

A New Chapter in Military Interventions:

The Effect of Military Expenditure on Military Interventions

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The military has had a significant role in Latin American society since the time of independence. Many military leaders led the anti-colonial movements that ultimately assisted countries to achieve independence from Spanish colonization. Latin American politics have historically been marked by military regimes. The military forms part of the culture and society of the western hemisphere. Traditionally, the armed forces ruled the region for years, obtaining power through interventions and military coup d'état. Nevertheless, since the end of the Cold War, Latin America continues to witness conditions of instability and characteristics that were crucial to nurture military regimes in the past. However, these continuous tendencies remain in the region without producing military rulers, as the power of Latin America's militaries have been altered and the region began to witness a relative absence of military interventions.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the decline in military regimes by analyzing the relationship between military expenditure and military intervention. It argues that the decline in military spending by Latin American countries have contributed to the decrease in military interventions and coups. For this paper, I will borrow Needler's assumption that "military intervention is increasingly directed against legally elected presidents heading constitutional regimes;" therefore, military interventions result in military coup d'états. Latin American military no longer possesses the resources, nor the budgets to afford interventions which results in a decline in militarism. It is noteworthy that military spending is not the only factor contributing to the lack of military interventions, nor is the most significant variable; however, this study focuses on military spending, because it is an independent variable that has been overlooked. To demonstrate

this phenomenon, this paper will analyze case studies on Argentina, Chile and Honduras by drawing observations through the use of data during the periods of 1970 through 2012. Argentina and Chile were selected at random from a list of countries that have experienced military regimes and are currently under civilian rule, in order to explore the different patterns of military spending throughout the period being studied. Honduras was chosen because it was the last country to experience a military coup. The analysis will also include data on military spending patterns, as well as personnel and military expenditure per country Gross National Product (GNP).

From the beginning, Latin America's conditions, especially in the 20th century were crucial to nurture military regimes in the past. The lack of major security threats in the region resulted in the absence of strong armed forces. Instead, the western hemisphere produced relatively weak military institutions that were mainly involved in political and societal issues¹ and assume the role of a political institution. Political instability and collapsed economies built the path for military leaders to gain popular support from the people and assume the rationale of societal savior in charge of restoring the order and economic development.² These leaders believed the government to be comprised of corrupt and incapable rulers; therefore, they must protect the poor. Evidently their beliefs created tensions and instability that triggered military interventions and coups.

Throughout many Latin American countries, permanent military regimes were established after the coups. During the 1960s and the 1970s, military regimes overthrew civilian governments and established military rule throughout the western hemisphere

¹ David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

² Thomas-Durell Young. "Military Professionalism in a Democracy." *Who Guards the Guardians and How* (2006): 17-34.

and by 1977, solely Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica could be considered fully democratic.³ Military governments became largely unpopular because of their poor ability to run the country and the various human rights violations that occurred during their regimes. With the lack of popular support, the military started to crumble and by the 1980s, the military was very much discredited and civilian's governments began replacing military dictatorship. As a result, the consolidation of democracy throughout most of Latin America significantly boosted civil-military relations.

Latin America is no longer the hub of military regimes, and before 1978, the chances that Latin America would have experience a military coup were at least twenty times higher than now a days.⁴ Although coups have not been completely eradicated, a new phase of civil/military coups is emerging; the Honduras case will further explore such episode. According to Hochstetler, military takeovers are no longer the case; however, the military can be involved in some crisis episodes.⁵

According to Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas, civilian control of military institutions in the region "forestall military takeover."⁶ Civilian's involvement in politics and their attention directed towards military personnel, who were engaged in power, have resulted in the reduction of their strength by weakening the institution that once was a major political actor.⁷ Interventions are unlikely to occur within a democratic state that is under civilian rule, because this tends to delimit the role of the military and as a result decrease

³ Perez-Liñan, 41

⁴ Mariana Llanos. *Presidential breakdowns in Latin America: causes and outcomes of executive instability in developing democracies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010: 21.

