

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

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Abstract

Recent high-profile examples such as the Free Syrian Army and M23 suggest that when governments violate human rights, they risk spurring resistance within their own security forces. Does repression generally lead to regime coups and rebellions originating from the regime? Under what conditions are we most likely to observe this process? I argue that when governments engage in repression, they tend to lose legitimacy at both the domestic and international levels, increasing the risk of defections from the regime. This risk should be even greater when significant numbers of soldiers share ethnic ties with the individuals being repressed, and when the military has limited centralized control over its members. Using a global sample spanning the years 1946–2013, I find robust evidence that repression is associated with an increased probability of coup attempts, and limited evidence for a link to rebel groups originating from the regime. The ethnic ties hypothesis finds more support than the military centralization prediction. The results add support to previous arguments that internal backlash provides a disincentive for governments to repress.

does it matter which group exercises what control?

Introduction

When the Arab Spring protests spread to Syria in March of 2011, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad quickly responded with forceful repression, including the torture and killing of a 13-year-old boy (MacLeod and Flamand 2011). While this brutality was presumably intended to deter threats to the regime, it arguably backfired by provoking the defection of a substantial portion of the regime military including Colonel Hussein Har-moush, who expressed a feeling of complicity in the government actions, saying that “I defected from the Syrian Arab army and took responsibility for protecting civilians... I feel like I am responsible for the deaths of every single martyr in Syria,” (Abouzeid 2011).

Riyad al-Assad, who defected from the Syrian Air to form the Free Syrian Army rebel group, similarly declared his intent to protect protestors and resist the regime military (Lister 2016). Several other contemporary rebel groups have similar origins, including M23 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the National Liberation Army in Libya, suggesting that the phenomenon could be widespread. This paper thus seeks to answer two questions. First, does the use of repression place regimes at greater risk of desertion and coups? Second, under what conditions is repression most likely to produce such outcomes?

→ abstract refers to coups AND rebellion; what is/are the outcome(s) of interest to you? This is muddled in the intro.

The fragmentation of the regime military is a key dynamic in many conflicts and potentially explains why the Arab Spring led to civil war in Syria and Libya, but not in other countries. Similar processes have occurred in numerous other cases, as original data presented herein shows that more than 15% of rebel groups since World War II have traced their origins to the regime military, and an additional 9% were founded by civilian regime officials. These rebellions have received little attention from scholars, and while some existing theories of civil war onset such as greed theory (Collier and Hoeffler 2004) could potentially account for them, many, including theories focusing on ethnic discrimination (e.g. Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010) and protest escalation (e.g. Pierskalla 2010), assume that rebellions originate outside the government. Studying these cases thus offers the possibility of enhancing our understanding of civil war onset.

Another prominent form of regime fragmentation — coups d'etat — has been the subject of much scholarship. While most of the existing literature focuses on broader structural conditions affecting coup risk, some identify a connection between protests and coup occurrence (Casper and Tyson 2014; Johnson and Thyne 2018). Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) consider the government's response to protests, finding that the possibility of regime fragmentation often deters the use of repression. Yet, fragmentation does occur, suggesting the need for further research analyzing fragmentation as a dependent variable.

Additionally, deterrence effects create the possibility of endogeneity, but existing studies have not fully corrected for this concern. This study advances the literature on coups and repression by making coups a dependent variable, by accounting for the possibility of endogeneity through the use of an instrumental variable, and by examining a wider set of cases than previous studies.

This research also contributes to the literature on human rights. Understandably, most work in this area has focused on the causes of human rights violations. Several scholars, however, have turned their attention to the consequences of human rights violations for outcomes such as foreign direct investment (Blanton and Blanton 2007) and foreign aid (Lebovic and Voeten 2009), and others have suggested that repression could provoke infighting amongst regime factions (Hendrix and Salehyan 2017). These consequences of human rights violations could offer insight to preventing abuses in the future. For example, if regime fragmentation has the potential to constrain abusive behavior (Hendrix and Salehyan 2017), disrupting the flow of private benefits to soldiers might undermine solidarity and strengthen this effect. By comparing specific mechanisms linking repression to regime fragmentation, this study offers the prospect of such policy recommendations.

