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THE CONDITIONALITY OF VULNERABILITY: THREE ANALYSES OF RISK AND
OPPORTUNITY IN CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Political Science
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

Prior research has not established a clear relationship between democracy and insulation from coups d'état. I contend that the lack of attention paid to the conditional influences of democracy have resulted in these mixed findings. I posit that insulation from coups occurs at higher levels of economic development and judicial institutional strength in democracies. Further, the vulnerability at low levels of both economic development and judicial institutional strength is significantly greater in democracies than in autocracies. Empirical assessments of 165 states for the years 1950-2012 offer strong support for both arguments. Results from these studies first help to reconcile earlier research on coup risk in democracies. Second, I point to the conditionality of democratic coup risk by highlighting the roles of economic development and political institutions. Third, I underscore the vast differences in institutional arrangements within democracies, suggesting a more nuanced approach is needed in the study of democratic political institutions. In line with this research, I examine the propensity for democratization in the aftermath of irregular leader removal. Examining the actors and tactics associated with different removal types, I focus on the benefits and challenges posed to democratization in the aftermath of removals. In an empirical assessment of authoritarian states from 1950-2012, I find that only removals resulting from coups, in conjunction with economic development, have significantly higher rates of democratization compared with the null. The results of this study are twofold, finding that not all forms of irregular leadership removal result in similar rates of post-removal democratization and that coups have driven prior results finding an association between irregular leader removal, economic development, and democratization.

To my parents,
Rose and Barry

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I owe a debt of gratitude to numerous individuals who read, listened, and offered their support throughout this process.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Since 1950, about 100 of the approximate 450 coup attempts have targeted democracies. Though low proportionally, in the last two decades this proportion has increased. However, studies of coups d'état have traditionally relegated regime type to that of a control variable, producing inconsistent results. Dichotomous indicators of democracies either do not achieve significance (Böhmelt & Pilster 2015; Caspar 2017; De Bruin 2018; Girod 2015; Kim 2016; Leon 2014; Powell 2012; Powell & Chacha 2016; Powell et al. 2016; Savage & Caverly 2017; Schroeder & Powell 2017; Thyne 2010; Wobig 2015) or the associations found lack robustness (Bell & Koga-Sudduth 2017; Gassebner et al. 2016; Hiroi & Omori 2015; Tusalem 2010). I assert that the relationship between coups and regime type has been obscured in extant research by a lack of attention paid to the conditionality of regime type. Therefore, I suggest that to more fully understand the extent of democratic insulation from coups, further study of the effects of regime type on coups is necessary. Toward that end, chapters two and three separately examine two conditions predisposing democracies to coups d'état, economic development and judicial institutional strength. The following paragraphs will briefly outline these chapters.

Chapter two examines regime type in conjunction with economic development. Conceiving of economic development as a measure of wealth or scarcity, I suggest a game initiated by uncertainty over future resource shares. When all states are poor, elites make rational choice calculations concerning the costs of waiting out the incumbent and the benefits of a successful coup. Coups should be more likely in poor democracies than in either wealthy democracies or autocracies at level of development for three reasons. First, democracies have larger coalitions to pacify making public goods more expensive. Second, democracies lack access to similar levels of elite maintenance mechanisms including repression and patronage

making elite defections more likely. Finally, poor democracies lack adequate resources to begin with thus further complicating both the first and second conditions. Results from empirical tests on a global sample of states from 1950-2012 provide robust support for the mechanism suggested. Highlighting the need for conditional studies of democratic vulnerability to coups d'état, I find that poor democracies suffer disproportionate risk. Alternatively, wealthy democracies are disproportionately insulated from coups when compared with either poor democracies or autocracies at any stage of development.

Next, chapter three investigates coup risk as a function of regime type and judicial institutional strength. Weak judicial institutions are characterized as those that either fail to apply rules impersonally or fail to apply rules in a consistent manner. I suggest that weak judicial institutions prompt uncertainty in elite interactions by removing reliable information about which actions are punishable and which actors can expect punishment. When judicial institutions are weak and rule breakers are not punished, the range of acceptable actions are no longer constrained, thus increasing uncertainty. This should increase coups in democracies for two reasons. First, democracies have larger coalitions to keep pacified. These coalitions in democracies are not only larger in number but broader in terms of interests, thus severely increasing the need for independent arbiters to solve conflicts within coalitions. Second, democracies lack high levels of both patronage and repression to manage elite defections, thus making coups more likely. Empirical tests on a global sample from 1950- 2012 provide robust support for the causal mechanism. Again highlighting the conditional nature of democratic vulnerability, I find robust support for the notion that weak judicial institutions predispose democracies to coup risk. Democracies at low levels of judicial institutional strength, variously operationalized as judicial accountability, high court independence, government compliance with

the high court, judicial corruption, court purges, and court packing, are significantly more likely to experience coup attempts than autocracies at any level of judicial institutional strength.

Moving on from democratic coup vulnerability, this dissertation further examines questions related to democratization prospects in the aftermath of irregular removal, including coups. Popular protests in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Libya each led to the irregular removal of their long-serving autocrats. However, results of the Arab Spring varied widely by country. In Egypt, protests led the military to take power after Hosni Mubarak was forced out. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia was forced to resign after 23 years in power and sought exile in Saudi Arabia. Finally, violence in Libya devolved into civil war after the capture and killing of Muammar Gaddafi (Arab Uprising 2013). Therefore, a comparison of Arab Spring outcomes raises critical questions about the prospects for democratization in the aftermath of irregular leader removals. However, prior literature examining the subject remains mixed with some suggesting that all irregular removals result in a higher probability of post-removal democratization compared with the null (Miller 2012), other suggesting that protest removals provide the greatest democratizing potential (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz 2014), and still others illustrating the positive effects of coups on democratization (Marinov & Goemans 2014; Thyne & Powell 2016). Noting the lack of consensus in prior literature, this research aims to discern the effects of irregular leadership removal on the prospects for democratization.

Chapter four examines irregular leadership removals and democratization prospects. I assert that both the character of the irregular removal and the political legacy left in the aftermath of the removal must be considered when theorizing about democratization prospects. Therefore, the mechanism I assert considers the consequences of the removal for the larger population, the effects of the removal on institutional and bureaucratic continuity, and the ability of the removal

to engender meaningful political change. I find that of the five main irregular leader removal methods identified in earlier research, including assassinations, civil wars, coups, foreign interventions, and protests, only coups have a positive effect on future democratization compared with states not experiencing irregular removals. Empirical results on a sample of authoritarian states from 1950-2012 lend robust support to the mechanism, confirming results from Miller (2012) while adding an important caveat. Namely that not all irregular leader removals provide openings for democratization at a similar rate.

CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COUPS D'ÉTAT

Introduction

In the last decade, democratic states including Thailand (2006 & 2014), Madagascar (2009), Mali (2012), Honduras (2009), and Burundi (2015) have all suffered coups. Indeed, over half of all coups in the last decade targeted democracies (Bell 2016a; Powell & Thyne 2011). However, the study of coups d'état has long relegated regime type to that of a control variable, producing inconsistent results. I suggest that the relationship between coups and regime type has been obscured in extant research by a lack of attention paid to the conditionality of regime type.

The contributions of this work are twofold. First, I contend that regime type produces conditional influences on coup proclivity. Then I offer an elite-led mechanism to explain the differences in vulnerability between regime types. While some democracies are insulated from coups, there are conditional factors predisposing other democracies. Focusing on the conditionality of democracy, I point to the differential effects of economic development on coup attempts. Here, I conceive of economic development as an indicator of resource wealth or scarcity. Resource scarcity provides a signal to elites that they need to ensure future resource shares. When economic development is relatively low, scarcity signals that future resource shares are uncertain, thus incentivizing coup attempts. This mechanism is likely at play in all regimes, but I expect it to be most problematic in poor democracies for two reasons. First, democracies must maintain larger coalitions, requiring greater spending on public goods. Second, democracies utilize lower levels of elite loyalty maintenance mechanisms (e.g., patronage and repression) making managing elite defections more difficult. In short, I expect that at low levels of economic development, democracies will face a higher rate of coup attempts

than autocracies. However, at higher levels of wealth, democracies should be able to avoid coup attempts by maintaining adequate levels of goods provision without the need to rely on high levels of patronage or repression to manage elite defections.

The following paper will proceed in five parts. First, I review literature on democratic coup risk and regime breakdown more generally. Next, I offer an elite-led mechanism explaining the conditionality of democratic coup proclivity, followed by theoretical expectations for democracies at both high and low levels of development. The third section will detail the plan to test the causal mechanism, including a discussion of data sources and methods utilized. Next, results and analysis are provided. I find that democracies at lower levels of economic development are significantly more likely to suffer coup attempts than autocracies at similar levels. Further, the rate at which economic development insulates regimes from coups is significantly more pronounced in democracies than in autocracies. Finally, some areas of future research will be presented.

Literature Review

Coups & Democracy

Of over 450 coup attempts since 1950, less than 25% targeted democratic regimes. Though low overall, this represents almost 100 coups attempted against democracies. Further, in the last two decades this proportion has increased. My own evaluation of coup targets, provided in Figure 1, suggests that democracies do indeed have much to fear. Between 1997 and 2017, just under half (49%) of all coup attempts took place in democracies. Between 2007 and 2017,

that rate increased to 66%.¹ Two takeaways relevant to this study are evident from Figure 1. First, while the figure clearly shows that the majority of coup attempts have taken place in autocracies, it also points to an alarming number of coups in democracies relative to a tendency in the literature to assume democratic insulation from such events.

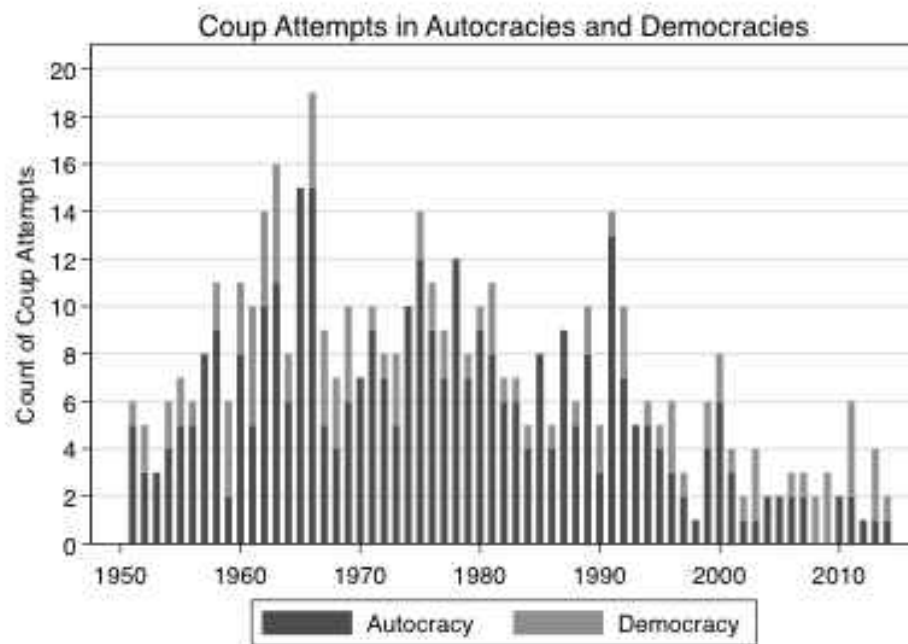


Figure 1: Coup Attempts in Autocracies and Democracies

Despite of the frequency of coups in democracies, prior literature has relegated regime type to that of a control variable in the study of coups. Where explored, the literature presents findings as varied as democratic coup risk being similar to authoritarian risk, vastly lower, or even more pronounced (Gassebner et al. 2016; Lindberg & Clark 2008; McGowan & Johnson 1984; Tusalem 2014). Table 1 in Appendix A offers a look at the extant quantitative literature examining coups (either attempts or successes) as the central dependent variable. A quick look at

¹ Data on coup attempts are derived from Powell and Thyne (2011) and data on regime type are derived from Bell (2016b).

the figure provides several important insights into the state of the literature. Of the 33 studies examined, 24 either lacked robust results capable of producing clear findings or lacked substantive findings related to democracy.² Next, the assumption that coups are largely an autocratic problem is evidenced in studies focusing on coups in a sample of autocracies alone, conceiving of coups as authoritarian votes of no confidence (Askoy et al. 2015; Bove & Rivera 2015; Galetovic & Sanhueza 2000; Geddes 2003, 66). The belief that democracies are insulated from coups is made clear in four of the reviewed studies that limit their investigation to a sample of authoritarian states. Finally, the remaining results are mixed, with ten studies reporting negative (though not robust) effects of democracy on coups and two reporting positive findings. Ultimately, the jury is out on democratic coup risk.

Recent studies have put forth two main theoretical mechanisms explaining democratic vulnerability to coups, namely, legitimacy and opportunity. First, examining military interventions on the African continent, Lindberg and Clark suggest that legitimacy lies at the heart of democratic insulation from coups. Operationalizing legitimacy as political consent (i.e., liberal electoral institutions), the authors assert that insulation from military interventions occurs once a democracy has consolidated (Lindberg & Clark 2008).³ Dividing regimes into three categories, consolidated, transitioning, and non-democracies, they find that regimes in the first category suffer the fewest military interventions in politics. The mechanism contends that through the process of repeated elections, citizens give political consent to the democratic

² Table 1 includes studies utilizing a measure of coups as the central dependent variable, published since 2000.

³ The authors illustrate a decrease in coups after the first democratic election is held in a country but assert that coups may continue until elections are repeated. Importantly, the authors do not utilize control measures in this study. Instead they claim that, “while we have not controlled for any confounding factors, it seems unlikely that such a strong relationship found in this investigation, which makes intuitive and theoretical sense, would be ‘washed out’ by the influence of other factors like development, education, or availability of concentrated natural resources” (Lindberg & Clark 2008, 100).

system, thus de-legitimizing military interventions in politics (Lindberg & Clark 2008). In short, some democracies do indeed enjoy increased insulation from military interventions, but this insulation can only be expected after repeated elections.

Second, Bell (2016a) notes prior inconsistencies in the literature, claiming that while structural conditions, including regime use of repression, are relatively absent in democracies, they nonetheless face coup risk due to both increased incentives and opportunities. Highlighting these increased incentives and opportunities for coups, as well as deficient repressive capacity in democracies, Bell (2016a) asserts that we can apply the same logic of coups against authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes. The presence of democratic constraints makes democracies more attractive coup targets simply because they are less able to hinder them. In line with Powell (2012), Bell (2016a) ultimately finds that while democracies are significantly less likely to experience coup attempts, when they do occur, they are much more likely to succeed.

Thus far, two broad points have been asserted. First, the quantitative literature has not fully depicted coup risk in democracies, obscuring the conditional effects of democracy. Second, including regime type in the study of coup risk can help to address inconsistencies in the literature by illuminating the conditional effects of democracy. A more nuanced understanding of democratic coup risk can be achieved through both the inclusion of regime type and attention to the conditional influences of democracy. One such important conditional effect on democratic coup risk, as noted by scholars including Lindberg and Clark (2008) and Bell (2016a), is economic development. A large literature has investigated the relationship between economic development and coups, and that between development and regime breakdown more generally. The discussion turns now to that literature, with special attention paid to democratic breakdown.

Coups, Wealth, & Regime Breakdown

Global studies investigating coup risk have often pointed to both a lack of economic development and/or poor growth rates as increasing coup risk (Gassebner et al. 2016; Londregan & Poole 1990; O’Kane 1993). Londregan and Poole (1990, 151) echo the sentiment of earlier scholars on the subject noting that, “economic backwardness is close to being a necessary condition for coups.” They ultimately find that low levels of income are significant predictors of coups. Kim (2016) finds that even short-term shocks to income in the form of temporary slowed growth are positively associated with coup attempts. However, Belkin and Schofer (2003) claim that economic crises and declines are bad at explaining coups and cite mixed evidence for economic development. They specifically assert that wealth can be both a cause and an insulating factor. In the absence of robust results concerning the effects of development on coup risk, we can turn to the broader wealth and breakdown literature for insight into how economic development may insulate democracies.

It has been firmly established that wealthy democracies rarely fail (Przeworski et al. 2000). Over a certain income limit democracy is thought to be impregnable.⁴ Modernization theory posited that as states develop economically, they would liberalize and establish stable, democratic regimes (Barro 1990; Lipset 1959; Przeworski 2005; Przeworski et al. 2000). Outside of this literature however, this may appear a bit of a simplification. Modernization has alternatively been described as a volatile process wherein all regimes experiencing liberalization and development would experience instability. For example, Huntington (1968, 41) noted that “modernity breeds stability but modernization breeds instability.” However, while the

⁴ Przeworski et al. (2000) cite this figure as US \$6,055 GDP per capita.

modernization debate (between those supporting the exogenous and endogenous variants of democratization) can provide some insight into the timing and development of stable democratic states and institutions, it does not further our understanding of democratic survival. How democracies emerge and survive may remain in question but the fact that they survive when wealthy is not.

Four broad mechanisms have been offered to explain why wealthy democracies survive including the theory of democracy as equilibrium, cultivation of democratic preferences, democratic ability to more equitably solve distributional conflicts, and increased perceptions of legitimacy. First, democracy is thought to survive in wealthy states due to what has been referred to as democracy as equilibrium. This refers to the relatively higher cost to elites of vetoing democracy in favor of authoritarianism as compared to waiting out a democratic regime with whom elites disagree. At a high enough level of income, democracy becomes cheaper for everyone. As states develop economically, the cost of reverting to authoritarianism increases beyond the cost of losing a democratic election (Lipset 1959; Przeworski 1991; Przeworski 2005; Przeworski et al. 2000; Weingast 1997). If an incumbent adopts redistributive taxation programs elites in a wealthy democracy, elites will likely decide that the cost of a coup is greater than suffering said redistribution. Here, elites rationalize that an opportunity for replacement will arise within a predefined amount of time (Boix & Stokes 2003; Miller 2012).

Further supporting the notion of democratic affordability, some argue that economic development stabilizes democracies by encouraging the cultivation of democratic preferences. This argument suggests that development allows democratic norms, including preferences for education, relatively equitable distribution, and liberal governance, to develop, consolidate, and allow democracies to become self-enforcing (Barro 1990; Lipset 1959). In the quantitative

literature this has been explored in terms of both domestic and regional normative preferences for democracy such that democratic norms diffuse (e.g., Gleditsch & Ward 2006).

Third, wealthy democracies may endure due to their ability to better solve distributional conflicts (Lipset 1959). Some civil conflict research has shown a positive association between distributional conflicts and civil violence, implying that the ability to peacefully manage such conflicts may increase regime stability (Ndikumana 2005; Øtsby et al. 2009). This is likely the case in wealthy democracies for two reasons. First, democracies provide greater public goods and second, they utilize more equitable mechanisms for said provision. Beginning with goods provision, wealthy democracies begin with lower levels of distributional conflicts because they both spend more on public goods provision, and, being wealthy, have a larger pot from which to spend. Second, democracies dispense public goods in a more inclusive manner than do their autocratic counterparts, therefore further decreasing distributional conflicts (Lake & Baum 2001).

Finally, wealthy democracies should be more insulated from breakdown due to increased perceptions of legitimacy (Belkin & Schofer 2003; Bell 2016a; Lindberg & Clark 2008). Lindberg and Clark (2008) claim that the process of repeated elections allow democracies to consolidate and accrue legitimacy with their electorates thus de-legitimizing practices including military interventions in politics. Legitimacy however, may be derived from several sources, including goods provision. Regarding wealthy democracies specifically, we should expect them to be able to provide goods at an increased rate compared with either poor democracies, lacking similar resources, or autocracies, lacking similar levels of goods provision at any level of economic development (Lake & Baum 2001; Lindberg & Clark 2008).

