
The Impact of Military Spending on the Likelihood of Democratic Transition Failure: Testing Two Competing Theories

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Abstract

Many countries complete tenuous transitions to democracy and must work to prevent an authoritarian reversal, which is often at the hands of the military. One of the most important tools the new government has in dealing with the military is the amount of money allocated to the military. This leads to the question, how does government military spending in post-transition democratic countries affect the chances of democratic transition failure? The extant literature provides two answers. The first is to increase military spending to placate the military; the second is to decrease military spending to weaken the military and address social welfare needs. The article tests these two hypotheses by examining democratic transitions from 1967 to 1999 using both logit and survival analysis methods. The results of the study provide robust support for the hypothesis that decreasing military spending decreases the likelihood of a democratic transition failure.

Keywords

democratic transition, military spending, democratic regime failure, government spending

The surge of democratic countries associated with the third wave of democracy led to a great deal of new research on democratic transitions. This literature has

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focused primarily on what conditions lead to democratic transitions and how the new democracy can be consolidated in to a mature, liberal democracy. A related area of focus that has received considerably less attention is why some democratic transitions are successful and others fail. The two questions of why democratic transitions fail and what leads to consolidation of democracy, although similar, are substantively different. The concern of democratic consolidation is how a new democracy becomes a fully functional, liberal, and mature democracy. The concern of successful democratic transitions is what prevents the reversal of these democratic transitions back to authoritarian forms of government. Often these reversals to authoritarianism are at the hands of the military, through explicit actions such as military coups or simply ceasing military support for the new democratic government. At the same time, a new democratic government needs the support of the military to ensure domestic order and to prevent such actions as military coups.

The literature on the role of the military in democratic transitions has not reached a clear consensus on how the military affects democratic transitions. One school suggests that the military should be weakened so that it cannot be a strong participant in the post-transition political environment. A second school argues that the new democratic government must keep the military placated to prevent military coups and must keep it strong to ensure domestic stability. This article offers a first attempt to empirically test these two competing schools of thought by examining patterns of government military expenditures in post-democratic transition governments. Government spending provides adequate tangible evidence as to the importance the new democratic government places on strengthening the military. Higher levels of military spending would suggest that the government views the military as important to the transition process, while smaller levels suggest the government wishes to weaken the strength and resources of the military.

The main question this article seeks to answer is how does government military spending in post-transition democratic countries affect the chances of democratic transition failure? To answer this question, the article looks at democratic transitions from the years 1967 to 1999 and uses both logit and survival analysis methods to assess the impact of military spending on democratic transition failure. The findings of the analysis suggest that high levels of military spending increase the chance of democratic transition failure. In other words, when the new democratic government attempts to placate or strengthen the military, the chances of democratic transition failure increase. This result proves robust across the two methods of analysis.

The next section examines the two competing theories in the literature on the role of the military in post-transition democracies and the impact military spending has on this relationship. The research design is presented in the third section and a discussion of the methodological issues follows. Finally, the results are presented and discussed as well as possibilities for future research.

Theories in the Relevant Literature

The literature on the role of the military in democratic transitions has reached a consensus on the fact that the new democratic government must gain civilian control over the military. Consensus has not been reached on how this should be done, however. One school of thought argues that the new democratic government needs to placate and strengthen the military through increasing its resources. A countering school of thought posits that the new democratic government needs to weaken the military by decreasing its resources. These two opposing schools are presented below.

Increase Resources

There are two main reasons identified in the literature that increasing the resources of the military are beneficial to democratic transition success. The first reason is simply to placate the military.¹ The logic for this reason begins with the idea that democratic transitions result from bargaining between the elites of the outgoing and incoming governments.² The result of this bargaining creates winners and losers of the democratic transition and it is important for the new democratic government that the military does not perceive itself as a loser in the democratic transition. If this is the case, the military may view democracy in a negative light and have an incentive to pursue options, such as a coup, leading to other forms of government. Thus, it is in the interest of the new democratic government to increase military resources to keep the military satisfied and guard against military intervention into domestic politics. Aguero argues that often the new democratic government has no choice but to increase military resources, because the military was able to institutionalize its place in the post-transition democratic environment during the bargaining process.³ Thus, any attempts by the democratic government to cut military resources would result in aggressive action by the military. Huntington recognizes this fact as well but also argues that the new democratic government should increase military resources even when it is not institutionalized simply to keep the military happy.⁴ In his guidelines to democratizers to curb military power, Huntington suggests that new democratic governments should increase salaries, improve housing facilities, and provide the military with new toys, such as new tanks, planes and electronic equipment, to keep them satisfied and out of domestic politics.⁵ Trinkunas agrees with Huntington by suggesting one strategy the new democratic government has to control the military is to co-opt it through increased resources.⁶

