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**A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations in the Andes?**

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Almost all countries in the Andean region have experienced increased civil-military conflict during the last decade. Venezuela has elected a former coup leader as president who has swiftly militarized public administration, placing over 170 active duty and retired military officers in senior ministerial and vice-ministerial positions (Machillanda 2001). Ecuador witnessed a coup d'état in January 2000 that led to the deposal of a legitimately elected president and his replacement by his vice-president (Weidner 2000). Peru led the region in this area, experiencing a civilian-led self-coup in 1992 by President Alberto Fujimori, and a transition to democracy from a deeply corrupt civilian semi-authoritarian regime in 2001. A thoroughly complicit military played a leading role in both events (Garcia Calderón 2001). Even Colombia, which has made substantial progress towards democratic control of the armed forces by establishing a civilian Ministry of Defense, has dealt with civil-military tensions over its internal conflict. Over 200 officers were recently dismissed for their suspected links to right wing paramilitary organizations. Even Bolivia, were former dictator, Gen. Hugo Banzer, had served as an elected president, has witnessed some military tension over internal conflicts between the state and indigenous communities over coca policy (Weidner 2000). Taken together, these events suggest that the Andean region may be experiencing a crisis in civil-military relations.

This trend towards increased civil-military conflict is troubling because many of these countries are either among the first to make transitions during the 'Third Wave' of democratization, such as Ecuador and Peru, or are successful holdovers from previous waves, such as Venezuela and Colombia. Furthermore, each of these states is experiencing civil-military conflict simultaneously at a time of declining public confidence in democracy in the region. Understanding roots of political instability and democratic deconsolidation in these cases would provide insights into the fate of regimes that transitioned later in the 'Third Wave.' In particular, these cases provide us an opportunity to examine the relationship between the nature of civil-military institutions and the larger question of democratic legitimacy.

Is the growing prominence of the armed forces in politics experienced by Andean countries a crisis that poses a threat to democratic stability in the region? If there is such a crisis, what are its sources? In this paper, I will argue that there is considerable evidence of a crisis in civil-military relations in the Andean region. There is also increasing evidence of a generalized crisis of democratic governance in the region. The intent of this paper is not to establish a definite causal link between the two crises in the Andean region, but rather to establish a research agenda designed to explore the relationship between the resurgent role of the armed forces in politics and democratic legitimacy.

In 2001, the notion of a Latin America in crisis do to conflicts over economic policy, globalization and social unrest seems on the verge of becoming conventional wisdom, yet it is important to note that crises in substantive outcomes under democratic governments do not lead to civil-military conflict in and of themselves. The case of Argentina today, perpetually teetering on the brink of a debt default, is illustrative, since the wave of labor strikes and political unrest this country has experienced has gone unmarred by any reference to military discontent. However, in the Andean region, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela have all experienced regime change in the last two years, albeit not all in direction of greater democracy. While these three countries used to rank well above the mean Freedom House score for Latin America during the 1980s, by 2000 they all trail the region on the basis of comparative freedom indices.<sup>1</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Calculation by author based on Freedom House 2001 index data. See [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org).

suggests that the deterioration of regime legitimacy in each of these cases has been particularly acute. Drawing on my previous work on democratic control of the armed forces, I also find considerable evidence that there has been an expansion of military jurisdictions over the state in all three cases, well beyond the boundaries that would indicate democratic civilian control of the armed forces.

The expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries is particularly worrisome as it becomes increasingly apparent that democratic regimes in the region are having great difficulty in finding successful development strategies for achieving stability and prosperity in a globalized world economy. This has undermined whatever legitimacy democratic regimes could derive from positive substantive outcomes, forcing them to rely on procedural legitimacy to justify their existence. In part, this is a result of state weakness and the consequent difficulty regime's face in finding and applying solutions to problems. However, exogenous shocks from the international system, in the form of the Mexican and Asian financial crises, have also contributed to the deterioration of regime legitimacy. In the cases of Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela, the deterioration of substantive outcomes has been compounded by the manipulation of the procedural bases of democracy, such as elections and constitutions, through questionable means.

In the final section of this paper, I explore possible links between the crisis in civil-military relations and democratic governance in the Andes. There is evidence that, despite the persistence of more or less democratic forms of government in each of these states for considerable lengths of time, they share a history of poorly articulated and under-institutionalized civil-military relations. The consequent blurring of policy jurisdictions between the armed forces and the civilian government have tempted both civilian politicians and senior military officers to use military forces to carry out obligations that the weak states of the region are otherwise unable to fulfill. There is also some evidence that the employment of the armed forces in these missions has politicized the officer corps, particularly in Venezuela and Ecuador. As a tentative conclusion, I argue that the general crisis of development in Latin America has undermined the both the substantive and procedural basis for the legitimacy of democracy in the region. The combination of the weakening democratic legitimacy and poorly institutionalized civil-military relations has led either to democratic breakdown, as in Peru in 1992 or in Ecuador in 2000, or re-equilibration, as may be the case in Venezuela today. This environment provides a rich opportunity for political entrepreneurs, civilian and military, to turn to increasingly authoritarian solutions to the regional crisis of legitimacy.