*Also the lit
on repression
leading to
civil war/violence
(e.g. Poltak,
Will Moore,
Joe Young,
Emily Ritter,
Chris Sullivan,
etc.)*

I proceed with a review of the literature on regime fragmentation, including coups, rebellions, and desertion. Next, I articulate three theoretical processes that could link repression to regime fragmentation. I then specify a research design to test these propositions, and present results from fixed-effects and instrumental variables regression models. I conclude by situating the results in the broader literature, and by offering suggestions for future research.

give the reader a preview of your theory/hypotheses/findings

Prior Work on Regime Fragmentation

While some forms of political violence are often considered jointly, such as protests and civil war or civil and international war, coups d'etat are typically treated as distinct phenomena and are not considered jointly with other forms of violence.¹ Given examples

such as the Free Syrian Army, however, I argue that there is considerable overlap between coups and civil wars. Thus, I analyze coups and rebellions that originate from the regime

jointly under the umbrella term "regime fragmentation."

(I don't think I'd say these forms of violence are often analyzed jointly though maybe they should be! I'd be inclined to say civil wars and (bloody) coups are more commonly combined than most/all other forms of PV - though we don't usually acknowledge that!)

Dissent, Repression, and Coups

The literature often conceptualizes coup attempts as coordination problems among elites

Dissent (Weeks 2008; Powell 2012). Protests can potentially solve this coordination problem by

revealing the regime's ability to deter challenges (Casper and Tyson 2014; Johnson and Thyne 2018). These signals are likely to be especially influential when protests are non-violent (Johnson and Thyne 2018), occur in or near the national capital (Johnson and Thyne 2018), and are amplified by a free press (Casper and Tyson 2014). Protests can also serve as a motive for coup attempts by signaling the illegitimacy of the regime (Johnson and Thyne 2018) and enhance opportunities for successful coups by empowering the military (Svolik 2012).

While protests are associated with a statistically-significant increase in the probability of coups (Casper and Tyson 2014; Johnson and Thyne 2018), responding to protests with force is not necessarily a wise choice for regimes. Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) argue that the use of repression can cause backlash within the military, and show that this possibility deters repressive tactics, particularly when coup-risk is especially, as is the case for militaries that have previously experienced infighting, and for protests which emphasize

¹One notable exception is Roessler (2011).

Powell's work, Bell + Sudduth's work

size ethnic or religious identities. While this deterrent effect is substantial, a great deal of repression occurs nonetheless. Neither Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) nor any other study to my knowledge examines the reverse relationship assessing, in effect, whether the assumption that repression leads to regime fragmentation is correct. Furthermore, the use of repression is likely endogenous to potential reactions to its use (Ritter and Conrad 2016). The body of evidence on the relationship between repression and regime fragmentation would therefore be strengthened by analyses using causal identification techniques such as the instrumental variable analysis presented here.

Repression and Civil War

a form of dissent (re: your previous section heading)

Many scholars of political violence and human rights have examined the “repression-dissent nexus,” often focusing on the role of government repression in escalating unrest. There is widespread agreement that repression can backfire and escalate dissident activities, though the conditions under which this occurs are contested. Early work in this area disaggregated dissident activity, showing that repression reduces non-violent dissent while increasing violent opposition (Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998). Rasler (1996) emphasizes temporal dynamics, providing evidence that repression reduces dissident activity in the short-run while increasing it in the long-run. Pierskalla (2010) criticizes prior studies for their lack of attention to strategic interplay and finds that escalation should only occur in the presence of a third-party threat. The preceding findings concern primarily the qualitative character of dissent, rather than the quantitative volume. The consistency of repressive or accommodative policies (Lichbach 1987), the forcefulness of repressive tactics (Hegre et al. 2001; Pierskalla 2010), and prior history of civil conflict (Bell and Murdie 2018) have been posited as explanations for the aggregate level of dissent.

The preceding studies generally define escalation in relative terms, leaving unclear the frequency with which the violence they observe aligns with scholarly definitions of

civil war.² However, several works do focus specifically on civil war as a form of escalation. Some scholars conceptualize repression and civil war as distinct equilibria (Besley and Persson 2009; Choi and Kim 2018). The probability that repression is met by effective resistance (the civil war outcome) rather than remaining one-sided is shown to increase with the material value of winning control of the government (Besley and Persson 2009), decrease with the inclusiveness of political institutions (Besley and Persson 2009; Choi and Kim 2018), and increase with the size of the dominant ethnic group relative to the size of the minimum winning coalition (Choi and Kim 2018). Others treat repression and civil war as sequential steps in a process of escalation. In this view, repression often proves counterproductive as it decreases support for the regime (Young 2013) and increases the probability of civil war. Interestingly, this relationship does not appear to be conditional on the efficacy of repression, as effective repression increases the risk of civil war by further inflaming tensions, while ineffective repression does so by emboldening dissidents (Davenport, Armstrong II, and Lichbach, n.d.). In addition to being associated with the onset of civil conflict, repression predicts increased violence by existing rebel groups (Shellman, Levey, and Young 2013).