The second reason to increase military resources is to ensure domestic stability in the post-transition democratic environment.⁷ The logic behind this suggestion recognizes that often time, countries are in a state of turmoil and conflict following democratic transitions. The conflict can be the result of a continuing ethnic or civil conflict or result from the inclusion of new actors into the political process. In either case, the new democratic government faces an insecure and unstable environment. To ensure the democratic government's survival, a strong military is required to ensure order and to provide legitimate authority and power to the new democratic government.

Thus, the military will likely require an increase in resources to better handle the domestic instability. Although Cawthra and Luckham recognize that the military needs to be strengthened, they also recognize that this is, in some ways, a double-edged sword.⁸ Increasing the strength of the military also poses threats of military intervention into the domestic politics, if the military grows dissatisfied with the new democratic regime. This paradox leads into the argument to weaken resources.

Decrease Resources

Similar to the school on increasing resources, the literature on the need to decrease resources provides two main reasons for why decreasing resources is beneficial to democratic transition success. The first reason suggests that increasing resources and strengthening the military creates a greater chance of military intervention in domestic politics because the military has greater abilities. For this reason, it is best to decrease resources and weaken the military following the democratic transition so the military has less power in the new political environment and is forced to play a limited role.⁹ This proposition holds true under stable conditions but it is also applicable under unstable conditions.¹⁰ The paradox described in the previous section applies here. If a military is given more resources to ensure domestic stability, once the goal has been achieved, the military is significantly strengthened and poses a potential threat to the democratic government.¹¹

The second reason to decrease resources focuses on the negative impact increased military spending may have on the society. It is important to the government following democratic transitions to provide resources, such as better education and social welfare benefits, to the new participants of the political process.¹² This task increases the legitimacy and popular support for the new democratic government. Increased military spending can lead to decreased social spending, and thus a limited ability of the government to provide the public benefits often associated with democracy.¹³ An inability to provide these public benefits can result in a decrease in support for the new democratic government and thus increase the chances the democratic transition may fail. Thus, decreasing resources to the military may allow the new democratic government to pursue policies to promote economic growth and provide social and welfare benefits to the public, both of which increase the chance of democratic transition success.

The two schools presented above offer differing hypotheses on how military spending following democratic transitions affect the chances of success or failure of the democratic transition. The two hypotheses of the schools are presented below.

Increase Resources Hypothesis: As the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures increase, the likelihood of democratic transition failure will decrease.

Decrease Resources Hypothesis: As the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures decrease, the likelihood of democratic transition failure will increase.

Research Design

This article looks at military spending following democratic transitions during the time period of 1967–1999. Ideally, a longer time frame would be examined, but the time frame used in this study was determined by access to the main independent variable, military spending. The sample used in this study was determined using the Polity IV data set. Countries enter into the sample following a regime change of +2 or higher, as coded by the Polity IV data set, provided the regime change results in a positive Polity score. The regime change variable in the Polity IV data set codes regime changes on a scale of –2 to +3, with +2 representing a minor democratic transition and +3 a major democratic transition. Countries leave the sample following a regime change score of –1 or –2, representing a negative regime change or an adverse regime change, respectively.¹⁴ The process of determining the sample in this manner has some precedent in the literature on democratic transition.¹⁵ The study by Starr and Lindborg used Freedom House data to determine the existence of a democratic transition and authoritarian reversal. Polity IV data were chosen for the current study because it offer more precise data than the Freedom House data and the method used by the study of Starr and Lindborg, which grouped countries into three categories, not free, partly free, and free, and recorded transitions between these three categories.

