The Origins of Authoritarian Rule: Three Essays on the Make-up of the Ruling Coalition, Domestic Politics, and International Conflict

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To Grazvile,
my beloved wife,
who supported and encouraged me throughout this journey,
and my sweet daughter,
Kotryna,
who always brightens up my day.

Abstract

This dissertation explores the origins of authoritarian rule and its effects on the make-up of the ruling class, and consequently, on domestic politics and international conflict. I argue that the origins of authoritarian rule set long-lasting trajectories that continue to shape authoritarian politics for decades. Authoritarian regimes are categorized based on whether the founding leader of authoritarian regime transforms the social and political life of the preexisting state or relies on the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state. The former is called a regime from the bottom because it relies on people with no prior governing experience and few resources, whereas the latter is classified as a regime from the top because it relies on rich individuals that had considerable influence in economic and political affairs of the previous regime. The first paper (Chapter 2) explores the effects of these factors on regime durability and probability of elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders. The second paper (Chapter 3) focuses on the origins of authoritarian regimes and foreign policies of authoritarian leaders. I argue that the make-up of the ruling coalition has an effect on ruler's propensity to instigate international conflict – it makes regimes from the bottom particularly likely to pursue hawkish foreign policies. In the third and final paper (Chapter 4) of this dissertation I connect the origins of authoritarian rule to power-sharing arrangements between the leader and military. I show that domestic factors push some authoritarian leaders to share power by establishing the Ministry of Defense and appointing a defense minister. These have consequences on interstate conflict – rulers that delegate the Minister of Defense pursue international crises less frequently than leaders who hold the Defense portfolio. The empirical sections of the first two papers include 118 states and 280 authoritarian regimes over the time period of 1946 – 2010, whereas the sample for the last paper covers 115 states and

224 authoritarian regimes over the time period of 1966 – 2010. Empirical tests show strong support for my arguments.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In the summer of 1900, Yan Huiqing earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in moral philosophy to become the first international student to graduate from the University of Virginia[1]. Following his education Yan returned to China and had a distinguished career in the civil service. He was a renowned diplomat – the first China's ambassador to the Soviet Union, ambassador to the United States of America, China's representative in Germany, Sweden and Denmark, and a delegate to the League of Nations. During 1920-1926 period he served in various government roles under alternating military and civilian regimes including as Foreign Minister, Premier and even President of China. In 1926 he briefly left civil service to become a businessman before returning to serve in Chiang Kai-shek's administration in early 1930s. Yan is one of very few people to have served under both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong. While Yan's profile is typical for a member of the ruling class in Chiang's Nationalist China, his short service under Mao is rather exceptional.

The composition of the ruling coalition could not be more dissimilar between Chiang and Mao's regimes. The ruling elites of Nationalist China were made of already powerful and rich people, such as former aristocracy, business elites, high-ranking civil servants, and top military officials. On the other hand, the members of the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese Red Army – people who later came to serve in prominent government positions under Mao Zedong's communist regime – mostly consisted of peasants, common criminals, educators, and students. There was a mistrust – and clearly not unwarranted – between well-connected and wealthy people who had important roles in previous administrations and Mao. Yan Huiqing's membership in the

[1]UVA recently renamed its International Residential College to Yen House to honor Yan Huiquing's legacy. The story can be found here. Daily Progress discusses his time at the University of Virginia and career that followed. Stories of Chinese Christianity provide a more detailed account of Yan's career.

National Committee and service in a position of vice chairman of the East China Military and Political Committee – albeit short – was a rarity.

This raises an interesting question, what consequences do elites have on domestic and foreign policies of authoritarian regimes? In this dissertation I study the origins of authoritarian rule and its effects on the make-up of the ruling coalition, and consequently, on regime stability and engagement in international crises. I propose two regime categories – regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top. The former refers to authoritarian regimes, the founding leader of which, transforms the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state, whereas the latter are regimes that rely on the traditional elites centered around the middle and upper classes, which most frequently translates to maintaining the social and political life of the previous regime. While these distinct patterns in the formation of authoritarian rule are often overlooked in the literature, I argue, they have important consequences on both regime durability and conflict proneness.

By definition the composition of the ruling class in the regimes discussed above is qualitatively different. Authoritarian regimes in which leaders rebuild the institutions from the grounds up and bring new people in the process feature individuals with little experience in the public sector and business affairs, such as peasants, urban working class, educators, and students. On the other hand, other authoritarian leaders make a choice to rely on influential and resourceful people – essentially, those who played a role in previous administrations, such as former aristocracy, business elites, top military officials and high-ranking public servants. In this dissertation, my central argument is that this distinction between authoritarian regimes opens a window into internal dynamics of the state, which in turn, has an effect on domestic and foreign policies of authoritarian regimes. This classification provides a powerful explanation for an unexplained variation in regime durability and conflict proneness across authoritarian regimes and

brings an important contribution to the study of comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict.

An Overview of Previous Work

Existing literature has paid little attention to the distinct features of the ruling coalition across authoritarian regimes. Most of the studies in the areas of comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict focus on the size of the ruling coalition and domestic institutions, but largely ignore the make-up of the ruling class (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Gandhi 2008; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Svolik 2012; Weeks 2014). Comparative literature studies domestic threats, such as that of coups and civil wars, to the survival of authoritarian leaders and discusses the effects of the size of the ruling coalition and power-sharing and militaristic elements of domestic institutions on regime stability (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Gandhi 2008; Singh 2014; Svolik 2012). Similarly, this set of scholarship explores the capacity of authoritarian leaders to quell domestic rebellion and protect themselves against coup threats.

Previous studies on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict argue that unconstrained authoritarian leaders have the highest propensity to pursue interstate conflict. These are regimes that feature small winning coalitions (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004), personalist dictators and military personnel's commanding control of domestic institutions (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Weeks 2014). This set of literature proposes that while domestic institutions and large ruling coalitions constrain authoritarian leaders, the propensity to pursue hawkish foreign policies has a lot to do with individual characteristics of authoritarian leaders, such as military training, ideological mission, greed, or pursuit of glory.

These seminal works provide interesting insights into the inner workings of authoritarian regimes. However, they largely ignore the presence of important measurable differences in the make-up of the ruling class in authoritarian regimes. I argue that this might explain the remarkable variance in regime stability and propensity to pursue hawkish foreign policies. The reemerging literature on revolutionary and rebel regimes suggests that the origins of authoritarian rule set long-lasting trajectories, which have an impact on the make-up and behavior of the ruling coalition (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). While relatively narrow – some studies identify as few as 18 revolutionary regimes over the time period of more than 100 years (Lachapelle et al. 2020) – this set of work shows evidence that the composition of the ruling class differs across autocracies. Important theoretical and empirical implications on regime stability and conflict proneness follow from that.

In this dissertation I follow in the footsteps of these seminal works and argue that the composition of the ruling coalition[2] plays an important role in shaping policies of authoritarian leaders. The make-up of the ruling class is a novel concept that greatly expands on previous studies about revolutionary and rebel regimes. Contrary to this set of work I propose that while indeed the foundational nature of a regime is often shaken after or during a civil upheaval, the founding leaders can transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state using other non-violent means, such as rigid ideology.

I build on the causal mechanisms proposed in previous studies about the fusion of military-political life, the capacity of an authoritarian leader to manipulate inexperienced and resourceless members of the winning coalition, and long-term consequences of the origins of authoritarian rule

[2] I use the terms *composition of the ruling coalition*, *the make-up of the ruling coalition* and *the make-up of the ruling class* interchangeably in this dissertation.

on regime durability and conflict proneness that survive past regime founders (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). The transformative nature of the regimes from the bottom enables the founding leaders to reform domestic institutions – with little resistance from the members of the ruling coalition – in a way that maximizes their chances of survival and permits maximum freedom to pursue aggression abroad. Successors inherit these institutions and continue to reap the benefits.

The Motivation for the Study

Recent expansion of authoritarianism across the world[3] – most of which is towards a personalist authoritarian rule – challenges existing work on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict and warrants further investigation. Contrary to the predictions from the literature, these new regimes appear to be surprisingly durable, but pursue unpredictable foreign policies. Some are relatively pacifistic, whereas others pursue aggression abroad. These latest trends indicate unexplained variation in regime stability and propensity of some regimes to engage in international conflicts.

In this dissertation I take a novel approach and focus on the origins of authoritarian rule, which I argue have an effect on the make-up of the ruling coalition, and consequently, the behavior of authoritarian regimes. I propose that regimes from the bottom – that is, regimes that transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state, which often bring widespread support from the masses – are remarkably durable. Furthermore, said regimes are more likely than regimes from the top – that is, regimes that rely on the traditional social and political life, which translates to support from the political and economic upper classes – to engage

[3] These trends have been reported by the Freedom House among other sources. The reports can be found here and here.

in international crises. These trends are long-lasting and survive past the founding leaders of authoritarian regimes.

The Structure of the Dissertation

In the rest of this dissertation, I aim to explore theoretical considerations that I introduced in this brief introductory chapter and defend them using empirical evidence from three sets of quantitative tests. The dataset uses original data on the make-up of the ruling class and various measures of regime durability, elite-driven challenges to authoritarian leaders and interstate conflict. My sample covers 118 states, 280 authoritarian regimes and 534 leaders over the time period of 1946-2010[4]. I employ a variety of empirical tests, including fixed effects logit and Poisson regressions, to estimate the coefficients for Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 of this dissertation. The large N analysis shows strong support for my arguments in all three sets of tests.

Chapter 2 focuses on domestic politics of authoritarian regimes. I present two regime categories – regimes that transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state and regimes that rely on the social and political life of the preexisting state. I argue that the former, which I call regimes from the bottom, are more durable and that elites in these regimes are less likely to challenge the leader than in regimes from the top.

Chapter 3 builds on the theory and explores the implications of these regime categories on international conflict. The old elites – that is, the ruling class in regimes from the top – generally have a strong preference for peace, because any disruption to the status quo creates threats to their wealth, connections, and influence. On the other hand, the fusion of military-political life and

[4] Chapter 4 is an exception. The dataset for this chapter covers authoritarian regimes over the time period of 1966-2010.

relatively inexperienced elites in regimes from the bottom empower the ruler to pursue desirable foreign policies. Aggression abroad is partly driven by structural factors, but also it is another tool at the disposal of authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom to deal with domestic crises. As a result, regimes from the top engage in interstate conflict less frequently than regimes from the bottom.

Chapter 4 builds on previous chapters of this dissertation and investigates whether power-sharing arrangements have an effect on the propensity of authoritarian leaders to engage in international crises. I reevaluate previous literature on domestic institutions by focusing on the Ministry of Defense portfolio. Leaders that appoint the Minister of Defense – one of the most powerful positions in authoritarian regimes – pursue interstate conflict less frequently than leaders who hold this position themselves. I then study how the make-up of the ruling coalition and delegation of the Defense portfolio interact – regimes from the bottom in which the ruler holds the defense minister post are the most likely to engage in interstate conflict.

In Chapter 5 I present the conclusions in which I discuss my findings, explore the relevance and limitations of this dissertation, and identify agenda for future research.

Chapter 2. Authoritarian Regimes and Threats from Within: The Nature of the Ruling Class and Regime Stability

Abstract

Why do some authoritarian leaders lose the support of the ruling coalition and face attempts to forcibly remove them from power, whereas other autocrats stay in office unchallenged for decades? Most work on regime durability, coup attempts, and irregular removals of authoritarian leaders focus on economic (Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012) and institutional factors (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013; Svolik 2012). However, these studies fail to account for a remarkable variation across nations with similar economic conditions and domestic institutions. In this paper, I build on the growing set of scholarship about long-lasting consequences of regime origins (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022) and argue that the make-up of the ruling class has an effect on the capacity of the ruling elites to directly challenge the authoritarian leader. Regimes that bring support from outside the ruling class of the preexisting state (regimes from the bottom) face fewer coup attempts, coup plots are less likely to be carried out successfully, and, in general, authoritarian leaders in these regimes are less likely to be forcibly removed from office than leaders in regimes that rely on the support of the old elites (regimes from the top) at the point of regime inception. My sample covers 118 countries, 280 regimes and 534 authoritarian leaders over the time period of 1946-2010. Empirical analysis supports my claims – there is a stark difference between regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top in terms of regime survival rates and elite-led threats to the rule of authoritarian leaders.

Keywords: The make-up of the ruling coalition, regime stability, political survival, coups

Introduction

In this paper I study the make-up of the ruling coalition, and its effects on the capacity of the ruling class to challenge the rule of authoritarian leader. Almost 60 percent of authoritarian leaders face at least one coup attempt and depending on the statistic between 40 and 50 percent of authoritarian exits are forcible removals from office – that is, the leader is removed from office by either threatening to use force or using force (Chiozza and Goemans 2011; Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009; Svolik 2012). The vast majority of irregular exits occur at the hands of dissatisfied domestic elites. Even removals that are orchestrated and carried out by foreign powers

as well as leader exits that result from popular uprisings usually start with a conflict between opposing elite factions or at least have some elite involvement.

While these data do not directly account for the longevity of an authoritarian regime[5], the evidence is clear – losing the support of the ruling class is one of the most significant threats to the survival of authoritarian leader and regime stability. However, there is a remarkable variation across authoritarian regimes that previous studies do not fully account for. Some regimes, such as Soviet Union, People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Republic of Cuba, turned out to be extremely durable and faced few-to-no challenges from the elites. Others, such as the nationalist rule of Argentina under Juan Perón and military junta of South Vietnam, were short-lived and faced several elite-driven attempts to forcibly remove the authoritarian leader. This raises a very interesting question, why do some elites in authoritarian regimes attempt a forcible removal of the leader, whereas others, even in the presence of significant disagreements within the ruling coalition, never challenge their leader?

Most of the existing research on authoritarian stability focuses on economic factors (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Nordvik 2019; Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012; B. Smith 2006) and political institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013; Gandhi 2008; Meng 2020; Svolik 2009, 2012). However, these literatures do not address important qualitative differences in the composition of the ruling coalition across authoritarian regimes. These differences can be traced to the founding leader of an authoritarian regime who made a choice to (1) either transform the social order of the preexisting state, replace the military and domestic security apparatus, and remold domestic institutions, or (2) rely on the traditional elites

[5] It is important to note that the regime does not always collapse with the forcible removal of authoritarian leader. For example, Nikita Khrushchev was deposed from office via a coup, but the regime survived for decades after this event.

centered around the economic and political upper classes. I argue that the make-up of the ruling class provides a powerful explanation for an unexplained variation in regime stability[6].

This paper brings several contributions to the comparative literature. It proposes a novel way to study the ruling elites by focusing on the make-up of the ruling coalition. I present evidence that the behavior of elites largely depends on the composition of the ruling coalition, which bridges two literatures: the work on the ruling coalition (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Paine 2019; Roessler and Ohls 2018) and origins of the regime (Dimitrov 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; Sokoloff and Engerman 2000). While my main focus is on the ruling class as in De Mesquita et al. (2003), I argue that regime stability does not depend as much on the size or ethnic composition of the ruling coalition as the make-up of the ruling class. That is, authoritarian leaders in regimes that rely on the new elites – peasants, urban proletariat, educators, and students – are less likely to face challenges from regime insiders than regimes supported by the old elites – former aristocracy, top military officials, high-ranking civil servants, and business elites. The logic behind the argument suggests that authoritarian rule that starts with a blank state – transformation of the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state – present dictators with several advantages. Authoritarian leaders that have the capacity to share economic and political appointments with loyal, but inexperienced supporters are unlikely to face immediate threats, which allows said dictators to establish a coherent regime ideology, coup-proofing institutions and other measures that protect them against future challenges.

[6] In this dissertation, I define regime stability as the level of threats to the rule of authoritarian leader from the inner circle. A stable regime is a regime in which authoritarian leader does not face challenges from the ruling class. Some of these challenges (e.g., coup attempts) might be unsuccessful and others might be successful. Unsuccessful challenges are treated as a threat to regime stability.

This paper is organized as follows. In the next section, I review existing literature on internal threats to the survival of authoritarian leaders and regime stability. I then define the key concept of this paper – the make-up of the ruling class and discuss conditions under which a regime can be considered a regime from the bottom and when a regime would be classified as a regime from the top. Next, I introduce my data and present preliminary findings. A section that presents empirical tests of my hypotheses about coups in authoritarian regimes follows. I conclude with a discussion of the results.

Literature

The most frequent threat to the rule of authoritarian leaders comes from the inner circle. First, a large number of authoritarian leaders end their tenures by forcible removal rather than a peaceful exit (Chiozza and Goemans 2011; Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009; Svolik 2012). Almost 50 percent of authoritarian leaders end their tenure with an irregular removal from office. 70 percent of forcible exits are a result of a successful coup, and 10 percent a result of a popular uprising (Svolik 2012)[7]. While rebellions and revolutions are often studied as mass movements from the bottom, they rarely succeed without the support from dissatisfied elites. That is, popular uprisings are typically instigated by a dissatisfied elite faction within the ruling coalition if other measures to replace the leader fail (Singh 2014). What does the literature say about regime durability and challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders from the ruling coalition?

Previous studies on elite-driven threats to the stability of authoritarian regimes focus on economic performance and resource wealth (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012; B. Smith 2006), domestic institutional structures (Boix and Svolik 2013;

[7] My data show very similar results. If we look at all authoritarian regimes between 1960-2010, 80% of authoritarian leaders faced at least one coup attempt, 78% of which were successful.

Meng 2019; Svolik 2009, 2012; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012), and ruling coalition (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Dimitrov 2013; Meng and Paine 2022; Roessler and Ohls 2018). While these studies explore different measures and coup-proofing strategies authoritarian leaders use to stay in power, there is an emerging work that builds on Huntington (1968) and other scholars of the 20th century, and present evidence that regime durability to a large degree depends on the origins of the regime. They argue that revolutionary regimes transform domestic institutions and existing social order, which in turn, enable these regimes to much more effectively quell dissent, establish strong parties, co-opt opposition, and control the coercive hand of the state (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). This paper primarily draws on two literatures: the work on the role of the ruling coalition in authoritarian regimes and the scholarship on the origins of authoritarian regimes, and its long-term consequences on the survival and security of authoritarian leaders.

The scholarly work that highlights the role of economic factors and institutions on the elite-driven threats to authoritarian leaders and regime durability makes the following predictions. First, studies that focus on the economics of authoritarian state, such as economic growth and resource wealth, show that economic factors other than abundant natural resources, such as oil reserves[8], are not particularly important sources of authoritarian durability (Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012), but certainly can lead to widespread violence and civil wars (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Ross 2012). Second, parties and other pseudo-democratic institutions boost chances of survival and reduce the risk of challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders from the inner circle (Gandhi

[8] Several studies followed in the footsteps of Ross's (2001, 2012) seminal work on oil curse, and proposed that resource rich authoritarian regimes survive for decades in spite of low levels of social spending and economic growth (Hong 2017; Nordvik 2019; B. Smith 2006). However, new research challenges these findings by showing that these results hold on rich authoritarian states in the Arabian peninsula, the development of which are an artifact of the British politics in the early 20th century (B. Smith and Waldner 2021). If countries in the Arabian Peninsula are excluded from the analysis results lose their significance.

2008; Meng 2020; B. Smith 2005; Svolik 2009, 2012). However, these factors by themselves are insufficient to explain sources of internal threats and challenges to authoritarian leaders, and regime durability. There is a remarkable variation across wealthy, oil-rich, and party-based regimes, in terms of the severity of internal threats to authoritarian leaders and regime stability. Some ruling parties survive for decades, whereas other party-based regimes are short-lived. Similar variation applies to states with abundant resources or wealthy authoritarian regimes.

If we study the causes of regime stability, the most overwhelming evidence comes from two strands of research – work on the ruling coalition and regime origins. The former focuses on the size of the ruling class, elite ideology, and elite cohesion (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Dimitrov 2013; Paine 2019; Roessler and Ohls 2018). The latter proposes that the origins of authoritarian regimes have long-lasting consequences on regime stability and the severity and frequency of internal threats to authoritarian leaders (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). This strand of literature argues that only those regimes that come to power through violent revolutions and other mass-movements have the capacity to transform social order, rebuild domestic institutions, replace the coercive hand of the state, and eliminate dissent, which in turn, explains their durability. On the other hand, authoritarian leaders in regimes that rely on institutions and social order of the preexisting state are more likely to face threats from the ruling class and collapse. Essentially, the origins of authoritarian regime, or leader's path to power, set long-term consequences that are irreversible.

This paper bridges the scholarly work on the origins of authoritarian regimes and the role of the ruling class in explaining regime stability. I focus on the role of elites in authoritarian regimes but acknowledge that the composition of the ruling class largely depends on the origins of authoritarian rule, and regime characteristics that come from it.

Defining the Make-up of the Ruling Coalition in Authoritarian Regimes

The make-up of the ruling class describes the composition of domestic elites and the backgrounds of the inner circle in authoritarian regimes[9]. What I call 'regimes from the bottom' are regimes that at their infancy rely on the support of new elites, such as urban proletariat, peasants, students, and educators – elites that have no prior wealth and influence on domestic politics. Regimes from the top rely on the support of old elites, such as former aristocracy, business elites, and top military officers. These are people with established family legacies, considerable wealth, and influence. Essentially, regimes from the top rely on existing domestic structures with all the baggage that comes from the previous regimes including competing centers of power, strong elite networks, and existing divisions and disagreements about policies, whereas regimes from the bottom are regimes that transform the preexisting state and start with a blank slate.

The complete transformation of institutional structures and social order is a challenging task, and hence, authoritarian leaders much more frequently come to power by exploiting divisions within the preexisting ruling class and relying on the support from the old elites (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). The main question is what kind of regimes have favorable circumstances, willingness, and capacity to completely reshape the state including the economic structures, bureaucracy, and domestic institutions to provide the space for new elites? To identify regimes where elites are drawn from outside the previous regime, previous work mostly focuses on revolutionary regimes. For example, Lachapelle et al. (2020) present four characteristics of a revolutionary regime, which include (1) regimes led by mass-movements, (2) followed by a violent

[9] My definition of authoritarian regimes follows that of Acemoglu and Robinson (2005) and Svolik (2012). These are regimes with no free and fair elections, even if some rule of law is established and there is a limited protection of civil rights. Autocracies do not look after the interests of the majorities to the same extent as democracies do, and primarily represent interests of the elites.

overthrow of a previous regime, (3) regimes that transform domestic institutions and replace coercive apparatus of the state, and (4) regimes that bring radical social change including new elites. These rather strict criteria limit the authors to only 18 revolutionary regimes over the time period of 1900-2015. Essentially, the authors argue that a complete transformation of the state is possible only after the collapse of the preexisting state (Lachapelle et al. 2020). That is not necessarily a case – existing literature identifies other regime characteristics that enable their leaders to transform the ruling class (Dimitrov 2013; Meng and Paine 2022). In this paper, I relax some of these criteria and draw on several literatures to identify the features of a typical regime from the bottom as opposed to regime from the top.

In general, it is challenging to categorize authoritarian regimes as either regimes from the bottom or regimes from the top – that is, it is nearly impossible to measure the proportion of the new and old elites within the ruling class of an authoritarian regime due to the secretive nature of authoritarian regimes. However, the transformation of the social order, domestic institutions, and coercive state apparatus – features of the regime that relies on the new elites – is possible under a limited number of circumstances. I rely on previous studies to identify common features of regimes with new and old elites, which I later use for the coding of the regime type variable in the empirical section of the paper.

The make-up of the ruling coalition largely depends on the presence of at least some of the following regime characteristics: (1) regime origins, (2) military structures, (3) dominant ideology, and (4) the most important groups of supporters that paved the way for the emergence of the new regimes. The first two features are connected, the transformation of domestic institutions and social order, and replacement of the preexisting coercive hand of the state including the military and secret police is a feature of revolutionary, postcolonial, and rebel regimes (Huntington 1968;

Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005; Walt 1996). These regimes are led by mass-movements, such as guerilla movements in Cuba and Cambodia, political parties in Imperial Russia and China, and social movement in Iran, and rarely rely on the support on the old elites, such as aristocracy, business elites and top military officers. The support for a revolutionary or rebel movement would put the old elites at risk of losing their status within the preexisting ruling coalition and economic security.

While the ideology of revolutionary and rebel regimes is not necessarily socialist or communist[10], there is evidence that authoritarian regimes driven by socialist and communist ideologies are particularly durable and long-lasting, more than nationalist, restorative, or any other type of authoritarian regime (Dimitrov 2013). Communist ideology drives efforts or at least provides ideological backing for a complete transformation of preexisting economic structures, political institutions, and social order, which enables the new elites – that is, peasants, urban proletariat, educators, students and other supporters with few resources and little influence – to take important positions and become members of the ruling class. For example, authoritarian communist regimes that were established at the conclusion of WWII all across Central and Eastern Europe were not backed by mass movements or emerge as a result of violent social revolutions. They were installed by a foreign power, Soviet Union. That is, communist regimes of Central and

[10] Revolutionary and rebel regimes can be both regimes of the left and regimes of the right. They sometimes rely on communist ideology and at other times nationalism is a predominant ideology (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). Some regimes that emerged from pro-independence movements in former colonies don't have a coherent ideology, or rely on both, communist and nationalist impulses. For example, my data shows that a significant number of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and Africa have pursued both socialist and communist, and nationalist ideologies. Another more concrete example, Sukarno, the leader of Indonesian struggle for independence from the Netherlands and later the leader of independent Indonesia, is coded as a regime from the bottom. However, while he was a revolutionary and leader of a communist party, he skillfully co-opted the conservative elite groups. Some may argue that the number of coup attempts against Sukarno is a result of this inclusion.

Eastern Europe were not revolutionary regimes, and yet, dissolved and transformed the preexisting state[11].