⁵ Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret Edwards. "Failed Presidencies: Identifying and Explaining a South American Anomaly." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2 (2009): 37-38.

⁶ David Pion-Berlin, and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

⁷ Ibid., 76-100.

its defense budget. According to Centeno, with a decline in military regimes there is also an overall decline in military expenditure, due to the fact that military regimes usually tend to favor their institution. If there is a shift in power and the military role in politics diminishes then they lose power to control the budget and provide to their sectors.⁸

A military requires a tremendous amount of resources including a vast quantity of personnel and armaments acquired through military spending. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data shows that “the primary reason countries carryout military expenditure is to acquire military capability of one sort or other.”⁹ Also another factor is the quality possessed of both arms and resilient soldiers in order for it to be a successful armed force.¹⁰ The budget and expenditure of the military relies on the economy of the country, but because most Latin American countries inadequately try to tax the upper class, it adds restrains to the government expenditure and weakens the military budget.¹¹

Latin American militaries do not enjoy the adequate resources to accomplish interventions. Not only do they lack the personnel, but also as Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas argue, “regional changes have raised the costs to military interventions to unprecedented heights,” making military coups hardly possible, discouraging the schemers from trying¹². By the end of the 20th century most Latin American military forces had began to decline, in that a small amount of civilians comprised the military working force.¹³

⁸ Miguel Angel Centeno. "Making War." In *Blood and Debt*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2002. 93.

⁹ SIPRI <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/measuring-military-expenditures>

¹⁰ David R. Mares. *Latin America and the Illusion of Peace*. Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2012.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

¹³ Ibid., 76-100.

According to Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas “military programs, training and installations have been eliminated and personnel payrolls trimmed based on macroeconomic criteria, pressure from international lenders and the political priorities of diverting resources to other areas.”¹⁴

Many nations started cutting military budgets and size for economic purposes and political effort, and by 1999, the armed forces throughout the western hemisphere had been cut drastically.¹⁵ Incidentally, the military was significantly minimized by the cost of balancing the economy after the “Third World Crisis.”¹⁶ There was a combination of issues such as the appreciation of the US dollar, and high interest rates that added to the worldwide economic recession in the 1980’s, which threatened Latin America’s economy.¹⁷

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a country’s military spending includes all existing capital spent on the military whether it is for research, aid, personnel, pensions, maintenance, development and even governmental agencies that are involved in projects within the defense department.¹⁸ SIPRI bases its data on military expenditure by regions, and Latin America altogether falls short in total GDP spending compare to most of the world. Central America and the Caribbean spend approximately \$8.5 billions in military while South America spends an overall total of \$66 billion, whereas the United States spends a total of \$705 billion.¹⁹

¹⁴ David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76-100.

¹⁶ Gordon Richards. "The Rise and Decline of Military Authoritarianism in Latin America: The Role of Stabilization Policy." *SAIS Review* 5.2 (1985): 155-171.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 155-171.

¹⁸ "SIPRI Definition of military expenditure." "â€" www.sipri.org.

http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database/definitions (accessed April 6, 2014).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*,

The assumption is that since the end of the cold war, with civilians in power through democratic elections, they have decreased military expenditure that has had an impact on the power of the military, making it very difficult to successfully execute a coup. In order to predict whether a coup is not likely to occur in the 21st century, one must look at the military expenditure trends that were present before, during and after the previous coups. By doing so one can assume possible outcomes to militarism in the future.

The subsequent case of Argentina is chosen for an in-depth analysis country study, given the fact that it has been ruled by military regimes for decades and since 1983 has been a constitutional democracy.²⁰ In this way, we can explore the different patterns in military expenditure throughout military and civilian regimes. In addition, Argentina used to have “one of the larger military industrial complexes” not only in Latin America but compared to the rest of the world.²¹ By exploring Argentine history, this analysis will try to provide an outlook to its military government and the conditions in which the regime controlled the military spending patterns. After the military coup that deposed President Isabel Peron, the military regime took office between 1976 and 1983, committing alarming human rights violations perpetrated against civilians who opposed the military regime.²² This period of civil unrest, violence, kidnapping and murders by the military is called the Dirty War and took approximately from 10,000 to 30,000

²⁰ "Military Expenditure ." In Argentina. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Publications, 1993. 93-106.

