prerequisite for the

military to replace the government, either becoming an authoritarian regime or sharing power with the civilian government now in a junior partnership with the military. During critical periods, these four countries all experienced weak leadership for maintaining or stabilizing the national situation, from which the military took the opportunity to replace the government.

In South Korea, at the end of his tenure the democratically elected president Syngman Rhee tried to centralize political power in his own hands by twice revising and amending the 1948 Constitution, in 1952 and 1954. This led to domestic opposition and also fostered defection from the military as a veto holder able to overthrow the government. Meanwhile, the South Korean economy showed no indication of significant improvement. It was also reinforced by rampant political corruption in the government and the ruling Liberal Party that in turn weakened his political position, fostered military distrust of his regime, and eventually led to a military coup in 1961. In the same vein, the inclination of President Joao Goulart to exercise a socialist agenda led to the coup launched by the BAF in 1964. The coup was also fortified by the incapability of the “left-wing” government to sweep out corruption and manage the inflation that caused large disparities between the rich and poor.

Initially, the Indonesian military also took the opportunity to engage in political affairs. The dissatisfaction of some generals with the performance of Soekarno’s regime, in which the military had limited power, led to the 1965 coup. This coup was also fortified by political instability, including a confrontation between the military and the Communist Party. Similarly, in the Philippines, the AFP launched several coups after the decline of the Marcos regime. The weak performance of civilian leadership, ranging from Aquino to Arroyo, also fortified the military’s ambition to influence and even take over the government.

These three factors shape the ruling ambition of the military to engage in political affairs. However, the degree of this ambition is different for each country. Indeed, it can be seen that the ruling ambition of the military is embedded in the nation-building process. Since the development of the democratic system in these four countries, only South Korea has succeeded in controlling the ambition of the military to rule the country. In contrast, in Indonesia and the Philippines, the TNI and AFP respectively still seem to exhibit various degrees of political intervention. In these two countries the military--in particular some generals, both active and retired--still display an interest to intervene in the political realm either as a guard of the nation or to address the national condition.

The Forms of Military's Ruling Ambition

The military's ruling ambition can be divided into two forms: institutional including or sub-groups and individual. The form will determine the extent to which the military is involved in political affairs.

The institutional ruling ambition basically arises from the institutional desire to take over the government following national instability or the weakness of civilian leadership. However there are different modes of institutional ruling ambition. For example, in authoritarian regimes, this ambition is performed by cooperating to rule and maintain national governance. Under a military regime, the military directly controls governance without any oversight from civilian participation. However, one enactment of the ruling ambition of the military after entering the democratic system is a military coup.

In these three countries the intensity of a coup is absent only in South Korea. This difference between Korea and the other two is due mainly to the civilian power's ability to

control the military after overthrowing the authoritarian regime—in South Korea after 1987. Yet the possibility of a coup in Indonesia following the authoritarian regime is low. Unlike with the 1965 coup by former general Soeharto against former president Soekarno when there was support for the authoritarian regime, the current regime has no such significant support.

The ambition of the sub-groups emerges within the military, particularly among certain officers who form a single group to challenge the incumbent government or to attain its power. Sub-group ambition occurs when there are some factions embedded in the military, and fragmentation within the military leads to a struggle for power among the officers or groups who want more privileges or even to seize the power of the government. Sub-group ambition of the military to intervene in political affairs can be constrained by societal leverage or by the broader institutional capacities of the military itself.

The second type of military ruling ambition arises from an individual interest to influence or rule the government. This type reflects the desire of the military officer, either active or retired, to get involved in political realms. In this situation, the role of the military as an institution that can control the role of these officers is indispensable. —In Indonesia and the Philippines, however, such military constraints do not exist. In these countries, even though the military officers do not rule as active officers, they still use their background to influence the political situation. For instance, the role of the military officers to support certain candidates running in a general election can be described as the officers' ambition in political affairs. Suzanne Nielsen and Don M. Snider in *American Civil-Military Relation: The Soldier and the State in a New Era* use the concept of “politicking” to describe the officer's ruling ambition.

