

Theorizing about the Civil in Civil-Military Relations: Why Political Party Behavior Dictates Military Strategies

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ABSTRACT. The interplay between the military and civilian government can structure politics and determine coup propensity. The civil-military relations literature focuses on the military part of this relationship, finding that certain types of militaries are prone to interfere in civilian governance. We argue that the civilian state and political parties play a determinative role in shaping military strategy. Through Cox Proportional Hazards models, we show that state and party strength predict the likelihood of a military coup better than established indicators of military strength. These findings underline the importance of theorizing about the civil part of civil-military relations by incorporating insights from studies on institutions.

Keywords: Civil-Military Relations, Coup Propensity, Political Parties, State Capacity, Military

1 Introduction

The exclusion of civilian politics in discussions on the relationship between civilians and the military privileges explanations that focus on military characteristics and so on one half of the equation. This oversight has resulted in an incapability of theory to explain the variation in civil-military relations in authoritarian regimes and new democracies because accounts of how old democracies achieved civilian control are incomplete. This study will show that the characteristics of civilian political institutions shape their relationship with the military and determine whether militaries implement coup d'états in a country.

Studies attribute a military's willingness to interfere in politics to its level of professionalization or other internal characteristics, such as its commitment to democratic values. These accounts focus on the emergence of the 'modern' or 'professional' army as the key to the military's removal from politics in new democracies, citing the experience of the developed world as evidence. However, these overlook an important timing effect that was present in states with civilian control of the military when focusing on just the military component. The historical work on Europe credits the coevolution of the state and military as crucial to successfully subjugating the military to civilians (Tilly 1985). The strength of civilian political institutions preceded the professionalization and resulting institutional strength of militaries in the developed world. Accounts of civilian control that focus on the professionalization of the military are incomplete without a discussion of the initial political conditions that made civilian control possible.

We utilize Cox Proportional Hazard models to demonstrate that state capacity and political party cohesiveness better predict the incidence of a coup than indicators of military strength. Countries with strong state apparatuses that are effective at implementing the rule of law are less likely to witness a coup. Militaries also tend to strategically choose their actions based on a political party's organizational strength, responding to some political parties with impunity while remaining wary of others. Rather than privileging one institution's determinative power

over another, we argue that the internal dynamics of both institutions shape their preferences and actions in response to each other. When civilian authorities demonstrate an ability to maintain order or garner political consensus, militaries are less likely to implement a coup because of a lack of opportunity or incentive to do so.

The paper contributes to our understanding of civil-military relations, democratic backsliding, and coup propensity. We show how the institutional characteristics of both the military and civilian institutions affect the strategic interaction between them. This has important ramifications for regime transitions and is critical in explaining civilian control of the military in the developed world and the mixed pattern present today in the developing world.

2 Military Professionalization and Civilian Control

The foundational literature on civil-military relations attributes civilian control of the military to an ethic of non-interference in militaries. The reason for the existence of this ethic differs among the opposing approaches, which place focus on values or institutions. The historical evolution of the military into a professional organization is seen as responsible for civilian control in the developed world with its ethos of non-interference in politics (Huntington 1956). Others argue that military integration with civilians and society is critical to civilian control. This leads the military to share the values and wishes of society, which prefers the military to adhere to the mandates of elected civilian governments (Janowitz 1960). Huntington and Janowitz's framework might be applicable in the developed world, on which it is built, but it does not travel well to the developing world.

More recent studies assert that by focusing only on the internal control mechanisms of the military when explaining civilian control, these foundational accounts have defined away the civil-military problematique with their understanding of professionalism (Feaver 1996). Rather, professionalism has two components, one structural and the other a social process.

The structural focuses on whether the military has evolved into a complex, well-organized, self-functioning corporation or remains a simple, poorly organized institution. The second involves the indoctrination of common values, views, and behaviors that make up the military's corporate identity. The second component follows from the first, so the more professional the military is, the more effective it is (Abrahamsson 1972). Contrary to Huntington, these studies assert that the more effective the military, the more civilian control is impaired. Similarly, Finer views the military as an organization with distinct characteristics that make it professional or unprofessional. Non-interference in civilian affairs is kept distinct from this definition of professionalism as it is seen as an unproven consequence of a modern military. Military professionalism does not preempt military interference in politics, rather adherence to the principle of civilian control is independent of it (Finer 2002). These arguments hold in the developing world, where professionalization has not necessarily led to a military ethic of political non-interference.

This paper adopts Finer's definition of professionalization, which focuses on the military as an institution. In doing so, it resembles both Weberian and Huntingtonian definitions of institutionalization. The organizational definition of professionalization highlights the cohesiveness and hierarchical nature of modern militaries. There are five central components of a professional army: centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, intercommunication, and an esprit de corps that results in a sense of solidarity and purpose. Centralization refers to a chain of command that extends from the lowest echelons to the highest levels of the military command, which directs all functional directives that are carried out. A hierarchy implies a pyramid-like authority structure with each level clearly delineated by rank and insignia. Authority is determined by rank, not the individual, and each member is subject to the institutional rules that demand obedience to superiors on pain of punishment. Vertical and horizontal communication throughout the military is crucial to make the organization a seamless, responsive unit. A sense of solidarity and unity, built on common beliefs, sentiments, and a way of life, permeates the

institution.

Professionalism can lead militaries to contrary policies of interference and non-interference, dependent on the context. Professionalization creates a cohesive organization with a strong corporate identity. This comes with a sense of purpose as the defender of the state and not just the regime in power. This leads them to interfere in civilian politics when they are concerned about the state's survival or when civilian politicians threaten its institutional interests. A professional military is less likely to involve itself in civilian politics by allying itself with a specific political party or civilian faction against other civilians. This is because the resultant politicization of the military threatens the centralization of command, clear hierarchies, and its sense of unity and discipline. Professionalization or institutionalization leads to an ethic of political neutrality.