The studies reviewed here have consistently found a link between repression and the onset of civil conflict. However, tests of specific theoretical mechanisms have been less conclusive. A potential reason for this is that while all of the theories above assume that rebel groups emerge from non-state dissident movements, original data presented here reveals that a large number of rebellions included in commonly-used datasets are launched by members of the regime. Differences in the conditions under which repression produces these two types of rebellions could account for the inconclusive results on mechanisms observed thus far. This analysis could shed light on such a possibility.

²Such definitions typically entail a minimum threshold of severity such as 25 fatalities per calendar year, a substantial degree of organization on both sides, and some amount of competitiveness between the two sides. For a representative example, see Pettersson and Eck (2018).

So far, the disjointedness caused by moving between coups + civil war is somewhat distracting. Can you find a way to more cohesively⁶ discuss these outcomes jointly?

Theorizing Regime Fragmentation

moving back to
other forms of PV
is confusing

Prior work has demonstrated an empirical link between protests and coup onset. Repression plays a crucial, but often untested role in the accompanying theoretical models. The government's response to unrest is thought to reveal information about its strength, increasing the probability that potential coup plotters will be able to coordinate their actions (Casper and Tyson 2014; Johnson and Thyne 2018). In this view, all else equal, high levels of repression should reduce the probability of coups and rebellions by signaling that the government is strong. I argue that this approach is overly focused on the informational role of protests and coups, and overlooks the possibility that repression could alter preferences over challenging the government.

While the use of repression demonstrates a certain degree of military strength, backlash to its use can weaken the regime in a variety of ways. Belkin and Schofer (2003) argue that losing legitimacy in the eyes of the populace is a prerequisite for coups. As a government becomes more repressive, it should tend to lose legitimacy and support among citizens. It does not necessarily follow that regime opponents will experience a concomitant gain in legitimacy and popularity, particularly if they played a role in applying the repression. Nevertheless, opponents should gain strength relative to the regime as pro-government mobilization becomes less likely. The regime may also lose international support as it engages in repression. Human rights violations are often met with economic sanctions, and there is evidence that human rights practices inform consumer choices (Cao, Greenhill, and Prakash 2013). Although sanctions do not seem to be effective at deterring human rights abuses (Wood 2008), they may have dramatic consequences for internal regime politics. Many regimes maintain the loyalty of their security force by providing material benefits (Belkin and Schofer 2003; Powell 2012), often financed through non-tax revenue sources such as foreign aid and natural resource rents (Morrison 2009). If these revenue streams are disrupted in response to repression, the incentives for soldiers

Sharon Nepstad's work on defections in nonviolent conflicts would be good to engage (e.g. her 2013 JPR)

but what if the repression targets unlikely elements of society? we know there are conditions under which the public supports for example Will Moore, Sarah Croco, and coauthors have a paper on this)

to continue supporting the regime are reduced.

In short, I expect that repression and the regime's power share a paradoxical relationship. While the successful use of repression is indicative of a strong regime, it also tends to set regimes on a path toward a relative decline in power. Repression should therefore be positively related to the incidence of coups and regime-based rebellions.

H1a: Repression increases the probability of coups H1b: Repression increases the probability of regime rebellion

Ethnic Ties

* Again, can you come up with a way to discuss these jointly (your "regime fractionalization" term, perhaps)? If not, perhaps they require distinct theories? Why coup and not regime rebellion, and vice versa?

Ethnicity and religion are the most influential ordering principles in many societies worldwide (Robinson 2014), shaping aspects of life ranging from fundamental tasks such as local-level collective action (Habyarimana et al. 2007) to broad political patterns such as party preference (Wantchekon 2003). Identity has often been the basis for protests (Jazayeri 2016; Salehyan and Stewart 2017) and violent conflict between societal groups and the state (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013). This creates many opportunities for repression, which might be an especially likely response when a state faces multiple potential identity-based challenges (Walter 2006).

