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7

Latin America's Increased Role in UN Peace Operations: Current Trends and a Note of Caution

Arturo C. Sotomayor

Latin America is an active participant in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKO). Blue helmets from South and Central America are currently deployed in various UN-sponsored missions around the world. This picture contrasts markedly from past decades, when military institutions were widely known for intervening in domestic affairs via coups, rather than for promoting human rights and democracy abroad. Historically, the region has been a recipient, not an exporter, of foreign troops. Throughout the 1990s, peacekeeping (PK) soldiers were deployed to pacify Central America and the Andes; to date, Central American and Andean blue helmets are pacifying regions within and beyond the Western Hemisphere. Hence, Latin America has now become an exporter of peace, not because instability and violence have diminished at home, but because governments across the region have gradually increased their troop commitment to UN peace efforts. At a time when military budgets in North America and Europe are in decline, Latin America's commitment to international security appears to be rising. This could signify a new era for regional security affairs, with Latin American states increasingly engaged in world politics and the armed forces exposed to globalizing trends.

This chapter thus raises two questions concerning the impact of this international role on the civil–military relationship within Latin America: What motivating factors explain Latin America's interest in PKO? What have been the effects of this external strategy on civil–military relations? I argue that the increased interest in PK stems directly from Latin America's recent experience with democratization, in which civil–military factors

played a crucial role. An emerging consensus in Latin America and the UN increasingly promotes PK participation as an efficient policy tool to reshape the armed forces by providing them with a mostly constructive role overseas, especially in a post-transition to democracy era. Recently, democratically elected statesmen have thus engaged the military in missions abroad to correspond with the changing regional security environment and to emphasize external military doctrines. This has led to a strong pattern of regional policy diffusion, in which PK participation has expanded as a wave, whereby neighboring states have adopted similar PK deployment patterns.

Democratization and civil–military imperatives thus provided the initial incentives for increased participation in external missions, but they have not determined the outcomes. In fact, with regards to the second question, I argue that PK has had mixed results, with many unintended consequences. Soldiers have benefited from the expansion of missions with increased monetary incentives and benefits, but military attitudes towards PKO vary substantially from country to country. Those involved in UN missions have increasingly adjusted their mutual defense policies and coordinated their military efforts, but this has inadvertently generated increased military activism in diplomatic affairs. Finally, PK has exposed soldiers to positive and negative international trends, ranging from increased cooperation with NGOs to serious allegations of sexual exploitation and human rights abuses in PKO. Hence, PK is a socializing tool, but its effectiveness for exposing soldiers to new, constructive, and progressive dynamics is not guaranteed. This in turn raises questions about civil–military relations' claims that civilians are more capable of efficiently controlling their armed forces when they are given missions overseas.

The chapter is divided into two sections. First, I discuss Latin America's increased role in UN peace missions by focusing on the domestic and regional demands for military action. I then analyze the unintended consequences of such actions, including the effects on soldiers, regional security cooperation, and military orientation.

Civil–Military Rationales and Neighborhood Effects on Latin American PK Contributions

During the Cold War era, Latin America played a mostly tangential role in UN PK trends. Few UN blue helmets were from the Latin American region, and no major UN peace operation ever took place in the Western Hemisphere between 1947 and 1990. Larger South American states, such as Brazil and Argentina, provided regular military observers for missions in the Middle East (Suez) and South Asia (Kashmir), but did little to finance or command them.¹

Furthermore, the wave of dictatorial and authoritarian regimes that spread across the region during 1970s and 1980s increased Latin America's isolation from major world trends, including PK. Military juntas in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Peru (among others) decided not to commit troops and eventually withdrew all their military observers from UN PKO. Even Brazil, Latin America's largest and perhaps most influential country in the UN system, reverted towards isolationism during the dictatorship era. By 1967, the Brazilian army abstained from sending troops to the UN, mostly to silence international criticism for a poor human rights record.²

Nevertheless, being a product of its time, PK changed once the Soviet Union collapsed and the wave of democratization (or third wave, as it is often known) swept the region. Since the 1990s, the UN system has witnessed a sea of change in its nature and purposes. Troop levels have increased considerably and more than half of the top twenty UN troop contributors now come from the Third or developing world.³

Interestingly, it is in the post-Cold War era that the Latin American region has become more actively engaged in UN PK affairs and is increasingly seen as trendsetter in troop recruitment processes. Comparatively speaking, Latin America is not the region with the largest troop deployment rate in the UN system to date; Asia and Africa, as a whole, deploy more than 70 percent of all UN military personnel in the field, while Latin America provides close to 9 percent of all blue helmets (see chart below). But these numbers must be put in perspective. South Asia has a feature that no other region possesses, namely a critical mass of soldiers, mostly infantrymen, who can be committed for missions overseas. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India are the top three UN troop-contributing countries; yet, their contribution represents only a small part of the Army's force at home, which, in the case of India, totals close to a million men. What is interesting about Latin America is that in spite of these force disparities, some South American states, including Uruguay and Brazil, are already ranked among the top fifteen troop contributors to UN missions (see Table 7.2, page 187). In 2000, Latin America barely contributed, with less than 3 percent of all UN troops. In less than a decade, it increased its troop contribution by more than eight percentage points and it is now the world's third largest regional UN troop contributor, after Asia and Africa (see Table 7.1, overleaf).

Uruguay stands out: over 24,335 of the country's soldiers have been involved in at least one UN PK mission in the past two decades. In relation to its population (less than four million people), there is one Uruguayan peacekeeper for every two hundred eighty citizens, making Uruguay the world's largest UN troop contributor per capita.

