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MODELING POLITICAL INSTABILITY: POLITICAL CULTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND REGIONAL RELATIONS IN 161 COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the dynamics of political instability in the contemporary world. The main research objective is to identify a coherent set of predictors that could explain the dynamics of political instability in the last decade. For this general research purpose, we aimed to analyze the impact of the political culture and the functioning of the government as endogenous variables for political instability. However, we argued that interstate relations and the number of external conflicts might influence the stability of the political systems. Using quantitative research methods based on multiple linear regressions, we performed three analytical models that assess the relevance of culture, governance, interstate relations, and number of conflicts in the sphere of political instability. The models cover the period between 2010 and 2023 and the sample is compound of 161 states from the contemporary political systems. Empirical findings reveal significant differences in political instability, generated by geographical regions and historical legacy, the level of political culture, and the impact of governance in the field of public affairs. Therefore, political instability remains a pressing issue with profound implications for governance, political participation, and societal development. Quantitative results are particularly relevant for both theorists of democratic regimes and decision-makers seeking to reduce instability, mitigate polarization, and prevent potential social or political crises. Our results underscore the importance of addressing both endogenous and exogenous factors for creating political strategies for fostering political stability.

Keywords: political instability, political culture, governance, interstate relations, democratic regimes

1. Culture, governance, and democratic order. Literature review and research hypotheses

The paper creates the link between endogenous and exogenous factors that could explain political instability. In the field of endogenous factors political culture and governance are relevant variables for democratic regimes. Since the early 1950s scholars underlined the importance of political culture both for social and democratic development (Almond & Verba, 1963). Defined in terms of attitudes regarding politics, both conscious and unconscious, political culture shapes political attitudes and behaviors (Almond & Verba, 1963; Newton & Van Deth, 2010; Diamond, 1993; Munck, 2009; Hoewe & Peacock, 2019; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Wiarda, 2018). Political culture is transmitted throughout early and secondary socialization, creating opportunities for achieving the same set of political values within the community (Barnett, 2003; Barnett & Low, 2004). If parochial culture is less important for democratic order, participatory models and civic attitudes create opportunities for developing political sophistication. In this respect, political culture is an important variable for generating both cognitions and patterns of political behavior. Political culture is related to the complex mechanism of developing social and political beliefs.

However, both implicit and explicit attitudes are relevant variables for understanding the complex interaction between cultural patterns and individuals' cognitive styles. The sociological determinants of political behavior reflect the importance of secondary socialization in generating conscious and unconscious attitudes regarding the political sphere (Searle, 1995; Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Rice & Feldman, 1997).

Political culture is an important vector of democratic order. It influences how citizens are engaged in the political process, how they are legitimating political institutions, and how support political values such as political freedom and civil rights. Political culture shapes citizens' cognitions related to human rights, political values, freedom, freedom of speech, rule of law, and political engagement. As regards political engagement, political culture facilitates the interactions between individuals and political systems. Citizens contribute to the creation of a "public agenda", while political systems respond to citizens' demands with political outputs (political feedback). This complex interaction between citizens and governance is fostered by the participatory cultural model (Dacombe & Parvin, 2021; Fetрати, 2023).

A crucial role played by political culture in the field of political stability and democratic order is represented by social trust in political institutions (Della Porta, 2019). Participatory political culture is more likely to be correlated with an increased level of political trust. An increased level of social and political trust strengthens governance and might reduce political instability. In this respect, political instability could be defined in terms of rapid and violent changes in the structure of the executive political power, violent conflicts, and high levels of social and political polarization (Gutmann & Thomson, 2003; Dryzek, 2002). The perceived legitimacy of the governance creates opportunities for stable political regimes and systems. Democratic societies based on participatory political cultures are more likely to be legitimated than other types of societies. In societies with participatory cultures, citizens advocate for freedom of speech, the rule of law, and civil liberties, reducing the risk of authoritarian rule. Political culture is relevant for understanding social cohesion. Political culture influences the process of sharing the same social or political norms. This fact reduces political polarization by increasing the level of political integration and social cohesion (Yarchi et al., 2020; Prior, 2013). In accordance with these perspectives, we argue that participatory political culture is involved in crisis management (Kutay, 2015). Political or economic crises are overcome through civic participation and institutional responses. Theorists of democratic consolidation argued that political culture plays a crucial role in democratic transition and consolidation. Political socialization based on education and media is a key concept for understanding the role played by democratic values and beliefs in consolidating democratic order. Participatory political culture ensures the best axiological framework for sharing political pluralism, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, and political competition. The electoral process, party competitions, or judicial activity have to align with the evolution of political culture and political attitudes to ensure social and political stability. Although the seminal work of Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, highlights the importance of political attitudes and beliefs in shaping democratic order, contemporary societies are faced with multiple factors that influence both political stability and democratic consolidation (Almond & Verba, 1963). Therefore, economic development, social inequalities and polarization, and globalization are several factors that might influence the complex relationship between political culture and democratic stability. This theoretical perspective serves as a foundation for a more comprehensive empirical analysis that explores the complex and nuanced relationship between political culture, political stability, and democratic political regimes. In this respect, to evaluate the complex interaction between political culture and political stability we postulate the following research hypotheses:

H₁: Countries with participatory political culture are more likely to be correlated with an increased level of political stability.