Professionalism impairs civilian control because militaries have the structure and institutional identity to be able to interfere in civilian affairs effectively. However, this does not necessarily mean that they do so. Instead of becoming just a tool of the government, strong militaries have different kinds of relationships with civilian governments. Professional militaries have chosen to either adhere to civilian rule or become an arbiter of civilian politics, playing the role of guardian.

A professionalized military is primarily concerned with its own institutional interests instead of individual or sub-group ambitions in the military organization. Conversely, an unprofessional military is not a cohesive and unified organization with an institutional identity. It is fractionalized and fragmented, with officers more interested in their ambitions than empowering the military organization. This leads parts of the military to ally with political actors that can give them access to material benefits and political power. Its politicization empowers individuals at the expense of the military institution. Civilian politicians do not have to make deals with the military institution because they can buy off parts of it. This allows civilians to exploit fractures in the military for their own interests, which includes subordination by the civilian government.

A military's level of professionalization reveals its preferences and incentives, but it does not predict the course of action it pursues. This is because the military responds to the other key player in the civil-military relationship, the civilians. A professional military can adhere to its ethic of political neutrality by interfering or not interfering in civilian affairs. In contrast, an unprofessional military can become involved in civilian politics or subordinated to the civilian government. A military's preferences are limited by its internal characteristics (of which professionalization is key), but external factors determine its actions. We argue that the strength of civilian institutions guides the actions of professional and unprofessional militaries and so predicts the type of civil-military relations in a state.

3 The Civilians in the Civil-Military Relationship: The State, Political Parties, and Party Systems

The civilian part of the civil-military relationship is often overlooked in the literature, which refers to the civilian component only vis-a-vis the military. Perhaps the most explicit discussion of the importance of civilian institutions for civil-military relations is by Huntington, who asserts that weak political institutions create the opportunity for military coups. He is vague about which political institutions are the most crucial, citing elites, societal relations, political parties, and bureaucracies at various points (Huntington 2006). We focus on the 'civilian' state, which consists of the bureaucratic state and the government comprising politicians and parties. Countries have differing levels of administrative or infrastructural state strength and party and party system institutionalization. We argue that this can have implications for the power the civilian state wields over the coercive apparatus of the state, the military.

Strong state institutions that can implement the rule of law are better equipped to maintain law and order. They can prevent or stop riots, criminality, and upheaval resulting from political or economic crises. This prevents militaries from stepping in to maintain order and play the

'guardian' of the state by preference or necessity. Weak state institutions that cannot police the streets create opportunities for military interference. The state's capacity can also shape politics, regulating the behavior of political actors. Strong state institutions can prevent abuses of power that lead to political corruption or instability which incentivize military interference in civilian affairs.

Parties and party systems function as an effective medium through which to organize and enforce elite bargains and power-sharing agreements (Aldrich et al. 1995). A party is a tool that various societal forces, elites, and even the military utilize to govern, with strong parties creating effective political institutions in a state. A stronger party views itself as having a longer time horizon in government to carry out its policies and is relatively confident of its continuing electoral success. Strong parties incorporating a wide range of societal actors can empower civilian governments. They have the political power and legitimacy to reform the military and are more likely to subordinate it. A party system's institutionalization indicates the strength of the parties in it (Mainwaring et al. 1995). Institutionalized parties are less likely to allow the military to become or remain a counterweight to their own power. They want to subordinate the military to the state they control instead of letting it retain its independence. Strong civilian governments are more likely to turn de jure control of a professional or unprofessional military into a de facto reality. While they might be able to subjugate an unprofessional military, they have a harder time doing so with a professional military, which maintains a separate institutional identity. This is why democracies and autocracies with professional militaries continue to have civil-military friction.

Conversely, a weakly institutionalized party system has weak parties with unstable and unpredictable vote shares in elections. This results in greater uncertainty of electoral outcomes among politicians and voters, leading to the privileging of shorter time horizons by parties in government (Mainwaring 1999). Elites are disunited with no institutional mechanism to resolve disagreements before they escalate. The civilian parties are more focused on their

electoral competitors and willing to involve the military in civilian political disputes to gain the upper hand. Party weakness is more likely to lead to politicization with an unprofessional military or the establishment of a professional military as a separate sphere of influence in the state. Professional militaries hold an inordinate amount of power and influence in a state with weak civilian institutions, as they are one of the strongest organizations in the country. The ineffectiveness of weak civilian institutions is often the pretext or cause of military intervention by professional militaries, who come to view them as a threat to the state and its survival.

Strong civilian institutions can transform a professional army's ethic of neutrality into non-interfere through monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. This is preferable to the alternative because a professional military is effective on the battlefield while an unprofessional one is not, as outlined by the coup-proofing literature (Talmadge 2015; Biddle and Zirkle 1996). Weak and fragmented civilian institutions are less interested and empowered in subordinating militaries in the short term. Unprofessional militaries often come to share power with weak civilian institutions, and sub-groups in both the military and civilian political elite ally with each other to empower specific individuals or groups. Unprofessional militaries are less likely to mount a unified campaign to replace the civilian government because they are often politicized and fragmented.

We theorize that these relationships result in four types of civil-military relationships: civilian control with no civil-military friction, civilian control with civil-military friction, shared military and civilian control, and military domination. We argue that different types of military and civilian institutions have distinct incentives and resultant actions that interact to produce these outcomes. Figure 1 outlines the distinct trajectories and patterns of civil-military relations that this paper theorizes results in states from this interaction.