Furthermore, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has become the testing ground for a joint peacebuilding model, developed

by Latin American states, in which troops, development aid, and political support are mostly provided by South American states through joint consultation and regional institutional mechanisms. Indeed, South America contributes 48 percent of all UN troops in Haiti, with Brazil commanding the overall mission since 2004.⁴

Table 7.1 Troop Contributions to UN Peacekeeping by Region: 2000 and 2010

Region	2000	2010
Asia	33.90%	47.60%
Africa	26.60%	34.10%
Western Europe	16.60%	7%
Oceania	10.30%	0.30%
East Europe	8.50%	2%
Latin America and Caribbean	2.50%	8.90%
North America	1.60%	0.10%

Source: "Defence and National and International Community," in *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean* (RESDAL: Buenos Aires, 2011), p. 103.

Here is where the connection between civil–military relations and UN PK becomes relevant. Latin American states increased their troop commitment overseas while experiencing democratization processes at home. Evidence from this region locates the decision to engage in UN operations within civil–military relations, specifically viewing it as the result of doctrinal changes within the armed forces. The increasing trend in Latin America is thus to deploy troops overseas as a means to redesign military missions, especially during the post-transition to democracy era.⁵ This Latin American trend originated from a growing conventional wisdom in UN policy circles, which argues that PK engagement can help reform the armed forces by providing them with externally oriented roles that are more compatible with democratic practices. The implicit assumption is that PK "encourages democratization of the military mindset"⁶ and that it provides soldiers with an international outlook and new ideas about conflict prevention. PK may not only provide externally supported guarantees, but also socialize and persuade "military leaders that the role of the military is not to act as an internal police force, but rather to protect the state from outside forces."⁷ Ultimately, PK participation was introduced in Latin America as a mechanism to "make young officers more cosmopolitan, less nationalistic, and more resistant to calls for military 'salvation' via coup in times of crisis."⁸

This growing trend was first put in place by Argentina, in the early 1990s, following an international call for troops to help support the UN-sanctioned blockade against Iraq. The president of Argentina at the time, Carlos Saúl Menem, who had just pardoned the military and survived a coup attempt himself, promptly responded by deploying soldiers. The move changed the national debate on military affairs, as politicians and soldiers shifted their attention from military rebellion and trial pardons to UN missions abroad. Governmental and military motivations explain Argentina's sudden engagement in UN affairs. The government tried to use UN PK participation as a catalyst for greater international exposure and for military reform. According to Deborah Norden, PK offered a partial solution to two co-related problems: military insubordination and an ill-defined mission for the armed forces in the post-transition to democracy era.⁹ To avert future coups, the Menem administration carefully drafted a particular group of Army officers and non-commissioned officers to serve in multiple UN peace missions in the Former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Iraq–Kuwait, Central America, Cambodia, and Rwanda. Between 1992 and 1995, Argentina was ranked among the world's top ten UN troop providers.¹⁰ In exchange for their service abroad, soldiers received economic compensation, which included per diems and extra bonuses, additional training, and international recognition.

In 1997, Argentina assumed the military command of the UN PK Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and was eventually granted a major non-NATO ally status in recognition for its large contribution to UN PK.¹¹ However, military deployments overseas gradually decreased amidst a looming financial crisis that erupted in 2001–2002. Although Argentina is no longer among the top twenty UN troop contributors, it still maintains military units (roughly six hundred soldiers per month) in Cyprus and Haiti.

Argentina was the region's trendsetter, deploying troops to places where no other South American state had ever committed. Soon afterwards, a diffusion wave was triggered in the South American region, whereby neighboring states began adopting similar PK patterns to those implemented by the Menem administration. Following Argentina, Uruguay, which had undergone a transition to democracy in 1984 (only a year after its neighbor to the west), committed its first UN PK battalion in 1992. Amidst its own democratization process, Uruguay deployed more than 1,200 men to the UN Mission in Cambodia (UNTAC).¹² Other deployments followed suit, including the UN missions in Angola, Mozambique, and Congo. By 2000, PK deployments had been effectively institutionalized and rationalized in the military's organizational ethos. Not only did PK become the army's central mission, with a quarter of its soldiers performing several UN functions, it also provided the resources and economic benefits to subsidize national defense policies and salaries. PK became bureaucratized as the military deployed not only soldiers, but

was also heavily engaged in providing services – such as supplying drinkable and purified water – for several UN PKO. In absolute terms, Uruguay was the eighth largest UN troop contributor between 2000 and 2010.¹³ It was also Latin America's leading supplier of blue helmets. In 2011, Uruguay sustained three battalions in two concurrent missions, deploying more soldiers than neighboring Argentina and Brazil. Similar to Argentina, PK provided salary incentives, supplementary defense budgets, and sufficient international exposure at a time when internal missions (such as counterinsurgency and policing) were in decline.

Brazil was no exception to the rule, and it soon caught up with the PK-democratization wave that swept across South America. The return to civilian rule in 1985 brought Brazil back to UN politics. As the country democratized, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (also known as *Itamaraty*) increased its presence in the international organization. Democratization has played an important role in shaping Brazil's multilateral policy, and its return to PK affairs has largely been motivated by foreign and domestic policy imperatives. In contrast to Argentina and Uruguay, PK in Brazil has been conceived as a mechanism to achieve two related foreign policy goals, namely, to increase the country's visibility in the UN system, after years of isolation, and to encourage the internationalization of its political and military strategies.

Unlike Argentina and Uruguay – countries that deployed large military units to places far away from national security interests – Brazil took a much more gradual approach towards PK. It gradually increased its troop contribution by sending only a handful of observers to Portuguese-speaking nations in Africa and Asia (Mozambique, Angola, and East Timor) during the 1990s, and only later contributed with large contingents and units to the UN mission in Haiti.

