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Trust in Government versus Fear of Crime as Predictors of
Support for Authoritarian Policies in Ecuador: A Cross-Sectional Study

A thesis

presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Sociology

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Sociology

by

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fear, crime, Ecuador, social order.

ABSTRACT

Trust in Government versus Fear of Crime as Predictors of Support for Authoritarian Policies in Ecuador: A Cross-Sectional Study

by

C. David Cañarte Gutiérrez

Individuals interacting in an environment that exacerbates fear of crime and general distrust may face erosion of democratic values and perceive authoritarian policies as a solution to restore order. In Latin America historical widespread distrust in the government apparatus as well as fear of crime, have always been a topic of interest, not only for sociologists but also for political scientists and lawmakers. This study uses the LAPOP wave 2012 (Latin American Public Opinion) survey to assess Ecuadorians' perceptions about trust in the government and fear of crime as predictors of support for authoritarian policies (*mano dura*). Logistic regressions show evidence that fear of crime acts as a better predictor than level of trust in the government for predicting the likelihood of supporting authoritarian policies. Overall, this study provides a hint of how Ecuadorians support for democratic principles may have weakened by fear of crime and lack of trust in the government apparatus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	2
LIST OF TABLES.....	4
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
Definitions of Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Personality.....	6
Trust and Authoritarianism.....	8
Fear of Crime as Part of the Social Dynamics.....	9
Legacy of “Mano Dura” Policies as Default Politics in Latin America.....	11
Ecuador’s Political Background and Authoritarian Legacy.....	13
Fear of Crime and Mano Dura Policies in Ecuador.....	15
3. METHODS.....	17
Data and Sample.....	17
Dependent Variables.....	18
Independent Variables.....	19
Analytic Strategy.....	22
4. RESULTS.....	24
5. DISCUSSION.....	35
REFERENCES.....	40
VITA.....	46

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Contingency Tables of Fear of Crime Index and Approval of <i>Mano Dura</i> Policies.....	25
2. Mean Scores on Trust Government Index for <i>Mano Dura</i> Variables.....	27
3. Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting <i>Mano Dura</i> Policies I.....	28
4. Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting <i>Mano Dura</i> Policies II	29
5. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Approval for “Cleansing of Undesirables”.....	31
6. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Approval for “Use of Torture on Criminals”.....	32
7. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Preferences between <i>Mano Dura</i> Policies Vs. Everyone’s Participation.....	33

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When social groups see their social order threatened by crime or there exists a generalized distrust in the government, citizens may feel inclined to support the implementation of authoritarian policies to restore order. In a classical explanation, Mead (1934) stated that individuals immersed in social groups resemble the way the group is organized and unified. Therefore, citizens may transfer their anxiety of dealing with a chaotic environment to the enactment of punitive laws. Paradoxically, this request jeopardizes democracy and civil liberties.

Military coups in the name of right or left wing ideologies have been frequent in Latin America, and its history is plagued with political struggle amongst confronting elites shielded under charismatic leaders. However, the 21st century marks a relatively quiet period of democratic regimes. Ecuador, my native country, has not escaped this dynamic and it has been a fertile soil of the same formula: military coups posing as a democratic solution to restore order. Similar to the rest of the region, Ecuador is living in a transitional moment with relative economic and political stability since 2007 when President Correa took office. Nevertheless, this political stability has not deterred spikes in organized crime as well as general lack of trust in the government apparatus. All of these factors combined motivate me to undertake this study in order to provide a clearer explanation of this phenomenon.

Using data collected by Latin American Public Opinion (LAPOP) wave 2012, this study seeks to analyze Ecuador's contemporary context by gauging if the perceptions of fear of crime and distrust in the government apparatus increase the likelihood of approving military coups, justified as *democratic* solutions to restore order. This study seeks to add to the literature about the impact of trust and fear of crime on society, as well as expanding sociological research using Ecuador as a study subject.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Personality

Max Weber ([1922] 1978) defined three types of legitimate domination: Rational grounds (legal authority) based on the belief in the legality of enacted rules and the righteousness of authorities that enforce them, traditional grounds (traditional authority) that function under the virtue of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them, and charismatic grounds (charismatic authority) that rest on the devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or unique character of an individual person and the his/her infallible set of norms.

Weber ([1922] 1978) stated that legal authority demands and enforces submission to a body of abstract rules that have been intentionally established. The authority impersonally issues commands to members of the organization who think they are not obeying the leader, but the rules. In this sense individuals do not notice their allegiance to the authority, but their obedience to social or impersonal orders is assured. Weber ([1922] 1978) defined patrimonialistic traditional domination as the one that takes form in the state, and it is seen when administrative and military forces become personal instruments of leaders who seek to appropriate particular powers and specific economic assets. Weber ([1922] 1978) also points out that the figure of the charismatic authority or “leader” is regarded by the people as having divine, supernatural, and superhuman powers. These endow him or her with infallibility to solve people’s problems. Followers practice a sort of devotion to charismatic leaders, and when the charismatic leader lacks success, their fragility and instability is exposed regardless of their powerful appeal. In this sense, their authority is unstable.

The development of an authoritarian personality and rigid worldviews begin with the continuous interaction from childhood in a hierarchical, authoritarian, and exploitive parent-

child relationship (Adorno et al. 1950). The authoritarian-raised child – later adult – rejects whatever is considered as weak and in opposition to his/her constrained perception of reality. In addition, Sanford et al. (1950) measured implicit antidemocratic trends clustered in several variables of opinions and attitudes shaping authoritarian personalities. These scholars mentioned the following variables: 1) Authoritarian submission: Submissive and uncritical standpoint toward idealized authorities; 2) Authoritarian aggression: Tendency to reject, condemn, and punish people who violate conventional values; 3) Superstition: Belief in mystical determinants of an individual's destiny; 4) Stereotype: Disposition to classify people and events only in rigid categories; 5) Power and toughness: Concerned with the dynamics of dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower interactions, and identification with figures who display excessive power and egocentric worldviews.

Altemeyer (1988) describes right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) as a combination of three attitudes: 1) Conventionalism and rigid adherence to social conventions thought to be endorsed and established by authorities; 2) Authoritarian aggression against various types of people who deserve to be sanctioned by authorities; 3) Submission to whom the individual considers a legitimate authority. Altemeyer (1988) concluded that highly submissive and conventional individuals hold a fearful perception of the world that surrounds them and see society at large as chaotic and lawless. The tendency to self-righteousness triggers aggressive impulses that are aimed at a vast range of victims. McHoskey (1996) found that RWA was strongly associated with a rejection of relativistic or pluralistic ethical worldviews. When absolutism and closed-mindedness are combined, the result tends to be individuals with authoritarian personalities.

Levi Martin (2001) criticizes both Adorno's et al. (F-Scale) and Altemeyer's (RWA) theories of the authoritarian personality. This scholar concluded that both theorists' methodologies are designed to catch individuals scoring high in the authoritarian scale. Levi

Martin (2001) suggests that is difficult to assess authoritarianism on categorical typologies (aggressive vs. non-aggressive, high vs. low.) In this sense, both F-Scale and RWA falter when leaving out other signs of authoritarianism that may emerge in individuals scoring low in the measure. This conclusion was shared by Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo (1973) in their celebrated Stanford Prison Experiment that found that psychologically “normal” individuals performing as guards with no signs of authoritarian personalities, violent behavior, or conflictive family past developed authoritarian and sadistic behavior towards the participants performing as prisoners.