Taking together the reasons why we should expect wealthy democracies to be insulated from breakdown, the discussion can now turn to the reasons why poor democracies are more vulnerable to breakdown. Przeworski et al. remarked that, “we already know that democracies never die in wealthy countries. Yet it is still striking how fragile poor democracies are” (2000, 111). In an attempt to understand what makes poor democracies so fragile, the literature has posited two broad mechanisms, namely, redistributive income policies and the provision of public goods.

First, the democracy as equilibrium mechanism is only capable of ensuring democratic survival when income redistribution is enough for the poor but not too much for the rich. If we are to accept that past a certain point of wealth, democracy becomes more affordable for everyone then we can assume that before a point, it may be too expensive. This line of reasoning essentially argues that democracies will experience breakdown when the redistribution of wealth becomes costlier for elites than a reversion to authoritarianism (Acemoglu & Robinson 2001; Przeworski 2005). The assumption of democracy as equilibrium is especially questionable in developing democracies that might pursue redistributive taxation policies (Tonizzo 2008). However, some studies have raised questions about the occurrence of such mechanisms. Slater and colleagues contend that coups are neither inspired by redistributive taxation, nor do they result in the reversal of such policies. Instead, the authors submit that coups in developing democracies are inspired by state weakness (Slater et al. 2014). Alternatively, while Haggard and Kaufman (2012) call the redistributive conflict model into question, they nonetheless assert that about one third of all reversions from democratic rule between 1980-2008 were driven by redistributive conflicts. In a qualitative assessment of autocratic reversions in this period, Haggard and colleagues divide cases into three groups depending upon whether a transition was

principally led by an elite reaction, populist leader, or state weakness (Haggard et al. 2016). Both the elite and populist reversion categories show signs of redistributive conflict in qualitative case studies, with the elite reversion category offering the clearest support for the mechanism put forth in Acemoglu and Robinson (2001), for example. An examination of cases in the elite reaction and populist leader categories illustrate that at least half of the reversions from democratic rule resulted from coups.

Second, because democracies need to spend more on public goods to keep both their larger necessary coalitions and the public satisfied, we should expect poor democracies to face heightened vulnerability. Lake and Baum (2001) contend that, in contrast to autocracies, democracies act as a regulated monopoly and therefore engage in greater levels of public goods provision due to their relatively low cost of leader exit and low barriers to political participation. A large literature explores public goods provision in terms of the size of the coalition needed to maintain power, ultimately finding that a leader beholden to a larger group will spend more on public goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Lake & Baum 2001, 2003; Ross 2006). Regardless of calculations concerning who needs to be satisfied to keep a regime in power, in wealthy states the money marked for public and private goods should not pose too great a danger to either incumbents or elites, as the pot is large enough to go around. However, in relatively poorer states, where resources are scarce, the money needed to maintain both elite and population loyalty may incentivize elites to attempt to change the system.

Theoretical Mechanism

Two main trends should be reiterated. First, democracies are not as free from coups as commonly thought. Contrary to common assumptions, democracies have much to fear from coups. Since 1950, about 100 coups have targeted democracies.⁵ Figure 2 offers a look at descriptive trends in the data concerning regime type and coup attempts. First, we can see that although the vast majority of coup attempts take place in autocracies, a non-negligible proportion have taken place in democracies. Coups occur at a rate of about 5.4% in autocracies compared with about 2.1% in democracies. Interpreting the images above, one may deduce that autocracies should suffer the highest coup proclivity. However, I contend that the conditional effects of democracy operate differently in poor and wealthy states.

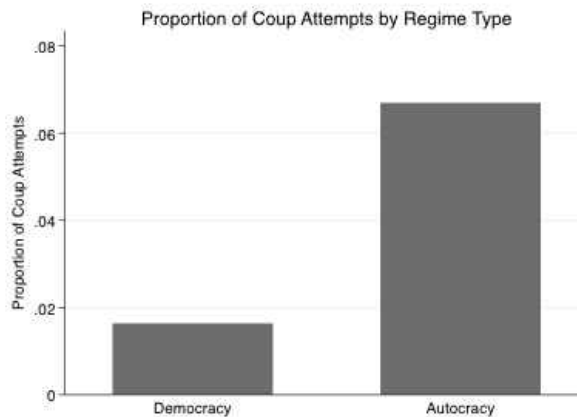


Figure 2: Coups Across Regimes

Second, wealth disproportionately insulates democracies from coups as compared to either poor democracies or autocracies at any stage of development. Figure 3⁶ provides a

⁵ Coup data are derived from Powell and Thyne (2011) and democracy data from Bell (2016b).

⁶ Wealthy states are defined as those above the approximate mean of GDP per capita in developing states (US \$4000) and poor states are those below the mean.

comparison of coups across regime type and levels of economic development and points to two main findings. First, the figure points out that democracy provides significant insulation from coups when states are wealthy. Wealthy democracies suffer coup attempts in about .007% of country years, compared with poor democracies who suffer coups in about .05%. Next, poor autocracies suffer coups in about .07% of country years compared with wealthy autocracies, at about .02% of years. Second, while the figure points out that more coups occur in autocracies, wealthier democracies enjoy greater insulation from coups at higher levels of economic development than do wealthy autocracies. As democracies move from below the mean of economic development to above it, their rate of coups decreases by more than 86% compared with autocracies who experience a decrease of approximately 71%.

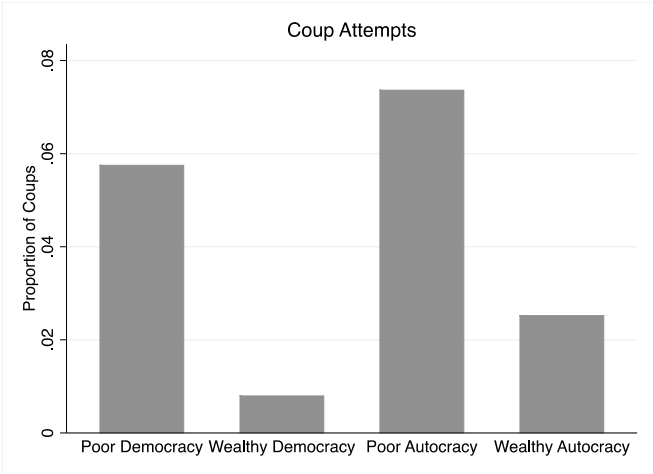


Figure 3: Coups in Wealthy and Poor Regimes

In the pursuit of understanding why poor democracies are that much more vulnerable to coup attempts than other regimes at varying levels of development, a theoretical mechanism is offered. Poor democracies should experience the highest coup proclivity due to elite calculations

Democracy and autocracy data are derived from Bell (2016b), which follows a procedural definition of democracy coding those states as democratic that have reasonably free and fair competitions for power. All those states that do not have such competitions are coded as autocracies (non-democracies).

concerning future resource shares, increased necessary spending on public goods, larger coalitions necessary for regime survival, and relatively decreased access to elite loyalty maintenance mechanisms. Figure 4 provides an overview of the theoretical expectations described.

	Low Economic Development	High Economic Development
Democracy	· Increased resource scarcity	· Decreased resource scarcity
Large necessary coalitions	· Increased goods provision	· Increased goods provision
	· Decreased regime loyalty mechanisms	· Decreased elite loyalty mechanisms,
	Highest elite motivation	Lowest elite motivation
Autocracy	· Increased resource scarcity	· Decreased resource scarcity
Small necessary coalitions	· Decreased goods provision	· Decreased goods provision
	· Increased regime loyalty mechanisms	· Increased elite loyalty mechanisms

Figure 4: Theoretical Mechanism

Bringing together theoretical expectations with prior work on the subject, I utilize a rational choice framework to illustrate the increased coup risk poor democracies face. I contend that calculations made by elites depend upon predictions about future resource shares. Rational choice theory, well suited to the understanding of coup attempts given its ability to gauge circumstances concerning a small number of actors, calculable odds, and large potential payoffs, has been utilized in the coup literature by scholars including Bell and Koga-Sudduth (2017), Thyne (2010), and Powell (2012). Rational choice theory suggests that coups are undertaken as the result of an expected utility calculation on the part of elites. This decision considers both the probability of success or failure as well as the benefits of success and/or the hindrances of failure. The relative weight that elites place on the consequences of coups are influenced by the magnitude of possible payoffs and the probability of success. Bell and Koga-Sudduth (2017) argue that in situations characterized by relatively increased benefits of success, plotters may

undertake otherwise prohibitively risky attempts. They therefore argue that when the benefits of a successful coup are high, riskier coups will be attempted.

I expect that coups will be most likely to occur in poor democracies for two main reasons. First, beginning with democracy as equilibrium, when states are poor, resources are limited, and future resource shares are not guaranteed. The pursuit, for example, of redistributive income policies in poor states to satisfy the masses may prove unacceptable to elites, forcing them to engage in a cost benefit analysis concerning the viability of the status quo in a redistributive democracy or under an unknown dictator. Second, democracies in general, and especially those facing resource limitations, can only engage in limited patronage and repression to manage elite defections. Beginning with patronage, poor democracies are constrained in three ways. First, poor democracies do not have many resources to go around. Second, democracies require larger coalitions to keep their incumbent in power and therefore patronage, by definition, is a more expensive endeavor. Third, democracies require more spending on public goods than do autocracies and therefore a portion of the pot is already earmarked. Finally, in democracies repression is both a costlier and less feasible option in democracies therefore making managing elite defections more difficult.

Next, regarding wealthy democracies, I expect that they will be the most insulated from coups for two main reasons. First, at higher levels of wealth, democracy becomes more affordable for everyone. Elites know that if they disagree with the regime in place, they will not lose their wealth by allowing a regime with whom they disagree to remain in power. Instead, they can afford to live out the regime's tenure and try again for a like-minded regime. Second, wealthy democracies have greater resources with which to provide both public and private goods. Greater resources mean the ability to pacify the larger coalitions necessary to keep

democratic incumbents in power and to pacify the population with public goods. Greater public and private goods provision can therefore alleviate many common grievances among the general population and elites (Buono de Mesquita et al. 2003). Finally, while similar to poor democracies in that wealthy democracies cannot rely on high levels of repression or patronage to manage elite defections, they should not be forced to as elites should be relatively content with the status quo.

Hypothesis 1: At low levels of economic development, democracies are more likely to suffer coup attempts than autocracies.

Hypothesis 2: At high levels of economic development, democracies are less likely to suffer coup attempts than autocracies.

Data & Methods

Examining a global sample of 165 countries from 1950-2011, I investigate the conditional influence of democracy on coups. The unit of analysis is country year and the main dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator, therefore a logit estimator is employed. Standard errors are clustered by country in an effort to address heteroskedasticity. Finally, all independent and control variables are lagged by one year to address potential endogeneity unless otherwise noted.

The dependent variable, *coup attempt*, is derived from the Powell and Thyne dataset and accounts for both failed and successful attempts. Following Powell and Thyne (2011, 252), coup attempts are defined as “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive.” The variable is dichotomous with 1 signifying a coup attempt in the given country year. Attempts were chosen to model coup activity because I aim to capture the decision to launch a coup rather than to account for the factors that may influence success. Therefore, by examining all coup attempts, I am able to disregard exogenous variables

influencing success. Second, in the interest of excluding instances of coup rumors and plots, I limit the measure to only attempted coups, ensuring that included events do not suffer differing degrees of reporting bias (Powell & Thyne 2011).

The main independent variables of interest used to test the casual mechanism include *democracy* and *economic development*. *Democracy* is examined utilizing a dichotomous measure derived from Bell with data available from 1950-2017. In the REIGN dataset regime types are coded dichotomously: democracy or non-democracy. For regimes coded as democracies, Bell relies on a procedural definition of democracy thus including states with “reasonably free and fair competitions for political power” (Bell 2016b, 3). For the purposes of robustness, five democracy datasets are ultimately utilized, including Bell (2016b), Boix et al. (2013), Cheibub et al. (2009), Geddes et al. (2014), and the Polity IV dataset (Marshall et al. 2011).⁷

Economic development is operationalized as the natural log of *Real GDP per capita*. An interaction term is utilized to test the conditional argument made regarding democracies and economic development. The interaction term is thus a combination of the two main independent variables, democracy and economic development, *Democracy X Economic Development*.

Utilizing controls commonly found in the coup literature, I control for the *Cold War*, coded 1 in the years between 1960 and 1991 and 0 in other years. The effect of passage of time since a coup is controlled for with the use of *Time Since Coup*, operationalized as a count of years since the last coup. Squared and cubed polynomials are also included (Carter & Signorino 2010).

⁷ The Polity democracy measure was transformed into a dichotomous measure according to the guidelines put forth by Marshall et al. (2011). Results utilizing all five mentioned democracy measures are similar with the interaction between democracy and wealth illustrating a significant, negative effect on coups.

Controlling for military interests, operationalizations in the literature have included expenditure per soldier (Bell & Koga-Sudduth 2017; Powell 2012), and expenditure as a percentage of GDP (Kim 2016; Leon 2014; Powell et al. 2016), both of which proxy possible material grievances. Data are derived from Singer et al. (1972) with updates to 2012. Next, *Military Regime* is controlled for utilizing a dichotomous indicator where 1 signifies a military autocracy and 0 signifies a non-military regime (autocratic or democratic). The data are gathered from Bell (2016b) and the variable is lagged by one year to address potential endogeneity. In the interest of robustness, a similar measure from Geddes et al. (2014) is utilized in models where the Geddes democracy measure is used.

Results

Table 1: The Effects of Regime Type and Economic Development on Coup Attempts

	Model 1 (Naïve)	Model 2 (Reign)	Model 3 (Cheibub)	Model 4 (Boix)	Model 5 (Geddes)	Model 6 (Polity)
Democracy	-0.065 (0.163)	3.908*** (1.107)	3.794*** (1.098)	3.015* (1.178)	4.175*** (1.077)	3.523** (1.365)
GDP pc (ln)	-0.308*** (0.085)	-0.157+ (0.088)	-0.225** (0.083)	-0.262** (0.087)	-0.200* (0.083)	-0.206** (0.079)
Democracy X GDP pc (ln)		-0.493*** (0.147)	-0.460** (0.141)	-0.360* (0.151)	-0.514*** (0.141)	-0.471** (0.177)
Military Regime	0.233+ (0.136)	0.463** (0.155)	0.333* (0.136)	0.515*** (0.154)	0.521*** (0.157)	0.439** (0.153)
Cold War	0.436** (0.156)	0.524** (0.177)	0.535** (0.163)	0.513** (0.172)	0.548** (0.179)	0.457** (0.169)
Time Since	-0.277*** (0.043)	-0.196*** (0.043)	-0.267*** (0.043)	-0.261*** (0.042)	-0.233*** (0.041)	-0.253*** (0.041)
Time Since²	0.016*** (0.004)	0.007* (0.003)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	0 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.071* (0.031)	-0.088+ (0.051)	-0.04 (0.031)	-0.045 (0.041)	-0.03 (0.045)	-0.052 (0.042)
Constant	0.881 (0.576)	-0.276 (0.604)	-0.2 (0.597)	0.238 (0.637)	-0.428 (0.607)	-0.003 (0.578)
ROC	0.795	0.801	0.799	0.802	0.799	0.802
Observations	6,983	6,982	7,086	6,816	6,865	6,770
Number of Groups	164	151	165	151	151	152

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 3 examines the effects of democracy on the probability of a coup attempt. Six models are presented in Table 3 with models two through six utilizing a different Democracy data source for the purposes of robustness. Model 1 is a naïve model that omits the interaction

term and utilizes data from Bell (2016b). First, the naïve model (model 1) shows a negative, though not significant, effect of democracy on coup attempts. Without considering the interaction effect, it would appear that regime type does not play an important role. Next, in models two through six, the constitutive democracy term illustrates a positive and significant effect on coups. Mirroring some prior findings in the literature, the coefficient suggests that at low levels of economic development democracy has a positive effect on coup attempts (Arriola 2009; Bell 2016a; Hiroi & Omori 2015; Gassebner et al. 2016). Therefore, while not directly interpretable due to the lack of real-world circumstances reflecting situations where GDP is zero, the results nonetheless offer support for the argument at low levels of development.

Moving now to the interaction term, we can see that the coefficient for *Economic Development X Regime Type* is negative and significant in models 2 through 6, offering robust support for the argument that democracies are afforded insulation from coups as wealth increases. Models 2 through 6 each illustrate the negative and significant coefficient such that the positive effect of democracy on coup attempts declines as wealth increases. Finally, a ROC value is offered in Table 3 for each model 1 through 6. The ROC values range from 0.795 to 0.802 indicating a fair to good model fit.

Examining the substantive effects of the interaction term, Figure 4 illustrates the difference between coup vulnerability at high and low levels of development in democracies and civilian autocracies separately. Substantive effects for models 2 through 5 are depicted in Figure 4 with each graph utilizing a different measure of democracy (noted above each graph).

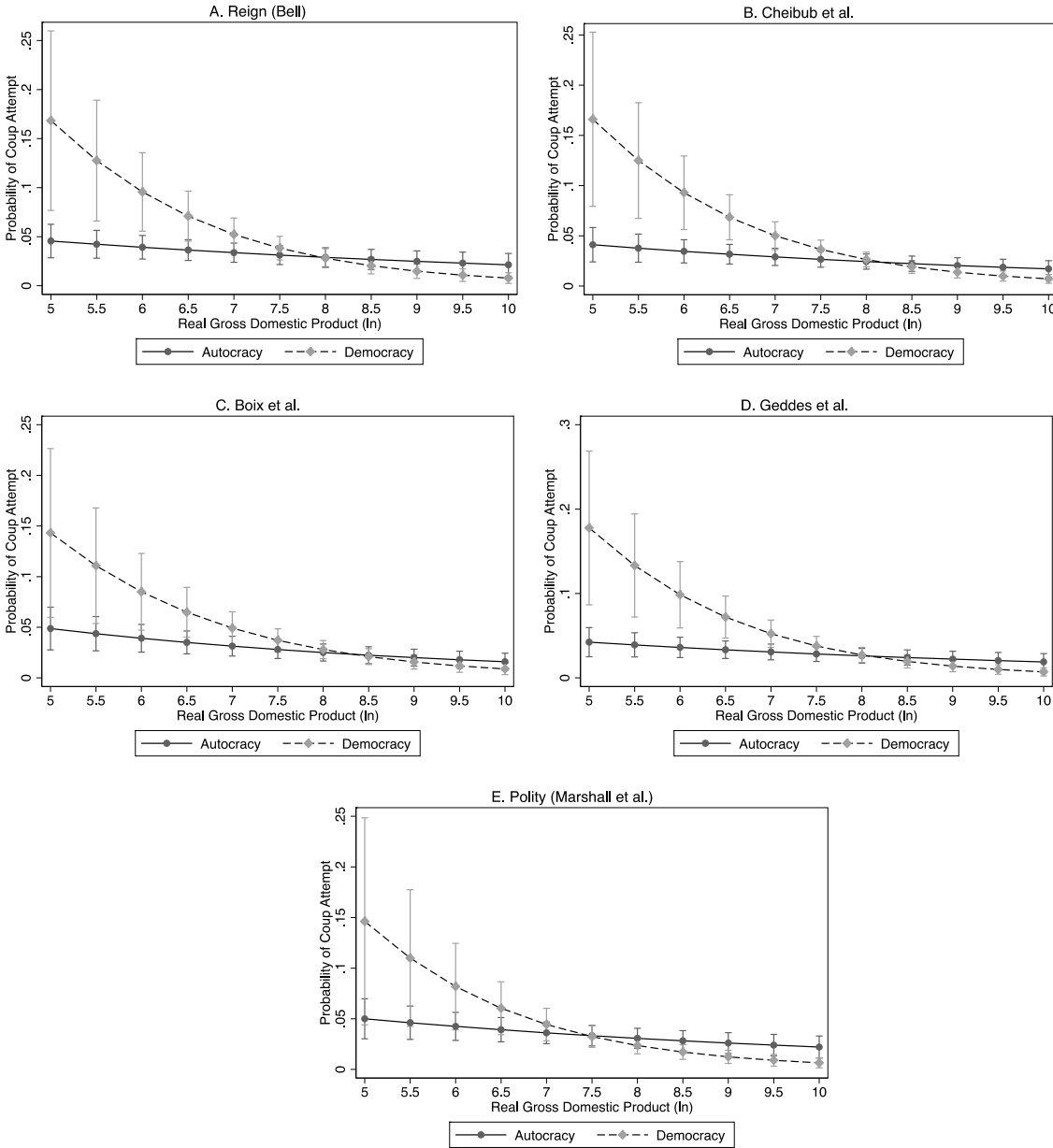


Figure 5 A-E: Regime Type, Economic Development, and Coup Attempts

Beginning with Figure 5-A, we can see that at the lowest end of economic development democracies suffer an approximate .17 rate of coup attempts compared with a .04 rate in autocracies at the same level. Democracies maintain a significantly higher rate of coup attempts until they reach a logged value of about 6.5 real GDP per capita. Moving to the mean of economic development, at 8.34 logged real GDP per capita, both democracies and autocracies suffer about a .02 rate of coup attempts in a country-year. Autocracies present a somewhat flat

line, illustrating little change in coup propensity when moving from the lowest to the highest levels of economic development. Autocracies at a value of 5 logged GDP per capita suffer a rate of .04 coup attempts in a county-year and those at 10 logged GDP per capita report a .01 rate. Next, Figure 5-B illustrates similar results with democracies again suffering increased coup attempts at lower levels of economic development compared with autocracies. At the lowest levels of economic development, democracies suffer a .16 rate of coup attempts compared with autocracies experiencing a .04 rate. Moving to the mean of economic development the rate of coup attempts in democracies decreases by about 87% to a rate of .02. Compare this with the rate of coups in autocracies at the mean of development, .02, and the insulation gained is less notable. Next, Figure 5-C fails to illustrate significant differences between autocracies and democracies across levels of development. While the interaction term is negative and significant in Model 4, the confidence intervals overlap suggesting a lack of significant differences between coup rates between regime types. Figure 5-D again illustrates that democracies are significantly more likely than autocracies to experience coups at very low levels of economic development, .17 to .04, respectively. Finally figure 5-E fails to show significant differences in coup propensity between regime types at any level of economic development. Taking the figures together, two main findings stand out. First, democracies appear more susceptible to coups at low levels of economic development than autocracies. Second, at increased levels of economic development democracies garner greater insulation from coup attempts than do civilian autocracies.