Brazil became a leading UN troop contributor after committing more than 1,200 troops to stabilize the Caribbean nation of Haiti in 2004. This force appeared to be relatively small, but it had an important symbolic significance. In the space of six years (2004–2010), more than 6,000 Brazilian soldiers participated in MINUSTAH, making it Brazil's largest foreign military commitment since the UN mission in the Suez in the 1950s and World War II. Also, it is important to note that Brazil was given the general military command of a UN peace operation in Haiti, composed of roughly 7,000 soldiers and 1,600 police, half of whom came from Latin America. Moreover, this was the first time soldiers from the Brazilian armed forces were involved in a mission mandated under chapter seven of the UN Charter, which involves the authority to use force if necessary, about which *Itamaraty* had previously expressed reservations. Similarly, President Lula was deploying forces to take over from American and French forces in a Caribbean island that had few or no cultural, linguistic or political linkages to Brazil.¹⁴

Certainly, Brazil has used its PK contribution to publicize its commitment to international stability and to demonstrate that the country had sufficient leadership skills to be considered a so-called “global player” or “emerging power.”¹⁵ However, it has also sought to improve intra-bureaucratic coordination between soldiers and diplomats by forcing both establishments to work jointly in peacekeeping. Decision makers have thus come to realize that if Brazil is to increase its status as a “global player,” it needs to synchronize the messages and activities of its various bureaucracies, especially its most visible ministries. According to Brazilian experts, Brazil’s PK strategy is an attempt to gradually expose the armed forces to democracy and globalization.¹⁶ Citing a Brazilian geopolitics expert, *The Economist* claims, “Peacekeeping encourages the democratization of the military mindset. The old generation is all about war and security. In another generation we’ll have a new military, with an international outlook and new ideas about conflict prevention, civilian government and the rule of law.”¹⁷

Chile, once ruled by a dictator who despised the UN human rights regime, also bandwagoned the South American PK wave, shortly after its own gradual and difficult transition towards democracy in 1988. However, the Chilean military establishment was first resistant to engaging soldiers in UN peace operations and rejected invitations to participate in joint missions with Argentina during the early 1990s. It was not until 2000, after the house arrest and indictment of General Augusto Pinochet, that a new generation of senior military officers began to seriously assess and consider the benefits of UN PK participation.¹⁸ Similar to Brazil’s PK path, Chile took a very cautious approach, deploying only a handful of military observers to the UN mission in Cyprus, along with the Argentine contingent, and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, under President Michelle Bachelet (2004–2008) the country took a more active military role in UN operations. The UN Security Council initially authorized a three-month Multinational Interim Force in February of 2004 (the predecessor of MINUSTAH), comprised of US Marines; later, French, Canadian, and heavily armed Chilean troops joined the stabilization force.¹⁹ Subsequently, Chilean Ambassador Gabriel Valdés became UN Special Representative to Haiti, while the military command of the mission was given to Brazil.²⁰ Chile’s military role evolved over time from committing troops overseas to deploying soldiers for enforcement (or combat) operations authorized by the UN. Likewise, it took command and control of the strategic Haitian port of Cap-Haitien, where nearly five hundred Chilean soldiers have been stationed since 2005.²¹

The South American PK wave continues to evolve as the universe of cases keeps increasing, with Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru committing troops to MINUSTAH. Even former PK recipient states, including El Salvador and Guatemala, are now engaging their previously

Table 7.2 Latin American military contributions to UN PKO, 2010

UN Mission Country	Argentina	Brazil	Uruguay	Chile	Bolivia	Peru	Paraguay	El Salvador	Guatemala	Ecuador	Honduras
Western Sahara	3	10	1				2	5			12
Haiti	709	2308	1128	503	208	372	31		146	67	
Liberia		4			3	4	3	2		3	
Ivory Coast		7	2		3	3	10	3	5	1	
Congo DRC			1410		29	7	17		156		
Darfur					2						
Sudan		22			15	13	6	4	8	17	
East Timor		4									
Israel-Palestine	5			3							
Lebanon								52	3		
Nepal		6	2				6		1		
India-Pakistan			2	2							
Afghanistan			1								
Cyprus	266	1		15		2	14				
Total per month	983	2362	2546	523	260	401	89	66	319	88	12

Source: These numbers represent monthly average troop contributions as reported by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. See "Defence and National and International Community", *Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Buenos Aires: RESDAL 2011), p. 102.

authoritarian armies in UN missions. By the end of 2010, eleven Latin American countries had more than 7,000 soldiers in fourteen UN operations worldwide (see Figure 7.1).

