Leadership Turnover and International Crisis

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Abstract

How do foreign adversaries react to leadership turnover in a rival state? In contrast to the conventional wisdom that foreign adversaries are likely to probe the type of their new counterparts or to explore the newcomers' weakness by initiating challenges, this dissertation demonstrates that foreign adversaries' reaction depends largely on the anticipated direction of the new leader's foreign policy preference shift in relation to the previous administration.

I argue that foreign adversaries have incentive to challenge a new leader in their rival state only when the newcomer is perceived as being more hawkish than the predecessor. I theorize that this occurs through three vectors: first by triggering the challenger's fear of suffering an immediate and possibly unacceptable loss, second by lowering the challenger's tolerance for any drop in relative capability due to the target's gaining of experience in the future, and third, by reducing, if not eliminating, the challenger's concerns about opportunity costs of any early confrontation. The fear can cause a status-quo challenger to opt for crisis initiation as either a costly signal for resolve or an attempt to preempt an unavoidable conflict, whereas the latter two forces incentive a revisionist challenger to act quick to lock in a better payoff that is available "today" before the hawk becomes more experienced.

Statistical analysis of a sample of rival dyads characterized by democratically elected leaders on the target side during the post-WWII period yields strong evidence that supports my argument. Relying primarily on the left-right spectrum of political ideology as an operationalization of the hawkishness of leader's policy preference, I find that only leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor tend to experience initially high probabilities of being targeted in militarized disputes before declining over time.

To get a fuller picture of the impact of leadership turnover on interstate relations, I also investigate how cooperative interactions between national leaders evolve over one's tenure. Using a machine-coded event dataset, I find that a foreign adversary tends to initiate more cooperative attempts, in both quantitative (the number of actions) and qualitative (measured as the average intensity score of all cooperative actions) terms, toward leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor, but only as their time in office increases. I attribute this pattern to the adversary's recognition of the existence of a hawk's advantage in clearing domestic barriers to adopting conciliatory policies toward enemies, on one hand, and the adversary's preference to deal with a more dovish foreign counterpart in the long-term, on the other. These two motives incentivize the adversary to not rush into seeking substantive cooperation with a new dove, as such moves may risk undermining the new dove's domestic support if she does reciprocate or harming the adversary's own reputation at home if there is no reciprocation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Research Question

States are run by people, but people who run states come and go. Every four years, the United States may have a new president. In Japan, from the Tsutomu Hata cabinet that took office in June 1994 to the current Yoshihide Suga cabinet formed in September 2020, there have been 20 cabinets led by 13 different prime ministers. During the similar period, however, Russia just experienced three leadership transitions with Vladimir Putin getting elected twice, while the paramount leader of North Korea only changed once within the same Kim family. These leadership turnovers, in their various forms, have long been studied by political scientists, but only as important domestic political events. The influence of leadership turnover on international security has begun to gain scholarly attention only recently in the shift from states to leaders as units of analysis. This dissertation examines one specific question of this research program: how do foreign adversaries react to the emergence of a new leader in their rival states?

Despite the sheer amount of global media coverage as well as the growing scholarly attention leadership turnover has gained, this question has yet to be

addressed satisfactorily.[1] A quick glance of the "war of words" between the Democrat and Republican camps shortly before the 2008 presidential election can help reveal the unsettled nature of our understanding of the consequences of leadership turnover.

On October 19, 2008, Joe Biden — Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's running mate — reportedly told a group of campaign contributors at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel: "Mark my words. It will not be six months before the world tests Barack Obama like they did John Kennedy...we're going to have an international crisis, a generated crisis, to test the mettle of this guy" (Abramowitz 2008). Although Biden was intended to rally support for the young Democrat candidate, his words were picked up and turned against Obama by the Republicans — "it doesn't have to happen, Vote McCain" says the Republican campaign ad (Lane 2008). The Obama team then quickly fired back, claiming that those potential challengers "are going to find this guy's got steel in his spine" (B. Smith 2008).

On one hand, it seems intuitive, as Biden warns, that relatively inexperienced new leaders are likely to be perceived as weak targets, and therefore attract challenges (Potter 2007). There is indeed empirical support for this argument as studies have shown that leaders' time in office tends to be, on average, negatively correlated with their probability of being targeted in crises (Gelpi and Grieco 2001) or wars (Gaubatz 1991). On the other hand, however, another line of research that focuses on leaders' reputation-building suggests, as Obama's campaign ad claims, that new leaders not only have strong incentives to stand firm against challenges, but they may even welcome or actively look for crises (as opportunities) to build

1. For example, see Cowen (2020) on how much the entire world paid attention to both the results and the reaction of US 2020 presidential election.

a reputation for resolve that will stave off future troubles (Wolford 2007; Kertzer 2016; Lupton 2018; Wu and Wolford 2018; Smith and Spaniel 2019; Wu, Licht, and Wolford 2021). In other words, for any potential challenger, new leaders could, or should, be unattractive targets as they will predictably overreact and potentially escalate any brinkmanship into an unexpected or unwanted conflict.

Clearly these arguments are working at cross-purposes and are insufficient as they stand. How can we weigh these competing tendencies to better understand the pattern of crisis initiation against new leaders? If new leaders can both encourage a potential challenger to take advantage of their inexperience and deter a potential challenger by their strong incentives to establish a reputation for resolve, then we lack an equilibrium. This study attempts to fill this gap.

1.2 The Argument

The central argument of this dissertation is that foreign adversaries' reaction to the emergence of a new leader in their rival state will depend largely on the direction of the foreign policy preference shift associated with the leadership turnover. Specifically, I argue that a foreign adversary is likely to challenge a new leader in a rival state only when the newcomer is perceived as being more hawkish than her predecessor. Conflicts may be initiated either because a status quo challenger tries to move first to avoid the worst possible loss or because a revisionist challenger seeks to move quick to lock in a better gain available today.

Fear-driven challenge: In the first scenario, the challenger is satisfied with the status quo but motivated by fear that a new but more hawkish opponent can be dissatisfied with the current status quo reached by her predecessor and thus

seeks to revise it. The potential challenger's fear of suffering an immediate, and possibly unacceptable, loss tends to be further amplified by the new leader's lack of experience in handling the complexity of foreign affairs (e.g., make reckless offers) and eagerness to establish a tough image (highly determined to revise the status quo). As a result, the foreign adversary is propelled towards risky options — crisis initiation — to avert the worst possible outcome. On one hand, by actively engaging in some limited forms of conflict or crisis that may escalate, the challenge serves as a costly signal that conveys the challenger's position and resolve.[2] In other words, the goal of the challenge is not to balance the probability of rejection against the gains from a successful bid (as the conventional bargaining literature holds), but to *educate* the relatively less informed newcomer to the game on the challenger's resolve, and to caution the newcomer against being too aggressive.[3] On the other hand, the challenger may have incentives to preempt a conflict that is perceived as unavoidable, seeking to eliminate a threat before it becomes stronger. Although provoking a more hawkish player is risky, the costs of not acting early tend to loom even bigger when the prospect of a conflict is high. Not only might the inaction be interpreted as a signal of weakness, but the challenger might miss the window to take advantage of the target's initial lack of preparedness should a conflict occur.

On the contrary, when the policy preference of the new leader is expected to

2. As Schelling (1966, 1960) demonstrated in his seminal analysis of brinkmanship, threats can convey information about resolve when it generates risks that neither side directly controls. Trager's analysis of how the cope of a demand can convey resolve also bears important similarity to the argument made here (Trager 2013).

3. As I will detail in chapter 2, it is not necessarily the case that the new leader knows nothing about the challenger's position or resolve and therefore needs to be educated. Instead, the more prevalent concern for the challenger is that the new and more hawkish leader might adamantly believe that his or her predecessor was not tough enough and therefore substantially more concessions can be granted.

remain largely intact or to shift toward a more dovish direction after a leadership turnover, such a fear (of suffering an immediate loss) would be largely absent. The potential challenger who is satisfied with the status quo, therefore, can afford more time to wait and see how the new leader in their rival state would develop her position.

Revision-driven challenge: In the second scenario, the revisionist challenger is dissatisfied with the status quo and seeks to revise it. The challenger becomes dissatisfied with the status quo after a leadership turnover in the target state because the new leader's inexperience gives her a temporary advantage, causing her to value less of the current status quo, which can happen either when a dove replaces a hawk or when a hawk replaces a dove.[4] However, the revisionist challenger's temptation to take advantage of the new target's initial weakness tends to play out differently in these two distinct situations.

There is a trade-off facing the revisionist challenger. On one hand, she can challenge today when there is a much higher probability that her offer will be rejected due to the new leader's high reputation concern and lack of political capital to legitimize or ratify any concession at home. But in the meantime, acting early gives the challenger a temporary advantage in conflicts due to the target's initial inexperience should the offer be rejected and war ensue. On the other hand, the challenger could wait until the target becomes stronger so that any acceptable offer can be ratified domestically. But in the meantime, since the target has gained more experience and become stronger, her reservation value also increases, which may make the acceptable deal even worse than the challenger's expected utility

4. As I will detail in Chapter 2, if the status quo lies close to the challenger's reservation value, then the new hawk in the target state can still be satisfied with it.

from the risky early bid.

Confronted with this trade-off, the opportunity to take advantage of the target's initial inexperience becomes more attractive when there is a new hawk in the target's office, for the same degree of drop in relative capability (due to the target's gaining of experience) can result in larger loss of future gains when the target is inherently more cost tolerant and thus more demanding. That is, a more rapid shift in bargaining power against the challenger when a hawk is in office gives the challenger an incentive to lock in what gains he can get now (Powell 2006). Moreover, concerns about the opportunity costs of any early confrontation — disrupting a potentially more cooperative relationship between two countries — tend to have less constraining power when the challenger is facing a new hawk as future cooperation would be difficult anyway.

1.3 Contributions of the Study

This simple innovation — taking the direction of preference change into consideration — allows this dissertation to make three major contributions to the field of international security studies. First, the theoretical model and empirical findings can help reconcile two conflicting propositions in the literature: (1) inexperienced new leaders are more likely to be challenged; and (2) new leaders should be less attractive targets as they are more likely to resist or overreact due to reputation concern. This dissertation demonstrates that new leader's inexperience and reputation concern can either amplify fear and thus force the challenger to move quick to signal resolve when the challenger holds a rather pessimistic expectation about the future strategic environment, or restrain the challenger from provoking a newcomer who

might be able and willing to help develop a warmer bilateral relationship. This study offers a theoretically and empirically compelling explanation for why we did not have a consensus on whether new leaders are more trouble-attractive before, that is, because new leaders are incorrectly treated as a homogeneous group, and thus any related theoretical expectations are overgeneralized. The right question that we should be asking is: what types of new leaders are more trouble-attractive?

Second, this project finds new evidence of state leaders cultivating and attributing reputation in international politics. Existing studies tend to treat "reputation-building" much as a reactive move such as resisting challenges in strategic interactions.[5] In fact, as I will detail below, the majority of existing works that investigate the relationship between leadership turnover and international security has been focused on the escalation of disputes, attributing new leaders' firm resistance to foreign challenges to their reputation concerns. Findings of this study, however, indicates that when the strategic environment is expected to deteriorate, challengers also have strong incentives to renew their reputation as a resolute actor in front of the newcomer by actively initiating crises. Cultivating a reputation is costly, and therefore a rational actor should only be willing to invest in it when it is worth doing so.

Last but not least, this study provides an alternative way to think about a long-standing puzzle in international politics: why does it appear to be the case that, despite their better performance in the battlefields, democracies are more likely to be targeted in international disputes or militarized conflicts. (Rousseau et al. 1996; Leeds and Davis 1999; Grieco 2001; Gelpi and Grieco 2001; Reiter and Stam

5. See, for example, Sechser (2010).

2003)? Conventional wisdom tends to attribute this vulnerability to democratic institutional constraints, which make democratic leaders more cost sensitive (see, for example, Filson and Werner (2004)). However, democratic institutions not only constrain leaders, but also produce more leaders who may have different foreign policy preferences through open and competitive elections. Findings of this dissertation indicate that these leadership transitions are likely to be quite destabilizing, at least if the election rhetoric suggests that the new leader is quite determined to expand the influence of his or her state. Foreign challengers may not be necessarily greedy actors who seek to explore democratic leaders' weakness, but are worried about the future and feel the need to establish upfront a willingness to confront new leaders in democracies perceived to have hostile intentions.

In addition to its scholarly contribution, this dissertation also has important policy implications. The findings of this study indicate that strategic interactions between state leaders can begin before a new leader is in office. Pre-office behavior and campaign rhetoric might be cheap, but are not without cost. Leaders (or candidates) should be prepared to deal with the consequences of their early signals, even if some of these signals are sent unintentionally. This project also calls attention to the way appointments work for key foreign policy or national security positions during the leadership transition periods. Given the potential disturbance caused by the change of national leaders, a more stable and smooth transition in these positions would help preserve institutional knowledge. This is particularly important for democracies where appointments of these positions might be tainted by domestic partisan politics.

1.4 Previous Studies on Leadership Turnover and International Conflict

The salience of leadership turnover, especially in terms of its potential destabilizing effects on international relations, has been widely acknowledged among policy makers. As one example of the immediate confrontational reactions from the Arab world to the election of a more hawkish Ariel Sharon as the Prime Minister of Israel in 2001, the then Syrian foreign minister Faruq al-Shara said: "This proves that Israel does not want peace and never wanted it."[6] More recently, Barack Obama set out his last foreign trip as the U.S. President shortly after the 2016 election only to reassure the world that America's foreign policy actually would not change much (Dovere 2016).

However, if politicians and political observers believe that leadership change, and in particular, anticipated policy preference change matters, international relations scholars have long discounted it. Realist IR theories treat states as unitary actors whose preference is exogenously fixed at either security- or power-maximization (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). While liberal IR theories take preference more seriously, they emphasize societal interest and political institutions, thereby downplaying the impact of leadership turnover on interstate relations (Moravcsik 1997). As a result, students of international relations have long been focused on system- and/or state-level factors that usually do not change significantly with leadership turnover to understand international cooperation and conflicts.[7]

6. For a sample of mixed Arab reactions to Sharon's victory in 2001, see Policy Watch #517 produced by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (2001).

7. See, for example, Waltz (1979), Gilpin (1987), and Mearsheimer (2001) on distribution of power; Organski and Kugler (1981) and Copeland (2000) on power transition; Milner (1991), Oneal and Rus-

Even works that are more skeptical of these approaches tend to focus on how individuals' cognitive limitations and misperceptions shape their decision-making (Jervis 1976; Lebow 1981; Jervis, Lebow, and Stein 1985; Mercer 1996; Berejekian 1997), which largely applies to all leaders, and thus gives no substantive meaning to leadership turnover.

The tides are shifting as a new wave of research that has (re)demonstrated that leaders matter in international politics is emerging.[8] Much of this growing body of leader-centric research seeks to understand how leaders' conflict participation behavior varies over their tenure, and pays special attention to the period shortly after leadership turnover.[9] Despite that, however, this literature does not provide us with a clear picture of how leadership turnover affects the *onset* of interstate conflicts. As I will detail below, the ambiguity is primarily manifested in the conflicting theoretical propositions of as well as inconclusive empirical findings regarding whether new leaders are more or less willing and capable to use military force than their longer-serving counterparts.

sett (1997, 1999, 2001), Gartzke, Li, and Boehmer (2001), and Copeland (2014) on interdependence; Ikenberry (1998), Simmons (2000), and Keohane (2005) on international institution; Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), Tannenwald (1999), and Risse-Kappen et al. (1999) on norm; Owen (1994, 2010) and Haas (2005) on ideology; Doyle (1986), Fearon (1994), De Mesquita et al. (1999), Schultz (2001), Filson and Werner (2004), and Weeks (2008) on regime type; Legro (1996) and Johnston (1995, 1998) on culture. All these factors are fairly immune to the impact of leadership turnover.

8. For a detailed review of recent developments of leader-centric studies of international relations, see Horowitz and Fuhrmann (2018).

9. Another related research program focuses on how leaders' political survival concern shapes policies, which they call "Selectorate Theory" (De Mesquita et al. 2003; De Mesquita and Smith 2010; Siverson and Mesquita 2017). However, Wolford (2008, Chapter 2) argues that this approach is "insufficiently leader-centric" as "the connection between political survival and conflict outcomes is mediated in large part by a state's selection institutions," and therefore "the explanatory power in the political economy approach comes from domestic institutions" (20-26).

1.4.1 Weak new leaders

One line of research attributes the disturbing nature of leadership turnover to the attractiveness of new leaders as targets. These works argue either directly or implicitly that relatively inexperienced new leaders are likely to be perceived by foreign challengers as weaker than longer-serving leaders, and thus more likely to be challenged.

Gelpi and Grieco (2001, 795) argue that "domestic political incentives may make resistance costly relative to concession for inexperienced leaders in both democratic and authoritarian states", and therefore, potential challengers are more likely to "target countries with inexperienced leaders." Specifically, they argue that in democracies, gains from successfully resisting a challenge early in a leader's tenure will be quickly diminished by the time of next election, while negative impact of a failure tends to be longer-lived, which discourages new leaders from getting involved into conflicts. New autocratic leaders, on the other hand, usually do not have a full control over potential domestic competitors; therefore, they are more willing to make concessions to foreign challengers to avoid diverting their military resources away from defending their hold on power at home. Empirically, Gelpi and Grieco (2001) demonstrate that the length of time a leader has been in office is negatively related to the probability that his or her country is the target of an international crisis (drawing on ICB data), which has been widely cited as the first set of comprehensive evidence that proves new leaders' "trouble attractiveness".

Focusing primarily on U.S. presidents, Potter (2007) finds a similar pattern — the probability that the United States is involved in international crises or militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) declines as a presidential administration gains

time in office.[10] Backed by some additional qualitative evidence, he argues that a new administration's lack of experience and capability in handling the complexity of foreign policies is one of the reasons why leaders are more prone to conflicts early in their tenure. Leadership turnovers might generate not only new presidents but also fresh advisors and immature presidential management structures, and therefore, "new U.S. administrations may not be as competent in their internal practices or as established in their relationship with the bureaucracy and legislature" (Potter 2007, 355).

Besides, works that examine how leaders' political survival concern affects their decision on using military force also suggest that new leaders are likely to be weaker than their more seasoned counterparts. De Mesquita and Siverson (1995) were among the first to lay down the theoretical foundation that leaders are only willing to use military force and engage in risky foreign policies when they are confident that they can politically survive a potential defeat. They explicitly argue that long-surviving nondemocratic leaders (or democratic leaders who do not suffer from the coalition of minorities effect) are more likely to "wage losing wars (or wars in general) than incumbents who are newer to their positions" (847).[11]

Relying on a two-stage probit model that takes account of the "reciprocal relationship between the probability of losing office and the probability of crisis initiation," Chiozza and Goemans (2003) find that more time in office increases

10. It is worth noting, however, that Potter (2007) doesn't differentiate between the U.S. being a crisis initiator and being a target in his statistical models, which are all coded as "crisis involvement". Therefore, it is unclear whether the weak management and inexperience make new US presidents attract more troubles or generate more troubles.

11. De Mesquita and Siverson (1995, 852), however, tend to believe that most democratic leaders suffer from the coalition of minorities effect, and thus argue that "if democratic leaders are going to wage war, they are better off doing it early, before they have lost support as a result of the cumulative impact of the coalition of minorities effect."

a leader's probability of crisis initiation regardless of regime type. They argue that this empirical pattern casts serious doubts on the diversionary war argument, but strongly supports the notion that leaders are only willing to use force when they become more secure in office. In their study of the relationship between term limits and international conflicts, DiLorenzo, McBride, and Ray (2016) also find that US presidents' time in office is positively associated with MID initiation. Building on the same political survival rationale, Bak (2020, 259) finds that "the likelihood of autocratic crisis initiation significantly increases during the early years of autocratic leadership tenure, after which it moderately decreases over time." This inverted U-shaped relationship indicates that while autocratic leaders need time to consolidate their power before being able or willing to initiate conflicts abroad, they may experience "power dissipation" as they stay in office for too long and become old, which again discourages them from engaging with external enemies.

While this second set of empirical works do not directly test the relationship between leaders' tenure and their probability of being targeted, the pattern revealed by them — that leaders are more likely to initiate crises as their time in office increases — lends additional support to the notion that new leaders are likely to be perceived as they appear to be less willing to use force.

