Constitutional Foundations of Military Coups

Abdullah Aydogan
Ph.D. Candidate
Political Science Department
University of Houston

Puzzle

- Military Coup Literature
  - Region Studies
    - Africa
    - Latin America
  - Cross Country Studies
    - Lack of constitutional design variable

- Democratic Breakdown Literature (Perils-of-Presidentialism)

  - Neglect political influence of military in a world outside of established democracies
  - Mostly fail to distinguish between different types of breakdowns
  - Only focus on democratic countries
    - 1950-2006 (excluding fully authoritarian states like kingdoms): 91 military coup occurred, only about 20 of them were in democratic countries.

Does Constitutional Design Matter?

- Endogenous Explanation:
  - Mechanism in "Perils of Presidentialism" (Linz 1978);
    - Fixed term rule
    - Winner takes all
    - Dual legitimacy
  - Horowitz (1990), Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), Shugart and Carey (1992), Stephan and Skach (1993), Cheibub and Limongi (2002) and so on...

- Exogenous Explanation:
  - Military Legacy (Cheibub, 2007)

- Criticisms to Exogenous Explanation: (Sing 2012, Maeda 2012)

- Different Theoretical Approach:
  - Discussing the inherent features of parliamentarism.
- Mechanism proposed here;
  - **Military Elites'** influence on political decision making, particularly during government formation processes in developing world
  - Inherent features of parliamentarism makes military elites even more influential.

Theoretical Framework

- Inherent features of parliamentary systems give alternative options to the military, which are less costly, so that they do not need to conduct a coup, but they get what they want.
  - Inherent features
    - possibility of coalition governments
    - early government terminations
    - vote of no confidence
  - Alternative option
    - threatening the political arena and creating an ideologically desirable government from the parliament.
- Such a threatening possibility is not a best option for the military in presidential systems because
  - There is no vote of confidence rule, and impeachment procedure is highly costly.
    - Nevertheless, impeachment occurs and military uses this procedure as a new mechanism that replaces the military coups in Latin America. (Perez Linan 2007)
  - Resignation of a chief executive will require new elections or constitutionally mandated successor to be chief executive

Civil-Military Conflict of Turkey in 1997 and Egypt in 2013

- Parliamentary Vs. Nonparliamentary

- Several similarities
  - Culture and demography
  - Islamist movements and parties
    - National Outlook and Muslim Brotherhood
    - Welfare Party and Freedom and justice Party
  - Success of Islamist movements and military's reaction
  - Economy and social classes
  - Military prerogatives (economy and judiciary)
  - Historical circumstances

Civil-Military Conflict of Turkey in 1997 and Egypt in 2013

- Military's response in Turkey: Threatening
  - Prime minister resigned
  - 37 legislators of a coalition party resigned and joined to another party
  - New coalition was formed and the military's reaction settled down.

- Military's response in Egypt: Coup
  - The above strategy is less costly.
  - Why Egyptian military did not use it?

EITM Framework

- Theoretical and statistical concepts:
  - Decision-making
  - Discrete choice (to conduct a coup or not)

- Theoretical and statistical analogues:
  - Game-theoretic bargaining model, Utility maximization
  - Probit and Survival Model (in both cases dep. var. is binary)