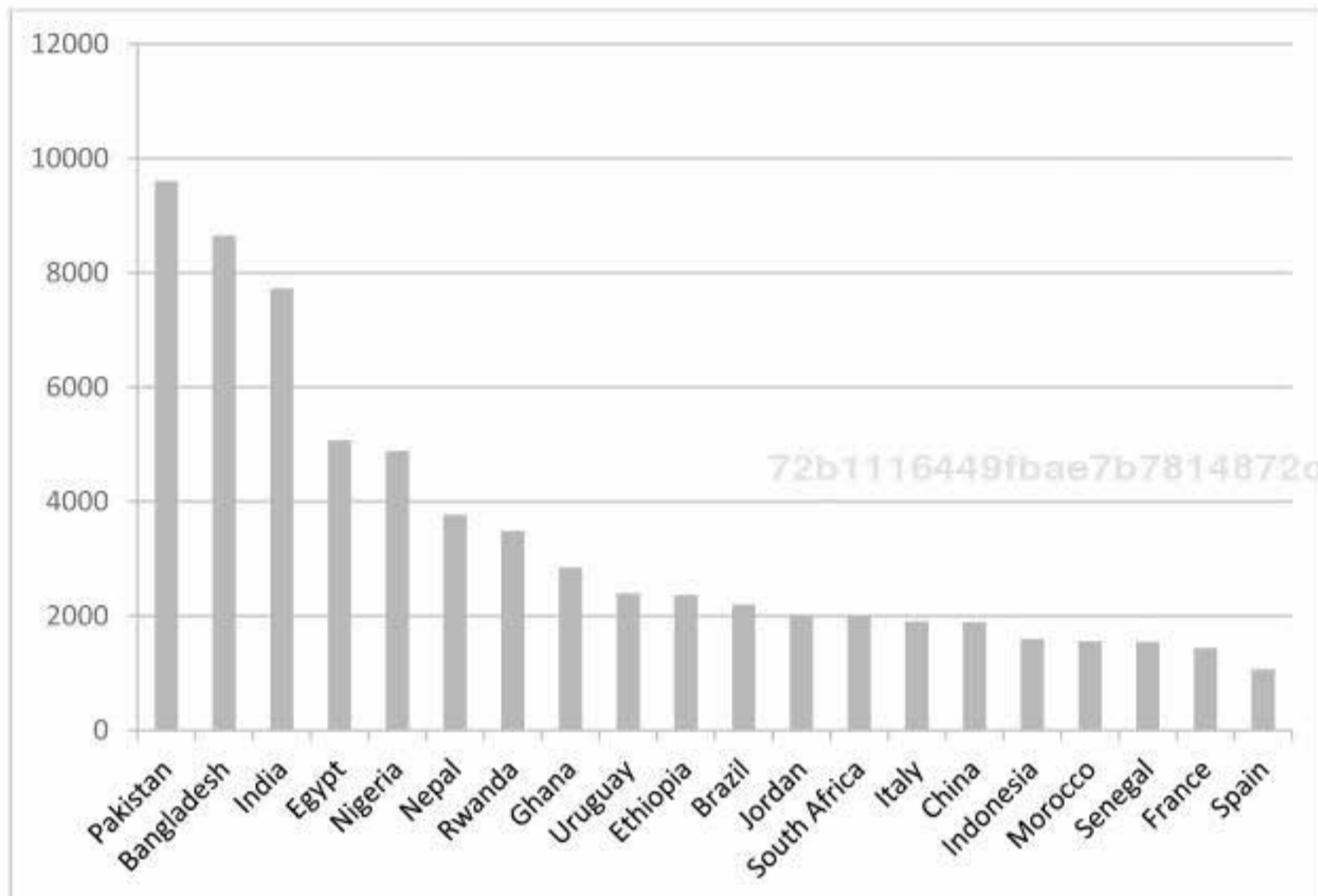


Figure 7.1 Centre on International Cooperation, *Global Peace Operations 2011*, p. 109.

Paradoxically, three Latin American states have been notoriously absent from the PK wave, namely Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela. These countries are major development aid donors in Haiti, but have yet to commit troops to UN operations. Cuba has been traditionally critical of PKO, often denouncing them as nothing less than veiled forms of imperialistic intervention.²² Cuba's position towards PKO, however, is not entirely different from the policies once held by previous South American authoritarian regimes, which often refrained from committing troops to the UN. One strand of research on political rationales for contributing to UN peace missions argues that democracies are more likely to cooperate with institutions, such as the UN, and even commit troops for PK to assist other failing democracies from collapsing and in order to establish peace among themselves.²³ However, an alternate hypothesis suggests that military institutions with prevailing national security doctrines (focused on political order and counterinsurgency) will be resistant to commit soldiers in support of PK precisely because commanders will have a preoccupation (if not an obsession) with national politics and economics, and its relationship with national security. In such a context, the military doctrine will place a premium on civilian opponents and preventing internal disorder

and warfare, rather than maintaining peace abroad.²⁴ Hence, Cuba's opposition to PK might be less motivated by the lack of democracy in the island and more influenced by the type of national security doctrine practiced by the army itself.

On the other hand, the absence of Mexican troops in UN operations is puzzling. Mexico is the world's tenth largest economic donor to the UN regular budget and Latin America's largest financial provider to the UN PK budget.²⁵ Mexican troops number close to 250,000, the region's largest after Brazil. Likewise, the country is a founding member of the UN system and its diplomats have occupied key positions within the organization. Still, Mexico has yet to commit a single soldier to UN peace efforts and has provided police forces to only one UN mission, El Salvador, in 1991. Research on Mexican civil–military relations suggests that military imperatives and preferences have prevented civilian officials from committing troops overseas.²⁶ Specifically, the army remains vehemently opposed to deploying soldiers abroad when its organizational imperatives remain focused on internal missions. The growing influence of drugs and cartels has had an impact on the armed forces. Increasingly, the military is being used to deter transnational organized crime within Mexican borders. In fact, thousands of soldiers were incorporated into the federal police force, and President Calderón deployed more than forty thousand troops across the country to fight drug cartels.²⁷ The Mexican army thus perceives peace operations as a diversion and distraction from its main mission (anti-drug campaigns), much to the chagrin of the diplomatic establishment, which would prefer some level of international commitment. Hence, doctrinal imperatives (a focus on drug trafficking, insurgency, and policing) and the armed forces' relative institutional autonomy help explain Mexico's deviant PK behavior.

72b1116449 Finally, Venezuela's PK policy also deviates from the regional standard. This South American state was once heavily engaged in UN peace operations in Central America during the early 1990s, becoming one of the region's largest troop-contributing states. The government of then President Carlos Andrés Pérez provided more than two hundred fifty peace observers to El Salvador and a full battalion (nearly eight hundred soldiers) to the UN mission in Nicaragua to demobilize 20,000 Contras. Under Hugo Chávez, however, Venezuela completely withdrew its peace observers from the UN system.²⁸

President Chávez has an active and controversial foreign policy, but has not used military means to achieve political goals abroad. Although he is a former army coronel, he is not known for recruiting troops for foreign policy campaigns. This stems from a long history of military distrust and lack of political support from some senior members of the armed forces.²⁹ Chávez himself was a victim of a military coup attempt in 2002, and his three administrations to date have effectively purged the army, reduced its

force, and created an alternative Bolivarian militia, which is strikingly similar to Cuba's Territorial Militia.³⁰ In other words, Venezuela's foreign policy has distanced itself from PKO in part because it does not trust the armed forces to conduct missions overseas. This, again, seems to suggest that civilian authorities facing political challenges will probably abstain from deploying troops or limit their PK commitments in order to focus their attention on domestic concerns.³¹ Other countries that have recently experienced political turmoil and coups, including Honduras and Paraguay, might follow this same path and commit fewer troops to future UN missions.

