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Katherine Joseph April 15, 2015

Blessing or Curse? The Effect of Foreign Military Aid on the Democratization Process

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Abstract

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Should ideological values, such as reinforcing democratic regimes, be a priority in the foreign policy agendas of countries like the U.S., or should the security and economic concerns of the donor country surpass the needs of the civilians on the ground in the recipient country? This study contributes to a larger dialogue of the role of military aid in foreign policy, and seeks to discern whether delivering millions of dollars in military aid to developing countries helps these countries build democratic institutions. It begins by showing that there has not been a sufficient and comprehensive investigation into the outcomes of military aid, and then explains the theoretical framework that justifies the belief that receiving military aid would affect a country's level of democracy, explaining the causal mechanisms. It examines the trends in the democracy score of countries that receive military aid and, controlling for external influences to democracy, concludes that foreign military aid has a negative effect on the democracy score of recipient countries.

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Introduction

Foreign military aid is intended to improve a recipient country's ability to deal with threats such as terrorism, and perhaps to improve human rights. The security forces in many developing countries are not accountable to the public, however, and they are not transparent about their activities and methods. The practice of providing assistance to repressive states raises a number of questions, the answers to which have significant policy implications. One question is whether U.S. military assistance has improved the accountability of these governments; or, does such aid reinforce suppression of political opposition to government, and allow autocratic regimes to use political or legal reforms to avoid recognizing opposition movements.

Furthermore, the arms trade is a major cause of many human rights abuses and continued conflicts. Some governments spend more on military expenditures than on social development, communications infrastructure and health combined.[1] While every nation has the right and the need to ensure its security, at this time, when many countries are facing internal ethnic, economic, and social conflict, countries might want to evaluate their arms requirements and procurements.

In the context of the premises set forth above, this study will seek to answer the question of whether foreign military aid transfers impact a country's propensity to experience democracy. The independent variable is therefore, military aid transfers and the dependent variable is the democracy score given to a country by the Freedom House and Polity framework for categorizing countries. These sources draw from the Universal

[1] Anup Shah, "The Arms Trade Is Big Business," *Global Issues*, 05 Jan. 2013 http://www.globalissues.org/article/74/the-arms-race-is-big-business (Accessed 07 Mar. 2015)

Declaration of Human Rights to highlight the fundamental components of freedom, offering a holistic perspective for studying the consequences of aid. Previous studies that have investigated this topic have fallen short by focusing on specific elements, such as human rights abuses (Blanton, 1999), the length of military rule in developing states, the occurrence of coups (Maniruzzaman, 1992) or internal stability (Donoso and Bike, 2006).

Throughout history, military entities have been concerned with much more than national defense. In modern times, virtually all Latin American and African nations have seen military interventions, often ending in military coups and the emergence of military dictatorships. There are also instances of military involvement in domestic politics, even in states that appear to be solid democracies. There is a political moral hazard problem present, as a repressive military can be both a blessing and a curse: it is built to protect a nation from external threats, but once created it often attempts to establish a military dictatorship, seizing power from democratic or oligarchic governments.[2] Although military aid is often given to bolster external security, the internal threat that militaries can pose creates a contemporary moral question about military aid: in a more globalized, value-minded international system, should countries give military aid if it is found to hurt the citizens of the recipient country?

Political arguments are frequently made for using military aid as a tool to encourage democratic institutions in recipient countries. Two examples of this include recent threats

[2] Daron Acemoglue, Davide Ticch, and Andrea Vindigni, "Democracy and the Military," *VOX CEPR's Policy Portal*, 16 June 2008. http://www.voxeu.org/article/democracy-and-military (accessed 22 Nov. 2014)

by the U.S. to use military aid to pressure Myanmar[3] to reinforce its democratic progress, and when the U.S. said it would cut military aid to Egypt in October of 2013 until the army-backed government took measures to reinstitute democratic institutions after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi.[4]

The hypothesis of this study is that despite what political advisors believe will most benefit recipient countries (and in turn, donor's own national security), military aid actually hurts a country's democratic status: first, because it both provides autocratic leadership with equipment that can become tools of repression, and second, because it removes the power of the people to hold leaders accountable for their actions, and gives it to the foreign power from whom that state receives aid.

The results of this study demonstrate that military aid has a negative influence on a country's likelihood to experience democracy. The findings are more robust for states that were non-democracies in 1990, the beginning of the time frame of this study. After reviewing the literature of both economic and military aid leading up to the Cold War period, this paper will address how the nature of aid changed during the Cold War, and discuss the structure of contemporary military aid. The logic behind why military aid would have an effect on a country's democracy, the methods used to investigate this relationship, and what the results of this study revealed will also be addressed.

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[3] Mark Landler and Thomas Fuller, "Obama Prods Myanmar Back Toward Democracy," *The New York Times*, 13 Nov. 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/14/world/asia/obama-will-try-to-push-myanmar-back-on-the-path-toward-democracy.html?_r=0 (accessed 2 Oct. 2014)

[4] Nicole Gaouette and Caroline Alexander, "U.S. Cuts Military Aid to Egypt, Seeks Move to Democracy," *Bloomberg.com*, 9 Oct. 2013, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-09/u-s-suspends-cash-and-equipment-assistance-to-egyptian-military.html (accessed 2 Oct. 2014)

Literature Review

In the past, there have been three main weaknesses in the existing literature on this topic: most of the existing studies focus on economic rather than military aid, much of the research and literature has been on the Cold War period and is limited to U.S. foreign military aid, and the majority of political scientists who have investigated military aid have focused on the question of what factors account for who receives military aid rather than the effects of aid itself on democracy. A different approach here will focus on military aid as the independent variable, and will look at trends in the data since the end of the Cold War throughout the world.

