Military Coups, Regime Change, and Democratization

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Abstract: When do military coups in authoritarian regimes promote democratization? This paper uses original data on coup attempts in authoritarian regimes from 1960-2010 which distinguish between whether the coup plotters sought to reshuffle leadership within the regime or install a new regime. Contrary to the traditional view that coups never promote democracy and recent studies which suggest that all kinds of coup activity promote democracy, I hypothesize that only certain kinds of coups under certain kinds of authoritarian rule likely promote democratic change. Consistent with expectations, I find that successful regime change coups, at least in personalist regimes, boost chances of a democratic transition both during and after the Cold War, but that successful leader reshuffling coups only do so after the Cold War. In addition, I find that failed regime change coups have almost no democratizing effects, but failed leader reshuffling coups in liberalizing regimes (veto coups) often do. The paper is the first to systematically show how the identity and preferences of coup leaders affect prospects for post-coup democratic trajectories.

Keywords: coup d’état, authoritarian politics, regime change, democratization

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But never in the postwar period did a military insurrection or violent coup extend freedom to the people in whose name power was taken.
-Ackerman and DuVall (2000, 459), A Force More Powerful

Conventional wisdom holds military coups to be anti-democratic by their very nature as well as in their political effects. For example, in their acclaimed book on the Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, 66) go so far as to use the term “coup” as a short-hand to describe all transitions from democracy to non-democracy. Although devoting an entire chapter modeling the relationship between coups and democratic breakdown (chapter 7, 221-253), Acemoglu and Robinson expend very little effort to model the relationship between coups and authoritarian breakdown. This paper develops just such a theoretical model, which addresses the following key questions: which military coups in autocratic regimes subvert or promote prospects for democracy, and what structural conditions favor democratizing coups? My explanation centers on the importance of the preferences of the regime leader (dictator), the size and structure of the military, and the relative strength of his support coalition in the military.

To identify which coups are most likely to foster authoritarian breakdown and democracy, I employ original data on all coup attempts from 1960-2010; in contrast to prior data that has treated military coups as homogenous phenomena, this new data distinguishes whether the coup leaders sought leadership change and personal power within an incumbent regime or sought to install a new regime. By empirically distinguishing different types of coups and theorizing their effects on political stability and democratization, this paper speaks to disparate literatures on authoritarian politics, civil-military relations, and democratic transitions. To my knowledge, this is the first paper to systematically exploit basic variation in the identity and preferences of coup leaders themselves to explain why some coup attempts promote and others subvert democracy.
The paper proceeds as follows. First, I briefly review the literature on military coups and democratization. Next, I introduce a typology of military coups, and thirdly, theorize about the effects of each type on a state’s democratic trajectory. Fourth, I present an empirical strategy for assessing the potential independent effect of military coups on democratic transitions, which involves estimating a two-stage model of military coups (in the first stage) and democratization (in the second stage). I also describe my data. Fifth, I present my main empirical results and a series of robustness checks. Sixth, I build on the statistical findings by presenting brief cases of reshuffling and regime change coups which highlight key dynamics. The final section concludes.

I. Coups and Democratization: A Review of the Literature

Leaders matter crucially for whether or not countries are likely to transition to democracy, as almost all democratic transitions entail the replacement of a dictator rather than the reform and continued rule of previous dictators legitimized by free and fair competitive elections. In fact, of all 87 democratic transitions from 1949 to 2004 that are identified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) for which we have Archigos leader data (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009), a whopping 85 transitions resulted in leader change; only two entailed leader continuity.¹ Thus, a successful democratic transition requires either (a) a leader that voluntarily leaves office, because they or their supporters have democratic preferences or they have no choice politically or, or (b) an incumbent dictator and support coalition that opposes democratization must be forcibly removed from office and replaced with new leaders that are supportive of a democratic transition.

¹ The only two leaders of autocratic regimes who survived free and fair democratic elections by this measure were Adolfo Suarez of Spain in 1977 and Orchibat of Mongolia in 1993. Of course, many dictators may win elections that fall short of democratic standards; in other cases, affiliated leaders are able to succeed deposed autocrats, as when Chun Doo Hwan was forced from power but his lieutenant Roh Tae Woo won the first elections in 1987 because of a split ticket by the opposition leaders Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung. Finally, dictators may return to office as a democrat after being removed from power earlier. More leader continuity would be coded if we relied on a broader coding of democracy. If one dated Taiwan’s democratization to 1996, for example, instead of 2000, one could argue that Lee Tung-hui led the KMT to continued rule under democracy. Thanks to Michael Coppedge for highlighting the importance of leader replacement for democratization as opposed to rarer cases of leader-led democratization.
However, most large-N studies that consider political violence and instability as a sign of regime weakness and precursor of democratization tend to lump together all “irregular” leader exits or political unrest (e.g. Miller 2012, 1002), whether or not that unrest or leader removal was carried out by regime outsiders (e.g. foreign installation, rebel insurgency, assassination, or mass protests) or by regime insiders (e.g. a military coup). In practice, democratization scholars have given more attention to mass mobilization such that it is now common to control for contentious collective action (e.g. Ulfelder 2005). However, Svolik (2012) has persuasively argued that the control of regime outsiders is but one fundamental problem of authoritarian politics. Historically, dictators have been much more threatened by regime insiders and thus pre-occupied with the problem of authoritarian power-sharing. The leading cause of the “irregular” or unconstitutional ouster of authoritarian leaders has, in fact, been a military coup d’état, which accounts for three-fifths to three-quarters of all autocratic leader exits.\(^2\) Given the importance of military coups for the survival of dictators, it is surprising that few scholars have examined how coups affect democratic transitions, as opposed to their much-studied impact on democratic consolidation.\(^3\)

The vast majority of studies on military coup attempts to this day remain concerned with their causes and with the determinants of their success (e.g. Belkin and Schofer 2003, Powell

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\(^2\) Svolik data on leaders and regimes indicate that coups in general account for 68% of unconstitutional exits since 1946, with military participation in some 86% of these cases, which implies a figure of about 58%. Archigos leader data similarly indicates that about two-thirds (117 of 199) of leader exits during authoritarian regimes since 1949 (as coded by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) were carried out by a military coup. Original data compiled by this author and colleagues on military coups (described more below in the body of the paper) implies that 121 of 169 irregular leader exits from 1960-2004 have been the result of a military coup, with the remainder by other irregular means including non-military coups, assassinations, rebellions, assassinations, and the threat or use of foreign force.

\(^3\) Much of the classical literature on military coups, which peaked from the 1960s to 1980s, was carried out by area specialists interested in the explaining the causes of “military intervention” in the developing world and the origins of military regimes, particularly in Latin America (e.g. Needler 1966, Putnam 1967, McAlister, Maingot, and Potash 1970, Lowenthal 1974), Africa (e.g. First 1970, Welch 1970, Decalo 1976), and the Middle East (e.g. Be’eri 1970, Hurewitz 1969). This literature waned with the onset of the third wave of democratization. Thus, the operative assumption in this early literature is that military coups are subversive of “objective control” under democratic civil-military relations. For several influential classic statements on military politics in the developing world, see Finer (1976), Nordlinger (1977) and Perlmutter (1977). Any democratic effects of coups were neglected in this literature.
The “transitions” literature held that military intervention was an obstacle to democracy and military actors are key veto players, not facilitators, of democratic transitions.\textsuperscript{4} This is why Huntington (1991, 3-4) called the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974 an implausible and unwitting beginning of the third wave of democracy. However, using coup data first reported in Powell and Thyne (2011), Thyne and Powell (2014) found empirically that since 1950, \textit{ceteris paribus}, both successful and failed coup d’états significantly promote democratic transitions within a few years, especially in those countries that were least likely to democratize otherwise (based on pre-coup polity scores and executive tenure).\textsuperscript{5} Marinov and Goemans (2014) emphasize that coups have had more democratic effects after the Cold War, especially among aid dependent countries, who could no longer play the Soviet Union and U.S. off against one another.

However, existing literature gives very little guidance on which coups are likely to be “democratic coups.” Because of the co-incidence of military coups in such prominent cases of nonviolent revolutions, some scholars such as Varol (2012) have argued that persistent popular opposition to the authoritarian regime is a prerequisite for a democratic coup d’état. But how often do coups promote democracy absent massive popular mobilization? We still don’t know.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{4} O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986, 69), in their influential edited volume, for example, cast the armed forces as a veto player. Drawing an analogy to chess, they call the armed forces a regime’s “Queen” which defends the “King”, or the “property rights of the bourgeoisie”, such that for a transition to succeed the military’s “institutional existence, assets, and hierarchy cannot be eliminated or even seriously threatened. If the armed forces are threatened, they may simply sweep their opponents off the board or kick it over and start playing solitaire.” Nothing in this analogy would allow for a Queen to attack their own King and empower the pawns to take power.

\textsuperscript{5} Powell (2014) also found that from 1952-2012 coups improved the odds that an African country transitions to democracy, \textit{ceteris paribus}. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Bratton and Van de Walle (1997, 211) found that of 13 cases of military intervention between 1989 and 1994, militaries took pro-democratic actions in seven cases that resulted in freely elected governments rather than act as a guardian of the ancien regime (Benin, Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, and South Africa). Bratton and Van de Walle (1997, 217) concluded, “as went the military, so went the transition”. Varol (2012) credits coups with promoting democracy in Turkey in 1960, Portugal in 1974, and (perhaps prematurely) Egypt in 2011. Scholars like Miller (2011) still question whether coups promote democracy.

