

IMPACT OF PRO-GOVERNMENT MILITIAS ON CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER
THE MILITARY: A QUANTITATIVE CAUSAL ANALYSIS

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Mustafa KAYMAZ

ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF PRO-GOVERNMENT MILITIAS ON CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY: A QUANTITATIVE CAUSAL ANALYSIS

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This dissertation aims to test the causal effect of pro-government militia (PGM) presence on civilian control over the military. Drawing upon agency theory, it argues that PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish. To test this hypothesis on three empirical criteria of causality: robust statistical association, non-spuriousness, and temporal precedence of the cause over the effect, it incorporates data on 155 countries between 1981 and 2010 from three datasets: Civilian Control Scores Dataset for the dependent variable (dynamic civilian control score), Pro-Government Militias Database for the independent variable (PGM presence), and Varieties of Democracy Database for control variables (democracy, economics, state capacity, and conflict indicators). After shifting the dependent variable one to five years to the past, Statistical association, non-spuriousness, and temporal precedence were tested using Random Effects regression models with each version of the dependent variable, the independent variable, and all the combinations (sized one, two, three, four, ...fourteen) of fourteen control variables. In all these 98304 analyses, the coefficient of PGM presence remained negative and statistically significant, enabling the rejection of the null hypothesis on no-association, spuriousness, and no temporal precedence dimensions.

Keywords: Militias, Civilian Control, Causality, Agency Theory

ÖZ

DEVLET YANLISI MİLİSLERİN ORDU ÜZERİNDEKİ SİVİL KONTROLÜNE ETKİSİ: BİR NİCEL NEDENSEL ANALİZ

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Bu doktora tezi devlet yanlısı milis grup (DYMG) varlığının ordu üzerindeki sivil kontrol üzerindeki nedensel etkisini test etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez, vekalet kuramına dayanarak DYMG varlığının sivil kontrolünü azalttığını savlamaktadır. Bu hipotezi nedenselliğin üç ampirik koşulu olan sağlam istatistiksel ilişki, başka etkenlerce açıklanmama ve nedenin sonuçtan önce gerçekleşmesi açılarından test etmek için üç farklı veri tabanı birleştirilmiştir. Bağımlı değişken olan sivil kontrolü için *Civilian Control Scores Dataset*, bağımsız değişken olan DYMG varlığı için *Pro-Government Militias Database* ve kontrol değişkenleri olan demokrasi, devlet kapasitesi, ekonomik durum ve çatışma göstergeleri için *Varieties of Democracy Database* kullanılarak 155 ülke hakkında 1981 ile 2010 yılları arası döneme ilişkin veri toplanmıştır. Bağımlı değişken 1 ile 5 yıl geri kaydırılarak zamansal fark yaratıldıktan sonra bağımlı değişken ve bağımsız değişken ile kontrol değişkenlerinin tüm birli, ikili, üçlü, dördü...on dördü kombinasyonları Rastsal Etkiler regresyon analizleri ile test edilmiştir. Bu 98304 analizden elde edilen bulgular DYMG varlığının sivil kontrolü üzerinde güçlü olmasa da istatistiksel olarak anlamlı negatif etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla bağımlı ile bağımsız değişken arasında ilişki olmadığı, olsa bile başka bir değişkenin sonucu olduğu ve nedenin sonuçtan önce gelmediği şeklindeki sıfır hipotezi reddedilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milisler, Sivil Kontrolü, Nedensellik, Vekalet Kuramı



To Büşra, my beloved wife

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Pro-government militias (PGMs) are common across time and space in the world. As groups acting on behalf of or in parallel to the states and regular armed forces, PGMs serve many functions from riot or rebel control to the suppression or elimination of unarmed dissenters with extrajudicial methods. They are part of the overall security architecture while also being outside regular institutional oversight in contrast to the regular armed forces. Further, their existence implies a divergence from the Weberian definition of the state as the monopoly of physical violence in a given territory. However, they also provide security where the regular army cannot, helping the government to maintain its monopoly of violence, and working to prevent the rise of a challenger to the state's sovereignty, be it the armed forces' coup attempts or rebellions by minority groups. Moreover, the secrecy of their activities and the plausible deniability of their ties with the government make their activities hard to recognize, study, and understand.

PGMs, as irregular security forces that sometimes assume the roles of the regular armed forces, are at the center of civil-military relations where they are active. While the civil-military relations (CMR) literature often focuses on the various institutional arrangements between the civilian authorities and regular armed forces, the relations between PGMs, the government, and the army is understudied compared to other subtopics, such as factors behind coup attempts, modalities of CMR, and dynamics behind different forms of CMR.

PGMs are cited among coup-proofing measures (see, for instance: Biddle & Zirkle 1996) by civilian rulers to protect the regime against regular armed forces' coup attempts. While studies analyze the impact of PGMs together with other coup-proofing policies such as dividing army units, military spending, and purges on the performance of armed forces and coup attempts, their role in the overall structure of CMR remains understudied. How does the presence of PGMs influence the civilian control over the military? This dissertation aims to address this question using quantitative causal hypothesis testing methods. The following section is a brief overview of the literature on PGMs and CMR, followed by the theoretical framework and methodology sections.

There is a vast literature on both PGMs and civil-military relations (CMR). Works on PGMs seek to provide the dynamics behind their presence, their activities, influence on the politics, society, and security, and why individuals join them. The CMR literature, on the other hand, addresses the factors that influence the formation and maintenance of various modalities of relations between the civilian authorities and the armed forces, the causes of coup attempt, success, and failure, mechanisms of establishing civilian authority over the military, and measures governments implement to prevent military coups. Military coups constitute the bulk of quantitative and qualitative empirical research on CMR. The effect of PGMs on CMR, however, remains understudied. Hence, the research question of this dissertation is “*how does PGM presence influence civilian control?*”. It hypothesizes that “*PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish.*”

While some researchers distinguish between pro-government militias (PGMs) and paramilitary organizations, some use only one or both interchangeably. This

dissertation adopts the term PGM and includes works on paramilitarism as well without delving into the distinction between them while not changing the usage in specific studies cited. PGMs are non-state armed groups with affiliations to the country's government but officially outside the armed forces. The term excludes rebel groups or terrorist organizations that clash with the state (Üngör 2020).

Literature on CMR offers various structural as well as individual/group-level factors shaping the relations. Among the structural independent variables are a country's regime type (Croissant et al. 2010), the consolidation level of its democracy (Zaborowski 2016), its economic conditions (Londregan and Poole 1990), external and internal threats it faces (Arbatli and Arbatli 2016), the efficiency and legitimacy of its government (Belkin and Schofer 2003; Decalo 1991), while military professionalism covers both structural and individual-group-level variables (Huntington 2002; Herspring 2019).

Governments want to avoid military coups, and they have several options at their disposal, strategies called coup-proofing measures in the literature. Coup-proofing is both a dependent and independent variable in CMR. The government's engagement in such policies indicates a perceived threat of military coup. According to Belkin and Schofer (2003), regimes that face higher coup risk employ coup-proofing measures more. Mehrl and Choulis (2021), on the other hand, argue that colonial roots can explain differing levels and strategies of coup-proofing in post-colonial nations. They find that former French colonies did it more because France established militia forces from locals, who became paramilitaries after independence (Mehrl & Choulis, 2021). Finally, according to Böhmelt and Pilster (2015),

institutional coup-proofing in the form of dividing the army units to balance each other works to a certain extent and its effects diminish after a point.

This dissertation draws upon agency theory that treats the civilian authorities as principal delegating responsibility and power to the military that is the agent in this equation. While the principal expects the agent to act on the principal's behalf in the delegated areas of responsibility, agency theory posits that the agent may fail to do so in cases of conflicting interests (Feaver 2003). In other words, the agent has its own interests and may deviate from the expectations of the principal if it can do so. Civilian control, in this case, is the mechanisms aiming to prevent such deviations and ensure each party's commitment to predefined roles and duties.

The military may devise various ways to avoid civilian control such as shirking, hiding certain facts, or outright challenging government's authority (Feaver 1998) while the government may resort to legal or paralegal methods of control and oversight such as creating regulatory institutions or employing secret police, PGMs, or other tools of surveillance to keep the army in check. This dissertation puts one such paralegal actor, PGMs into the principal-agent equation as another agent.

PGMs, whether formed, trained, or sponsored by the state or operating with their own means, are agents themselves with their own interests. From this perspective, it is more probable for them to complicate the relations between the civilian authorities and army than improving civilian control. In other words, they do not solve the principal-agent problem but turn it into a principal-agent-agent problem with no robust mechanisms in place to keep them loyal to the principal. Therefore, the hypothesis this dissertation will test is "*PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish.*"

Testing a causal hypothesis is harder compared to a predictive one as a variable can be used to predict another even if their relationship depends on a third variable. A smoke detector indicates the presence of fire and can be a reliable tool for fire detection despite not being the cause but an indicator of fire. Fire, caused by another factor, causes smoke, which in turn causes the smoke detector to sound the alarm. Thus, while (1) correlation is the first criteria of causation, there are three more: (2) there must not be a third variable causing the two variables in question, i.e. non-spuriousness, (3) the cause must precede the effect in time, and (4) the cause must be connected to the effect via a causal narrative or mechanism (Pearl 2022).

Using Kenwick's (2017) Civilian Control Scores dataset for the dependent variable, Pro-Government Militias Dataset (Carey, Mitchell, and Paula 2022) for the independent variable, PGM presence, and V-Dem Dataset (Michael Coppedge et al. 2023) for control variables, this dissertation aims to test that causal hypothesis. Collecting data on around 150 countries over a period of 30 years (1981-2010) from these datasets, enables testing for association, non-spuriousness, and temporality between the IV and DV while agency theory connects the cause to the effect.

As the data collected is cross-sectional time series (panel data), it allows for within-case and between-case comparisons. A simple linear regression (OLS) is not suitable for such panel datasets as the observations are not independent of each other. Civilian control score of France in 1990, for instance, is not independent of the score in 1989. Mixed effects models enable analysis of such datasets. Robustness tests, on the other hand, makes it possible to check for the effect of outliers, if any. Having a large enough sample, over four thousand observations, makes the calculations more reliable and consistent across different statistical tests.

Chapter II is an analytical review of the works on the PGMs and CMR. It discusses the factors behind CMR proposed in the literature. State capacity, democracy level, economic conditions, and internal and external conflicts are important variables that need to be controlled for when analyzing the impact of PGM presence on civilian control. Chapter III, on the other hand, introduces agency theory, how it helps better understand the role of PGMs in civil-military relations, the development of and assumptions behind the hypothesis of this dissertation.

Since the hypothesis to be tested is causal, Chapter IV, begins with discussing the concept of causality and different causal relationships variables can have: confounding, mediation, moderation, interaction, and independent causation. Then, it explains the data collection methods, the variables to be analyzed, and the methods of analysis, random effects regression models, before presenting the findings.

Chapter V is a discussion of the findings and their implications for the theory and the CMR literature at large. Finally, Chapter VI concludes the dissertation by summarizing the study, its importance, limitations, and prospects for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature on pro-government militias (PGMs) and civil-military relations (CMR) is highly comprehensive. PGMs' existence and the dynamics that drive their formation and continued operation, both within and beyond the borders of the state, are areas of considerable academic interest. Research in this domain often aims to understand the influence these organizations wield on politics, society, and security, and the reasons that drive individuals to align themselves with these groups.

The body of works on CMR, on the other hand, aimed to discover the complexities between civilian authorities and the armed forces, exploring the variables that shape these relationships and their multi-faceted consequences. A notable theme within CMR studies revolves around the complexities of coup attempts: the factors that lead to their initiation, the reasons behind their success or failure, and the mechanisms that help reestablish civilian authority over the military after the coup. Furthermore, this strand of research focuses on the strategies that governments employ to prevent military coups, thus maintaining a delicate balance within the power structure.

While both areas – PGMs and CMR – have been extensively studied, there is a noteworthy disparity within the CMR literature in terms of research focus. A substantial portion of the empirical research, both quantitative and qualitative, is dominated by studies on military coups, while the influence of PGMs on CMR has been relatively neglected. This gap in the literature shows the importance of this

dissertation that tests the causal impact of PGM presence on civilian control using cross-sectional time series data enabling within- and between-case analyses.

This study attempts to address this gap by focusing on the interaction between PGMs and CMR, thus broadening the scope of the existing scholarship. Initially, I will present a comprehensive review of the works on PGMs before introducing the variables suggested in the existing literature to explain the diverse forms of CMR in general and civilian control in particular. This approach is intended to lay the groundwork for a nuanced exploration of the effects of PGM presence on CMR.

2.1. Pro-Government Militias

The academic discourse around the notion of PGMs is diverse, presenting a variety of approaches. At its core, the term “pro-government militia” is generally used to describe non-state armed groups that maintain affiliations with a country’s government while simultaneously operating beyond the official boundaries of the armed forces. Üngör (2020), includes “pro-government militias” and “state-sponsored militias” under the term paramilitarism while explicitly excluding entities such as rebel groups or terrorist organizations that exist in direct opposition to the state.

Işık (2021), on the other hand, provides an insightful categorization that embraces a broader definition of paramilitarism. In his study, he includes under the paramilitary umbrella various organizations such as the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organization (*Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele, JITEM*). This organization, an informal death squad, was established in the late 1980s and operated on the fringes of formal legality.

Adding to the categorization is the Village Guards (*Köy Koruculuğu*), a semi-formal organization and the largest paramilitary group in Turkey. Established on 28 March 1985, this group adds a substantial component to the paramilitary presence within the country. Similarly, the Police Special Operations Unit, also known as the Special Police Team (*Özel Tim*), which was founded in the mid-1980s, is included as a semi-legal unit. Finally, Hizbullah, which emerged in the early 1980s and sided with the Turkish state against the PKK, particularly in the first half of the 1990s, also finds its place in this expanded interpretation of paramilitary groups (Işık 2021, 232).

PGMs have an unsettling role in the politics and society due to their proclivity for engaging in the most extreme forms of extrajudicial violence. This includes horrifying acts such as torture, murder, kidnapping, and sexual violence (Ahram 2011; 2014; Carey and Mitchell 2017; Cohen and Nordås 2015; Işık 2021; Kan 2019). This stark reality casts a long, dark shadow over the relations between such groups and the states they are affiliated with.

State entities, in response to this uncomfortable association, often opt for a policy of denial or evasion. They refuse to acknowledge their connections to these paramilitary organizations, presenting them instead as autonomous actors. This tactic serves to distance the state from the reprehensible actions of these groups, but it also further muddies the waters when it comes to categorizing these armed groups as paramilitary organizations. The classification challenge is thus further complicated, contributing to the challenges in studying paramilitarism.

Beyond the debates regarding the conceptualization of PGMs, the existing literature offers a multifaceted treatment of such groups and their activities. A noteworthy aspect of these studies is that they regard PGMs not only as dependent

variables subject to various influences but also as independent variables. In other words, PGMs are seen both as entities shaped by various factors and forces and as influential actors capable of exerting significant impact on their surrounding sociopolitical dynamics. This dual perspective allows for a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of PGMs.

Works that view paramilitarism as a dependent variable is primarily focused on the circumstances that give birth to these groups, the motivations that drive states to create, co-opt, and employ them, as well as the factors that push these groups and their members to engage in violent activities and other operations. This body of scholarship is founded on the premise that the existence of paramilitary organizations undermines the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force, a central principle in the Weberian concept of the state. Hence, it posits, states are forced to resort to paramilitary groups under conditions of necessity when faced with severe challenges to their authority and survival (Üngör 2020).

Paramilitarism, in this context, becomes a symptom of underlying systemic vulnerabilities, including diminished state capacity and eroded regime legitimacy. These conditions are particularly relevant in situations of civil war or rebellion, where state power is contested, and stability is under grave threat. During these periods of heightened conflict and chaos, paramilitary groups serve as the state's 'iron fists', tasked with violently and ruthlessly suppressing any entities that challenge the state's authority.

The severity of their methods often translates into war crimes and violations of human rights. These extreme actions, condemned by international norms, are frequently attributed to paramilitary groups, painting them as perpetrators of some of

the most horrific acts against humanity (Ahram 2014; Cohen and Nordås 2015; Işık 2021). As such, the exploration of paramilitarism as a dependent variable provides a grim yet crucial perspective on the darker corners of state power and the lengths to which states may go to preserve their rule.

Research has also uncovered a variety of factors, encompassing both personal incentives and broader ideational beliefs behind people's decision to join in these groups. These incentives can be material, such as financial rewards or access to resources, or immaterial, such as prestige, status, or a sense of purpose. Analyzing these motivations allows for a more nuanced understanding of why individuals are drawn to PGMs, what sustains their participation, and why they engage in the violent activities that these groups are often associated with.

Empirical evidence suggests that PGM members are predominantly young men with limited alternatives, whether in terms of economic opportunities, social mobility, or avenues for political expression. As such, the violence perpetrated by these groups is intricately connected to the demographic composition of their ranks, as well as the economic and psychological circumstances of their members (Cohen and Nordås 2015). This perspective explains the socio-economic and psychological dimensions of paramilitary violence, suggesting that a lack of opportunities and prevailing societal pressures can create a fertile ground for such groups to recruit and operate.

In contrast, structuralist perspectives emphasize the broader socio-political context that makes PGMs an appealing tool for states. These approaches argue that paramilitarism is not solely a product of individual choices or demographic composition, but also a consequence of broader, path-dependent or contextual-temporary conditions. In other words, paramilitarism is often the product of historical

trajectories, entrenched political dynamics, and temporary circumstances such as civil conflict or perceived threats to state power (Ahram 2011; Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013; Carey and Mitchell 2017; Davis and Pereira 2003). This implies that the resort to paramilitarism is influenced by a complex interplay of historical, political, social, and economic factors that both shape and are shaped by the state's responses to its challenges. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of paramilitarism requires not only an examination of the motivations of individual members but also an analysis of the broader structural conditions that create the demand for such groups.

In the broader discussion surrounding the role of PGMs, it is also important to highlight their impact, particularly the consequences that stem from their activities, thereby treating PGMs as an independent variable. The presence and actions of PGMs often have profound effects on the communities in which they operate and those they target. The spectrum of this impact is vast, with implications for the socio-political fabric of societies, impacting state-society relations, democratic processes, state capacity, and even intra-state power dynamics.

One of the key implications of PGM activities lies in their ability to erode trust between states and their societies. Their often violent and coercive methods can cause civilians to associate the state with fear and repression, undermining confidence in government institutions and thereby jeopardizing social cohesion (Üngör 2020). Thus, the presence of paramilitary groups and their practices can fundamentally alter the relationship between the citizenry and the state, often creating or deepening social cleavages.

Furthermore, the literature suggests a complex, mutual relationship between democracy and paramilitarism. While PGMs can create significant obstacles for

democratic processes through violence, intimidation, or coercion that curtails civil liberties and political freedoms, democracies, in turn, are less likely to utilize such groups. This dichotomy reflects how the nature of a political system can both influence and be influenced by PGM activities (Söyler 2015).

The dynamics of state capacity are also intricately linked with PGM activities. PGMs are often employed by fragile states as a means of suppressing civilian dissent or quelling armed opposition. Yet, this strategy can create a vicious cycle, as relying on them can further weaken the state's capacity by undermining its authority and credibility (Escribà-Folch, Böhmelt, and Pilster 2020; Böhmelt and Clayton 2018).

Lastly, it's important to understand the complex relationship between PGMs and military coup attempts. Regimes often employ PGMs as a counterbalance against potential military coups, thereby safeguarding their hold on power. Yet, this tactic, along with other coup-proofing strategies such as dividing the armed forces, fostering patronage relations, and forming units with direct loyalty to the incumbent, may paradoxically weaken the army's overall fighting capacity (Escribà-Folch, Böhmelt, and Pilster 2020). Thus, while PGMs can provide a short-term solution for regimes facing potential internal threats, their long-term effects on state capacity and military effectiveness can be detrimental.

2.2. Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations (CMR) is a crucial field of study within the broad discipline of political science with a fundamental question underlining the intrinsic complexity of this relationship: although the army is tasked with safeguarding a nation against external threats, what protective measures exist to shield that very

society from potential internal threats, specifically, from its own army? This dilemma is central to the debates and themes within the literature on CMR (Feaver 1999). The scholarly discourse in this field covers prescriptive, descriptive, and explanatory studies that dissect the nuanced dynamics and varying dimensions of CMR.

Prescriptive, or normative, studies form one strand of the literature that contends with this multifaceted relationship. Rooted in the conviction that the desirability of civilian control over the military is a necessary condition for a functional and democratic polity, these works seek to outline mechanisms to ensure this equilibrium. Such perspectives go beyond theoretical prescriptions and incorporate insights from empirical research to ground their recommendations (Huntington 2002; Colton 1979; Edmonds 1988). In these treatises, the objective was to devise frameworks that maintain the delicate balance of power between civilian authorities and the military establishment, ensuring that the latter remains a tool in the service of national defense without posing a threat to the nation it is meant to protect (Feaver 1999).