Finally, the most ardent supporters of challengers to the old regime are typically rewarded with important military appointments, access to resources and/or government positions. In the end, the ruling class in authoritarian regimes reflects the people who contributed to the emergence of these regimes. For example, the make-up of the ruling class under Chiang Kai-Shek – a leader of a nationalist restorative regime of China – included the old elites, such as warlords, business elites, top military officials and high-ranking civil servants, people who funded and supported the regime. All of them had diverse interests and ideological beliefs about domestic and foreign policies. This is a stark difference from the ruling class under Mao Zedong – a leader of a communist China – who rewarded his companions, such as Liu Shaoqi (a son of a peasant who joined the Chinese Communist Party and became a close supporter of Mao when he was a student), with important cabinet appointments.

Regime features discussed above – that is, (1) regime origins, (2) military structures, (3) dominant ideology, and (4) most active group of supporters – contribute to the make-up of the ruling class. However, my definition of regime from the bottom, and regime from the top does not require the presence of all four of these factors. Regimes that rely on preexisting structures and social order are categorized as regimes from the top, and regimes that transform the preexisting state and rely on elites from outside the preexisting state are categorized as regimes from the bottom. In general, the presence of any of the first three features in combination with the fourth

[11] The Soviet Union used brutal force to quell any dissent in these new authoritarian regimes. The distinction from revolutionary regimes though is, communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe did not emerge through violent social revolutions, and they did not rely on the support from below, but from a foreign power. And yet, the outcome is the same, complete transformation of the state, the emergence of new elites, and durable authoritarianism.

regime characteristic determine whether the regime relies on people who are already rich (business leaders, aristocracy) and influential (top military officials), or replace the old elites with the new ones. While communist Poland and Eastern Germany are listed as regimes from the bottom, because they transformed the social order and domestic institutions, punished the old elites, and relied on the new elites for support, these regimes only have the following regime features from the list: (2) communist ideology, (3) collapse of preexisting military and security structures and establishment of the new coercive apparatus of the state[12], and (4) support from people who did not have any standing in previous regimes. The typical regime from the bottom and regime from the top is shown below (*see* Table 1).

Table 1. The Profiles of Regimes from the Top and Regimes from the Bottom

REGIME FEATURES	REGIMES FROM THE BOTTOM	REGIMES FROM THE TOP
Path to power	Rebel/ Revolutionary regime	Non-rebel/ non-revolutionary regime
Military structure	Revolutionary army or complete replacement of existing military structures	Reliance on former/existing military structures
Ideology	Communist or socialist ideology	Nationalist or Conservative/Restorative ideology
The most important groups of regime supporters	Peasants, urban proletariat, educators (professors and teachers), and students	Business interests, large landowners, former aristocracy, and military elites
The make-up of the ruling coalition and important cabinet appointments	New elites: people with little prior influence and few resources (peasants, urban working class, officers from revolutionary army)	Old elites: already rich and influential people (former aristocracy, businessmen, landowners, high-ranking government officials, and military elites)

Note: This table presents regime features that have consequences on the make-up of the ruling class. I describe my measures in detail in the empirical part.

[12] The size of the military limited by the Soviet Union, Soviet soldiers stationed inside the state, and the creation of new domestic security forces.

Overall, I identify 68 regimes from the bottom over the time period of 1960-2010, and 212 regimes from the top over the same time period[13]. Examples of regimes from the bottom include the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Cuba. Regimes from the top include China under Chiang Kai-Shek, Chile under Augusto Pinochet, Spain under Francisco Franco, and Argentina under Juan Perón.

Theory

Many authoritarian leaders are challenged at least once by the ruling class and a significant number of these attempts are successful – that is, forcible removal from office is a common end to the rule of authoritarian leader. The scientific community has shown an increasing interest in studying sources of stability in authoritarian regimes. While the research mostly focus on economic factors (Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012; B. Smith 2006; Sokoloff and Engerman 2000) and domestic institutional structures (Boix and Svolik 2013; Meng 2019; B. Smith 2005; Svolik 2009, 2012), this set of work does not address issues like remarkable variation across nations with similar economic conditions and domestic institutions. Furthermore, under what conditions authoritarian leaders have the capacity to transform the preexisting state to maximize their chances of survival and regime stability? Building on the scholarship on the ruling coalition (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Paine 2019; Roessler and Ohls 2018), ideologies (Dimitrov 2013), and the origins of authoritarian rule (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Lai and Slater 2006; Meng and Paine 2022; Slater 2003, 2010; B. Smith 2005), I argue that the composition

[13] While my predictions for regimes from the bottom are relatively similar to predictions scholars make about revolutionary regimes as defined by Lachapelle et al. (2020) – that is, both are more durable than other regime types and less likely to face a coup attempt – these two variables are not identical. Lachapelle et al. (2020) use a very strict definition for revolutionary regimes, which they argue are regimes led by violent mass-movements, which violently overthrow the old regime, fundamentally transform the state and initiate a radical social change (p. 559-560). They only identify 18 revolutionary regimes that fit all four criteria over the time period of 1900 – 2015. My variable is much broader and includes a higher number of regimes.

of the ruling class at the point of regime inception has long-lasting and often irreversible consequences for the survival of authoritarian leaders and regime stability[14].

Future authoritarian leaders face a dilemma, whether to rally the people outside the ruling class of the preexisting state or rely on the support of the old elites. These choices set long-lasting trajectories. It is important to note, that authoritarian leaders rarely make a conscious calculation about the composition of the ruling class. The make-up of the ruling class largely depends on the origins of authoritarian rule and regime ideology. This paper presents two types of authoritarian regimes – regimes that draw elites from outside the preexisting state and regimes that rely on elites of the preexisting state. The former I refer to as regimes from the top, and the latter can be characterized as regimes from the bottom.

Regimes from the Bottom – Initially Weak Elites

Authoritarian leaders that transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state by sharing the control of economic activities and political appointments with the new elites have several distinct advantages. First and most importantly, the capacity to overhaul the system enables dictators to install most ardent supporters to the positions of power. This gives dictators the power to mold and shape the ruling class, which brings elite cohesion. More loyal and less polarized elites bring stability. Second, there is a learning process for the new elites – that is, former urban proletariat, peasants, educators, and student activists – about the innerworkings of economic and political processes. Furthermore, it takes time to build connections and networks

[14] While my theory does not explicitly draw from the literatures on path dependence and historical legacies, there are some commonalities between this line of inquiry about "critical junctures" and "history matters" arguments (e.g., Collier and Collier (2002), Pierson (2011)) and work on revolutionary regimes (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). My argument does not suggest that the effects of the origins of authoritarian rule – and consequently, the make-up of the ruling class – are irreversible for a state in question, but that changes can happen through a regime change via coup, popular uprising, and other means.

with the members of the ruling coalition. As a result, there is little-to-no immediate threat to the rule of authoritarian leader from the ruling class, which in turn, gives the leader some very valuable time to protect herself against potential challenges from the inner circle.

Regimes from the Top – Resourceful and Influential Elites

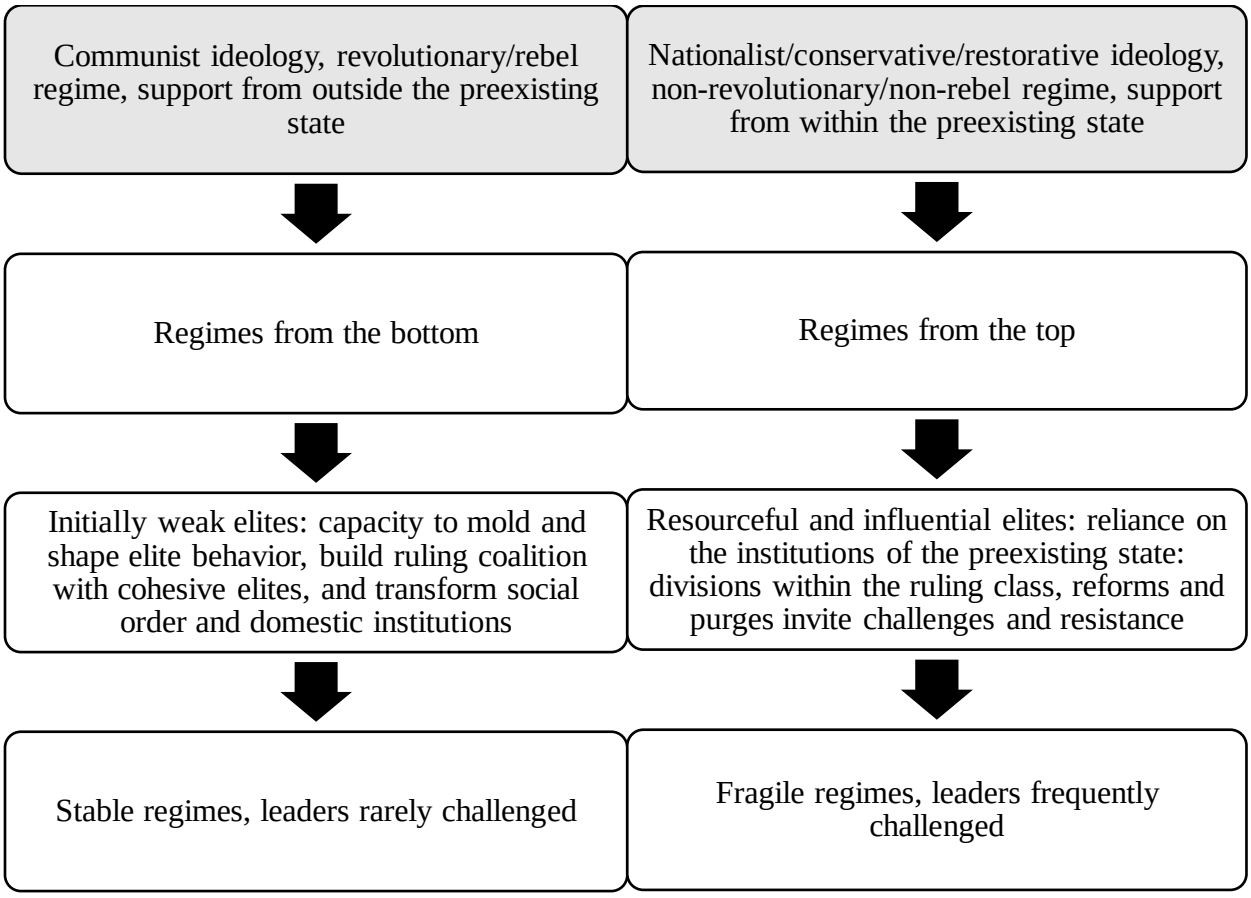
The reliance on the old elites – that is, people from within the ruling coalition of the former regime – poses several threats to regime stability. First, people with resources, networks, and influence have know-how and capacity to challenge authoritarian leader at every step of the way. Second, the rules of the game are already established – attempts of authoritarian leaders to reform domestic institutional structures or purge dissatisfied elites to protect themselves against threats from the inner circle would invite immediate resistance (Lachapelle et al. 2020; B. Smith 2005). This is further supported by recent work on elite purges and other coup-proofing measures, which suggests that when the risk of coups is high, elite purges would invite resistance and coup plot would be inevitable (Sudduth 2017). The risk of coups is the highest at regime inception, which means that widespread elite purges are not a good option. It will make elite-driven challenges to the rule of authoritarian leader more likely. Thus, elite purges are the most likely when the risk of coups is low, which is rarely the case for regimes from the top. Third, the old elites are less likely to share coherent ideologies and are more likely to be divided. This is another cause of danger to the survival of authoritarian leader – disagreement within the ruling coalition means that the leader might need to take a side at some point, which in turn, might result in a coup attempt or even a large-scale civil conflict (Singh 2014). As a result, regimes from the top remain vulnerable to the threats from the ruling class in the long-term.

The Causal Model

I argue that the origins of authoritarian rule set long-lasting trajectories on regime stability. Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom have a huge advantage – initially weak elites that enable said dictators to shape and mold the beliefs of the ruling class and transform domestic institutional structures to minimize internal threats to the survival of authoritarian leaders. On the other hand, authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top face resourceful and influential elites. This poses an immediate threat to the survival of authoritarian leaders – any attempt to reshuffle the ruling coalition or establish coup-proofing institutions is interpreted as the threat to the elites and invites fierce resistance.

There is evidence that authoritarian leaders will pursue coup-proofing and order widespread elite purges paradoxically not when the risk of coups is high, but when it is low (Paine 2019; Sudduth 2017, 2021; Woldense 2022). When the threat of elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders is high any attempt to consolidate power or eliminate opposition makes elites jumpy and cause a reverse reaction. Regimes from the bottom have a huge advantage, initially weak and unorganized elites, that give leaders of these regimes valuable time to deal with threats from within. The causal model of this relationship is presented below (*see* Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Causal Model for the Make-up of the Ruling Coalition and its Consequences on Regime Stability



Note: These causal chains illustrate the dynamics between the ruling class and authoritarian leader under a regime from the bottom and regime from the top, and their effects on regime stability.

Illustrative Case Study: China Under the Rule of Mao and Chiang

An example of this elite-leader dynamic described above is the rivalry for the future of China between Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong. Although both leaders represent very different visions for China, the case of China is particularly fitting, because both leaders presided over the same era and faced similar domestic and international challenges. The country had serious economic challenges, was divided, and faced foreign enemies.

There is a disagreement about the rule of Mao Zedong – some argue that Mao was a stooge for Moscow (Chang and Halliday 2011), whereas others give Mao much more agency (Pantsov and Levine 2012). However, the consensus is that after Mao achieved a de-facto leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and was elected a chairman of the CCP for the first time in 1935 there was no one to stop his ascend to ultimate power. Mao used this as an opportunity to purge party members viewed not sufficiently loyal to Mao and choose members of the future ruling class. These actions have never invited a serious threat to the rule of Mao. He skillfully used support from the masses, domestic institutions, party apparatus and communist ideology to protect himself against domestic threats. Mao was capable to do all that, because he as a revolutionary and founding father of the party[15], started with a blank slate and was given an opportunity to completely reshape the preexisting state.

On the other hand, Chiang Kai-shek faced serious challenges the moment he gained power. Chiang was a member of one of the "secret societies" committed to Chinese Nationalism, the membership of which included prominent military officers, businessmen, bankers and other elites (Taylor 2009, 22–23). With the help of these networks Kai-shek was rather quickly brought into the inner circle and started to gain power within Kuomintang (KMT). In 1925, after the death of nationalist leader Sun Yat-Sen, Chiang Kai-shek emerged as the new leader of KMT and de-facto leader of Chinese Nationalists. His efforts to unify China were largely successful, and by 1928, the nationalists controlled most of China's territory.

[15] This is disputed in the literature. There is some evidence that Mao was not one of the founders of the Chinese Communist party. Mao joined the Party and founded a local chapter of the Communist Party in Changsha in 1921, while the Party was established in 1920 by Chen and Voitinsky (Chang and Halliday 2011). However, that does not negate the impact of Mao on the party. He quickly became one of the most important members of the party and a major figure in forming the party ideology.

Chiang Kai-Shek was a leader of a typical regime from the top. He inherited social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state with all the problems that come from it: factionalism among elites, widespread corruption, divided country, warlords who ruled over large portions of the territory and the lack of coherent ideology among elites. Chiang recognized that the biggest threats to his rule are domestic[16] and that his coalition that consisted of former aristocracy, business elites, top military officials and warlords was fragile. He was forced to navigate different elite factions and compromise with warlords and other people with bad reputations to keep the country together, which in turn, prevented him from pursuing any serious reforms and coup proofing measures to protect himself from future threats from within (Taylor 2009). In 1936 Chiang was seized by one of his generals and held hostage for two weeks in a coup attempt and by 1949 he had to leave the country.

Hypotheses

This section produces three testable hypotheses about the variation in regime stability and elite-driven challenges to the rule of authoritarian leader. My analysis primarily focuses on the following threats to the survival of authoritarian leaders – attempted coups, successful coups, and forcible exits from office, a broader measure that includes coups, civil wars, foreign-supported regime change, and other types of irregular regime overthrows. The first observable hypothesis suggests that reliance on the old elites produces threats of coups for authoritarian leaders:

H1: *Regimes from the top are more likely to face a coup attempt than regimes from the bottom.*

[16] Chiang Kai-Shek famously said: *First pacify the interior then resist the external threat* . While his efforts to deal with internal threats largely failed, he was adamant about one threat – the communists. In an interview with an American journalist Theodore White Kai-shek articulated his beliefs: *The Japanese are a disease of the skin, the Communists are a disease of the heart* (T. H. White 1978).

The second observable hypothesis follows the logic of the first, and suggests that the elites in regimes from the top more frequently challenge their leaders, and their efforts are more likely to be successful:

H2: *The ruling class in regimes from the top is more likely to plot a successful coup than the elites in regimes from the bottom.*

The third observable hypothesis suggests that only leaders of authoritarian regimes that transform the preexisting state can feel relatively safe:

H3: *Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top are more likely to be forcibly removed from office than leaders in regimes from the bottom.*

Data and Measurement

To test my hypotheses, I use panel data with country-years as my unit of analysis. The dataset is constructed on the authoritarian regimes data from Geddes, Write, and Frantz (2014). The information on authoritarian leaders is obtained from *Archigos* (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009). The dataset covers 118 countries, 280 regimes and 534 authoritarian leaders over the time period of 1946-2010.

Dependent Variables

To test my theory, I use two different classes of dependent variables. One is a version of a coup attempt and the other is a broader measure of elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leader or forcible removal from office.

Data on coups is obtained from the *Cline Center Coup (CDP) D'état Project Dataset* (Peyton et al. 2021a). CDP codebook defines coups as an organized and illegal or extra-legal

attempt to irregularly remove the incumbent leader from office[17] (Peyton et al. 2021b, 2). The dataset includes data on unrealized and realized coup attempts. The former refers to a failed coup plot – that is, either the coup plot was discovered (conspiracy), or coup attempt was initiated and failed (attempted coup). The latter is a successful coup attempt – that is, coup organizers successfully remove the leader. My dataset includes 4724 observations, with 141 conspiracies, 241 attempted coups and 337 realized coups. For the empirical analysis, my dependent variables include *coup attempts* and *realized coups*, both measured in a binary scale.

Another measure of regime stability included in the analysis is leader's exit from office. This is a binary measure of how leaders lose their office and is coded either as a regular or irregular removal (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009). Leader is forcibly removed from office when there is a threat or actual use of force, such as a coup attempt, assassination, foreign intervention, and civil war (the vast majority of irregular removals are driven by domestic elites). Regular removal indicates scheduled succession, such as term limits or defeat in elections, voluntary retirement, and natural death. My dataset includes 534 authoritarian leaders of which 202 exits are irregular.

Independent Variable.

The data on the make-up of the ruling coalition comes from multiple sources. For the first measure of the ruling class, I collected an original data about whether regime relies on the "old" or the "new" elites. The second measure of the ruling elites is based on multiple variables from

[17] The official definition, "organized efforts to effect sudden and irregular (e.g., illegal, or extra-legal) removal of the incumbent executive authority of a national government, or to displace the authority of the highest levels of one or more branches of government".

the *Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) Project* (Coppedge et al. 2022). The former is a binary measure, and the latter is a continuous variable.

The original variable about the make-up of the ruling class is coded based on multiple criteria. This variable is constructed based on various news sources and literature on individual countries as well as existing data. To make a judgement about the nature of the ruling coalition I also consulted variables on the main groups of regime supporters and regime ideology from *V-dem* dataset (Coppedge et al. 2022). For example, I study how much the regime relies on the support from aristocracy (*v2regsupgroups_0*), business interests (*v2regsupgroups_3*), military (*v2regsupgroups_5*), peasants (*v2regsupgroups_9*), and urban proletariat (*v2regsupgroups_11*). Similarly, I look at the most important group of supporters the regime relies on (*v2regimpgroup*). I also take into account the origins of authoritarian regime – that is, whether the leader of a new regime ascended power through regular or irregular means[18] (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009; Svolik 2012). Finally, before making a judgement about the make-up of the ruling class, I look at regime ideology – that is, whether the regime is nationalist (*v2exl_legitideolcr_0*), conservative/restorative (*v2exl_legitideolcr_2*) or communist (*v2exl_legitideolcr_1*). Regime ideology is a good indicator on whether the regime is from the top or from the bottom. Another measure of regime ideology that I use is a binary measure of whether the regime is a communist regime from Svolik's (2012) dataset. However, caution is necessary, as some communist regimes in the Middle East and Africa rely on secular elites, busines interests (for example, widespread nationalization and confiscation of private property, but protection of the private property rights for oil/mineral businesses, because of their involvement and support for some communist

[18] If the leader entered office irregularly, I also study whether the path to power included a coup, assassination, revolution, civil war, or foreign intervention.

governments in the region) or support from top military officers (for example, Algeria from 1962-1992 is coded as a regime from the top, because of the support from a small circle of top military officers). *The make-up of the ruling elites* is a binary variable and is coded as either a regime that relies on the support from the bottom (0) or regime that relies on the support from the top (1) at the point of its inception. The complete list of regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top is listed in the appendices (*see* Table 3).

To test the consistency and robustness of my results I construct another measure for the composition of the ruling class that is entirely based on existing data. The variable is continuous and is measured on the scale from 0 (regime from the bottom) to 1 (regime from the top). This variable is a measure of the following equally weighed variables: (1) the origins of the regime (revolutionary/rebel regime or not), (2) ideology (communist or not), and (3) how important for the regime the support from the top – aristocracy, business interests, military – is. The last part of the variable is a sum of three measures that represent the support for the regime from the top[19] and is measured from 0 (the support from the top is not important at all) to 1 (the leader relies on the support from the top). The make-up of the ruling class is normalized so that it is in the range from 0 to 1.

Control Variables

To account for alternative explanations for elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders I incorporate several controls from the existing literature in my analysis. First, I include three covariates to account for economic factors that are discussed in the literature as sources of regime stability (Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2001, 2012). These include a natural logarithm of

[19] The measures for aristocracy (v2regsupgroups_0), business interests (v2regsupgroups_3) and military (v2regsupgroups_5) come from V-dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2022).

GDP per capita rates or *log(GDP/per capita)*, annual *GDP growth* rates, and *resource wealth*[20] (Coppedge et al. 2022; Fariss et al. 2021; Haber and Menaldo 2011). Next, I control for regime level factors that include two binary measures of regime type – that is, whether the regime is a party-based regime (*party*), whether regie is a military regime (*military*) (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014) and whether the regime is a communist regime (Svolik 2012). Since several studies argue that the military plays a key role at deposing a leader and successful coup attempts are primarily organized with the help of top military officials (Singh 2014; P. B. White 2017a), I also take into consideration *the proportion of active military personnel in the cabinet*, another measure of militarism from Peter B. White's dataset (P. B. White 2017b). Other measures capture broader societal factors across regimes: the population size or *log(population)* (Coppedge et al. 2022; Fariss et al. 2021), and how significant for regime stability is the support from a specific ethnic or religious group *(ethnic/religious group)*[21] from V-dem dataset.

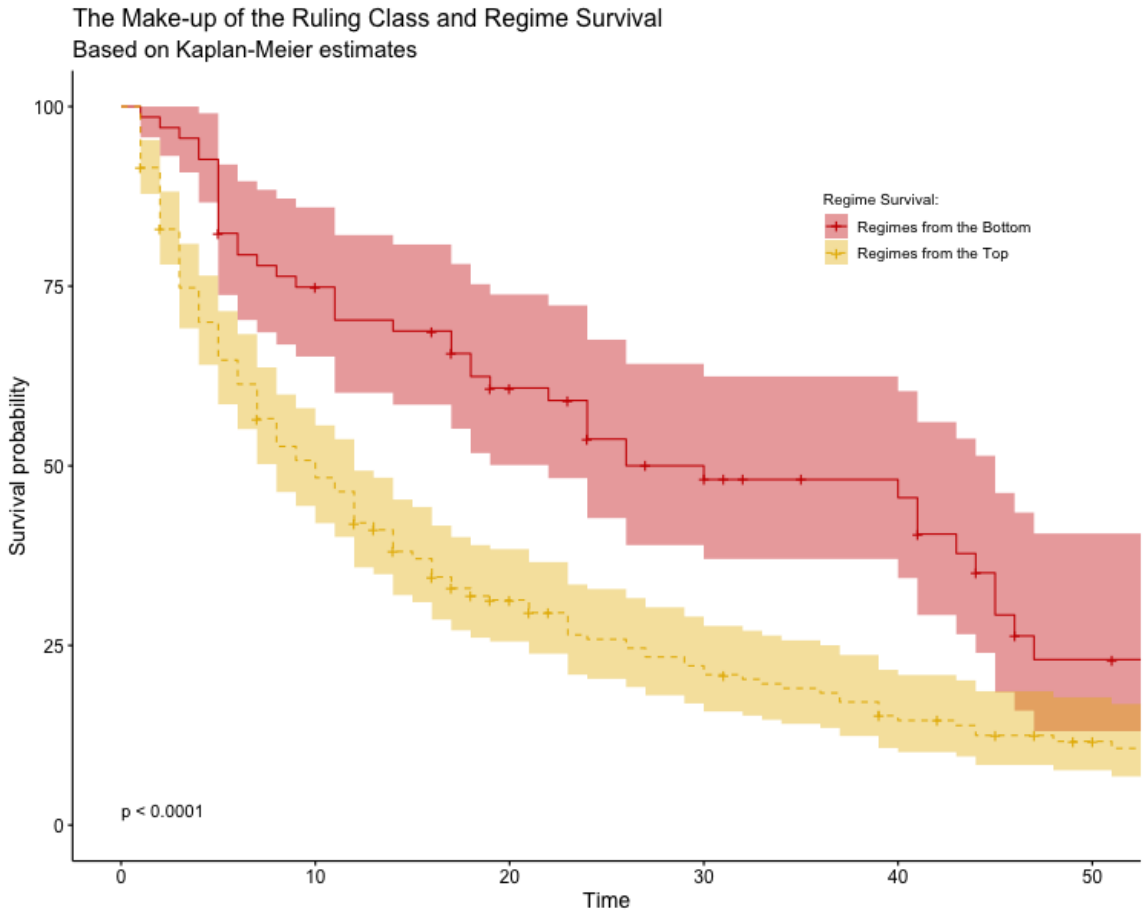
Descriptive Statistics

While this paper focuses on the threats to the survival of authoritarian leader from the inner circle, yearly regime survival rates and regime durability are good indicators of regime stability and the level of threats to authoritarian leader. Authoritarian leaders that are not threatened by the elites survive at higher rates and longer time periods. To visualize these data, I present Kaplan-Meier estimates for both regime types along with 95 percent confidence intervals (*see* Figure 2). The graph shows yearly survival probabilities for regimes with different ruling coalitions. Regimes from the bottom have more than 97 percent chance to survive the five-year period, whereas regimes from the top have only 83 percent chance to survive the same time period. This

[20] This variable measures the real value of coal, natural gas, petroleum, and metals produced per capita.
[21]To be more precise, this variable measures whether a regime relies on the support of a particular ethnic or racial group to stay in power.

difference becomes even starker as regime duration increases and peaks at 40 years of duration before shrinking. Regimes from the bottom have over a 60 percent chance to survive for 40 years. This statistic for regimes from the top is only 30 percent. The risk that regime from the bottom will fail after one year since the regime has been established is only 1.5 percent. This same statistic for regime from the top is a staggering 8.5 percent. The average duration of regime from the bottom is 25.5 years (the median is 22.5 years), whereas regimes from the top last only 16.8 years on average (the median is 9 years).