- Unifying analogues
  - Military elites will decide to conduct a coup, or not to do so, depending on the opportunities the constitutional design provides, and other actors' strategies.
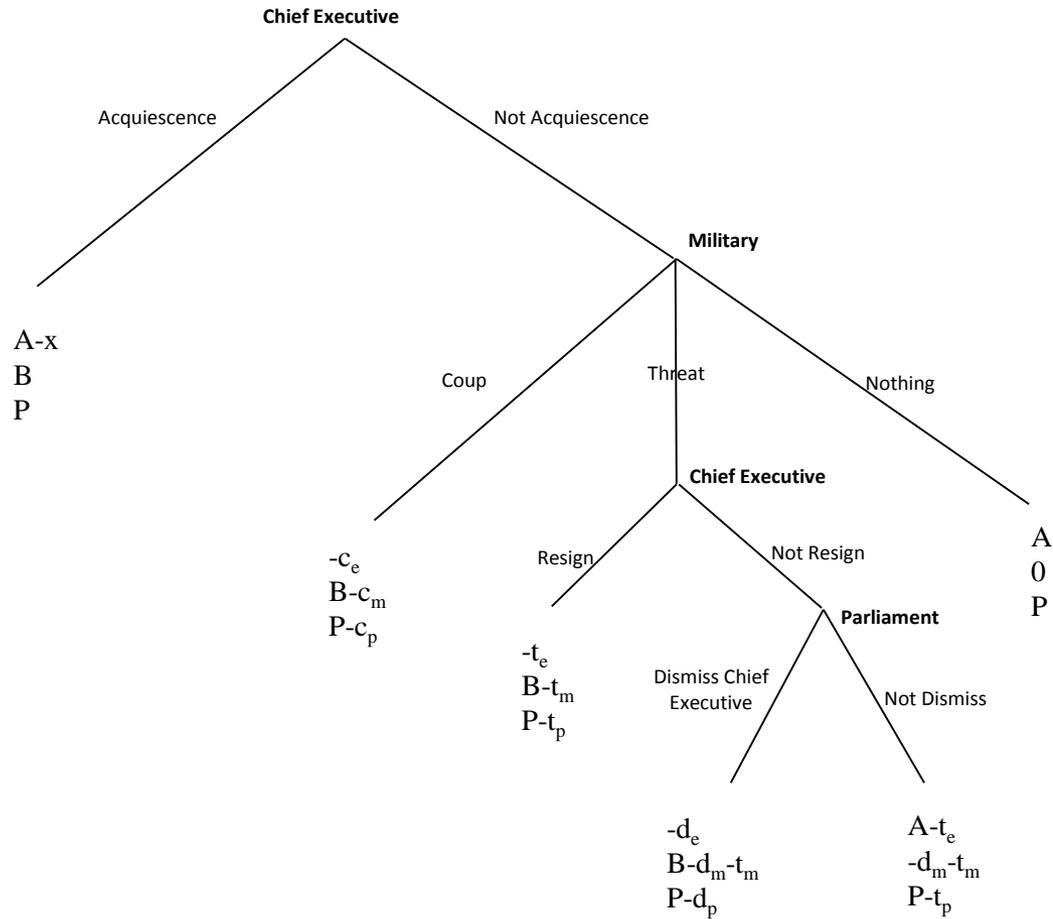
Actors and Their Possible Choices

- Chief Executive
  - Acquiescence to the Military Ideology
  - Not Acquiescence to the Military Ideology