1.4.2 Tough new leaders

The weakness-based arguments, however, encounter both empirical and theoretical challenges. Empirically, neither of the above patterns — that new leaders are more likely to become targets or new leaders are less likely to initiate crises — appears to be very robust.

For example, while Chiozza and Goemans (2004) find that the number of

days a leader has been in office reduces the probability of becoming a target of international crises, the effect is only statistically significant at 0.1 level. They attribute the smaller and lesser significant effect of target tenure to strategic conflict avoidance, as the potential challenger also has incentives to avoid provoking a new leader who might be insecure in office and thus has diversionary incentives to use force.[12] More recently, Bak and Palmer (2010, 266) explore the targeting of MIDs in a directed-leader-dyad-period setup, showing that "target leader's length of time in office has positive effects on the likelihood of being a target for younger leaders but no or negative effects for older leaders". While the theoretical logic underlying this conditional pattern is underdeveloped in the paper, the result at least casts doubts on whether it is the tenure cycle alone that explains previous empirical findings. Besides, both challenger tenure and target tenure have also been included as control variables by Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam (2005) in their analysis of the relationship between leaders' age and their conflict behavior, and they find that neither of these two variables is a significant predictor of MIDs initiation.[13]

Put aside the robustness of these findings that indicate new leaders are weaker than their longer-serving counterparts, there are equally plausible theoretical reasons to argue that new leaders can also be tough players. At least, new leaders' inexperience does not seem to necessarily undermine their capability and

12. It should be noted that this argument — the potential challenger also has incentives to avoid provoking a new leader who might be insecure in office and thus has diversionary incentives to use force — contradicts their earlier findings that leaders do not usually have diversionary incentive, but are more likely to use force as their time in office increases and become more secure in office (Chiozza and Goemans 2003).

13. Similarly, as a control variable included in their study of the relationship between term limits and international conflicts, DiLorenzo, McBride, and Ray (2016) find that time in office is unrelated to the likelihood that the US is targeted in a MID.

willingness to use force.

Consider first the varying degree of institutional constraint across the electoral cycle in democracies. Gaubatz (1991) argues that there is usually a relative dominance of state over societies shortly after an election, rendering democratic leaders less constrained early in their tenure. Along similar lines, Hastedt and Eksterowicz (2001, 67) find that there usually is a "honeymoon period" at the beginning of an administration when the "president's relationships with Congress and the media are at least cordial if not deferential." More recently, Chiozza (2017) finds that in in ternational crises tying-hand commitment strategies were more frequently used by U.S. presidents when presidential elections come closer, while sunk-cost strategies were more often used early in their tenures, which also reflects how a democratic leader's capability to generate audience costs (which depends largely on the degree of domestic constraints) varies over the electoral calendar. Gaubatz (1991) ties this feature to leaders' conflict initiation pattern, showing suggestive evidence that democratic leaders are more likely to initiate wars early in their tenure when they are relatively less constrained.[14]

On the other hand, and perhaps more problematic to the weakness-based arguments, there has been little, if any, systematic evidence that shows new leaders are more likely to make concessions when challenged. On the contrary, anecdotal

14. It is worth noting that Gaubatz (1991, 232) also finds that new democratic leaders are more likely to be "the targets of others' aggressive aims" in the postelection period. He also offers an explanation that differs from the weakness-based arguments introduced above, arguing instead that when "the winner of the election is known, the government is again established, and its policies are now freer of domestic electoral distortions. If the variance of possible outcomes is thus decreased, then, ceteris paribus, more risk-averse actors will be ready to undertake an aggressive action" (236). There might be, however, another alternative explanation. According to the logic of two-level game (Putnam 1988; Iida 1993; Mo 1995), leaders who are relatively less constrained by domestic politics are likely to be perceived as easier bargainers and thus attract challenge.

stories, such as U.S. President Kennedy's determined rejection to Soviet leader Khrushchev's ultimatum during the 1961 Vienna Summit, suggest that new leaders could be just as tough as their more seasoned counterparts. Indeed, Kennedy not only rejected the ultimatum, but responded by activating 150,000 reservists and increasing defense expenditures in preparation for a potential conflict over the future of the city, and the crisis eventually culminated in the city's *de facto* partition as the East German government erected the Berlin Wall (Office of the Historian 2021).

This kind of resolute resistance, and in some cases overreactions, according to time preferences and reputation-building logic, tends to be the norm rather than exception (Jervis 1970; Nalebuff 1991; Sechser 2010). Empirical studies have shown that early interactions between individual leaders are essential to form leader-specific reputations for resolve and this initial perception of resolve can significantly influence later inferences (Chiozza and Choi 2003; Lupton 2018, 2020).

Wolford (2007) is the first to incorporate leaders' reputation concern into the dynamic of leadership turnover. Unlike the weakness camp that primarily treats new leaders as new to their jobs, Wolford focuses more on another dimension of the "newness" — new leaders are *new* to their foreign counterparts.[15] Through this lens, a crucial difference between new leaders and longer-serving leaders is that the former ones tend to hold more private information. It is this informational asymmetry (re)generated by leadership turnovers, according to Wolford (2007), that simultaneously gives the challenger incentives to test the type of this new

15. Potter (2007, 358-361) also touches on this point by noting that the broken personal ties associated with leadership turnovers together with the noisy information revealed during elections can exacerbate uncertainties, making conflicts more likely.

player, and provides the new leader with a chance to form a reputation for resolve early on so that she can strike a better deal in the next crisis. These two forces together result in a higher probability of conflicts (bargaining failure) earlier in a leader's tenure.

This theoretical innovation also brings in a new wave of empirical studies that focus more on how the likelihood of escalation rather than the onset of crises or conflicts varies over a leader's tenure. Consistent with the hypothesis that new leaders care more about their reputation for resolve, Dafoe (2012) finds that conditional on a MID occurring, leaders earlier in their tenure are significantly more likely to use force, have longer MIDs,[16] experience more fatalities per MID, and win their MIDs. Similarly, Wu and Wolford (2018) find that both leadership turnover and regime change can trigger the reputation-building dynamic as the probabilities that militarized disputes escalate to the use of force significantly decrease as a leader's or a regime's time in office increases in the presence of possible future disputes. In another related paper, Wu, Licht, and Wolford (2021) further demonstrate that this "turnover trap" is most likely to arise when democratic leadership turnovers cause changes in domestic support coalition, for these transitions tend to introduce more private information and thus higher incentive to establish reputation.

Beyond interstate conflicts, scholars find that new leaders' incentive to establish reputation for resolve can also increase the probabilities of arms race onset (Rider 2013) and repression against domestic dissents (Licht and Allen 2018) during the early stages of a leader's tenure. Furthermore, lab experiments have also

16. Smith and Spaniel (2019) find the same pattern, but their theory puts less weight on the reputation logic, emphasizing instead that the higher degree of uncertainty at the onset of a new leader's tenure tends to cause the challenger to make less accurate offers, which is more likely to be rejected and prolongs the bargaining.

shown that "individuals with high present bias are less resolute (more sensitive to casualties) than more patient individuals", suggesting indirectly that new leaders with longer time horizons should be more willing to pay the short-term costs in exchange for potential longer-term (reputation) benefits (Kertzer 2016, 78).[17]

Nevertheless, although theoretical models based on the reputation-building logic and informational approach have greatly advanced our understanding of why bargaining is more likely to collapse and therefore conflicts are more likely to escalate in the period shortly after leadership turnover, these models are not designed to address the *onset* of the dispute.[18] In most of these models that have a screening game structure, the challenger does not have any alternative option other than issuing a probing offer (challenge) to get the game started. The challenger's decision is thus restricted to how much to challenge rather than whether to challenge. The analytical focus is largely on behaviors once crises are already under way. The question that arises is: why does the challenger want to provide the target with a chance to demonstrate resolve? It is true that learning about the target's type can help the challenger make more accurate offers in the future. But if Kertzer (2016) is correct in that more patient players are inherently more resolute (see ft.16), then the screening costs would be extremely high at the onset of the target's tenure. Both the need to screen and the costs of doing so will decrease as the target's time

17. It is worth noting that Kertzer's argument is slightly different from the reputation-building logic, which emphasizes the importance of information asymmetry during the early stage of a leader's tenure. This information asymmetry gives some irresolute types incentive to bluff, and also forces resolute types to differentiate themselves from the irresolute type, which together results in a higher probability of resistance. In other words, the same pattern — conflicts involving new leaders are more likely to escalate — would not emerge in a world of complete information. Kertzer (2016), on the other hand, focuses on individuals' inherent time inconsistent preferences, suggesting that even "honest" irresolute types are likely to be more resolute when they face a longer time horizon.

18. This is why the empirical tests summarized above focus exclusively on the escalation or duration rather than initiation of interstate conflicts.

in office increases. [19] In fact, through detailed investigations of eight U.S. presidential transitions since 1953, Breslauer (1983, 83-84) finds very little support for the testing hypothesis, but instead reveals "a strong correlation between the U.S. electoral cycle and assertive U.S. behavior at Soviet expense." Miura and Weiss (2016) also find that Chinese leaders usually opt for a "wait-and-see" approach when the uncertainty about their new foreign counterparts' policy is high.

1.4.3 Discussion

Clearly, there is an important puzzle to be solved. On one hand, it seems intuitive that inexperienced new leaders are more likely to be targeted by potential foreign adversaries. On the other, there are plausible theoretical formulations capable of generating opposing expectations (that new leaders can be tough actors due primarily to their reputation concerns) and competing empirical tests that support both of them. I argue that progress on this seemingly intractable question has been limited for three main reasons.

First, existing studies tend to hold, albeit implicitly, a revisionist bias toward the crisis initiator. The challenger is either theorized as seeking to take advantage of the new leader's weakness or modeled as trying to balance the probability of rejection against the gains from capturing an irresolute target. To a great extent,

19. The model developed by Wu and Wolford (2018) does allow the challenger to choose "pass" in the first state (a.k.a not challenge). The proposition about the initiation decision in the first stage of the game (in their appendix) indicates the challenger (actor A) is more likely to initiate probing offers as the range of possible values of the target's (actor B) resolve, $[\underline{b}, \bar{b}]$, increases, which is equivalent to having a higher degree of uncertainty. Conversely, as the range of $[\underline{b}, \bar{b}]$ decreases, the challenger becomes more certain about the target's type and thus has lower incentive to screen. It is not immediately clear, however, given the same level of uncertainty, how the challenger's prior belief about the target's initial reputation for resolve (i.e. different point estimation of b given the same range of $[\underline{b}, \bar{b}]$) affect the challenger's initiation decision.

the fundamental tension between the "weak new leader" and "tough new leader" propositions is rooted in this bias as they encourage and disincentivize revisionist probes respectively. However, other studies have argued that states or leaders can also opt for crisis initiation or even waging wars to preempt imminent attacks from enemies (Van Evera 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Flynn 2008), to prevent future decline (Levy 1987; Schweller 1992; Copeland 2000; Fravel 2007), to protect commercial interests in light of a pessimistic expectation of future trade environment (Copeland 2014), or to signal resolve (Wiegand 2011; Zhang 2019).[20] The revisionist bias leaves unaddressed this set of alternative but not uncommon type of crises initiation, in which the challenger is motivated by fear of suffering losses instead of greed for more gains. And perhaps more problematically, this revisionist bias does not match well with the nature of the data widely used to test those hypotheses. It has been established that both ICB and MID data, the two most widely used data sets in investigating crisis initiation and escalation, include incidents that do not involve clear revisionist agenda such as deterrent warnings, minor skirmishes, and military exercises (Downes and Sechser 2012). This discrepancy — the theoretical logic only predicts revisionist challenges while the empirical data covers both revision- and fear-driven challenges — can be a potential source for the lack of robustness of some empirical findings.

Second, a black-box assumption regarding the process of leadership turnover has been adopted by the majority of existing studies, which renders leadership turnover coded as a binary event with two values "happen" or "not happen" in both theoretical and empirical models. However, the way through which new leaders

20. Similarly, Gartzke, Li, and Boehmer (2001) have modeled disrupting trade relations as a costly signal for resolve.

come into power varies dramatically from relative transparent democratic elections to the black-box style hereditary dictatorship in countries like North Korea, with the relatively opaque but institutionalized peaceful authoritarian leadership turnover in countries like China and Vietnam sitting in the middle. What is obscured by adopting the black-box assumption is that under some conditions a certain amount of information about the new leader, such as her foreign policy preference, can be revealed before she takes office. The extent to which this information (both in terms of the availability and the content of the information) may affect the potential challenger's decision-making has been insufficiently examined.

As a direct consequence, the heterogeneity among "new leaders" has not been fully interrogated or constructively researched. Most of existing studies tend to treat new leaders as a homogeneous group as opposed to their longer-serving counterparts.[21] While this dichotomous approach allows us to concentrate on the sharp difference between these two types of leaders to develop unique propositions regarding new leaders' conflict participation pattern, it also overlooks potential difference within new leaders and thus risks overgeneralizing.[22] The relatively less robust empirical findings regarding the pattern of crisis and dispute initiation against new leaders is likely a result of overgeneralizing, for systematically divergent dynamics are (erroneously) grouped together.

Last but not least, it should be acknowledged that both observations —

21. In empirical models, the degree of newness is actually measured as a leader's time in office (e.g., logged value of the number of days since taking office), which is a continuous variable. But theoretically, a dichotomous conceptualization is always adopted to highlight the distinction between new leaders and seasoned leaders

22. The "difference" here does not refer to the fact that some new leaders might have previous experience as national leaders and therefore are not necessarily inexperienced. This type of heterogeneity has already been seriously addressed in existing works by including a variety of control variables and fixed effects in empirical models.

that new leaders are relatively inexperienced and that new leaders tend to be more resolute due to reputation concerns — are correct in their own ways. The literature, however, fails to tie these two factors together into one coherent and dynamic framework. Specifically, *the possibly different impact of the target's gaining of experience relative to her level of resolve have not been carefully considered*. While most leaders will gain more experience as their time in office increases, which tends to make them a harder target to deal with, not all of them will become significantly less resolute as their reputation-building motive diminishes (e.g., an inherently more hawkish player will remain as a rather resolute player). As a result, the attractiveness of taking advantage of the target's initial inexperience might loom bigger in some cases than in others. Further, the opportunity costs of challenging the new leader — benefits from longer-term cooperation absent an initial confrontation — is also insufficiently discussed, if at all. Works on leader specific punishment have demonstrated that leadership turnover can also help restore interstate relations under certain conditions, such as when a defecting leader is replaced (McGillivray and Smith 2000, 2004, 2006). Thus, the potential challenger's decision must also take into consideration of the prospect of overall level of cooperation between two states, for any threat or non-cooperative behavior may incur the risk of "a breach in relations, not merely with respect to the issue at hand, but also with respect to other aspects of the relationship" (Trager 2010, 347).

This dissertation seeks to remedy these limitations. As I will detail in chapter 2, the direction of foreign policy preference change (which can be observed by the potential challenger under certain conditions once the black-box assumption is relaxed) is one such important dimension of leadership turnover that can account for meaningful heterogeneity among new leaders that has yet to be carefully

examined.[23] This study explicitly theorizes how a pessimistic expectation about the future strategic environment due to preference change in the target state after leadership turnover — which can simultaneously trigger fear of suffering an immediate and possibly unacceptable loss, lower the challenger's tolerance for any drop in relative capability due to the target's gaining of experience in the future, and reduce the challenger's concerns about opportunity costs of any early confrontation — can make both fear- and revisionist-driven challenges more likely to happen.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation proceeds in four additional chapters. Chapter 2 details the theoretical logic underling the argument that the direction of preference change matters in affecting the potential challenger's decision. The theory highlights three primary motivations of the challenger — signal resolve, preempt an imminent conflict, or lock in better payoffs available today — to explain why a foreign adversary is only willing to challenge a new leader in the target state when the newcomer is perceived as a being more hawkish than her predecessor.

In Chapter 3, I test this conditional hypothesis in a series of large-N empirical models. Statistical analysis of democratic leadership turnovers in countries that have at least one foreign rival during the post-WWII period yields strong evidence that supports my argument.[24] Democracies are chosen because the transparent and

23. Horowitz and Fuhrmann (2018, 2079) have suggested that "leadership turnover may be especially consequential when it results in a change in political party." Wu, Licht, and Wolford (2021) confirm this idea by showing that conflict escalation is most likely to happen when democratic leadership turnovers involve changes in domestic supporting coalitions. This dissertation takes one step further, demonstrating that not only the change but also the direction of political party change — from Left to Right or the other way around — matters as well.

24. I rely on the Peace Data v2.01 (Diehl, Goertz, and Gallegos 2019, 6) to identify rivalry relation-

competitive nature of their leadership transition process would allow their potential challengers to detect the direction of preference change, if there is any. Relying primarily on the left-right spectrum of political ideology as an operationalization of the hawkishness of leader's policy preference, this chapter reveals three patterns of crisis initiation against new leaders. First, I find that only leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor tend to experience initially high probabilities of being targeted in militarized disputes before declining over time, while there is no significant variation in the probability of being challenged over one's tenure for leaders who do not experience party change and for leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor. Second, this pattern is most significant when the new leader does not have previous experience in serving as the head of government. Third, these challenges are initiated by both status quo and revisionist challengers, but only through low-intensity actions.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus to cooperative interactions between national leaders. Utilizing a machine-coded event dataset managed by the Cline Center for Advanced Social Research (Althaus et al. 2019), I demonstrate that a foreign rival tend to initiate more cooperative moves, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, toward leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor, but only as their time in office increases. I attribute this pattern to the adversary's recognition of the existence of a hawk's advantage in clearing domestic barriers to adopting conciliatory policies toward enemies, on one hand, and the adversary's preference to deal with a more dovish foreign counterpart in the long-term, on the other. These two motives incentivize the adversary to not rush into seeking substantive cooperation

ship, which is conceptualized as states between which "sentiments of threat, enmity and competition that remain—along with the persistence of unresolved issues".

with a new dove, as such moves may risk undermining her domestic support if she does reciprocate or harming the adversary's own reputation at home if there is no reciprocation.

Chapter 5 concludes this study, rounding out the thesis that leadership turnover can have significant influence on international relations in both near and longer term. However, the effect is not driven by the change of the "person" per se, but primarily by expected policy preference change associated with leadership turnover. This chapter also draws out implications of the study, discussing how the theoretical framework and empirical findings presented in this dissertation reiterate, challenge, and improve our understanding of the relationship between leader, regime type, uncertainty, and international conflicts.

Chapter 2

The Theory of Leadership Turnover and the Targeting of New Leaders

2.1 Introduction

I have argued in the previous chapter that the empirical ambiguity regarding whether or not leaders are more likely to face foreign challenges early in their tenure is largely a result of theoretical inadequacy. And this inadequacy is in part due to the insufficient synthesization of two factors, which are leaders' experience and resolve. This is the task that is undertaken in this chapter.

The question this chapter seeks to answer is a simple one: why might challenging a new leader can or cannot serve the challenger's interests? I argue that the answer lies in an important but largely overlooked dimension of leadership turnover — the direction of the new leader's anticipated foreign policy preference shift in relation to the previous administration. Fear of suffering an immediate and possibly unacceptable loss and temptation to lock-in a better expected payoff propels foreign adversaries to challenge the a new leader in their rival state who is perceived as more hawkish then her predecessor, while the lack of these motives plus the stronger constraining effect from opportunity concerns restrain the

challenger from provoking a new leader might be able to promote cooperation. I develop this argument by first addressing why different directions of preference change can give rise to either fear or revisionist motives in foreign adversaries, and then explaining how the potential challenger's evaluation of the new leader's initial inexperience, and more importantly gaining of experience in the future, relative to their resolve could lead to different actions.

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. In the section that follows, I discuss two assumptions critical to the theory, which is immediately followed by a detailed illustration of the causal logic. I conclude this chapter by developing testable hypotheses developed from the theory.

2.2 Preference Change and It's Observability

Whereas weakness-based explanations and the informational approach summarized in the previous chapter treat new leaders as "new" to their jobs and to their foreign counterparts respectively, I emphasize on their "newness" in comparison to their predecessors. In other words, not every leadership turnover will necessarily bring a "new leader" into office unless the successor is anticipated to hold a set of policy preferences that is substantively different from her predecessor. There are two assumptions involved here that deserve discussion: leadership turnover can result in foreign policy preference change in a state and this preference change is more or less observable for the potential challenger.