Soldiers should be especially likely to rebel against the regime when asked to repress members of their own ethnic group. Evidence suggests that unusually dense network ties between members are a key reason for the unique role that ethnic groups often play in politics (Habyarimana et al. 2007). Thus, soldiers may have some degree of social connection to the co-ethnic targets of repression, which might reduce their inclination to carry out orders, and may lead them to leave their posts to defend their families or communities. Even in the absence of direct social ties, orders to target co-ethnics may give soldiers pause because ethnic groups are often defined in part by a sense of "linked fate"

why? Any existing work arguing this you can cite, or case examples?

(Kuran 1998). Soldiers may fear that a repressive campaign against dissident members of their ethnic group could eventually turn against them. Ethnic identity has been shown to be malleable in response to the political climate (Eifert, Miguel, and Posner 2010), meaning that even if soldiers did not identify strongly with their ethnic group previously, they may begin to do so in response to the repression of co-ethnics.

The preceding logic suggests that the risk of coups and rebellions from the regime should increase with the proportion of the military that shares a common identity with the individuals being targeted with repression. I expect this effect to increase with the severity of repression. Thus, I hypothesize an interaction effect between the level of repression and the extent of ethnic ties between the military and the repressed.

H2: *There is a positive interaction between the level of repression and the share of the military with ethnic ties to the repressed*

One of the most commonly-cited categories of explanation for coups is the degree of organizational control within the military. Unsuccessful coup plotters tend to be punished harshly. The probability of coup attempts should therefore decrease as the regime's ability to withstand challenges and apprehend participants increases? Militaries with high levels of command and control may even be able to prevent coup attempts altogether by disrupting the ability of dissatisfied members to coordinate. There is some disagreement about the conditions under which militaries achieve such control. Belkin and Schofer (2003) view the fragmentation of the military into multiple branches or factions as an effective form of coup-proofing, as it reduces the likelihood of successful coordination amongst a wide swath of the military, while Powell (2012) finds that most measures of factionalism are not significant predictors of coups. One reason for this discrepancy appears to be that not all intra-military divisions are created equal, as Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) find indirect

ON RISK OF COUP/REBELLION.
Reword your hypotheses to make that more explicit.

evidence that infighting between military factions increases the risk of coups. Building on their work, I expect that manifest disunity within the military in the form of infighting should amplify the effect of repression. This should be observable as a statistically significant interaction effect between repression and the occurrence of conflict within the military.

H3: There is a positive interaction between the level of repression and the level of infighting amongst military factions

Again, where are coups/rebellion?

Research Design

An underlying question in this analysis is whether the regime fragmentation observed during the Arab Spring was unique to that historical process, or something that has occurred frequently throughout time and space. A cross-national quantitative analysis that tests for such outcomes in a large sample is therefore a logical choice. While highly disaggregated analyses of political violence are increasingly common and often facilitate nuanced tests of theoretical mechanisms (e.g. Hendrix and Salehyan 2017), the datasets conducive to this sort of research tend to have limited spatial and temporal coverage. I thus elect to conduct my analysis at the country-year level, with a sample covering the entire world over the period 1946-2017. This provides an initial set of 10,713 cases, though due to missing data the number used in most analyses is slightly lower.

Dependent Variables

Coup Attempt One form of regime fragmentation is coups d'etat. As I am primarily interested in the conditions under which members of the military possess a desire to effect change, I analyze coup attempts rather than coup success, which depends on a set of somewhat unrelated factors (Powell 2012). The dataset comes Powell and Thyne (2011), who

↑
like what? Seems like that could be v. useful in helping to develop theory for coups "vs." rebellion" as you call them

what does this entail (- isn't that just like having a coup/mil. faction/rebel group?)
Give an example of two of what you mean by infighting
(and/or better yet formally define it)

define a coup as an “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive,” (Powell and Thyne 2011, 252). As coup attempts often cluster in space and time, I convert the coup list to a binary indicator that is equal to 1 for country-years in which a coup was attempted, and 0 otherwise. This yields 407 country-years with coup attempts.

does this include bloodless AND bloody Coups (that may qualify as Civil wars)?

Regime-Based Rebellion Some instances of regime fragmentation are not included in most coup datasets because they do not work through the state apparatus. For example, members of the Syrian Air Force turned against the Assad regime in 2011, but opted to form a rebel group (the Free Syrian Army) rather than operate through their roles within the state. I call this phenomenon “regime-based rebellion,” and collect original data to measure it. I begin with a list of the rebel groups which appear in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s Dyadic Dataset (version 18.1) (Pettersson and Eck 2018). Inclusion in the dataset requires that a rebel group was involved in fighting that produced at least 25 fatalities in at least one calendar year between 1946 and 2017. I then code the societal origin of the rebel group using a variety of primary and secondary sources. In cases of limited information, coding decisions are based on the previous roles of the rebel group’s leader(s).