- Military
  - Coup
  - Threaten the Politicians
  - Nothing

- Chief Executive
  - Resign
  - Not Resign

- Parliament
  - Dismiss the Chief Executive
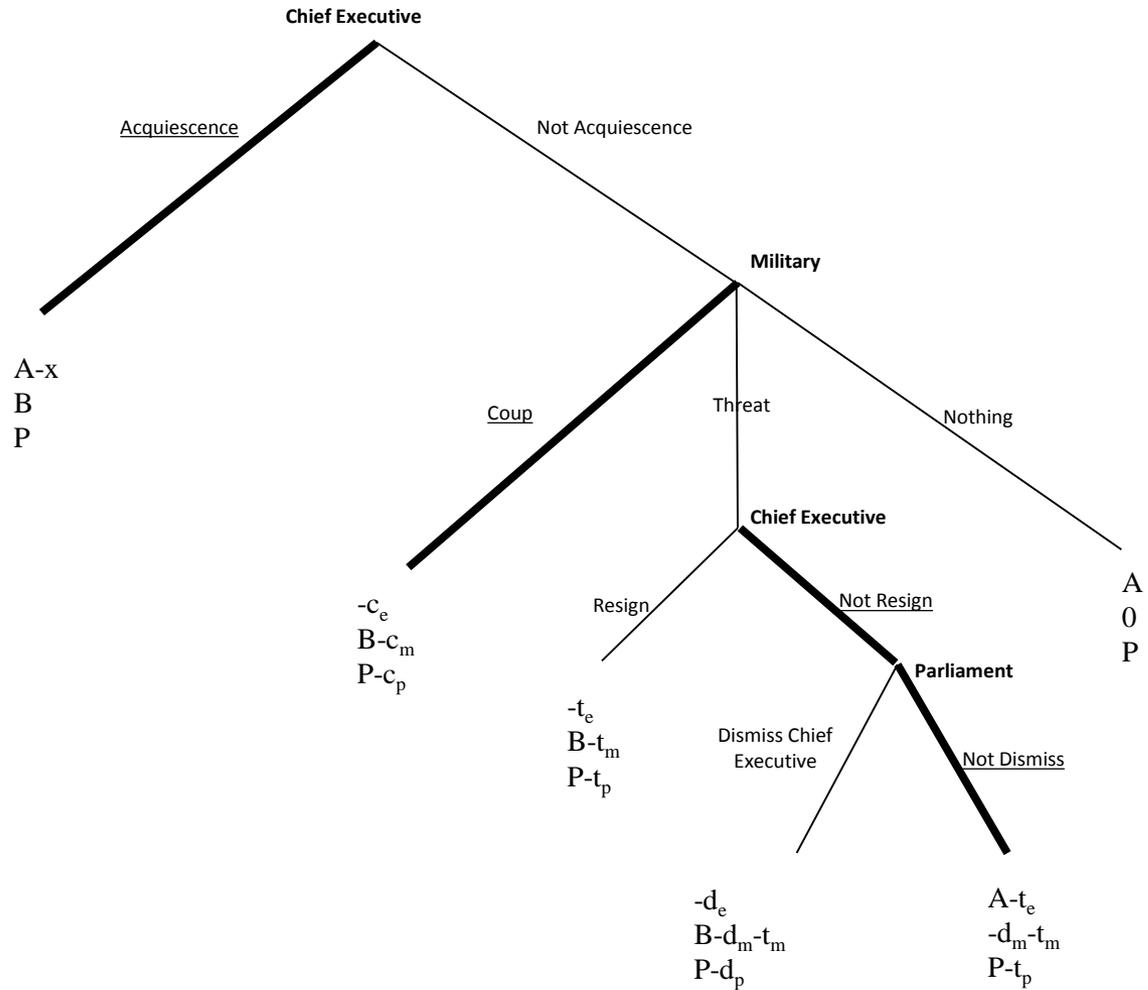 - Not Dismiss the Chief Executive

Notations for the Bargaining Model

A: The payoff chief executive receives when he pursues her own policies in office.

x: The cost chief executive pays when he acquiesces.

B: The payoff military elites receive when they pursue their own policies.

P: The payoff parliament aggregately receives in case there is no exogenous intervention

c_e: The cost chief executive pays when faces military coup.

c_m: The cost of conducting military coup.

c_p: The cost parliament pays when faces military coup.

t_e: The cost chief executive pays when faces threat and pressure for resignation by military.

t_m: The cost of threatening and pressuring to change the government composition. ($t_m < c_m$)

t_p: The cost parliament pays when faces threat and pressure from military for resignation of chief executive, but does not (need to) dismiss chief executive

d_e: The cost chief executive pays when dismissed by the parliament ($d_e > t_e$)

d_m: The cost military pays when the parliament is forced to dismiss the chief executive

d_p: The cost parliament pays when dismisses chief executive due to military pressure ($d_p = l_p n$)

