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*Civilians and the Military in Latin America:  
The Absence of Incentives*

*Thomas C. Bruneau*

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that civil-military relations should be conceptualized not only in terms of democratic civilian control but also for effectiveness in implementing a spectrum of roles and missions. It also argues that achieving effectiveness requires institutional development as a necessary but not sufficient condition. Currently in Latin America, the focus in civil-military relations remains exclusively on civilian control. While there is a growing awareness of the need for analysis beyond asserting control over the armed forces, so far nobody has proposed or adopted a broader analytical framework. This article proposes such a framework, and employs it to analyze differences among four major South American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia. The explanation for the differences identified by use of the framework is found in the incentives of civilian elites in Chile and Colombia, who have recognized serious threats to national security and defense.

In comparison to other world regions that have experienced the emergence of new democracies in the third wave of democratization, there is a rich and abundant literature on civil-military relations in Latin America. While this literature, and more important, the policies it seeks to explain, is extremely good at describing and analyzing the achievement and exercise of democratic civilian control, until now it has sought to go no further. Democratic civilian control is viewed as the goal, in and of itself. Indeed, highly regarded scholars have explicitly argued that control is sufficient. David Pion-Berlin uses the term *management* of the military (Pion-Berlin 2005, 19).

Considering the background of misery and trauma caused by repressive military regimes in the majority of countries in the region, it is not surprising that there is such an emphasis on asserting and maintaining control over the armed forces. Yet the focus must be broader, and must include effectiveness, and not only in fighting wars but also across the broad spectrum of roles and missions in which Latin American security forces—including the armed forces, national police, and intelligence agencies—are currently engaged.

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In my work on comparative civil-military relations, I have developed a framework for analysis, and have applied it to new democracies as well as to the United States (Bruneau 2011). In this framework I define three necessary, but not sufficient, requirements for democratic civilian control, and three for effectiveness in achieving roles and missions. I have found that unless the three are fulfilled for both dimensions, control and effectiveness, it is not possible to achieve either.

Analysis must include whether a country's security forces meet the requirements to be prepared to engage in the roles and missions for which they are actually used. These roles and missions include preparing for territorial defense (Chile), preparing for or engaging in fighting insurgencies (Colombia and Peru), preparing for or engaging in combating terrorism (Colombia and Peru), engaging in peace support operations (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay), engaging in fighting organized crime and street gangs (Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico), and providing humanitarian assistance in the case of natural disasters (all countries in the region). The relevance and urgency of the fifth category is supported by results from the respected public opinion surveys conducted by *Latinobarómetro*, which demonstrate an unrelenting increase in the identification of *delincuencia/seguridad pública* as the most important problem of a country (*Latinobarómetro* 2011, 33 for the increase between 2007 and 2011 for the region, and 71 for current rate by country).

Analyzing national security and defense entails serious methodological challenges. Simply rating the success or failure of a country in performing any one of these roles and missions does not get us very far because, for example, a potential aggressor may avoid going to war with a country it perceives as too strong militarily to overcome, while in peacetime support operations and humanitarian assistance in a natural disaster, mitigation rather than "success" is the most that can be expected. I seek instead to analyze the requirements to conduct any of these activities.

With these caveats in mind, and in order to do research and empirical analysis, I posit three fundamental requirements for democratic civilian control: institutional capacity for controlling the armed forces, oversight to see that civilian direction is being followed, and reform of professional military education (PME) to modify the culture of an armed force in line with a civilian-led, democratic orientation. For the implementation of roles and missions, I posit the following three requirements: a plan or strategy that indicates what is intended to be achieved and how to achieve it, central institutions to implement the strategy (including interagency coordination, as there are multiple security agencies), and sufficient resources, both financial and human, to ensure implementation. My argument is that a country must have the institutional capacity of the first five requirements, and sufficient resources, or the armed forces will not be under democratic civilian control, or be effective, or neither.<sup>1</sup>

Some authors are beginning to expand analysis beyond the exclusive focus on civilian control, but so far, none has put forward a framework for analysis. Without such a framework, which will allow systematic comparisons, it will not be possible to describe, let alone explain, variations among countries. The one area of the world where the policies and analyses of civil-military relations in new democracies have

gone beyond control to include effectiveness in implementing roles and missions is Eastern and Central Europe. I therefore begin this article with a discussion of Europe, to demonstrate that the institutional development and study of civil-military relations in a new democracy can include more than control. I then apply my framework to compare both control over and effectiveness of the armed forces in four major countries in South America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia.

This comparison demonstrates significant differences among countries. I then attempt to explain the incentives that have led the democratically elected civilian elites to create the institutional bases for achieving effectiveness. Using this variable, the presence or absence of political incentives for civilians to go beyond control to enhance effectiveness, I elaborate on, and, to a certain extent, qualify the work of David Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas on “attention deficits,” in which they focus on incentives (Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas, 2007).