The Intensity of the Military's Ruling Ambition

The intensity of the military's ruling ambition can be categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. Alfred Stepan, in his book *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, used these three levels for measuring the application of military prerogatives. In contrast, I am using these levels to measure the degree of the military's ruling ambition in both non-democratic and democratic regimes. There are four indicators for measuring the level of intensity, namely launching coup or coup attempts, running for the election, politicking, and intervening in the policy-making process.

1. Military Coup or Coup Attempts

Many political scholars believe the absence of a coup is outdated as an indicator of crafting a stable and democratic civil-military relationship. Military coups do not emerge only in non-democratic systems but also in democratic regimes. Thailand is an obvious example of the institutional ambition of the military to replace the government. In some cases, however, such as Thailand and the Philippines, this indicator is very important.

2. Running for the Election

Some retired generals and other officers run for office in general elections noting they have the same rights as other citizens. Such a demonstration of ambition to rule the country, by running as the presidential candidate, occurred in Indonesia. Since the outset of authoritarian regime, Soeharto, as the former general, used the Golkar Party as a political vehicle to maintain his

power. In the democratic era, some retired generals still show their ambition to rule the country by repeatedly registering with the national election commission as presidential candidates.

3. Politicking

Politicking may involve open support for candidates and efforts to influence election outcomes through retired officers' endorsements and public statements of support, especially by prominent and senior military officers (Nielsen & Snider, 2009). The public convention says that retired generals and other officers have a right as citizens to support certain candidates for election. However, as Suzanne argues, these ex-officers have served for many years in the military and thus they cannot be presumed as ordinary citizens. "Some military endorsements matter precisely because they are made by prominent, recently serving officers is just exercising his rights in campaigning for a candidate neglects the fact that those efforts particularly matter—are publicized and have extra influence—because the person served in the military" (Nielsen and Snider, 2009).

4. Intervening Policy-Making Process

The military's ruling ambition can also be performed by its interfering in the national policy-making process, in either non-democratic or democratic regimes. For instance, military officers may acquire many seats under the authoritarian regimes (civilian or military). Civilian leaders thus give the military these opportunities as a way to appeal for support from the officers to bolster the regime. In the democratic era, the military are also given an opportunity in the executive cabinets to manage the defense sectors or certain civilian areas.

We can say that its ambition is at a low intensity when the military exercises only one or two indicators, *de jure* or *de facto*. It can be considered moderate when three indicators are

present. It is high when all four indicators are exercised. This schema is based on the analysis of these four countries.

The Constraining of the Military's Ruling Ambition

The ultimate goal of a democratically elected civilian government in building a stable civil-military relationship is gradually to reduce and eventually to eliminate the ruling ambition of the military—institutional, sub-group, or active and retired officers. There are two ways to constrain the military's ruling ambition, namely institutional constraints and non-institutional constraints.

The *institutional constraint* operates under conditions based on organizational guidelines or principles and restricts the ruling ambition that might emerge from individual officers. In these particular countries, the number of officers who have ambitions in the political sphere has continued steadily under both non-democratic and democratic regimes. However, the military realizes that its primary function of defending the national security from either external or internal threats is a top priority that limits its involvement in political affairs. This institutional constraint stems from the idea of a professional military, borrowing the concept from Huntington, that functions as a single and united institution for the exercise of coercive power. The military is expert in practicing a coercive instrument; thus it must remain isolated from politics as well as retain and guard its professional autonomy because society does not have a similar capability (Zoltan, 2009). This type of constraint does limit the sub-group intention of the military to influence or get involved in political affairs by creating internal control within the armed forces. By maintaining internal cohesion, the military is towing the line of doctrine,

principle and discipline based on organizational hierarchy. Eventually the military exercises its duty according to the Constitution.