2.2.1 Can leadership turnover cause preference change?

"Politics stops at the water's edge" has long been treated as a shorthand label for the notion that a nonpartisan foreign policy could (or should) be pursued, at least

in the case of the U.S. (Vandenberg Jr 1945). This type of view has its deep root in the realist paradigm, which treats states as unitary actors that always seeks to maximize national interests, be it survival or power (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). What this implies is that leadership turnover, or even ruling party turnover, in a state would not result in any significant change in foreign policy preference.

This view, however, has been increasingly subject to question. Quandt (1986, 829) argues that a nonpartisan foreign policy consensus might exist in the U.S. during early years of Cold War, but it is certainly not the case any longer since mid-1960s and the trauma of Vietnam. Beyond the U.S. case, Narizny (2007, 28) argues that "partisan coalitions tend to choose leaders whose policy positions correspond to their aggregated interests", which leads to persistent differences in foreign policy orientations of parties from election to election. More generally, these critics usually share the tradition of liberal IR theories, which posits that states' foreign polices can be significantly influenced by different domestic interests, including but not limited to economic interests (Snyder 1991; B. Fordham 1998), social class (Narizny 2003), ethnic groups (Davis and Moore 1997), and ideologies (Rathbun 2004; Palmer, London, and Regan 2004; Arena and Palmer 2009; Koch 2009). Building on these theoretical foundations, Mattes, Leeds, and Carroll (2015) have revealed through large-N analysis of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voting patterns that shifts in the party in power significantly correlate with changes in the foreign policy positions of nations.

Further, this study focuses on one single dimension of a leader's preference — namely, dovishness versus hawkishness — as it is one of "the most commonly used shorthand labels to characterize elites' preferences in foreign and security policy" due to its relevance to leader's willingness to use military force (Kesgin 2020,

07). This rather abstract and broad focus makes it even easier to justify the preference change assumption if we narrow down our focus on only one dimension—dovishness versus hawkishness, for even if two or more parties share the same preferred outcome, they may still differ in their preferred policy tools (e.g. diplomacy vs military force) to achieve that end. For instance, despite his still relatively murky foreign policy agenda towards China, the newly elected President Biden has repeatedly emphasized that "his approach would be different from his predecessor" (Macias 2020).

Policy preference change is not a feature merely associated with democracies who tend to experience party rotation more frequently. Leadership turnover in autocracies, especially those through military coups and revolutions, can generate even more dramatic policy preference changes. Even in more institutionalized one-party regimes, individual leaders may hold foreign policy preferences that are different from the mainstream party preference, with Gorbachev in Soviet Union and Deng Xiaoping in China being the most notable examples. Although these new leaders tend to publicly emphasize the coherence of the ruling party and the continuity of their policy positions, it is important to differentiate between their "propaganda policies" and "real ideal policies".[1] In fact, Mattes, Leeds, and Carroll (2015) find changes in domestic sources of leader support have stronger effect on autocracies. Yet, a crucial difference between this type of preference change and democratic cases lies in their *ex ante* observability.

1. For instance, in 2012, after becoming the *de facto* leader of China, Xi Jinping emphasized in a meeting at the Central Military Commission that "we must inherit and carry forward the excellent traditions of Chairman Mao, Deng, Jiang, and Hu"(Xinhua 2012).

2.2.2 Is the preference change observable?

It should be noted that the informational approach advanced by (Wolford 2007) also adopts the assumption that leadership turnover involves preference change in terms of the hawkish versus dovish nature of a leader's preference. Indeed, it is the very uncertainty of this preference change that gets the game started by giving the challenger incentive to screen the type of the new leader, though crisis initiation is not the real focus of these models (as they focus on escalation). Where I depart from the these models is that I further assume that this preference change, or at least the direction of preference change, is more or less observable to the foreign adversary. The observability is largely determined by the varying ways through which leaders come into power.

At one end of this spectrum lies democratic elections.[2] The impact of the transparent and competitive nature of democratic domestic politics on international relations has been widely acknowledged, theorized, and tested (Owen 1994; Putnam 1988; Schultz 2001). The same domestic competition dynamic can also force new democratic leaders to reveal their foreign policy positions in elections. As Hermann (1990, 7) puts it, "[During an election] issues become a centerpiece in the struggle for political power. Competing political leaders and their supporters use a foreign policy position to differentiate themselves from opponents".

A careful reader might question the degree to which other foreign observers will take these electoral rhetoric seriously given their multifunctional nature. How-

2. It is worth noting, however, that democratic election is not the only turnover type that can reveal new leader's preference. Some violent leadership turnovers, such as military coups and revolutions, if succeed can also signal that there is a high probability that the new office taker possesses a different set of policy preferences.

ever, although campaign rhetoric appears to be "cheap", they are not without costs.[3] This is because any threat or non-cooperative rhetoric may incur the risk of "a breach in relations, not merely with respect to the issue at hand, but also with respect to other aspects of the relationship" (Trager 2010, 347). Leaders usually find themselves constrained by their campaign statements as "they worry that abandoning past promises will diminish their credibility" (Miura and Weiss 2016, 10). For example, as noted by former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs Kurt Campbell and former Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg:

> "when the 24/7 news cycle means every word spoken by a candidate is recorded for posterity and is often available in searchable form on the Internet, candidates are more inextricably tied to their promises than ever before. . . During George W. Bush's transition into the White House, his press secretary, Scott McClellan, quickly found the administration engaged in a 'permanent campaign' with the media and the public in which the tasks of governing and campaigning were 'indistinguishable' " (Campbell and Steinberg 2009, 42).

Quandt's analysis of how U.S. presidents' conduction of foreign policy varies across their tenures also indicates that "these first definitions of a president's position, often taken in the midst of the campaign, are typically of considerable importance in setting the administration's initial course" (Quandt 1986, 830).

Furthermore, and perhaps more relevant to the question here, what really matters might not be the *de facto* change in the foreign policy preference, but is the foreign observer's perception of the possible change. There has been abundant

3. This by no means indicates that "noise" doesn't exist. The fact that democratic competition plus transparency may generate too much information, making it more difficult to distinguish between "signals" and "noise", and therefore exacerbate potential conflicts has been well documented (Wohlstetter 1962; Finel and Lord 1999). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, the escalation of any challenge against a new leader can possibly be caused by these noises.

real world anecdotal evidence that shows leadership turnovers can trigger foreign countries' concerns about foreign policy preference change. As one example of the immediate confrontational reactions from the Arab world to the election of a more hawkish Ariel Sharon as the Prime Minister of Israel in 2001, the then Syrian foreign minister Faruq al-Shara said: "This proves that Israel does not want peace and never wanted it" [4]. The U.S. Presidential election in 2016 is another example. In fact, the then U.S. President Obama set out his last foreign trip as POTUS shortly after the election of Trump only seek to reassure the world that America's foreign policy actually wouldn't change much[5].

In contrast, opaque leadership turnovers in many autocratic countries usually cannot reveal much information about the new leader's foreign policy preference until the new leader consolidate his position. Perhaps there is no better example to illustrate how difficult it can be to estimate a new autocratic leader's preference than the sharp contrast between China's more authoritarian turn later and the hot discussion of a potential "neo-liberal Xi administration" during the early stage of President Xi's tenure (see, for example, Kroeber (2013)). It is for this reason, I expect the pattern hypothesized by the theory presented here to be more likely to arise in cases of more transparent democratic leadership turnovers.

4. For a sample of mixed Arab reactions to Sharon's victory in 2001, see Policy Watch #517 produced by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (2001).

5. For a related news article, see Dovere (2016)

2.3 The Direction of Preference Change and the Targeting of New Leaders

I now turn to the central question of this dissertation: how does the direction of foreign policy preference change — namely, from dovish to hawkish or the other way around — affect the foreign adversary's decision on whether or not to challenge the new leader?

I argue that when the new leader is perceived as being more hawkish than her predecessor, a pessimistic expectation of the future strategic environment arises, which gives the challenger an incentive to act early. I theorize here that this occurs through three vectors: first by triggering the challenger's fear of suffering an immediate and possibly unacceptable loss, second by lowering the challenger's tolerance for any drop in relative capability due to the target's gaining of experience in the future, and third, by reducing the challenger's concerns about opportunity costs of any early confrontation. Whereas the fear can lead a status-quo challenger to opt for crisis or conflict initiation as a costly signal for resolve or to preempt an unavoidable conflict, the latter two forces incentive a revisionist challenger to act quick to lock in early available gains before the hawk becomes more experienced (and thus more powerful).

In contrast, when a dove replaces a hawk in the target state, all three forces are reversed. Fears about any immediate and unacceptable loss will be unlikely to arise. Revisionist challengers, on the other hand, tend to be more patient, for even with a drop in relative capability the challenger may still be able to secure a safer deal in the future that is better than the expected payoff she can get today by risking a conflict. Besides, revisionist challengers are also more constrained by

opportunity cost concerns due to a brighter prospect of future overall cooperation with their more dovish foreign counterparts.

2.3.1 Move first to avoid the worst

The origins of fear

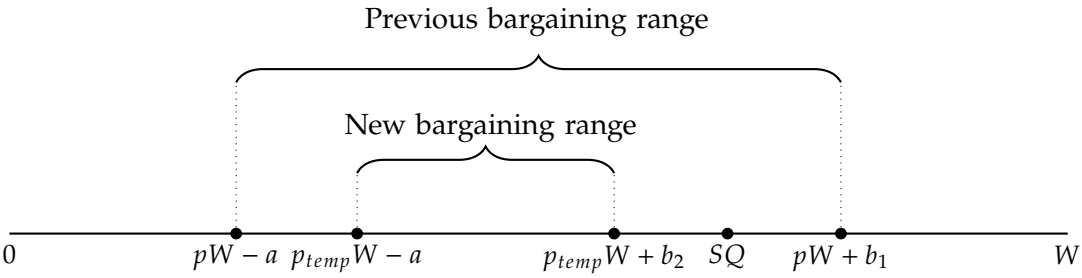
Consider first the scenario that has been largely overlooked by the existing literature on leadership turnover and crisis initiation, in which the challenger is driven by fear of suffering a potentially unacceptable loss. Such a situation can only arise when the leadership turnover in the target state brings in a more hawkish leader whose higher tolerance of the costs of war renders the status quo outside of the new leader's narrower acceptance range.

We can express the origins of the potential challenger's fear in terms of a rudimentary bargaining model (Fearon 1995), which is graphically illustrated in Figure 2.1.[6] It is worth emphasizing that this model is not used to analyze any actor's decision-making, but simply serves as heuristic tool to illustrate how leadership turnover may disrupt the existing stability between two states. This figure demonstrates two features in the period shortly after the leadership turnover in state B. First, since B_2 is a relatively inexperienced new leader, A enjoys a

6. The basic bargaining model considers two states, A and B, that have conflicting preferences over the division of a pie $W > 0$. When there is a division x, then state A gets all the value to the left of $x \in [0, W]$ and state B gets all the value to the right of x, or $W - x$. Clearly, A prefers x closer to W, while B prefers x closer to 0. If a war breaks out then the winner can take everything. State A wins with probability $p \in [0, 1]$ and A's perceived costs for fighting a war is a, while B prevails with probability $1 - p$ and her perceived costs for war is b. State A prefers any value x to war if $x \geqslant pW + (1 - p)0 - a$, which yields A's acceptance range: $x \geqslant pW - a$. Similarly, B prefers any value x to war if $W - x \geqslant p0 + (1 - p)W - b$, which yields B's acceptance range: $x \leqslant pW + b$. These two values constitute the lower and upper bounds of the bargaining range, $[pW - a, pW + b]$, between A and B in which any division of the pie x is preferred to war for both states. In Figure 2.1, the current status quo, SQ, is assumed to fall in the bargaining range between A and B's outgoing leader, namely $SQ \in [pW - a, pW + b_1]$.

temporary increase in relative capability, which is captured by $p_{temp} > p$.[7] Second, the more hawkish B_2's perceived costs of war is smaller than her predecessor, which is captured by $b_2 < b_1$. The fear-driven crisis initiation scenario would arise when the net effect of these changes makes the new hawk in state B dissatisfied with the current status quo, or when $p_{temp}W + b_2 < SQ$.

Figure 2.1: Fear-driven Challenger



It should be noted that such a change does not necessarily cause A to panic as long as there still exists a bargaining range between A and the more hawkish B_2, and both players can correctly identify the range. In that case, the worst possible outcome for player A would be $p_{temp}W - a$, which is still weakly preferred to the war outcome. In other words, from state A's perspective, while the loss relative to the status quo is unavoidable, it can be acceptable, at least in a world of complete and perfect information.

However, uncertainty is an omnipresent feature of the anarchic international system (Waltz 1979), which introduces reasonable fears that the exact bargaining range might not be accurately identified (by both players). The fact that B_2 is a relatively inexperienced ***new leader*** tends to further disturb A's peace of mind, for a

7. As I will detail below, this feature may turn the potential challenger into a revisionist player dissatisfied with the status quo, depending on the degree of the temporary advantage and the where the status quo stands.

new leader might be particularly poorly informed of where A's true bottom line lies or what the true military capabilities look like. Put differently, the probability that B_2 might make a reckless demand that is unacceptable for A, or unilaterally change the status quo by *fait accompli* (Tarar 2016; Altman 2017), tends to be extremely high when the leader is new to the job. This type of uncertainty has been largely overlooked by existing studies, especially the informational approach advanced by Wolford (2007), which tends to disproportionately emphasize the extent to which newcomers hold more private information while downplaying the other side of the same coin — newcomers are also relatively less familiar with their foreign counterparts, and perhaps more importantly, the practice of interstate relations. Yet in fact, from Kennedy's mishandling of the Bay of Pig (Quandt 1986; Neustadt 1991) to George W. Bush's misstatement of the US policy position on Taiwan (Sanger 2001), the initial weak management and lack of knowledge of complex policies have repeatedly proven to be dangerous (Potter 2007). Most recently, Chinese strategists also cautioned that "[Trump's] lack of experience and over-confidence bring uncertainties and could cause him frustration that might lead to impulsiveness" (Shen 2016).

Even if the new leader is fully debriefed on the subject of matter such as where the status quo and their foreign adversary's claimed bottom line stand, the more hawkish leader might adamantly believe that the less desirable situation is caused by previous leaderships' short of resolve, and therefore substantively more concessions can be secured if he or she pushes hard enough. This is also manifested in the dynamic of President Trump's trade war against China. "I don't blame China," Trump said, "After all, who can blame a country for being able to take advantage of another country to the benefit of its citizens? But in actuality, I

do blame past [U.S.] administrations for allowing this out-of-control trade deficit to take place and to grow" (Phelps 2007). The existence of this type of reasoning is even more alarming to foreign adversaries, for they might reasonably anticipate a harder push from the new hawk even if the status quo already rests on exactly their bottom lines.

Another widely acknowledged feature of new leaders — that new leaders have stronger reputation concern than their longer serving counterparts — can also be a source of fear for the potential challenger. The majority of research to date has been focused on how reputation concern can cause the new leader to stand firm if challenged (Wolford 2007; Dafoe 2012; Wu and Wolford 2018; Lupton 2020). However, once we take the direction of preference change into consideration, the new hawk's eagerness to demonstrate her resolve to both foreign and domestic audience (e.g., to fulfill a hardline policy promised during the election campaign) can reasonably make her even more cost-tolerant and thus determined to revise the status quo. In other words, while new leaders' inexperience and high reputation concern can pull a revisionist challenger to opposite directions on the challenging decision, they tend to converge when the newcomer is perceived as a threat, amplifying the potential challenger's fear of suffering an immediate and unacceptable loss. Moreover, "newsworthy" prioritized by the press can result in an overemphasis of aggressive and extremist views and downplay moderate gestures in international communications (Fallows 1997; Finel and Lord 1999), which causes pre-office hawkish messages to be overwhelmingly conveyed, exacerbating A's fear that the more hawkish new leader might seek to demand something unacceptable.

Crisis initiation as a costly signal

One might argue that even if A is facing a potential loss, she can still avoid the worst possible outcome by appeasing the more hawkish B_2, or in terms of Figure 2.1, by granting some concessions that satisfies B_2's new reservation value. But again, this argument rests on the assumption that A can correctly identify B_2's bottom line and that B_2 would not make counteroffers.[8] Neither of these is realistic. Moreover, as the new hawk gains more experience in office, the temporary increase in A's relative capability would diminish, which might cause the new hawk dissatisfied with the appeasement status quo again. Put differently, the new hawk may have time-inconsistent preferences as she becomes more powerful. And perhaps more importantly, the initial appeasement may be (mis)interpreted by the new hawk as a signal of weakness, resulting in even worse payoffs in the longer-term.

As a result, in light of the possibility of suffering an unacceptable loss, the potential challenger (A in Figure 2.1) has incentives to *educate* the newcomer on the challenger's position, resolve, and capability. The ultimate goal is to avoid the worst possible outcome (e.g., being forced to fight an all-out war) by cautioning the less informed new hawk to think twice before demanding too much or taking too aggressive actions to alter the status quo. In other words, the challenger under this scenario is not trying to probe the private information of the new leader (as suggested by screening game based propositions), but primarily seeks to actively reveal her own private information to the newcomer.

The credibility of the message, as Schelling (1960) recognized, depends on

8. If B_2 could make counteroffers, then the same fear that this inexperienced player may propose reckless and unacceptable offers remains.

"the costs and risks associated with fulfillment for the party making the threat."[9] Hence, deployment or mobilization of troops, military exercises, weapon testing, open threat, or even limited war (Wagner 2000) can all become "risky and costly" options for the challenger to signal willingness and capability to use force. While these actions might be well understood as deterrent threats in theoretical terms (Huth 1997), they do trigger de facto crisis or conflicts from an empirical perspective. States also take actions in more aggressive forms to signal resolve. For instance, Wiegand (2011) finds that when states are in disputes with other adversaries, they are more likely to initiate territorial MIDs against their territorial disputants as a way to transfer reputation for resolve. Zhang (2019) also demonstrates that China is more likely to escalate maritime disputes when it senses a need to establish reputation for resolve.

Clearly, the emergence of a more hawkish leader in the rival state who is dissatisfied with the status quo and may seek to revise it in a rather reckless manner surely marks a moment where establishing or renewing reputation for resolve is urgently needed. In fact, it is a widely established feature of various formal models on signaling dynamic that the signaler tends to invest more in demonstrating resolve as the opponent's costs of war decreases, or in other words, when the opponent becomes more hawkish (Fearon 1997; Slantchev 2005). While provoking a more hawkish player is risky, the costs of not acting early tend to loom even bigger when the prospect of a conflict is high. Moreover, human beings are far from perfectly rational and are usually subject to a variety of cognitive

9. Trager (2013, 438) has demonstrated through a cheap talk model that the scope of the demand can also credibly convey a state's willingness to fight "because of the negotiating risks involved in larger demands."

biases that may affect their decision-making (Wilson 2011). One particular type of cognitive bias that may further propel the challenger towards risky options is loss aversion, which according to prospect theory represents a tendency for risk aversion for possible gains but risk acceptance for loss (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Although subsequent research has suggested that expertise, experience, and the flow of information can help mitigate this cognitive bias (Pope and Schweitzer 2011; Clay et al. 2017), there is evidence to suggest that even well informed and assisted decision-making elites may be subject to loss aversion (Jervis 1992; Levy 1992, 1996; Jervis 2004). The challenger may also have incentive to act early to avoid missing the window to take advantage of the inexperienced target's initial lack of preparedness should the brinkmanship fails.

The Hainan Island incident that occurred on April 1, 2001—39 days after President Bush taking office—between China and the U.S. can illustrate this logic. During the presidential election campaign, George W. Bush promised that he would revise the Clinton administration's policies to treat China as a "strategic competitor" rather than a potential "strategic partner" (Lippman 1999). This hawkish turn in U.S. foreign policy was well recognized and taken seriously by his Chinese counterpart. As then Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan wrote in his memoir, "to a certain extent the word competitor implied the US position as being in opposition to China and it was disturbing to think about the possible adverse impact on China-US relations should the Bush argument become the China policy of the US government" (Tang 2011). Upon election, these campaign threats showed little sign of moderating and instead escalated into ominous policy signals (from the Chinese perspective). For example, immediately upon taking office Bush telephoned every major world leader except Chinese President Jiang Zemin, reinforcing his intention

to downgrade Beijing's position (Malik 2002). It didn't take long for the "disturbing thinking" to turn into real crisis when a U.S. Navy spy plane flying a reconnaissance mission over the South China Sea was stuck by a Chinese J-8 fighter jet that veered aggressively close, causing a mid-air collision that killed the Chinese pilot and resulted in the detainment of 24 US crew members (Keefe 2002). While the collision might be an unexpected accident, according to then US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, this type of aggressive actions in terms buzzing American planes actually emerged as a consistent pattern only recently (Kates 2001). The fact that the timing of China's assertive turn in their handling of US reconnaissance missions coincided with the election of a more hawkish Bush in the U.S. to some extent manifests Beijing's attempts to signal their resolve to the new host of the White House.

