

Even Generals Need Friends: How Domestic and International Reactions to Coups Influence Regime Survival

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Abstract

Signals from domestic and international actors have been shown to influence the likelihood of coups. Coups remain difficult to predict and consequently leave policy makers in a reactive stance, but little systematic work assesses how these reactions influence long-term outcomes. We examine how reactions from domestic and international actors influence the duration of coup-born regimes, arguing that negative reactions will shorten leadership duration. We further probe these relationships by considering how signaling consistency, Cold War dynamics, and pre-coup relationships condition the influence of reactions on leadership duration. Tests use events data to capture domestic and international reactions and newly coded information on leadership to capture leader duration. Results indicate that international responses have a profound influence on leadership tenure, especially those from strong actors. We find tentative support that state reactions have the strongest effect during the Cold War, while international organizations matter the most afterward.

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The international community expressed optimism for a democratic transition and improved stability after Egypt's 2011 ouster of Hosni Mubarak. This hope was short lived. Amid ongoing civil strife, the military became discontented with President Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood-supported leadership and overthrew the government in 2013. Although policy makers agreed that they wanted bloodshed to stop, there was wide disagreement among international actors about how to respond to the coup. As Egypt's largest supporter in terms of aid, for example, the United States saw a lively debate about how the president should respond to the situation. Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham immediately urged the president to cut off assistance to the Mansour-led government, while the administration leaned toward supporting the coup (Howell 2013). Secretary of State John Kerry remarked, "The military was asked to intervene by millions and millions of people . . . In effect, they were restoring democracy" (Taylor 2014). President Obama sided with his secretary, urging restraint and calm, but making no overt threats to cut off the flow of money. As *The Guardian's* Martin Chulov (2013) wrote, Washington refused to officially "call an armed overthrow of a democratically elected government . . . a coup." The response to the May 2014 coup in Thailand less than a year later was considerably different. In contrast to Morsi's ouster, Kerry concluded "there is no justification for this military coup" and the US quickly suspended US\$4.7 million in foreign assistance (Taylor 2014; Chanlett-Avery, Dolven, and Mackey 2015). The Egyptian and Thai cases illustrate the divergence in international reactions to similar events, even in as basic a matter as labeling an event a "coup."

This article explores the consequences of varying responses to coups, explicitly investigating whether disparate reactions like those described above matter for how long the coup-born regime remains in power. This is an intriguing avenue given that a variety of international actors have adopted policies to punish coup-born regimes, driven by the underlying belief that coups can be curtailed, and democratization potentially furthered, if the international community makes an effort to inflict costs upon coup-born governments. Recent studies have suggested that coups are on the decline (e.g., Lindberg and Clark 2008) and that coups can act as shocks to allow for democratization (Marinov and Goemans 2014) or increased authoritarianism (Derpanopoulos et al. 2016). However, we have yet to see a systematic study on the influence domestic and international audiences have on coup-born regimes.

We pursue such an agenda by investigating the tenure of coup-born governments as a function of how international and domestic actors respond to coups. We offer two primary expectations. First, we argue that coup-born regimes will quickly fail when faced with public hostility. Second, we expect coup-born leaders facing high levels of international hostility to be unlikely to "weather the storm" and will either

voluntarily step aside or risk being forced to do so. After presenting our primary argument, we probe the influence of domestic and international reactions on leadership duration in three secondary ways. First, we expect the influence of domestic and international actors to be strongest when their responses are aligned. While the public could potentially rid itself of an undesired coup-born government through protests and strikes, we argue the existence of strong international support can help ensure its survival. Second, we consider whether reactions from states or IOs have the strongest effect on the duration of coup-born regimes. Recognizing that an anticoup norm has developed primarily in the post–Cold War period, we argue that state reactions should matter most in early periods, and then IO responses should come to the forefront afterward. Finally, we consider how precoup relationships influence postcoup regimes, arguing that coup-born leadership should be short lived when the junta overthrew a regime with ties to strong actors.

Cues and Coups

Although the role of coup responses is a largely unexplored area, there is growing empirical and considerable anecdotal evidence suggesting that coup leaders do in fact respond to various reactions, both foreign and domestic. Our discussion focuses on three primary sets of actors following a successful coup attempt. First, we consider the group that recently staged the coup, which by definition must come from members of the state apparatus (Powell and Thyne 2011). We assume that the junta prefers to either consolidate power for the long term (Svolik 2012; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003) or to handpick a successor who can credibly promise to protect its interests after a return to the barracks. The junta's second preference is to step down, leaving power to a less preferable successor, but only after negotiating an exit with an amnesty guarantee. The worst outcome for a coup-born regime is to lose their privileged status altogether, perhaps via a countercoup, widespread rebellion, or an external invasion. Our second set of actors includes citizens who are nonelite members of the population. We argue that protests from citizens signal government illegitimacy, which is apt to shorten duration of coup-born leadership. External states and IOs serve as our final set of actors. Like citizens, we consider how external reactions to coups influence the junta's decision to cede or retain power and follow up the basic discussion by considering how variations in actor types (states vs. IOs) and precoup relationships (e.g., alliances and trade ties) influence the tenure of coup-born leaders.

Domestic Responses and Regime Tenure

Defined as the “degree of consensus among citizens, elites, and organizations about the state's right to make rules” perception of a regime's legitimacy has been a commonly noted predictor of coups (Belkin and Schofer 2003, 607). Economic performance has been argued to proxy for a government's legitimacy, though

variables accounting for overt antipathy against a regime, such as protests and riots, seem to be more robustly associated with coup activity (Thyne 2010; Casper and Tyson 2014). Finer (1962) claimed that militaries will intervene when the public overtly displays its dissatisfaction with the regime, while Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas (2010) more recently argued that Latin American armies have chosen to remain quartered during constitutional crises due to worry about the public's response to their actions.

Putschists are ultimately dependent on constituents accepting their claim to legitimacy, but often miscalculate what the public reaction will be. Many failed coups, including Germany's infamous Kapp putsch in 1920 and the Soviet attempt to oust President Gorbachev in 1991, collapsed after public support anticipated by the instigators never materialized. Roberts (1975, 31) concluded that "even token civilian opposition can have a disproportionate effect" on an effort's outcome, while Sutter (1999) equates unpopular coups with overtaking a ship: armed men can overtake the bridge, but the passengers can still knock out the engines. Indeed, civilians have the potential to make a polity completely ungovernable in a postcoup environment. These leaders would seem to have three options: (1) repress dissent in an attempt to consolidate power, (2) stay at the helm of Sutter's disabled ship and risk being overthrown by force, or (3) voluntarily step down from the bridge.