\textsuperscript{6} Yashar (1997, 16-19) long ago observed casually that coup attempts “have effected a change of regime from one (form of) authoritarianism to another, but they have rarely led toward democracy in the absence of mobilized and mobilizable coalition partners”. Although several recent studies examine the causes and consequences of “military quartering” during mass uprisings (e.g. Lee 2014, Pion-Berlin, Esparza, and Grisham 2014), to my knowledge no large-N test of the proposition that mass mobilization promotes the democratizing potential of coups has been done.
II. Regime Change, Leader Change, and the Varieties of Coups

In contrast to earlier studies, I theorize about how the identity and preferences of coup leaders affects whether a coup promotes democracy or not. To generate hypotheses about which coups are likely to promote or hinder democracy, I draw on the novel distinction identified by Frantz and Ezrow (2011, 17) and Aksoy, Carter, and Wright (2015) between two kinds of coups: leader reshuffling coups that may perpetuate an authoritarian regime and regime change coups that oust authoritarian regimes to install a new one. By our definition, all coups entail a concrete and observable action by at least one member of the regime’s current military or security apparatus to unseat and replace the incumbent regime leader using unconstitutional means. Although all successful coups result in leadership change, only some result in regime change.

Following Geddes et al. (2014), a regime is “a set of formal and/or informal rules for choosing leaders and policies”, where the identity of the group of elites from whom leaders can be chosen is a key rule. In a military regime, a group of senior officers decides who rules and exercises policy influence. In a civilian or party-based regime, ruling political parties dominate access to political office. By contrast, in personalist regimes, the dictator himself wields control over decision-making and the military and ruling party lack independent authority (Geddes 2003, 51). In a monarchical regime, power resides in the royal family and with the King, and rules of succession determine who in the royal family may legitimately accede to the throne. Whereas the “selectorate” is small and a ruler’s “winning coalition” in a dictatorship is often restricted to a small set of elites within the regime (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), institutions in a democratic regime empower a majority of the voting age population to have a voice in selecting their leaders.

Regime change coups result in the toppling of one regime and establishment of another. Such coups are usually led by regime outsiders; they result in extensive changes in the political
system that replace one group of elites with another and change the formal or informal rules for leader selection. Regime change coups against monarchies and party-based regimes most often result in transitions to military or personal regimes. And in a third to half of regime change coups against military or personal regimes since 1960, one military regime led by senior officers was replaced by a regime led by junior officers, or one personalist regime was replaced by another. In regime change coups, the “soldier as reformer” may have a radical political program or represent a previously disenfranchised socio-economic class (Huntington 1968, 198-208) or ethnic group.

**Leader Reshuffling coups**, by contrast, are led by regime insiders, who seek to preserve their own power within the regime. Rather than conflict over institutions, personal ambition and factionalism within the ruling elite lie at the heart of such coups; policy disputes over means predominate, not disputes over fundamental ends (e.g. communist ideology, representation of a landed elite, etc.). Thus, when one general takes power from another general in a military regime, or a prince seizes power in a palace coup, but this leads to no other major change in the regime, this can be considered a more limited leader change rather than a more sweeping regime change. Rather than overthrowing the regime, such coups may also seek to strengthen or reinforce the regime by getting rid of (perceived) incompetent leaders or preventing the entry of new elites (Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015). In such instances, reshuffling coups are “veto coups” carried out by the conservative “soldier as guardian” of the existing order (Huntington 1968, 219-237).

**Anti-democratic coups**, meanwhile, are a special and theoretically distinct set of regime change coups. Whereas coups against dictators may or may not entail a transition to a different authoritarian regime or to democracy, a successful coup against a democratic regime always results in the initiation of a new autocratic regime and never the initiation of a democratic regime. However, it is possible that even anti-democratic coups contain the seeds of re-democratization.
This might be the case because residual support for democracy within civil society (and also the military) may deprive the new autocratic regime of legitimacy, making it difficult to keep power. For example, the 1953 anti-democratic military coup by Colombian army commander Lt. Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla that deposed President Laureano Gómez was set against a long history of civilian rule. Although intervention initially was seen as necessary given the outbreak of rural violence and party strife, military rule was from the outset always seen as a temporary solution. When Rojas tried to secure a second four year term for himself, a Liberal-Conservative civilian alliance and business elites supported a May 1957 leader reshuffling coup by senior officers that forced Rojas to appoint a junta headed by General Gabriel Paris Gordillo (Hudson 2010, 44-45), which immediately set about supervising a return to civilian rule by 1958 (Premo 1992, 103-104).

Coups attempted under provisional regimes are distinct in that they target neither a settled democracy nor an autocratic regime. Though I do not focus on them, such coups may crucially affect transitions. For example, following Portugal’s April 1974 Carnation Revolution (a regime change coup by leftist junior and middle-ranked officers of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) overthrowing the Caetano regime), a successful democratic transition was by no means assured. It was only a failed November 1975 coup attempt by radical paratroopers that permitted General Antonio dos Santos Ramalho Eanes to lead a moderate counter-coup that ended the left’s bid to seize power (Pinto 2008, 311) and led to a February 1976 agreement between the MFA and the parties to allow a democratic constitution with universal suffrage. Thus, rather than the radical April 1974 coup, it was really the moderate November 1975 coup that secured democracy. Had Spinola succeeded in his coup in March 1975, rather than democracy, a new dictatorship of the

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7 When the MFA installed General Spinola, who had publicly called for the end of the colonial wars, as head of a Junta of National Salvation, their program called for a long transition, with Constituent Assembly elections within a year and another year to elect a parliament. Yet no parties aside from the communists were organized at this point. Western observers were therefore concerned as the revolution appeared to lurch to the left (Maxwell 1986, 118-120).
right would have likely emerged. Had MFA radicals prevailed (as they did temporarily after the September 1974 coup ousting Spinola), a dictatorship of the left would have likely prevailed.

Finally, *non-military coups* do not involve any current, active military members, while an *autogolpe* or “self-coup” is conceptually distinct from military coups in that they are carried out by the regime leader themselves and target other regime elites (e.g. in the legislature or judiciary) in a bid to retain power. The failed democratic transition in Togo in 1991 featured both kinds of coup events, though neither type is a military coup in my dataset. Under growing domestic and international pressure, in June 1991 President Eyadéma of Togo agreed to a national conference (Handy 2005, 47). In August 1991, the national conference threatened to make the president a figurehead and attempted to install a human rights lawyer, Kokou Koffigoh, as prime minister and schedule multiparty elections in 1992. Eyadéma blocked this non-military coup over the next four months via a series of five coup-like events by army troops loyal to Eyadéma (autogolpes) that effectively cowed Koffigoh (Meredith 2005, 397-398). Eyadéma died in office in 2005.

In this paper, I draw on an original coup dataset that I coded jointly with Joseph Wright and David Carter which divides all military coup attempts in authoritarian regimes [as coded by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014)] into the mutually exclusive categories above (a summary of data sources and coding rules is provided below).[^8] We exclude nonmilitary coups and autogolpes. In total, we identified 117 leader reshuffling coup attempts (46 failed and 71 successful) and 123 regime change coup attempts (55 failed and 68 successful) in authoritarian regimes from 1960 to 2010. Empirically, military coups are clearly not randomly distributed events across authoritarian regimes. For example, regime change attempts coups are most likely against personalist regimes (55 attempts) and party-based regimes (35 attempts), whereas leader reshuffling coups are most common under military regimes (64 attempts) and personalist regimes (23 attempts).

[^8]: Full details are available in a separate paper and codebook that is available from the author upon request.
III. A Theory of Coup Types and Democratization

The heterogeneous pattern of coup types across regimes suggests that to predict which coups promote democracy we must first understand the constellation of power in the pre-coup regime and then consider the identity and preferences of the coup-makers. To derive predictions, I consider a highly stylized model of an authoritarian regime with three actors: a dictator, regime insiders in the military (e.g. senior officers, dominant ethnic group, ruling party members), and regime outsiders (e.g. junior officers, excluded ethnic group, opposition party members). At the outset, I assume that the dictator can select insiders and set the overall level of military resources or power, \( p \), based on the state’s internal and external threat environment subject to a fiscal budget constraint \( b \). Regime insiders benefit most from military rents (in the form of higher pay and prestige) and wield a share of military power \( i \) greater than that wielded by regime outsiders \((1-i)\). Thus, in the initial equilibrium state, regime insiders are winners and outsiders are losers; the latter have greater motivation or desire to launch a coup, but have less capacity to do so.

Given such an initial setup (depicted in extensive form in Figure 1), I assume that insiders and outsiders can choose between two initial strategies: challenge the dictator or remain loyal. If both insiders and outsiders remain loyal, political stability prevails (and thus authoritarian regime survival is most likely). If insiders challenge the regime, they succeed in a leader reshuffle coup with probability \( p \) (and potentially strengthen the regime) or they fail (and likely weaken the regime) and the “game” ends. In this model, reshuffling coups are purely “insider games.”

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9 By necessity, because I identify a coup typology with more than one military actor, I cannot rely on prior principal-agent models of civil-military relations which typically identify only two actors: the ruler and a corporate military. For a game-theoretic examples of such two-actor models, see Svolik (2013) and McMahon and Slantchev (2015).

10 As in previous literature, here I take the threat environment to be exogenous to the initial decision over resource allocation. For the seminal argument that threats promote civilian control and military loyalty, see Desch (1999).