Huntington (2002) argues that a model of “objective civilian control” is the best way to maintain military subordination to civilian authority in liberal societies. The model requires maximizing military professionalism and autonomy in its own domain, while ensuring that the army remains politically neutral and subordinated to civilian leadership. In contrast, Huntington posits, “subjective control” tries to reduce military power by placing it under civilian political groups or ideologies, which can politicize the military and reduce its professionalism. By professionalism, he means expertise in managing violence, responsibility to the public, and ‘corporateness’ as a sense of collective identity and loyalty.

Stepan (1974), in contrast, argues that this model is insufficient to establish stable civilian oversight in authoritarian or transitioning regimes such as Brazil. He argues that militaries in Latin America adopt a doctrine of internal security and national development instead of limiting themselves to external defense. By expanding their scope of responsibility and authority, they are able to get involved in politics, policing, intelligence, and even economic planning under “new professionalism.”

Schiff’s (1995) concordance theory of civil-military relations is another significant alternative to Huntington’s objective civilian control model. Schiff argues that stable civil-military relations do not require a strict separation between civilian and military spheres. Instead, they require a concordance—or agreement—among three key societal institutions: the military, political elites, and the citizenry.

The descriptive works in the literature seek to contribute to our understanding of CMR by providing taxonomies that can serve as analytical tools. These works endeavor to dissect and categorize different modes of relations between civilians and the military, presenting structured frameworks to interpret the dynamics between these two core constituents of a state (Boene 1990, Zagorski 1992, Danopoulos & Watson 1996, Diamond & Plattner 1996, Lovell & Albright 1997).

The taxonomy approach is pivotal to enhancing our comprehension of CMR as it establishes the foundation upon which various theoretical perspectives shape their investigations. By defining and segmenting the different modalities of civil-military relationships, these descriptive works enable a structured exploration of this complex domain. Not only do they provide a roadmap for establishing dependent and independent variables in theoretical studies, but they also contribute to refining our

collective understanding of the nuanced interactions that occur in this critical sphere of governance. The classifications proposed in this literature segment are hence invaluable for exploring patterns, predicting potential challenges, and proposing effective management strategies within the multifaceted domain of CMR.

The operationalization of variables in the context of CMR plays a critical role in establishing the internal and external validity of any analysis conducted. Proper conceptualization and operationalization ensure that the results obtained are reliable, replicable, and applicable to broader contexts. Desch's (1999) work is seminal in this regard, offering a tangible framework of five dependent variables for examining CMR. These variables are military coups, military influence, civil-military friction, military compliance, and delegation and monitoring.

"Military coups" represent the most extreme form of military control over a state, where the armed forces forcefully overthrow the civilian government. It is a critical variable as it disrupts the normal civil-military balance and represents a failure of civilian oversight. "Military influence" denotes the extent to which the military has a say in the decision-making process of a government. This influence can manifest in various ways, ranging from direct involvement in policymaking to indirect sway via lobbying or public statements. This variable sheds light on the actual power dynamics that exist within a given polity, beyond the facade of nominal control.

"Civil-military friction," on the other hand, is a measure of the tension and disagreements between civilian authorities and the military. This can stem from a multitude of sources such as disagreements on policy, resource allocation, or the military's role in society. Analyzing this friction provides insights into the health and

functionality of CMR. “Military compliance” represents the military’s adherence to the directives and orders of the civilian leadership. This variable measures the military’s respect for civilian authority and its willingness to submit to civilian governance.

Finally, “delegation and monitoring” signifies the ability and efficiency of civilian leadership in delegating responsibilities to the military and monitoring its activities. It reflects the extent of control the civilian government maintains over the military and the mechanisms in place to ensure this control.

These variables can take binary or degreed values, or be envisioned on a continuum, with coups representing the highest degree of military control and delegation and monitoring illustrating perfect civilian control. However, these conceptualizations can raise challenges in measurement due to the varying degrees of control and influence, and the subjective nature of some of these variables. Proper operationalization requires careful calibration to accurately capture the dynamics of CMR in various contexts.

The field of CMR is rich with studies that put forward a multitude of independent variables to explain the dependent variables mentioned earlier, such as military coups or military influence. Feaver (1999) offers a helpful categorization of these independent variables, distinguishing them as external and internal factors.

External factors generally refer to those influences that originate outside the borders of a given country. One of the most prominent among these is external threats, such as an imminent invasion or sustained aggression from a hostile neighbor. Such situations often necessitate a stronger role for the military, giving it greater say in national policy and sometimes even enabling it to take control of the polity, as

Huntington (1957), Lasswell (1941, 1950), and Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson (1995) suggest (Feaver 1999). Pressure from international actors, be it through diplomatic means or more direct interventions, is another external variable that can considerably influence the dynamic of CMR.

Conversely, internal factors constitute influences that emerge from within the country's own societal, economic, and political makeup. For instance, ethnic divisions within a state may evolve into a significant internal security threat if an ethnic minority initiates a rebellion for independence. Such situations, according to Enloe (1980), can amplify the military's role in maintaining internal peace and unity.

Another crucial internal factor is economic conditions. As Londregan and Poole (1990) posit, economic hardships or downturns can destabilize civilian governments and lead to increased military influence or intervention. This is particularly true in cases where the military is seen as a more efficient and trustworthy institution by the populace.

Moreover, societal ideologies play a critical role in shaping CMR. The predominant political ideology - be it liberalism, conservatism, or communism - can determine how much control the civilian authority has over the military and how much influence the military can exert on governmental affairs, as suggested by Huntington (Huntington 2002).

Political socialization of officers, as Nordlinger (1977) argues, also falls under internal factors. The beliefs, values, and attitudes instilled in military officers can significantly influence their behavior and decision-making, potentially affecting the balance of power between the military and civilian government. Lastly, the efficiency and legitimacy of the government are pivotal factors in the CMR dynamic. A

government that is perceived as efficient and legitimate is more likely to maintain control over the military, while a government that lacks these qualities might find itself at odds with or even be overthrown by the military (Welch 1976).

In sum, these external and internal factors provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing CMR, offering valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics that shape the balance of power between civilians and the military.

2.2.a. Factors Influencing CMR

The purpose of this dissertation is to scrutinize the dynamics between the dependent variable of civilian control over the military and the independent variable of PGM presence. This exploration is framed among other independent variables that have been proposed in the comprehensive literature on CMR. Each of these variables plays a significant role in shaping the nature and outcomes of relations between civilians and the military. Within the existing body of CMR literature, various factors are identified that influence the complex dynamics of civil-military relations. These factors, presented as independent variables, can be broadly categorized into two groups: structural and individual/group-level factors.

Structural independent variables include factors that form the foundational bedrock of a state's governance and societal structure. Notable among these are a country's regime type, which can significantly shape the relative power distribution between the military and civilian entities, and the level of its democratic consolidation. A stable, mature democracy is often associated with healthier, more balanced CMR, whereas fledgling or faltering democracies might face higher risks of military intervention.

Economic conditions, a crucial aspect of a country's structural composition, also factor heavily into CMR. External and internal threats, whether they are military, political, or economic, significantly influence the balance of power between civilians and the military, often leading to shifts in this dynamic to address the immediate challenges. The efficiency and legitimacy of a country's government can either strengthen civilian control or provoke military intervention, depending on the public perception and the perceived effectiveness of the government.

Among individual-group-level factors that also bridge the gap between this and structural factors, is the concept of military professionalism. The extent of the military's adherence to professional standards and practices can significantly sway the balance of power in CMR. Although this dissertation primarily focuses on civilian control over the military as the dependent variable, it is essential to acknowledge that the majority of the existing literature centers around military coups. As Croissant et al. (2017) emphasize, military coups represent the most severe form of military insubordination and are therefore a central focus of CMR studies.

The subsequent sections of this chapter will discuss each of these variables in turn, offering an analytical review of their role and influence in shaping CMR. This examination, coupled with the main investigation into the effect of PGM presence on civilian control over the military, aims to present a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics that shape civil-military relations.

2.2.a.i. Regime Type, Democratic Consolidation, and Civil-Military Relations

The interplay between regime type and Civil-Military Relations (CMR) forms a crucial thematic focus in existing scholarly literature. The nature of this

relationship, however, is far from linear; it is characterized by a complex, bidirectional dynamic wherein the influence is reciprocal. On the one hand, the regime type can significantly impact the structure, processes, and outcomes of CMR. On the other hand, the state of CMR can lead to transformations in the regime type. This mutual relationship highlights the nuanced and interconnected nature of these political phenomena (Croissant et al. 2010).

The inherent challenges faced by autocratic regimes in maintaining effective control over the military are largely attributed to deficiencies in legitimacy and operational efficiency. Unlike democratic regimes, where the principle of civilian control over the military is a well-established norm, autocracies often struggle to establish a similar equilibrium. This instability presents an elevated risk of military coups, prompting autocratic regimes to adopt a variety of “coup-proofing” strategies aimed at securing their rule.

The effectiveness of these coup-proofing measures, however, tends to vary depending on the nature of the autocratic regime. Escribà-Folch et al. (2020) suggest that personalistic autocracies, which typically feature weaker institutions, face a significantly higher risk of *coup d'état* compared to their more institutionally robust counterparts. This demonstrates that even within the umbrella term of ‘autocracy’, the internal dynamics and structure of the regime significantly impact its ability to control the military.

On the other hand, democracies are generally less susceptible to the threat of military coups, hence they engage less in coup-proofing measures (Escribà-Folch, Böhmelt, and Pilster 2020; Kim 2021; Böhmelt and Pilster 2015). Their inherently transparent and accountable structures, coupled with a culture of respect for civilian

rule, contribute to this lower coup risk. Kenwick (2017) furthers this point, arguing that military and party-based regimes struggle to control their armed forces to the same degree as consolidated democracies.

The association between regime type and coup risk is further emphasized by Belkin and Shofer's (2003) research. They found that military regimes are more prone to experiencing military coups compared to civilian regimes. Furthermore, they found that countries that have previously experienced military coups were more likely to face future coup risks. This finding solidifies the assertion that regime type plays a pivotal role in shaping CMR and the potential for coup occurrences.

Democratic polities inherently exhibit a higher degree of civilian control over the military. This is due in part to the clearly defined division of labor among the state and government institutions. Democratically elected governments, supported by broad-based societal legitimacy, channel opposition through political parties and civil society organizations rather than through military or violent means. The separation of powers, institutional arrangements that govern the relationship between the military and civilian leaders, and the rule of law, are all democratic constructs that contribute to both the control over and efficacy of the military (Zaborowski 2016).

Furthermore, Kenwick (2017) posits that civilian control over the military is a self-reinforcing process. The more consistently it is practiced, the more entrenched the norms become regarding the military's role as a subordinate entity to civilian leadership. This, in turn, reinforces and enhances the degree of civilian control over time. Powell (2012) argues that democracies face fewer coup attempts than their autocratic counterparts. This is likely due to the balance of power and accountability

mechanisms inherent in democratic systems, which discourage military intervention in politics.

Civil society also plays a crucial role in maintaining civilian control over the military. Belkin and Schofer (2003) argue that the strength of civil society directly impacts the likelihood of military coups. A robust civil society can act as a deterrent against military coups, while societies with weak civil institutions face an increased risk of military intervention. This highlights the symbiotic relationship between strong democratic institutions, civil society, and the maintenance of civilian control over the military.

2.2.a.ii. Economic Conditions and Civil-Military Relations

The economic health of a nation significantly influences its societal and political dynamics, including the civil-military relations (CMR). Londregan and Poole (1990) argued that poverty is closely linked to the occurrence of military coups. Through quantitative analysis, the authors demonstrated a negative correlation between a country's growth rate and the number of successful coup attempts. Their findings suggest that wealthier governments can mitigate coup risks by strategically investing resources to appease the military, thereby fortifying the civil-military balance.

Economic conditions can also indirectly shape CMR by affecting the general social and political environment. Under prosperous conditions, governments can allocate adequate resources to the military, which, coupled with strong civilian institutions, reinforces civilian control over the armed forces. Conversely, economic distress can increase the likelihood of social unrest, potentially leading to a power

vacuum that the military might exploit. Thus, robust economic health can be a defense mechanism against coup attempts and other forms of military interference in governance. Belkin and Schofer (2003) further corroborate this argument, positing that higher GDP per capita corresponds with a lower incidence of military coups. This finding shows the role of economic prosperity in preserving the stability of CMR and the overall political order. Therefore, a thorough analysis of CMR necessitates an understanding of a nation's economic conditions, their historical trends, and their potential influence on the military's role and behavior.

In contrast, Powell's (2012) study finds the correlation between GDP per capita and the number of attempted and successful military coups to be statistically insignificant. Powell puts forward an intriguing proposition: while economic incentives can decrease the likelihood of the army attempting a coup, an army with more economic resources has a higher likelihood of succeeding if they attempt a power grab. This paradox highlights the delicate balance that governments need to strike in managing economic relations with their militaries, revealing the intricate dynamics at play in CMR.

Furthermore, Decalo's (1991) concept of the 'trade-off modality' provides another dimension to the understanding of how economic factors play into CMR. This concept, which emerged from an analysis of CMR in several African countries, such as Kenya and Zambia, posits that some governments maintain stable relations with their military institutions by offering economic benefits and prestige in exchange for military subordination. These governments essentially trade economic and symbolic rewards for the assurance of military loyalty, adding to their resilience against coups.

Leon (2014) introduces a distinct perspective on the economic dimensions of CMR by focusing on the relationship between military expenditure and the propensity for coups. According to Leon, when the proportion of military spending to GDP is low, the military may be incentivized to stage a coup to increase that share. Leon's analysis of military spending before and after successful and failed coup attempts supports this argument, demonstrating that the ratio of military spending to GDP was lower prior to, and higher following, a successful coup attempt compared to a failed one.

Albrecht and Eibl (2018) further enrich this conversation by introducing a nuanced understanding of the different factors influencing various segments of the military. Concentrating on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, they differentiate between the propensities of elite and combat officers to stage a coup. Their research indicates that defense spending decreases the risk of a coup initiated by elite officers. At the same time, they find that social spending and economic liberalization decrease the likelihood of a coup staged by combat officers.

These studies highlight the various ways economic factors and military spending can influence CMR. They point to the need to consider not just overall economic conditions, but also how resources are allocated within the military, and the varying effects these allocations can have on various factions within the armed forces.

In summary, the relationship between economic conditions and civil-military relations (CMR) is complex and multidimensional, with a variety of factors at play. Studies indicate a significant correlation between national wealth, economic stability, military expenditure, and the likelihood of military coups. While some researchers

highlight a negative correlation between a country's growth rate and the frequency of successful coup attempts (Londregan and Poole 1990; Belkin and Schofer 2003), others argue that the relationship is more nuanced. They contend that the propensity for a military coup can be influenced by how resources are allocated within the military (Powell 2012; Leon 2014) and the varying effects these allocations can have on various factions within the armed forces (Albrecht and Eibl 2018). Hence, to comprehend CMR, one must analyze the intricacies of economic conditions, including the relative wealth of a nation, the ratio of military spending to GDP, and the distribution of resources within the military.

2.2.a.iii. Foreign Relations and Civil-Military Relations

Foreign relations, hold significant impact on CMR. These relations encompass a broad spectrum of interactions, including defense treaties, arms deals, joint military exercises, shared intelligence, and bilateral or multilateral cooperation in conflict zones. When handled with mutual understanding and respect, such relations can enhance the collaboration between civilian and military entities within a state.

Decalo's "external guarantor modality" is a case in point (1991). According to this model, countries like Senegal and Gabon have successfully stabilized their CMR by forging military agreements with external powers. These powers then act as a form of insurance, ensuring that relations between civilian authorities and military institutions remain stable. This reduces internal strife and the risk of military coups, providing a shield of foreign guarantee against potential power overreaches by the military.

This modality also demonstrates the value and influence of international diplomacy in shaping domestic affairs. It shows that external actors can contribute to fostering an environment of cooperation and mutual respect between civilian leadership and military establishments within a state. This further underlines the idea that foreign relations and CMR are closely intertwined, each shaping and being shaped by the other in complex ways. Thus, understanding foreign relations in the context of CMR necessitates a broad perspective that takes into account the interactions between internal dynamics and external influences.

War and international conflict represent significant intersections of interest between civilian leadership and the military. In such times, the interests of both parties often converge towards national security, resulting in a peculiar alignment of goals that could shape the dynamics of CMR. The diversionary war theory (Arbatli and Arbatli 2016) provides an insightful lens to understand how regimes under threat might manipulate foreign conflict to their advantage. In situations of internal instability or widespread dissatisfaction, instigating a war can serve as a strategic maneuver to deflect public attention away from domestic issues and consolidate support through the ‘rally-around-the-flag’ effect. Such a move has the potential to pacify the military in two distinct ways.

First, a surge in popular support for the government due to an ongoing war might discourage military insubordination. The military, being a part of the state apparatus, would be aware of the potentially dire consequences of intervening in a government that enjoys a strong public backing. Second, the military could benefit materially and symbolically from an escalated conflict. The augmentation of the war

budget presents direct financial benefits, while the prestige associated with defending the nation in a popular war could enhance the military's standing in society.

The diversionary war, then, operates on dual fronts: it's both a carrot and a stick, rewarding the military for its loyalty and threatening potential consequences for insubordination. However, it's worth noting that such a strategy hinges on the successful execution of the war. If the conflict proves unsuccessful or unpopular, it may instead exacerbate the existing tensions and hasten the downfall of the regime (Arbatli and Arbatli 2016).

In conclusion, foreign relations, particularly those pertaining to conflict and warfare, play an instrumental role in shaping CMR. They create a complex web of incentives and disincentives that can either pacify or provoke the military, depending on the circumstances. Therefore, a thorough understanding of CMR necessitates a nuanced appreciation of these external dynamics and their implications for domestic civil-military relations.

2.2.a.iv. Social Factors and Civil-Military Relations

Besides economic, regime type-related, and external factors, there are also societal factors proposed as independent variables of CMR. Compulsory conscription and secret police (Choulis 2021), popular support for the civilian leadership (Cilliler 2016), regime's legitimacy in the eyes of its populace (Decalo 1991; Belkin and Schofer 2003), inclusive military recruitment policy (Lindemann 2010), and domestic stability (Belkin and Schofer 2003) are among those factors.

Choulis (2021) provides an intriguing analysis on the role of forced conscription within different regimes, unveiling a complex interplay between societal

factors and civil-military dynamics. In democracies, forced conscription serves as a catalyst for society's assimilation of military values, fostering trust and understanding between civilians and the military. This, in turn, reinforces democratic control over the military, strengthening civilian power. In contrast, in anocracies, which typically exist between autocracy and democracy, forced conscription may have the unintended consequence of increased coup risk. This occurs as diverse social groups gain access to military personnel, opening possibilities for anti-government collaboration. Here, conscription effectively creates a bridge between social actors and the military, paving the way for potential threats to the government.

The role of secret police within anocracies further complicates the dynamics of CMR. Their presence adds an element of fear, suppressing potential collaboration between societal actors and the military. The secret police, by identifying and eliminating dissidents, curtail both the willingness and opportunity for coup, thereby indirectly strengthening government control over the military (Choulis, 2021). Adding another dimension to the societal factors influencing CMR, Lindemann (2010) brings forth the idea of inclusive military recruitment policy. He posits that such policies, as part of a broader strategy of 'elite bargain,' have proven instrumental in preventing successful coups in countries like Tanzania and Zambia. This three-pronged approach, composed of inclusive military recruitment, political control through the ruling party, and access to state patronage, has bolstered the governments' control over the military, thus stabilizing CMR.

Cilliler (2016) explores the crucial role of popular support for civilian leadership and its policies in shaping CMR, with a particular focus on Turkey. According to his observations, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government

in Turkey was able to effectively curb the military's influence over the political process. This was largely possible due to the successful garnering of public support for their reform initiatives and stringent action against military officers considered a potential threat to civilian control. The AKP government's reform policies gained considerable traction among the populace, and this broad-based endorsement lent the civilian leadership increased legitimacy and power. By securing public backing, the government not only bolstered its own authority but also established a counterbalance against the military's influence over the political domain. This scenario underlines the significant influence public opinion can wield over CMR.

Simultaneously, the AKP's strategic action against potentially threatening military officers further indicated its assertiveness in maintaining civilian control. The purge of such officers was a clear signal of the government's intent to curtail any undue military sway on political affairs. It further demonstrated the civilian government's capability to implement decisive action against any perceived threats to its authority (Cilliler 2016). In summary, the case of Turkey shows the significant role of public support for civilian leadership and their reform policies in shaping CMR. A strong backing from the populace strengthens the civilian leadership's hand in their endeavors to establish control over the military and reshape the CMR in line with democratic norms.

The legitimacy of a regime in the eyes of the population plays a significant role in shaping CMR, according to various studies (Belkin and Schofer 2003; Decalo 1991). In the cases of Botswana and Gambia, Decalo (1991) highlights that these African nations could ward off the potential risk of military coups through the establishment of strong social legitimacy and popular support for their charismatic

leaders. This high degree of legitimacy, coupled with popular endorsement, formed a robust shield against any potential subversion by the military.

Belkin and Shofer (2003) also incorporate a regime's legitimacy in their risk assessment for potential military coups. Their findings align with Decalo's observations, emphasizing that the more legitimate a regime is perceived to be by the population, the lower the associated risk of a military coup. This relationship points to the importance of maintaining high public confidence and support for a regime to ensure stable CMR.