Therefore, the evidence from the Latin American cases suggests a correlation between political transitions (democratization or erosion of democracy) and PK contributions, in which civil-military factors have provided incentives as well as disincentives for participation in UN operations. But what has been the overall effect among those who have been involved in UN missions? PK commitments suggest the presence of second image reverse effects, in which international factors may affect the domestic structures of those states involved in international processes.³²

PK Participation and its Effects on Civil-Military Relations: A Mixed Bag of Results

While Latin America's involvement in UN PKO has received increasing attention from defense and UN policies communities, there is little research available about the effects of peace operations on civil-military relations. Nevertheless, the preliminary evidence from case studies indicates that such international engagements have had mixed results.³³ Three issue areas deserve analysis, namely, the effects on soldiers, regional cooperation, and mission orientation.

First, studies conducted on Argentine civil-military relations have demonstrated that participation in PK had an overall positive effect among military officers, especially at a time when public opinion towards the armed forces was at its historic low and when military discontent towards political leadership was at its highest.³⁴ PK diffused military discontent in Argentina after a tumultuous transition to democracy, in which the number of officers prosecuted by Argentine courts for human rights abuse represented about 20 percent of the country's active officer corps.³⁵ In this context, participation in UN operations provided monetary incentives for soldiers and, more importantly, a constructive role to engage a young cohort of officers who felt increasingly alienated from the political system. Interestingly, a survey among 6,607 army officers, conducted a decade after the first UN deployment, found that 45 percent of all those interviewed indicated that forming part of a PK mission was a priority for the

armed forces; 39 percent perceived such missions as important but not primary; and only 15 percent considered PK as an unimportant mission for the force; one percent expressed no opinion.³⁶ During the Menem administration, close to 40 percent of the army officer corps participated in at least one PK mission; hence, a large percentage of army soldiers were exposed to international missions during a key transitional period in Argentina. Ultimately, this experience contributed to internationalize the officer corps and reduced the incentives for future military rebellion.

However, the Argentine experience was not replicated elsewhere in the region. In contrast to Argentina, Venezuela's experience with UN peace missions in Central America generated wide military discontent, as such operations were broadly perceived as diversionary strategies designed by civilians to distract the attention of the armed forces. For instance, Carlos A. Romero found that Venezuelan soldiers who participated in the peace operation in Nicaragua (ONUCA) became increasingly discontented with the mission and blamed their own political leadership for the UN failures. In fact, PK deteriorated civil–military relations, especially when many army officers were already unhappy with the way President Pérez was managing political affairs in Venezuela (all while assuming a political leadership role abroad). Romero then found that many of the soldiers who had participated in the army's uprising and coup attempt of 1992, led by Hugo Chávez, had in fact just returned from PK assignments in Honduras and Nicaragua.³⁷ In this case, PK did not make young officers more cosmopolitan, less nationalistic, or less resistant to coups in times of crisis. These extreme results suggest variation in PK outcomes and raise questions about the alleged positive impact of international factors on civil–military relations.

Second, MINUSTAH has generated increased interest in regional security cooperation in South America. Although the region is still far from the security community model developed in Europe, there is substantial evidence of increased regional policy coordination. Certainly, this is not the first time we have witnessed Latin American solidarity and cooperation in PK issues. The pacification of Central America in the 1990s and the Ecuador-Peru reconciliation effort of 1998 generated plenty of regional coordination efforts involving regional powers (Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and Mexico), organizations, ad hoc groups (the Contadora group, Esquipulas process, and the Rio Group), as well as troop commitments from a variety of Latin American countries.³⁸ However, diplomatic agents mostly led the peace processes in Central America and Ecuador-Peru. Conversely, the UN mission in Haiti involves the armed forces as the principal agent, in which the military is largely responsible for the success and failure of the mission.

For instance, PK has enabled the Argentine and Chilean armed forces to identify common interests. Their involvement in Haiti eventually led to

the creation of the Argentine-Chilean bi-national force for peace operations, known as Cruz del Sur (Southern Cross). In this framework, two former regional military foes now conduct joint training exercises for PKO. According to Rut Diamint, "Cruz del Sur . . . opened the prospect of further defense cooperation and helped to definitely end mutual conflict scenarios . . . Argentina and Chile's contribution was not seen as a selfless service to global peace, but as an unexpected and inexplicable initiative by two countries that had hitherto played antagonist roles within the DPKO [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations]."³⁹ As a result, Chilean military officers are now embedded within the Argentine contingent in the UN mission in Cyprus, while blue helmets from Argentina are incorporated into Chile's PK unit in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Other similar experiences have been replicated across the region. In fact, Paraguayan troops are trained by and embedded with Brazilian peacekeepers in Port-au-Prince.