Many rebel groups draw membership from multiple societal groups; in the present analysis I use only the origin that I deem to be the largest contributor of personnel. I code a rebel group as originating from the regime military if its membership is drawn primarily from individuals who were most recently employed by any branch of the regime security forces. Rebels who previously held civilian roles within the government are not included in the category.³ From these codings I construct a binary indicator for country-years in which a regime-based rebel group was formed. This is the case in 71 country-years. As many opposition movements employ a diversity of tactics, these overlap substantially with the coup variable - 46 of the country-years with a regime-based rebellion also have a coup.

³For complete coding rules, see Bowden (2017).

how do you determine what qualifies as “primarily”?

w/ Sirianni Dahlum's work, or something else? More info would be useful.

Independent Variables

Latent Protection Score I use two alternative measures to capture the concept of repression. The first is Latent Human Protection scores, version 2 (Fariss 2014; Schnakenberg and Fariss 2014). Most human rights datasets are derived from news coverage, creating the possibility for bias as the depth of coverage and standards against which human rights practices are evaluated might vary across space and time. To solve this, the authors combine thirteen of the most prominent scholarly human rights datasets in a Bayesian measurement model. This produces an estimate for each country-year based on a mix of the data for that particular year and the average score for that country and year. The absolute values of the measure are not inherently meaningful, but range from roughly -3.1 (most repressive) to 4.7 (most respectful of human rights). Examples of cases towards the more repressive end of the spectrum include Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which had a score averaging around -2.5, and Sudan, which had scores around -3.0 during the genocide in Darfur.

NAVCO Repression The Latent Protection Scores are a useful measure of the general state of human rights in a given country-year, but by design smooth over temporary fluctuations in repression levels. To compensate for this blind spot, I include a direct measure of the repression of specific protests campaigns from the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) dataset (version 2.0) (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013a, 2013b). The dataset includes all known instances of sustained, purposive campaigns against a government or occupying force between 1946 and 2013. I utilize the "repression" variable, which codes the government response to a campaign on a four-point scale ranging from 0 (not repressive) to 3 (extreme repression). When multiple campaigns occur within a single country-year, I use the most repressive action observed.

Percentage of Military from Discriminated Ethnic Groups To test Hypothesis 2 I construct a measure from the Security Forces Ethnicity (SFE) Dataset (version 1.0) (Johnson and Thurber 2017). The SFE data measures the ethnic composition of security forces in the

Middle East, 1946–2013, providing approximate ethnic breakdowns of both the officer corps and rank-and-file. I combine this data with the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) Core Dataset 2018 (Vogt et al. 2015), which codes the political status of each ethnic group worldwide, 1946–2017. I then construct a measure of the percentage of the rank-and-file membership that belong to an ethnic group facing discrimination (the “Discriminated” or “Powerless”) codings on the “status” variable.

(I seem to recall someone constructing something similar for African militaries.. not sure, though.
Sorry!
Can't
recall
who (if
anyone)
did this.)

Military Infighting To test *Hypothesis 3* I include a binary indicator of whether conflict between military factions has occurred. The measure is constructed from the Historical Phoenix Event Data (version 1.0.0) (Althaus et al. 2017). Phoenix compiles political events through automated coding of news articles, recording the actors involved and classifying the event on the CAMEO events data coding scheme. I code the indicator as 1 for country-years in which there was at least one violent conflict between two actors associated with the government military.

Control Variables

(How)are these events distinct/distinguished from your coup DV?

As coups have been shown to be most prevalent in relatively poor states (Londregan and Poole 1990), I include the per capita gross domestic product and population using data from Gleditsch (2002) (version 6.0 beta) for the period 1950–2011. Both measures are logged. Following Johnson and Thyne (2018) I include binary indicators for autocratic and democratic regimes (leaving anocracy as the residual category) using data from the Polity IV project (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2016), and a binary indicator for military regimes using from the Autocratic Regime Data (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). Lastly, I control for ongoing civil conflicts, including all conflicts producing at least 25 fatalities in a calendar year as reported by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Armed Conflict Data (Pettersson and Eck 2018).

Model

As both dependent variables are binary, I estimate panel logistic regression models. Because I am primarily interested in the effect of changes within countries, I use a fixed-effects estimator. To help ensure that the explanatory variables cause regime fragmentation rather than the reverse, all independent variables and controls are lagged by one year. For robustness I estimate instrumental variables probit models, discussed in detail below.