The *non-institutional constraint* can also be put into account to reduce the military's ruling ambition. This type of constraint stems from pressures outside of military organizational principles, such as international pressure, societal pressure, and strong civilian leadership. *International pressure* can reduce the military's ruling ambition that is at odds with international values or principles. On the one hand, the increasing concerns of western countries about the level of democracy in developing countries along with the national interest of the country itself in building an international image will be a driving force for constraining the ruling ambition of the military. On the other hand, there is a demonstrable direct causal relationship between a state's desire to gain membership in prestigious international organizations and their willingness to democratize in numerous areas, including civil-military relations (Zoltan, 2009). However, in the following cases the external factor gives an opportunity to the state to raise its international image as well as to perform well as a democratizing country.

Furthermore, there is *societal pressure* that stems from mass demonstrations, people movements, and regular non-governmental pressures which shape public opinion and lead to deep investigations. Such actions can gradually reduce the military's ruling ambition. The societal pressure occurs primarily during the process of transition in which the wave of mass protesters strongly urges the incumbent (civilian and military) to step aside and give the power to the people. This type of protest has been changing over time to become more moderate and function as a watch dog pressure groups in the democratic consolidation period. There is a rising number of non-governmental organizations concerned with various issues related to defense. Their roles include conducting work at think tanks, research institutes, and universities;

producing policy-relevant research on military and security issues; and providing not only advisers for the legislative body but also, along with the media, “fire alarms” (Zoltan, 2009) for the military to obey orders under democratic principles.

Another constraining factor is *strong civilian leadership*. In many developing countries strong civilian leadership is the key ingredient for reducing the ruling ambition of the military, resulting finally, in the long-term, its elimination. This type of constraining has the capacity to keep the armed forces out of politics by building and implementing a system of strict control mechanisms that effectively preclude the military’s political involvement. Strong civilian government can prevent and reduce the military’s ruling ambition stemming from both the military-initial regime and the civilian-authoritarian regime.

The Military’s Ruling Ambition in South Korea

After being elected the first president of South Korea, Rhee Syngman started strengthening his power by revising the Constitution and terrorizing opposition political forces. Rhee also manipulated the military forces to fortify his tenure, because he saw the military as the main vehicle to maintain his power, including its ability to be used to suppress opposition political forces. On May 15, 1952, Rhee imposed martial law in the Busan area, the temporary capital during the Korean Conflict, exploiting the communist issue as the main threat against his presidency. He used the military to arrest 50 Assemblymen for allegedly receiving political bribes from the communist groups. This action was used to advance his interest to revise the 1948 Constitution, allowing the president to extend his tenure, and he also proposed another amendment to the National Assembly that allowed the president to remain in office for life. This effort led to fragmentation within the military officers, with one group led by General Le Jong

Chan who wanted armed forces to maintain a strict political neutrality and another led by General Park-Jung hee who intended to get more involved in political affairs to overthrow the corrupt civilian government and establish a more efficient military dictatorial regime (Woo, 2011: 29). This intention marked the initial ruling ambition from the South Korean Armed Forces to engage in political spheres.

After the student revolution on April 1960, the wave of protest from the civil society along with the military erupted as a catalyst for the overthrow of Rhee's government. The military became thoroughly involved in the political sphere particularly after General Park Jung-hee launched a coup on May 16, 1961. The failure of civilian leadership was also a reason for taking over the government by launching the 1961 coup. Prior to this coup the initial ambition of General Park had been seen since 1960, when he mobilized a number of soldiers to launch a coup, but it did not materialize due to the outbreak of the April Student Revolution (Woo, 2011: 70). Following the installation of the military regime in 1961, Park started suppressing the right for freedom, for example arresting several old politicians, student activists, and a number of corrupt businesspeople. Furthermore, he formed the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) as the main body for facilitating the military's dictatorial rule and also placed many military officers in his cabinet.