H₂: Parochial and subject political culture are correlated with an increased level of political instability.

Together with cultural dynamics, governance plays a crucial role in maintaining political stability and democratic order. The functioning of government is a key factor that explains political performance and sustainability. Public policies, the rule of law, and social order are the main coordinates that define the functioning of government. Efficient public policies (economic, health, education, fiscal, environmental, etc.) are the expression of the public trust in the political elite. If citizens perceive the governmental actors as capable of addressing their public needs, we observe an increased level of political trust and lowest rates related to political and ideological polarization. Conversely, ineffective and inefficient governance is characterized by political corruption, poor public services, and social polarization. All these variables are relevant for explaining political inefficiency and instability. Political dissatisfaction can generate social movements, protests, or violent reactions in the social sphere. Governments that lose the capacity to promote and preserve basic public services are more likely to be associated with political instability and crises. A functioning government has to ensure legality and a good framework for preserving human rights (political rights and civil liberties). Societies characterized by an increased level of preserving economic, political, and civil rights are distinguished by an increased level of political stability. In this respect, full democratic regimes are relevant for preserving human rights and encouraging political participation in the field of domestic affairs. Functioning governments that are responsive to public demands tend to foster greater political stability. Ineffective governance, especially within social or economic crises, might exacerbate social tensions and lead to political instability (Merkel, 2018; Krause & Merkel, 2018). In this context, ineffective governance creates premises for social and political polarization. Polarization is based on an ideological divide between antagonistic social or political groups. Therefore, social conflicts, violence, and protests are more likely to increase the level of political instability. Empirical studies underline that undemocratic political regimes are related to instability (Howell & Moe, 2020; Ercan & Gagnon, 2014; Linz & Stepan, 1996). Full democratic political regimes support civic engagement, political pluralism, and the rule of law (Sartori, 1987; Lijphart, 2012; Putnam et al., 1993). These elements are crucial for creating and preserving social order. Political theorists have argued that social order depends on various levels of state intervention in social or economic fields (Nozick, 1999; Rawls, 1993; Rothbard, 1999; Hayek, 1978). Minimal intervention, or the corrective role of government (Mihailescu, 2020, 2022) in different social sectors, contributes to maintaining a climate of social trust and civic accountability.

Taking into consideration the institutional design we argue that the functioning of government is relevant for transparency and the rule of law. Strong social or political institutions contribute to a stable political environment by ensuring political continuity, transparency, and accountability (Di Palma, 1990; Cheibub et al., 1996; Schedler, 1998). An important theoretical perspective that highlights the relevance of the government in the field of institutional design is represented by the “principal-agent” theory (Lane, 2005). Political accountability and further directions of political actions are strongly related to good governance. Good governance is essential in democratic societies, as it creates mechanisms to control the abuse of power and prevent acts of corruption. Weak institutions may exhibit clientelism and are vulnerable to acts of corruption and abuse of power.

As regards the economic impact of the functioning of governments we stressed that governance in the economic sector is essential for having political stability. Governments that manage well different economic or fiscal policies are more prone to preserve political

continuity and stability. Conversely, economic imbalances and crises lead to political mistrust and unstable political systems. A good economic perception of the state of the current economy is relevant for an increased level of quality of life and social trust (Downs, 1957; Lewis-Beck, 1988). Therefore good quality of life and social trust contribute to maintaining a stable social and political system. For this reason, political scientists theorized about political elections in terms of economic votes. Economic vote and economic perspectives highlight the importance of governance in preserving economic balances and prospective policies for an increased level of social and economic development. By these theoretical directions that support the interdependency between political stability and governance we aim to evaluate the following research hypothesis:

H₃: An increased level of functioning of government is negatively related to political instability.

Beyond the endogenous factors of the democratic order, we aim to assess the exogenous factors that could predict the dynamics of political stability in contemporary political systems. If culture and governance are relevant factors at the endogenous level, international relations could predict the further political directions of the political systems. Taking into account the global context, based on multiple interdependencies, political stability could be understood in terms of interstate relations. The number of economic or diplomatic transactions between states could be an important marker of internal and external stability. The frequency and severity of interstate relations are relevant indicators of political stability and fragile state index. The ability of states to manage different external conflicts and tensioned relations is the key concept in the field of external stability. Regarding international relations, diplomatic efforts, trade partnerships, and mutual security arrangements could foster a more stable political environment. The diverse territorial conflicts are more prone to increase the level of political instability. In this regard, we argue that “spillover effects” could generate vulnerabilities and insecurity. In this respect, refugee flows, economic imbalances, and extremist ideologies are relevant variables for shaping the image of political instability (Buzan & Weaver, 2003). In accordance with these assumptions, we aim to evaluate the following research hypotheses:

H₄: Deteriorating interstate relations are positively correlated with an increased level of political instability within states.

