

International Conflict and Democratic Breakdown in New Democracies

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June 6, 2019

Abstract

Many scholars have theorized that international conflict can contribute to democratic breakdown. Others suggest that conflict might prevent breakdown by decreasing the likelihood of coups or increasing citizen participation. However, work directly examining the impact of military conflict on democratic breakdown finds null results. In contrast, previous work suggests that new democracies are particularly vulnerable to democratic breakdown for various reasons. By allowing the effect of conflict on democratic breakdown to vary over the age of democracy, this article finds that international conflict does contribute to democratic breakdown but only does so in new democracies. After establishing this effect, the article tentatively suggests several possible mechanisms that could account for it including: uncertainty about the limits on executive power in new democracies during a crisis, weaker internalization of the values of democracy among the citizens in new democracies, and nationalism associated with the creation of new states or democratic regimes.

Word Count 4,855

*I would like to thank Michael DeCrescenzo, Micah Dillard, Yoshiko Herrera, Dmitrii Kofanov, Andrew Kydd, Jon Pevehouse, Benjamin Power, Jessica Weeks, Susanne Mueller-Redwood, David Greenwood-Sanchez, Sujeong Shim, Anton Shirikov, and Alexander Tahk for helpful comments on drafts of this article.

Political thinkers have long worried that military conflicts endanger democracy. De Tocqueville writes, “No protracted war can fail to endanger the freedom of a democratic country[...]. If it lead not to despotism by sudden violence, it prepares men for it more gently by their habits” (Tocqueville 1847, p. 285). Recently, the continuous and secretive nature of the War on Terrorism has led observers to fret about its influence on democracy (Giroux 2015; Greenwald 2013; Manor 2015; Starr 2010).

While research shows that international conflict can weaken judicial independence and checks on executives (Gibler 2010; Gibler and Randazzo 2011), work directly examining the effect of military conflict on democratic breakdown finds null results (Reiter 2001; Pevehouse 2002). Some scholars even theorize that international conflict might help preserve democracy either by decreasing the likelihood of military coups in new democracies (Acemoglu, Ticchi, and Vindigni 2010) or by promoting citizen participation (Starr 2010; Kage 2010). The conflicting theoretical predications about the influence international conflict should have on democratic survival merit revisiting the evidence.

Perhaps rather than increasing the likelihood that every democracy will breakdown, international conflict only affects a subset of democracies. If this were the case, it would explain why previous research examining the effect of conflict on democratic breakdown, averaged over all democracies, does not recover an effect. Political scientists have long recognized that new democracies are particularly at risk of democratic breakdown (Gasiorowski 1996; Bernhard, Reenock, and Nordstrom 2003; Svulik 2008). New democracies could be particularly vulnerable to democratic breakdown in the event of conflict for multiple possible reasons including: uncertainty about the limits on executive power in new democracies during a crisis, weaker internalization of the values of democracy among the citizens making them more willing to sacrifice democracy to fend off a threat, and nationalism associated with the creation of the new states or democratic regimes leading citizens to prioritize defending the nation over the defense of democracy.

This article examines whether international conflict increases the chances of democratic

breakdown in new democracies. It finds the first direct evidence that international conflict increases the probability of democratic breakdown in new but not old democracies. This finding is robust to a wide variety of measurements and model specifications. Further, this is *not* just one more reason new democracies are especially vulnerable to breakdown. The results indicate that military conflict is relatively unique among predictors of democratic breakdown as it is the only predictor (among others including GDP per capita, economic growth, regional democracy, and regime characteristics) that has an effect that is statistically different depending on the age of the democracy in question. This is *not* to suggest that these factors do not matter for democratic survival, instead it suggests that, unlike international conflict, their importance to democratic survival does not diminish as democracies age. After establishing the relationship, the paper offers some tentative mechanisms for future research to explore.

Method

Data and Coding

The data include all sovereign democracies from 1950 to 2008, including country-years where democracies broke down. The dependent variable, *Democratic Breakdown*, comes from the Political Regimes dataset (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2013).¹ If a leader is democratically elected and then later makes politics in the country uncompetitive, Political Regimes codes the breakdown as occurring when politics became uncompetitive rather than when the leader was initially elected (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2013, p. 1535). This makes the Political Regimes data well suited to compare the timing of breakdown and conflict in cases where the breakdown occurs in the middle of a term, since coding the entire term as authoritarian would wrongly indicate that democratic breakdown preceded the conflict. Regime change in

¹See Appendix section D for an explanation of why a binary measure of democracy is most appropriate.

the Political Regimes dataset does not necessarily imply leader change.²

Time Democratic measures how long a country has been democratic as well as the year the country breaks down if it does. This variable is logged because after a country has been a democracy for a long time, each additional year of democracy has a diminishing effect on its ability to survive. Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn (2003) also suggest it is often appropriate to log the time interaction when evaluating variables that have effects that differ depending on how long a unit has survived.

Force is a count of the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs) involving the use of force that occur in each country-year (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996).³ Previous work on conflict and democracies has used MIDs to measure of threats (Gibler 2010), and theories about the impact of threats on public support for democracy often assume that “public support follows the use of force” (Gibler and Randazzo 2011, p. 700).

To assess whether conflict increases the probability of democratic breakdown in new but not old democracies, *Force* is interacted with *Time Democratic*. The model does not estimate an effect for *Time Democratic* alone (the constitute term of the interaction) because this is incorporated in the baseline hazard rate. The *Time Democratic* variable is just a natural log transformation of the time that a country is included in the dataset, so even if it is included in the model it is kicked out for creating a singular matrix, returning results identical to those shown with an additional column filled with NAs for *Time Democratic*. See Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn (2003) for more on time interactions to address non-proportional hazards.

The first control variable is *GDP Per Capita*, which correlates with democratic survival (Przeworski 2000). Further, it is plausibly correlated with conflict because it is related to the military strength of a country. *Economic Growth* is added as a control because democratic breakdown may be more likely to occur during recessions, which might be related to conflict

²For example, Taiwan is coded as a democracy for the first time in 1996, but Lee Teng-hui was president of Taiwan from 1988 to 2000. This is just an example to show how democracy and leader change are coded. Taiwan is not coded as sovereign and so is not included in the subset of the data that is analyzed.

³This is defined as MIDs with a Hostility Level of 4 or 5. 4 denotes a use of force, and 5 signifies a war.

in diversionary wars (Svolik 2008).

Whether a democracy is a presidential, parliamentary, or mixed democracy may be related to breakdown (Svolik 2008). Further, executives in presidential democracies have greater control over the armed forces, which could influence conflict. For these reasons, binary controls are included for *Presidential* systems and *Parliamentary* systems, leaving mixed regimes as the comparison category.

Lastly, *Proportion Democratic Neighbors* controls for the proportion of bordering countries that are democratic. The more democratic neighbors a country has, the more it is exposed to democratic diffusion effects (O’loughlin et al. 1998; Gibler and Tir 2013). Further, because of the democratic peace, a democratic country with more democratic neighbors may be less at risk for conflict. Measures of democratic neighbors or regional democracy, growth, and GDP per capita are all commonly used in international relations models of democratic breakdown (Pevehouse 2002; Reiter 2001). Each independent variable (save Time Democratic) is lagged one year.

Modeling Strategy

Statistical Model

Event history models are best for modeling democratic breakdown because of time dependence. Time dependence exists because if a given democracy breaks down at time t it cannot break down at time $t + 1$ or $t - 1$. The Cox proportional hazard model is chosen because the baseline hazard of breakdown as well as its distribution are unknown.⁴ This kind of model is common in the literature modeling democratic breakdown (Pevehouse 2002; Svolik 2008). Countries exit the dataset upon breakdown. However, if a country breaks down and then

⁴All models either satisfy the proportional hazard assumption or have been corrected following Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn (2003). The models calculate the probability of an event, in this case democratic breakdown, conditional on the individual (country) reaching a certain point in time (age of democracy) without the event occurring. This conditional probability is known as the hazard. One advantage of these models is that they avoid making the results dependent on arbitrary time windows. On censoring, see Appendix H.2.

re-democratizes, it reenters the dataset. Following Box-Steffensmeier and De Boef (2006), repeated events are accounted for by stratifying across the number of previous breakdowns and using gap time.⁵ Stratifying across previous breakdowns is the Cox analogue to putting in a fixed effect for previous breakdowns. This means democracies are only compared with other democracies that have the same number of breakdowns in the past. Box-Steffensmeier and De Boef (2006) also recommend including shared frailty for individuals (countries). However, the frailty term is not significant in the model that includes controls, so it is omitted (see Appendix section E).

Results

Before estimating the model with a time transformed Force term, it is important to establish that the effect of Force on democratic breakdown actually varies based on democratic age. If it does not, then it would not be appropriate to model the relationship with a time transformed term (Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn 2003). A test of whether the effect of Force varies over time, formally a test of the proportional hazard assumption for the force term, rejects the null hypothesis of that the effect of Force ($p = 0.0297$) does not vary over time. This means researchers who model democratic breakdown using models that assume proportional hazards risk biasing their results if they do not interact conflict with a function of time (Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn 2003). Further, of all the variables discussed in the Data and Coding section, Force is the only one for which the null hypothesis of a constant effect over democratic age can be rejected.

For this reason, it is important to examine how conflict's effect varies across different values of Time Democratic. Figure 1 shows how the simulated natural log of the relative hazard of Force changes as Time Democratic changes.⁶ Figure 1 shows the effect for the

⁵The number of previous breakdowns is the conditional risk set. Gap time means the time counter starts over after each event (breakdown). The results also hold up without stratification (see Appendix section G).