In fact, this type of reactions (or interactions) appears to be the norm rather than an exception in China's dealing with the US. In light of the election of Ronald Reagan who had campaigned with a more hawkish tone regarding Beijing, Deng Xiaoping reportedly said "to deal with the US, we must not fear going backward [a deterioration in relationship]...if we do not adopt a hard-line policy now then troubles will emerge in an endless stream in the future" (Wang, Sun, and Liang 2017). More recently, in 2016, the consecutive elections of Tsai Ing-wen from the more pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan and Donald Trump who suggested that he might reconsider the one-China policy in the US — both are perceived by Beijing as being more hawkish than their predecessors — represented another situation where Chinese leaders sensed a need to demonstrate resolve. As A. Goldstein (2020, 191) concludes, China's subsequent ramped-up warnings were aimed at "reminding both Taipei and Washington that it was de-

termined, and more able than ever, to resolutely resist any challenge to one of the brightest red lines that define China's core interests."

Crisis initiation as preemption

The fear of suffering an unacceptable loss can also cause the potential challenger to move first to preempt an unavoidable conflict. It should be acknowledged that preemptive wars in general are rare events due primarily to political costs concerns (Reiter 1995). However, as Copeland (2000, 45) concludes, "the Seven Years War and the fact that preemptive wars on a lesser scale do occur...show that preemption is always a real possibility." Leadership turnover can generate preemptive motives for two reasons.

First, the emergence of a more hawkish leader may result in a situation that mirrors what Fearon (1995) calls "issue indivisibility". Fearon (1995, 382) argues that issue indivisibility should be a less compelling, albeit logically tenable, explanation of conflicts because the complexity of " the issues over which states bargain typically are complex and multidimensional", which often makes it possible for states to effectively divide the issue through side-payments or issue-linkages. However, the involvement of a new leader who might be less capable of mastering the complexity of foreign policy issue and more resolute due to reputation concerns tends to make issue indivisibility (relatively) more likely to occur.[10] In other words, while a bargaining-range might (re)emerge as time passes, it might not exist when the hawk is new in the office. If that is the case, then signaling resolve would not help the potential challenger to avoid the worst case, for the most generous offer

10. Such a situation might also arise because the potential challenger overestimates the temporary advantage, which might lead to war due to mutual optimism (Blainey 1988; Slantchev and Tarar 2011). For critiques of mutual optimism as a source for war, see Fey and Ramsay (2007).

from the new hawk will still be unacceptable. The potential challenger will instead have incentives to preempt an imminent conflict.

Second, a leadership turnover that brings in office a more hawkish actor who is dissatisfied with the status quo can intensify the escalating spirals of hostility and fear (Jervis 1976), which makes preemption (or inadvertent conflicts) more likely to occur. Fearon (2018) nicely captures a tragic "feedback loop" that can be triggered by such a leadership turnover through analyzing a complete information repeated game of arms build-up and war. The model suggests that when one state (or in our case, state A) feels threatened by a new leadership, it will arm up to deter the potential aggression, which can make the current peaceful status quo become less attractive to this state since it now has to invest more to preserve the peace. The threatened state will consequently put more value on striking for more gains, which will in turn feedback on the revisionist state's need for more arms. It should be noted that this dynamic is remarkably different from the standard security dilemma logic, in which conflicts break out between status quo states that are *uncertain* about others' intentions or preferences (Jervis 1978; Glaser 1997; A. Kydd 1997; A. H. Kydd 2005). This complete information model does not involve uncertainty. Instead, as Fearon (2018, 523) concludes, "inefficiency arises because arming to deter lowers a state's value for living with the status quo, which creates a security externality and a feedback loop." A slightly different way to state this outcome is that the high costs of deterring a more hawkish player gives rise of the incentive to "eliminate the threat to the status quo" (Powell 2006).

Unlike the conventional preemptive war literature that emphasizes on offensive-dominance to rationalize preemptive attacks (Jervis 1978; Snyder 1984; Van Evera 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Hopf 1991), the first-mover advantage in the

period shortly after a leadership turnover rests in part, and ironically, on taking advantage of the new hawk's lack of preparedness. That is, the new hawk's inexperience simultaneously makes her appear to be a dangerous player who might act recklessly and a relatively "easier" target when compared to herself in the future. To some extent, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 manifests this logic. The Islamic Revolution that had brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power in Iran in the year before greatly exacerbated the Ba'athists' fear of Shia fundamentalism (Bulloch and Morris 1989). Saddam Hussein therefore decided to "overthrow the Khomeini regime before that regime could overthrow him" (Hardy 2005). To a large degree, the Iranians' lack of a cohesive leadership and the execution of many highest ranking officers boosted Baghdad's confidence that they could achieve a quick victory (Kahana and Suwaed 2009).

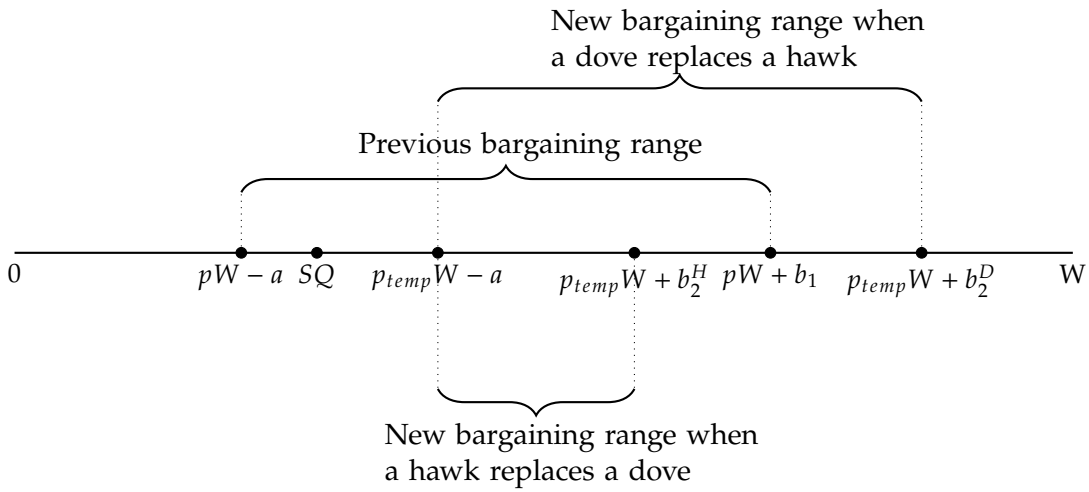
2.3.2 Move quick to lock in the early available gain

The origins of the revisionist motive

Now consider the situation where the challenger is a revisionist player, seeking to alter the status quo. The revisionist motive in this case is largely driven by the temporary increase in the challenger's relative capability when the inexperienced new leader in the target state is (perceived as) not fully prepared. We can again use the basic bargaining model as a heuristic tool to illustrate the origin of the revisionist motive, which is depicted in Figure 2.2.

As Figure 2.2 shows, if the current status quo reached by A and the outgoing B_1 lies close to A's old reservation value, then the temporary increase in A's capability relative to an inexperienced new leader ($p_{temp} > p$) might raise A's reservation value to a degree that exceeds the current status quo ($p_{temp}W - a > SQ$),

Figure 2.2: Revision-driven Challenger



turning A into a dissatisfied player. In other words, the temporary weakness of the new leader makes the potential challenger value less the current status quo. Another feature highlighted in Figure 2.2 is that A might become dissatisfied with the status quo either when a dove replaces a hawk (which is characterized as the new leader having a higher costs of war than her predecessor, $b_2^D > b_1$) or when a hawk replaces a dove (which is characterized as the new leader having a lower costs of war than her predecessor, $b_2^H < b_1$). Two assumptions adopted here are worth mentioning. First, the new dove and new hawk generate the same degree of temporary advantage for A, which is characterized as the size of $p_{temp} - p$. Second, and relatedly, both players' war payoffs are solely determined by their own perceived costs of war, and uncorrelated with the other's type. In other words, they do not prefer to fight a dove over a hawk. If we do allow "correlated types", then A might be more likely to become dissatisfied with the status quo when facing a

new dove because of larger war payoffs from fighting a dove.[11]

It should be noted that this is a rather conservative way to understand the origin of revisionist motives in that the potential challenger only wants to improve her position or renegotiate when the status quo becomes unacceptable to her. If an offensive realist assumption is strictly imposed, which suggests that states always pursue more gains (Mearsheimer 2001), then states (both A and B) will have revisionist motives as long as there is extra room within the bargaining range; or in other words, satisfied players also have revisionist motives. Another alternative way to think of why a satisfied player may still have revisionist motives is through the logic of side payment. For instance, player A might be satisfied with the current status quo because the incumbent leader in state B is able to offer some side payments, such as some concessions on other issues, that can compensate for the surplus left in the bargaining range. Then A could become unsatisfied (even if the status quo still falls in her acceptance range) either because she has incentives to demand more side payments from a new dove (B_2^D) or because the new hawk (B_2^H) is unwilling to offer the same amount of side payment. As a result, A will demand more from the surplus in the bargaining range.[12]

Hence, Figure 2.2 reflects the more conventional way of understanding crisis initiation against new leaders where the potential challenger is tempted to take advantage of the new leader's initial weakness (Gelpi and Grieco 2001). But how might this temptation play out differently when the potential challenger faces different types of new leaders? Critical to answering this question is examining how

11. see, for example, Wolford (2008, ch 5).

12. It is interesting to note that this might make the satisfied player A simultaneously have fear-driven and revisionist-driven motives to challenge depending on where the status quo stands and how hawkish the new opponent is.

the shift in relative power due to the targets' gaining of experience as their time in office increases and the opportunity costs of an early conflict may exert different influence on the potential challenger under these two scenarios.

Varying tolerance of power shift

The direction of preference change can affect the revisionist challenger's decision-making by influencing her sensitivity to the change in relative capability due to the target's gaining of experience in the future.

Like in the case where the challenger is driven by fear, the new leader's temporary inexperience tends to be a double-edged sword for the revisionist challenger as well.[13] On one hand, it gives the challenger a temporary advantage should a military conflict break out. On the other hand, the new leader's inexperience might make him unable to ratify the challenger's offer domestically even if the offer falls into his personal acceptance range. Existing research has demonstrated that peaceful resolutions of territorial disputes are more likely to happen between more seasoned national leaders because these leaders' accumulated reputation as competent and successful players can be a form of expendable political capital and make their choices perceived by their domestic audience as "objectively suited to their countries' best interests" (Chiozza and Choi 2003, 235).

This confronts the the potential challenger with a trade-off when calculating the timing of challenge: (1) challenging today when there is a possibility that her

13. To recap, the new leader's inexperience also appears to be a double-edged sword in the case where the potential challenger is satisfied with the status but driven by fear of suffering an unacceptable loss. In that case, the new hawk's inexperience simultaneously makes her appear to be a dangerous player who might act recklessly and a relatively "easier" target when compared to herself in the future, which can motivate the challenger to move first to preempt the unavoidable conflict.

offer will be rejected; but in the meantime, the challenger also enjoys a temporary advantage due to the target's initial lack of experience should the offer be rejected and war happen; (2) or, the challenger could wait until the target becomes stronger so that any acceptable offer can be ratified domestically; but in the meantime, since the target has gained more experience and become stronger, his reservation value also increases, which may make the deal even worse than the challenger's expected utility from the risky early move. To some extent, this trade-off reflects the commitment problem elaborated by Powell (2006). The once weak target's inability to commit to the same level of concession when he gets stronger may give the challenger incentive to lock in a higher expected payoff available today.[14]

To sketch the logic more formally, suppose that the unsatisfied leader in state A (the challenger) is determined to re-divide the pie W with the new leader in state B (the target). The challenger then must decide whether to challenge now or later. Assuming that there is complete information about the current relative power, which is modeled as A's probability of winning a conflict p; the potential shift in relative power against A in the near future as the target gains more experience, which is modeled as A's probability of winning a conflict dropping to δp where $\delta \in (0, 1)$ is a discount factor; and each player's perceived costs of war a and b

14. In fact, we can also conceptualize this trade-off as an information problem: (1) challenging today when there is *uncertainty* about the new leader's true reservation value can entail some risk of war; but in the meantime, the challenger also enjoys a temporary advantage due to the target's initial lack of experience should war happen; (2) or, the challenger could wait until she knows better about the target so that she can strike a safer deal that entails no risk of war; but in the meantime, since the target has gained more experience and become stronger, the safer deal may be worse than the risky gamble for the challenger. This would require an additional assumption that the potential challenger can slowly learn about the new leader's type as his time in office increases without necessarily directly interacting with him. This assumption can be somewhat justified by findings that show states do learn about other nations from how these other nations are doing elsewhere and that extra-dyadic interaction of states has significant influence on the pattern of dyadic conflict (Crescenzi 2007).

respectively. Let's further assume that the challenger is also aware that the target's initial weakness may cause her early offer (regardless of the value of it) to be rejected with a probability of $\pi \in [0, 1]$, and the rejection will lead to war.[15] Since it is assumed that there is an arbitrary probability for an offer to be rejected (which is independent from the offer size as long as the offer falls in B's acceptance range), the challenger will always try to make the maximal offer that is equal to B's reservation value, which should be $pW + b$ if challenging today and $\delta pW + b$ if challenging later.[16]

Thus, the challenger's expected utility of challenging today is $EU_A(Now) = (1 - \pi)(pW + b) + \pi(pW - a)$, in which the first component captures the expected utility from an accepted offer, while the latter part captures the expected utility from a war. And her expected utility of challenging later is $EU_A(Later) = \delta pW + b$, for it is assumed that when the target gets stronger the offer will be accepted with certainty. The challenger, therefore, is willing to challenge today if and only if $EU_A(Now) \geqslant EU_A(Later)$, which gives the following inequality:[17]

$$\delta \leqslant \frac{pW - \pi a - \pi b}{pW} = \delta^* \tag{2.1}$$

What Inequality 2.1 states is that when the relative capability shift against A due to B's gaining of experience is substantial (when $\delta < \delta^*$), the potential challenger will be willing to tolerate the risk of war and is tempted to act quick to

15. In models of with incomplete information, this probability is endogenized into the bargaining process, which is determined by the size of the offer (which is in turn determined by the relative power and the two players' costs of war).

16. See ft.7 of this chapter.

17. Proof of Inequality 2.1: $EU_A(Now) \geqslant EU_A(Later) \Leftrightarrow (1 - \pi)pW + (1 - \pi)b + \pi pW - \pi a \geqslant \delta pW + b \Leftrightarrow \delta \leqslant \frac{pW - \pi a - \pi b}{pW}$.

lock in better gains available today.

$$\frac{\partial \delta^*}{\partial b} = -\frac{\pi}{pW} \tag{2.2}$$

Clearly, the first derivative of δ^* with regard to b (which is shown in Inequality 2.2) indicates that there is a negative relationship between δ^* and b. What this suggests is that as the target becomes more hawkish (having a lower perceived costs of war b), the potential challenger will be willing to challenge today with an even smaller drop in relative capability in the future (a higher value of δ^*).[18] This is because an actor's bargaining power consists of both relative capability and his or her resolve. A more hawkish target who is inherently more resolute and cost-tolerant can thus amplify the negative impact of power shift on the challenger. In other words, while a certain level of drop in the relative capability can be tolerable for the challenger when she faces a more dovish target, the same level of drop can effectively cause the challenger to be impatient, rushing to lock in a relatively better outcome today, when the shadow of future is characterized by a stronger and more hawkish opponent. It is interesting to note that this analysis actually indicates that the revisionist challenger is also driven by "fear". But unlike the status quo challenger who is fearful of suffering a loss, the revisionist challenger is driven by fear of gaining less if not acting now.

Russia's annexation of Crimea can somewhat illustrate this logic. Although technically the *fait accompli* happened before the more anti-Russia Ukrainian leader Poroshenko officially took office, the Maidan protest that ousted the pro-Russia

18. Note that a bigger value of δ^* means a smaller drop in A's relative capability. Put it formally, $p - \delta_1^* p < p - \delta_2^* p$ given that $\delta_1^* > \delta_2^*$.

Yanukovych sent Moscow a clear message that the next president of Ukraine will take a harsher stance towards it. This quite foreseeable preference change coupled with the temporary weakness of a post-revolution Kyiv likely gave Putin incentive to take the initiative to revise a long-time status quo that he dislikes. As a result, "Russia sought to act before the Ukrainian state could politically consolidate itself after the Maidan demonstrations" (Kofman et al. 2017, 66).[19]

Varying constraints of opportunity costs

Opportunity costs represent the potential gains states might miss out on when choosing one particular action over another, which has been proven to be one of the powerful mechanisms through which economic interdependence can reduce the probability of war between states (Polachek and Xiang 2010). In the context of leadership turnover, we can think of opportunity costs of challenging a new leader as the benefits she can get from a potentially warmer and more cordial relationship with the same leader in the future absent such an early confrontation.

Clearly, from the potential challengers' perspective, one critical difference between the emergence of a new dove versus a new hawk in their rival state is that they may face a very different overall strategic environment in the future, one that is characterized by more cooperative or conflictual interactions respectively. The potential challenger therefore should have incentives to approach the new dove more cautiously, for any threat or confrontation may incur the risk of "a breach in relations, not merely with respect to the issue at hand, but also with respect to

19. It should be noted that the key difference between this case and Saddam Hussein's preemptive attack against Iran in 1980 is that Putin was not really driven by fear that a Ukraine under Poroshenko would cause him any significant loss (which is simply not realistic). Instead, he was worried that the window of time for him to seize the territory would be quite narrow.

other aspects of the relationship" (Trager 2010, 347). This concern tends to be largely mitigated, if not entirely eliminated, when a new hawk is in office, for cooperation would be difficult anyway. Moreover, according to the logic of two-level games, if the challenger wants to keep a relatively dovish adversary in office as long as possible, then a more cordial external environment needs to be cultivated (Putnam 1988).

This is more than a mere theoretical concern. On one hand, works on leader specific punishment have demonstrated that leadership turnover can indeed help restore interstate relations under certain conditions (McGillivray and Smith 2000, 2004, 2006). On the other, Clare (2014) shows that dovish leaders can even utilize their foreign counterparts' preferences for their stay in power to elicit cooperation and extract critical concessions from adversaries. In fact, foreign adversaries may even have incentive to cooperate to help the dovish leader win office.[20] As Clare (2014, 1312) demonstrates through analyzing the 1992 Israeli election, "secret lines of communication between the Palestinians and top Labor Party officials had in fact already commenced two months before the elections," during which top Labor officials even "outlined a Palestinian strategy that would prevent Shamir [Likud candidate] from making any substantive electoral gains from the ongoing peace talks." Clare (2014, 1312) then concludes that "this recount reveals just how closely the Palestinian expectations for peace were embedded in Israeli electoral dynamics and clearly shows their preferences for dealing with the (dovish) Labor Party over the (hawkish) Likud government."

In sum, forward-looking rational actors must calculate not only the imme-

20. For discussions of how the shadow of leadership turnover may affect the current bargaining with the incumbent leader, see Wolford (2007, 2012).

diate gain and loss but also the longer-term consequences of their actions today, especially when the new leader carries a longer "shadow of future" (Axelrod 1984). However, the direction of preference change can paint the future in different "colors". A brighter prospect of future cooperation with a dovish leader tends to impose more constraints on the potential challenger today.

2.4 Hypotheses

These tendencies have clear translations into how foreign adversaries might approach the emergence of a new leader in their rival state differently, depending on the direction of their anticipated preference change associated with leadership turnover. Most straightforwardly, the potential challengers' incentives to demonstrate resolve, to preempt conflicts, and to lock in early available gains leads to the following first two hypotheses we can test. The critical difference between H1a and H1b is that the former focuses on cross-time variation for the same leader, while the latter examines the cross-type variation at the same time point.