We expect leaders to be less willing to repress dissent or make other moves to retain power that might risk their elite status altogether. Research has shown that the costs of leadership turnover are dangerous following the costs of conflict (coups do, after all, have costs of their own), and that frequent leadership turnover leads to commitment problems for the state (Wolford 2007, 2012). Far from being the end of political turmoil, the putschists' rise to power could merely represent the beginning of a much longer political crisis. To avoid further deterioration, coup-born leaders are tasked with building a regime that is seen as legitimate by those they mean to rule. These leaders consequently justify their efforts as acting in public good, including ending repression utilized by the previous regime. Few actions will undermine the new regime's efforts quicker than the use of repression, and repression itself has severe limitations and can undermine the interests of the military (Danopoulos 1988; Wintrobe 1998; Enterline and Gleditsch 2000; Pion-Berlin and Trinkunas 2010).

To avoid risking their elite status altogether, coup leaders faced with protests are likely to cede power or open up the political process. For example, Thyne and Powell (2016) suggest that coup-born governments will attempt to increase their popularity by permitting democratic reforms. Although such reforms could lead to one's ouster through electoral loss, this is preferable to the consequences of being ousted through either countercoups or mass uprisings. Leaders removed through irregular means are over twice as likely to be exiled as to go unpunished and are equally likely to be killed (Goemans 2008).¹ Maintaining power in the face of domestic resentment can thus be risky, especially when one considers the disproportionate increase in coup likelihood shortly after one has been attempted (Londregan and Poole 1990).

While opening the political process is not always a viable option, coup-born regimes do have the ability to shift hostile opinions by stepping down from office even when they are unable to handpick their successors. This might seem contrary to the incentives of attempting a coup in the first place, but such a strategy has its advantages, especially if the plotters are met with unexpected resistance. First, the plotters do not run the risk of being overthrown, and successful putschists can negotiate an exit by securing an amnesty guarantee (e.g., 2003 São Tomé e Príncipe). Second, stepping down can earn rewards from the ensuing regime, including improved organizational benefits or promotions for officers. Even Captain Amadou Sanogo, whose 2012 coup in Mali can be described as nothing short of calamitous, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general shortly after ceding power. Third, stepping down most often leaves officers eligible for a future office. The target of Captain Sanogo's coup in Mali, for example, originally came to power following the 1991 ouster of Moussa Traoré. Newfound leader Amadou Toumani Touré quickly stepped down, was promoted to general by the following government and later ascended to the presidency after testing the 2002 presidential ballot.

Public responses to coup-born governments are important for three broad reasons. First, protests can undermine the regime's legitimacy and make it difficult to consolidate rule. Second, the existence of a coup in the first place indicates that the regime is already weak and potentially vulnerable to a subsequent coup. Such a scenario grows increasingly tenuous with an increase in antipathy toward the leader. Third, though the public could react with hostility toward a coup, all is not lost for its participants. Voluntarily stepping aside helps avoid larger, revolution-like crises that risk the coup leaders' elite statuses altogether and can earn the plotters amnesty or allow them to contest later elections. This discussion leads us to our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: As negative postcoup reactions from domestic actors increase, the tenure in office for leaders who came to power via a coup d'état should decrease.

International Responses

International reactions to coups have similar effects as domestic responses. While coups have not previously been examined individually in the leadership turnover literature, work shows that the perceptions of the international community play a strong role in leadership durability (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Colaresi 2004; Wolford 2007; Goemans 2008; Debs and Goemans 2010; Shannon et al. 2015; Escribá-Folch and Wright 2010). In the light of the irregular manner of removal from office, these conditions should be amplified with coups. Such a viewpoint is consistent with Thyne's (2010) investigation of coups in Latin America, which found attempts to be more likely when regimes receive hostile signals from the

United States. Such a view is also prevalent in the literature on coups in Africa, which has argued that a lack of international condemnation of independence-era coups increased the willingness of militaries to intervene (e.g., First 1971).

Based on this literature, we suspect most coup-born regimes facing international backlash to be unwilling to risk the consequences of a foreign intervention, choosing instead to cede power before such consequences arise. Two of Latin America's more recent coups help illustrate this expectation. Following the overthrow of Haitian President Aristide in 1991, the Organization of American States (OAS) quickly instituted a trade embargo, and sanctions went from hemispheric to global after the approval of a "universal" oil and arms embargo with United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 841. Although the junta initially refused to step down, it was ultimately convinced to do so following the approved deployment of 20,000 US marines. Raoul Cédras left for Panama soon afterward, leaving behind his position as commander in chief of the army.

Based on the Haitian example, Honduran soldiers who overthrew President Zelaya in 2009 likely knew what to expect from international actors, particularly after the anticoup framework was established from the OAS (specifically Resolution 1080 [1991] and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, 2001). They chose the coup route anyway and were predictably suspended from the OAS. As Thompson and Lacey (2009) explain, however, this was a strategic set of coup plotters. They predicted punishment but also predicted that they could withstand international backlash for a few months before ceding power following already scheduled elections. They were right. Power returned to democratic rule five months after the coup, and neither the civilian nor military coup leaders suffered consequences for their actions.

These examples illustrate how negative international reactions to coups can shorten the tenure of coup leaders. However, we might see dramatic variation in reactions from international actors. Following the 2008 Mauritania coup, for example, almost all reactions were negative, including official responses from states like Nigeria, the United States, and South Africa, and similar condemnation from IOs such as the UN, European Union, and African Union. International actors rarely speak with such a consistent voice. Focusing on the 2011 overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt, for example, Morey and his colleagues (2012) reveal that while states like France and the United States expressed concern fairly consistently, these negative reactions were balanced by early and consistent support from Russia and China.

While the Haitian and Honduran cases suggest that coup-born leadership should be short lived when international actors condemn the coup, the Egyptian example indicates that it would be unwise to assume the international community speaks with a unified voice. We expect opposing responses among international actors to weaken the effect that negative responses have on the coup-born government. The effects of sanctioning behavior are weakened dramatically when the coup regime can find support elsewhere, and the likelihood of direct interventions decreases if potential

interveners sense that their actions could precipitate a much larger international crisis. This discussion yields our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: As agreement in negative postcoup reactions from international actors increase, the tenure in office for leaders who came to power via a coup d'état will decrease.