Trust and Authoritarianism

Haidt (2012) noted that moral judgments of righteous minds manage reputations, strategically build alliances, and recruit adherents to support their side in the disputes of daily life. Hence, moral judgments under the lens of righteousness are powerful mechanisms that bind people who ask for protection from cheaters, slackers, and free-riders who are seen as threats to society. Additionally, cooperation is maintained in moral communities through gossiping and punishing slackers, free-riders, and cheaters. This type of punitive worldview is more found often in the conservative ideology who tend perceive that incarceration is not used enough as well as considering rehabilitation an unrealistic solution. Conservatives tend to believe that only through mass incarceration of opportunists, crime is controlled and reduced (Western 2006). Conversely, Haidt (2012) remarks that societies can control authoritarianism through social reforms, education, and laws promoting civil liberties.

Other scholars approached this phenomenon explaining how trust in individualistic and collectivistic societies determine the way members of society may rely on when looking for solutions in their communities. Berigan and Irwin (2011) found low levels of trust in others' actions as a common characteristic in collectivistic societies. These societies may favor external organizations, e.g. government or supporting legislation, to achieve social

order. Previous studies confirmed that when social groups' lack of trust becomes the norm and creates in individuals the sensation of being constantly exploited, the support for sanctioning strangers increase. These punitive mechanisms seek to enhance, monitor cooperation, restore order, and overcome fear (Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe 1998). Additionally, Irwin (2009) noted that members of collectivistic nations are more inclined to rely more on external sanctioning authorities –police forces and other law-enforcement institutions, etc.– to monitor and punish other members of society who do not cooperate to achieve a common good rather than taking personal initiative to sanction defectors.

Messner, Baumer, and Rosenfeld (2006) found that whites in the U.S. who do not trust government are more prone to support capital punishments than blacks. Blacks feel less inclined to give to a white dominated judicial system the authority to take a prisoner's life, whereas in whites partisanship and political ideology have a stronger influence on their support for authoritarian policies. These scholars also emphasize that the increase in awareness about crime must be properly “problematized” and discussed by the community in the right way to elicit the request for harsher laws and punishments against criminals. In Estonia Sööt (2013) found that participants (N=509) had difficulties to assign to a single variable the reasons for supporting punitive policies. This scholar found that socio-demographics used as independent variables are more likely to explain preference for harsher punishment toward cases of corruption than for burglary. Conversely, Sööt found that participants who trust politicians could develop higher punitive feelings towards thieves rather than corruption offenders.

Fear of Crime as Part of Social Dynamics

Durkheim ([1893] 1984) argued that even when crimes are harmful to individuals, as a whole they really do not destabilize the society in the same way as an “economic crisis, a crash of stock market... [which] can disorganize the body social much more than an isolated

case of homicide” (Durkheim [1893] 1984:33). Nevertheless, this classic conceptualization of crime did not take into account instances when crime rises disproportionately and threatens the basic general solidarity necessary for social order.

Seltzer and McCormick II (1987) found that fear of crime victimization was a better predictor than actual crime victimization itself on the willingness to impose the penalty of capital punishment on others. Because it is perceived as a collective threat, neighborhood disorder alienates neighbors and shapes perceptions of powerlessness and mistrust among them (Gainey, Allper, and Chappell 2010; Ross 2011). Powerlessness is defined as a lack of self-capability to avoid or manage threat and it is developed with the exposure to uncontrollable, negative conditions such as crime, danger, and threats in one’s neighborhood. However, Ross (2011) argues that collective threat is alienating and distressing even though few people are personally victimized. Rountree, Wilcox and Land (1996) state that individuals from higher socioeconomic strata tend to feel more scared or with higher risk of becoming victims of crime. These scholars concluded that the sensation of fear of crime resulted in a better predictor than being the victim of a burglary or any other crime. These scholars note that the higher the social integration in a neighborhood, the more accurate the definitions of what type of crimes are committed, whereas lack of integration in the community increases the sensation of danger among residents who tend to define their neighborhoods as unsafe. Social integration serves to diminish residents’ perceptions of the neighborhood as unsafe and is negatively related to perceived risk (Rountree et al. 1996).

Other studies have explored the relationship between media consumption and the proclivity to support authoritarian policies. Dowler (2002) found evidence that crime-drama TV viewers tended to be more open to stronger law enforcement and the use of guns as crime deterrent. In another study, however, Dowler (2003) found that race, education, income, fear

of crime, and marital status are stronger predictors of support for punitive policies than the relationship between media consumption and punitive attitudes.

Legacy of “Mano Dura” Policies as Default Politics in Latin America

Holland (2013) defines *Mano Dura* (Iron Fist Rules) as justice reforms that promote disproportionate punishments for crimes based on subjective evidence. These policies open the door to military or informal police abuse. Cesarini and Hite (2004) included in the Latin American authoritarian legacy shaping the *Mano Dura* policies, a set of rules, norms, procedures, patterns, in well-defined authoritarian relationships of the past still thriving and influencing contemporary post-authoritarian democratic systems. In authoritarian regimes formal democratic institutions are regarded as the tools for exercising political authority. Previous researchers concur with Cesarini and Hite, that in the context of *mano dura* policies, governments are prone to violate laws and authorities allowing quasi-criminals to enroll in law-enforcement forces to disproportionately punish criminals and political dissidents. As a consequence basic democratic standards erode (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1976; Levistky and Way 2002).

Lack of efficiency of police officers and the judicial system slowly undermine not only the legitimacy of the state authority but more dangerously the legitimation of democracy and encourage popular support for *Mano Dura* policies (Prillaman 2003). When conservative political regimes risk losing popular support or face external political pressures, they stress *Mano Dura* speech to attract low-income supporters. In this context fear of crime has proved to be a successful tactic to cluster electoral affiliates to support conservative political parties (Holland 2013). More specifically, Chevigny (2003) compared how in the United States fear of crime was used by politicians to promote the corporate prison industry and its whole bureaucracy (police, judges, prosecutors, legislators), whereas in Latin America politicizing fear of crime clusters voters around populist politicians' agendas.

Fortete and Cesano (2009) note that in Latin America, many citizens perceive police forces as corrupt and merely the muscle enforcing the laws of an also inefficient judicial system. These scholars conclude that the politicization of authoritarian solutions to combat crime and mass media exacerbation of victimization have influenced the overall lack of trust in Latin American justice systems. On the other hand, Ross Arnold (2012) found that Latin Americans' chronic lack of interest in political discussions leads them to either underestimate or overestimate crime and corruption. Ross Arnold argues that better politically informed citizens have better skills to identify corrupt acts in government officials.

