Twitter Thread by Paul Poast



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Was the attack on the US Capitol an attempted coup?

Rather than debate that question here (or in another forum), I'm making it an assignment. Specifically, I'm asking my Quantitative Security students to determine if it belongs in our coup/attempted coup datasets.

[THREAD]

A core goal of this course is to introduce students to how Large-N data on violence and security are created.

We put WAY TOO much emphasis on estimators & software (Stata v R ■); not enough on the quality of the data going into the analysis.

First, what happened? @johncarey03755 offers a succinct explainer

https://t.co/oNNACsl6Z4

Second, I'll ask the students to read some of the recent pieces that say the event was NOT a coup attempt.

These include...

...detailed twitter threads by @HarknessKristen...

https://t.co/dyFBxlMGMt

> Let me try this again\u2026 What would it look like if this were a coup (failed, in progress, or otherwise)? 1/n
>
> — Kristen Harkness (@HarknessKristen) January 7, 2021

...and by @naunihalpublic.

https://t.co/oyvCZPRTiH

> Some thoughts on what we are seeing, why it is not a coup, what sort of bad thing it is, and what might make it a coup attempt.
>
> — Naunihal Singh (@naunihalpublic) January 6, 2021

They also include this @washingtonpost article that quotes @naunihalpublic & @esdebruin

https://t.co/dRLmleKQky

Speaking of @esdebruin, she wrote an earlier thread that also details conditions for considering an event to be a coup

https://t.co/3VZHAo35uX

> Okay, a brief thread about this 'coup' framing. Coups involve overt attempts unseat a sitting executive, backed by the use or threat of force. The types of steps Trump is taking to discredit the election & remain in power are incredibly worrying, but they are not a coup. 1/x https://t.co/WQeGDRqusj
>
> — Erica De Bruin (@esdebruin) November 10, 2020

And then there is the pedantry of @smsaideman ■

https://t.co/08yVTIW31y

Third, I'll the give the students articles that make the case for this event BEING a coup.

Those include...

...@profmusgrave's @ForeignPolicy piece...

https://t.co/dyiHV5nBTx

... @JHWeissmann pointing to the work of the Cline Center...

https://t.co/pdxbxJ9B1h

> So, I'm not a political science junky, but it seems today's chaos does in fact fit the definition of a coup laid out by the Cline Center for Democracy.
>
> They break coups into 12 different categories, including so-called "dissident actions." https://t.co/CaejpXg0NM pic.twitter.com/YO3du08xJm
>
> — Jordan Weissmann \U0001f5fd (@JHWeissmann) January 6, 2021

... and @dhnexon's blog post (though his says it's BOTH a coup and an insurrection)
https://t.co/HMYTUVrhEp

Third, the students will look at some of the recent coup data projects to understand the coding rules that scholars use to create "coup attempt" datasets.

These include...

...the Powell & Thyne data on coups & coup attempts...

https://t.co/9n8jdgdZ5r



...The Cline Center data on coups...

https://t.co/Y7e9SdBxQM

... and Chapter 3 of @naunihalpublic's book.

https://t.co/dlFWMPtlUL

Fourth, I'll ask the students to answer this question:

"based on what you read and based on the coding criteria used in the datasets you explored, should the event of Jan 6 be included as an observation in a coup attempt dataset?"

I'm VERY curious to see how the students respond. I'll report the findings soon!

[END]

Addendum: The students could consider "self-coup", as Fiona Hill argues here (which is also a category in the Cline Database)

https://t.co/xhVElSAcoj