Park planned to consolidate his dictatorial rule by setting up a popular election on October, 1963. To extend his tenure, Park retired from active military service to run as a presidential candidate. Park won the election by defeating his competitor Yun Po-sun. Furthermore, Park formed the government by appointing 314 ministers between 1964 and 1979, including 118 with an active military background. In addition, Park tightened his dominance over the military by giving key governmental positions to senior officers (Woo, 2009).

However, during the last five years of his tenure, Park faced many problems both external, in particular the rising harmful activities conducted by North Korea and internal, particularly domestic instability as the effects of student demonstrations and civil society protests. Such protests led to a lack of public trust in Park's regime. At the end, Park was assassinated by Kim Jae-kyu, marking the end of the Park regime but not of the military regime. In the aftermath of Park's death, another coup launched by Chun Doo-hwan and his followers occurred, which lasted until 1987.

The military's ruling ambition is more that of a factionalized group rather than institutional or individual. Some sub-groups struggled to influence the government. These groups consisted of various elements --for example, old established officers and "young Turks" as well as Korean Military Academy alumni and graduates of the Reserve Officers Training Program. This factionalism within the Korean Military was also fortified by the patrimonial system of recruiting and promoting officers into the upper echelon as undertaken by President Park Chung-hee. Park recruited KMA alumni from the eastern Yongnam region (his native region) to occupy the key positions inside the security apparatus, and they monopolized access to the inner circle of the regime. In other words, regimes in South Korea used a divide and rule instrument to maintain their power and acquire loyalty from the officers.

This form of the military's ruling ambition highlighted its desire to achieve power or at least to influence the decision making-process. However, the divide and rule strategy did not work when protests erupted in Kwangju in 1980 (the Kwangju Massacre). Following the Kwangju Massacre, opposition groups launched many protests against the regimes, and the political crises escalated in the summer of 1987 when the government was expelled. Moreover, at that time the military was forced to choose between two options: suppressing the protests, or

acceding to the demands of the opposition. The military split into two factions: those who supported a strong crackdown on the protest and those who rejected such an order from the regime. One explanation proposed by Crossant to describe the split among the officers is that the military had never intervened in politics as an organization. This explanation fortifies the assumption that the military's ruling ambition within the armed forces tended to be within sub-groups more than as an overall institution. "It exercises its power indirectly, and therefore was not bound to assume direct rule as long as the political leadership respected its ideological principles and material interests" (Crossraint, 2004: 370).

The military's ruling ambition in the Korean Armed Forces was high during the military regimes, as shown in the four indicators: launching two coups (1961 and 1985), occupying the executive cabinets, running for the presidential elections, and frequent politicking by issuing statements about the conditions of civilian governments. For example, when the military officers started occupying cabinet positions and the national assembly, they held 27.5 percent and 11.6 percent of seats in those bodies during first military regime (1963-79), and even during the transition period they still occupied approximately 9.7 percent and 2.7 percent in 1998-2000. Although the number of positions declined drastically, the military's ambition continued.

During his reign, Roh Tae-woo represented the continuity of the armed forces' political ambition. He guaranteed the protection of the military's interests, values, and political status. His doing so can be assumed as the way he assured his acceptance as the commander-in-chief by the armed forces. He understood and followed the same strategy his predecessors used to maintain their power in office by obtaining support and legitimacy from the military.

During his presidency, Roh continued to treat the military as his main partner, maintaining the civil-military relationship that afforded continuity of the military influence on the government. However, during Roh's presidency was also on the verge of the gradual transition from the old authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes. Roh provided more opportunities for the civil society groups to express their interests and for the political groups to advance their agenda alongside the government's agenda.

The civil-military relationships had a more democratic nuance during Kim young Sam's tenure beginning in 1993. Kim was elected democratically by defeating the incumbent former general Roh Tae-woo, receiving more support from civil-society groups.