## IS THERE A CRISIS IN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE ANDES?

When does civil-military conflict pose a threat to democracy? During the last decade, political scientists have disagreed over whether third wave democracies in Latin America has experienced significant break with traditions of militarism and made a significant shift towards civilian control of the armed forces. Hunter has argued that the electoral dynamics inherent in democracy tend to lead politicians to seek control over defense resources so as to divert them to alternative programs to satisfy their constituencies (Hunter 1997). This suggests that even democracies that emerged from constrained modes of transition should experience a trend towards civilian control of the military. Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux have noted that during the latest period of democratization, military participation in internal security and civic action, has often occurred at the discretion of civilian politicians who have retained control of mission initiation and termination. This is important in that military participation in these roles has traditionally been perceived as evidence of continuing military autonomy and a precursor to

civil-military conflict (Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux 2000). These scholars are representative of a body of work that argues that trends in civil-military relations have improved in Latin America during the period of democratization, despite occasional bouts of conflict in the relationship.

Others have argued that there is considerable continuity in military prerogatives and thinking between the authoritarian and democratic periods. Loveman has noted that Latin American armed forces continue to perceive themselves as the supreme moderators and guardians in their countries, despite the onset of democracy. From this perspective, the armed forces in Latin America retain a high latent potential for intervention in politics (Loveman 1999). McSherry has noted that few Latin American countries have successfully prosecuted military officers for violations of human rights during the authoritarian governments of the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, she notes a substantial continuity in the military personnel in the intelligence and internal security communities. From this, she concludes that Latin American armed forces continue to pose a substantial threat to both the quality and persistence of democracy (McSherry 1997). From the Loveman and McSherry perspective, episodes of civil-military conflict are both signals of the continued military autonomy and opportunities for them to exercise their permanent interest in manipulating politics in their countries.

The key distinction between these two perspectives is the old chestnut of civil-military relations: ‘who governs?’ If civilian elected officials retain the institutional authority to set defense policy, monitor its execution, and punish the armed forces if they shirk, then civil-military conflict is less likely to threaten democracy. However, if civilians lack the institutional mechanisms to exercise authority, then the internal composition of the armed forces and their mental map of their role in the state become critical because the survival of democratic regime depends on the ability of the armed forces to self-regulate.

In my own work, I focus on the jurisdictional boundaries between civilian and military authorities in the state to explore the question of ‘who governs?’ I define the jurisdictional boundaries of civilian and military authority within the state by examining question of who makes policy in each of four areas: defense, internal security, public policy (including civic action), and state leadership selection. I concur with Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux that expanded military participation in state activities is less threatening in so far as civilians retain the prerogative to set policy and monitor its implementation. Thus, the key to understanding whether civil-military conflict in the Andes constitutes a crisis is to examine the direction in which civil-military jurisdictional boundaries are headed. Contracting military jurisdictional boundaries would suggest that civilians are extending their policy making authority over the state, making increased military participation in policy implementation largely irrelevant. A significant expansion of military boundaries would suggest the reverse, raising the specter of civil-military conflict as civilian politicians and military officers clash over policy-making prerogatives (Trinkunas 2000). Furthermore, the expansion of military jurisdiction inevitably undermines the quality of democracy by robbing elected officials of their power to make decisions about state policy that are compatible with their constituent’s desires.

In this section, I compare the jurisdictional boundaries of Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela in 1990, a time when all of them had already experienced at least two successive elected civilian administrations and a peaceful transfer of power between opposition parties<sup>2</sup>, and in 2000, the period when growing civil-military conflict indicated a potential crisis that threatened

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<sup>2</sup> There is still considerable debate over what are appropriate indicators of democratic consolidation, but two post transitional elections and a peaceful transfer of power between opposition parties are two of the indicators widely cited as indicating consolidation.

democracy. I focus on four key areas for civil-military relations: external defense, internal security, public policy and state leadership selection. In the following figures, I depict the jurisdictional boundaries in each country, showing 'who governs' in each of the four arenas.

**(Insert Figure 1 here)**

In 1990, Venezuela had maintained a record of three decades of democratic rule and stable civil-military relations, but it stood on the cusp of a civil-military crisis that most caught most observers by surprise. During the 1970s and 1980s, civilian politicians maintained complete control over state leadership selection and public policy. Venezuela's status as an oil exporting country had provided state leaders with ample revenues until the 1980s, some portion of which was used to build up the military. This funding had enabled Venezuela's armed forces to achieve a high level of professionalism. However, in the face of financial and economic crisis of the 1980s, newly elected president Carlos Andrés Pérez applied neoliberal policies that restricted state spending in 1989. Since the overall size of the defense budget was entirely controlled by civilians, the armed forces suffered from reduced spending and military salaries badly lagged inflation. The armed forces maintained a largely latent role in internal security, although one branch, the Guardia Nacional, acted as a militarized gendarmerie with a substantial role in border and rural security. The armed forces as a whole had been involved in the repression of the massive 1989 'Caracazo' riots which resulted in several hundred civilian casualties. However, they had acted strictly at the behest of civilian politicians only after police forces were overwhelmed, and civilians controlled mission initiation and termination. This mixed picture provides the basis for coding Venezuelan internal security jurisdictional boundaries as 'shared' (at worst) in figure one.

The area where the Venezuela armed forces exhibited the greatest autonomy was in their defense role. Institutionally, the armed forces were administered by a military-led Ministry of Defense. Military doctrine and education were largely in the hands of the armed forces. In fact, the only area where civilians actually played a role in the composition of the armed forces was in the personnel promotion process, where higher ranking officers needed the approval of the legislature and the president. Overall, this meant that the Venezuelan armed forces had considerable autonomy in defense policy, for which reason I have coded this jurisdiction as 'military dominant' in figure one. Taken together, Venezuela had achieved a considerable degree of civilian authority over the armed forces by 1990, but as the 1992 coup attempts would later show, even the relatively limited range of autonomy the armed forces had enjoyed had provided a secure breeding ground for coup plots (Trinkunas 2000).