The History of Aid Research

Economic aid has been a topic of research since the mid-20th century when Development Theory started as a full discipline, spurred by thinkers such as Arthur Lewis (who received the Nobel memorial prize in economics in 1979 for his work.)[5] As a result of the global decolonization that took place in the 1950s and 1960s, the development needs of newly independent countries and the appropriate policies these countries should adopt were the main focus of many academics and policymakers alike. Shoultz (1981) was an early explorer of the effects of aid and determined that although aid in general was given to increase the overall well-being of poor people around the world, foreign aid had other goals as well, such as maintaining political power and alliances, and pressuring recipient countries into certain specified actions.

[5] Robert L. Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006)

McCormack and Mitchell (1988) were generally aligned with Schoultz's earlier findings but stated that human rights were not as important in determining U.S. aid as had previously been believed. They conducted a key study in the evolution of this field that showed that military aid correlated more strongly with human rights abuses than did more generalized aid. Apodaca and Stohl (1999) later conducted a much more comprehensive study that repositioned aid as the dependent variable, and determined that although the protection of human rights played a significant role in the allocation of economic aid, it did not affect the dispersal of military aid. The effects of military aid specifically, however, were not studied separately from economic aid until the end of the Cold War, when they began to be analyzed as a separate variable. The distribution of military aid during the Cold War period, however, had a framework that differed significantly from how military aid is viewed and used today.

Military Aid in the Cold War Period

In the post-World War II era U.S. aid focused on economic reconstruction through programs like the Marshall plan, but the focus of aid, particularly military aid, shifted at the beginning of the Cold War. In an early example of this shift, President Truman set forth the Truman Doctrine policy in a speech on March of 1947, stating that the U.S. would support Greece and Turkey with economic and military aid to prevent their falling into the Soviet communist sphere. During the Cold War, military aid was a significant concern in the foreign policies of both the Eastern and Western blocs. The U.S. and Soviet Union both viewed arms-supply programs as a means of strengthening the self-defense capabilities of friendly states (both for their external and internal defense) and of

spreading their own political influence, especially among geographically strategic or resource-rich states. Consequently, during this period the U.S. often supported anti-democratic regimes in regions such as Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia and even parts of Africa. This was often due to the concern (real, faked, or misguided) that Soviet influence would gain a foothold in those regions. The result of this aid contest was that fledgling democracies often found themselves fighting foreign-backed forces, which they often had little chance of countering.

In some cases, arms transfers were used as a payoff for political favors, such as when the U.S. sent arms to El Salvador and Honduras in return for their support of the Nicaraguan Contras; or, alternatively, as a means of funneling arms to insurgent and revolutionary forces in a region, such as when Moscow supplied weapons to Cuba in order for that island country to send guerrilla forces to other countries.

Political scientists reviewed Cold War arms transfers to determine the effect of military aid on inter-state conflict, indicating that political instability due to conflict may be particularly affected by military aid. There is a large realist-vs.-idealist debate in the literature over whether arms transfers have led to an increase or decrease in overall regional and global conflict, and the resulting political stability of countries involved, but the resulting research has been inconclusive. Kemp and Stahl (1991) argued the idealist approach, that the only way to prevent war is disarmament, and their logic was that the Cold War system promoted global militarization and had therefore either directly or indirectly exacerbated conflicts.

A realist approach, on the other hand, questions whether an increase in militarism resulted in negative consequences at all. This hypothesis focuses on the idea that arms

transfers from the two superpowers during the Cold War actually had a restraining effect on violent conflict, acting as a deterrent, and preserved global peace throughout the second half of the 20th century (Kinsella 2002). Arms transfers embody both military capability and political support, creating a leverage defined as the "manipulation of the arms transfer relationship in order to coerce or induce a recipient-state to conform its policy or actions to the desires of the supplier-state" (Wheelock 1978, 123). Sanjian (1999) finds, however, that instability models are stronger than models that show stability from arms transfers, and that the two superpowers destabilized both the political and military relationships between the donors and recipients by transferring arms.

Overall, Cold War literature on the effectiveness of military aid is inconclusive, but it does provide principles that remain relevant to contemporary debates, as the consequences of military aid and the idea of leverage are still very relevant in the global aid system. The debate over the effect of military aid on state stability also has implications for the effect of aid on democracy, as the causal mechanisms may be similar - for example the use of aid as leverage. Supplier governments can exert military aid as leverage to encourage institutional changes.

Furthermore, the realist-idealist debate is also relevant to the question of democracy. In this context, the idealist approach would argue, as per Kemp and Stahl, that the only way to encourage peace would be disarmament, and that military aid provides arms that will eventually be used for some form of repression. The realist approach, conversely, can be shaped to argue that providing arms to states facing external threats will provide those states with enough strength to deter other states from initiating conflict. William Thompson (1996) argues that participation in warfare affects a country's inclination to

democratize, and that being able to deter external threats can, in turn, affect a country's democratization. Thompson says that the nature of war can often support more authoritarian approaches to both resource allocation and decision-making, and therefore a state's involvement in warfare can influence a regime towards consolidating state power and, subsequently, authoritarianism. He states, "Whether relatively authoritarian or democratic at the outset, political systems are quite likely to become more authoritarian as they become engaged in crises of national security."(Thompson, 1996, 144) While the absence of warfare does not necessarily lead to less authoritarianism within a state, it does allow for the diffusion of political power within the state. Therefore, he continues, regions of relative peace can facilitate the evolution of political participation. Aaron Friedberg further discusses this question in his 1996 book, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy*, arguing that the threat of war encourages states to stifle internal opposition in order to build military might, discussing how the U.S. avoided this trend due to the suspicion of state power on which the country was founded. Due to the possible similarity of outcome between stability and democracy, Sanjian's (1999) findings, which show that the instability models are stronger, have influenced the hypothesis of this essay about the effects of military aid on democracy. It is important, however, to consider how military aid will have different results in today's international climate than it did during the Cold War period.