> *H1a: Leaders are more likely to be challenged earlier in their tenure only when they are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessors.*
>
> *H1b: Leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessor are more likely to be challenged than leaders who do not experience preference change and dovish leaders who replace a more hawkish predecessor, but only during the early stage of their tenure.*

Moreover, new leaders' initial inexperience plays a crucial role in affecting the potential challenger's calculation in all three scenarios discussed above. Yet not all "new" leaders can be considered as inexperienced. Perhaps there is no better

manifestation of this point than the comparison between George W. Bush whose only political involvement before his presidency was a 5-year governorship of Texas and his father George W. H. Bush who had already served as the head of CIA, US Ambassador to the U.N., and vice president from 1981 to 1989 before his arrival in the White House. Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

> *H2: The pattern hypothesized in H1 should be most significant for leaders with no or less previous experience in politics.*

Last but not least, the theory presented above indicates that a fear-driven challenger who seeks to avoid the worst possible loss may either use conflict as a costly signal to educate the new hawk, or launch preemptive attacks to eliminate the threat before it becomes stronger. Given the different nature of the purposes, we should expect to observe different crisis initiation behaviors accordingly. Clearly, if the challenger is motivated to preempt an unavoidable conflict and is determined to eliminate a temporarily weak hawk, then she will be unlikely to only rely on threats, troop mobilizations, or display of forces, for these low intensity crisis behaviors can actually undermine the preemption agenda by alarming the enemy. By contrast, if the challenger is more worried about being misinterpreted as irresolute, she is likely to only engage in low intensity behaviors, for directly triggering a major conflict (by more aggressive behaviors such as blockade or occupation) is exactly the outcome she seeks to avoid. This would lead to three more hypotheses:

> *H3a (Status quo Challenger): Leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessors are more likely to face low intensity challenges initiated by status quo challengers early in their tenure (Signaling).*

H3b (Status quo Challenger): Leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessors are more likely to face high intensity challenges initiated by status quo challengers early in their tenure (Preemption).

Revisionist challengers' behavior, however, is more difficult to predict. They may either try first with some low intensity probing actions and bet that coercion or threat might work out, or directly resort to forces to seize whatever they seek to acquire (like the annexation of Crimea). Thus, we should expect to observe:

H4 (Revisionist Challenger): Leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessors are more likely to face either low intensity or high intensity challenges initiated by revisionist challengers early in their tenure.

2.5 Conclusion

In sum, this chapter layed out the rationale underlying the argument that foreign adversaries' reaction to the emergence of a new leader in their rival state depends largely on the direction of the foreign policy preference shift associated with the leadership turnover. This change — from dovish to hawkish or the other way around — influences the challenger's evaluation of the costs and benefits of an early challenge by affecting the presence or absence of fear of suffering loss, amplifying or diluting the attractiveness of the new leader's initial inexperience as a source of weakness to explore, and weakening (if not eliminating) or strengthening opportunity costs concerns of an early confrontation. In addition, this chapter, in a departure from most work in this area, presented a theory that addresses crisis initiation by both status quo and revisionist challengers.

This small innovation allows me to develop several novel, and more granular, hypotheses regarding the relationship between targets' time in office and their

probability of being challenged, and more importantly, the type of challenges they may face. These hypotheses will be tested in a series of statistical models in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 3
The Timing of Militarized Challenges

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I subject the six hypotheses derived from the previous chapter to empirical scrutiny in a series of statistical models. Using primarily a sample of democratically elected leaders that have at least one foreign rival during the post-WWII period (1945-2014), I examine the relationship between a leader's time in office and the likelihood that this leader is targeted in a militarized interstate dispute, and more importantly, how this relationship varies conditional on direction of preference change after leadership turnover.

Statistical results support most of the hypotheses, providing strong evidence that the direction of preference change matters. Relying primarily on the Left-Right spectrum of political ideology as an operationalization of the hawkishness of a leader's foreign policy preference, I find that only leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor tend to experience initially high probabilities of being targeted in militarized interstate disputes before declining over time, while there is no significant variation in the probability of being challenged over one's tenure for leaders who do not experience party change and for leaders who are

more leaf-leaning than their predecessor. Moreover, this type of leaders are also significantly more likely to face militarized challenges than the other two types, but only during the early stage of their tenure. And this relationship is most significant for leaders who had not served as the head of a state before (or vice president in the case of the U.S.). The results are robust to various model specifications and different samples of dyads.

Digging deeper, statistical results also show that leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor are more likely to face low intensity challenges earlier in their tenure from both status-quo and revisionist challenger, providing evidence that supports the signaling mechanism and partially support the logic that challengers are tempted to lock-in a better payoff early. However, support for the preemption logic does not emerge, as new right-leaning leaders are not more likely to face high intensity challenges from status-quo challengers.

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. I first clarify the data structure and sample selection, which is followed by a discussion of the operationalization and measurement of the dependent variable, key independent variables, and controls. The third section presents descriptive analysis of the data. Results form a series of statistical models are presented and discussed in the section that follows. I conclude this chapter by drawing out implications and contributions of the findings.

3.2 Data Structure and Sample Selection

The hypotheses indicate the appropriate unit of analysis should be able to capture two features, which are leader-level interaction and specific attributes of the tar-

get and the challenger within a crisis. Thus, following Bak and Palmer (2010), I construct a directed-leader-dyad-period dataset that covers the 1945-2014 period. Each observation consists of a directed dyad between a challenger leader (Side A) and a targeted leader (Side B) in a given period, or at maximum 1 year. The word "period" is used to capture situations where multiple leader-dyads are present in a given year after leadership turnover. For example, in 2001 there are two directed-leader-dyads between China (Side A) and the U.S. (Side B), which are Jiang Zemin versus Bill Clinton from January 1st to January 19 and Jiang Zemin versus George W. Bush from January 20 to December 31st.[1] Leader-level information, such as the dates and manner of their entry and exit from power is collected from the Archigos data (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009).[2]

In terms of leaders that could appear on the target side (Side B), in the main empirical tests, I restrict the analysis to those who came into power in or after 1945 in countries covered by the Manifesto Project Dataset (Volkens et al. 2018), which are "mostly democracies in OECD and Central and Eastern European countries." This sample of targeted leaders is chosen for two main reasons. First, as I discussed in the previous chapter, the direction of preference change, if there is any, is most likely to be observed by their foreign adversaries when the leadership transition happens via relatively transparent democratic elections. Moreover, these countries are generally stable regimes that can guarantee smooth and peaceful leadership transitions, which allows us to isolate the effect of leadership turnover and prefer-

1. There could also be multiple directed-dyads if leadership turnover happens in the challenger state. For example, in 2003 there are also two directed-leader-dyads between China (Side A) and the U.S. (Side B), which are Jiang Zemin versus George W. Bush from January 1st to March 14 and Hu Jintao versus George W. Bush from March 15 to December 31st.

2. Specific leader-level variables (as well as state- and system-level variables) will be discussed in the next section.

ence change from other possibly confounding scenarios such as foreign imposed leadership change or coup and revolutionary outcomes.[3] These stable regimes also have more established domestic politics dynamic such as historical partisan tradition, which could further facilitate their adversaries' learning and a relatively quick estimation of the possible preference change. This last point leads to the second, practical reason for focusing only on these countries, which is that it allows us to construct consistent measures of the direction of preference change (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section) based on the political orientation of the leader's affiliated party.

It has been widely acknowledged that including all dyads into the analysis contains so many dyads without expectations of disputes, risking aggregation bias (Wu and Wolford 2018). The theory presented in the previous chapter indicates that the most relevant sample for testing the disturbing effect of leadership turnover should be one that focuses on rival relationships, for states locked in rivalries are most likely to worry about a satisfied status quo being revised or have incentives to revise an unsatisfied status quo. These states also tend to be more concerned about their reputation for resolve given that there is higher chance of future crisis and disputes. Hence, for leaders that could appear on the challenger side (Side A), I restrict the analysis to those who are considered rival country leaders of the targeted state. I then rely on the Peace Data v2.01 (Goertz, Diehl, and Balas 2016; Diehl, Goertz, and Gallegos 2019) to identify rival-dyads, which defines and codes

3. For the same reason, I further drop several leaders within this sample who either serve as the first leader of a new regime or who came into power through military coups, including Konrad Adenauer who served as the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963, Ben-Gurion's first Prime Ministership from 1948 to 1954, and four Turkish Prime Ministers whose entry into the office is coded as Irregular by the Archigos dataset, including Cemal Gursel in 1960, Nihat Erim in 1971, Kenan Evren in 1980, and Mesut Yilmaz in 1997.

rivalry relationship as states between which "The sentiments of threat, enmity and competition that remain—along with the persistence of unresolved issues" and therefore "past negative interactions lead them to expect such interactions to continue or repeat in the foreseeable future" (Diehl, Goertz, and Gallegos 2019, 6).[4]

As a result, matching the target sample with challenger sample yields a directed-leader-dyad-period dataset with 3,842 observations that consists of 1,269 distinct directed-leader dyads.[5] This dataset will be used for the main tests, while several other different samples (e.g., covering different time period, including autocracies as targets) will be used for checking the robustness of the findings, which will discussed later when results from regression on specific samples are reported.

3.3 Dependent Variable, Independent Variables, and Controls

This section clarifies the operationalization and measurement of the variables that will be used in the main empirical tests.

3.3.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variable used for testing H1a, H1b, and H2 is a binary variable, which is coded 1 if there is a militarized interstate dispute (MID) initiated against a targeted leader from a challenger leader in a given period. I use the most recently

4. Targeted states that do not have rivals are therefore dropped from the sample. This procedure leaves 28 states on the target side: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, Israel, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand.

5. Not every directed-leader dyad lasts for the same length of time as rivalry relationships may end at different points.

updated MID v5.0 dataset to identify these incidents, which extended the temporal coverage to 2014 (Palmer et al. 2020).[6]

I use the beginning date of a MID to strictly identify disputes between two specific leaders. Using again the China-US dyad in 2001 as an example, there are two directed-dyads between China and the U.S. in that year, which are Jiang Zemin-Clinton and Jiang Zemin-George W. Bush, with the former being the challenger. The MID#4280 (The Hainan Incident) is coded as China challenging the U.S. in 2001 on March 23, 2001. Therefore, only the Jiang Zemin-George W. Bush directed-dyad is coded 1, while Jiang Zeming-Clinton observation in the same year is coded 0. Moreover, ongoing conflicts are not coded as challenges. For example, if a MID was initiated in 2001 but lasted until 2005, then only the 2001 observation is coded as 1 while all relevant observations in the subsequent years are coded 0.

Besides, it has been argued that MIDs include some incidents that are either too minor to possibly get national leaders involved or too complex to figure out who the real initiator is (Downes and Sechser 2012). Thus, I rely on Gibler (2018) who provides detailed descriptions of each entry of MID to further clean out the most relevant incidents. Specifically, there are four types of MIDs are dropped from the main tests (I provide robustness checks using the uncleaned DV in the Appendix (Table A5) of this chapter). First, I drop all minor encounters between coast guard vessels and fishing boat trawler or passenger vessels. Second, incidents that are clearly collateral damages are dropped. Most of this type of incidents occurred during the Tanker War from 1984 through 1988 when both Iran and Iraq often

6. This dataset is built on four previous iterations: MID v1 (Gochman and Maoz 1984), MID v2 (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996), MID v3 (Ghosn, Palmer, and Bremer 2004), and MID v4 (Palmer et al. 2015).

randomly harassed merchant ships in the area. Third, I drop cases that either do not have a description in Gibler (2018) or do not have a clear distinction between Challenger and Target (e.g., a MID description indicates that two forces exchanged fired over the border without clearly identifying which side opened fire first or how the incident began). Fourth, I drop cases where multiple targets are involved or states that not identified as the original target.

To test H3a, H3b, and H4, I construct a categorical dependent variable based on the two dimensions: the intensity level of the challenger's highest action and whether or not the challenger is coded as a Revisionist State in the MID.[7] Both types of information are available in the MID v5.0 dataset (Palmer et al. 2020). A challenge is coded as low intensity if the highest action taken by the challenger involved only threat to use force (e.g., threat to blockade or threat to declare war) or display of force (e.g., mobilization or show of force), while a high intensity challenge captures incidents where the challenger used force (e.g., occupation, seizure, or attack) or a war occurred (e.g., declaration of war or beginning interstate war). As for the coding of Revisionist State, the original Dispute Coding Manuscript states "the judgment as to whether or not a state is revisionist should be based on the behavior of the state in the related incidents and not on some intuition about who was the 'aggressor' in a dispute or the state that 'started it all.' To be considered revisionist, a state must demonstrate, through its behavior, a desire to change the status quo in a significant way."[8]

7. It is difficult to create an independent variable or control to identify whether a challenger state (Side A) is a revisionist state, for their roles might change across different disputes.

8. The coding manuscript is available for downloading at the Correlates of War Project.

3.3.2 Independent variables

The theory hypothesizes that the probability that a leader is challenged should be largely determined by two factors: the length of the leader's time in office and the direction of preference change, or whether this leader is more or less hawkish than than her predecessor.

Thus, the key to measure the direction of preference change is to first find an appropriate operaitionalization of the rather abstract concept of hawkishness. I choose to rely primarily on the Left-Right political orientation of the leader's affiliated political party as a proxy for hawkishness for two major reasons. First and foremost, it has been widely established in the IR literature that party ideology has a strong and direct influence on the hawkish or dovish nature of the government's foreign policy (Clare 2014). For example, Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione (2010) have shown that liberals are more "prosocial" and more likely to seek compromise internationally, while conservatives tend to be more "proself" and bargain more aggressively. More directly, Palmer, London, and Regan (2004) and Arena and Palmer (2009) demonstrate that among developed democracies governments on the right are more likely to be involved in militarized disputes than those on the left, for the hawkish base of right-wing leaders are less likely to punish them should they use force. Consistent with these patterns, Koch (2009) and Koch and Sullivan (2010) find that governments on the left tend to engage in shorter disputes, while right-wing governments fight longer disputes. More recently, Bertoli, Dafoe, and Trager (2019) also find that in the case of the U.S., electing right-wing candidates increases state aggression.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the theory presented in the previ-

ous chapter emphasizes the foreign adversary's perceived hawkishness instead of the new leader's "true", latent hawkishness. And since the window of opportunity to take advantage of the new leader's initial weakness is quite narrow (or the threat is imminent in the fearful situation), foreign adversaries are likely to rely on those most readily observable indicators to inform their evaluation of the possibility and direction of preference change. Clearly, leaders party affiliation is one of these factors. As a result, while there are other approaches that might be able to more precisely measure or explain the variation of leaders' hawkishness, such as relying on leaders' dispositional or psychological traits (Keller 2005; Yarhi-Milo 2018) or constructing more comprehensive measures by latent variable models (Carter and Smith 2020), they may not serve well the theoretical focus of this study. Hence, this study adopts the simple operationalizatio of hawk vs dove based on leaders' party affiliation, with leaders more on the right considered more hawkish.

I then take three steps to measure the *Direction of Preference Change (DPC)* based on the ideological orientation of the leaders' affiliated party. Step-1: following Clare (2014), I use the thirteen left-wing and thirteen right-wing issues identified by Laver and Budge (1992), which are drawn from the Manifesto Project Dataset (MPD) (Volkens et al. 2018), to calculate a political party's ideological position at each election as follows:

$$\text{Party Ideology} = \frac{\text{Right} - \text{Left}}{\text{Right} + \text{Left}}$$

, where "Right" is the percentage of manifesto statement falling under the right-wing categories and "Left" is the percentage of statement falling under left-wing categories. The outcome is a continuous value ranging from -1 (Left) to 1 (Right).

Step-2: I use the Change in Source of Leader Support (CHISOLS) Dataset (Leeds and Mattes 2015) to identify whether a leadership turnover involves any defacto change in the leader's domestic source of support, which is defined as "the set of societal interests whose support allows the leader to gain and maintain power". In democracies, this change largely captures political party shift associated with leadership turnover. Step-3: if there is a source of leader support change identified by CHISOLS, I calculate whether the new leader's political party is more or less on the Right than the outgoing leader's political party based on the cumulative average of the two parties' ideological score over time constructed above. I use the cumulative average instead of the current value to capture the possibility that foreign adversaries' understanding and evaluation of the new leader is somewhat affected by their long-time interaction with different parties in the target state (Miura and Weiss 2016).[9] As a result, this three-step procedure yields a three-value categorical variable that will be used in the main tests as a measure of the first independent variable *Direction of Preference Change (DPC)*:

> **DPC=0**: the new leader shares the predecessor's source of leader support (No Preference Change).
>
> **DPC=1**: the new leader is more on the left than his or her predecessor (From Right to Left).
>
> **DPC=2**: the new leader is more on the right than his or her predecessor (From Let to Right).

The second independent variable, *Target Tenure*, is straightforwardly operationalized as the targeted leader's length of time in office. I measure this variable

9. I report models using the current value measure in the Appendix (Table A3) of this chapter.

as the number of days since the leader took office to either (a) the day the leader left the office in a given dyad-period (in cases where leaders stay in office less than a year), or (b) the last day of a given year provided the leader stayed in office through the last day of the year and no MID happened, or (c) to the starting day of a militarized dispute if a MID was initiated in a given dyad period. Logged value of these numbers are used in the model to account for the highly skewed distribution. Finally, an interaction between the *DPC* and *Target Tenure* is included to examine if the timing of challenges against different type of new leaders would show different patterns.

3.3.3 Controls

A number of control variables are included in the statistical models. To begin with, *Challenger Tenure*, which is measured in the same way as *Target Tenure*, is included to account for the confounding effect that new leaders might also be more or less likely to initiate crises, and therefore the timing of challenge might be primarily driven by the challenger rather than the target (Chiozza and Goemans 2003; DiLorenzo, McBride, and Ray 2016). Besides, both *Challenger Age* and *Target Age* are included in the model to control for their impact on leaders' conflict participation pattern. For instance, contrary to the conventional wisdom built on biological hypothesis that young leaders with an average higher level of testosterone should act more aggressively, Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam (2005) find that leaders become more likely to both initiate and escalate militarized disputes as their age increase. They attribute this pattern to the fact that younger leaders usually have relatively longer time horizons and therefore are "willing to delay taking risky decisions than older leader" (668). Both the challenger and target leaders' gender, which is coded 1 if

the leader is male and 0 otherwise, are included in the model to account for their impact on leaders' conflict participation behavior. Post and Sen (2020) find that female leaders are more likely to reciprocate and forcefully escalate a dispute than male-led governments as gender stereotypes tend to exacerbate the information asymmetry, causing the opponent to underestimate the female leader's resolve.

I also include in the model a dummy variable, *Previous Experience*, to capture whether or not a leader had served as national leaders (or in the U.S. case served as Vice President) before. This variable will be mostly included as a control in the models. But it will be considered an important conditional factor, and thus interacted with *DPC* and *Target Tenure*, when testing H2. I will also use two alternative measures of leaders' experience when testing H2. One is a binary variable *Military/Rebel Experience* that measures whether or not a leader has served military or fought in rebel groups before, and the other one is a continuous variable *Years of Experience* that measures the number of years a leader had been "heading agencies or divisions that would appear to be within the executive branch", both of which are drawn from the Leader Experience and Attribute Descriptions dataset (LEAD) dataset (Ellis, Horowitz, and Stam 2015).

Several dyadic level variables that have been widely proved relevant to the onset of interstate conflicts are also included in the model as controls. A dummy variable, *Joint Democracy*, which is coded 1 if both sides of the dyads are democracies, to account for democratic peace effect (Doyle 1983; Owen 1994). I use Polity IV data (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2017) to identify regime type, and code states with a polity score equal or greater than 6 as democracies. I control for relative power by creating a continuous variable, *Relative Capability*, using the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score from the National Material Capabilities

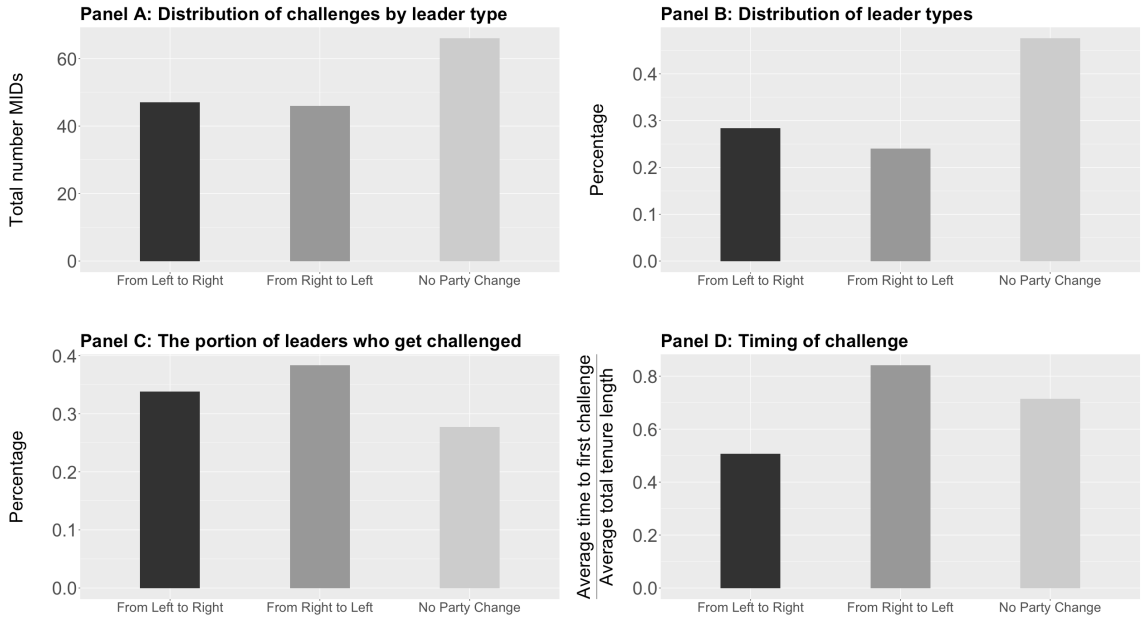
v5.0 (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972), which is calculated by dividing the challenger's CINC score by the sum of the capabilities of both states. However, CINC is only updated to 2012. The 2013 data is computed by multiplying the 2012 data by the average changing rate of a country's CINC score in the past decade (2002-2012), and the 2014 data is computed in the same way.