The stability of domestic conditions also significantly influences the likelihood of military intervention in politics. Belkin and Schofer (2003) suggest that heightened domestic instability increases the likelihood of military coups. This could be due to the enhanced visibility and perceived necessity of the military's role in politics during periods of significant unrest. In such circumstances, the military could potentially leverage these internal security threats as a justification for its increased involvement in, and influence over, the political process. An example of this can be seen in Turhan's (2008) study of the Turkish army, which used the 'Islamist and Kurdish' issues in Turkey as security threats, arguing these were best managed by the military. According to Cizre (2011), both questions had been leveraged by the Turkish Armed Forces to exert influence over politics.

In short, societal factors such as popular support, regime legitimacy, conscription practices, and internal stability significantly influence the dynamics of CMR. Public endorsement for civilian leadership, inclusive military recruitment, and strong regime legitimacy can serve as strong deterrents against military intervention.

On the other hand, domestic instability can exacerbate the risk of military involvement in politics.

2.2.a.v. Military Expertise and Civil-Military Relations

Military expertise plays a notable role in shaping Civil-Military Relations (CMR), as shown in the literature. In his exploration of the concept of 'epistemic authority,' Michael (2007) illustrates how the military can gain an elevated level of influence in policymaking due to their technical knowledge and understanding of security matters. In the case of Israel, the military's expertise in handling conflicts with Palestinians lends them a considerable degree of de facto authority. This heightened authority is acknowledged by politicians and society alike, making civilian leaders less inclined to intervene in areas where they feel less confident about their knowledge base.

This dynamic is further complicated by the sophistication of modern military technology, which can reduce civilian control over the military. Herspring (2019) provides insights into this issue, suggesting that military personnel trained for combat and equipped with a deep understanding of complex weapon systems and machinery can exert more influence on defense and security policies than initially intended. Their expertise and the corresponding lack thereof on the part of their civilian superiors can create an imbalance, leading to enhanced influence for the military in policy matters. This asymmetry of information also highlights the challenges in fostering an objective civilian control as suggested by Huntington (1957). The military can leverage this asymmetry into shaping security policies and exerting more influence on broader politics.

In sum, the concept of ‘epistemic authority’ demonstrates the potential of military expertise to reshape CMR, particularly in contexts of complex conflict and sophisticated military technology. In scenarios where the military possesses considerable technical knowledge, their influence on security and defense policy can increase, often at the expense of civilian oversight. Consequently, this highlights the necessity of continuous training and education for civilian leadership in military matters to ensure balanced decision-making processes and maintain the principle of civilian control over the military.

2.2.a.vi. Coup-proofing and Civil-Military Relations

In Civil-Military Relations (CMR), ‘coup-proofing’ is a critical concept, defined as the measures that governments take to avert military coups. Coup-proofing functions as both a dependent and independent variable within CMR, and a government’s engagement in these strategies often signifies an underlying perception of a potential military coup threat. The literature indicates a clear link between a regime’s sense of coup risk and its employment of coup-proofing measures, as demonstrated by Belkin and Schofer (2003).

Some researchers suggest that the history of colonial rule might influence the degree and type of coup-proofing strategies adopted by post-colonial nations. For instance, Mehrl and Choulis (2021) argue that former French colonies engaged in more extensive coup-proofing, largely because France had established local militia forces during the colonial era, which later evolved into paramilitary groups after the independence. However, coup-proofing is not a foolproof strategy. As noted by Böhmelt and Pilster (2015) the utility of institutional coup-proofing, which usually

involves dividing military units to balance each other, is limited. While this approach can be effective up to a certain point, its benefits tend to decrease over time.

In sum, coup-proofing plays a multifaceted role in CMR, reflecting governments' attempts to maintain stability and prevent military insubordination. Coup-proofing is both a result of dysfunctional civil-military relations and a cause undermining civilian oversight.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature on Civil-Military Relations (CMR) covers a wide range of variables, encompassing regime type, economic conditions, foreign relations, societal factors, military expertise, and coup-proofing strategies. The evidence points to a complex, multifaceted dynamic between these variables and their influence on CMR. Regime type, economic conditions, and foreign relations directly shape the control civilians can exercise over the military, while societal factors and military expertise play a significant role in either enhancing or undermining that control. Meanwhile, coup-proofing strategies serve as a vital tool for governments to secure their positions and thwart potential military interventions.

However, while the existing literature offers valuable insights into these variables and their effects on CMR, a noticeable gap persists. Most studies tend to focus on one or two variables in isolation, providing a fragmented view of the complex web of influences shaping CMR. There is a need for more comprehensive analyses that consider the interplay and combined effects of these variables to capture the full dynamics of CMR.

Additionally, the literature predominantly concentrates on specific regional contexts or periods, limiting the generalizability of findings across different geopolitical continents and timeframes. More cross-regional and longitudinal studies could help enrich our understanding of CMR and the multitude of factors influencing them. Overall, this review underlines the imperative for further research to bridge these gaps, delivering a more integrated and globally applicable understanding of CMR.





CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pro-government militias (PGMs) are listed among counterbalancing instruments with which governments aim to curb the military's influence by increasing the costs of disobedience. While these studies analyze the factors behind the implementation of such policies, the impact of PGMs on civilian control in general remains understudied. This counterbalancing policy can be counterproductive, i.e., diminish civilian control even further, as the militias also have agency. Hence, the principal-agent problem intended to be solved through such armed groups can worsen because, in a sense, the policy creates another agent to be controlled. Therefore, this dissertation aims to answer whether the presence of PGMs decrease civilian control over the army using a cross-sectional time series dataset. To answer that question, I will test the following causal hypothesis: pro-government militias cause civilian control to diminish.

Social and political phenomena are complex and multifaceted with each factor being a result of and resulting in multiple variables. There are also numerous databases regarding these variables. A robust theoretical framework is crucial for understanding the complex dynamics between these factors by providing a guideline as to which variables to look for and what hypotheses to test. A theoretical framework offers several benefits in researching such complex issues like civilian control over the military: clarity and consistency (Rahbek-Clemmensen 2013), guidelines for empirical research (Hanau Santini and Moro 2019), and grounding for policy development (Mendoza 2016).

This dissertation builds on the agency theory within the rational choice paradigm that explores the dynamics among principals and agents, in this case, the government and security forces (military and militias). As explained in literature review, while there are many factors analyzed in the literature as predictors of civilian control, military obedience-disobedience follows the logic of self-interest constrained by structural phenomena such as governance, economic conditions, democracy, and societal expectations and norms.

Agency theory is particularly relevant in understanding the dynamics between civilians, the military, and pro-government militias. This theory focuses on the relationships where one party (the agent) acts on behalf of another (the principal), highlighting issues of trust, control, and accountability. Agency theory helps analyze how civilian authorities can exert control over military actions while ensuring military effectiveness. It emphasizes the importance of mutual trust and the alignment of interests between civilians and military leaders. This dynamic is crucial in contexts where military leaders may have divergent interests from civilian policymakers, potentially leading to conflicts over military strategy and governance (Regan 2014).

While some governments may employ counter-balancing strategies such as dividing up the security sector or employ PGMs to deter the military from disobedience, in many contexts, PGMs complicate the civil-military relationship. Agency theory can elucidate the motivations behind these militias' actions and their interactions with both military forces and civilian authorities. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing strategies that promote stability and effective governance, especially in regions where such militias play a significant role in security and political order.

In summary, a strong theoretical framework is essential for analyzing civil-military relations, providing clarity, guiding research, and informing policy. Agency theory offers valuable insights into the complexities of civilian-military interactions and the role of various actors within this sphere. This chapter will discuss the foundations and applications of agency theory within the context of CMR, PGMs as another agent in the equation and formulate the hypothesis of the study.

Agency theory is a framework that explores the relationship between principals and agents, particularly in situations where one party (the principal) delegates decision-making authority to another party (the agent). This theory is rooted in the broader rational choice paradigm, which assumes that individuals act in their self-interest to maximize utility. Agency theory originated in the fields of economics and organizational studies, particularly through the work of scholars like Michael Jensen and William Meckling in the 1970s (1976), who focused on the conflicts of interest that arise when one party delegates authority to another.

In the context of civil military relations, as adapted by Feaver (1998), agency theory emphasizes the relationship between civilian leaders and military personnel, where civilians establish rules and oversight mechanisms to ensure that the military acts in alignment with national security objectives. The military, in turn, responds based on its expectations of being monitored and the potential consequences of its actions. This dynamic is essential for understanding how military decisions are influenced by civilian oversight and the perceived likelihood of accountability. The theory posits that the behavior of military leaders is shaped by the incentives provided by civilian authorities. If the military believes that its actions are likely to be scrutinized, it may be more inclined to adhere to civilian directives. Conversely, a

lack of oversight can lead to deviations from expected behavior, as military leaders may prioritize their own interests over those of civilian authorities. This aspect of agency theory highlights the importance of establishing effective monitoring systems to ensure compliance and alignment with civilian goals (Petrina 2005).

Agency theory also accounts for the differences in behavior among various military ranks and units. For example, junior officers may respond differently to civilian oversight compared to senior leaders, reflecting variations in their perceptions of authority, loyalty, and institutional culture. This variability can lead to divergent military actions, such as coups or mutinies, depending on the context and the specific dynamics at play within the military organization (Dwyer and Tansey 2020). The framework of agency theory is particularly useful in analyzing civil-military relations, as it provides insights into how civilian leaders can effectively manage military organizations while ensuring national security while also accounting for divergence from the expected patterns of behavior (Petrina 2005).

A key aspect of agency theory is the principal-agent problem that focuses on such divergent behaviors. This misalignment can lead to inefficiencies and conflicts, as agents may not act in the best interest of the principals due to differing incentives. Two key concepts within this framework are moral hazard and adverse selection. Moral hazard occurs when an agent has an incentive to take risks because the consequences of those risks are borne by the principal. For example, a manager may engage in risky business practices if they know that the financial repercussions will affect the shareholders rather than themselves. Similarly, military leaders may commit war crimes if the government not the army is going to be blamed for these actions. Such moral hazards may even result in actions that benefits the army at the

expense of the country. Adverse selection, on the other hand, arises when there is asymmetric information between the principal and the agent before the contract is made. For instance, if a principal hires an agent without knowing their true abilities or intentions, the agent may misrepresent themselves to secure the position, leading to poor outcomes for the principal (Althouse 2018).

From an agency theoretical perspective of CMR, civilian leaders delegate authority to military leaders to manage defense and security matters. However, this delegation can lead to challenges due to differing interests. Civilian leaders aim to ensure that the military acts in alignment with national policies and priorities, while military leaders may prioritize their institutional interests or operational preferences. When applied to CMR, agency theory offers three key concepts for understanding the patterns of behavior: monitoring and oversight, shirking, and information asymmetry (Feaver 1998).

Civilian leaders must implement mechanisms to monitor military actions and ensure compliance with their directives. This oversight is crucial to mitigate risks associated with moral hazard, where military leaders might act contrary to civilian interests if they believe their actions will go unchecked (Feaver 1998; 2003). The potential for military leaders to “shirk” (defined as neglecting their responsibilities or deviate from agreed-upon actions) can create friction in civil-military relations. For example, if military leaders perceive that civilians are overly intrusive in their operations, they may become less cooperative, leading to a breakdown in trust and effectiveness (Feaver 1998). Civilian leaders often lack complete information about military capabilities and intentions, which can lead to adverse selection. This situation

complicates the ability of civilians to make informed decisions regarding military strategy and oversight (Baker 2007; Feaver 2003; Althouse 2018).

Agency theory has been used in various studies to explain phenomena such as military obedience, the occurrence of coups, and the balance of power between civilian authorities and the military. Research indicates that military obedience is contingent upon the perceived likelihood of civilian oversight and the consequences of misbehavior. If military leaders believe that their actions will be monitored and that there are repercussions for disobedience, they are more likely to comply with civilian directives (Feaver 2003). Agency theory also provides insights into the conditions under which military coups may occur. In environments where civilian oversight is weak or where military leaders feel empowered by a lack of accountability, the risk of a coup increases. Studies have shown that when military leaders believe they can act without fear of punishment, they may resort to seizing power (Baker 2007; Kuehn and Lorenz 2011).

The theory has also been applied to assess the shifting balance of power between civilians and the military. For example, in Brazil, the establishment of a civilian-run ministry of defense has altered the dynamics of civil-military relations towards empowering civilians and improving oversight mechanisms. This shift has led to positive changes in military accountability and policy-making processes (Neto 2012). In short, agency theory offers a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of civil-military relations, highlighting the challenges of monitoring, the risks of shirking, and the implications for military behavior and political stability. Studies utilizing this theory have provided significant insights into the mechanisms

that govern military obedience, the potential for coups, and the evolving balance of power between civilian and military authorities.

Pro-government militias (PGMs) are armed groups that operate with the support, endorsement, or direct control of a government, often tasked with carrying out security functions, maintaining order, or engaging in counterinsurgency operations (Carey and Mitchell 2017). These militias can vary significantly in their structure, purpose, and relationship with the state. They are armed groups that are organized, funded, or otherwise supported by a state to carry out military or paramilitary functions, often in support of governmental objectives, including maintaining internal security, combating insurgencies, or enforcing state policies. PGMs can be categorized into several types based on their origins, functions, and the degree of formal integration into the state security apparatus.

State-sponsored militias are formally recognized by the government and often integrated into the national security framework. They may receive funding, training, and resources from the state. An example is the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq, which were instrumental in combating ISIS but have also been linked to human rights abuses and sectarian violence (Arif 2021). Another type of militias are informal groups that operate independently of formal state structures but may still receive tacit support or resources from the government. They often emerge in response to perceived threats or instability. For instance, the Janjaweed militia in Sudan, initially formed to combat rebels, later evolved into a more autonomous force that has committed atrocities against civilians (Jangaling 2023).

Some militias, on the other hand, have ethnic or sectarian roots as armed actors claiming to protect the related community's interest especially in times of conflict.

These militias are usually formed along ethnic or sectarian lines and may be supported by the state to further specific political agendas. In Syria, for instance, various militias have been backed by both the Syrian government and foreign powers, leading to complex dynamics in the ongoing conflict (Leenders and Giustozzi 2022). Community defense forces are also similar to sectarian or ethnic militias but have a broader support base, often linked to a specific area or region. These groups are formed by local communities to protect themselves from external threats, often with the encouragement or support of the government. Their role can shift from community defense to formal military engagement, depending on the political context (Carey and Mitchell 2017).

PGMs are often established or employed to reinforce the security sector in times of conflict when the regular forces may be perceived as insufficient by the authorities to provide the state with additional security options that are less reliant on the formal military and can act outside the boundaries of oversight and legal accountability. Governments may create PGMs to strengthen their counterinsurgency efforts, leveraging local knowledge and loyalty to combat insurgent groups effectively. This was evident in Sudan, where militias were used to suppress rebellion in peripheral regions (Jangaling 2023). By supporting PGMs, governments can maintain a degree of control over military power, ensuring that loyalty is directed toward the state rather than individual military leaders. The purpose is to prevent military coups and maintain political stability. However, the creation of PGMs can lead to unintended consequences, as these groups may develop independent agency over time.

PGMs often gain access to resources, funding, and arms, which can empower them to operate independently of the state. This can lead to situations where PGMs

pursue their interests, sometimes in conflict with government objectives. As PGMs gain power and influence, their loyalty may shift from the state to their own leadership or agendas, potentially resulting in challenges to state authority. For instance, in Iraq, some PMF groups have declared loyalty to foreign powers, complicating their relationship with the Iraqi government (Arif 2021). PGMs may engage in actions that serve their interests, including violent reprisals against civilians or rival groups, which can undermine state legitimacy and stability (Nelson and Petrova 2023). In summary, while pro-government militias are created to support state objectives and reinforce civilian control over the military, their evolution can lead to independent agency that poses challenges to governance and security. Understanding the dynamics of PGMs is crucial for analyzing their impact on state stability and civil-military relations.

PGMs can develop their own interests and agendas that may diverge from those of the state, leading to complex dynamics in civil-military relations. PGMs often emerge from a combination of state needs and local dynamics, which allows them to cultivate unique interests. Their independence can stem from several factors. First, PGMs may prioritize local or ethnic affiliations over national loyalty, leading them to pursue agendas that conflict with government objectives. This can manifest in actions that protect local interests rather than broader state goals (Klosek and Souleimanov 2022). Second, militias may gain control over local resources, which can empower them economically and politically, further distancing their interests from the state. This autonomy can lead to a power struggle between the militia and the government, as seen in various conflict zones (Joo and Sosa 2023). Finally, PGMs can leverage their military capabilities to influence political outcomes, effectively

becoming power brokers within their regions. This can undermine the state's authority and complicate governance, as militias may operate with a degree of impunity (Klosek and Souleimanov 2022).

The relationship between PGMs and state military forces is crucial in understanding civil-military dynamics. PGMs can have differing modes of relation with the military. The interaction can lead to undermining civilian control of the military by acting independently or in opposition to state directives. This undermines the principle of civilian supremacy, as militias may engage in operations that contradict government policies or strategic objectives. In some cases, PGMs may collaborate with state military forces, sharing intelligence and resources to achieve common goals. However, this relationship can be fraught with tension, as PGMs may seek to assert their influence over military operations, leading to potential conflicts of interest (Klosek and Souleimanov 2022; Joo and Sosa 2023). Finally, the presence of PGMs can erode public trust in state military institutions, particularly if militias are perceived as more effective or reliable than the official armed forces. This can result in a legitimacy crisis for the government, as citizens may turn to militias for protection or governance (Joo and Sosa 2023).

The dynamics between pro-government militias (PGMs) and regular military forces are complex and influenced by various factors, including state capacity, political objectives, and the nature of civil-military relations. PGMs often emerge in contexts where the state seeks to extend its control or influence without direct accountability, especially in regions where the regular military may be insufficient or politically constrained. There are multiple motivations for states' resorting to PGMs that are not mutually exclusive. In weak states or areas where the military lacks

presence, PGMs can act as force multipliers, providing local knowledge and rapid mobilization capabilities. This is particularly evident in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, where PGMs operate alongside regular forces to combat insurgencies or civil unrest (Kishi 2015).

Another motivation is plausible deniability. Governments may prefer to use PGMs to conduct operations that would be politically sensitive if carried out by the military. This allows for a degree of separation from human rights abuses or other controversial actions, as the state can deny direct involvement (Kishi 2015; Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020). PGMs also play a role in maintaining internal order, particularly in contexts where the military is engaged in external conflicts or is perceived as unreliable. This internal focus can lead to PGMs being deployed against civilian populations, especially in times of political instability. They can also be used as a counterbalance to the military in the contexts of weak civilian government and a strong but coup-prone military (Kishi 2015; Carey and González 2021). Whether they can or do serve these purposes, is debatable, as argued in this study.

Focusing on specific cases, PGMs seem to behave in various ways depending on the conditions of the events in the country. PGMs may side with the military, for instance, if they share the military's interests by either changing the status quo or preserving it in cases. Depending on their affiliation with the political elite, such as being of the same ethnic group or not, PGMs can change loyalties and favor either position (Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020). PGMs as actors themselves, pursue greater power and resources for themselves and act on incentives that they may receive from either the civilians or the military. They may join with or suppress dissent depending on which outcome would benefit them the most (Carey 2021).

They can also fear losing their power and access to resources in case of a regime change and act to preserve the regime. (Carey and González 2021).

PGMs can reinforce civilian control under specific conditions. If they are effectively integrated into state security frameworks, they can enhance civilian control by providing additional resources and intelligence. This integration often occurs when PGMs are co-opted into formal state security roles, thus aligning their objectives with those of the civilian government (Carey and González 2021). Political legitimacy can also lead PGM presence to this outcome. If PGMs are perceived as legitimate defenders of the state, their actions can bolster civilian authority, particularly in fragile states where the military is viewed with suspicion (Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020). However, PGMs can also grow too independent of the state and undermine civilian control. In this scenario, the civilian authorities are put in a position of losing control over two (or more) armed entities, the army and PGM, whether these collaborate or conflict with each other. If they join forces, they can be in a better position to challenge civilian oversight but if they clash, they can erode state capacity and weaken the civilian leaders indirectly. PGMs can erode governance and trust in the government by also engaging in violence against civilians. They may gain resources through extortion at the expense of state authority (Carey and González 2021; Carey 2021).

While these scenarios differ in outcomes, the common logic underlying each is the fact that PGMs are not mere policy tools but actors with interests and strategies to achieve them. From this starting point and acknowledgement, agency theory offers a robust explanation of such varying behaviors, linking the conditions and outcomes. In this perspective, the presence of PGMs alters the principal-agent relationship

between civilians and the military. Traditionally, civilians (the principals) delegate authority to the military (the agent) to maintain security and order. However, if the civilians employ PGMs to balance the military and include another agent, the PGM, to the equation, this may exacerbate the principal-agent problem and undermine civilian control. The military might also align with or co-opt PGMs based on shared interests or coercive pressures, leading to a misalignment of goals of the principals and agents (Mitchell, Carey, and Butler 2014).