11 The lack of a threat of regime change in such coups parallels the model of coups by Gallego and Pitchik (2004).
choose to *defect*, leading to a successful regime change coup with probability $q$, which is less than probability $p$ since they have less resources than insiders. If insiders *defend* the dictator and outsiders *acquiesce*, political stability is restored and the regime may be strengthened as disloyal elements are purged. However, if the outsiders *escalate*, a civil war may ensue against the regime.

Whether or not democracy follows from these different coups and paths to instability will, of course, depend on the preferences of the actors toward democracy. First consider the dictator’s preferences. If the dictator is a reformer (whether for instrumental or ideological reasons) that pursues liberalization, or the inclusion of new elites into the regime that expands the circle of winners, threatened regime insiders, the *hardliners*, may seek to remove the offending dictator in one kind of leader reshuffling coup, the *veto coup*. If a veto coup succeeds, we should expect the new dictator to rollback democratic reforms. If a veto coup fails, as the dictator rallies support among *moderates* and the new elites, we should expect the liberalizing project to continue. To take one example: Colombia’s transition from military rule in 1958 with the democratic election of Alberto Lleras Camargo was almost derailed when, two days prior to the election, Army Col. Hernando Forero and supporters of ex-dictator Rojas Pinilla in the military police kidnapped Camargo and four members of the ruling five-man junta, which had scheduled the elections. The fifth junta member, Admiral Piedrahita, escaped and negotiated the release of the other junta members (New York Times 1958a, b). Given the anti-democratic preferences of the coup leaders and supporters, it was precisely the *failure* of the coup that permitted the elections to proceed.

*Hypothesis 1 (veto coups)*: Failed leadership reshuffling coups under liberalizing authoritarian regimes will increase the likelihood of successful democratic transition, whereas their success will hinder democratization, ceteris paribus.

By contrast, consider a “hardline” dictator that values and ruthlessly defends his political survival. Then a key to the authoritarian regime’s durability is the dictator’s ability to solve the
problem of authoritarian power-sharing. At this stage, to retain the loyalty of regime insiders, a dictator may resort to classic coup-proofing strategies.\textsuperscript{12} Either way, regime change becomes a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratization of a consolidated authoritarian regime. A democratic transition could follow a regime change coup because the coup leaders either (a) had more democratic preferences\textsuperscript{13} or (b) their nascent autocratic regime is initially weaker than the outgoing one and concede to democratic pressure that had been repressed before the coup. In either case, regime change coups provide a new political opportunity structure for democrats to exploit. Thus, democratization is more likely if democratic civil society is stronger at the time of the coup.\textsuperscript{14} If a regime change coup fails, democracy is not as likely to emerge because the challengers either become rebels engaged in a civil war (promoting a “rally around the flag” effect) and/or regime insiders use the event to purge outsiders and consolidate their power.

\textit{Hypothesis 2 (regime change coups):} Successful regime change coups will increase the likelihood of democratization, particularly in developed societies; but failed regime change coups attempts will have no such effect on democratization.

Although we have no direct data on the democratic preferences of leaders, we can also make hypotheses about variation in these preferences across different regimes. For example, it is widely held that leaders of military regimes are less likely to value political survival and are weaker\textsuperscript{15}, while personalist dictators value survival and successfully concentrate more power.\textsuperscript{16} Using updated leader data from 1946-2012, I confirm that military leaders on average only

\textsuperscript{12} These include buying off the military with greater military budgets (Wintrobe 2012), using ethnic recruitment strategies (Enloe 1980), or counter-balancing the military with other armed groups (Böhmet and Pilster 2014).

\textsuperscript{13} For example, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) assume that regime outsiders (the poor) have more democratic preferences than insiders (the rich) since the latter have more invested in the existing regime. For the most part, they model “revolutionary threats” by the poor. Of course, such threats may gain support within lower military ranks.

\textsuperscript{14} This hypothesis parallels the account of Miller (2012) about violent leader removal and democratization.

\textsuperscript{15} Military elites may be more willing to withdraw from politics if corporate interests are protected under democracy. On the logic of the instability of military regimes and military withdrawal, see Wintrobe (1990) and Geddes (1999).

\textsuperscript{16} On the rarity but durability of personalist dictators, see Svolik (2012, Chapter 3).
remain in office for half as long as other dictators (5.8 years vs. 10.5 years). Svolik (2012, 77), meanwhile, has shown that dictators are most vulnerable to a coup within the first five years of being in office, and that their vulnerability to being ousted in a coup declines with time in office, while the odds of exiting naturally increases with time in office. Frantz and Ezrow (2011, Ch. 2), moreover, find that personalist regimes are more likely to collapse if the dictator is ousted.

Given these institutional characteristics, I expect that leader reshuffling coups will be relatively more likely in military regimes, and regime change coups relatively more likely in personalist regimes, reflecting greater power of regime insiders in the former. Thus, coups in military regimes may reflect regime weakness and occur in conditions which are favorable to re-democratization. One possibility is that reshuffling coups may be led by democrats that target leaders that refuse to “return to the barracks.” The former may be empowered by changes in external conditions such as the end of the Cold War. The other possibility is that coups by non-democrats also weaken the regime. By contrast, coups against entrenched personalist dictators may be the only route for democratic change (Collier 2008). When personalist dictators fall, a lack of institutional structure (strong parties or militaries) may make it hard for the coup leader to successfully construct a new authoritarian regime, advantaging those that wish to democratize.

**Hypotheses 3 (returning to the barracks):** Reshuffling coups in military regimes will promote democracy when professional military elites believe that their leader will not fulfill promises or new demands that the military “return to the barracks.”

**Hypothesis 4 (anti-personalist coups):** Regime change coups against personalist regimes promote democracy most because personalist elites are otherwise least likely to voluntarily relinquish power and building a new regime is more difficult.

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17 Version 2.9 of Archigos leader data ends in 2004. I extend these leader data by cross-referencing a number of sources, including Magaloni, Chu, and Min (2013) and updates of Svolik data by Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2014).

18 Similarly, Snyder (1992) has argued that military coups can facilitate transitions from neopatrimonial dictatorship. Snyder (1992, 386) argues that the coup against Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in February 1986 was more than epiphenomenal as it “allowed the civilian moderates to replace him without opening the way for a seizure of power by the radical left.” He also notes that, after the ouster of “Baby Doc” Duvalier in Haiti, a series of military coups reshuffling weak governments preceded the 1991 democratic election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide (pg. 380).
IV. Data and Empirical Strategy

Following Thyne and Powell (2014), I develop and test a comprehensive statistical model of democratization which includes variables believed to promote democratization. I then add a series of indicator variables for coup attempts to these models. To the extent that the addition of these variables significantly improves model performance, we can then confirm that coups have at least predictive value for democratic transitions, and test whether variation in coups improves upon simpler models. Further, because coups are rare “shocks” to authoritarian regimes, it is important to control for other sources of instability to rule out any form of omitted variable bias. I therefore describe and test a long list of control variables to guard against this possibility. The final concern, which always plagues observational studies, is whether or not coup events have any independent causal effect on democratic transitions or whether coups are really markers of more fundamental variables. Because this paper is exploratory of new data and hypotheses, most of the models reported here are, strictly speaking, correlational rather than causal. However I did test a number of two-stage selection models of coups (first stage) and democratization (second stage) as robustness checks. I also use case studies and counterfactuals to shed light on issues of causation. Models of coup attempts and outcomes in related work sheds light on the structural conditions which promote different kinds of coups across different kinds of autocratic regimes.

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19 Results from a replication of the Thyne and Powell (2014) study are available upon request. However, I do not rely on their data or specifications because their replication data and models contain anomalies which call into question their reliability. For example, some countries are coded as having had prior democratic experience for all years, even before the first year that they are democracies! Similarly, their logged income variable implies an implausibly low GDP per capita range of $5 to $92; annual GDP per capita growth averages implausibly high 6%. Perhaps more troubling, these models are potentially plagued by endogeneity (simultaneity) bias since none of the time-varying independent variables are lagged, meaning they may be picking up democratization-induced coups. In all the models presented in this paper, time-varying independent variables are lagged by a year to avoid this problem.

20 Some previous studies have sought to exploit the difference between successful and failed coups to use countries where coups failed as the control group for countries where coups succeeded. However, this identification strategy rests on the key but problematic assumption that the success of coup attempts is “as if random”, which they most certainly are not. In addition, this strategy does not permit us to compare the effects of coups relative to countries that do not have any. For a recent study of post-coup military spending that employs this approach, see Leon (2013).
**Dependent Variable.** Although results are comparable using alternative measures of democracy (e.g. various cut-points in *Polity2*)\(^{21}\), I mostly present models that identify democratic transitions with the autocratic regime data from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (GWF 2014), which distinguishes between transitions to democracy and transitions to other authoritarian regimes. The sample is restricted to all non-democracies in the previous year (including provisional regimes), such that the probit regressions predict democratic transitions from 1961 to 2010.\(^{22}\)

**Coup Variables.** The basic models, reflecting current literature, include independent variables for *any recent successful coup* and *any recent failed coup*. “Recent” is defined as the past three years, on the assumption that the democratic effects of coups take time to manifest themselves.\(^{23}\) As described earlier, I then disaggregate data on coup attempts under authoritarian regimes into one of four mutually exclusive categories: *successful regime change coups, failed regime change coups, successful leadership reshuffling coups,* and *failed leadership reshuffling coups*. To count as a “success”, the coup must forcibly oust the regime leader using unconstitutional means, and the post-coup leader must remain in power for at least seven days.\(^{24}\) I also label coups against democracies as *anti-democratic coups* and coups under *provisional regimes* as provisional coups, as these largely exhaust all possible coup events in the country.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{21}\) For a description of the polity data, see Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr (2014).

