Institutional Arsenals for Democracy?:

The Post-Coup Effects of Conscript Militaries

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Abstract

Recent years have seen increased study of military coups, including a growing debate on how coups influence long term political trajectories. This includes studies that claim coups against authoritarian regimes can act for the public good and provide a boost to a state's democratization prospects. We argue that this growing body of work can benefit from increased attention given to those who carry out coups: the armed forces. Specifically, we argue that coups reflecting a larger societal interest, be it the removal of a dictator or the desire for democracy after a dictator's ouster, are more likely undertaken by conscript armies. A cross-national exploration of over 170 coups suggests that conscript militaries are in fact significantly more likely to oversee democratic transitions following military coups. Beyond contributing to a broader literature on civil-military relations, the paper points to important policy implications for developing nations.

Responding to important regional events such as the Color Revolutions and the Arab Spring, scholars have sought to understand how the armed forces react when the regimes they are meant to defend are challenged by different actors in society (e.g., Pion-Berlin et. al, 2014). Further, much research has sought to explain the conditions under which militaries intervene in politics, specifically investigating the coup d'état (Belkin and Schofer, 2003; Bell, 2016; Koga Sudduth, forthcoming). Explanations for the phenomenon are varied, but often coincide with the corporate interests of the armed forces and/or the public displaying high levels of overt dissatisfaction with the government (Leon, 2014; Johnson and Thyne, 2016). However, a review of this literature on military coups reveals a few important gaps in need of further investigation.

First, comparatively less research has been dedicated to investigating the aftermath of coups. Nordlinger's (1977, 109-110) work—completed over 40 years ago—argued that "what the soldiers do after taking control of the government is of greater importance than the takeover itself." Despite considerable attention to other aspects of military interventions, this specific suggestion has received limited attention. Second, though a few studies have assessed post-coup political trajectories, these investigations have done little to account for the qualities of the armed forces. Third, literature has at times attempted to link political trajectories to the actions of societal actors toward coups, but these studies have not assessed the relationship that the military has with society (Pevehouse, 2005).

This paper fills these gaps by assessing the role of conscription in post-coup politics. We argue that militaries relying on conscripts, being drawn more broadly from society, are the militaries most likely to have the broadest socio-political interests. Therefore, we expect that coups undertaken by conscript armies are likelier to reflect the desires of the public, and consequently anticipate that conscript armies should be more likely to oversee democratic

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transitions than non-conscript forces. Thus, we begin by discussing the literature on our dependent variable, post-coup political trajectories. Next, we examine factors related to our independent variable, military manpower policy and its relationship to societal interests that are likely to shape post-coup political motives and influence. Relying on a global sixty year sample (1950-2009) that encompasses over 170 successful coups, our study reveals that coups are over twice as likely to lead to a democratic transition when undertaken by militaries that include conscripts.

Coups and Democratization

Coups are frequently viewed as the largest threat to democracy. However, some cases suggest that coups can act as catalysts for democratic transitions. Beyond noteworthy historical examples during democracy's "third wave," in places as diverse as Portugal (1974), Paraguay (1989), Mali (1991), some scholars have recently argued that coups are more likelier harbingers of democratic transitions than we would commonly assume (Huntington, 1991; Pevehouse, 2005). Miller (2012), for example, has pointed to violent regime change as opening a window of opportunity for a major change in the political system. He finds that wealthier states that experience coups are significantly more likely to transition than poorer states. Thyne and Powell (2016) find that coups against dictators roughly double their state's democratization prospects, while also finding that democratization is likeliest in cases that are otherwise very unlikely to see a transition (e.g., long tenured leaders).

The findings of the latter have seen the rise of a debate, with Derpanopoulos and colleagues arguing it is not coups, but rather military regimes that drive the democratization trend, while Miller has argued their contrary findings are driven by modelling choices, which severely truncate the sample. The validity of a theoretical connection between coups and

democratization will likely continue to be contested following efforts by Miller (2011), Derpanopoulos et al. (2016), and Tansey (2016), but our goal differs in an important way. Whereas these studies have aimed to explore why dictatorships do not usually democratize following coups, our goal is to assess one possible reason why many coups do lead to democratization. In other words, we seek to study coups as a sample of interest rather than as an independent variable.

Our approach is similar to two prior efforts. First, Marinov and Goemans (2014) argued that an increase in foreign aid conditionality by donor states in the post-Cold War era has prompted post-coup leaders to allow elections far more frequently. For example, following Raoul Cedras's coup in 1991 Haiti, the country's overseas development assistance dropped over 40% (WB 2019). Following the withdrawal of the military and the return of Aristide, Haiti's ODA increased to roughly four times the level seen prior to the coup. In other cases, such as The Gambia following Yahyah Jammeh's coup, a lack of democratic development was accompanied by substantially lower aid flows. Typically less than a third of the level seen prior to the 1994 coup, it would take over a decade and a half for the country's aid to reach pre-coup levels. Second, Chacha and Powell (2017) moved away from examining the coercive nature of conditionality by looking more generally at the financial costs of coups. They found that post-coup democratization appeared to be tied to transnational commercial relationships (trade, foreign direct investment, etc.).