Figure 1: Varieties of Civil-Military Relations

		<i>Civilian Institutions</i>	
		Strong	Weak
<i>Military</i>	Strong	<p style="text-align: right;">1</p> <p>Civilian Control <i>(Civil-Military Friction)</i></p> <p>Likelihood of Coup: Low</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">2</p> <p>Military Domination <i>(Tutelary Rule)</i></p> <p>Likelihood of Coup: High</p>
	Weak	<p style="text-align: right;">3</p> <p>Civilian Control <i>(No Civil-Military Friction)</i></p> <p>Likelihood of Coup: Low</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>Shared Military-Civilian Control <i>(High Military Influence)</i></p> <p>Likelihood of Coup: Medium</p>

A professional military and strong civilian institutions often result in civil-military friction with a low likelihood of a coup (cell 1). We theorize that professional militaries are more effective at impairing civilian control than unprofessional ones, but they are also incentivized not to interfere in civil affairs when civilian institutions are strong. A professional military’s institutional interests discourage it from governing because of the inherent dangers of politicization when in power. While the military still seeks to protect its interests, which causes some friction between civilian and military organizations, it does so through other avenues available to them, like lobbying, instead of a coup. Professional militaries are more likely to adhere to civilian mandates set by a strong party. Over time this leads to the institutionalization of civilian control as was the case in India with the Congress party and more recently in Turkey with the AKP.

A professional military and weak civilian institutions often result in military domination with a high likelihood of a coup (cell 2). Strong militaries are willing to interfere in civilian affairs if the military determines civilian institutions are endangering the state or encroaching

on what the military views as its purview, primarily security-related issues. When the military interferes in civilian affairs, it comes to appoint itself as not only the guardian of the state but also the policeman of civilian governments and parties. Over time this can lead militaries to encroach further into the civilian government's domain, creating a separate sphere of influence in the state to empower itself. This military dominance or tutelary rule is characterized by a high incidence of coups as witnessed in Pakistan, Thailand, and Bangladesh.

This does not mean civilian control in these states is impossible to achieve, just highly unlikely if neither the military nor civil institutions change over time. Civilian institutions can be built up and come to subdue a professional military. A party that comes to dominate civilian politics and represents the majority of society can subordinate the military as evidenced in Turkey with the AKP. Conversely, professional militaries can be dislodged if the military's inclusion in governance leads to politicization, which interferes with its organizational cohesiveness and sense of unity and purpose. The South Korean transition to democracy highlights the effectiveness of this approach.

When the military is unprofessional and strong civilian institutions are in place, civilian control is maintained without civil-military friction (cell 3). An unprofessional military becomes a tool of the civilian state and the party in power. The civilian government can use the disunity of the military and its individuals' ambitions to its advantage. There is a low likelihood of a coup since civilian governments can establish patron-client relationships with parts of the military. Over time, this civilian control is institutionalized through monitoring mechanisms. This pattern is best exemplified by civilian governments in Russia and other Eastern European countries, which were able to retain civilian control because of the fragmentation of the military with the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Weak and fragmented civilian and military institutions result in shared military and civilian control (cell 4). Under these circumstances, militaries are likely to be subordinate to civilian governments since they are often involved in politics. This influence can lead to unintended

consequences as it weakens the corporate identity and unity of the military establishment. Military prerogatives can gradually be removed without the military perceiving these actions as threatening its institutional power. This happens in a haphazard way with multiple steps backward and forward toward civilian control. This scenario is modeled by the military in Brazil, which used its influence to continue to be part of the legislature and involve itself in civilian politics after a democratic transition. The eroding of military prerogatives took place slowly and without a concerted and organized effort by weak party institutions to disempower the military and so the military did not foresee the threat (Hunter 1997). This is also demonstrated in the recent democratic transition in Indonesia and the history of Western Europe and the U.S.

4 Data and Methods

We employ Cox Proportional Hazards (Cox PH) models to examine the likelihood of a coup occurring in a country while accounting for a range of political, institutional, and military factors. Survival analysis is a statistical domain concerned with time-to-event data analysis, where the outcome of interest is the time until a particular event occurs (Kalbfleisch and Prentice 2011). The Cox PH model is an established method in survival analysis, which concentrates on the time until a specific event of interest transpires (Cox 1972). As a fundamental tool in survival analysis, the Cox PH model is apt for modeling the time until a coup takes place in a country.¹ By estimating the hazard rate as a function of predictor variables, the model facilitates a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing coup timing and forms the basis for making predictions (Bouziid 2011; Rabinowitz and Jargowsky 2018; Koehler and Albrecht 2021; Song 2022). Our investigation explores the applicability of the Cox PH model for predicting the duration a country remains coup-free. The model allows us to test which factors, military

¹In many instances, the exact coup timing may not be observed for all countries, either because a coup has not yet transpired or due to incomplete data. This type of incomplete information is known as censored data. The Cox PH model is specifically designed to manage censored data, rendering it a suitable choice for modeling coup timing in countries with incomplete or ongoing observations (Jackson et al. 2014).

or civilian, are more likely to result in a coup. We are also able to determine which civilian institutions affect coup propensity.