In Peru, civil-military jurisdictional boundaries had swung widely during the 1980s as a result of a serious internal security crisis, but the armed forces had always retained considerable autonomy since the transition to democracy in 1980. The first elected leader of the democratic period, President Belaunde Terry (1980-5), allowed military prerogatives to remain more or less intact during his term of office. President Alan Garcia initially made some attempts to rein in the armed forces, especially on the issue of human rights, but his authority over the armed forces declined rapidly as the Sendero Luminoso Maoist insurgency gained ground. When combined with the deterioration of the economy under his heterodox adjustment policies, the result was a substantial crisis in legitimacy that provided an opening for a political outsider, Alberto Fujimori, to win the 1990 presidential election.

The one area in which the two democratic administrations of the 1980s successfully excluded the armed forces was from state leadership selection. The fact that Alan Garcia, a leader of the APRA party, served as president despite the long standing mutual enmity between

the military and APRA, is evidence of this achievement. Initially, public policy was an area from which the armed forces were largely excluded. Both the Belaunde Terry and Alan Garcia administrations also initially restricted the counter-insurgency and internal security efforts of the armed forces, allowing greater scope for independent police action. Nevertheless, external defense remained a largely military controlled arena. The armed forces retained control over the Ministry of Defense, and other mechanisms for civilian control, such as the legislature and the judiciary, failed to provide adequate monitoring of military operations. Even President Garcia's efforts to punish human rights abuses committed during his administration ground to a halt by the end of his term, giving way before the increasing institutional importance of the armed forces in the state as a result of the counter-insurgency war (Hunter 1997; McClintock 1998, 139-150).

Among the three countries discussed here, it is clear that Ecuadorean democratizers were most attached to a policy of accommodation towards the armed forces after the transition in 1978. Civilian politicians did not challenge the substantial number of prerogatives within the political and economic system that the armed forces had accumulated during the prior authoritarian regime. During the 1980s, there were occasional bouts of civil-military conflict, including the temporary kidnapping of the civilian president by Air Force officers in the mid-1980s. As Fitch point out, civilian elected officials had few mechanisms for overseeing the defense sector, and they generally allowed the armed forces to operate relatively autonomously. This autonomy was reinforced by the Ecuadorean armed forces legally mandated access to a percentage of the state's oil revenues. Not only does this prevent the Ecuadorean government from using the legislatively appropriated budget to control military activities, but it also provided the armed forces with a considerable interest in government oil policy. The armed forces retained an interest in internal security, but the lack of large-scale insurgency during this period meant that this role remained latent within the political system. However, the weakness of the Ecuadorean state has also provided a rationale for a developmental mission for the armed forces. Military forces participate in civic action projects across the Amazon region of the country where they are often the only visible presence of the state (Fitch 1998: 75-105). Evidence suggests that the Ecuadorean armed forces retained a dominant role in defense issues during the 1980s, and extensive interests in internal security and public policy, as I have coded in figure one.

**(Insert figure two about here)**

Even though jurisdictional boundaries were by no means low in the 1980s, by the year 2000, they had expanded considerably in all three countries to such an extent that they indicated a potential for civil-military conflict threatening to democracy. In Venezuela, President Hugo Chavez, himself a former leader of a failed coup attempt, has increasingly militarized public administration. As of July 2001, over 176 active duty military officers serve in ministerial, vice ministerial and senior policy positions in government agencies unrelated to defense (Machillanda 2001). The armed forces also engage in extensive civic-action projects under the rubric of Plan Bolivar 2000. Despite the appointment of a civilian as minister of defense, this has not represented an advance in civilian control since the new minister is not in the chain of command, has no civilian staff to support him, and his offices are located at a considerable distance from the Ministry itself on the grounds of the former Air Force general headquarters. What little civilian oversight of the promotion process existed prior to the Chavez administration has ceased under the new 2000 constitution, which removes from the legislature the power to approve promotions and transfers this authority back to the armed forces themselves. Moreover, all state internal security, intelligence, and police agencies are led by either active duty or retired military officers. The result has been an increasing militarization of Venezuelan politics, and an

expansion of military jurisdiction over state activities, particularly in the area of public policy and state leadership (Trinkunas 2002).

Similarly, Ecuador has witnessed an expansion in military responsibilities from the already high levels of the 1980s. The most dramatic evidence of this is the coup against President Mahuad in January 2000, where a group of mid-ranking officers, allied with indigenous groups, successfully deposed the president. Their hold on power was brief once senior officers intervened to transfer power to Vice-president Naboja (Lucero 2001, 59-68). However, the military had already played a significant role in the removal of President Bucaram in 1998 on the grounds of insanity by acquiescing to his removal by the legislature and hosting the civilian negotiations over the transfer of power in military facilities (Bonilla 2001: 7-10). During the 1990s, the armed forces expanded their role in civic action programs in the Amazon region of Ecuador, where they were often the only visible presence of the state among indigenous communities (Fitch 2001, 62-67). The armed forces also retained the prerogative of receiving a fixed percentage of Ecuador's state oil revenues every year, providing them with considerable immunity from civilian oversight. Levels of military autonomy in internal security and external defense continued relatively unchanged as well, although the 1995 war with Peru and the peace process that followed generated some civil-military tension over the decision by President Ballén Durán to sign a peace treaty that many in the armed force disagreed with (Bonilla 2001: 8). Overall, the Ecuadorian armed forces played a more significant role in leadership selection in the late 1990s, adding to their already considerable autonomy in state activities (Fitch 1998: 152-153.). For this reason, I have coded for an expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries in Ecuador in Figure 2.