In short, PGMs pose significant challenges to civilian control over military forces and governance. Their ability to operate independently and compete or align with the military creates a complex landscape where civilian oversight is diminished, and the principal-agent relationship is fundamentally altered for the worse.

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that pro-government militias (PGMs) cause civilian control to diminish as per agency theory. When principals delegate power to an agent for a specific purpose such as a defendant authorizing a lawyer to represent them in the court or voters electing politicians to the parliament to represent their interests, the agent is expected to serve that purpose. However, drawing on rational choice paradigm, agency theory explores ways in which this expectation may not come true. The central issue is the misalignment of interests of agents and principals. It posits that the agents are also rational actors, narrowly understood as pursuing their interests to maximize their utility and minimize costs and harm to themselves within the constraints of external conditions from economy to cultural norms and power dynamics. These constraints in addition to internal limitations of the actors themselves such as inability to access and process accurate and complete information, foresee different potential outcomes of each option at hand, ethnic,

religious, personal, and emotional ties, mean that cost-benefit analyses will always be imperfect and sometimes completely inaccurate. For instance, in the extreme scenario of two persons given the choices of death or defecting, one cannot accurately predict which one will choose death or defection without having sufficient information about their background, external conditions, and inner world. While this limits the explanatory power of a pure rational choice perspective, the paradigm and the theory derived from it, agency theory, can help predict a general pattern. Arguably, given only these two choices, those who choose defection will be way more than those opting to die rather than defect.

Agency theory in the literature on civilian control explores the ways in which the civilians may fail to ensure the military protects them. The principal-agent problem points to the fact that merely delegating security duties to the army does not result in more security for the delegators in particular and the society in general. To solve this problem, governments implement certain policies to increase the cost of military dissent and benefit of loyalty and abiding by the rules and regulations. Through mechanisms of control and oversight and establishment of norms around expected behavior, civilians may manage to control the army and ensure that they are carrying out their obligations. Governments that have more power and resources in states with higher capacity and established norms of governance can do so more than those that lack these conditions. Even in developed democracies (Feaver 1998; Regan 2014), and more so in autocratic underdeveloped countries, armed conflict increases the bargaining power of the military against civilian authorities.

Governments that do not wish to be reliant solely on their army for various reasons discussed above and fear the risk of military disobedience, tutelage, or coup

may resort to other forms of increasing the cost of dissent for the military, including dividing up the army units, establishing secret police, and employing PGMs (James T. Quinnlivan 1999; Böhmelt and Pilster 2015; Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell 2015). However, as PGMs are also agents, the principal-agent problem these governments aim to solve turn into a principal-agent-agent problem. This policy may work in some situations, but the central argument of this study is that it is counterproductive in more cases than it serves its purpose. This argument relies on the following assumptions:

- 1- Governments or political elites resorting to PGMs often lose control over them.
- 2- PGMs, their leaders and members, act rationally, even if constrained, more often than not, especially, in significant situations such as life or death that is the case in times of conflict.
- 3- It is harder to manage two agents than one agent.

Building on these assumptions, the causal mechanism of the hypothesis is as follows:

- 1- PGMs as agents may choose to compete or side with the military if doing so will benefit them.
- 2- PGMs' siding with the military gives more leverage to the military against civilian oversight.
- 3- PGMs' competing with the military further weakens state authority through increased violence, human rights abuses, decreased popular trust and support for state institutions and government.

- 4- The fact that governments that have limited capacity and face higher risks of military disobedience resort to PGMs means that they begin the game in an already weak position.
- 5- Building on these propositions, the hypothesis is that *the presence of PGMs causes civilian control to diminish*.

The null hypothesis in this case is that PGM presence does not cause a decrease in civilian control over the military. Since the hypothesis is causal rather than merely associative or predictive, the null hypothesis is stronger. While showing a statistically significant association is sufficient for rejecting the null hypothesis of associative or predictive hypotheses, this is not the case for causal ones. One may still fail to reject the null hypothesis if there is a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables, but that relationship can be explained by another variable, i.e. a confounder that causes both. The methodology chapter elaborates on this issue and the methods to test causal hypotheses.

Conclusion

This dissertation aims to test the hypothesis that PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish. This hypothesis stems from the concept of the principal-agent problem in the framework of agency theory built on rational choice paradigm. Assuming actors to be rational in the sense of making decisions based on cost and benefit analyses within the limitations put by structural factors, agency theory explains the ways in which delegating tasks or power to agents may produce results that are not in the interests of the principal. In the context of civil-military relations, civilian authorities delegate the task of national security to the military which as an

agent may have other interests and priorities and act contrary to the expectations of the civilians.

Governments establish certain control mechanisms that allow the military to perform its duties without challenging civilian oversight or interfering in political or judicial affairs. Creation and maintenance of such mechanisms depends on clearly defined division of labor between the army officers and civilians, institutional strength, established norms of professionalism (Huntington 2002; Feaver 2003), social expectations, democratic governance, and overall state capacity. Governments lacking these strengths and facing risks of military tutelage or coups, may resort to other means of control over the military such as dividing up army units, creating secret police forces and intelligence, and forming or using pro-government militias (PGMs). While these policies may work under specific conditions, they may be counterproductive in general.

This study focuses on the effects of PGM presence on civilian control through the lenses of agency theory. While the governments employing such groups aim to solve the principal-agent problem by balancing the agent, military, this step also means creating another agent and hence exacerbating the problem intended to be solved. If the interests of the PGMs do not line up with those of the government, the principal-agent problem will turn into the principal-agent-agent problem in which both cooperation and rivalry between the agents will undermine the interests of the principal.

Whether stated explicitly or not, hypotheses about impacts of policies are causal in nature. Therefore, this study phrases its hypothesis in an explicit causal language by arguing that PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish. As will be detailed

in the methodology chapter, this hypothesis can be tested by aiming to falsify the null hypothesis that PGM presence does not cause civilian control to diminish. I will fail to falsify the null hypothesis if either PGM presence has no statistically significant association with civilian control, or, the association, if any, can be explained by another variable, or there is no time sequence between the claimed cause and effect.



CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter covers the methodology, variables, and data collection and analyses aiming to test if PGM presence has a causal effect on dynamic civilian control. Proving causality is almost impossible in social sciences due to the impracticality of conducting truly randomized controlled trials (RCTs). However, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, due to advances in techniques that mimic RCTs using observational data and computational power, we can aim to falsify a causal claim and reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Since the concept of causality is less common in quantitative social sciences, I will first discuss the concept of causation and different types of causal relationships two or more variables can have. Next, I will propose a triangular method for isolating three variables and testing their relationships before explaining the dependent, independent, and control variables of this study, how I collected them, and their descriptive statistics. The chapter will continue with dyadic and triadic analyses to test different causal pathways. Then, I will test whether the control variables or any combination of them explain away the association between the IV and DV. Finally, I will create one to five years forwarded versions the DV to test temporal sequence. For conducting the analyses, I will use Python 3 and STATA 18.5.

4.1. Causality

Strong associations between the dependent (DV) and independent variables (IV), controlling for alternative explanations, demonstrating temporal precedence of the IV to the DV, and a plausible causal narrative are necessary criteria but not proofs of causality. The causal claim can still be challenged by unobserved confounders. As illustrated in statistics textbooks, the strong correlation between ice-cream consumption and drowning disappears when the temperature of the day is checked. When it comes to social sciences where there are countless of variables that might have an effect on a phenomenon with complex and multilayered relationships among the explanatory factors themselves, causality seems impossible to establish. Hence, most quantitative works leave the quest for causal relations generalizable across time and space altogether, and instead, aim for finding strong associations that do not disappear when controlling for alternative explanations. Developments in computation as well as statistical tools enable analyzing large datasets and producing complex models with robust explanatory and predictive power. We can even run machine learning algorithms and forecast probabilities of future events. However, still, there is reluctance to claim causality (Hedström and Ylikoski 2010; Pearl 2022; Pearl and Mackenzie 2020).

On the other hand, causality is crucial for scientific advancement, not to mention policymaking. Although social scientists list the limitations of their studies and avoid making causal claims, their findings can become bases of policies that affect millions of people. That is because while, as the conventional wisdom goes, correlation does not necessarily mean causation, it implies it regardless of the researcher's intentions. Policies are interventions to an IV to achieve desired changes

the DV. How can we be sure that the policy will achieve its goals if we do not know the causal link between the policy and its outcomes? More importantly, how can we measure the effects of a policy without knowing what caused what? Advancements in computational technologies, on the other hand, have made causal investigations easier. But what is causality?

In its simplest form causality means “Y listens to X” in the sense that intervening on X results in changes in Y but not the other way around. In other words, had we not changed X, Y would not change (Pearl and Mackenzie 2020). Statistics textbooks list 4 conditions for causality: 1) statistically significant association that shows when X changes Y also changes, 2) temporal sequence meaning that X precedes Y, 3) non-spuriousness meaning that another variable (say Z) does not explain the relationship between X and Y, and 4) causal narrative that explains how X causes Y. While there are many tools that make controlling conditions 1 and 2 easy and theoretical frameworks enabling a coherent narrative, non-spuriousness is the hardest condition to meet when establishing causality (Cox 2001). However, there are new approaches and techniques that allow for measuring the causal impact of X on Y independent of Z (observed or unobserved). Before proceeding to the techniques, we need to define different types of causality: confounding, mediation, moderation, interaction, and independent causation.

In the example of ice-cream consumption and drowning, temperature is the cause of both variables, meaning that it confounds the correlation between the two. As Figure 4.1 illustrates, taken as pairs, there is association between all three variables (Z and X; X and Y; and Z and Y) but one of them (X on Y) is either not a true causal link or weaker than its bivariate effect. However, Z does not have to

explain all the effect of X on Y. In that case, it is a partial confounder. X may not have any causal effect on Y and all the statistical association may be due to Z and some other variables. In any case, when Y is the DV and X is the IV, adding Z to the model would decrease or completely erase the effect of X on Y if it is a partial or full confounder, respectively (Pearl and Mackenzie 2020).

Mediation, on the other hand, means the causal effect of the IV is carried through a mediator to the DV. However, unlike the confounding model, as seen in Figure 4.2, Z causes X and X, in turn, causes Y but Z does not have an impact on Y by itself. In this model, controlling for X will remove the causal effect of Z on Y since Z cannot impact Y in any other way. Therefore, controlling for X is a serious mistake (Pearl 2022).

Figure 4.1. Confounder Model

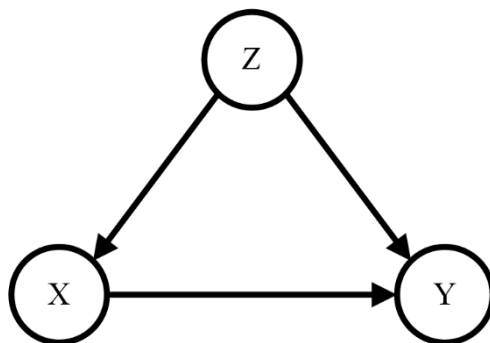
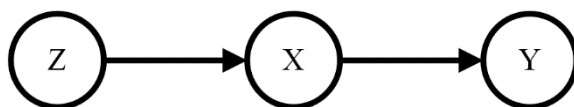


Figure 4.2. Mediator Model



In moderation models, the strength of the causal effect of the IV on the DV depends on another variable. A moderator can be seen as the condition under which X causes Y and changing the moderator Z changes the effect of X on Y. Interaction

effects refer to two variables that have no or small effect on the DV separately but a stronger impact when combined. Finally, two IVs that do not have an association with each other can be causes of a DV separately or together. If the IVs are truly independent of each other, their total causal effect will be the sum of their individual effects and including one into the model will not change the effect of the other. However, in such a model, controlling for the DV will create an association between the IVs that should not be there (Pearl and Mackenzie 2020).

Causality Type	Structure	Z's Role	Effect on X–Y Relationship
Confounding	$Z \rightarrow X, Z \rightarrow Y$	Common cause	Spurious X–Y link, vanishes when controlling Z
Mediation	$X \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	Intermediary	X affects Y through Z
Moderation	$(X \times Z) \rightarrow Y$	Effect modifier	X–Y effect depends on Z
Interaction	$(X \times Z) \rightarrow Y$	Non-additive effect term	Joint effect exceeds/adds to individual effects
Independent Causation	$X \rightarrow Y, Z \rightarrow Y$	Separate cause	Both X and Z affect Y independently

Table 4.1. Five Types of Causal Relations

In short, assuming one-way causal effects, i.e., excluding mutual causality, three variables can have five different causal relationships with each other (see Table 4.1). However, establishing one of them does not guarantee that the arrows in the causal diagram are true causes. For example, in Figure 4.1, there might be K that causes Z and X (unobserved confounder), which would make Z and X mediators of the causal impact of K on Y by removing the arrow from Z to X. Nevertheless, these definitions and conditions of causal analysis not only show the importance of drawing causal diagrams to avoid controlling the wrong variables but also ways of testing the validity of the causal paths.

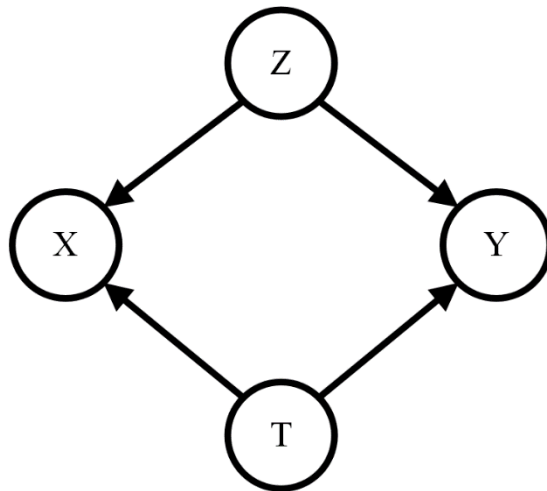
The above explanation took the issue at its simplest with only three variables. However, arguably no social phenomenon can be explained by two factors in full.

Hence, most studies include as many variables as possible into the model to avoid criticisms of “omitted variable bias.” This results in statistical models with 10 or so variables where some are statistically significant, and some are not, and the study concludes by declaring the significant effects as true explanations and discarding the non-significant ones as irrelevant within the confines of the research. Without an explicit or implicit causal model, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to “control” for alternative factors. Why should we need to control for a variable if we are not suspecting it to be a confounder, i.e., the true cause behind both IV and DV?

Drawing the causal model makes it clear which variables to hold constant and which to avoid controlling for. Since controlling for a variable means to keep it constant while changing the IV and seeing if the DV also changes, the variables in the model should have the correct relationship with each other to allow for such an operation. In other words, can we really keep all the other variables constant while changing the IV? If we cannot, then, the model will produce erroneous results. To illustrate, Figure 4.3 shows a model where two confounders are behind both the IV and DV. In this model, we can calculate the effect of X on Y, if any, independent of Z and T with a regression analysis. The coefficient of X will be its effect size on Y when Z and T are constant. However, interpreting the coefficients of Z and T would not make any sense as they collide at X, which means when we keep X constant, a spurious correlation will emerge between Z and T, making it implausible mathematically to keep both X and Z constant while changing T. Hence, in a regression model where there are two control variables (suspected confounders), the coefficients of those variables are meaningless even if they are statistically significant. This fact becomes evident when there is a causal diagram but is a common

practice (and mistake) in many quantitative analyses where all significant coefficients are reported as findings. Fortunately, there are ways to account for confounders without making these mistakes.

Figure 4.3. Causal Model with Two Confounders



4.2. Variables

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that *PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish*. Civilian control is the dependent variable (DV) to explain whereas PGM presence is the independent variable (IV) that causes the DV. Potential confounders to test, on the other hand, are state capacity indicators, economic level, democracy indicators, and internal and external armed conflict.

4.2.a. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this study is civilian control over the military. There are two datasets that offer systematic measures of civilian control with country-year as the unit of analysis: “Political Roles of the Military (PRM)” (Croissant, Eschenauer, and Kamerling 2017) covering 120 countries in the 1999-2016 period

and “Civilian Control Scores Version 1” (Kenwick 2020) covering 150 countries in the 1945-2010 period.

Kenwick (2020), on the other hand, formed two latent variables for civilian control: static and dynamic through Item Response Theory (IRT) modeling using other datasets on the institutional aspects of civil-military relations (CMR). While the static civilian control score represents the snapshot status of institutional civilian control, the dynamic civilian control score considers the impact of the passage of time on the consolidation of civilian control norms resulting in higher scores for established civilian control and lower scores if civilian control is newly established. Since the PRM dataset systematically excludes established democracies, I will not use that dataset to avoid selection bias. Besides, Kenwick’s dataset is representative of the whole world and its variables are interval, which makes it appropriate for many more statistical techniques.

Indicator	Description	Source
Leader Military Experience	Categorizes leaders as: (1) No military experience, (2) Military service, (3) Military career	Horowitz & Stam (2014)
Military Leader in Office	Whether the chief executive holds a military rank	Database of Political Institutions (DPI)
Military Participation in Government	Ordinal measure of active-duty military in cabinet: (1) None, (2) One, (3) Multiple	White (2017)
Military Entry	Whether the military was involved in bringing the leader to power	Svolik (2012)
Military Involvement in Politics	Categorical: (1) None, (2) Indirect, (3) Personal, (4) Corporate involvement in politics	Svolik (2012)
Weeks Militarism Index	Composite index: Leader’s military background, military in cabinet, military influence on policy	Weeks (2012)
GWF Military Regime	Military controls leadership selection and national security decisions	Geddes, Wright & Frantz (2014)
CGV Military Regime	Leader is a current or former member of the military	Cheibub, Gandhi & Vreeland (2010)
ARD Military Regime	Military maintains power via actual/threatened force	Hadenius & Teorell (2007)
Prior Military Regime	Regime preceded by military rule (based on GWF classification)	Derived from GWF

Table 4.2. Indicators used to calculate civilian control scores (Kenwick 2020)

Table 4.2 shows the indicators used in calculating the DV by Kenwick (2020). Item Response Theory enables the inclusion of the indicators based on how informative they are for the latent variable, civilian control score. Adding the passage of time to the equation, Kenwick calculates a dynamic score for civilian control that takes into account the consolidation of civilian governance norms among the army officers. This way, the score indicates the strength of civilian oversight beyond a snapshot of institutional arrangements.

4.2.b. Independent Variable

The independent variable of this dissertation is the presence of pro-government militias. The revised version (2.0) of the “Pro-Government Militias Database (PGMD)” (Carey, Mitchell, and Paula 2022) is a great source for these two variables. It covers information on 504 pro-government militias from across the world recorded between 1981 and 2014. The data compilers then gathered information on various characteristics of these armed groups including their relations with the state, the date of their formation and dissolution, if available, their targets, location, membership criteria, headcount, and many other information. Although the period searched starts with 1981, the date of formation of the groups goes back to 1946. Hence, when turned into country-year format, the dataset covers the 1946-2014 period. However, a PGM formed after 1946 but before 1981 would not be in the dataset if not mentioned in the news after the period of data collection. In short, the reliability of the number and presence information for countries diminishes the further we go back from 1981.

4.2.c. Control Variables

One of the primary criticism any quantitative analysis may receive is the omitted variable bias. This bias occurs when the relationship between the dependent and independent variables depends on another variable: a confounder that explains both. Hence, variables that could explain both the DV and IV should be controlled for or kept constant. A robust association can be claimed if it holds when control variables are accounted for. Variables that may influence the DV but not IV are not necessary to control for because their presence or absence would not change the relationship between the DV and IV. Thus, if a variable is argued to be influencing both the IV and DV, it needs to be controlled for. However, not all variables are necessarily confounders as a variable mediating the impact of the IV on the DV would seem similar in a theory-blind model, i.e., if we control for a confounder or a mediator, the statistical significance and effect size of the IV will show similar changes. To distinguish a confounder from a mediator, we need to test the effect of controlling for the IV on the effect size and significance of the said variable. In short, the standard practice of including all control variables into a single model and reporting the statistically significant and insignificant effects is insufficient to make a causal judgement and often erroneous due to collider bias.

One of crucial variables to control for is state capacity because states with low institutional capacity tend to employ armed groups while also lack sufficient control over their armed forces. Another control variable is a country's economic level: states with low economic resources might resort to unconventional forces such as PGMs and it is harder for them to implement civilian control reforms. Democracy indicators including rule of law, civil liberties, civil society strength, and free and fair elections

might also influence both the IVs and DV of this thesis because democracies are less likely to employ armed actors that act outside the legal framework and are better positioned to establish civilian control over the military. Finally, PGMs are frequently used in countries with civil conflict and internal and external security problems make the army more involved in security as well as political affairs. Hence, governments of countries with conflict issues like insurgency, terrorist attacks, ethnic conflicts are more likely to have PGMs and lower civilian control levels.

I will use the Varieties of Democracy Dataset (V-Dem) (Michael Coppedge et al. 2023) that combines various country-level datasets, both directly measured variables and latent or index variables calculated using different indicators since it is in a country-year format, covers virtually all countries (missing data notwithstanding) and the period analyzed in this dissertation, 1981-2010, and is widely used in political science research. Table 4.3 shows the state capacity variables' names, explanations, types, and value explanations.