H₅: An increased level of external conflicts creates premises for an increased level of political instability.

Political culture, governance, and interstate relations are seen as endogenous and exogenous factors that could predict political instability. Participatory political culture and good governance create premises for democratic order and political stability. In contrast, parochial or subjective cultures associated with ineffective government could increase the level of political mistrust and political instability within different countries. Moreover, the quality of international relations and the involvement in external conflicts could explain the dynamics of the political indicators during time (Ştefanachi, 2019). It's obvious that an increased level of external conflicts, either local or regional, could influence the quality of the political regime and the quality of the functioning of the government. In this regard, external factors and the international context could influence political culture, civic accountability, human rights, and good governance (Ştefanachi, 2013). As long as citizens play an important role in public affairs and governments ensure good quality of the public services, transparency, and rule of law we will have a robust and stable political system. Governments that cannot ensure political participation, citizens' decisions regarding public goods, or the rule of law are more susceptible to create premises for undemocratic or unstable political regimes.

2. Research Methodology

To evaluate the importance of culture, governance, and political context in the field of political instability we follow several research objectives such as O1: to evaluate the dynamics of political instability within contemporary political systems; O2: to analyze the relationship between political culture and the level of political instability; O3: to estimate the impact of the functioning of government in the field of political instability; O4: to analyze the correlation between the quality of the interstate relations and the evolutions of the political instability across contemporary political systems; O5: to observe the influence of the external conflicts in the field of political stability/ instability.

The research used secondary data, provided by The Economist and Institute for Economics and Peace. The dependent variable is represented by political instability. In general terms, political instability is defined by The Institute for Economics and Peace as a “qualitative assessment of the political instability within the country. It addresses the degree to which political institutions are sufficiently stable to support the needs of its citizens, businesses, and overseas investors” (The Institute for Economics and Peace). The variable is measured on a scale from 1 to 5. The value 1 means a very low level of political instability and the value 5 is a very high level of political instability. Statistical measures were collected from the archived data of the Institute of Economics and Peace from 2010 to 2023. We used as independent factors endogenous and exogenous variables. In the field of exogenous variables that could affect the level of political instability we used, from the Institute for Economics and Peace, two variables: neighboring country relations (measured on a scale of 1 to 5, from very low to very high) and number, duration, and role of external conflicts fought (measured on the scale 1 to 5, from very low to very high).

Regarding the endogenous variables of the political systems, we used both the functioning of government and political culture, data provided by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). EIU provides a qualitative assessment of the democratic regimes across the world. Data are scaled from 1 to 10. Using this scale, EIU created four categories of political regimes: full democracies (8.00-10), flawed democracies (6.00-7.99), hybrid regimes (4.00-5.99), and authoritarian regimes (0-3.99). Table 1 presents the research variables, units of measurement, and data sources:

Variables	Symbols	Units of Measurement	Data sources:
Political Instability	PI	[1;5]	Institute for Economics and Peace
Political Culture	PC	[1;10]	The Economist Intelligence Unit
Functioning of Government	FG	[1;10]	The Economist Intelligence Unit
Neighboring Relations	NR	[1;5]	Institute for Economics and Peace
Number of External Conflicts	NC	[1;5]	Institute for Economics and Peace

Table 1: Research Variables

To evaluate the relevance of the governance, culture, and interstate relations in the field of political instability we collected secondary data using a long-term statistical series between 2010 and 2023. Our analysis is based on 161 countries, grouped by geographical position and regime type.

In order to achieve the research objectives, we used several mathematical models. Therefore, to capture the relationship between endogenous factors and political instability we propose the following quantitative model:

$$\Delta PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \Delta PC + \beta_2 \cdot \Delta FG + \varepsilon_{i,j}$$

Where $\Delta X = \frac{x_j - x_i}{h}$, $j = i + 1$, and h – step size; $\beta_0 = \text{constant}$, $\beta_{1,2}$ – regression coefficients, $\varepsilon_{i,j}$ – unstandardized residuals.

The second model captures the linear relationship between exogenous factors and political instability:

$$\Delta PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \Delta NR + \beta_2 \cdot \Delta NC + \varepsilon_{i,j}$$

In order to evaluate the relevance of both exogenous and endogenous factors that could predict the level of political instability we used the following equation:

$$\Delta PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \Delta PC + \beta_2 \cdot \Delta FG + \beta_3 \cdot \Delta NR + \beta_4 \cdot \Delta NC + \varepsilon_{i,j}$$

3. Empirical Findings

Statistical results confirm differences between variables by geographical regions ($F > 4.89$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore in Asia ($\mu = 3.07, \sigma = \pm 0.96$), Africa ($\mu = 2.93, \sigma = \pm 0.99$), Central America ($\mu = 2.32, \sigma = \pm 0.96$) and South America ($\mu = 2.16, \sigma = \pm 0.98$) were registered increased values of political instability. Conversely, North America ($\mu = 1.63, \sigma = \pm 0.78$), Australia, and New Zealand ($\mu = 1.00, \sigma = \pm 0.01$) and Europe ($\mu = 1.78, \sigma = \pm 0.82$) are regions characterized by political stability.