Military Aid in the Post-Cold War Period

There are reasons to think that the effects of foreign aid might change in the post-Cold War environment, as the international environment, and therefore the nature of

foreign policy, has been different since the fall of the Soviet Union, the demise of the bipolarity between the East and the West, and the end of the Communist threat. Meernik, Krueger, and Poe (1998) researched the change in U.S. foreign policy during and after the Cold War, testing the system-level, societal-level and state-level explanations of U.S. foreign policy behavior. They hypothesized that as security concerns assume a less prominent role during eras of relative peace and security (Kingley, 1993), their results would indicate that the security-driven imperatives of the system-level approach would decline in importance while the ideological goals associated with the state-level approach would increase in the era after the Cold War. This is partly due, they argued, to the findings that states that have international power have substantial incentives to remake the world in their own image (Krasner 1978, 340) and socialize leaders in other states to their norms and values (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990). Their findings showed that, although the three approaches were similarly important in explaining U.S. behavior in both eras, the security-driven goals have become less critical and ideological goals more important with the passing of the Cold War. They concluded that the end of the Cold War re-oriented the goal of U.S. foreign policy away from national security, and policymakers were now able to focus more attention and resources towards promoting U.S. ideological values, such as democracy and human rights.

The predominant focus of more contemporary literature about foreign military aid, however, has been the effect of democratic institutions on how military aid is allocated (Meernik, et al, 1995; Blanton 1999, 2005), and has focused on U.S. military aid. Several studies have had military aid is the dependent variable, while they investigate how human rights conditions, freedom of speech, political stability, and other indicators of democracy

affect whether a country receives aid, especially after President Carter announced a policy to support and prioritize human rights in the 1970s. The consensus in the existing literature about the relationship between arms transfers and democratic institutions in receiving states is that there is no consensus – the only clear outcome is that the factors driving this relationship are complex and multifaceted.

John Sislin (1994) discovered that there is, in fact, a relationship between the allocation of military aid and certain characteristics of a recipient state, the recipient-supplier interaction, and the supplier state. For the recipient state he highlighted six factors: regime type, international conflict (those involved in international conflict required more military aid), security threats (those with current or future security threats were also more susceptible to influence), civil strife, resources, and indigenous arms production. He included three characteristics of the recipient-supplier interaction: dependence on supplier arms (as a supplier can make a recipient dependant on that supplier's arms through its arms export policy, for example by training the recipient state's army and giving them a military strategy that requires arms that only that specific supplier can deliver), trade dependence (the recipient's dependence on the supplier for other relations, for example economic trade, that a recipient may fear it will lose if it does not adhere to the supplier's influence), and precedent (past attempts at building relationships) that might affect the outcome of a current attempt (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978)). Sislin also outlined two key characteristics of the supplier: supplier unity (the division of powers and the checks and balances system), and presidential style (the idea that presidents have a certain style that is translated into presidential power and

subsequently into policy outcomes). Sislin also proposed the existence of systemic variables that affect aid relationships, including hegemony and superpower relations.

The main contribution of Sislin's study, however, was the focus on aid as an influencer of other states' policies, and on how the power dynamic between two states can affect aid delivery. He described how the recipient state might be engaged in a behavior the supplier does not desire, and that the recipient might obtain more value in noncompliance with the supplier than in compliance. The supplier prefers that the recipient change its behavior in line with the supplier's wishes, because the supplier will somehow benefit more by the recipient's compliance. Sislin posited the evident dilemma that spurs aid: The recipient does not want to change while the supplier does not like the current status quo. This was one of the first conclusions about which situations would prompt military aid delivery.

Other studies have focused on human rights records and democratic institutions as factors that increase the likelihood of receiving military aid from the U.S. (Meernik et al 1998). But few have looked at whether that aid has a positive or negative effect on democratic indicators, such as human rights, free elections, a free media, and the absence of civil ethnic or religious conflicts. This study will focus on aid allocation as the independent rather than the dependent variable.

Causal Mechanisms

There are reasons to believe that foreign military aid does, in fact, affect democracy. One mechanism, as previously discussed is the leverage exerted through a country's dependence on military aid. If a country fears losing the favor of a country from which it

regularly receives aid, that country will likely be more inclined to adhere to conditions coming with the aid, including a requirement of increased democratization. A second way that military aid would promote democracy is by protecting against external influences that could threaten the stability of internal democratic institutions within a country. For example, ethnic conflicts tend to cross borders, especially between countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America. Stronger military capabilities enable countries that adjoin states in conflict to keep their borders open and absorb refugees without allowing the fighting to also cross the border into its own country. Refugees can also strain a country's infrastructure by overwhelming its education system, economy, and social services; this can lead to susceptibility in that state to political instability and perceived weakness by enemies, and a strong military can help prevent advantage being taken of such a destabilized host state.