The Cox PH model enables the incorporation of multiple predictor variables, allowing for the analysis of various factors potentially influencing coup likelihood. By including relevant covariates such as political instability, economic conditions, regional conflicts, and historical precedent, the model offers a comprehensive understanding of coup risk determinants (Bouziid 2011; Rabinowitz and Jargowsky 2018; Koehler and Albrecht 2021; Song 2022).²

4.1 Variables

The dependant variable Coups (V-dem) represents the number of successful coups d'état in a given year. It is defined as any event that results in the irregular removal or resignation of the chief executive through violence or the threat of violence by an armed organization. The definition excludes transfers of power among civilians that don't involve force, and it places no restrictions on the origin of the armed group or the identity of the incoming ruler. The data is obtained from Przeworski et al. (2013) and covers the years 1789-2008.³

The independent variable, Rule of Law Index (V-dem), is a measure of the extent to which laws are transparently, independently, predictably, impartially, and equally enforced and the extent to which government officials comply with the law. It uses a scale from 0 to 1 and is based on Bayesian factor analysis of multiple indicators including compliance with high

²The Cox PH model is semi-parametric, meaning it does not necessitate the specification of the underlying baseline hazard function (Cox 1972). This flexibility permits the model to accommodate a wide array of time-to-event data without requiring strong assumptions regarding the baseline hazard function's shape. Consequently, the Cox PH model can deliver robust and reliable estimates of predictor variable effects on the hazard rate, even in situations where the true baseline hazard function is unknown or challenging to specify (Kleinbaum and Klein 1996). The Cox PH model's proportional hazards assumption posits that hazard ratios (i.e., the relative risks of the event occurring) remain constant over time (Grambsch and Therneau 1994). While this assumption may not always hold, it simplifies the analysis and can still yield valuable insights into the relative importance of predictor variables. Researchers can assess the validity of this assumption using statistical tests and diagnostic plots and, if necessary, consider alternative models that relax this assumption, such as the stratified Cox model or time-varying coefficients models (Royston and Parmar 2002).

³The variable may be less reliable for the pre-1950 era due to scarce information.

court, judiciary, court independence, executive respect for constitution, transparent laws, access to justice, judicial accountability, public sector corruption and theft, executive bribery, and embezzlement.⁴ We use this variable as a measure of state capacity, testing whether a strong civilian state results in less coups. Our other key independent variable Legislative Party Cohesion (V-dem) is a measure of the extent to which members of the legislature tend to vote with other members of their party on important bills. It is a measure of the strength of political parties in a country. The variable is based on a 4-point ordinal scale, with response options ranging from "not really" to "yes, absolutely". It tests whether stronger parties lead to less coups in a country.⁵

We use a number of other variables that measure party characteristics to test their effect on the likelihood of a coup occurring. Party linkages is a V-Dem metric that measures the form of linkage between major political parties and their constituents. The data was collected from 1789 to 2020 and asks about the most common form of linkage, which is the sort of "good" that a party offers in exchange for political support and participation in party activities. The responses range from 0 to 4 on an ordinal scale, with 0 being clientelistic (constituents are rewarded with goods, cash, and/or jobs) and 4 being policy/programmatic (constituents respond to a party's positions on national policies, general party programs, and visions for society).⁶ The variable captures whether the type of parties in a country influence the likelihood of a coup. The Candidate selection-national/local (V-dem) is a measurement of the degree of centralization in legislative candidate selection within political parties. The measurement ranges from 0-5 and is based on the level of power that different party actors have in selecting national legislative candidates. The measurement is ordinal, with the different responses representing the relative influence of national party leaders, regional/state-level organizations, local party organizations,

⁴The index was created by Svend-Erik Skaaning and Jeffrey Staton and data is available from 1789 to 2020. The index is based on Pemstein et al. (2021) and V-Dem Codebook. The intercept has convergence issues in the model parameters.

⁵The scale is converted to an interval scale by a Bayesian item response theory measurement model. The index was created by Allen Hicken and data is available from 1789 to 2020. The index is based on Pemstein et al. (2021) and V-Dem Codebook.

⁶The cross-coder aggregation was performed using a Bayesian item response theory measurement model.

and constituency groups.⁷ The variable Party branches (V-dem) measures the number of parties that have permanent local party branches. The response options range from "None" (0) to "All" (4), and the scale is ordinal, which is later converted to interval by the measurement model.⁸ Party organizations (V-dem) is a measure of the number of political parties for national-level office that have permanent organizations. A permanent organization refers to a substantial number of personnel who are responsible for carrying out party activities outside of the election season. The responses range from 0 to 4, with 0 meaning no parties and 4 meaning all parties have permanent organizations.⁹

The variable National party control (V-dem) measures the level of unity in the control of the national government by political parties. It has 3 possible responses: 0 indicates a unified coalition control where a single multi-party coalition controls both the executive and legislative branches, 1 indicates divided party control where different parties or individuals control the executive and legislature or the executive power is divided between a president/monarch and a prime minister, each belonging to different parties, and 2 indicates unified party control where a single party controls both the executive and legislative branches.¹⁰ The variable Political Polarization (V-dem) is a measurement of the extent to which political differences affect social relationships beyond political discussions. The measurement is based on the level of friendliness between supporters of opposing political camps, with responses ranging from 0 ("Not at all" - supporters interact in a friendly manner) to 4 ("Yes, to a large extent" - supporters generally interact in a hostile manner).¹¹ It captures the relationship between political parties and tests

⁷The data for this measurement was collected from 1789 to 2020 and was analyzed using a Bayesian item response theory measurement model. The data was aggregated by cross-coders and the measurement was released in data release 1-11.

⁸The data for this variable was released in 1-11 data releases and cross-coder aggregation was done using a Bayesian item response theory measurement model. The data covers the years 1789-2020.

⁹The measurement is ordinal and is converted to interval by a Bayesian item response theory measurement model. The data release is between 1-11, and the years of measurement are from 1789 to 2020.

¹⁰The data is collected between 1900-2020 and has an ordinal scale, which is converted to interval by the measurement model. The data was collected and analyzed by Allen Hicken and the V-Dem project team using a Bayesian item response theory measurement model.