\(^{22}\) If we were to exclude provisional regimes from the sample, we would lose all the cases of coups which were responsible for the breakdown of the previous authoritarian regime and the transition to provisional regimes. For example, the April 1974 coup in Portugal led to a provisional regime in 1975 and 1976 and only democracy in 1977.

\(^{23}\) That assumption is necessary empirically, because coups and other irregular leadership changes rarely *directly* lead to democracy the following year. As Miller (2012, 1006-9) observes, more than half of democratic transitions saw irregular leadership turnover in the previous five years, but only a handful of cases since 1875 have witnessed irregular leadership turnover occurring concurrently with democratization. Still, Thyne and Powell (2014, 9) assert that their results are robust to alternative windows (2 to 5 years) and to different lag periods of 1 to 3 years. I choose the same window in my results to maximize the comparability of my results with the existing literature.

\(^{24}\) The one week threshold follows the convention in the coup literature (e.g. Thompson 1973, Powell and Thyne 2011), although applying a one-month rule as do Marshall and Marshall (2014) would not affect very many cases.

\(^{25}\) There are a few coups that occur during foreign occupation or under a warlord regime, but because these regime types are so rare, and sovereignty contested in them, we do not code these coups as reshuffling or regime change.
First, we identified the set of all successful coup attempts by cross-validating coup lists from Powell and Thyne (2011), Marshall and Marshall (2014), McGowan (2003), and Be'eri (1970, 1982), as well as the leader exit data compiled by Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza (2009) and Svolik (2012). From 180 candidate successful coups in these sources since 1960, 95 coups emerged as consensus coups, which in all but one case we adopted without question. For the remaining 85 candidate successful coups, we determined that 44 met our definition of a coup.26 We therefore identified a total of 138 successful coups, of which 67 were associated with regime change in the GWF data and 71 were only associated with leader reshuffling.

Second, we identified the set of all failed coups by cross-validating coup lists from Powell and Thyne (2011), McGowan (2003), and Be'eri (1970, 1982). From these sources, we identified 158 candidate failed coup attempts since 1960.27 Because we cannot observe the regime that would have been observed in the case of failed coups, we conducted historical research on each case to identify the identity of the coup attempt leaders, including their ethnic identity and professional identity, namely whether the attempt was led by junior military officers, senior regime officials, or relatives of the leader. We also tracked down records of the coup plotters stated grievances or goals as well as statements by the government and other observers about the plotters intentions. Although the coding rules are quite detailed, we in essence attempt to replicate the coding rules for the GWF data. If the coup was led by junior officer or excluded

26 The remainder of events we excluded for a variety reasons, such as when we viewed evidence of the event as an assassination unsupported by military actors, an autogolpe perpetrated by (not against) the regime leader, the means used to oust the leader were constitutional, there was no participation of current active military members (in which case the event was coded as a non-military coup, or a case of prior defection if the coup leaders had been former or retired members of the military not on active service), or the event did not appear to target the regime leader.

27 As indicated earlier, this coup coding dataset project is joint with Joseph Wright and David Carter. We hope to soon finish validating the remaining non-consensus failed coup attempts in Marshall and Marshall (2014) for the 1950s. Upon completion of the project, we will publish a data paper and release our codebook and detailed case narratives for each candidate failed coup attempt and for all the non-consensus successful coup attempts in our data. Our working codebook is already almost 500 pages long, which gives an indication of the amount of information required to understand what appear to be quite opaque events and to confidently justify our coding decisions.
ethnic groups, for example, we assume the coup plotters’ success would significantly alter the group from which leaders can be selected, and therefore code a regime change attempt. If the coup plotters sought to prevent personalization of the regime (in terms of ethnic narrowing or preventing familial succession), we also code a regime change attempt. If the coup sought to preserve the incumbent ruling group, was led by regime insiders, and would not change the ruling group, we code a reshuffling coup. From our candidate cases, we confirmed 107 coup attempts, of which we determined 58 sought regime change and 49 sought leader reshuffling.28

Finally, since there may be more than one coup attempt in a country in a given year, I construct indicator variables which equal 1 if there was any of that kind of coup attempt that year, and zero otherwise.29 I then create variables for whether there was any recent coup attempt over different periods, using three years as the default window following Thyne and Powell (2014).

**Leader entry and exit variables.** In addition to recent coup events, I also code leader entry and exit data since Ulfelder and Lustik (2007, 367) find that recent leadership change in general (in the past five years) is a significant predictor of democratic transitions; Miller (2012) likewise found that all violent / “irregular” leader change significantly promotes democratization. But no existing studies distinguish between coups and other forms of irregular exit. In order to compare the effect of military coups compared to other modes of leader entry and exit, I adjust the Archigos leader data of Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza (2009) to code whether the current dictator came to power or exited by a regime change, leader reshuffling, or an anti-democratic coup, as defined above, or whether they came to power or exited by other irregular means (such as an assassination, rebel insurgency, or the foreign threat or use of force) or regular means.30

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28 We excluded candidate cases for the same reasons as successful candidates. In addition, we specifically exclude preempted coup plots if the plotters were never able to make a concrete and observable action targeting the leader.

29 There are 187 country-years with only 1 coup attempt and 27 with more than one coup attempt since 1960.

30 Leader exit by military coup may also be the result of failed coup attempts, not only successful coup attempts.
Other Control Variables. The basic model also includes the following control variables: the log of GDP per capita\textsuperscript{31}, the annual percent change in GDP per capita\textsuperscript{32}, independence year\textsuperscript{33}, a count variable for prior democratic transitions\textsuperscript{34}, a dummy term for colonial history as a former British colony, and a cubic polynomial of years under authoritarian spell to control for duration dependence (Carter and Signorino 2010).\textsuperscript{35} I also include decade and region fixed effects, which control for un-modeled region and time-specific variation in democratization. In my “full” models, I also control for a series of institutional variables, democratic diffusion variables, other domestic social and economic variables, other international variables, and domestic conflict variables that have been theorized to affect prospects for democratization.

Institutional Variables. I include indicator variables for provisional regimes, party regimes, personal regimes, and monarchies, leaving military regimes as the excluded reference group. Because authoritarian legislatures are thought to facilitate elite bargaining and thus reduce the likelihood of regime breakdown (Wright and Escribà-Folch 2011), I include an indicator variable which equals 1 if the regime has no national legislature, and equals 0 if it does.\textsuperscript{36}

Democratic Diffusion Variables. To account for spatial dependence in democracy and capture the dynamics of democratic diffusion, I generated and tested a series of the most plausible spatial lag variables, which simply take the average democracy score of a country’s

\textsuperscript{31} I rely primarily on the revised GDP estimates of Angus Maddison (Bolt and van Zanden 2014), supplemented by estimates from the Penn World Table version 8.0 (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015), the World Bank World Development Indicators, and only lastly Gleditsch (2002) to fill in missing data not coded by the Maddison Project.

\textsuperscript{32} Economic crises are widely viewed as harbingers of democratization (e.g. Haggard and Kaufman 1995).

\textsuperscript{33} New states are thought to be less apt to transition to democracy (Thyne and Powell 2014, 12).

\textsuperscript{34} To control for re-entry into the sample, following the convention established by Przeworski et al. (2000).

\textsuperscript{35} It is worth noting that coup attempts are likely endogenous to many of these other right-hand side variables. For example, one of the most well-known facts about coup is that they are much more likely to occur in poor countries (e.g. Londregan and Poole 1990). Including coup attempts as an independent variable would thus be problematic if we were interested in estimating the effect of wealth on democratization since coups mediate the effects of poverty.

\textsuperscript{36} The underlying data on legislative selection is taken from Banks and Wilson (2013).
“neighbors”, defined using any geographic or non-geographic connectivity matrix (Beck, Gleditsch, and Beardsley 2006). In the full models, I include three diffusion variables. First, I include the year-on-year change in regional democracy levels (e.g. Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2007). Second, I add a measure of the average democracy level among a country’s trade partners (e.g. Zhukov and Stewart 2013). Third, I add the year-on-year change in IO Score, which measures the mean democracy level for the most democratic regional political, economic, or military IGO that a country was a member state of in a given year (e.g. Pevehouse 2005).