²¹ David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

²² Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "Dirty War," accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/165129/Dirty-War>.

lives;²³ right after the coup, in 1976 the military controlled the state and the municipal government, and with that also the budget.²⁴

Prior to the coup, Argentina's economy was not performing well and it struggled for years while it tried to heal. During Isabel Peron's presidency the economic inflation had exceeded 600%, yet another reason for the military to stage a coup.²⁵ In 1976 a junta led by three men took over office after deposing President Isabel Peron in a military coup. National Congress was shut down and the military obtained control of the government of Argentina.²⁶ Further data includes changes in expenditure that led to the military coup. The data will compare the Argentine military spending per GNP before and after the coup as well as during the military regime.

In order to create accuracy in the data presented by the Arms Control and Disarmament U.S. Agency from 1975 to 1985, the monetary value that is presented for all years under this data will be represented by the 1983 constant. In 1975 a year after Isabel Peron took office the military expenditure represented 2.1% of the Argentine GNP. By the time Isabel was ousted from power just a year later in 1976, the military expenditure had significantly increased to 3.2% of the GNP.²⁷ The data presented demonstrate that in just a year, Argentine military spending had increased by 1.2 % and had influenced military power. However, in 1982 with the war over the Falkland Islands

²³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "Dirty War," accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/165129/Dirty-War>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "CHRONOLOGY-Argentina's painful history of economic crisis." CHRONOLOGY-Argentina's painful history of economic crisis. <http://www.trust.org/item/20140124203247-npz5c/> (accessed April 11, 2014).

²⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "Dirty War," accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/165129/Dirty-War>.

²⁷ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986." Table 1. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

the military expenditure reached its peak to 6.2% of the total Argentine GNP.²⁸ This is the highest it has ever been despite of the Dirty War, the collapsing economy and the continuous loss of allies.²⁹ In 1982 Argentina was still controlled by military regime and entering into combat, therefore this explains the sudden increment of twice the amount of spending it had in previous years. However, it is noteworthy that even after the substantial loss of military personnel, armaments and the war, Argentine military expenditure only decreased to 4.6% in 1983.³⁰ This was a transition period towards democracy in which the military still exerted some control.

Another variable that contributes to military resources is the quantity of personnel enlisted. The pattern that shows the data on table 1.2 in regards to the personnel is based on the amount of soldiers in the armed forces per 1000 people. There was a pattern of decline in the number of personnel up to the Falkland war, where there was increase to 6.0 soldiers per 1000 people. With the war lost and the civilian rule back in power, this number began to decline once again to 3.7 by 1984.³¹ Although, not as a significant decrease in relation to the armed forces spending, this shows how the military expenditure itself is a stronger variable that determines military power. In fact, when there is less expenditure and almost the same amount of personnel, this weakens the military as the capital tends to be divided among various areas of the military from pensions, to payroll to power and ultimately leaves a vacuum on the organization itself.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "Dirty War," accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/165129/Dirty-War>.

³⁰ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986." Table 1.2. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

³¹ Ibid.

After the failed invasion of the Falkland Islands, the military was in turmoil. Also the numerous abuses to human rights committed during their regime and an economy that continued to plummet, the Argentine military was completely discredited, resulting in an internal coup brought by General Bigone through public pressure that restored democratic elections in 1983.³² Under civilian rule in 1984, the military expenditure had decreased to 3.6% of the GNP.³³ Civilian leaders did not approve of the regime or the amount of money going to the armed forces.