Secondary Expectations

In this section, we unpack the influence of responses on the duration of coup-born leadership by focusing on three factors. First, while we considered domestic and international responses independently above, in reality coup-born regimes will consider the reactions of both actors at once, and these responses will not always be in unison. We, therefore explore the interaction between domestic and international responses to coups. Second, international responses come from a variety of actors, and the influence that these actors have on coup leadership is likely to change in predictable ways over time. Thus, we consider how state and IO reactions are conditioned by the Cold War. Finally, we expect the influence of international responses to vary depending on the strength of the external actor and the actor's precoup relationships with the coup state.

Mixed Responses

We begin by considering cases where coup-born regimes receive conflicting reactions from domestic and international actors. Two scenarios are possible: the public could support a coup that is condemned by international actors or they could rage against a coup that is supported by international actors. In both cases, we expect the consequences of the response sent from any one actor to be tempered by contrasting reactions from another.

Considering the first scenario, international actors have fewer options to punish juntas that have domestic support. Sanctions can be applied and states can be ousted from IOs, of course, though such actions may draw a backlash by strengthening support via a rally effect and by giving the junta a scapegoat for domestic troubles (Galtung 1967). At more extreme levels, military invasions to oust even unpopular leaders will likely meet resistance, and resistance should be strongest when ousting a leader who enjoys broad public support (Edelstein 2008). Just as domestic support for coup-born leaders can offset international condemnation, so too can international support offset domestic protests. This is consistent with the more general concept of "black knights," which are external actors that support authoritarianism (von Soest 2015; Tolstrup 2015). A general strike can derail a country's economy and pressure the leadership to step down, for example, but this could be offset if the regime receives a lifeline such as economic aid from abroad.

The growing anticoup framework of the African Union (AU) illustrates these dynamics. The organization has seen some successes, as seen with both the declining

frequency of coups and in influencing coup-born regimes (Souaré 2014; Powell, Lasley, and Schiel 2016). Following the 2003 coup in São Tomé e Príncipe, for example, the new regime was immediately threatened with sanctions, including an oil embargo from Angola and a military intervention from then-AU Chairman Obasanjo's Nigerian military (Ikome 2007). With little public support, the new regime collapsed in less than two weeks (Seibert 2003). In other cases, condemnation from international actors seems to have been offset by domestic support for the new government. The coup that overthrew Mauritanian President Taya in 2005, for example, was harshly condemned by a variety of international actors. These reactions stood in stark contrast to the flood of people who took to the streets to celebrate the strongman's ouster (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] 2005). Able to withstand international condemnation, the junta leaders held onto power until elections in 2007, which saw the junta-supported Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi come to power (N'Diaye 2009). These cases fit with Omorogbe's (2011) more general overview of the AU's anticoup efforts, which suggest that the positive influences associated with public support for the removal of dictators is being undermined by hostile international reactions. This leads us to our third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The influence of reactions from domestic/international actors on the tenure of coup-born regimes should weaken if they are inconsistent with responses from international/domestic actors.

States, IOs, and Anticoup Norms

To this point, we have combined states and IOs as international actors in our discussion of how international reactions influence coup-born leadership. However, a large swath of literature focusing on liberal international institutions suggests that IOs may have a fundamentally different role from states in the international community (Doyle 1986; Moravcsik 1997). Realists contend that states pursue self-interest and power, while liberals argue that IOs serve as a testament to states' ability to cooperate for collective interest (Mearsheimer 1991; Doyle 1986; Keohane 2005). If liberals are correct, states are apt to signal differently than IOs, and the effect of these signals should yield different postcoup outcomes. In contrast, if signals from IOs have little to no impact on the domestic affairs of other states or are no different from that of states, this bolsters the realist argument that IOs largely do not matter in international relations, at least in the postcoup context.

There is reason to suspect that responses have changed over time, both in terms of those reacting, the nature of the reactions, and the influence of the reactions. Following the end of the Second World War, political nationalism and state identity were of the utmost importance. Counterattacks to nationalist tendencies included the formation of the European Union, the UN, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, none of these were able to deter the arms race between the Soviet

Union and the United States as the Cold War came to the political forefront. Up until the end of the Cold War, we expect to see state reactions dominate signals from IOs, if for no other reason than that nationalist ideology had benefited from a much longer period of path dependence than cooperative IOs.

The end of the Cold War bolstered the normative commitment to democracy through global institutions, and IOs expanded in number and prominence (Kadera, Crescenzi, and Shannon 2003; Pevehouse 2005; Milner 1997; Shannon, Morey, and Boehmke 2010). States could use membership in IOs to mount stronger, multilateral efforts for desired results. Such a contention is consistent with a recent study from Shannon and her colleagues (2015), which shows that IOs became the preferred mouthpiece for postcoup international signaling following the end of the Cold War. Due to the democratic nature of these organizations, we should also expect to see an increase in the likelihood of international reactions to push for democratization in coup states, consistent with the findings of Marinov and Goemans (2014) and Thyne and Powell (2016). Indeed, a variety of transnational frameworks were adopted with the intention of explicitly deterring coups. Although individual countries like the United States implemented policies that called for the suspension of both military and foreign aid against regimes that seize power through a coup, regional IOs took the most forceful steps following the end of the Cold War.² OAS General Assembly Resolution 1080 (1991) provided the first comprehensive attempt by regional actors to guarantee constitutional power transfers by recommending a comprehensive set of punishments for coup-born governments.³ The overwhelming response to the aforementioned Haitian case sent an example to others in the region. During the 1996 Paraguayan constitutional crisis, for example, some observers saw it as a foregone conclusion that General Lino Cesar Oviedo would seize power. Although Oviedo's rivalry with President Juan Carlos Wasmosy reached a boiling point, he did not seize power, reportedly claiming to his colleagues that "with the OAS's adoption of Resolution 1080 in Santiago, the era of Latin American coups had come to an end" (Valenzuela 1997, 54).

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and, later, the AU took similar steps, though early OAU efforts were far less consistent than that of the OAS.⁴ After being given the opportunity to pursue a Haitian-type precedent when a 1999 coup unseated Henrie Konan Bedie in Cote d'Ivoire, the organization allowed the coup leader to attend its subsequent meeting. The 2002 launch of the AU more clearly specified the required organizational response, and the AU has grown more consistent in punishing coups following the establishment of its Peace and Security Council (Omorogbe 2011; Souaré 2014).