Researchers differ on the explanations when assessing the most influential factors determining support for *mano dura* policies. On the one hand, in Mendelberg's (1997) study of the 1988 U.S. presidential race, political messages invoking race, rather than crime, probably did more to activate racial prejudice in voters. However, he acknowledges the limitations of his conclusion in a long-term set. On the other hand, Chevigny (2003) found that in nations with high economic inequalities and poor provision of social services the temptation to use fear of crime to get people's vote increases. In contrast, Johnson (2009) examined the 2001 Race, Crime and Public Opinion Study, found that in the U.S. anger about crime is a significant predictor of punitive attitudes, after controlling for other factors such as racial prejudice, fear of crime, causal attributions for criminal behavior, and political ideology.

Crime has been a particular political concern in Latin American since the mid-1990s. Pereira and Ungar (2004) note that the inefficacy of state agencies to enforce laws and punish crime makes citizens' interactions uncertain and urges them to seek immediate results. In contrast, Davis (2006) argues that in Latin America, violence and lawlessness have not addressed their origins in the structural social inequalities of the region. Other researchers noted that people living in urban areas tend to perceive higher rates of crime because of

corruption and authorities' inefficiency. These factors prompt citizens to treat communal norms as expendable (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1976). These scholars noted that communities implement vigilantism as a solution to crime as well as a substitute for the regular system of law. In addition, Kreml (1976) notes that vigilantes experience constant threats to personal security, a situation that may trigger the authoritarian propensities to take justice in one's hands.

Ecuador's Political Background and Authoritarian Legacy

Gerlach (2003) stated that during the Inca Empire individuals were secondary to the collective. Additionally, the Inca Emperor ruled the land to support the military, religion, and bureaucracy of the empire, and small pieces of land were assigned to families to satisfy their food supply. Spaniard conquistadores were medieval men shaped by the fanatical religious militancy of the struggle to regain Spain from Muslim rule, with very little interest in cultural differences (Gerlach 2003). Hurtado (2007) noted that the encounter of the Spanish and Inca civilization was also the combination of two hierarchical and authoritarian societies ruled by nobility. The outcome was a highly hierarchical society ruled by white Spaniards and a huge base of people of all other skin colors, whose lifetime status was determined by birth throughout the Spanish colony and beyond. Other researchers confirmed that former Spanish and Portuguese colonies still show evidence of an almost unaltered system of social inequality and discrimination based on monarchical legacies affecting rules, procedures, norms, patterns, practices, dispositions, relationships, and memories (Hite and Morlino 2004; Farrington 2012).

Political instability has been common in Ecuadorian history after its emancipation from Spain in 1822. During the liberal revolution in 1895, General Eloy Alfaro advocated for reforms such as legal divorce, separation of church and state, religious freedom, civil marriage, and public education. However, Alfaro encountered strong opposition from

conservative groups representing elites and the church. This political agitation led to a civil war that ended with Alfaro's assassination in 1912 (Farrington 2012).

The 20th century was marked by unstable democracies and recurrent military coups. Additionally, national security doctrines, democratic instability, and constant military intervention to referee democratic dynamics eroded Ecuadorians' support of democracy and provided recurrent justifications for the use of military coups to restore order (Isaacs 1993). Burbano de Lara (2008) considers Ecuador a nation in a constant "unstable transition" where, even though the idea of democracy exists, justifications for strikes and military coups are called "democratic." This scholar noted a contradictory pattern in which people employ civil liberties such as speech, thought, organization, and protest to call for the immediate resignation of officials in office rather than guarantee democracy. Other authors note that despite the democratic transition from dictatorial regimes, individuals supporting the use of violence to restore order and police using the *mano dura* approach to law enforcement still plague Latin American societies (Huggins, Haritos-Fatouros, and Zimbardo 2002; Pereira and Ungar 2004).

In contrast, Farrington (2012) asserts that Ecuador is released from the threat of military repressive dictatorships. Nevertheless, in spite of the healthier participation of the military and civilians in the democratic process, inequalities in terms of ethnicity, gender, and class still pervade when white elites have better access to privileged positions than other ethnic groups. Burbano de Lara (2008) argues that civilian-military relationships are more complex and dynamic and yield no possibility for military forces to intervene as a referee in political affairs. Nevertheless, on September 30th 2010 Rafael Correa's government suffered a police insurrection that threatened Ecuador's democratic stability, and it is still acridly debated whether the mutiny was an attempt to overthrow Mr. Correa from office or a masquerade to boost his popularity.

De La Torre (2000) notes other authoritarian patterns in Ecuador's democratic dynamics. This scholar argues that despite the laws protecting the rights of poor Ecuadorians, those with fewer resources lack the power to ensure the accomplishment of their rights and rely on *protectors* who defend them from the police and other powerful people. In this sense, Ecuador is fertile soil for symbols of populism and charismatic leaders, who continuously challenge the oligarchical political order and gather the "masses" to their agendas (De La Torre and Conaghan 2009; De La Torre 2013).

Fear of Crime and Mano Dura Policies in Ecuador

Authoritarian tendencies and the proclivity to claim *mano dura* policies have been stressed in Ecuador. Isaacs (1993) cited a 1988-89 survey conducted in Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador's biggest cities. This study found greater support in Guayaquil than in Quito for undemocratic values such as a dictatorship being more effective than democracy at solving the nation's problems. As a clear example, Isaacs (1993:34) quoted a leading industrialist, who in a meeting of the Ecuadorian-American Chamber of Commerce in 1989 was asked: "Don't you know of any Ecuadorian Pinochet who might be able to reactivate the economy?"

Seligson et al. (2006) used data from the LAPOP survey and found that between 2001 and 2006 Ecuadorians tended to lean more toward the right-wing of the political spectrum. These scholars found that ethnic stratification in Ecuador is translated into socioeconomic and cultural differences that explain the disposition of showing authoritarian attitudes. Seligson et al. (2006) found that people who considered themselves racially mixed tended to be less racially authoritarian than people who considered themselves white. Nonetheless, this study should be contrasted with more recent studies assessing the impact of the economic boom on the perceptions towards authoritarian tendencies since Rafael Correa's left wing government took office in 2007.

Using data collected in the 2010 Latin American Public Opinion Project survey (LAPOP), Buchanan et al. (2012) evaluated the levels of support for *mano dura* rules among respondents in Latin America. This report found that 24.2 percent of Ecuadorians would support the implementation of *mano dura* instead of supporting the democratic participation of citizens in the search for solutions. This study also revealed that people showing the lowest levels of interpersonal trust tended to support *mano dura* against crime, expecting an external entity to enforce a solution. Buchanan et al. (2012) found that with each year of educational attainment, support for *mano dura* policies declined, whereas perceptions about corruption and lower levels of interpersonal trust may influence the likelihood of supporting *mano dura* policies. However, this report did not conduct regression analyses combining other independent variables such as fear of crime and trust in the government apparatus, and it also did not analyze countries independently.