Furthermore, the PK experience in Haiti motivated South American leaders to find means to better coordinate their joint military efforts in the Caribbean. Argentina, Brazil and Chile, or ABC, as they are sometimes referred to, informally coordinated the military aspects of MINUSTAH. Eventually, the group was formalized into the 2×3 coordination mechanism, which regularly gathers two deputy ministries (foreign affairs and defense) from its three member states ($2 \times ABC = 2 \times 3$). Since 2004, the ABC has expanded into the ABC+U (U for Uruguay) and the so-called 2×9 (ABC+ Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay).⁴⁰ The emerging policy convergence and defense coordination amongst South American peacekeepers have led scholars to believe that the region has now become an exporter of peace, which in part reflects upon their very own national experience with dictatorships and democracy.⁴¹

Similarly, there has been a proliferation of PK training centers, whereby almost every Latin American country involved in peace operations has now established a formal structure to prepare and train blue helmets. This has also increased military contacts leading to the creation of the Latin American Association of PK Training Centers (ALCOPAZ), which includes Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Through this mechanism, Latin American soldiers meet every six months to exchange knowledge, lessons learned, and discuss how to better prepare peacekeepers for missions such as MINUSTAH. Recently, Argentina was selected by the UN DPKO to develop a nationwide pilot plan to prepare and train the first cadre of female UN force commanders.⁴²

The unusual high levels of military cooperation eventually led Brazil to convene the defense ministers of the region to a meeting in Brasilia in 2008 to create the Defense Council of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). The Council included the nine South American

states involved in MINUSTAH and had the explicit purpose of strengthening regional defense and military cooperation.⁴³ Many saw this as a Brazilian attempt to establish a successor institution for the Inter-American system and a means to exclude Washington from the regional decision-making process. José Miguel Insulza, the Chilean Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), even declared that it was “completely wrong” that the OAS had been excluded from the dialogue.⁴⁴ Together, these initiatives instituted what might be termed as military diplomacy in South America, in which international security coordination efforts were put in place by the region’s defense and military establishments.

Without a doubt, these joint ventures have fostered regional military cooperation; however, it is unclear whether they have improved civil–military relations. With the mere exception of Argentina (the only country that has effectively civilianized its defense establishment), PK has evolved into an essentially military enterprise. South America’s contribution to peace operations is almost exclusively composed of troops and military observers; the region provides very limited support with UN police and civilian personnel. Moreover, as Rut Diamint argues in her chapter contribution to this book, in most South American countries, the process of recruitment, training, doctrine, and decision making is often delegated to service commanders (mostly the army), who in turn implement policies with relative institutional autonomy. The defense ministries, which are staffed mostly by military personnel, act as mere political managers and logistical administrators of PK policies, with no relevant policy leverage on educational, training, or doctrinal matters.⁴⁵

Civilian input in the decision making process is marginal at best, often led by the executive branches, in direct consultation with military service commanders. Legislators play a secondary role in authorizing troop deployments and remain mostly uninformed about current PK trends.⁴⁶ Again, with the exception of Argentina, peace missions have neither altered the balance between military agents and civilian principals, nor have they increased civilian leverage over defense matters. Moreover, PK has actually increased the so-called “civilian attention deficit”⁴⁷ as active military officers are, de facto, the only field specialists on peace support operations. Civilian experts on peacebuilding are scarce or affiliated to military institutions. Not surprisingly, few academic civilian institutions in Latin America offer specialized courses on peacebuilding or humanitarian operations. By contrast, military academies across Latin America organize conferences and seminars on peace missions, while their PK training centers cater to journalists and even graduate students with specialized courses and certificate programs on UN peace operations.⁴⁸

Although an increased number of women have been involved in UN missions, a recent report by RESDAL indicated that Latin America’s

participation in PK continues to be a predominantly male-dominated endeavor.⁴⁹ This in spite of the fact that former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet was recently appointed as the Women Executive Director for the UN system, who is directly responsible for monitoring and improving gender relations in UN-sponsored peace operations.

Furthermore, PK has become a niche for military entrepreneurship, in which officers deployed to UN missions can more than double their regular salaries, military services find ways to increase military budgets to supplement PK operational costs, and defense establishments use UN operations to sell training modules or provide services to the UN system at market value.⁵⁰ In sum, and as Diamint argues in her chapter contribution, PK has effectively increased military activism without generating improved civilian intervention.

Finally, the evidence regarding the positive effects of PK on military missions remains largely disputable. This is ironic, since so much scholarship on civil–military relations claims that civilians are more capable of controlling their armed forces when they are given missions overseas. An externally oriented military mission supposedly enables civilians to control and manage domestic politics more effectively without having to face the challenge of military intervention or insubordination. In a critical review of the civil–military relations literature, David Pion-Berlin and Craig Arceneaux summarized the external-oriented mission argument as follows: “As the military prepares professionally to face external challenges, it is increasingly preoccupied with matters strictly of a defensive nature, and thus lured away from domestic politics.”⁵¹ It therefore makes sense for civilian leaders to emphasize externally oriented missions. After all, the main reason so many Latin American states got involved in UN PK in the early 1990s was to redefine military missions in a post-transition to democracy era. Have military missions been transformed amidst increased levels of PK participation?

Certainly, the armed forces of Latin America are now more readily engaged in external missions. However, PK remains in a secondary or tertiary role compared to other domestic missions, including policing, drug trafficking, counterinsurgency, or managing civilian unrest. Uruguay is the only country where UN peace operations absorb almost a quarter of the force and in which PK is the main military mission. UN troop commitment levels remain notoriously low in the rest of Latin America, with only a handful of military observers and units deployed to UN operations, mostly in Haiti. Brazil and Chile, the two military-powerful South American states currently engaged in MINUSTAH, deploy less than one percent of their overall military force to peace operations. With a total force of almost 300,000 and 60,000 soldiers respectively, these regional military powers could easily deploy far more troops than they have actually committed. At best, military institutions across the region have merely

added PK to the menu of missions they perform without fundamentally modifying their structure or *modus operandi*.

