

# I Didn't Sign Up for This: Repression and the Fragmentation of Regime Forces

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Figure 1: Free Syrian Army Members

# Questions

- How do regime members respond to orders to repress?
- Under what conditions does it lead to regime fragmentation?
  - Coup attempts
  - Rebellions founded by regime members

# Framing

- Protests increase coup risk (Casper & Tyson 2014; Johnson & Thyne 2018)
- Coup risk deters repression (Hendrix & Salehyan 2017)
- Internal source of restraint other than democracy
- Explains large category of political violence (15% of rebel groups)

- Opportunity:
  - Coups more likely when military already mobilized
  - Exacerbates existing divisions in regime, legitimizes coup plotters
- Motive:
  - International pressure decreases private benefits
  - Incompatibility with reasons for enlisting
  - Ethnic ties to repression victims

# Hypotheses

*H1 (General): Repression increases the probability of coup attempts/regime-based rebellion*

*H2 (Motive): Positive interaction between repression and share of military w/ ethnic ties to victims*

*H3 (Opportunity): Positive interaction between repression and level of infighting amongst military factions*

# Research Design

- DV1: Coup attempts (Powell & Thyne 2011)
- DV2: Regime-based rebellion (my coding of UCDP rebel groups)
- IV1: Repression:
  - Latent Human Protection Scores (Schnakenberg and Fariss 2014)
  - NAVCO 2.0 (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013)
- IV2: % military from discriminated ethnic group
  - Security Force Ethnicity data (Johnson & Thurber 2017) + EPR (Vogt et al. 2015)
- IV3: Military infighting from PHOENIX events data (Althaus et al. 2017)

# Research Design

Controls: democracy, autocracy, military regime, log GDPpc, log population, civil war

Models: fixed-effects logistic regression w/ IVs lagged one year

Robustness: instrumental variables probit w/ youth bulge as instrument for repression



# Results

Table 1: Fixed-Effects Logit Models of the Effect of Repression on Regime Fragmentation

	(1) Coups	(2) Rebellion	(3) Coups	(4) Rebellion
Latent Protection Score	-0.50*** (0.11)	-0.94*** (0.23)		
NAVCO Repression			0.16* (0.07)	0.25 (0.14)
N	4340	2210	4340	2210

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Results

Table 2: The Effect of Military Ethnic Ties and Repression on Regime Fragmentation

	(1) Coup	(2) Coup	(3) Rebellion	(4) Rebellion
Latent Protection Score	0.06 (0.35)	-0.58* (0.29)	-1.20 (0.68)	-0.88 (0.61)
% Military Discriminated	-0.04** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.02)
Latent Protection Score $\times$ % Military Discriminated	-0.03** (0.01)		0.02 (0.02)	
N	778	778	269	269

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Results

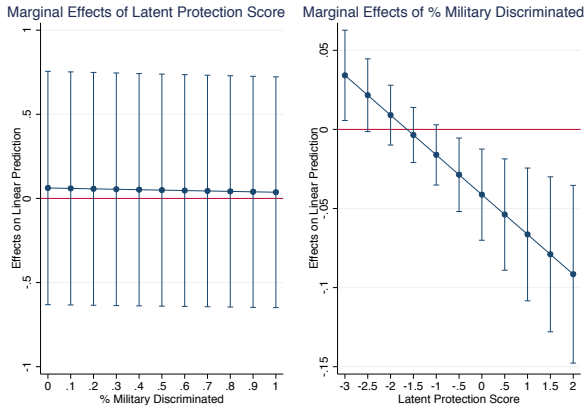


Figure 2: Marginal Effects of Repression x Military Discrimination Interaction

# Results

Table 3: The Effect of Military Infighting and Repression on Regime Fragmentation

	(1) Coup	(2) Coup	(3) Rebellion	(4) Rebellion
Latent Protection Score	-0.50*** (0.11)	-0.53*** (0.11)	-0.94*** (0.23)	-0.91*** (0.23)
Military Infighting	-0.11 (0.19)	0.09 (0.25)	-0.04 (0.40)	-0.43 (0.66)
Latent Protection Score $\times$ Military Infighting		0.22 (0.20)		-0.34 (0.44)
N	4340	4340	2210	2210

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Results

Table 4: IV Probit Models of the Effect of Repression on Regime Fragmentation

	(1) Coup	(2) Coup	(3) Regime Rebellion
Latent Protection Score	-0.30 (0.23)		-0.38 (0.30)
NAVCO Repression		1.21*** (0.31)	
Constant	1.06* (0.42)	0.68 (0.65)	-0.72 (0.43)
N	7595	7595	7595

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Summary

- Repression robustly correlated with coup attempts, less robustly with regime-based rebellion
- Some indications that relationship is causal
- Little evidence for specific mechanisms

# Conclusion

- Cases like FSA common in post-WWII era
- Repression may be key to link between protest and coups
- Many regimes have internal disincentive to torture

# Future Work

- More tests of specific mechanisms:
  - International: sanctions, military aid
  - Opportunit: spatial location of repression
- Alternative causal identification strategies
- Strategic calculations - given the risk of backlash, when/why do states repress?