⁶The natural log of the relative hazard is taken in the graphs to show more clearly when the confidence intervals become insignificant. All simulations conducted with simPH (Gandrud 2015), which allows post-

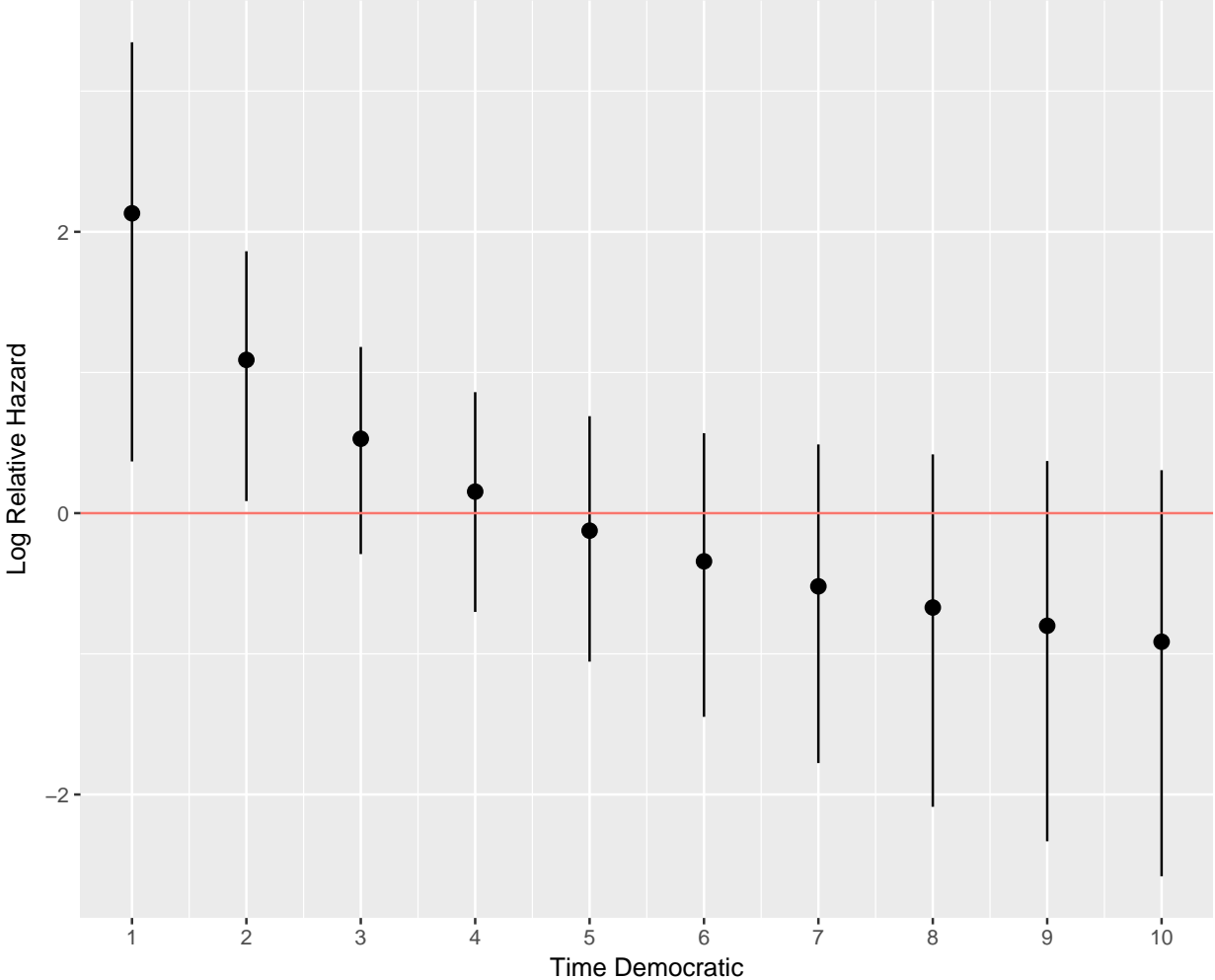
first 10 years after democratization to focus on how the effect changes as new democracies age. Changing the amount of years shown in the figure does not alter the calculation of the results. See Appendix section B for the full regression table this plot is simulated from as well as another model that shows the effect continues to hold when the control variables are omitted.

Figure 1 reveals that Force does increase the probability of breakdown substantially for new democracies in the first 2 years. 1-year-old democracies experiencing Force have about 7 times the probability of breakdown of 1-year-old democracies that do not.⁷ This effect weakens over time and becomes statistically indistinguishable once a democracy hits 3 years of age.

estimation simulation of Cox proportional hazard models based on Licht (2011)'s method.

⁷This can be seen in Figure 1 by exponentiating the logged relative hazard value when Time Democratic is 1.

Figure 1: Effect of Conflict on the Probability of Democratic Breakdown Over the Age of Democracy



95% confidence interval shown. Time is rescaled from log-years to years to aid interpretation. See Appendix section B for the full regression table. This figure shows the effect of the initiation of a single conflict involving force.

Robustness of Findings

To show that the results are not sensitive to the time period or a few influential observations, alternative measures of economic size and growth (iron and steel production) are used to extend the data back to 1800 (see Appendix section H.4). To show that the findings are insensitive to the measure of democracy, results are replicated with Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010) (see Appendix section H.5). The Appendix section H.1 shows the results using logistic regression rather than a cox proportional hazard model. To guard against the possibility that unobservable differences among countries are driving the findings, the results are replicated with country shared frailty (see Appendix section E).⁸

It is not likely that an omitted variable making new democracies both more likely to initiate conflict and more likely to collapse is driving the results because the findings hold up even when only conflicts where the democracy is the target rather than the initiator of the conflict are included (see Appendix section C). Additionally, the model calculates the effect of conflict conditional on the age of democracy, meaning it only compares democracies of the same age to each other. This guards against the possibility that new democracies' conflict proneness is driving results (Mansfield and Snyder 2007). Together these precautions reduce the concern that authoritarian prone leaders in new democracies who are especially likely to initiate conflict are driving results. However, it could still be possible that latent proneness to authoritarianism is increasing the likelihood that a leader is targeted and that democracy collapses. Future research on the cases listed in Table 1 should examine this possibility.

The quality of democratic institutions might correlate with democratic age and confound results. For example, Time Democratic could be serving as a proxy for poor judicial institutions. However, even when using Polity, which is composed of measures of the competitiveness of executive recruitment, the openness of executive recruitment, constraints on the chief executive, and the competitiveness of political participation, to control for the quality of democracy and democratic institutions within a country, the finding that Force increases

⁸This is the cox analogue to adding country random effects.

the probability of breakdown in new democracies holds up (see Appendix section H.7). The executive constraint portion of polity should account for whether judicial institutions in place are constraining the executive (Gibler and Randazzo 2011). This suggests that the age of democracy plays a role even when institutional quality is accounted for.

Territorial conflicts, which some suggest could threaten democracies by stoking nationalism (Gibler 2012), could also be the driving factor rather than Force. To examine this, the simulation show in Figure 1 is replicated using a count of territorial MIDs rather than Force as the primary independent variable (see Appendix section H.8). The effect is not significant.

Three further alternatives are examined in the Appendix. The first is whether the results hold up when controlling for the Cold War (section H.6), and the second is whether, as some suggest (Starr 2010; Gibler 2010), only lengthy conflicts contribute to breakdown (section F). Notably, the Cold War is the only variable other than force explored in this paper found to have an effect on democratic collapse that varies over time. This further suggests that the survival of new democracies may be tied to the international threat environment in ways it is not for older democracies. Lastly, multiple conflicts in the same year might have a diminishing effect, making it more appropriate to log the count of conflicts (section H.1).

Discussion

Given the finding that international conflict increases the likelihood of democratic breakdown only in new democracies, why might this be the case? This section puts forward several potential explanations that future research can explore. Table 1 shows a list of democracies from the data that broke down within 5 years of democratization in proximity to a conflict.

One explanation is that in new democracies, citizens have not yet internalized democratic values, or, at least, they have internalized these values to a lesser extent than citizens in democracies that have persisted longer. One reason for this could be that civil society has

had less time to develop and promote these values (Diamond 1994, p. 8). This lack of value internalization might make citizens more willing to sacrifice democratic rights for the sake of security in the presence of international threats.

Another possibility is that that recently independent democracies have strong nationalist movements left over from independence. Nationalist leaders will try to keep nationalist movements going after independence to maintain political power, and their success at maintaining these movements may be related to whether or not the nation is seen as threatened (Barrington 2006, pp. 14–15). If this nationalism also makes citizens more willing to surrender freedoms to defend the state, then these states might be more likely to revert to authoritarianism in the presence of international conflict. Almost half (5 of 11) of the democracies in Table 1 come from states established in the previous 20 years, providing partial support for this explanation. Another version of this explanation is that nationalism could be associated with the establishment of democratic regimes, as opposed to the initial establishment of the state (Mansfield and Snyder 1995, p. 6).

The third possible explanation comes from research that suggests the preservation of democracy may require citizens to coordinate to resist authoritarian power grabs (Diamond 1994; Weingast 1997; Brender and Drazen 2009; Fearon 2011). Citizens face a coordination problem. They only want to resist if enough other citizens resist for the preservation of democracy to succeed. Otherwise they risk punishment from the new authoritarian regime (Fearon 2011, p. 1697). Conflict might aggravate this problem in new democracies because these democracies have not faced an international crisis before, so citizens do not have a precedent that enables them to determine what kinds of executive power centralizations are normal in a crisis as opposed to those that threaten democracy. This deprives them of a focal point that would otherwise allow them to solve their coordination problem.