¹¹The variable is ordinal, but has been converted to interval by the measurement model. It is based on data

whether military coups are more likely if parties are actively hostile against each other, which leads to political instability and crisis.

We control for the type of government to examine the potential impact of different political regimes on the variables of interest. To classify and control for the type of government, we rely on the [Anckar and Fredriksson \(2019\)](#) dataset. This data offer a comprehensive classification of political regimes from 1800 to 2016, encompassing democracies, autocracies, absolute monarchies, military rule, party-based rule, personalist rule, and oligarchies. The typology and dataset allow for a systematic analysis of the influence of various political regimes on our research outcomes. The dataset is constructed using a combination of expert assessments, historical data, and existing databases to ensure the reliability and validity of the classification. Each country-year observation is assigned to one of the seven types of government based on the authors' criteria. We employ these classifications to control for the type of government in our analyses.

Defense Exp Per Cap is a data set from the Cross-National Time-Series (CNTS) that focuses on National Defense Expenditure. It is calculated from two other data sets: National Government Expenditure (revexp5) and the ratio of National Defense Expenditure to National Government Expenditure (revexp7). The data in Military2 is presented in per capita form, which means that the data is adjusted for population size. The variable proxies for military strength in the model and allows us to measure the effect of military strength relative to civilian institutional strength and type.

A number of variables control for the effect of economic growth on institutional variables. Inflation (V-dem) represents the annual inflation rate, with data sourced from multiple sources including Clio Infra, Arroyo Abad, Davies and van Zanden, Montevideo-Oxford Latin America

from 1900 to 2020 and was created by Project Managers Anna Lührmann and Sebastian Hellmeier. The data is released in versions 10-11 and cross-coder aggregation was performed using the Bayesian item response theory measurement model. The methodology and data can be found in Pemstein et al. (2021, V-Dem Working Paper Series 2021:21) and the V-Dem Codebook.

Economic History Database, De Zwart, Reinhart and Rogoff, Santing, and the World Bank.¹² The GDP per capita (V-Dem) is a measure of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person. It is calculated by dividing the GDP of a country by its population.¹³ GDP growth (V-Dem) is a variable that measures the growth rate of a country's GDP per capita.¹⁴ A control for regime type is included in the model to test its effect on coup propensity. The Polity 5 combined score is a measure of the political regime type of a country, ranging from strong democracy to strong autocracy.¹⁵

5 Results

In this study, we explore the intricate dynamics of civilian institutions and their impact on coup risk reduction within the realm of political science. Our analysis identifies key mechanisms and moderating factors that contribute to the relationship between institutional design and coup likelihood, providing essential insights for policymakers and scholars alike. In this section, we discuss our findings, highlighting the significant outcomes discovered throughout the investigation.

Our analysis examines the specific mechanisms through which civilian institutions contribute to coup risk reduction and investigates potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship between institutional design and coup likelihood. We present the results across five different Cox proportional hazard models, using coup attempts as the dependent variable, as shown in Table 1.

¹²The data has been interpolated to fill missing values within the time-series using linear interpolation. The data was released as part of the 5th to 11th data release by Clio Infra and the years covered in the data are 1789-2010.

¹³The data for this measure comes from The Maddison Project Database (2018) and covers the years 1789 to 2018. The data release is 2-11 and the citation for this information is Bolt and van Zanden (2020) and Bolt et al. (2014).

¹⁴It is estimated from the data on GDP per capita, and the data source is The Maddison Project Database (2018). The data was released in data release 2-11, and the suggested citation for this variable is the V-Dem Codebook.

¹⁵The score is calculated by subtracting the autocracy score from the democracy score, resulting in a numeric scale that ranges from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic). The data is sourced from the Polity 5 database and the data release is 5-11. The data was last updated in 2020 and covers the years 1800 to 2018.