The 2008 LAPOP survey found significant differences among Latin American nations on the restrictions of minority rights when members of society have defined *what is right* and *what is not right* to be defended (Orces 2010). For example, among 22 countries, Argentina scored the lowest popular support (32.9 percent) for suppressing minority rights when society has decided *what is right*, whereas Ecuador ranked sixth at 56 percent. Orces (2010) stated that the high level of satisfaction of Ecuadorians with Correa's government may lead many to define it as something *right to be defended* and suppress minorities' political opinions. Nevertheless, Orces's study does not explain whether defending *what is right* would mean supporting discrimination against minorities when controlling for other variables such as race, religion, gender, or political views.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This study explores how levels of trust in the government apparatus and fear of crime may influence the support of *mano dura* policies in Ecuador. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

H₁: Ecuadorians who report having altered their lifestyles because of fear of crime, are more likely to approve the implementation of *mano dura* policies to restore social order.

H₂: Ecuadorians who manifest distrust in the government apparatus are more likely to approve the use of *mano dura* policies to restore order.

In order to account for potentially confounding factors, I included the control variables sex, age, total household income, educational attainment, religion, and political affiliation.

Data and Sample

This research uses secondary data from Latin American Public Opinion (LAPOP) Americas Barometer wave 2012 collected by Vanderbilt University (USA). LAPOP (2013) gathers respondents' opinions from 26 countries in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. LAPOP (2012b) states that the sample in Ecuador consists of 1,500 voting age participants with a sampling error of $\pm 2.5\%$. Each country's sample is developed using a multi-stage probabilistic design with quotas at the household level for most countries. LAPOP surveyed Ecuador by its major regions, size of municipality, and by urban and rural areas within municipalities (LAPOP 2012b).

LAPOP (2012c) interviewed most participants face-to-face in Spanish and some in Quichua language. The sample is a representation of Ecuador's most populated areas, clustering 1,433 participants mostly in between the Coast and the Highlands regions. According to LAPOP (2012c), the Amazon region is part of the survey (n=200) but is not a

representative sample for this stratum. The Galápagos Archipelago is not included in the survey. LAPOP (2012c) surveyed 990 participants in urban areas and 552 in rural areas. A downloadable English version of the questionnaire with the same questions and variable codes as the Spanish survey is available (LAPOP 2012a).

Dependent Variables

I used eight questions from the LAPOP (2012a) survey as dependent variables to determine approval or disapproval of *mano dura* policies:

1) “When there is a lot of crime, a military take-over of the state would be justified?”

This variable is coded as 1 = military coups are justified when there is a lot of crime and 0 = military coups are not justified when there is a lot of crime. To assess this variable in a multi-factorial context a binary logistic regression is required.

2) “Due to rampant corruption, a military take-over of the state would be justified?”

This variable is coded as 1 = military coups are justified when there is a lot of corruption and 0 = military coups are not justified when there is a lot of corruption. To assess this variable in a multi-factorial context a binary logistic regression is required.

3) “In order to catch criminals, do you believe the authorities should always abide by the law or that occasionally they can cross the line?” This variable is coded as 1 = authorities occasionally can cross the line and 0 = authorities should always abide by the law. I used a binary logistic regression to assess this variable.

4) Participants were asked if the best way to confront crime is having harsher laws. Frequencies in this variable yielded 65.9 percent of participants agreeing with harsher laws as an option. For this reason this variable is coded as a dummy variable where 1= Strongly Agree and 0= all other responses (somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). To assess this variable in a multi-factorial context a binary logistic regression is required.

5) “In the context of combating crime, if a group of people begins to carry out “social cleansing,” that is killing people that some people consider “undesirable,” would you approve of them killing people considered undesirable?” This variable is coded as 1 = Neither approving nor understanding 2 = Not approving but understanding 3 = Approving. To assess this variable, a multinomial regression is required. The answer “neither approving nor understanding” is used as reference.

6) “If police torture a criminal to get information about a very dangerous organized crime group, would you approve police forces torturing criminals?” This variable is coded as 1 = Neither approving nor understanding 2 = Not approving but understanding 3 = Approving. To assess this variable, a multinomial regression is required. The answer “neither approving nor understanding” is used as reference.

7) Participants are asked to choose between a *mano dura* government or democracy with the following question: “Do you think that our country needs a *mano dura* government or, do you think that that everyone’s participation can solve all the problems?” This variable is coded as 1 = Iron fist rules (Mano Dura), 0 = Everyone’s participation (Democracy). To assess this variable, a binary logistic regression is required.

8) Participants were asked to choose from a list of statements the one that they agree with the most. This variable is coded as 1 = People like me do not care whether the government is democratic or nondemocratic, 2 = Democracy is preferable to any other form of government, 3 = Under some circumstances an authoritarian government may be preferable to a democratic one. To assess this variable, a multinomial logistic regression is required. In this regression, democracy was used as the contrast group.

Independent Variables

In the case of predictors, LAPOP does not assess in a single question the participants’ perceptions about fear of crime. Hence, I chose the following questions to assess

Ecuadorians' approval for *mano dura* policies. All these questions' answers are coded as 1 = Yes, 0 = No. In order to improve their impact on the outcome and effectively evaluate whether participants have altered their lifestyles because fear of crime, I combined them as an index. A reliability test of this index yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .709 and the Principle Components-Factor Analysis produced one factor with an Eigen value of 1.9. This Fear of Crime Index consist of the following questions.

- I. Out of fear of crime, have you limited the places where you go to shop?
- II. Out of fear of crime, have you limited the places where you go for recreation?
- III. Out of fear of crime, have you felt the need to move to a different neighborhood?
- IV. Out of fear of crime, have you organized with the neighbor of your community?

The second index evaluates Ecuadoreans' levels of trust in the government apparatus. All these variables are coded from 1= nothing to 7= a lot of trust. A reliability test of this index yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .843 and the Principle Components-Factor Analysis produced one factor with an Eigen value of 3.9. This index included the following questions:

- I. Up to what extent, do you trust the military?
- II. Up to what extent, do you trust the police?
- III. Up to what extent, do you trust the judicial system?
- IV. Up to what extent, do you trust Congress?
- V. Up to what extent, do you trust political parties?
- VI. Up to what extent, do you trust the President?
- VII. Up to what extent, do you trust the Supreme Court?
- VIII. Up to what extent, do you trust the elections in your country?

The following controls are included in all the logistic regressions. First, monthly household income. This variable is coded as 0 = no income, 1 = under \$40, 2 = between \$40 to \$90, 3 = between \$91 to \$130, 4 = between \$131 to \$180, 5 = between \$181 to \$220, 6 = between \$221 to \$260, 7 = between \$261 to \$310, 8 = between \$311 to \$350, 9 = between \$351 to \$400, 10 = between \$401 to \$460, 11 = between \$461 to \$530, 12 = between \$531 to \$790, 13 = \$791 to \$1060, 14 = between \$1061 to \$1580, 14 = between \$1061 to \$1580, 15 = between \$1581 to \$2110, 16 = More than \$2110. I recoded these amounts in order to adjust them to Ecuadorian salary standards.

Second, religious affiliation is recoded as four different dummy variables for Catholics (n=1,176), Protestants (n=160) include Protestants and Evangelicals. Seculars (n=92) include Agnostics and Atheists, and other religions (n=34) that include Muslims, Jews, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and other religious denominations with very small numbers of followers in the sample. In all regressions Catholics were used as a reference.