Controls largely behave as expected with military regimes experiencing a higher coup propensity than other autocratic regimes, confirming results from earlier studies (Hiroi & Omori 2015; Böhmelt & Pilster 2015). The variable *Cold War* displays a positive and significant effect of the time period on coup attempts confirming a well-established finding in the literature. Next,

increasing time since coup displays a negative and significant impact on coup proclivity confirming findings in several studies (e.g., Kim 2016; Powell 2012; Wobig 2015). Finally, *Military Expenditure per Soldier* (ln), is negative however it does not provide robust results perhaps implying that the effect of wealth more generally does a better job of capturing this grievance.

Conclusion

The findings of this research are twofold. First, poor democracies are significantly more vulnerable to coups than are poor autocracies but increased economic development can help to insulate democracies from coups. Second, poorer autocracies are not prone to the same level of vulnerability in the form of coup attempts, likely due to their smaller winning coalitions, greater repressive capacity, and increased elite loyalty maintenance activities. Unlike democracies however, increases in economic development do not result in the same degree of regime insulation from coup attempts. In short, high levels of economic development disproportionately insulate democracies from coup attempts and low levels of wealth disproportionately expose democracies to coup attempts. Further still, these relationships are not evident in autocracies; the level of economic development has a negligible effect on coup attempts in autocracies.

Elite coups remain a threat to stability for both democracies and autocracies. Understanding the mechanisms at work both across regimes and within them separately is thus of the utmost importance. While outcomes alone are significant predictors of vulnerability and political violence, they leave out much of the story of regime vulnerability. Capturing the decision to overthrow a regime instead provides insight into the forces at work in all regimes suffering the kind of instability that can eventually lead to illegal interventions in politics. Illustrating the conditional vulnerability associated with poor democracies can help to make clear

the threats faced by such regimes, perhaps eventually resulting in increased attention to matters of coalition maintenance. Further research into the conditional effects of democracy are necessary and will likely result in a more comprehensive understanding of coup vulnerability.

CHAPTER THREE: REGIME TYPE, JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH, AND COUPS

Introduction

In April 2015, Burundi was wracked by political violence in the run up to presidential elections. Speculation over whether President Nkurunziza would run for a third term led to protests, escalating into the displacement of tens of thousands. When the ruling party announced the nomination of Nkurunziza, protests increased dramatically. Upon the urging of a collection of civil society groups, the constitutional court agreed to review the president's constitutionally dubious third term bid. Opponents of the president however were not optimistic, with one observer remarking, "the constitutional court is composed of the darlings of Pierre Nkurunziza, and they do not refuse him anything" (*AFP* 2015). As expected, on 5 May, the court ruled in Nkurunziza's favor, six to one (*Africa News* 2015). On 13 May, former intelligence chief, General Godefroid Niyombare, earlier dismissed for counselling the president against a third term, attempted a coup while the Nkurunziza was in Tanzania. The coup ultimately failed when loyal segments of the army regained control of the airport and capital, restoring power to the president. The impacts of the coup and electoral violence were devastating with at least 70 killed, more than 100,000 displaced, and the renewed use of ethnic rhetoric and violence (Jones 2015; Vandeginste 2015).

Tracing the events of April 2015 in Burundi, one can see how judicial institutional weakness and regime type worked together to bring about the coup. First, in all regimes, strong judicial institutions increase certainty for elites in two ways. First, they provide reliable and repeatable information about the consequences for breaking rules. Second, by enforcing these rules impersonally, they constrain the set of acceptable actions that actors can take. When

judicial institutions are strong, elites are constrained by the rules, thus limiting the range of acceptable actions. When institutions are weak, constraints fall away as rules are no longer applied or applied on a personal basis. This can result in a larger range of possible actions thereby increasing uncertainty.

Second, autocracies are able to rely more extensively on loyalty maintenance mechanisms to manage elite defections than democracies, including both repression and patronage. Third, when weak judicial institutions trigger a crisis, autocracies have both smaller coalitions to pacify and less broad interests represented within these coalitions. Compared with autocracies, the coalitions needed to maintain democratic incumbents are both larger and represent more diverse interests. In short, democracy exacerbates the need for independent arbiters to solve conflicts and when judicial institutions are weak, these arbiters are absent.

I assert that the mechanism predisposing some democracies to coups d'état is a lack of judicial institutional strength. Political institutions can be broadly understood as previously agreed upon rules and procedures that limit and facilitate political behavior (Levitsky & Murillo 2009). Strong institutions enforce previously agreed upon rules impersonally. Alternatively, weak institutions either do not enforce the rules or enforce them on a personal basis. When either of the latter characterize a state's judicial institutional function, elites lack certainty about the future and may engage in cost benefit analysis regarding the benefits of removal and the cost of waiting out the incumbent. Results from empirical tests on a global sample from 1950-2012 suggest that democracies with weak judicial institutions are more likely to suffer coup attempts. Findings from this study help to explain discrepancies in earlier literature about coups and regime type in two ways. First, by pointing to variation in judicial institutions within democracies, I show that more nuance is required in our understanding of liberal institutional

arrangements. Second, by illustrating the conditionalities associated with institutional weakness, I reconcile earlier findings regarding coup risk in democracies.

The following paper will unfold in six parts beginning with a survey of the literature concerning the sources of institutional weakness. Following, I will review of the state of the literature concerning coups and political institutions. Third, I present a theoretical mechanism accounting for coup propensity across regimes at different levels of judicial institutional strength. Next, I present a detailed description of the data and methods utilized to test my causal mechanism. Fifth, results of empirical tests will be offered, followed by a discussion situating the findings in the larger coup literature. Finally, conclusions and areas for further research will follow.

Literature Review

Judicial Institutional Weakness

Strong judicial institutions offer a degree of certainty by enforcing rules impersonally. Impersonal enforcement of rules ensures that each member of a society will be treated similarly according to previously agreed upon rules regardless of her place in society. While this is a lofty goal at any level, it is especially relevant at the elite level. The guarantee that rules will be enforced impersonally constrains the range of acceptable actions such that given a set of choices, elites can be relatively certain of likely outcomes. Therefore, when judicial institutions are strong, actors know that those who break the rules will face agreed-upon consequences. Rules regarding, for instance, term limits, ensure that incumbents do not attempt to extend their terms by extra-constitutional means. If incumbents should attempt to do so, elites can rest assured that the courts will block such attempts and that the incumbent will be punished accordingly. Alternatively, when judicial institutions are weak, elites lack certainty both about who will be

punished and what actors are likely to do in a given set of circumstances when actions are no longer constrained by the rules. Returning to the term limit example, when judicial institutions are weak, an incumbent may choose to run for a third term when the constitution has explicit rules concerning term limits. Knowing that limits will not be applied to her, the incumbent's actions are no longer constrained to behavior considered acceptable in the constitution. This removes a measure of certainty in elite interactions. Then, when elites attempt to challenge this illegal term extension, it is unclear what weak judicial institutions will do, creating more uncertainty. Elites then must choose how to respond in the new landscape where rules are not applied impersonally or at all. Therefore, a lack of certainty about the guidelines of acceptable behavior, fostered by weak institutions, encourages actors to cheat. (Acemoglu et al. 2000; North 1990). Understanding the role of judicial institutions in a state, we can then address the possible sources of institutional weakness.

Institutional weakness may come about as the result of three mechanisms: design, stability, and/or enforcement. First, institutional design refers to process through which rules are created. This may either be an organic process, as in the *bellicist* theory of state building, or institutions may be transplanted, as happened when a state was colonized. State building, in the political development literature, is the process that occurred in early communities during preparation for war. Especially relating to the development of the early states of Western Europe, the *bellicist* theory of state building is widely accepted. Tilly (1985) describes the process through which property rights became institutionalized as that of a state engaging in a protection racket with its citizens. Initially, states required resources from the population to make war and in making successful war they expanded and required more resources. As a result, a contract developed wherein states were able to extract resources in exchange for providing protection to

their citizens. North and Thomas (1973) assert that when popular resistance to greater extraction, and the means of coercion used to extract formed, states responded with property rights, means for adjudicating disputes, and greater repressive and coercive capacities. Scholars have posited institutional evolution, or the lack thereof, as a main culprit leading to poor economic growth and regime instability (Acemoglu 2005; North et al. 2009).

Next, institutional stability refers to the durability or longevity of an institution. North and colleagues separate institutions into those that are perpetually lived and those that are dependent upon the lives of their members (2006). Perpetually lived institutions exist independently from the identities of their members and as a result are capable of impersonal enforcement of rules. The authors assert that perpetual institutions are the second of three “doorstep conditions” essential for impersonal exchanges in society, facilitating sustained economic growth and development. The three door step conditions include rule of law for elites, perpetual forms of organizations (for elites), and political control of the military (North et al. 2006, 52). Each of these conditions is reliant on the establishment of the prior condition. For instance, rule of law must take hold before perpetual organizations can be established. Alternatively, institutions associated with the identities of their members do not enforce rules impersonally, do not outlast their individual members, and therefore are less durable (e.g., partnerships).

Third, enforcement refers to the degree to which the rules on paper are practiced. There are several reasons that enforcement may be lacking including political will, state capacity, or inequality (Levitsky & Murillo 2009). First, regarding political will, enforcement may vary due to discrepancies between stated and indented goals of political actors. Alternatively, especially in developing countries, enforcement may be weak due to “window dressing” institutions, created

to satisfy international donors (e.g., Van de Walle 2001). Second, enforcement may be weak due to low levels of state capacity such that it is simply not possible to enforce the rules (e.g., Herbst 2000). Third, inequality in the state can account for differential rates of enforcement of rules (Levitsky & Murillo 2009).

Understanding that the sources of weakness are different, while important, merely underscores the notion that there can be a variety of factors at play in regimes that suffer from institutional weakness. Each of the above-mentioned sources of institutional weakness have a similar outcome, namely the either the absent or unequal application of law. With the sources of institutional weakness in mind, the discussion will now turn to the effects of weak political institution on coup proclivity.

Political Institutions & Coups d'état

Beginning broadly, political institutions describe the set of rules enshrined in a state's constitution governing political behavior (Levitsky & Murillo 2009). These include laws surrounding the judiciary, the executive, and the legislature. Much of the work focusing on the nexus between political institutions and coups has been focused in two broad areas. First, work has examined regime type as a proxy for institutional quality. While the majority of these studies utilize a dichotomous indicator of regime type, they nonetheless reach varied conclusions. Scholars including Bell (2016a) and Powell and colleagues (2018) point out the frequency with which democracies are targets of coups despite mixed findings in the literature. Indeed, dichotomous indicators of democracy in studies of coup risk rarely achieve significance (Bell & Koga-Sudduth 2017; Böhmelt & Pilster 2015; Hiroi & Omori 2015; Powell 2012). However, when they do the results are inconsistent with some studies suggesting democracies are less

likely to see coups (e.g., Johnson & Thyne 2018) and others asserting autocracies are more insulated from coups (e.g., Tusalem 2010).

Alternatively, some studies find a non-linear relationship between democracy and coup risk such that unconsolidated regimes are the most likely to see coups (Piplani & Talmadge 2016; Houle 2016). These results suggest that perhaps dichotomous measures of regime type alone miss important differences in institutions that may account for coup proclivity. These institutional differences picked up in unconsolidated, or hybrid regimes, have been highlighted in work by Levitsky and Way (2002), for instance. Here, the authors argue for more nuanced categorizations of regimes rather than classifying unconsolidated autocracies as democracies, or at the least, democratizing. Instead, I argue that this problem can be remedied, in quantitative research, by accounting for the strength of political institutions in conjunction with regime type.

Second, existing work on specific political institutions and their effects on coups has been narrowly focused on co-optation strategies in the legislature and executive cabinets, and separately, on property rights. First, Bove and Rivera (2015) find autocratic utilization of elite co-optation strategies, including the existence of an elected legislature, decreases coup activity. The authors argue that legislatures incorporate potential rivals into the incumbent's coalition, thus giving them a stake in the incumbent's survival. Regarding executive cabinets, Arriola (2009) utilized data on ministerial cabinet appointments and found that expanding the size of the cabinet was inversely related to coup risk. He suggests that this very visible form of patronage expands the incumbent's coalition so that the added cabinet member will not plot against him. Finally, Tusalem (2010) examined property rights and found that states with more secure

property rights were less likely to experience coups.⁸ The mechanism here suggests that when property rights are threatened, decreases in both public and private investments can occur, thus leading to differing forms of political destabilization, including coups.

Beyond the studies above, research examining specific political institutions and their effects on coups is lacking. This is especially true of judicial institutions and coups. As of writing, the only study relevant to judicial institutions and coups examines judicial independence in relation to both democratic backsliding and regime stability (Gibler & Randazzo 2011). Operationalizing judicial independence as degrees of judicial constraints on the executive, the authors find that an independent judiciary can prevent both democratic backsliding and regime failure. The overall theoretical mechanism suggests that a strong judiciary builds legitimacy, strengthening the institution such that the executive will not need to implement emergency executive powers in times of crises, thus prompting democratic backsliding.

Thus far, the review of the literature has established three main points. First, the coup literature has established a tenuous link between institutional quality and coup proclivity, generally proxied with the use of dichotomous regime type variables. However, dichotomous measures of regime type fail to account for coup proclivity in democracies. Second, the coup literature has yet to account for judicial institutional strength as an explanatory variable explaining coup risk. Third, judicial institutional weakness stems from at least three sources including institutional design, stability, and enforcement, all of which are likely at work in unconsolidated democratic states. The following paragraphs will offer a theoretical mechanism asserting a rational choice framework accounting for heightened democratic vulnerability to coup attempts when judicial institutions are weak.

⁸ Tusalem (2010) utilized the Contract Intensive Money ratio as a proxy for property rights.

Theoretical Mechanism

Democracies characterized by weak judicial institutions should suffer the highest coup proclivity due to heightened uncertainty in interactions, larger and broader necessary coalitions, and decreased use of elite loyalty mechanisms. Alternatively, autocracies characterized by strong judicial institutions should have the lowest coup proclivity due to the relative certainty in elite interactions, smaller necessary and more narrow coalitions, and increased use of elite loyalty mechanisms. Figure 7 outlines my expectations for democracies and autocracies at differing levels of judicial institutional strength. The following paragraphs will outline my theoretical mechanism in detail beginning with my expectations for judicial institutional strength, followed by my expectations for regime type.

	Strong Judiciary	Weak Judiciary
Democracy	Impersonal application of law	Personal application of law
Larger necessary coalition, representing broad interests	Decreased patronage Decreased repression Low coup propensity	Decreased patronage Decreased repression High coup propensity
Autocracy	Impersonal application of law	Personal application of law
Smaller necessary coalition, representing relatively narrow interests	Increased patronage Increased repression Low coup propensity	Increased patronage Increased repression Low coup propensity

Figure 6: Theoretical Mechanism

When judicial institutions are strong, they foster a measure of certainty in elite interactions in two ways. First, when the rules are applied impersonally, elites can be certain of the consequences for breaking rules. Second, when elites know that rules are applied impersonally, the set of acceptable actions that elites can take becomes constrained, thus increasing certainty. Returning to the case of Burundi in 2015, weak judicial institutions fostered uncertainty by failing to enforce the constitution impersonally. Elites therefore lacked certainty about whether the president would attempt to stand for a third term. Then when the president did attempt to run again, the constitutional court did not uphold the law, as it was understood by

most, allowing the third term bid to proceed. The increased uncertainty brought about by the crisis triggered a rational choice calculation on the part of elites concerning the cost of failure and the benefits associated with removal. Applying this logic to the larger universe of cases, I assert that the uncertainty brought about by weak judicial institutions can force elites into making rational choice calculations about their futures under the incumbent.

However, considerations concerning regime type should temper our expectations for how judicial institutions may prompt coups. In other words, instead of expecting judicial institutional weakness to operate similarly relating to coups in all regimes, I expect the relationship to change dependent on the regime type in which the institutional weakness takes place. I expect that democracies will suffer coups at a higher rate than autocracies for two reasons. First, democratic incumbents have larger necessary coalitions that they must keep pacified to remain in power than do autocratic incumbents. These larger coalitions necessary to maintain democratic incumbents not only increase the cost of patronage, discussed below, but they also broaden the actors and interests represented within the coalition. This broadening of the coalition in terms of both actors and interests is likely to increase conflict, thus underlining the need for a strong judiciary to act as an independent arbiter. Therefore, in democracies arbiters are severely needed to enforce rules and settle disputes. When judicial institutions are weak, the uncertainty produced by the range of interests, actors, and unconstrained actions can lead to cheating on the part of elites. When this cheating rises to the level of increasing uncertainty about the future, crises occur, and coups may arise.

Second, democratic incumbents should face more coup attempts when judicial institutions are weak due to their relatively diminished ability to engage in patronage and repression to manage elite defections. First, to manage these defections, autocracies are able to

engage in greater use of repression than are democracies and they are able to do so at lower cost (Bell 2016a). Second, patronage is a cheaper tool for autocracies to rely on than democracies. Again, referring to the relative size of coalitions, autocrats require smaller coalitions to stay in power than those needed by an incumbent in a democracy (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003) With more to go around, it is in theory easier to keep elites happy. Additionally, autocracies spend less than democracies on public goods therefore leaving more for the incumbent to spend on private goods (Lake & Baum 2001). In sum, I expect that the effects of weak judicial institutions on coups will be most pronounced in democracies because they cannot rely on mechanisms to ensure elite loyalty to the extent that autocracies can, including the use of both repression and patronage.