TABLE 1: Exploring Mechanisms and Moderating Factors

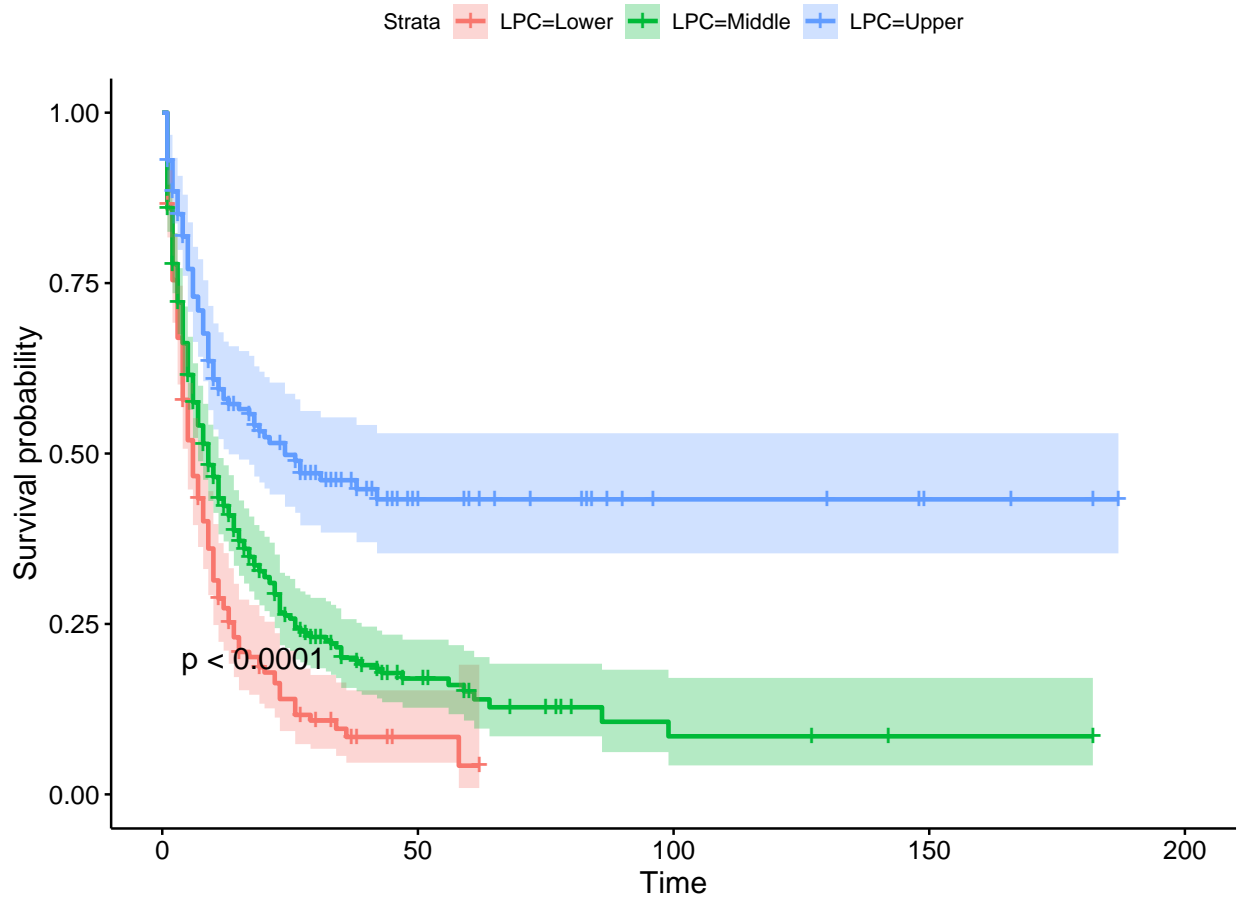
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Rule of Law	0.139***	0.222***	0.194***	0.608	
Legislative Party Coh	0.840***	0.867***	0.826***	0.844*	0.789**
Party linkages		0.858***		0.866	0.801**
Candidate selection			0.839***	0.821*	0.892
Party branches				1.228	1.533*
Party organizations				0.753	0.649**
Defense Exp Per Cap (\$ thousands)				0.893**	0.898**
Inflation				1.002*	1.001
GDP Per Capita				1.000	1.000
Year				0.991	0.990
GDP Growth				1.754	2.088
National party control				0.966	0.940
Political Polarization				1.053	1.173
Polity 5					0.943**
Region Fixed Effects	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
Num.Obs.	742	742	742	256	229
AIC	5271.6	5264.9	5258.2	1236.7	1008.9
BIC	5322.3	5320.2	5313.5	1311.2	1081.0
RMSE	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.70

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Model 1 reveals a significant negative relationship between Rule of Law and coup attempts, with a hazard ratio (HR) of 0.139, suggesting that increased rule of law is associated with a decreased likelihood of coups. Legislative Party Cohesion also demonstrates a significant negative relationship with coup attempts across all models, with hazard ratios ranging from 0.717 to 0.840, indicating that stronger party cohesion within legislatures reduces the risk of coups. Model 2 uncovers a significant negative relationship between Party Linkages and coup attempts, with a hazard ratio of 0.858, implying that stronger linkages between parties and the electorate may reduce the likelihood of coup attempts. Model 3 exposes a significant negative relationship between Candidate Selection and coup attempts, with a hazard ratio of 0.839, signifying that more inclusive and participatory candidate selection processes within political parties can reduce the risk of coups. Model 4 compares various government types to the reference group, which is the parliamentary system. Notably, we find that Presidentialism has a hazard ratio of 0.280, indicating that presidential systems are significantly less likely to experience coup attempts compared to parliamentary systems when accounting for other control variables. Absolute monarchy has a hazard ratio of 0.151, also suggesting a lower likelihood of coup attempts in this model. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, as the number of observations drops to 256, and the model may not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between government types and coup attempts. Model 5 incorporates the Polity 5 score as a control variable and demonstrates a significant negative relationship with coup attempts, with a hazard ratio of 0.963. This indicates that higher levels of democracy are associated with a lower likelihood of coup attempts. Our analysis unveils several mechanisms and moderating factors that influence the relationship between institutional design and coup likelihood. Rule of Law, Legislative Party Cohesion, Party Linkages, and Candidate Selection all play a crucial role in decreasing the risk of coup attempts. Furthermore, government types and the level of democracy, as measured by the Polity 5 score, also significantly impact the likelihood of coups. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex

relationship between institutional design and political stability, providing valuable insights for both policymakers and scholars. To further explore the effects of Legislative Party Cohesion, we categorize the variable into three groups: High levels of Cohesion, Low levels of cohesion, and those falling in the middle. Figure 2 presents the results of the CH model. The findings reveal that all states begin with a high probability of survival, indicating that coups are unlikely to occur within a year or two of the regime's establishment. Following this, there is a sharp decline in survival probability for all regimes, with the most dramatic decrease observed in those with the lowest levels of legislative party cohesion. Regimes with intermediate levels of cohesion also experience a significant drop, though not as rapidly as those with the lowest levels. However, after approximately 50 years, these regimes join their lower-level counterparts, with a survival probability of less than 25% overall. In contrast, regimes with the highest levels of legislative party cohesion follow a different trajectory. While they experience an initial decline, it is far less severe than for other regimes. Notably, after about 20 years, states with the highest legislative cohesion begin to diverge from other countries. At this point, the survival probability curve for those with the strongest legislative party cohesion starts to flatten and remains relatively stable from 50 years onward, hovering around a 50% probability. This suggests that systems with robust civilian control are much more durable and less likely to face a coup compared to those with weaker civilian institutions.