## THE EXPERIENCE OF EUROPE

There is a very respectable body of scholarly literature arguing that the new democracies in Europe are different from other new democracies. As Adam Przeworski wrote in 1991,

Geography is indeed the single reason to hope that Eastern European countries will follow the path to democracy and prosperity. There is no place in Europe today for nondemocratic politics; democratic institutions are the *sine qua non* for any country that seeks to become a member of this community. (Przeworski 1991, 190)

Specifically focusing on civil-military relations, Felipe Agüero provides insights into how the larger institutional framework of Europe influences civil-military relations. He discusses the importance of NATO membership several times, illustrated by the following quotation:

Spain’s incorporation into NATO provided an international impetus for centralization and civilianization of top defense structures. Also, the intense debate prior to the final incorporation helped to expand the participation of diverse civilian sectors in the definition of issues that would have otherwise been left exclusively to military quarters. (Agüero 1995, 203)

More recently, Narcís Serra, who was minister of defense in Spain during the most critical phase of the democratic transition and consolidation, 1982–91, has made two key points:

Spanish democracy became solidly rooted when Spain joined the European Community. On the other hand, membership of the Atlantic Alliance was what most influenced the professional profile of the military by providing reference points for modernization and giving anchorage to current and future reforms. (Serra 2010, 139)

I have written elsewhere about the impact of NATO on the democratic transition in Portugal from 1974 to 1994. I learned from interviews with officials at NATO in Brussels and the Department of Defense in Washington, as well as with Portuguese civilian officials and military officers in Lisbon, that membership in NATO and the desired membership in the European Economic Community (precursor to the European Union) were critical factors influencing the behavior of Portuguese political elites and military officers (Bruneau and Trinkunas 2008, 49–68). Currently, we can document similar influences in the newer NATO members, including Romania and Slovenia (Bruneau and Matei 2012, 158–66, 318–30).

In addition to NATO and the EU, the new democracies that join the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also commit themselves to a Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. In chapter 7 of the code, 15 articles concern the military, other security forces, intelligence agencies, and civil-military relations (OSCE 1994, 1–7).

There are several concrete incentives for political elites in Europe to focus on civil-military relations, including both control (especially in the EU and OSCE) and effectiveness (especially in NATO and its Partnership for Peace, PfP program) in the implementation of a spectrum of roles and missions. In most Eastern and Central European countries, NATO membership was popular among the population, if only to establish a link to the West and to minimize the influence of Russia. In some, including Spain, it was seen as a precursor to joining the EEC, with all of the funding that was promised. In a sense, the importance of NATO and the rest of the security architecture in Europe is a legacy of the past, of the Cold War, and current experiences of NATO members in Afghanistan and in the regime change in Libya raise serious questions about war-fighting viability in the future. But for the purposes of this article, the imposition of the security architecture, and the incentives that accompany it, has resulted in both democratic civilian control and effectiveness in implementing roles and missions in the newly democratic NATO and EU members.

The scholarly literature regarding civil-military relations reflects these realities concerning roles and missions, and includes analysis beyond control to effectiveness. In addition to Narcís Serra's excellent case study of the democratic transition and civil-military relations in Spain, there are several books and articles by British scholars. Among the best examples are the studies by Andrew Cottey et al. in, for example, "The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Democracy and Civil-Military Relations" (2002), in which they argue that the traditional civil-military literature, which they characterize as "distorted, narrowed, and sometimes confused by a conceptual focus on 'democratic control' of armed forces," must be reconceptualized (2002, 31). The title of one of Timothy Edmunds's many articles, "What Are Armed Forces For? The Changing Nature of Military Roles in Europe" (2006), nicely captures the changes, and the recognition among analysts that there is indeed change.

These authors have expanded the focus of civil-military relations studies beyond democratic control and territorial defense to include most areas of national security and defense and to encompass not only the armed forces but also national police forces and intelligence agencies. In sum, the institutional configuration of

civil-military relations in Europe, which is heavily determined by the extensive web of structures and processes imposed by NATO and NATO's PfP, the EU, and the OSCE, includes both democratic civilian control and effectiveness in implementing roles and missions. And the scholarly literature captures this reality.