Other Domestic and Economic Variables. In addition to the GDP variables in the basic model, I control for mean years of school for the under-25 population, since educated populaces may promote democracy (e.g. Barro 1999). In addition, I control for a series of variables that are thought to hinder democratization: the log of oil and gas income per capita (e.g. Ross 2001); youth bulges, or the proportion of the population aged 15-29 (e.g. Cincotta 2008); the

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37 I test but in the end omit spatial lags based on border continuity and defense alliances due to a lack of significance.
38 I aggregated regional United Nations classifications into eight regions, namely the Americas, Western Europe, E. Europe and Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, East Asia, South Asia, and Oceania.
39 Trade data is taken from version 3 of COW’s trade data (Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins 2009).
40 I replicated and extended Pevehouse’s (2005) original measure, which only extended from 1950-1992, through a combination of original coding and COW IGO membership data from Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke (2004). I first identified all 71 IGO’s which met Pevehouse’s criteria for inclusion. I therefore exclude universal IOs and IFIs (such as the U.N., World Bank, IMF), as well as cultural, technical, and environmental IOs. In addition to the 55 regional IGO’s in Table 3.4 of Pevehouse (2005, 68-9), I include the 9 post-1992 IOs cited by (Teorell 2010, 168), as well as seven other IOs (the African Union, Arab league, European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community, Organization of Central American States, and Southern African Development Coordination Conference). The COW data codes IGO membership for 1950, 1955, 1960, and annually from 1965-2005. I filled in data for missing years (prior to 1965 and after 2005) and corrected several coding errors in COW data by consulting the IOs’ websites as well as the Yearbook of International Organizations. See http://www.uia.be/s/or/en/igo.
41 Income and education are well correlated ($\rho \approx 0.7$), but Boix and Stokes (2003) argue that income is really a proxy variable for more fundamental causes such as education. Data on educational attainment comes primarily from Barro and Lee (2013), but I fill in missing country-years using data from Nardulli, Peyton, and Bajjalieh (2010).
42 Oil income data (in constant $2007$) is taken primarily from Ross (2012). I fill in missing data using fuel income data in Haber and Menaldo (2011) and the Energy Information Agency. The measures are highly correlated ($\rho = 0.99$), but I use linear regression with country fixed effects to smooth differences in their levels (R-sq. = 0.99).
Islamic share of the population\(^{44}\) (e.g. Fish 2002); linguistic heterogeneity\(^{45}\); and a measure of state coercive capacity, the Correlates of War’s composite index of national capability (\textit{CINC})\(^{46}\).

\textit{Other International Variables}. As a proxy for a country’s population’s integration into global democratic civil society or “world polity” (e.g. Torfason and Ingram 2010), I control for the log of total memberships in international non-governmental organizations (\textit{log INGO membership})\(^{47}\). Because countries that align themselves with the United States since World War II can be expected to become more democratic, I control for an ideal point estimate of affinity to the U.S. world order based on U.N. General Assembly voting data (\textit{U.S. interest affinity})\(^{48}\) I also control for a measure of U.S. security hierarchy, a variable measuring the total number of U.S. troops hosted in a country as a share of that country’s population (\% \textit{U.S. troops}), since we might expect the U.S. to prop up its client states, at least during the Cold War\(^{49}\). Conversely, I control for the proportion of a country’s population that come to the U.S. as college students (\% \textit{study students}).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Islamic share of the population} \textit{is taken from the Correlates of War World Religion Data set v 1.1} (Maoz and Henderson 2013).
\item \textit{linguistic heterogeneity} \textit{is taken from Alesina et al. (2003). I also tested the inclusion of ethnic and religious heterogeneity, but these alternative forms of heterogeneity did not have a significant impact across model specifications and I therefore omit them for the sake of parsimony. This may be partially a result of autocorrelation.}
\item \textit{national capability} \textit{is measured by the Correlates of War’s composite index of national capability (\textit{CINC}). CINC scores weight six components: military expenditures, military personnel, total population, urban population, iron and steel consumption, and primary energy consumption. CINC scores worldwide add up to 1 each year, so it measures relative rather than absolute power internationally. Although CINC scores are poor predictors of military victory (Biddle 2004), among non-democracies, they reasonably proxy for the degree of external/western leverage. Version 4.0 of the COW data ends in 2007 (Singer 1988). I reconstructed and extended the dataset for subsequent years using population and energy data from the United Nations (2014), (2015b, 2015a), iron and steel data from the World Steel Association (2014), and military expenditure and personnel data from annual editions of \textit{The Military Balance} by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), filling in missing data for certain countries with \textit{World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers} (WMEAT) data released by the U.S. Department of State (2013).}
\item \textit{linguistic fractionalization} \textit{is taken from Alesina et al. (2003). I also tested the inclusion of ethnic and religious heterogeneity, but these alternative forms of heterogeneity did not have a significant impact across model specifications and I therefore omit them for the sake of parsimony. This may be partially a result of autocorrelation.}
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\end{itemize}
abroad), since exposure to such a western education is thought to promote democracy by socializing future elites in sending countries (e.g. Spilimbergo 2009, Gift and Krcmaric 2015).  

*Domestic Conflict Variables.* I control for *any nonviolent anti-regime campaign*, which measures whether there was a non-violent anti-regime “people power” movement in a country. Such movements are rare (occurring in 3% of country-years), but may spark a “color revolution.” Such campaigns are widely held as promoting democratization (e.g. Schock 2005, Ulfelder 2005, Teorell 2010, Ch. 5, Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, Nepstad 2011, Celestino and Gleditsch 2013). Following Celestino and Gleditsch (2013), I also control for *any violent anti-regime campaigns*, which many of the same authors just cited argue bolster autocrats and hinder democratization.

*Leadership characteristics.* In a final set of models, I control for other leader variables. I control for whether the leader was a *Founding Father* of the country or the *first regime leader*, based on Archigos leader and GWF regime data. I also control quadratic *leader years in office*, and a dummy variable for *revolutionary leaders*, which we would expect to hinder democracy.  

The main reason for considering so many variables is to allay the concern that it is other omitted features of leaders and societies that promotes or hinders democratization, not coups.

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51 Data on nonviolent and violent anti-regime campaigns comes from RE-NAVCO, an original dataset I compiled that totally reconstructs and extends past 2006 version 2.0 of data on Nonviolent and Violent Outcomes and Campaigns by Chenoweth and Lewis (2013). In these models I exclude major territorial campaigns seeking secession, autonomy, or anti-occupation goals because I have shown elsewhere in my dissertation that these are less relevant for promoting regime change. In addition to reclassifying nearly a dozen cases in NAVCO as coups, I identified 60 major violent campaigns and 40 major non-violent campaigns over the 1945-2013 period that had not been identified by NAVCO 2.0 or the MEC data, even though the campaigns appeared to meet the inclusion criteria. A 300 page codebook with detailed narratives and nearly 800 new documentary sources improve data reliability.

Major new sources for candidate cases for major violent campaigns included Paul et al. (2013), version 2.9 of Archigos (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009), and the UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset (Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015). Major new sources for candidate cases for non-violent cases include the “Major Episodes of Contention” data (Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2015), version 2.9 of Archigos, Kalandadze and Orenstein (2009), Levitsky and Way (2010), Bunce and Wolchik (2011), and Swarthmore’s Global Non-Violent Action Database.

52 Data on revolutionary leaders or regimes, which is not coded on democracy levels, is taken from Colgan (2012).
V. Results: Disaggregating and Explicating the Coup Path to Democratization

The breakdown of authoritarian regimes is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a democratic transition. If a coup path to democracy genuinely exists, it must therefore start with regime change, and we should be able to uncover evidence that coups endanger the survival of authoritarian regimes. Figure 2 indicates that, in general, coup attempts are indeed associated with shorter regime lifespans, both democratic and autocratic. Consistent with the conventional wisdom, panels a and b of Figure 2 show that coup activity is, as one expects, highly subversive of democratic survival. Over the 1960 to 2010 period, democracies that never suffered a military coup survived an average of 38 years, whereas democracies suffering one or more coup attempts over their lives on average survived less than a third as long, just 12 years. But, perhaps to the surprise of some, many coups have a similarly subversive impact on the survival of authoritarian regimes. As shown in panels c and d of Figure 2, authoritarian regimes in states that have never had any coup activity have survived an average of 40 years, compared to an average of 25 years for authoritarian regimes in states that have experienced one or more coup attempts.

However, not all coup types and outcomes equally subvert the survival of authoritarian regimes, as shown in Figure 3. There appears to be no statistically significant difference in the average duration of authoritarian regimes that have experienced a successful or failed leader reshuffling coup, those regimes that have experienced a failed regime change coup, and those regimes that have never experienced any coup attempt at all (~32 years vs. 35 years). Thus, only successful regime change coups entail shorter lifespans for the authoritarian regimes that fall to them; such regimes have an average lifespan of only 20 years. This pattern is consistent with hypothesis 2 that successful but not failed regime change coups promote transitions.

53 The average duration for no-coup regimes is 35 years, not 40 years here, because some regimes have never experienced a coup but other regimes in that state (either previously or subsequently did experience a coup).
Although coups are rare events in dictatorships—occurring in 206 (~5%) country-years across 69 countries from 1960 to 2010—coup activity disproportionately cluster in the years prior to a democratic transition, which are also a rare event—occurring in 86 (~2%) country-years across 63 countries from 1960 to 2010. As shown in Figure 2a, coup activity significantly increases in the five years that precede a democratic transition, tripling to almost 17% of states just two years prior to their democratic transition. A coup has been attempted in an autocratic regime in the five years prior to a democratic transition in 30 of 86 (35%) cases, while an additional 11 cases have had democratic transitions within five years of a coup under a previous democratic regime, so that some 41 of 86 (48%) democratic transitions were preceded by coup activity in the prior five years. What’s more, as implied by Figures 4b and 4c, it is successful coups rather than failed coup attempts which more typically foreshadow a democratic transition in the coming five years. Whereas 12 democratic transitions saw at least one successful and one failed coup attempt in the prior five years, 20 transitions were preceded by successful coups only, 9 by failed coups only.

As shown in Table 1, the cumulative risk of a coup attempt in any five-year period under an authoritarian regime from 1960-2010 is close to 20%, two-and-a-half times less than countries that experience a democratic transition. However, we know that coup risk itself varies by regime type, and is higher under military regimes than in party or personalist regimes (Frantz and Ezrow 2011, 32-33). This appears to be true in general as well as in the five years prior to a democratic transition. The risk of a coup attempt in any five-year window varies from 55% in military regimes to 27% in personalist regimes, 10% in party-based regimes, and only 6% in monarchies. In the five years preceding a democratic transition, this (unconditional) coup risk increases to 68% in military regimes, 43% in personalist regimes, and 19% in party regimes, with no increase in
coup risk under monarchies, as shown in Table 1. These descriptive statistics suggest that, if
coups do promote democracy, they are most likely to do so under military and personal regimes.