Dependent Variable

Democratic transition failure. The dependent variable is dichotomous and is democratic transition failure. Transitions to democracy are tenuous events that are often uncertain in their future. As such, democratic transition failure is conceptualized as movement away from democracy following a previous transition to democracy. The variable is coded as 1 for any year where there is a negative or adverse transition away from democracy, as recorded in the Polity IV data set, and 0 for all years where there was no such transition.¹⁶ The entire data set contains forty-four instances of failure, although this number varies in the analysis due to missing data of some of the independent variables.

Independent Variable

Military expenditures. There are several issues that need to be discussed with respect to the measurement of the main independent variable, military expenditures. The first issue is related to the reliability of the data. The data on military spending were taken from various years of the U.S. State Department's World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers Report.¹⁷ Official reports or estimates of budgetary outlays are not always reliable. There is a certain amount of measurement error that is associated with using such data. Second, official reports of military expenditures do not tell the whole story. The military may be able to procure resources outside of the formal budgetary channel through corruptive practices. Official reports do not account for resources gained in this manner, and thus the potential of measurement error increases. A final issue related to the potential measurement error associated with military expenditures

is that the measurement error associated with possible military corruption may be correlated with democratic transition failure. A military that is actively engaged in corruptive practices has the potential to undermine a new democratic government and increase the likelihood of failure. There is potential for bias in the analysis to the extent that the measurement error associated with military expenditures is correlated with the dependent variable. Unfortunately, the ability to ascertain the level of resources gained through corruptive practices is limited and, as such, the analysis and results that follow should be viewed in light of the potential problems associated with measurement error.

A second main issue relates to the variety of ways the main independent variable of military spending can be operationalized, all of which have certain advantages. This article uses the ratio of military spending to central government expenditures. For the purposes of the current study, this measure is deemed more appropriate than looking at the dollar amount of military spending or military spending as a ratio of gross domestic product (GDP) for two reasons. The first is that this ratio standardizes the variable across the countries in the sample allowing for better comparison in a cross-country analysis. A second and more theoretical reason is that this measure is better representative of the main points of the two competing schools of thought discussed previously. The military may look at the amount of military spending in relation to the amount spent on other segments of society to determine whether a transition to democracy will be beneficial or harmful to their interests. Furthermore, this measure also captures the amount of resources the military may be taking away from social spending, which is one argument as to the negative impact of military on democratic transition success.

The main independent variable is looked at in two different time periods. The first is the lag of the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures to account for the ratio in the previous year, assuming that actors will react to government spending in time period $t - 1$ during time period t . The change in the ratio from one year to the next is also examined to look at the issue in a more dynamic fashion. This variable represents the test of the two schools presented above. If the increase resources hypothesis is true, the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures should be negatively associated with democratic transition failure, indicating when military expenditures represent a greater share of central government expenditures, the chances of democratic transition failure decrease. Conversely, if the decrease resources hypothesis is true, the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures should be positively associated with democratic transition failure, indicating when military expenditures represent a greater share of central government expenditures, the chances of democratic transition failure increase.

Control Variables

Past democratic transition failure. A number of control variables are included in the study and can be separated into domestic and international factors. A first control

variable simply looks at instances of past democratic transition failure and is coded 1 if a country has experienced a past democratic transition failure and 0 otherwise. It is expected that this variable will be positively associated with democratic transition failure.

Previous civilian regime. A second important domestic factor that may influence the likelihood of democratic transition failure is the nature of the regime being transitioned from. The nature of the previous regime was determined using information from the *Political Handbook of the World* (various years). A civilian regime is defined as one in which the chief executive is not a member of the military or was not appointed as the result of a military coup. The presence of a previous civilian regime is coded as 1 and if the previous regime was military in nature, it is coded as 0. The nature of the previous regime is important because it serves as an indicator for the historical involvement of the military in the politics of the country. A country in which the military has been actively involved in the governing of the country would be more likely to experience future involvement of the military in the government than a country with a history of the military staying on the political sidelines. The inclusion of the variable is also important because it speaks somewhat to the role the military may have in the negotiation phase. Previous involvement of the military in the political process may indicate that the military would be involved in the transitional negotiations to a greater extent than if the military is historically uninvolved in politics.¹⁸ Perhaps, the most prominent example of this is involvement of General Pinochet in Chile's 1980 constitution. The expectation is that a previous civilian regime will decrease the chances of democratic transition failure.