Innovative in numerous respects, these efforts largely omit any theoretical or empirical treatment of the institutions that ultimately oversee or deny these transitions: the military. Miller considers no military dynamics beyond controls for prior democratic breakdowns. Marinov and Goemans only consider whether the military was involved in the prior leader's removal. Thyne

and Powell only include a control for prior experience with coups. Finally, Chacha and Powell only include controls for prior military regime and coup history. In short, the entirety of the quantitative literature that purports to find an association between coups and democratization treats the military as an afterthought. Below, we build on prior civil-military relations scholarship to argue that one particular trait of the military—conscription—is expected to have an especially pronounced influence on post-coup politics.

Conscription and Democratization

We argue that conscription could contribute to democracy by decreasing and limiting military intervention in domestic politics, promoting social integration and a stronger appreciation for the common good, and serving as a vehicle for extending individual rights. While any one of these processes might be sufficiently powerful to foster democratic governance, their combined effect would seem likely to be especially powerful. In this paper, we specifically investigate episodes in which armies have already intervened in politics, and consequently focus on dynamics related to social integration, appreciation for a common public good, and the extension of individual rights.

Initially, socially representative militaries that are typically associated with conscription diminish the prospects that the military could evolve into an undemocratic domestic threat with loyalty to a specific demographic constituency based on factors such as ethnicity, religion, social class or geographic region. While militaries pride themselves on instituting conformity within their ranks to perpetuate order on the battlefield, there is no guarantee that this sense of discipline will be sufficient to keep them out of politics when their own interests or those of the societal groups from which their members come are in question. Thus, Morris Janowitz (1991, 300) warned that with volunteer militaries,

> The potential danger is not simply that the military will become ingrown and socially isolated, although there is clearly a trend in this direction. The real danger is that the military will become both ideologically rigid and more specialized in its contacts with civilian society, and that these contacts may move it toward a more explicitly conservative and rightist orientation.

Further adding to this problem, numerous states adhere to an exclusive military blueprint that systematically exults people from particular groups—often ethnically based—who are viewed as unequivocally supportive of the ruling elite while other marginalized groups are systematically excluded and diminished (Enloe 1990a, 1990b). Because broadly based militaries would have fewer parochial interests than a narrowly drawn force, which might encourage praetorianism, socially representative military structures should be the least threatening type of military for a democratic state (Held 1996, 50-54; Adam 2012, 717).[1] For example, Janowitz (1991, 105) notes that as merit-based recruitment to the officer corps became more socially representative, it decreased the aristocratic hold on power.

Such matters are obviously relevant to democratic governance because, as Adam Przeworksi (1991, 14) contends, the difference between authoritarian and democratic rule is defined by a "threshold beyond which no one can intervene to reverse the outcomes of the formal political process." A military lurking in the political shadows with overriding allegiance to social groups of one sort or other beyond the state could undermine democratic rule. Thus, it is no surprise that numerous theorists have noted how military institutions can thwart democracy when they intervene with force in the political processes (O'Donnell 1996, 35; Schmitter and Karl 1991, 81. Robert Dahl notably mentions military factors first in his consideration of variables that "increase or decrease the chances for polyarchy." He acknowledges this importance because of the degree to

which militaries affect the illegitimate use of violent coercion within a political system (1989, 244). Along with decreasing military capabilities, dispersing military control and indoctrinating troops with democratic principles, Dahl (1989, 248-249) indicates that some polyarchies developed militaries that generally reflected the attitudes of the population at large. Specifically, he writes, "The tendency to adopt the democratic process in governing the state has been stronger during periods when military organization and technology have required that large numbers of combatants be drawn from the general population" (Dahl 1989, 245).

While militaries may intervene in politics on account of their narrow institutional interests, it is understandable how a military that is dominated by a particular group might be motivated to either directly intervene politically on behalf of that group's broader socio-political interests or to pursue those interest in the aftermath of interventions undertaken for other reasons. In fact, it was concerns such as these that led Fredrich Engels to argue that "Contrary to appearance, compulsory military service surpasses general franchise as a democratic agency." This process, he argued, would guarantee that the military would reflect the will of the majority of German society (Neumann and von Hagen, 1986, 277).[2] The same logic was also espoused in democratic France in the Interwar Period when liberal politicians successfully pushed for conscription with short terms of service so as to counter the likelihood of creating a reactionary standing army (Kier 1997, 25, 40, 56-58).[3]

Second, states with socially representative militaries are inclined to be more democratic because they are more socially integrated, fostering a greater appreciation for each other, and ultimately, the common good of the community that is likely to sustain the polity.[4] While the aforementioned process pertains primarily to thwarting undemocratic military behavior, it also

relates to how armed forces can facilitate respect for legitimate democratic processes, regardless of their particular partisan or policy preferences (Przeworski 1991, 12-13). Theoretically, democracy affords majorities and minorities the opportunity to compete politically and win within legally established parameters. However, while the democratic playing field is rarely level in reality, even individuals and groups with political advantage can only be confident in one truth: they will not win all the time on each issue and every vote.