l_p: Parliament's level of loyalty to democratically elected chief executive

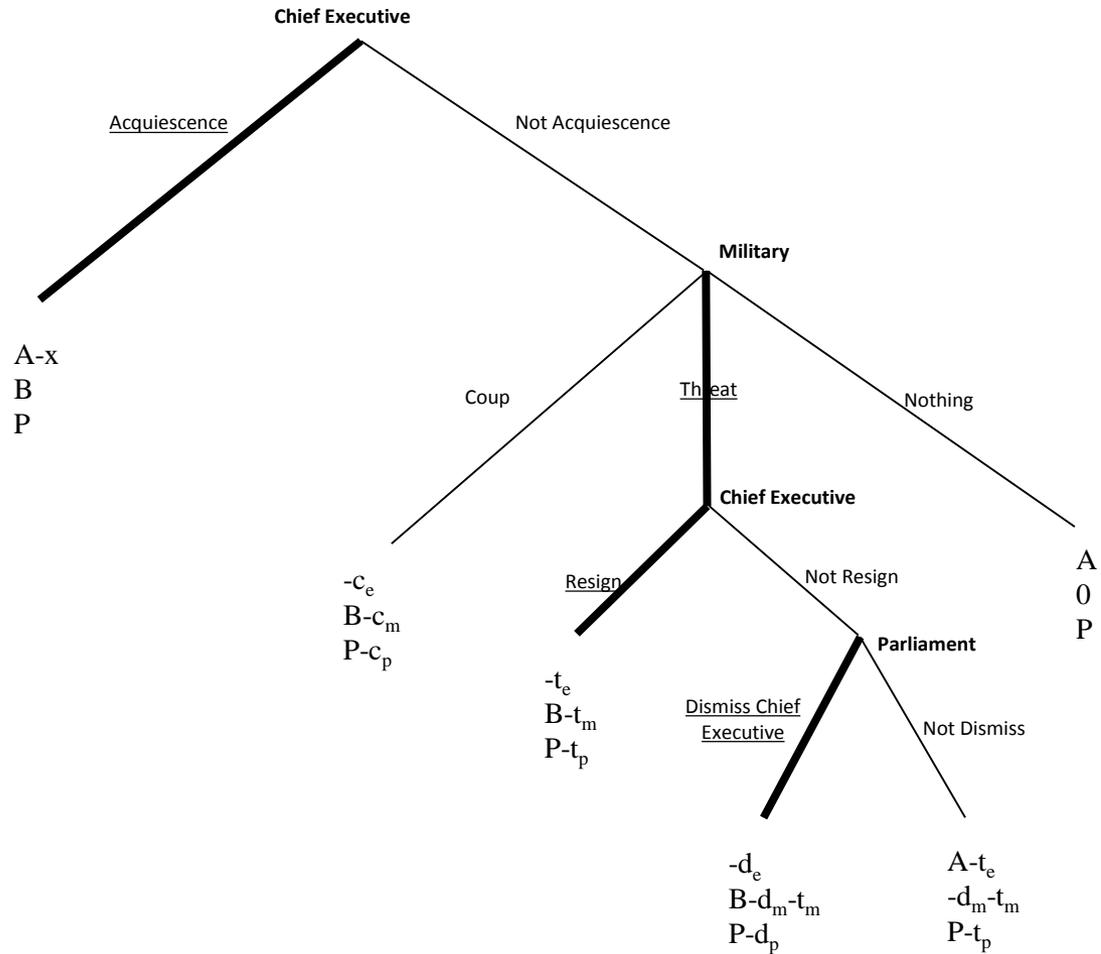n: Number of legislators necessary to be persuaded to dismiss the chief executive

Bargaining Between Military and Chief Executive

Chief Executive

Acquiescence

Not Acquiescence

A-x
B
P

Military

Coup

Threat

Nothing

$-c_e$
$B-c_m$
$P-c_p$

Chief Executive

A
0
P

Resign

Not Resign

$-t_e$
$B-t_m$
$P-t_p$

Parliament

Dismiss Chief Executive

Not Dismiss

$-d_e$
$B-d_m-t_m$
$P-d_p$

$A-t_e$
$-d_m-t_m$
$P-t_p$

$(l_p\ n) > t_p$ (Presidential Systems)

$(l_p \, n) < t_p$ (Parliamentary Systems)

Chief Executive

Acquiescence

Not Acquiescence

A-x
B
P

Military

Coup

Threat

Nothing

$-c_e$
$B-c_m$
$P-c_p$

Chief Executive

Resign

Not Resign

A
0
P

$-t_e$
$B-t_m$
$P-t_p$

Parliament

Dismiss Chief Executive

Not Dismiss

$-d_e$
$B-d_m-t_m$
$P-d_p$

$A-t_e$
$-d_m-t_m$
$P-t_p$

Hypotheses

- H1: Parliamentary systems are less prone to military coups.

- H2: Parliamentary systems allow more elite influence on politics in between elections. (will be tested in future)

Data and Method

- Years: 1960-2006

- Number of countries: 125

  - (57 parliamentary, 68 presidential or semipresidential)

- Unit of analysis: regime years

- Method:

  - Probit

  - Survival Model (Cox Proportional Hazard Rate)
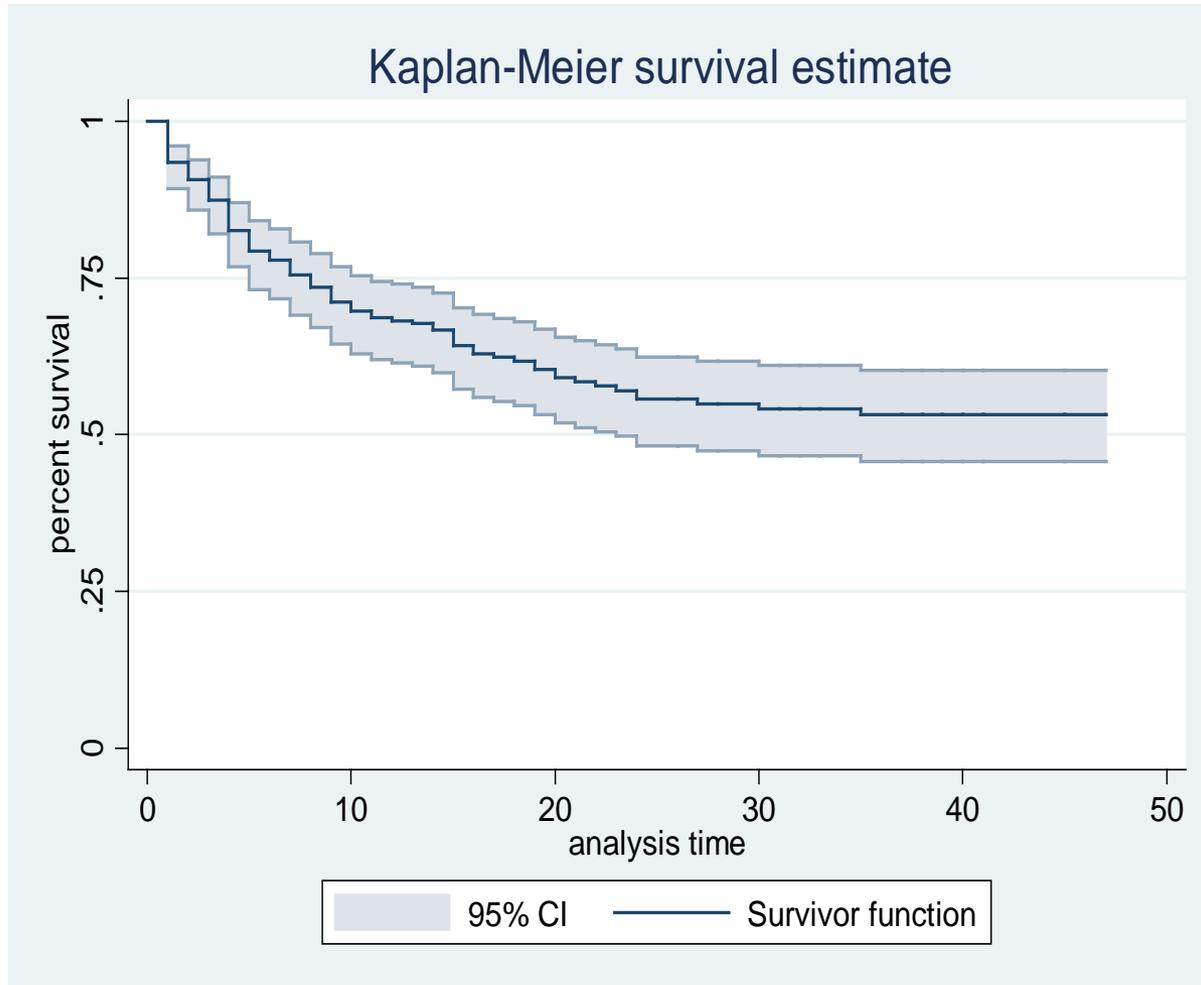
Dependent Variable

- Military coup: it takes value of 1 if a coup occurred at a country in a given year, 0 otherwise

- Definition: "illegal and overt attempt by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive that provides at least 7 days of ruling power to the perpetrators" (Powell and Thyne 2011)

- Aim is resignation of chief executive

- Incoming chief executive does not need to be a general

Independent Variables

- Parliamentarism: takes value of 1 if a system is parliamentary, 0 otherwise. Obtained from Gerring et al. (2009)

- Log of GDP per capita (lagged for one year)