Results

Results for *Hypotheses 1a* and *1b* are presented in Table 1. Consistent with my predictions, repression generally predicts the onset of coups and regime-based rebellions. Model 1 uses the *Latent Human Protection Score* to measure repression, with coup attempt as the dependent variable. Higher values of the protection score signify *greater* levels of respect for human rights; I thus expect a negative relationship between this variable and coups. Indeed, the measure has a negative relationship with coup probability that is statistically significant at the 99.9% level. The effect is substantively large, as a one-unit decrease in the *Latent Protection Score* (for reference, this was roughly the difference between Israel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2013) increases the probability of a coup by 64.8%. Model 2 shows the relationship between *Latent Protection Score* and the onset of regime-based rebellion. Once again consistent with my prediction, the relationship is negative and statistically significant. The substantive effect is even larger, with a one-unit decrease in the protection score increasing the probability of rebellion by 156%. The number of observations decreases by more than half for the regime rebellion dependent variable, as many countries never experience the phenomenon and fixed-effects estimation requires variation on the dependent variable.

The effects of the NAVCO *Repression* variable are reported in Models 3 and 4. In this

cases higher values are associated with greater levels of repression, meaning that I would expect a positive coefficient. The result for coup attempts is consistent with my prediction, as *NAVCO Repression* has a positive coefficient that is statistically significant at the 95% level. The effect size is modest in comparison to that of *Latent Protection Score*, as a one-unit increase in repression (for example, movement from “moderate” to “extreme” repression) increases the probability of a coup by 17.4%. *NAVCO Repression* is not significantly related to regime-based rebellion. On the whole, these results suggest strong support for Hypotheses 1a and 1b — repression is a strong predictor of regime fragmentation, manifest in both coup attempts and rebellions originating from the regime.

so this DV is coded for both situations in which no rebellion occurred AND when non-regime rebellion occurred?

I don't know that you can make this claim given the findings using the NAVCO repression measure esp. re: H1b.

Table 1: Panel Logit Models of the Effect of Repression on Regime Fragmentation

	(1) Coup	(2) Regime Rebellion	(3) Coup	(4) Regime Rebellion
Latent Protection Score	-0.50*** (0.11)	-0.94*** (0.23)		
NAVCO Repression			0.16* (0.07)	0.25 (0.14)
Autocracy	-0.65*** (0.15)	-0.85** (0.33)	-0.52*** (0.15)	-0.58 (0.32)
Democracy	-0.24 (0.20)	-0.19 (0.48)	-0.31 (0.20)	-0.37 (0.48)
Military Regime	0.33 (0.18)	0.17 (0.46)	0.37* (0.18)	0.34 (0.45)
log GDPpc	-0.24 (0.17)	0.08 (0.40)	-0.30 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.38)
log Population	-1.54*** (0.18)	-1.01* (0.40)	-1.35*** (0.17)	-0.58 (0.36)
Civil Conflict	0.22 (0.19)	-0.98* (0.42)	0.32 (0.20)	-0.67 (0.45)
N	4340	2210	4340	2210

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

Results for $H2$ are presented in Table 2. The first column reveals a statistically significant interaction between *Latent Protection Score* and % *Military Discriminated*. The

marginal effects plotted in Figure 1 reveal how the variables affect each other. *Latent Protection Score* is virtually unaffected by the level of % *Military Discriminated*, having a consistent, slightly positive effect on coup probability. This pattern contradicts my expectations (recall that higher levels of the measure equate to *less* repression). The effect of % *Military Discriminated*, however, is highly conditional on the level of *Latent Protection Score*. At the most repressive end of the scale, the share of the military that belongs to a marginalized ethnic group is positively related to the probability of a coup. At the least repressive end of the spectrum, however, discrimination of ethnic groups well-represented in the military is *negatively* related to the probability of coups. One interpretation of these result is that the violent repression of co-ethnics induces soldiers to turn against the regime, while non-violent forms of discrimination do not. It may also be the case that the different repressive strategies (violent vs. non-violent) correlate with a confounding factor such as coup-proofing efforts. The former explanation would be consistent with my theoretical framework, while the latter likely would not be. The % *Military Discriminated* measure is not statistically significant in a simple additive model, and neither the interactive nor the additive effect is significantly related to regime-based rebellion.