Since military service is intrusive and demanding upon the individual by design, it seems most appropriate that those types of responsibilities should be allocated in keeping with egalitarian principles from classical Greek democratic thought such as equality before the law and at the ballot box (Held 1996, 15-20, 23). Tocqueville (1945, quoted in Cohen 1985, 146) recognized egalitarianism in early America regarding military service when he wrote, "The government may do almost whatever it pleases, provided it appeals to the whole of the community at once; it is the unequal distribution of weight itself that commonly occasions resistance." More recently, Coppedge (2002, 36-37) suggests that unfair administration of military conscription laws should be considered as a possible measure of inclusiveness when measuring democracy. Furthermore, since national security is a classic example of a collective good it stands that all citizens should be equally responsible for its maintenance. Allowing free riders to shift individual democratic obligations onto the shoulders of people with fewer social and economic opportunities violates this egalitarian democratic ethic (Cortright 1975, 43-47).

Inculcating a sense of political equality also helps to mitigate the temptation for citizens to regard themselves as above the law, which could lead them to thwart the will of other politically enfranchised actors. Given the degree to which militaries resemble what Erving Goffman (1961) calls "total institutions" with formidable socializing influence, armed forces can

play important roles in enhancing the quality of democracy by bringing people from diverse backgrounds into contact with one another, so that they can gain a perspective beyond their own, narrow condition. John Stuart Mill argued that for democracy to be viable, citizens had to be able to look beyond their own narrow self-interest to pursue what was in the best interest of the political community.

Broadly-based mandatory military service has fostered heightened national integration on several occasions. For example, while France originally used conscription to refashion its army after the ouster of Louis XVI, Levi writes that "[i]ts purpose was as much nation-building as nation-protecting" by the 20th century (Levi 2002, 342). Similarly, she argues that Britain's widespread military mobilization—albeit without conscription—to deal with the threat from Napoleon altered British society by bringing together men from disparate places and social groups to help forge a shared national identity (Levi 1997, 52). Additionally, the anthropologist Margaret Mead (1967, 109) claimed that universal military service in the United States was "above all a new institution for creating responsible citizens alert to problems in responsibilities of nationhood in a rapidly changing world," while also allowing young people "to establish an identity and a sense of self-respect and responsibility as individuals before making career choices or establishing homes." Burk (2003, 126) argues that while individuals may find service in volunteer militaries to be constructive, it "loses value as a form of civic education" when service in uniform ceases to be a "widely shared experience."

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, it can forge stronger social bonds by fostering intergroup contact to reduce prejudice.[5] Also, civic participation can build social capital by advancing perceptions of others as being trustworthy, fair, and cooperative.[6] Military training builds communal identity by deemphasizing individual identity so as to develop troops

oriented toward self-sacrifice, if necessary (Nadelson 2005, 26). These relationships involving reciprocated trust and reliance, especially when demonstrated under adversity, can become profoundly intimate going beyond even the relationships between spouses (Nadelson 2005, 29-30; LeShan 2002, 84). These relationships between comrades during war have been found to better explain persistence in battle than either patriotism or faith in the objective being sought (Shils and Janowitz 1948, 280-315; Caforio 2003, 15; Nadelson 2005, 28; Stouffer et al. 1965).

Finally, socially representative militaries enhance democracy because they reaffirm the social contract's linkage between the advantages of democracy, including individual rights, and individual responsibility to perpetuate the system.[7] Historically citizenship in democracies and political and civil rights as well as material benefits from the state have been allocated as rewards for military service. First, the historic predecessors of modern democracy associated military service with the benefits of citizenship. Ancient Greece required citizens to provide military service, and Roman law, the foundation for European civil law, afforded the benefits of citizenship to men as early as their nineteenth year, if they served in a military capacity (Cultice 1992, 2).[8] Since this relationship was diminished with monarchies and their use of mercenaries and foreign armies, it is not surprising that at the outset of the Industrial Revolution, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote, "We have physicists, geometricians, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, and painters in plenty; but we have no longer a citizen among us" (Dagger 1997, 99). However, nation-states would come to embrace the idea of citizenship contingent upon liability for military service. While scholars frequently associate citizenship with voting, military service has also been critically linked to suffrage. Janowitz maintained that "the American Revolution and the French Revolution were crucial points in the origin of the modern mass military forma-tion" to the extent that "[m]ilitary service emerged as a hallmark of citizenship and citizenship as

the hallmark of a political democracy." Furthermore, he pointed out that Bismark's Germany instituted male suffrage in 1871 in response to changes in military service obligations. Similarly, Britain, in 1918, allowed those who had been conscripted during the war to vote by abolishing the property requirement that had previously existed (Burk 1991, 225-228).[9]