The loss over the Falkland Islands put Argentina in debt. According to Scheetz, the fact that the military expenditure continued to decrease shows how the military significantly declined in political power and their power to lobby.³⁴ The military expenditure shows how other sectors were diverged from quality and quantity of resources that were used in military sectors. Civilian governments after the Falkland War started to give priority to other sectors, which resulted in a diminishing military power.³⁵ Therefore, like the rest of Latin America, Argentina continued to reduce and even denationalize and privatize its defense forces.³⁶ Social expenditure and central government investments also decreased during a time when Argentina was ruled by military regimes. The amount of money spent on investments and social issues were displaced by military expenditure. As a result of civilian rule and change in military expenditure, these displacements of investments and social outlays occurred fewer over

³² "Military Expenditure ." In Argentina. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Publications, 1993. 93-106.

³³ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986." Table 1,2.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

³⁴ Thomas Scheetz. "Military Expenditure and Development in Latin America." In *Arming the South*. Great Britain: Palgrave, 2002. 51-70.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

time.³⁷ Military leaders supported crowding out investments. Argentina witnessed 50% of social expenditure crowd out between 1970 and 1979, compared to zero percent of crowding out after Argentina transitioned to democracy. However, during the transition to democracy Argentina's economy and other sectors were also suffering by the lack of transparency and compliance from taxpayers because, out of the 30 million Argentines only 30,000 paid their taxes.³⁸ After transitioning to democracy, taxpayers no longer use their money to support the military and endorse military roles or missions.³⁹

The military was left helpless against the demands of civilian politicians for drastic reduction in military budget and size⁴⁰. In addition, as a result of the military regime, external pressures were made by international financial organizations to cut budgets of the Argentine military and to assume a neoliberal policy. The Organization of American States threatened to isolate any regime in power that were to be establish through a coup.⁴¹ Argentina's civilian government kept the armed forces in place and did not develop a strong defense policy that would get the military too involved. Therefore, over the past 17 years, Argentina has continued to embrace democratic governments. As a result, none of the previous ministers of defense throughout this time had experience with military defense policies.⁴² Furthermore, in Argentina the percentage of GDP on defense expenditure continued to decrease significantly from 2.9% in 1985 to 1.2% in

³⁷ Thomas Scheetz. "Military Expenditure and Development in Latin America." In *Arming the South*. Great Britain: Palgrave, 2002. 51-70.

³⁸ "CHRONOLOGY-Argentina's painful history of economic crisis." CHRONOLOGY-Argentina's painful history of economic crisis.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ J. Mark Ruhl. "Changing Civil-Military Relations in Latin America." *Latin America Research Review* 33, no. 3 (0): 257-269. <http://lasa-2.univ.pitt.edu/LARR/prot/search/retrieve/?Vol=33&Num=3&Start=257> (accessed April 9, 2014).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Scheetz, Thomas . "Military Expenditure and Development in Latin America." In *Arming the South*. Great Britain: Palgrave, 2002. 51-70.

1990⁴³. According to the CIA report, as of 2012, Argentina currently spends only 0.9% of their GDP on their military, a great shortage from when they were in power. The military is currently ranked 108th compared to the rest of the world.⁴⁴ And according to Scheetz, Argentina continues to be a declining military industry.⁴⁵

During the Cold War, Latin American political powers were being affected. Salvador Allende became president of Chile in 1970 under the Socialist Party.⁴⁶ Allende rose to power, promising reforms that would aid the working class, under a Marxist political agenda. During his government, Allende created policies that nationalized many enterprises such as banks and copper mines, resulting in an opposition among the upper class and even greater unpopularity among the military, which he began to lose control of.⁴⁷

In 1973, the Chilean military had already been planning to oust President Allende and on September 11 of that year, “all branches of the Chilean Armed Forces had conspired to wrest control of the country.”⁴⁸ Nonetheless, President Allende refused to step down and General Pinochet “ordered a siege on the compound” by the armed forces through a military coup.⁴⁹ President Allende committed suicide before the armed forces could get to him and the military took over under General Pinochet’s rule.⁵⁰ It was not

⁴³ Marcella, Gabriel. "Appendix." In *Warriors in Peacetime*. Portland: Frank Cass, 1994. 159.