By observing the military's ruling ambition during the building of the nation-state, authoritarian regimes, and democratic regimes, we can see the importance of regime changes in influencing the type of civil-military relationship in South Korea. How the armed forces of South Korea presented their ambition depended more on the regime than on their institutional legacies--a different process from the historical institutionalism that characterizes Indonesia's military ruling ambition. After establishing the military regimes in 1963, the South Korea military started occupying strategic positions within the government. With this opportunity to get involved in domestic political affairs, it exercised its own interests and privilege.

The second military dictatorship under Chun also suffered from a serious legitimacy crisis from the beginning until the end of his tenure. One of the biggest challenges at the end of his tenure was a rising number of civil society groups, including pro-democracy groups and opposition political groups, that eventually overthrew his government. Even though the military's ruling ambition of South Korean military had declined, that reduction was only for

certain areas. In other words, the end of military regimes did not mean the elimination of the ambition of the military, in this case that of the officers.

The significant turning point for gradually reducing the military's ruling ambition of the Korean Armed Forces was the election of Kim Young-sam as a new president, replacing Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993). Shortly after being elected, Kim dismissed the Hanahoe (One Mind), a secret association created by Chun and Roh. This agency had been a political body of the South Korean armed forces since Presidents Roh and Chun. The subsequent effort by Kim was the reshuffling of top personnel so that he could establish firm control over senior army officers. Furthermore, President Kim reformed the chain of command in the military intelligence agencies actively involved in policing domestic politics, putting some generals and officers who were allegedly involved in corruption cases into jail. Kim's most prominent acts were imposing a death sentence on former President Chun and a 22- year prison sentence for Roh. With this trial and a series of other institutional reforms, firm civilian control and a gradual reduction of military ambition were achieved under Kim's presidency. These changes were fortified by numerous supports from and control by civil society groups who wanted to end the military officers' ambition to bring South Korean back to military regimes. The support from civil society was also exercised by engaging in institutional military reforms.

At the end of his reign, Kim had established a strong and stable civil-military relationship by exercising a strong civilian leadership. This path was continued by Kim's successor President Kim Dae-Jung by maintaining the civilian supremacy that has continued to control the ambition of the military's ruling ambition. The ruling ambition in South Korea is categorized as low because the civilian leadership was able largely to control and reduce the ambition of South Korean armed forces.

The regime change affects the nature of civil-military relationships in South Korea. The military has never been in the political affairs as an institution, however, when some factions launched a coup, they acquired the opportunity to govern or influence domestic politics condition. Under the first republic, the ingredients of political army were presented by following the order of the elected regime to crackdown the opposition groups. The military's ruling ambition was significantly rising since the installation of military regimes in 1961 by General Park Jung-hee. Since that the military exercised their ambition to control the government. It was continued during the transition period in 1987. Though, it has been declined, the ambition of the military still pervasive by acquiring the strategic positions within the executive body and national assembly. However, since during the

The Moderate Military's Ruling Ambition in Indonesia

Indonesian's military ruling ambition was high for more than 30 years during President Soeharto's reign. Initially the ruling ambition of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) was established during the period of independence when the military saw itself as a crucial component to build a nation-state. This *birthright principle* is embedded in doctrinal and organizational principles of the TNI. This birthright principle was transformed initially through the concept of *dwifungsi* (dual-function) in the early 1950s by General Abdul Haris Nasution). This concept rendered to the military additional roles besides their primary function as a protector of the nation; these were political, economic, and societal roles. This concept was embedded into TNI doctrine and as a main component of organizational principles. However, this role was not performing well under the Soekarno's era as a result of the military competition with Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

The concept of dual-function flourished significantly under Soeharto's reign. During his tenure, the military acquired many political positions in the government. Soeharto invited military officers to run as his vice-presidential candidates. At the same time, the ruling ambition of the TNI was exercised by sub-groups under a new order. Some groups tried to challenge the leadership of Soeharto, from General Sumitro and General Benny Moerdani, to General Ali Moertopo. However their intentions were blocked by the strong leadership of President Soeharto. In the aftermath of Soeharto, many civil society groups called for dismissing the dual-function concept of the military. To some degree, the military agreed with the demands to disband this concept through withdrawal of the military from parliament and also from civilian departments.