In the American experience, military service has been associated with the expansion of rights of groups that had been disadvantaged politically. In the decades prior to the Vietnam War "blacks pressed to be armed and integrated into the fighting military as a sign that they had effectively attained citizenship and the concomitant privileges."[10] Based on these efforts, Klinkner and Smith (1999) as well as Parker (2009) demonstrate that military service played an important role in fight for racial equality in the United States.[11] Moreover, young people and women also gained political clout based on their service in defense of the nation. In the United States, the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution lowered the voting age to 18, largely in recognition of the role played by young men serving in the military during the time of the Vietnam conflict.[12] Lowering the voting age based on military experience is not unique to the American historical experience; Bolivia, Canada, France and Italy also lowered their respective voting ages for veterans in 1961 (Cultice 1992, 78, 70). With respect to American women, participation in support of the military effort in World War I helped women gain full suffrage through the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 (Krebs 2006, 134-136).[13] Finally, in the American democratic experience, special benefits of citizenship have been accorded to people who served in uniform. Aliens who had been honorably discharged from the United States military from the Civil War through World War I were granted special status and could be naturalized as American citizens because of their military service.[14]

Conscriptions has also been specifically suggested as a method for preventing coups. For example, Tullock contended that conscription made coups more difficult by somewhat complicating the training and organization of personnel (Tullock 1987).[15] Adam (2012, 715) claimed to find support for that hypothesis in his study quantitative study of 149 countries between 1970 and 2005. More specifically, he claims "that countries with unstable democratic institutions (i.e., those in relatively young democracies) employ military conscription as a mechanism to control the military and to prevent its involvement in a successful coup."

Given our position that conscription's relationship with politics is directly related to the public good, the decision of the armed forces to intervene could even be conditional on the political dynamics such as the quality of governance and the regime's treatment of the people more generally. In other words, repressive government actions could actually *increase* the willingness of conscript armies to seize power. Aware of the confounding effects, we ultimately follow the aforementioned suggestion from Nordlinger to assess post-coup behavior of the armed forces. Specifically, we now move toward assessing whether conscription is associated with an increase in a state's democratic prospects in the aftermath of coups.

Given our institutional focus on military forces, we would be remiss if we did not address why we focus on the recruitment method for the enlisted ranks rather than simply factors related to the officer corps. After all, much of the work on civil-military relations has focused primarily on the officer corps. For example, Huntington's (1957) classic work on the civil-military relations would have been more appropriately titled *The Officer and the State* instead of *The Soldier and the State* given that he focused on role of the officer corps. Similarly, much of the scholarly work on coups has focused much more closely on the participation and involvement of officers. Nevertheless, we believe that our focus is entirely appropriate. While the officer corps

can certainly influence the direction of military affairs, enlisted soldiers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs)—as the most numerous part of any military institution—play an important role as well. Despite some perceptions to the contrary, enlisted troops and NCOs are not perfectly malleable individuals that always easily absorb the socio-political views of their leaders (Peled 1998; Krebs 2006). Moreover, the historical reliance of militaries upon "martial races" stereotypes for manpower purposes suggests that state leaders recognize this statement to be true (Enloe 1980a; Enloe 1980). Thus, the idea that troops are blank slates that can be easily deployed and directed to act counter to the interests of the domestic communities from which they hail is highly suspect (Alexiev and Wimbush 1988). Additionally, since forces using conscription often rely on troops who serve for only a few years, this further serves to limit the ability of military institutions to remake troops entirely in the image of their institutional leaders (Kier 1997).

Data and Methods

Sample

We test the association between conscription and democratization in a global sample of successful coups d'état, as determined by Powell and Thyne (2011) and the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall and Marshall 2018). Our primary models result in a maximum sample of 148 coups, with 57 different countries represented. Additional reduced form models assessing a sample of 176 coups in 67 countries provides results that are substantively identical to those reported here.

Dependent Variable

We assess whether a country is democratic three years removed from the coup. We chose three years as a threshold as it is adequate time to allow for an election and turnover of power, but is limited enough to avoid an accumulation of confounding factors as time goes on. This is also consistent with prior scholarship on post-coup democratization, but is a shorter timeframe than Marinov and Goemans (2014). It is worth noting that a post-coup transition that fails prior to the third year will not be captured as a transition in our models. For example, the 2005 Mauritanian coup resulted in a swift democratic transition with the election of president Abdallahi in 2007. However, Abdallahi was removed by the armed forces in August 2008. Though Abdallahi's coming to power is coded as a transition in multiple datasets we use, it is not considered to be a transition in our models. Aside from the convenience of a simple measure, this operationalization is attractive in that it ensures that our results are not driven by "transitions" which quickly failed.

To assess regime type, we primarily rely on the Rulers, Elections, and Irregular Governance Dataset (REIGN) due to its superior temporal and geographic scope (Bell 2016). Updated monthly, the data also allow us to consider within-year variation in the data. In the text we also reports results from the commonly utilized Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (henceforth CGV, 2010) dataset.