⁴⁴ Central Intelligence Agency. "Argentina." Central Intelligence Agency.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ar.html> (accessed April 9, 2014).

⁴⁵ Thomas Scheetz. "Military Expenditure and Development in Latin America." In *Arming the South*. Great Britain: Palgrave, 2002. 51-70.

⁴⁶ Pinochet’s Chile. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/inatl/longterm/pinochet/overview.htm>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Alain Rouquié. *The military and the state in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California. 1987. Press. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=43894>.

⁴⁹ Michael Welch, Michel Chossudovsky, and Peter Kornbluh. “The 1973 Chilean Military coup: Remembering the other September 11.” *Global research* <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-1973-chilean-military-coup-remembering-the-other-september-11/5348672>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

until 1990 that Chile became a democratic government once again, “when Christian Democrat, Patricio Aylwin, was elected president.”⁵¹

Chile’s military expenditure per GNP in 1970, when Allende was elected to power, was 2.5%.⁵² In 1973, when General Pinochet led the military coup against President Allende, the military expenditure per GNP was at 3.3%.⁵³ And in 1974, a year after the military took over, the expenditure per GNP rose to 4.9%.⁵⁴ Regardless of the severe economic issues that Chile faced between 1974 and 1980, with an unemployment twice as much as it was in 1970,⁵⁵ Chile’s military expenditure per GNP was an average of 4.2%.⁵⁶ Just a year after Chile had returned to a Democratic State, the military expenditure was at 2.8% of GNP, much lower than previous decades.

The case of Honduras was the most recent to successfully execute a coup; some scholars have various points of views on whether it was a coup d’état. However, for the purpose of this research it will be treated as a military coup for the following reasons. First, the coup in fact was carried out by members of the military and second, President Manuel Zelaya was physically deposed from power and sent to exile in Costa Rica.⁵⁷ History seems to be repeating itself; previously, in 1963 President Ramon Villeda

⁵¹ Pinochet’s Chile. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/inatl/longterm/pinochet/overview.htm>

⁵² United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. “World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1970-1979.” <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185663.pdf>

⁵³ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. “World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1970-1979.” <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185663.pdf>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Alain Rouquié. *The military and the state in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California. 1987. Press. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=43894>.

⁵⁶ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. “World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986.” Table 1. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

⁵⁷ Will Stebbins. “Winners and losers in Honduras - Focus - Al Jazeera English.” Al Jazeera . <http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/2009/11/2009117115128431373.html> (accessed April 9, 2014).

Morales was sent to Costa Rica after the military coup ousted him from power.⁵⁸ Since Honduras was the most recent Latin American country to experience a successful coup, it is important to review the military spending patterns in order to examine the role of military expenditure during a military intervention post Cold War.

Honduras has been ruled for the most part of its history by military and authoritarian regimes. In fact, after the coup of 1963 the military ruled for decades to follow until general elections were established in 1981.⁵⁹ Democracy was accomplished due to the pressure from the U.S. to establish democratic nations throughout the western hemisphere. Honduras generated democratic civilian leaders from 1981 through 2005.⁶⁰ Unlike other Latin American countries, Honduran military continued to exert dominance and was able to expand their troops throughout the 1980's and beginning of 1990's, as a result of U.S. military aid.⁶¹ Scholar Mark Ruhl called this period the "locally version of the cold war" within Central America, which did not see an end until the early 1990's.⁶² The government of President Carlos Roberto Reina began to weaken the military once he rose to power in 1994.⁶³ In 1998, when President Carlos Flores took office, he began to discharge the chief military commander and many of his top personnel.⁶⁴ According to the U.S. State Government, the person who decides on the defense budget is in fact the chief of the military⁶⁵ and when this person is fired along with other high ranked

⁵⁸ Morris Rosenberg. "Coup Setback for Alliance." *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg), October 4, 1963, sec. A. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=j-INAAAAIABAJ&sjid=4IYDAAAABAJ&pg=6161,634040&hl=en> (accessed April 6, 2014).