The lack of this focal point that clearly demarcates anti-democratic behavior citizens should coordinate against could make a democracy vulnerable to promissory coups, where a coup leader takes power in the name of protecting democracy from an external threat and

promises to restore democracy when the threat has passed (Bermeo 2016). The case of South Korea’s 1961 democratic breakdown provides anecdotal support to the idea that international threats make new democracies more vulnerable to promissory coups. The military promised (falsely) to return the government to civilian control under a new democratic constitution by 1963 (Kim and Baik 2011, p. 66). The lack of democratic experience may have increased the willingness of citizens to accept these promises. International threats may be more effective than domestic political issues at getting citizens in new democracies to accept promissory coups because citizens are more united in their desire to fend off international threats than they are about domestic political issues.

Table 1: Cases for Future Research

State Established	Democracy Since	Breakdown Year	Country
1949	1960	1961	South Korea
1841	1958	1962	Argentina
1948	1960	1962	Myanmar
1841	1963	1966	Argentina
1956	1965	1969	Sudan
1899	1971	1972	Honduras
1887	1975	1976	Thailand
1960	1979	1983	Nigeria
1956	1986	1989	Sudan
1944	1992	1996	Albania
1960	1993	1996	Niger

This is a list of cases of democracies that broke down, in the period between 1950 to 2008, within their first 5 years of democracy and experienced Force within 3 years prior to democratic breakdown. State establish data from Correlates of War Project (2016).

Judging among these possible explanations is beyond the scope of this research note. Further, they may not be mutually exclusive. Future work should examine the cases in Table 1 to see whether one or more of these explanations (or some other explanation) best accounts for the empirical pattern found here.

Conclusion

Conflict increases the probability of democratic breakdown in new democracies. The substantive effect is large. Democracies in their first year that experience conflict have about seven times the probability of breakdown of budding democracies that do not experience conflict. One might object that conflict is relatively rare, but from 1950 to 2008, there are 11 cases of democracies within their first five years that broke down within three years after a conflict (Table 1). Future work should examine these cases to see if coordination problems aggravated by conflict, nationalism, the lack of internalization of democratic values, or some other explanation provides the mechanism for this effect.

Regardless of the mechanism, the finding that young democracies are particularly at risk of breakdown in the presence of conflict has policy implications. Powerful states interested in democracy promotion may wish to give security guarantees to new democracies to deter aggression or to pressure newly democratic allies not to take part in conflict. Leaders in new democracies ought to try to avoid or at least delay conflict if they wish democracy to survive. Further, civil society groups and the opposition ought to be particularly careful to ensure that elites do not attempt to use international threats to gather power.

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A Appendix: Summary Statistics

Table 2 shows the summary statistics for the full sample. Table 3 shows the same summary statistics for a subset of the sample that only includes democratic breakdown country-years.

Table 2: Summary Stats

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Democratic Breakdown	3,851	0.016	0.127	0	1
Time Democratic	3,851	33.412	38.457	1	209
Force	3,805	0.158	0.496	0	5
Targeted	3,805	0.062	0.280	0	4
(Log) GDP Per Capita	3,373	2.017	1.016	-1.088	4.378
Growth	3,352	0.039	0.046	-0.321	0.542
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	3,260	0.558	0.395	0.000	1.000
President	3,747	0.264	0.441	0	1
Parliament	3,747	0.513	0.500	0	1
Polity	3,053	7.837	3.327	-9	10
Cold War	3,851	0.520	0.500	0	1
Force Length	3,805	0.215	0.780	0	14
Past Breakdowns	3,805	0.395	0.751	0	4

Table 3: Democratic Breakdown Country-year Summary

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Democratic Breakdown	63	1.000	0.000	1	1
Time Democratic	63	10.778	9.424	2	47
Force	63	0.143	0.435	0	2
Targeted	63	0.095	0.296	0	1
(Log) GDP Per Capita	53	0.910	0.670	-0.404	2.149
Growth	52	0.023	0.070	-0.303	0.183
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	56	0.253	0.355	0.000	1.000
President	62	0.419	0.497	0	1
Parliament	62	0.387	0.491	0	1
Polity	59	4.424	3.701	-5	9
Cold War	63	0.762	0.429	0	1
Force Length	63	0.159	0.515	0	3
Past Breakdowns	63	0.492	0.738	0	3

B Full Regression Table

The results shown in Table 4 are not exponentiated, so positive coefficients mean that a variable is associated with democracies failing more quickly and negative coefficients mean a variable is associated with democracies taking longer to fail. Conflicts involving Force have a positive and significant coefficient in both models. Because it is interacted with Time Democratic, the coefficient on Force represents the effect of a single use of force when Time Democratic is 1 (Time Democratic starts at 1 and not 0). This supports the theory that when democracies are young, conflicts increase the hazard of democratic breakdown.

The interaction between Force and Time Democratic is significant and negative. This means that each year of democracy decreases the hazard of breakdown during conflict.

Table 4: Uses of Force and Democratic Breakdown

	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.282** (0.550)	1.932** (0.764)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.844** (0.428)	-1.328** (0.583)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.887*** (0.228)
Growth		-7.279*** (2.695)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.163** (0.456)
President		1.171*** (0.443)
Parliament		0.824* (0.482)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	3,805	2,952
R ²	0.001	0.016
Max. Possible R ²	0.114	0.099
Log Likelihood	-228.065	-130.090
Wald Test	5.460* (df = 2)	40.330*** (df = 7)
LR Test	5.016* (df = 2)	48.496*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	4.325 (df = 2)	44.421*** (df = 7)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

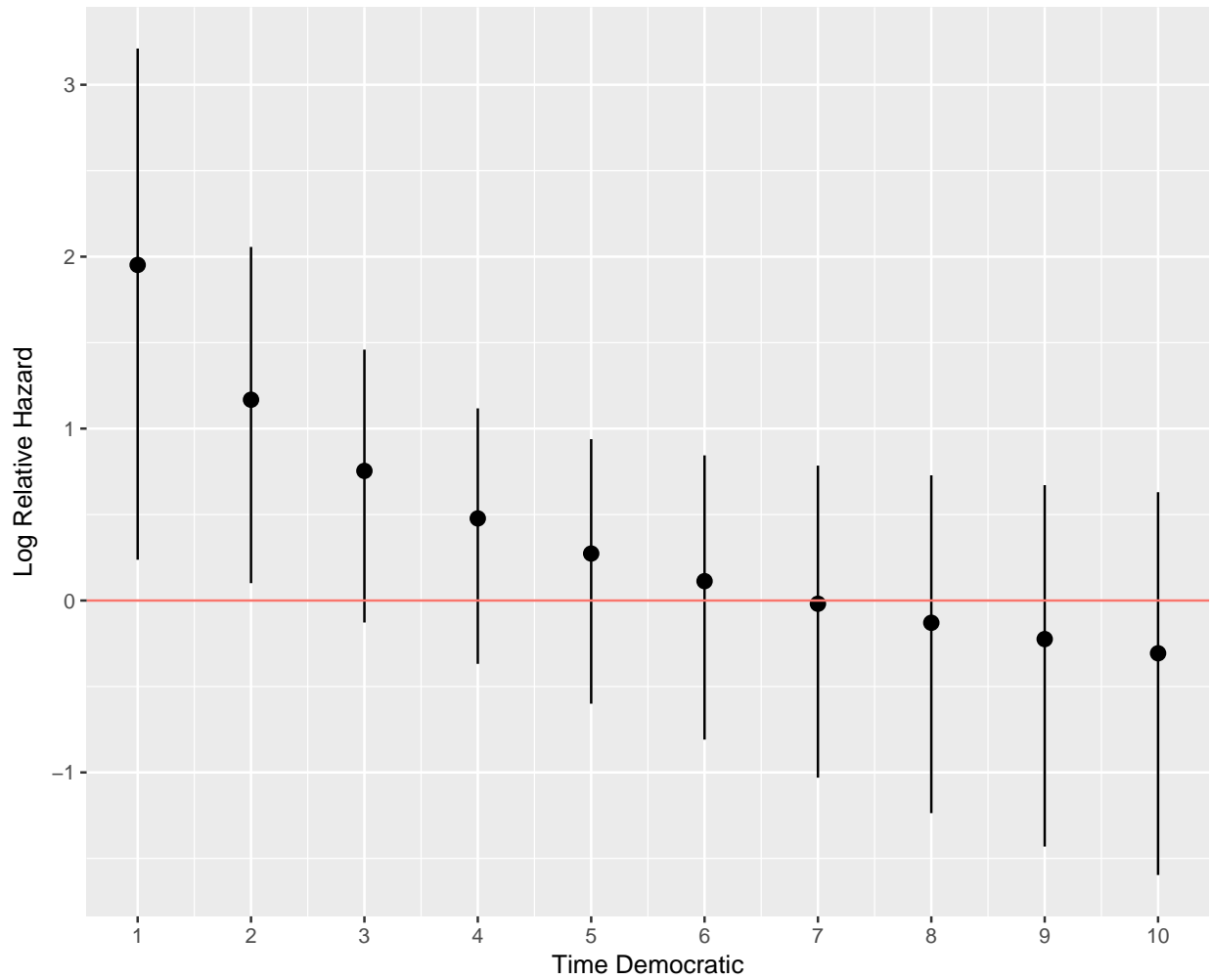
C When Democracies are the Target of Conflict

A possible concern is that elites in states who already plan to create an authoritarian regime are also more likely to initiate conflict. If this were the case, conflict and democratic breakdown would be correlated but conflict would not cause democratic breakdown. For this reason, the results are shown for the case when only uses of force where the new democracy is the target are included (*Targeted*). The interaction between *Targeted* and *Time Democratic* is not significant when pooling across time (Table 5). However, the question is whether international conflicts affect new democracies, so the more direct test is whether the effect of *Targeted* is significant for democracies in their first years after democratization. Figure 2 shows the relative hazard of democratic breakdown over time for the model including controls. *Targeted* significantly increases the hazard of breakdown at the 0.1 level for democracies in their first 2 years. The significance drops from the 0.05 level to the 0.1 level, probably because there are only half as many cases of *Targeted* as there are of *Force*, so the model is less certain about the effect. Regardless of whether all conflicts are included or only conflicts where the democracy is the target are included, new democracies experiencing conflict are significantly more likely to break down.