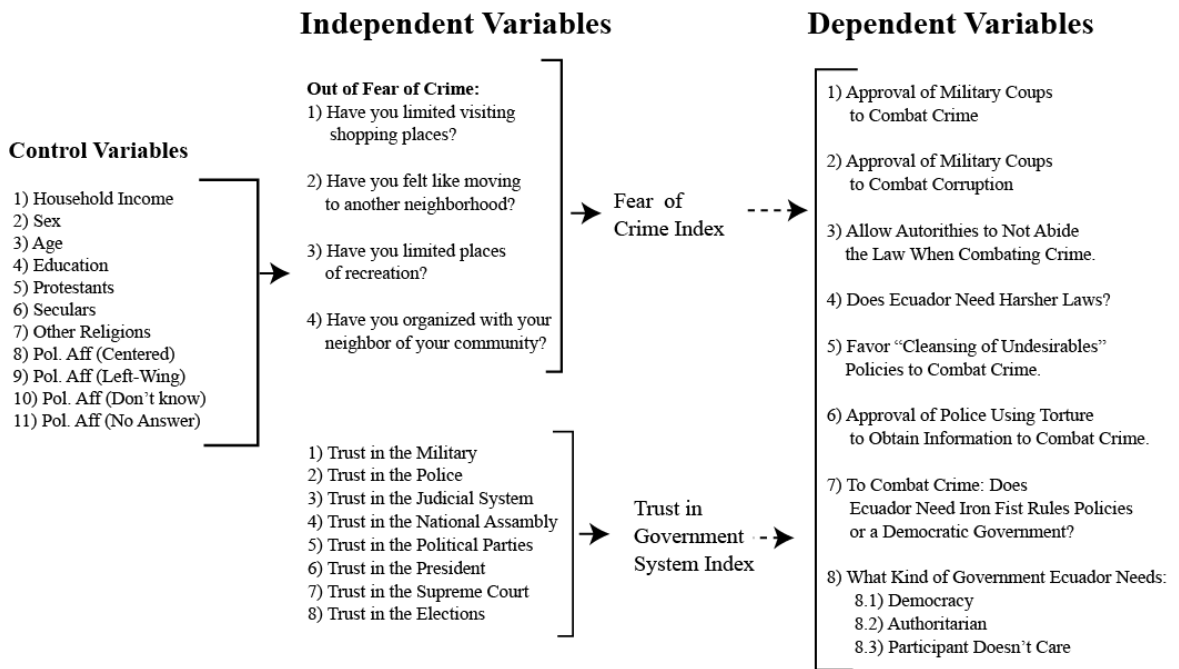
Third, participants' age is part of the control variables. Fourth, political affiliation is recoded as five different dummies representing "right-wing", "center", "left wing", "don't know" and "no response." In all regressions the "right-wing" dummy was used as a reference. Fifth, the variable "sex" is a categorical variable where 1= Males, 0 = Females. Finally, "education" is an interval variable ranging from 0 to 18 years of schooling completed.¹

¹ When trying to improve the impact of education as predictor in the regression models, I recoded it into three dummies 1) 7th to 11th grade, 2) 12th to 13th grade and, 3) 14th grade to 18th grade or more years of educational attainment. Regressions showed that only the dummy "14th to 18th and +" showed statistical significance in the likelihood of deterring in participants the claim for *Mano Dura* policies. For this reason, I discarded this option and continued the analysis using the education variable as originally coded in LAPOP 2012.

Although I initially considered using “racial bias” in respondents as part of the controls, preliminary crosstab analysis yielded no statistically significant relationship between racial bias against dark-skinned people and approval for military coups to combat crime. Almost 53 percent of respondents who assigned “culture” as the main factor explaining poverty in dark-skinned people, expressed no approval for a military coup to restore order when combating crime, $\chi^2(2) = .810$; $p \leq .667$. Due to lack of statistical significance, I decided to drop it as part of the control variables. Additionally, using an Ecuadorian 2004 national survey (N=8,682), Beck, Mijeski and Stark (2011) found that around half of respondents have little conceptual knowledge about racism and, around two-thirds of respondents did not have a clear idea about what racial discrimination is. Almost 70 percent were not familiar with the concept of racial prejudice. Figure 1 explains the models used in this research.

Analytic Strategy

To test my hypotheses, I ran eight models assessing each of the dependent variables shown in Figure 1. For the dependent variables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7, a binary logistic regression was required using Fear of Crime Index and Trust in Government Index as main predictors as well as the control variables. A multinomial logistic regression was used to assess the dependent variables 4, 5, and 8 using Fear of Crime Index and Trust in Government Index and controls as predictors.



Source: C. David Cañarte Gutiérrez. 2014

Figure 1. Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables Modeled

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Table 1 contains the results of crosstabs assessing the relationship between the indexes and the dependent variables. The first crosstab reveals a statistically significant relationship when 56.8 percent of respondents scoring high in the fear of crime index say that a military coup would be acceptable to combat crime and restore social order, compared to 37.2 percent of respondents scoring low in the fear of crime index, $\chi^2(4) = 38.528$; $p \leq .000$.

The second crosstab shows a statistically significant relationship, primarily because when 55.8 percent of respondents who scored high in the fear of crime index agreed that a military coup would be justified to restore social order when corruption is widespread compared to only 39.7 percent of participants who scored the lowest in the fear of crime index, $\chi^2(4) = 29.168$; $p \leq .000$.

The third crosstab exhibits a statistical significance showing that 68.0% of respondents who score high in the fear of crime index agree that authorities can cross the line and not abide by the law when combating crime, compared to 57.1 percent of the sample who scored the lowest in the fear of crime index, $\chi^2(4) = 16.322$; $p \leq .003$.

The fourth crosstab shown in Table 2 found no statistically significant relationship between responses on the fear of crime index and agreement with “cleasing of undesirables” when combating crime, $\chi^2(8) = 9.987$; $p = .266$. A fifth crosstab also exhibits no statistically significant relationship between fear of crime index and approval of police forces using torture to get information when combating crime, $\chi^2(8) = 12.440$; $p = .133$.

The sixth crosstab does not show statistical significance between the fear of crime variable and responses to the item on whether Ecuador needs a *mano dura* government rather than a democracy (everyone’s participation), $\chi^2(4) = 4.849$; $p = .303$.