H1: Democracies with weak judicial institutions will be most likely to suffer coup attempts

On the other hand, autocracies should not face similar vulnerability when judicial institutions prompt uncertainty for two reasons. First, autocrats have smaller necessary coalitions to sustain them in power and these coalitions represent relatively narrower interests than in democracies. The effects of smaller coalitions representing narrower interests should decrease coup attempts for two main reasons. First, smaller coalitions decrease the cost of patronage. A smaller number of elites to pacify means relatively less spending on private goods. Second, a narrower set of interests represented within the incumbent's coalition means that solving conflicts may not require an independent arbiter such that weak judicial institutions do not exacerbate coalition conflicts.

Second, autocracies should be not face heightened vulnerability to coup attempts when judicial institutions are weak, compared with democracies, due to their increased ability to manage elite defections through the use of patronage and repression. Autocracies are able to

engage in increased use of both patronage and repression, compared with democracies, such that it is considered a legitimate practice and is less costly. First, as discussed above, smaller necessary coalitions make patronage less expensive. And second, the lack of constraints on autocrats makes the use of repression an effective tool to manage elite defections in that the practice is both less costly and more feasible in autocracies (Bell 2016a).

H2: Autocracies with weak judicial institutions will not suffer increased coup attempts

Data & Methods

Examining the conditional effects of regime type and judicial institutional strength on coups attempts, a global sample, examining 165 countries, from 1950 to 2012 is utilized. The dependent variable is dichotomous, and the unit of analysis is country year, therefore a logit estimator is employed. Standard errors are clustered by country to account for between country variations in unobserved variables. All independent variables are lagged by one year to address potential endogeneity unless stated otherwise. The dependent variable, coup attempt, is operationalized as an “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive” (Powell & Thyne 2011, 252). I chose an attempt treatment rather than a measure of success for two main reasons. First, utilizing a measure of success would also account for omitted variables that that determine success. Second, by focusing on attempts I limit the measure to more readily observable events and exclude instances of coup rumors and plots which may suffer differing degrees of reporting bias (Powell & Thyne 2011).

The main independent variables of interest include democracy, judicial institutional strength, and an interaction term, *Democracy X Judicial Institutional Strength*. Beginning with democracy, I utilize the Reign dataset (Bell 2016b). The Reign data offers dichotomous coding

of states, democracy or nondemocracy, from 1950-2017. For regimes coded as democracies, Bell (2016b) relies on a procedural definition of democracy, thus including states with “reasonably free and fair competitions for political power”.

Next, judicial institutional strength is operationalized with six measures including judicial accountability, high court independence, government compliance with the judiciary, judicial corruption, judicial purges, and court packing. These data are derived from the Varieties of Democracy dataset and are all lagged by one year to address potential endogeneity (Coppedge et al. 2016). The measures are ordinal, converted to interval by the measurement model, and ranked from low to high with 0 denoting the weakest institutions and 4 denoting the strongest institutions. First, judicial accountability asks, “When judges are found responsible for serious misconduct, how often are they removed from their posts or otherwise disciplined?” Answers include never, seldom, half the time, usually, and always, corresponding to 0-4 (Coppedge et al. 2016, 201). Next, the measure for high court independence asks, “When the high court in the judicial system is ruling in cases that are salient to the government, how often would you say that it makes decisions that merely reflect government wishes regardless of its sincere view of the legal record?” Answers include never, seldom, half the time, usually, and always, corresponding to 0-4 (Coppedge et al. 2016, 202). Third, compliance with the high court asks, “How often would you say the government complies with important decisions of the high court with which it disagrees?” Answers, again, include never, seldom, half the time, usually, and always, corresponding to 0-4 (Coppedge et al. 2016, 203). Next, for judicial corruption, the questions asks the coder “how often do individuals or businesses make undocumented extra payments or bribes in order to speed up or delay the process or to obtain a favorable judicial decision?” Answers include never, seldom, half the time, usually, and always, corresponding to 0-4

(Coppedge et al. 2016, 201). Fifth, for the variable judicial purges, the question asks, “Judges are sometimes removed from their posts for cause, as when there is strong evidence of corruption; however, some judges are removed arbitrarily, typically for political reasons, with this distinction in mind, please describe the removal of judges that occurred this calendar year.” Answers include massive, arbitrary purges, limited and very important removals, limited and arbitrary removals, removals that were not arbitrary, and judges were not removed, corresponding to 0-4 (Coppedge et al. 2016, 199). Finally, court packing states, “the size of the judiciary is sometimes increased for very good reasons, as when judges are added to manage an increasing caseload; however, sometimes judges are added for purely political reasons. With this distinction in mind, please describe any increases in the size of the judiciary that occurred this calendar year.” Answers include massive politically motivated increases across entire judiciary, limited politically motivated increases across very important courts, limited politically motivated increases, judges were added but there is no evidence it was politically motivated, corresponding to 0-4 (Coppedge et al. 2016, 200).

Next, to test to main causal mechanism, I utilize an interaction term, *Democracy X Judicial Institutional Strength*. The term is comprised of the democracy variable and one of the judicial institutional strength variables, depending upon the model.

Controls utilized are those commonly found in the coup literature and include a term for Cold War, military expenditure per soldier, military regime, GDP per capita, time since coup, and squared and cubed polynomials. Cold War is operationalized as a binary indicator, 1 for the years between 1960 and 1991, and 0 in other years. Next, prior literature asserts that a poorly-funded military is more likely to unseat a regime. Therefore, to control for the effect of military grievance, I include the natural log of military expenditure per soldier utilizing data from Singer

et al. (1972) with updates to 2012. Next, Military regime is controlled for with data from Geddes et al. (2014) with a binary indicator, where 1 indicates a military regime and 0 denotes a non-military regime. Next, poorer states have been shown to be more prone to coup attempts in prior research (Gassebner et al. 2016; Kim 2016; Londregan & Poole 1990). Therefore, I control for economic development with the natural log of real GDP per capita from the Penn World Tables. Additionally, returning to the discussion of sources of institutional weakness, I included a count variable that records the number of years of each democratic regime, or spell. By controlling for the number of years that a state has been a democracy with the variable Democracy (years), I am able to account for the effects of new regimes apart from institutional weakness. A similar variable, labeled Autocracy (years) is utilized in models testing limited samples of only autocratic states. Finally, following the lead of Carter and Signorino (2010), to model the effect of passage of time since a coup, I include a count of years since the last coup, as well as squared and cubed polynomials.

Results

Table 2: The Effects of Judicial Institutions on Coup Attempts, 1950-2012

	1: Judicial Accountability	2: High Court Independence	3: Compliance with High Court	4: Judicial Corruption	5: Court Purges	6: Court Packing
Institutional Strength	-0.171+	0.008	0.0002	-0.340**	-0.340**	0.067
	(0.095)	(0.065)	(0.060)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.078)
Democracy	0.217	0.174	0.181	0.289	0.157	0.263
	(0.190)	(0.184)	(0.185)	(0.178)	(0.184)	(0.181)
Cold War	0.476**	0.447**	0.448**	0.596***	0.460**	0.430**
	(0.174)	(0.169)	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.168)	(0.165)
Time Since	-0.240***	-0.241***	-0.241***	-0.232***	-0.232***	-0.242***
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.040)
Time Since²	0.012***	0.012***	0.012***	0.011***	0.011***	0.012***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000**	-0.000**	-0.000**	-0.000**	-0.000**	-0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Mil Exp. (ln)	-0.062	-0.074	-0.074	-0.084+	-0.06	-0.078
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.048)
Mil. Regime	0.447**	0.473**	0.473**	0.485**	0.479**	0.462**
	(0.158)	(0.158)	(0.159)	(0.170)	(0.167)	(0.156)
Real GDP pc(ln)	-0.294***	-0.312***	-0.311***	-0.206*	-0.306***	-0.318***
	(0.089)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.087)	(0.088)
Democracy (years)	-0.015	-0.017	-0.017	-0.015	-0.015	-0.017
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Constant	0.89	0.865	0.868	0.602	0.968	0.823
	(0.607)	(0.606)	(0.600)	(0.576)	(0.603)	(0.608)
Observations	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 2 above presents the results of six logistic regressions examining the effects of judicial institutional weakness on coup attempts from 1950-2012. Six naïve models, omitting the interaction term, are presented in Table 1 with different operationalizations of judicial institutional weakness as the main independent variable. Each model utilizes coup attempts as the dependent variable. Model 1 examines judicial accountability, Model 2 high court

independence, Model 3 government compliance with the high court, Model 4 judicial corruption, Model 5 court purges, and Model 6 court packing. Beginning with Model 1, judicial accountability has a negative and significant effect on coup attempts such that the stronger judicial institutions are, the fewer coup attempts in a state. Model 2, examining high court independence, displays a positive sign but does not reach traditional levels of significance. Model 3, examining government compliance with the high court, similarly does not reach significance. Next, Model 4 examines judicial corruption and illustrates a negative sign, reaching statistical significance at the .01 level. States with low levels of judicial corruption suffer coup attempts at lower levels than states with higher levels of judicial corruption. Next, Model 5 looks at a measure of court purges and displays a negative sign and reaches significance at the .01 level suggesting that states with higher levels of judicial institutional strength, measured by the degree of political purges of the court, suffer fewer coup attempts. Finally, Model 6 examines court packing. The measure displays a positive sign but fails to reach statistical significance.

The democracy variable fails to reach statistical significance in any of the six models, echoing results in earlier research (Bell & Koga-Sudduth 2017; Böhmelt & Pilster 2015; Hiroi & Omori 2015; Powell 2012). The lack of findings here are expected. As stated previously, I contend that there are conditional effects of democracy that must be accounted for, hence the need for the interaction term. Variables displaying significance include time since coup, military regime, and Real GDP per capita, all of which are expected and mirror robust findings in the literature.

Table 3: The Effects of Judicial Institutional Strength and Democracy on Coup Attempts, 1950-2012

	7: Judicial Accountability	8: High Court Independence	9: Compliance with High Court	10: Judicial Corruption	11: Court Purges	12: Court Packing
Democracy	1.000*** (0.261)	1.180*** (0.292)	1.528*** (0.360)	-0.199+ (0.112)	1.180*** (0.352)	0.796* (0.404)
Institutional Strength	-0.039 (0.104)	0.147* (0.069)	0.078 (0.067)	-0.072 (0.071)	-0.074 (0.070)	0.107 (0.083)
Dem X Strength	-0.508*** (0.153)	-0.552*** (0.145)	-0.546*** (0.132)	-0.543** (0.168)	-0.347** (0.130)	-0.258+ (0.153)
Cold War	0.501** (0.175)	0.479** (0.171)	0.435* (0.173)	0.634*** (0.172)	0.485** (0.164)	0.433** (0.164)
Time Since	-0.234*** (0.040)	-0.224*** (0.042)	-0.232*** (0.041)	-0.228*** (0.039)	-0.226*** (0.039)	-0.241*** (0.040)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Mil Exp. (ln)	-0.054 (0.047)	-0.071 (0.049)	-0.062 (0.048)	-0.081+ (0.048)	-0.052 (0.047)	-0.075 (0.048)
Mil Regime	0.457** (0.154)	0.463** (0.152)	0.465** (0.157)	0.477** (0.161)	0.463** (0.161)	0.448** (0.156)
Real GDP pc(ln)	-0.277** (0.089)	-0.268** (0.088)	-0.287** (0.088)	-0.192* (0.084)	-0.293*** (0.087)	-0.317*** (0.088)
Democracy (years)	-0.007 (0.015)	-0.011 (0.015)	-0.009 (0.014)	-0.009 (0.014)	-0.007 (0.014)	-0.014 (0.016)
Constant	0.472 (0.621)	0.28 (0.614)	0.446 (0.615)	0.203 (0.566)	0.664 (0.594)	0.699 (0.592)
Observations	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858	6,858

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 3 above presents the results of six logistic regressions examining the effects of judicial institutional weakness and regime type on coup attempts from 1950-2012.⁹ Again, six models are presented, this time with the inclusion of the interaction term, *Democracy X Judicial*

⁹ Appendix B offers robustness tests. Tables 11- 16 include robustness tests further examining Table 3 utilizing four different democracy variables. The results of Table 3 are largely replicated in these tests.

Institutional Strength. Again, utilizing coup attempts as the dependent variable, model 7 examines judicial accountability, Model 8 high court independence, Model 9 compliance with the court, Model 10 judicial corruption, Model 11 court purges, and Model 12 court packing. Each model then includes the interaction term, democracy X that model's specification of judicial institutional strength.

Overall, the six models offer robust support for my causal mechanism with all models reaching statistical significance in the expected direction. Beginning with model 7, the interaction term displays a negative sign reaching statistical significance at the .001 level, suggesting that democracies at high levels of judicial accountability are less likely to suffer coups than democracies at low levels of judicial accountability or autocracies at any level. Democracy, while not directly interpretable, displays a positive and significant sign suggesting that at very low levels of judicial accountability these states are a good deal more prone to coup attempts. Figure 7-A depicts the substantive effects below, illustrating the statistically significant difference in coup propensity at low levels of judicial accountability among democracies and autocracies. Democracies at low levels of judicial accountability have about a .074 probability of a coup attempt in a year compared with autocracies at a .028 probability. Next, model 8 finds that democracies at high levels of high court independence face fewer coup attempts than democracies at lower levels of high court independence or autocracies at any level. Again, though not directly interpretable, the constitutive democracy term is positive and significant suggesting that at very low levels of high court independence, democracies are the most prone to coup attempts. Referring to Figure 7-B we can again see the statistically significant difference between the propensity for coup risk at very low levels of high court independence among democracies and autocracies, .069 probability and .022 respectively. Model 9 examines

government compliance with the high court and tells a very similar story to models 7 and 8 with the interaction term displaying a negative and statistically significant sign at the .001 level.

Democracies with high degrees of compliance with the high court suffer fewer coup attempts than democracies with lower degrees of compliance or autocracies at any level of compliance.

Further, the constitutive democracy term is positive and significant suggesting that at very low levels of compliance, democracies are likely more prone to coups than autocracies at any level of compliance or high compliance democracies. Referring to Figure 7-C, democracies at low levels of compliance with the high court have about a .105 probability of a coup attempt compared with autocracies who at low levels risk about a .024 probability.

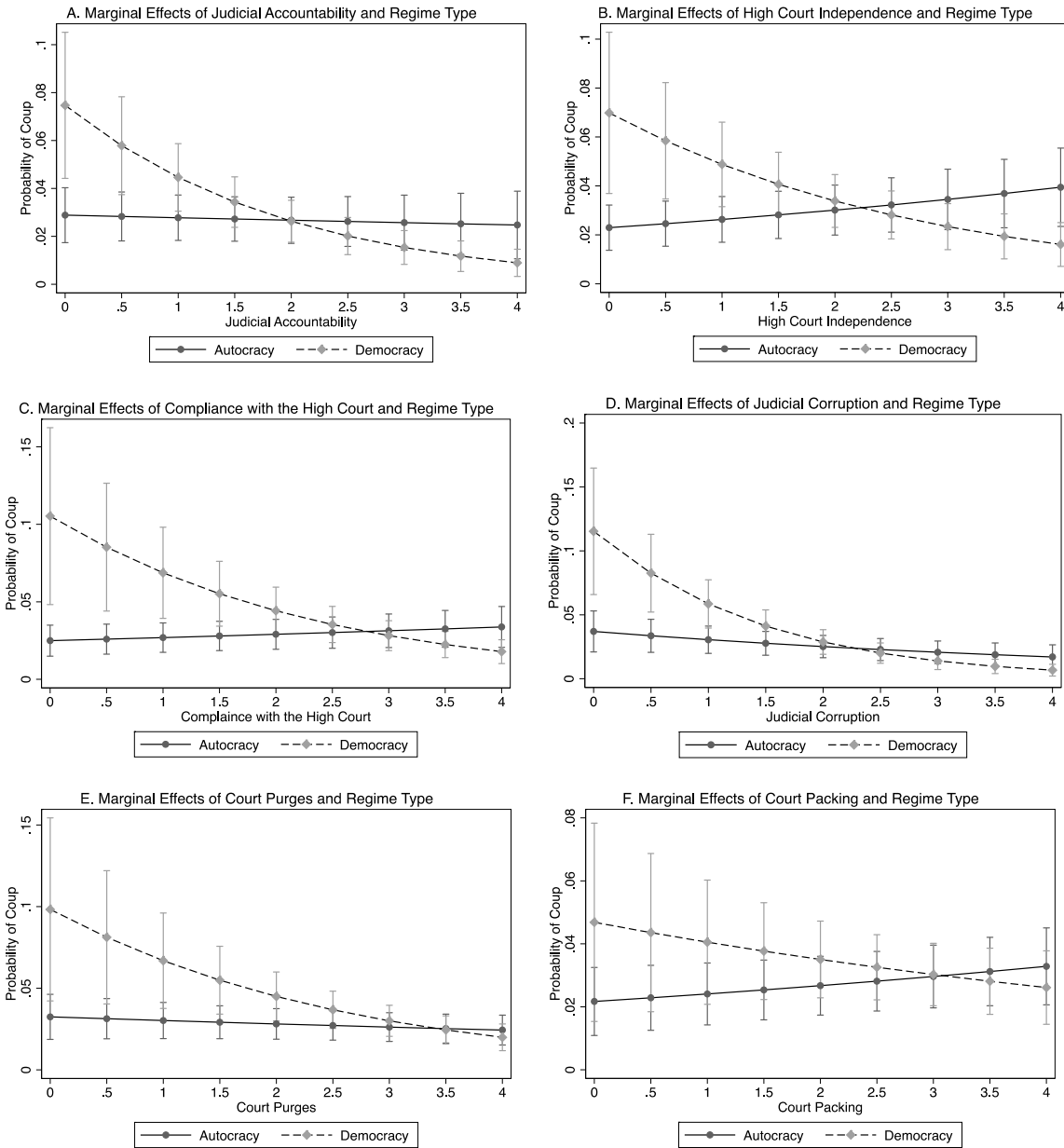


Figure 7: Substantive Effects of Judicial Institutional Weakness on Coup Attempts

Model 10 looks at judicial corruption. The interaction term is negative and significant such that democracies with low levels of judicial corruption are less likely to see coup attempts than either democracies with more corruption or autocracies with any level of corruption. And again, like models 10 and 11 the democracy variable is positive and significant suggesting that perhaps democracies with very weak judicial institutions, measured by judicial corruption, will be the

most prone to coup attempts. Substantive effects presented in Figure 7-D lend support to this notion with significant differences evident in confidence intervals. At high levels of judicial corruption democracies suffer an approximate .115 probability of a coup attempt compared with autocracies who suffer about a .036 probability. Next, model 11 examines judicial purges. The interaction term displays a negative and significant sign at the .01 level suggesting that democracies that engage in fewer politically-motivated purges of the court are less likely to experience coup attempts than either democracies that engage in the practice more frequently or autocracies at any level of the practice. The democracy variable is positive and significant suggesting that perhaps when purges are high, democracies may be most prone to coup attempts. However, checking substantive effects in Figure 7-E this does not appear to be the case. Instead, confidence intervals overlap suggesting that there is little difference in coup propensity between regime types at differing levels of judicial institutional strength as measured by purges. Finally, in model 11, the interaction term displays a negative sign and reaches significance at the .05 level, but substantive effects show overlapping confidence intervals suggesting little difference in coup propensity at low levels of institutional weakness between democracies and autocracies. At high levels of judicial institutional strength, measured by low levels of court packing, democracies are less likely to see coup attempts. However, it does not appear that high levels of the practice make democracies more prone to coups.