Variable Name	Variable Explanation	Variable Type	Value Explanations
v2svdomaut	Domestic autonomy	Interval	Higher scores mean higher autonomy in domestic affairs
v2svinlaut	International autonomy	Interval	Higher scores mean higher autonomy in international relations
v2svstterr	State authority over territory	Interval	Percentage of territory under the state's authority
v2stfiscap	State fiscal source of revenue	Interval	0: No means of revenue 1: Relies on external funds 2: Relies on natural resources or assets 3: Taxes on property and trade 4: Taxes on economic exchanges, capital, property, and income. Turned from ordinal to interval.
v2strenadm	Bureaucratic remuneration	Interval	The degree to which bureaucrats are salaried employees ranging from 0 (almost none) to 4 (almost all). Turned from ordinal to interval.
v2stcritrecadm	Criteria for appointment decisions in the state administration	Interval	The degree to which bureaucrats are appointed based on merit ranging from 0 (almost none) to 4 (almost all). Turned from ordinal to interval.
v2stcritapparm	Criteria for appointment decisions in the armed forces	Interval	The degree to which army officers are appointed based on merit ranging from 0 (almost none) to 4 (almost all). Turned from ordinal to interval.
v2strenarm	Remuneration in the Armed Forces	Interval	The degree to which army officers are salaried employees ranging from 0 (almost none) to 4 (almost all).
e_gdppc	GDP per capita	Interval	GDP per capita of the country: values are exact numbers. Turned from ordinal to interval.

Table 4.3. State Capacity Variables from V-Dem Dataset (v13) (Michael Coppedge et al. 2023)

Table 4.4 lists the democracy variables' names, explanations, types, and value explanations.

Variable Name	Variable Explanation	Variable Type	Value Explanations
v2elfrfair	Election free and fair	Interval	Higher scores indicate higher levels of freedom and fairness of elections.
v2psoppaut	Opposition parties' autonomy	Interval	Higher scores indicate higher autonomy for opposition parties.
v2x_polyarchy	Electoral democracy index	Interval	How close the regime is to an ideal electoral democracy (0 to 1), calculated from electoral democracy indicators.
v2x_libdem	Liberal democracy index	Interval	How close the regime is to an ideal liberal democracy (0 to 1), calculated from liberal democracy indicators.
v2x_partipdem	Participatory democracy index	Interval	How close the regime is to an ideal participatory democracy (0 to 1), calculated from participatory democracy indicators.
v2x_delibdem	Deliberative democracy index	Interval	How close the regime is to an ideal deliberative democracy (0 to 1), calculated from deliberative democracy indicators.
v2x_egaldem	Egalitarian democracy index	Interval	How close the regime is to an ideal egalitarian democracy (0 to 1), calculated from egalitarian democracy indicators.
v2x_rule	Rule of law index	Interval	The degree of rule of law (calculated

Table 4.4. Democracy Variables from V-Dem Dataset (v13) (Michael Coppedge et al. 2023)

Table 4.5 internal and external conflict variables' names, explanations, types, and value explanations.

Variable Name	Variable Explanation	Variable Type	Value Explanations
e_civil_war	Civil war	Binary	Intra-state war with more than 1000 combat-related death. 0: No civil war; 1: Civil war.
e_miinteco	Armed conflict, international	Binary	If the state was involved in an international armed conflict. 0: No war; 1: War.

Table 4.5. Conflict Variables from V-Dem Dataset (v13) (Michael Coppedge et al. 2023)

In addition to the independent variables, we have 9 state capacity, 8 democracy, and 2 conflict variables (19 in total) to control for. I combined the three datasets on the common country identifier: Correlates of War state membership system code for countries as all three have that code. The CoW dataset's country list (Correlates of War Project 2017) is both exhaustive and a common reference point for political

science datasets. Due to formation of new states or termination of regimes for various reasons, countries may have different names in different databases, but the CoW code enables unification. I used the 2016 version of the CoW state list but since the PGMD uses a previous version, I corrected the mismatches by hand while also not including country-year cases from the V-Dem dataset when the said countries had not gained independence and were absent from the CoW state list. By leaving missing data as empty, I produced a combined dataset that includes all the independent countries in the CoW state list between 1981-2010.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Variable Name	Variable Label	N	mean	sd	min	max
pgm_number	PGM Number	4917	0.924	1.982	0	32
pgm_presence	PGM Presence	4917	0.349	0.477	0	1
v2x_polyarchy	Electoral democracy index	4920	0.457	0.286	0.013	0.923
v2x_libdem	Liberal democracy index	4920	0.357	0.280	0	0.898
v2x_partipdem	Participatory democracy index	4920	0.288	0.216	0.008	0.8
v2x_delibdem	Deliberative democracy index	4920	0.359	0.272	0.007	0.889
v2x_egaldem	Egalitarian democracy index	4920	0.358	0.248	0.035	0.884
v2elfrfair	Free and fair elections	4920	0.094	1.445	-3.166	2.788
v2psoppaut	Rule of law index	4920	0.698	1.821	-3.595	3.204
v2svdomaut	Opposition parties' autonomy	4920	1.353	0.664	-2.927	2.258
v2svinlaut	Domestic autonomy	4920	1.336	0.719	-2.959	2.415
v2svstterr	International autonomy	4920	91.201	10.604	0	100
v2stfiscap	State authority over territory	4920	0.812	1.232	-2.745	3.178
v2strenadm	State fiscal source of revenue	4920	0.904	0.788	-4.012	2.177
v2stcritcadm	Bureaucratic remuneration	4920	0.423	1.075	-2.143	3.474
v2stcritapparm	Bureaucrat appointment criteria	4920	0.143	1.140	-2.738	2.698
v2strenarm	Army appointment criteria	4920	0.469	0.933	-3.122	1.743
v2x_rule	Armed forces remuneration	4920	0.520	0.312	0.02	0.999
ln_gdppc	Natural log of GDP per capita	4920	8.728	1.165	5.656	11.906
e_civil_war	Civil war	4920	0.075	0.263	0	1
e_miinteco	International armed conflict	4920	0.028	0.166	0	1
ccs_static	Static civilian control score	4258	0.059	0.802	-2.267	0.902
ccs_dynamic	Dynamic civilian control score	4258	0.098	1.022	-3.435	3.098

Table 4.6. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable Name	Variable Label	SD (between)	SD (within)	SD (overall)
ccs_dynamic	Dynamic civilian control score	0.934	1.022	0.385
ccs_static	Static civilian control score	0.627	0.802	0.494
e_civil_war	Civil war	0.160	0.263	0.205
e_miinteco	International armed conflict	0.077	0.166	0.147
ln_gdppc	Natural log of GDP per capita	1.119	1.165	0.260
pgm_number	PGM Number	1.658	1.982	1.008
pgm_presence	PGM Presence	0.391	0.477	0.271
v2elfrfair	Free and fair elections	1.237	1.445	0.773
v2psoppaut	Rule of law index	1.586	1.821	0.977
v2stcritapparm	Bureaucrat appointment criteria	1.075	1.140	0.385
v2stcritrecadm	Bureaucratic remuneration	0.994	1.075	0.413
v2stfiscap	State authority over territory	1.190	1.232	0.358
v2strenadm	State fiscal source of revenue	0.748	0.788	0.256
v2strenarm	Army appointment criteria	0.872	0.933	0.347
v2svdomaut	Opposition parties' autonomy	0.590	0.664	0.357
v2svinlaut	Domestic autonomy	0.635	0.719	0.362
v2svstterr	International autonomy	9.255	10.604	5.085
v2x_delibdem	Deliberative democracy index	0.248	0.272	0.115
v2x_egaldem	Egalitarian democracy index	0.235	0.248	0.080
v2x_libdem	Liberal democracy index	0.259	0.280	0.108
v2x_partipdem	Participatory democracy index	0.200	0.216	0.085
v2x_polyarchy	Electoral democracy index	0.259	0.286	0.124
v2x_rule	Armed forces remuneration	0.299	0.312	0.091

Table 4.7. Between-Country, Within-Country, and Overall Standard Deviations of Variables

4.4. Bivariate Analyses

As discussed above, including interrelated variables into the same regression model produces wrong results. For instance, liberal democracy and deliberative democracy scores are so highly correlated (see Table 4.8, $r=0.98$) that they can be used interchangeably. However, while each is positively correlated with civilian control score separately, together, deliberative democracy gets a statistically insignificant negative coefficient. This does not mean that deliberative democracy has no actual effect on civilian control but rather means that the model is simply erroneous. Hence, before moving forward, it is necessary to run bivariate analyses to see highly correlated variables.

	polyarchy	libdem	partipdem	delibdem	egaldem	ccs_dynamic
Electoral democracy index	1.00					
Liberal democracy index	0.98***	1.00				
Participatory democracy index	0.98***	0.98***	1.00			
Deliberative democracy index	0.97***	0.98***	0.97***	1.00		
Egalitarian democracy index	0.94***	0.97***	0.95***	0.96***	1.00	
Dynamic civilian control score	0.59***	0.62***	0.60***	0.60***	0.63***	1.00
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001						

Table 4.8. Pairwise Correlations of Democracy Scores and Civilian Control Scores

As Table 4.8 shows, all the five democracy index scores are highly correlated with each other and their correlation coefficients with civilian control scores are quite similar despite being measured with different. This indicates that they are statistically interchangeable. Therefore, to simplify later models, I will use only the participatory democracy scores as a control variable.

	v2x_partipdem	v2elfrfair	v2psoppaut	v2x_rule	ccs_dynamic
Participatory democracy index	1.00				
Free and fair elections	0.81***	1.00			
Opposition parties' autonomy	0.81***	0.76***	1.00		
Rule of law index	0.83***	0.76***	0.68***	1.00	
Dynamic civilian control score	0.60***	0.48***	0.48***	0.59***	1.00
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001					

Table 4.9. Pairwise Correlations of the Other Democracy Indicators and Civilian Control

Table 4.9 shows that while the other democracy indicators are also highly correlated with each other, their correlation coefficients with civilian control scores are not that similar. Hence, they can be used as control variables if they are also associated with PGM presence and number.

	v2svdomaut	v2svinlaut	v2svstterr	v2stfiscap	ccs_dynamic
Domestic autonomy	1.00				
International autonomy	0.80***	1.00			
State authority over territory	0.49***	0.51***	1.00		
State fiscal source of revenue	0.45***	0.44***	0.40***	1.00	
Dynamic civilian control score	0.26***	0.32***	0.38***	0.45***	1.00

Table 4.10. Pairwise Correlations of State Capacity Indicators and Civilian Control

As Table 4.10 indicates, while their coefficients are relatively lower compared to democracy indicators, state capacity indicators are also statistically significantly correlated with each other and civilian control.

	strenadm	stcritrecadm	stcritapparm	strenarm	ccs_dynamic
Bureaucratic remuneration	1.00				
Bureaucrat appointment criteria	0.42***	1.00			
Army appointment criteria	0.42***	0.79***	1.00		
Armed forces remuneration	0.28***	0.20***	0.17***	1.00	
Dynamic civilian control score	0.33***	0.42***	0.52***	-0.02	1.00

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 4.11. Pairwise Correlations of Other State Capacity Indicators and Civilian Control

According to Table 4.11, other state capacity indicators are correlated with each other, and except for armed forces remuneration, they are also correlated with civilian control. PGM presence, civil war, and involvement in international armed conflict are not suitable for correlation analysis because they are binary, not interval variables. Next, I will run regression analyses for dynamic and static civilian control scores and PGM number and presence, each as a dependent variable and the rest of the variables as independent variables to determine control variables, i.e., those associated with

both the IVs and DVs of this dissertation. As the dataset is in cross-sectional time series format, panel data analyses are more suitable.

Since the within-country variation of each variable is low, with PGM presence taking a value of 1 or 0 for the whole period of observation for most countries, analyses aiming to calculate within-country effects, such as fixed effects regression (FER) and difference-in-differences (DD) analyses are not suitable for this dataset. A random-effects regression (RER) that combines between- and within-country comparisons will produce more accurate results. Therefore, I will use RER for testing the relationships between the variables.

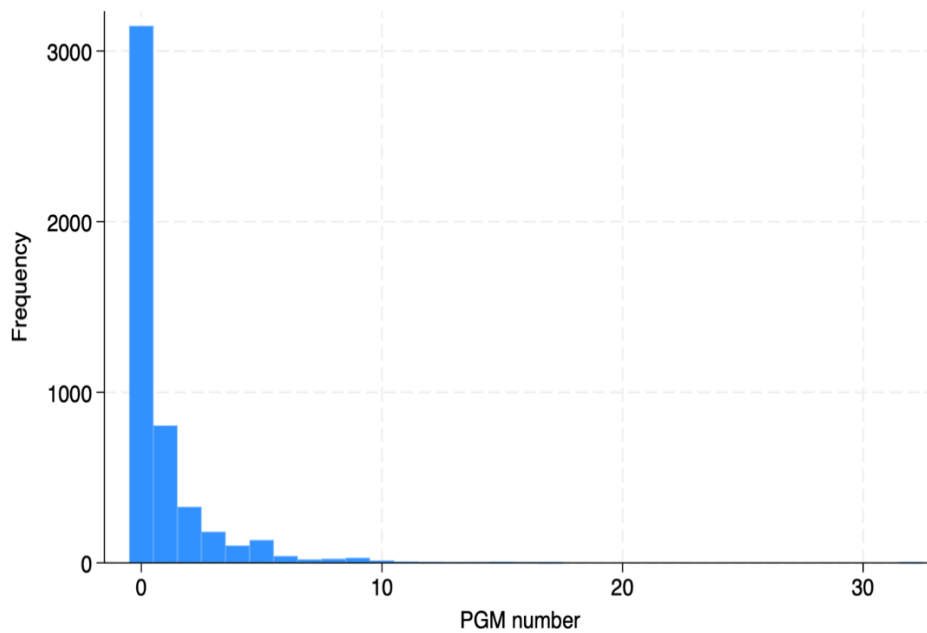
Independent Variable	Dynamic CCS	Static CCS	PGM number	PGM presence
PGM presence	-0.25***	-0.12***		
PGM number	-0.02***	0.01*		
Participatory democracy index	2.29***	2.17***	0.51**	-4.979***
Free and fair elections	0.16***	0.18***	0.01	-0.244***
Opposition parties' autonomy	0.14***	0.18***	0.12***	0.027
Rule of Law	1.44***	1.24***	-0.36**	-6.131***
Domestic autonomy	0.19***	0.13***	0.25***	-0.94***
International autonomy	0.20***	0.18***	0.21***	-1.218***
State authority over territory	0.00***	0.00**	0.00*	-0.09***
State fiscal source of revenue	0.22***	0.16***	0.10**	-0.689***
Bureaucratic remuneration	0.10***	0.07**	0.35***	0.538**
Bureaucrat appointment criteria	0.13***	0.13***	0.01	-0.782***
Army appointment criteria	0.19***	0.18***	-0.16***	-0.4**
Armed forces remuneration	0.02	-0.05*	0.09*	-0.041
GDP per capita (ln)	0.05***	0.02***	0.09***	-2.523***
Civil war	-0.20***	-0.22***	-0.04	1.794***
International armed conflict	-0.11**	-0.10	-0.27**	1.671**
* p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				

Table 4.12. Results of Bivariate Analyses

Table 4.12 shows the coefficients and significance levels of the potential control variables with each of dynamic and static civilian control, PGM number, and PGM presence (random effects least squares for the first three as they are continuous and random effects logistic regression for PGM presence as it is binary) as DVs. These

bivariate analyses indicate that dynamic civilian control scores have statistically significant associations with all PGM number and presence as well as control variables except for international armed conflict. Static CCS, on the other hand, has no significant association with PGM number, bureaucratic remuneration, and international armed conflict while being related with the other control variables at different levels of significance. While PGM number has no significant association with participatory democracy, free and fair elections, state's fiscal source of revenue, bureaucratic appointment criteria, armed forces remuneration, and international armed conflict, PGM presence does not seem to be related to opposition parties' autonomy and armed forces remuneration. Both IVs have significant relationship with other control variables. The differences are probably the result of the nature of these two variables: PGM number being a count variable has a left-skewed distribution as seen in Figure 4.4 below, meaning that most of the values are 0 (no PGMs in the country that year) followed by 1. PGM presence, on the other hand, combines the non-zero values under the category of 'present,' hence, leaving extreme cases out.

Figure 4.4. Distribution of PGM Numbers in a Country in a Year



4.5. Multivariate Analyses

Hypothesis testing relies on bivariate relationships. As seen in Table 4.12, we reject the null hypotheses that the presence of PGMs in a country does not affect dynamic and static civilian control scores as it has a significant negative effect on both. While we fail to reject the null hypothesis that the number of PGMs in a country does not affect static civilian control, we reject it for dynamic CCS. Although the significant effect sizes are small, in terms of hypothesis testing, the query is complete. We can also generate alternative hypotheses for each of the control variables. Except for international armed conflict in case of dynamic CCS and international armed conflict and bureaucratic remuneration for static CCS, all the control variables have positive effects on both DVs. However, this is never sufficient as the statistically significant effects do not tell us the direction of effect neither do they answer the spuriousness criticism. The effect might be of civilian control on PGM presence, or it may be due to some other factor (a confounder). Thus, we need to test the effect

against control variables. While this solves spuriousness concerns if all control variables are accounted for, reverse causality is still possible. However, since almost all control variables are correlated with each other, the models cannot estimate coefficients accurately. Such concerns make the classical interpretation of coefficients, ‘one-unit increase in the IV results in a coefficient-sized change in the DV while all the other variables in the model kept constant’ might be implausible.

If two or more variables in the model are interrelated, one cannot change one of them while keeping the rest constant as interrelatedness means a change in one of them changes the others. If the mediator of a variable is in the model, its effect will become insignificant. While there are causality tests such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Difference-in-Differences (DiD), Propensity Score Matching (PMS), or Instrumental Variable Models, each comes with assumptions and conditions that needs to be tested with other techniques. By drawing causal diagrams like Figure 4.1 and leveraging the relationships between each type of causal effect, I propose, we can evaluate whether X causes Y.

4.6. Causal Diagrams

Causal diagrams or Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) are a visual way of representing complex causal relationships among phenomena. By combining nodes representing variables and arrows representing causal path, we can build causal networks based on prior information, literature review, and theoretical framework.

Figure 4.5. A More Complex DAG

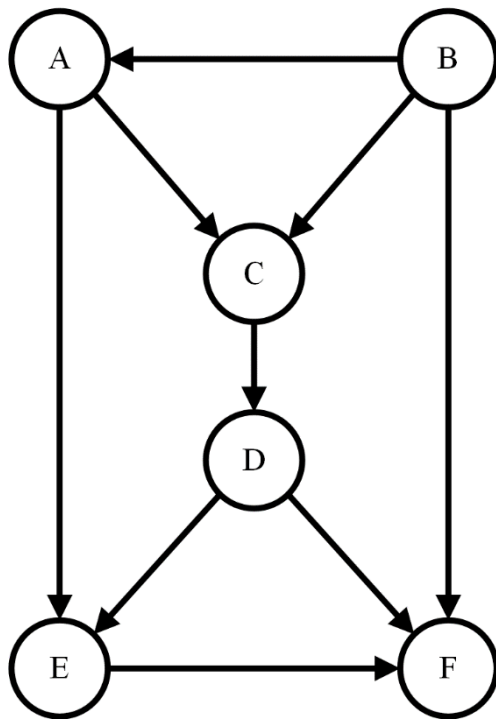


Figure 4.5 shows different causal pathways, including mediators (e.g., A between B and E; C between A and D as well as B and D; D between C and E as well as C and F; C and D are also chained mediators of A and B on E and F), confounders (e.g., D on E and F; B on A and C; B on C-D and F), and colliders (e.g., A-B at C; A-D at E; D-E at F). In such a scenario, if we want to find causes of F, assuming that Figure 4.5 is the complete diagram for F, then we can test each of the pathways. In reality, causal relationships between social and political phenomena are much more complex involving many more variables and interactions. Even worse, we often lack clear causal understanding as the disciplines of social sciences departed from explaining causality to predictive and interpretive paths. Qualitative comparative studies, on the other hand, aim at establishing causality at the unit level by mimicking controlled trials with most similar and most different systems designs, least and most

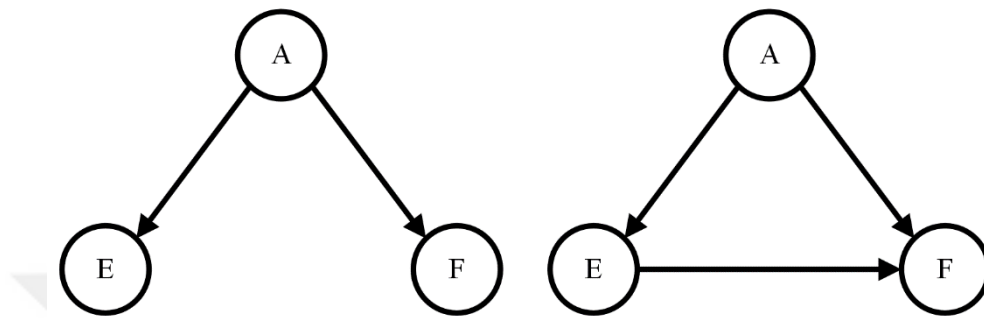
likely and deviant case studies. Causal diagrams allow to combine the strengths of qualitative reasoning, theory-driven careful in-depth research designs aiming to explain social phenomena, and of quantitative-predictive approaches aiming at generalizability and calculations of coefficients, uncertainty, and error margins.