⁵⁹ J. Mark Ruhl. "Honduras Unravels." *Journal of Democracy* 21 (2010): 93-107. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v021/21.2.ruhl.pdf (accessed April 6, 2014).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "Honduras Military Rule and Reform." Library of Congress Country Studies.

militaries, it shows the lack of power they possess. Ruhl explains that civilians started obtaining control over the military through a radical reform in the constitution that was created in 1999 in which it “legally established civilian supremacy over the military since 1950’s.”⁶⁶ By 2002, the military dropped to more than half of what it used to be in strength, and the majority of their powers and privileges were taken away⁶⁷.

The following data will provide expenditure patterns that will be needed to attempt to explain the Honduran military coup of 2009. In the data presented for Honduras by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the monetary value presented for all years under this data will be represented by the 1983 constant. Military spending during the military regime in the 70s accounted for 2.3% of its total military expenditure.⁶⁸ By 1981 the country began to shift to democratic governance and by 1985 military spending had only decrease slightly to 2.1%.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, in 1990 the Honduran military expenditure remained steady at 2.1%.⁷⁰ However, by 2002 the military significantly shrunk, the expenditure dropped to 0.8%.⁷¹ In 2005, the military continued to decrease to 0.6% of the GDP.⁷² When the military coup in Honduras took place, in 2009, the military expenditure had gone up to 1.1% of the GDP and the last data shown in 2012 by the SIPRI shows that it has remained continuous.⁷³

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+hn0031\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+hn0031)) (accessed April 9, 2014).

⁶⁶ J. Mark Ruhl. "Honduras Unravels." *Journal of Democracy* 21 (2010): 93-107.

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v021/21.2.ruhl.pdf (accessed April 6, 2014).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986." Table 1,2. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

⁶⁹ Gabriel Marcella. "Appendix." In *Warriors in Peacetime*. Portland: Frank Cass, 1994. 159.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² SIPRI. "SIPRI military expenditure database 1988-2012." Table 3. <http://www.sipri.org/>

⁷³ SIPRI. "SIPRI military expenditure database 1988-2012." Table 3. <http://www.sipri.org/>

The Honduran coup d'état in 2009 was not the usual military coup that Latin American countries had seen throughout their history and used to witness during the 1970's and 1980's. The military coup in Honduras did not instate a military regime nor did it form a junta. Instead, the President of Congress Roberto Micheletti presided over as interim executive chief until elections were held⁷⁴.

Honduran President Manuel Zelaya was trying to conduct a referendum to get rid of a single four-year term as stated by the constitution. The military had direct orders from the Supreme Court to depose President Zelaya. The Honduran military having a stable military budget, also had the support of congress. A factor in regards to the outcome of the coup was the backing of the legislative branch. President Zelaya fired the general of the armed forces for not complying with his orders to provide further support for the referendum. In fact, it was General Vasquez himself who received the order to oust President Zelaya.⁷⁵ Even though the military had an important role in the ousting of President Zelaya, they did not establish a de facto military government, as they do not possessed the resources to stay in power. As Putnam states, “the larger and more sophisticated the armed forces, the more likely that they will have the administrative and technical skills necessary for running a government and that the military will have a preponderance of armed power over civilians.”⁷⁶

As previously stated, changes in the region have made military interventions costly, making military coups hardly possible.⁷⁷ The military needs necessary power to be

⁷⁴ J. Mark Ruhl. "Honduras Unravels." *Journal of Democracy* 21 (2010): 93-107.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v021/21.2.ruhl.pdf (accessed April 6, 2014).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Robert D. Putnam. "Toward Explaining Military Intervention in Latin American Politics" *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Oct., 1967), pp. 83-110

⁷⁷ David Pion-Berlin and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

able to run the government that they oust.⁷⁸ Most of Latin America's military forces began to decline in the 20th century channeling resources that once were invested in them, onto different areas.⁷⁹ As a result, military expenditure throughout the western hemisphere has been cut drastically. Table 4 shows the change in military expenditure from the year 1977, in which only three countries were considered democratic, and in 2001 and 2012, which explores most recent times. An overall majority of countries have decreased their military expenditure from 1977 to 2012, reinforcing the theory that interventions are unlikely to occur within a democratic state that is under civilian rule, because this tends to delimit the role of the military and as a result decrease its defense budget.