The *Bilateral Trade* variable is included to account for the level of economic interdependence between two states, which uses the smoothed total trade values from Correlates of War Trade Data (Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins 2009). Spatial factors are also crucial in determining the strategic environment facing a state and the likelihood of disputes (Gleditsch and Ward 2001). I, therefore, include in the model *Distance* to capture the level of contiguity between two states, which takes values ranging from 1 (separated by a land or river border) to 6 (separated by more than 400 miles of water) (Stinnett et al. 2002). *Cold War*, a dummy variable coded 1 if the period is before 1991, is included to account for the unique international environment during that period and the potential that state leaders may behave differently. Finally, to account for time dependence driven by temporal correlation in the binary dependent variable, I include the number of peace years and a cubic polynomial expansion into the model Carter and Signorino (2010).

3.4 Descriptive Statistics

Before delving into regression analyses, some brief descriptive analyses can help clarify the distribution of as well as the association between the dependent variable and two key independent variables in the raw data. These quantity of interests are graphically presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Challenge and the Timing of Challenge



Panel A in Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of MIDs by the targeted leaders' type. There is a total of 159 MIDs, with No Party Change type being challenged 66 times, Right to Left type 46 times, and Left to Right type 47 times. Panel B plots the distribution of all 250 leaders on the target side in the sample by their types, in which about 48% are No Party Change type, 24% are Right to Left type, and about 28% are Left to Right type. Combining these two figures together, we can clearly see that the higher frequency of being challenged for the No Party Change type (which is shown in Panel A) is partly a result that more leaders on the target side in the sample belong to this type.

Panel C plots the portion of each type of leaders who get challenged at least one time. There are about 28% of the No Party Change type that get at least one militarized challenge during their stay in office, while 38% of Right to Left type and 34% percent of Left to Right type had been challenged, suggesting that leaders

who are more left-leaning than their predecessor are slightly more likely to be targeted than the other two types.[10] However, the key focus of this dissertation is not whether one type of leaders is more or less trouble-attractive, but the timing of the challenge. Panel C plots the ratio of the average time it takes for leaders to face their first militarized challenge to the average length of their tenure by three types of targeted leaders. This comparison reveals that among the targeted leaders, the Left to Right types on average tend to meet their first militarized challenge before they complete one-half of their tenure, which is sooner than the other two types. On average, the No Party Change type would not face their first challenge until they finish about 72% of their tenure, and it takes even longer for the Right to Left types (about 84% of their tenure) to meet their first militarized challenge.

In sum, taken together, these plots demonstrate three features of the Left to Right type leaders in the sample: on average, they are not more likely to appear in the sample, nor are they more likely to be challenged generally, but they do tend to face challenges sooner after taking office than the other two types should they be targeted.

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Does the direction of preference change matter?

Table 3.1 presents results from a series of Logit models. Robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are used in all models, and target state fixed

10. Note that this is not a sign that we can reject H1b, for that hypothesis emphasizes the cross-type comparison during the early stage of leaders' tenure.

effects are used in all but one model (Model 2). [11] Model 1 represents the conventional empirical approach to the study of the relationship between leaders' tenure and their likelihood of being challenged, where targeted leaders are treated as a homogeneous group. Model 2 provides the basic test of the interaction effect between targets' tenure and their types without adding any control variables or fixed-effects. Model 3 replicates Model 2 but with target-state-fixed effects and peace year polynomials added. Model 4 and 5 further add leader-level controls and state, system-level controls respectively. Model 6 is the full model that includes all control variables.

Despite using different samples, results from Model 1 are consistent with finds from Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam (2005), Bak and Palmer (2010), and DiLorenzo, McBride, and Ray (2016) in the sense that there is no significant relationship between targets' time in office and their probability of being targeted in militarized disputes. This pattern, however, significantly changed after taking into consideration of the direction of preference change. In all models with the interaction terms between *Target Tenure* and *DPC* (Model 2-Model 6), the coefficient of *DPC=2* $\times$ *Target Tenure* is negative and significant at 5% level, while the coefficients of both *Target Tenure* (the baseline type where there is no party change) and *DPC=1* $\times$ *Target Tenure* are insignificant. These results indicate that significant negative relationships between a leaders' time in office and their probability of being challenged are only present for leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor, confirming H1a.

11. In the Appendix (Table A2), I present models with no fixed effects, with target-year-fixed effects, with directed-state-dyad-fixed effects, and directed-leader-dyad-fixed-effects. Results remain robust to these modifications.

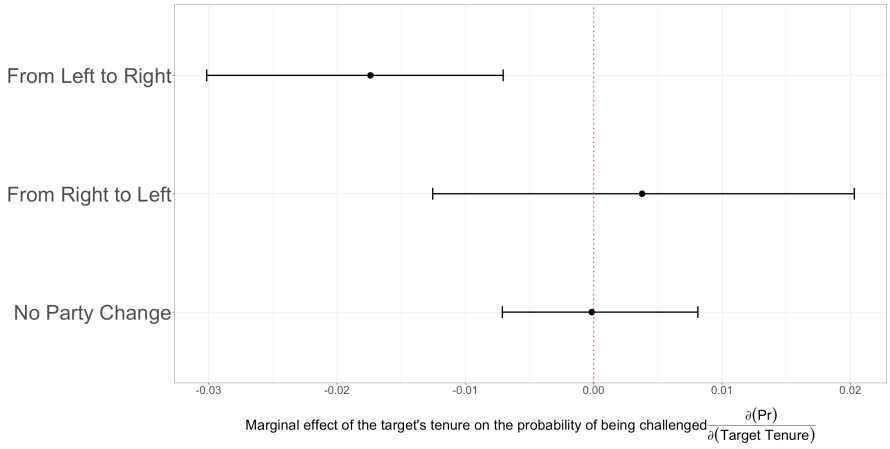
Table 3.1: Logit Model Results on the Targeting of Leaders

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Target Tenure	−0.092	0.031	0.048	0.005	0.054	−0.001
	(0.077)	(0.096)	(0.106)	(0.109)	(0.104)	(0.107)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)						
DPC=1 (Right to Left)		−0.759	−0.349	−0.040	−0.284	0.031
		(1.245)	(1.302)	(1.273)	(1.251)	(1.194)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)		1.837**	2.750***	3.288***	2.688***	3.117***
		(0.906)	(0.959)	(0.990)	(0.955)	(0.987)
Interaction Terms						
DPC=1 × Target Tenure		0.143	0.111	0.082	0.096	0.065
		(0.188)	(0.194)	(0.190)	(0.186)	(0.178)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure		−0.289**	−0.376**	−0.475***	−0.370**	−0.456***
		(0.140)	(0.147)	(0.154)	(0.147)	(0.154)
Controls						
Challenger Tenure	−0.013			−0.005		−0.009
	(0.071)			(0.069)		(0.073)
Challenger Age	−0.012			−0.001		−0.012
	(0.009)			(0.008)		(0.009)
Target Age	0.032***			0.033***		0.039***
	(0.012)			(0.011)		(0.012)
Male Challenger	−0.575			−0.959*		−0.709
	(0.635)			(0.581)		(0.614)
Male Target	−0.587			−0.849**		−0.811*
	(0.441)			(0.420)		(0.433)
Previous Experience	−0.094			−0.245		−0.205
	(0.223)			(0.243)		(0.244)
Relative Power	1.600***				1.324***	1.637***
	(0.488)				(0.471)	(0.492)
Joint Democracy	0.075				0.041	0.091
	(0.328)				(0.316)	(0.330)
Bilateral Trade	−0.015				−0.011	−0.017
	(0.019)				(0.019)	(0.019)
Distance	−0.261***				−0.262***	−0.259***
	(0.082)				(0.078)	(0.079)
Coldwar	−0.513**				−0.244	−0.412*
	(0.221)				(0.203)	(0.220)
Peace Year	−0.058		−0.099**	−0.084**	−0.080*	−0.058
	(0.042)		(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Peace Year^2	0.002		0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Peace Year^3	−0.000		−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	−0.298	−3.375***	−3.005***	−2.731**	−1.619*	−1.188
	(1.318)	(0.615)	(0.746)	(1.259)	(0.880)	(1.349)
Target State Fixed Effect	✓	No	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842
Log Likelihood	-588.936	-657.963	-603.348	-596.822	-590.321	-581.958
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,263.872	1,327.926	1,278.697	1,277.643	1,262.642	1,257.917

Note: Robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Since interaction terms in logit models make it difficult to interpret the substantive effect simply by inspecting the coefficients' signs or odds ratios, I present and discuss the results graphically by using a set of post-estimation simulations based on the coefficient and variance-covariance matrices associated with the full model (Model 6). Specifically, I follow Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan (2013) and run 1,000 simulations based on the posterior distribution of the model parameters (i.e., the coefficients and variance-covariance matrix). For each simulation, instead of using the value of an "average case", I hold the other covariates at each case's observed values, generate marginal effects and predicted values for each case, and then average over all observations. The goal of this "observed value" simulation approach is to obtain an estimate of the average effect in the population.

Figure 3.2: Average Marginal Effect of Leaders' Tenure

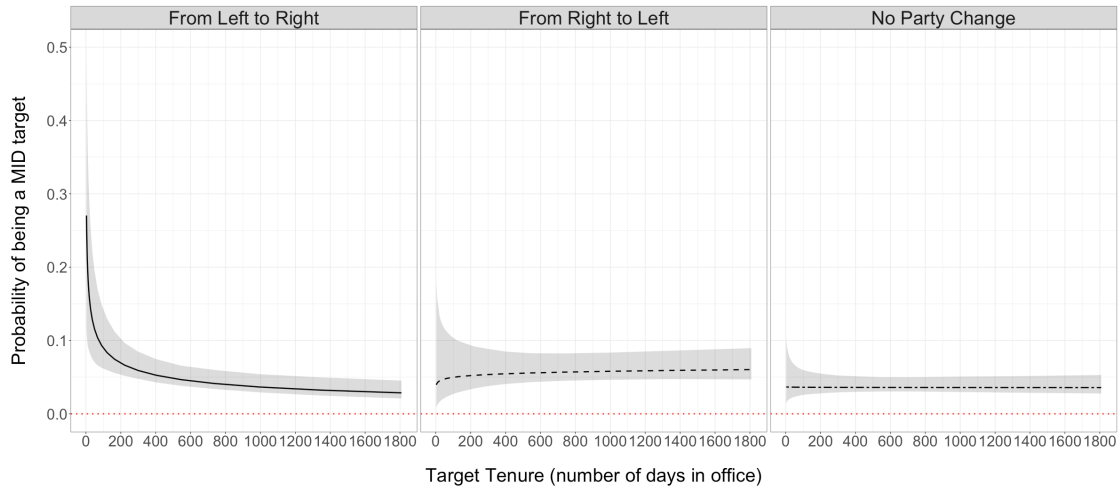


Note: error bars are 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

Figure 3.2 plots the average marginal effect of a target's tenure on the probability of being challenged conditional on different types of leadership turnovers. It clearly demonstrates that only for Left to Right type, a one-unit increase in target's tenure has a negative effect that is significantly different from 0, which is equivalent

to saying that the leader is more likely to face challenges early in her tenure. Substantively, on average, as the target's time in office increases by 1%, the probability of being challenged will decrease by about 2.5%.[12]

Figure 3.3: Predicted Probability of being Challenged



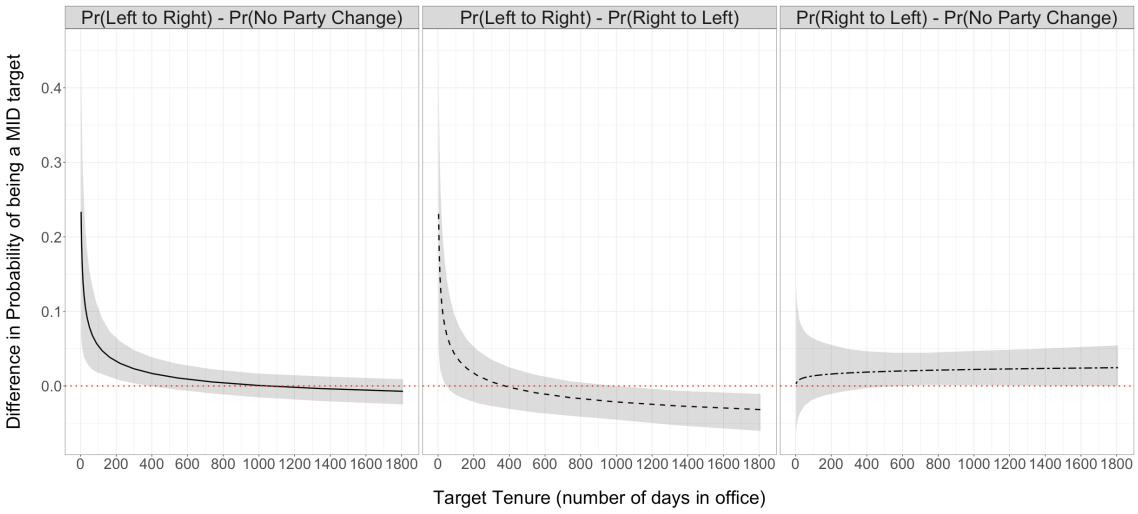
Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

Figure 3.3 plots how the predicted probabilities of being challenged changes over tenure for three types of leaders in an approximately 5-year span, where I de-log the tenure variable and present results strictly in terms of the number of days since taking office. Again, only the left-panel (Left to Right type) shows a significant decreasing trend in the probability of being challenged as the target's time in office increases, while the lines for other two types of leaders are largely flat over the tenure. Substantively, the Left to Right type, the probability of being challenged on the 6th day after taking office is about 0.22, which is about two times higher than two months later (which is about 0.1 on the 66th day) and about 4 times

12. Since logged values of the number of days in office are used, increases in *Target Tenure* should be interpreted as percentage changes.

higher than after taking office for more than a year (which is 0.05 on the 404th day).

Figure 3.4: Difference in Predicted Probability of being Challenged



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

To briefly recap, the descriptive analysis above presents a static comparison between different types of leaders' probability of being challenged in average terms, which indicates that the Left to Right type does not appear to be more likely to be targeted in militarized disputes than the other two types. Figure 3.4 re-explore this comparison in a more dynamic way by adding in temporal variation, plotting how the difference between different types of leaders' probability of being challenged varies over the course of their tenures. These graphs demonstrate that the Left to Right type is indeed more likely to be challenged than both Right to Left types and leaders who did not experience preference shift, but only when the comparison focuses on early stages of their tenure. Substantively, Left to Right types stop being more trouble-attractive than No Preference Change types and Right to Left types after about a year and a month respectively.[13] More interestingly, the middle-panel

13. In the simulation, the first insignificant difference between Left to Right types, on one hand,

of Figure 3.4 indicates that after taking the office for about three years (after 992 days), the likelihood of facing militarized challenges for the Left to Right types actually becomes significantly lower than the Right to Left types (as the difference becomes significantly smaller than 0). These graphs confirm that "inviting troubles" is a fairly short-period feature that is only attached to the Left to Right type, confirming H1b.

It is worth noting that the pattern in Figure 3.4 — especially the feature that Left to Right types become significantly less likely to be challenged than Right to Left types after about three years — should be primarily driven by the variation associated with the Left to Right type. Recall that while the coefficients of *DPC=1* × *Target Tenure* are positive across all models in Table 3.1, so does the plot of marginal effect of tenure in Figure 3.2, the effect never reaches 5% significance level. In other words, this pattern emerges not because Right to Left type becomes more likely to face challenges later in their tenure, but because the Left to Right type becomes extremely unlikely to be targeted as time goes. Why might this appear to be the case? The theory presented in the previous chapter can actually explain this null finding. The theory posits that one of forces that discourages the potential challenger to take advantage of a new dovish leader's initial inexperience is opportunity costs concern. Thus, f the election of a more dovish leader can, indeed, result in a warmer relationship between countries, then crises could be empirically unobservable (systemically missing) under this scenario. In other words, the warmer relationship between two countries is likely to either lead to a peaceful resolution of the issue under dispute without triggering crises or promote cooperation in other

and No Preference Change and Right to Left types, on the other, happen on the 403th day and the 49th day respectively.

issue areas that provides the potential challenger a satisfying side payment.

Given the centrality of the above finding to this project, it is necessary to check the robustness before moving to other tests. Thus, I reassess these models with different samples and alternative measures of *DPC*.

To begin with, Quandt (1986) once argued that during early years of Cold War there was a nonpartisan foreign policy consensus in the U.S., but such a consensus began fading out since mid-1960s and the trauma of Vietnam. To address concerns that the tension between two international camps during the early years of the Cold War might be too high to generate any substantial difference between right-wing and left-wing leaders, Model 7 replicates the full model with the post-Vietnam War subsample (1975- 2014).

Besides, empirical models above track the entire tenure of each leader, which can result in inclusion of some outlier cases in the sense that one leader stays in power for long. This is especially problematic if this long-serving leader is *not* the Left to Right type, for the null finding of this leader's associated type might be a result of the existence of outliers. It could be the case that most of this type of leaders are also more likely to face challenges early in their tenure, but the pattern is muted by the occurrence of a few challenges in the very late stage of this outlier's tenure (which tends to have very large values of *Target Tenure*).[14] To account for this possibility, in Model 8 I right-truncate the sample to focus only on each targeted leader's first four-year tenure.[15]

14. One potential outlier case could be Tage Erlander who served as Swedish PM for 23 years from 1946 to 1969. He is coded as No Preference Change type as he took the office from his own party, but he was targeted in a MID initiated by Soviet leader Brezhnev 6560 days after taking office in 1964.

15. The average length of tenure of all leaders on the target side covered in the sample is 1297 days, which is about 3.5 years. Results hold similar if the sample is right-truncated on the third,

The timing of the target side leaders' entry into the sample can be another source of bias. There are several cases in which leaders had already been in power for a while before they enter the sample. These cases arise mainly because the rival relationship between this leader's state and the challenger state, which is a key selection criterion used to construct the sample, developed in the middle of their stay in power. This can be a problem because the rival relationship might be developed due to some militarized disputes or crises that happened immediately prior to their entry into the sample. In other words, it might be the case that these leaders are selected into the sample by some challenges, but the challenge is left out of the sample. Again, this is especially problematic if it happens to leaders who are not Left to Right types, as it tends to leave some challenges that happen early in the targeted leaders' tenure unobserved. I take two approaches to address this problem. First, in Model 9, I left-truncate the analysis to a sample in which the year of the target leaders' first entry into the sample is equal to the year they begin their tenure. Second, in Model 10, I focus on a sample that only include dyads whose rival relationship lasts for more than thirty years.[16]

Moreover, all target side leaders are drawn from countries that are covered by the Manifesto Project Dataset, which is set to code election programs of political parties, and are thus assumed to come into power through open and transparent democratic elections. However, there are a few country-years on the target side that are identified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) as autocracies, such as Russia under Putin, Azerbaijan under Heydar Aliyev and later Ilham Aliyev, and Armenia

second, and first year as well.