This study about military aid is important: although the debate over the dangers of economic aid has been extensively investigated in the literature, military aid is often provided without apparent consideration of the consequences. The intention of this study is to offer policy implications for choices that countries make. Furthermore, a country like the U.S., which has strong international influence and wields immense power in the allocation of military aid to developing countries, can influence the policy of other countries, and therefore should be especially sensitive to the effects of its own policies. As Ikenberry and Kupchan write, "Elites in secondary states buy into and internalize norms that are articulated by the hegemon and therefore pursue policies consistent with the hegemon's notion of international order" (1990, 283). This would indicate that it is

possible that the U.S. and other large aid providers would have a greater positive effect if they decreased arms sales to other countries.

The effects of military aid may also influence the behavior of the leaders of the recipient countries. For example, Kinsella (1998) stated that, "conflictual behavior is discouraged by vulnerability to interruptions in the supply of military capability" (Kinsella 1998,18)**.** Therefore, if military aid is conditional on certain democratic institutions being present in the recipient state, and military aid tends to lead countries to democratize, recipient countries can use that trend to advocate for more aid. Therefore, the suggestions that emanate from a study like this one raise important considerations for the leaders of both aid-providing and aid-receiving countries. This study will also contribute to political scientists' understanding of international relations, as it relates to the use of leverage, contemporary alliances, and the security of national interests abroad.

It is important to determine the effect of military aid on autocratically led countries, focusing specifically on efforts to democratize. There are several reasons to question the efficacy of military aid in encouraging countries to democratize. For example, Blanton (1999) attempted to challenge the assumption that arms deliveries would not cause internal conflict or violence, and challenged whether, although arms transfers are designed to protect against external threats, they could be used as a means of internal repression of civil rights. Blanton stated that "by providing the means for violence, arms enables groups to choose brutal forms of political action" (Blanton 1999, 235) and determined this hypothesis to be true in her study, as she found a positive correlation between arms imports and repression of human rights. Her study, however, was limited because it only looked at human rights violations by recipient governments

and primarily looks at the Cold War period. Lee (2011), in a more recent study, did, however, look at the post-Cold War era, although she limited her study to U.S. aid, and also found that U.S. foreign aid (the aggregate of both economic and military aid) negatively impacts a government's respect for human rights in the recipient countries. She argued that despite the intention of the aid-giving administrators to promote human rights, the correlation is negative, and that the increase in foreign assistance from the U.S. leads to less protection of human rights.

Another reason to challenge the efficacy of military aid in democratic efforts lies in the fundamental principles of democracy itself. Although "democracy" arguably remains one of the most debated concepts, accountability would be assumed as a basic element of the concept - the accountability of a recipient country's leadership to the people it represents for its management of public affairs. Accountability requires those who hold power – whether that power is channeled through resources, material wealth, or symbolic authority – to give an account of the use of those resources and offer (or accept) corrective action when necessary. Therefore, if a foreign government is providing the resources to maintain an autocratic leader in power, that leader can bypass the people he (or she) represents.[6] Military aid can interrupt the ability of people in non-democracies to influence their government's military capabilities. If governments do not need to tax their citizens for the necessary funds to build military capabilities, they are not obligated to uphold their commitment to social and civic freedoms that democracy requires.

Following the above reasoning this study asserts that military aid will hurt the democratizing efforts of developing countries, both because it provides autocratic

[6] Devesh Kapur and Dennis Whittle, "Can the Privatization of Foreign Aid Enhance Accountability." *International Law and Politics* 24, (2009), 1143–80.

leadership with equipment that can become tools of repression, and because it removes the power of the people to hold leaders accountable for their actions, and transfers that accountability power to the foreign donor state.

Research Design and Data

This study investigates two different but related hypotheses to investigate first the effect of military aid on democratic institutions, and then whether military aid affects democratic states and non-democratic states differently.

Hypothesis 1: Receiving a higher average military aid will decrease a country's democracy score.

Hypothesis 2: Military aid will have a more negative effect on non-democracies than it has on countries that already have stable democratic institutions.

The first step of the analysis is to test the empirical prediction of whether receiving higher levels of military aid affects a country's democracy score positively or negatively. Both the independent and dependent variables are continuous in this model. It is true that the Polity score – from -10 to 10 – is not technically continuous, but it is treated as such in the literature and and will be so for the purposes of this study. Therefore, this study will use a multivariate regression model, as a regression analysis is used to predict a continuous dependent variable from a number of independent variables. The regression model will determine whether the independent variable, military aid, is statistically significant in affecting the democracy score of a country. The level of analysis is,

therefore, at the country level. Conducting a large-N study provides strong external validity and also naturally controls for possible influences on democracy, such as geography and climate.

Variables

Independent Variable

Donoson and Bike (2006) broke military aid down into three components: Foreign Military Financing, a line of credit of direct grants given to a country; Total Foreign Military Sales Deliveries, consisting of the total material, services, or construction delivered to a country; and International Military Education and Training (IMET) which is the total value of foreign military training delivered either oversees or conducted within the U.S. This study will focus on one of these components: the Total Foreign Military Sales Deliveries, or alternatively termed the military transfers.

The independent variable, Arms Imports, comes from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and covers the supply of military weapons through sales, aid, gifts, and transfers made through manufacturing licenses. It collects data that cover major conventional weapons such as aircraft, armored vehicles, artillery, radar systems, missiles, and ships designed for military use. The SIPRI database on military expenditure currently covers data for 172 countries, and figures are presented in constant (2011) US$. Military expenditure data measured in constant dollars are a trend indicator of the volume of resources used for military activities, which allow comparisons to be made over time for individual countries and between different countries.