## SLIGHT PROGRESS IN INSTITUTIONAL AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

In contrast with European developments, until very recently, both the institutional reality and the literature on civil-military relations in Latin America were limited to an exclusive focus on asserting democratic civilian control of the armed forces. There are, however, some recent indications of awareness that an analytical focus must extend beyond control to effectiveness. Chapters by two of the leading civilian experts on civil-military relations in Latin America, which appear in RESDAL's 2010 *Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean*, are indicative. In "The Hidden Appeal of Defence," Rut Diamint argues,

We do not want the armed forces of the past, but the ones we have got in the present seem never to be able to show their usefulness: either because they fail to control organized crime; or they never end up as entirely reliable political allies; or they do not provide a service that is needed for state development. (RESDAL 2010, 68)

In his chapter, "The Ministries of Defence and the Political Power," Juan Rial states: "At present, all processes are geared to solving problems of the predemocratic past, while, on the other hand, new problems are appearing for which there is not yet a precise formulation of the questions to be addressed and much the less, of course, their potential answers" (RESDAL 2010, 50).

This awareness of the need for a broader and more contemporary focus is also found in a recent publication edited by Alfred Stepan. He proposes to go beyond control and include effectiveness, while Felipe Agüero and Narcís Serra, who contribute chapters, insist that an analytical focus can no longer be exclusively on the armed forces but must also include the police and intelligence agencies (Stepan 2009; Agüero 2009; Serra 2009). They further argue that civil-military relations must be expanded as a concept to include effectiveness as well as control. While Agüero, Serra, and Stepan point in a promising direction, however, none of them, nor Diamint or Rial in the RESDAL atlas, shows how his or her broader conceptualization can be employed with empirical data. My goal here is to provide a framework to analyze both control and effectiveness, and to use it to gauge differences among Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia. I selected these four countries because they are important South American nations, have large militaries and diverse security forces, and are clearly consolidated democracies.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

As noted at the outset, in my framework for analysis I define three necessary requirements for democratic civilian control and three for effectiveness in achieving roles and missions. This is a set of minimal requirements, without which I believe neither control nor effectiveness can be achieved. There are several concerns in logic and methodology that I had to take into consideration in developing the framework. First is the difficulty of gaining access to reliable information, and the ability to discern what is real and what is rhetoric in documents on national security and defense. In the countries discussed in this article, I have enjoyed access for at least a decade to civilian officials and military officers, as well as academics and journalists. Second is the issue of roles and missions. Logically and empirically, it is not sufficient to focus only on traditional territorial defense and war fighting, since very few countries fight wars or are prepared to do so. Therefore, analysis must focus on whether a country's security forces meet the requirements to be prepared to engage in the roles and missions that they are in fact used for.

I posit three fundamental requirements for democratic civilian control: institutional capacity for controlling the armed forces, oversight to see that civilian direction is being followed, and reform of professional military education (PME) to modify the culture of an armed force in line with a civilian-led, democratic orientation. For achieving roles and missions, I posit the following three requirements: a plan or strategy that indicates what is intended to be achieved and how to achieve it, central institutions to implement the strategy (including interagency coordination, as there are always multiple security agencies), and sufficient resources, both financial and human, to ensure implementation. My argument is that a country must have the institutional capacity of the first five requirements, along with sufficient resources, or the armed forces will not be under democratic civilian control, or be effective, or neither. (The varying fulfillment of these requirements for nine NATO or PfP countries is illustrated in Bruneau and Matei 2012, 345).

In established democracies, including the United States and the newer democracies of Eastern and Central Europe, all six of these requirements can be identified and assessed, thanks in large part to the OSCE code of conduct, NATO and EU membership standards, or, in the case of countries such as Moldova, that do not aspire to NATO membership, thanks to an enhanced partnership with NATO via the PfP.

In Latin America, however, a comparable assessment is impossible to make, as no norms have been externally stipulated, let alone domestically institutionalized. The carrot-and-stick incentives that are found in Europe are missing in Latin America. The RESDAL atlas, for example, makes this clear by its virtual lack of attention to oversight, PME, and strategy. What I can do is analyze the resources and powers of civilian-led ministries of defense, which capture institutional capacity for both control and oversight in the control dimension and implementation in the effectiveness dimension. These, combined with PME and strategy, the latter for the effectiveness dimension, are necessary elements, but not of themselves sufficient, to guar-

antee civilian control and military effectiveness. The commitment of resources as a percentage of GDP is dealt with separately, as it is a critical but not an institutional capacity dimension.

The centrality of a ministry of defense (MOD) to control is widely appreciated, and is captured by Serra: “The creation of a ministry of defence is crucial in the process of reducing military prerogatives inasmuch as it is the key means for establishing the supremacy of civil society” (Serra 2010, 120). Agüero also describes the importance of the MOD for Spain’s democratic transition:

Critical to success [of reforms in civil-military relations] were the expanding formal prerogatives of a minister who had full support in Congress to pass legislation that would shape the major contours of reformed institutions for defense. The reorganization of the ministry and the creation of the Defense Staff unleashed functional dynamics through which the military-as-central defense structure helped advance the goals of the civilian leadership against the resistance of the military-as-institution. This centralizing impetus was aided by opportunities provided by the debate around, and integration into, NATO. (Agüero 1995, 214)

Serra writes with great authority about the MOD, which he regards as the central institution for military reform; which in turn, for him, includes both control and effectiveness.