Peru stands at the cusp of a transformation of civil-military relations in 2001 with election of President Toledo, but it is too soon to tell whether the new administration will be able to reinstitutionalize the broken civil-military relations it inherited from President Fujimori. The 1990s witnessed both the expansion of military autonomy within the state and the expansion of uninstitutionalized and personalistic civilian control over the armed forces by Fujimori and his intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos.

The economic and internal security crisis Peru confronted when Alberto Fujimori came to power provided the rationale for an expanded military role in the state. Faced with a recalcitrant legislature and judiciary, he structured an armed forces high command to back a 'self-coup' to shut down the other branches of state power. Fujimori gave military commanders full authority over all government programs and function in emergency zones especially hard hit by the Sendero Luminoso insurgency. These zones of martial law eventually included up to 50% of the Peruvian population. Even after the defeat of the insurgency, the armed forces continued to hold power over emergency zones that held 30% of all Peruvians, and this provided the authority for the armed forces to intervene widely in policy (Kay 1999). Even outside these zones, the armed forces participated in the economy through their engineering commands, which competed with civilian businesses for contracts to build roads, maintain ships and repair aircraft.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the 1990s, Fujimori relied extensively on the armed forces to maintain power, and this led to bloated military jurisdictional boundaries.

However, Fujimori prevented this expansion of jurisdictional boundaries from threatening his authority by using his intelligence service to control the armed forces and society. Cashiered Army captain Vladimiro Montesinos slowly acquired visibility as Fujimori's intelligence advisor during the 1990s and eventually became chief of the Servicio de Inteligencia

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<sup>3</sup> Conversation with Peruvian officers in Army Logistics Command (CoLoGe), July 2001.



Nacional, whose power greatly expanded during this period. Montesinos took advantage of his position to ensure that officers that were either loyal or subject to blackmail controlled key positions in the military (Rospigliosi 2000). Moreover, the new Peruvian constitution transferred power over promotions from the armed forces to the office of the President, and Fujimori used this prerogative to ensure a loyal high command (Fitch 1998: 149-150). This ensured a high degree of personal control over the armed forces in Peru, but one that was both uninstitutionalized and thus unavailable to future leaders, and damaging to the professionalism of the armed forces. For this reason, I have coded a substantial degree of shared authority across the spectrum in Peruvian civil-military relations in figure two.

### Implications of Expanded Military Jurisdictional Boundaries

In any democracy, expanded military jurisdictional boundaries can lead to increased civil-military conflict as the armed forces increasingly become involved in policy debates and policy making in non-defense areas. During this process, they increasingly substitute the democratic decision-making process of the regime with military criteria and procedures that are necessarily less democratic due to the nature of the armed forces as an institution. The expansion of military jurisdiction becomes particularly problematic when it is not fixed in time and place because longer duration missions which provide officers with considerable autonomy eventually create career paths for cadres of officers with vested interests in defending the expanded jurisdiction that provide the *raison d'être* for their power.

The fact that military jurisdictional boundaries have expanded in Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela is highly problematic for the success of democracy in the region. It is already quite apparent that in Peru, the armed forces have supported undemocratic governments during the last decade, although that has changed with Fujimori's resignation and the election of Toledo in 2001. One of the main challenges facing President Toledo is how to shrink military jurisdictional boundaries, particularly in areas where the armed forces have vested economic interests. It is also obvious that the Ecuadorean armed forces have never stopped being a powerful interest group that civilian politicians must account for in their political calculations. They are literally able to make or break governments, which calls into question whether Ecuador can even be labeled a democracy. The armed forces are becoming increasingly powerful political players in Venezuela, and they have become one of the main constituencies of the Chávez administration. These expanded military jurisdictional boundaries indicate that civilian control of the armed forces is non-existent and even the nature of democracy in these countries can be questioned.

All of these countries transitioned to democracy early in the third wave, or even earlier in the case of Venezuela. The evidence that I have presented here suggests that they have not been able to craft a pattern of civil-military jurisdictions that is compatible with democratic civilian control.<sup>4</sup> The degree of military influence over the state in each of these cases is so expansive that it significantly constrains the policy-making authority of elected officials. For this reason, it is difficult to consider Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela democracies by other than minimalist definitions, although Peru appears to be reversing this trend under the new administration of President Toledo. The trend towards expanded military jurisdiction within the state is, in and of itself, evidence of a crisis in civil-military relations in these countries. The next section of this paper will examine evidence for a growing crisis in democracy in the Andean region that may

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<sup>4</sup> See Trinkunas 2000 for discussion of civilian control and examples of military jurisdictional boundaries compatible with such control.

provide both an explanation and cause for concern regarding the (re)expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries in these countries.

#### THE CRISIS IN DEMOCRACY IN THE ANDEAN REGION

In a recent article, “Is Latin America doomed to failure?”, Hakim points out that despite substantial political and economic reforms, Latin America has made little progress towards stability and economic prosperity (1999, 103-119). Similarly, the Journal of Democracy recently devoted an issue to what it termed ‘High Anxiety in the Andes,’ in which a number of authors explore the sources of political instability in the region. A recent edited volume from the Woodrow Wilson Center, Crisis in Democratic Governance in the Andes (2000), reflects this trend as well. This shared notion of a crisis of democracy in Latin America is based on the observation that by many measures, democratic regimes in the region have failed to deliver and have thus called their legitimacy into question and imperiled their stability.