16. While thirty-year is a rather arbitrary choice, I also assess models with twenty plus-year rival dyads and ten-plus year rival dyads, which show similar results.

under Kocharyan. To account for the possibility that the way through which these leaders come into power might be inherently different from those more democratic leaders in the sample, and may therefore generate different information and/or conflict-prone environments prior and post the leadership transition, I drop them from the analysis in Model 11. The related, and deeper, concern is to what extent the targeting of leaders pattern revealed above may hold for a broader sample. In Model 12, I expand the current sample to include all autocratic leaders identified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) whose entry into power is coded the Archigos dataset as "Regular" and who have rival foreign opponents identified by the Peace Data v2.01 (Goertz, Diehl, and Balas 2016; Diehl, Goertz, and Gallegos 2019).[17] I then create a different five-value categorical variable to capture different types leaders on the target side by taking into consideration of regime type, changes in source of leader support, and the direction of change (when possible):

> ***Type of Targets (TT)*** **TT=0**: a new autocratic leader who shared the predecessor's source of leader support.
>
> **TT=1**: a new autocratic leader who experienced a change in the source of leader support.
>
> **TT=2**: a new democratic leader who shared the predecessor's source of leader support.
>
> **TT=3**: a new democratic leader who is more on the left than his or her predecessor.
>
> **TT=4**: a new democratic leader who is more on the right than his or her predecessor.

Last but not least, I reassess the impact of preference change with two slightly different measure of *Direction of Preference Change (DPC)* in Model 13 and 14. First,

17. In the Appendix (Table A4), I report simple comparisons between democratic and autocratic leaders.

the current measure of *DPC* is constructed by comparing party ideologies that are based on a wide range of issues (the thirteen factors identified by Laver and Budge (1992)) that cover both domestic and foreign affairs domains. However, it is likely that foreign adversaries care more or only about foreign policy related issues. Thus, following the same three-step procedure addressed above, I construct an alternative *DPC* measure that focuses exclusively on eight foreign policy related factors included in the MPD.[18] Second, I use a continuous measure in Model 14 to prob whether the degree of preference change also matters. In this measure, leaders who did not experience party change are still coded as zero, but for leaders who did experience party shift, I use the raw number of the difference between the new leader's and the outgoing leader's left-right score to measure the change in preference (without transforming it to a categorical variable).

Results from these models with alternative specifications are presented in Table 3.2. The sign and significance of key independent variables in almost all these models remain unchanged after these modifications, suggesting that the pattern revealed above — that Left to Right types are significantly more likely to be challenged earlier in their tenure — is quite robust and not systemically driven by any potential outliers in the sample.

Furthermore, this relationship still holds when the continuous measure of Direction of Preference Change (DPC) is adopted. Since interaction terms between two continuous variables are difficult to interpret, I plot how the marginal effect

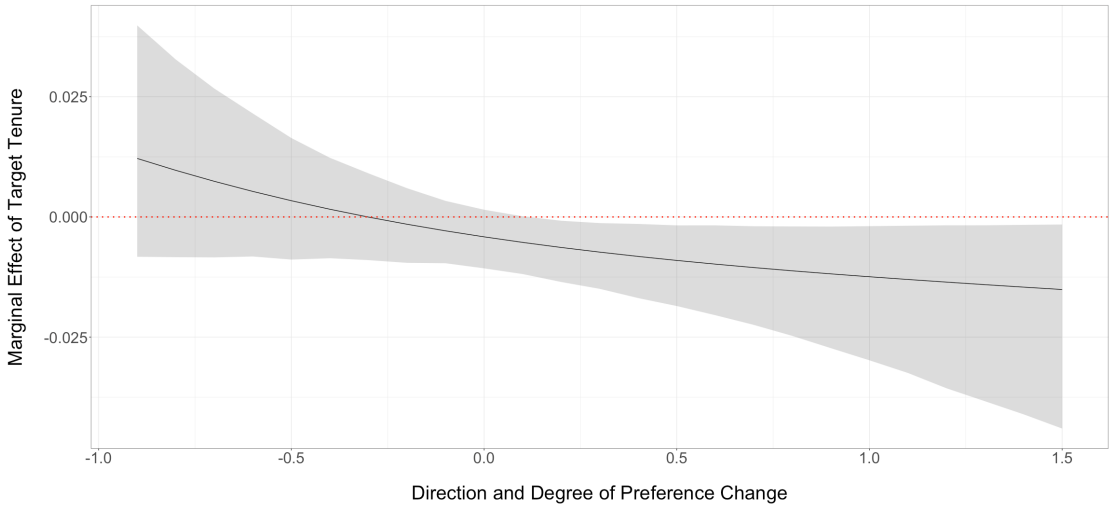
18. These factors are: anti-imperialism (per103), positive mention of military (per104), negative mention of (per105), peace (per106), positive mention of internationalism (per107), positive mention of EU (per108), negative mention of internationalism (per109), negative mention of EU (per110). The new measure of a leader's affiliated party's position is calculated as: $\frac{(\text{per104}+\text{per109}+\text{per110})-(\text{per103}+\text{per105}+\text{per106}+\text{per107}+\text{per108})}{\sum_{103}^{110}\text{per}_k}$.

Table 3.2: Additional Model Specifications

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID							
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
	Post-Vietnam	Right Truncated	Left Truncated	Long-Time Rival	Cleaned Democracy	Add Autocracy	Alternative DPC	Continuous DPC
Target Tenure	0.195	0.012	0.032	−0.050	0.025	0.019	−0.006	−0.109
	(0.178)	(0.121)	(0.111)	(0.113)	(0.102)	(0.075)	(0.107)	(0.078)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)								
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	1.528	−0.510	0.385	0.669	0.301		0.195	
	(1.642)	(1.508)	(1.204)	(1.403)	(1.209)		(1.123)	
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	4.456***	2.753**	3.217***	3.367***	3.383***		2.775***	
	(1.430)	(1.172)	(1.006)	(1.120)	(0.991)		(1.013)	
Interaction Terms								
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	−0.125	0.152	−0.003	0.010	0.007		0.041	
	(0.252)	(0.238)	(0.182)	(0.213)	(0.180)		(0.168)	
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.658***	−0.407**	−0.483***	−0.491***	−0.514***		−0.398***	
	(0.227)	(0.195)	(0.157)	(0.173)	(0.156)		(0.153)	
Continuous DPC								
DPC								1.886
								(1.193)
DPC × Target Tenure								−0.363**
								(0.179)
When Autocracies are added								
TT=1						−1.649		
						(1.098)		
TT=2						0.284		
						(0.888)		
TT=3						0.721		
						(1.164)		
TT=4						3.528***		
						(0.978)		
TT=1 × Target Tenure						0.326**		
						(0.147)		
TT=2 × Target Tenure						0.025		
						(0.124)		
TT=3 × Target Tenure						0.002		
						(0.166)		
TT=4 × Target Tenure						−0.472***		
						(0.143)		
Control variables and the constant term are suppressed to save space.								
Observations	2,081	2,623	3,746	2,727	3,675	8,649	3,842	3,684
Log Likelihood	-345.129	-413.863	-572.191	-389.458	-547.639	-1,312.652	-583.763	-560.401
Akaike Inf. Crit.	774.258	921.725	1,238.382	834.915	1,183.279	2,877.304	1,261.525	1,210.801

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
All models in this table include a full list of controls, which are available from the author upon request.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 3.5: Marginal Effect of Target Tenure Conditional on the Continuous DPC



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

of *Target Tenure* on the their probability of being challenged varies across a range values of DPC in Figure 3.5. When this measure is used, a negative value of DPC indicates that a new leader is more left-leaning than her predecessor and the smaller the value is (on the negative scale) the more leftist she becomes, while a positive value of DPC indicates that new leader is more right-leaning than her predecessor and the bigger the value is the more rightist she is. As the plot shows, the marginal effect of *Target Tenure* only becomes significantly negative when the value of DPC increases, or when the target is more right-leaning than her predecessor.[19]

A more interesting pattern emerges from Model 12, which uses a broader sample that consists of both autocracies and democracies. While Left to Right types who are democratically elected (*TT=4*) are still more likely to be challenged earlier in their tenure, the coefficient of *TT=1* × *Target Tenure* is positive and significant at

19. Substantively, in the simulation presented here, the marginal effect only becomes significantly negative when the DPC is greater than 0.2

5% level, suggesting that autocratic leaders who do not share the same source of leader support (e.g., Hugo Chavez in Venezuela) are significantly more likely to be challenged as their time in office increases.

One possible explanation of this pattern is that while potential foreign adversaries can observe the possible preference change in this autocracy, they may not be confident in judging the direction of change. Since source of leader support changes much less frequently, it is highly likely that interests groups represented by this new leader had never been in office before. Foreign adversaries thus may need more time to gauge this new leader's position before taking any actions. Interestingly, this finding may cast some doubts on the proposition advanced the informational approach, which suggests that foreign adversaries are mainly driven by motives to test their new opponent's position. What the pattern revealed in this model suggests is that potential challengers may actually tend to act cautiously when uncertainty about the new target's preference is high.

3.5.2 Does previous experience matter?

Careful readers might suspect that one important condition underlying the theory — that new leaders' inexperience can either amplify a potential challenger's fear or give the challenger incentive to explore the new leader's initial weakness — has not been adequately captured by the above empirical models. The above models simply use *Target Tenure* as a proxy for the target leaders' level of experience in handling complex foreign policies. But as briefly discussed in the previous chapter, not all new leaders can be considered equally inexperienced at the beginning of their tenure. In this section I assess the extent to which the target leaders' previous experience before they take office matters by exploring some additional three-

way interaction models — interaction between *Target Tenure*, *Direction of Preference Change*, and targets' *Previous Experience*.

I prob three types of experience here. First, and most straightforwardly, I examine whether leaders who had previous experience as the head of governments (e.g., Prime Ministers or Vice Presidents in the U.S. case) are evaluated differently by their foreign adversaries. I use the same variable *Previous Experience*, which is included in above analyses as a control, to capture this type of experience.

Serving as the head of a government, however, is not the only type of previous experience that can affect a leader's initial capability of handling foreign and national security policies. Existing research has demonstrated that leader' military service experience or prior rebel experience can significantly affect their understanding of utility of using military forces or how military forces should be used (Betts 1991; Brunk, Secrest, and Tamashiro 1990; Sechser 2004; Horowitz and Stam 2014; Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis 2015; Horowitz et al. 2018). Thus, using information drawn from the Leader Experience and Attribute Descriptions dataset (LEAD) (Ellis, Horowitz, and Stam 2015), I examine whether a leaders' previous *Military Experience* matters, which is coded as 1 if a leader has military service experiences or rebel experiences, and 0 otherwise. The LEAD dataset also has a variable, *Years of Political Experience*, which measures the number of years a leader had been in politics as either legislators or heads of "agencies or divisions that would appear to be within the executive branch" (736) before becoming national leader. This type of experience could matter as it captures "years as a politician where an individual is making contacts and learning about the institutional bureaucracy" (736). Leaders with this type of experience therefore might be able to more effectively manage inter-agency coordination and less "weak" during early crises. Given that this

variable is continuous, I center this variable by subtracting the mean value from the observed value. And since LEAD dataset only covers leaders who came into power before 2004, the sample used for testing these two variables excludes target leaders who came into power after 2004.

Table 3.3: Three-way Interaction Models on Target's Experience

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID		
	(15)	(16)	(17)
	Head of Gov	Military	Political
Target Tenure	−0.016	0.001	−0.059
	(0.124)	(0.135)	(0.111)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)			
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	−0.001	−0.271	−1.308
	(1.527)	(1.401)	(1.382)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	5.276***	2.991**	2.705**
	(1.348)	(1.450)	(1.154)
Different Types of Previous Experience			
Previous Experience	−0.377	0.490	0.004
Interaction Terms			
DPC=1 (Right to Left) × Target Tenure	0.082	0.099	0.270
	(0.228)	(0.216)	(0.201)
DPC=2 (Left to Right) × Target Tenure	−0.766***	−0.379*	−0.346**
	(0.211)	(0.224)	(0.175)
Previous Experience × Target Tenure	0.051	−0.111	0.006
	(0.238)	(0.205)	(0.010)
DPC=1 (Right to Left) × Previous Experience	0.155	−2.045	−0.066
	(2.323)	(2.736)	(0.112)
DPC=2 (Left to Right) × Previous Experience	−5.234**	−0.587	0.002
	(2.353)	(2.314)	(0.087)
DPC=1 (Right to Left) × Target Tenure × Previous Experience	−0.039	0.290	0.005
	(0.350)	(0.393)	(0.017)
DPC=2 (Left to Right) × Target Tenure × Previous Experiencee	0.779**	0.025	−0.005
	(0.358)	(0.352)	(0.014)
Control variables and the constant term are dropped from the table to save space.			
Observations	3,842	3,552	3,546
Log Likelihood	-577.383	-522.870	-520.915
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,258.766	1,145.739	1,141.831

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses. All models in this table nclude a full list of controls, which are available from the author upon request
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

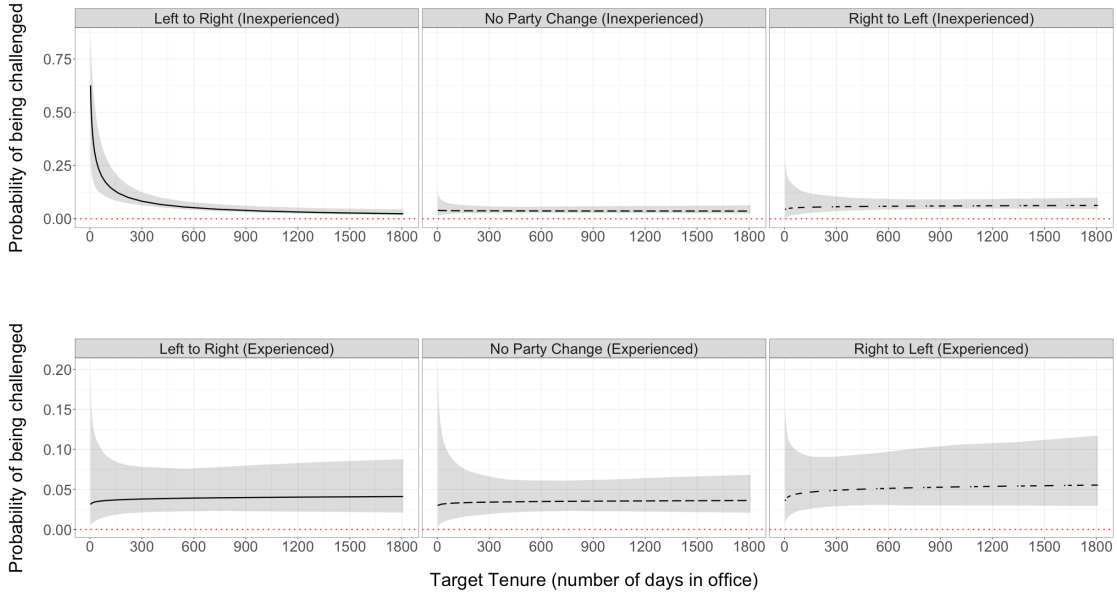
Results from the three-way interaction models are presented in Table 3.3, in which Model 15, 16, and 17 examine the effect of previous head of government

experience, military experience, and experience in politics in general respectively. There are three important findings emerging from the analysis. First, the significant negative relationship between the target's tenure and their probability of being challenged is still only present for the Left to Right type. Second, in terms of leaders' previous experience, only experience of serving the head of government tends to have a significant influence on this pattern as the coefficients of the three-way interaction terms for Model 16 and 17 are not significant. Third, Left to Right types' initially high probability of being challenged tends to be offset by their previous experience of serving as national leaders, for the coefficient of the three-way interaction term in Model 15 is significantly positive, and the magnitude of this positive effect (the value of the coefficient) is largely equal to the negative one on the inexperienced Left to Right types.

To further clarify this pattern, In Figure 3.6, I again simulate how the predicted probability of being challenged varies across their tenure for six types of leaders based on a combination of their direction of preference change and whether or not they had served as heads of governments before (Model 14). Clearly, only the upper-left panel, which plots the Left to Right (Inexperienced) case, shows a significantly decreasing trend in terms of the targeted leader's probability of being challenged over the tenure, confirming H2.

The implication of this finding for the broader IR literature is sound. It suggests that leaders' previous experience not only matters in affecting their own crisis participation behaviors as the literature suggests, but this influence can be taken into consideration by their foreign adversaries and thus affect their decision-making as well. Foreign adversaries tend to approach more experienced leaders rather cautiously and patiently especially when experienced leaders are from a

Figure 3.6: Predicted Probability from a Three-way Interaction Model



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

right-wing political party that tends to be more willing and able to use military force. According to the theory of this dissertation, foreign adversaries' caution and patience when confronting such a leader might be driven by both a more effective deterrence from the experienced hawk, and somewhat counterintuitively, trust. On one hand, a veteran "new" leader can effectively closes the window of opportunity for her foreign adversary to explore her initial weakness during the early stage of the tenure, which deters any potential revisionist challengers from taking aggressive actions. On the other hand, their experience in handling complex foreign policies can assure their foreign adversary that even if they are not dissatisfied with the current status quo, they are unlikely to take too reckless actions that would deem to be unacceptable. These two forces can help produce a temporary stability after leadership turnover.

3.5.3 What mechanisms are at play?

So far, I have demonstrated that there is a strong and robust relationship between leaders' time in office and their probability of being challenged conditional the direction of preference change associated with leadership turnover. But are these patterns driven by the mechanisms theorized in the previous chapter? This section is set to address this question.

It is well a established point that large-N statistical analyses are better tools to identify correlations between variables, but tend to fall short in testing mechanisms. But in this study, this methodological shortcoming can be somewhat compensated by examining three more narrowly defined hypotheses: H3a, H3b, and H4. These hypotheses identify specific links between different types of challengers who are motivated by different goals, on the one hand, and their possible crisis initiation behaviors, on the other. Specifically, we should expect to observe low-intensity MID initiations from status quo challengers if the signaling mechanism is at play (H3a), high-intensity MID initiations from status quo challengers if the preemption mechanism is at play (H3b), and either low- or high-intensity MID initiations from revisionist challengers who are motivated to lock in better payoffs available early (H4).

I test these hypotheses using Multinomial models with the five-value categorical dependent variable introduced above. To briefly recap, the variable considers two dimensions of a militarized challenge: highest level of action taken by the challenger and whether the challenger is identified as revisionist actor. With zero representing no MID in a given directed-leader-dyad-period and treated as the

base line value in models, the rest four values of are presented in Table 3.4.[20]

Table 3.4: Values of Categorical Dependent Variable

	Status-Quo Challenger	Revisionist Challenger
Threat or Display of Force	DV=1 (Low-SQ)	DV=3 (Low-Rev)
Use of Force	DV=2 (High-SQ)	DV=4 (High-Rev)

I run two Multinomial models to examine these relationships, which are reported in Table 3.5. Model 18 assesses the relationship of interest without adding any control variables and fixed-effects, while Model 19 adds the full list of controls plus both target state and year fixed effects. Coefficients from Multinomial models lack any substantive interpretation beyond their signs and significance, and can only tells us about the impact of the associated variables on the specific choice relative to the baseline category. Thus, I again graphically present the results from the fully specified model.[21]

Figure 3.7, which is based on Model 19, demonstrates that there are two sets of statistically significant relationships between different types of challenges and targets' tenure conditional on the direction of their preference change: (1) Left to Right type leaders are more likely to face low-intensity militarized challenges from

20. I use the "HostLev" variable in MID data to code whether or not a militarized challenge involves direct use of force; concretely, it is identified as involving force if HostLev $\geqslant 4$, as not involving force if HostLev $\leqslant 3$.

21. The only exception is that in Multinomial models, only the number of peace years is included, while the cubic expansion terms are dropped, for they are primarily designed to deal with time dependence in models with binary outcomes.