Table 5: Being Targeted and Democratic Breakdown

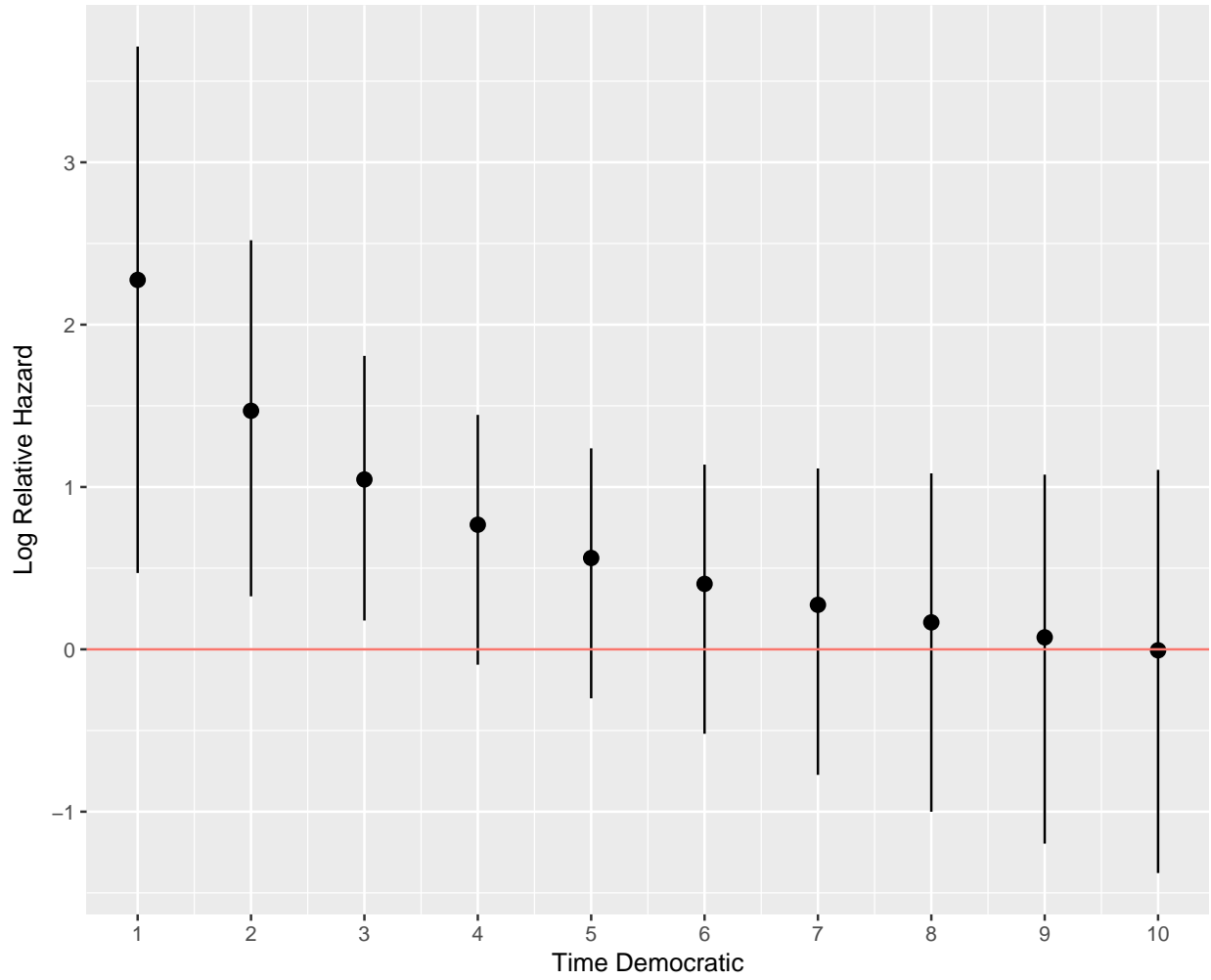
	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Targeted	1.928** (0.866)	1.713* (0.918)
Targeted*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.889 (0.543)	-0.930 (0.574)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.844*** (0.226)
Growth		-7.341*** (2.678)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.095** (0.446)
President		1.072** (0.437)
Parliament		0.651 (0.477)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	3,805	2,952
R ²	0.001	0.015
Max. Possible R ²	0.114	0.099
Log Likelihood	-228.521	-132.317
Wald Test	5.600* (df = 2)	38.020*** (df = 7)
LR Test	4.105 (df = 2)	44.044*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	5.716* (df = 2)	42.987*** (df = 7)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Figure 2: Relative Hazard of Being Targeted Once (Controls)



90% confidence interval shown.

Figure 3: Relative Hazard of Being Targeted Once (No Controls)



95% confidence interval shown.

D Appendix: Binary vs. Continuous Measures of Democracy

Binary measures of democracy like Political Regimes are better suited to test the theory than interval level measures. First, the theory makes a prediction about a transition from democracy to non-democracy, not a worsening of the quality of democracy or the entrenchment of authoritarianism. Interval level datasets like Polity and Unified Democracies Scores are not as well suited to measuring the precise year that democratic breakdown occurs because these interval scores were not coded with a clear cutoff between democracy and non-democracy in mind. This means the researcher must arbitrarily impose a cutoff point that may not work well for every country in the dataset. Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton (2010) show that commonly used datasets like Polity are often sticky across values of democracy. For example, the confidence intervals they estimate for different Polity values often overlap, especially for values near the middle of the spectrum. Further, analysts assigning democracy scores may base their scores on the score their country received in previous years. This minimizes variation and may miss the subtle moment when a powerful democratic executive consolidates control and becomes a dictator. While the Unified Democracy Scores data resolves the problem of stickiness (Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton 2010), the high level of variation in UDS means that the score for a particular country will commonly rise and fall below any given cutoff point, causing the researcher to overestimate the number of democratic breakdowns that occur (see Appendix section I).

E Appendix: Including Frailty Across Country

Box-Steffensmeier and De Boef (2006) argue that a conditional frailty model is the best way to model repeated events because researchers must account for the possibilities of both dependency across the number of events as well as heterogeneity across individuals. The conditional frailty model accounts for heterogeneity across individuals (countries) by allowing for shared frailty within observations of the same country (analogous to a country random effect). It accounts for event dependence by stratifying across a conditional risk set (the

number of past democratic breakdowns). The model that includes controls cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no shared frailty within countries. This section shows the models with the frailty term added. The inclusion of a frailty term does not substantially change the results. The frailty term for the model without controls has a χ^2 of 77.77 on 56.09 degrees of freedom with a p-value of 0.029. The frailty term for the model with controls has a χ^2 of 0 on 0 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.94.

Table 6: Force and Breakdown (with country shared frailty)

	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.18* (0.63)	1.93** (0.76)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.89* (0.46)	-1.33** (0.58)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.89*** (0.23)
Growth		-7.28*** (2.69)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.16** (0.46)
President		1.17*** (0.44)
Parliament		0.82* (0.48)
R ²	0.03	0.02
Max. R ²	0.11	0.10
Num. obs.	3805	2952
PH test	0.90	0.59

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

F Appendix: Conflict Length

De Tocqueville also raises the issues of the how long a democracy is under threat and the timing of breakdown. Threats may lead to ‘despotism’ by ‘sudden violence,’ or, if this is not the case, then threat ‘prepares men for it [despotism] more gently by their habits’. Starr conjectures that if threat’s tendency to promote centralization of power reverses after conflicts end, then indefinite conflicts like the War on Terror may threaten democracy (Starr 2010, pp. 65-66). Gibler (2010) argues that threats can only lead to regime change if they are sustained for a prolonged period (520). In contrast, this article argues that because international threats only cause breakdown in new democracies, they act within a relatively short window. This makes the length of time under threat less important. This article takes advantage of these theory’s diverging predictions about the timing of democratic breakdown to test them against each other below. *Force Length* is used to measure conflict duration. It is the length of the longest MID involving the use of force in a country-year.

Despite the marginal (0.1 level) significance of Force Length in the regression table for the model with controls, the simulations show that the effect of the length of a conflict involving force is not significant at any particular value of Time Democratic. Further, the hazards are the highest early on in democracies, before the effect of the length of the conflict could be felt, which suggests that Force Length may be serving as a proxy for another factor, such as conflict intensity. Another possibility is that conflicts are continued longer by the authoritarian regimes that replace democracies after breakdown.