Regime legitimacy is a difficult variable to measure since it rests on the perceptions of citizens about their government. Older interpretations of legitimacy focused on either tradition (Burke), or charismatic or rational-legal basis for authority (Weber). More contemporary interpretations of legitimacy in democratic regimes focus on the process by the breadth and depth of citizen participation, with the underlying assumption that greater participation is associated with higher levels of legitimacy. Yet as Crisp points out, the key concept is that legitimacy is what transforms compelled obedience by citizens into willing compliance with state directives (Crisp 1998, 21). Without this willing compliance, the cost of exercising authority increases considerably.

Theorists of democratization have focused on at least two different bases for citizens according legitimacy to the regime. Juan Linz has argued that legitimacy is based on the efficiency and efficacy of regimes, positing a relationship between these variables and successful governance (1978, 16-23). This is essentially a utilitarian basis for legitimacy, in so far as citizens support democracy because it is efficient and effective, and would presumably be prepared to jettison it in favor of other alternatives should it fail. From a rational choice perspective, Przeworski also notes that democracy can be a preferred regime based on purely utilitarian concerns (1991). In sum, the legitimacy of a democratic regime, or indeed of any regime, rests in part on its ability to deliver substantive outcomes that are desired by its citizens.

A second basis for the legitimacy of democracy arises from the conviction that it is the ‘least worst’ form of government, to paraphrase Winston Churchill. As O’Donnell and Schmitter argue, transitions to democracy often create new rules and institutions that garner the enduring support of political participants for the system. Karl also notes that contingent consent forms the basis for democratic governments, and rules and procedures developed during a transition help secure the consent of political elites by setting bounds on the uncertainty associated with democracy (Karl 1990: 1-23). From this perspective, legitimacy is based on the conviction that democracy is the best (or least worse) form of government. In other words, democracies are viewed as legitimate in so far as the procedures, rules and institutions for selecting governments and setting policy are followed by the participants in the political system.

The two views are entirely compatible, forming the basis for the observation that these dual sources of legitimacy are what allow democracies to survive external shocks that might have led to the collapse of an authoritarian regimes. However, as Linz would be the first to observe, the erosion of procedural legitimacy based on conviction is often caused by inefficient and inefficacious democratic regimes.

In this section, I will argue that there are serious signs that democratic legitimacy in Latin America has eroded on both substantive and procedural grounds. In many Latin American countries, democratic regimes have failed to deliver developmental goods that their citizens desire. Moreover, in the particular cases of Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela, institutional mechanisms associated with democratic government have been repeatedly violated, undermining the procedural basis for democracy. This has provided a fruitful environment in which civilian politicians and ambitious military officers can expand the jurisdictional boundaries of the armed forces to support their own projects.

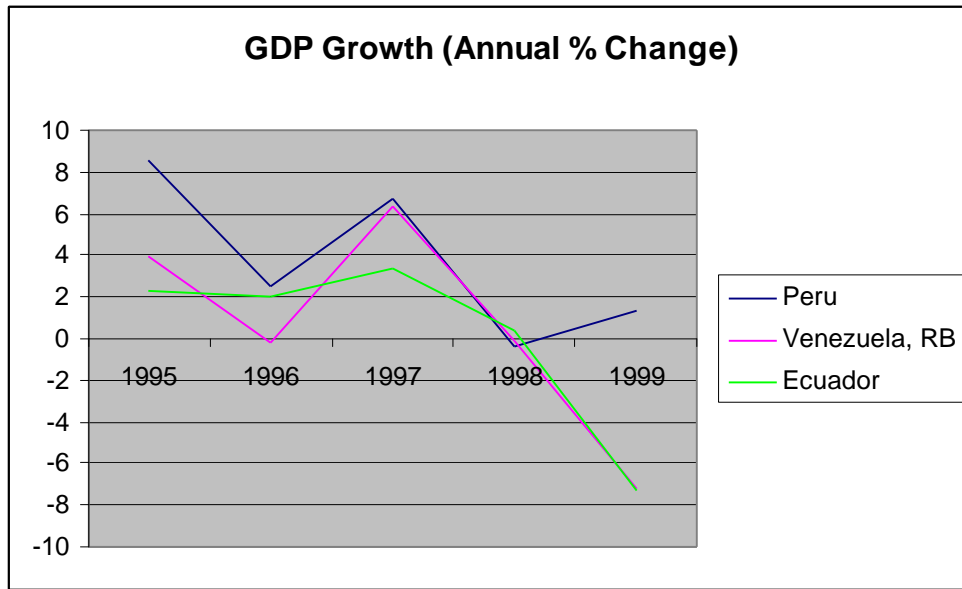
### What Have You Done For Me Lately?

Even though Latin American states have made some progress in improving health and education since the 1960s, sustained development remains elusive. Growth in per capita income has lagged behind that of other regions of the world, and average per capita income (in 1987 PPP dollars) has remained almost flat since the 1970s (IADB, 2-3). The growth that has occurred during the 1990s has been poorly distributed, and Latin America is often cited as one of the regions with the greatest income inequality in the world. As a result, poverty rates in many countries have declined only slightly (Korzeniewicz & Smith, 8-9). Moreover, periods of economic growth and recession alternate quickly compared to the rest of the world, and growth rates vary as much as four percent on average in a given year. This undermines public confidence and increases dissatisfaction with government policy (IADB 2001, 6).