SIPRI military expenditures data are based only on open sources, including a SIPRI questionnaire that is sent out annually to all countries included in the database. For some NATO member states, and for most data on then-NATO members before 1988, NATO's annual press release on Financial and Economic Data on NATO Defense is a key source to track military expenditures. The collected data are processed to achieve consistent time series, which are, to the extent possible, in accordance with the SIPRI definition of military expenditure.

The main source of SIPRI data comes from primary sources, that is, official data provided by national governments, either in their official publications or in response to questionnaires. This category consists of national budget documents, defense white papers and public finance statistics published by ministries of finance and of defense, central banks and national statistical offices. It also includes government responses to questionnaires about military expenditure sent out by SIPRI, the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and expert analyses of government budgets by members of the SIPRI Military Expenditure and Arms Production Expert Network. As a general rule, SIPRI takes national data to be accurate until there is convincing information to the contrary.

There are also secondary sources, some of which quote primary data. This second category includes international statistics, such as those produced by NATO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Data for most NATO countries are taken from NATO defense expenditure statistics as published in a number of NATO sources. Data for many developing countries are taken from the IMF's Government Financial Statistics Yearbook, which provides a defense line for most of its member countries. This category

also includes the publications of other organizations that provide proper references to the primary sources used. The three main sources in this category are the Europa Yearbook (Europa Publications Ltd, London), Country Reports of the Economist Intelligence Unit (London), and Country Reports by IMF staff.

Although a lack of sufficiently detailed data makes it difficult to apply a common definition of military expenditure on a worldwide basis, SIPRI has adopted a definition as a guideline. Where possible, SIPRI military expenditure data include all current and capital expenditure on: (a) the armed forces, including peacekeeping forces; (b) defense ministries and other government agencies that are engaged in defense developments; (c) paramilitary forces, when judged to be properly trained and equipped for military campaigns; and (d) military space activities. Such expenditures should include: (1) military and civil personnel, including retirement pensions of military personnel, as well as social services for personnel; (2) operations and maintenance; (3) military research and development; and (4) military aid (recorded in the military expenditure of the donor country). In practice it is not possible to apply this definition for all countries, since this would require much more detailed information than is usually available about what is included in military budgets and off-budget military expenditure items.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, created by the Quality of Governance, transforms both Freedom House and Polity data into the same scale and then averages the two into a Freedom House Polity score. The Freedom House *Freedom in the World* survey provides an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom as experienced by individuals. The

survey measures freedom—the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination—according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the public. Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.

The survey does not rate governments or government performance, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals within each country. Thus, while Freedom House considers the presence of legal rights, it places a greater emphasis on whether such rights are implemented in practice. This method takes into account the assumption that freedoms can be affected by government officials, as well as by non-state actors, including insurgents and other armed groups.

Furthermore, Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of freedom. The methodology of the survey is grounded in basic standards of political rights and civil liberties, derived predominately from relevant portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These standards apply to all countries and territories, regardless of geographical location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. The survey operates from the assumption that freedom for all peoples is best achieved in democratic societies.

The survey includes both analytical reports and numerical ratings for 195 countries and 14 select territories; its findings are reached after a multilayered process of analysis and evaluation by a team of regional experts and scholars. Although there is an element of subjectivity inherent in the survey findings, the ratings process emphasizes balanced, unbiased judgments. The analysts use a broad range of sources of information—including foreign and domestic news reports, academic analyses, nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, individual professional contacts, and visits to the region—in preparing the country and territory reports and ratings.

The ratings process is based on a checklist of 10 political rights questions and 15 civil liberties questions. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process, Political Pluralism and Participation, and Functioning of Government. The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief, Associational and Organizational Rights, Rule of Law, and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights. Scores are awarded to each of these questions on a scale of 0 to 4, where a score of 0 represents the smallest degree and 4 the greatest degree of rights or liberties present.

The Polity conceptual scheme is unique in that it examines simultaneous characteristics of democratic and autocratic authority in governing institutions, rather than discrete and mutually exclusive forms of government leadership. This method creates a spectrum of governing authority that spans from fully institutionalized autocracies through mixed, or incoherent, authority regimes, to fully institutionalized democracies. The Polity Score captures this regime authority spectrum on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy). The

Polity score consists of six elements that record key qualities of executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority and political competition. The dataset covers all independent states with a total population greater than 500,000 over the period of 1800-2013. It is important to note that the Polity data only contain information on the institutions of the central government and on political groups acting within that authority's state apparatus. The data do not address groups and territories that are actively removed from that authority, for example, separatists or "fragments" that are considered separate, though not independent polities, or movements within the population that are not yet sufficiently politically active in the context of central state politics.

This combined variable is a good source for this measure because it includes several different components of democracy and therefore gives a strong overarching picture of the democratic situation in a given country. The dependent variable in this study is the change in the Democracy Score that a given country sees between 1990 and 2012 (either positive or negative.) The singular weakness in using Freedom House, however, is that it will not be able to discern where some political practices might be more sensitive to military aid than others. That is a weakness of this study and is something that should be considered for further investigation.

Control Variables

To estimate the impact of military aid on democracy, it is crucial to control for factors (identified by scholars) that might also affect a country's propensity to experience democracy. To ensure that the observed variation in the democratization experienced by different states is caused by the military aid rather than another factor, several variables

will be added to the model to control for other potential influences on democracy. These variables include: (1) Change in GDP per capita over the time frame of the study (1990-2012), (2) Average Fuel Exports as a percent of merchandise exports (1990-2012), (3) Average Openness to Trade (1990-2012), and (4) Past democratic experience. It is important to control for these variables because each of them could cause an increase or decrease in the level of democracy in a country.