Striking a balance between controlling the military and maintaining discipline on the one hand, and inspiring motivation and necessary collaboration in order to construct and apply a new framework of relationships on the other, is one of the most difficult challenges in a period of consolidation. (Serra 2010, 153)

Fortunately, there is good material on ministries of defense in Latin America by both individual researchers and institutions (e.g., RESDAL; Bruneau and Goetz 2006; Radseck 2005; Pion-Berlin 2009). There is also a current initiative, based largely in Argentina, to study Latin American MODs.

Interviews with officials in the four countries have given the author a reasonable awareness of reforms in PME in the region, and the presence or absence of documents on strategy is relatively easy to determine. PME is relevant because it can be seen as a way to change the military (or police and intelligence) culture. Although changing institutions, including the MOD, is relatively straightforward, it can take a generation to change a culture, whereby the military accepts and possibly respects civilian control. It must be emphasized that the discussion below should be taken in terms of “a work in progress.” In Argentina, the lack of activity, and therefore progress, in institutional development is clear. In Brazil, there is a current initiative to create a think tank in the MOD to produce analyses and engage civilians in policymaking in national security and defense. Although in Chile and Colombia much of the progress is very recent, the antecedents of this progress are clear, and I believe the trends will continue. Table 1 indicates the findings regarding MODs, PME, and strategy, through a ranking system described below.



Table 1. Institutional Requirements for Control and Effectiveness

	(1) Robust MOD	(2) PME Reform	(3) Strategy	Total
Argentina	1	2	0	3
Brazil	1	1	1	3
Chile	2	2	1	5
Colombia	3	2	2	7

Table 1 suggests that significant variations exist among the four countries in South America regarding the institutional requirements for control and effectiveness. In this context, the term *institutional* emphasizes that a real, functional system, not just words on paper, has been created to achieve either democratic civilian control or effectiveness, or both (Hall and Taylor 1996, 938). My goal here is to put on an empirical basis something that the researcher can identify as being present or not. The ratings are determined by the following:

1. For the ministry of defense, the ratings, from 0 to 3, express whether the ministry has a foundation in organic law or similar legal instrument, whether there is a career track for civilian professionals, and whether the MOD is staffed with knowledgeable civilians. In the absence of a solid legal foundation and knowledgeable civilians, it is hard to imagine how an MOD can command either respect or obedience from the armed forces and implement a strategy, should there be one.
2. For professional military education, the ratings, 0–2, show whether civilians have exerted their influence or control over military education and whether the PME is joint in orientation.
3. For strategy, the ratings, 0–3, show whether there is a national security or defense strategy, a mechanism to evaluate the achievement of stated goals, and a link between strategy and resources. Thus, the maximum score a country can receive in these three areas is 8.

## EXPLANATION OF THE RATINGS IN FOUR SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES

I believe that the variables presented above are sufficiently concrete to usefully describe and compare civil-military relations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the critical issue of resources—the percent of GDP a country devotes to its military—only Chile and Colombia devote a significant amount of GDP to defense. According to SIPRI, the percentages for 2010 were Argentina 0.9 percent, Brazil 1.6 percent, Chile 3.2 percent, and Colombia 3.6 percent (SIPRI 2012).

## Argentina

The ratings for Argentina in table 1 are 1, 2, and 0. The MOD receives a 1 because it has a legal basis in the 1988 Law on Defense, but little more. It is indicative of the overall challenge of reform in national security and defense in Argentina that the law that was passed in 1988 was not implemented until June 2006, by President Néstor Kirchner, in Decree Law 727/2006. He did so to strengthen the MOD, so that the minister could define defense policies, make appointments, promote military personnel, and begin to open the door for civilians in the MOD. The law also took powers away from the chiefs of the services and defined the powers of the joint staff.

While many civilians apparently are employed in the MOD, the agency actually offers no specific career track for them, nor are they knowledgeable professionals. The most acute insights into the actual functioning of the Argentine MOD come from material created by Germán Montenegro, who served as vice minister of defense between 2006 and 2010. He notes two main problems with democratic civilian control based on the MOD (Montenegro 2010). First, with some 700 employees, the MOD is the smallest of the ministries in Argentina, with responsibilities over 75,000 personnel in the armed forces. Furthermore, despite efforts by past and present civilian leaders in the MOD, there is no specialization whereby civilians can develop their expertise and make a career of it. The turnover among these civilians is tremendous, and every time I visit the MOD in Argentina, I confront a new group of mostly young civilians engaged in “on the job training.” Michael Radseck’s observation is still accurate for Argentina: “As everywhere in Latin America, Argentina lacks a career path for civil servants in the Defense Ministry such as would be important for establishing continuity of civilian expertise” (Radseck 2005, 190). I will later update this observation with regard to Chile and Colombia.