Figure 2. Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves for Regimes from the Bottom and Regimes from the Top



The initial analysis of elite-driven challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders tells a similar story. A regime from the top faces 4.5 coup attempts on average, whereas elites only

attempt 2.8 coups in regimes from the bottom[22]. Almost 70 percent of regimes from the top end with a forcible removal of an authoritarian leader. Less than 40 percent of regimes from the bottom face similar ends. Analysis of individual leaders shows that authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom face a 10 percent chance to be forcibly removed from office at any given year. This statistic for leaders in regimes from the top is almost 30 percent[23]. Essentially, coups and forcible removals are pretty common across authoritarian regimes. Looking at the data presented above, authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top should be particularly worried.

Initial results demonstrate some very important findings. Regimes from the bottom outlive regimes from the top, and quite significantly. The ruling class in regimes from the top plot coups more frequently than elites in regimes from the bottom. Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top face more than two times higher risk of being forcibly removed from office.

Empirical Analysis

To test my hypotheses, I estimate logit models with fixed effects. A recent analysis of observational studies in a leading academic journal shows that studies often rely on the suppression effect by using controls for statistical significance (Lenz and Sahn 2021). To reduce these concerns, I follow the recommendations and include the covariates sequentially. I follow in the footsteps of Carter and Signorino (2010) and include cubic polynomial approximation of spell-time in my analysis[24]. To interpret my results, I focus on models with year fixed effects. First, these models isolate time-invariant sources of heterogeneity. These include systemic-level factors

[22] The same statistic for authoritarian leaders is 2 for authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top and less than 1.3 for authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom.
[23] The probability to face a coup attempt at a given year is forcibly removed from office is
[24] Increasingly, there is an agreement that a lot of scholarship has been too careless about temporal dependence, a result of which may be misleading logit estimates (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). One of the remedies for this problem is cubic polynomial approximation (t, t^2, t^3), which is found to perfom better than time dummies and are easier to estimate than splines (Carter and Signorino 2010).

(e.g., bipolar world order and the Cold War or unipolar system and the Arab Spring) that have implications on regime stability across multiple states. Second, coefficients can be more easily interpreted from a one-way fixed effects model (Kropko and Kubinec 2020).

The models presented below test my theory that elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders are more likely in regimes from the top than regimes from the bottom. My regression analysis takes the following form:

$$ln[\tfrac{P}{1-P}Y_{it}] = \alpha + \beta_R R_{it} + \beta_x X'_{it} + \beta_T T'_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where the subscript *i* denotes individual states and the subscript *t* denotes time, Y_{it} is a measure of *elite-led challenges to the rule of authoritarian leaders* (attempted coup, successful coup attempt or leader's exit from office), β_R is the coefficient for my independent variable and as such the main parameter of interest, R_{it} is *the make-up of the ruling coalition*, X'_{it} is a vector of control variables included in my analysis, and T'_{it} are controls for temporal dependence (t, t^2, t^3). Standard errors are clustered at the state-level.

Models 1 and 2 show a simple bivariate relationship: the former produces estimates with my original independent variable, whereas the latter is a robustness check with a proxy measure of the ruling coalition. Models 3 and 4 include economic and regime level factors. Models 5 and 6 include societal factors and a measure of communist ideology as well as substitute military regime variable with the proportion of active military members within the cabinet variable. I present three tables, each of which follows this logic (*see* Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3). All tables show exponentiated coefficients for easier interpretation. The results show overwhelming evidence that regimes from the bottom are more resilient and less likely to face internal threats to the rule of authoritarian leader. The results are positive and statistically significant across the board.

Overall, there is a stark difference between regimes from the top and regimes from the bottom. The ruling class is 1.7 times more likely to attempt a coup plot, 2 times more likely to carry out a successful coup attempt and 2.6 times more likely to forcibly remove authoritarian leader from office. The table that displays the summary of estimates is presented in the table below (*see* Table 2).

Table 2. Binary Logit with Fixed Effects.

	Dependent variable:					
	Coup Attempt		Realized Coup		Forcible Removal	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling Class	1.660***	1.803***	1.955***	2.222***	2.635***	1.401***
	(0.162)	(0.174)	(0.171)	(0.238)	(0.310)	(0.520)
Economic controls		✓		✓		✓
Institutional controls		✓		✓		✓
Societal controls		✓		✓		✓
t, t^2, t^3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4,724	3,020	4,724	3,020	4,724	3,020
Log Likelihood	-1,564.726	-953.648	-881.901	-501.345	-2,857.377	-1,542.206
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,267.452	2,019.296	1,901.803	1,114.689	5,718.753	3,196.411

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01

Discussion

In this paper I presented a theory and corroborating quantitative evidence that the threats to the rule of authoritarian leaders from the ruling class are much more common in regimes from the top than regimes from the bottom. Regimes from the top rely on the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state, whereas regimes from the bottom draw elites from outside the preexisting state. The consequences of these choices – that is, whether to rely on the support of the new or old elites – are long-lasting. I argued that authoritarian leaders supported by the old

elites at the infancy of the regime have major structural disadvantages, such as ideological inconsistencies, divided and sometimes disloyal elites, and established domestic institutions and social order. Any attempt by an authoritarian leader to consolidate power and protect against domestic threats invites resistance from the elites. This is a stark contrast compared to regimes from the bottom, which get a chance to completely transform the institutions and social order of the preexisting state. Empirical analysis that includes 118 countries, 280 regimes and 534 authoritarian leaders over the time period of 1946 – 2010 supports my argument. Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top face coup attempts more frequently, coup plots are more likely to be carried out successfully, and forcible removal from office is a common end to the rule of authoritarian leader.

Appendices

The Make-up of the Ruling Class in Authoritarian Regimes: the Complete List

Table 3. The List of Authoritarian Regimes Coded as Regimes from the Bottom and Regimes from the Top.

REGIMES FROM THE BOTTOM	Albania 44-91, Angola 75-NA, Belarus 91-94, Belarus 94-NA, Benin 69-70, Benin 72-90, Botswana 66-NA, Bulgaria 44-90, Burkina Faso 87-NA, Cambodia 53-70, Cambodia 75-79, Cambodia 79-NA, Cameroon 83-NA, Cen African Rep 60-65, China 49-NA, Congo-Brz 63-68, Cuba 59-NA, Czechoslovakia 48-89, Egypt 52-NA, Eritrea 93-NA, Germany East 49-90, Ghana 60-66, Guinea 58-84, Guinea Bissau 74-80, Guinea Bissau 80-99, Hungary 47-90, Indonesia 49-66, Iraq 58-63, Iraq 63-68, Iraq 68-79, Iraq 79-03, Ivory Coast 00-NA, Korea North 48-NA, Kyrgyzstan 91-05, Laos 75-NA, Libya 69-NA, Madagascar 75-93, Malawi 64-94, Mali 60-68, Mongolia 21-93, Mozambique 75-NA, Myanmar 58-60, Myanmar 62-88, Namibia 90-NA, Nicaragua 79-90, Poland 44-89, Romania 45-89, Rwanda 62-73, Senegal 60-00, Serbia 91-00, Sierra Leone 68-92, Somalia 69-91, Soviet Union 17-91, Tanzania 64-NA, Turkmenistan 91-NA, Uganda 66-71, Uganda 80-85, Uganda 86-NA, Uzbekistan 91-NA, Venezuela 05-NA, Vietnam 54-NA, Yemen 62-67, Yemen 67-74, Yemen 74-78, Yemen 78-NA, Yugoslavia 45-90, Zambia 67-91, Zimbabwe 80-NA
REGIMES FROM THE TOP	Afghanistan 29-73, Afghanistan 73-78, Afghanistan 78-92, Afghanistan 96-01, Algeria 62-92, Algeria 92-NA, Argentina 43-46, Argentina 51-55, Argentina 55-58, Argentina 58-66, Argentina 66-73, Argentina 76-83, Armenia 94-98, Armenia 98-NA, Azerbaijan 91-92, Azerbaijan 93-NA, Bangladesh 07-08, Bangladesh 71-75, Bangladesh 75-82, Bangladesh 82-90, Benin 60-63, Benin 63-65, Benin 65-67, Benin 67-69, Bolivia 43-46, Bolivia 46-51, Bolivia 51-52, Bolivia 52-64, Bolivia 64-69, Bolivia 69-71, Bolivia 71-79, Bolivia 80-82, Brazil 64-85, Burkina Faso 60-66, Burkina Faso 66-80, Burkina Faso 80-82, Burkina Faso 82-87, Burundi 62-66, Burundi 66-87, Burundi 87-93, Burundi 96-03, Cambodia 70-75, Cameroon 60-83, Cen African Rep 03-NA, Cen African Rep 66-79, Cen African Rep 79-81, Cen African Rep 81-93, Chad 60-75, Chad 75-79, Chad 82-90, Chad 90-NA, Chile 73-89, Colombia 49-53, Colombia 53-58, Congo-Brz 60-63,

	Congo-Brz 68-91, Congo-Brz 97-NA, Congo/Zaire 60-97, Congo/Zaire 97-NA, Costa Rica 48-49, Cuba 52-59, Dominican Rep 30-62, Dominican Rep 63-65, Dominican Rep 66-78, Ecuador 44-47, Ecuador 63-66, Ecuador 70-72, Ecuador 72-79, Egypt 22-52, El Salvador 31-48, El Salvador 48-82, El Salvador 82-94, Ethiopia 74-91, Ethiopia 89-74, Ethiopia 91-NA, Gabon 60-NA, Gambia 65-94, Gambia 94-NA, Georgia 91-92, Georgia 92-03, Ghana 66-69, Ghana 72-79, Ghana 81-00, Greece 67-74, Guatemala 54-58, Guatemala 58-63, Guatemala 63-66, Guatemala 66-70, Guatemala 70-85, Guatemala 85-95, Guinea 08-10, Guinea 84-08, Guinea Bissau 02-03, Haiti 41-46, Haiti 50-56, Haiti 57-86, Haiti 86-88, Haiti 88-90, Haiti 91-94, Haiti 99-04, Honduras 33-56, Honduras 63-71, Honduras 72-81, Indonesia 66-99, Iran 25-79, Iran 79-NA, Iraq 32-58, Ivory Coast 60-99, Ivory Coast 99-00, Jordan 46-NA, Kazakhstan 91-NA, Kenya 63-02, Korea South 48-60, Korea South 61-87, Kuwait 61-NA, Kyrgyzstan 05-10, Laos 59-60, Laos 60-62, Lesotho 70-86, Lesotho 86-93, Liberia 44-80, Liberia 80-90, Liberia 97-03, Libya 51-69, Madagascar 09-NA, Madagascar 60-72, Madagascar 72-75, Malaysia 57-NA, Mali 68-91, Mauritania 05-07, Mauritania 08-NA, Mauritania 60-78, Mauritania 78-05, Mexico 15-00, Morocco 56-NA, Myanmar 88-NA, Nepal 02-06, Nepal 46-51, Nepal 51-91, Nicaragua 36-79, Niger 60-74, Niger 74-91, Niger 96-99, Nigeria 66-79, Nigeria 83-93, Nigeria 93-99, Oman 41-NA, Pakistan 47-58, Pakistan 58-71, Pakistan 75-77, Pakistan 77-88, Pakistan 99-08, Panama 49-51, Panama 53-55, Panama 68-82, Panama 82-89, Paraguay 39-48, Paraguay 48-54, Paraguay 54-93, Peru 48-56, Peru 62-63, Peru 68-80, Peru 92-00, Philippines 72-86, Portugal 26-74, Russia 93-NA, Rwanda 73-94, Rwanda 94-NA, Saudi Arabia 27-NA, Sierra Leone 67-68, Sierra Leone 92-96, Sierra Leone 97-98, Singapore 65-NA, South Africa 10-94, Spain 39-76, Sri Lanka 78-94, Sudan 58-64, Sudan 69-85, Sudan 85-86, Sudan 89-NA, Swaziland 68-NA, Syria 46-47, Syria 49-51, Syria 51-54, Syria 57-58, Syria 62-63, Syria 63-NA, Taiwan 49-00, Tajikistan 91-NA, Thailand 06-07, Thailand 44-47, Thailand 47-57, Thailand 57-73, Thailand 76-88, Thailand 91-92, Togo 60-63, Togo 63-NA, Tunisia 56-NA, Turkey 23-50, Turkey 57-60, Turkey 60-61, Turkey 80-83, Uganda 71-79, United Arab Emirates 71-NA, Uruguay 73-84, Venezuela 48-58,

	Vietnam South 54-63, Vietnam South 63-75, Yemen 18-62, Yemen South 67-90, Zambia 96-NA, Indonesia 66-99

Note: If instead of a year the regime features NA, the regime was still in place at the point of the last year of data collection, which is 2010.

Fixed Effects Logit Regressions for Coup Attempt

Table 4. Binary Logit with Fixed Effects: Coup Attempt.

	Dependent variable:					
	Coup Attempt					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling Class (orig.)	1.660***		1.685***		1.717***	
	(0.162)		(0.167)		(0.169)	
Ruling class (proxy)		2.421***		2.512***		0.594
		(0.401)		(0.431)		(0.799)
log(GDP per capita)			0.970***	0.962***	0.871***	0.896***
			(0.094)	(0.107)	(0.106)	(0.108)
GDP growth			0.925***	0.926***	0.921***	0.925***
			(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Resource wealth			1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
			(0.00003)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)
Party Regime			0.680***	0.709***	0.735***	0.645***
			(0.168)	(0.204)	(0.210)	(0.228)
Military Regime			0.853***	0.916***		
			(0.193)	(0.200)		
log(Population)					0.890***	0.885***
					(0.067)	(0.073)
Ethnic/Religious Group					0.470	0.450
					(0.422)	(0.431)
Share of active military officers					2.111***	2.171***
					(0.389)	(0.408)
Communist regime					0.902***	0.559
					(0.208)	(0.442)
Constant	0.353	0.476	0.448	0.590	1.506**	3.684***
	(0.687)	(0.748)	(0.670)	(0.713)	(0.675)	(0.864)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,724	3,930	4,355	3,740	3,020	3,020
Log Likelihood	-1,564.726	-1,283.403	-1,440.645	-1,228.662	-955.485	-961.491
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,267.452	2,704.807	3,021.291	2,597.324	2,020.970	2,032.982

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01.

Fixed Effects Logit Regressions for Realized Coup

Table 5. Binary Logit with Fixed Effects: Realized Coup

	Dependent variable:					
	Realized Coup					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling Class (orig.)	1.955***		2.169***		2.179***	
	(0.171)		(0.178)		(0.225)	
Ruling class (proxy)		2.248***		3.125***		0.947
		(0.444)		(0.523)		(0.861)
log(GDP per capita)			0.945***	0.932***	0.947***	0.974***
			(0.108)	(0.141)	(0.121)	(0.126)
GDP growth			0.933***	0.939***	0.929***	0.935***
			(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Resource wealth			1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
			(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Party Regime			1.051***	1.100***	1.237***	1.031***
			(0.149)	(0.201)	(0.248)	(0.267)
Military Regime			1.001***	1.120***		
			(0.164)	(0.190)		
log(Population)					0.928***	0.923***
					(0.069)	(0.076)
Ethnic/Religious Group					0.135	0.133
					(0.450)	(0.474)
Share of active military officers					1.450***	1.443***
					(0.387)	(0.395)
Communist regime					1.073***	0.720
					(0.303)	(0.520)
Constant	0.214	0.659	0.232	0.570	1.442*	2.938***
	(0.769)	(0.852)	(0.743)	(0.825)	(0.803)	(1.040)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,724	3,930	4,355	3,740	3,020	3,020
Log Likelihood	-881.901	-672.402	-810.425	-651.914	-501.439	-506.621
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,901.803	1,482.805	1,762.850	1,445.829	1,114.878	1,125.242

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

Fixed Effects Logit Regressions for Forcible Removal from Office

Table 6. Binary Logit with Fixed Effects: Forcible Removal from Office.

	Dependent variable:					
	Forcible Removal from Office					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling Class (orig.)	1.901***		1.836***		1.265**	
	(0.348)		(0.414)		(0.515)	
Ruling class (proxy)		4.589***		3.451***		0.926
		(0.730)		(0.903)		(1.397)
log(GDP per capita)			0.783***	0.853***	0.763***	0.775***
			(0.198)	(0.220)	(0.241)	(0.240)
GDP growth			0.996***	1.000***	0.992***	0.994***
			(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Resource wealth			1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
			(0.00004)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)
Party Regime			0.503	0.486	0.673	0.649
			(0.404)	(0.433)	(0.475)	(0.498)
Military Regime			0.407	0.303		
			(0.382)	(0.471)		
log(Population)					0.814***	0.810***
					(0.143)	(0.146)
Ethnic/Religious Group					0.237	0.235
					(0.867)	(0.870)
Share of active military officers					0.619	0.635
					(0.761)	(0.761)
Communist regime					0.576	0.492
					(0.704)	(0.805)
Constant	2.072***	1.179	3.242***	2.615***	23.732***	32.121***
	(0.655)	(0.856)	(0.698)	(0.965)	(1.062)	(1.499)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,724	3,930	4,355	3,740	3,020	3,020
Log Likelihood	-2,487.320	-2,065.882	-2,274.158	-1,926.641	-1,565.270	-1,567.609
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,112.641	4,269.763	4,688.315	3,993.283	3,240.541	3,245.217

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Chapter 3. The Origins of Authoritarian Rule, the Ruling Class, and Interstate Conflict

Abstract

Why do some authoritarian regimes instigate international crises, whereas others engage in relatively pacifistic foreign policies? In this paper I argue that the origins of authoritarian rule have long-lasting consequences on the composition of the ruling class, and consequently, provide a powerful explanation for the variance in the hawkishness of foreign policies. In contrast to previous studies – mainly that of Chiozza and Goemans (2011), Colgan (2013), Colgan and Weeks (2015), and Weeks (2014) – I propose that these effects survive past the founders of authoritarian regimes. Regimes that rely on the social order, political life, and coercive agencies of the preexisting state (regimes from the top) are less likely to pursue aggression abroad than regimes that transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state (regimes from the bottom). I identify two sources of interstate conflict: (1) domestic, and (2) international. The former focuses on the divisiveness within the ruling coalition and loyalty of the military force, whereas the latter refers to the perceived threat from the perspective of the adversarial state. Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom face low probability of domestic threats to their survival, because of the cohesion of the ruling coalition and fusion of political-military elites. This makes risky behavior abroad unlikely to be punished domestically. On the other hand, the transformation of the social order and institutions is viewed as a threat by adversarial states to the security of their regimes, which incentivizes militarized interstate disputes. These two mechanisms drive the probability of interstate conflict – both as an instigator and defender – for regimes from the bottom. Authoritarian regimes from the top are characterized by fragility within the ruling coalition and relatively independent coercive agencies, which in turn, increase the risk of challenges from within. High probability of domestic threats to the rule of authoritarian leaders disincentivizes risky behavior abroad and pushes dictator to focus on domestic policies instead. Furthermore, foreign enemies exploit this divisiveness within the ruling class – they choose to meddle in domestic policies over initiation of interstate conflict, which has a potential to spiral into a costly war. I use fixed effects Poisson models to test my hypotheses. The empirical analysis shows strong support for my hypotheses.

Keywords: The make-up of the ruling class, the origins of authoritarian rule, interstate conflict.

Introduction

On the dawn of December 12, 1936, Chiang Kai-Shek was preparing to depart a hot springs resort called Huaqing in Xi'an province when he heard shots, and the bodyguard rushed into Chiang's cabin to inform about the attack. Chiang, still in his bathrobe, ran into the mountains.

He was found the next morning almost frozen to death. Chiang, the leader of the Nationalist China, was held captive for two weeks, and was freed only after he formally agreed to form an alliance with the communists in a war against Japan. The Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937.

The most interesting part of this story is Chiang's hesitation to instigate an attack against the Japanese and his willingness to work with them to find a peaceful solution to contested territories[25]. His instincts turned out to be right. In the fight against Japan it was the nationalist forces that did most of the fighting – of all the casualties on the Chinese side more than 90 percent were Chiang's forces (Taylor 2009). In spite of negligible contribution to the war effort, it was Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party who gained prominence and legitimacy, and eventually the throne of China.

This raises a very interesting empirical question, why would Chiang who was well-informed about the preferences of his own military and large portion of the population postpone the attack and focus on domestic enemies, whereas Mao, who at that point had established himself as the leader of the Chinese communist forces, would enthusiastically support the war? There is a stark contrast between this observation and the notions about interstate conflict in the literature. If we were to study existing scholarship on authoritarian regimes and interstate conflict, we would be surprised that it was Mao and not Chiang who advocated and promoted the war against Japan[26]. The literature suggests that autocrats like Chiang – that is, military and personalist leaders – are

[25] Several interviews and quotes attributed to Chiang support the argument that he resisted societal pressures and dissatisfaction within Kuomintang and hesitated to start a conflict with Japan for several years. For example, in an interview with an American journalist Theodore White the Generalissimo articulated his beliefs: "The Japanese are a disease of the skin, the Communists are a disease of the heart" (T. H. White 1978). Similarly, another quote attributed to Chiang expresses similar sentiments: "First pacify the interior then resist the external threat". Chiang understood that his survival was predicated on his ability to deal with domestic enemies and that war posed a serious threat to his regime in spite of the outcome.

[26] The account of Chiang's hesitation to instigate the attack against Japan and primary focus on domestic enemies comes from Taylor (2009). Mao's enthusiastic support for this war and his willingness to engage in other international crises are presented by Chang and Halliday (2011), and Pantsov and Levine (2012).

the ones that pursue conflict most frequently (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Butler 2004; Siverson and Johnson 2018; Weeks 2014). Similarly, one would expect a leader that has military training and embraces nationalist ideology to pursue expansionist and aggressive foreign policies (Siverson and Johnson 2018; Snyder 1991; Weeks 2014). While previous studies associate hawkish foreign policies with certain domestic factors, there is a noticeable variation across different regime types and leaders in their willingness to instigate international crises.

Why do leaders of some authoritarian regimes pursue relatively pacifistic, whereas others engage in aggressive foreign policies? I build on the reemerging literature about the origins of authoritarian rule and its long-term consequences on the social order and political life (Colgan 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005) and propose that the composition of the ruling coalition presents a powerful explanation for the type – whether hawkish or dovish – of foreign policies. Authoritarian leaders that build their regimes from scratch – that is they transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state have distinct advantages that enable them to pursue hawkish foreign policies. In comparison, authoritarian leaders in regimes that rely on the social order and domestic structures of the preexisting state, face divided ruling class and domestic challenges to their rule, which in turn, push these leaders to prioritize domestic threats and engage in relatively pacifistic foreign policies. I use an original measure of the composition of the ruling coalition and militarized interstate disputes from the Correlates of War database to test my argument. This paper presents empirical evidence that regimes from the top – that is, regimes that rely on the social order and domestic structures of the preexisting state – are less likely to engage in interstate conflict than regimes from the bottom.

I bring several meaningful contributions to the literature on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict. First, my theory is not limited to revolutionary regimes, which are extremely rare (Lachapelle et al. 2020). My analysis focus on all authoritarian regimes that transform the social and political orders of the preexisting state. That is, regimes from the bottom share a lot of common features with revolutionary regimes but they are a broader category that includes revolutionary regimes as well as actors that transform the preexisting state through internal means. These common features – transformation of the social order, political life, and coercive hand of the state – implies that regimes from the bottom face similar challenges and opportunities as revolutionary regimes that are discussed in the literature. Second, I draw on comparative literature and present evidence that the transformation of the social order and domestic institutions sets long-term trajectories that survive past regime founders. This observation rejects central tenets of previous studies, which argue that the effect of revolutions and other transformative events ends with regime founders (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). Third, I identify novel causal mechanisms for conflict proneness of some authoritarian regimes.

The paper is organized in the following manner. The next section reviews existing literature on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict. The definition of the key concept of this paper – the make-up of the ruling class – follows. These two sections discuss seminal papers and their shortcomings as well as how my measure of the regime type advances the study of authoritarian regimes and interstate conflict. I then present the theoretical reasoning behind the argument. I identify two sources of the hawkishness of foreign policies – one domestic that focuses on the cohesion and loyalty of the ruling class, and the other that is structural. Next, I introduce my dataset, which covers 113 authoritarian states over the time period of 1946-2010. I also discuss my dependent, independent and control variables. I then present an extensive

empirical analysis of my hypotheses about the level of hawkishness of foreign policies in authoritarian regimes. I estimate fixed effects Poisson models that show strong support for my arguments. Conclusions follow.