GDP per capita. A third domestic factor controlled for is the wealth of the country and is measured as GDP per capita. The data are taken from the Penn World Tables.¹⁹ The wealth of a country has been shown in many previous studies to be positively associated with the survival of democratic regimes and regime survival in general, as well as being a condition that promotes the development of democracy.²⁰ It is expected that this variable will be negatively associated with democratic transition failure.

GDP growth. A fourth control variable concerns economic growth and is measured as the annual growth rate of GDP per capita. The data for this variable are also taken from the Penn World Tables.²¹ Economic growth is generally considered to be positive for democratic transitions because it is better for the society as a whole and increases support for the government.²² Thus, it is expected that the growth rate of GDP per capita will be negatively associated with democratic transition failure.

Internal conflict. The presence of an internal conflict represents a fifth domestic control variable. The variable is coded as 1 in any year where an internal conflict occurred and 0 in all other years. The data on internal conflicts were taken from

version 4 of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/International Peace Research Institute's Armed Conflict Data set.²³ The presence of domestic instability poses a grave threat to a new democratic government and certainly has an impact on the chances of democratic transition survival. It is expected that the presence of internal conflict will be positively associated with the likelihood of democratic transition failure.

State power. Another domestic control variable is the power of the state, measured using version 3.02 of the Correlates of War's Composite Index of National Capabilities.²⁴ Theoretically, the stronger the state the government is in control of, the better chance the government has of survival. This is the case because the state has a greater ability to control unrest within the country and establish itself as the only legitimate source of authority. Thus, it is expected that this variable will be negatively related with the likelihood of democratic transition failure.

Ethnic fractionalization. A final domestic control variable is the ethnic fractionalization of the country, which is measured using the data of Fearon and Laitin.²⁵ This measure has been used in previous studies and the suggestion is that greater diversity in the society results in a greater variety of interests and this greater variety of interests makes it more difficult for the new democratic regime to govern.²⁶ Thus, it is expected that this variable will be positively associated with the likelihood of democratic transition failure.

Regional democracy. International factors can also have an influence on the success of democratic transitions. A number of studies have argued that neighborhood effects influence the domestic politics of a country. The number of democracies in the region and the number of military conflicts in the region have been shown to have an impact on democratic transition success. First, the impact of democracies in the region is controlled for and is measured using the Polity IV data set.²⁷ The variable measures the number of democracies in the region, as identified by the Polity IV data set, as a percentage of the total amount of countries in the region. Thus, a different percentage is calculated for each specific region in each year. The regions are Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. The presence of other democracies in the region should encourage successful transitions to democracy by providing an enabling environment and offering support.²⁸ It is expected that this variable will be negatively associated with democratic transition failure.

Regional conflict. The measure of the number of military conflicts in the region is conducted in a similar manner. The Correlates of War data on Militarized Interstate Disputes, version 3.02, are used to measure the percentage of countries in the entire region involved in a militarized interstate dispute in any given year.²⁹ The existence of militarized interstate disputes in the region should threaten the new democratic government and perhaps create incentives to sacrifice democratic freedoms for the sake of security.³⁰ Thus, it is expected that this variable will be positively related to democratic transition failure.

Method

Two separate statistical techniques will be used to test the hypotheses of the different schools on how military spending in post-transition democracies affects the likelihood of democratic regime failure. The two different techniques will be used because both have been used previously in the literature and using both offers a robust test of the competing theories.³¹ The potential for problems associated with heteroskedasticity is great when using data of a cross-sectional nature, and thus for both methods this potential problem is addressed using robust standard errors and accounting for clustering around specific countries.³² The first method is logistic regression, which is the proper statistical technique used to analyze dichotomous dependent variables. The second method used is survival analysis. Survival analysis models a hazard rate, which represents the “probability that an event will happen at time $t+1$ given that the event has not happened up until time t .”³³ The hazard rate in this study indicates the risk of a democratic transition failing. Similar to the study of Kadera, Crescenzi, and Shannon, this study also uses a Weibull model because this model provides a λ parameter estimate, which indicates the direction and duration of time dependence.³⁴