Figure 5, meanwhile, gives an indication of how different kinds of coups differentially
affect the probability of a democratic transition. As stated earlier, in countries with no coups in
the previous five years, the (unconditional) risk of a democratic transition is just under 2 percent.
By contrast, the risk of a democratic transition doubles to 4 percent (a statistically significant
difference) for countries that have experienced any coup attempts in the previous five years. This
aggregate finding, the one emphasized by Thyne and Powell (2014) and others, masks variation
in the impact of different coup types. Failed regime change coups have no statistically significant
effect on the risk of a democratic transition, whereas successful regime change coups double the
probability of democratic transition (again, statistically significant), in line with hypothesis 2.
Leader reshuffling coups triple the risk to six percent, providing initial support for hypotheses 1.

Coup type also varies by regime type, which suggests that different kinds of coups may
impact the prospects of democratic transitions under some kinds of regimes more than others. As
shown in Table 2, since 1960, leader reshuffling coup attempts have been most likely in military
regimes (accounting for 55% of all such coups), less likely under party and personal regimes (22%
and 20% of all such coups, respectively), and least likely under monarchies (3% of such coups).
By contrast, regime change coup attempts are most likely against personalist regimes
(accounting for 45% of all such coups), less likely under party and military regimes (28% and 20%
of all such coups, respectively), and again least likely under monarchy (7% of all such coups).
Thus, to the extent that reshuffling coups positively predict democratic transitions, we should
expect this to be driven mainly by the political dynamics of military regimes. By contrast, to the
extent that regime change coups positively predict democratic transitions, we should expect this
to be mainly driven by the political dynamics of personalist regimes. This pattern proves nothing, but is at least consistent with hypothesis 3 that reshuffling coups promote democracy in military regimes and hypothesis 4 that regime change coups promote democracy in personalist regimes.

Having set the stage by lending plausibility to the main argument that different types of coups differentially affect the propensity for democratic transitions across different authoritarian regime types, I am now in a position to present more systematic tests controlling for potential confounders. My basic results are presented in Table 3, which identifies democratic transitions using data from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014). Model 1 basically replicates the basic model specification employed by Thyne and Powell (2014) but identifying coups using my original data. As those authors would expect, we see in this model that the aggregate impact of successful and failed coup attempts are both positive and statistically significant, though the marginal effects of successful coups is nearly twice that of failed coups. However, when I include the “full” set of control variables described in the previous section, as in Model 2 presented in the second column, I find that the aggregate impact of successful coups remains positive and statistically significant, but that in aggregate, failed coups are not a significant predictor of democratization. The results suggest that, rather than generalized instability flowing from all coups, successful leadership and regime change in particular are more robust predictors of democratic change. Thus, there do not appear to be independent effects for all failed coup attempts controlling for many observables.

However, these aggregate coup variables mask variation in the democratic potential of different coup types. Consistent with hypothesis 1 (though not a direct test, because these basic models do not control for pre-coup liberalization trends), failed reshuffling coups do appear to promote a democratic transition in the following one to five years (see models 3-6). By contrast, failed regime change coups have no pro-democratic effects over the same period. However,
successful regime change coups having pro-democratic effects using a window of 1, 3, or 5 years, consistent with hypothesis 2. Successful reshuffling coups also appear to promote democracy, but only when using with a longer window of three to five years. In models not shown (available upon request), which use a continuous measure of years since last coup, I confirm that it is only such recent coup activity (particularly successful coups) that affect current democratic transitions.

As for predictive fit, a comparison of model 1 and subsequent models shows that the inclusion additional theoretically informed covariates more than doubles the predictive power of the models presented in the existing literature.\textsuperscript{54} Although not the focus here, results for control variables also seem reasonable and in line with expectations. Among the basic controls, we see that richer countries (as measured by GDP per capita) are less likely to transition to democracy, but that economic crisis (declines in GDP per capita) do promote democratic transitions. A count of prior democratic transitions also predicts re-democratization at higher rates than countries that have no prior democratic experience. Among the additional set of “full” controls, which I do not show in Table 3 due to space considerations, the following controls positively predict democratic transitions across all the models: provisional regimes and military regimes (as compared to party, personalist, or monarchical regimes), democratic diffusion among a state’s trade partners, membership in a greater number of regional IGOs with democratic members (IO Score), the log of INGO memberships, U.S. interest similarity, and the prevalence of major non-violent anti-regime campaigns. By contrast, the following are negative and robust correlates of democratic transitions: the lack of a legislature (whether elective or not), linguistic heterogeneity, youth bulges, state coercive capabilities\textsuperscript{55}, and the level of U.S. troop presence (e.g. occupation).

\textsuperscript{54} The pseudo-R\textsuperscript{2} improves from just over 0.1 in the basic Thyne-Powell replication models to a pseudo-R\textsuperscript{2} of 0.48 and AUC score of .96 with full set of control variables. For prediction of democratic transitions, I would therefore emphatically reject the advice to not include additional covariates or risk “garbage can” regressions (Achen 2005).

\textsuperscript{55} Measured here using the CINC score. But results are robust to the use of alternative measures of coercive power.
Table 4 further considers how coups affect the likelihood of democratic transitions by examining the differential propensities of different modes of leader entry and exit, controlling for other characteristics of leaders. The models show that leaders who come to power by a coup, regardless of type (and to a lesser extent by other irregular means), are significantly more likely to democratize than leaders who enter office by “regular” means, as coded by Archigos. This is consistent with recent research which confirms the long-standing hypothesis that institutionalized succession rules promote authoritarian endurance (e.g. Frantz and Stein 2014). In a similar way, model 3 shows that any recent leader change tends to promote democratization, consistent with the findings of Ulfelder and Lustik (2007). When we disaggregate recent leader exit by type (over the previous three years), we find that leader exit by reshuffling coups has a positive and significant marginal effect on the probability of a democratic transition (at the 1% level), but there is a weaker effect for recent leader exit by regime change coups (at the 10% level) and a non-existent effect for anti-democratic coups. The huge increase in model fit in these models shows that leader entry and exit (and coup type) are crucial for understanding democratization.56

The models in Table 5 introduce interaction terms of recent coup attempts (in the past three years) with dichotomous measures of regime type. The results in the last column, model 5, indicate that in aggregate coups reliably promote democratic transitions only in personalist regimes, while it has no net positive impact for party regimes, military regimes, or monarchies. Meanwhile, coups attempts during provisional regimes actually often hinder democracy (as seen in model 4, where the interaction term is actually negative and statistically significant. This heterogeneity belies the uni-directional assumption of the political effects of military coups, and provides some support for hypothesis 4 that coups are democratic when they oust personalists.

56 The data on leader entry and exit by regular and other irregular means was derived by adjusting existing Archigos leader data of Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza (2009) to account for differences in our new coding of military coups. Because the Archigos data (version 2.9) ends in 2004, the models presented here only extend to 2005.
A series of other robustness checks (available upon request) show that the democratic effects are not entirely conditional on structural conditions typically identified in the literature. For example, if we restrict the sample to the Cold War, we find that the main results still hold and that, in aggregate, successful coups still significantly promote democratic transitions. However, this result is driven entirely by successful regime change coups, which promote democracy both before and during the Cold War. By contrast, successful reshuffling coups have no effect on the likelihood of democratic transition during the Cold War, only having a positive effect after the Cold War. This result qualifies the key finding of Marinov and Goemans (2014), who found that coups mainly promoted democracy after the Cold War. However, those authors did not distinguish between different kinds of coups as I am able to with new original data. When we restrict the sample to those cases which did not have any major non-violent anti-regime campaign in the past three years, we again find that, in aggregate, successful coups still promote democracy. This suggests that many coup leaders are not simply forced to democratize by their citizens. In this sense, even non-cooperative democratic transitions require at least a faction of the military which supports democracy independent of the strength of democratic civil society.

Finally, a last robustness check (available upon request) entailed running a two-stage bivariate probit model which includes equations for the selection of states into the sample of countries that experience coup attempts as well as a model of democratic transitions with coup attempts as an independent variable. In these models, I instrument for coup propensity using a measure of years since last coup attempt as well as a measure of naval size (relative to the army), both of which seem to directly affect the likelihood of successful coups but have no direct effect on likelihood of democratic transition. These models show that, even when controlling for which states are likely to have coups, successful coup attempts still have a positive effect on democracy.
VI. Case Studies of Reshuffling Coups, Regime Change Coups, and Democratization

With hundreds of coup attempts across so many cases of successful and failed democratic transitions since 1960, it would be impossible to systematically provide case evidence on a large sample of them here. Instead, I use illuminating examples from the different categories of coups to help elucidate some causal hypotheses which are harder to test with large-N methods.

Veto Coups and Collapse of The Soviet Union. From August 18-21, 1991, a who’s who of high-level Soviet officials calling themselves the “State Committee on the State of Emergency USSR” (GKChP) led an abortive attempt to oust Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, which failed after the ambitious Russian President Boris Yeltsin mobilized civilians behind Gorbachev and the junta failed to secure popular support. By all accounts, the intention of the GKChP was to preserve the Soviet Union and Communist Party control, which the plotters believed Gorbachev’s leadership had imperiled. As Kotkin (2001, 107) argues, “It was the central elite, rather than the independence movements of the periphery, that cashiered the Union. Had the putschists been effective, they would surely have rallied many of the middle and upper layers of the vast Soviet elite to the cause of preserving at least the core of the Union...Thus, the larger truth about 1991 was that the ‘triumph’ of democracy involved a bid for power by Russian republic officials.” The failure of the coup led the remaining republics to declare independence, sealed the Soviet collapse, and thereby enabled Russian experimentation with democracy.