	North America		Central America		South America		Europe		Asia		Africa		Australia and New Zealand	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Functioning of Government	7.91	2.01	4.80	1.97	5.61	1.46	6.46	1.99	4.20	2.26	3.69	1.89	9.00	0.29
Political Culture	6.56	3.01	5.12	1.18	5.20	1.38	6.56	1.88	5.00	1.36	5.21	1.24	8.60	0.52
Neighboring Relations	1.67	0.58	2.22	0.67	1.70	0.82	2.10	1.13	3.05	1.20	2.33	0.64	1.00	0.00
Number of External Conflicts	2.49	2.17	1.04	0.12	1.00	0.00	1.32	0.64	1.32	0.67	1.56	0.64	1.16	0.11
Political Instability	1.63	0.78	2.32	0.96	2.16	0.98	1.78	0.82	3.07	0.96	2.93	0.99	1.01	0.01

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

By these results, we observed that political instability is related to decreased values of political culture and the functioning of government. Latin America, Asia, and Africa are characterized by parochial political cultures, with limited political participation and a lack of political feedback. The map below (Figure 1) shows the distribution of the political culture across 161 countries. However, we used the taxonomy proposed by Almond and Verba in three categories: parochial culture (values from 1 to 3.99), subject political culture (4.00-6.99), and participative political culture (7.00-10).

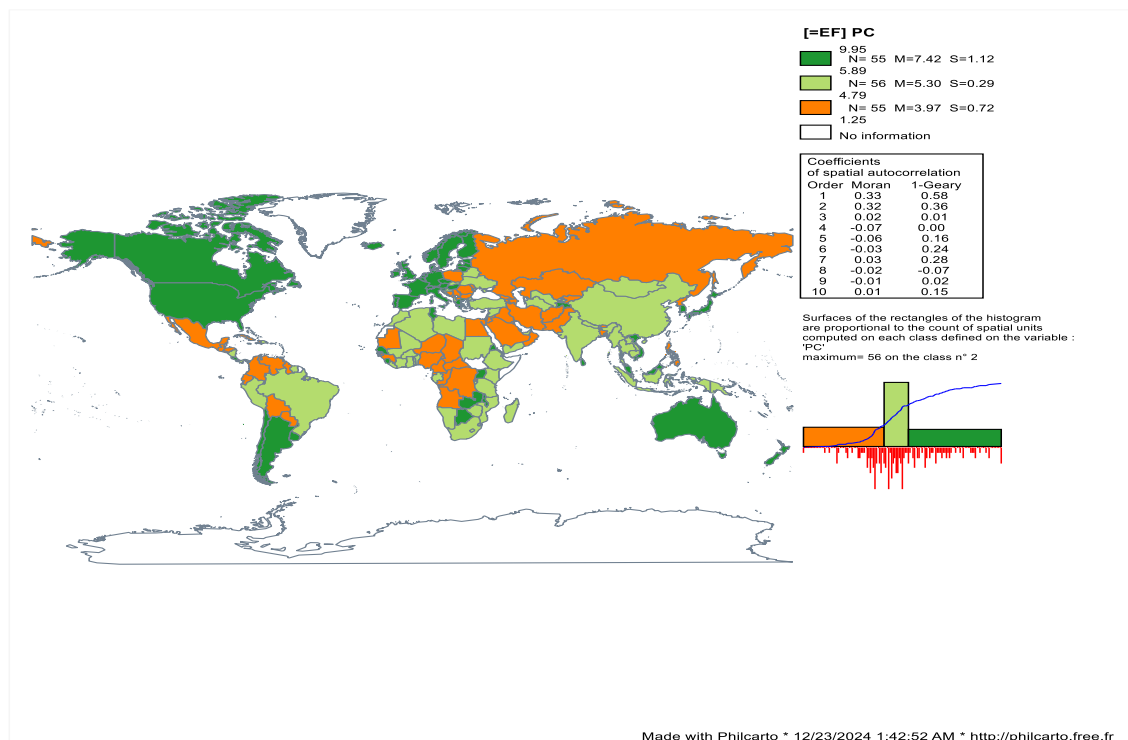


Figure 1: Map of Political Culture: Parochial, Subject, and Participative Culture.