- Change in the GDP

- Change in military expenditure

- Log of number of military personnel

- Soldier quality (which is calculated through dividing military expenditure by the number of soldiers)
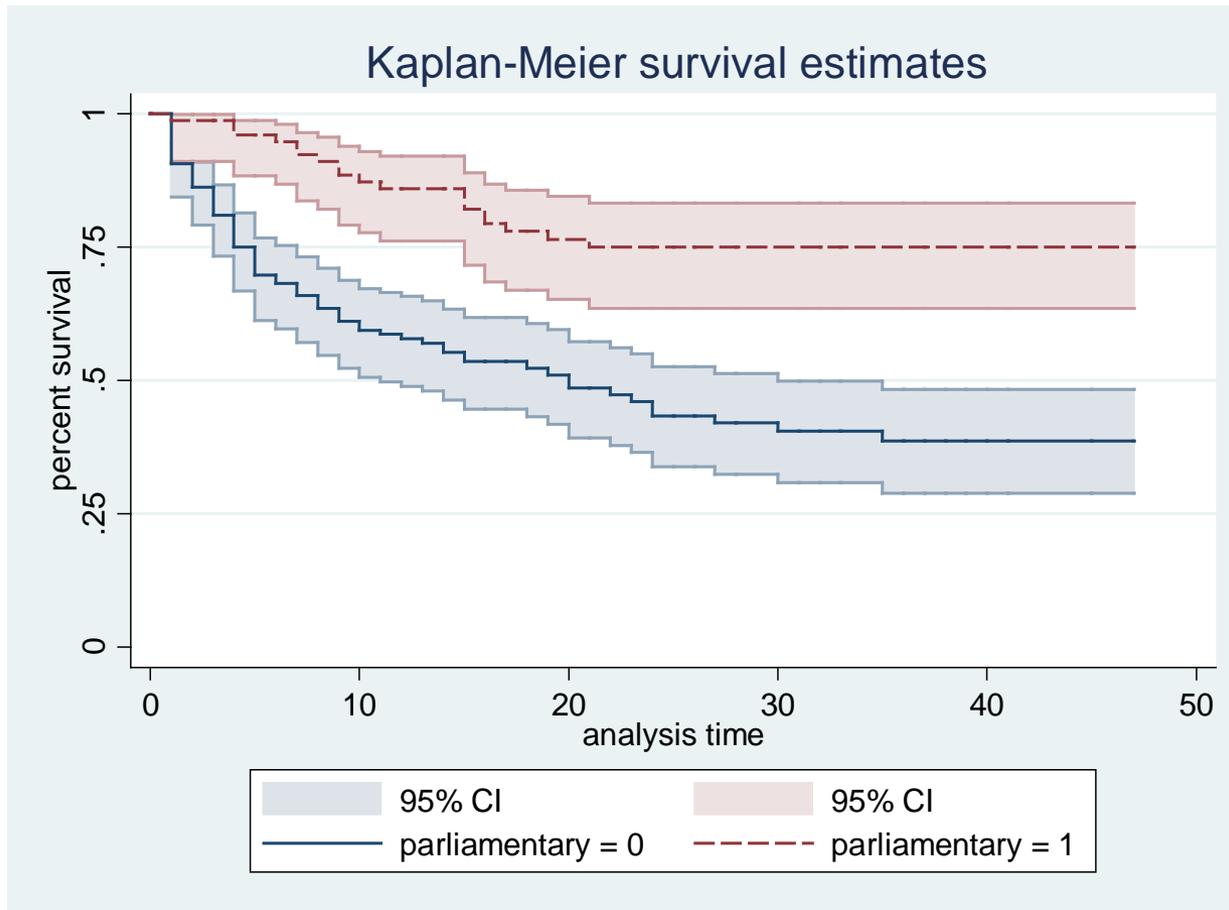
- Military legacy