What impact has PK generated among the one percent involved in UN missions? According to the conventional thinking, PK can be a powerful agent of socialization that can potentially modify military preferences by socializing the rank and file of officers to specific norms of conduct one soldier at a time.⁵² Interestingly, Latin American troops in Haiti appear to be performing roles that look quite similar to those performed at home. As explained in Rut Diamint's chapter, the Brazilian blue helmets have been policing and controlling drug gangs in Port-au-Prince, using similar skills and tools as those conducted in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where anti-gang and anti-drug trafficking campaigns are common.⁵³ Similarly, Uruguayan naval units are assisting Haitian authorities in deterring drug trafficking near Jacmel and Port-Salut, where drug shipments usually enter the country to be later distributed into the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Miami.⁵⁴ Peacekeeping thus appears to replicate domestic scenarios, placing troops in similar operational environments, but under the UN flag and authority.

Have the results been different under the UN flag? Once again, evidence from Haiti suggests that PK has not fundamentally altered behavior or outcomes. Reports from international NGOs and lawyers have continuously denounced Brazil's pacification strategy, which relies heavily on the use of force and causes collateral damage. The Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights and the *Centro de Justiça Global* (in Brazil) conducted one of the most comprehensive evaluations of the UN mission in Haiti in 2005, also known as the "Harvard Report." In its findings, the report concluded, "Despite one of the strongest human rights mandates in the history of UN PKO, MINUSTAH has not effectively investigated or reported human rights abuses; nor has it protected human rights advocates. Charged to train and reform the Haitian National Police, MINUSTAH instead has provided unquestioning support to police operations that have resulted in warrantless arrests and detentions, unintended civilian casualties and deliberate extrajudicial killings . . . In consequence, Haiti is ruled by guns and terror, not law".⁵⁵

Furthermore, in 2011, a PK scandal erupted, this time involving Uruguayan blue helmets. Specifically, five Uruguayan peacekeepers in Haiti were accused of sexual abuse and assault on a teenage boy. The case originated a crisis in Uruguay and Haiti, forcing President José Mujica, himself a victim of torture during the Uruguayan dictatorship, to publicly apologize to the Haitian people.⁵⁶ The scandal prompted Uruguayan authorities to dismiss the navy's mission commander, while the five sailors accused of alleged sexual assault were withdrawn from the mission, decommissioned, and then put under military justice. This incident took place in a context in which UN peacekeepers had been consistently

accused of sexual abuse in Haiti. In 2007, some one hundred Sri Lankan blue helmets – 10 percent of an entire brigade – were repatriated because they were giving small amounts of cash, food, and sometimes mobile phones in exchange for sex with underage girls.⁵⁷ The Uruguayan incident thus confirmed the belief that a culture of institutional impunity, which tolerated sexual abuse, had developed within the UN mission.

Ultimately, these incidents indicate that accountability, transparency, and even civilian control are inherently weak, even when troops are performing UN-mandated peace operations. This certainly problematizes and complicates the relationship between external missions and civilian control over the armed forces. The relationship is no longer linear, progressive, or positive.

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Conclusions

The preliminary findings of this research raise questions about conventional wisdom in civil–military relations concerning the effects of externally oriented missions on civilian control. The cases explored here suggest that civilians can lose control over the armed forces when they perform external roles, such as PK, as much as when they perform domestic or internal roles. Therefore, this project corroborates the insights of David Pion-Berlin and Craig Arceneaux regarding the role of civilians in crafting missions; as they argue, the key difference is not the type of mission being performed, but how the mission is defined, shaped, and monitored by civilian agents.⁵⁸ In the Latin American cases, there is only scarce evidence of increased civilian intervention in PK policies.

Yet, this chapter has only scratched the surface of a complex but fascinating area of research; several issues remain unexplained and merit fuller analysis in the future. For instance, the PK policy diffusion wave expanded across the region, but the effects have varied substantially from country to country. Latin American states involved in seemingly similar peace operations differed considerably in the way they managed their civil–military relations. This variation in outcomes is intriguing and requires further research. It suggests the presence of domestic intervening variables that diffuse the effects of external factors, leading to divergent effects among states. Hence, future research needs to explore the domestic causes of this variation.

Similarly, research on PK has often assumed that all peace operations are comparable, involving similar mandates, tasks, and duties. In the field, however, the operations conducted by the UN are evidently different and disperse from each other. Not surprisingly, the UN has a mixed record of success in accomplishing its PK, peacebuilding, and peace-enforcement goals. Again, this variation in outcomes could have large consequences on

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civil–military relations, in which soldiers exposed to failed missions may in fact adopt illiberal and regressive norms and practices, leading to negative socialization. The relationship between different types of UN missions and civil–military relations should be more thoroughly and systematically explored as well.

Finally, analysts may need to look beyond the UN and the Latin American region to have a more comprehensive picture of how external missions affect civil–military relations. This entails comparisons between different types of international security organizations conducting PK – UN, NATO, EU, ECOWAS and African Union – and more cross-regional comparative analysis. If South Asia and Africa are the major contributors to PK, then how do the armed forces of these countries react when they are deployed overseas? How similar or different is their experience compared to Latin America? Has PK had any effect on coup predisposition? Again, a comparative analysis among countries with similar PK experiences might shed light on competing explanations.