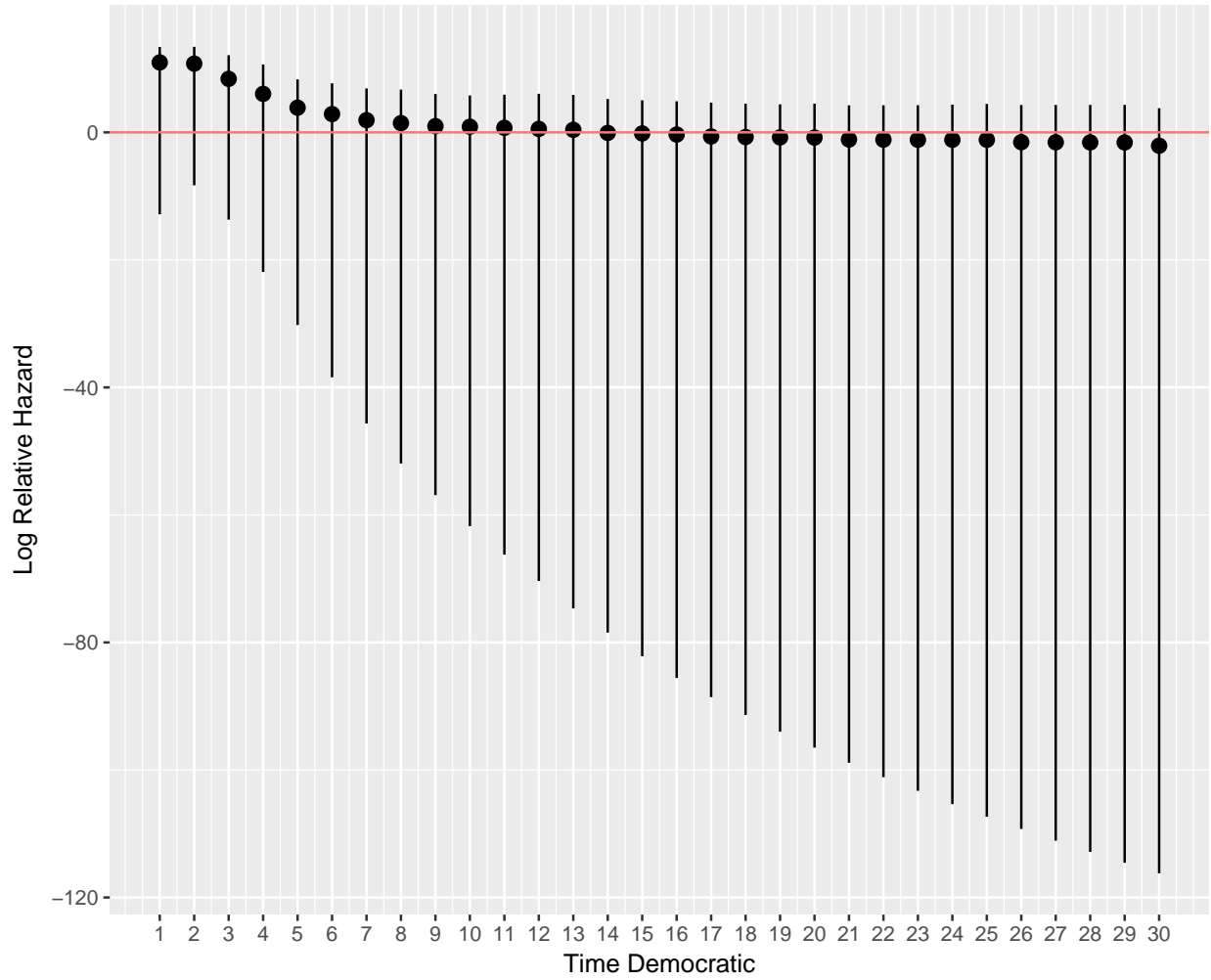
Figure 4 shows the relative hazard for the longest Force Length in the data (14 years) compared with no Force. If Force Length is lowered to seven or three years, the pattern is the same (see below), insignificance with the greatest hazard in the first two years.

Examining the cases where breakdown occurred further weakens the case for gradual breakdown. The longest conflict involving force ongoing during a democratic breakdown country-year was only ongoing for 3 years (see Table 3 in Appendix section A). Overall, these results do not support the hypothesis that long conflicts lead to gradual democratic breakdown.

Table 7: Force Length and Democratic Breakdowns

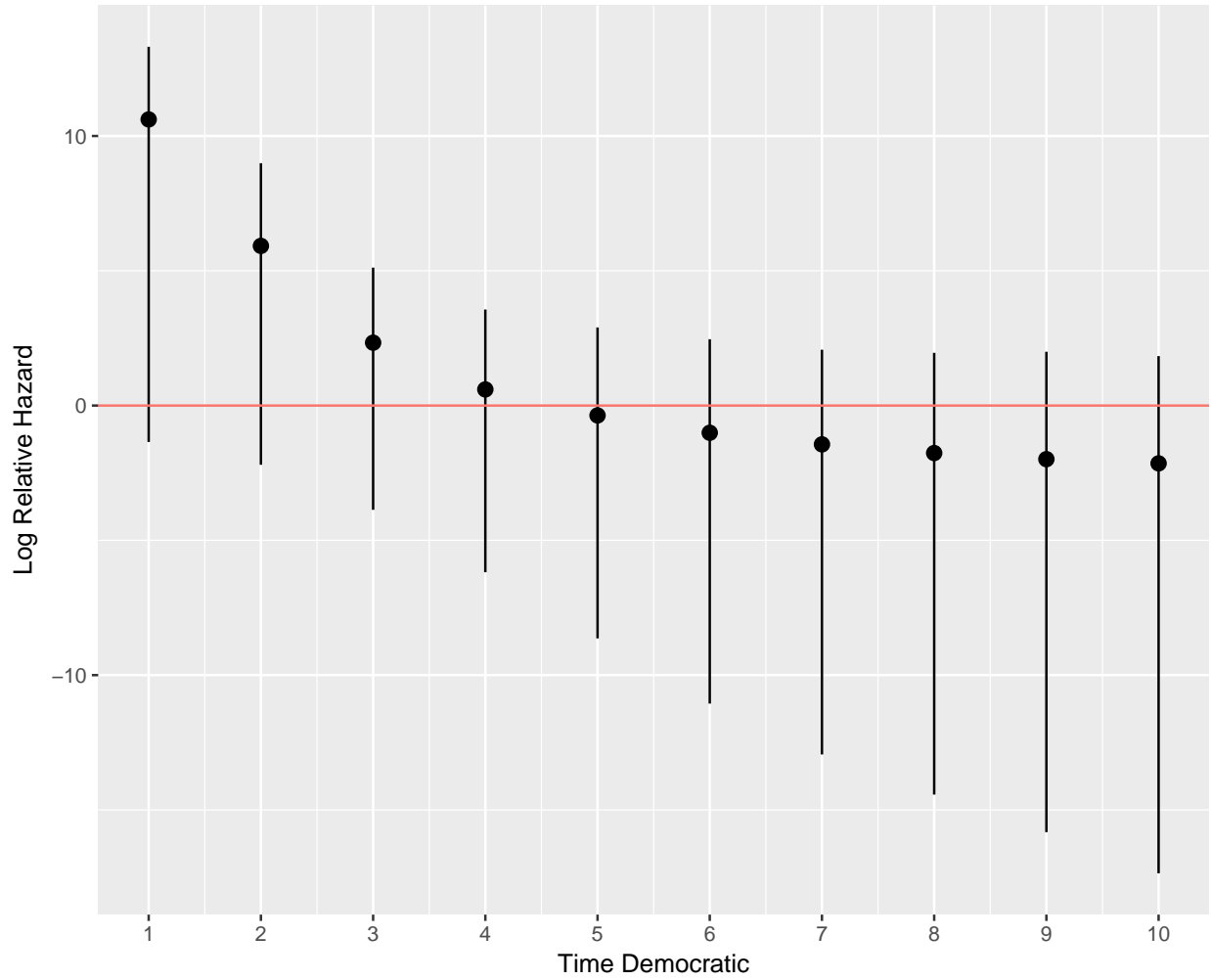
	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force Length	0.958 (0.592)	1.159* (0.668)
Force Length*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.612 (0.395)	-0.975* (0.518)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.869*** (0.230)
Growth		-7.532*** (2.654)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.133** (0.455)
President		1.097** (0.435)
Parliament		0.775 (0.477)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	3,805	2,952
R ²	0.001	0.016
Max. Possible R ²	0.114	0.099
Log Likelihood	-229.101	-131.220
Wald Test	2.640 (df = 2)	38.930*** (df = 7)
LR Test	2.944 (df = 2)	46.237*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	0.828 (df = 2)	40.292*** (df = 7)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Figure 4: Relative Hazard of 14 Years of Force