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

	(1) Coup	(2) Coup	(3) Regime Rebellion	(4) Regime 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)
Autocracy	-0.78 (0.41)	-0.53 (0.40)	1.22 (1.33)	0.69 (1.10)
Democracy	-0.35 (0.60)	-0.21 (0.62)		
Military Regime	-0.79 (0.57)	-0.66 (0.57)	-0.59 (1.47)	-0.42 (1.36)
log GDPpc	-0.07 (0.41)	-0.06 (0.39)	0.67 (1.11)	0.40 (1.08)
log Population	-1.74*** (0.47)	-1.74*** (0.44)	-0.89 (1.31)	-0.53 (1.18)
Civil Conflict	-0.34 (0.45)	-0.04 (0.43)	-1.05 (0.95)	-1.20 (0.90)
Latent Protection Score × % Military Discriminated	-0.03** (0.01)		0.02 (0.02)	
N	778	778	269	269

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

This is only for the Middle East, right? Remind the reader of that, and consider whether

The results for H3 are presented in Table 3. The interaction of *Military Infighting* and *Latent Protection Score* is significant for neither coup attempts nor regime-based rebellions. The infighting measure is also not significant in the additive models. In fact, the only noteworthy result in Table 3 is that the effect of *Latent Protection Score* is robust to the inclusion of the *Military Infighting* measure.

↑
especially given the lack of significance for this infighting measure, why not use a more traditional measure like counter balancing?

there might be some region-specific dynamics at play here making this not fit your theory.

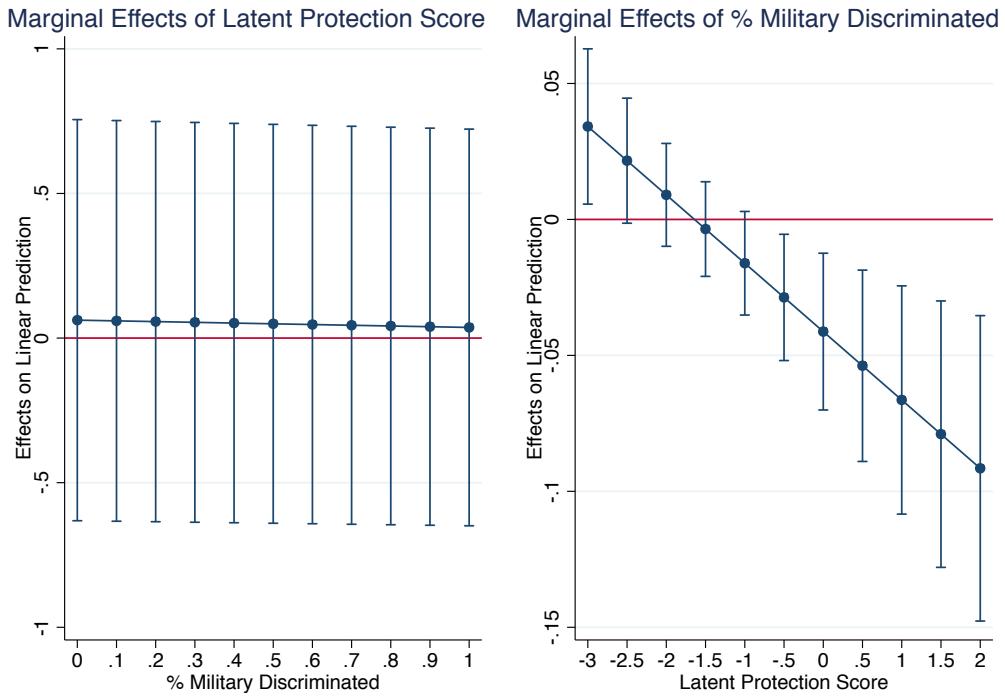


Figure 1: Marginal Effects of Repression x Military Discrimination Interaction

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Coup	Coup	Regime Rebellion	Regime 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)
Autocracy	-0.65*** (0.15)	-0.65*** (0.15)	-0.85** (0.33)	-0.86** (0.33)
Democracy	-0.25 (0.20)	-0.25 (0.20)	-0.19 (0.48)	-0.18 (0.48)
Military Regime	0.33 (0.18)	0.33 (0.18)	0.17 (0.46)	0.17 (0.46)
log GDPpc	-0.24 (0.17)	-0.25 (0.17)	0.08 (0.40)	0.10 (0.40)
log Population	-1.53*** (0.18)	-1.52*** (0.18)	-1.01* (0.41)	-1.02* (0.41)
Civil Conflict	0.23 (0.19)	0.24 (0.19)	-0.97* (0.42)	-1.00* (0.43)
Latent Protection Score × Military Infighting		0.22 (0.20)		-0.34 (0.44)
N	4340	4340	2210	2210