Results

The results of the two different statistical analyses are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Both results offer support for the decrease resources hypothesis. Table 1 contains the results of the logistic regression analysis. Looking first at the two different measures of the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures, we see that when this ratio is looked at in a single year or as the change between two years, it is positive and statistically significant. This indicates that as military expenditures become a greater share of central government expenditures, the likelihood of democratic transition failure increases. The results provide strong support for the decrease resources hypothesis. To determine what the results mean in a more substantive manner, the CLARIFY program can be used to calculate the marginal effects of variables of interest while holding other variables constant.³⁵ With respect to the one-year measure of military expenditures to central government expenditures, moving this variable from the 25th to 75th percentile results in an increase in the likelihood of democratic transition failure of approximately .42 percent. A similar movement in the dynamic ratio of military spending to central government spending results in an approximately .15 percent increase in the likelihood of democratic transition failure. At face value, these percentages seem fairly small; however, when viewed in terms of the data set as a whole, this is not the case. The total percentage of democratic transition failures in the sample is only 3.3 percent and when all variables are held at their means, the likelihood of democratic transition failure is only .64 percent. From this perspective, the marginal effects of the military expenditures’ variables are inline with the overall sample under examination.

Only three of the control variables are significant in both logistic regressions. The presence of a previous civilian regime is negatively related to democratic transition

Table 1. Logistic Regression Estimates of Democratic Transition Failure

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Military Expenditures/Central Gov't Expenditures	.033 (.016)*	—
Δ Military Expenditures/Central Gov't Expenditures	—	.057 (.021)***
Past Transition Failure	.141 (.415)	.362 (.487)
Previous Civilian Regime	-.890 (.349)**	-1.122 (.354)***
GDP Per Capita	-.001 (.0002)***	-.001 (.0002)***
GDP Growth	-.040 (.025)	-.052 (.033)
Internal Conflict	.463 (.446)	.686 (.492)
State Power	-45.245 (22.618)*	-30.310 (20.054)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-1.863 (.753)**	-2.256 (.837)***
Regional Democracy	-2.850 (1.754)	-2.905 (1.811)
Regional Conflict	.025 (.099)	.023 (.089)
Constant	-.104 (.770)	.706 (.749)
N (Failures)	984 (33)	884 (31)
Wald χ^2	60.28***	54.59***
Percentage correctly classified	96.65	96.61

Note: Results determined through logistic regression. Unbiased coefficients presented with robust standard errors clustered around country in parentheses.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .03$.

*** $p < .01$.

failure in both models. This finding speaks to the importance of the previous role of the military in the politics of the country as it pertains to potential future involvement. A country in which the military has played less of a role in politics is more likely to sustain a transition to democracy than a country with a history of a politically active military. The measure of GDP per capita is significant and negatively associated with democratic transition failure, as was expected. The wealthier a country is, the less likely a transition to democracy will fail. A final control variable that reached significance in both models was the ethnic fractionalization measure, which was negatively associated with democratic transition failure. This indicates that a more ethnically homogenous society will be less likely to experience a democratic transition failure than an ethnically diverse society. The measure of state power, as indicated by the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score from the Correlates of War, was only significant using the single year measure of the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures, and is negatively associated with democratic transition failure. This finding is as expected.

Next, we can look at Table 2 and the results of the survival analysis. With the exception of the λ parameter, a hazard ratio above 1 represents a positive relationship and a hazard ratio below 1 represents a negative relationship. The coefficient can be determined by calculating the natural logarithm of the hazard ratio. First, the λ

Table 2. Survival Analysis Results of Democratic Transition Failure

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Military Expenditures/Central Gov't Expenditures	1.061 (.015)***	—
Δ Military Expenditures/Central Gov't Expenditures	—	1.079 (.014)***
Past Transition Failure	4.558 (3.433)*	6.506 (4.899)**
Previous Civilian Regime	.163 (.091)***	.115 (.066)***
GDP Per Capita	.998 (.0004)***	.998 (.0005)***
GDP Growth	.927 (.033)*	.915 (.037)**
Internal Conflict	1.834 (.858)	2.763 (1.372)*
State Power	4.27e-45 (2.09e-43)*	2.14e-25 (4.69e-24)***
Ethnic Fractionalization	.063 (.057)***	.042 (.038)***
Regional Democracy	.109 (.206)	.122 (.237)
Regional Conflict	.959 (.084)	.984 (.073)
λ	.616 (.125)***	.703 (.148)***
N (Failures)	935 (33)	882 (31)
Wald χ^2	101.61***	76.98***

Note: Results determined using a Weibull model of survival analysis. Hazard ratios presented with robust standard errors clustered around country in parentheses.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .03$.