This paper explores the relationship between military interventions and military expenditure and finds that the evidence presented supports the hypothesis: that the decline in military spending also decreases military interventions that set the stage for coup d'états. Three cases were examined throughout the paper. The first one was Argentina, who has witnessed many years of military regimes and has not witnessed a coup since the end of the Cold War. The second country of analysis is Honduras, who has also been ruled by military leaders for decades, but unlike Argentina it has experienced the most recent military coup in the western hemisphere. Although both countries share history of repression and human rights abuse by the military, their military expenditure differs throughout the years.

⁷⁸ Robert D. Putnam. "Toward Explaining Military Intervention in Latin American Politics" *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Oct., 1967), pp. 83-110

⁷⁹ David Pion-Berlin, and Harold A Trinkunas. "Attention deficits: Why politicians ignore defense policy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 42.3 (2007): 76-100.

Argentina, once a military industrial power has considerably decreased its military expenditure. Argentina faces environments such as a struggling economy and a high inflation rates that in the past had fostered military coups. However, Argentina does not have any threats of military interventions, as their current military expenditure is at its lowest. Argentina's military expenditure is currently 0.9% of GDP, which is a substantial drop to when Isabel Peron was deposed from office in 1976 and the military expenditure was at 3.1%. Chile, like Argentina has fostered decades of military regimes, witnessed through their last coup in 1973 under General Pinochet. Chile's military expenditure was of 4.2% of their GNP in 1984 and by 1991, just a year after returning to democracy, their military expenditure was at 2.8%. Chile's military expenditure is currently at 2.1%, lower than when the military took power at 3.3% in 1973.

On the other hand, Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Nonetheless, it spends more on its military than Argentina, although it is a lot smaller in size and economic power than some of them. The Honduran military expenditure the year of the coup occurred was at 1.1%, which was higher than when President Zelaya took office and was at 0.6%. A higher military expenditure percentage is more suitable for the military to be able to stage a coup. It is important to recognize that the 2009 coup represents a unique and new phase to military interventions, as no military regime was established from this coup. This marks a new period for civil military relations.

Military expenditure is one of various measurements for the success or failure of a military. Although, there are other factors that also explain this new phenomenon, the relationship between military interventions and military expenditures is one that has been overlooked. The evidence provided illustrates that military expenditure is usually higher

during the year in which military intervention occurs. As a result, Military expenditure should still be considered as a tangible resource to calculate and determine military power. Therefore if military expenditure decreases so will the chances of military interventions and coups.

Tables and Figures

TABLE I. Military Expenditures, Armed Forces, GNP, Central Government Expenditures and Population, 1974-1984, By Region, Organization, and Country – continued

YEAR	MILITARY EXPENDITURES (ME)		ARMED FORCES	GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP)		CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES (CGE)	PEOPLE	ME / GNP	ME / CGE	ME PER CAPITA	ARMED FORCES PER 1000 PEOPLE	GNP PER CAPITA
	Milion dollars			Milion dollars								
	Current	Constant 1983		Thousands	Current	Constant 1983	Constant 1983	Millions	%	%	Constant 1983 dollars	Soldiers		Constant 1983 dollars
Argentina												
1974	552	1049	150	33410	63550	14440	25.6	1.7	7.3	41	5.9	2480
1975	781	1357	160	36440	63260	13570	26.1	2.1	10.0	52	6.1	2428
1976	1218	1989	155	38500	62890	12410	26.5	3.2	16.0	75	5.8	2373
1977	1398	2155	155	43390	66900	11460	26.9	3.2	18.8	80	5.8	2483
1978	1369	1952	155	45330	64630	12630	27.4	3.0	15.5	71	5.7	2359
1979	1694	2237	155	52180	68890	13560	27.9	3.2	16.5	80	5.6	2473
1980	2036	2463	155	57100	69090	14560	28.3	3.6	16.9	87	5.5	2440
1981	2120	2374	155	56130	62850	16060	28.8	3.8	14.8	82	5.4	2183
1982	3461	3620	175	55970	58540	13980	29.3	6.2	25.9	124	6.0	2001
1983	2745	2745	175	59740	59740	18360	29.7	4.6	14.9	92	5.9	2009
1984	2327	2250	174	63300	61190	13050	30.2	3.7	17.2	74	5.8	2024