Control variables largely behave as expected and confirm results in prior research. First, time since coup displays negative coefficient and is significant at at least the .05 level across all six models. Next, military regime has a positive effect on coup attempts confirming results in earlier studies including Böhmelt and Pilster (2015) and Hiroi and Omori (2013). Additionally, Cold War displays a positive and significant effect of the time period on coup attempts

confirming a well-established finding in the literature. Finally, the natural log of GDP per capita has a negative effect on coup attempts, confirming earlier findings concerning the likelihood of coups in poorer states (Gassebner et al., 2016; Kim 2016; Londregan & Poole 1990).

Examining real world examples, several cases fit theoretical expectations. First, as described in the introduction, Burundi in 2015 provides an instructive example of a democracy that suffered from low levels of judicial institutional strength and subsequently suffered a coup attempt in the aftermath of a constitutional crisis. In line with this case, other African states where leaders either attempted to amend, or successfully amended, term limits were examined. This examination produced the following examples that exemplify the theoretical expectations. Beginning with a democracy with strong judicial institutions, Malawi in 2003 faced constitutional challenges when President Muluzi attempted to run for a third term.¹⁰ The constitutional court ultimately ruled against Muluzi and the ruling party was forced to endorse a new candidate (Tenthani 2003). Alternatively, Rwanda in 2015 provides an instructive example of how the mechanism is expected to operate in autocracies with weak judicial institutions.¹¹ Similar to Nkurunziza and Muluzi, President Paul Kagame advocated for a constitutional amendment allowing him to stand for a third term. Unlike the leaders of Burundi and Malawi however, Kagame's attempt was met with widespread approval from both parliament and the people with the passage of both a constitutional amendment and a popular referendum (Uwiringiryimana 2015).

¹⁰ In 2003, Malawi scored a three or higher on all measures of judicial institutional strength.

¹¹ Rwanda in 2015 scored an average of 1.8 across the six measures of judicial institutional strength.

Next, to determine if the effects of judicial institutional weakness vary at high and low levels *within* regimes, Tables 4 and 5 offer sub-sample testing. Table 4 limits the sample to democracies and table 5 to a sample of autocracies.

Table 4: The Effects of Judicial Institutional Strength on Democracies, 1950-2012

	13: Judicial Accountability	14: High Court Independence	15: Compliance with High Court	16: Judicial Corruption	17: Court Purges	18: Court Packing
Democracy	0.312 (0.821)	-0.691 (0.874)	1.623 (1.109)	0.921 (0.920)	0.902 (1.048)	-0.719 (1.036)
Institutional Strength	0.007 (0.367)	-0.698 (0.479)	0.242 (0.334)	0.068 (0.363)	-0.062 (0.305)	-0.38 (0.383)
Dem X Strength	-0.493 (0.389)	0.222 (0.510)	-0.809* (0.396)	-0.782+ (0.413)	-0.462 (0.372)	0.132 (0.424)
Cold War	0.978** (0.310)	0.941** (0.320)	0.882** (0.298)	1.209*** (0.291)	1.042** (0.319)	0.939** (0.317)
Time Since	-0.183+ (0.106)	-0.158 (0.107)	-0.204+ (0.105)	-0.16 (0.098)	-0.193* (0.097)	-0.213* (0.106)
Time Since²	0.011 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.014+ (0.008)	0.01 (0.007)	0.012 (0.007)	0.013 (0.008)
Time Since³	0 (0.000)	0 (0.000)	-0.000+ (0.000)	0 (0.000)	-0.000+ (0.000)	-0.000+ (0.000)
Mil Exp. (ln)	0.055 (0.115)	0.01 (0.109)	0.057 (0.119)	-0.01 (0.100)	0.093 (0.129)	0.031 (0.131)
Real GDP pc(ln)	-0.689*** (0.189)	-0.633*** (0.189)	-0.675*** (0.184)	-0.556** (0.186)	-0.742*** (0.179)	-0.757*** (0.181)
Democracy (years)	0.01 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)	0.004 (0.023)	0.006 (0.023)	0.008 (0.023)	0.014 (0.025)
Constant	2.78 (1.696)	3.827* (1.661)	2.141 (1.859)	1.965 (1.394)	3.005+ (1.651)	4.397** (1.559)
Observations	2,737	2,737	2,737	2,737	2,737	2,737

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

In Table 4, Models 13 through 18 examine the same six operationalizations of judicial institutional weakness utilized earlier. However, the sample utilized in Table 4 is limited to democracies. The interaction term in Models 13 through 18 only reach significance in two models, 15 and 16, examining compliance with the high court and judicial corruption, respectively. Models 15 illustrates a negative and significant effect on coups attempts suggesting

that at low levels of government compliance with the high court, democracies are more prone to coups than at high levels of compliance with the court. Next, model 16 examining judicial corruption illustrates a similar relationship showing a negative effect on coup attempts and reaching statistical significance. Model 16 suggests that democracies that experience high levels of judicial corruption are more prone to coup attempts than democracies with less judicial corruption.

Next, Table 5 presents sub-sample tests on a sample of autocracies utilizing the same six operationalizations of judicial institutional weakness. Models 19 through 24 utilize the interaction term autocracy X institutional strength. However, unlike in the full sample or in the sample of democracies, the interaction term fails to reach statistical significance in any of the models, confirming my theoretical expectations regarding autocracies, judicial institutional weakness, and coup proclivity.

Table 5: The Effects of Judicial Institutional Strength on Autocracies, 1950-2012

	19: Judicial Accountability	20: High Court Independence	21: Compliance with High Court	22: Judicial Corruption	23: Court Purges	24: Court Packing
Autocracy	1.08 (0.691)	-0.352 (0.868)	-0.394 (1.074)	0.896 (0.782)	0.05 (0.619)	-0.19 (0.766)
Institutional Strength	-0.053 (0.106)	0.161* (0.066)	0.062 (0.067)	-0.234* (0.118)	-0.083 (0.070)	0.107 (0.080)
Aut X Strength	-0.588 (0.428)	0.313 (0.386)	0.287 (0.420)	-0.372 (0.432)	0.109 (0.252)	0.21 (0.323)
Cold War	0.410* (0.195)	0.411* (0.191)	0.392* (0.194)	0.488* (0.199)	0.393* (0.193)	0.363+ (0.190)
Time Since	-0.240*** (0.045)	-0.236*** (0.046)	-0.240*** (0.046)	-0.236*** (0.044)	-0.236*** (0.045)	-0.245*** (0.045)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Mil Exp. (ln)	-0.068 (0.061)	-0.078 (0.059)	-0.079 (0.064)	-0.08 (0.061)	-0.067 (0.062)	-0.081 (0.063)
Mil. Regime	0.476** (0.162)	0.469** (0.162)	0.470** (0.164)	0.498** (0.173)	0.489** (0.169)	0.456** (0.163)
Real GDP pc(ln)	-0.189+ (0.100)	-0.180+ (0.099)	-0.188+ (0.100)	-0.124 (0.099)	-0.186+ (0.100)	-0.201* (0.102)
Autocracy (years)	-0.004 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.008)	-0.002 (0.008)
Constant	0.074 (0.721)	-0.249 (0.713)	-0.039 (0.708)	-0.05 (0.703)	0.149 (0.702)	-0.014 (0.707)
Observations	4,114	4,114	4,114	4,114	4,114	4,114

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Conclusion

Weak judicial institutions appear to disproportionately predispose democracies to coups. By denying elites repeatable and reliable information concerning which actions are acceptable and/or punishable, weak judicial institutions increase uncertainty. In autocracies, this uncertainty

can be managed owing to the smaller coalitions necessary and the use of loyalty mechanisms including patronage and repression. Democracies on the other hand need larger coalitions to maintain power and find patronage and repression costlier, thus making elite defections more likely.

This study has highlighted the need to account for political institutional variation within democracies and the dire consequences that can arise from weak judicial institutions in particular. The main findings of this research are therefore twofold. First, I have pointed to the conditionality associated with democratic vulnerability to coups. By asserting that regime type is an important part of the story, I have differentiated between institutional characteristics as a proxy for regime type and as a main explanatory variable. Second, I have highlighted the institutional variation that exists within democratic states, making some vulnerable to coups and insulating others.

CHAPTER FOUR: IRREGULAR LEADER REMOVAL, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Introduction

The Arab Spring saw popular protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. While each movement involved popular protests aimed at unseating a leader, not all leaders left quietly. Within each case, leaders faced various choices ranging from resignation and exile, to increased threats of a coup, to civil violence escalating into civil war. In Tunisia, the movement forced Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to resign after 23 years in power and seek exile in Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, massive protests led to the military taking power following the coerced resignation of Hosni Mubarak. Finally, in Libya, protest movements turned violent and devolved into open rebellion against Muammar Gaddafi, ultimately spiraling the country into civil war. Gaddafi was infamously captured and killed, leading to ongoing political violence and state collapse (Arab Uprising 2013).

Though lumped into a single historical event dubbed “The Arab Spring,” a comparison of the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya raise important questions surrounding the nature of irregular leadership removal and the prospects for democratization in their aftermath. Prior scholarship remains mixed, with Miller (2012) suggesting that irregular leader removal results in a higher probability of a democratic transition compared to states not experiencing removals, Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) finding that protest removals are the most likely to democratize while dismissing the democratizing effects of other forms of removal, and Marinov and Goemans (2014) and Thyne and Powell (2016) reporting a positive association between successful coups and democratization. Noting the variance in previous literature, this research

aims to reconcile disparities and provide a more holistic assessment of democratization following irregular leader removal.

I argue that because irregular removals themselves can vary widely (including assassinations, civil wars, coups, foreign interventions, and protests) they will result in varied rates of democratization. In gauging the prospects for democratization after an irregular removal, I argue that the character of the removal should be considered. For example, compared with removals resulting from civil wars, protests should result in democratization at a higher rate. Returning to the example of Libya, casualty estimates from the civil war are largely guesses, as are estimates of the number of refugees and internally displaced (Salama 2018). In the immediate aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow, the UN estimated that at least 15,000 lost their lives (*Reuters* 2011). The effects of the civil war have Libya poised on the brink of state collapse. Numerous rebel groups vie for territory, human trafficking is rampant, and violence is ubiquitous. Contrast the that with the case of Tunisia and the differences are obvious. Relatively speaking, population costs were minimal with around 300 killed, 700 wounded and, in 2011, about 5% of GDP lost (Achy 2011; *CNN* 2011). Attempting to meet the demands of protesters, the new government replaced regional governors, top security officials, and removed members of the former ruling party (Kirkpatrick 2011). Importantly however, the new government maintained the loyalty of the army, recalling demobilized soldiers back to the job to aid in maintaining order (Bouderbala 2011; *Al Jazeera* 2011). While Tunisia hardly escaped unscathed from their Arab Spring, the case of Libya stands in stark comparison.

As the vast contrast in the cases illustrates, irregular leader removals characterized by widespread violence and destruction, for instance, are unlikely to see increased prospects for democratization in the post removal environment. Alternatively, removals that see a leader

ousted with minimal violence, those maintaining institutional or bureaucratic continuity, or those providing an opening for sweeping political change should see increases in future democratization. Given this logic, I expect that of the removal methods considered in earlier research, only removals resulting from coups and protests should have a positive association with future democratization.

To test these expectations, I rely on a global sample of authoritarian regimes from 1950-2012. Utilizing the Archigos data (Goemans et al. 2009) on irregular leadership removals, I find that only removals resulting from coups d'état, in conjunction with high levels of wealth, are positively associated with future democratization. Compared with other forms of irregular leadership removal, including assassinations, civil wars, foreign interventions, and protests, coups stand out as the only form of removal significantly associated with future democratization. These results, while echoing Miller's (2012) initial intuition concerning irregular leadership removal, economic development, and democratization, add an important caveat: not all "violent" leader removals result in democratization at a similar rate.¹²

From here the paper proceeds in five parts. First, I begin with an overview of the literature concerning irregular leadership removal. Next, I offer a discussion of the paper's central theoretical mechanism, explaining my expectations surrounding the five types of irregular leadership removals and their subsequent propensity for democratization. Following, I provide a detailed description of the methods and data utilized to test the mechanism asserted. I then offer a discussion of empirical results while situating them in the larger literature on irregular removal,

¹² While Miller (2012) refers to these events as "violent leader removals" this is a misnomer as many of these events occur without violence.

economic development, and democratization. Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion of policy implications and directions for future research.

Literature Review

Irregular Leadership Removal

When autocrats leave power, they do so in one of two ways. Autocrats are either removed by regular means, including those stipulated in the constitution or as a result of natural death, or by irregular/illegal means (Goemans et al. 2009). In the category of irregular removals, researchers have identified the five most common means, including assassinations, civil wars, coups, foreign interventions, and protests. The following section describes the most common removal methods as highlighted in earlier research, describes the existing data, and then examines the literature concerning democratization in the aftermath of such removals.

Figure 8 provides descriptive statistics of the five most common irregular removal methods according to the Archigos dataset. Archigos defines irregular removals as instances where rulers are removed by means other than those in “accordance with explicit rules or established conventions of his or her particular country” (Goemans et al. 2009, 2). These data examine all leader exits from 1875-2015, specifying the method of removal and including the categories assassination, civil war, coup, protest, foreign removal, and other.¹³

¹³ The “other” category is not included in the discussion moving forward as it is not generalizable. Cases range from leader removals resulting from state unification (e.g., East Germany 1990, Yemen 1990) to those involving democratic reforms removing monarchs (Bhutan 1998).

Archigos Data, 1875-2015		
Assassination	23	4.7 %
Civil War	53	10.9 %
Protest	38	7.8 %
Coup	327	67.2 %
Foreign Intervention	45	9.2 %
<i>N</i>	486	

Figure 8: Irregular Leadership Removal Descriptive Data

Beginning with the most prevalent form of removal identified both in the data (Goemans et al. 2009) utilized by Miller (2012) and in previous literature, coups describe events in which elites, either military or non-military, within the state apparatus, unseat the executive through unconstitutional means. Examples include the military's ousting of Traoré as Mali's president in 1991 when soldiers seized the president and demanded his resignation. Coups, in these data, account for over 65% of all irregular removals. The second most common method of removal, accounting for roughly 11% of irregular removals are civil wars, categorized as instances where a leader is removed by domestic rebel forces, either with or without foreign support. Examples of this include the 1990 execution of Samuel Doe of Liberia by rebel forces. Third, foreign invasions, accounting for about 9%, describe cases where a leader was removed by foreign forces or following an interstate war. Examples in this category are the 2003 Iraq invasion unseating Saddam Hussein. Fourth, protest removals, account for roughly 8% of irregular removals and are described by Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009), as cases involving the removal of a leader through popular protest, with or without foreign support. This category includes the resignation of Indonesia's Suharto in 1998 following a sustained popular protest movement. The fifth category is assassinations, describing instances where unsupported individuals, without coordination with a larger effort to seize power, kills a leader without the intent to replace her.

Included cases are the 1977 assassination of General Al Hamdi in Yemen. Finally, an “other” category includes irregular removals that do not meet the criteria of the events above. The Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) data includes the case of 1990 East Germany as an example of an “other” event because it entailed the removal of a leader due to the reunification of Germany.

Beginning with research that examined an aggregated measure of irregular leadership removal, Miller (2012) found that when economic development was high, removals were more likely to lead to democratization than high levels of economic development in the absence of an irregular removal. These findings suggest that there is something inherent in the removal itself that can aid in the process of democratization, namely an opening for sweeping political change. However, the existing literature on specific forms irregular removal do not point to such a trend, with different expectations surrounding different removal methods. Further, in cases of assassinations and civil wars, little research exists on post-removal democratization. In the former case, assassinations are carried out by unsupported individuals lacking aims on power, thereby limiting the ability to generalize. In the latter case, so few examples exist of democratization shortly following a civil war that the extant literature aims to answer questions regarding how to make democratization likely, not the extent to which it occurs (e.g., Paris 1997, 2004). Of the remaining categories of removals, the literature is largely mixed. The following section will review the literature concerning democratization in the aftermath of removals resulting from coups, protests, and foreign interventions.

Beginning with the most prevalent form of removal in the data, much work on democratization in the aftermath of coups exists, albeit with varied findings. First, Thyne and Powell (2016) assert a positive correlation between both failed and successful coups and democratization. The authors argue that after successful coups, plotters need to establish

legitimacy with the international community thus prompting moves toward democratization and that failed coups send a signal to the regime about the need to establish legitimacy to avoid future coups. Further specifying the relationship, Marinov and Goemans (2014) suggest that the correlation only exists after the cold war due to pressure from the international community on coup leaders to hold elections. However, other studies argue that coups do not usher in democratic gains. Derpanopoulos et al. (2016) argue that any democratization seen in the aftermath of coups is largely due to omitted variable bias related to military regimes, shown to be both more coup prone and more likely to democratize.¹⁴ Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) suggest of the irregular methods commonly removing autocrats, coups do not have a high propensity for post removal democratization. Pointing to descriptive statistics, they assert that at one year after a coup, only about 10% of cases have democratized.

On the surface, these studies appear contradictory but addressing two methodological issues with the studies above, results are not as disparate as they first appear. First, Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) utilized a one-year lag to investigate the democratic effects of coups. However, there is good reason to believe that the process of democratizing in the aftermath of a coup may take more than one year. Coups intent on democratization often impose interim governments that may organize elections, allow the opposition to organize and stand in elections, and allow for the institutionalization of other democratic processes that take time to occur. To test this, Figure 9 below illustrates the rates of democratization in the post-Cold War period after a successful coup at 1-5 years utilizing five different binary democracy indicators including REIGN (Bell 2016b), Boix et al. (2013), Cheibub et al. (2009), Geddes et al. (2014), and Polity

¹⁴ In a response, Miller (2016) suggests that the analysis by Derpanopoulos and colleagues (2016) itself suffered from bias, produced by an overutilization of control variables. His reanalysis, controlling for autocratic regime spell fixed-effects, is able to reproduce results showing democratizing effects of both coups and coup attempts.

(Marshall et al. 2011), with data on successful coups derived from Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009).¹⁵



Figure 9: Rate of Democratization, 1989-2012, Post-Coup at 1-5 years

While discrepancies exist among precise democratization rates, a positive trend toward democratization in the aftermath of a coup remains intact. At one year after a successful coup, the average rate of democratization, based on the above five democracy datasets, is roughly 17%, at three years it is 32%, and at five years it reaches almost 35% of cases. Second, the Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) study did not account for important dynamics, like economic development, which could vary dramatically between the categories. In a comparison of means test, for example, coup cases are significantly poorer than popular revolt cases.¹⁶ In other words, descriptive results could be completely spurious.

¹⁵ Examining the descriptive statistics for the years 1950-2012, average rates of democratization, based on the same five democracy indicators are as follows: at one year 6.4%, two years 9.4%, three years, 13.6 %, four years 15.2%, and five years 17.9%.

¹⁶ Examining real GDP, in the Archigos data (Goemans et al. 2009), the average country that experienced a protest removal had a GDP of \$5,712 (34% below the mean) whereas the average country that experienced a coup removal had a GDP of \$3,876 (55% below the mean) where the mean GDP is \$8,736.

The literature is more optimistic about democratization in the aftermath of protest removals. Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) suggest that while protest removals are rare, they are both increasing and have a high propensity to lead to democratization compared with other removal methods.¹⁷ Returning to descriptive statistics, the authors assert that at one year after a protest removal, 45% of states will undergo a democratic transition. The explanation offered is similar to that posited in Miller (2012), namely that the larger the scale of the removal, the greater the change will be. Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) assert that change led by insiders, a coup for instance, requires fewer individuals to participate and thus does not induce as much change as a popular movement. Indeed, according to Askoy and colleagues, roughly half of all successful coups see no change other than to shuffle the leader in office (2015). Popular movements, by definition, require mass mobilization and therefore have the possibility to enact more political change.