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

Causal Inference

The results presented thus far are consistent with $H1a$ and $H1b$, but face a notable shortcoming — a government's decision to repress or not may be endogenous to the potential consequences of repression. Indeed, Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) argue that the risk of internal backlash deters repression. Instrumental variables have been established as an effective means of correcting for such bias (Ritter and Conrad 2016). Valid instruments are often difficult to find, as they must be strong predictors of the endogenous variable (repression in this case), but cannot be related to the dependent variable except through the effects of the endogenous variable. One variable that may satisfy both requirements is the "youth bulge" measure originally proposed by Urdal (2006). Youth bulges are a national-level demographic attribute defined as the ratio of 15-24 year-olds relative to the adult population. In a meta analysis Hill and Jones (2014) show that the youth bulge is among the strongest predictors of repression in the literature, satisfying the first requirement of an instrument. It is less clear whether youth bulges meet the second requirement (the exclusion restriction). On one hand Urdal (2006) finds that youth bulges are strongly associated with political violence. On the other hand, the theoretical mechanisms he outlines emphasize challenges that originate outside the state, motivated by resource shortages.

We should not necessarily expect, then, that youth bulges would have a direct effect on defection from the regime. I thus proceed to utilize the measure as an instrument in a two-stage probit model.

Just to play devil's advocate: Opportunistic joiners - only in the military b/c they need \$/job and that's harder to come by w/ more youth competing for employment? Don't actually have loyalty to regime, being more willing to defect?

*where's the first stage?
(it) also be good to report test statistics
about whether youth bulges are empirically appropriate IV.*

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)	
Autocracy	-0.34*** (0.09)	-0.12 (0.16)	-0.19 (0.13)
Democracy	-0.24 (0.19)	-0.17 (0.23)	-0.14 (0.31)
Military Regime	0.52*** (0.12)	-0.21 (0.45)	0.16 (0.17)
log GDPpc	-0.16 (0.09)	-0.03 (0.15)	-0.11 (0.09)
log Population	-0.15* (0.06)	-0.14*** (0.04)	-0.08 (0.08)
Civil Conflict	-0.11 (0.26)	-1.81** (0.61)	-0.32 (0.36)
Constant	1.06* (0.42)	0.68 (0.65)	-0.72 (0.43)
N	7595	7595	7595

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

*Where's a model
for rebellion
w/NAVCO regression?*

The results of the instrumental variables analysis are presented in Table 4. In the first and third models, the youth bulge measure is used to instrument for *Latent Protection Score*. The statistically significant relationship exhibited by the direct disappears after instrumenting. When instrumenting for the *NAVCO Repression* measure, however, the relationship remains statistically significant and is larger, substantively than in the conventional regression.⁴ The instrumental variables analysis thus produces ambiguous results. One explanation is that by including a wide variety of data sources, the *Latent Protection Scores* capture information that is endogenous to the dependent variables studied here. It may even be the case that coups are factoring into the scores directly, though it is not clear through which underlying dataset this would occur. The *NAVCO* measure, by contrast, is more narrowly focused on the repression of non-state political movements, and thus less

⁴It was not possible to obtain estimates for the regime rebellion dependent variable.

beset by the concerns.

Conclusion

Anecdotally, repression seems to engender backlash and increase the risk of regime fragmentation. The evidence presented here suggests that cases like the Free Syrian Army and M23 are not rare. Repression is robustly related to coup attempts, and there is some evidence to suggest that it is an important cause of rebellions originating from the regime. The search for specific mechanisms found limited success, but it does appear that the combination of high levels of repression and ethnic ties between members of the military and the individuals being repressed increases coup risk.

These results have two important implications for the existing literature. First, they lend support to the argument of Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) that regimes face potential internal backlash over the use of repression. However, this study also shows that repression and subsequent fragmentation frequently do occur. Thus, the deterrence effect proposed by Hendrix and Salehyan (2017) is not perfectly effective, leaving a need for further research on the conditions under which repression does and does not provoke a backlash. These findings also have implications for the coup literature. Theories of coups often assume they are opportunistic and motivated by material greed. While there could be a material link between repression and regime fragmentation (see the discussion in the theory section regarding non-tax revenue), the finding that repression strongly predicts coups could also suggest that coups are guided by more ideational and moral concerns than previously recognized.

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