- Authoritarian dummy
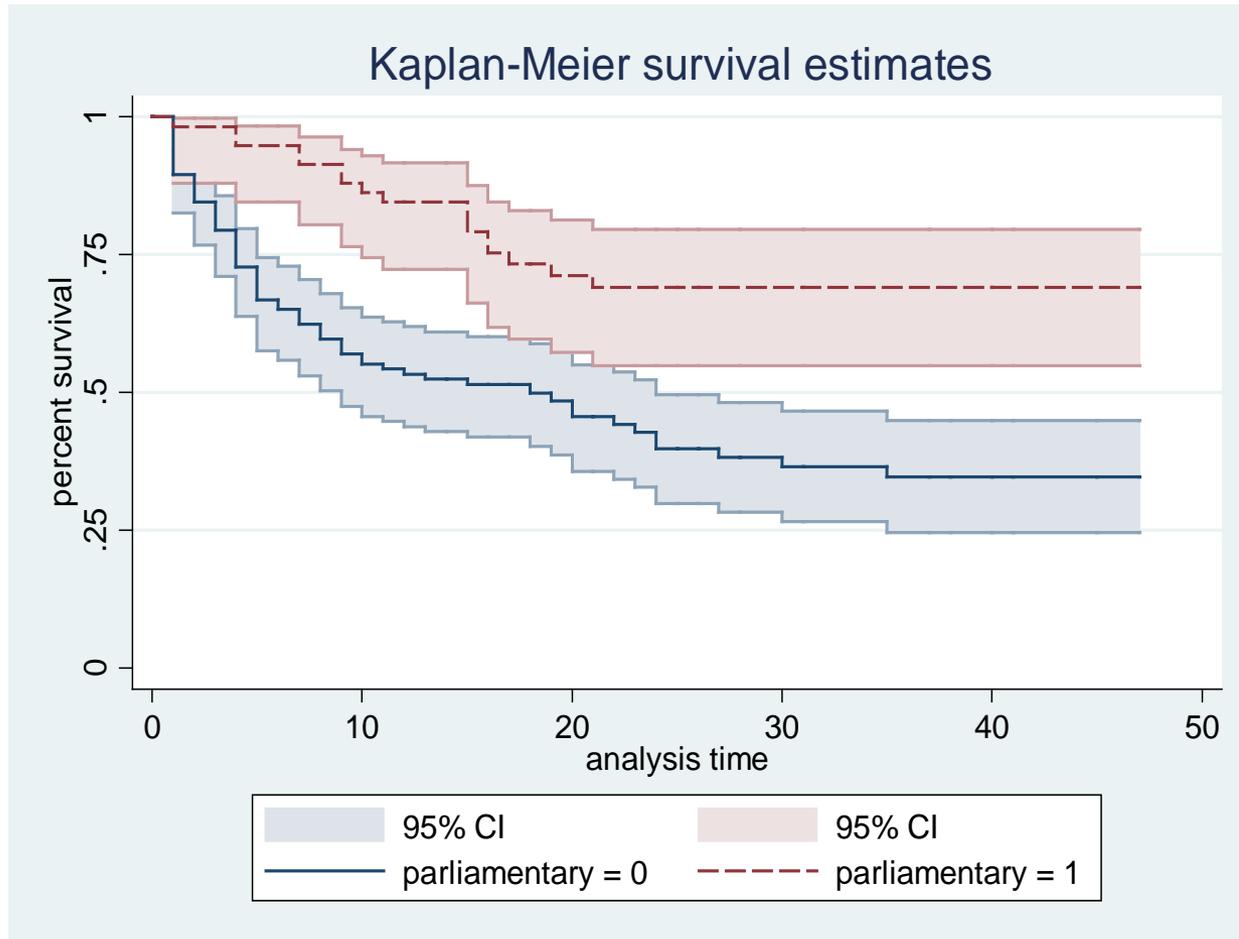
Results

Survival Estimate Graph

Results

Survival Estimate Graph by Constitutional Design

Results

Survival Estimate Graph by Constitutional Design (Excluding Consolidated Democracies)
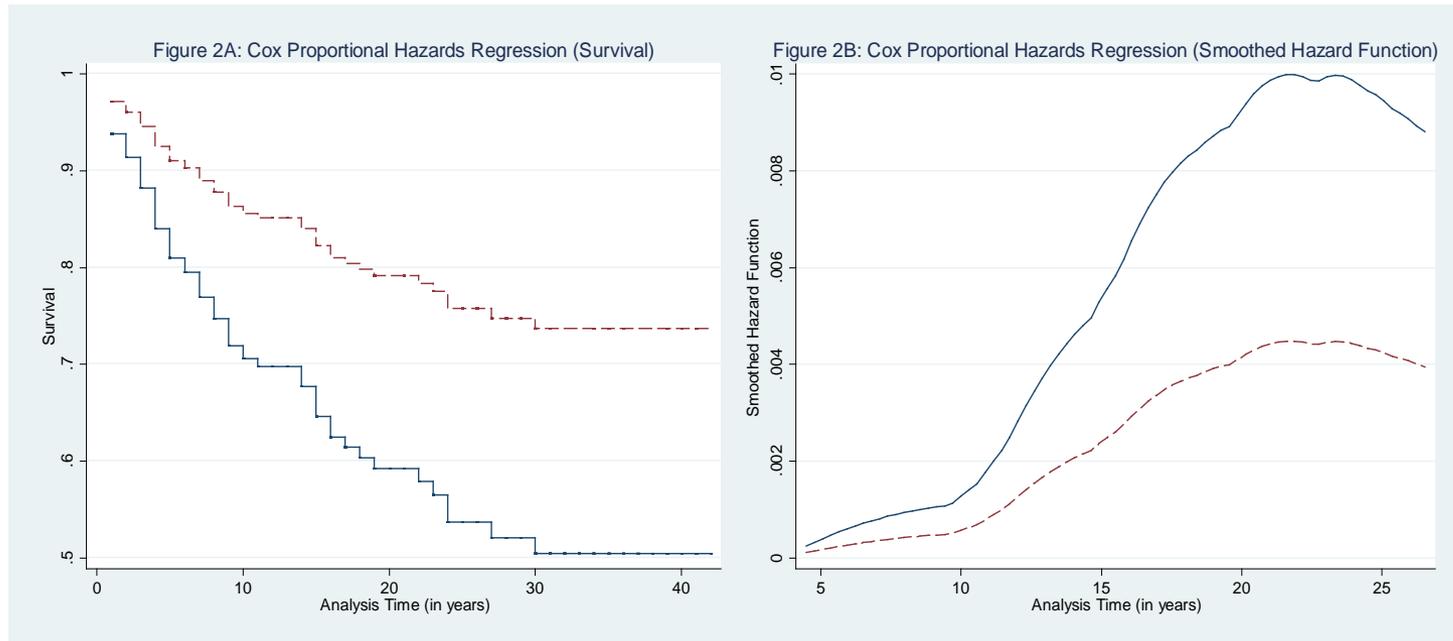

Kaplan-Meier survival estimates

Multivariate Analyses

VARIABLES	Probit	Probit	Probit	Probit	Duration Model
				No SemiPres	
	Polity IV 6 to 10	Polity IV 0 to 9	Polity IV -5 to 9	Polity IV 0 to 9	
Parliamentary	-0.16	-0.44*	-0.43**	-0.74***	-0.88**
	(0.318)	(0.247)	(0.209)	(0.269)	(0.367)
Change in GDP	-2.93	0.24	-0.69	-0.86	-1.09
	(2.014)	(1.636)	(1.042)	(1.786)	(1.641)
Change in Mil. Exp.	-0.36	0.11	0.05	0.27*	-0.05
	(0.359)	(0.142)	(0.077)	(0.162)	(0.137)
Soldier Quality	-0.17	-0.35***	-0.47***	-0.36***	-0.35***
	(0.121)	(0.109)	(0.086)	(0.128)	(0.115)
Log Mil. Personnel	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.12	0.05
	(0.065)	(0.073)	(0.056)	(0.098)	(0.075)
Log GDPPC(lagged)	-0.44**	-0.28	-0.06	-0.19	-0.33
	(0.201)	(0.213)	(0.166)	(0.244)	(0.239)
Authoritarian					-0.40*
					(0.229)
Military Legacy	-0.62**	-0.94***	-0.88***	-1.13***	-1.26***
	(0.277)	(0.237)	(0.206)	(0.289)	(0.354)
Constant	2.78***	3.15**	2.47**	2.79*	
	(0.993)	(1.285)	(0.975)	(1.572)	
Observations	1,779	1,148	1,448	893	2,788

Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Post-Estimation Graphs

The solid line represents presidential systems and dashed line represents parliamentary systems.

Conclusion

- This study aimed to make two contributions to the literature:
  - Theoretically
    - Proposed an alternative theory in regards to how military elites are influential in political decision making process and how this may change the probability of coups.
    - Challenges the superiority of parliamentary systems as demonstrated by Linz. ("Parliamentarism provides a more flexible and adaptable institutional context for the establishment and consolidation of democracy." Linz 1990)
  - Empirically
    - Examines a data on military coups which has not been tested before.

Future Research

- Quantitative analysis introducing a variable for electoral rules.

- Direct way to test the influence of elites on government formation (H2).

- Collect data on military's influence on the government formation and termination.