Data sources: *The Economist*: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2023/>, accessed on 10 November 2024

The map from Figure 1 presents with dark green the presence of participative culture, with green the presence of subject political culture, and orange elements of parochial political culture. Results show that Africa and Asia are characterized by a hybrid cultural model, based on elements of parochial and subject political culture. Values of the Moran Index ($I=0.32$) related to spatial autocorrelation indicate a weak positive association of the PC values in Canada, the USA, Western Europe, Scandinavia, the South-Western part of Latin America, and Australia and New Zealand. Also, using the 1-Geary Index we observed a moderate effect of grouping data at the local level ($1\text{-Geary}=0.58$). In addition to these observations, we can underline the fact that there is a low dispersion rate of values specific to parochial culture. Low grouping effects toward the mean are observed locally at the level of subject political culture ($1\text{-Geary}=0.28$).

Concerning the dynamics of democratic governance, data reveal a moderate tendency for spatial correlation, with Moran's I Index of 0.58, reflecting the values associated with democratic governance. Furthermore, the following regions can be identified: Europe and North America, characterized by democratic governance; Latin America characterized by governments typical of hybrid regimes and flawed democracies; and Africa and Asia, where prevail the authoritarian forms of governance. The map from Figure 2 shows the main differences in the functioning of the government across 161 countries:

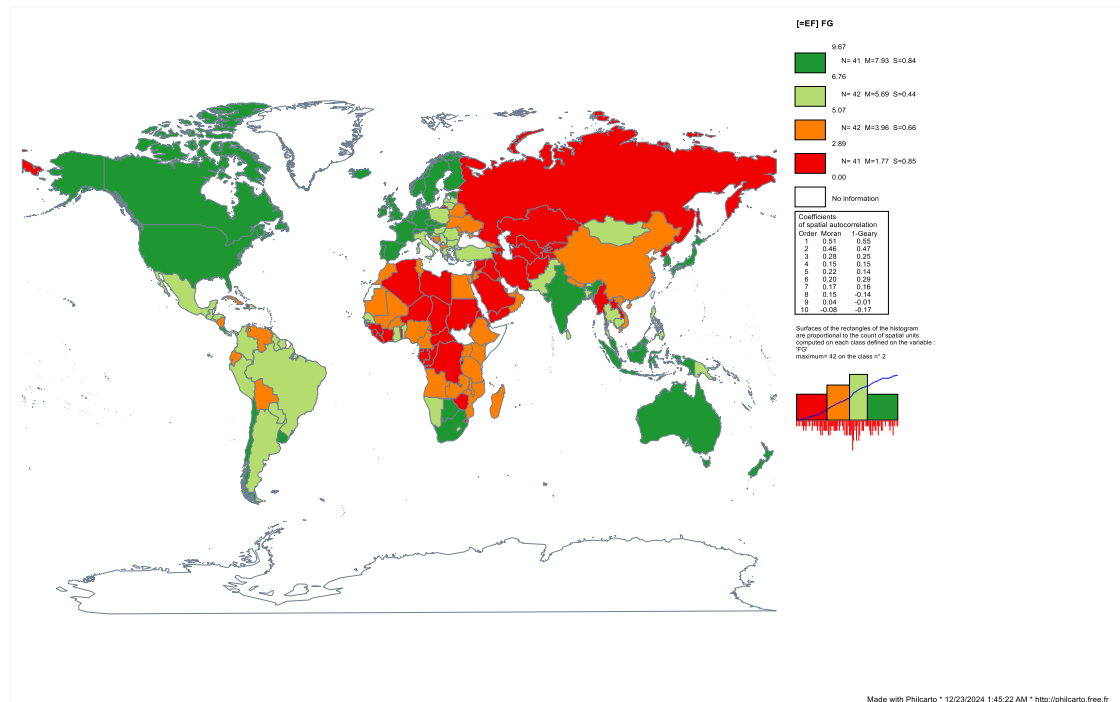


Figure 2: Map of Functioning of Government.

Data sources: *The Economist*: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2023/>, accessed on 10 November 2024

Political stability is the key concept for understanding social cohesion, political development, and economic performance. Political culture shapes attitudes and behaviors that support democratic order. Meanwhile, robust governance provides public services and ensures the rule of law within societies. Functioning government and institutional transparency reduce the risk of social, political, or economic crises. Using as independent and endogenous factors the level of political culture we observed significant differences between countries in the field of political instability. Thus, an important result stresses that there are significant differences in the field of political instability between states with parochial, subject, and participative political cultures ($F=50.28, p < 0.001$). Using ANOVA with Bonferroni Post-Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test we estimated significant differences in political instability across parochial and participatory political culture ($\mu_{\text{parochial culture}} - \mu_{\text{participative culture}} = 2.29, p < 0.001$). Political instability is relatively similar between parochial and subject cultures ($\mu_{\text{parochial culture}} - \mu_{\text{subject culture}} = 0.88, p < 0.001$). Results confirmed that states with parochial or subject political cultures exhibit comparable risks of political instability. Figure 3 indicates the significant differences in political instability by cultural model:

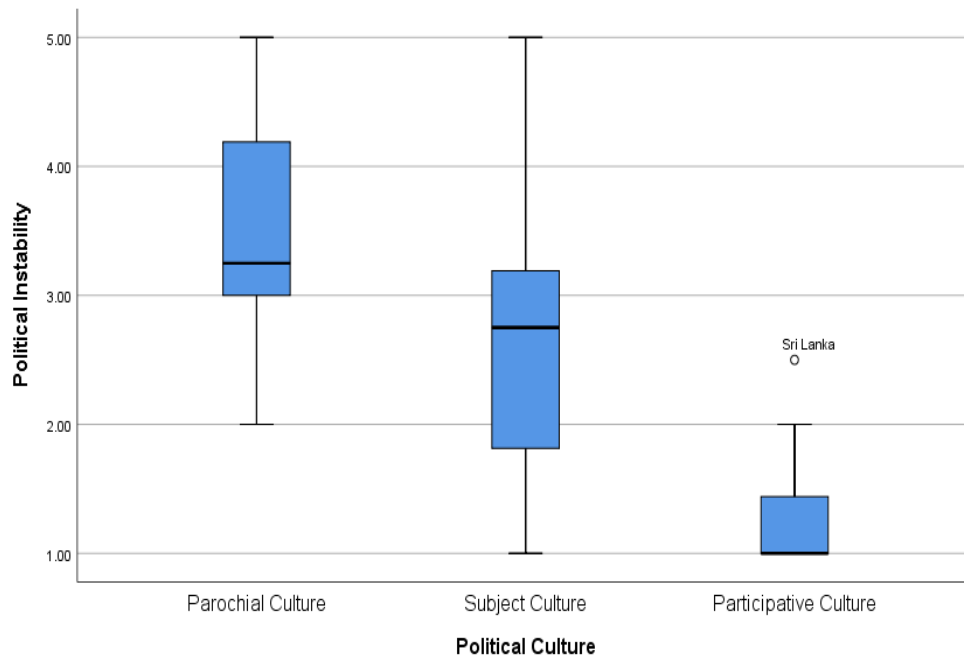


Figure 3: Political Instability across different Political Cultures

Data sources: *Institute for Economics and Peace*

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240107000641/https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>
and *The Economist*: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2023/>, accessed on 10 November 2024

Taking into account the functioning of the government we observed significant differences in the field of political instability ($F=71.48$, $p < 0.001$). Authoritarian governments are more likely to be correlated with political instability ($\mu = 3.41$, $\sigma = \pm 0.8$). Similar statistical values are estimated for hybrid political regimes ($\mu = 2.48$, $\sigma = \pm 0.42$). Conversely, flawed democracies and full democratic governments are relevant for political stability ($\mu = 1.64$, $\sigma = \pm 0.56$). Figure 4 shows the significant differences between countries taking into account the taxonomy of the governments:

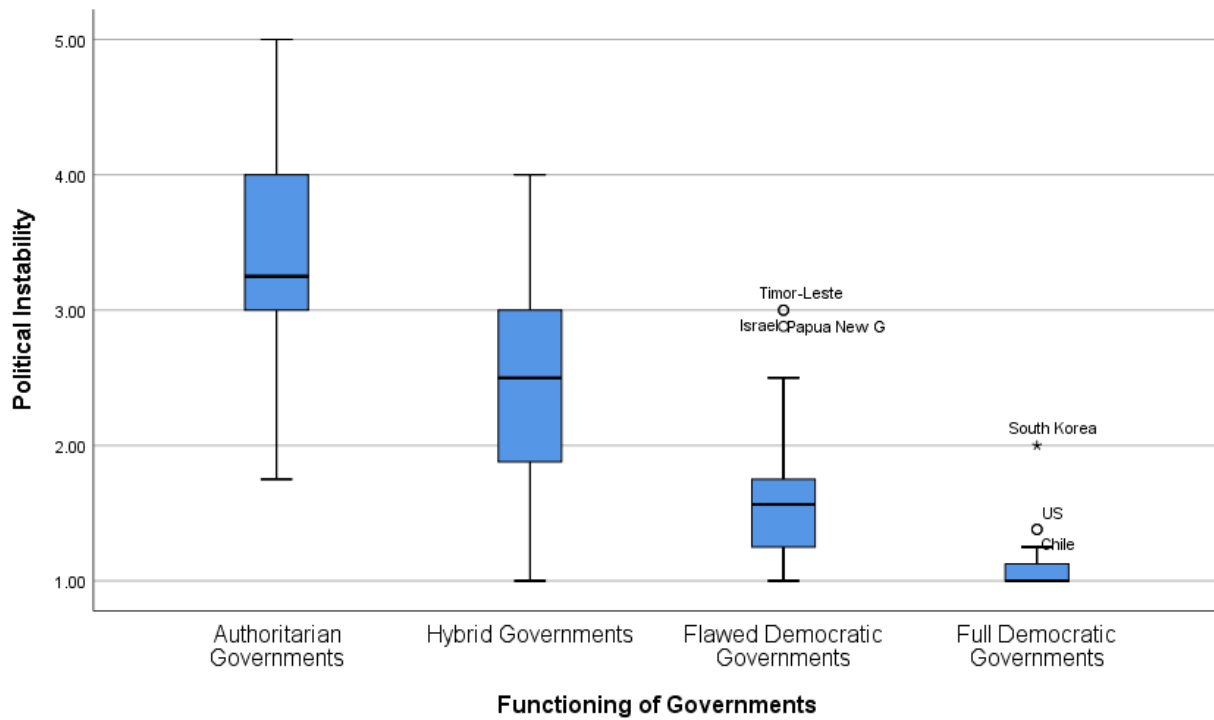


Figure 4: Political Instability across different Governments

Data sources: Institute for Economics and Peace

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240107000641/https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>
and *The Economist*: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2023/>, accessed on 10 November 2024

For assessing the research hypotheses we performed a multiple regression model using both exogenous and endogenous variables. In this regard, we obtained three quantitative models that are relevant for endogenous factors of political stability (culture and governance), exogenous factors (interstate relations and number of external conflicts), and a mixed model based on both exogenous and endogenous factors.

	MODEL I (Endogenous Factors)		MODEL II (Exogenous Factors)		MODEL III (Mixed Factors)	
	β	sig.	β	sig.	β	sig.
ΔPC	-0.145	0.03	-	-	-0.129	0.04
ΔFG	-0.649	0.01	-	-	-0.516	0.01
ΔNR	-	-	0.589	<0.001	0.297	0.01
ΔNC	-	-	-0.017	0.793	-0.005	0.924
β_0 (Constant)	-0.06		0.23		-0.002	
R^2	0.554	<0.001	0.346	<0.001	0.622	<0.001

The Model III (mixed factors) indicates a moderate value of $R^2 = 0.622$ for predicting the variations of political instability across 161 countries. The model indicates that the functioning of governments is negatively related to instability ($\beta = -0.516, p = 0.01$) and the dynamics of the neighboring relations could affect the evolution of the political instability in a positive but weak manner ($\beta = 0.297, p = 0.01$). The cultural factors are weakly involved in predicting the evolution of political stability ($\beta = -0.129, p = 0.04$).

This model highlights the fact that political instability is a complex variable that might be explained using a mixed analytical strategy that integrates both exogenous and endogenous variables. The first two models are limited in their ability to explain the dynamics of political instability over time in the states included in the sample (Model I: $R^2 = 0.554$; Model II: $R^2 = 0.346$, $p < 0.001$). To explain the variations in political instability we perform the following multiple linear equation:

$$\Delta PI = -0.002 - 0.129 \cdot \Delta PC - 0.516 \cdot \Delta FG + 0.297 \cdot NR$$

The negative impact of the functioning of government in the field of political instability emphasizes the fact that good governance is an important factor that reduces political instability. Weak institutional performance and the lack of rule of law generate social polarization and premises for political instability. Investing in institutional design and governmental performance are key factors that significantly mitigate political instability. The positive, but weak association between interstate relations and political instability confirms the fact that international context could influence the dynamics of the internal political strategies and affairs. This might reflect the spill-over effect and the importance of peaceful and collaborative economic or political relations. Although cultural factors have a weak impact in the field of political stability, we observed that political culture might influence long-term political attitudes and beliefs for supporting democratic institutions, the rule of law, and governance.

4. A complex model for explaining political instability

The interconnections between these factors are crucial for understanding variations of the political instability in contemporary political systems. A country with cultural fragmentation, weak institutions, and an unfavorable international context faces to risk of political instability. Countries featuring by participative culture, functioning governments, and social cohesion are more likely to be characterized by political stability.

Governance refers to processes by which public institutions, officials, and other stakeholders make decisions and implement public policies that affect the whole social body. It encompasses the policies and strategies that are relevant to public services and social integration. Transparency, accountability, and the rule of law are the main pillars that characterize social order and political stability. Both legal frameworks and informal civic participation are relevant factors for understanding good governance. Governmental and institutional transparency ensures the minimal and legal framework of public information. An informed citizen is an active citizen who participates in public debates and might create opposition when the governance tends to be authoritarian. Government officials are accountable to the public for their actions, decisions, and political strategies of implementing public policies. Transparency and legitimacy reduce the risk of political corruption and abuse of power. Using effective public administration, good governance should be based on the separation of powers and the preservation of political rights and civil liberties. Promoting human rights and civil liberties, governance creates the basis of legitimacy and the rule of law. In practice, citizens tend to support and preserve governments that promote and preserve their positive and negative rights. Ethical governance has to be the main feature of contemporary governmental systems. Therefore, our statistical results pointed out that the functioning of governments is negatively related to the level of political instability. Creating optimal public policies, and responding to public demands functioning governments are representative of democratic order and social cohesion. Based on the philosophical foundations of the Social Contract Theory (SCT) the legitimacy of the governmental structures depends on the contract between rulers and citizens. The accountability of the governmental structures derives from the capacity to preserve and enhance human rights.