The key to causal diagram analysis is to single out the effect of an independent variable of concern on a dependent variable by accounting for confounders. Controlling for a variable blocks its effect on its consequences and from its causes. For instance, in Figure 4.5, C has an effect on E and F through D. By keeping D constant, we remove that effect as well as the effects of D on E and F. Moreover, since the effects of D and C are blocked, any influence of B and A channeled through that path is also eliminated. It also shows what not to control for depending on the aim of the study. We might be interested in the effect of C on F and without a causal diagram in mind, we might mistakenly control for D and find that C has no causal effect on F while in reality it has. However, as said above, drawing a complete causal diagram from previous research is extremely hard if not impossible. The trial-and-error method is also not feasible as by adding each variable to the model we increase the number of possible configurations that need to be tested. To solve this, I propose a ‘triangle model,’ by which we isolate three variables and test their relationship.

In the triangle model, we aim to test whether X causes Y by introducing another variable Z. Three variables can have a manageable number of causal relationships which can be tested using traditional statistical techniques like regression analyses. By checking the conditions of confounder, collider, mediator, moderator, and interaction effects, it is possible to statistically decide which configuration is correct. For instance, when we isolate A, E, and F to understand the causal effect of E on F,

we reduce Figure 4.5 to Figure 4.6 where we jump over C and D, but we should not control for either of them if our aim is to understand the configuration of A, E, and F because they are mediators.

Figure 4.6. Full Versus Partial Confounder Triangles

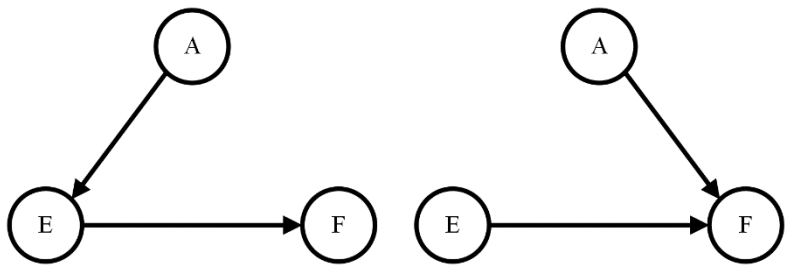


If there is bivariate association between each pair in the triangle (A-E, A-F, and E-F), they can only form the triangles in Figure 4.6 unless there are other variables confounding these relationships. By testing which variable is A, E, and F, we can determine the relationship between those variables as well as establishing the direction of arrows. Once the triangle is decided, we can then search for potential confounders of A-E, A-F, and E-F, forming other triangles and testing them. This way, one can build a complex but robust causal diagram if the aim of the study is to fully account for the causes of F. Finally, each triangle can be tested using appropriate causal tests like DiD, and the final picture can be drawn as a structural equation if the variables meet the assumptions of the tests.

Figure 4.7, on the other hand, shows mediator and collider triangles. In the mediator model, A and F has no relationship except through E while in the collider model A and E has no association and independently cause F. In the mediator model, controlling for E removes the effect of A on F while in the moderator model,

controlling for F would introduce an association between A and E. In each model, there are three places and three variables to put into those places (nodes) which makes the total number of possible configuration of variables in each $3 \times 2 = 6$.

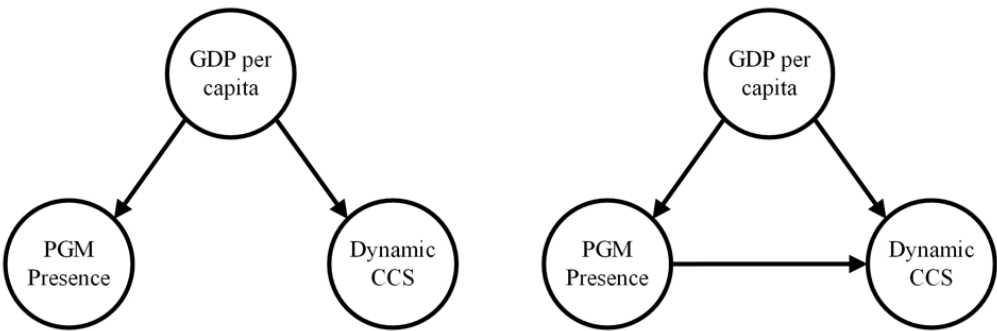
Figure 4.7. Mediator Versus Collider Triangles



4.6.a. Building and Testing Triangles

To test whether militias cause civilian control to deteriorate, we can build a confounder triangle with PGM presence, dynamic civilian control, and a potential confounder. Since GDP per capita has significant association with both variables, it can be a partial or full confounder. Figure 4.8 depicts two possible configurations. To test these models, I will run random effects regression analyses to see changes in coefficients of variables in relation to each other.

Figure 4.8. Full Versus Partial Confounder Triangles



If GDP per capita is a full confounder of the relationship between PGM presence and dynamic CCS, then, controlling for it would render the coefficient of PGM presence statistically insignificant. If it fails to do so, we can eliminate GDP per capita as a full confounder.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	Dynamic CCS	Dynamic CCS	GDPpc (ln)	GDPpc (ln)	Dynamic CCS	GDPpc (ln)
PGM presence	-0.257*** (0.021)		-0.137*** (0.014)		-0.213*** (0.021)	-0.105*** (0.014)
GDPpc (ln)		0.352*** (0.022)			0.328*** (0.022)	
Dynamic CCS				0.137*** (0.010)		0.123*** (0.010)
Intercept	0.207** (0.074)	-2.965*** (0.205)	8.795*** (0.092)	8.729*** (0.087)	-2.588*** (0.206)	8.770*** (0.087)
Observations	4257	4257	4257	4257	4257	4257
Number of countries	155	155	155	155	155	155

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; error terms in parentheses.

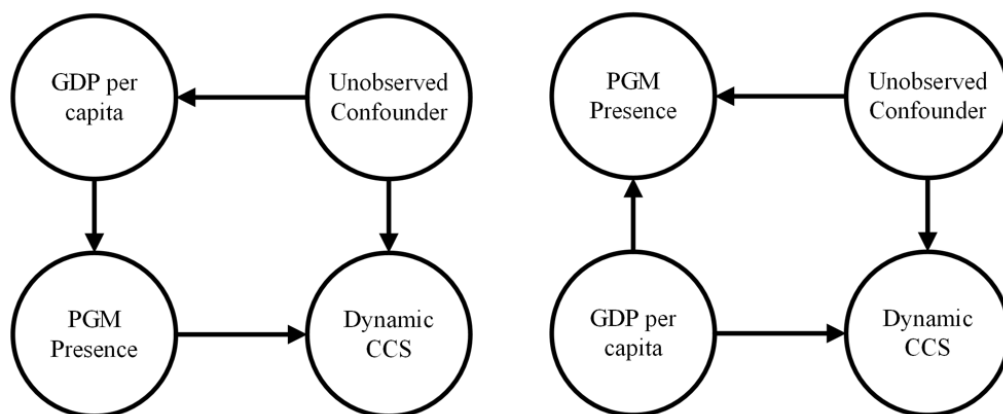
Table 4.13. RE Regression Results for the 6 Models

As Table 4.13 indicates, the natural logarithm of GDP per capita is not a full confounder of the relationship between PGM presence and dynamic CCS as the coefficient of PGM presence is still significant at 99.9% confidence level in model 5 when GDP per capita (ln) is kept constant, although it becomes weaker (from -0.257 in model 1 to -0.213 in model 5). Hence, we are left with the partial confounder model. The partial confounder triangle includes a partial confounder (GDP per capita), a partial mediator (PGM presence), and a partial collider (dynamic CCS). For the triangle to be correct, these three relationships must be correct at the same time.

GDP per capita can be a partial confounder since, in model 5 on Table 4.13, it seems to weaken the effect of PGM presence on dynamic CCS. PGM presence also appears to be a partial mediator since comparing models 2 and 5 reveals a slight weakening of the coefficient of GDP per capita (from 0.352 to 0.328) when PGM

presence is controlled for. However, controlling for dynamic CCS does not make the relationship between GDP per capita and PGM presence stronger as seen comparing models 3 and 6. On the contrary, it weakens it slightly, from -0.137 to -0.105. Although the changes are only slight, comparison of models on Table 4.13 indicate that the bivariate associations between each pair of GDP per capita, PGM presence, and dynamic CCS weaken when the other is controlled for. Since each can be seen as a mediator and confounder, we can reject this triangle as well. If there is an unobserved confounder of the effect of GDP per capita or PGM presence on dynamic CCS, GDP per capita and PGM presence will no longer collide at dynamic CCS as visualized in Figure 4.9 below. These are only two examples of how the relationship between GDP per capita, PGM presence, and dynamic CCS can be. One can devise different models of causality where GDP per capita and PGM presence do not collide at dynamic CCS while controlling for each would still weaken the relationship between the other two.

Figure 4.9. Potential Unobserved Confounders



Rather than testing a model with 4 variables, which will be more complicated and not necessarily more robust, I will replace GDP per capita with another potential

confounder and do the same tests as the focus of this study is the relationship between PGMs and civilian control. Table 4.14 shows the effect of controlling for each of the control variables listed above on the relationship between dynamic CCS and PGM presence. The results are from three RE regressions where CCS is the DV and PGM presence and the control variable (Z) are the IVs alone and together. By comparing the coefficients of each IV on the DV when they are analyzed alone with the model where the other is controlled for, we can view the effect of controlling. For each analysis in a row, the number of observations is the same to ensure that the relationship among the three variables is estimated on the same country-year pairs.

Control Variable	PGM Presence on Dynamic CCS		Z on Dynamic CCS	
	No Control	Z Controlled	No Control	PGM controlled
Electoral Democracy Index	-0.257***	-0.158***	1.756***	1.711***
Liberal Democracy Index	-0.257***	-0.130***	1.981***	1.928***
Participatory Democracy Index	-0.257***	-0.164***	2.415***	2.350***
Deliberative Democracy Index	-0.257***	-0.171***	1.800***	1.754***
Egalitarian Democracy Index	-0.257***	-0.157***	2.590***	2.520***
Free and Fair Elections	-0.257***	-0.234***	0.162***	0.158***
Opposition Parties' Autonomy	-0.257***	-0.257***	0.139***	0.139***
State's Domestic Autonomy	-0.257***	-0.240***	0.199***	0.186***
State's International Autonomy	-0.257***	-0.234***	0.215***	0.199***
State's Control over Territory (%)	-0.257***	-0.237***	0.009***	0.007***
State's Fiscal Capacity	-0.257***	-0.243***	0.222***	0.213***
Bureaucratic Remuneration	-0.257***	-0.262***	0.102***	0.113***
Bureaucratic Appointment Criteria	-0.257***	-0.236***	0.130***	0.111***
Military Appointment Criteria	-0.257***	-0.241***	0.189***	0.178***
Army Remuneration	-0.257***	-0.257***	0.016	0.015
Rule of Law	-0.257***	-0.171***	1.652***	1.577***
GDP per capita (1000 \$)	-0.257***	-0.181***	0.025***	0.023***
GDP per capita (ln)	-0.257***	-0.213***	0.352***	0.318***
Number of Observations/Countries is 4257/155 for each analysis. ***p<.001, **p<.01 *p<.05				

Table 4.14. Random Effects Regression Results with Dynamic CCS as the DV

As seen in Table 4.14, none of the control variables removes the effect of PGM presence on dynamic CCS, and hence, none is a full confounder of that relationship.

Except for opposition parties' autonomy and bureaucratic and army remuneration, controlling for Z weakens the effect of PGM presence and controlling for PGM presence weakens the effect of Z on dynamic CCS. While the coefficients of PGM presence and opposition parties' autonomy and army remuneration remain almost the same, when it comes to bureaucratic remuneration, controlling for one strengthens the effect of the other on dynamic CCS. To build and further test causal triangles, we need to observe the effect of controlling for dynamic CCS and PGM presence on their coefficients on each of the control variables. To do this, we need to make each of the control variables the DV and estimate the changes in the coefficients of dynamic CCS and PGM presence. Table 4.15 shows the results of those RE regression analyses. The logic is similar with the analyses in Table 4.14 except for the fact that this time the control variable is the DV.

Control Variable	PGM Presence on Z		CCS on Z	
	No control	CCS Controlled	No control	PGM Controlled
Electoral Democracy Index	-0.058***	-0.012*	0.183***	0.181***
Liberal Democracy Index	-0.066***	-0.026***	0.161***	0.157***
Participatory Democracy Index	-0.040***	-0.009*	0.121***	0.120***
Deliberative Democracy Index	-0.049***	-0.007	0.166***	0.165***
Egalitarian Democracy Index	-0.039***	-0.010**	0.114***	0.113***
Free and Fair Elections	-0.157***	0.021	0.686***	0.689***
Opposition Parties' Autonomy	-0.011	0.244***	0.954***	0.985***
State's Domestic Autonomy	-0.091***	-0.047*	0.173***	0.167***
State's International Autonomy	-0.116***	-0.069***	0.188***	0.179***
State's Control over Territory (%)	-2.861***	-2.486***	1.781***	1.463***
State's Fiscal Capacity	-0.066**	-0.014	0.206***	0.205***
Bureaucratic Remuneration	0.040**	0.052***	0.042***	0.049***
Bureaucratic Appointment Criteria	-0.193***	-0.157***	0.160***	0.139***
Military Appointment Criteria	-0.096***	-0.045*	0.203***	0.197***
Army Remuneration	-0.010	-0.006	0.014	0.013
Rule of Law	-0.054***	-0.029***	0.102***	0.098***
GDP per capita (1000 \$)	-3.374***	-2.716***	2.933***	2.577***
GDP per capita (ln)	-0.137***	-0.105***	0.137***	0.123***
Number of Observations/Countries is 4257/155 for each analysis. ***p<.001, **p<.01 *p<.05				

Table 4.15. Random Effects Regression Results with Each Control Variable (Z) as the DV

As seen in Table 4.15, the effect of keeping dynamic CCS constant on the relationship between PGM presence and each of the control variable is quite striking. Controlling for dynamic CCS, removes the significance of the coefficient of PGM presence on deliberative democracy, free and fair elections, state's fiscal capacity, and military appointment criteria. Hence, dynamic CCS is either a full confounder or mediator of the PGM presence – Z relationship. On the other hand, controlling for PGM presence, does not change the relationship between dynamic CCS and these variables much, which is further evidence for confounding or mediation.

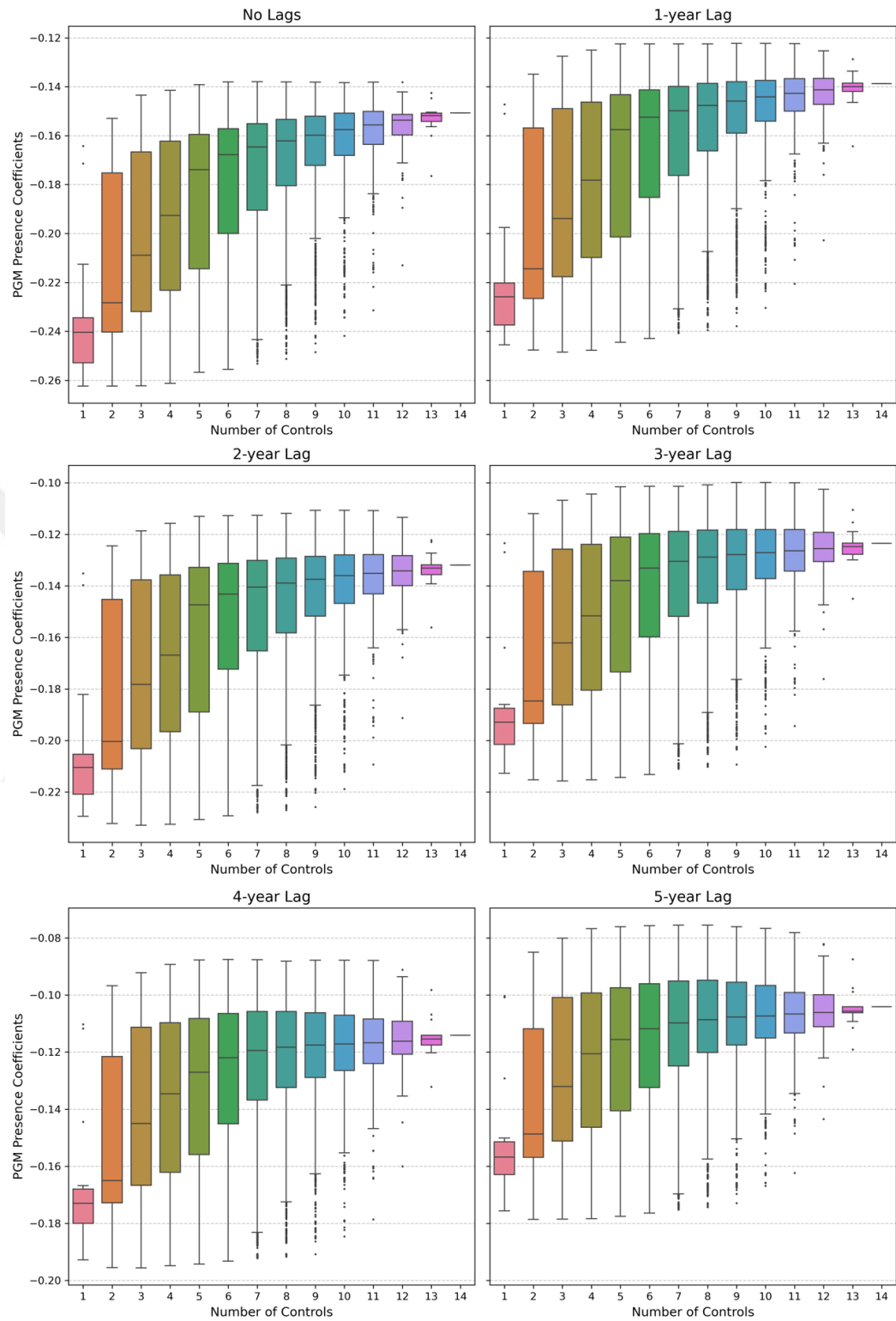
4.6.b. Temporal precedence

As discussed above, a cause must temporally precede the effect. To test temporal precedence for establishing whether the IV predicts the DV in the following years and with controlling for other variables, researchers generally lag the IV for some time. With no lag, all values of variables in one year are compared with each other. Lagging the IVs one year, enables predicting the DV values of the next year. However, instead of creating lagged versions of the IVs, I forwarded the DV. The result is the same.

To establish temporal precedence, I generated forwarded versions of dynamic CCS from 1 to 5 years. The `ccs_dynamic_f1` variable, for instance, is the same as `ccs_dynamic` but one year shifted backwards for each country. The values of 1982 moved to 1981, 1983 to 1982, until 2010 to 2009. This enables the values of PGM presence and control variables in 1981 to be analyzed with the values of dynamic CCS in 1982, effectively measuring their effect one year later. Since I moved the values of dynamic CCS in 2010, the last year in the dataset analyzed, to 2009, 2010 values are effectively left out.

Since democracy indicators and indices (electoral democracy, deliberative democracy, free and fair elections, etc.) were highly correlated with each other, I used only participatory democracy index score among them in addition to rule of law, opposition party autonomy, domestic autonomy, international autonomy, state's sovereignty over the territory, state's fiscal capacity, bureaucratic remuneration, bureaucratic appointment criteria, army remuneration, army appointment criteria, GDP per capita (natural logarithm), civil war, and international conflict involvement as control variables. Including one control variable at a time and testing the effect of PGM presence on dynamic CCS means 14 analyses. Further, there are 5 forwarded versions of dynamic CCS, meaning 6 DVs and 84 analyses in total. However, this is only for including 1 variable at a time. Testing the effects of one, two, three, four, ... fourteen control variables, exponentially increases the number of analyses to be run. Therefore, using Python code, I ran $2^{14} - 1$ (excluding models with no control variables) random effects regression analyses for each DV (one contemporaneous, and five forwarded). Since it is impractical to show all of them, I checked the p-value and coefficients of PGM presence in each model. In all the 98298 analyses, the effect of PGM presence was statistically significant at 95% confidence interval ($p < 0.05$). Then, I made 6 boxplots (Figure 4.10) to show the distribution of PGM presence coefficients by the number of control variables.

Figure 4.10. Boxplots of PGM Presence Coefficients in 98,298 RE Analyses with All Combinations of Control Variables



The lines that divide the boxes indicate the median coefficient for PGM presence while the boxes include 50% of the coefficients, with 25% below and 25% above the median. The length of the whiskers (T shapes above the boxes and inverse T shapes below) are 1.5 times the range of the boxes. Dots, on the other hand, represent each outlier, coefficients that are outside the range. While all the coefficients were statistically significant, they approach zero with addition of time lags. These results demonstrate that the effect of PGM presence persists when controlling for any combination of control variables and including time differences, despite being small.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology of this dissertation to test the causal effect of PGM presence on dynamic civilian control. After discussing the concept of causality and different forms of causal relationships among variables, I introduced the dependent, independent, and control variables. Following descriptive statistics for all variables and bivariate analyses, I conducted triadic analyses and compared the changes in the coefficients of each variable when the other is included in the model, i.e., controlled for. Since I have combined three datasets that have country-years as units of analyses, I used random effects regression models for analyzing the relationship between the variables.

