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Civil-Military Relations in Latin America: The Hedgehog and the Fox Revisited



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Abstract

This article argues for a new focus in the study of civil-military relations. It seeks to provide civilian policymakers with ideas and information to help them best carry out their responsibilities as democratically elected leaders. Referring to knowledge of military matters as “one big thing,” it argues that it is not necessary for policymakers to know as much about matters of defense as their military counterparts. Based on the academic literature and the author’s experience in Latin America and other regions, this article suggests that civil-military relations are best understood in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and civilian control of the armed forces. These relations will only be effectively normalized when institutions incorporate and personalize understanding and mechanisms of control at both executive and legislative levels.

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