For example, the Resource Curse Theory (which might fit into Average Fuel Exports variable above) argues that a country rich in natural resources will suffer higher levels of corruption and a higher likelihood of experiencing autocratic leadership. This is because the revenues gained from the natural resources are usually controlled by the state, which can use them to prevent democratization, and can also eliminate taxation if the natural resources are sufficient; this will result in the loss of a primary mechanism of accountability to the people. Therefore, controlling for fuel as a percentage of the exports of each country helps to control for this possibility.

Similarly, there has been extensive research investigating the relationship between globalization and democracy. In his study, Doces (2006) explained the relationship between these two phenomena, and described the process by which an increase in trade leads to more democratic representation. Based on the Heckscher-Ohlin model, Doces discussed how trade with other countries creates an income gain for the abundant factor in the developing country: labor. Consequently, labor's income gain increases the benefit to workers from political activity, and thus leads to more democracy. In addition, other studies have shown that the exchange of goods and services can serve as a conduit for the exchange of ideas, and that a more diverse range of ideas encourages political

competition (Eichengreen and Leblang, 2006). Therefore, using a control variable for Openness to Trade is one way to control for the influence of globalization on a country's democratic experience.

Additionally, GDP is important because a country's economic progress has important implications for its efforts to democratize. In Seymour Lipset's 1959 work, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Development*, he first established the theoretical link between the level of development of a certain country and the probability that it will sustain democracy. This notion has since become broadly accepted and is referred to as Modernization Theory. To Lipset, modernization manifested itself largely through changing social conditions that fostered democratic values of tolerance rather than regime-specific ideologies of hostility. This observation has been corroborated through further empirical evidence (e.g. Barro, 1999, Glaeser et al., 2004) Several variables that implicate socio-economic development can also influence democracy, including those that positively correlate with democracy such as GDP per capita, primary schooling, gender equality, middle-class share of income, as well as those that tend to negatively correlate with democracy, including urbanization and reliance on natural resources. A bivariate analysis of several of these variables determined that there was significant multi-colinearity between several of them; thus only GDP per capita has been included in this model. The required GDP data will come from The Quality of Government Institute's "standard" dataset, which includes these indicators, and includes a country-code variable that is largely compatible with the codes used in the Sipri data.

Lastly, Finkel et. al. (2006) raised the question of accounting for a country's

"normal" growth or decline of democracy occurring in the period being studied. In their study, they did this by employing growth models that were appropriate for this problem. There are several ways to control for democratic experience, and each has costs and benefits. For example it is possible to simply use the cumulative number of years under democracy, but that does not account for the fact that one country could have ten years of democracy in the mid 1800s and another could have experienced democracy in the ten years preceding this study. Additionally, some studies have used the cumulative number of turnovers of the chief executive (Boix and Stokes, 2011) as a measure of instability, or simply the number of transitions from democracy to dictatorship that a country has experienced (Houle, 2009), as countries that have been victims of multiple *coups* in the past are more likely to experience *coups* in the future. In addition the relationship between the elites and the general population is likely to vary between countries that have democratic experience and those that do not. This study uses two separate controls for past and current democratic experience, so that the model takes into account that not all countries are at the same democratic score in the beginning of the study time frame, and that they have diverse backgrounds of democratic experience tied to different religious, colonial, and cultural histories. To ensure that there is no multi-colinearity in the model, a correlation was run between these two variables showing that they only had a correlation coefficient of 0.5382.

Figure 1: Summary Statistics of Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	# of Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Change in Freedom House/Imputed Polity Score, start of panel to end (1990-2012)	192	.7157063	2.13947	-6.708055	7.40305
Average Arms Imports (1990-2012)	173	1.47e+08	2.85e+08	0	1.84e+09
Change in World Bank GDP/capita PPP measure, start of panel to end (1990-2012)	178	3270.93	5591.678	-31208.47	29969.54
Average Fuel Exports (% of Merchandise Exports) (1990-2012)	172	16.18616	27.11684	0	96.58056
Average Openness to Trade (1990-2012)	183	81.41013	41.71727	1.99492	343.0876
Number of Years of Democratic Rule since 1800 in 1990 or start of panel	193	16.27461	31.36815	0	191
Value of Freedom House/Imputed Polity Score in 1990	193	5.601318	3.434367	.25	10

Limitations

There are limitations in the data collection methods available for this study as well as in the variables selected. The chief concern is the number of independent variables for which the model will not control. The breadth of literature on the topic of democracy demonstrates the extremely complex and multifaceted nature of both building and sustaining democratic institutions. As previously stated, the model will include some alternative explanations for democratization, but it is never possible to control for all possible outside influences.

In addition, all attempts to measure a concept such as democracy – and all indicators that are based on subjective interpretations – are bound to be uncertain and contested. So also with the Polity Project, which is sometimes criticized for relying on a too minimalist definition of democracy and for not offering a theoretical justification for the way the component variables are aggregated to a single regime index. On the other hand, the Polity indices are among the most widely used indices of democracy and are often given credit for the reliability of the index: the coding rules are clearly specified in the users' manual, the component variables are presented in disaggregate form, and several independent coders are used in the coding process.