Argentina rates a 2 in PME reform. In an interview, Dra. Sabrina Frederick, subsecretary for education in the MOD, explained that her office was reorganizing military education, bringing it under civilian control, cutting down the number of educational institutions, and creating a joint senior war college, the *Escuela Superior de Guerra Conjunto* (Frederick 2009). In attempting to keep track of the changes, her plan appears to have been implemented, as I verified in visits in April 2010 and September 2012. In addition to the specific PME institutions, the MOD also has under its control the National Defense School, now headed by Germán Montenegro, which brings together both military officers and civilians for a program in strategy. The hope is that the civilians will ultimately find positions in the MOD. Overall, then, Argentina is reforming PME with the intention both to economize resources by consolidating schools and programs and ultimately to allow civilians to influence the content of education.

Argentina does not have a national security strategy. After much fanfare, with study groups and seminars involving international experts, the MOD finally completed a *Libro blanco de la defensa* in late 2011. While very impressive in its size (401 pages) and pictorial presentation, the document does not pretend to be a national

security or national defense strategy. It is rather something of a tourist guide to the Argentine defense establishment. And, as noted above, Argentina spends only 0.9 percent of GDP on defense.

In sum, while Argentina shows some emphasis on institutionalized control, with a total of three points out of a possible five, it puts minimal emphasis on effectiveness, with a score of 1 out of a possible 5 (MOD and strategy), compounded by minimal spending levels. The nominal rating for effectiveness is not surprising, as the Argentine military, in line with Decree Law 727/2006, limits the roles and missions of the armed forces to external defense against a state actor. Legally, then, the Argentine military is not designed to be effective in most currently imaginable roles and missions.

### **Brazil**

Brazil's ratings are 1, 1, and 1. The MOD was established 14 years after Brazil's democratic transition with the passage of Complementary Law No. 97 on June 9, 1999. A complementary law requires the support of both houses of the Brazilian Congress and then the signature of the president. Between its creation in 1999 and the appointment of Nelson Jobim as defense minister on July 25, 2007, the MOD was under weak and erratic leadership, and did not develop as an institution. Since the demission of Nelson Jobim by President Dilma Rousseff on August 4, 2011, the MOD has been headed by Ambassador Celso Amorim, who was foreign minister during the two Lula da Silva administrations, 2002–10. Ambassador Amorim is a highly regarded bureaucrat, but he has no background in defense and national security. Even under the relatively powerful Jobim, however, a civilian cadre of advisers was never established. The MOD offers no career track or the required *concurso* (public academic competition) to fill open positions, with the result that the role of civilians in the MOD cannot be enhanced. For these reasons, Brazil scores only 1 of a possible 3.

PME is recognized as high quality in Brazil, and is provided through an elaborate system at several levels. The three service academies concentrate on technical training; further professional training, as well as policy and strategy, are offered in the three war colleges; while a strategic level of education is available at the very traditional *Escola Superior da Guerra* (Higher War College), in which senior military officers mix with civilians. As civilian education has for decades been regulated rigorously by the Ministry of Education, for the past few years, civilian and military education has been approximated, in part due to the *Pró Defesa* program of funding for joint education and research. Absolutely no joint education exists, however; the idea is staunchly opposed by the senior leadership in all of the services, who will not allow their prerogatives in education diminished.

In December 2008, the MOD formulated and President Lula da Silva decreed the *Estratégia Nacional de Defesa*, or END (National Defense Strategy) (Brazil, Ministry of Defense 2008). In this category, therefore, Brazil receives a 1. However, because the END was created by decree and thus, according to the Brazilian legal-

administrative system, did not go through the Brazilian Congress, there is no implication that the congress funds it. To be linked to funding, it has to be passed as at least an ordinary law or a complementary law. In addition, the END does not include any reference to implementation beyond purely bureaucratic measures.

In terms of resources, 1.6 percent of Brazil's GDP was dedicated to national security and defense in 2010. Plans for the Brazilian navy to purchase new ships, an item highlighted in the END, were put on hold in 2011. Brazil has yet to decide on the next generation of supersonic fighters it will buy, despite discussions on this topic that have continued for at least a decade.

In sum, when it comes to building institutions in national security and defense, Brazilian policy is balanced and consistent: it scores 1 across all three dimensions. This is in line with the negotiated and careful approach Brazilians take in virtually all areas of national security and defense. They emphasize neither control nor effectiveness. In essence, the military is left alone to do what it does; there are no major disruptions or issues to confront; the relevant documents are not guiding or demanding; and the country contributes a minimum amount to maintain the armed forces and keep the equipment functioning.