However, while the data and literature thus far paint an encouraging picture for democratization in the aftermath of protest removals, estimations may be falsely inflated due to coding decisions in the Svoboda (2012) data utilized in the Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) study. In some instances, events enjoying a measure of popular support are coded as revolts, regardless of the ultimate means of removal.¹⁸ For example, coded as a revolt in Svoboda's data, while the coup that ousted Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti on 7 February of 1986 was accompanied by protests, the president was ultimately removed by the army (Goemans et al. 2009; Davidson 2018). Of the 29 cases coded as revolts in the Svoboda data, only 13 are coded similarly in the Archigos data. The remaining 16 cases coded as revolts in the Svoboda data are

¹⁷ Depending on the data source, they account for between about 8% to 10% of all autocrat removals.

¹⁸ Defined in a similar manner, events referred to as protest removal in the Archigos data (Goemans et al. 2009) are referred to as revolts in the Svoboda (2012) data.

coded as coups, civil war removals, foreign removals, or regular removals in Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009). Indeed, as Geddes (1999) points out, protests, though commonly accompanying a transition to democracy, are rarely the initial cause of the transition. Coding differences such as these are important beyond the mere count of events. For instance, counting any removal event that enjoys a measure of popular support as a removal by protest/revolt biases any investigation into the democratizing effects of irregular removal methods.

Finally, the literature regarding democratization in the aftermath of foreign interventions, again, provides mixed findings. Several studies assert that democratization in the aftermath of foreign intervention should be dependent upon characteristics related to either the intervening state, suggesting conditional influences related to regime type or strategy, or those related to the state experiencing the intervention, including economic and social conditions (Bueno de Mesquita & Downs 2006; Downes & Montén 2013; Enterline & Greig 2008a & b; Pickering & Kisangani 2006). However, as Downes and Montén (2013) point out, the lack of generalizable results partly stems from differences in the data. The authors point to studies utilizing samples too broadly defined, including cases where military hostilities did not occur or where leaders or governing institutions were not removed. Limiting the sample to only cases experiencing foreign-imposed regime change by democracies, the authors conclude that on average, there is no post-removal democratization increase (Downes & Montén 2013).

In short, irregular leader removals can increase prospects for democratization however, the degree to which different forms of removals can lead to democratization is unclear. Moving ahead with the assumption that irregular removals can provide an opening for democratization, we must now ask how different removals produce political legacies that either challenge or benefit democratic transitions.

Theory

According to Miller (2012), autocratic states are more likely to democratize when they undergo an irregular leader removal, concurrent with a high level of economic development. I suggest that instead of assuming that all removals will democratize at a similar rate, the character of the removal must be taken into consideration. The following paragraphs outline my expectations for democratization in the aftermath of irregular leader removal methods according to the challenges and benefits each pose to democratization.

First, I expect that irregular leader removals characterized by negative consequences for the wider population, including widespread violence, loss of life, and damage to infrastructure and the economy will reduce the probability of democratization. Second, I think that removals resulting in a loss of bureaucratic and/or institutional continuity hindering the functioning of the state will degrade the likelihood of a democratic transition. Third, I expect that removals less able to effect meaningful political change will be unlikely to see a democratic transition. Below, Figure 10 provides an overview of my expectations in the aftermath of the five irregular leader removal methods according to the actors involved, their goals, and the subsequent benefits and challenges posed to democratization.

Removal Means	Actors	Goal	Challenges	Benefits
Assassination	Individual, Elites, Foreign Government, Non-State Actor	Execution of the Executive	Possible inability to effect sweeping political change	Possible institutional/bureaucratic continuity, lack of violence and associated confounding factors
Civil War	Rebel group	Unseat regime, gain territorial control	Lack of institutional/bureaucratic continuity, DDR challenges, harm to population, infrastructure, and economy	N/A
Coup	Military, Elites	Removal of the executive	Legacy of military intervention, possible inability to effect sweeping political change	Institutional and bureaucratic continuity, order imposed by military, relatively less violence
Foreign Intervention	Foreign government	Displace regime and install new regime	Possible inability to maintain institutional/bureaucratic continuity	Order imposed by occupying force, possible ability to effect sweeping political change
Protest	Domestic popular movement	Unseat leader/regime and impose new regime	Lack of institutional/bureaucratic continuity, possible inability to effect sweeping political change	Possible ability to effect sweeping political change

Figure 10: Theoretical Expectations

Beginning with assassination, this category should provide the clearest test for Miller’s (2012) argument. If all that is necessary to increase democratization prospects is the removal of a leader, theoretically assassinations should provide a best-case scenario in that they involve the removal of a leader without great cost to the rest of a population. Barring that, one can make few generalizations regarding all cases of assassination. The inability to generalize the actors and goals involved in such events makes theorizing about the political legacies left in the wake of assassinations problematic. Therefore, my expectation is that as a form of irregular leader removal, assassinations should not provide any benefits to future democratization compared with the null.

In a much clearer case, theoretically, removals resulting from civil wars should not experience any post-removal democratization increase compared with the null. Civil wars are characterized by widespread violence and loss of life and severe damage to both infrastructure and the economy. Mobutu's Zaire provides an instructive example. The civil war that removed Mobutu in 1997, combined with three decades of despotic rule, left a state with a complete lack of institutional capacity, a decimated economy, about 1 million killed and missing, meddling neighbors in charge of much of country's territory, and numerous domestic and regional rebel groups active in the country. The challenges that each of these circumstances alone pose to democratization would be difficult to surmount. The confluence of all of these factors has ultimately resulted in conflict recurrence, a bankrupt economy, and strikingly low levels of state capacity. Work on post-conflict states suggests that instead of focusing on market stabilization and liberalization, post-civil war societies instead should focus on institution building and power sharing (e.g., Paris 1997, 2004). On the benefits side, there is little one can point to as beneficial for democratization. The degree of political change afforded by a civil war removal, however large, is rarely, if ever, positive for democratization prospects. The data points to only three cases where a civil war removal resulted in democracy at $t+1$, all occurring before 1950.¹⁹ Therefore, while perhaps providing an opening for sweeping political change, my expectation is that cases experiencing an irregular leader removal resulting from civil war will not experience a higher rate of democratization than the null.

¹⁹ The three cases that made democratic transitions one year after a civil war removal include Latvia (1919), Ireland (1922), and Costa Rica (1948). Increasing the time after a civil war removal to two, three, and four years does not add any additional cases. Increasing the time after a civil war removal to five years however adds the additional case of Nicaragua (1979).

Next, regarding removals resulting from coups, I expect that these cases will have a higher propensity for democratization post-removal compared with the null. Several scholars have identified a democratic coup phenomenon wherein coups can both bring about elections (Marinov & Goemans 2014) and increase a state's democratization prospects (Powell 2014; Powell & Thyne 2016).²⁰ Coups can generally be typified as targeted events removing a leader and/or regime, leading to the imposition of a transitional government or military dictatorship. Implied in these scenarios is a degree of continuity imposed by military control. Unlike cases of civil war removals, coups generally result in drastically lower levels of violence to the population and much less harmful effects on the economy. Again, a case provides an instructive example. The 1999 coup in Niger resulted in the death of then president, Ibrahim Maïnassara Baré. The army assumed control of the state and formed a transitional government that promised elections. Within six months, a new president, Tandja Mamadou, was democratically elected. The order facilitated by the transitional military government served two broad purposes. First, the military government was able to ensure a measure of institutional continuity by organizing democratic elections and readopting a semi-presidential system. Second, the transitional military government ensured that further violence did not occur by taking measures, in some ways self-serving, like granting amnesty to the 1996 and 1999 coup plotters, that nevertheless, prevented disorder and violence against the population. The end result was the transitional government handing over power to a civilian leader in less than a year (Davis & Kossomi 2001).

Coups however, are not without challenges for democratization. First, the legacy of military interventions first stands out. Sometimes referred to as the coup trap, states that have experienced coups are much more likely to continue to experience them (e.g., Londregan &

²⁰ Examples include Paraguay 1989, Mali 1991, and Niger 1999.

Poole 1990). Second, since coups directly target the executive, sweeping political change may not take place in the aftermath as often happens when one autocrat replaces the last. However, this might not be the case in all coups. Recalling the example of Niger in 1999, the military transitional government allowed for sweeping political change to occur, ushering in a democratic government. Further, popular protest movements occasionally accompany coups, as was the case in 1991 Mali when popular dissatisfaction with the Traoré regime led to widespread protests, leading the military to remove the regime. Taking both benefits and challenges posed to future democratization into consideration, I expect that removals resulting from coups should result in higher rates of democratization compared with the null.

Next, I do not expect that removals resulting from foreign military interventions will result in higher rates of democratization than the null. These cases be characterized by more powerful states removing leaders they find unsatisfactory within their sphere of influence (e.g., Haiti 1994) or those occurring during the pursuit of an ongoing war (e.g., Kuwait 1990). Regarding aspects potentially beneficial for future democratization, order imposed by the occupying force may help to bring about democratic reforms and prevent further destabilization. However, in line with the literature, prospects for democratization are heavily dependent upon the intervening state's strategy and economic and social conditions to a state prior to the intervention (Downes and Monten 2013). Therefore, my expectation regarding democratization is that states experiencing removals resulting from foreign military interventions will not have a higher likelihood of democratization compared with the null.

Lastly, states experiencing removals resulting from protests should see increases in democratization compared with the null. My expectations relate to the high degree of political change afforded by such events and the relatively benign consequences for the wider population.

Prior research has noted the potential for democratization associated with such removals, finding that protests are the most likely to lead to democratic transitions compared with other removal methods (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz 2014). Recalling the case of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, the protest movement that unseated Ben Ali did so with relatively benign consequences for the wider population while still affording an opening for considerable democratization to take place. On the other hand, however, challenges to democratization associated with protest removals may relate to superficial changes or a lack of bureaucratic and institutional continuity. First, when protests aim to unseat the incumbent alone, the movement risks only enacting superficial change not capable of forcing a democratic transition. Second, protests targeting the regime as a whole risk suffering the effects of a lack of continuity in both bureaucracy and institutions, thus hindering a democratic transition. However, considering both possible benefits and challenges, as well as prior findings on the subject, I expect removals resulting from protests will result in increased democratization compared with the null.

H1: Removals resulting from assassinations will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H2: Removals resulting from civil wars will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H3: Removals resulting from coups will experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H4: Removals resulting from foreign invasions will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H5: Removals resulting from protests will experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

Having laid out my expectations for democratization prospects in the aftermath of the five most common removal methods, I can now return to Miller's (2012) mechanism, concerning wealth as a force multiplier in autocracies, acting as either a democratizing or stabilizing

mechanism. The following section thus briefly reviews this literature and offers adjusted hypotheses H1a-H5a regarding my expectations for democratization prospects in the aftermath of the five irregular leader removal methods in the presence of high economic development.

Wealth as a Stabilizing or Democratizing Force

Wealth has been found to both stabilize regimes and encourage democratization. These findings, taken together, result in contradictions concerning the role that development plays in autocratic turnovers. Wealthier autocratic regimes are expected to have longer tenures than their less developed counterparts due to the increased wealth available to engage in patronage and repression, thus increasing the ability of autocrats to maintain the coalitions necessary to remain in power (e.g., Kennedy 2010; Miller 2012). Alternatively, wealth has a robust correlation with democracy (e.g., Barro 1990; Boix 2003; Boix & Stokes 2003; Lipset 1959; Przeworski & Limongi 1997; Przeworski et al. 2000). The question then is how can wealth both insulate regimes from failure while also encouraging democratization? The following section will outline the above debate, beginning with the literature concerning wealth as a stabilizing force in both autocratic and democratic regimes.

Broadly construed, wealth insulates leaders from removal by providing the regime more resources with which to pacify both elites and the greater population, thereby discouraging challenges to the regime in the form of rebel movements or coups, for example (e.g., Goldstone et al. 2010; Londregan & Poole 1990). Though less studied than the effects of wealth on democracies, wealth is also thought to insulate autocratic regimes from failure. In autocracies, the effect of wealth on regime stability is expected to be greater due to the relatively smaller number of coalition members needed to maintain power (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Instead

of increased spending on public goods, autocrats focus resources on the relatively smaller coalition needed to maintain power, thereby increasing their chances of survival.

Alternatively, firmly entrenched in the literature is the finding that wealth is also highly correlated with democratization. The debated portion concerns whether wealth encourages democratization or allows democracies to accumulate by ensuring survival. Those asserting that wealth merely encourages democratic stability point to the historical record. Democracies, over a certain income threshold (Przeworski et al. 2000 cite this figure as \$6,055 GDP per capita), rarely fail. Exogenous democratization suggests that rather than encouraging democratization, economic development instead allows democracies to accumulate by decreasing their chances of failure. Four main reasons have been cited for why wealthy democracies rarely fail, beginning with the theory of democracy as equilibrium. Democracy as equilibrium theory suggests that the cost of authoritarian reversion in most democracies is higher than the cost of waiting out an incumbent with whom elites disagree (Lipset 1959; Przeworski 1991 & 2005; Przeworski et al. 2000; Weingast 1997). Second, democratic institutions also likely help democracies sustain by decreasing the cost of distributional conflicts (Lipset 1959). Third, the cultivation of democratic preferences, both regional and domestic, is thought to insulate democracies from failure by increasing average citizen interest in maintaining democracy (Barro 1990; Lipset 1959; Manwaring & Linan 2013). Finally, perceptions of legitimacy should theoretically be higher in democracies due to the increased participation of civil society and the existence of democratic elections, thus discouraging popular movements to unseat the regime (Belkin & Schofer 2003; Bell 2016a; Lindberg & Clark 2008).

Alternatively, endogenous democratization suggests that wealth both sustains democracies and encourages transitions. Modernization theory popularized the notion that as a

country develops economically it will also democratize. The mechanism suggested by modernization theory asserts that economic development leads to less economic inequality and a larger middle class to act as a moderating force in politics (Lipset 1959). Further, economic development results in increases in the standard of living, which then engenders a democratic culture capable of fostering the participation necessary for democratic institutions to both form and consolidate (Barro 1990). Taking the above findings together, wealth acts as a stabilizer, both increasing regime tenure, and acts as a force for instability, encouraging democratization. To understand how wealth can have these contradictory effects, we must turn to the conditional effects of wealth on autocratic survival.

Studies examining autocratic survival have consistently identified conditionalities associated with wealth (e.g., Smith 2004; Ulfelder 2007; Wright et al., 2015). These conditionalities can help to explain how wealth can both encourage democratic transitions and increase authoritarian stability. Given the debate concerning economic development as both stabilizing and instability inducing, the competing effects of economic development must operate with conditionality. One such conditionality concerns regime stability. Miller (2012) asserts that development further consolidates regimes when they are stable and further endangers them when they are already vulnerable. Conceptualizing stability as the absence or presence of an irregular leader removal, he finds that instability, in conjunction with economic development, is positively associated with democratization.

The above has asserted two main points from their respective literatures. First, economic development is strongly associated with stability in both autocratic and democratic regimes. Wealth provides insulation to regimes by affording incumbents resources with which to pacify their coalitions and potential dissidents. Second, economic development also encourages

democratization. Addressing contradictions in these literatures, Miller (2012) asserts that in stable regimes, characterized by the absence of irregular leader removals, wealth serves to further insulate a regime from failure. However, in unstable regimes, characterized by the presence of an irregular removal, increased economic development can help to bring about a democratic transition (Miller 2012). This clarification of earlier literature then leads to the main question that this research seeks to answer. Namely, do all forms of irregular leader removal, in conjunction with economic development, result in similar democratization prospects? I assert that, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, different irregular leadership removal types will result in differing rates of democratization. The rate at which states democratize in the aftermath of episodes of leadership removal should be dependent upon the type of removal due to the varying political legacies produced. Therefore, taking together my expectations for irregular leader removal methods with my expectations regarding wealth, I offer the following hypotheses.

H1a: Removals resulting from assassinations, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H2a: Removals resulting from civil wars, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H3a: Removals resulting from coups, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, will experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H4a: Removals resulting from foreign invasions, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, will not experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

H5a: Removals resulting from protests, in conjunction with high levels of economic development, will experience post-removal democratization at a rate higher than the null

Data & Methods

In examining the effects of five types of irregular leader removal and economic development on post-removal democratization, a global sample of authoritarian country-years, 1950-2012 is utilized. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of democracy and thus a logit estimator is employed. All variables are lagged by one year unless otherwise noted. The dependent variable, *democracy*, is derived from the Boix et al. (2013) democracy dataset. This is a binary indicator conceptualizing democracies as those that meet criteria concerning both contestation and participation. First, regarding contestation, the executive must be directly or indirectly elected and responsible to a legislature. Next, the legislature must be chosen in free and fair elections. Second, regarding participation, the suffrage threshold requires that a majority of adult males be eligible to vote (Boix et al. 2013). Utilizing a low-threshold definition of democracy allows for the capture of both new and established democracies. This is especially important in the study of transitions to democracy where some cases may have begun a process to democratization without having fully institutionalized their democratic intentions.

Independent variables of interest include *irregular leader removal* and *economic development*. In directly testing Miller's (2012) argument, I have utilized replication data from the original study, additionally disaggregating the irregular removal measure, discussed below. The data concerning irregular leader removals are derived from the Archigos dataset (Goemans et al. 2009). Given that the unit of analysis is country-year, the specific removal category variables are collapsed, such that beyond one event in each country year, only one event is recorded. The variable *irregular leader removal* is comprised of cases coded as irregular exits in the Archigos data and accounts for episodes of irregular leader removal in the prior three years. An irregular removal is defined as any instance where a leader is removed other than in

“accordance with explicit rules or established conventions of his or her particular country” (Goemans et al. 2009, 2) and includes all removals resulting from the five categories discussed above.

To test whether all forms of irregular removal are equal in their post-removal democratization prospects, I incorporate a disaggregated measure of irregular leader removal to include the five main types of removal separately. This results in five binary indicators of removals resulting from assassinations, civil wars, coups, foreign interventions, and protests. Models utilize a dichotomous measure of each removal with 1 signifying an episode of irregular leader removal in the prior three years and 0 denoting no such removal. By measuring the independent variable *Irregular Leader Removal* as a 1 in any case where removal has occurred in the last three years, and measuring the dependent variable at $t+1$, I am able to see the effects of irregular removals and economic development on democratic transitions at $t+1$ through $t+4$. Examining irregular leader removals in a prior three-year period therefore accounts for both the varying times necessary for democratization to take place and for the lasting effects of an episode of removal. No further leads of the dependent variable are included due to my skepticism surrounding the presence of a relationship between irregular leadership removal and democratization separated by more than five years.

The second independent variable of interest is *economic development*, operationalized as the natural log of GDP per capita such that relatively high GDP signifies higher levels of economic development and lower GDP signifies low levels of economic development. The data are derived from the Penn World Tables. Additionally, given that mechanism hinges the democratizing potential of irregular leader removal in conjunction with economic development, an interaction term, *Removal X GDP*, is included.

Control variables are comprised of those commonly found in the democratization literature and include economic growth, regional democracy, history of colonization, and prior democratic breakdown, and largely mirror those controlled for in Miller's (2012) study.