A certain amount of data are missing, resulting in minor technical limitations to the research. Data might be missing for varied reasons. One reason is the difficulty in monitoring covert aid; as its name implies, covert aid is generally unreported, either to the public or to monitoring institutions, and can often be large sums. Additionally, the nature of country coding before, during, and after the Cold War made merging data sources difficult; consequently certain countries that have not had a consistent identity or sovereignty throughout the study's time frame had to be dropped, such as Sudan (which is sometimes coded Sudan, sometimes separated into North and South). Furthermore, monitoring for some states is simply not possible, possibly due to their political or social status during those years, and so data are simply missing for certain countries in particular years. Given these concerns, the data and results demonstrated here need to be read with some caution. Nevertheless, the conclusions formed through this data do have the potential to provide insight into the effects of foreign military aid.

Results/Empirical Analysis

The theoretical argument, the empirical expectations, and the alternative arguments can be examined against the evidence by utilizing several statistical models to look at different angles of the causal relationship. The statistical analysis begins first with a model to determine the effect of aid on democracy, as described above. Figure 2 provides the analysis for the first hypothesis tested in this study: receiving military aid will decrease a country's democracy score.

Figure 2: Standard Regression Model Testing the Relationship Between Foreign Military Aid and Polity Score

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	P-value
Arms Imports	-9.64e-10	5.19e-10	-1.86	0.0325
Change in World Bank GDP/capita PPP measure, start of panel to end	.0000931	.0000334	2.78	0.003
Average Fuel Exports (% of Merchandise Exports)	-.0253759	.0056722	-4.47	0.00
Average Openness to Trade	-.004049	.003841	-1.05	0.147
Number of Years of Democratic Rule since 1800 in 1990 or start of panel	.0069844	.0057957	1.21	0.115
Value of Freedom House/Imputed Polity Score in 1990	-.4829787	.0631015	-7.65	0.000

Number of Observations=154, R-squared=0.3505, P-values are reported for a one-tailed significance test

The analysis offers a range of interesting insights into the effect of aid on democratization. The first and probably most obvious conclusion is that Arms Imports is statistically significant to the change in Polity score (p-value of 0.0215, clearly below the accepted threshold of 0.05). In other words, there is only a 3.25 in a 100 chance that there

is no relationship between democratization and the foreign military aid a country receives, and therefore the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between military aid and democracy can be rejected. Once we determine that military aid is a significant predictor of democracy, it is important to more closely examine the relationship between the two variables. For example, is the relationship positive or negative? The direction of the relationship between military aid and democracy is determined by looking at the regression coefficient associated with the Arms Imports variable. Since the coefficient of the Arms Imports variable is negative, the model has shown that as military aid increases, there is a negative effect on the democracy score.

The second hypothesis this study examines is that military aid will have more of a negative impact on non-democracies than it does on democracies. Military aid delivered to democratic countries can help those countries defend against destabilizing forces, such as insurgencies or terrorist organizations, allowing them to strengthen their democratic and social institutions. On the other hand, Wright (2009) explained the basic premise of why military aid would affect democracies and autocracies very differently. He argued that if democratizing reforms are likely to cause incumbent to lose power in elections, aid will not be used for democratic reform. This is true even if there is conditionality attached to the aid, and that, "The promise of higher aid if the country democratizes only provides an incentive for democratization for political leaders who expect to remain in office after democratization occurs." (Wright, 2009, 554) On the one hand, this means that dictators who have a good chance of maintaining their power in fair elections might have incentive to democratize so that they receive more aid from donors; on the other hand, military aid delivered to autocratic regimes that are less likely to survive political liberalization in

power will only be used to help those leaders maintain their autocratic power. Therefore, the efficacy of aid in promoting democratic institutions in autocratic regimes will vary based on the chances of a dictator surviving that political liberalization. Furthermore, autocratic regimes may become more consolidated over time, and therefore the likelihood that the country will experience a transition to democracy decreases with the time a regime has been in power. Gleditch and Choung (2004) divided up the usually-residual category of non-democracies, typically defined in terms of what they are not, and studied the differences between transitions to democracy between stable and unstable autocratic regimes – those where the regime or coalition remains in power as opposed to non-democracies that experience abrupt changes in political leadership and institutions. They found in their study that there was strong evidence of consolidation among stable autocratic regimes, and that the length of time a regime has been in power is negatively associated with the chance that the regime will experience change.

To determine the validity of this argument, and see whether military aid has a different effect on democracies and non-democracies, two regression models were run that separated the countries in the sample based on their democratic status at the beginning of the study's time frame. Countries were divided between democracies and non-democracies based on the Boix-Miller-Rosato dichotomous coding of democracy, which covers 219 countries from 1800 to 2012.[7] Figures 3 and 4 show the results below.

[7] Carles Boix, Michael K. Miller, and Sebastian Rosato, "A Complete Data Set of Political Regimes, 1800-2007." *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no.12 (2013), 1523-54.

Figure 3: Standard Regression Model Testing the Relationship Between Foreign Military Aid and Polity Score for States with Democratic Status in 1990

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	P-value
Arms Imports	-7.92e-10	6.81e-10	-1.16	0.125
Change in World Bank GDP/capita PPP measure, start of panel to end	.000182	.000056	3.25	0.001
Average Fuel Exports (% of Merchandise Exports)	-.0496591	.0126051	-3.94	0.000
Average Openness to Trade	-.0072194	.0070776	-1.02	0.156
Number of Years of Democratic Rule since 1800 in 1990 or start of panel	.0019817	.006091	0.33	0.373
Value of Freedom House/Imputed Polity Score in 1990	-.4019459	.1755299	-2.29	0.0125

Number of Observations=69, R-squared=0.3131, P-values are reported for a one-tailed significance test