Figure 2: Legislative Party Cohesion Drives Survival Probability



6 Authoritarian Regimes, Democratization, and Civilian Control

Civil and military institutional strength is central to civilian control, irrespective of authoritarian or democratic context because institutions order politics in both authoritarian and democratic regimes (Weeks 2014; Magaloni 2006; Brownlee 2007; Hicken and Martínez Kuhonta 2011; Mainwaring et al. 1995). This has important consequences for the military and the relationship between the civilian and military arms of the state. We examine whether civilian institutions effect coup propensity in both democracies and autocracies. Table 2 displays the results, with a distinction made between countries with Polity scores greater than or equal to 6 (democracies)

and those with Polity scores less than 6 (autocracies).

TABLE 2: Civilian Institutions Matter in Democracies and Autocracies

	Polity \geq 6	Polity $<$ 6
	Hazard Ratio	Hazard Ratio
Party linkages	0.159***	0.853*
Party branches	0.027***	1.850**
Party organizations	83.581***	0.502***
Legislative Party Coh	0.505*	0.717***
Candidate selection		0.959
Defense Exp Per Cap (\$ thousands)		0.890**
Inflation		1.001
GDP Per Capita		1.000
year		0.993
GDP Growth		3.028
National party control		0.929
Political Polarization		1.096
Region Fixed Effects	TRUE	TRUE
Num.Obs.	130	146
AIC	90.2	880.7
BIC	127.5	937.4
RMSE	0.25	0.81

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Note: due to the few coup attempts in democratic regimes, fewer variables were used in the Polity \geq 6 to prevent overfitting.

In democracies (Polity \geq 6), we find strong evidence that party linkages (HR = 0.159, p

< 0.01), and party branches (HR = 0.027, $p < 0.01$) are positively associated with coup risk reduction. Legislative party cohesion is also significant, with a positive relationship (HR = 0.505, $p < 0.1$) suggesting that greater cohesion within legislative parties contributes to the stability of democracies.

In autocracies (Polity < 6) party linkages (HR = 0.853, $p < 0.1$) also appear to have a positive impact on reducing coup risk. Additionally, party organizations (HR = 0.502, $p < 0.01$) and legislative party cohesion (HR = 0.717, $p < 0.01$) are negatively associated with coup risk, indicating that stronger organizations and more cohesive legislative parties in autocratic regimes can mitigate the likelihood of coup attempts.

Candidate selection, defense expenditures per capita, inflation, GDP per capita, and year were omitted in the democratic model due to the limited number of coup attempts in democracies, which necessitated the use of fewer variables to prevent overfitting. In autocracies, defense expenditures per capita (HR = 0.890, $p < 0.05$) were found to be significant, while candidate selection, inflation, GDP per capita, year, GDP growth, national party control, and political polarization were not significant.

These results emphasize the importance of civilian institutions in both democratic and autocratic regimes in mitigating coup risk. The findings suggest that strengthening these institutions can contribute to greater political stability, regardless of the regime type. By focusing primarily on the military, scholars overlook an important timing effect that was present in old democracies that achieved civilian control. The historical work on Western Europe and the U.S. credits the coevolution of the state and military as crucial to the successful subjugation of the military to civilians. The strength of civilian political institutions preceded the professionalization, and resulting institutional strength, of militaries in the developed world. During transitions to democracy in Western Europe, militaries were unprofessional and often integrated with the civilian government. There was no clear distinction between the political and the military since military and political leadership were merged and shared

a common origin and outlook (Huntington 1956). The military was the tool of European monarchs and later the civilian governments because of the oversight that governments built into the state as the military professionalized. In the U.S., the political elite was concerned with maintaining civilian supremacy and created constitutional provisions to ensure it. They sanctioned the presence of state militias that prevented the centralization of military power in a regular, standing army. The military was also drawn into political conflicts since both the Congress and President were granted power over it. The exclusion of civilian politics in discussions on the relationship between civilians and the military has resulted in an incapability of theory to explain the variation in civil-military relations in new democracies since it provides an incomplete account of how civilian control was achieved in older democracies.

Table 3 shows that systems with more diluted political power, such as parliamentary systems, are less likely to face a coup. Compared to countries with parliamentary systems, all other institutional types exhibit significantly higher hazards of coup attempts. Our findings suggest that the more political players have a place at the table, the less likely the country is to experience a coup attempt. This relationship holds across various institutional types, with all other forms of government having significantly higher hazard ratios of coup attempts compared to parliamentary systems.

TABLE 3: Cox Proportional Hazard Model: Impact of Institutional Types on Coup Attempts

DV: Coup Attempts	
	Hazard Ratio
Semi-presidentialism	2.252**
Presidentialism	2.102**
Semi-monarchy	3.686***
Single-party rule	3.608***
Multi-party authoritarian rule	3.556***
Personalist rule	3.722***
Military rule	4.083***
Absolute monarchy	4.311***
Monarchic oligarchy	4.507***
Other oligarchy	3.330***
Region Fixed Effects	TRUE
Num.Obs.	772
AIC	5529.1
BIC	5617.4
RMSE	0.74