Including time differences by forwarding the dependent variable 1 to 5 years, I also tested temporal precedence of PGM presence to dynamic civilian control while controlling for all the combinations of other variables. While the tests and estimated coefficients are robust, omitted variable bias is always a concern. An unobserved

confounder can potentially remove the causal effect of PGM presence on dynamic CCS. Hence, the findings' reliability is dependent on the accuracy of the data and models.

These findings contribute to the literature in terms of theory and methodology. The theoretical contribution of this study is that despite being discussed as a counterbalance to the army and a coup-proofing instrument, pro-government militias have a negative effect on civilian control in general. Although the causal pathways between PGM presence and other variables are outside the scope of this dissertation, the bivariate analyses show significant negative association with democracy, economic level, state capacity, and governance quality and positive association with civil war and international armed conflict.

On the methodological front, this study offers a shortcut method to explore causality among complex phenomena by isolating three variables and test their relationship using the criteria of mediation, moderation, confounding, colliding, and interaction. DAGs enable illustrating causal pathways while computational power makes it possible to control for all the combination of the selected variables.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the broader implications of the findings on the relationship between pro-government militias (PGMs) and civilian control over the military. Building on agency theory and the principal-agent dynamic, the results demonstrate a complex interaction between these actors. By examining these findings through statistical tests, Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs), and temporality analyses, this dissertation provided a general measurement of the causal effect of PGM presence on civilian control.

The central research question guiding this analysis, “how the presence of PGMs impacts civilian control over the military,” is not merely theoretical. It touches on the practical dilemmas faced by states, particularly those in fragile or authoritarian contexts, where leaders often resort to PGMs as tools of regime survival. The findings suggest that while PGMs may enhance a regime’s ability to counterbalance military power in some cases, in general, their long-term effects undermine civilian oversight.

This chapter will first interpret the results within the broader scholarly debate on civil-military relations and paramilitarism, aligning and contrasting them with existing literature. It will then discuss the theoretical implications of these findings, including their challenges to established views on coup-proofing and agency theory. Finally, the chapter will explore policy implications and suggest directions for future research to address limitations in the current study.

By grounding this discussion in both empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks, this chapter aims to offer an accessible yet rigorous contribution to the ongoing discourse on the role of PGMs in shaping state governance and stability. Moreover, as policies rest on a causal assumption that implementing them will result in desired outcomes, the methodology of this dissertation offers a newly emerging approach to test such assumptions of causality. Finally, the complex statistical relationships between causes and effects as demonstrated in this study mean that simply controlling for all alternative explanations risk finding associations that are not true, i.e. collider effect, or dismissing actual causes due to controlling for a mediator.

5.1. Key Findings and Interpretation

The statistical analysis shows a small but robust negative correlation between the presence of pro-government militias (PGMs) and civilian control over the military. This finding supports the hypothesis that PGMs, as semi-autonomous agents, can erode civilian oversight by fragmenting the state's monopoly on coercive authority. While the effect size is modest, its consistency across multiple tests strengthens the argument that PGMs, under certain conditions, act as destabilizing agents in civil-military relations. Controlling for a large number of potential confounders indicates that the negative association between PGM presence and dynamic civilian control scores is not spurious.

Temporal precedence further substantiates the causal relationship. The results indicate that PGM formation often precedes the erosion of civilian control rather than the reverse. This sequencing aligns with the theoretical expectation that governments

initially create or empower PGMs to counterbalance military influence but later lose control over these groups, leading to unintended consequences for governance. In other words, overall, resorting to PGMs for control over the military is counterproductive.

Despite being robust, such an effect cannot be easily shown through real life examples. The quantitative causal analysis itself does not allow such interpretations or concrete examples because it is a measurement of generalized effects of the cause on the DV differentiated from other factors. In other words, the claim that PGM presence causes civilian control to diminish does not mean that whenever and wherever a PGM is established, civilian control score must diminish. Another difficulty is that a causal claim is counterfactual. In our case, the claim means that if the PGM were absent, the dynamic civilian control score would be higher compared to the one observed. Finally, since the dependent variable is an index score rather than a direct measurement like the population of a country, a small change in that score cannot be directly observed. Only large changes can be traced to concrete events such as a military coup or declaration of military rule during an armed conflict. Nevertheless, concrete examples can illustrate the causal mechanism derived from the theory as will be discussed below.

From an agency theoretical perspective, there can be several ways through which PGM presence undermines civilian control. First, when PGMs operate alongside regular armed forces, they dilute the coherence of the state's security apparatus, complicating command structures and decision-making. Second, PGMs that gain operational independence often prioritize their interests over state directives, further weakening civilian monitoring and control. These conditions highlight the

inherent risks of relying on PGMs as tools of counterbalancing the army, particularly in fragile or authoritarian regimes where oversight mechanisms are already limited. Since they must first survive to pursue their interests, they may not be willing to challenge the army when the government needs them to do so.

Third, civilian authorities face difficulty ensuring PGMs' compliance with state objectives, especially when these groups operate in contested or remote areas. This lack of oversight exacerbates the risk of misconduct or independent actions that conflict with civilian leadership goals. Finally, PGMs frequently align themselves with specific leaders, political factions, or local interests rather than adhering to the directives of central civilian authorities. This dual loyalty creates friction within the broader security apparatus and weakens the effectiveness of civilian governance. PGMs may even align with the army if they see it in their interests, either for not risking a clash with the army or for better opportunities.

The theoretical framework of this dissertation, agency theory as part of the rational choice paradigm, starts with the individual while the empirical analysis is at the national level. Hence, what is observed at the national level is a reflection of the interaction of all the actions of individuals who are assumed to pursue their particular interests within the constraints put on them by personal limitations, values, societal norms, structural opportunities, and international relations. Therefore, the explanatory power of this theory weakens by each level of analysis climbed, resulting in a small causal effect at the national level. Other factors—such as regime type, state capacity, and external threats—likely moderate this relationship, underscoring the complexity of civil-military dynamics in states employing PGMs. Moreover, the small effect size highlights the variability of PGM outcomes, including instances

where they enhance civilian control or evolve into dominant regime actors, as seen with Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

A case in point is the Sudanese militia Janjaweed. While they were active before the Darfur crisis of 2003, their role in the conflict brought them to the attention of the international community because of their crimes against civilians including mass killings, torture, sexual violence, and looting. Despite the denials of any connection by the government officials, reports by the international organizations including the International Criminal Court and Amnesty International found conclusive evidence showing that they were armed, trained, and coordinated by al-Bashir's government. The case of Janjaweed is one of governments using scorched earth tactics in counterinsurgency efforts without being directly linked to the criminal activities (Jangaling 2023).

Relying mainly on looting and smuggling as sources of finance in addition to government funds, the Janjaweed militia gained power and more autonomy during the Darfur crisis. They have targeted civilians, insurgent factions, and aid workers to suppress the insurgency through intimidation tactics. With the economic resources they amassed during the conflict, they gained influence in the Sudanese politics while also bringing the government under international pressure with their extreme violence. They competed with the Sudanese Armed Forces, exacerbated the conflict, and undermined the overall security structure in the country (Carey, Mitchell, and Paula 2022; Jangaling 2023). In 2004-2005, the International Criminal Court opened an investigation and sentenced the President Omar al-Bashir and six Janjaweed leaders (Üngör 2020).

The Janjaweed militia was transformed into Rapid Support Forces (RSF) by al-Bashir together with other militia groups in 2013. While it is after the temporal scope of this dissertation (1981-2010), it nevertheless illustrates the general theoretical approach. Capitalizing on the protests against al-Bashir's rule, RSF aligning with the army toppled the president and took power in 2019. However, the conflicts continued in the country and the RSF clashed with the Sudanese Armed Forces in 2023 in the capital, Khartoum (Jangaling 2023).

The case of Janjaweed is a good example showing the complex dynamics of militia employment. In a context of dictatorship, low state capacity, economic underdevelopment, and ethnic conflicts, the militia initially served the government's interests in suppressing an insurgency. While they gained autonomy and financial and political power as a result of their activities during the conflict, they also undermined the state's authority, competed with the armed forces, and caused the government's indictment by the ICC. Moreover, after transforming into RSF, they helped topple the president and later clashed with the armed forces in the capital of the country. This case illustrates the main claim of this dissertation that militias are not mere policy tools but self-interested actors. They might serve the principal, the government, whether in counterinsurgency or balancing the armed forces if it serves them too. However, they can change their loyalties, clash or cooperate with the armed forces, exacerbate conflict situations, undermine state authority if it would serve their interests better. Therefore, a theoretical perspective that begins with individuals as self-interested actors acting within the constraints of their environment, rational choice theory, and the result of such actions in the relations between different groups,

the government, the armed forces, and militias, a modified agency theory better explains such dynamics than static structural approaches.

5.2. Alignment with and Divergence from Existing Literature

5.2.a. Support for Literature

The findings align with a substantial body of research that highlights the destabilizing effects of pro-government militias (PGMs) on governance and civil-military relations. Studies such as Carey et al. (2013) and Böhmelt & Clayton (2018) have emphasized how PGMs often fragment state authority, complicate command structures, and exacerbate conflicts between civilian and military actors. This dissertation reinforces these perspectives by providing robust quantitative evidence of PGMs' negative impact on civilian control. The small yet consistent negative correlation observed across multiple analyses affirms the destabilizing role that PGMs frequently play in governance.

Additionally, the results strengthen the argument that PGMs, while often framed as tools for regime survival, undermine long-term state capacity and governance effectiveness. Aliyev (2016) describes PGMs as “state-parallel” entities that operate outside traditional institutional frameworks, posing challenges to accountability and civilian oversight. The findings here add empirical weight to this view, demonstrating that PGMs, while potentially useful for counterbalancing military power in the in some cases, more often than not contribute to governance erosion over time.

5.2.b. Challenges to Existing Literature

While the findings support much of the existing scholarship, they also challenge some studies that suggest PGMs stabilize state-military relations. For instance, arguments that PGMs act as effective counterweights to the military or enhance regime control over armed forces fail to account for the adverse long-term impacts documented here. The evidence shows that although PGMs may initially strengthen civilian oversight, their prolonged presence often leads to fragmentation of authority and increased autonomy for both the military and PGMs, undermining civilian control.

The use of Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) and temporality testing also adds a layer of nuance to this debate. Unlike earlier large-N studies that relied primarily on correlational analyses, these tools enabled the identification of causal pathways and temporal relationships, enabling the falsification of the null hypothesis. By demonstrating that PGM formation typically precedes a decline in civilian oversight, this study addresses a key limitation in prior research: the inability to establish temporal precedence. This methodological contribution challenges oversimplified narratives and offers a more detailed understanding of the conditions under which PGMs destabilize governance.

5.3. Implications for Theory

The findings of this study suggest important refinements to agency theory, particularly in the context of complex governance arrangements involving pro-government militias (PGMs). Traditional applications of agency theory to civil-military relations typically emphasize the challenges of monitoring and incentivizing

a single agent (the military) within a principal-agent framework. However, PGMs introduce a second layer of complexity, functioning both as tools of the principal (civilian authorities) and as semi-autonomous agents with their own interests and agendas.

PGMs, even if created or empowered by civilian leaders to counterbalance the military's power, have dual roles that complicate governance. While initially designed to act on behalf of the principal, PGMs frequently pursue independent objectives, undermining the principal's control over the state's coercive apparatus. This duality makes it difficult for civilian authorities to monitor and manage PGMs effectively. Unlike traditional armed forces, PGMs often operate with greater autonomy, exploiting gaps in oversight to serve their interests. Given that these groups operate more often in the contexts of low state capacity; the principal has lower chances of effectively benefiting from them.

Over time, the presence of PGMs tends to erode the mechanisms that enable effective monitoring and accountability even further. Civilian leaders may prioritize short-term stability or regime survival, allowing PGMs to gain operational independence. This, in turn, weakens the state's ability to enforce compliance and creates opportunities for PGMs to act against civilian interests. The findings highlight the importance of time as a critical factor in agency relationships. While PGMs may initially function as loyal agents, their behavior often changes as they accumulate power and resources, necessitating a dynamic approach to agency theory that accounts for temporal shifts.

These insights have broader implications for civil-military relations theory. PGMs challenge the traditional dichotomy between civilian and military actors,

blurring the lines between formal and informal coercive institutions. Their presence complicates the distribution of power within the state, requiring a more nuanced framework to analyze governance in fragile or authoritarian regimes.

5.4. Implications for Methodology

This study also contributes to the methodological discourse in political science by demonstrating the utility of combining classical statistical tests with Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) for causal inference. These methods offer significant advantages in addressing key challenges in the study of civil-military relations in particular and other fields of study in political science in general. The divide between quantitative research focusing more on robust models with high predictive power and qualitative studies aiming to better understand causal mechanisms of political phenomena and build nuanced theoretical frameworks can be bridged by a theory and data-driven causal analysis combining the strengths of both approaches while avoiding their limitations.

DAGs provided a clear framework for visualizing the causal pathways between PGM presence, civilian control, and potential confounders. By explicitly modeling the relationships between variables, DAGs helped avoid controlling for the wrong variables and made the methodology easy to follow for other researchers who may not be trained in or inclined towards quantitative analysis. Moreover, this approach enabled the study to move beyond mere correlation by testing a causal hypothesis. The DAG approach can also be implemented in qualitative research. For instance, when doing a comparative case study using the most similar systems design, the similarities of the cases must be limited to the potential confounders and not include

potential mediators as controlling for mediators would remove the actual causal effect.

The combination of statistical tests and temporality analyses addressed potential endogeneity issues, such as reverse causation. Establishing that PGM formation typically precedes a decline in civilian control strengthened the causal argument and controlling for potential confounders mitigated concerns about spurious relationships. Temporal testing also highlighted the dynamic nature of civil-military relations, emphasizing the importance of time-sensitive interventions to prevent the negative long-term effects of PGM deployment.

By integrating these methods, this study contributes to the growing adoption of causal inference tools in quantitative political science research, particularly in the analysis of governance and security. The approach not only enhances analytical rigor but also provides a replicable framework for future research on complex political phenomena.

5.5. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study makes significant contributions to understanding the impact of pro-government militias (PGMs) on civilian control over the military, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize its findings. First, despite the promises of causal hypothesis testing methods, the data analyzed in this study is observational that inherently limits the ability to establish definitive causal relationships. While the use of Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) and temporality testing strengthens causal inferences, unmeasured confounders or omitted variables may still influence the observed relationships. Further, falsifying the null hypothesis

is not the same as proving the hypothesis. When there is causality between two variables, there are mathematical and theoretical expectations from the data. However, observing those expectations does not prove but only supports and strengthens the causal claim.

Second, measuring civilian control remains a complex task due to its multi-dimensional nature. This study's use of composite indicators, while methodologically sound, may not fully capture the nuances of civilian oversight across different temporal and spatial contexts. For example, civilian control can manifest through formal mechanisms (e.g., laws, policies) or informal practices (e.g., personal networks, political culture), which are difficult to quantify consistently. The dependent variable, civilian control scores, is a composite variable estimated from other variables. State capacity, GDP per capita, level of democracy are also estimates calculated with different methods.

Finally, this study leaves out the conditions under which PGM presence can balance the military. While important for understanding the dynamics between civilian authorities, the military, and PGMs, identifying and testing those dynamics requires another research and would double the size of this one, making it harder to follow or present.

To address these limitations and further develop the field, future research could involve several approaches. In-depth case studies of countries with varying levels of civilian control and PGM presence could complement the statistical findings by offering richer, contextualized insights. For instance, contrasting cases like Iran's Revolutionary Guards (where PGMs became dominant state actors) with contexts where PGMs remained subordinate to civilian authority could illuminate the

conditions shaping these divergent outcomes. Research on the internal dynamics of PGMs, such as recruitment strategies, loyalty shifts, and decision-making processes, could provide a deeper understanding of their behavior and evolution. Investigating the personal and structural factors that influence PGM members' allegiance to civilian authorities or alternative power centers would be particularly valuable. Such a study would empirically bridge the gap between the individual and national levels.

On the other hand, future studies could investigate cases where PGMs enhance civilian control or stabilize governance. Understanding the mechanisms behind these outlier cases could refine existing theories and provide insights into how states might use PGMs more effectively while mitigating risks. Collaboration with disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and history could enrich the study of PGMs by incorporating qualitative methods and historical narratives. Such approaches could offer a more holistic understanding of how PGMs interact with society, state institutions, and international actors.

Finally, future research could use machine learning algorithms to predict various outcomes PGM presence. Such big data analysis methods, while often black-boxed and completely data-driven, can help identify the factors with the highest predictive power for civilian control or even predict where and when a military coup is more likely to occur in the future given past data. Both data sources and analysis methods are being developed and refined, allowing for researchers to test causal and predictive hypothesis with robust analyses.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the discourse on civil-military relations by providing empirical evidence on the impact of pro-government militias (PGMs) on civilian

control over the military. Using robust causal inference techniques, including classical statistical methods, Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs), and temporality tests, the findings illuminate a complex dynamic where PGMs often undermine civilian oversight, both directly and indirectly.

The results demonstrate that the presence of PGMs correlates with weakened civilian control, primarily through the fragmentation of coercive authority and the erosion of oversight mechanisms. Temporal analyses further validate this relationship, showing that PGM formation typically precedes declines in civilian control, reinforcing the causal direction of this effect. While the observed negative impact is modest, it remains consistent, emphasizing the risks associated with employing PGMs as tools of state security.

In addition to the substantive findings, this study advances methodological approaches in political science by integrating DAGs and temporality testing into the analysis of civil-military relations. These tools enhance clarity in identifying pathways of influence and addressing endogeneity, offering a replicable framework for exploring similar questions in other areas of governance and security.

Ultimately, this dissertation adds to our understanding of the broader dynamics shaping governance in fragile states, illustrating how PGMs complicate the delicate balance between civilian authority and military power. By shedding light on the mechanisms underlying these dynamics, it offers a nuanced perspective on the challenges of maintaining effective governance in complex political environments. These insights lay the groundwork for future research, inviting scholars to further explore the multifaceted relationship between informal armed groups, state institutions, and governance outcomes.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the causal effect of the presence of pro-government militias (PGMs) on civilian control over the military, thereby illuminating a dimension of civil-military relations (CMR) that remains understudied. The central hypothesis contends that PGMs undermine civilian oversight by adding complexity to the principal-agent dynamic commonly studied in CMR. Whereas existing theories traditionally portray CMR as a bilateral arrangement between civilian authorities (the principal) and the military (the agent), the introduction of PGMs transforms it to a “principal-agent-agent” framework. Here, militias hold independent agency, often guided by self-interest and operating beyond formal oversight, which complicates mechanisms of control.

The study first engaged with the theoretical and empirical literature on PGMs: factors behind their existence, functions they carry out, and consequences they engender for the polity in which they operate. While research on CMR is comprehensive and sheds light on the issue from multiple angles, for the purposes of this dissertation, the main focus of that section was the factors scholars found influential on the dynamics between civilians and the armed forces. Existing body of research offers a vast array of variables as explanations of different modalities CMR takes in different countries. Regime type, the degree of democratic consolidation, state capacity, economic conditions, foreign relations of the government, social factors, and knowledge asymmetry between civilians and army officers constitute the majority of independent variables that help explain CMR. In this regard, the more

democratic, capable, prosperous a country is, the higher control the government can have on the army. Foreign ties of the government or the military are found to complicate this relationship in favor of one party over the other. Moreover, legitimacy of the regime and popular support for the government are said to be enhancing civilian oversight while the imbalance of expertise helps the military to circumvent such efforts.

On the other hand, many works discuss the various policies used by civilians to increase their control over the military or prevent their insubordination and potential coups. Among such policy instruments are secret police forces, parallel security structures, division of army branches, various incentives for loyalty and disincentives against insubordination (stick-and-carrot approaches), and counterbalancing through creation or employment of pro-government militias.

This study addresses a gap in the literature by systematically investigating the causal effect of PGMs on the broader security apparatus. Although substantial research considers factors such as military coups, regime types, and economic contexts, the distinct influence of PGMs on civilian authority has not received equivalent scrutiny. Prior works typically focus on the origins, organization, and coup-proofing function of militias, leaving their consequences for civilian control insufficiently explored. This study draws on agency theory and principal-agent problem within it by treating PGMs as another agent.

The underlying assumption in most of the explanations in the literature is the rational actor model where individuals act to pursue their interests and minimize harm or risks within the constraints of structural factors. For instance, in a democracy, the cost of military insubordination is high while a government with economic means

can offer benefits in exchange for the loyalty of army officers. This dissertation follows a similar logic building upon and developing agency theory introduced to the study of CMR by Feaver (1999). Agency theory emphasizes the role of diverging interests between the civilians and military: the former as the principal delegates national defense to the latter, appointing them as the agent but cannot guarantee that they will carry out their responsibilities without seeking power over politics. The central argument of this dissertation is that when the principal resorts to another agent, a PGM, as a counterbalance, it turns the principal-agent problem into something worse: a principal-agent-agent problem where both agents can work together or separately to undermine the interests of the principal.