Figure 4: Standard Regression Model Testing the Relationship Between Foreign Military Aid and Polity Score for States with Non-Democratic Status in 1990

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	P-value
Arms Imports	-1.72e-09	8.94e-10	-1.93	0.0285
Change in World Bank GDP/capita PPP measure, start of panel to end	.0000542	.0000431	1.26	0.1065
Average Fuel Exports (% of Merchandise Exports)	-.0193848	.0069378	-2.79	0.0035
Average Openness to Trade	-.0042743	.0049574	-0.86	0.1955
Number of Years of Democratic Rule since 1800 in 1990 or start of panel	-.0235572	.0464158	-0.51	0.3065
Value of Freedom House/Imputed Polity Score in1990	-.4234384	.1249695	-3.39	0.0005

Number of observations=85, R-squared=0.2343, P-values reported for a one-tailed significance test

The above tables demonstrate that, in fact, the effect of military aid is different when applied to democracies verses non-democracies. The effect of military aid on democracies is not statistically significant, while the effect on non-democracies is statistically significant. Additionally, as expected, military aid to non-democracies has a negative effect on the Freedom House/Polity Score. It is also important to note that the variable for Fuel Exports is also statistically significant, and that the effect is negative. This, too, adheres to what we would expect based on the resource curse literature. The cause of this negative effect can be due, as previously stated, to the rent-seeking model based on the assumption that resource rents can be appropriated by the government and, therefore, replace taxation and remove the need for accountability. In addition, there are also the causal mechanisms of Dutch disease, a theory positing that an abundance of natural resources pressures production factors to shift away from sectors that are most important for growth so that economic development suffers in the long run (Andersen and Aslaksen, 2006).

It is important to recognize the practical as well as the statistical significance of the relationship between military aid and democratization, what it implies in real terms. Looking further into this model, it is also important to understand whether these results are substantively significant, and how these two variables – military aid and fuel exports – compare to the change exhibited by the Polity Score. To understand the real world significance of the effect of military aid, the Arms Imports coefficient can be interpreted to read that for every unit increase in aid, there is a negative 1.72e-09 change in Polity Score, holding all other controls constant. In other words, for every $1,000,000 increase in military aid, there is a .00172 drop in the Polity Score, if everything else is held

constant. Although this change may appear to be minimal, if we consider that the average aid package in the data is $147,000,000 (see Figure 3) this small effect can quickly become quite substantial.

Additionally the Fuel Exports variable can be interpreted using the same method. Based on the regression coefficient, it is clear that for every unit increase in the average fuel exports as a percent of the merchandise exports, there is a .0193848 drop in the Polity Score, holding all other variables in the model constant. This can be quite significant, considering the range observed in the Fuel Exports variable from 0 to almost 96% (see Figure 3).

It is also important to explore the standard deviations of these two significant variables. The standard deviation of Arms Imports is 2.85e+08 (Figure 3), meaning that the individual responses deviate by $285,000,000 from the mean, showing that the responses are widely spread. Similarly, the Fuel Exports variable has a standard deviation of 27.11684, so the distribution of the individual responses around the mean is just over 27 percentage points. Furthermore, in order to compare the effect of these two variables on the dependent variable, Freedom House/Polity Score, this study determined the effect of one standard deviation in both the Arms Imports and Fuel Exports variables on the dependent variable. One standard deviation in the Arms Imports variable had an effect on the dependent variable of -.4914 units, and the Fuel Export variable had an effect on the dependent variable of -.5257 units. Therefore we can see that these two variables have a very similar effect a country's democracy score, but also that the Fuel Exports have slightly more influence.

Conclusion

The results presented in this study reveal a mixed narrative about recent trends in the relationship between military aid and democratic development. On the one hand, military aid clearly has a negative influence on non-democracies when controlling for the variables that are included in the model. Granted there are several other variables that can influence democracy (as previously discussed) and therefore there might be variables missing from the model that would be possible causes of democracy, but the study found robust results that demonstrate there is a relationship. On the other hand, the results were not able to statistically determine whether military aid has any effect on countries that are already experiencing democracy when they receive the aid.

Furthermore, although this analysis identified a relationship between military aid and democratization, the question remains: what is the causal process through which this relatively abstract and distant concept of military aid actually operates on the ground, leading to its effects on democratization? Future studies could conduct empirical qualitative research to probe the causal pathways or mechanisms linking these two phenomena; such research would lend more plausibility to the conclusions within this study, and would also deepen our general understanding of the barriers faced by democratizing societies.

It is difficult to say exactly what applicable conclusions can be drawn from the new information exposed in this study. Some of the theories discussed above point to the benefits of military aid, and it is understandable that donor countries would try to promote democracy abroad, as there are myriad benefits to a world of democracies. Such

a world would advance the security and economic interests of many developed countries, and the benefits - to list a few - would include a reduction in threats, fewer refugees attempting to enter neighboring countries, and better economic partners for trade and investment. It is clear, however, that countries should be wary of giving military aid with the expectation that democratization will follow. The the assumption that military aid will promote democracy is subject to challenges on several fronts, including reducing the need for taxation, thereby reducing the demand for democratic accountability (Knack, 2004), increasing the power of the executive, even in democracies (Bräutigam, 2000), or even increasing instability by making control of the government apparatus and aid receipts a more valuable prize.

The research set forth above also serves to illustrate the potential for monitoring the effect of military aid on key democratic institutions in recipient countries. Given the constant, heated public debate surrounding the issue of foreign military aid, it is important to be able to measure both the benefits and costs of such aid, and this new research can further inform discussion focused on the quantitative side of the debate.

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