Literature Review

While the literature on conflict behavior of autocrats is quite limited, the growing body of studies associate the variation in such behavior to domestic institutional structures. The type of dictatorship – whether personalist or party-based and whether civilian or authoritarian – shapes autocrat's worldview as well as constrains or encourages her to pursue aggressive foreign policies, such as an initiation of interstate conflict (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Siverson and Johnson 2018; Weeks 2014). The causal logic of previous studies include the size of the ruling coalition (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004), unconstrained nature of domestic institutions in personalist dictatorships (Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014), and the preferences and mindset of dictators with military experience (Weeks 2014). However, the conception of dictators as "crazy" – that is, the idea that dictators are driven by glory and greed rather than survivalist instincts in unconstrained authoritarian regimes – is outdated and ignores more recent developments in comparative literature. Similarly, this line of work does not address the following question, what explains the regime type – that is, why do some authoritarian leaders rely on the military for support, whereas others establish civilian cabinets and why do some authoritarian leaders engage in power-sharing agreements, whereas others pursue exclusionary rule?

While the work on the origins of authoritarian regimes and interstate conflict is rather limited, emerging scholarship shows compelling evidence for the relationship between the manner through which the regime was established and interstate conflict. These studies argue that the

genesis of authoritarian rule and the manner through which the future leaders take charge set long-lasting trajectories that have an effect on both, domestic (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005) and foreign policies (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). Essentially, regime characteristics and features discussed above are a consequence of the type of support the dictator relied on toward her path to power. For example, the regime type – whether power-sharing or exclusionary[27] – is largely a function of the origins of authoritarian rule (Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). That is, rebel and revolutionary regimes are more likely to establish power-sharing institutions and build cohesive ideologies (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). The moment of birth of authoritarian rule has long-term effects on the inner workings of authoritarian state and consequences on its policies. It is true that regimes evolve over time, authoritarian leaders engage in elite-purges and pursue other means of domestic oppression, and often there is a power-struggle given the death of regime founder or the subsequent leader, these factors due not negate the trajectories set by regime founder absent of a regime change (Lachapelle et al. 2020; B. Smith 2005). The new leader of a revolutionary state – and in my paper I argue a broader category of regimes with similar features that I call regimes from the bottom – continue to rely on the support of the ruling class and loyal-integrated security apparatus.

Previous work on the origins of authoritarian rule and interstate conflict is limited to revolutions and can be put into two categories. The first focuses on revolutions as singular events

[27] I use power-sharing regimes as a synonym for party-based regimes and exclusionary as a synonym for personalist regimes. Party-personalism distinction has appeared in many previous studies on interstate conflict (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Weeks 2014), whereas power-sharing and exclusionary institutions have been adopted in comparative literature as more precise and flexible concepts of authoritarian institutions (Boix and Svolik 2013; Gandhi 2008; Roessler and Ohls 2018; Svolik 2012). That is, the presence of a party is one of the signs that the leader shares power, but the leader can also share power with elites in other ways. For example, an autocrat can appoint the Minister of Defense, which is one of the most important positions in authoritarian states (Meng and Paine 2022).

(Maoz 2004; Walt 1996), and the second studies the characteristics of revolutionary leaders (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). The first set of scholarship suggests that states that enter the international system through evolutionary process are much more pacifistic than revolutionary states, because the latter bring uncertainty, fear, and perception of hostility into the system (Haas 2005). Revolutionary processes also lower the quality of information and increase the probability of miscalculation, which in turn, increases the probability of international crises (Fearon 1995; Walt 1996). On the other hand, studies that explore the characteristics of revolutionary leaders propose that they share some common features, such as high-risk tolerance, strong drive for power and ambition to change the status quo (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). This branch of literature proposes very similar causal mechanisms as studies on regime type (Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014) – that is, they argue that revolutionary leaders are more ambitious and more risk tolerant than other types of leaders, and hence, they are more likely to pursue aggressive foreign policies.

Previous studies face several limitations. First, they focus on the effects of revolutions on international system and the characteristics of revolutionary leaders and ignore more recent developments in comparative literature about the long-term consequences of revolutionary events on the social order and domestic institutional structures (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). Second, this set of literature assumes that revolution is a pre-condition for the transformation of the preexisting state. However, we should be careful – some non-revolutionary regimes are able to transform the social order, economic and political life through rigid ideology. These include communist regimes, which are transformative and share features of revolutionary regimes, such as integrated militaries and cohesive elites (Dimitrov 2013). Also, they often draw popular support. For example, in 1948 Czechoslovakia experienced a transition to a communist

dictatorship following a successful coup attempt. While not a revolutionary regime, the Communist Party consolidated power and completely transformed the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state. Third, previous scholarship on interstate conflict lags behind comparative work on revolutions and proposes that the effect of a revolution ends with a revolutionary leader. However, the social order and institutions survive past revolutionary leaders unless there is a regime change, and we should treat regimes as our units of analysis rather than leaders. I propose to focus on the make-up of the ruling coalition of the founding father rather than exclusively on revolutionary regimes, because that enables us to capture all authoritarian regimes that transformed the preexisting state.

The Make-up of the Ruling Class

The definition of the make-up of the ruling class in authoritarian regimes follows that of my previous paper. I draw from the literature on the origins of authoritarian rule and its long-lasting consequences on regime stability (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005) and implications on foreign policy (Colgan 2013). As discussed in Chapter 2 of my dissertation, I propose a new terminology for regime type. Regimes that transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state are regimes from the bottom and regimes that rely on the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state are regimes from the top. The transformation of the preexisting state results from (1) mostly violent mass-led regime change, such as a rebellion or revolution, or (2) a peaceful transition led by a political party or movement with a rigid socialist or communist ideology[28]. Examples of the former include Soviet Union led by Vladimir Lenin or People's Republic of China led by Mao

[28] This definition broadly follows the logic behind comparative literature on revolutionary/rebel and communist regimes (Dimitrov 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020). A more extensive justification for this regime dichotomy can be found in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

Zedong, whereas the latter include Czechoslovakia, where Communist Party had mass support and took power via a successful and bloodless coup in 1948.

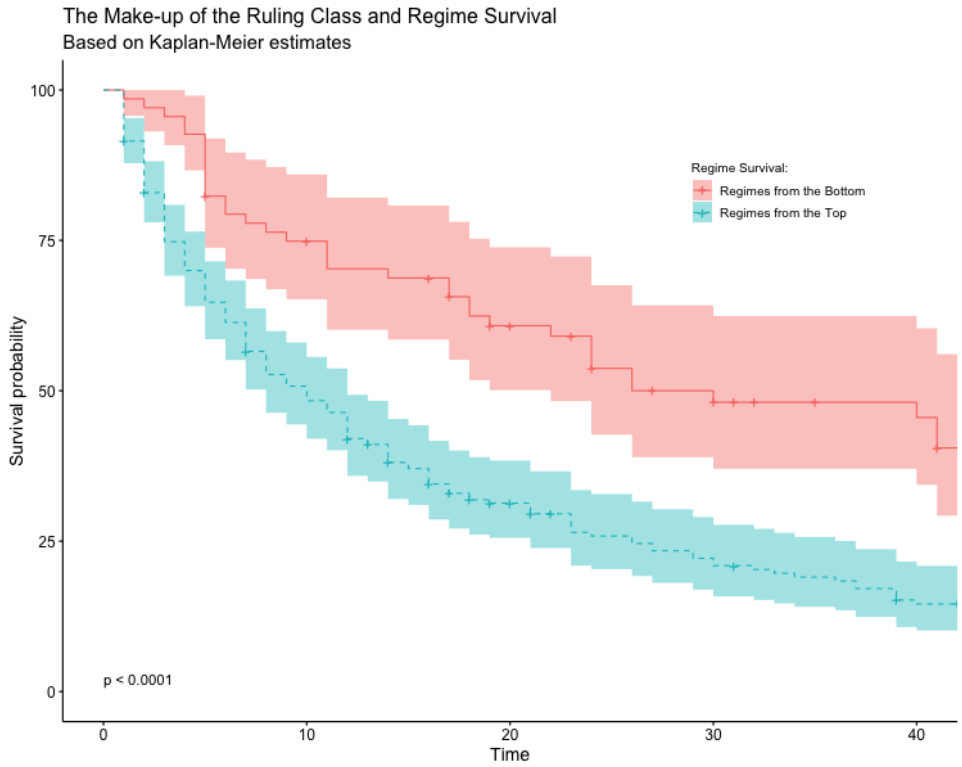
The composition of the ruling coalition is another feature of these regimes that stems from the origins of authoritarian rule. Regimes that rely on the new elites – peasants, urban proletariat, educators, students and other people with little influence and resources – at regime inception are classified as regimes from the bottom. Autocrats who rely on the old elites – that is, former aristocracy, business elites, high ranking officials, and top military officers – are classified as regimes from the top.

Theoretical Framework

This paper distinguishes between two types of authoritarian regimes – regimes that transform the social order and institutions of the preexisting state and regimes that take an evolutionary approach to political processes. I refer to the former as regimes from the bottom because they rely on the new elites – people with little influence in the preexisting state (peasants, urban proletariat, educators, and students) – for support at regime inception. The latter are classified as regimes from the top because they rely on the old elites – formerly rich and powerful people (aristocracy, business elites, top military officers) – for support. Since the ruling coalition remains largely the same as that of the preexisting state, the social order of the state does not change. Furthermore, elites will resist the effort to reshape domestic institutions that continue to serve their interests. This comparison between regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top reveals fundamental differences between these two regime categories. In this section I explain how the make-up of the ruling class shapes foreign policy considerations of authoritarian leaders.

The capacity to transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state gives authoritarian leaders some distinct advantages. The most important of which, authoritarian leaders are given an opportunity to reshape the social order and domestic institutions to their liking, which result in stable and durable dictatorships. My previous paper shows strong evidence that regimes from the bottom are more stable and durable than regimes from the top. I estimate a Kaplan-Meier curve, which is a simple descriptive graph that based on my data reports the number of regimes surviving at each point in time. It shows evidence that regimes from the top are more likely to collapse at each point in time compared to regimes from the bottom (*see* Figure 3). Similarly, regimes from the top are much more likely to face challenges from the ruling class. My data shows that around 70 percent of authoritarian regimes from the top breakdown with a forcible removal of an authoritarian leader compared to less than 40 percent of regimes from the bottom. This clearly indicates that authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom face fewer domestic threats than regimes from the top. The question is, what implications these features have on foreign policies?

Figure 3. The Survival Probabilities Based on the Make-up of the Ruling Class



Note. A version of this figure appears in Chapter 2 of my dissertation.

Regimes from the Bottom

The capacity to transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state result in unconstrained authoritarian regimes, which in turn, lead to hawkish foreign policies. The relative stability and durability of authoritarian regimes from the bottom indicate elite cohesion and relative domestic peace (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). The biggest threat to these regimes is thus from foreign adversaries who see the transformation of the state as a threat (Maoz 2004; Walt 1996). However, during the times of worsening economic conditions, natural disasters and other domestic crises rulers are happy to engage in conflicts – for the purposes of scapegoating and other types of diversionary war rationale – given relatively low risk of challenges from the ruling elites (Levy 1989; Richards et al. 1993; Tarar 2006). These

logics suggest that authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom have several strategic reasons for conflict proneness.

Initially weak elites and transformation of domestic coercive apparatus (both features of regimes from the bottom) enable authoritarian leaders to establish safeguards to their rule, which in turn, reduces domestic threats to the survival of authoritarian leaders (*see* Chapter 2 of this dissertation). However, this transformation of the social order and institutions create powerful adversaries abroad due to perceived threat to their regimes (Walt 1996). For example, Western Powers have been wary of revolutionary and communist regimes even before the Cold War. John Edgar Hoover was delegated to establish the Bureau of Investigation (predecessor to FBI) as early as 1924 to fight communist ideas within the US. Clearly, the US and other Western democracies identified the Soviet Union and other nations that spread communist and revolutionary ideas as a threat. This is confirmed by later America's involvement in conflicts with communist and revolutionary regimes in Latin America and East Asia.

The change in the status quo – new elites, new military, and new institutions – has a benefit. It produces elite cohesion and fusion of military and political forces within the ruling coalition to fight counterrevolutionary forces and foreign enemies (Lachapelle et al. 2020). In the times of domestic crises this gives authoritarian leaders space to use international conflict to deal with domestic problems at home, such as growing public dissatisfaction with economic policies (Levy 1989; Richards et al. 1993; Tarar 2006). However, the transformation of the preexisting state is what Meng and Paine (2022) call a double-edged sword: while it makes regimes more stable and durable, which means that dictators don't have to pay a price for risky foreign policies, on the flip side, it creates enemies abroad and increases the risk of conflict. That is, I identify two sources of interstate conflict for regimes from the bottom: (1) the fear of popular demands for a regime change

in other states following a transformation of the state of our interest – that is, perceived threats to their stability from the perspective of foreign states, and (2) the low cost of risky decisions to pursue adventurous foreign policies abroad due to the cohesion and loyalty of the ruling coalition. Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom are happy to exploit this relatively low risk of overthrow from members of the ruling coalition in the time of domestic crisis, such as worsening economic conditions, for diversionary war purposes (Richards et al. 1993; Tarar 2006).

Regimes from the Top

The reliance on the traditional elites centered around the economic and political upper classes – that is, regimes from the top – result in constrained authoritarian regimes, which in turn somewhat counterintuitively, lead to relatively pacifistic foreign policies. Regimes from the top face two potential domestic threats: divided elites and relatively independent oppressive hand of the state[29]. In the eyes of the ruling coalition a decision to pursue aggression abroad challenges the status quo and has potential to affect their influence and wealth and could be viewed as a pretext to challenge the leader, which reduces autocrat's willingness to engage in risky foreign policies. Furthermore, divided elites enable foreign adversaries to meddle in domestic politics, and if necessary, bribe dissatisfied elite faction to attempt a coup. That is, fragile regimes lead to relatively pacifistic foreign policies, because authoritarian leaders in said regimes have to be careful about potential overthrow from the members of the ruling coalition. Similarly, adversaries abroad find it preferable to use domestic division to achieve their political goals over an initiation of interstate conflict, which always has a potential to spiral into a costly war.

[29] Authoritarian leader in regimes from the top do not have the complete support and loyalty from the elites and military, because they don't have the capacity to transform the social order, domestic institution, and security apparatus as leaders in regimes from the bottom have (Lachapelle et al. 2020). Any attempts to do so invites resistance from the ruling coalition – the military and civilian elites – and increases the probability of coups.

Divided elites in regimes from the top create opportunities for foreign adversaries to use the situation to their advantage. Given the presence of dissatisfied elites, it is cheaper to meddle in the domestic politics than instigate an interstate conflict that has a potential to escalate. For example, Francisco Franco – a personalist leader with military background – to the surprise of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini remained neutral throughout the World War II. One potential explanation, Franco realized the severity of potential domestic threats and decided to focus on domestic suppression rather than foreign wars. Indeed, Winston Churchill infiltrated the Spanish military and bribed top-ranking officials with the help of a well-known banker, with Francoist credentials, Juan March[30]. Spanish generals were supposed to keep an eye on Franco. If El Caudillo was to join the war on behalf of the Axis powers or attack Gibraltar, these military officials agreed to organize a coup. The threat to Franco's regime was real and it was partially funded by foreign powers. That is, El Caudillo was constrained by his own ruling class – which foreign states so happily bribed – without a more direct attack from abroad.

Similar things can be said about the US involvement in Latin American countries during the Cold War. Despite high concentration of authoritarian states and particularly large number of personalist-military dictatorships, the region has been relatively pacifistic throughout the period. As suggested by my argument, the US supported coup attempts in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and other states, and in most cases avoided military intervention. The region was dominated by regimes from the top, which as predicted resulted in very little interstate conflict, but a large number of coups.

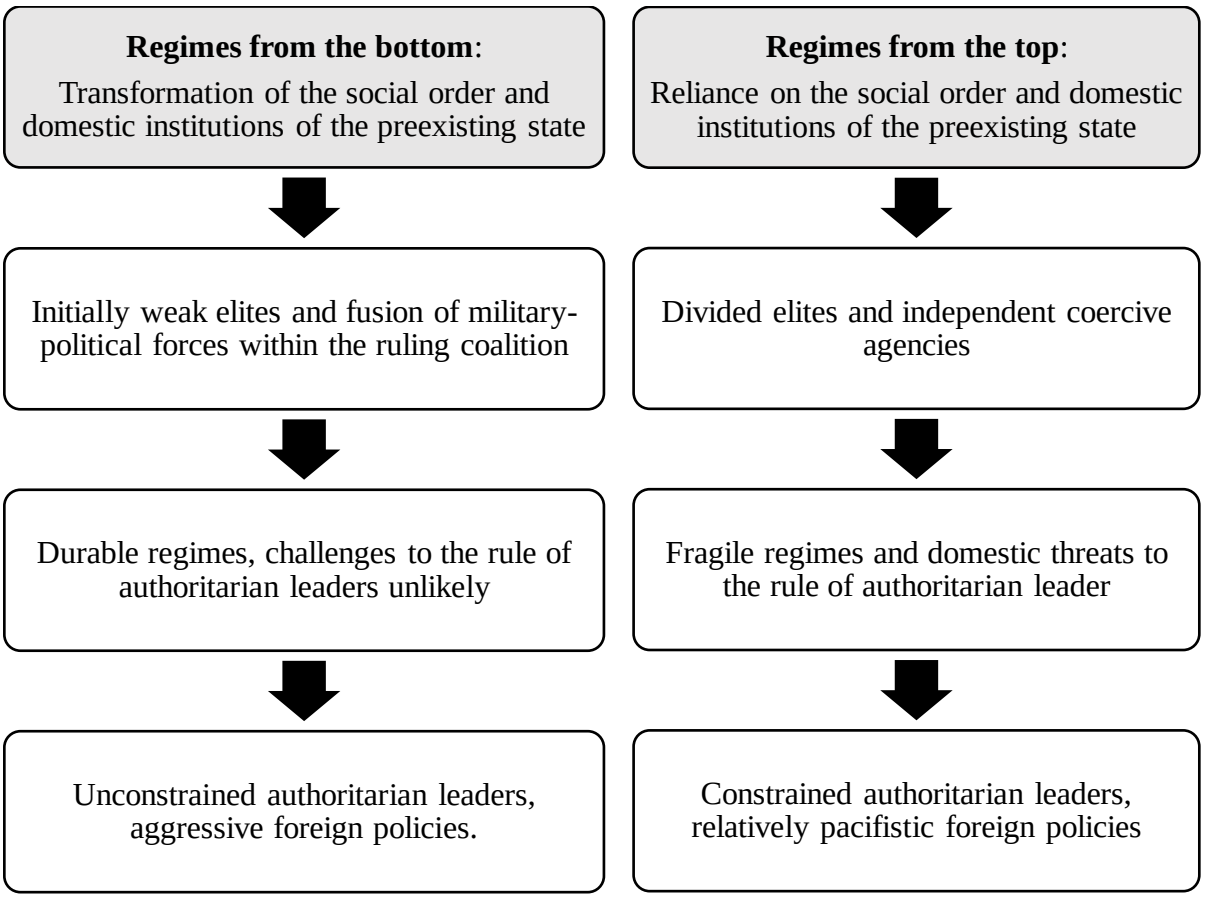
[30] Based on a recent MI6 report. The Guardian describes the attempts of the British Intelligence to bribe members of the ruling coalition and high-ranking Spanish generals to keep Spain out of WWII. If Franco made a decision to join the War, generals were expected to attempt a coup. The story can be found here and the Spanish version is available here. The summary is also available here. The original document is not freely accessible.

I identify two sources of relatively pacifistic foreign policies pursued by authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top: (1) from authoritarian leader's perspective: fragile regimes and domestic threats dissuade the leader from risky foreign policies, such as an initiation of interstate conflict, and (2) from foreign adversary's perspective: less costly for adversarial states to bribe dissatisfied elites to overthrow the leader than instigate a conflict and risk war.

The Make-up of the Ruling Class and Observable implications

The make-up of the ruling coalition produces a clear distinction between regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top that has important foreign policy implications. I argue that elite cohesion and integrated militaries in regimes from the bottom compared to divided elites and relatively independent militaries in regimes from the top largely explain variation in foreign policies in authoritarian states. The causal logic is presented in Figure 4 below. This section presented two sources of hawkish foreign policy behavior. The first focuses on the domestic threats from the ruling coalition, and the second focuses on the perceived threat and associated costs of military intervention from the perspective of foreign adversary.

Figure 4. The Make-up of the Ruling Coalition and its Consequences on Foreign Policies



Note: These causal chains illustrate the effects of two types of authoritarian regimes – regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top – on interstate conflict.

There is a clear rationale for authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom to engage in interstate conflict. Elite cohesion and fusion of military-political elites make risky foreign policies relatively costless and limit options to engage for foreign enemies. Adversarial states express their dissatisfaction by instigating interstate conflict, since meddling in domestic politics is nearly impossible due to elite cohesion and integrated coercive apparatus. On the other hand, leaders in regimes from the top are hesitant to engage in hawkish foreign policies, and if rational will focus on domestic politics. They realize the severity of domestic threats that are often exacerbated by foreign foes. Three related testable hypotheses follow from these theoretical considerations:

H1. *Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom are more likely to get involved in interstate conflict – both as an aggressor and as a defender – than regimes from the top.*

H2. *Authoritarian leaders in regimes from the bottom are more likely to initiate interstate conflict than regimes from the top.*

H3. *Authoritarian regimes from the bottom are more likely to become victims of interstate conflict – that is, to be on the receiving end of international crisis – than regimes from the top*.

Data and Measures

To establish evidence for the hypotheses discussed above, I use panel data with country-years as my unit of analysis. My sample includes 118 authoritarian states between 1946-2010. During this time period I record 280 authoritarian regimes and 534 authoritarian leaders. The dataset consists of 4590 observations.

Dependent Variable

I use measures of *interstate conflict* from the Correlates of War database (Palmer et al. 2020). Militarized interstate disputes are cases of international crises, where "*the threat, display, or use of military force short of war by one member state is explicitly directed towards the government, official representatives, official forces, property, or territory of another state. Disputes are composed of incidents that range in intensity from threats to use force to actual combat*" (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996, 163). I take a similar approach to that of Colgan (2013) and use different types of MIDs as my dependent variables. First, I study the cases where a state is an aggressor and initiates interstate conflict. I call this variable an *aggressor MID*. Second, I include international crises, where a state is a defender. I call this variable a *victim MID*. My third dependent variable encompasses all cases of militarized interstate disputes – that is, cases where a

state is an aggressor, and cases where a state is a defender. All of these variables are counts – that is, the number of militarized interstate disputes in a given year per state. 70 percent of country-year observations include no interstate conflicts (coded as 0), 20 percent of observations are one, and 10 percent include more than one conflict. Only three observations are higher than 10. The state that engaged in the highest number of conflicts is Iran in 1987, which is 25 interstate conflicts. Density plots are presented in the appendices (*see* Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8).

Independent Variable

The measure of the make-up of the ruling coalition is based on the combination of existing and original data[31]. This variable is coded based on multiple criteria, which answer the following question, has the regime transformed the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state? To make a judgement about the nature of the ruling coalition I consulted data on the origins of the regime (Svolik 2012), regime ideology (Coppedge et al. 2022; Svolik 2012), and the main groups of regime supporters (Coppedge et al. 2022). I also studied newspaper articles and literature on individual regimes.

My data covers 280 authoritarian regimes (118 states) over the time period of 1946-2010. The make-up of the ruling class is a binary variable. A regime established at the conclusion of violent rebellion or revolution by rebel forces or a regime with communist ideology that at its inception relies on the support from the new elites (peasants, urban proletariat, students, and educators) is considered a regime from the bottom. Alternatively, a regime that promotes

[31] This measure is identical to the make-up of the ruling class variable that I used in Chapter 2 of my dissertation. *The Data and Measurement* section from Chapter 2 provides a much more extensive explanation for the coding of this variable. It also identifies specific variables that were used to make a judgement on whether the regime is a regime from the bottom or regime from the top. Here I only provide a short summary of this discussion.

nationalist ideology and a regime that relies on the support from the elites of the preexisting state (former aristocracy, business elites and top military officials) is considered a regime from the top.

Covariates

In my analysis I include several controls from previous studies that are believed to have an effect on foreign policies of authoritarian leaders. First, I control for regime level characteristics, such as regime type and regime duration. Next, I take into account structural variables that play a role in state's capacity to challenge its adversaries. These include geography, state's material capabilities, population size, and health of the economy.