## Chile

For Chile the ratings are 2, 2, and 1. The Chilean MOD has gradually taken on authority and competence, and is now developing institutionally. The legal basis was finally established, following a five-year process in the Chilean Congress, by the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the Ministry of Defense, in December 2010 (Law 20.424, 2010). Even before the law passed, four or five highly qualified civilian advisers had served as an "executive staff" to the minister of defense, thus fulfilling the second requirement for a functional MOD. Following from the December 2010 law is an organic law, which was approved by the *Contraloría*, for staffing the MOD. With the passing of the law, Chile is a 3.

PME also receives a 2. The quality of PME in Chile is outstanding. There are three service academies, three command and general staff colleges, and the *Academia Nacional de Estudios Políticos y Estratégicos* (ANEPE, National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies) for higher-ranking officers, mainly at the 0–6 (colonel) level, and civilians. Through the increasing role of the Ministry of Education in PME, the civilian authorities are gradually changing the culture of the military.<sup>3</sup> There are elements of jointness in the intermediate colleges, and clearly in ANEPE, which is under the MOD and has a civilian academic as vice director. ANEPE is also providing education in defense and security matters for civilians.

The *White Book* of 2010 (following more rudimentary versions of 1997 and 2002) can be considered a national defense strategy. For having a strategy, albeit one that is still not linked to resources, Chile receives a 1.

Chile commits 3.2 percent of GDP to national security and defense. In fact, the 1989 Organic Law of the Armed Forces stipulates that the defense budget may not fall below the absolute amount of 1989. It should be noted that debates are ongoing

in the Chilean Congress regarding the copper law (Chile, Camara de Diputados, 2012). The fact that the military still receives a percentage of the foreign earnings from copper exports, and that it is divided equally among the three services, is due to the politics of the civilians in the congress and not the putative power of the military.

In sum, Chile is relatively well advanced in developing the institutions for both democratic civilian control and effectiveness. Particularly significant is the increasing robustness of the MOD, its role in developing and implementing a national defense strategy, and the amount of resources committed to defense. Unlike Argentina or Brazil, Chile does have modern supersonic fighter aircraft (F-16, Block 50), modern frigates, and modern helicopters and tanks.

## Colombia

The scores for Colombia are 3, 2, and 2. I must admit that when I was doing research and technical advising in Colombia, from 2002 until 2008, I was cynical about progress in many of these dimensions. A team from the Center for Civil-Military Relations was engaged in a project for Minister of Defense Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón that required analyzing the MOD and making recommendations for improvement.<sup>4</sup> In a 2003 meeting, she volunteered, “Colombia has a civilian minister of defense but not a civilian Ministry of Defense” (Ramírez 2003). Progress was very slow, but finally, by 2011, institutional development had progressed tremendously.

The MOD rates a 3, which means that it meets all the requirements for a robust and functional MOD. The 1991 Constitution first stipulated the requirement for a civilian minister of defense. The 2003 Democratic Security and Defense Policy of President Alvaro Uribe strongly emphasizes a central role for the MOD in coordinating national security and defense to implement the government’s counterinsurgency policies. The civilians in the MOD, buttressed since the mid-2000s with two civilian vice ministers, have assumed increasingly larger roles in defining and implementing policy. In 2007 the MOD was further reorganized, and the salaries for civilians, which had previously been about two-thirds the salaries in other ministries (because the Colombian MOD was still assumed, even after the 1991 Constitution, to be staffed by military officers), were raised substantially, thereby permitting competent civilians to specialize in issues of national security and defense and to earn a decent salary. This is not possible in either Argentina or Brazil. Today the Colombian MOD includes four hundred civilians and six hundred military personnel, with the civilians taking the lead in policy.

PME in Colombia rates a 2. Thanks in large part to problems encountered fighting against the FARC, and to the huge infusion of U.S. funds and technical advice for that fight, there was wide awareness of serious weaknesses in Colombia’s PME. Consequently, from top to bottom, Colombian PME has been undergoing a major reform, including better content and instructors. Moreover, counterinsurgency operations made it obvious that the Colombian military would have to work jointly, including with the national police. Thus, in the Colombian War College,

where all of the selectees for flag and general ranks spend a year, the entire curriculum centers on jointness. Colombia is a U.S. Defense Institution Reform Initiative recipient, with the focus primarily on PME, in addition to further developing the MOD.

Colombia also meets two of the three requirements in strategy. The country indeed has a codified defense strategy, which was very much at the center of military policy during the latter seven years of the two Uribe administrations (2002–10). Furthermore, unlike most national security strategies, Colombia's 2003 policy includes explicit measures to track success in achieving the goals of the strategy. Although that strategy lapsed with Uribe's departure in mid-2010, his successor, Juan Manuel Santos, previously the minister of defense, is creating a new strategy through the MOD, which is now headed by Juan Carlos Pinzón, who had previously been a vice minister in that agency.