Conscription

We measured conscription or volunteer systems relying on Toronto's (2014) Military Recruitment Data set. While this measure is valuable in terms of helping to distinguish systems of conscription from those that rely on professional/voluntary recruitment systems, it should be noted that even systems that are routinely classified as having conscription have far from total conscription across all young males, the demographic group routinely identified for obligatory

service. For example, U.S. draft laws during the Vietnam War, in addition to only drafting a fraction of the total age eligible male population, worked in such a way as to effectively require less from men who hailed from privileged socio-economic backgrounds (Appy 2000). While the U.S. is not among the countries in our data set, some countries in our data have forms of conscription that stray from an ideal type. For example, during several decades of the 20th century Thailand experienced a brand of conscription that effectively excluded the sons of Chinese immigrants, as well as various indigenous minorities, including Karens and Muslim Malays (Keegan 1983, 580). In some instances, conscription effects military institutions within a country differently, as in Turkey where conscripts played a large role in the Army during the 20th century, but a limited role in its comparatively smaller Air Force (ibid., 594). In other cases, conscription penetrates different parts of military organizations as in Portugal prior to 1958, where conscription was used to recruit for the enlisted ranks but not the officer corps (ibid., 484). However, conscriptions' compulsory requirement often would nonetheless create forces more diverse than those who were socio-economically motivated to serve.

Toronto's data ultimately simplifies a complex practice. Conscription can take many forms and these variations can have important consequences for the degree to which armies might share social bonds with society. We anticipate an observed effect would be stronger if we were able to exclude cases in which conscription, though present, was effectively insignificant. Given the data do not allow this, we believe any bias resulting from the measure should introduce noise to the models that make it more difficult to find an effect.

Controls

We control for a variety of potentially confounding factors. First, we consider whether the country was a democracy prior to the coup. A swift return to democracy could be less

meaningful than a transition from authoritarianism, so the control is essential. Next, as military regimes have been argued to be more likely to democratize than other types of authoritarian governments, we include a measure for whether the state was led by a military head of state (in the CGV models) or a more formal military regime (in the REIGN models). Next, we control for the level of state wealth given prior arguments for its association with democratic transitions, especially in the aftermath of irregular leader removal. We control for the presence of an ongoing civil conflict, as the civil conflicts are both contributors to coups and present obvious obstacles for democratic transitions. Finally, we include a control for whether the coup occurred during the post-Cold War period.

Modeling Strategy

We employ a logistic regression due to the binary nature of the dependent variable. However, we take multiple approaches to assessing the robustness of the results. First, we clustered our standard errors by country in order to account for heteroskedastic variance of standard errors for the models we report. Next, we introduce country random effects. Finally, considering the small sample size, we include estimates from rare events logistic regression (King and Zeng 2001).

Results

We take various approaches to testing the sensitivity of the findings, with the majority of robustness checks reported in the appendix. Here, we take three broad steps. First, we utilize different data sources for coups, including data from Powell and Thyne (2011) and the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall and Marshall 2018). Second, we consider two different regime type sources. Due to its broader temporal coverage, we utilize the REIGN data by default. These

models are reported in Table 1. We also use the CGV (2010) regime data as reported in Table 2. Third, for each permutation we also utilize different estimators. This includes a standard logit model that clusters standard errors by country, a country random effects logit, and a rare events logit (King and Zeng 2001), with the latter addressing the infrequency of post-coup democratization and small sample size. Due to sampling issues noted by Miller (2016), we intentionally avoid utilizing country-level fixed-effects.

Beginning with the REIGN and Powell and Thyne data, we have a sample of 148 coups, 29 (20%) of which ushered in democracy within three years of the coup. There are, however, important differences depending on conscription. Among these events, conscript forces accounted for 81 coups, of which 20 (25%) were democracies three years after. Volunteer forces, however, saw a democratization rate of roughly half that of conscription forces, at 13%. Similar tendencies are seen when considering the CSP coup data and CGV regime data, though CGV predicts an overall higher likelihood of democracy.

[Table 1 about here]

[Table 2 about here]

While bivariate trends can be illustrative, it is of course important to control for a range of potentially confounding factors in order to ensure results are not spurious. Our models, especially considering the conscription variable, are remarkably consistent across data sources and modeling choices. The conscription variable is consistently significant and with the expected positive sign, suggesting that conscript forces are significantly more likely to see a post-coup

democratic transition. Except for the Cold War variable, which exhibited a consistently negative

association with democratization, control variables generally performed very poorly.

After accounting for the controls, our findings reveal an even more pronounced

difference in post-coup fates than what was seen in the bivariate statistics. The substantive

impact of these trends, derived from each of the four combinations of data sources, are reported

in Figure 1. When holding control variables at their mean values, we find that states with

volunteer forces have a .066 predicted probability for being a democracy, while those with

conscript forces see a probability roughly four times higher, at .261. Considering the CSP data

revealed a similar trend, with the probability of democracy going from .061 to .216 when

changing from an all-volunteer force to one using conscription.