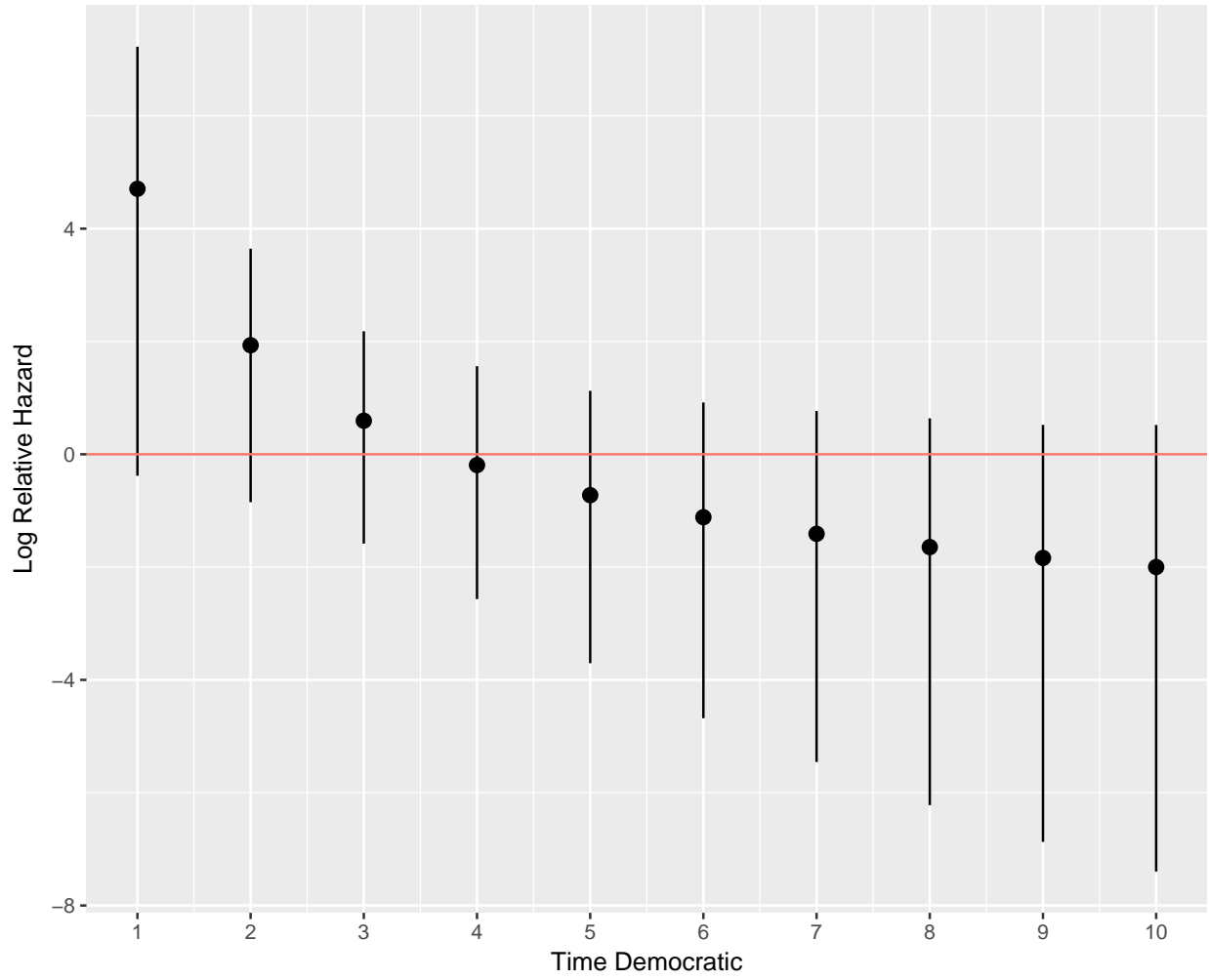
95% confidence interval shown.

Figure 5: Relative Hazard of 7 Years of Force



95% confidence interval shown.

Figure 6: Relative Hazard of 3 Years of Force



95% confidence interval shown.

G Appendix: No Stratification

The Tables below show the results from Table 4 and Table 5 without stratifying on past democratic breakdowns. The results are substantively the same.

Table 8: Uses of Force and Democratic Breakdown

	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.317** (0.568)	1.785** (0.746)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.881** (0.443)	-1.315** (0.609)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.505*** (0.172)
Growth		-7.124*** (2.612)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.540*** (0.435)
President		1.159*** (0.414)
Parliament		0.508 (0.456)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Observations	3,805	2,952
R ²	0.001	0.014
Max. Possible R ²	0.141	0.128
Log Likelihood	-286.653	-180.538
Wald Test	5.410* (df = 2)	38.130*** (df = 7)
LR Test	5.276* (df = 2)	42.831*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	4.195 (df = 2)	40.016*** (df = 7)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

H Appendix: Robustness Checks

H.1 Result with Force Variable Logged

The following table shows the same analysis shown in Table 4 except the Force variable has been logged. The purpose of this test is to guard against the possibility that forceful conflicts have a diminishing impact as increasingly many occur in the same year. Both the logged Force variable and the interaction term are significant and have the expected signs, indicating that conflicts increase the chance of breakdown in new democracies.

Table 9: (Log) Force and Democratic Breakdown

	Democratic Breakdown
(Log) Force	3.275** (1.441)
(Log) Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-2.151** (0.972)
(Log) GDP Per Capita	-0.872*** (0.229)
Growth	-7.343*** (2.670)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	-1.156** (0.455)
President	1.156*** (0.440)
Parliament	0.794* (0.480)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	2,952
R ²	0.016
Max. Possible R ²	0.099
Log Likelihood	-130.321
Wald Test	40.340*** (df = 7)
LR Test	48.036*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	45.081*** (df = 7)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

H.2 Left and Right Censorship

Because some countries enter the dataset as already democratic and others survive until the end of the dataset without breaking down, the results could be affected by both left and right censorship. Here all countries that start as democratic are treated as left censored (they may or may not have experienced conflict during the time they are not observed) and all democracies in 2008 are treated as right censored (it is unknown if they will breakdown later) using the `icenReg` package for R. The standard errors are bootstrapped. Table 10 is the equivalent of Table 4 taking both kinds of censorship into account. The results are substantively unchanged.

Table 10: Force and Breakdown with Left and Right Censorship

	Democratic Breakdown
Force	1.711 ^{***} (0.099)
Force * (Log) Time Democratic	-0.588 ^{***} (0.034)
(Log) GDP Per Capital	-0.987 ^{***} (0.027)
Growth	-0.227 (0.700)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	-0.198 ^{***} (0.058)
President	-0.757 ^{***} (0.055)
Parliament	-0.255 ^{***} (0.476)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns	Yes
Observations	2,952
Log Likelihood	-11502.71
Bootstrap Samples	100
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

H.3 Results Using Logistic Regression

The following table shows the main results using logistic regression using a count of the year after the previous democratic breakdown as well as its squared and cubed term to control for time dependence (Carter and Signorino 2010). These terms as well as dummies for the number of previous breakdowns are included in the regression but omitted from the following tables.

Table 11: Uses of Force and Democratic Breakdown (Logit)

	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.169** (0.544)	1.932*** (0.750)
(Log) Time Democratic	2.878*** (1.114)	2.881** (1.337)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-0.928*** (0.224)
Growth		-7.874*** (2.705)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.272*** (0.456)
President		1.248*** (0.446)
Parliament		0.782 (0.478)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.731* (0.377)	-1.298** (0.555)
Constant	-4.413*** (0.639)	-4.467*** (0.883)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	3,805	2,952
Log Likelihood	-291.979	-192.767
Akaike Inf. Crit.	605.959	417.533

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

H.4 Analysis Starting From 1800

The table below shows the analysis from the main text repeated using data extending back to the year 1800. Because of the Penn World Table dataset only extends back to 1950, the model with controls uses iron and steel production and growth in iron and steel production to proxy for economic growth. The controls for Presidential and Parliamentary systems are omitted because that data only extends to the year 1946. The model without controls extends to 2010 while the model with controls only extends to 2007 because of lack of data.

Table 12: Uses of Force and Democratic Breakdown From 1800 to 2010

	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.301** (0.552)	1.365** (0.691)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.871** (0.407)	-0.949** (0.479)
(Log) Iron and Steel		-0.0001* (0.00003)
Iron and Steel Growth		-0.129 (0.280)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.188*** (0.335)
<hr/>		
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	5,448	4,049
R ²	0.001	0.007
Max. Possible R ²	0.119	0.126
Log Likelihood	-341.327	-259.603
Wald Test	5.560* (df = 2)	20.880*** (df = 5)
LR Test	5.845* (df = 2)	27.228*** (df = 5)
Score (Logrank) Test	4.294 (df = 2)	21.743*** (df = 5)
<hr/>		
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

H.5 Results with Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited Data (DD)