*** $p < .01$.

parameter in each model is positive and significant. This parameter accounts for the impact of time on the dependent variable, and the results indicate that as time progresses, the hazard of democratic transition failure increases.

The measures of military spending perform in a similar manner to that of the logistic regression. Both variables are significant and are positive. This offers even more support for the decrease resources hypothesis. The result indicates that the risk, or probability, of democratic transition failure increases as the share of military expenditures to central government expenditures increases. Substantively, the results of the survival analysis suggest that a one unit increase in the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures increases the hazard rate of democratic transition failure by approximately 6 percent over the baseline hazard model. A similar increase in the dynamic measure of the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures increases the hazard rate of democratic transition failure by approximately 7.5 percent over the baseline model. The change in the hazard rate over time is presented graphically in Figures 1 and 2. Figures 1 and 2 show the hazard rate of democratic transition failure when the corresponding military expenditure measures are placed at their mean values and at the 25th and 75th percentile levels. Whether looking at the one-year or dynamic ratio of military expenditure to central government expenditure, the figures clearly indicate an increase in the hazard of democratic transition failure as the ratio of military expenditures to central government expenditures increases.

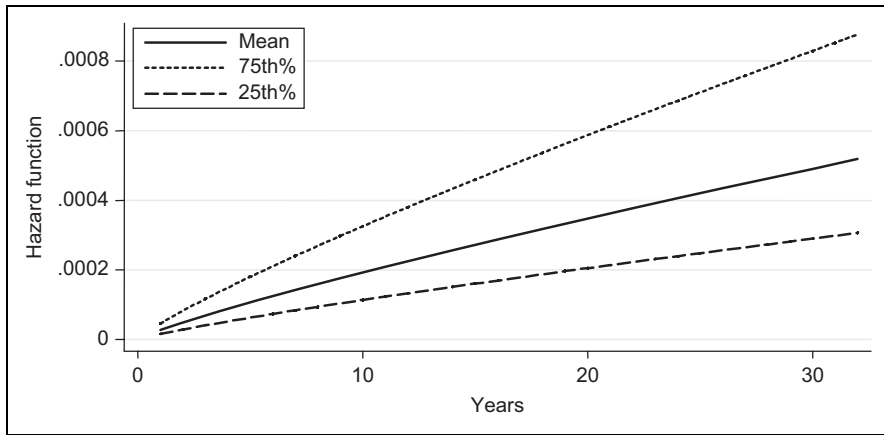


Figure 1. Ratio of Military Expenditures to Central Government Expenditures and Hazard of Democratic Transition Failure

A greater number of control variables reach significance under the survival analysis. The existence of a prior civilian government is significant and negatively associated with democratic transition failure in both survival models. The GDP per capita variable is once again significant and negative using either military expenditure measure. The other economic variable, GDP per capita growth rate, is significant and negative in both models. This finding is consistent with the expectation of the article and indicates that an improving economy is beneficial to democratic transition success. The measure of past democratic transition failure is positive and significant in both models, which is also as expected. The measure of state power is also significant in both models and is negatively associated with democratic transition failure, similar to the results of the logistic regression. The last control variable that is significant in both models is that of ethnic fractionalization, which is negatively associated with democratic transition failure.

The only other variable that reached significance was that of the presence of internal conflict in the second model. The presence of an internal conflict was positively associated with democratic transition failure, indicating that the likelihood of democratic transition failure increases when a country is experiencing an internal conflict. The variables to measure neighborhood effects were not significant in any of the models using logistic regression or survival analysis.

The overall results of this study offer fairly robust support for the decrease resources hypothesis. Using two different measures of military expenditures and two different statistical techniques, the findings suggest that increases in military expenditures increase the chances of democratic transition failure. The practical implications of this finding point to the importance of the relationship between the government and the military in transitioning democracies. The role of the military is an important one and if the military receives an increase in resources, thus