The growing strength and consistency of reactions to coups from international actors is important because they provide important information to coup plotters, both prior to and in the aftermath of a coup. In the aftermath of coups, reactions from the international community can act to either stabilize or undermine the new regime. Strategic state interests dominated the landscape during the Cold War, creating responses that varied in both direction and strength. Following the conclusion of

the Cold War, however, policies from IOs helped develop norms to condemn coups in the international community. This discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The influence of state reactions to coups on regime duration should have the strongest influence during the Cold War, and IO reactions should have the strongest influence afterward.

Precoup Relationships

Our final concern focuses on precoup relationships. The discussion thus far considers how reactions from domestic and international actors influence the postcoup tenure of coup leaders. These reactions can indeed be unpredictable and fleeting (Morey et al. 2012); however, it would be unwise to assume that coup leaders ignore precoup information when launching the putsch. Instead, we suspect positive precoup relationships to strengthen the relationship between international reactions to coups and the tenure of coup-born regimes.

The most direct way that external actors can shorten the life span of coup-born regimes is by imposing a new regime by force, as we saw the United States do in Panama. Undertaking such maneuvers requires both ability and will, however, which is not constant across states that may react harshly to coups. US condemnation of the 2000 Ecuadorian coup likely influenced the junta more than a similar reaction from the UK, for example, due to US strength and its long history of influence in Latin America. Seeking to avoid the fate of leaders like Hudson Austin in Grenada or Johnny Paul Koroma in Sierra Leone, we expect coup-born regimes to be short lived when they overthrow a regime that had friendly relations with major powers.

A secondary way that precoup relations matter is less direct, though similarly important for the survival of a coup-born regime. States form security arrangements to protect their long-term interests. The Egypt–Israel (1979) peace treaty, for example, not only normalized relations between the two states but also started the flow of economic and military aid from the United States to Egypt. Over time, relations between Egypt and Israel warmed, and the two states now cooperate extensively in counterinsurgency operations (Schenker 2015). Given the importance of this relationship, it is no surprise that military leaders immediately promised to uphold international agreements after ousting Presidents Mubarak and Morsi, and it is unsurprising that Israel reacted positively to the coups following such overtures (Fahim 2011; Times of Israel 2014). Had either the United States or Israeli responses to the Egyptian coups been hostile, we suspect the military's run in office would have been appreciably shorter. This discussion yields our final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: As precoup ties between coup states and powerful international actors increase, the influence of negative postcoup reactions from international actors on the tenure in office for leaders who came to power via a coup d'état should increase.

Research Design

Our primary expectation is that the duration in office for coup leaders will decrease if domestic (Hypothesis 1) and international (Hypothesis 2) actors react negatively to the coup. We further expect the influence of domestic reactions to have weaker effects when they are inconsistent with international responses and vice versa (Hypothesis 3). Focusing exclusively on the influence of international reactions, we argue that states should have their strongest influence during the Cold War, and that IO responses should be most meaningful after the Cold War (Hypothesis 4). Finally, we expect the influence of reactions to matter most for states that have precoup ties with strong actors (Hypothesis 5).

To test our hypotheses, we first define our unit of analysis as the postcoup period for all leaders who came to power via a coup from 1950 to 2013. We begin with Powell and Thyne's (2011) data set, which records 233 successful coups during this time frame.⁵ After losing cases due to missing data, we end up with 206 cases. Among these, 192 cohorts lost power prior to the end of our data set, leaving fourteen others censored. Our dependent variable, *leader duration*, captures the duration (in months) that the coup leader(s) retained power after successfully seizing control of the government.⁶ This measure comes from original data coded for this project. To this point, coup data sets have classified coup attempts as successful if the coup leader maintains power for a certain number of days—usually a rather arbitrary week or month.

Our measure improves upon previous efforts in two ways. First, we pinpoint the exact date that the leader or the leader's cohort remained in control. This ranges from a minimum of seven days to a maximum of forty-two years. This precision allows us to capture "success" on a continuum and will allow future researchers to either use duration as a continuous measure (as in this project) or define their own threshold to code coup success. Second, our measure captures the duration that either the leader or the leader's cohort remains in office. While one could easily capture the date the leader leaves office using leader-focused data sets, such as the Archigos Dataset of Political Leaders (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009), in many cases, the leader hands power to a close relative or another member of the coup cohort. In these cases, focusing exclusively on the leader's tenure would deflate the duration that the coup leadership retains office. Thus, we examined the historical record of each power transition following a coup, marking the date that a completely new regime came into power. In most cases, these transitions happened due to subsequent coups, rebellions, or elections. In more complex cases, we coded a new regime where (1) none of the junta members retained seats in the government and (2) the junta played no role in selecting the new leadership (beyond voting).

The duration of leadership tenure is examined by observing whether a leadership transition took place in each month using a hazard model. Following past work on leadership removal, we expect coup-born leaders to fail early in their tenures (Smith and Vreeland 2006; Williams 2012). This suggests that a Weibull model should be

most appropriate for the analysis because it captures this declining hazard. Compared to other approaches, the Akaike's information criterion and Bayesian information criterion show that the Weibull model best describes the data for all of our models. Our models also show an estimated parameter (p) less than one, which further justifies the Weibull model. Models are estimated using the accelerated failure time metric. Standard errors are clustered by country to account for potential unobserved state-level heterogeneity.⁷

Independent Variables

We first expect leadership duration to decrease if the domestic population responds negatively to the coup. We followed four steps to capture domestic protests. First, we began with data from the Social, Political, and Economic Event Database (SPEED) Project.⁸ Coded for 165 countries in the post–World War II era, these data focus on “human-initiated destabilizing events,” which are defined as “happenings that unsettle the routines and expectations of citizens, cause them to be fearful, and raise their anxiety about the future” (Nardulli, Hayes, and Bajjalieh 2013, 1). SPEED data are collected using a hybrid computer–human approach with autoextraction of news reports that are categorized into event data by human coders.⁹ Coded events contain information to analyze a variety of research questions, including event type (e.g., political violence, terrorism), location, government response, and fatalities.