My model incorporates several regime-level controls. I include a measure of militarism, since recent international relations literature suggests that military regimes are more likely to initiate interstate conflict than civilian regimes (Lai and Slater, 2006; Weeks, 2012, 2014). Similarly, my military regime variable might be correlated with regime categories as military regimes might be more likely to rely on the support from the old elites than civilian regimes. My measure of a *military regime* is a binary variable that records whether the regime is a military or civilian regime (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014)[32]. I also account for exclusionary rule, since personalist leaders are believed to engage in conflict more frequently (Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014). *Personalist regime* is a binary variable of whether the regime is a personalist regime or not (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). Next, I control for regime duration as studies show that in some cases young regimes are more likely to initiate

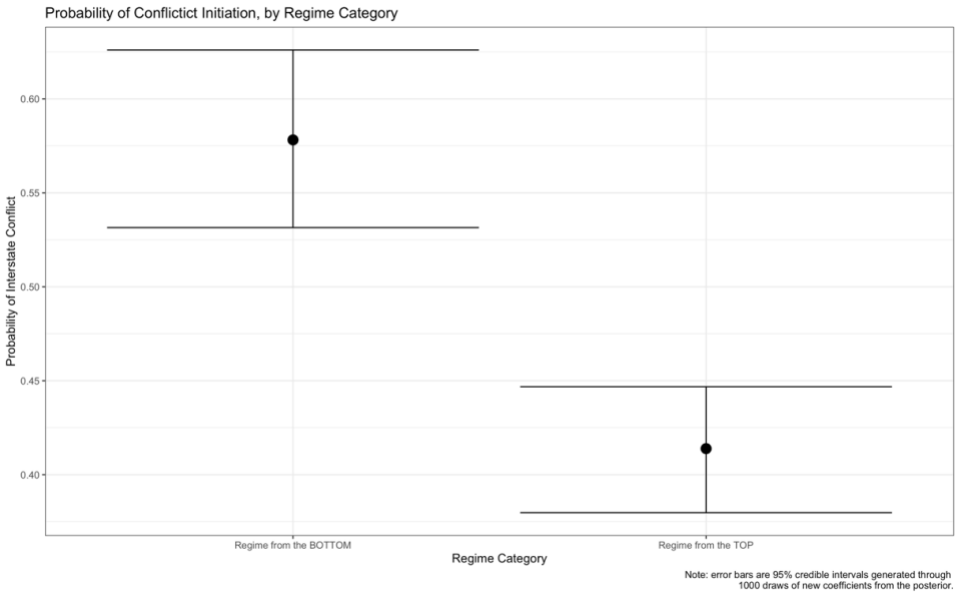
[32] Another measure of militarism that is used in a more recent literature is the proportion of active military personnel in the cabinet. Several studies argue that the influence of the military within the ruling coalition plays a decisive role at its ability to challenge an authoritarian leader and that this measure is a more reliable measure of militarism (Singh 2014; P. B. White 2017a, 2017b). However, this variable covers a shorter time period, and for that reason, I primarily used the military regime variable in my analysis. Substituting military regime with military personnel variable does not affect the results.

and escalate international crises than mature regimes (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; B. C. Smith and Spaniel 2019). Regime duration might be also correlated with my regime categories given regimes from the bottom are more durable. *Regime duration* shows regime longevity measured in years (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). This is a very important variable to account for, because it shows whether the behavior of authoritarian leaders changes as regimes get older and evolve (e.g., founding fathers nominate their successors).

As discussed above, my analysis also includes structural covariates. I control for the *number of neighboring states (or geographic proximity to other states)*, since it is easier to initiate conflicts (e.g., deploying military) with geographically close states that have a land border. My variable measures a number of immediate neighbors the state shares its land borders (COW n.d.; Stinnett et al. 2002). I also account for *state's capacity*. Power is one of the key concepts in the literature of international relations. Scholars argue that balance of power between states and shifts in the power have an impact on the probability of conflict and war (Organski and Kugler 1980). I control for national material capabilities by employing *CINC* variable from National Material Capabilities (NMC) dataset (NMC n.d.; Singer et al. 1972). This is a composite indicator of national material capabilities, which tracks annual data for the following characteristics: iron and steel production, military expenditures, military personnel, primary energy consumption, total population, and urban population. The national material capabilities index aggregates these six components of state national material capabilities into a single variable. I also include other covariates that account for state capacity in other ways, such as *the natural logarithm of the population size, natural logarithm of GDP per capita, and GDP growth rates* (Coppedge et al. 2022; Fariss et al. 2021).

To establish plausibility of results, Figure 5 shows predicted probabilities based on the estimates from a simple bivariate logit. If I treat the dependent variable as a binary measure of interstate conflict – more precisely, whether the state experienced at least one militarized interstate dispute in a giver year or not – there is a clear difference between regimes from the top and regimes from the bottom. Almost 60 percent of regimes from the bottom will initiate interstate conflict compared to slightly more than 40 percent of regimes from the top. Detailed empirical analysis is presented in the section below.

Figure 5. The Make-up of the Ruling Class and Predicted Probabilities of MIDs



Empirical Analysis

My empirical analysis is monadic, since the focus of this paper is about the implications of domestic politics on the initiation of international crises. My hypotheses are tested using fixed effects Poisson regression models. Due to disproportionate number of zero events (peace years) regular logit models cannot be used for the analysis. Fixed effects Poisson regression models provide the most consistent and efficient estimates for models with dependent variable that are

event counts (Wooldridge 1999)[33]. To reduce concerns about the suppression effect I include covariates sequentially (Lenz and Sahn 2021). I include cubic polynomial approximation of spell-time (t, t^2, t^3), which in my analysis are peace years since the last interstate conflict (MID), to account for temporal dependence (Carter and Signorino 2010)[34]. State fixed effects are used in the empirical analysis to account for observable and unobservable differences within each state, and hence, reduce omitted variable biases. The estimates from the models presented below take the following form :

$$\ln(\mathrm{E}(Y_{it})) = \alpha + \beta_R R_{it} + \beta_x X'_{it} + \beta_T T'_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where the subscript *i* denotes individual states and the subscript *t* denotes time, Y_{it} is a count of one of the measures of militarized interstate disputes (*MIDs*, *Attacker MIDs*, *Victim MIDs*), β_R is the coefficient for the independent variable, R_{it} is *the composition of the ruling class*, X'_{it} is a vector of controls I include in the analysis, and T'_{it} accounts for temporal dependence (t, t^2, t^3). Standard errors are clustered at the state-level.

All models presented in the Table 7 below include country fixed effects and cubic polynomial approximation. Model 1, model 4 and model 7 estimate a simple bivariate relationship. Model 2, model 5, and model 8 include regime-level controls, whereas model 3, model 6 and model 9 include both regime-level and structural controls. More detailed regression analyses for each dependent variable are presented in the appendices (*see* Table 8, Table 9, Table 10).

[33] Other studies identified overdispersion in their data and used negative binomial models in their analysis for similar applications (Colgan 2013). However, tests show that for my analysis the most efficient models are Poisson regressions and there is no overdispersion of data. I also, ran the empirical analysis using negative binomial models, but they produced virtually identical results, and for that reason the models presented in this paper are different versions of Poisson regressions.

[34] It is important to account for temporal dependence to reduce the risk of misleading results from generalized linear models (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). In my analysis, I use the solution proposed by Carter and Signorino (2010), which the authors argue perfom better than time dummies and produce equivalent results and are easier to estimate than splines.

Table 7. Poisson Fixed Effects Models

	Dependent variables:								
	All MIDs			Aggressor MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Ruling class	0.927***	0.843***	0.959***	0.959***	0.843***	0.956***	0.595	0.742***	0.480
	(0.077)	(0.083)	(0.087)	(0.115)	(0.105)	(0.094)	(0.555)	(0.275)	(0.517)
Regime-level controls		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Structural controls			✓			✓			✓
t, t^2, t^3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4,590	4,590	4,560	4,590	4,590	4,560	4,590	4,590	4,560
Log Likelihood	-1,936.996	-1,932.944	-1,915.753	-1,901.102	-1,893.854	-1,874.449	-430.847	-520.364	-414.535
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,117.991	4,115.888	4,091.507	4,046.203	4,037.707	4,008.898	1,105.695	1,056.728	1,089.070

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

The results show strong support for my argument. The effect of the 'old elites' – that is, regimes from the top – on interstate conflict is negative and statistically significant across the board with the exception of defender events. The size of the effect remains relatively constant as my analysis moves from bivariate models to multivariate models. Based on models that include all controls and state fixed effects (model 3, model 6, and model 9), the predicted number of interstate conflicts in a given year for a regime from the top is lower by a multiplicative factor of 0.96, 0.96, and 0.48 holding all covariates equal. In other words, if a state experiences a regime change from a regime from the bottom to a regime from the top, the predicted number of interstate conflicts decreases by 4% each year, the predicted number of aggressive actions against other states decreases by 4%, and the probability that the state will be attacked by another state decreases by 52%. While the effect is sizeable for the defender state in the militarized interstate dispute, it is not statistically significant in all cases (e.g., Table 7 model 6 and model 9). However, most models

show a powerful and statistically significant effect for models where *victim MID* is the dependent variable (*see* Table 10 in the appendices for more detailed results). Even in cases where the statistical significance disappears the effect remains large. A detail that requires attention is evolution of authoritarian regimes.

One might suggest that as regimes evolve – that is, founding fathers nominate their successors and a new generation of elites slowly replace aging elites – the impact of the origins of authoritarian rule should disappear. However, that is not the case. I account for this potential issue in two ways: (1) I include regime duration as a control, which while significant shows a very weak effect (in some models increases and in others reduces the risk of conflict), and (2) I include a cubic polynomial approximation of time that accounts for temporal dependence (impact of previous behavior of autocrat on her current behavior). This indicates that the origins of authoritarian regimes have a persistent and long-lasting effect on interstate conflict, which does not disappear over time.

Overall, empirical evidence supports all three of my hypotheses. Regimes from the top are less likely to engage in interstate conflict than regimes from the bottom. Compared to regimes from the bottom, regimes from the top are less likely to initiate interstate conflict against other states. Finally, regimes from the top are less likely to become victims of the attacks from the enemies abroad.

Discussion

In this paper, I studied sources of aggressive foreign policies in autocracies. My argument challenged central tenets of several seminal works including studies on domestic institutions and interstate conflict (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks

2014), work on individual leaders and their decisions to pursue aggressive foreign policies (Chiozza and Goemans 2011), and literature on revolutionary leaders (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). First, these studies propose that leader-level characteristics and their decisions about domestic institutions have an impact on foreign policies, but do not extend to their successors. I argue that this is not the case, and that the origins of authoritarian rule set long-term consequences on interstate conflict that survive past founding fathers of authoritarian regimes. Second, these studies argue that party-based and civilian regimes pursue more pacifistic foreign policies (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014), which I show is not necessarily the case. Many leaders of communist and revolutionary regimes that are classified as regimes from the bottom are civilian leaders who establish powerful parties, and yet they pursue particularly aggressive foreign policies (e.g., Stalin, Mao). Third, my argument contrasts with that of Chiozza and Goemans (2011) who propose that leaders who face the threat of forcible removal from office, pursue hawkish foreign policies. I show that authoritarian leaders in regimes from the top face significant domestic threats, and yet, they pursue relatively pacifistic foreign policies.

I build on the existing literature on authoritarian leaders that establish regimes that transform the preexisting state (Colgan 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005) and study the effects of such regimes on interstate conflict. Authoritarian leaders that transform the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state typically establish durable long-lasting regimes. Relatively low risk of domestic threats, such as coups, empowers these leaders to pursue risky foreign policies without worries that these actions will increase the probability of domestic threats. Furthermore, the transformative nature of regimes from the bottom threatens the social order and political life of adversarial states, which in turn, push them to instigate interstate conflict. On the other hand, leaders that rely on the

support of elites and institutions of the preexisting state face serious domestic threats, and hence, focus their attention to domestic politics rather than pursuing adventures abroad. Foreign enemies choose to meddle in domestic politics over initiation of interstate conflict, which has a potential to escalate into a costly war.

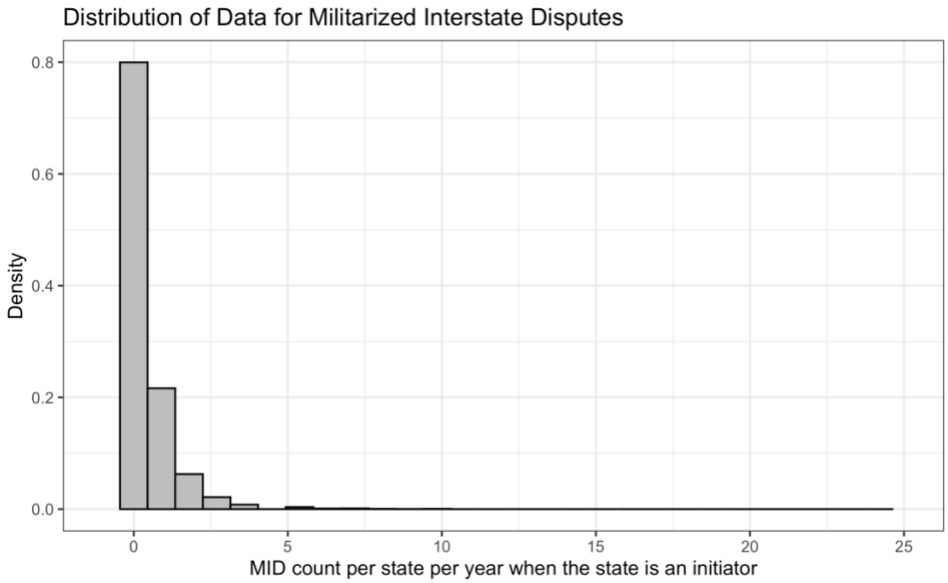
In this paper, I presented empirical evidence that authoritarian regimes from the bottom are more likely to get involved in militarized interstate disputes than regimes from the top. Similarly, regimes from the bottom pursue aggressive foreign policies, including initiation of interstate conflict, more frequently than regimes from the top. Finally, regimes from the bottom are more likely to get attacked by adversary states than regimes from the top. This evidence applies to autocracies around the world.

Appendices

Density Plots for Different Versions of Militarized Interstate Disputes

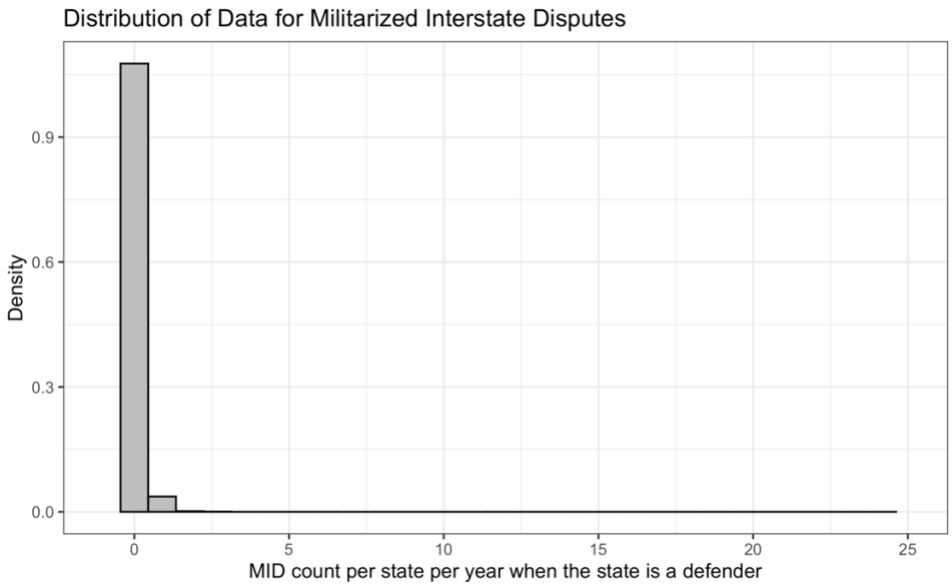
Density Plot: State is an Aggressor

Figure 6. The Density Plot for Aggressor MIDs



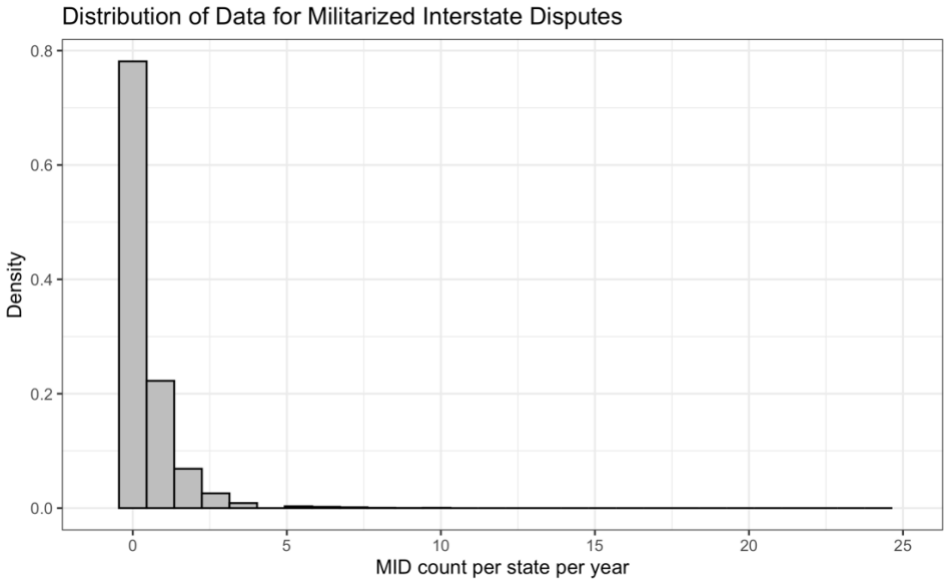
Density Plot: State is a Defender

Figure 7. The Density Plot for Defender MIDs



Density Plot: All Militarized Interstate Disputes

Figure 8. The Density Plot for MIDs



All Militarized Interstate Disputes

Table 8. Poisson Regression Models for all MIDs

	Dependent variable:					
	Militarized Interstate Disputes					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling class	0.826***	0.927***	0.834***	0.843***	0.965***	0.959***
	(0.114)	(0.077)	(0.133)	(0.083)	(0.105)	(0.087)
Military regime			0.939***	1.191***	0.875***	1.103***
			(0.136)	(0.127)	(0.140)	(0.132)
Personalist regime			1.021***	1.280***	1.016***	1.183***
			(0.134)	(0.105)	(0.119)	(0.101)
Regime duration			1.001***	0.999***	0.998***	0.992***
			(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.005)
log(Population)					1.007***	1.233***
					(0.032)	(0.113)
log(GDP/capita)					1.112***	1.014***
					(0.039)	(0.072)
GDP growth					0.995***	0.994***
					(0.006)	(0.005)
Contiguous borders					1.045***	1.065***
					(0.012)	(0.063)
State capacity					1.406	47.340***
					(1.138)	(1.760)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,560	4,560
Log Likelihood	-2,111.392	-1,936.996	-2,109.204	-1,932.944	-2,000.381	-1,915.753
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,232.784	4,117.991	4,234.409	4,115.888	4,026.762	4,091.507

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

Aggressor Militarized Interstate Disputes

Table 9. Poisson Regression Models for aggressor MIDs

	Dependent variable:					
	Aggressor MIDs					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling class	0.842***	0.959***	0.842***	0.843***	0.976***	0.956***
	(0.121)	(0.115)	(0.147)	(0.105)	(0.119)	(0.094)
Military regime			0.972***	1.228***	0.884***	1.108***
			(0.153)	(0.151)	(0.160)	(0.155)
Personalist regime			1.080***	1.429***	1.066***	1.314***
			(0.150)	(0.132)	(0.136)	(0.123)
Regime duration			1.000***	0.998***	0.996***	0.991***
			(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)
log(Population)					1.038***	1.152***
					(0.038)	(0.128)
log(GDP/capita)					1.106***	1.084***
					(0.048)	(0.078)
GDP growth					0.993***	0.992***
					(0.006)	(0.005)
Contiguous borders					1.042***	1.068***
					(0.014)	(0.066)
State capacity					1.024	85.600***
					(1.232)	(1.872)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,560	4,560
Log Likelihood	-2,082.194	-1,901.102	-2,080.754	-1,893.854	-1,972.910	-1,874.449
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,174.389	4,046.203	4,177.507	4,037.707	3,971.821	4,008.898

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

Defender Militarized Interstate Disputes

Table 10. Poisson Regression Models for Defender MIDs

	Dependent variable:					
	Victim MIDs					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ruling class	0.655**	0.595	0.742***	0.918**	0.799***	0.480
	(0.282)	(0.555)	(0.275)	(0.413)	(0.252)	(0.517)
Military regime			0.552	0.796*	0.646*	1.142***
			(0.370)	(0.461)	(0.365)	(0.402)
Personalist regime			0.391*	0.217	0.416*	0.186
			(0.214)	(0.329)	(0.224)	(0.398)
Regime duration			1.006***	0.999***	1.003***	1.024***
			(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.009)
log(Population)					0.728***	2.710***
					(0.110)	(0.471)
log(GDP/capita)					1.215***	0.368
					(0.099)	(0.271)
GDP growth					1.026***	1.026***
					(0.017)	(0.015)
Contiguous borders					1.063***	1.109***
					(0.045)	(0.080)
State capacity					46.404***	0.000
					(2.963)	(8.387)
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,590	4,560	4,560
Log Likelihood	-538.795	-430.847	-520.364	-424.307	-506.606	-414.535
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,087.590	1,105.695	1,056.728	1,098.615	1,039.213	1,089.070

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Chapter 4. Power-sharing in Authoritarian regimes: The Ministry of Defense and International Conflict

Abstract

The growing body of scholarship argues that domestic factors are the primary drivers of interstate conflict (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014). These studies assume that parties, legislatures, constitutions, and coercive institutions, such as domestic security apparatus and military, have a specific one-directional effect on leader's policies. However, the presence of these institutions does not necessarily determine the capacity of the ruling class to constrain and challenge the ruler – very often these domestic institutions are used by authoritarian leaders for their own purposes, such as creating an illusion of legitimacy, rather than empowering elites. This paper introduces a novel concept of authoritarian power-sharing – the decision of authoritarian leader to appoint the Minister of Defense – to account for previously unexplained variation in the probability of international conflict in authoritarian regimes. I argue that authoritarian leaders who nominate a defense minister engage in militarized interstate dispute less frequently than leaders who hold this position. First, the appointment of the defense minister constrains the ruler from unilateral decision-making about the use of military force abroad, and second, makes the leader fearful that initiation of interstate conflict will empower the Minister of Defense, which may pose a threat to the survival of authoritarian leader. Since the origins of authoritarian rule have long-lasting consequences on the make-up of the ruling class and domestic institutional structures – including the establishment and role of the Ministry of Defense – I also incorporate this dimension in my analysis. I generate four regime categories based on these arguments and make several predictions about the conflict behavior of authoritarian regimes. Unsurprisingly, regimes from the bottom in which the leader holds the defense ministry portfolio pursue the most hawkish foreign policies, whereas regimes from the top in which the leader appoints the Minister of Defense are the most pacifistic in terms of foreign policies. My sample covers 224 authoritarian regimes during the time-period of 1966-2010. Empirical analysis shows strong support for my hypotheses.

Keywords: Power-sharing, the make-up of the ruling class, militarized interstate disputes.

Introduction

Most studies on authoritarian regimes and international crises focus on constraints that prevent some authoritarian leaders from engaging in hawkish foreign policies. This body of scholarship assumes that psychological factors or lived experiences, such as personal ambition, expansionist mindset and military training, make authoritarian leaders particularly likely to

contemplate aggression abroad. On the other hand, authoritarian leaders won't act on such policies if domestic institutions impose high costs on policy failures. That's why, scholars argue, personalist and military regimes engage in adventurous foreign policies, whereas civilian and elite-constrained regimes pursue relatively pacifistic foreign policies (Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014). However, this set of work fails to account for a notable variation in the hawkishness of foreign policies within each regime type. For example, Augusto Pinochet and Francisco Franco can be categorized as strongmen – that is, personalist military leaders – and yet, contrary to the predictions of previous studies they pursued surprisingly pacifistic foreign policies. On the other hand, the communist regimes of Soviet Union and People's Republic of China, which are coded as party-based civilian regimes, pursued remarkably hawkish foreign policies. Furthermore, inconsistencies with coding of military regimes and other domestic institutions in previous studies necessitate a thorough reevaluation of these concepts, and their effects on foreign policies of authoritarian leaders.

This raises the following question, does power-sharing depress the propensity of authoritarian leaders to pursue aggressive foreign policies? I reexamine this question with a novel concept of power-sharing from recent comparative literature and propose a new causal mechanism. One of the most direct and straightforward measures of power-sharing between the military and ruler is the decision authoritarian leader makes on whether to appoint the Minister of Defense or keep this position herself (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). This concept avoids problems associated with other measures of power sharing, because the expected effect of the defense minister is one-directional – it reduces ruler's grip on the military. While parties, legislatures, constitutions, and militaries can serve the interests of authoritarian leader and even legitimize her unilateral decisions about what foreign policies to pursue, nomination of the defense minister

diffuses leader's power and has an immediate effect on autocrat's ability to make unilateral decisions about interstate conflict. Furthermore, this concept provides a unique window into the relationship between military elites, which are the most important members of the ruling coalition, and authoritarian leader. Ruler's decision to delegate the Minister of Defense (one of the most important cabinet positions) creates an institutional barrier – that is, closes a direct link between the leader and military (Meng and Paine 2022; Paine 2022). Multiple centers of authority and inability to use military force without approval of the defense minister makes it less likely that the leader will initiate an international crisis.

However, we cannot rely on one dimension to explain interstate conflict. If we look at previous work, there is clear evidence that the origins of authoritarian rule are strongly connected to the level of power-sharing, including arrangements with the military elites (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). It is also one of the most powerful predictors of both domestic (Dimitrov 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; B. Smith 2005) and foreign policies (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015; Walt 1996). Regimes that completely reshape the social and political life of the preexisting state – which I call regimes from the bottom – pursue interstate conflict more frequently than regimes that rely on the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state – which I identify as regimes from the top (*see* Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation). While the founding of an authoritarian regime has long-term and often irreversible effects on the relationship between the ruling coalition and authoritarian leader, the decision on whether to appoint a defense minister or hold the position herself, is under autocrat's control. In this paper I generate four regime categories based on the interaction between my power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling class dimensions. I show strong evidence that regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders hold the Ministry of Defense portfolio

pursue the most hawkish foreign policies, whereas regimes from the top in which leaders appoint the Minister of Defense are the most pacifistic.

This paper contributes to the literature of international relations in several ways. First, I introduce two innovative concepts about domestic politics in authoritarian states and show their role in the propensity to instigate international crises. I bring a novel measure of power-sharing from comparative literature introduced by Meng (2020) to the audience of international relations. I show that from the theoretical and practical perspective the appointment of the Minister of Defense is a much more precise measure of power-sharing than other concepts frequently used in the literature of comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict, such as personalism and militarism dimensions (B. Geddes 2003; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Butler 2004; Slater 2003; Weeks 2014). Second, I introduce an original concept about the make-up of the ruling coalition (*see* Chapter 2 of this dissertation for a detailed discussion of the conceptualization). I argue that in contrast to previous studies (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004), the preferences of the selectorate differ across regimes. Reliance on the new elites – people with no prior influence and resources – compared to that of the old elites – already rich and powerful people – determines a desire and capacity of the ruling class to challenge the authoritarian leader, which in turn, has implications on the foreign policies of authoritarian regimes.