Table 1. Contingency Tables of Fear of Crime Index and Approval of Mano Dura Policies
(Column Percentages)

<i>Fear of Crime Index</i>	0 = not scared	1	2	3	4 = very scared
<i>Approval Military Coups/Crime^a</i>					
% Agree	37.2	53.9	50.4	56.2	56.8
% Disagree	62.8	46.1	49.6	43.8	43.2
<i>Approval Military Coups/Corruption^a</i>					
% Agree	39.7	54.2	53.8	54.2	55.8
% Disagree	60.3	45.8	46.2	45.8	44.2
<i>Authorities Can Cross the Line^a</i>					
% Agree	57.1	49.5	57.8	46.1	68.0
% Disagree	42.9	50.5	42.2	53.9	32.0
<i>Ecuador Needs Harsher Laws^a</i>					
% Agree	60.6	63.2	75.6	70.0	71.4
% Disagree	39.4	36.8	24.4	30.0	28.6
<i>“Cleansing Undesirables”</i>					
% Not approving, not understanding	43.6	42.8	45.8	50.8	41.6
% Not approving but understanding	36.5	34.6	33.8	31.1	27.3
% Approving	19.9	22.6	20.4	18.1	31.2
<i>Use of Torture</i>					
% Not approving, not understanding	33.4	26.9	29.6	27.1	33.8
% Not approving but understanding	38.0	37.4	41.1	36.7	28.6
% Approving	28.6	35.7	29.3	36.2	37.7
<i>Mano Dura Vs. Democracy</i>					
% Mano Dura	29.5	31.7	32.0	30.7	41.6
% Everyone’s	70.5	68.3	68.0	69.3	58.4
<i>Government Preferences^a</i>					
% Doesn’t care	19.0	14.2	16.9	16.7	25.4
% Democracy	69.2	69.0	73.9	66.1	66.2
% Mano Dura	11.7	16.8	9.2	17.3	8.5

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

a. Chi-Square test is significant at the .05 level.

The seventh crosstab found statistical significant relationship when 71.4 percent of participants scoring high in the fear of crime index think that Ecuador needs harsher laws to combat crime whereas 60.6 percent scoring low in the fear of crime index think that harsher laws to combat crime are necessary, $\chi^2(4) = 22.985$; $p \leq .000$.

The eighth crosstab found a statistically significant relationship when 8.5% of respondents who scored the highest in the fear of crime index manifested approval to the statement that under some circumstances, a *mano dura* government may be preferable to democracy, whereas 11.7 percent of respondents scoring the lowest in the fear of crime index agreed that an authoritarian government is better than democracy. Additionally, 25.4 percent of respondents who scored the highest in the fear of crime index did not care whether the government is authoritarian or democratic compared to 19 percent of respondents who scored the lowest in the fear of crime index. This lack of interest can be interpreted as alienation towards politics that manifest in their indifference to the type of government in Ecuador, $\chi^2(8) = 16.311$; $p \leq .038$.

I used *t*-test and ANOVA to compare the means between those participants who support *mano dura* policies and their likelihood to trust in the government apparatus. Only one outcome yielded a significant relationship, when participants who favor “cleansing of undesirables” are more likely to not trust in the government apparatus. These results fail to support H_2 : “Ecuadorians who manifest distrust in the government apparatus may approve the use of *mano dura* policies to restore order.” For further analysis about the aforementioned means scores see Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores on Trust Government Index for Mano Dura Variables

Independent Variable	Means Trust Government Index
Military Coups/Crime (N = 1,313)	
Yes	31.3
No	32.0
Military Coups/Corruption (N= 1,313)	
Yes	31.4
No	31.9
Allowing Authorities (N= 1,341)	
Abiding by the Law	32.1
Cross the Line	31.0
Cleansing “undesirables” (N= 1,344) ^b	
Approving	30.5
Neither approving nor understanding	31.5
Not approving but understanding	32.1
Use of Torture (N= 1,358)	
Approving	30.9
Neither approving nor understanding	31.7
Not approving but understanding	31.9
Ecuador needs for combating crime (N = 1,333)	
Democracy	31.8
Mano Dura	31.5
Ecuador needs (N = 1,250)	
Democracy	31.4
Mano Dura (Authoritarian)	31.4
Doesn’t Care	32.2
Ecuador needs Harsher Laws (N = 1,368)	
Yes	31.7
No	31.2

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

^a $p < 0.001$ for Independent samples t -test.

^b $p < 0.001$ for one-way analysis of variance.

Table 3. *Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting Mano Dura Policies I (Odds Ratios Reported with Standard Errors in Parentheses)*

<i>Variable</i>	Military Coups/Crime	Military Coups/Corruption	Authorities not Abiding by the law/ Can Cross the Line
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	2.017 (.422)	2.468 (.421)	1.975 (.416)
Income	1.002 (.019)	1.003 (.019)	1.015 (.018)
Centered Political Aff.	.791 (.161)	.940 (.160)	.750 (.160)
DK Political Aff.	.697 (.228)	.828 (.223)	.958 (.218)
Left Wing Pol. Aff.	.912 (.173)	.894 (.172)	.884 (.171)
NA Political Aff.	1.162 (.254)	1.254 (.252)	1.238 (.244)
Sex	1.056 (.119)	1.049 (.118)	.765 (.117) **
Education	.950 (.016) ***	.936 (0.16) ***	1.020 (.016)
Protestants	.931 (.191)	1.030 (.191)	.918 (.189)
Seculars	1.241 (.257)	1.001 (.258)	1.110 (.246)
Other Religions	3.085 (.483) **	1.481 (.463)	.743 (.439)
Age	.994 (.004)	.992 (.004)	.994 (.004)
Fear of Crime Index	1.238 (.048) ***	1.203 (.047) ***	.985 (.047)
Trust in Gov Index	.992 (.006)	.993 (.006)	.986 (.006) **
<i>Model stats</i>			
Nagelkerke R ²	.055	.046	.027
- 2 log likelihood	1621.316	1.636.543	1676.472
<i>N</i>	1,210	1,212	1,235

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Tables 3 and 4 show the odds ratios of the binary logistic regressions. Model 1 of Table 3 shows that the fear of crime index, educational attainment, and being a religious minority yielded statistically significant relationships with the approval for military coups to combat crime. For every unit increase in the fear of crime index, the odds of approving a military coup to combat crime increase by 23.8 percent ($\beta = .214$). Members of religious minorities have 208.5 percent higher odds ($\beta = 1.127$) of approving a military coup to combat crime than Catholics. For every additional year of education, the odds of approving a military coup to combat crime decreases by 5.2 percent ($\beta = -.052$).

In Model 2 of Table 3, educational attainment and the fear of crime index yielded statistically significant relationships with the approval of military coups to combat

corruption. For every unit increase in the fear of crime scale, the odds of supporting a military coup to combat corruption increase by 20.3 percent ($\beta = .185$). For each additional year of education the odds of supporting a military coup to combat corruption decrease by 6.8 percent ($\beta = -.066$).

Table 4. *Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting Mano Dura Policies II (Odds Ratios Reported with Standard Errors in Parentheses)*

<i>Variable</i>	Mano Dura Vs. Democracy	Ecuador Needs Harsher Laws
	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	.985 (.445)	.949 (.434)
Income	.995 (.020)	1.007 (.019)
Centered Political Aff.	1.103 (.169)	1.013 (.164)
DK Political Aff.	.482 (.260)***	1.747 (.242) **
Left Wing Pol. Aff.	1.034 (.182)	1.270 (.180)
NA Political Aff.	.903 (.267)	.885 (.253)
Sex	.851 (.126)	1.292 (.123) **
Education	.954 (.017) ***	.961 (0.16) ***
Protestants	.909 (.207)	1.113 (.201)
Seculars	1.017 (.265)	1.286 (.269)
Other Religions	2.726 (.454) **	.876 (.451)
Age	.999 (.004)	1.003 (.004)
Fear of Crime Index	1.046 (.050)	1.224 (.051) ***
Trust in Gov. Index	1.000 (.007)	1.008 (.006)
<i>Model stats</i>		
Nagelkerke R ²	.032	.045
- 2 log likelihood	1500.763	1.568.440
<i>N</i>	1,233	1,257

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Model 3 of Table 3 shows that sex and the trust in the government apparatus index yielded statistically significant relationships with the approval of approving authorities to not abide by the law and cross the line to combat crime. For each unit of increase in the trust of government apparatus index the odds of authorizing authorities to not abide by the law decrease by 1.4 percent ($\beta = -.014$). Being a male decreases by 30.7 percent ($\beta = -.267$) the

odds of approving authorities to not abide by the law when combating crime when compared to the odds for females.