Resilient, inclusive, and stable political systems are the expression of good governance and active citizenship.

As regards the cultural factors we argue that political culture is strongly related to governmental structures. Using the statistical data of the sample we estimated a moderate positive association between political culture and the functioning of the government ($R^2=0.515$, $p<0.01$). Participative cultures are likely to experience better social, economic, or political outcomes. Civic education, trust in the political elite, and accountability are the relevant outcomes of the interaction between political culture and democratic governance. In this regard, our approach highlighted the importance of cultural factors in shaping both human capital and good governance. The theoretical perspectives created on the relation between culture and society emphasized the role played by social capital in preserving an increased level of participatory democratic processes. The seminal work of Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work. Civic traditions in modern Italy*, stressed the linear relation between civic engagement and the quality of the political regime. Therefore, democratic governance is relevant for having active citizenship and control mechanisms for preventing the abuse of power.

Using the mixed model based on both endogenous and exogenous factors we observed that interstate relations are significant predictors for political stability. Although there is a weak correlation, we argue that regional context is significant for understanding variations in the field of political instability. Formal interactions, economic partnerships, trade unions, military collaboration, and cultural exchanges are key factors that are relevant in the interaction between regional context and internal political stability. Using the Realist theoretical approach in International Relations we explained the fact that both international and regional relations are characterized by national interest and the dynamics of power. However, regional relations and good neighborhoods are crucial elements for ensuring a national stable political environment. Using other relevant variables from the field of international relations we can understand how cooperation or dependency could affect the states' political stability. While mutual economic or military interest could create a kind of "security umbrella", competition or radical ideological perspectives might generate a climate of insecurity and political instability. Understanding this interplay is important for decision-makers and political theorists interested in the field of democratic transitions, consolidation, and political stability.

To assess the importance of internal and external factors that could interact with political stability we aimed through the research Objective₁ to highlight the dynamics of political stability across the contemporary political systems. Statistical results confirm significant differences between states by geographical regions. Asia, Africa, and Latin America are relevant examples of political instability. Political regimes and historical legacies are relevant factors that explain current political tendencies. To address the research objective O₂ we have analyzed the association between political culture and political instability. Our findings confirmed the research hypotheses H₁ and H₂ that highlighted a positive moderate correlation between the participatory cultural model and the level of political stability. Democratic countries are more likely to preserve political stability compared to other types of political regimes. Political culture is linked with democratic governance. Both theoretical and empirical studies argued that good governance is a marker of democratic order and political stability. To achieve the research objective O₃ we developed the research hypothesis H₃. Our quantitative results confirmed a moderate negative impact of the functioning government in the field of political instability. However, our findings underline the role played by exogenous factors such as culture and governance in preserving democratic order and political stability. Beyond the endogenous factors, our approach took into account the relevance of the exogenous factors in shaping a good model of political

order. In this respect, the research objectives O₄ and O₅ are correlated with research hypotheses H₄ and H₅. The international context, characterized by both neighboring relations and the number of external conflicts, is an important factor in understanding political stability. Results confirmed that interstate relations are significant predictors of political instability. Using multiple linear equations based on the variations of political instability we confirmed that the functioning of government, interstate relations, and political culture are significant predictors of political stability.

Beyond these quantitative results, we stress several limitations related to data availability, research context, and the dynamics of the political, economic, and social dimensions. An important limitation might be related to the dynamic nature of culture, governance, and political instability. The model might oversimplify a very complex and dynamic reality: political instability. Political stability is influenced by the interplay between cultural, economic, social, political, and international factors. Even though we used data from 2010 to 2023, there are several limitations regarding the dynamics of political stability over time. Future exploration will focus on the relation between economic and cultural factors. Electoral process, participatory culture and market economy could predict this complex political phenomenon.

5. Conclusion

This study focused on the complex interplay between endogenous and exogenous factors relevant for explaining political instability. The theoretical models, the study provides evidence of the complex interplay between political culture, governance and international relations in creating a stable political framework. The key-factors that we have taken into account for evaluating political instability are represented by participatory cultural model functioning of government, interstate relations and number of external conflicts. Quantitative results highlighted that governance matters in the field of political stability. Transparency, rule of law and effective government are relevant directions for strengthening political stability. Our findings show that civic engagement and functional governance are the foundations to preserve political stability. International cooperation and good neighborhood reduce instability, while conflicts or strained relationships amplify risks of political instability. Both scholars and decision-makers should discuss and prioritize institutional reform, participative culture and governmental transparency while mitigating to political instability. The findings suggest the complexity of the phenomenon, emphasizing the role played by an interdisciplinary approach to understand and address to the causes of the political instability.

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