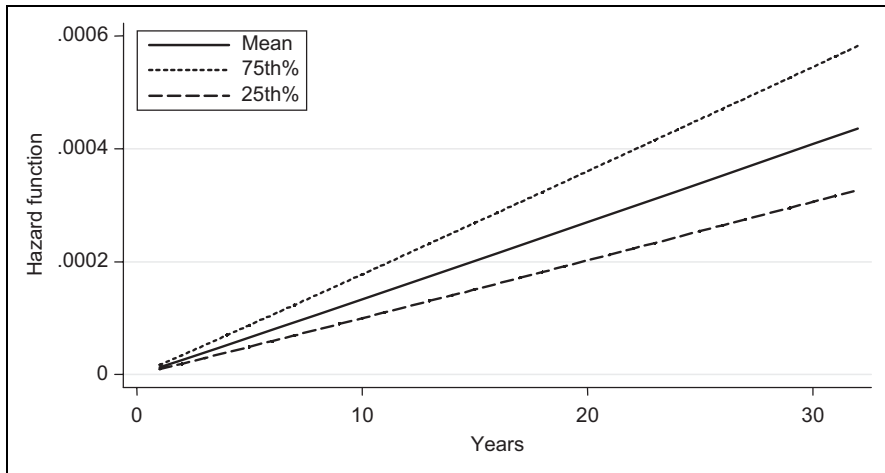


Figure 2. Dynamic Ratio of Military Expenditures to Central Government Expenditures and Hazard of Democratic Transition Failure

strengthening the organization, the findings of this study suggest that the democratic transition is in more jeopardy than if military resources were decreased. Governments that emerge from democratic transitions must take steps to limit the power of the military and the threat of military involvement in the political sphere.

Conclusion

The military plays an important role in post-transition democratic governments, and the methods new governments use to deal with the military can have an impact on the chances of the democratic transition's success. This article argued that military expenditures serve as an adequate measure of whether the new democratic government intends to strengthen or weaken the military. Thus, the central question of this study is how does government military spending in post-transition democratic countries affect the chances of democratic transition failure? Two competing answers to this question are found in the literature. One school of thought argues that increasing military resources enhances the chances of democratic transition success because it placates the military and does not provide them incentives to become involved in politics. Furthermore, a strong military is often needed in post-transition societies to maintain order and ensure stability. The second school of thought argues that decreasing military resources is the best way to ensure democratic transition success. A stronger military is more capable of influencing domestic politics and has greater abilities to intervene. Increases in resources to the military also may have a negative impact on economic growth and take resources away from social and welfare benefits. Positive economic growth and the provision of social and

welfare benefits are important in establishing the legitimacy of the new democratic regime. The study used both logistic regression and survival analysis to test the competing schools. Both statistical techniques provided evidence that decreasing resources increase the chance of a successful democratic transition.

There are a number of avenues that future studies can improve on the current study. The first is to extend the time period under consideration. It is possible that the results are indicative of the time period examined and looking at a longer time frame would offer a stronger test of the two competing schools. A second is to examine the complex relationship between democratic transition failure, military spending, and economic growth. Previous studies have shown that military spending has a negative impact on economic growth.³⁶ If military spending does have a negative impact on economic growth, this relationship should be modeled along with how these two factors affect democratic transition success. In addition, the relationship between democratic transition failure, military spending, and social welfare spending needs to be examined. If military spending results in a reduction of social spending, there is the possibility that this could have a negative impact on democratic transition success. The current situation in Russia may provide a good example of these relationships, as military spending is expected to increase greatly in the upcoming years.³⁷ An examination of how the increased military spending in Russia affects economic growth or social spending as it relates to a potential further decline in democracy in Russia could provide a good starting point for studying these complex relationships. Additionally, the basic findings of this study would benefit from case studies dealing with the role of the military following democratic transitions. The current study has identified a general trend but a great deal more nuance can be learned from more in-depth, case-by-case examinations.

A third chance for improvement is through further refining the main independent variable of military spending. Future studies could examine even more varied measures of military spending to see if the operationalization of the measure has an impact on the results. In addition, a more thorough examination of the relationship between corruption and military resources could provide a step toward addressing the potential issues related to measurement error and military expenditures. Related to this, future studies could also more closely examine the handling of the military by democratic leaders. Democratic leaders may use a variety of different strategies in dealing with the military, some of which could alleviate potential stress related to decreasing the military budget and placate the military through other means. The different strategies used by democratic leaders in handling the military represent another dimension beyond budgetary outlays that may affect the likelihood of democratic transition failure.

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Notes

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Bio

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