In model 1 of Table 4, educational attainment, religious minorities and “don’t know” political affiliation yielded significant relationships with the choice between a *mano dura* government and democracy as the best form of government. For every year of increase in educational attainment the odds of supporting a *mano dura* government decrease by 4.8 percent ($\beta = -.047$). Respondents who were not able to define themselves politically have 107 percent lower odds ($\beta = -.729$) of supporting a *mano dura* government than those who have a right-wing political affiliation. Being part of a religious minority increases by 172 percent ($\beta = 1.003$) the odds of perceiving a *mano dura* government as a better option than a government where everyone’s participation is assured.

In model 2 of Table 4, the fear of crime index, sex, education attainment, and “don’t know” political affiliation yielded statistically significant relationships with the likelihood of an Ecuadorian to approve harsher laws to combat crime. For every unit of increase in the fear of crime index the odds of supporting harsher laws in Ecuador increase by 22.4 percent ($\beta = .202$) Being a male increases by 29.2 percent ($\beta = .256$) the odds of approving harsher laws. For every year of increase in educational attainment the odds of approving harsher laws in Ecuador decrease by 4 percent ($\beta = -.039$). Participants who were not able to define their political affiliation have 74.7 percent ($\beta = .558$) higher odds than right-wing respondents of supporting the enactment of harsher laws for combating crime in Ecuador.

Table 5 shows the results of the multinomial logistic regressions where seculars, education, and “no answer” political affiliations yielded statistically significant relationships with the likelihood of supporting groups “cleansing of undesirables” when combating crime. For every unit of increase in education attainment the odds of approving the “cleansing of undesirables” decrease by 3.9 percent ($\beta = -.039$). Seculars have 91.7 percent ($\beta = .651$)

higher odds of supporting “cleansing of undesirables” compared to Catholics. Respondents who had no answer defining their political affiliation have 153.3 percent ($\beta = .930$) higher odds of supporting “cleansing of undesirables.” Respondents who had no answer defining their political affiliation have 105.1 percent ($\beta = .718$) higher odds of not supporting but understanding “cleansing of undesirables.”

Table 5. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Approval for “Cleansing of Undesirables” (Odds Ratios)

<i>Independent Variable</i>	Not Approving But Understanding	Approving
Income	0.975	0.998
Centered Political Aff.	1.236	0.975
DK Political Aff.	1.069	0.896
Left Wing Pol. Aff.	1.397	1.525
NA Political Aff.	2.051**	2.533 ***
Sex	1.246	0.765
Education	0.976	0.962*
Age	0.999	0.998
Protestants	0.905	0.670
Seculars	1.199	1.917**
Other Religions	0.731	0.641
Fear of Crime Index	0.911	0.988
Trust in Gov Index	1.007	0.991
<i>Model stats</i>		
Nagelkerke R ²	.048	.048
- 2 log likelihood final	2567.282 **	2567.282 **
N	1,238	1,238

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

a “Not Approving Nor Understanding” is the reference category

Table 6 shows that the fear of crime index, education, and age have statistically significant relationships with the approval for Police forces to use torture to get information from criminals. For each unit of increase in educational attainment the odds of approving police to use torture decrease by 5.8 percent ($\beta = -.057$). For every unit of increase in the fear of crime index, the odds of supporting police to use torture increase by 14.2 percent ($\beta =$

.133). Every additional year old decreases by 1.7 percent ($\beta = -.017$) the odds of supporting police to use torture to get information from criminals to combat crime.

Table 6. *Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Approval for "Use of Torture on Criminals" (Odds Ratios)*

<i>Independent Variable</i>	Not Approving But Understanding	Approving
Income	0.996	1.021
Centered Political Aff.	1.050	0.934
DK Political Aff.	1.205	1.241
Left Wing Pol. Aff.	0.994	1.304
NA Political Aff.	1.566	1.436
Sex	1.148	0.871
Education	0.971	0.945***
Age	0.995	0.983***
Protestants	0.716	0.682
Seculars	0.959	0.824
Other Religions	0.877	1.126
Fear of Crime Index	1.029	1.142**
Trust in Gov Index	1.004	0.994
<i>Model stats</i>		
Nagelkerke R ²	.035	.035
- 2 log likelihood final	2689.006 **	2689.006 **
N	1,249	1,249

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

a "Not Approving Nor Understanding" is the reference category

Table 7 reports the odds ratios of the multinomial logistic regression assessing participants' likelihood to favor the idea that in some circumstances, an authoritarian government is preferable than a democratic one as well as, whether Ecuadorians do not care if an authoritarian or democratic government is in office. In both models, preference for democracy (everyone's participation) as the best government option was used as reference.

Table 7. *Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Between Mano Dura Vs. Everyone's Participation Government (Odds Ratios)*

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>I don't care Type of Government</i>	<i>Authoritarian Government is preferable</i>
Income	0.978	0.967
Centered Political Aff.	0.949	0.649
DK Political Aff.	1.334	0.425**
Left Wing Pol. Aff.	0.995	0.689
NA Political Aff.	1.615	0.332**
Sex	0.998	1.450*
Education	0.943***	0.971
Age	0.989*	0.976***
Protestants	0.567	0.945
Seculars	0.695	1.027
Other Religions	1.340	1.359
Fear of Crime Index	1.027	0.988
Trust in Gov Index	1.006	0.998
<i>Model stats</i>		
Nagelkerke R ²	.057	.057
- 2 log likelihood final	1829.105 **	1829.105 **
<i>N</i>	1,152	1,152

Source: Latin America Public Opinion Survey (2012)

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

a "Everyone's participation" Government (Democracy) is the reference category

Table 7 shows that for participants who do not care what type of government in charge, education attainment and age yielded a significant statistical relationship. For each unit of increase in education the odds of not caring about if the government in office is authoritarian or democratic decrease by 6 percent ($\beta = -.059$) compared to those who prefer democracy. For every year older participants turn the odds of not caring whether the government in office is authoritarian or democratic decrease 1 percent ($\beta = -.011$).