Economic growth is operationalized as annual percentage change in GDP per capita and is taken from Penn World Tables. In line with studies examining the effects of economic growth on democratization, I expect that greater economic growth will have a positive effect on transitions to democracy (e.g., Barro 1990; Boix & Stokes 2003; Lipset 1959). Next, *regional democracy* is operationalized as regional average of the polity score such that a higher score denotes more democratic neighbors and a lower score denotes a dearth of regional democracies. Several studies have noted effects of democratic diffusion wherein states surrounded by democracies are themselves more likely to democratize (e.g., Gleditsch & Ward 2006). I expect that higher *regional democracy* scores will have a positive effect on democratic transitions. Third, history of colonization is controlled for with two variables. First, I control for states that had no history of colonization with a binary indicator, *never colonized*, derived from Miller (2012), due to the ill effects of prior colonization on democratic institutions. Here I expect that any history of colonization will have a negative effect on democratic transitions. Alternatively, a binary indicator signifying whether the country was ever a *British Colony* is utilized due to results in prior studies finding that a history of British colonization is associated with positive democratic outcomes. I expect that a history of British colonization may have a positive effect on democratization. Finally, *Prior Democratic Breakdown* is controlled for utilizing with a dichotomous indicator recording whether or not a state has experienced a previous democratic regime failure. Prior research has pointed out that states with a prior history of democracy have a

greater chance of a future democratic transition (Boix et al. 2013) and therefore I expect the prior breakdown variable to have a negative effect on democratic transitions.

Results

Table 6: Irregular Removals and Democratization, 1950-2012

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Aggregate	Assassination	Civil War	Coup	Foreign	Protest
Removal	1.187*** (0.259)	1.385 (1.049)	- (-)	0.919*** (0.256)	0.993 (0.757)	1.983*** (0.536)
GDP pc(ln)	0.086 (0.100)	0.023 (0.098)	0.009 (0.097)	0.057 (0.099)	0.026 (0.097)	0.013 (0.099)
Growth	-1.455 (1.282)	-2.640* (1.322)	-3.305* (1.420)	-2.420+ (1.378)	-2.584* (1.300)	-2.274 (1.386)
Regional Democracy	0.156*** (0.025)	0.148*** (0.027)	0.149*** (0.027)	0.156*** (0.025)	0.146*** (0.026)	0.138*** (0.026)
New Country	-0.025 (0.280)	-0.104 (0.286)	-0.127 (0.288)	-0.075 (0.277)	-0.113 (0.288)	-0.174 (0.290)
Never Colonized	0.174 (0.319)	0.096 (0.327)	0.112 (0.327)	0.15 (0.324)	0.112 (0.324)	0.086 (0.321)
British Colony	-0.313 (0.355)	-0.301 (0.361)	-0.298 (0.360)	-0.317 (0.360)	-0.309 (0.360)	-0.208 (0.359)
Prior Breakdown	0.392*** (0.110)	0.504*** (0.119)	0.492*** (0.116)	0.421*** (0.113)	0.506*** (0.117)	0.508*** (0.119)
Constant	-4.763*** (0.915)	-3.927*** (0.869)	-3.754*** (0.864)	-4.342*** (0.881)	-3.961*** (0.868)	-3.902*** (0.887)
Observations	4,459	4,459	4,374	4,459	4,459	4,459

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 6 presents results of six naïve models examining the effects of irregular leader removal methods on the likelihood of democratization on a sample of authoritarian states between 1950 and 2012. Model 1 utilizes an aggregated measure of irregular leader removal, as in Miller (2012). The aggregated measure includes all instances of violent leader removals resulting from assassinations, civil wars, coups, foreign interventions, protests, and the other

category, occurring in the prior three years. Next, Models 2 through 6 each examine a specific type of irregular leader removal separately so as to discern the effects of different types of removal. Model 2 examines removals resulting from assassinations, 3 civil wars, 4 coups, 5 foreign interventions, and model 6 investigates those resulting from protest movements.

Several results of the model are worth noting. First, model 1 displays a positive and significant coefficient, confirming results from earlier research including both Miller (2012) and Kendall-Taylor & Frantz (2014). Irregular leader removals generally increase democratization prospects in the following years. Second, models examining removals from both coups and protests, models 4 and 6 respectively, present positive and significant coefficients. In line with my expectations, compared to cases not experiencing irregular leader removals, removals from both coups and protest movements are associated with democratization after 1950. Third, economic development alone does not reach statistical significance, however, suggesting that in the absence of an irregular removal, economic development does not provide the impetus necessary for a country to make a democratic transition. Fourth, economic growth displays a negative and largely statistically significant coefficient confirming findings in earlier literature concerning the regime strengthening effects of growth such that as economic growth increases, democratization decreases (Miller 2012; Smith 2004). Finally, both regional democracy and prior democratic breakdowns display positive and significant coefficients across all six models reasserting the effects of prior democratic experience and democratic neighborhoods on democratic transitions (e.g., Boix et al. 2013; Gleditsch & Ward 2006).

Moving now to models testing the main theoretical mechanism, Table 7 presents results from six logistic regressions, utilizing the interaction term *Removal X Economic Development*, that explore the effects of irregular leader removal methods and economic development on

democratization in a sample of authoritarian states from 1950-2012. Models 7-12 utilize an interaction term that, first, in model 7, examines an aggregated measure of irregular leader removal X economic development. Then in models 8 through 12 the interaction term consists of a specific type of removal X economic development with model 8 examining assassinations, 9 civil wars, 10 coups, 11 foreign interventions, and 12 protests. Finally, the removal variable, again, accounts for irregular removals in the prior three years.

Table 7: The Effects of Irregular Leader Removal and Economic Development on Democratization, 1950-2012

	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Aggregate	Assassination	Civil War	Coup	Foreign	Protest
Removal	-3.080+	4.589	-	-3.506*	1.433	2.019
	(1.669)	(3.736)	-	(1.706)	(5.205)	(6.391)
GDP pc(ln)	-0.066	0.027	0.009	-0.033	0.027	0.014
	(0.119)	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.107)	(0.100)	(0.099)
Removal X GDP	0.524**	-0.389	-	0.543**	-0.055	-0.004
	(0.199)	(0.426)	-	(0.201)	(0.623)	(0.761)
Growth	-1.366	-2.633*	-3.305*	-2.435+	-2.588*	-2.275
	(1.268)	(1.319)	(1.420)	(1.384)	(1.313)	(1.399)
Regional Democracy	0.159***	0.148***	0.149***	0.156***	0.145***	0.138***
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.026)
New Country	0.01	-0.107	-0.127	-0.032	-0.113	-0.174
	(0.278)	(0.286)	(0.288)	(0.277)	(0.288)	(0.290)
Never Colonized	0.156	0.095	0.112	0.146	0.113	0.087
	(0.321)	(0.327)	(0.327)	(0.327)	(0.325)	(0.325)
British Colony	-0.292	-0.302	-0.298	-0.322	-0.309	-0.208
	(0.356)	(0.362)	(0.360)	(0.363)	(0.360)	(0.360)
Prior Breakdown	0.343**	0.502***	0.492***	0.382***	0.507***	0.508***
	(0.111)	(0.118)	(0.116)	(0.112)	(0.117)	(0.120)
Constant	-3.511***	-3.955***	-3.754***	-3.601***	-3.972***	-3.903***
	(1.024)	(0.868)	(0.864)	(0.925)	(0.888)	(0.894)
Observations	4,459	4,459	4,374	4,459	4,459	4,459

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Model 7, utilizing an aggregated measure of removal, reports a positive and significant effect of irregular leader removal concurrent with economic development on democratization prospects in the aftermath of the removal, confirming results in earlier research (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz 2014; Miller 2012). The interaction term displays a positive coefficient, reaching statistical significance, suggesting that the democratization occurring after an irregular leader removal is increased in the presence of economic development.

Examining the substantive effects of irregular removal and economic development on democratization (Figure 11), we can see that as economic development increases beyond the mean, the likelihood that a state experiencing an irregular removal will democratize increases. At the average level of logged GDP per capita (approximately US 2015 constant \$4,000) a state that experienced an irregular removal has approximately a 5% democratization rate whereas at the same level of GDP, states not experiencing a removal have only a 1.5% rate.

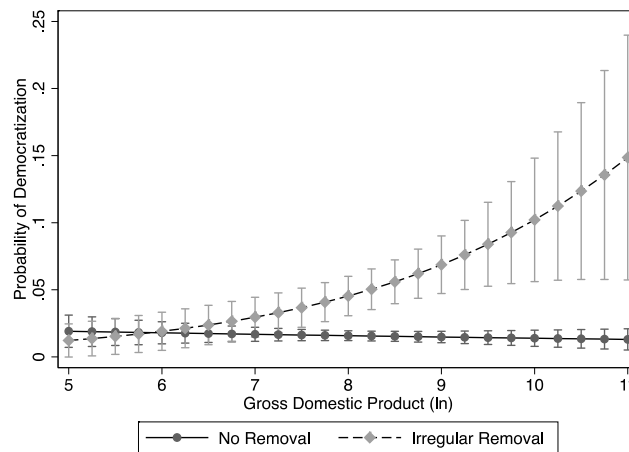


Figure 11: Irregular Leader Removal, Economic Development, & Democratization

Turning now to models investigating specific types of irregular removal interacted with economic development, we begin with removals resulting from assassinations (Model 8). The interaction term displays a negative sign fails to reach statistical significance. The lack of statistical significance in democratization outcomes between states experiencing a removal

resulting from assassination, in conjunction with economic development, confirms my theoretical expectations. As mentioned above, removals resulting from assassinations provided the clearest test of the argument put forth in Miller (2012) due to the relatively benign consequences for the larger population associated with an assassination. However, along with relatively low levels of violence and minimal consequences for the population come lower degrees of political change. Assassinations however, only remove the executive while leaving the larger regime in place thus producing similar levels of democratization to cases not experiencing violent leader removals. The substantive effects of assassinations and economic development on democratization are presented in Figure 12-A. The overlapping confidence intervals illustrate a lack of statistically significant difference in the rates of democratization between states experiencing assassinations and those not experiencing removals.

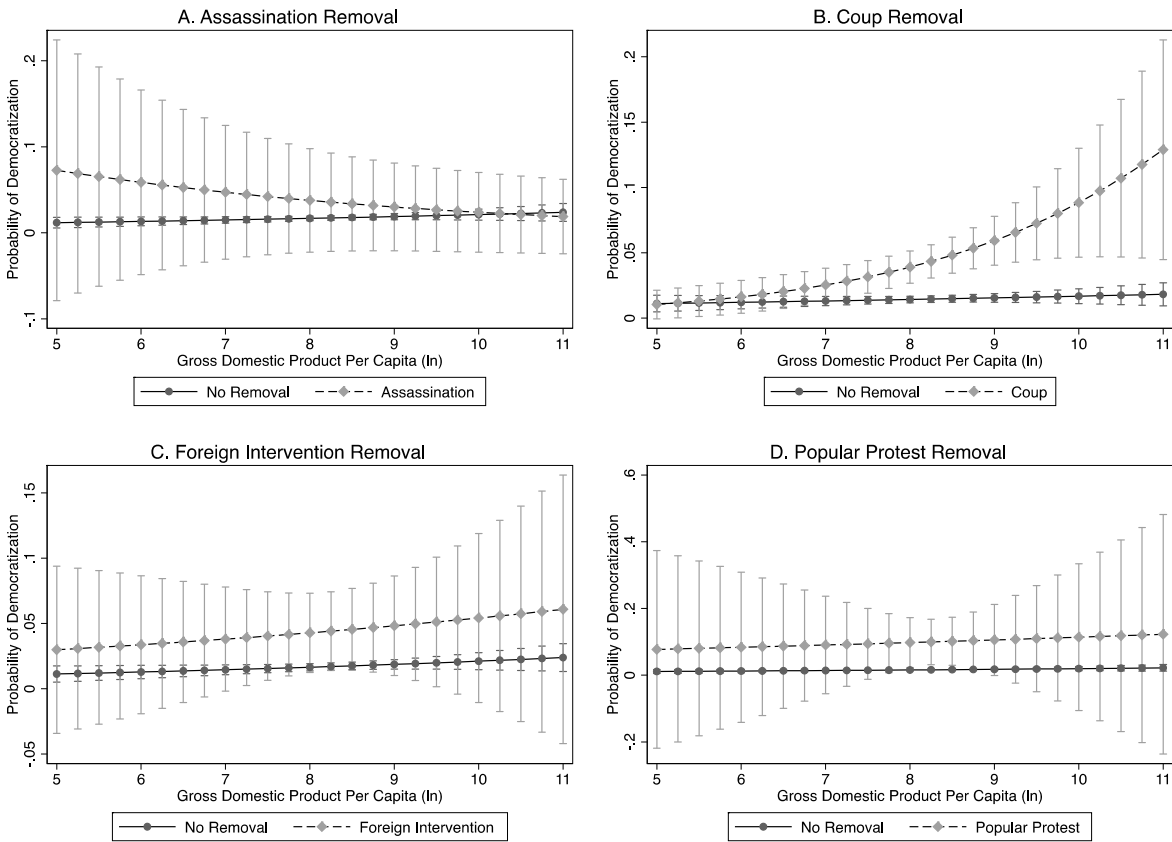


Figure 12 A-D: Substantive Effects of Removal Types and Economic Development on Democratization

Next, turning to Model 9, removals resulting from civil wars are dropped from the model due to collinearity. Examining the data, there are 33 cases of civil wars, after 1949, resulting in a leader removal. Of these only one case made a democratic transition within three years of the removal, Nicaragua in 1979. In line with my theoretical expectations, the level of violence and destruction brought about by civil war largely negates any opening for democratization theoretically provided by an irregular leader removal.

Model 10 examines removals resulting from coups. The removal variable displays a negative and statistically significant coefficient, that while not directly interpretable, suggests that at lower levels of economic development, coup removals decrease democratic transitions.

Next, the interaction term has a statistically significant, positive effect on democratization.²¹

Contrary to findings in Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014) regarding a lack of democratic outcomes in the aftermath of removals resulting from coups, instead we see that coups do indeed result in democratic outcomes when accompanied by development. Utilizing a measure that accounts for democratization at $t+1$, the authors likely miss the effects of states that take longer than twelve months to democratize. Examining the substantive effects in Figure 12-B, we can see that once a state approaches the mean of economic development (Logged GDP/capita 8.3 or about 2015 constant US \$4000), countries experiencing coup removals are significantly more likely to democratize than those not experiencing removals. At the mean of economic development, states experiencing irregular leader removals resulting from coups in the prior three years have about a 4.3% chance of democratization at $t+1$ whereas states absent a removal have a 1.4% chance of democratizing. Further, the removal variable alone has a negative and significant effect on democracy.

Next Model 11 examines the interaction of foreign intervention removals and economic development. The interaction coefficient displays a positive coefficient but does not reach statistical significance, suggesting that states undergoing removals resulting from foreign interventions, in conjunction with economic development, do not enjoy greater democratization prospects post-removal compared with the null. Examining the substantive effects in Figure 12-C

²¹ Robustness tests utilizing an increased sample (1875-2015) are available in Appendix C. Results examining the larger sample fail to reach statistical significance in regression models (Table 17) but maintain statistically significant differences when examining substantive effects (Figure 13). The substantive effects of economic development and coup removals on democratization, on a sample of autocratic states from 1875-2015, show that states experiencing coup removals in conjunction with economic development are more likely to democratize than states not experiencing removals.

the results comparing foreign interventions to those countries not experiencing removals are strikingly similar with very little difference in confidence intervals.

Finally, Model 12 examines the effects of protest removals and development on democratization. The coefficient for the interaction term displays a positive, though not statistically significant, sign. Examining the substantive effects, Figure 12-D shows that confidence intervals between states experiencing protest removals and those not experiencing removals overlap. Contrary to my expectations, there does not appear to be an increased rate of democratization for states suffering protest removals compared with the null. Though protest removals may benefit from sweeping political changes in some instances, the challenges associated with consolidating a revolution, replacing a bureaucracy, and/or reinventing institutions may present too many challenges for democratization to occur.²²

Two control variables reach statistical significance across all six models in Table 7 including both *Regional Democracy* and *Prior Democratic Breakdown*. *Regional Democracy* displays positive and statistically significant coefficients in all models presented in Table 7. Results concerning *Regional Democracy* confirm earlier findings in the literature concerning the spatial transmission of democracy wherein a greater proportion of democratic neighbors has a positive effect on a country's democratic prospects (Gleditsch & Ward 2006). Next, *Prior Democratic Breakdown* displays a positive and statistically significant coefficient across all models in Table 7. The positive effect speaks to the influence of prior democratic spells on a country's probability of a democratic transition such that states that have past experiences as democracies are more likely to democratize in the future (Boix et al. 2013). Though not robust, results concerning *growth* confirm findings in earlier research suggesting that economic growth

²² Appendix C, Table 18 provides a summary of hypotheses and outcomes.

can increase autocratic longevity by helping to prop up a regime with resources (Miller 2012; Smith 2004).

Conclusion

The findings of this research are twofold. First, not all forms of irregular leadership removal result in democratization at similar rates. Prior findings in the literature concerning irregular removal as an impetus for democratization suggested that in conjunction with economic development, irregular leadership removal may provide an important opening for democratization (Miller 2012). I suggest that instead of considering all removal means as providing such an opening, instead we should expect greater rates of democratization in cases where removals met three broad criteria including relatively benign population consequences, a degree of institutional and bureaucratic continuity, and those allowing a window for political change to take hold. Second, largely in line with my theoretical expectations, I find that only irregular removals resulting from coups d'état, in conjunction with economic development, are positively associated with future democratization. Importantly, as the results point out, coups that occur in states at low levels of economic development do not experience democratization increases beyond the mean. Therefore, economic development remains an important part of the democratization story. However, contrary to my theory, protest removals, while resulting in large degrees of change, do not increase the potential for democratic transitions beyond the null.

This research does not aim to make a case for the democratic coup but rather to point out that there very specific conditions associated with some irregular leader removals that provide the opening identified in earlier literature. Rather than being needlessly pessimistic, or overly optimistic, about the democratic prospects of all removals, instead each scenario should be

judged according to its characteristics. Coups can, at times, provide the window needed to remove a leader and democratize.