Notes

- 1 See Bobrow and Boyer, “Maintaining System Stability”, p. 742; and Sotomayor, “Different Paths and Divergent Policies in the UN Security System”.
- 2 Ubiraci, “Intermediate Countries and the Multilateral Arenas”, p. 91.
- 3 See, for instance, Sotomayor, “Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Others Do Not”.
- 4 See Kenkel, “Stepping out of the Shadow”.
- 5 For a detailed analysis of the relationship between democratization and UN troop commitment in South America see Sotomayor, “Democratization and Commitment to Peace”.
- 6 See Economist, “Brazil and peacekeeping”, p. 52.
- 7 Pevehouse, “Democracy from the Outside-In?”, p. 527.
- 8 Loveman, *For la Patria*, p. 267.
- 9 Norden, “Keeping the Peace, Outside and In”, p. 339.
- 10 Etchegaray, “Policy paper: Operaciones Militares de Paz”.
- 11 Sims, “U.S. Alliance Brings Prestige to Argentines”, p. A-9.
- 12 For a detailed analysis of Uruguay’s PKO contribution, see Sotomayor, “Uruguay”.
- 13 Data was obtained from UNDPKO, *Facts and Figures for Troop Contributors, 2000–2010*.
- 14 There is an abundance of descriptive literature on Brazil’s role in MINUSTAH. See, for example, Leone and Kalil, “Operaciones de paz de las Naciones Unidas: la perspectiva brasileña”; Seitenfus, “De Suez ao Haiti”; and Diniz, “O Brasil e a MINUSTAH”.
- 15 See Kenkel, “South America’s Emerging Power”.
- 16 Hirst, “La intervención sudamericana en Haití”, pp. 338–339.
- 17 See Economist, “Brazil and peacekeeping”.

- 18 On the effects of the demise of Pinochet in Chile see Pion-Berlin, "The Pinochet Case and Human Rights Progress in Chile".
- 19 See Weiner and Polgree, "The Aristide Resignation". For a general overview of the PK mission in Haiti, see Kretchik, "Haiti's Quest for Democracy".
- 20 See Di Nocera and Benavente, "Chile: Responding to a Regional Crisis".
- 21 See Pédola, "Chile y las operaciones de paz".
- 22 See Prensa Latina, "Cuba Criticizes Breach of Commitments to Haiti".
- 23 For example, Andersson, "Commitment to UN Interventions"; Daniel and Caraher, "Characteristics of Troop Contributors to Peace Operations and Implications for Global Capacity".
- 24 Sotomayor "Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Others Do Not."
- 25 Center on International Cooperation, *Global Peace Operations 2011: Annual Review*, p. 139.
- 26 For an analysis of Mexico's motivations in PK, see Sotomayor, "Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Others Do Not," and "Different Paths and Divergent Policies in the UN Security System".
- 27 See González, "Usan más militares como policías: CIDE".
- 28 See Romero, "Exporting Peace by Other Means: Venezuela".
- 29 See Romero, "Chávez Seeks Tighter Grip on Military".
- 30 See Romero, "Venezuela's Military Ties with Cuba Stir Concerns".
- 31 This argument is further developed in Sotomayor, "Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Others Do Not".
- 32 See Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed".
- 33 On the effects of PK, see Sotomayor "Peacekeeping Effects in South America".
- 34 Norden, "Keeping the Peace, Outside and In"; Lagorio, "Institutionalization, Cooperative Security, and Peacekeeping Operations"; Palá, "Peacekeeping and its Effects on Civil–Military Relations"; Sotomayor, "Unintended Consequences of peace operations for troop-contributing countries in South America".
- 35 Norden, *Military Rebellion in Argentina*, p. 103.
- 36 Römer & Asociados, "Militares y sociedad en Argentina".
- 37 Romero, "Exporting Peace by Other Means", pp. 160–166.
- 38 See, for instance, Arnson (ed.) *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, and Montgomery (ed.) *Peacekeeping and Democratization in the Western Hemisphere*; and Herz and Pontes, *Ecuador vs. Peru*.
- 39 Diamint, "Security Communities", pp. 670–671.
- 40 See Diamint, "El 2x9 una incipiente comunidad de seguridad em América Latina?"; Souza Neto, "A Participação e a Cooperação entre os Países de Cone Sul em Operações de Paz".
- 41 See Hirst, "La intervención sudamericana en Haiti".
- 42 Ministry of Defense, *Argentine Model for the Defense System Modernization*, p. 32.
- 43 See Mendelson, "Latin American peacekeeping"; and Hirst, "La intervención sudamericana en Haití".
- 44 See Sánchez, "The South American Defense Council".

- 45 Political management of the military occurs when political leaders have been able to subordinate their militaries to civilian rule, but without a fundamental knowledge of or interest in defense affairs. As Pion-Berlin argues, “civilian authority and the military’s respect for that authority does not stem from civilian defense knowledge, but from the politicians’ ability to manage strictly political and administrative affairs.” See Pion-Berlin, “Political management of the military in Latin America”, p. 28.
- 46 One exception is Argentina, where Congress did play a crucial role in authorizing the deployment of troops to MINUSTAH. See Follietti, “La participación argentina en Haití”.
- 47 A civilian attention deficit is a widespread disinterest in defense policy and a general lack of concern for the “development of plans and processes designed to provide for the oversight, organization, training and deployment, and funding of the armed forces.” See Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas, “Attention Deficits”, p. 77.
- 48 A list of courses offered by Latin America’s PK training centers is available at: <http://www.alcopaz.org/cursos-alcopaz/cursos-2012.html> (accessed on August 28, 2012).
- 49 See Avelar, “In the Crossroads”.
- 50 On military entrepreneurs see Cruz and Diamint, “The New Military Autonomy in Latin America”.
- 51 The authors do not advocate for this type of argument; they in fact criticize it. See Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux, “Decision-Makers or Decision-Takers?”, p. 417.
- 52 On socialization in PKO see Moskos, *Peace Soldiers*.
- 53 Barnes, “Brazil launches peacekeeping force in the *favelas*”.
- 54 See Carneiro Álvarez, “Uruguayan Navy in MINUSTAH, Beyond the Scandal”.
- 55 See Harvard Report, “Peace in Haiti?”, p. 8.
- 56 See BBC, “Uruguayan peacekeepers in Haiti accused of abuse”.
- 57 See also BBC, “Sri Lanka troops ‘abused Haitians”.
- 58 Pion-Berlin and Arceneaux, “Decision-Makers or Decision-Takers?”, pp. 413–436.

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