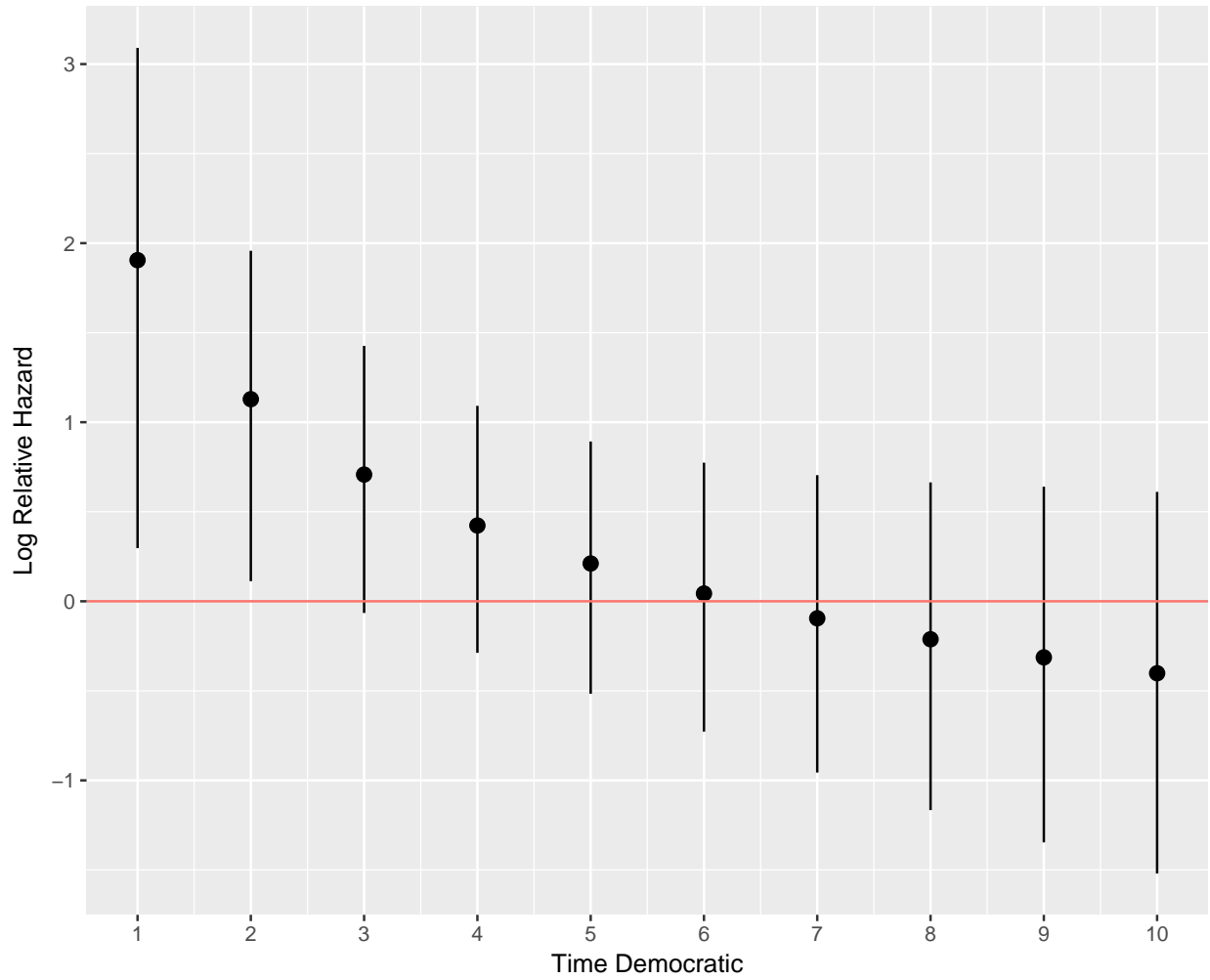
In this section replicates the main models from the paper using the binary measure of democracy from Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010). The results for the model with controls is essentially unchanged.

The reason the model without controls is not significant with the DD data is likely because this dataset codes democratic breakdowns as occurring at the start of the term of a leader who later subverted democracy rather than occurring at the time of the breakdown itself. This makes it less suitable to test the theory because the conflict that contributed to democratic breakdown may have occurred after such a leader took office.

Table 13: Force and Democratic Breakdown (DD)

	Democratic Breakdown	
	No Controls	Controls
Force	1.119 (0.691)	1.680** (0.757)
Force*(Log) Time Democratic	-0.612 (0.414)	-0.936** (0.445)
(Log) GDP Per Capita		-1.119*** (0.232)
Growth		-7.871*** (2.808)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors		-1.397*** (0.447)
President		1.084** (0.476)
Parliament		1.177** (0.522)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	3,844	2,945
R ²	0.001	0.019
Max. Possible R ²	0.105	0.097
Log Likelihood	-211.245	-121.269
Wald Test	2.620 (df = 2)	47.130*** (df = 7)
LR Test	2.868 (df = 2)	57.677*** (df = 7)
Score (Logrank) Test	2.378 (df = 2)	52.724*** (df = 7)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Figure 7: Relative Hazard of 1 Use Force (DD)



Simulation conducted with simPH (Gandrud 2015), which allows post-estimation simulation of Cox proportional hazard models based on Licht (2011)'s method. 95% confidence interval shown. Simulation based on model with controls.

H.6 Controlling for the Cold War

The Cold War variable is multiplied by the natural log of time to correct for non-proportional hazards (Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn 2003). The logged time term gets kicked out of the model because it is already included in the baseline hazard.

Table 14: Controlling for the Cold War

	Democratic Breakdown	
	All Force	Targeted Only
Force Length	2.371*** (0.822)	
Force Length*(Log) Time Democratic	-1.480** (0.589)	
Targeted		2.395** (1.017)
Targeted*(Log) Time Democratic		-1.200** (0.606)
(Log) GDP Per Capita	-1.032*** (0.242)	-1.004*** (0.240)
Growth	-8.098*** (2.799)	-7.926*** (2.768)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	-1.020** (0.482)	-0.936** (0.469)
President	0.419 (0.480)	0.297 (0.481)
Parliament	0.177 (0.492)	0.012 (0.490)
Cold War	3.719*** (1.290)	3.807*** (1.315)
(Log) Time	(0.000)	(0.000)
Cold War * (Log) Time	-1.171** (0.529)	-1.207** (0.536)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	2,952	2,952
Log Likelihood	-122.724	-124.895
LR Test (df = 9)	63.230***	58.886***

Note:

H.7 Controlling for Quality of Democracy

Polity is used to measure the quality of democratic institutions and is lagged 2 years in these models rather than 1 to avoid post-treatment bias. Because conflict contributes to democratic breakdown, it should lower polity values, so polity would be post-treatment to conflict. The results hold up.

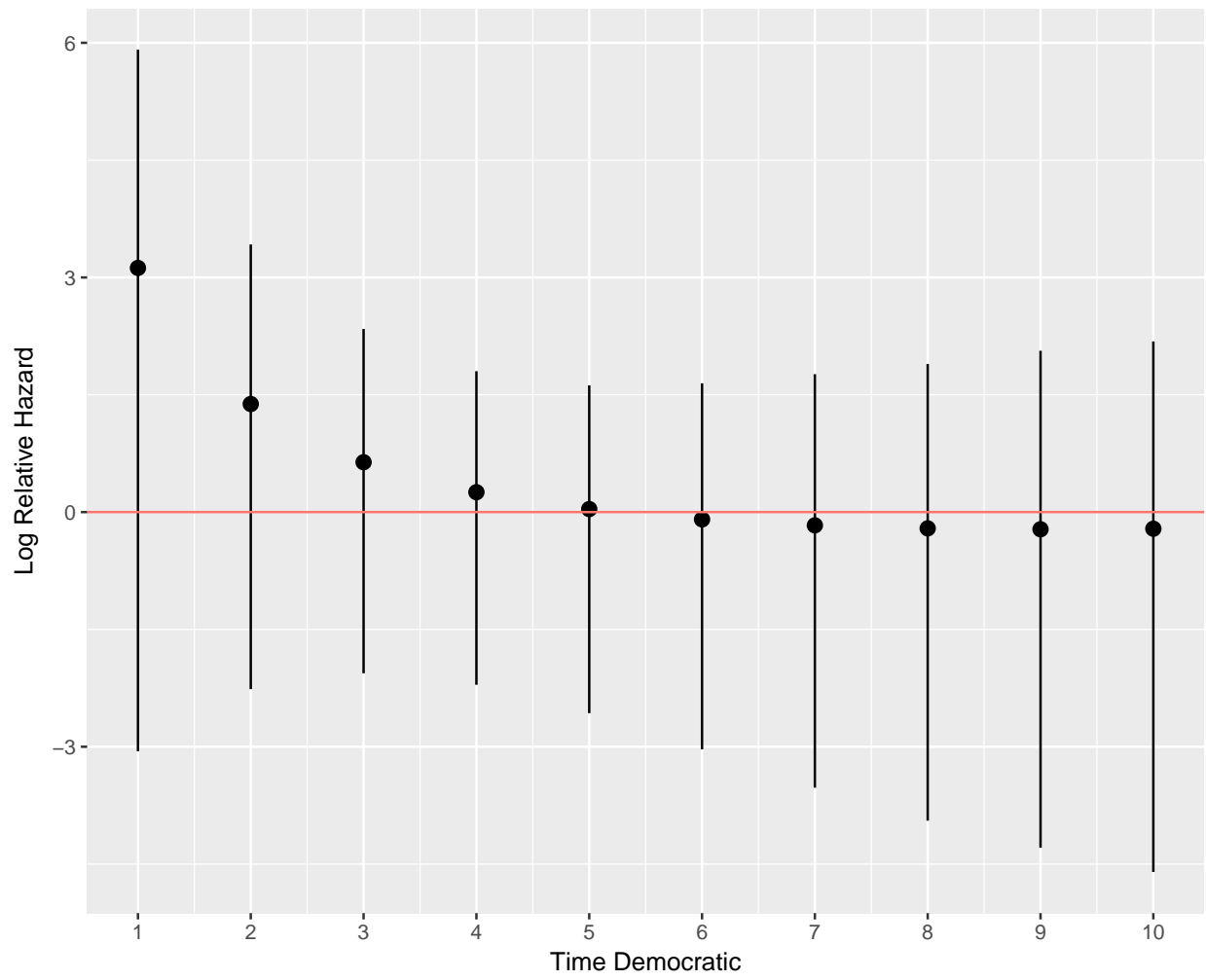
Table 15: Controlling for the Quality of Democracy

	Democratic Breakdown	
	All Force	Targeted Only
Force Length	2.352** (0.916)	
Force Length*(Log) Time Democratic	-1.541** (0.663)	
Targeted		2.470* (1.283)
Targeted*(Log) Time Democratic		-1.278* (0.768)
(Log) GDP Per Capita	-0.655*** (0.236)	-0.680*** (0.233)
Growth	-7.720*** (2.635)	-7.447*** (2.607)
Proportion of Democratic Neighbors	-1.143** (0.474)	-1.002** (0.454)
President	0.478 (0.464)	0.431 (0.461)
Parliament	0.777 (0.480)	0.689 (0.480)
Polity	-0.224*** (0.051)	-0.218*** (0.051)
Stratified on Past Breakdowns?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Observations	2,568	2,568
R ²	0.023	0.021
Max. Possible R ²	0.104	0.104
Log Likelihood	-110.474	-112.787
Wald Test (df = 8)	45.820***	42.980***
LR Test (df = 8)	59.850***	55.224***
Score (Logrank) Test (df = 8)	54.586***	52.752***
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

H.8 Territorial MIDs Only

To see if it is territorial MIDs rather than MIDs involving force driving the results, the analysis shown in Table 4 is repeated with threats measured as a count of all territorial MIDs (regardless of whether they involve force) in a particular country-year. Figure 8 shows the simulated relative hazard for 1 territorial MID based on this analysis. The effect of territorial MIDs on democratic breakdown is not significant for any year democratic, suggesting that the important factor is whether a MID involves force and not whether a MID is over a territorial issue.