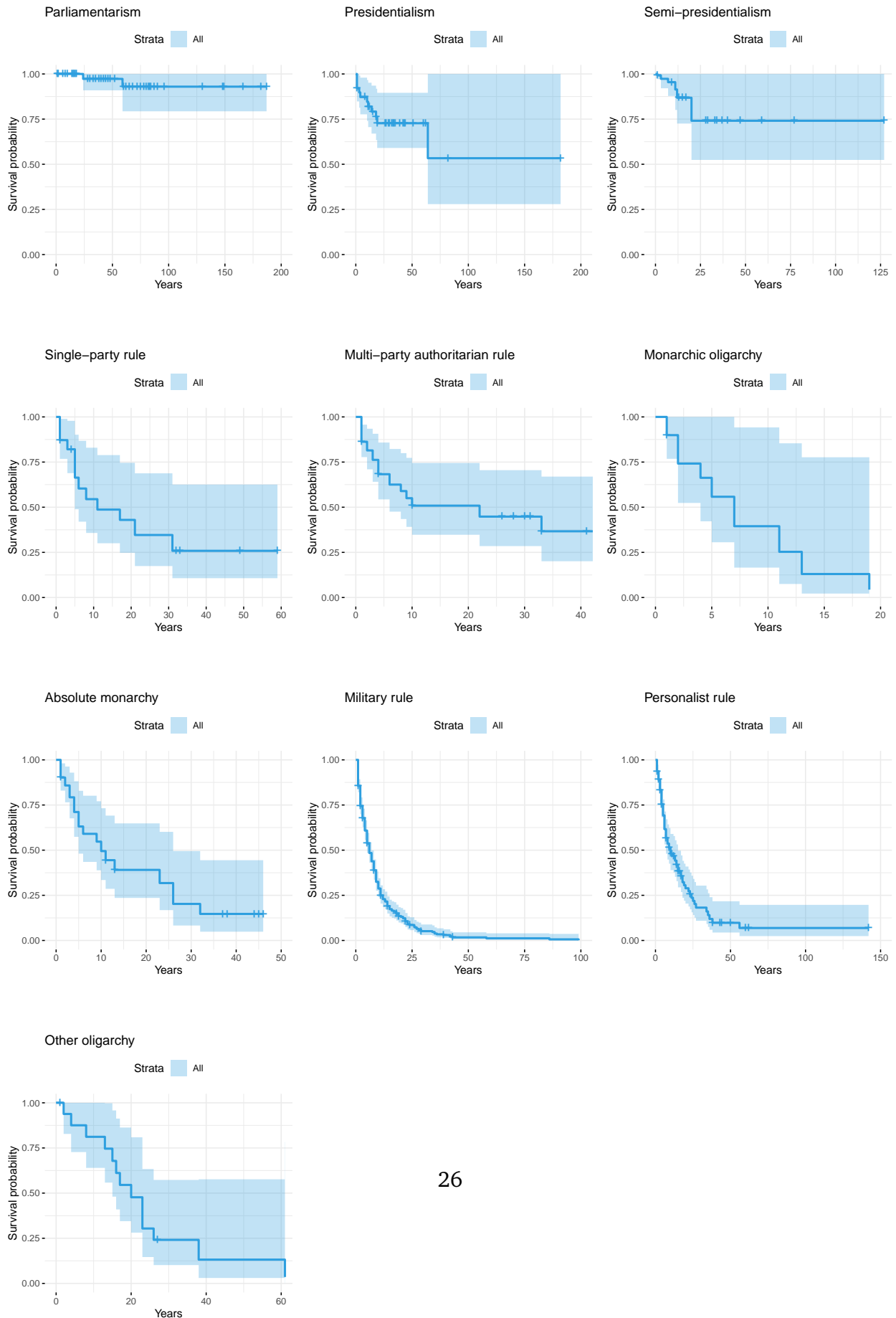
+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ Parliamentary system is the reference group.

When comparing the hazard ratios of Presidentialism, Single-party rule, Absolute monarchy, and Personalist rule, we find meaningful differences. Presidentialism has a hazard ratio of 2.102, meaning that presidential systems are 2.102 times more likely to experience a coup attempt than parliamentary systems. In contrast, Single-party rule has a hazard ratio of 3.608, indicating that countries under single-party rule are 3.608 times more likely to face a coup

attempt compared to parliamentary countries. Absolute monarchy has a hazard ratio of 4.311, which suggests that absolute monarchies are 4.311 times more likely to experience a coup attempt compared to parliamentary countries. Lastly, Personalist rule has a hazard ratio of 3.722, implying that countries under personalist rule are 3.722 times more likely to face a coup attempt than parliamentary countries.

Figure 3 shows that the likelihood of coup attempts varies significantly across different civilian institutional types. These findings imply a spectrum where more concentration of political power into a few hands results in a higher coup risk. Regimes where power is concentrated in the hands of a personalist dictator or absolute monarch have much lower odds of survival compared to other regimes. Presidential systems have greater concentration of political power compared to parliaments since their institutional design has a single executive who is not a part of the legislature. However, even here we see that the oft criticized presidential system is still more robust than a single-party or personalist regime on average. This suggests that more nuanced measures of civilian institutions should be discussed in studies on military strategies and actions.

Figure 3: Survival Plots For Regime Type



7 Conclusion

The new theoretical framework we present makes several new observations on civilian control that contradict the existing literature. We argue that strong militaries can hinder democracy in a country that has weak civilian institutions. What seems to work in older democracies can deter democratic politics in newer democracies. Our findings indicate that strong civilian institutions can better subordinate militaries and reduce the likelihood of a coup. Countries with weak militaries are also more likely to have civilian control and develop professional militaries with an ethos of noninterference.

Our findings show that stronger civilian institutions reduce the risk of a military coup. We identify several significant mechanisms and moderating factors, such as Rule of Law, Legislative Party Cohesion, Party Linkages, and Candidate Selection, that play a crucial role in mitigating coup likelihood. Moreover, the results emphasize the importance of having more political players at the table and strengthening civilian institutions to promote political stability, regardless of regime type. These insights offer valuable guidance for both policymakers and scholars as they seek to better understand the complex relationship between institutional design and political stability.

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