The unaltered SPEED data set begins with 62,074 events coded by precise date range, location, initiator, and target (*inter alia*) from 1946 to 2005. For our *domestic protests* variable, we are interested in how nonstate, domestic actors responded to the government. Thus, our second step was to purge the data to capture only events where domestic actors demonstrated a negative response (either “political expression” or “political attacks”) toward the government, which reduced our observations to 18,509 events. Having defined the event type of interest, our third step was to capture the number of protest events that took place in each month during the postcoup period, which we define as the first six months following the coup.¹⁰ Finally, we filled this number down beyond the six-month postcoup period, assuming that each response lasted until the end of the regime's tenure (or the end of the data set for censored cases).¹¹ This resulted in 4,892 protest months, which represents 29.4 percent of the sample. We expect this measure to produce a negative and significant coefficient to support our first hypothesis.

Our second hypothesis predicts that the duration of postcoup leadership tenure will decrease if external actors react to the coup in a hostile manner. We test this expectation using data from Shannon et al. (2015), who code international responses to coups from IOs and states during the six-month postcoup period. As with the measure for domestic reactions, these authors began with the Powell and Thyne (2011) data set and then coded all international responses to coup states using the Goldstein (1992) scale, which ranges from -10 (most hostile) to $+8.3$ (most supportive). These scholars searched sources “by hand” to look for instances where

international actors responded specifically to coups. Their final measure captures 1,259 reactions to 98 postcoup periods. To remain consistent with the measure for domestic protests, we multiplied this measure by -1 , so that positive values capture increasing levels of international protests and then captured the mean signal sent from all international actors during the six-month, postcoup period.¹² The final measure has a marginally supportive mean of $-.133$ ($s = 1.87$). As with the measure for domestic protests, we expect to see a negative and significant coefficient to support our second hypothesis.

Although the mean reaction from international actors captures the influence of international protests on regime tenure, this measure does not necessarily capture agreement, as suggested with our second hypothesis. We more precisely capture agreement among international actors by interacting the mean international response with the standard deviation (*SD*) in responses (*Intl prot. × Intl prot. SD*). We expect to see a positive coefficient for this interaction term, which would indicate that the regime-shortening effect of hostile international reactions is weakened if there is disagreement among international actors. Likewise, we test our third hypothesis by interacting domestic protests with international protests (*Domestic prot × Intl prot*). We expect to see a negative and significant coefficient for this interaction term, suggesting that the negative influence of domestic/international reactions on coup leader duration strengthens when the reactions are consistent with international/domestic reactions.

Our final hypotheses focus exclusively on reactions from external actors, though we retain domestic protests as a control variable when testing these hypotheses. Our fourth hypothesis predicts state reactions to matter the most during the Cold War, and for IO reactions to have the strongest influence afterward. We test this expectation by splitting international reactions into two categories, states and IOs, and then splitting the sample between years prior to 1989 and those afterward.

Finally, we expect international signals to have the strongest influence on postcoup tenure if they come from states that have precoup ties with powerful international actors. We control for IO reactions and then focus on states to capture this concept in three ways. First, we split the measure for international signals into two groups: major powers and nonmajor powers, as defined by the Correlates of War project (2011). This approach assumes that major powers have meaningful ties with all postcoup states, which may not necessarily be true. Thus, we more precisely capture precoup ties by first coding whether or not the coup state had a meaningful trading relationship with the reacting state (Barbieri and Keshk 2012; Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins 2009). We define a relationship as meaningful if the coup state's trade with the reacting state comprised at least 10 percent of its total trade. We then split international reactions into two categories: (1) reactions from trading partners and (2) reactions from nontrading partners. Like the trade measure, we also captured whether or not the coup state had a formal alliance with the reacting state (Gibler 2009). We then split international reactions into two categories: (1) reactions from allied states and (2) reactions from nonallied states. We expect reactions from major

powers, trading partners and allied states to have the strongest tenure shortening effect to support our fifth hypothesis.¹³

Control Variables

We include two sets of control variables that are meant to capture other causal processes that might explain coup leader duration.¹⁴ The first set captures the post-coup climate by drawing on previous studies of leader duration (e.g., Escribá-Folch and Wright 2015). Our first two measures, *gross domestic product (GDP)/capita* and yearly *Change in GDP/capita*, come from K. S. Gleditsch (2002). Following previous studies, we predict that leaders who enjoy a strong economy, measured in either static or dynamic terms, are more likely to retain their leadership positions (Cheibub and Przeworski 1999; Chiozza and Goemans 2004). Next, previous work has discovered that large *populations* are more difficult to govern (Fearon and Laitin 2003); thus, we expect leaders in states with high populations to have shorter tenures (K. S. Gleditsch 2002). Finally, even failed coups have been found to destabilize leaders (Belkin and Schofer 2003; Powell 2012). We thus include a measure counting the number of *failed coups* that took place in the previous two years.

The second set of control variables captures the precoup status of the state. These measures are important because they capture the strategic, forward-thinking nature of coup plotters.¹⁵ When coups are launched during protests, coup leaders might rightly expect domestic support for the putsch because they are likely to be seen as guardians of the people. Similarly, precoup sanctions indicate that international actors are likely to support regime upheaval, so must hold the precoup status of domestic and international viewpoints constant in order to gauge the exogenous effect of postcoup reactions on regime tenure. We capture the precoup domestic climate using the same data as our domestic protest measure. *Precoup protests* is a dummy that captures whether a protest event took place in the month preceding the coup. For international viewpoints, we turn to the threat and imposition of economic sanctions data to capture *precoup sanctions* (Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014). Capturing events like embargoes, travel bans, and cutting foreign aid, this data set captures the precise dates that an international actor threatened or applied sanctions against another state. We include a dummy variable that indicates whether sanctions were applied or threatened in the month preceding a coup. We might also expect negative domestic and international reactions to be more likely if the coup overthrew a democratic regime. Previous experience with democracy might likewise make the coup-born government less likely to solidify their power under authoritarianism. We include a measure called *precoup democracy*, which equals one if the state was a democracy (+6 or above on the Polity IV's polity2 measure) prior to the coup (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2011). Similarly, plotters may be able to anticipate responses based on how the economy is doing, expecting greater support for the putsch in more dire periods. We consequently include measures for precoup GDP/capita and the yearly change in GDP/capita (K. S. Gleditsch 2002).

Data Analysis

We begin by examining the impact of domestic protests in Table 1. All models can be interpreted similarly with positive/negative coefficients, indicating that leadership duration increases/decreases as the independent variable increases. We find support for our initial theoretical expectations. Aside from the post-Cold War model, the measure for domestic protests is in the predicted direction and significant (p values range from .04 to .091). We likewise see that leadership duration decreases when international actors react negatively to the coup (model 2, $p < .048$). However, interacting international responses with variation in responses reveals that agreement does not strengthen this effect (model 3). Thus, we are left with only partial support for our second hypothesis: protests from international actors significantly reduces the duration of the postcoup regime, but agreement in how international actors responds does not seem to condition this effect.