[Figure 1 about here]

Using the CGV regime type data reveals a similar substantive effect, though the

probability of democracy is more pronounced. In the Powell and Thyne data, the probability of

democracy more than quadruples by going from .086 to .380, while in the CSP data the

probablity triples, moving from .10 to .324.

Robustness Checks

We made a number of efforts to ensure our results were not driven by any particular data

choice, including steps that went beyond what was reported here. First, an absence of economic

data lead to up to 25 cases of coups dropping from the model (when using the REIGN and

Powell and Thyne data). The democratization rate for the excluded cases was quite low, at 7%.

Though perhaps unsurprising given that the vast majority of these events occurred during the

Cold War and in countries mired in poverty and conflict, we were cognizant that the omitted

cases could bias the results. We therefore specified additional models that omitted the economic data. Second, we assessed prior democracy in different ways. Given some concern than many of these cases could be democracies simply re-democratizing, and that a lagged regime variable does not account for long-term legacies, we introduced additional measures. This included recoding the democracy to only include cases that were at least five years in duration. We repeated this exercise with a ten-year threshold. Next, we replaced the democracy dummy variable with count variables that addressed how many years the government has been either democratic or autocratic. Invariably, each of these robustness checks provided additional support for the results presented in the main text. These results held regardless of the source for the coup or regime type data, regardless of the whether using a traditional, random effects, or rare events logit, and regardless of what type of threshold was invoked when accounting for prior democracy.

Conclusion

Coups are typically followed by continued or rebirthed authoritarianism. Coups are often attempted specifically to stop in-progress transitions, and frequently lead to an array of worsening dynamics in the affected polity (e.g., Powell et al., 2019). However, among post-coup outcomes is perhaps a counterintuitive phenomenon all too often obscured—that coups can also act as windows of opportunity for democracy, or perhaps even direct catalysts. Prior research has identified a number of trends associated with such transitions, primarily pointing at the increased influence of foreign, and specifically western, actors. It is perhaps surprising that far less effort has been put into investigating domestic influences on these transitions, particularly the role of the very actor that both opened the window of opportunity and could act to either promote or veto the transition: the armed forces.

We argue that the nature of military conscription—though manifested in various ways—ultimately increases society's ties with the armed forces. We believe this is no modest distinction, as moving from dictatorship to democracy represents an important shift in power from a narrow elite to a broader swathe of society. Conscript armies are thus far likelier to represent the desires of the broader polity, and are more likely to promote the political empowerment of the masses when those armies intervene via a coup.

Our assessment found strong statistical support for such a relationship, relying on a range of democracy indicators and modeling choices. This is, however, just one of many domestic conditions that can play an important role in transitions. Future scholarship could benefit from providing more attention to variations in conscription in order to understand how they can contribute to democratization and, more generally, nation-building. Future work can also benefit from more directly assessing the role of the public. Though coups are by definition led by regime insiders, many coups are directly prompted by efforts of the masses to unseat dictators. Prior scholarship, however, has ranged from viewing these coups as efforts to forestall broader revolution and redistributive policies to being a necessary condition for democratization (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001; Elischer 2017). Further recognizing the role of these various interests and actors is essential for more fully understanding the conditions under which definitive unconstitutional acts such as coups can help prompt democratization.

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Table 1: Coups, Conscription, and Democratization (REIGN Data)

|	Powell & Thyne Coups			Center for Systemic Peace Coups		
	Clustered SEs	Random Effects	Rare Events	Clustered SEs	Random Effects	Rare Events
Conscript	1.602**	1.602*	1.386**	1.444**	1.444*	1.234*
	(0.548)	(0.766)	(0.595)	(0.537)	(0.746)	(0.565)
GDP pc	0.253	0.253	0.211	0.538*	0.538*	0.445
	(0.266)	(0.267)	(0.248)	(0.312)	(0.298)	(0.298)
GDP Growth	-3.428	-3.428	-3.071	-3.293	-3.293	-3.019
	(2.443)	(3.325)	(2.555)	(2.518)	(3.394)	(2.409)
Democracy	0.288	0.288	0.313	0.648	0.648	0.625
	(0.523)	(0.546)	(0.526)	(0.521)	(0.566)	(0.535)
Military Regime	0.658	0.658	0.635	0.792	0.792	0.757
	(0.637)	(0.599)	(0.556)	(0.686)	(0.662)	(0.628)
Civil Conflict	-0.513	-0.513	-0.383	-0.451	-0.451	-0.341
	(0.592)	(0.668)	(0.587)	(0.622)	(0.696)	(0.605)
British Colony	0.853	0.853	0.777	0.510	0.510	0.475
	(0.670)	(0.827)	(0.715)	(0.745)	(0.826)	(0.728)
Cold War	-1.948***	-1.948***	-1.744***	-2.082***	-2.082***	-1.831***
	(0.595)	(0.542)	(0.534)	(0.635)	(0.614)	(0.581)
lnsig2u		-13.959			-13.850	
		(526.387)			(551.660)	
Constant	0.137	0.137	0.218	-2.258	-2.258	-1.685
	(2.738)	(3.458)	(2.564)	(2.755)	(3.424)	(2.525)
Observations (Coups)		148			139	
Transitions		29			25	
Democracy %		19.6%			18.0%	
Conscript Coups		81			73	
Conscript Transitions		20			17	
Conscript Dem %		24.7%			23.3%	
Volunteer Coups		67			66	
Volunteer Transitions		9			8	
Volunteer Dem %		13.4%			12.1%	
Years		1952-2009			1952-2008	
Countries		57			58	