This paper is organized as follows. In the next section I review existing scholarship on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict. I discuss previously used concepts of domestic institutions and their flaws. Then, my concepts of power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling class are presented. In the theoretical section of the paper, I advance my arguments about the effects of the nomination of the defense minister and the composition of the ruling coalition on

interstate conflict. Data and measures are discussed. Theoretical implications are thoroughly tested using logit and Poisson regression models. Conclusions follow.

Literature Review

There is a strong consensus among scholars that exclusionary rule and transformative nature of some regimes create conditions that are ripe for interstate conflict. In this section I cover the scholarship on domestic institutional structures and work on the origins of authoritarian rule. The former focuses on two regime dimensions – personalism and militarism – to explain hawkish foreign policies (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Reiter and Stam 2003; Weeks 2014), whereas the latter studies revolutionary regimes and their propensity to pursue aggression abroad (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015; Walt 1996). The origins of authoritarian rule are said to have an effect on domestic institutions (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). This very interesting connection between these two literatures necessitates further investigation.

Previous studies on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict – namely that of Peceny and Beer (2003), Peceny and Butler (2004), Lai and Slater (2006), and Weeks (2014) – do not account for a remarkable variation in the severity of foreign policies, not only across, but also within different authoritarian regime types. These seminal works are to a large extent based on outdated concepts of authoritarian regimes – most of which either use or build on Geddes (2003) and Slater's (2003) regime classification – and need to be updated. These concepts rely on multiple yes/no questions to construct either binary measures of regime type (as in Geddes et al. (2014) dataset) or continuous regime type variables based on proportion of yes/no answers (Weeks (2014) takes this approach). The former is problematic because it does not show the variation between categories. In some cases, regimes within the same category are more different in terms of their

institutions than regimes from different categories. For example, China since 1949 is coded as a party-based regime, but clearly there is a huge difference between China under Mao and China after Mao. Similarly, the Soviet Union under Stalin is coded as a party-based regime. These categories are time-invariant: the Soviet Union and China are coded as party-based regimes despite Stalin and Mao's complete control of their parties compared to their successors who largely bowed to party elites.

While Weeks (2014) attempts to address these issues, her approach does not solve other problems related to these measures. By looking at proportion of yes/no answers, this approach puts the same weight to all questions that measure personalism and militarism dimensions. For example, questions, such as "Does access to high government office depend on the personal favor of the leader" and "Has normal military hierarchy been seriously disorganized or overturned" are given the same weight without a clear justification. These measures lack nuance as country specialists that provide answers to these questions are forced to give yes/no answers when clearly there are degrees to which these questions could be answered. While some of these measures are continuous, they do not reflect such important aspects of militarism dimension as the type of military service, years served in the military, what branch of the military the leader served and so on. For example, Saddam Hussein is coded as the military leader as is Francisco Franco, and yet his training is very different – Franco had an extensive training and career in the military, whereas Hussein is not believed to have had any formal military training or experience in the field. Reliance on researchers and country experts to answer these questions rather than focusing on objective measures increases chances of errors. Studies that attempt to generate continuous measures based on Geddes raw data still rely on responses to subjective questions.

From the theoretical perspective this body of scholarship focuses on the constrains authoritarian leaders face from their selectorate and domestic institutions. Existing work on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict proposes that authoritarian leaders become increasingly constrained from taking unilateral actions on foreign policies as the size of the ruling coalition increases (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004), and domestic institutions, such as parties, are introduced (Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014). However, these studies argue that domestic institutions don't create incentives to pursue aggressive foreign policies, but rather that an unconstrained nature of some authoritarian regimes allow dictators to pursue desired policies, which are driven by personal ambition, military training, and various psychological factors[35]. That is, most of these studies focus on constraints authoritarian leaders face to pursue foreign policies of their choice and ignore the logic for the aggression abroad. Essentially, the literature seems to propose that personalist or military leaders have a different mindset than other types of leaders and pursue aggression abroad because of personal reasons, such as greed and glory, or training – that is, military experience makes leaders sympathetic towards the use of force and biased against diplomatic solutions. These ideas have been challenged by comparative literature, which focuses on domestic threats to the survival of authoritarian leaders (Gandhi 2008; Roessler 2011; Svolik 2012; Singh 2014; Roessler and Ohls 2018; Meng 2019). While comparativists focus on domestic policies, there is no reason to believe that dictators would pursue rational policies domestically, but irrational and dangerous policies abroad. I argue that a remarkable variation in the severity of foreign policies across authoritarian regimes can be partially

[35] An exception to the rule is a seminal work published by Chiozza and Goemans (2011), which presents a more up to date analysis of authoritarian politics that is based on the dynamics between the leader and elites. The authors argue that leaders will initiate interstate conflict to minimize the risk of forcible removal from office, which essentially means that leaders will initiate international crises if and only if such policies increase their chances of survival, or at worst guarantee safe and relatively prosperous retirement. That is, rather than focusing on ex-ante domestic constrains authoritarian leaders face to pursue foreign policies of their choice, Chiozza and Goemans study ex-post domestic consequences of pursuing interstate conflict.

explained by studying the threats of forcible removal from office (*see* Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

Furthermore, previous studies rely on concepts, such as the presence of parties, legislatures, and constitutions to explain domestic and foreign policies. However, these institutions do not necessarily have a one-directional effect. That is, parties can be relatively powerful and constrain authoritarian leader from pursuing aggressive foreign policies, but also, parties can be used to serve the interests of the dictator and legitimize her actions. The presence of the party does not say much about the quality of the institution and its capacity to challenge the leader. In this paper, I use the decision about whether to fill the Minister of Defense position or keep this position herself as a measure of power-sharing, which I borrow from recent comparative literature (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022) and apply this concept to the context of international relations. The Defense portfolio is a simple yet straightforward application of power-sharing, which implies a one-directional effect. The decision to nominate the Minister of Defense appeases the military elites, because it gives the military more agency, but also, introduces a potential challenger to the rule of authoritarian leader.

Another body of literature that is related to this paper is the work on the origins of authoritarian rule. In the literature, a particular attention is given to revolutionary and rebel regimes, which scholars argue are unique, because the nature of such regimes empowers the founding fathers to completely transform the social order and political life of the preexisting state (Huntington 1968; B. Smith 2005; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). Furthermore, it is argued that revolutionary and rebel leaders have specific character traits, such as expansionist mindset, tolerance for violence and commitment to their policy goals, which translates to more frequent international crises (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015). Similarly, scholars propose

that the transformative nature of said regimes increases the probability of miscalculation and ideological distance between states, which in turn, create regional instabilities (Fearon 1995; Haas 2005; Maoz 2004; Walt 1996). However, empirical implications of these theories are limited because revolutionary regimes are extremely rare[36]. These studies make a misguided assumption that regimes can be transformative only under a revolution or rebellion, which is not necessarily the case (*see* Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation). The founding father of an authoritarian state can transform the social order and domestic institutions through peaceful means, such as communist ideology (Dimitrov 2013). That is, other regimes share features of revolutionary and rebel regimes as long as regime founders transform the social order and political life of the preexisting state.

Theoretical Framework

Previous work on power-sharing arrangements and the origins of authoritarian rule imply a number of causal mechanisms that connect various concepts of power-sharing to relatively pacifistic foreign policies, and transformative regimes to aggression abroad. Furthermore, there is evidence that both of these concepts are connected: rebel and revolutionary regimes are more likely than other types of regimes to establish durable coalitions, powerful parties and power-sharing arrangements between the ruler and military (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005), and hence, should be studied together. In this section, I reevaluate previous work on inclusive coalitions by focusing on a novel approach to power-sharing – that is, whether authoritarian leader appoints or holds the defense minister post. Then, I discuss theoretical implications of regime categories that are generated based on two dimensions – the Defense

[36] Some papers only identify 18 revolutionary regimes during the time period of 1900 – 2015 (Lachapelle et al. 2020).

portfolio and make-up of the ruling class – on the propensity for international crises. Hypotheses are presented at the end of the section.

Power-sharing: Appointed Defense Ministers v. Defense Ministry Portfolios Held by an Authoritarian Leader

While previous work shows strong support for the negative effect of power-sharing on interstate conflict, there is a need to reexamine this literature with new concepts that provide a clearer, more straightforward, and one-directional effect on foreign policies. I borrow from comparative literature and propose to use the nomination of the Minister of Defense as a measure of power-sharing (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). The decision to appoint the defense minister has several important implications on domestic politics, and consequently, on international conflict.

In a typical stable authoritarian regime, top military officials are members of the ruling coalition. The biggest and most frequent threat to the rule of authoritarian leader is a military coup organized by military elites (Singh 2014; Svolik 2012). Almost 60 percent of authoritarian leaders face a coup attempt, of which, the vast majority is organized by top military officers (Chiozza and Goemans 2011; Singh 2014; Svolik 2012). One way to combat these threats is to share power with the military by appointing the Minister of Defense as opposed to abolishing the post, keeping it unfilled or holding the position herself (Meng and Paine 2022). The Ministry of Defense portfolio is distinctive from other cabinet positions because it gives certain amount of power over the coercive hand of the state to a person other than the leader. It also offers certain amount of autonomy and creates a distance between the dictator and the military.

Even if the Minister of Defense is not connected directly to military elites or that person is a family member, the nomination of defense minister itself distances the leader from the military

and creates opportunity for the minister to challenge the ruler if things go south between the leader and the minister. As Meng and Paine (2022) point out in their seminal work, power-sharing is a "double-edged" sword. The appointment of the Minister of Defense is likely to reduce the motives for the military elites to directly challenge the leader. But it also lessens dictator's grip on the military, which means that if authoritarian leader makes significant errors in the domain of domestic and foreign policies the appetite might arise for the defense minister to challenge the leader. The data supports this claim, among high ranking officials the defense minister is the most likely to be responsible for a coup attempt (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; Singh 2014). Essentially, the nomination of the Minister of Defense makes the autocrat fearful of forcible removal from office, and hence, make her cautious about domestic and foreign policies. Under these circumstances risky actions – of which initiation of international conflict is almost always the case – is unlikely.

Similarly, authoritarian regimes in which the defense minister position is filled by a person other than the ruler have lower propensity for international crises, because of the constraining institutional effect. There is a consensus in the literature about the constrained nature of power-sharing regimes, which in turn, depresses the probability of interstate conflict (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014). Taking a unilateral action to pursue aggression abroad is nearly impossible, because the defense minister has at least some influence over the military and its strategies. In rare circumstances, where the dictator and defense minister both favor the instigation of international conflict, the policy requires cabinet meetings and negotiations between the two about the strategy and resources to be used in the conflict. The prolonged decision-making process increases the probability that during this time period the peaceful resolution will be

discovered between adversarial states. That is, the nomination of the Minister of Defense works in several ways to depress the probability of international crisis.

The Make-up of the Ruling Coalition: Regimes from the Bottom v. Regimes from the Top

There is evidence that the origins of authoritarian rule set long-lasting and often irreversible conditions that are ripe for interstate conflict[37]. Regimes can be characterized by the transformation of the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state or by the reliance on the social and institutional structures of the old regime. Previous studies propose that only a limited number of regimes – that is, revolutionary and rebel regimes – have features of a transformational regime (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). However, I identify numerous other regimes that transformed the preexisting state – regimes that achieved this status through other means than a revolution or rebellion, such as communist ideology and post-colonial pro-independence movements (Dimitrov 2013; Meng and Paine 2022; Paine 2019). To identify the make-up of the ruling class I ask the following question, did the founding father of an authoritarian regime transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state, or said leader rely on the social and institutional structures of the preceding regime?

Regimes that completely remold domestic institutions and disrupt the social order are categorized as regimes from the bottom. Authoritarian leaders in these regimes rebuild institutions from the ground up and establish a new class of elites – people with little-to-no influence and resources, such as urban proletariat, peasants, educators, and students. An example of a regime from the bottom is People's Republic of China, the founding father of which, Mao Zedong,

[37] *See* Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 for a more detailed description and analysis of the origins of authoritarian regimes. For a further analysis of the origins of authoritarian rule and interstate conflict see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

completely transformed domestic institutions of preceding regime and brought people who had not government or business experience into the ruling coalition. Regimes that rely on the institutions and social order of the preexisting state are identified as regimes from the top. Authoritarian leaders in these regimes rely on the institutions of the preceding state and people who are already rich and famous. Example of a regime from the top includes Chile under Augusto Pinochet, who came to power through a military coup and established a regime that was largely based on the institutions of the preexisting democratic regime and people with influence and resources. Members of his ruling coalition included lawyers, such as Jaime Guzmán, people with connections to the US (so-called Chicago boys), top military officers, and people with business interests. That is, the make-up of the ruling coalition is very different in regimes from the bottom as opposed to regimes from the top.

The founding fathers of authoritarian regimes set long-lasting consequences on both domestic and foreign policies. Regimes from the bottom are more durable, because they transform the state, which in turn, enables them to build institutions that promote elite cohesion and political-military fusion (Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). These are factors that minimize the risk of domestic threats to the rule of authoritarian leaders and empower dictators to pursue aggressive foreign policies. Authoritarian leaders are unlikely to be punished by risky policies because the ruling coalition consists of the new elites who don't have status and interests abroad. Furthermore, elites are willing to support the authoritarian ruler in her endeavors with an expectation to gain influence and important cabinet appointments in the future. On the other hand, policies, such as an initiation of international conflict, are much more likely to be challenged in regimes from the top. Leaders in these regimes rely on the old elites – people with business interests and international networks – the preferences of which are rather

conservative. Aggressive foreign policies threaten to disrupt the status quo, which in turn, might negatively affect the resources and networks of the members of the ruling coalition. That is, regimes from the bottom pursue hawkish foreign policies, whereas regimes from the top are relatively pacifistic. These arguments are considered more extensively in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Previous work on comparative authoritarianism presents some evidence that the origins of authoritarian regimes and power-sharing arrangements are connected. Revolutionary and rebel regimes are more likely to establish durable parties (B. Smith 2005), blend civilian and military hands of the state (Lachapelle et al. 2020), and appoint Ministers of Defense (Meng and Paine 2022) than other regime types. This connection requires further examination.

Regimes from the Bottom: The Nomination of the Minister of Defense Compared to the Post Held by an Authoritarian Leader Herself

Elite cohesion and the fusion of political-military affairs empower dictators in regimes from the bottom to pursue relatively hawkish foreign policies. Similarly, the decision to hold the position under her control enables the leader to keep complete control over the coercive hand of the state, make unilateral decisions about domestic and foreign policies, and in turn, engage in interstate conflict. These dimensions work together to incentivize authoritarian regimes, in which, authoritarian leaders hold the Minister of Defense position, to pursue the most hawkish foreign policies.

Regimes From the Top: The Nomination of the Minister of Defense Compared to the Post Held by an Authoritarian Leader Herself

As discussed above, the appointment of the Minister of Defense depresses the propensity of authoritarian leaders to initiate interstate conflict. Similar effect is observed for regimes that rely on the old elites for support (regimes from the top). These dimensions work together to make regimes from the top, in which, authoritarian leaders appoint the defense minister, the most pacifistic regime category.

Empirical Implications

Two broad empirical implications follow from the theoretical framework of this paper (*see* Figure 9 for the summary of different regime categories and associated predictions):

H1. *Authoritarian leaders that appoint the Minister of Defense pursue less aggressive foreign policies than authoritarian leaders who hold this position themselves;*

H2. *Authoritarian power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling coalitions have an effect on foreign policies of authoritarian leaders – the nomination of the defense minister and establishment of the regime from the top both depress the probability of interstate conflict:*

H2A: Regimes from the bottom, in which authoritarian leaders hold the position of the Minister of Defense, pursue the most aggressive foreign policies;

H2B: *Regimes from the top, in which authoritarian leaders appoint defense ministers, pursue the most pacifistic foreign policies*.

Figure 9. Regime Categories and Predictions

The Origins of Authoritarian Rule and the Make-up of the Ruling Coalition:	Domestic Institutional Structures	
	Exclusionary politics *Defense minister position is held by an authoritarian leader*	Power-sharing arrangements *Authoritarian leader appoints the Minister of Defense*
Regimes From the Bottom (RFTB) *Regimes that transform the social order and domestic politics of the preexisting state*	H2AA: Regime durability and the most hawkish foreign policies. Cases: *Mao Zedong's China (1949-1954), Soviet Union before Stalin's death (1922-1953)*	H2AB: Regime stability and moderately hawkish policies. Cases: *Soviet Union (1953-1990), China after Mao's death and prior to the 18th Party Congress (1976-2012)*
Regimes From the Top (RFTT) *Regimes that rely on the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state*	H2BA: Threats to domestic stability, but capacity to make unilateral policy decisions, and moderate foreign policies. Cases: *Imperial Japan under Tōjō Hideki (1943-1945), Panama under José María Pinilla Fábrega and Bolívar Urrutia Parrilla (1968-1982).*	H2BB: Threats to domestic stability, but constrained authoritarian leader, and the most pacifistic foreign policies. Cases: *Francisco Franco's Spain (1939-1978), Augusto Pinochet's Chile (1973 - 1981), Chiang Kai-shek's China (1926-1948).*

Data and Measurement

In this paper I use panel data – that is, the unit of analysis is country-years. The dataset covers 115 states that were coded as authoritarian at some point between 1966 - 2010[38]. During this time period I recorded 224 authoritarian regimes, of which 160 are coded as regimes from the top and 64 as regimes from the bottom, and 411 authoritarian leaders, of which 341 appointed the Minister of Defense at some point and 70 held the defense ministry portfolio throughout their tenure. The sample includes 3514 observations.

[38] The dataset includes all authoritarian regimes that appear on Geddes et al. dataset (2014) during the period of 1966-2010.

Dependent Variables

For the purposes of consistency I employ the same dependent variables as in Chapter 3 of my dissertation – that is, I use versions of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) from the Correlates of War database (Palmer et al. 2020). MIDs are defines as hawkish foreign policies that include "*the threat, display, or use of military force short of war by one member state"* towards another state (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996, 163). My approach is similar to that of Colgan (2013), I use three types of MIDs in my analysis. *Attacker MIDs* identify states that initiated interstate conflict, *Victim MIDs* show states that had to defend against attacks from adversarial states, and *All MIDs* identify all cases of militarized interstate disputes. I code these variables in two distinct ways. First, for the initial analysis I create binary measures of MIDs that identify whether the state got involved in at least one MID in a given year (coded as 1) or not (coded as 0). Second, for the main body of analysis I use counts of MIDs, which is the number of militarized interstate disputes in a given year per state (*see* Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14 for density plots of each dependent variable).

Independent Variables

I use two different independent variables to test my hypotheses. The first variable is a binary measure of power-sharing, or more precisely a measure on whether the dictator holds the post of the Minister of Defense (0) or appoints the defense minister (1) (Meng 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). If we look at the regime level, leaders in 169 of 224 regimes nominated the defense minister at some point. At the leader-level, 341 of 411 authoritarian leaders appointed the defense minister at some point. The second variable is a composite measure of regime categories based on my power-sharing variable (the *Defense portfolio*) and *the make-up of the ruling coalition*

variable[39], which is also a binary measure. The make-up of the ruling class identifies two types of regimes: regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top. Regime is categorized as a regime from the bottom if regime is established by transforming the social order and domestic institutional structures of the preexisting state. That is, the founding father completely rebuilds domestic institutions – both political and military – from the ground up and establish a new class of elites – people with no influence, resources, and power in the preceding regime. Regime is coded as a regime from the top if the founding father of authoritarian rule relies on the social and political life of the preexisting state for support. That is, while the regime is new, the leader relies on domestic institutions and military structures of the preexisting state as well as people that are already famous, rich, and powerful. My sample includes 224 authoritarian regimes, of which 64 are categorized as regimes from the bottom (1300 country-year observations) and 160 (2214 country-year observations) as regimes from the top. Detailed description of the data and coding rules are presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

As discussed above, the main independent variable is an interaction between my power-sharing and composition of the ruling class variables. Based on these data I generate four regime categories: (1) regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders hold the Ministry of Defense portfolio (21 regimes, 133 country-year observations), (2) regimes from the bottom, where leaders appoint the defense minister (43 regimes, 1167 country-year observations), (3) regimes from the top, where leaders hold the defense minister position (34 regimes, 189 country-year observations), and (4) regimes from the top in which leaders appoint defense ministers (126 regimes, 2025 country-year observations).

[39] The make-up of the ruling coalition is an original variable that I also used in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation (see Chapter 2 for a detailed description and coding rules for this variable).

Covariates

In this paper I use a number of regime-level and structural covariates that are discussed in the literature as potential explanations of interstate conflict. The former includes military regime and regime duration variables, whereas the latter account for such factors as GDP per capita rates, GDP growth, population size, state capacity and a number of contiguous borders with neighboring states. All of these measures are discussed in the literature as explanatory variables for the hawkishness of foreign policies including interstate conflict.

Regime-level covariates – the measure of militarism and regime duration – come from Geddes et al. dataset (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014)[40]. These measures are included in the analyses, because the former is believed to increase the probability of interstate conflict (Lai and Slater, 2006; Weeks, 2012, 2014), whereas the latter is said to reduce that probability (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; B. C. Smith and Spaniel 2019). Structural covariates come from a variety of sources. The *number of contiguous borders (or geographic proximity to other states)* (COW n.d.; Stinnett et al. 2002), *state's capacity* (NMC n.d.; Singer et al. 1972), *the natural logarithm of the population size, natural logarithm of GDP per capita, and GDP growth rates* (Coppedge et al. 2022; Fariss et al. 2021) are all used as potential explanatory factors for the level of interstate tensions in previous studies.

[40] Another and probably a more precise measure of militarism that I considered is the proportion of active military personnel in the cabinet. The role the military has within the ruling coalition determine its ability to challenge the authoritarian leader (Singh 2014; P. B. White 2017a, 2017b). However, this variable includes a lower number of observations and for that reason the military regimes variable is used as a primary control in the empirical analysis. It is important to note, that both variables produce nearly identical results, and don't affect coefficients of main dependent variables.

Selection Effects

Estimating the effects of defense ministers on the probability of interstate conflict poses endogeneity concerns. The problem occurs when the independent variable in the linear model is correlated with the error term. This is most frequently the case under the following circumstances: (1) when the empirical analysis excludes important predictors (known as "omitted variable bias"), and (2) when the outcome variable (Y) either predicts the independent variable (X) or there is a two-way effect and both X and Y have an impact on each other at the same time (Lynch and Brown 2011). In my empirical analysis I address the former by controlling for covariates frequently used in the literature on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict. The latter is addressed in this section theoretically.

The decision of an authoritarian leader to appoint the Minister of Defense is not random. The question is whether this move is driven by domestic or international concerns. The comparative literature shows strong evidence that changes in domestic institutional structures – including cabinet appointments – are largely driven by domestic environment and not foreign policy concerns (Colgan 2013; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng 2019; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). First, authoritarian leaders make decisions about power-sharing arrangements based on the level of domestic threats, such as coups and civil wars (Boix and Svolik 2013; Gandhi 2008; Meng 2019; Svolik 2012). Second, the origins of authoritarian rule may also set trajectories for different types of domestic arrangements (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; Paine 2019; B. Smith 2005). Finally, post-civil war settlements and negotiations to curb ethnic violence between opposing domestic factions are said to have an effect on domestic institutional structures (Hartzell and Hoddie 2015; Paine 2019; Roessler 2011; Roessler and Ohls 2018). That is, there is little

reason to believe that authoritarian leaders make decision about domestic institutions based on their foreign policy preferences.

While conditions under which authoritarian leaders make power-sharing arrangements – that is, domestic threats, the origins of authoritarian rule, and post-civil war settlements – are discussed above, when do leaders establish Ministries of Defense and appoint defense ministers? The significance of the Ministry of Defense portfolio is demonstrated by leader's unwillingness to share the post: the Minister of Defense position is more likely to be held personally by the leader than any other cabinet position (Meng 2020, 110). There is a good reason for that, the vast majority of coups are plotted and successfully carried out by top ranking military officials, such as Army Chief of Staff and The Minister of Defense (Meng and Paine 2022; Singh 2014)[41]. On the other hand, the military elites are important members of the ruling coalition, and their cooperation is key to a stable authoritarian rule. Authoritarian leaders share power with potential challengers – that is, delegate the defense minister – to confront threats to their survival in office and ensure military cooperation (Paine 2022; Roessler 2011). That is, cabinet appointments allow dictators to allocate goodies to the members of the ruling coalition (De Mesquita et al. 2003) and grant more independence to military structures by creating an institutional link between the leader and military (Meng and Paine 2022, 3). While appointment of defense minister is what Meng and Paine (2022) call a "double-edged sword" and has clear drawbacks it might be the best option to ease tensions between the executive and military.

[41] Unsurprisingly, coups are the most likely to succeed when they are carried out by top officials (Singh 2014). Meng and Paine (2022) show empirical support for these claims: coups attempted by generals and cabinet-level officials succeed 60% of the time (their sample includes African countries). The success rate exceeds 80% when coups are organized by the Minister of Defense, Vice Minister of Defense, and Army Chief of Staff.

There is clear evidence that appointment of the Minister of Defense is not driven by foreign policy concerns, but mainly by domestic factors, such as increasing threats of popular uprisings and insurgencies, which necessitate military cooperation (Meng and Paine 2022; Paine 2022), and threats of coups from the military, which force authoritarian leaders to look for a compromise to ensure their survival (Meng 2019; Svolik 2012). Furthermore, the origins of authoritarian rule – that is, whether the regime is revolutionary or not – and post-civil war environment are contributing factors to domestic institutional structures, such as the establishment of the Ministry of Defense (Hartzell and Hoddie 2015; Lachapelle et al. 2020; B. Smith 2005). That is, it is highly unlikely that initiation of international conflict or attack from a neighboring state will have an impact on the decision of authoritarian leader to appoint the Minister of Defense or remove the position.