We present substantive effects in Figure 1. The horizontal “+” marks show the predicted median regime tenure when all independent variables are held constant at their mean/mode. For the primary analyses, the median regime tenure at these settings is 39.5 months. We calculate substantive effects by keeping measures held constant and then altering each primary independent variable. As we can see in the first set of points, the median duration changes little (to 41.6 months) in the absence of domestic and international protests. This is unsurprising, given that the modal coup receives neither response. Coup-born regimes with two postcoup protests, however, are predicted to last only 31.9 months. Similarly, regimes are predicted to last 32.3 months when they receive a moderately hostile international reaction (+2). With both domestic and international actors responding negatively, we see the predicted duration plummet to 24.7 months. These findings align well with recent work. Studies have shown that domestic protests heighten the likelihood of coup activity (Casper and Tyson 2014; Johnson and Thyne forthcoming), which is the primary way that coup-born regimes are ousted. Regarding international influences, these findings also align well with both older qualitative work (David 1987) and more recent statistical analyses (Thyne 2010; Thyne and Powell 2016; Marinov and Goemans 2014) that demonstrate the influence that international actors have on coups.

Moving to the third hypothesis, we predicted the duration-shortening impact of hostile international reactions to become even more pronounced when coupled with domestic protests. We find little evidence to support this expectation in model 4. One explanation for this is that the absence of protests may equate to domestic support for coups, which might contrast with international responses. Following the 1999 overthrow and assassination of President Mainassara in Niger, for example, France suspended aid and urged a “rapid return of democracy” (New York Times 1999b). In contrast, Niger’s opposition parties rallied their followers behind coup-born President Wanké after he promised to yield power via elections later that year (New York Times 1999a). It is also possible for domestic actors to stay

Table 1. Influence of Domestic and International Reactions on Leadership Tenure.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Primary Independent Variables				
Domestic protests (Hypothesis 1)	-0.126* (0.065)	-0.133** (0.066)	-0.133** (0.065)	-0.133** (0.065)
Intl protests (Hypothesis 2)	-0.127** (0.064)	-0.071 (0.077)	-0.131* (0.078)	
Intl protests SD (Hypothesis 2)	0.090 (0.128)			
Intl prot. × Intl prot. SD (Hypothesis 2)	-0.078 (0.064)			
Domestic prot × Intl prot. (Hypothesis 3)	0.003 (0.025)			
Postcoup controls				
GDP/capita (ln)	-0.202 (0.200)	-0.316 (0.205)	-0.358 (0.207)*	-0.318 (0.210)
Change in GDP/capita	0.101 (0.063)	0.106 (0.066)	0.106 (0.066)	0.106 (0.066)
Population	-0.094 (0.110)	-0.078 (0.104)	-0.098 (0.104)	-0.077 (0.104)
Recent failed coup	-0.323** (0.161)	-0.348** (0.163)	-0.324** (0.154)	-0.345** (0.163)
Precoup controls				
Protests	0.217 (0.302)	0.199 (0.298)	0.210 (0.313)	0.198 (0.298)
Sanctions	0.096 (0.375)	0.049 (0.380)	-0.003 (0.355)	0.049 (0.381)
Democracy	0.341 (0.284)	0.384 (0.271)	0.452* (0.251)	0.384 (0.272)
GDP/capita (ln)	0.282 (0.174)	0.350** (0.174)	0.344* (0.186)	0.351** (0.176)
Change in GDP/capita	0.031 (0.108)	0.043 (0.107)	0.063 (0.114)	0.043 (0.107)
Constant	4.800** (1.407)	5.098** (1.391)	5.580** (1.468)	5.102** (1.392)
<i>p</i>	.686	.692	.695	.692
Postcoup states	70	70	70	70
Postcoup periods	206	206	206	206
Leader terminations	192	192	192	192
Wald χ^2	18.31**	20.53**	25.28**	20.91*
Observations	16,666	16,666	16,666	16,666

Note: Robust standard errors clustered by state in parentheses. SD = standard deviation; GDP = gross domestic product.

* $p < .10$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .05$.

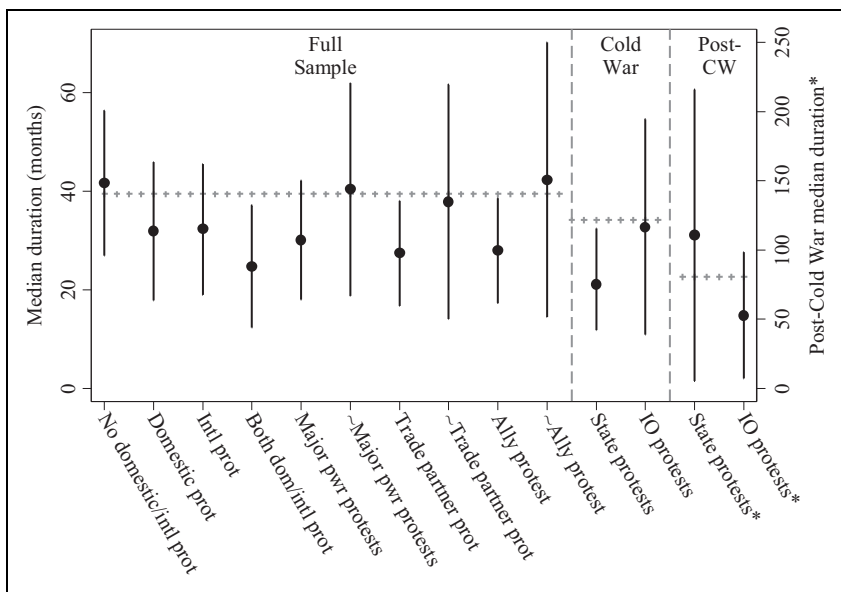


Figure 1. Estimated tenure for coup-born regime. Right Y-axis for “Post–Cold War” variables only; all others displayed on left axis. The small/gray “+” symbols show the baseline median with all variables set at means/modes. Dots show predicted median duration for each scenario listed along the X-axis. Bands show 95 percent confidence intervals.

silent if they expect the regime to use repression against protesters, while international condemnation can rarely yield punishment. After immediately declaring martial law to prevent looting, for example, people did not rise up to protest the overthrow of Fiji’s young democracy in 2000 (New York Times 2000). This did not prevent Australian Prime Minister Howard from harshly condemning the coup (BBC 2000). These examples suggest that we might expect protesters to stay at home and let international actors do the work if they fear major repercussions. Beyond providing little support for our hypothesis, this null finding reveals that future research would do well to consider how disaggregated responses from actors influence coup-born regimes.