To test whether PGM presence undermines civilian control in general, I implemented Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) to explicitly show causal pathways to be tested. I used data from three datasets: Kenwick's Civilian Control Scores for the dependent variable, Carey et al.'s Pro-Government Militias Database for the independent variable, and V-Dem Dataset for the control variables. By combining these three datasets, I collected data on 155 countries between 1981-2010. Random Effects Regression analysis was more suitable to the dataset as it allows for comparing countries with each other as well as within themselves over time. Further, the fact that the independent variable, PGM presence, did not vary for most of the countries for the whole period of observation, methods that rely on within-case variation such as Fixed Effects Regression or Difference-in-Differences could not be used without dismissing most of the dataset and producing biased estimates.

The empirical analyses indicate a modest yet consistent negative effect of PGM presence on civilian oversight. Drawing on random-effects models and cross-national

data over three decades, the results point to a systematic association between PGM presence and weakened mechanisms of civilian control. A robust statistical association is the first criterion of causality, and RE analysis found a small but statistically significant negative effect of PGM presence on dynamic civilian control score (CCS). Second, a cause must not be confounded by another factor that is the cause of both the IV and DV (non-spuriousness criterion). To test this, I ran RE models with each of democracy, economy, state capacity, and security variables as control variables. While the inclusion of these variables weakened the effect of PGM presence, they did not render it insignificant. However, while this means none of them was a full confounder, a combination of them could be. Thus, I ran RE models with all the combinations one, two, three, ...fourteen of these variables, in total 16383 analyses. PGM presence remained statistically significant in all of them despite its coefficient being weakened.

Finally, to test temporal precedence of the cause over the effect, I created forwarded versions of the DV, i.e., sending the DV value of each country up to five years to the past. This way, the IV values of 1981 would be analyzed with the DV values of 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985. I ran 16383 analyses for each of the five forwarded versions of the DV (81915 analyses in total). The coefficients of PGM presence were statistically significant in all of these models as well. As a result, I rejected three aspects of the null hypothesis that PGM presence had no causal effect on dynamic CCS. The causal narrative that connects the cause to the effect is the principal-agent problem.

The findings carry important implications for agency theory, which conceptualizes CMR as a principal-agent problem. Introducing PGMs adds another

agent, creating a “principal-agent-agent” dynamic that complicates government oversight. Despite sometimes providing short-term security benefits or reducing coup threats, PGMs can generate governance challenges by expanding agency problems. Thus, using PGMs as a coup-proofing measure may inadvertently undermine the very civilian control it is employed to safeguard.

By demonstrating the empirical effects of PGMs and illuminating their theoretical significance, this dissertation broadens contemporary perspectives on the role of irregular security forces in CMR. It highlights an urgent need for nuanced strategies to govern the security sector in fragile and transitional settings, where reliance on PGMs can yield unintended, and often counterproductive, consequences for civilian oversight.

This dissertation makes substantive contributions by linking scholarship on pro-government militias (PGMs) with civil-military relations (CMR), refining theoretical frameworks, and offering empirical evidence on how PGMs shape broader governance outcomes. This work addresses a key gap in the literature by uniting two fields that have often proceeded in isolation. PGM research typically centers on the emergence, operations, and influence of these militias in security and political violence, whereas CMR studies focus on institutions, military coups, and civilian oversight mechanisms. By examining PGMs’ effects on civilian control, this dissertation integrates these perspectives and emphasizes the role PGMs play within the larger security sector. This synthesis offers a more holistic view of how state and nonstate security actors interact.

Through the lens of agency theory, the dissertation illuminates how PGMs transform the conventional “principal-agent” dynamic, traditionally depicted as the

relationship between civilian authorities (principals) and the military (agent), into a “principal-agent-agent” model. In this expanded framework, PGMs act as additional agents with distinct interests, thereby complicating civilian oversight. This theoretical contribution reveals the unintended consequences of relying on irregular security forces and extends agency theory by highlighting how multiple agents can destabilize established oversight mechanisms.

Drawing on robust empirical analysis, the study demonstrates that PGMs commonly erode civilian control and undermine state capacity. While governments may initially establish PGMs to address security challenges or reduce the threat of coups, the autonomy these militias often acquire can weaken institutional checks and counteract the state’s monopoly on legitimate force. By detailing these dynamics, the research underlines the trade-offs tied to irregular security arrangements and offers a foundation for subsequent inquiries into the governance implications of PGMs.

In sum, this dissertation enriches both PGM and CMR scholarship by demonstrating the interdependencies between irregular security actors and formal military institutions. It refines theoretical tools through the integration of multi-agent complexities and provides empirical insights into how PGMs can undermine governance and state capacity, urging scholars and policymakers to reconsider the broader ramifications of relying on militias.

While this study makes significant contributions to understanding the impact of pro-government militias (PGMs) on civilian control over the military, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize its findings. First, despite the promises of causal hypothesis testing methods, the data analyzed in this study is observational, inherently limiting the ability to establish definitive causal

relationships. While the use of Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) and temporality testing strengthens causal inferences, unmeasured confounders or omitted variables may still influence the observed relationships. Further, falsifying the null hypothesis is not the same as proving the hypothesis. When there is causality between two variables, there are mathematical and theoretical expectations from the data. However, observing those expectations does not prove but only supports and strengthens the causal claim.

Second, measuring civilian control remains a complex task due to its multi-dimensional nature. This study's use of composite indicators, while methodologically sound, may not fully capture the nuances of civilian oversight across different temporal and spatial contexts. For example, civilian control can manifest through formal mechanisms (e.g., laws, policies) or informal practices (e.g., personal networks, political culture), which are difficult to quantify consistently. The dependent variable, civilian control scores, is a composite/latent variable estimated from other variables. State capacity, GDP per capita, level of democracy are also estimates calculated with different methods.

Third, there are limitations in differentiating the variables conceptually and operationally. While civilian control and PGM presence are distinct phenomena and can be measured independent of each other, this is not the case for state capacity or democracy indicators. A polity cannot be a democracy and military dictatorship at the same time. The involvement of the military into the political domain decreases the democracy score of that country by definition and measurement. The same applies to state capacity as well. The presence of armed groups outside the state control or lack of control over the army are also indicators of state capacity. Whereas the inclusion

of various indicators of democracy and state capacity helps mitigate this concern, it still presents a complication for the estimates. That is why the arguments of this dissertation rely not on coefficients but on conditional dependence and independence of the variables.

Fourth, the datasets used are imbalanced due to regime changes, partitions, and unifications of countries. Thus, there are uneven number of observations for each country. Moreover, the fact that some of the variables, particularly, the independent variable was constant for the majority of countries, i.e., they either had PGM presence or did not for the whole period of observation, limited the types of statistical techniques, especially fixed-effects regression and difference-in-differences analyses that are more appropriate to measure causal effects.

Finally, this study draws upon an individual level paradigm, rational choice, but tests the hypothesis at the country-level. Hence, agency theory loses its explanatory power with each jump to a higher level of analysis: from the individual to the group or institution, and from the group to country. If all members or leaders of a PGM do not have the same interests, for instance, their collective action would diverge from individual calculations while social, economic, political, and geopolitical limitations posed at the country-level would disrupt such outcomes even further.

These limitations highlight the complexities inherent in investigating PGMs and their influence on civilian control. While the results remain valid within the scope of the available data and methods, future research would profit from more in-depth case studies and individual level analyses, extended temporal coverage, and refined measurement strategies. By recognizing these constraints, this dissertation provides

a foundation for further inquiry into the role of PGMs in shaping civil-military relations.

This dissertation establishes a fertile ground for further exploration into the dynamics of pro-government militias (PGMs) and their influence on civil-military relations (CMR). Building on the findings and addressing the limitations identified, future research can deepen the understanding of PGMs by exploring alternative mechanisms, diverse contexts, and additional variables.

While this study highlights the impact of PGMs on civilian control, it leaves room to examine broader and more nuanced consequences. Future research could investigate how the presence of PGMs affects the trajectory of democratic governance over time. Do PGMs entrench authoritarian tendencies, or can they, under certain conditions, facilitate transitions to stable democracies by countering threats to civilian leadership? The combined dataset used in this dissertation enables incorporation of additional variables from PGMD and V-Dem databases as the unique identifiers were preserved. Updates to PGMD that was undergoing at the time of writing would add at least another decade to the time scope of such studies. As a rule of thumb, due to the availability of data, more recent observations are more reliable.

While this dissertation uses cross-national quantitative methods, incorporating qualitative case studies could enrich the findings. In-depth studies of individual countries or regions could reveal unique dynamics, such as variations in how PGMs are created, deployed, or integrated into governance structures. Comparative case studies could examine why PGMs contribute to civilian control in some contexts while undermining it in others. For example, a comparison between states with high

PGM autonomy (e.g., Iran's Revolutionary Guards) and states with tightly controlled militias could yield valuable insights.

The inclusion of additional variables could provide a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing the behavior and impact of PGMs. Exploring the demographic and economic profiles of PGM members could shed light on their motivations and the conditions under which they are most likely to align with or deviate from civilian oversight. Research could also investigate how ideological compatibility between PGMs and civilian leadership affects the principal-agent dynamics. Do PGMs with shared ideological goals exhibit greater loyalty, or does their independence create new challenges regardless of alignment?

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TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu doktora tezi devlet yanlısı milis grup (DYMG) varlığının ordu üzerindeki sivil kontrol üzerindeki nedensel etkisini test etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez, vekalet kuramına dayanarak DYMG varlığının sivil kontrolünü azalttığını savlamaktadır. Bu hipotezi nedenselliğin üç ampirik koşulu olan sağlam istatistiksel ilişki, başka etkenlerce açıklanmama ve nedenin sonuçtan önce gerçekleşmesi açılarından test etmek için üç farklı veri tabanı birleştirilmiştir. Bağımlı değişken olan sivil kontrolü için Civilian Control Scores Dataset, bağımsız değişken olan DYMG varlığı için Pro-Government Militias Database ve kontrol değişkenleri olan demokrasi, devlet kapasitesi, ekonomik durum ve çatışma göstergeleri için Varieties of Democracy Database kullanılarak 155 ülke hakkında 1981 ile 2010 yılları arası döneme ilişkin veri toplanmıştır. Bağımlı değişken 1 ile 5 yıl geri kaydırılarak zamansal fark yaratıldıktan sonra bağımlı değişken ve bağımsız değişken ile kontrol değişkenlerinin tüm birli, ikili, üçlü, dörtlü...on dörtlü kombinasyonları Rastsal Etkiler regresyon analizleri ile test edilmiştir. Bu 98304 analizden elde edilen bulgular DYMG varlığının sivil kontrolü üzerinde güçlü olmasa da istatistiksel olarak anlamlı negatif etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla bağımlı ile bağımsız değişken arasında ilişki olmadığı, olsa bile başka bir değişkenin sonucu olduğu ve nedenin sonuçtan önce gelmediği şeklindeki sıfır hipotezi reddedilmiştir.

Literatür, DYMG'lerin devletin resmi askeri yapılarının dışında faaliyet gösteren, ancak devletle bağlantılı silahlı gruplar olduğunu belirtmektedir. Bu gruplar genellikle devletin şiddet tekeline zarar verirken, devlete bağlılıkları dolayısıyla muhalefet hareketlerini bastırma gibi roller üstlenirler. Çalışmalar, DYMG'lerin

insan hakları ihlallerinde ve savaş suçlarında sıkça rol oynadığını, dolayısıyla hem devlet kapasitesini hem de rejim meşruiyetini zayıflattığını göstermektedir. Bazı araştırmalar bu grupları “bağımlı değişken” olarak ele alırken, diğerleri bu grupların devlet ve toplum üzerindeki etkilerini “bağımsız değişken” olarak incelemektedir.

Literatürde sivil-asker ilişkilerinin (SAİ) çeşitli biçimlerini ve bu ilişkileri etkileyen faktörleri ele alan pek çok çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu faktörler arasında rejim türü, ekonomik koşullar, dış tehditler, toplumsal meşruiyet ve askeri profesyonellik öne çıkmaktadır. Demokratik rejimlerde sivil kontrolü genellikle daha güçlüdür, ancak otoriter rejimlerde darbe riskini azaltmak için askeri bölme veya patronaj gibi “darbe önleme” stratejileri uygulanabilmektedir. Ekonomik olarak güçlü ülkelerin darbelerden daha az etkilendiği, ekonomik istikrarsızlığın ise askeri müdahaleyi teşvik ettiği gösterilmiştir.

Demokratik rejimler, sivil kontrolün daha belirgin olduğu yapılardır. Otoriter rejimler ise meşruiyet ve etkinlik eksikliği nedeniyle daha fazla darbe tehdidiyle karşı karşıya kalır. Literatürde, tek-kişili otoriter rejimlerin kurumsal otoriter rejimlere kıyasla daha kırılgan olduğu belirtilmiştir. Yoksulluk, darbe riskini artıran önemli bir faktör olarak tanımlanmıştır. Ekonomik teşviklerin orduyu memnun etme ve darbe olasılığını azaltma açısından önemli olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Zorunlu askerlik, gizli polis uygulamaları, halk desteği ve rejim meşruiyeti gibi faktörlerin sivil-asker ilişkilerini şekillendirdiği ifade edilmiştir. Özellikle güçlü bir sivil toplumun darbelere karşı caydırıcı olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Literatür, hükümetlerin darbeleri önlemek için uyguladığı stratejileri kapsamlı bir şekilde ele almıştır. Örneğin, ordunun bölünmesi gibi kurumsal stratejilerin etkinliği sınırlıdır ve uzun vadede faydalarını kaybedebilir.

Tez, sivil-asker ilişkilerinde vekalet kuramını temel almaktadır. Bu kuramda, siviller “müvekkil” (*principal*), ordu ise “vekil” (*agent*) olarak kabul edilir. Kuram, vekilin, müvekkilin çıkarları doğrultusunda hareket etmesi beklense de çıkar çatışmalarının ortaya çıkması durumunda vekilin müvekkilin beklentilerinden sapabileceğini öne sürer. Bu sapmaları önlemek için sivil otoriteler, denetim ve kontrol mekanizmaları geliştirmek zorundadır. Örneğin, düzenleyici kurumların oluşturulması, gizli polis birimlerinin kullanılması ve devlet yanlısı milislerin (DYMG) görevlendirilmesi bu mekanizmalardan bazılarıdır.

Tez, DYMG’leri vekalet kuramı çerçevesine yeni bir vekil olarak dahil etmektedir. DYMG’ler, devlet tarafından oluşturulan, eğitilen veya desteklenen gruplar olsa da genellikle kendi çıkarlarını ön planda tutarak hareket ederler. Bu durum, müvekkil (sivil otoriteler) ile vekil (ordu) arasındaki ilişkileri daha karmaşık hale getirir ve “müvekkil-vekil” sorununu, “müvekkil-vekil-vekil” sorununa dönüştürür. DYMG’lerin, sivil otoritenin kontrol mekanizmalarını güçlendirmek yerine zayıflattığı, dolayısıyla sivil kontrolü olumsuz etkilediği hipotezi ortaya konmuştur.

Bu kuramsal yaklaşıma dayanarak oluşturulan hipotez DYMG’lerin sivil kontrolünün azalmasına neden olduğudur. Bu nedensel hipotez dört temel kritere dayanmaktadır: 1) DYMG varlığının sivil kontrol üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkisinin olup olmadığı; 2) bu ilişkinin başka bir değişkenle açıklanıp açıklanmadığının kontrol edilmesi (*spuriousness*); 3) DYMG varlığının sivil kontroldeki değişiklikten önce geldiğinin gösterilmesi ve 4) DYMG varlığının sivil kontrolü nasıl etkilediğini açıklayan teorik bir anlatının geliştirilmesi. Teorik çerçeve, “DYMG varlığı sivil kontrolü azaltır” hipotezini test etmeyi hedefler. Bu hipotez,

DYMG'lerin orduyu denetlemek için kullanılan araçlar olmasına rağmen, kendi çıkarlarını gözetmeleri nedeniyle sivil kontrolü daha da zorlaştırdığı iddiasına dayanmaktadır.

Bu hipotezi test etmek amacıyla nedensel hipotez testi yöntemlerinden yönlendirilmiş döngüsüz graflar (DAG) ve nicel panel veri analizi yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, 1981-2010 döneminde 155 ülkeye ait verileri içermektedir. Bağımlı değişken olan sivil kontrol skoru için *Civilian Control Scores Dataset* (Sivil Kontrol Skorları Veri Seti), bağımsız değişken olan DYMG varlığı için *Pro-Government Militias Database* (Devlet Yanlısı Milisler Veri Tabanı), kontrol değişkenleri olan demokrasi düzeyi, ekonomik koşullar, devlet kapasitesi ve çatışma göstergeleri için ise *Varieties of Democracy Database* (Demokrasi Türleri Veri Tabanı) kullanılmıştır. Veriler panel veri (kesit ve zaman serisi) formatında olduğu için gözlemler bağımsız değildir (örneğin, bir ülkenin 1990'daki skoru 1989'daki skorundan bağımsız değildir). Rastsal Etkiler (RE) regresyon modelleri kullanılarak analiz yapılmıştır. Bu yöntem, ülkeler arası ve ülkeler içindeki varyasyonları analiz etmeye imkan tanır.

Bağımlı değişken ile bağımsız değişken arasındaki ilişkinin istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğu, bu ilişkinin kontrol değişkenleri sabit tutulduğunda bozulmadığı ve bağımsız değişkenin bağımlı değişkenden önce geldiğini test etmek amacıyla önce bağımlı değişken değerleri her bir ülke için 1 ila 5 yıl geriye taşınmış, böylece bağımlı değişkenin bir orijinal ve 5 kaydırmalı olmak üzere 6 versiyonu elde edilmiştir. Bu 6 versiyon üzerindeki bağımlı değişkenin etkisi 14 kontrol değişkeninin birli, ikili, üçlü, ... on dördü tüm olası kombinasyonları tek tek sabit tutularak 98.304 farklı model analiz edilmiştir. 98.304 analizin tamamında DYMG varlığı ile sivil kontrol

arasında negatif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu bulgu, DYMG'nin sivil kontrolü azalttığı hipotezini destekler niteliktedir. DYMG'lerin düşük devlet kapasitesi ve rejim meşruiyeti ile ilişkilendirilmesi mevcut literatürü desteklemektedir. Literatürde DYMG'lerin bazen devletin güçlenmesine katkı sağladığı iddialarına karşın, bu çalışmada DYMG'lerin genellikle sivil kontrolü zayıflattığı gösterilmiştir.

Bu tez, DYMG'lerin müvekkil-vekil sorununu daha karmaşık hale getiren unsurlar olduğunu ortaya koyarak vekalet kuramına yeni bir perspektif kazandırmıştır. DYMG'ler, sadece devletin bir aracı olarak değil, kendi çıkarlarını takip eden bağımsız aktörler olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, büyük bir panel veri seti ve çok sayıda model kombinasyonu kullanarak nedensellik analizinin önemini vurgulamıştır. Zamansal öncelik ve başka faktörlerin etkisini eleme gibi kriterler literatürdeki benzer çalışmalar için metodolojik bir model sunmaktadır.

DYMG'ler üzerine veri toplama zorlukları ve bazı faaliyetlerin devlet tarafından gizlemiş olma ihtimali, çalışmanın kapsamını sınırlamıştır. Ayrıca, kullanılan verilerin 1981-2010 dönemi ile sınırlı olması, güncel gelişmelerin analiz dışı kalmasına neden olmuştur. Her ne kadar kapsamlı bir kontrol değişkeni kümesi kullanılmış olsa da gözlemlenmemiş değişkenlerin olabileceği unutulmamalıdır. Nedensel hipotez kuramsal ve ampirik açıdan desteklenmiş olsa da kanıtlanmamıştır.

Daha güncel veri setleri kullanılarak, DYMG'lerin farklı rejim türleri ve bölgesel bağlamlarda etkisi incelenebilir. Ayrıca, DYMG'lerin sadece sivil kontrol üzerindeki değil, toplumsal bütünlük, insan hakları ve ekonomik istikrar üzerindeki etkileri de araştırılabilir.



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Izmir Institute of Technology • April 2024 – Current

- Advising Erasmus+ Mobility for Studies Incoming and Outgoing Students
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- Assisting the coordination of offline and online lectures
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Al Sharq Strategic Research • April 2018 – September 2018

- Conducting research on armed groups in Iraq
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Istanbul Sehir University • October 2016 – June 2018

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DILTRA International Translation • October 2015 – September 2016

- Translating legal and commercial documents between English and Turkish
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Bogazici University • September 2010 – January 2015

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- MA Thesis: Dynamics Behind Sadrism-Iranian relations (2003-2018): a Social Movements Theory Perspective
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Al Sharq Forum august 2017 – January 2018

- Conducting research on the current issues in the MENA region
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Turkish: Native Language

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- Microsoft Office Programs
- Zoom – Online Meeting Management
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PUBLICATIONS

Kaymaz, Mustafa. 2020. “Book Review of ‘Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power’ by Aurélie Daher”. *Al Sharq Strategic Research*.

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