Many Latin American countries have also performed poorly in terms of maintaining the rule of law, providing efficient government, and fighting corruption. Democratization has provided for greatly increased civil and political liberties. Unfortunately, it has also been associated with rising crime rates, and the median number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in Latin America more than twice that of any other region of the world. In many countries of the region, the judicial system seems to be unable to cope with the surge in crime (Hakim: 2-3). Similarly, Latin America fares poorly in comparison to the rest of the world in terms of rule of law and corruption indices (Transparency 2001). Taken together, it is clear that Latin America is experiencing a crisis in the public safety and the rule of law.

Although not consistent across all the elements compared, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela have not fared well in terms of sustaining development compared to the rest of Latin America, let alone the world. The fact that both Ecuador and Venezuela are major oil exporters has subjected their economies to different dynamics than that of Peru, but all of them have been subject to substantial volatility in their GDP. Peru and Ecuador have had among the most volatile GDP growth in Latin America during the 1960-1998 period. None of these countries has sustained particularly high rates of GDP growth during the 1958-98 period, with Ecuador barely exceeding 2% annual growth, and Venezuela achieving little over half a percent (IADB 5-6).

**Figure Three**



(Source: World Bank )

As World Bank data suggests, growth rates have been dropping in all three countries, even though they had reached quite high levels in Ecuador and Peru in 1995.

Similarly, Venezuelan and Ecuador rank poorly in terms of levels of crime, corruption, and rule of law (Transparency International 2001). In the wake of the Montesinos scandal, it is difficult to believe that the public would perceive Peru as being less corrupt than the mean in Latin America.

**Table One: Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, 2001**

Country	Rank
Ecuador	79
Peru	44
Venezuela	69
<b>Latin America Median Score</b>	<b>57 (of 91)</b>

(Source: Transparency International. All ranks out of 91 maximum, with lower ranks indicating less corruption.)

By comparison with other Latin American countries, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela tend to be worse off in terms of economic development and public safety. Only in education do Peru and Ecuador fare above the regional mean, although Venezuela does not share this distinction (IADB 2001: 13-14).

Dissatisfaction with substantive outcomes is clearly reflected in polling data available on Latin America. Recent Latinobarometro polls comparing public sentiment in 1995-6 and 2001 regarding the economic situation in Latin American countries shows a steady deterioration of confidence. Only Mexico and Venezuela showed improved confidence during this period, and

the Venezuelan case may be unusual insofar as 1995 was a year of financial crisis, while in 2001, the country had received substantial oil derived income during the previous two years. On the other hand, both public opinion in both Peru and Ecuador showed a marked decrease in confidence, with over 60% of respondents in both countries viewing their economic situation as bad or very bad in 2001. Similarly, public opinion regarding crime showed that 80% or more viewed the problems as getting worse in the 1998-2001 period, compared to 65% in 1995. Respondents also reported increases in the number of friends and families who were victims of crime (Economist 2001). Clearly, not only have Latin American states not been able to deliver improved substantive outcomes to their citizens, but these are well aware of the fact.

### Undermining the Procedural Basis for Democracy in the Andes

When faced with crisis, democracy's saving grace is that its legitimacy rests not only on outcomes but on the conviction that the procedural mechanisms associated with democracy, such as elections, legislatures, and the rule of law, are the best means to address them. Respect for the procedures, rules and institutions associated with democracy is unevenly distributed across Latin America. However, the constitutional regime installed as a result of the transition to democracy in many Latin American countries has continually operated without major interruptions. Even in countries facing severe economic and financial crises, such as Argentina in 2001, have not resorted to extra-constitutional solutions to solve them. This is very real achievement for many countries in the third wave of democratization in Latin America.

This respect for democratic procedures is not found in any of the three countries examined here, all of which have experienced considerable deviations from the procedural norms for democratic governance set out in their own constitutions. In Peru, President Fujimori, with the support of the armed forces, shut down the legislature and the judiciary in 1992. He took the opportunity to call for a constitutional convention that produced a new constitution that shifted the balance of power within the state in favor of the president. President Fujimori also manipulated the legislature and the judiciary to make possible a constitutionally questionable third run for the presidency in 2000, and according to international election observers, perpetrated a substantial degree of fraud in securing his victory (Conaghan, 2001). In Ecuador, one populist president has been removed by the legislature on the grounds of insanity and his successor was overthrown by the armed forces (Bonilla, 2001). The institutions of Venezuela's democratic regime were transformed or abandoned under the Chávez administration, who used constitutionally questionable referenda and elections to jettison the features of the ancien regime that he considered objectionable, included the recently elected legislature and the supreme court (Neuman and McCoy, 2001). In each case, politicians have shown very little regard for democratic procedures, and in the case of Venezuela in 1999 and Peru in 1992, they have received considerable public backing for their attacks on democratic institutions.

Recent polling data from Latinobarometro, one of the few high quality longitudinal studies that encompasses the region, suggests that democratic legitimacy is beginning to be questioned across the region.