APPENDIX A: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COUPS

Table 8: Coup & Democracy Literature

Quantitative Study	Democracy Measure	Coup Measure	Sample	Findings
Arbatli & Arbatli 2016	Belkin & Schofer Coup Risk Measure: Legitimacy and Political Competition (binary)	Coup attempts (CSP)	Global sample, 1960-2000	Negative and significant effect risk measure on coup attempts
Arriola 2009	Executive competition (binary) Polity (binary) (democ & semi-democ)	Irregular change (Goldsmith & McGowan)	40 African states, post-1971/independence - 2001	Positive and significant effect of full, partial, elected and non-elected on duration
Askoy et al. 2015	N/A	Coup attempts & successes (Author & GWF)	Authoritarian regimes, 1971- 2006	N/A
Bell 2016a	Democracy, Interim, Various Autocracies	Coup attempts (CSP & PT)	Global Sample, 1945-2011 & Sub Saharan Sample 1960-2011	Negative and significant on global sample; null findings on Sub Saharan Sample
Bell & Koga-Sudduth 2017	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts & successes (PT)	Global sample, 1950-2011	Negative, inconsistent, effect on attempts; no substantive effect on successes
Bodea et al. 2017	Full democracy, partial factional democracy, partial non-factional democracy (binary)	Coup attempts & successes (CSP & PT)	Global sample, 1950-2007	All measures have negative, robust effects on attempts and successes
Böhmelt and Pilster 2015	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts & successes (PT)	Global sample, 1950-2011	No substantive effects on attempts or successes
Bove & Rivera 2015	N/A	Successful coups (Archigos)	Authoritarian regimes, 1950- 2004	N/A
Caspar & Tyson 2014	Polity score (-10 - 10)	Coup attempts (CSP)	Global sample, 1989-2010	Negative, robust effect on attempts
Caspar 2017	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	Global sample, 1970-2011	No substantive effects of democracy on attempts
DeBruin 2018	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts & successes (CSP)	Random Sample of Developing States, 1950-2010	No substantive effect on attempts or successes
Galetovic & Sanhueza 2000	N/A	Coup attempts (Jodice & Taylor)	Authoritarian regimes only	N/A
Gassebner et al. 2016	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	164 Countries, 1952-2011	Positive, inconsistent effect on attempts

Girod 2015	Democracy (interval)	Coup attempts (PT)	90 non-communist, developing countries, 1950- 1982	No substantive effect on attempts
Hiroi & Omori 2013	hybrid, and full democracy (binaries)	Coup attempts (CSP)	Global sample, 1962-2007	Negative, robust effect of full democracy measure on attempts
Hiroi & Omori 2015	Democracy (interval)	Coup attempts (CSP)	Global sample, 1946-2009	Positive, inconsistent effect on attempts
Houle 2016	Democracy (interval) (polity and polity ²)	Coup attempts & successes (PT)	Non-western states, 1960- 2008	No substantive effect on coups; polity ² has robust, positive effect on attempts and successes
Johnson & Thyne 2018	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	150 States, 1951-2005	Negative and significant effect on attempts
Kim 2016	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	Global sample, 1960-2005	No substantive effects on attempts
Lehoucq & Perez-Linan 2014	Political Competition (binary) & Democracy (binary)	Coup success (Authors)	18 Latin American States, 1900-2006	Negative and significant effect on successes
Leon 2014	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (Belkin & Schofer)	153 States, 1963-1999	No substantive effects of democracy on attempts
Miller et al. 2016	Democracy (interval) (polity and polity ²)	Coup attempts & successes (PT)	Global sample, 1950-2010	No substantive effects of democracy on coups though polity ² has a robust, positive effect on attempts and successes
Piplani & Talmadge 2015	Democracy (interval) (polity and polity ²)	Successful coups (PT)	Global sample, 1950-2010	Negative, robust effect of democracy measure on successes
Powell 2012	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts & successes (PT)	Global sample, 1961-2000	No substantive effect on attempts or successes
Powell & Chacha 2016	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	Global sample, 1952-2007	No substantive effect of democracy on coup attempts
Powell et al. 2016	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	54 African states, 1950-2014	No substantive effect of democracy on coup attempts
Savage & Caverly 2017	Democracy (binary)	Military-backed Coup Attempts (PT & CSP)	Global sample, 1970-2009	No substantive effect on attempts

Schroeder & Powell 2017	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (PT)	Global Sample, 1952-2009	No substantive effect on attempts
Thyne 2010	Democracy (binary)	Coup attempts (CSP)	19 Latin American states, 1960- 1999	No substantive effect on attempts
Tusalem 2010	Democracy (binary)	Successful coups (Banks)	88 Developing states in Asia, Africa, & Latin America, 1970- 1990	Negative, inconsistent effect of on successes
Tusalem & Morrison 2014	Democracy (continuous)	Successful coups (Banks)	47 Diamond-Producing African States, 1960- 1999	N/A, not directly tested
Wig & Rød 2016	N/A	Coup attempts (PT)	Authoritarian regimes only	N/A
Wobig 2015	Democracy Clause (binary)	Coup attempts (CSP & PT)	Global Sample, 1991- 2008	No substantive effect on attempts

Table 9: The Effects of Regime Type and Economic Development on Coup Attempts, Fixed Effects

	Model 1 (Naïve)	Model 2 (Reign)	Model 3 (CGV)	Model 4 (BMR)	Model 5 (GWF)	Model 6 (Polity)
Democracy	-0.181 (0.188)	2.814+ (1.441)	1.034 (1.454)	1.071 (1.498)	2.851+ (1.454)	2.716+ (1.543)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.607** (0.197)	-0.304 (0.205)	-0.822*** (0.213)	-0.721*** (0.207)	-0.530* (0.210)	-0.626** (0.209)
Democracy X GDP pc (ln)	- -	-0.367+ (0.190)	-0.139 (0.190)	-0.115 (0.197)	-0.360+ (0.192)	-0.354+ (0.202)
Military Regime	-0.233 (0.151)	0.035 (0.201)	-0.174 (0.156)	0.205 (0.196)	0.153 (0.204)	0.121 (0.189)
Cold War	0.791*** (0.167)	0.889*** (0.174)	0.857*** (0.166)	0.865*** (0.169)	0.892*** (0.176)	0.828*** (0.172)
Time Since	-0.177*** (0.043)	-0.106** (0.033)	-0.168*** (0.043)	-0.163*** (0.042)	-0.145*** (0.040)	-0.158*** (0.042)
Time Since²	0.013*** (0.004)	0.005* (0.002)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.003)	0.009** (0.003)	0.010** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Military Exp/Soldier (ln)	-0.117+ (0.062)	-0.133* (0.064)	-0.071 (0.058)	-0.083 (0.061)	-0.106 (0.065)	-0.095 (0.062)
Observations	3781	3949	3807	3772	3848	3765
Number of Groups	81	79	81	77	79	78

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 10: The Effects of Regime Type and Economic Development on Coup Attempts, Random Effects

	Model 1 (Naive)	Model 2 (Reign)	Model 3 (CGV)	Model 4 (BMR)	Model 5 (GWF)	Model 6 (Polity)
Democracy	-0.134 (0.169)	3.683** (1.223)	3.127* (1.252)	2.600* (1.248)	3.838** (1.238)	3.610** (1.331)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.518*** (0.108)	-0.316** (0.115)	-0.474*** (0.125)	-0.481*** (0.123)	-0.403*** (0.120)	-0.413*** (0.119)
Democracy X GDP pc (ln)	- -	-0.467** (0.158)	-0.392* (0.160)	-0.308+ (0.161)	-0.473** (0.160)	-0.478** (0.171)
Military Regime	0.025 (0.148)	0.342+ (0.179)	0.108 (0.152)	0.429* (0.178)	0.431* (0.182)	0.332+ (0.175)
Cold War	0.582*** (0.157)	0.659*** (0.167)	0.665*** (0.158)	0.646*** (0.163)	0.683*** (0.167)	0.593*** (0.164)
Time Since	-0.215*** (0.044)	-0.147*** (0.034)	-0.207*** (0.044)	-0.206*** (0.042)	-0.180*** (0.040)	-0.199*** (0.042)
Time Since²	0.013*** (0.004)	0.005* (0.002)	0.013*** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.009** (0.003)	0.011** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000+ (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp/Soldier(ln)	-0.092+ (0.050)	-0.109+ (0.059)	-0.058 (0.048)	-0.061 (0.055)	-0.06 (0.057)	-0.071 (0.056)
Constant	1.982* (0.790)	0.508 (0.858)	1.232 (0.929)	1.4 (0.919)	0.71 (0.904)	1.078 (0.888)
Observations	6983	6982	7086	6816	6865	6770
Number of Groups	164	151	165	151	151	152

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

APPENDIX B: JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH AND COUPS

Table 11: The Effects of Judicial Accountability and Democracy on Coup Attempts, 1950-2012

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	0.951** (0.311)	0.918** (0.288)	0.887** (0.283)	0.608+ (0.345)
Judicial Accountability	-0.071 (0.117)	-0.064 (0.126)	-0.078 (0.113)	-0.08 (0.109)
Democracy X Strength	-0.477** (0.175)	-0.418* (0.177)	-0.439* (0.171)	-0.443* (0.191)
Cold War	0.506** (0.187)	0.522** (0.184)	0.481** (0.179)	0.447* (0.179)
Time Since	-0.234*** (0.040)	-0.259*** (0.042)	-0.262*** (0.042)	-0.252*** (0.040)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.026 (0.048)	-0.033 (0.045)	-0.032 (0.043)	-0.053 (0.043)
Military Regime	0.515** (0.167)	0.516** (0.171)	0.495** (0.167)	0.461** (0.157)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.229* (0.116)	-0.266* (0.124)	-0.249* (0.115)	-0.205+ (0.108)
Constant	-0.012 (0.819)	0.286 (0.864)	0.276 (0.822)	0.19 (0.781)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 12: The Effects of High Court Independence and Democracy on Coup Attempts, 1950-2012

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	1.576*** (0.294)	1.341*** (0.321)	1.311*** (0.322)	1.057** (0.336)
High Court Independence	0.174* (0.068)	0.139+ (0.072)	0.152* (0.068)	0.172* (0.068)
Democracy X Strength	-0.793*** (0.137)	-0.598*** (0.134)	-0.615*** (0.139)	-0.661*** (0.145)
Cold War	0.482** (0.180)	0.521** (0.181)	0.460** (0.172)	0.410* (0.172)
Time Since	-0.216*** (0.041)	-0.245*** (0.044)	-0.247*** (0.044)	-0.242*** (0.041)
Time Since²	0.010*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.004)	0.012*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.045 (0.045)	-0.06 (0.043)	-0.061 (0.041)	-0.066 (0.041)
Military Regime	0.521** (0.165)	0.601*** (0.169)	0.571*** (0.161)	0.467** (0.153)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.193+ (0.103)	-0.244* (0.115)	-0.214* (0.103)	-0.187+ (0.098)
Constant	-0.5 (0.698)	-0.005 (0.757)	-0.133 (0.710)	-0.19 (0.699)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 13: The Effects of Government Compliance with the High Court and Democracy on Coup Attempts, 1950-2012

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	1.815*** (0.372)	1.353*** (0.375)	1.669*** (0.403)	2.237*** (0.370)
Compliance with High Court	0.075 (0.070)	0.029 (0.071)	0.061 (0.071)	0.122+ (0.068)
Democracy X Strength	-0.671*** (0.133)	-0.429** (0.132)	-0.579*** (0.146)	-0.950*** (0.139)
Cold War	0.423* (0.181)	0.471** (0.181)	0.417* (0.175)	0.378* (0.175)
Time Since	-0.228*** (0.041)	-0.256*** (0.043)	-0.254*** (0.043)	-0.244*** (0.042)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.034 (0.047)	-0.053 (0.042)	-0.057 (0.040)	-0.061 (0.042)
Military Regime	0.530** (0.166)	0.595*** (0.168)	0.570*** (0.162)	0.473** (0.153)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.220* (0.106)	-0.263* (0.118)	-0.227* (0.104)	-0.182+ (0.099)
Constant	-0.224 (0.707)	0.275 (0.755)	0.072 (0.711)	-0.26 (0.703)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 14: The Effects of Judicial Corruption and Democracy on Coup Attempts

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	1.079*** (0.302)	0.808** (0.305)	0.856** (0.306)	0.754* (0.329)
Judicial Corruption	-0.248* (0.116)	-0.292* (0.124)	-0.280* (0.116)	-0.252* (0.116)
Democracy X Strength	-0.462** (0.166)	-0.277 (0.190)	-0.328+ (0.177)	-0.424* (0.188)
Cold War	0.648*** (0.178)	0.669*** (0.179)	0.612*** (0.174)	0.573*** (0.173)
Time Since	-0.224*** (0.039)	-0.249*** (0.041)	-0.252*** (0.041)	-0.242*** (0.039)
Time Since²	0.010*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.054 (0.044)	-0.063 (0.042)	-0.064 (0.041)	-0.076+ (0.041)
Military Regime	0.545** (0.173)	0.556** (0.185)	0.530** (0.179)	0.484** (0.166)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.154 (0.104)	-0.188 (0.118)	-0.181+ (0.105)	-0.148 (0.100)
Constant	-0.21 (0.730)	0.169 (0.797)	0.211 (0.740)	0.104 (0.726)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 15: The Effects of Judicial Packing and Democracy on Coup Attempts

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	1.184** (0.366)	1.130** (0.374)	1.041* (0.440)	0.859+ (0.452)
Court Packing	0.12 (0.085)	0.111 (0.093)	0.101 (0.087)	0.124 (0.083)
Democracy X Strength	-0.455** (0.143)	-0.372* (0.150)	-0.360* (0.173)	-0.460** (0.171)
Cold War	0.419* (0.169)	0.464** (0.170)	0.399* (0.170)	0.345* (0.165)
Time Since	-0.238*** (0.040)	-0.259*** (0.042)	-0.264*** (0.042)	-0.254*** (0.041)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.046 (0.044)	-0.058 (0.043)	-0.062 (0.041)	-0.064 (0.041)
Military Regime	0.496** (0.167)	0.548** (0.167)	0.530** (0.162)	0.451** (0.157)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.241* (0.107)	-0.287* (0.120)	-0.271* (0.107)	-0.222* (0.102)
Constant	-0.045 (0.696)	0.336 (0.733)	0.396 (0.708)	0.096 (0.693)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 16: The Effects of Judicial Purges and Democracy on Coup Attempts

	GWF	CGV	BMR	Polity
Democracy	1.477*** (0.367)	1.258*** (0.308)	1.227*** (0.321)	2.118*** (0.380)
Judicial Purges	-0.074 (0.072)	-0.095 (0.068)	-0.081 (0.068)	-0.019 (0.071)
Democracy X Strength	-0.454*** (0.130)	-0.335** (0.123)	-0.358** (0.121)	-0.792*** (0.126)
Cold War	0.486** (0.172)	0.512** (0.172)	0.441* (0.171)	0.445** (0.168)
Time Since	-0.227*** (0.038)	-0.250*** (0.041)	-0.254*** (0.041)	-0.243*** (0.039)
Time Since²	0.011*** (0.003)	0.014*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.003)
Time Since³	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Military Exp (ln)	-0.03 (0.046)	-0.042 (0.043)	-0.049 (0.041)	-0.048 (0.043)
Military Regime	0.538** (0.172)	0.560** (0.180)	0.537** (0.174)	0.476** (0.158)
Real GDP pc (ln)	-0.216* (0.104)	-0.260* (0.115)	-0.237* (0.103)	-0.194* (0.098)
Constant	-0.051 (0.689)	0.382 (0.726)	0.359 (0.694)	-0.043 (0.647)
Observations	6,832	6,482	6,787	6,743

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

**APPENDIX C: VIOLENT LEADERSHIP REMOVAL, ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMOCRATIZATION**

Table 17: The Effects of Irregular Leader Removal and Economic Development on Democratization, 1875-2015

	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Aggregate	Assassination	Civil War	Coup	Foreign	Protest
Removal	-1.042 (1.515)	3.282 (3.130)	-2.395 (2.341)	-1.278 (1.706)	1.927 (3.366)	2.694 (6.266)
GDP pc(ln)	0.217* (0.107)	0.254** (0.091)	0.246** (0.091)	0.231* (0.101)	0.262** (0.092)	0.240** (0.090)
Removal X GDP	0.296 (0.181)	-0.308 (0.372)	0.167 (0.280)	0.293 (0.201)	-0.1 (0.403)	-0.07 (0.753)
Growth	-1.94 (1.347)	-2.940* (1.225)	-3.138* (1.263)	-2.771* (1.315)	-2.804* (1.252)	-2.714* (1.306)
Regional Democracy	0.182*** (0.024)	0.173*** (0.024)	0.174*** (0.024)	0.182*** (0.024)	0.173*** (0.024)	0.163*** (0.024)
New Country	0.279 (0.214)	0.217 (0.214)	0.219 (0.217)	0.27 (0.212)	0.221 (0.217)	0.149 (0.222)
Never Colonized	-0.237 (0.241)	-0.305 (0.246)	-0.298 (0.243)	-0.242 (0.242)	-0.32 (0.245)	-0.271 (0.244)
British Colony	0.032 (0.323)	0.038 (0.320)	0.042 (0.319)	0 (0.324)	0.05 (0.321)	0.094 (0.316)
Prior Breakdown	0.376*** (0.099)	0.564*** (0.100)	0.561*** (0.098)	0.436*** (0.096)	0.553*** (0.101)	0.579*** (0.100)
Constant	-6.080*** (0.854)	-6.087*** (0.717)	-6.009*** (0.718)	-6.052*** (0.805)	-6.162*** (0.731)	-6.049*** (0.718)
Observations	7,106	7,106	7,106	7,106	7,106	7,106

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

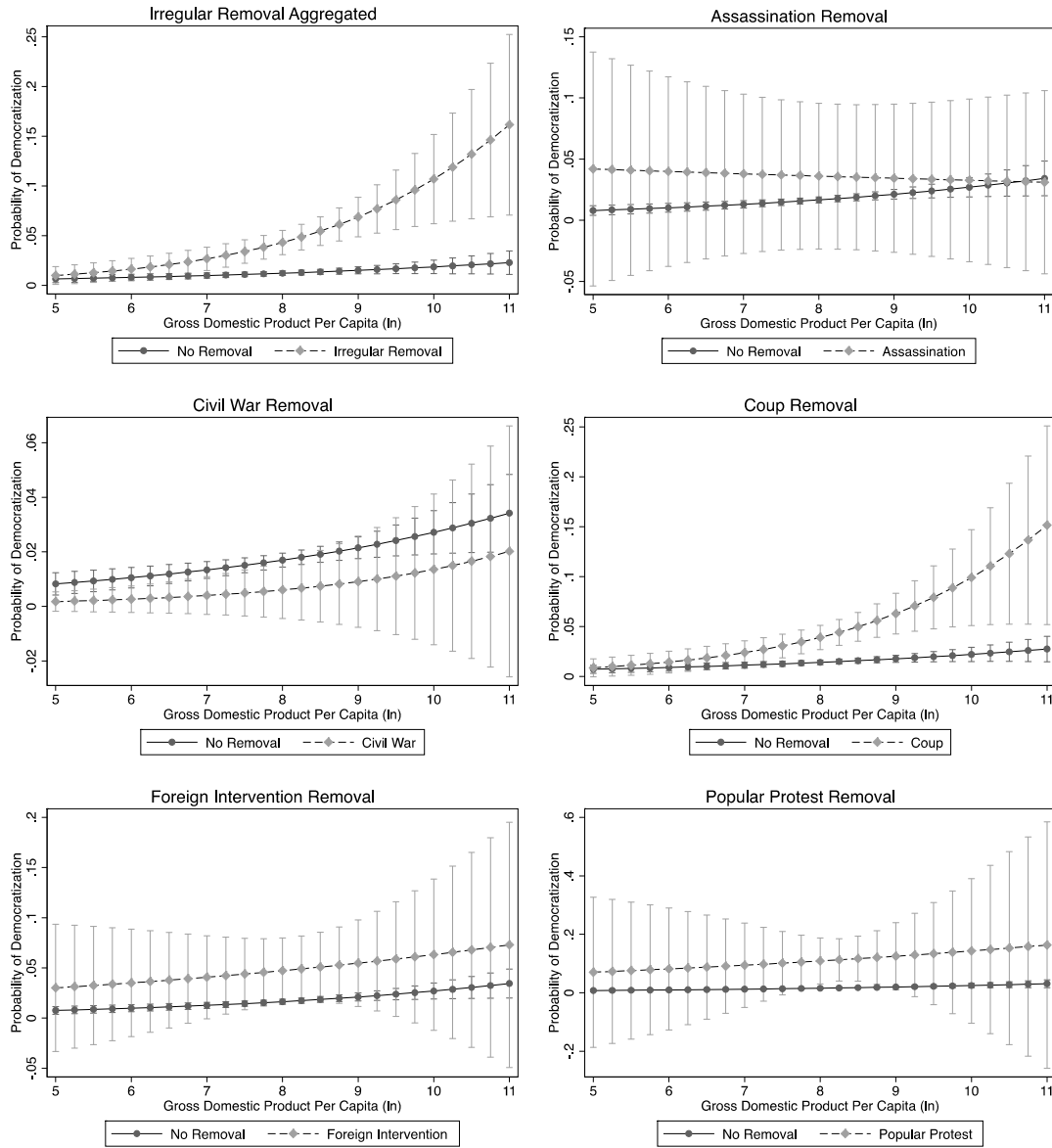


Figure 13: Substantive Effects of Irregular Removal Methods and Development on Democratization, 1875-2015

Table 18: Hypotheses Summary

Hypothesis Number	Empirical Test	Offered Support
H1	Model 2	Yes
H2	Model 3	n/a (dropped from sample)
H3	Model 4	Yes
H4	Model 5	Yes
H5	Model 6	Yes
H1a	Model 8	Yes
H2a	Model 9	n/a (dropped from sample)
H3a	Model 10	Yes
H4a	Model 11	Yes
H5a	Model 12	No

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