Table 7 reports that for participants who agree that in some circumstances an authoritarian government is preferable to a democratic, the variables sex, political affiliation "don't know," "no answer," and age yielded statistically significant relationships. Being a male increases by 45 percent ($\beta = .371$) the odds of supporting an authoritarian government depending the circumstances compared to those who prefer democracy. Political affiliates

who define themselves as “don’t know” have 135 percent ($\beta = -.855$) lower odds of supporting an authoritarian government over democracy compared to right-wing respondents. Participants who did not provide an answer about their political affiliation have 201 percent lower odds ($\beta = -1.103$) of supporting an authoritarian government over democracy than right-wing respondents. For every year older participants turn the odds for supporting an authoritarian government over democracy decrease by 2.4 percent ($\beta = -0.24$).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overall, educational attainment is the most consistent predictor for deterring the likelihood of supporting *mano dura* policies. The more education Ecuadorians have, the less likely they are to support any kind of *mano dura* policies enforced by authorities. This study also found that education diminishes the likelihood of supporting a military coup when corruption is widespread. Additionally, education also thwarts Ecuadorians from requesting harsher laws to combat crime. However, this study did not include crime or corruption victimization as controls.

In spite of the low percentages of variance in the likelihood of supporting *mano dura* policies explained by the predictors, support for military coups to combat crime seem to have the best likelihood to occur. This study found evidence that the fear of crime index is a better predictor than the trust in government index of the likelihood of approving *mano dura* policies. The findings of this study also provide evidence of an association between fear of crime and approval of military coups to combat crime and corruption, approval of torture to get information from criminals, and the approval for harsher laws. These findings suggest that Ecuadorians seem to lean on requesting more severe sanctions and, approving of repressive measures when criminals are the targets of the punishment.

Fear of crime was not a good predictor when the claim for *mano dura* punishments needed to be individualized. On the one hand, the fear of crime index failed to predict the likelihood of supporting “cleansing of undesirables.” LAPOP (2012) questionnaire explained to participants that “cleansing of undesirables” implied killing another person that some people consider undesirable. The strong negative connotations of the word “killing” may have triggered in participants the necessity to display “social desirability” to repress the support for “cruel solutions” in front of the interviewers. Additionally, participants may have

found difficulties when defining who is an “undesirable” as well as difficulties to correctly interpret the word “cleansing”. Crosstabs of this study support these findings when showing no statistical significance between approval for *mano dura* policies and permitting “cleansing of undesirables.” These findings allow me to query: to what extent do Ecuadorians who participated in the LAPOP (2012) survey become what Becker (1963) defined as “moral entrepreneurs” who feel empowered to label others as “undesirables”? On the other hand, fear of crime worked better providing evidence that Ecuadorians are more prone to approve the use of torture when the word “criminal” was included in the question. This study found that Ecuadorian males showed a higher likelihood of favoring the implementation of harsher laws. However, there was no gender difference in support for allowing authorities to cross the line and circumvent the law. This may suggest that male participants may assign more righteousness to the word “law” and reacted negatively to the term “crossing the line.” Males may think they have higher chances of being victims, regardless of their culpability, of authorities not abiding by the law. For this reason, the ambiguity of the term “crossing the line” may influence males to be less likely to allow authorities to flout the law. In this sense this study shows evidence of contrasts in the levels of severity of the punishment depending on the individual’s interpretation of the words used in the question.

The lack of predictive power of the trust in government index may be attributed to the difficulties assessing trust at a micro-level for evaluating large government organizations. Participants’ perceptions about trust differ among individuals and the chance of social desirability can make them hide their real thoughts about the government apparatus, especially when questioned in person. Frequencies on the levels of trust in government show that the military is the most trusted institution in Ecuador –three highest scores in the Likert scale yielded 63.8 percent. This also provides evidence to conclude that Ecuadorians regard the military as a “democratic referee” without having a clear idea about their extent to

perform this role. In other words, this study provides more evidence to what it has been suggested by the literature, that Ecuadorians may perceive “military coups” as a temporary and quick solution to restore democratic order without having a clear idea of the consequences when awarding too much political power to the military forces. These findings suggest that the low-scale brutality of former Ecuadorian dictatorships did not leave a deep scar in the collective memory of citizens. This is the reason why Ecuadorians may not fully realize that in the name of punishing “undesirables” military forces may endanger all civil liberties.

President Correa received the second highest score among Ecuadorians’ levels of trust –three highest scores in the Likert scale yielded 61.9 percent. The findings of this study cannot determine if Correa’s popularity is a cause for deterring the likelihood of Ecuadorians supporting *mano dura* policies. Further research may consider assessing if the President’s popularity may correlate with Ecuadorians’ levels of trust in the government at large. Another consideration for future research may evaluate if Ecuadorians conceptually perceive democracy not as a sum of stable institutions but as a reflection of a stable interaction between the President in office and a military force not acting as a referee.

This study found that participants who defined their political affiliation as left-wing as well as those who do not have a clear opinion about politics seem to also have a predisposition to support authoritarian policies. In the case of left-wing affiliates, the legacy of being the target of right-wing authoritarian governments may make them susceptible to react aggressively towards the “undesirables” possibly may be the right-wing affiliates. This possibility needs to be addressed in further research. This study also suggests that Ecuadorians who lack interest in politics can negatively influence democratic values in Ecuadorians. Absence of political knowledge may trigger in participants a tendency to forego

democratic mechanisms and rely on the military or the implementation of *mano dura* policies to restore order.

This study also suggests that religious minorities are more prone to support military coups to combat crime as well as preferring a *mano dura* government. These findings suggest that regardless of Ecuador being a country that constitutionally guarantees freedom for professing religious beliefs, a possible sense of alienation for being a minority group may lead them to feel more uncertainty about their safety. Another implication for these findings may be that religious minorities do not have a wide and rich social network in higher positions of the government apparatus that will mobilize law-enforcement protection as quickly as necessary. This is not the case for Catholics and Protestants, who are the mainstream religious groups in the nation. This privileged position offers these groups a greater chance to mobilize political influence and resources as well as law-enforcement forces to protect their interests. This finding is corroborated by Grim and Finke (2011) who noted that in nations where religious freedoms are ensured and, there is not a single religion monopolizing privileges and authority from the state, the likelihood of the use of physical violence by groups defending the dominant religions to restrict religious minorities, considered cults or sects, increases.

I assert that future research needs to make a deeper inquiry into Ecuadorians' perceptions about fear of crime used to frame authoritarian policies. As mentioned in the methods section, this study only used four questions from LAPOP (2012) addressing this variable and, regardless of this limitation, the fear of crime index yielded a better predictor for *mano dura* policies. Future research should explore previous LAPOP waves and analyze if fear of crime and trust in the government apparatus scored higher or lower and, they were more influential on Ecuadorians' likelihood to choose *mano dura* policies in the past. As stated in the literature, Ecuador is in a transition period of relative political stability in

comparison to the early years of the 21st century. Hence, it may be that socioeconomic and political context since 2007 when President Correa took office has deterred in Ecuador the support for *mano dura*.

In summary, this study explores Ecuadorians' predisposition to support authoritarian policies to restore social order. Results provide evidence that fear of crime influences the likelihood to support highly punitive policies. These results should encourage Ecuadorian policymakers to promote education as a variable to reduce demands for authoritarian policies. Although education is not a panacea for solving all social problems, it may be regarded as an antidote for leaving behind a historic propensity to rely on the military to solve governability problems. In this sense, Ecuador may be able to start cementing a more solid and stable democracy for future generations.

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