Table 1

Honduras												
1974	18	35	10	1123	2136	303	3.1	1.6	11.4	11	3.3	697
1975	23	40	12	1180	2048	349	3.2	2.0	11.5	13	3.8	646
1976	25	41	12	1334	2179	392	3.3	1.9	10.4	12	3.7	664
1977	31	48	12	1569	2418	424E	3.4	2.0	11.4	14	3.5	712
1978	43	61	14	1815	2588	544E	3.5	2.4	11.2	17	3.8	735
1979	50	65	14	2084	2751	574E	3.6	2.4	11.4	18	3.8	755
1980	51Eb	62	14	2322	2810	686E	3.8	2.2	9.1	16	3.7	744
1981	46Eb	51	17	2557	2863	657E	3.9	1.8	7.8	13	4.3	728
1982	56Eb	58	17	2641	2763	710E	4.1	2.1	8.2	14	4.2	679
1983	80Eb	80	19	2809	2809	605E	4.2	2.8	13.2	19	4.5	668
1984	124Eb	120	20	2981	2882	733E	4.4	4.2	16.4	28	4.6	662

Table 2

	A	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA
1	Military expenditure of gross domestic product, 1988-2012																						
2	Countries are grouped																						
3	Figures in blue are SIPRI highly uncertain data.																						
4	". ." = data unavailable/not independent during all or part of the year in question.																						
5																							
6	Country	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
67	El Salvador	3.5	3.0	2.4	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
68	Guatemala	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
69	Haiti	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
70	Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
71	Jamaica	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8
72	Mexico	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
73	Nicaragua	4.0	2.6	2.1	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
74	Panama	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
75	Trinidad & Tobago	..	..	0.1	0.4	0.5	..	..	..	..	..	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	1.3	..	..	..
76	North America																						
77	Canada	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
78	USA	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.4
79	South America																						
80	Argentina	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9
81	Bolivia	2.7	2.5	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.5
82	Brazil	2.0	1.5	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5
83	Chile	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1
84	Colombia	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.1	2.4	3.7	2.3	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.1	3.3
85	Ecuador	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.4	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.6	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.9	3.0	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.4
86	Guyana	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	..	..	..	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.8
87	Paraguay	2.4	2.4	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.8
88	Peru	1.2	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3
89	Uruguay	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.9
90	Venezuela	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.0	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.0

Table 3

Country	Military Expenditure/GNP 1977 (%) ⁸⁰	Military Expenditure/GDP 2000 (%) ⁸¹	Military Expenditure/GDP 2012 (%) ⁸²
Argentina	3.2	1.1	0.9
Bolivia	2.0	2.1	1.5
Brazil	1.0	1.8	1.5
Chile	4.6	2.8	2.1
Ecuador	2.3	1.6	1.5
El Salvador	1.2	1.3	1.0
Guatemala	1.2	0.8	0.4
Honduras	2.0	0.7	1.1
Nicaragua	2.5	0.8	0.8
Paraguay	1.7	1.6	1.8
Peru	6.8	1.8	1.3
Uruguay	2.4	2.5	1.9
Venezuela	1.6	1.5	1.0

Table 4

⁸⁰ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "World Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1986." Table 1. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185656.pdf>

⁸¹ SIPRI. "SIPRI military expenditure database 1988-2012." Table 2. <http://www.sipri.org/>

⁸² Ibid.

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