Our final hypotheses focus exclusively on international responses, and we present results in Table 2. The fourth hypothesis predicts that state reactions will have the largest effect during the Cold War, and that responses from IOs will matter most afterward. We test this expectation in models 5 to 7. We see in model 5 that splitting negative international reactions between states and IOs reveals a stronger effect for state signals for the full sample. Consistent with our expectations, we see that only state reactions are statistically significant during the Cold War (model 6, $p < .001$). Our hypothesis is only partially supported, however. In model 7, we see the expected

Table 2. Influence of Domestic and International Reactions on Leadership Tenure: Variations in Reaction Type.

Variables	Model 5	Model 6 (CW)	Model 7 (Post-CW)	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Primary Independent Variables						
Intl protests, international organizations (Hypothesis 4)	-0.090 (0.111)	-0.021 (0.122)	-0.216 (0.178)	-0.105 (0.110)	-0.054 (0.161)	-0.119 (0.177)
Intl protests, states (Hypothesis 4)	-0.145** (0.053)	-0.200** (0.059)	0.185 (0.132)			
Intl protests, major powers (Hypothesis 5)	-0.137** (0.056)					
Intl protests, ~ major powers (Hypothesis 5)	0.010 (0.095)					
Intl protests, trade partners (Hypothesis 5)	-0.188** (0.054)					
Intl protests, ~ trade partners (Hypothesis 5)	-0.028 (0.128)					
Intl protests, allies (Hypothesis 5)	-0.164** (0.040)					
Intl protests, ~ allies (Hypothesis 5)	0.025 (0.135)					
Postcoup controls						
Domestic protests	-0.126* (0.065)	-0.120* (0.068)	0.048 (0.223)	-0.124* (0.067)	-0.120* (0.071)	-0.125* (0.066)
GDP/capita (ln)	-0.376* (0.210)	-0.534 (0.341)	-0.206 (0.359)	-0.347* (0.210)	-0.359* (0.206)	-0.334 (0.212)
Change in GDP/capita	0.108 (0.067)	0.074 (0.068)	0.090 (0.081)	0.105 (0.066)	0.104 (0.066)	0.101 (0.064)
Population	-0.081 (0.101)	-0.052 (0.127)	-0.202 (0.208)	-0.089 (0.102)	-0.113 (0.102)	-0.086 (0.101)
Recent failed coup	-0.338** (0.161)	-0.134 (0.239)	-1.282** (0.369)	-0.345** (0.162)	-0.334** (0.159)	-0.317** (0.160)
Precoup controls						
Protests	0.194 (0.297)	0.132 (0.377)	0.281 (0.568)	0.196 (0.298)	0.204 (0.291)	0.183 (0.302)
Sanctions	0.054 (0.382)	0.095 (0.487)	0.008 (0.788)	0.074 (0.379)	0.101 (0.383)	0.086 (0.384)
Democracy	0.429* (0.256)	0.574 (0.349)	-0.564 (0.605)	0.424* (0.252)	0.457* (0.241)	0.357 (0.245)
GDP/capita (ln)	0.395** (0.179)	0.444 (0.304)	0.649 (0.419)	0.374** (0.181)	0.393** (0.177)	0.344* (0.179)
Change in GDP/capita	0.039 (0.108)	-0.011 (0.140)	0.212 (0.150)	0.044 (0.109)	0.038 (0.107)	0.055 (0.108)
Constant	5.316** (1.392)	5.907** (1.764)	3.574 (3.095)	5.287** (1.398)	5.474** (1.420)	5.322** (1.386)
p	.694	.697	.728	.696	.701	.696
Postcoup states	70	67	46	70	70	70
Postcoup periods	206	174	66	206	206	206
Leader terminations	192	140	52	192	192	192
Wald χ^2	29.61**	19.79**	31.28**	28.20**	38.10**	41.53**
Observations	16,666	10,171	6,495	16,666	16,666	16,666

Note: Robust standard errors clustered by state in parentheses. GDP = gross domestic product; CW = Cold War.

* $p < .10$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .05$.

negative sign for IO signals in the post–Cold War period, but this measure is not statistically significant ($p < .224$).

Although we see the predicted trend in states mattering the most during the Cold War and IOs mattering the most afterward, the insignificant finding for the post–Cold War era warrants further discussion. One explanation for this insignificant finding is simply that our theory is wrong. Another explanation is that the shortened time frame makes it difficult to find significance for any of our measures. Our domestic protest measure is significant at the $p < .10$ level across all other models, for example, but is insignificant in the post–Cold War model due to the shortened time span. Such a perspective is consistent with an accumulating body of evidence about the role that IOs play in influencing coups. As explained in our theory, both Thyne and Powell (2016) and Marinov and Goemans (2014) argue that pressure from international actors as part of an emerging post–Cold War “anticoup norm” drives coup leaders toward democracy, and their empirical results show that the likelihood of democratization and elections following coups increases after the Cold War. However, neither set of authors directly capture international reactions, relying instead on a dummy variable to capture the Cold War. Likewise, Shannon et al. (2015) show that IOs are significantly more likely to respond to coups in the post–Cold War era. However, these scholars capture neither the reaction type (supportive or hostile), nor do they analyze how responses to coups influence what comes afterward. Our analyses attempt to connect these dots. We now have at least tentative support suggesting that the influence of states has been replaced with that of IOs. IOs respond to coups more frequently than states (Shannon et al. 2015), and these responses may shorten the duration of postcoup leadership, with changes most likely coming in the form of elections (Marinov and Goemans 2014) or full democratization (Thyne and Powell 2016). To be sure, a closer investigation of the types of IOs responding and how they respond to coups would be worthwhile for future research.