Colombia commits 3.6 percent of GDP to defense. It should be noted that not only does Colombia receive funds from the United States for its counterdrug and counterinsurgency programs, but through various taxes achieves a relatively high rate of investment in defense. During President Uribe's first term, the so-called war tax generated \$1 billion per year.

In sum, Colombia has developed an institutionally robust MOD, made major reforms in PME, developed and follows a strategy, and commits a significant sum of GDP toward national security and defense.

## WHY CHILE AND COLOMBIA DIFFER

In seeking to explain why Chile and Colombia differ from Argentina and Brazil, and indeed from virtually all other Latin American countries, in terms of these variables, what stands out first is their shared emphasis on institutional development in national security and defense by the civilian political elites.

Chileans have felt threatened by their neighbors, particularly Bolivia and Peru, for reclaiming territorial gains made by Chile during wars in the nineteenth century. In 2008, Peru brought suit for conflicting territorial claims (really a large maritime zone) before the International Court of Justice in The Hague (International Court of Justice 2008). Meanwhile, the Peruvian and Chilean media keep the issue alive at home. The conflict with Bolivia, whose president, Evo Morales, also threatens to go to the International Court of Justice, is yet more pressing. A constitutional referendum passed on January 25, 2009 mandates that in 2014 the Bolivian president must abrogate the 1904 treaty between Bolivia and Chile recognizing the current borders. While there is some progress in confidence-building measures (CBMs) between Chile and Peru, with Bolivia there is much less progress, since the Bolivians want to maintain pressure on Chile regarding access to the Pacific Ocean.

Colombia's investments in institutional development, PME, and strategy formulation are due to nearly 50 years of fighting several leftist insurgencies, particularly the well-organized and well-funded (through drug money) FARC. The threat became particularly acute during the presidency of Ernesto Samper (1994–98),

when the country was decertified by the U.S. government for its weak antidrug policies. President Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) attempted negotiations with the FARC; by the end of his term of office, they were widely recognized as a failure. In 1998 and 1999, while ostensibly negotiating an end to the conflict, the FARC launched extensive attacks, persuading many analysts that it was a more capable armed force than the Colombian military (Serafino 2001, 10).

Alvaro Uribe was elected president on a “law and order” platform in the first round of voting in May 2002. On taking office on August 7, 2002, Uribe immediately declared a state of emergency and used the increased powers to impose a special tax that was allocated mainly for defense (Cope 2002, 1). President Uribe was easily re-elected on May 26, 2006 with 62 percent of the vote, 40 percent more than his nearest competitor, and left office in August 2010. His approval ratings were between 79 percent and 84 percent during his second term. Despite the traditional reticence of the Colombian civilian elite to become involved in issues of national security and defense, civilian officials finally perceived that the danger to the country was extremely serious, and instituted major reforms to several aspects of national security.

In short, Chile and Colombia have made much greater progress than their neighbors toward creating the institutional capacity for democratic control and effectiveness in the security and defense sector and in funding this sector, because civilian political elites in both countries perceive threats and have incentives to commit financial and political resources. At a minimum, the incentives are votes. It is significant that Michelle Bachelet of Chile and Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia were both elected president of their countries immediately on leaving their ministerial positions in the MOD. I can think of no similar experience in any other South American country. Elsewhere, the MOD is not a trampoline for political ascendancy, but rather a millstone perpetuating political irrelevance. Or, in popular terms, “defense does not produce votes.”

## THE STATUS QUO ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION

In the rest of Latin America, including Argentina and Brazil, there is no similar set of political incentives for civilian elites to commit resources, political and financial, to build institutions dealing with national security and defense. The primary reason for this lack of incentives was captured vividly in an interview with then–Brazilian minister of defense José Viegas Filho in March 2002. In response to the question, is Brazil immune to terrorism? he stated, “No one can say that they are immune to terrorism. But if you were to draw up a list of countries that are vulnerable to this problem, Brazil would certainly be in one of the lowest rankings. *Brazil has no enemies*. There is not one country in the world that hates us or is prejudiced against us” (*Correio Brasiliense* 2002, emphasis added).

Current corroboration for this point can be found in Brazil’s END, National Strategy of Defense, of 2008, which states in the introduction: “Brazil is a peaceful country, by tradition and conviction. It lives in peace with its neighbors.” And under “Guidelines”: “Presently, Brazil does not have any enemies” (END 2008, 8,

16). If it has no enemies, then why should the citizens vote for politicians who say they are going to use their political and financial resources for national security and defense when so many other demands exist in basic socioeconomic areas?