After the ousting of President Soeharto, the TNI's ruling ambition remained pervasive although the degree was gradually reduced. During the democratic transition regime, President Abdurahman Wahid tried to reform the TNI radically. He proposed the reform-minded officer General Agus Wirahadikusumah to make a radical transformation within the TNI. Although Wirahadikusumah gained popularity among junior ranking officers, he maintained uneasy relations with mostly senior officers (Alagappa, 2001).

Under the Megawati reign, the civil-military relationships faced a big challenge from the rising domestic conflicts in some areas, such as Aceh, Papua, Moluccas, and the independence of East Timor. In the midst of multiple security threats from separatist movements and interethnic violence, President Megawati felt she had no choice but to bring the armed forces into politics. Furthermore, Megawati amended the Constitution to restrict retroactive legislation, thus exonerating army officers of past human rights abuses.

Following the election in 2004, Indonesia had a new former general as president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, one of the reformer generals. Yudhoyono, took several efforts that strengthened the TNI internal reforms, such as passing two important regulations of TNI law, namely Act No. 2/2002 concerning state defense and Act No. 32/ 2004 concerning TNI. These two regulations provide a foundation for the military in the democratic era.

However, during the democratic process that has been underway since 1998, the TNI is still performing its ambition in three ways: the retired generals still occupying crucial ministries, such as the defense ministry, the coordinator ministry of security and social affairs, and the state secretary ministry; some retired generals are still running as presidential candidates since the general election in 2004, such as Prabowo Subianto, Wiranto, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono; and the retired officers are frequently calling for rectifying problems of the government.

By occupying some decisive ministries, the military can continue to maintain power and block crucial agendas to reform and reduce its ambition to influence the government. In some cases, such as human rights abuses--most recently the assassinations of four detainees conducted by the army special forces (Kopassus) officers--many retired generals, the defense minister and deputy minister, and even President Yudhoyono praised what was done by certain officers because these officers did the killing based on the notion of esprit de corps, even as the killing was done inside the prison as presumed as state symbol. This latest case demonstrates how retired officers still exercise their ambition to influence the government and also the country.

Furthermore, since the free election was held for the first time in 1999, many retired officers found an opportunity to run as legislative candidates or presidential candidates. Although, the number of those officers has declined, the ambition to get involved in

Indonesian's political affairs steadily continues. In particular, the military's ruling ambition in Indonesia applies more to the sub-group and individual cases than to the institutional. It can be seen through the presence of certain retired generals in running as a presidential candidate, such as Prabowo Subianto and Wiranto in this upcoming election in 2014.

The military's ruling ambition of the TNI is categorized as moderate since it has been reduced gradually since 1999. One effort that has been successful in its reduction is the high level of societal pressure following Soeharto's collapse. Another factor is institutional constraining by the military itself. In addition, the effort to uphold Indonesian status in the international community as a majority Muslim country has supported democratic principles.

Although retired military are technically civilians, they often identify with and share the same interests as active-duty soldiers. Additionally, close connections between active-duty and retired military personnel become significant when the latter are appointed to civilian posts at either the national or regional level, particularly if their posting involves oversight of active duty military personnel. Moreover, these officers may be perceived as speaking on behalf of a broader constituency, either active officers or military families. By endorsing a particular candidate, they create the impression not only that the individual officer favors this candidate but also that the military does so.

Such endorsements have become increasingly common in current elections in both Indonesia and the Philippines. For instance, after the collapse of Soeharto's regime, many retired generals got involved in various civil society organizations, such as those concerning youth, students, labor, and business. These generals frequently give statements about the national condition under current regimes. In 2011, some generals held a national gathering for different

cohorts of the military and called for national reformation.⁸ They stated that Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency was incapable of managing and stabilizing national and local conditions. These conditions included many top-down corruption cases, ranging from the national to the local level; an increase in poverty; and the management of natural resources for the welfare of the people. There is also a frequent regular meeting in Bakrie Wisma to discuss the current national situation.⁹ These instances suggest the ruling ambition of the military to influence--or even, if possible to launch a coup.