Empirical Analysis

This paper studies the implications of domestic politics – that is, the composition of the ruling class and power-sharing – on interstate conflict. Following previous empirical work on leader- and regime-level factors, I take a monadic approach to study interstate conflict (Colgan 2013; Lai and Slater 2006). My empirical analysis uses event counts of interstate conflict (originator MIDs, all MIDs, victim MIDs) as dependent variables that include disproportionate number of events with a 0 count (country-years with no interstate conflict). For such type of data fixed-effects Poisson regression models produce the most consistent and efficient results (Wooldridge 1999). I don't identify overdispersion of data, which indicates that these models are the most fitting. Density plots for different dependent variables are presented in the appendices (*see* Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14). In this section, I estimate and present fixed-effects Poisson models using different versions of militarized interstate disputes as my dependent variables (number of MIDs per state per year).

To address concerns about the suppression effect covariates are included in the analysis sequentially (Lenz and Sahn 2021). One issue that is often overlooked by researchers and needs to be addressed is temporal dependence (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). I rely on the remedy proposed by Carter and Signorino (2010), which – the authors argue – is as or more effective than frequently used techniques, such as time dummies and splines. So, the temporal dependence issue is addressed by calculating and incorporating cubic polynomial approximation of spell-time (t, t^2, t^3) – peace years in my analysis (Carter and Signorino 2010). To reduce omitted variable bias, my analysis includes models with state fixed effects, which control for observable and unobservable characteristics within each country. The linear equation for my models takes the following form:

$$\ln(\mathrm{E}(Y_{it})) = \alpha + \beta_R R_{it} + \beta_x X'_{it} + \beta_T T'_{it}\,, \qquad (1)$$

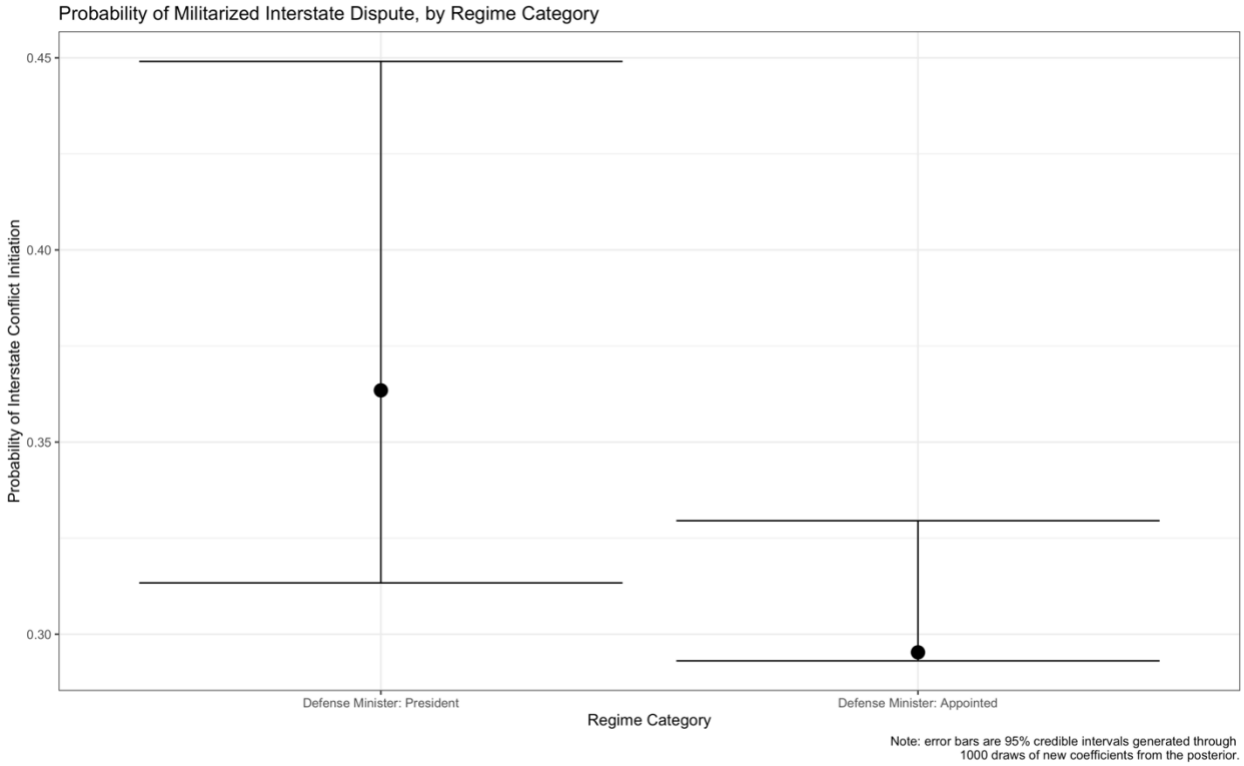
Where subscripts *i* and *t* denote individual states and time accordingly, Y_{it} is a count of militarized interstate disputes (*MIDs*, *Attacker MIDs*, *Victim MIDs*), β_R is the coefficient for R_{it}, which are my independent variables (*appointment of defense ministers and regime categories*), X'_{it} is a vector of covariates included in my analysis, and T'_{it} is a measure of temporal dependence (t, t^2, t^3). I cluster standard errors at the state-level.

Before I discuss the results from fixed-effects Poisson models, I present predicted probabilities that are calculated based on fixed-effects logit estimates (in this analysis, my dependent variable is a binary measure of whether the MID occurred in a state at a given year, rather than event counts). These are consistent with existing literature (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2014). Another benefit of estimating logit models is their interpretability. The discussion of Poisson models follows.

Results: Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

This analysis deals with power-sharing and interstate conflict. As discussed above, power-sharing is a binary measure on whether the leader holds the defense ministry portfolio or appoints the defense minister. To demonstrate the plausibility of my results, I estimate predicted probabilities based on a simple bivariate logit model (*see* Figure 10). The model includes country fixed effects and cubic polynomial approximation of spell-time (peace years) to account for observable and unobservable factors within each country and temporal dependence. Dependent variable in this analysis is a binary measure of militarized interstate disputes (0 indicates peace in a given year, and 1 shows the presence of MID in a given year). Results demonstrate a stark difference between authoritarian leaders who hold the Minister of Defense position and those who appoint the defense minister: the former have 36 percent probability to engage in an interstate conflict, whereas the latter will get involved in militarized interstate disputes with a significantly lower probability of 29 percent. Regression tables that use logit analysis are presented in the appendices (*see* Table 13).

Figure 10. Power-sharing and Predicted Probabilities of MIDs



Given promising initial results, I also estimate fixed effects Poisson models using versions of counts of militarized interstate conflict (*All MIDs, Attacker MIDs, Victim MIDs*) as my dependent variables. The results from this analysis are presented in Table 11 below. Poisson models show strong and statistically significant effects. Authoritarian leaders who appoint defense ministers are less likely to engage in and initiate interstate conflict. Based on models that include all controls and state fixed effects (model 4 and model 5), the predicted number of interstate conflicts in a given year for an authoritarian leader who appoints the defense minister is lower by a multiplicative factor of 0.78 and 0.75 holding all covariates equal. That is, if authoritarian leader decides to appoint the defense minister, a position which previously has been held by an autocrat herself, the predicted number of interstate conflicts decreases by more than 21 percent and the predicted probability of aggressive actions by an autocrat against other states decreases by more than 22 percent. Somewhat surprisingly the leaders that appoint defense ministers are more likely

to become victims of interstate conflict (*see* model 3 and model 6 in Table 11). Detailed analysis that includes results from Poisson regression models with covariates added sequentially are presented in the appendices (*see* Table 15, Table 16).

Table 11. Poisson Models for Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:					
	All MIDs	Aggressor MIDs	Victim MIDs	All MIDs	Aggressor MIDs	Victim MIDs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Appointed Minister	0.851***	0.841***	1.273**	0.788***	0.775***	1.394***
	(0.107)	(0.115)	(0.516)	(0.095)	(0.098)	(0.512)
Regime-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State FE				✓	✓	✓
t, t^2, t^3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509
Log Likelihood	-3,091.400	-2,952.907	-328.900	-2,600.141	-2,475.713	-361.228
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,210.800	5,933.814	689.800	5,456.282	5,207.425	978.456

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

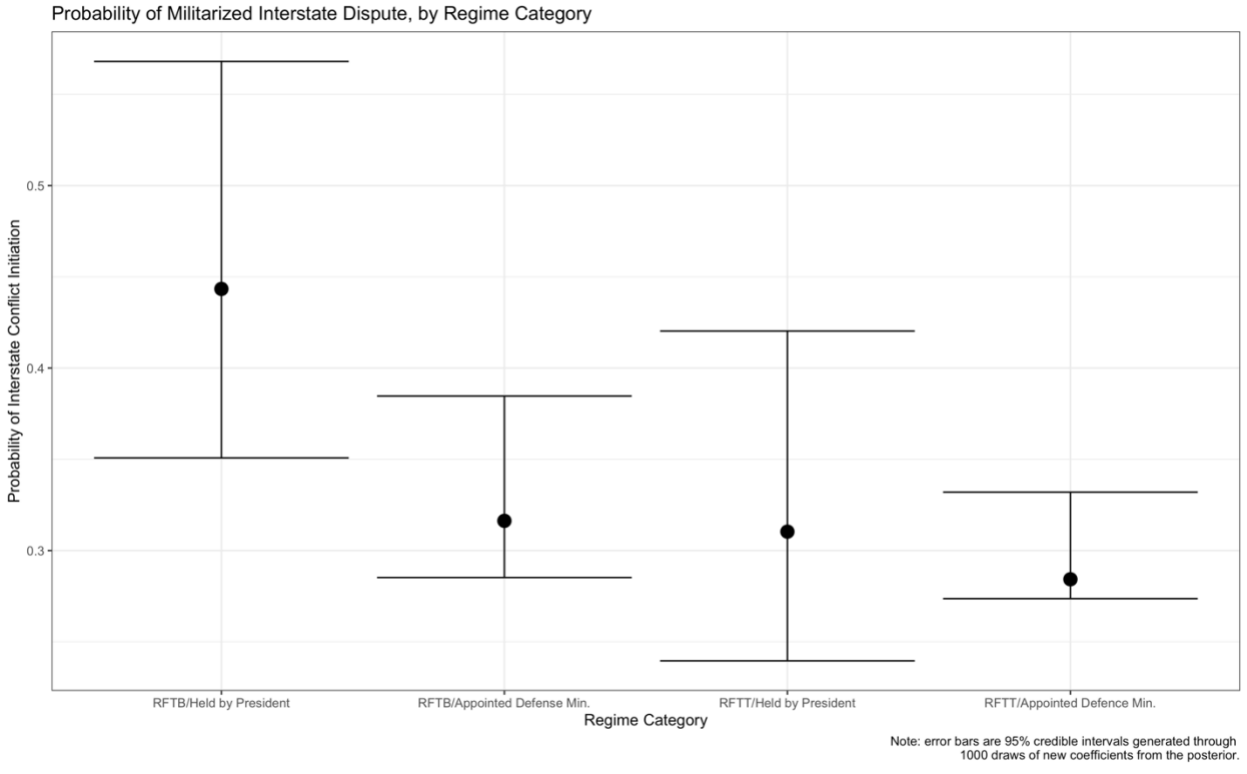
Results: The Make-up of the Ruling Coalition, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

This part of the empirical analysis focuses on the interaction between the make-up of the ruling class and my power-sharing variable, and its effects on interstate conflict. To demonstrate the plausibility of results, I begin my analysis with a graph that shows predicted probabilities based on a bivariate logit model with fixed effects and cubic polynomial approximation of spell-time (*see* Figure 11)[42]. For this logit analysis, I treat the dependent variable as a binary measure of

[42]Figure 11 uses the following acronyms for the make-up of the ruling coalition: RFTB for regimes from the bottom and RFTT for regimes from the top.

interstate conflict – more precisely, whether the state experienced at least one militarized interstate dispute in a given year or not. The figure below displays some evidence about the hawkishness of foreign policies in regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top in which dictators either appoint the defense minister or hold the position themselves. Almost 45 percent of regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders hold the Ministry of Defense portfolio will engage in interstate conflict, compared to 32 percent of regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders appoint the defense minister. If we look at regimes from the top, the probability that leaders who hold the defense minister position will engage in interstate conflict is 31 percent, compared to 28 percent probability for leaders who appoint the defense minister. Initial results show strong support for my argument.

Figure 11. Regime Categories and Predicted Probabilities of MIDs



The main body of the empirical analysis – that is, Poisson models that use event counts of militarized interstate disputes – strongly support my initial findings. The results are displayed in the table below (see Table 12)[43]. The effect is strong and statistically significant across all MIDs and attacker MIDs. Regimes from the top in which authoritarian leaders nominate the defense minister are the most pacifistic, whereas regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders keep the defense minister position pursue the most hawkish foreign policies.

If we look at the models that include all controls and state fixed effects (model 4 and model 5), compared to regimes from the bottom in which an autocrat holds the defense ministry portfolio, the predicted number of militarized interstate disputes for a regime from the bottom in which authoritarian leader appoints the defense minister is lower by a multiplicative factor of 0.79 and 0.78 holding all covariates equal. Compared to a regime from the bottom in which the autocrat holds the Minister of Defense position, a regime from the top with a leader that holds the defense minister position the predicted probability of interstate conflict is lower by a multiplicative factor of 0.89 and 0.92 holding all controls equal (the same probability for a regime from the top in which the autocrat appoints the defense minister position is lower by a multiplicative factor of 0.7 and 0.71). That is, if autocrat in a regime from the bottom appoints the defense minister the predicted number of interstate conflicts decreases by 21 percent and the predicted probability of aggressive actions by an autocrat against other states decreases by 22 percent. Moving from a regime from the bottom to a regime from the top, these probabilities decrease by 11 and 8 percent if the leader holds the defense minister position and decrease by 30 and 29 percent if the leader appoints the defense minister. The surprising finding again is the effect of my regime categories on defender MIDs – regimes that appoint the defense minister are more likely to be attacked from abroad (this

[43] Regression table uses RFTB for regimes from the bottom and RFTT for regimes from the top.

effect is consistent for both and applies to both regimes from the bottom and regimes from the top). More detailed results are presented in the appendices (*see* Table 17 and Table 18).

Table 12. Poisson Regression Models for the Make-up of the Ruling Class, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:					
	All MIDs	Aggressor MIDs	Victim MIDs	All MIDs	Aggressor MIDs	Victim MIDs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
RFTB: Appointed Defense	0.740***	0.727***	2.373***	0.790***	0.775***	1.628*
	(0.167)	(0.185)	(0.783)	(0.135)	(0.129)	(0.895)
RFTT: Held by President	0.735***	0.717***	2.041**	0.893***	0.915***	0.708
	(0.230)	(0.248)	(0.951)	(0.318)	(0.325)	(1.090)
RFTT: Appointed Defense	0.712***	0.692***	1.981***	0.700***	0.709***	0.852
	(0.191)	(0.204)	(0.768)	(0.240)	(0.237)	(1.033)
Regime-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State FE				✓	✓	✓
t, t^2, t^3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509	3,509
Log Likelihood	-3,091.400	-2,952.907	-328.900	-2,600.141	-2,475.713	-361.228
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,210.800	5,933.814	689.800	5,456.282	5,207.425	978.456

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. $*$ p < 0.10, $**$ p < 0.05, $***$ p < 0.01.

Discussion

This paper explored regime-level factors – power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling coalition – and their effects on the probability of interstate conflict. I argued that authoritarian leaders who appoint defense ministers – and in that way share power with the ruling class and make military more independent – pursue interstate conflict less frequently than authoritarian

leaders who hold the defense ministry portfolio. These predictions are based on two theoretical considerations that are consistent with previous studies (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Weeks 2014). First, power-sharing has a constraining effect on authoritarian leaders and guard them from taking unilateral actions, such as aggressive foreign policies. Second, a decision to engage in a militarized interstate dispute would empower the military and might create opportunities for the Minister of Defense to challenge the autocrat, which in turn, makes an autocrat fearful that interstate conflict might result in her removal from office. My second argument brings together this measure of power-sharing and the concept of the make-up of the ruling class that I explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of my dissertation. I argued that regimes from the top pursued interstate conflict less frequently than regimes from the bottom, because the preferences of the old elites are geared towards the status quo, and because the transformative nature of regimes from the bottom disrupts commerce and networks in neighboring states and creates fears of the domino effect. That is, power-sharing and the decision of the founding father to rely on the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state depress the hawkishness of foreign policies. Empirical analysis showed strong support for both arguments.

These arguments challenge several notions of literature on comparative authoritarianism and interstate conflict. I argued that previous measures of power-sharing are problematic and coded inconsistently, primarily because they assume that the presence of certain institutions, such as parties, parliaments, and constitutions, is an indicator of power-sharing, which is not always the case. For example, the Soviet Union and China are coded as party-based regimes since their founding (Barbara Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). However, the parties under Stalin and Mao had little-to-know constraining effect on their leaders, compared to the influence and capacity of these same parties to constrain and dictate policies to the successors of Stalin and Mao. Essentially,

these measures do not account for the quality and power of these institutions on the leader. The appointment of a defense minister is a very straightforward and precise indicator of power-sharing. Even if said leader appoints a person from the inner circle or relative to this position, the threat to an autocrat is immediate. Defense minister enjoys certain level of control over the coercive apparatus of the state, which she can use to her advantage (Meng and Paine 2022). Second, my argument about the transformative nature of some regimes sets long-term trajectories, which survive past the founding fathers. The make-up of the ruling class accounts much more effectively for the propensity to engage in militarized interstate dispute than various measures of domestic institutions. The transformation of social and political life at regime founding as compared to regimes that rely on the social order and institutions of the preexisting state explains the capacity of the ruling coalition to challenge the leader and dictate their policy preferences. This measure also accounts for the relative pacifism of strongmen (personalist-military leaders), such as Pinochet of Chile and Franco of Spain, and relative hawkishness of machines (party-based civilian leaders), such as Mao and Stalin. While the future research might build on these findings by creating a larger sample that covers a longer time period, one interesting finding that certainly invites further investigation is the effect of power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling class on *Victim MIDs* that goes to the opposite direction to that of other dependent variables.

Appendices

Density Plots:

Figure 12. The Density Plot for all MIDs

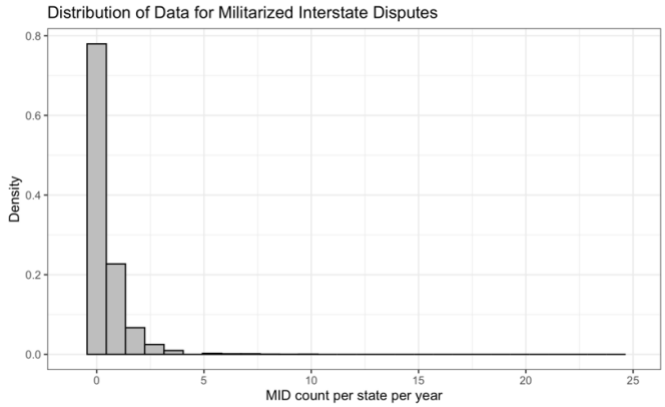


Figure 13. The Density Plot for Aggressor MIDs

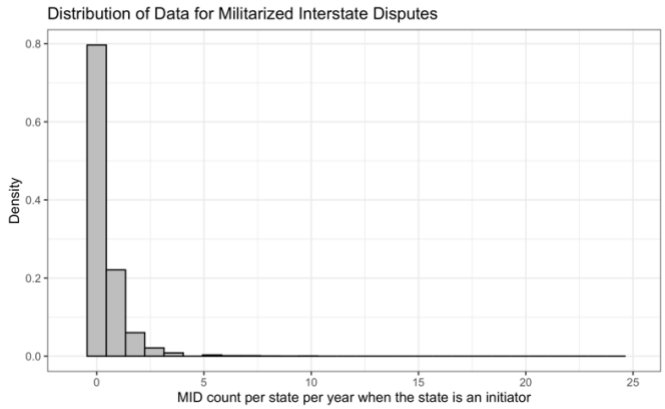
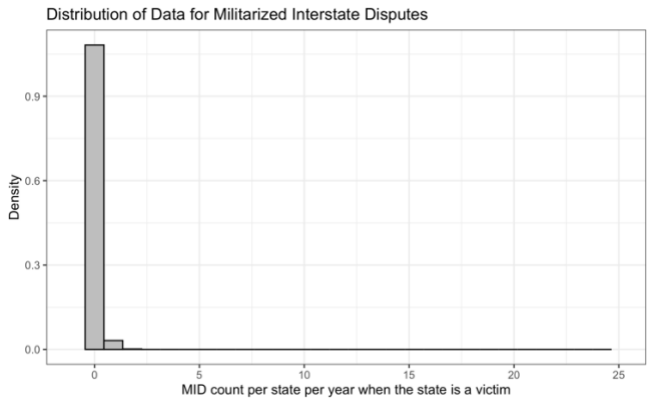


Figure 14. The Density Plot for Defender MIDs



Logit Empirical Models: Power-sharing, the Make-up of the Ruling Class, and Interstate Conflict

This appendix displays results from logit models starting with models on power-sharing and interstate conflict (see Table 13), and then analysis on the interaction between power-sharing and the make-up of the ruling class, and its effects on interstate conflict (see Table 14).

Table 13. Fixed Effects Logit Models for Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Appointed Minister	0.656***	0.678***	0.645***	0.631***	0.647***	0.630***	1.453**	1.504**	1.373**
	(0.176)	(0.163)	(0.180)	(0.191)	(0.178)	(0.187)	(0.598)	(0.610)	(0.561)
The make-up of the ruling coalition		0.687**	0.834**		0.724**	0.884***		0.864	0.654
		(0.334)	(0.336)		(0.333)	(0.320)		(0.728)	(0.822)
Military regime		0.717**	0.674*		0.679*	0.623		2.158**	2.202***
		(0.362)	(0.376)		(0.381)	(0.400)		(0.843)	(0.853)
Regime duration		0.973***	0.968***		0.970***	0.965***		1.000***	1.016***
		(0.007)	(0.009)		(0.007)	(0.009)		(0.017)	(0.025)
log(GDP)			0.826***			0.885***			0.270
			(0.250)			(0.250)			(0.551)
GDP per Capita			0.984***			0.980***			1.030***
			(0.010)			(0.011)			(0.018)
log(Population)			2.063***			1.611***			5.315***
			(0.356)			(0.351)			(0.842)
State Capacity			1,803,491.00***			2,919,927.00***			0.0000
			(5.362)			(5.135)			(14.428)
Contiguous Borders			0.894***			0.856***			0.881***
			(0.116)			(0.115)			(0.186)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-1,674.960	-1,658.105	-1,648.100	-1,628.523	-1,607.721	-1,599.908	-346.678	-346.368	-338.793
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,587.921	3,560.211	3,550.199	3,495.046	3,459.443	3,453.815	931.355	936.737	931.587

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01.

Table 14. Fixed Effects Logit Models for the Make-up of the Ruling Class, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
RFTB: Appointed defense minister	0.526	0.569**	0.522*	0.491	0.535*	0.509*	1.307	1.355	1.499
	(0.320)	(0.275)	(0.306)	(0.322)	(0.277)	(0.295)	(0.949)	(0.975)	(0.952)
RFTT: Held by autocrat	0.499	0.520	0.598	0.503	0.531	0.627	0.762	0.727	0.760
	(0.397)	(0.376)	(0.384)	(0.413)	(0.392)	(0.386)	(1.156)	(1.197)	(1.134)
RFTT: Appointed defense minister	0.413	0.405	0.455	0.410	0.402	0.470	1.210	1.188	0.963
	(0.346)	(0.328)	(0.316)	(0.345)	(0.332)	(0.304)	(0.920)	(1.069)	(1.054)
Military regime		0.723**	0.680*		0.685*	0.629		2.156**	2.207***
		(0.357)	(0.369)		(0.375)	(0.394)		(0.842)	(0.857)
Regime duration		0.974***	0.968***		0.970***	0.965***		1.000***	1.016***
		(0.007)	(0.009)		(0.007)	(0.009)		(0.017)	(0.025)
log(GDP)			0.825***			0.884***			0.270
			(0.250)			(0.250)			(0.551)
GDP per Capita			0.984***			0.980***			1.030***
			(0.010)			(0.011)			(0.018)
log(Population)			2.090***			1.634***			5.332***
			(0.360)			(0.357)			(0.849)
State Capacity			2,080,380.000***			3,358,499.000***			0.00000
			(5.358)			(5.130)			(14.584)
Contiguous Borders			0.894***			0.856***			0.880***
			(0.116)			(0.116)			(0.188)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-1,673.575	-1,657.844	-1,647.738	-1,627.324	-1,607.413	-1,599.531	-346.660	-346.359	-338.786
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,589.149	3,561.688	3,551.475	3,496.649	3,460.825	3,455.061	935.320	938.719	933.572

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Poisson Empirical Models: Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

The following appendix presents detailed Poisson regression models with covariates added sequentially (*see* Table 15 and Table 16 for models on power-sharing and interstate conflict).

Table 15. Poisson Models for Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Appointed Minister	1.108***	1.123***	0.848***	1.074***	1.097***	0.837***	1.999***	1.827***	1.251**
	(0.159)	(0.156)	(0.108)	(0.161)	(0.156)	(0.116)	(0.504)	(0.515)	(0.503)
The make-up of the ruling coalition		0.941***	0.787***		0.965***	0.773***		0.449	0.468
		(0.206)	(0.240)		(0.212)	(0.247)		(0.392)	(0.409)
Military regime		0.998***	0.992***		0.996***	0.988***		1.012***	1.011***
		(0.003)	(0.007)		(0.003)	(0.007)		(0.002)	(0.002)
Regime duration			1.241***			1.227***			1.522***
			(0.096)			(0.105)			(0.105)
log(GDP)			0.985***			0.982***			1.016***
			(0.009)			(0.009)			(0.015)
GDP per Capita			1.121***			1.165***			0.750***
			(0.086)			(0.095)			(0.146)
log(Population)			2.291			3.738			38.473***
			(3.374)			(3.488)			(3.703)
State Capacity			1.070***			1.062***			1.067***
			(0.030)			(0.032)			(0.062)
Country FE	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
t, t2, t3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-3,464.575	-3,459.844	-3,093.091	-3,330.996	-3,320.469	-2,954.863	-475.842	-459.873	-437.192
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,939.150	6,933.688	6,210.181	6,671.993	6,654.937	5,933.725	961.684	933.746	898.385

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01.