Table Two

Doubting democrats												
Which of the following statements do you agree with most?												
%												
	Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government						In certain circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one					
	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000	2001	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000	2001
Argentina	76	71	75	73	71	58	11	15	15	16	16	21
Bolivia	na	64	66	55	62	54	na	17	16	22	13	17
Brazil	41	50	50	48	39	30	21	24	19	18	24	18
Chile	52	54	61	53	57	45	19	19	16	16	19	19
Colombia	na	60	69	55	50	36	na	20	13	17	23	16
Costa Rica	na	80	83	69	83	71	na	7	9	21	6	8
Ecuador	na	52	41	57	54	40	na	18	23	19	12	23
El Salvador	na	56	66	79	63	25	na	12	13	10	10	10
Guatemala	na	51	48	54	45	33	na	21	26	29	21	21
Honduras	na	42	63	57	64	57	na	14	17	9	15	8
Mexico	49	53	52	51	45	46	15	23	31	28	34	35
Nicaragua	na	59	68	72	64	43	na	14	19	9	6	22
Panama	na	75	71	71	62	34	na	10	10	8	18	23
Paraguay	52	59	44	51	48	35	20	26	42	36	39	43
Peru	52	63	60	63	64	62	23	13	16	12	13	12
Uruguay	80	80	86	80	84	79	8	9	7	9	9	10
Venezuela	60	62	64	60	61	57	21	19	17	25	24	20

Source: Latinobarometro \*Not including those who answered "it doesn't matter" and don't know

(Source: The Economist, Jul. 26 2001, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com) )

This poll addresses the essence of the procedural basis for democratic legitimacy, which is the conviction among citizens that democracy is the best form of government. The fact that this type of conviction has been declining among citizens in many countries is worrisome, particularly the most recent figures in 2001. Interestingly, Peru and Venezuela have maintained mid range scores on this question in spite of poor substantive outcomes in recent years, in all likelihood because of recent regime transitions that have been widely supported by citizens in these countries (Economist 2001).

**CONCLUSION: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CRISIS IN DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY AND THE CRISIS IN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

It is my intuition that the near simultaneity of the expansion of military jurisdiction and the crisis in democratic governance in Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela appears to be more than mere coincidence. After all, the armed forces have played a significant role in regime transition in all three countries, but almost always at the behest (or at least behind the figurehead) of civilian politicians. The armed forces in all three countries have also been called on to provide remedies for democratic governance, ranging from internal security to economic development. The armed forces do not hold direct power in any of these cases, but it is clear that their

jurisdiction within the state is incompatible with democratic rule. What is not clear is whether factors exogenous or endogenous to the civil-military relationship are driving the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries. This final section of this paper will examine two sets of possible explanations for the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries during a crisis of democratic legitimacy.

### Factors Exogenous to Civil-Military Relationship

It is increasingly apparent that part of the explanation for the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries lies in factors completely exogenous to the civil-military relationship that pull the armed forces into a more prominent role within the state. It seems likely that the crisis in democratic governance is in part responsible for this 'pull' into politics. The weakness of the state in Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela and the insecurity of their regimes in the face of political unrest and a crisis of legitimacy has provided their political leaders with strong incentives to pull the armed forces into more political roles as props for their governments.

The difficulty in governance faced by democratic regimes in Andean region results in part from the weakness of the non-military institutions that comprise their states. In Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela, state bureaucracies tend to be bloated, inefficient, and incapable of implementing government policies. This has meant that democratic regimes have great difficulty in delivering even minimal public goods to their citizens, such as the rule of law, public safety, or economic development. Moreover, the weakness of the state in these countries has meant that even when their governments do select strategies to provide these public goods, even fairly minimalist ones such as neoliberalism, they face great difficulty in sustaining these policies over time (Fukuyama and Marwah 2000).

The weakness of the state is also compounded by its uneven distribution across the national territory. Not only does this mean that certain rural social groups, such as indigenous communities in Peru and Ecuador, rarely have access to state services, but the state has great difficulty in monitoring its own territory. The absence of the state in many rural areas of Peru and Colombia has provided a safe space for insurgencies against democratic regimes to mature. The recent emergence of the CONAIE indigenous association in Ecuador as a significant political force is an example of how social movements can become organized to make demands of weak and unresponsive states. In the absence of the non-military institutions of the state in the Amazon, social movements and the armed forces stepped in to provide services, and observers have noted that many of the linkages between the indigenous movement and mid-ranking Ecuadorean officers were formed during cooperative civic action efforts in the 1990s (Walsh 2001: 173-179).

Essentially, the weakness of the state has made it difficult for democratic regimes to find and implement solutions to the ongoing governance crisis. Under these circumstances, there is a great temptation to use the armed forces to provide better substantive outcomes through civic action. In Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, the armed forces are one of the few institutions present across the national territory and capable of implementing government policy with some degree of efficiency. In the case of Venezuela under the current administration, it is quite clear that President Chavez is pursuing a deliberate strategy of militarizing public administration as a means to instill some discipline and hierarchy in the state bureaucracy.

Citizen dissatisfaction with democratic regimes, whether expressed as riots in Venezuela in 1989, in the form of the Sendero Luminoso insurgency in Peru, or through social movements such as CONAIE in Ecuador, may also lead civilian politicians to fear for the security of the

regime. Popular dissent and unrest create incentives for elected officials to cultivate the armed forces as a key political constituency in support of the regime and their administration. It is quite clear that President Fujimori in Peru, facing a substantial economic and internal security crisis in 1992, deliberately drew the armed forces into politics and made them a pillar of his administration in order to eliminate institutional and political opposition to his rule. Insofar as civilian politicians are able to successfully manipulate their armed forces, the temptation to use them to centralize power and provide regime security in the midst of crisis would seem quite strong. Where substantive outcomes are poor and procedural legitimacy is in question, the final bulwark in the defense of any regime is repression. The difference in Ecuador and Peru is that it is being carried out under the leadership of elected civilian officials.