Given the seeming strength of the “gang of eight”, the reason for the collapse of the coup is somewhat of a puzzle that continues to be debated. Some accounts point to the long-term legitimacy crisis that led the military to first join but then dissociate itself from the coup attempt

57 The “gang of eight” included Vice President Gennady Yanayev, Premier Valentin Pavlov, Interior Minister Boris Pugo, Defense Minister Dmitry Yazov, KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, First Deputy Chairman of the Defense Council Oleg Baklanov, Chairman of the Peasants’ Union Vasily Starodubtsev, and President of the Association of State Enterprises Alexander Tizyakov.
(e.g. Lepingwell 1992). Others point to the courageous leadership of Yeltsin in defense of the White House on the second day of the coup attempt. But according to Singh (2014, 196), neither of these factors was decisive. Instead, the coup failed because pro-democracy forces in the Soviet media “kept up a steady drum beat of stories designed to make the junta seem far weaker than it was and Yeltsin far stronger than he was.” Whatever the causes of the failure, however, there can be little doubt that it was the failure of the coup which precipitated democratic political change.58

The political trajectory following the August 1991 coup contrasts starkly with the June 1957 “anti-Party plot”, in which another “gang of eight”, seven of which had formed a majority in the highest decision-making body, the Presidium, sought to oust the Soviet leader Nikita Khruschev (Taubman 2004, 310-320).59 Svolik (2012, 97) notes that the leaders of the putsch “were Stalinist hardliners who feared that Khruschev’s steps towards greater de-Stalinization – most notably his Secret Speech delivered at the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party – were in reality concealed attempts to marginalize them.” However, in 1957, this power struggle played out in the halls of the Kremlin, in the absence of any mass mobilization. Thus, when the plot failed, Khruschev simply consolidated his position, losing power only in 1964, and of course the Communist regime did not collapse until 1991. Clearly, not all failed reshuffling coups promote democracy. One key difference is that in 1957 the communist project still retained a measure of legitimacy, and thus a buoyant Khruschev had no desire or incentive to democratize.

**Military Withdrawal by Reshuffling Coup: The Argentine Case.** Leader reshuffling coups in military regimes may initiate or accelerate a democratic transition when an influential segment of the junta becomes convinced that the military must withdraw to the barracks. If the regime

---

58 Of course, Russian democracy did not survive the turbulent 1990s, but this is an analytically separate problem.

59 The evidence over whether to consider this event an elite-led coup attempt a la the August 1991 coup or whether this instead represents a “constitutional” or legal political struggle appears ambiguous, but regardless of coding rules employed to decide the reshuffling logic seems clear.
leader is opposed to such withdrawal and refuses to step down voluntarily, a leader reshuffling coup may be necessary to oust the leader and accelerate the desired regime change.

In Argentina, military withdrawal from power in 1983 was fundamentally the result of the military regime’s loss of legitimacy due to the failures of the Proceso government and defeat in the Malvinas/Falklands War. After July 1981, President Roberto Viola, leader of a moderate military faction, had courted the Multiparidaria civilian opposition coalition in a bid to court some legitimacy. Seeing this as a threat to the principles of the Proceso, on December 11, 1981, Viola’s hardline rival Leopoldo Galtieri seized power in a covert coup (Viola resigned due to “poor health”). Galtiero soon publicly ruled out elections, saying that apertura would be a long process (Gordon 1988, 215-216). He immediately set about planning the Malvinas invasion in a diversionary attempt to gain public support for his government, which took place in April 1982. Argentina surrendered on June 14, 1982, and in the wake of widespread public criticism the army high command forced Galtieri to resign two days later. In essence, this leader reshuffling coup was taken because since “the military, mindful of its tenuous position, wanted a caretaker regime which would protect its corporate interest during the now inevitable return to civilian government” (Gordon 1988, 217). Galtieri was made the scapegoat for the regime’s defeat.

After deposing Galtieri, the army command refused to accept the air force commander Llami Dozo as Galtieri’s replacement, fearing he might maintain himself in power. Instead, the army picked a retired general, Reynaldo Bignone, to preside over a “return to the barracks”, precisely since he had no power base of his own (Philip 1984, 631). This led the navy and air force to resign from the junta in protest, but they lacked the power to enforce their own successor. Presidential elections were duly held in October 1983, which marked the democratic transition. As in Colombia, the 1983 democratic transition was preceded by two reshuffling coups in the
two previous years. However, the first reshuffling coup by itself led by Galtieri boded ill for
democratization; had Great Britain acquiesced, as expected, the regime would have been saved,
at least in the short run; only the reshuffle coup ousting a disgraced Galtieri promoted transition.
Thus, consistent with hypothesis 3, successful reshuffling coup attempts may either promote or
block democratic transitions depending on the constraints on and preferences of the coup leader.

*Regime Change Coups and the Collapse of Personalist Regimes.* Personalist regimes tend
to concentrate power among the regime leader’s ethnic group, cronies, and family, so that regime
change coups usually entail an attempt to either alter the ethnic balance of power or widen the
circle of favored elites to a broader group. Unlike military regimes, personalist dictators are
unlikely to voluntarily hand over power. The regime change coup, therefore, often seems to play
a prominent role in the collapse of such regimes, thus providing the opportunity for a democratic
transition if democratic forces are organized. For example, according to the catalog by Wheeler
(1979), the personalist regime under Salazar and then Caetano consolidated only because it was
able to survive some 20 failed military regime change coup plots or attempts since 1926. It was
only the 21st military conspiracy which succeeded, and thus Portugal’s Carnation Revolution
ousted Caetano in 1974. That coup permitted, following an uncertain period under a provisional
regime, a democratic transition by 1976.  

Mali’s democratic transition in 1991 was facilitated
by civil protests and a March regime change coup against Moussa Traore’s personalist regime by
Amadou Toumani Touré. The 1986 regime change coup (the “EDSA Revolution”) ensured the
success of “People Power” and collapse of Ferdinand Marcos’s regime (Schock 2005, 78-79).

To understand the dynamics in personalist regimes, consider the collapse of the Trujillo
regime in the Dominican Republic, which came after the assassination of Rafael Trujillo in a

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60 Recall that, in terms of causal direction, it was the defection of the MFA and April 25, 1974 military coup which
caused the mass mobilization now known as the Carnation Revolution, and not vice versa. See, e.g., Osuna (2014).
failed regime change coup attempt in May 1961. Although several leaders of the coup plot were regime insiders and harbored a combination of personal and political grievances, they resented the concentration of power within the Trujillo family and, supported with arms provided by the CIA, had planned to install a provisional civil-military junta until democratic elections could be held in 1962 (Diederich 1990). Although the May 1961 coup plot failed at the outset, due to the last minute defection of the army commander Gen. Pupo Román, Trujillo’s death led to the organization of a new civilian opposition (the National Civic Union) that demanded democracy.

With Trujillo dead, President Joaquin Balaguer emerged as a political force following a power struggle within the Trujillo family which led Trujillo’s son Ramfis to go into exile in France and a counter-coup plot by the deceased dictator’s brothers in September 1962 failed under the threat of U.S. military intervention. Meanwhile, Balaguer “was continuously attacked by emerging political groups” hoping for political change, leading to further weakening of the regime. In December 1961, under U.S. pressure, Balaguer agreed to “to share power with a seven-person Council of State, which took office on January 1, 1962” and included members of the UCN, private sector, Catholic Church, and surviving assassins of Trujillo (Crandall 2006, 48).

On January 16, 1962, amidst public protests demanding the resignation of Balaguer and armed forces secretary Maj. Gen. Echevarria, the latter launched a coup attempt ousting the new Council of State, with the goal of preventing the UCN from gaining power and seizing power for himself. When junior air force officers turned on their commander in a counter-coup two days later, the Trujillo regime had finally come to an end. The Council of State under democratic UCN leader Rafael Bonnelly took office, and democratic elections were quickly organized.61 Both the assassination of Trujillo (in a failed regime change coup) and the failure of Echevarria’s power bid (in a failed “veto” coup) were necessary for democracy to become possible.

61 Although the new democratic regime did not survive long, this is a separate question of democratic consolidation.
VII. Conclusion

Democratic transitions are notoriously difficult to predict. Even leading empirical models of democratization, which have all excluded coup events even while including other measures of instability, have often been able to predict only 10-30% of variation in democracy from one year to the next (see e.g. Ulfelder and Lustik 2007, Teorell 2010, Miller 2012). By exploiting relevant variation in coup events and including a more comprehensive set of theoretically-informed control variables, the statistical models presented in this paper significantly outperform these models in predictive power. Whereas the baseline Thyne and Powell (2014) models were unable to actually predict any successful democratic transitions (area under ROC ≈ 0.8), my models successfully predicts almost half of all democratic transitions (area under ROC ≈ 0.98). The quantitative models and case studies provide evidence that is supportive of several propositions, particularly the positive impact of failed reshuffling “veto” coups on democratization and the positive impact of regime change coups in promoting democracy in personalist regimes.