Our final hypothesis tests a variety of measures to capture the strength of the signaler and the relationship between the signaler and coup state. We see consistent findings regardless as to how we measure strength. International protests do not significantly influence the duration of coup-born regimes when they come from weaker actors, and the baseline median for regime duration of 39.5 months changes little when hostile international reactions come from nonmajor powers ($p < .918$, 40.4 months), nontraders ($p < .826$, 37.9 months), and nonallies ($p < .850$, 42.3 months). In contrast, the regime-shortening influence of international protests is both statistically significant and substantively meaningful when the protests come from stronger actors. Protests from major powers shorten the predicted median duration to 30.1 months ($p < .015$), while protests from traders ($p < .001$) and allies ($p < .001$) shorten duration to 27.4 and 28.0 months, respectively.

Regarding the control variables, we see that the analyses largely support our expectations in terms of direction, though most measures fail to reach standard levels of statistical significance. Leaders seem to remain in power longer as the economy strengthens, and their tenure in office shortens with recent failed coups. Our results

generally show that coup-born governments last longer when they overthrow both democracies and states with stronger economies. The latter finding is expected as stronger baseline economies provide regimes with more resources to stay in power. However, the finding for “precoup democracy” is somewhat peculiar. We expect domestic protests to be more likely when putschists overthrew a democratic government, so our primary motivation for this control variable was to help isolate the influence of protests on regime tenure. Nevertheless, a closer look at the data reveals that most of the cases where coup-born regimes survived for long periods after overthrowing democratic governments can be found in the postcolonial period in Africa, where colonial powers imposed unsustainable democratic governments upon independence (Bernhard, Reenock, and Nordstrom 2004). Therefore, we suspect further investigation of patterns of colonialism and history of democracy to be worthwhile to better understand entrenchment of coup-born governments.

Conclusion

Although research on coups largely waned with the decline of coups in the 1990s, recent events like the coups in Egypt and Thailand have recaptured the attention of scholars, the public, and policy makers. This article was motivated by our belief that scholarship has gained considerable ground in enhancing our understanding of the causes of coups, but that the “aftermath [of coups] has eluded systematic scrutiny” (Marinov and Goemans 2014, 799). We feel that such an agenda does more than simply fill a void in the scholarly literature. Governments and IOs have attempted to influence coup-born regimes through a variety of actions, and leaders have come under fire for their seemingly haphazard response to recent coups (Morey et al. 2012). Evidence of how domestic and international reactions to coups influence long-term political developments of a states, however, has yet to be assessed in a systematic manner. We hope this work provides an important step in that direction.

Our analyses suggest that coup-born regimes are surprisingly robust, lasting a predicted median of around three years. However, the tenure of these leaders varies considerably based on domestic and international responses. Looking at the entire time frame, hostile reactions from both domestic and international actors cut the median survival time by around 20 percent (7 months). And while the influence of states was strongest primarily during the Cold War period, we see that IOs have played a stronger role since then. We, likewise, find that international reactions have the strongest regime-shortening effect when powerful international actors protest. Thus, the answer to our primary puzzle is clear: domestic and international reactions make a profound impact on how long the coup-born leaders remain in power.

Our work supports a growing body of literature demonstrating that signals are meaningful policy tools that are worthy of further study. Future explorations can improve on this study by offering a more nuanced look at the manner in which a coup cohort leaves office, the types of actors that respond to coups, and the types of responses that we see. The current discussion only allows us to draw generalizations

regarding the length of time the cohort is in power; it says very little about the way in which power changes hands. Whether the cohort voluntarily stepped down, was ousted in a countercoup or uprising, or deposed through foreign intervention could have important implications for the long-term well-being of the state.

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Supplementary Material

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Notes

1. It is worth noting that coups account for over 60 percent of irregular removals in the Archigos data set on which Goemans (2008) relies (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009).
2. For relevant documentation of US policy toward coups, see Section 513 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (1993) and Section 608 of the Fiscal Year Consolidated Appropriations Act (2008).
3. For relevant documentation, see Resolution 1080 (1991) and the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001).
4. A resolution condemning coups was a product of the 1997 African Unity Summit in Harare, the 1999 Algiers declaration, and the 2002 African Union (AU) charter.
5. Powell and Thyne (2011, 252) define coups as, “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat a sitting executive.”
6. Using leader years as the level of analysis produced substantively identical results to those reported here. Our Online Appendix provides supplementary information on our dependent and primary independent variables and presents analyses for all alternative model specifications mentioned in subsequent footnotes.
7. Results remain consistent when introducing a γ frailty term as a random effect by country and postcoup period.

8. For an excellent summary of the Social, Political, and Economic Event Database (SPEED) data set and comparisons with similar data sets, see Nardulli and Hayes (2013) and Hayes and Nardulli (2014).
9. Since 2006, SPEED's automated SEARCH routine has continuously collected news from over 5,000 news feeds in 120 countries, sorting around 100 thousand articles as potential events each day. Prior to 2006, events were collected using digitized archives of the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, and *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (Central Intelligence Agency; Nardulli, Leetaru, and Hayes 2014).
10. Similar results were found using alternate measures, including number of protesters and a dummy for any protest.
11. Filling down for all responses until the end of the regime's tenure is questionable in some cases. It is unlikely that protests immediately following a coup will still matter in a junta's tenth year of power, for example. Thus, we ran two alternatives. First, we filled down for sixth-months only, which has some practical significance as the AU gives coup-born governments six months to restore constitutional processes. Second, we ran a decay function by dividing the response by each month following the response. Both alternatives produced similar findings as we present here.
12. The second section in the Online Appendix provides additional information on how this measure was coded.
13. Splitting international reactions does not alter the descriptive statistics for the aggregate international protests measure appreciably. For the aggregate measure, the mean state reaction is 1.9 with a standard deviation of 1.3. Similar values result when splitting between major ($\bar{X} = 2.0, s = 2.0$) and nonmajor powers ($\bar{X} = 2.4, s = 1.7$), trading ($\bar{X} = 2.4, s = 2.1$) and nontrading partners ($\bar{X} = 1.7, s = 1.3$), and allies ($\bar{X} = 1.8, s = 2.2$) and nonallies ($\bar{X} = 1.8, s = 1.3$).
14. All independent variables are lagged at $t - 1$ to avoid endogeneity. Our models are kept as simple as possible, although we tested a plethora of additional control variables to assure that our results are robust. These include ongoing civil war (N. P. Gleditsch et al. 2002) and both regional and decade dummy variables. Our results do not change in terms of statistical significance and change very little in terms of substantive effects when these measures are included. Descriptive statistics for all independent variables are presented in the first section of the Online Appendix.
15. An explicit test of selection effects using the "Dursel" estimator from Boehmke, Morey, and Shannon (2006) yields similar results to those presented here.

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