In most of the region, David Pion-Berlin's observation is fully accurate: political elites lack incentives to become involved in civil-military relations, including building institutions and committing resources, because they are satisfied with political management of the military (Pion-Berlin 2005, 31). While I fully agree with Pion-Berlin regarding the lack of incentives for civilian political elites to promote defense reform in most of the region, the situation fits the analogy of a broken clock being right twice a day. Chile and Colombia are extremely important anomalies, and any analysis must be able to incorporate their divergent experiences.

More generally for the region, as long as things remained peaceful, Latin American militaries did just fine, as they did not have to prove themselves. Today, however, as a very large and increasing percentage of the population identifies crime, delinquency, and public security as the most important problems facing their countries, and the security forces could conceivably assume the responsibility to deal with this huge problem, then civilians might see the need to respond. So far, however, the conceptualization of civil-military relations, limited as it is to democratic civilian control, constitutes an intellectual obstacle to this awareness. It is ironic that it is mainly traditional national security and defense challenges, as perceived in Chile and Colombia, that provide the motivation to build the necessary institutions to deal with the problems.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Narcís Serra is very critical of Latin American experiences in his book on civil-military relations in Spain (2010), in which he draws extensively on comparative case studies. While Serra's book is exemplary as a case study of civil-military relations, Spain had the advantage of joining NATO and the EEC, and also signed on to the OSCE Code of Ethics, the epitome of democratic and modern European jurisdiction. In addition, Serra makes a general point that he often repeats: "It must be understood that passing laws is not enough: one must be sure they are implemented before proceeding to the next measures." Specifically regarding civil-military relations, he states, "As with all aspects of military reform, what is difficult is not to legislate but to implement the letter and spirit of the new laws" (Serra 2010, 156, 192). But for the exceptions of Chile and Colombia, the security institutions in the region, and the policies they are supposed to implement, are mainly façades and, from my experience, are not taken seriously by civilian elites or even military officers. The question often arises if statements or supposed commitments in the areas of national security and defense are really serious at all.

A recent example will illustrate this point. In Brazil, the government issued the END, National Security Strategy, by decree in 2008. It focuses a great deal on defense of the "green" and "blue" Amazons. The former refers to the Amazon rain-



forest, and the latter is the maritime area where the major oil discoveries are located (END 2008, 10, 14). The strategy, however, has two problems. The first is the undeclared nature of the enemy; it is hard to imagine any other country coveting these areas enough to go to war, let alone have the capability to do so. The second problem, particularly regarding the blue Amazon, is the lack of funds for Brazilian naval vessels to do anything about defending this area, where the only imaginable "invader" would be the United States, and that in itself is unimaginable.

Other examples of the failure to ground policy and law in reality, so that they can in fact be implemented, can be found in virtually all countries in the region. No informed person can or, I believe, does take the rhetoric of military preparedness and reform in Latin America seriously. In my view, only in Chile and Colombia can the military and other security forces effectively respond to actual threats and challenges. Some other countries, including Brazil, could get there, but so far the civilian elites do not perceive sufficient political incentives to commit anything but the most minimal, largely formalistic resources.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Europe, primarily due to the conditions for entry into NATO and the EU, the institutional requirements for both democratic civilian control and achieving effectiveness in selected military roles and missions are present. The scholarly literature on civil-military relations in that region reflects the need to go beyond a focus on control and to include the requirements for also achieving effectiveness. In Latin America, there is an abundant literature on civil-military relations, but it is exclusively concerned with control. While there are some hints of a recent awareness of the need to expand this focus, there has been no framework for doing so.

In this article I have proposed a framework and illustrated it with data from four South American democracies. I demonstrate that there are indeed variations among countries and seek to explain the causes of the variations in terms of political incentives for the elites in Chile and Colombia. In all other Latin American countries, the incentives for the elites to commit resources, either political or financial, to increase military effectiveness are minimal. There are simply no votes in defense.

This argument is important to both the U.S. government and the recipients of several U.S. foreign assistance programs in national security and defense. In my view, the likelihood of these programs' success, beyond the nebulous justification of "engagement," is minimal. Without clear political incentives, it is hard to imagine why any country, aside from Chile and Colombia, would be interested in committing energy, political capital, and its own resources to the areas of national security and defense and civil-military relations.

## NOTES

1. For information on the author's bona fides for developing and applying this framework see <http://www.globalacademicprofessionals.com> Track Record
2. For an approach that follows the general conceptualization of this article but can be done with more generally readily available data, see Flisfisch and Robledo 2012.
3. The author participated, as an international member, on the Ministry of Education accreditation team for the Chilean Military Academy in October 2006. It was clear that one of the main goals in the process was to assert civilian control over military education and to ensure that this education was supportive of democracy.
4. The Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) is located at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Since 1994, CCMR has been conducting research, educating officers and civilian officials, and advising governments on democratization and civil-military relations in countries around the world.

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