Figure 8: Relative Hazard of 1 Territorial MID



I Appendix: Comparing Democratic Breakdowns using Different Datasets

I.1 Democratic Breakdowns using Political Regimes

Table 16: All Breakdowns (Political Regimes)

Country	Year
CZECH REPUBLIK	1947
COLOMBIA	1948
PANAMA	1951
CUBA	1953
GUATEMALA	1954
PAKISTAN (INCL. BANGLAD.)	1956
INDONESIA	1957
SUDAN	1958
MYANMAR	1958
LAOS	1959
KOREA, SOUTH	1961
PERU	1962
ARGENTINA	1962
MYANMAR	1962
GUATEMALA	1963
HONDURAS	1963
ECUADOR	1963
CONGO, REP.	1963
BRAZIL	1964
PHILIPPINES	1965
ARGENTINA	1966
NIGERIA	1966
GREECE	1967
SIERRA LEONE	1967
PANAMA	1968
PERU	1968
SOMALIA	1969
SUDAN	1969
HONDURAS	1972
GHANA	1972
CHILE	1973
URUGUAY	1973
ARGENTINA	1976
LEBANON	1976

THAILAND	1976
PAKISTAN	1977
SRI LANKA	1977
GRENADA	1979
SURINAME	1980
BOLIVIA	1980
TURKEY	1980
GHANA	1981
GUATEMALA	1982
NIGERIA	1983
UGANDA	1985
FIJI	1987
SUDAN	1989
SURINAME	1990
PERU	1990
THAILAND	1991
BELARUS	1994
GAMBIA	1994
ALBANIA	1996
NIGER	1996
GUINEA-BISS	1998
RUSSIA	1999
PAKISTAN	1999
ECUADOR	2000
SOLOMON IS.	2000
NEPAL	2002
CENTRAL AFR.R.	2003
MOZAMBIQUE	2004
VENEZUELA	2005
THAILAND	2006
BANGLADESH	2007
HONDURAS	2009
NIGER	2009
MADAGASCAR	2009
SRI LANKA	2010

I.2 Democratic Breakdowns using Democracy and Dictatorships Revisited Data

Table 17: All Breakdowns (DD)

Country	Year
Ecuador	1947
Costa Rica	1948

Venezuela	1948
Peru	1948
Colombia	1949
Panama	1951
Cuba	1952
Guatemala	1954
Argentina	1955
Sudan	1958
Pakistan	1958
Myanmar	1958
Laos	1959
South Korea	1961
Peru	1962
Argentina	1962
Myanmar	1962
Guatemala	1963
Honduras	1963
Ecuador	1963
Congo (Brazzaville, Republic of Congo)	1963
Brazil	1964
Philippines	1965
Argentina	1966
Nigeria	1966
Greece	1967
Sierra Leone	1967
Panama	1968
Peru	1968
Somalia	1969
Sudan	1969
Honduras	1972
Ghana	1972
Chile	1973
Uruguay	1973
Lebanon	1975
Argentina	1976
Thailand	1976
Pakistan	1977
Sri Lanka	1977
Grenada	1979
Suriname	1980
Bolivia	1980
Turkey	1980
Ghana	1981
Guatemala	1982
Nigeria	1983

Uganda	1985
Sudan	1989
Suriname	1990
Peru	1990
Thailand	1991
Comoros	1995
Niger	1996
Burundi	1996
Sierra Leone	1997
Congo (Brazzaville, Republic of Congo)	1997
Pakistan	1999
Ecuador	2000
Fiji	2000
Nepal	2002
Guinea-Bissau	2003
Central African Republic	2003
Thailand	2006
Bangladesh	2007
Mauritania	2008

I.3 Democratic Breakdowns using Polity

Below is a list of democratic breakdowns according to the Polity data when democracy is coded as a 6 or greater on the -10 to 10 scale.

Table 18: All Breakdowns (Polity)

Country	Year
Brazil	1947
Czechoslovakia	1947
Greece	1949
Turkey	1954
France	1958
Sudan	1958
Syria	1958
Pakistan	1958
Laos	1960
Brazil	1961
Korea South	1961
Myanmar (Burma)	1962
Dominican Republic	1963
Singapore	1963
Nigeria	1966
Uganda	1966
Sierra Leone	1967

Somalia	1969
Sudan	1969
Malaysia	1969
Lesotho	1970
Uruguay	1971
Turkey	1971
Chile	1973
Bangladesh	1974
Argentina	1976
Pakistan	1977
Turkey	1980
Ghana	1981
Sri Lanka	1982
Nigeria	1984
Honduras	1985
Fiji	1987
Sudan	1989
Haiti	1991
Peru	1992
Ukraine	1993
Dominican Republic	1994
Gambia	1994
Belarus	1995
Armenia	1995
Niger	1996
Zambia	1996
Haiti	1999
Pakistan	1999
Fiji	2000
Malawi	2001
Nepal	2002
Sri Lanka	2003
Venezuela	2006
Thailand	2006
Fiji	2006
Ecuador	2007
Russia	2007
Bangladesh	2007
Niger	2009
Madagascar	2009
Sri Lanka	2009
Guinea-Bissau	2012
Mali	2012
Ukraine	2014
Thailand	2014

I.4 Democratic Breakdowns with UDS data

Below is a list of democratic breakdowns according to the UDS data when democracy is defined as a country with a posterior mean of 0.3 or above. This table quickly reveals a pattern where some countries like Guatemala, Guyana, and Ecuador are found to breakdown repeatedly as their UDS bounces above and below the cutoff point. This poses a challenge to using UDS to measure democratic breakdown.

Table 19: All Breakdowns (UDS)

Country	Year
Cuba	1952
Dominican Rep	1994
Grenada	1979
Guatemala	2002
Guatemala	2007
Guatemala	2009
Guatemala	2011
Honduras	1986
Honduras	2009
Nicaragua	2011
Costa Rica	1948
Panama	1963
Colombia	1990
Colombia	2009
Venezuela	1999
Venezuela	2002
Guyana	1968
Guyana	1973
Guyana	2005
Guyana	2007
Suriname	1980
Ecuador	1955
Ecuador	1961
Ecuador	2000
Ecuador	2005
Ecuador	2011
Peru	1968
Peru	1990
Brazil	1964
Bolivia	2011
Paraguay	1994
Paraguay	1999

Paraguay	2001
Chile	1973
Argentina	1975
Uruguay	1973
Czechoslovakia	1948
Montenegro	2007
Macedonia	2000
Bosnia	1992
Bosnia	2010
Greece	1967
Cyprus	1963
Cyprus	1980
Estonia	1992
Ukraine	1993
Ukraine	2011
Armenia	2004
Georgia	2006
Guinea-Bissau	2006
Guinea-Bissau	2008
Gambia	1971
Gambia	1975
Gambia	1978
Gambia	1994
Mali	1999
Mali	2001
Mali	2012
Senegal	2010
Niger	1996
Sierra Leone	1967
Sierra Leone	2008
Sierra Leone	2010
Ghana	1981
Nigeria	1964
Nigeria	1983
Kenya	2008
Burundi	2006
Somalia	1969
Malawi	2002
Malawi	2006
Namibia	1993
Namibia	2007
Lesotho	2007
Botswana	1993
Madagascar	2006
Madagascar	2008

Comoros	1993
Comoros	2008
Comoros	2010
Sudan	1969
Turkey	1954
Turkey	1971
Turkey	1980
Turkey	1988
Turkey	1994
Turkey	1997
Turkey	2000
Lebanon	1951
Lebanon	1956
Lebanon	1961
Lebanon	1975
India	1975
Pakistan	1975
Pakistan	1991
Bangladesh	1995
Bangladesh	2000
Bangladesh	2005
Bangladesh	2007
Bangladesh	2010
Myanmar (Burma)	1958
Myanmar (Burma)	1962
Sri Lanka	1983
Sri Lanka	2000
Sri Lanka	2010
Nepal	1999
Nepal	2002
Thailand	1976
Thailand	2006
Laos	1959
Malaysia	1969
Singapore	1965
Philippines	1966
Indonesia	2001
Papua New Guinea	2011
Vanuatu	1985
Solomon Islands	2000
Fiji	1987
Fiji	2000
Western Samoa	2006