High Military's Ruling Ambition in the Philippines

Since its formation in 1935, the AFP has never been in political affairs, due partly to its close connection with US armed forces. Given this relation, the AFP has focused on internal security duty. The US armed forces provided external protection for its ally. This US-Philippines relation led to the strengthening of the civilian supremacy over the armed forces.

Civilian control over its coercive apparatus has been broken since Ferdinand Marcos became president. Initially he imposed martial law as the way to maintain his power over opposition political forces. His capability to manipulate the military interests in line with his own interests fortified his power. He gave the military a high position within the government and facilitated financial incentives for soldiers, all on a larger scale ever before seen in Philippine history. This capability allowed Marcos to transform the armed forces into a force loyal to himself rather than to the "institution of civilian authority."

⁸ Approximately 150 retired officers attended a national gathering in Jakarta. Some generals stated their attention towards the national condition under President SBY, himself a former general. For further explanation see <http://www.citizenjournalism.com/hot-topics/150-jendral-berkumpul-bentuk-dewan-revolusi-rakyat/>

⁹ Personal interviewed with Let. Gen. Agus Widodo, a former territorial chief of army in June 2012 at Wisma Bakrie, Kuningan, Jakarta.

The military ruling ambition in the Philippines tends more to sub-group ambition than in Indonesia. The sub-group ambition been seen since the factions that developed in the last days of President Marcos when popular demonstrations against his authoritarian regime occurred (Lee, 2009: 650). There were two factions: those who affiliated with General Fabien Ver and those who supported Lt. Gen. Fide Ramos. These factions were decidedly split. Ver and his proponents maintained Marcos' power in office against the officers led by Ramos and opposition groups. These kinds of factions have continued even under the period of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's rule, as can be seen below.

The personal politicization of the AFP formed the core tenets for the military political involvement during the next presidencies despite the initiation of the democratic periods. Since the collapse of Marcos, the military ruling ambition has been pervasive. During Aquino's tenure, the military was the main proponent of maintaining and stabilizing the country. Although she reformed the 1987 constitution in order gradually to reduce the military prerogatives and build civilian supremacy, the military still displayed its ambition by occupying cabinet positions, enabled by agreement and supports from certain political parties. Aquino increasingly relied on her close connection with former Gen. Ramos for her government's survival (148). Eventually, Aquino's tenure depended on the military.

Aquino's successor Ramos, president from 1992 to 1998, has maintained his personal connection and reflected his background in granting the AFP enhanced elite recruitment. He appointed 5 retired officers to his cabinet and 100 others to senior postings. This large number of officers the extent Ramos relied on his old colleagues to maintain his power. Apparently, during the Ramos tenure, the military ruling ambition was still high, even though he could build stable civil-military relationships.

After overthrowing the democratically elected president Ferdinand Marcos, the AFP still displayed its interests to play a decisive role in the government. Fidel Ramos is the most prominent retired officer who showed his ambition to rule the Philippines after the collapse of President Ferdinand Marcos and the end of Corazon Aquino's tenure. His ambition was followed by the subsequent coup attempts conducted by a certain number of officers. Thus, the ruling ambition of AFP is presumed to be more that of sub-groups than institutional and individual.

Starting from the era of President Aquino, the military has tried several times to launch a coup. During Aquino's tenure, the AFP launched six coups led by different factions within the AFP. Some groups were led by Arturo Tolentino, Marcos' running mate in the 1986 presidential election, and several other pro-Marcos officers within the AFP. The second was led by General Fidel Ramos.

Table 1. Major Coup Attempts during the Aquino Presidency, 1986-1989

Date	Military Groups
July 1986	Loyalist, supported by RAM
November 1986	RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement)
`	Loyalist
April 1987	Loyalist
July 1987	Loyalist
August 1987	RAM
December 1989	RAM and Loyalist

Source: Mark R. Thomson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 169 in Jongseok Woo, *Security Challenges and Military Politics in East Asia: From State Building to Post-Democratization* (New York: the Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 129.