Unlike previous crises of regime legitimacy in these countries, during the 1990s, the armed forces have not intervened as guardians but rather at the behest of civilian and military political entrepreneurs who seek to use the capabilities of the armed forces to achieve or hold onto power. This pattern fits events in Venezuela (1998) and Peru (1992) quite well, although in Ecuador there does appear to be a balance between military and indigenous political entrepreneurs, such as the ones that overthrew President Mahuad in January 2000, and more traditional military officers who retain a conception of their role as guardians and moderators and led the counter coup that brought Vice-President Naboia to power (Fitch 1998). In part, this emerging strategy of authoritarianism with a civilian face may be a response to an international community that is supportive of democracy and hostile of dictatorship, but unsure of how to assess the quality of democracy in troubled regimes. The United States political intervention in Ecuador during 2000 coup (Bonilla 2001), and the prominent role of the OAS in assessing the quality of elections in Peru during the same year (Leavitt 2001), indicate the extent to which the international community is willing to support democracy, but also its limits.

I would argue that there is not yet sufficient evidence to draw a direct linkage between the crisis in democratic governance in the region and the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries. However, much of the data I have presented here is strongly suggestive of such a relationship, and it suggests that further research into issues of regime insecurity and state strength (or weakness) in the region may form part of the explanation for the crisis in civil-military relations in the Andes. In other words, the source of the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries lies with elected officials pulling the military into expanded roles to compensate for weaknesses elsewhere within the state.

#### Factors Endogenous to the Civil-Military Relationship

A crisis in democratic governance does not necessarily lead to civil-military conflict, so long as democratic regimes have achieved civilian control of the armed forces. For example, even though substantive outcomes have deteriorated in Argentina, there is little sign of civil-military conflict (Trinkunas 2000). As Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux also point out, expansive military roles and missions are not necessarily corrosive to democracy as long as elected officials retain control over the initiation and termination of military participation in non-defense issues (Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux, 2000). Unfortunately, it appears that elected officials in Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela have dismantled what little civilian control of the armed forces they had achieved since their transitions to democracy. For this reason, I argue that the mission expansion that we have witnessed as a result of the crisis in governance is potentially threatening to democracy.



None of the countries in examined in this paper are noted for institutionalized civil-military relations or democratic control of the armed forces, even during the hey days of their democracies in the 1980s. Venezuela had achieved a limited form of civilian control during the 1958-1998 period, but it has been deliberately dismantled under the Chávez administration (Trinkunas 2002.) As Fitch notes, democratizers in Ecuador chose a strategy of accommodation vis a vis the armed forces following democratization in 1978, and figure one illustrates the substantial degree of military autonomy that existed in this country even during the 1980s. In Peru, the only civilian president to challenge military prerogatives was Alan Garcia (1985-1990), but even this effort collapsed under the weight of the economic and internal security crisis the country experienced during his administration (Fitch 1998). While Fujimori achieved some authority over the armed forces with the assistance of his intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, this control was uninstitutionalized, corrupt and incompatible with democracy or the rule of law (Rospigliosi). In a survey of Latin American Ministries of Defense, Fischel finds that Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela have among the most militarized and least democratic institutions for controlling their armed forces (Fischel 2000: 10). This evidence suggests that none of these countries has civilian institutions adequate to supervising military performance in non-defense missions. When civilian politicians increasingly pull the armed forces into additional roles within the state in the absence of institutions for monitoring military activities, the inevitable result is an expansion of military autonomy.

Another endogenous factor that has received a good deal of attention in the past lies in the area of military doctrines, ideologies and self-conception as to their role within the state. As Loveman points out, many Latin American militaries have mythologized their roles as guardians and protectors of the state in ways that justify their intervention against populist or radical civilian governments. In the cases of Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela, there is also an explicit role for the armed forces in national development that justifies their participation in civic action projects (Loveman, 269-278). In Peru, the internal security crisis caused by the Sendero Luminoso and Tupac Amaru insurgencies appears to have influenced the military's decision to back Fujimori in his self-coup against democracy in 1992. In Venezuela, developmentalist doctrines of security and mythologized visions of Venezuelan history centered on Simón Bolívar have strongly influenced the armed forces and, by extension, former army colonel and now president, Hugo Chavez (Trinkunas 2002). The links between indigenous movements and the Ecuadorean coup plotters in January 2000 also gave rise to concerns regarding the influence of anti-globalization nationalist doctrines in this country's armed forces (Weidner 2000: 4-7). Overall, my suspicion is that there is still not enough evidence to suggest that this factor plays a highly significant role in explaining the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries, although additional research may be necessary to confirm this.

#### An Agenda for Future Research on Civil-Military Relations in the Andes

Although the evidence presented in this paper is suggestive of a link between the crisis in democratic legitimacy and the expansion of civil-military relations, additional research is needed into several points in order to clarify the chain of causality. First, the relationship between state weakness, regime insecurity, and an expanded role for the military needs further explanation and evidence. In this respect, further analysis of the types, duration and supervision of domestic military missions, particularly those characterized by Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux as expansive, is needed. Also, the rationale for civilian (and military) political entrepreneurs for seeking out and relying on the armed forces as a constituency needs to be explored, particularly in light of regime

insecurity in the face of problems of democratic governance in the Andes. Similarly, the abdication of civilian politicians in all three countries of responsibility for institutionalizing civilian control over the military is curious given the history of authoritarian rule in the region. In particular, the role of Fujimori and Chávez in deliberately sabotaging institutionalized civil-military relations seems particularly counter-intuitive and worthy of further analysis. Finally, the the international community's strategy for supporting democracy in the region, and the counter strategy of elected civilian authoritarian rule in Peru (and possibly Venezuela) is another new phenomena that raises interesting questions. The crisis of democracy and the expansion of military jurisdictional boundaries in all three countries provide useful insights for understanding other cases in Latin America and globally that may be experiencing crises in democratic legitimacy and incipient military role expansion.

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