Table 16. Fixed Effects Poisson Models for Power-sharing and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Appointed Minister	0.747***	0.762***	0.781***	0.728***	0.745***	0.770***	1.486***	1.532***	1.391***
	(0.136)	(0.116)	(0.089)	(0.143)	(0.122)	(0.093)	(0.540)	(0.549)	(0.506)
The make-up of the ruling coalition		0.823***	0.763***		0.794***	0.723***		2.030**	2.020**
		(0.250)	(0.260)		(0.252)	(0.264)		(0.793)	(0.786)
Military regime		0.986***	0.975***		0.986***	0.973***		1.000***	1.013***
		(0.004)	(0.005)		(0.005)	(0.005)		(0.012)	(0.021)
Regime duration			0.907***			0.948***			0.354
			(0.152)			(0.158)			(0.441)
log(GDP)			0.990***			0.987***			1.029***
			(0.006)			(0.007)			(0.016)
GDP per Capita			1.359***			1.296***			3.700***
			(0.191)			(0.206)			(0.687)
log(Population)			472,887.300***			564,625.600***			0.00002
			(2.343)			(2.411)			(13.090)
State Capacity			0.895***			0.881***			0.916***
			(0.086)			(0.093)			(0.152)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-2,652.039	-2,630.745	-2,600.427	-2,528.462	-2,506.044	-2,475.862	-367.887	-367.615	-361.519
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,542.078	5,503.490	5,452.854	5,294.925	5,254.089	5,203.723	973.775	977.230	975.037

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01.

Poisson Empirical Models: The Make-up of the Ruling Class, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

The following tables display Poisson regressions with control variables added sequentially for models that study the interaction between the make-up of the ruling class and power-sharing, and its implications on interstate conflict (*see* Table 17 and Table 18).

Table 17. Poisson Models for the Make-up of the Ruling Class, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
RFTB: Appointed defense minister	1.073***	1.096***	0.740***	1.027***	1.064***	0.727***	2.620***	2.383***	1.819**
	(0.247)	(0.244)	(0.167)	(0.251)	(0.248)	(0.185)	(0.749)	(0.777)	(0.760)
RFTT: Held by autocrat	0.677**	0.673*	0.735***	0.659*	0.654*	0.717***	1.241	1.282	1.614*
	(0.339)	(0.347)	(0.230)	(0.342)	(0.351)	(0.248)	(0.957)	(1.008)	(0.968)
RFTT: Appointed defense minister	0.804***	0.809***	0.712***	0.768***	0.776***	0.692***	2.046***	1.917**	1.481*
	(0.281)	(0.292)	(0.191)	(0.286)	(0.299)	(0.204)	(0.747)	(0.789)	(0.780)
Military regime		1.069***	0.809***		1.102***	0.798***		0.489	0.505
		(0.214)	(0.248)		(0.222)	(0.256)		(0.420)	(0.423)
Regime duration		0.998***	0.992***		0.996***	0.988***		1.012***	1.011***
		(0.003)	(0.007)		(0.003)	(0.007)		(0.002)	(0.002)
log(GDP)			1.246***			1.232***			1.543***
			(0.096)			(0.106)			(0.105)
GDP per Capita			0.985***			0.982***			1.018***
			(0.009)			(0.009)			(0.016)
log(Population)			1.120***			1.164***			0.734***
			(0.089)			(0.098)			(0.135)
State Capacity			1.746			2.669			14.999***
			(3.485)			(3.600)			(3.725)
Contiguous Borders			1.070***			1.061***			1.074***
			(0.030)			(0.032)			(0.059)
Country FE	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-3,447.010	-3,442.100	-3,091.400	-3,313.959	-3,302.365	-2,952.907	-475.042	-459.282	-436.650
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,908.020	6,902.199	6,210.800	6,641.917	6,622.731	5,933.814	964.085	936.564	901.299

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. ∗ p < 0.10, ∗∗ p < 0.05, ∗∗∗ p < 0.01.

Table 18. Fixed Effects Poisson Models for the Make-up of the Ruling Class, Power-sharing, and Interstate Conflict

	Dependent variable:								
	All MIDs			Attacker MIDs			Victim MIDs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
RFTB: Appointed defense minister	0.747***	0.819***	0.790***	0.725***	0.800***	0.775***	1.481*	1.541*	1.628*
	(0.168)	(0.148)	(0.135)	(0.171)	(0.147)	(0.129)	(0.887)	(0.916)	(0.895)
RFTT: Held by autocrat	0.833**	0.596*	0.893***	0.843**	0.604*	0.915***	0.811	0.729	0.708
	(0.324)	(0.321)	(0.318)	(0.344)	(0.336)	(0.325)	(1.082)	(1.135)	(1.090)
RFTT: Appointed defense minister	0.640***	0.459	0.700***	0.634***	0.456	0.709***	1.214	1.111	0.852
	(0.219)	(0.282)	(0.240)	(0.223)	(0.283)	(0.237)	(0.868)	(1.023)	(1.033)
Military regime		0.832***	0.768***		0.801***	0.726***		2.103***	2.194***
		(0.243)	(0.260)		(0.244)	(0.264)		(0.798)	(0.814)
Regime duration		0.983***	0.974***		0.982***	0.973***		0.998***	1.009***
		(0.004)	(0.005)		(0.004)	(0.005)		(0.015)	(0.023)
log(GDP)			0.911***			0.952***			0.362
			(0.153)			(0.160)			(0.443)
GDP per Capita			0.990***			0.988***			1.030***
			(0.006)			(0.007)			(0.016)
log(Population)			1.346***			1.286***			3.840***
			(0.201)			(0.217)			(0.691)
State Capacity			235,180.000***			337,835.900***			0.00000
			(2.707)			(2.700)			(12.438)
Contiguous Borders			0.902***			0.885***			0.930***
			(0.087)			(0.094)			(0.151)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
t, t^2, t^3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509	3,514	3,514	3,509
Log Likelihood	-2,651.296	-2,622.669	-2,600.141	-2,527.908	-2,498.706	-2,475.713	-367.844	-367.523	-361.228
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,544.592	5,491.337	5,456.282	5,297.815	5,243.412	5,207.425	977.687	981.047	978.456

Note: Exponentiated coefficients. Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

This dissertation investigated the make-up of the ruling class and power-sharing arrangements in authoritarian regimes and their effects on domestic and foreign policies. I presented novel concepts to study authoritarian regimes that build on recent studies on revolutionary and rebel regimes (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005), and previous work on domestic institutions in authoritarian states (Colgan and Weeks 2015; Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014). I argued that the origins of authoritarian regimes – that is, whether the founding leaders transform the social order and domestic institutions of the preexisting state (regimes from the bottom) or rely on the traditional elites centered around the political and economic upper classes, which most frequently translate to keeping the social and political life of the preexisting state (regimes from the top) – have important long-term consequences on the survival of authoritarian leaders as well as propensity of said leaders to engage in international conflicts. Furthermore, I explored the effects of domestic institutions – more precisely the delegation of the Ministry of Defense portfolio – on the propensity of authoritarian leaders to initiate international conflict. This section of the dissertation reevaluated existing work on power-sharing arrangements and its effects on foreign policies of authoritarian leaders by presenting an alternative measure of authoritarian power-sharing. Empirical evidence showed strong support for my arguments.

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation I argued that it is not the size – as some scholars argued (De Mesquita et al. 2003; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004) – but the make-up of the ruling coalition that contributes to regime durability and conflict proneness.

Authoritarian leaders that transform the social and political life of the preexisting state have several significant advantages over rulers that rely on traditional elites, which include already rich and influential individuals, and institutions of the previous regime. The ruling coalition that consists of new elites, which translates to individuals with little prior experience in government affairs and few resources, does not have organizational capacity to challenge the leader. That is, in the short-run the ruling elites in the regimes from the bottom pose very few domestic threats to the survival of authoritarian leader. This initial weakness of the ruling class provides the founding leaders of regimes from the bottom with time and space to protect themselves against domestic threats through institutional reforms, promotion of rigid ideology and other means. Similarly, the transformation of the social and political life – and the coercive hand of the state in particular – enables said leaders to glue social-political-military aspects of the regime together, which in turn, makes elite-driven challenges to their rule rare. These advantages authoritarian leaders have over the ruling coalition in regimes from the bottom apply not only to domestic but also foreign policies.

My predictions about the stability of the regimes from the bottom and their conflict proneness are well supported by empirical evidence. I introduced an original variable that categorizes authoritarian regimes based on the make-up of the ruling coalition. In the empirical analysis I estimated its effects on regime stability (Chapter 2) and probability as well as frequency of interstate conflict (Chapter 3). I thoroughly tested my results by using logit and Poisson models with case-fixed effects. That is, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation explored the origins of authoritarian rule, and its connection to the make-up of the ruling coalition, which as a result, appears to have a powerful effect on regime durability and propensity to engage in international conflict.

Chapter 4 fits neatly in this discussion and introduces an additional domestic institutional factor that determines the relationship between the leader and ruling elites and its effects on interstate conflict. This work reevaluated previous studies on power-sharing arrangements in authoritarian states and international crises by introducing a new measure of authoritarian power-sharing, which I borrowed from Meng (2020). I argued that authoritarian leaders that share power with the military elites by appointing the Minister of Defense are less likely to engage in interstate conflict than those leaders that hold the Defense portfolio themselves. I concluded this chapter by generating four regime categories based on the make-up of the ruling class and delegation of defense minister. This chapter presents strong empirical evidence that authoritarian regimes from the bottom in which authoritarian leaders keep the post of the Minister of Defense are the most likely to pursue aggression abroad, whereas regimes from the top in which leaders appoint the Minister of Defense are the most pacifistic.

This dissertation brings several important contributions to the existing work on comparative authoritarianism and international conflict. First, it bridges the literatures on the origins of authoritarian rule, size of the winning coalition and regime ideology (Colgan 2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015; Dimitrov 2013; Huntington 1968; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Maoz 2004; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005; Walt 1996). Second, it expands on the work on revolutionary and rebel regimes by showing that characteristics and consequences of these regimes are found in other types of regimes (Colgan 2013; Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). That is, *the regimes from the bottom* is a much broader regime category that in addition to revolutionary and rebel regimes include other regimes, the founding leaders of which, transform the social order and political life of the preexisting state. Third, my dissertation challenges some of the work on diversionary war tactics (Chiozza and Goemans 2011) and shows

that only those leaders who have relatively low chances of successful forcible removal from office and organizational advantages over the ruling elites engage in international crises – that is, authoritarian leaders don't gamble for survival. Fourth, in contrast to previous work on domestic institutions (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014) I present evidence that unconstrained authoritarian rulers are not necessarily personalist and military leaders, but leaders from the regimes from the bottom. Finally, I reevaluate existing work on power-sharing arrangements in authoritarian states and international conflict (Lai and Slater 2006; Peceny and Beer 2003; Peceny and Butler 2004; Weeks 2014) and show additional evidence that authoritarian power-sharing reduces the propensity of authoritarian leaders to initiate interstate conflict.

In the final sections of this dissertation, I recap some of the cases introduced in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4, discuss the relevance of studying authoritarian regimes, and identify potential areas for future research.

Implications of the Theory: Illustrative Cases

In this dissertation I briefly touched on several cases including that of China under Chiang Kai-shek and China under Mao Zedong. These cases illustrate my arguments about the impact the ruling elites have over domestic and foreign policies. Nationalist China under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek – a regime from the top – was a fragile regime, whereas People's Republic of China under Mao and consequent leaders – a regime from the bottom – has remained a durable and stable dictatorship. If we look at foreign policies of these leaders, Chiang Kai-shek pursued relatively pacifistic foreign policies, whereas Mao was eager to engage in conflicts with foreign nations.

In 1925, after the death of nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek – who in Western media appeared as Generalissimo (Taylor 2009, 57) – emerged as the new leader of Kuomintang (KMT). His upbringing was that of an upper-class[44]. Kai-shek was classically trained and was given a neo-Confucian education. Generalissimo received military education in Central Army School in China and later additional training in Japanese military academy. Upon his return to China from Japan Kai-shek joined one of the "secret societies" committed to Chinese Nationalism, the membership of which included prominent military officers, businessmen, bankers and other elites (Taylor 2009, 22–23). With the help of these networks Kai-shek was rather quickly brought into the inner circle and started to gain power within KMT. After being named the Commander-in-chief of the National Revolutionary Army, Generalissimo became a de-facto leader of Chinese Nationalists. His efforts to unify China were largely successful, and by 1928, the nationalists controlled most of China's territory.

Chiang continued Sun's legacy and largely relied on the social order and domestic institutions of the previous regime. Generalissimo clearly recognized the fragility of his coalition that consisted of wealthy and influential patrons, such as former aristocracy, business elites, top military officials and warlords. Elite factionalism and the role of warlords and other people with bad reputations within the ruling coalition created a lot of problems for Chiang. He faced constant pressures and resistance at his attempts to reform domestic political and economic institutions. As a result, Chiang's reforms only achieved moderate success – domestic institutions remained

[44]Kai-shek's family owned a small business, which had a license – probably a result of political connections – to sell salt and wine, which made the family part of the rural elite (Taylor 2009, 10–12). Generalissimo's relative wealth can also be illustrated by his ability to self-fund his studies in Tokyo, Japan.

inherently corrupt and inefficient (Taylor 2009, 1, 50–51, 330, 487–88)[45]. Furthermore, these domestic dynamics meant that the Generalissimo faced constant threats to his survival, which in turn, meant that he had to focus his attention on domestic politics. Chiang pursued repressive domestic politics – in 1927 he purged the leftists within the KMT and engaged in further repressions to minimize the communist threat.

On the other hand, his foreign policies were relatively pacifistic, he sought allies with Soviet Union and was willing to overlook aggression from Japan. Both Soviets (the occupation of Chinese territory by Russians in the 19th century) and the Japanese (Manchuria) held territories that previously belonged to China, and yet Kai-shek was willing to compromise and not raise these issues. Generalissimo resisted societal pressures and dissatisfaction among some members within the party and hesitated to start a conflict with Japan. Similarly, even after the Soviet Union ended its support for the Nationalist government, he tried to build alliances with Stalin.

While there is clear evidence that Chiang resented both the communists and the Japanese, he decided to collaborate with them. And yet, all this juggling did not prevent challenges to his policies and threats to his rule. In 1936, Chiang was seized by one of his generals and held hostage for two weeks in a coup attempt and by 1949 had to leave the country. Overall, Chiang Kai-shek's instincts were right, the war with Japan weakened the regime and eventually resulted in the Communist victory.

[45] Chiang Kai-shek was known for his honesty and integrity. For example, General Chennault defended Chiang in front of President Roosevelt: *Sir [when addressing Roosevelt], I think the Generalissimo is one of the two or three greatest military and political leaders in the world today. He has never broken a commitment or promise to me* (Chennault and Hotz 1949, 226). And yet, he was forced into tolerating widespread corruption in order to stay in power and keep fractioned country together.

China under Mao Zedong

While not the original founder of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao founded the People's Republic of China after winning a civil war against Chiang's nationalists in 1949. During his reign in power, Mao masterfully pitted party members against each other, employed unparalleled levels of domestic repression and engaged in numerous interstate conflicts that allowed him to hold absolute power for decades. He was able to do so for two reasons. First, the members of the ruling coalition had little-to-no prior experience in government affairs and very few resources, which enabled Mao to build institutions that served his interests[46]. Second, Mao built his own rebel army from peasants and common criminals as early as 1927, which over time grew into a powerful military force (Pantsov and Levine 2012, chap. 15). The years fighting together and socialization into a particular ideology worked as a glue and resulted in a reliable and loyal military force (Lachapelle et al. 2020; Meng and Paine 2022; B. Smith 2005). By the time Mao become the leader of the Communist China in 1949, it was a completely transformed country with new domestic institutions, military force, and social order, which as discussed in this dissertation are essential for durable and stable regimes.

In 1934 Mao started to gain favor from Moscow, other party members and military commanders (Pantsov and Levine 2012, chap. 19). In 1935 Mao achieved de-facto leadership of the party and was elected a chairman of the CCP for the first time. Increasingly exclusionary rule over party politics was complete in 1943, when he became the chairman of the Secretariat and Politburo of the CCP. Mao used this as an opportunity to purge party members viewed not

[46] Most of the people who became members of the ruling coalition were educators, students, peasants, and common criminals. Party members before the establishment of the People's Republic of China received some financial support from the Soviet Union, but even then, the vast majority of these communist elites struggled financially and lived frugally. In order to survive, a number of influential communists taught classes, edited newspapers and worked as translators. Similarly, Mao's army had little funding and had to resort to extracting resources from people in its path (Pantsov and Levine 2012, chaps. 12, 15).

sufficiently loyal to Mao to pave the path to exclusionary rule of China after the country is unified. He received very little resistance from the party members. This time period also marks increasing Mao's popularity – while conflict with Japan has been going on and off for more than a decade, his alliance with Chiang Kai-shek and pro-war advocacy during the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) and propaganda about effective guerilla war tactics attracted masses of new supporters (Chang and Halliday 2011, chap. 23). While still technically at civil-war, united front with Chiang's regime against Japan, is the first example of many of Mao initiating an interstate conflict to increase support from the masses, consolidate power and deal with dissenters by expelling them from the party, sending suspected opponents (from the CCP) to prisons or the front lines (Chang and Halliday 2011, chap. 23). This war cemented Mao's popularity among peasants and youth, gained him god-like status within the party and weakened Chiang.

Throughout his tenure as the leader of the People's Republic of China, Mao showed propensity for international conflict. In 1949 Mao Zedong defeated nationalist forces and came victorious in the Chinese civil war. This is the beginning of unconstrained power not only within the party, but also over the mainland China. While Nationalists retreated to Taiwan (and took a large portion of Chinese military equipment including ships and planes), Mao did not stop and ordered military officials to plan a military operation against Taiwan. Multiple attacks on islands under Kai-shek's control failed. This did not deter Mao as he prepared for a large-scale conflict with Taiwan. The US literally sailed its naval ships between Taiwan and China, and yet numerous conflicts occurred resulting in casualties. If not for the Korea war (1950-1953), in which Mao was greatly involved, there is reason to believe that all-out war over Taiwan was a real possibility. US involvement did not deter Mao from conflict in Korea and did not stop him from getting involved in Vietnam in the First Indochina War and later supporting North Vietnam. These hyper aggressive

foreign policies did not stop there, Mao got himself involved in a conflict with Khrushchev soon. Haas (2005) argues that increasing ideological differences between the Soviet Union and China resulted in deteriorating relationship. However, he seems to overstate ideological differences between Soviet Union and China. There is evidence that Khrushchev was extremely excited to meet Mao during his first visit to China and wanted to start his tenure with actually more generous and mutually beneficial policies toward China than Stalin did (Pantsov and Levine 2012, chap. 29). It is true that Mao disliked Khrushchev's destalinization policies, but while similar in terms of personalist governing style, Stalin himself deviated from Marxist-Leninist policies Mao espoused. Rather problems at home demanded aggression towards the Soviet Union. These actions cemented Mao's status as one of global communist leaders and granted him legitimacy at home. When Mao started to lose support of the peasantry in 1955 and domestic policies including further collectivization of the economy and domestic repression failed, Mao turned to his playbook (Pantsov and Levine 2012, 415). He intensified his rhetoric against policies pursued by Khrushchev, which eventually resulted in Sino-Soviet split and border conflict between China and Soviet Union. Throughout 1950s Khrushchev attempted to rectify relations with China and was generally friendly towards China. That, however, did not deter Mao from pursuing aggression. While some members of the Chinese Communist Party had a preference for strong relations with the Soviet Union, they did not challenge Mao and followed his command.

Mao pursued inter-state conflict with one neighbor after another, including Soviet Union and states supported by the US. At first, even before holding power over mainland China, involvement in the Second Sino-Japanese war, which rallied his core supporters (peasants, youth, etc.) around the flag, enabled Mao to eliminate opponents both within his party and weaken Chiang, and prevent a potential coup from Wang Shiwei and other dissenters. Next, repeated

aggression against Taiwan and its territories after victory in the civil war against the Nationalists. Then, involvement in the Korea War and tumultuous relationship with the Soviet Union, which ended in a border crisis. Finally, Sino-Indian War over a disputed Himalayan border that started in 1962. Mao's playbook: use interstate conflict to stabilize the country during or after a domestic crisis and minimize a threat of coups. It worked, for many decades, and with very little resistance from the domestic elites.

Relevance

National security experts have been warning about the expansion of authoritarian rule across the world[47]. Surprisingly, the vast majority of recent democratic breakdowns are transformations to a particular type of authoritarianism – personalist authoritarian rule, such as that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey and Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela. Even party-based regimes, such as those of China, are experiencing a transition towards a personalist rule[48]. And yet, contrary to the predictions of existing theories, which associate aggressive foreign policies with personalist (Peceny and Butler, 2004; Weeks, 2014) and military (Lai and Slater, 2006; Weeks, 20124, 2014) dictatorships, there is a noticeable variation in the hawkishness of foreign policies these regimes pursue. The spread of not only aggressive, but also relatively pacifistic personalist authoritarianism, challenges central tenets of existing theories about foreign policies of authoritarian states and invites further investigation into this topic.

My dissertation brings a meaningful and relevant contribution to the study of authoritarian rule, which is on the rise globally, by presenting a novel approach to study variation in the domestic

[47] This tendency has accelerated in the last couple of years. See the reports from the Freedom house in 2022 and 2021 that discuss the expansion of authoritarian rule.

[48]Other types of dictatorships, such as military regimes have almost completely disappeared from the world's stage. As of July, 2022, Myanmar (a result of a recent coup d'état) and Thailand's military juntas are the last regimes of this type.

and foreign policies of authoritarian regimes. The make-up of the ruling coalition has often been overlooked in previous literature, but nevertheless – as this dissertation shows – plays an essential role in shaping policies in authoritarian states. Furthermore, the decision of authoritarian leaders to empower the ruling elites by delegating the Ministry of Defense portfolio has important implications on the probability of international crises. These two dimensions – that is, the make-up of the ruling coalition and appointment of the Minister of Defense – provide insights into the variation in the durability of authoritarian regimes and the probability of interstate conflict.

Epilogue: Limitations and Future Research

In the dissertation I presented an argument about the make-up of the ruling coalition in authoritarian regimes and its effects on domestic and foreign policies. This work has several areas for improvement. First, I presented what Waltz (1959) called a "second-image" theory, which largely focused on the internal structures of the state – that is, the make-up of the ruling class and power-sharing arrangements between the ruler and elites. That does not mean that "first-image", also known as individual leader characteristics, and "third-image" or structural factors do not play a role in state's propensity for conflict. It would be interesting to see how international environment, such as worsening economic conditions in the region, power-balance between neighboring states or changes in the polarity of international system, interact with variables used in my analysis.

Another dimension to look at, the establishment of a new authoritarian regime. I suspect that international community would view regimes from the bottom as a much bigger threat than regimes from the top, because they transform the preexisting state in numerous ways. This has a potential to disrupt diplomatic relations and trade with neighboring states. Furthermore, the founding of a regime from the bottom – that is, an event that potentially changes the status quo in

the region – might be seen as a threat by the elites in surrounding states (Haas 2005). The establishment of the regime from the bottom – elites fear – can have a domino effect and inspire popular revolutions and revolts in their states (Grinin, Grinin, and Korotayev 2022; Kaine 2017; Leeson and Dean 2009). This raises an interesting question, are authoritarian regimes more likely to pursue conflict with dissimilar regimes? It is possible that regimes from the top are more likely to engage in interstate conflict with regimes from the bottom than with other regimes from the top (the same would apply to regimes from the bottom). These considerations could be tested using a dyadic analysis.

While these tests would open a curtain into interactions between states, the question about the role of individual leaders in shaping both domestic and foreign policies should be thoroughly tested. One potential way to investigate this puzzle would be to look at the previous experience of authoritarian leader – whether in business, military, or government – and how that affects the principal-agent relation between the leader and ruling coalition. Does this prior experience have an impact in what kind of regime the founding leader establishes? How much agency authoritarian leaders really have? Some of this has been discussed in Chapter 4 of my dissertation. Authoritarian leaders who hold the post of the Minister of Defense themselves have unchecked power – particularly in regimes from the bottom. However, my theories do not touch on the impact of individual leader-level characteristics.

Finally, this dissertation presents some very interesting puzzles for future research. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 investigated the variation in probability and frequency of militarized interstate disputes in authoritarian regimes. To get a better sense of the severity of these disputes, future research should test whether my findings hold if only violent conflicts – that is, disputes that involve military and civilian casualties – are included in the analysis. To take this research

further one might study the effects of foreign-imposed regime change on regime durability and international peace. There seems to be a consensus that the intervention of the third party – via support for a coup effort or popular revolution – rarely leads to long-lasting and stable regimes as well as peace in the region (Downes and Monten 2013; Downes and O'Rourke 2016; Lo, Hashimoto, and Reiter 2008; Peic and Reiter 2011). However, my dissertation presents some clues that foreign support for a regime change might lead to durable authoritarian regimes if these efforts champion the transformation of the social and political life of the preexisting state. For example, the Soviet Union contributed to the establishment of numerous durable communist states around the world – not always through direct occupation, but also through the financial support of local communist parties and other means. On the other hand, reliance on the institutions and elites of the preexisting state might result in regional peace but not regime durability.

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