As Table 4.3 illustrates, numerous major coup attempts were organized either by RAM members or by Marcos loyalists within the first four years of the Aquino presidency. These subsequent coups were due mainly to several of Aquino's policies that did not support the AFP's interests, such as domestic security, and the corruption within the government. In 2003, during Arroyo's presidency, there was a coup attempt led by nine military officers.¹⁰ This attempt followed protests related to Arroyo's incapability to reduce or abolish corruption within the government and to establish reforms.

This coup represented the military *institutional* interest and also enjoyed the backing of the business community, intellectuals, social activists, and the media.¹¹ The possibility of a coup in the Philippines is large. It is traceable from several coup attempts by *individual* military officers since 1987. Nevertheless, the military coup attempts in the Philippines from 1987 to 2003 represented more individual or group interests than in Thailand. In addition, the military coup attempts in the Philippines since the collapse of Ferdinand Marcos have been influenced by civilian supports.

The civilian regimes in the Philippines also need assistance from the military to maintain their power. The rising domestic instability, including the inability of Philippines presidents, provides the way to the military to involve themselves in political affairs. Some retired generals gained decisive positions within the executive cabinet as enacted by Arroyo, placing several senior officers in civilian departments. Arroyo also surrounded herself with some generals to maintain her power in office. Some retired officers also put themselves forward as legislative candidates and presidential candidates.

¹⁰ See New York Times at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/08/world/asia/08iht-phils.1.11768126.html?_r=0.

¹¹ Ukrist Pathmanand, "A Different Coup d'Etat?," (*Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 381:1, February, 2008): 130-32

The personal politicization by Marcos in 1972 is the key to understanding why the military ambition has remained high until now. The path dependence process since the ambition was first introduced has created the way for political engagement of the Philippines military. The critical juncture for the military ruling ambition of the AFP occurred in 1972 when Marcos imposed martial law to strengthen his power toward opposition political groups. As his proponents the military was given crucial positions that afforded involvement in the policy-making process at national and local levels. The 1986 People Movement became another critical juncture for the revival of efforts to build a civilian supremacy by reducing the military ruling ambition of the AFP. Although the outcome of the crucial movement was not sufficient, it nonetheless led to civilian desire to create a stable and democratic civil-military relationship. However, the military continues its ambition to rule the country by forming close ties with the civilian government and political parties. This pattern maintains the high level of ambition of the military in the Philippines.

Conclusion

In the path toward democracy, one of biggest challenges to building a stable and democratic civil-military relationship is not only exercising civilian supremacy, but also, and most importantly, controlling the military's ruling ambition. In many developing countries where civilian supremacy has been achieved under a democratic regime, the ambition of the military, both institutional including the sub-groups and individual, is still pervasive and occasionally challenges the regime or the decision-making process within the regime.

By looking at the three different countries—South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines—we can assess the various levels and forms of the military's ruling ambitions. South

Korea presents a low intensity of the military's ruling ambition. By contrast, in Indonesia and the Philippines, the ruling ambition of the military remains moderate and high respectively, despite both countries' having passed through the democratic period more than a decade after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes.

There are three elements to a military's ruling ambition: its intensity, its form, and its origins. It can emerge from various sources, including the "birth right" principle, where the armed forces or key figures have played a prominent role in achieving national independence; personal politicization; the needs of a state to defend aggressively from external and internal threats; and the "competence principle" in which the military presume themselves to have superior organization and resources than the elected civilian government.

In the final analysis, to understand the ruling ambition of the military, we must continue to focus on the ability of the regime, in particular civilian regimes including the civil society, to oversee the performance of this ambition in the national government. Most importantly, by controlling the military's ruling ambition, the civilian government can build more stability and democracy in its relation with the military.

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