***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10 (two-tailed).

Table 1: Coups, Conscription, and Democratization (CGV Data)

	Powell & Thyne Coups			Center for Systemic Peace Coups		
	Clustered SEs	Random Effects	Rare Events	Clustered SEs	Random Effects	Rare Events
Conscript	1.873*	1.873**	1.645**	1.460*	1.461*	1.292*
	(0.960)	(0.710)	(0.671)	(0.789)	(0.644)	(0.593)
GDP pc	0.519*	0.519*	0.460*	0.785**	0.785**	0.685**
	(0.247)	(0.232)	(0.211)	(0.307)	(0.255)	(0.256)
GDP Growth	-2.756	-2.755	-2.270	-3.015	-3.016	-2.556
	(2.627)	(2.834)	(2.427)	(2.571)	(2.862)	(2.231)
Democracy	0.257	0.257	0.232	0.504	0.504	0.468
	(0.591)	(0.612)	(0.582)	(0.612)	(0.586)	(0.576)
Military Regime	0.640	0.640	0.558	0.648	0.647	0.571
	(0.571)	(0.575)	(0.557)	(0.590)	(0.581)	(0.573)
Civil Conflict	0.785	0.786	0.765	0.896	0.895	0.839
	(0.595)	(0.599)	(0.564)	(0.621)	(0.633)	(0.604)
British Colony	0.735	0.735	0.675	0.180	0.180	0.194
	(0.914)	(0.785)	(0.720)	(0.812)	(0.769)	(0.694)
Cold War	-0.298	-0.298	-0.272	-0.414	-0.415	-0.379
	(0.537)	(0.581)	(0.563)	(0.585)	(0.608)	(0.566)
lnsig2u		-9.757			-11.429	
		(32.521)			(23.524)	
Constant	-4.115	-4.116	-3.840	-5.632*	-5.632*	-5.042*
	(2.845)	(3.163)	(2.614)	(3.019)	(3.255)	(2.731)
Observations (Coups)		143			135	
Transitions		36			33	
Democracy %		25.2%			24.4%	
Conscript Coups		78			71	
Conscript Transitions		28			25	
Conscript Dem %		35.6%			35.2%	
Volunteer Coups		65			64	
Volunteer Transitions		8			8	
Volunteer Dem %		12.3%			12.5%	
Years		1952-2005			1952-2005	
Countries		56			58	

***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10 (two-tailed).

Figure 2: Conscription and Democratization after Coups
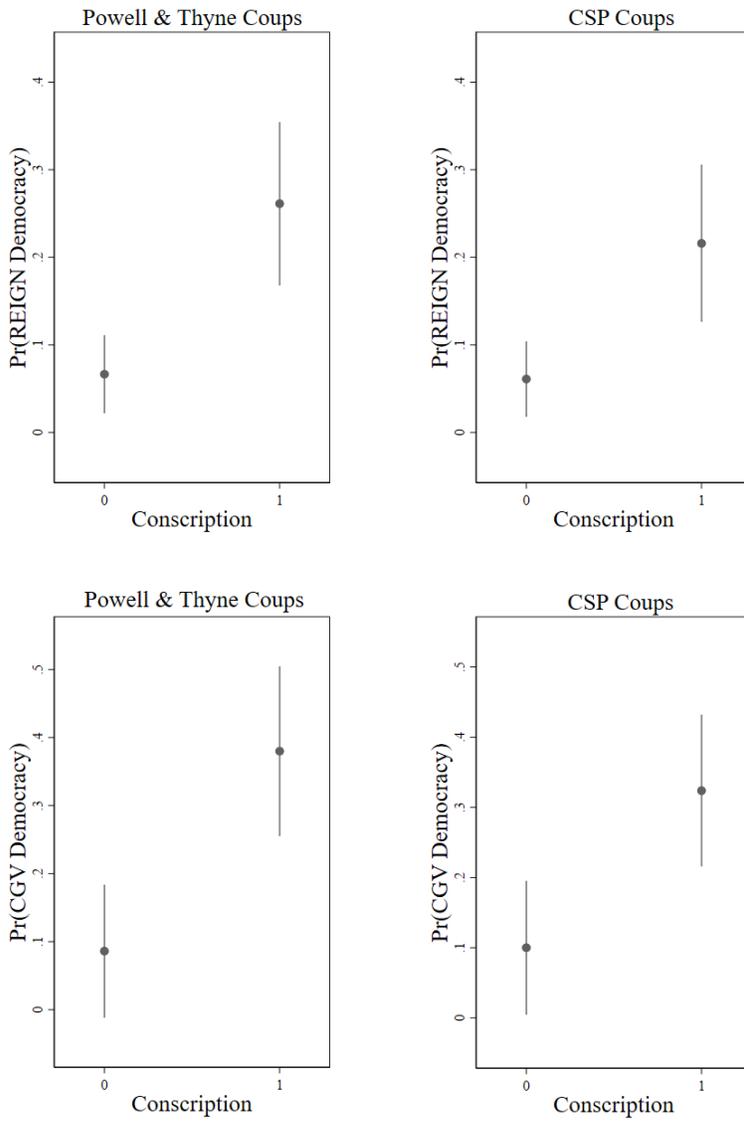
Note: X Axis; 0 = volunteer forces; 1 = conscript forces