This paper probes deeper behind the coup-democracy relationship than any existing study has done heretofore. The results do not yield general policy prescriptions over whether the U.S. or other interested actors should support or oppose coups in authoritarian regimes. Instead, case-by-case prescriptions are warranted. Whether or not coups promote democracy is dependent on the identity and preferences of coup makers, as well as the structural constraints that they face. In short, whenever a coup does occur, immediate sanctions may not be the best policy, even though it may be crucial to attempt to shape incentives to promote a transition to a democratic or provisional regime in short order, rather than witnessing the perpetuation of the existing regime or a slide into a new autocratic regime. Given the complexity of military intervention across cases, it should not be surprising that some coups promote democracy, and others don’t. Scholars do a disservice to policymakers by suggesting all coups generally promote (or hinder) democracy.
VIII. Appendix of Results

Table 1: Recent Coup Activity and Democratic Transitions Since 1960, By Regime Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Years with Democratic Transitions</th>
<th>Regime Years without Democratic Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any coup in the last 5 Years?</td>
<td>Any coup in the last 5 Years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarchy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: I omit “other” warlord or occupied regimes, of which two had democratic transitions since 1960 and one was preceded by a coup in the previous five years.

Table 2: Regime Change and Reshuffling Coup Attempts Since 1960, By Regime Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Change Coup Attempts</th>
<th>Reshuffling Coup Attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful?</td>
<td>Successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: I omit one successful regime change coup under an “other” (not independent) regime, the 1961 coup which led Syria to leave the union with Egypt and dissolve the United Arab Republic.
Table 3: The Impact of Coups on Democratization, by Coup Type, 1961-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregate Coup Models</th>
<th>Disaggregated Regime Change and Leader Reshuffling Coup Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any Recent Coup (Yrs)</strong></td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any Successful</strong></td>
<td>0.57***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any Failed</strong></td>
<td>0.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Failed Reshuffle</strong></td>
<td>0.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Failed Reg. Ch.</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Successful Reshuffle</strong></td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Successful Reg. Ch.</strong></td>
<td>1.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic Controls**

|                      | 0.08  | 0.28  | 0.31  | 0.33  | 0.28  | 0.27  |
|                      | (0.15) | (0.24) | (0.25) | (0.25) | (0.24) | (0.24) |
| **Year of Independence** | -0.00** | -0.00 | -0.00 | -0.00 | -0.00 | -0.00 |
|                      | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) |
| **Log(GDP per capita)** | 0.05  | -0.67*** | -0.64*** | -0.63*** | -0.68*** | -0.71*** |
|                      | (0.08) | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.19) |
| **Economic Growth** | -1.47* | -1.71+ | -2.12* | -1.91* | -1.78+ | -1.77+ |
|                      | (0.58) | (0.96) | (0.88) | (0.91) | (0.93) | (0.96) |
| **Prior Dem. Transitions** | 0.13  | 0.37* | 0.42* | 0.37* | 0.36* | 0.39* |
|                      | (0.08) | (0.16) | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.16) |

**Duration Dep. (Cubic)**

|                      | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|                      | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **“Full” Set of Controls** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Region Fixed Effects** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Decade Fixed Effects** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **# of Countries** | 117 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 |
| **# of Observations** | 3938 | 3189 | 3147 | 3189 | 3189 | 3189 |
| **Pseudo-R^2** | 0.179 | 0.478 | 0.477 | 0.472 | 0.482 | 0.498 |
| **AUC Score** | 0.845 | 0.960 | 0.959 | 0.958 | 0.961 | 0.965 |

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by country. Model 1 and 2 applies the aggregate coup indicators using a three-year lag window to predict democratic transitions using data on all authoritarian regimes coded by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014). Model 1 includes the basic covariates shown which parallel those included by Thyne and Powell (2014). Models 2-6 include the full set of additional covariates described in the data section. Models 3-6 introduce the distinction between two coup types: leader reshuffling coups and regime change coups. Due to space considerations, the decade and region fixed effects are not shown, nor are coefficients for the additional controls or the constant. See the main text for a brief summary of significance of major control variables.
Table 4: The Impact of Leader Entry and Exit By Coup on Democratization, 1961-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader Characteristics</th>
<th>Entry Only Models</th>
<th>Exit Only Models</th>
<th>Both Entry and Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founding Father</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.35)</td>
<td>(0.44)</td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Regime Leader</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Years in Office</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Years in Office Sq.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Leader</td>
<td>-1.24**</td>
<td>-1.42***</td>
<td>-1.04**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leader Entry:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>By Mil. Coup</th>
<th>Other Irregular</th>
<th>By Reshuffle Coup</th>
<th>By Regime Ch. Coup</th>
<th>By Anti-Dem Coup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.84***</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td>0.98***</td>
<td>1.09**</td>
<td>1.34**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>(0.28)</td>
<td>(0.26)</td>
<td>(0.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.77**</td>
<td>0.77*</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td>0.87*</td>
<td>1.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>(0.35)</td>
<td>(0.38)</td>
<td>(0.42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leader Exit:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Any Recent (3y)</th>
<th>By Mil. Coup (3y)</th>
<th>Other Irregular (3y)</th>
<th>Regular (3y)</th>
<th>By Reshuffle Coup (3y)</th>
<th>By Reg. Ch. Coup (3y)</th>
<th>By Anti-Dem Coup (3y)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.60***</td>
<td>0.99***</td>
<td>1.99***</td>
<td>1.46***</td>
<td>1.18**</td>
<td>0.69+</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
<td>(0.48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# of Countries: 101 101 101 101 101 101
# of Observations: 2897 2897 2897 2897 2897 2897
Pseudo-R²: 0.503 0.520 0.574 0.601 0.614 0.644
AUC Score: 0.962 0.965 0.978 0.981 0.982 0.986

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by country.
All models in Table 4 include the full set of covariates also present in models 2-6 in Table 3 above. Because they are not of theoretical interest, the coefficients for the control variables are not shown in the interest of space.
Table 5: The Impact of Coups on Democratization, by Regime Type, 1961-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Type</th>
<th>Any Recent Successful Coup (3y)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalist Regime</td>
<td>0.48* (0.21)</td>
<td>0.74*** (0.22)</td>
<td>0.61 (0.40)</td>
<td>0.83*** (0.23)</td>
<td>-1.72** (0.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Regime</td>
<td>0.15 (0.55)</td>
<td>0.23 (0.54)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.52)</td>
<td>0.13 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.14 (0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Regime</td>
<td>1.40* (0.50)</td>
<td>1.35* (0.49)</td>
<td>1.33* (0.48)</td>
<td>1.21* (0.48)</td>
<td>1.27* (0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Regime</td>
<td>2.74*** (0.60)</td>
<td>2.63*** (0.58)</td>
<td>2.66*** (0.59)</td>
<td>3.03*** (0.64)</td>
<td>3.07*** (0.67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction of any recent coup (3 yr) with regime:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Type</th>
<th>Personalist Regime</th>
<th>Party Regime</th>
<th>Military Regime</th>
<th>Provisional Regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalist Regime</td>
<td>1.38** (0.50)</td>
<td>1.33* (0.51)</td>
<td>1.27* (0.55)</td>
<td>1.23 (0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Regime</td>
<td>-0.77 (0.51)</td>
<td>1.68* (0.51)</td>
<td>1.27* (0.55)</td>
<td>1.23 (0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Regime</td>
<td>1.33* (0.55)</td>
<td>1.33* (0.55)</td>
<td>1.27* (0.55)</td>
<td>1.23 (0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Regime</td>
<td>-1.32* (0.54)</td>
<td>-1.32* (0.54)</td>
<td>-1.32* (0.54)</td>
<td>-1.32* (0.54)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# of Countries | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 |
# of Observations | 3189 | 3189 | 3189 | 3189 | 3189 |
Pseudo-$R^2$ | 0.484 | 0.476 | 0.475 | 0.481 | 0.490 |
AUC Score | 0.961 | 0.959 | 0.958 | 0.959 | 0.962 |

Note: All models in Table 5 include the full set of covariates described in the data section. The coefficients for these control variables as well as the constant are not shown in the interest of space. Standard errors are clustered by country. Monarchy is the excluded reference group for regime type. The models indicate that the effect of coups on democratic prospects varies by regime type, being greatest for personal regimes and least for provisional regimes.
Figure 1: Coup Attempt Types and Regime Stability
Figure 2: Regime Duration, by Coup Experience

Democratic Regimes

(a) One or More Coup Attempts
mean duration = 12 years

(b) No Coup Attempts
mean duration = 38 years

Autocratic Regimes

(c) One or More Coup Attempts
mean duration = 25 years

(d) No Coup Attempts
mean duration = 40 years

Mean 95% C.I. Difference-in-means t-statistic 5.472, P-value 0.0000

Note: Regime data is from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014); Original coup data coded by author. Each green dot represents a different regime. 95% confidence intervals bracket the mean duration.

Figure 3: The Duration of Authoritarian Regimes, By Coup Experience

Never Experienced a Coup

The Regime Has Ever Suffered:
...a Coup Attempt
...a Successful Regime Change Coup
...a Failed Regime Change Coup
...a Successful Leader Reshuffle Coup
...a Failed Leader Reshuffle Coup

Mean 95% C.I.

Note: Regime data is from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014); Coup typology data coded by author
Note: The figure indicates that coup attempts are not randomly distributed across autocracies. Instead, they are significantly more likely in the few years prior to democratic transitions (the red line) than the average authoritarian country-year (blue shaded region). Data is based on 86 transitions since 1960 coded by Geddes et al. (2014) and original coup data described in the text.
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