End Notes

[1] This is due partly to a fear of forces that could threaten political leadership. Machiavelli (1980, 72-73) advocates using their "own citizens" for national defense instead of mercenaries or foreign troops. Similarly, the standing armies that Kant laments as being antithetical to republican governance are more akin to volunteer militaries than conscripted forces (Kubik 2001).

[2] Under circumstances such as these, military intervention in politics could still be undemocratic if majoritarian interests trampled on constitutionally protected democratic processes.

[3] Janowitz, however, claims that when the political centers of power within a country are not profound, the risk of reactionary military intervention is dramatically diminished. Janowitz talks of the military basis of the Ottoman Empire in these terms (Janowitz 1991, 233).

[4] This process is facilitated in part by a sense of equality among a large number of people. While armed forces are inherently hierarchical, they do create a sense of equality amongst troops of a given rank. It is important to note that a military with diversity in its ranks may be a necessary, but not sufficient condition for promoting social integration. For example, a military may have diverse membership, but if those troops are not integrated during training, daily activity and combat deployment, military service might not overcome parochial perspectives and could reinforce them.

[5] Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that even in groups where characteristics like equality, shared goals and intergroup cooperation are absent, prejudice could be overcome. Previously, Gordon Allport agued those types of conditions were necessary for diminishing prejudice.

[6] While Brehm and Rahn (1997, 1009) do not focus on military service as a variable in their study, they do observe that survey respondents from older generations might be less distrustful because of "collective experiences" such as the world wars."

[7] Levi (1997, 5) observes that mandatory military duty is a paradox for social contract theorists such as Hobbes to the extent that the individual security one receives by submitting to state protection may have to be sacrificed for the good of the community.

[8] Thomas Jefferson himself documented this when he wrote: "the necessity of obligating every citizen to be a soldier; this was the case of the Greeks and Romans and must be in every free state" Cohen (1985, 148).

[9] Women were also allowed to vote in recognition for their wartime efforts.

[10] Morris Janowitz. "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies." Chapter 13 in *Morris Janowitz: On Social Organization and Social Control.* Edited and with an Introduction by James Burk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 228.

[11] Specifically, Klinkner and Smith argue that such civil rights triumphs were the result of Washington's need for a large number of troops, who were often conscripted, as well as the existence of an apparent international adversary and a sizeable movement for civil rights. Parker places even greater emphasis on the role of African American military service While Klinker and Smith make this argument, it has been called into question somewhat by Krebs (2006).

[12] In congressional debate, U.S. Senator Marlow Cook argued that over a fourth of the U.S. military in 1968 and nearly half of the casualties in Vietnam at that time were comprised of troops under the age of 21. However, this was not the first extension of American suffrage to people younger than 21. The Reform Act of 1918 allowed 19-year-old veterans of World War I to vote and all veterans over the age of 19 could also vote during World War II. Cultice, *Youth's Battle for the Ballot,* pp. 72, 123-124.

[13] Three years earlier, women's wartime roles played an important role in winning for women right to vote in New York, which was an important state in the national women's suffrage movement. Cultice (1992, 17) notes that "(a)lthough they were not active in military service, women 'Marinettes and Yeomanettes," army and navy nurses, Signal Corps telephone operators, and Motor Corps drivers answered their country's call. In recognition of their wartime contribution, New York, a pivotal target state in their voting-booth battle, extended full suffrage to women in 1917."

[14] Nearly 200,000 veterans became naturalized American citizens based on U.S. military service during World War I (Newman, 1985, 15-16). It is worth pointing out that material benefits have also been extended at times based on military service or association with a military service member. While the best example from the twentieth century was the extension of the GI Bill's educational funding to servicemembers following World War II, Skocpol (1992) has carefully documented that the social welfare system in the United States began with the extension of material benefits, such as pensions, to veterans and their family members.

[15] Along these lines, training and organization of conscript forces usually face challenges from relatively higher turnover compared to volunteer militaries (Warner and Asch 2001) and the former are reputed to have lower levels of human capital as well (Poutvaara and Wagener 2007).