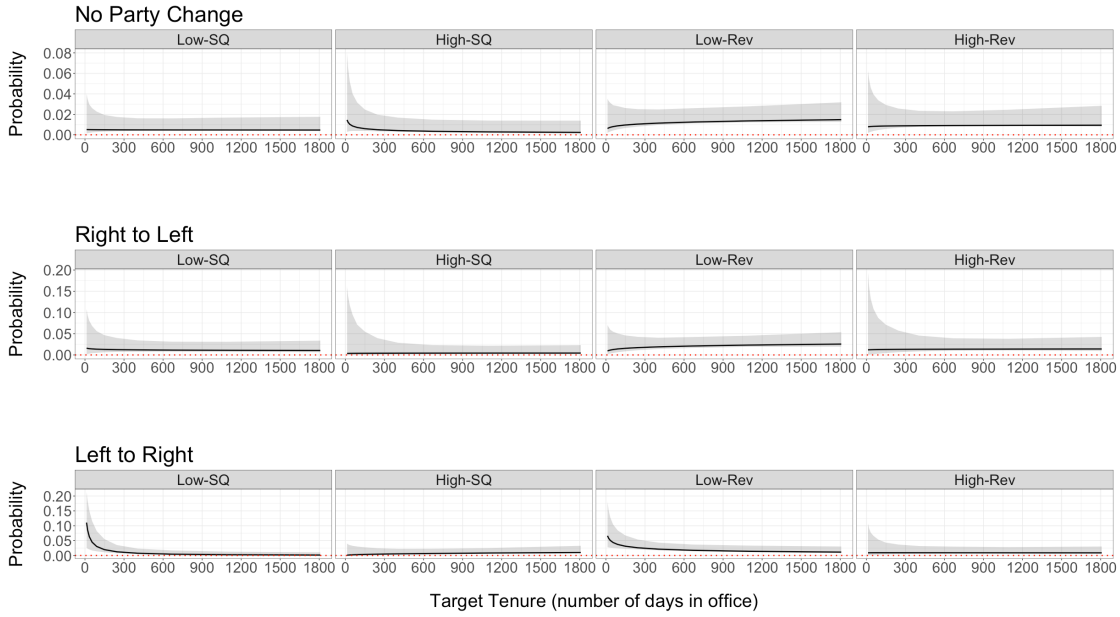
Table 3.5: Multinomial Model Results on Different Types of Militarized Challenge

	(18)				(19)			
	Low-SQ	High-SQ	Low-Rev	High-Rev	Low-SQ	High-SQ	Low-Rev	High-Rev
Target Tenure	0.010	−0.245	0.152	0.050	0.115	−2.590***	0.258	−0.332
	(0.262)	(0.278)	(0.175)	(0.162)	(0.352)	(0.863)	(0.216)	(0.240)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)								
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	0.994	−6.348	0.353	−1.590	4.267	−22.914***	0.391	−1.880
	(2.616)	(5.710)	(1.928)	(2.219)	(4.548)	(4.584)	(2.365)	(3.342)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	3.641	−2.875	4.171***	−0.505	16.701***	−23.216***	6.057***	0.122
Interaction Terms								
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	−0.083	0.923	0.002	0.242	−0.164	3.624***	0.069	0.405
	(0.397)	(0.803)	(0.283)	(0.322)	(0.681)	(0.585)	(0.354)	(0.498)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.599*	0.577	−0.661***	−0.010	−2.388***	3.603***	−0.876***	−0.072
Controls								
Challenger Tenure					−0.035	0.023	−0.011	−0.115
					(0.243)	(0.235)	(0.120)	(0.112)
Challenger Age					−0.031	−0.022	0.008	−0.030*
					(0.034)	(0.026)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Target Age					0.155***	0.250*	0.067***	0.041
					(0.060)	(0.130)	(0.023)	(0.029)
Male Challenger					11.441***	12.759***	−1.691	−1.717
					(2.290)	(2.539)	(1.184)	(1.338)
Male Target					−9.352***	−6.087**	−0.618	−0.827
					(3.513)	(3.093)	(0.872)	(0.786)
Previous Experience					−1.031	−1.325	−1.018**	0.344
					(1.299)	(1.945)	(0.517)	(0.560)
Relative Power					3.596*	4.314**	2.298***	−0.071
					(1.854)	(1.699)	(0.859)	(0.922)
Joint Democracy					−0.321	0.377	−0.164	0.089
					(0.996)	(1.227)	(0.537)	(0.633)
Bilateral Trade					−0.065	−0.038	−0.021	−0.060*
					(0.066)	(0.054)	(0.037)	(0.034)
Distance					−0.813***	−0.078	−0.064	−0.355**
					(0.245)	(0.305)	(0.121)	(0.149)
Cold War					−5.270***	0.498	3.400***	7.423***
					(0.711)	(1.194)	(0.391)	(0.738)
Peace Years					0.003	0.020	−0.057***	−0.027
					(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.018)	(0.022)
Constant	−5.232***	−4.049**	−5.183***	−4.467***	−20.819***	−22.913***	−18.887***	−8.502***
	(1.721)	(1.705)	(1.184)	(1.071)	(2.290)	(2.539)	(2.444)	(2.426)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,723.077	1,723.077	1,723.077	1,723.077	1,937.300	1,937.300	1,937.300	1,937.300

Note: Both target state and year fixed effects are used in Model 18. Standard errors are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

status-quo challengers earlier in their tenure, and (2) Left to Right type leaders are more likely to face low-intensity militarized challenges from revisionist challengers earlier in their tenure. Together, these results confirm H3a, and partially confirm H4.

Figure 3.7: Predicted Probability of Different Types of Challenges



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

These patterns, especially the lack of evidence that supports the preemption logic, are to some extent consistent with the general pattern in interstate conflicts or wars revealed in the literature. For example, Reiter (1995) finds that preemptive wars almost never happen, and he argues that this is mostly because of the high political costs preemptive attacks may incur and that mutual fears of preemption may incentivize leaders on both sides to find ways to defuse the risk for a tragic war, such as costly signaling. Similarly, Wiegand (2011) also demonstrates that when states try to transfer their reputation for resolve, they are more likely to only

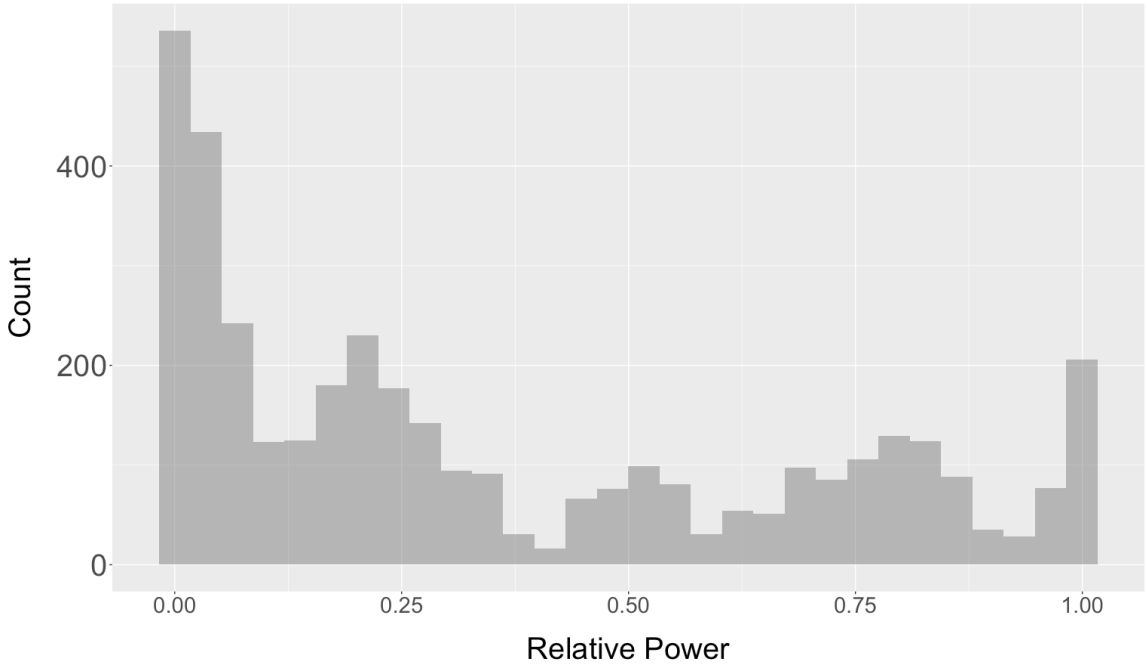
resort to low intensity behaviors such as threats or displays of force.

More interestingly, it appears to be the case that even revisionist challengers who are tempted to lock in some better expected payoffs available early are only willing to do so with low-intensity challenges first. This might have to do with the power distribution of the sample at hand, which is shown in Figure 3.8. The mean and median value of relative power (which is measured as $\frac{\text{CINC}_A}{\text{CINC}_A+\text{CINC}_B}$) in this sample is about 0.35 and 0.24, suggesting that most of the rival relationships covered are characterized by power asymmetry with a relatively weaker potential challenger. Yet usually direct and actual use of force tends to target relatively weaker targets (Tarar 2016). In fact, if we carefully examine the substantive values of predicted probability of being challenged plotted in Figure 3.7 (focusing on the last row), the strongest effect of a target's tenure is present for Left to Right types in the case of low-intensity challenges from status quo challengers; concretely, this probability drops from 0.19 on the 3rd day after taking office to about 0.03 three months later. By contrast, the drop in probability of being challenged for Left to Right types in the case of low-intensity revisionist challenges during the same period is from 0.09 to 0.04. This comparison indicates that the pattern revealed in above sections is largely driven by relatively weaker challengers who seek to signal resolve when a more hostile leader comes into office in their rival states.[22] This feature is actually consistent with Jervis's analysis of cooperation under security dilemma, in which he argues that a relatively low cost of being cheated "can make a state wait to see what the other will do" (Jervis 1978, 172). Applying the logic

22. However, this conclusion should be taken with caution because additional model specifications with a three-way interaction term between target tenure, direction of preference change, and relative power does not show that there is a significant conditional effect by relative power.

to the analysis presented here, the fear tends to loom small for a more powerful challenger who may reasonably perceive the cost of being cheated rather low.

Figure 3.8: Histogram of Relative Power in the Sample



3.6 Conclusion

A leader's tenure can be a powerful predictor of crisis, but it depends strongly on the (perceived) direction of preference change triggered by the emergence of this leader in the target state. Relying on the left-right spectrum of leaders' political ideology as a proxy for the hawkishness of their foreign policy, analysis in this chapter provides strong and robust evidence that leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor are significantly more likely to face militarized challenges during the early stage of their tenure, especially when they do not have previous experience as national leaders. And there is suggestive evidence that this

pattern is mostly driven by relatively weak challengers who fear suffering some immediate and unacceptable loss from a more hawkish leader in the rival state.

These findings help clarify a long-standing empirical ambiguity in the literature — namely, some studies find that new leaders are more trouble-attractive, while others find that there is no such a systemic relationship. This chapter demonstrates that the theoretical expectation developed in preceding chapters is correct in that not all new leaders are evaluated in the same way by their foreign adversaries. As a result, previous empirical models that treat new leaders as a homogeneous group are underspecified.

What really matters to a potential challenger is not the change of the "person" in the target state per se, but is the preference of the new leader, and by extension, the strategic environment in which near and future interactions could happen. Foreign leaders do have incentives to either take advantage of the new administration's inexperience or probe its position, but they tend to be equally, if not more, constrained as well when the new leader is perceived as being likely to promote future cooperation. Thus, in the next chapter, cooperative interactions between rival leaders will be investigated.

Chapter 4

Leadership Turnover and International Cooperation

4.1 Introduction

The empirical analysis in the previous chapter is focused exclusively on conflictual interactions between states. Yet the theory presented in chapter 2 also has important implications for the pattern of international cooperation. Admittedly, cooperation is not the main outcome that the theory seeks to explain. Instead, cooperation, or more precisely, expectation of future cooperation serves as an important constraining factor in the causal logic that explains why a challenger may want to hold off from early confrontation with a new leader who is perceived as more dovish than her predecessor. If this is indeed the case, then we can reasonably expect to observe certain efforts from the potential challenger to cultivate a more cordial relationship at varying points of the target's tenure. This chapter investigates this possibility.

To this end, I utilize a machine-coded event dataset managed by the Cline Center for Advanced Social Research (Althaus et al. 2019) to extract directed cooperative interactions between rival states (the same sample as the one used in the previous chapter), which allows me to examine not only the occurrence but also the

frequency and depth of cooperative gestures from one state to another. Relying on the same party ideology as a proxy for the perceived hawkishness of a leader's foreign policy orientation, statistical analyses reveal that a foreign rival tend to initiate more cooperative moves, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, toward leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor, but only as their time in office increases. While not directly challenging the hawk's advantage literature, which suggests that hawks are better positioned to "deliver the olive branch" (Cowen and Sutter 1998; Schultz 2005; Mattes and Weeks 2019), findings from this chapter at least shows that doves might be more likely to receive the olive branch.

The rest of this chapter is divided into four parts. I begin with a brief discussion of the testable hypothesis that can be derived from the theory presented earlier. I then lay out the research design, which is mainly focused on discussing the operationalization of a new dependent variable. Results from a series of statistical models are presented in the next chapter, and I conclude by drawing out implications and contributions of the findings.

4.2 Theoretical Expectations and the Hypothesis

What does the theory of the timing of crisis initiation layed out earlier have to say about the pattern of interstate cooperation? I argue that the same set of factors, leaders' experience and the direction of preference change, are again at play. Concretely, I argue that foreign adversaries are more likely to initiate cooperation toward a leader who is more dovish than her predecessor, but only when the target leader has gained more experience and become domestically strong enough to be able to reciprocate a cooperative move from an adversary. I develop this argument

by drawing on two seemingly conflicting logic — hawks are better positioned domestically to initiate cooperation (Schultz 2005) and doves are more likely to extract cooperative moves from foreign adversaries (Clare 2014).

"Only Nixon could go to China" has become a shorthand label to characterize the Hawk's Advantage proposition in the international cooperation literature. Cukierman and Tommasi (1998) and Cowen and Sutter (1998) were among the first to put forth the argument that hawkish leaders enjoy some advantage compared to their dovish counterparts in convincing their domestic audience that cooperation with an adversary can best serve national interests. This is because hawks usually carry the reputation for hardline policies, which puts them in a better position to convey the wisdom of cooperation, accommodation, or rapprochement to the public. Doves, by contrast, are more likely to be questioned by the public for the same cooperative move as their choice tends to be seen as following their own default preference rather than prudent calculation. Schultz (2005) offers an alternative logic, which posits that hawks who opt for cooperative interactions are more likely to be viewed as a moderate type and thus garner support from voters who are closer to the center of the political spectrum, while doves who promote cooperation are likely to lose support from these voters as they might be perceived as extremist "pacifists". The hawkish advantage proposition has recently gained strong empirical support from Mattes and Weeks (2019) who find through survey experiments that the hypothetical Republican President who carries hawkish reputation tends to be penalized much less severely by the public for their rapprochement efforts toward China regardless of the outcome of the policy.

One major critique of the hawkish advantage proposition by Clare (2014, 1315) is that it leaves "unexplored an international opponent's preferences for one

leader over another and how these preferences influence its willingness to reciprocate." Clare (2014, 1315) then argues that incentive to "avoid a tougher opponent in the future" leads foreign adversaries more likely to reciprocate cooperative moves from a more dovish leader in the rival state, which is seen as an effort to help the dove maintain domestic support and stay in power. In other words, there is a dovish advantage in terms extracting concessions from foreign enemies. His examination of territorial disputes yields strong evidence that supports this logic as he finds that negotiation attempts by left-wing governments who face right-wing domestic opposition parties are more likely to be reciprocated by their foreign counterparts. This argument may also gain some support from A. Smith (2009) who develops a formal model to show that leaders will continue cooperation with foreign leaders who have similar preferences but withdraw from cooperation when a more hostile government is formed in the opponent state.

It should be noted that these two types of arguments are not necessarily in tension with each other as they focus on different dependent variables. Simply put, the hawkish advantage argument explains possible domestic reaction to a leader's cooperative efforts, while the dovish advantage argument predicts reactions from the potential foreign adversary.[1] It is possible that both empirical patterns — that it is easier for hawkish leaders to sell cooperation policies domestically and that it is easier for dovish leaders to extract cooperation from enemies abroad — can simultaneously exist. Thus, I do not seek to pick up a side in this debate, but instead combine them together to generate hypothesis regarding the relationship between leadership turnover, preference change, and the foreign adversary's cooperation

1. Clare (2014) does frame his argument and findings as a rejection to the hawkish advantage literature.

initiation.

The logic is straightforward. While foreign adversaries have strong incentive to form a more cooperative relationship with the new and more dovish leader in their rival state, they might be discouraged from rushing into any substantive move by the initial weakness of the new leader due to their lack of experience and political capital at home.[2] On one hand, a too quick cooperation attempt may subject the new dove to an already (and inherently) difficult domestic environment for legitimizing cooperation with adversaries. It is not in the adversary's best interests to undermine the domestic support of a leader whom they favor. On the other hand, an unreciprocated cooperation effort (not because of the target's unwillingness to reciprocate but due to their inability to do so) can also harm the initiator's reputation at home or even their own political survival. Colaresi (2004) has demonstrated that unreciprocated cooperation with a rival can significantly accelerate the risk of leadership removal.

Where I slightly depart from the works cited above is that I treat the severity of the domestic barriers facing the dove to legitimize cooperation as endogenous to her experience in a sense that more experienced leaders with established reputation for been competent would face fewer barriers and less severe punishment if the outcome is not good (Chiozza and Choi 2003). Thus, the foreign adversary will only begin to seek cooperation when the new dove gains more experience and consolidate her position at home so that she can credibly convince her domestic

2. One might question why, given the hawk's advantage, the foreign adversary would not want to engage more cooperatively with the hawk. This is because hawk's advantage only makes hawkish leaders more able to initiate cooperation, but does not necessarily make them more willing to do so. In fact, Clare (2014) finds that in the context of territorial disputes, governments more on the right (more hawkish) are significantly less likely to initiate cooperative actions.

audience that cooperation with an adversary is not simply a convenient policy option that is consistent with her preference but a prudently calculated strategy that can best serve the state's interests. In sum, it is the recognition of hawkish advantage and the desire to keep a dove in the rival state's office that together give the foreign adversary incentive to approach the new dovish leader with more patience, which leads to the following hypothesis:

> *H1: Leaders who are perceived as being more dovish than their predecessors will receive more cooperative initiation from a foreign adversary later in their tenure as they gain more experience.*

4.3 Research Design

The same directed-leader-dyad-period sample is used to test the cooperation hypothesis. So are the same operationalization and measure of the target leader's *Direction of Preference Change (DPC)*. A new dependent variable, however, is much needed, for it has been argued that the mere absence of conflict (e.g., no MID occurrence in the previous chapter) cannot sufficiently capture the positive interactions between states and therefore is inappropriate for testing hypotheses regarding the pattern of interstate cooperation (Pevehouse 2003, 2004).

Hence, following the tradition in the international cooperation literature, I employ a broad measure of cooperative interactions based on event data (Leeds 1999; Colaresi 2004; Pevehouse 2004; B. O. Fordham 2005; Sullivan, Tessman, and Li 2011; Mattes and Rodriguez 2014). The particular dataset I employ is the The Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data (CCHPED) as it has a broader geographic

and longer temporal coverage: 1945-2019 (Althaus et al. 2019).[3]. The CCHPED data includes several million events extracted from 18.9 million news stories. These data were produced using the PETRARCH-2 software to analyze content from the New York Times (1945-2018), BBC Monitoring's Summary of World Broadcasts (1979-2019) and the Central Intelligence Agency's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (1995-2004). PETRARCH-2 documents the agents, locations, and issues at stake in a wide variety of conflict, cooperation and communicative events in the Conflict and Mediation Event Observation (CAMEO) ontology.[4]

Before constructing the specific measures, several steps need to be taken to clean the data. Following the procedure recommended by Mattes and Rodriguez (2014), I first extract all incidents that occurred between sovereign governments.[5] Second, to address the concern about the noisy nature of large event datasets, I further filter the data by only keeping incidents in which the geographic information is available (using the Latitude variable). The assumption adopted here is that incidents without this information are likely to be minor or politically-irrelevant events.[6] I then deal with duplicate entries by dropping all but one observation of the same actors engaging in the same event (with the Goldstein Intensity Score, which will be discussed shortly) on the same day. According to Mattes and Rodriguez (2014, 532), while it is possible that the pair of actors may engage in the

3. Other popular even datasets with shorter time series include the Conflict and Peace Database (COPDAB) for 1948-1978, World Event Interaction Survey (WEIS) for 1966-1990, Protocol for the Assessment of Nonviolent Direct Action (PANDA) for 1984-2000, the 10 Million International Dyadic Events data for 1990-2004, and the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) for 1995-2019.

4. For a more detailed introduction of the data set, see the coding manual (Althaus et al. 2019).

5. The even dataset has two variables, Source Agent and Target Agent, which capture the type of actors in an incident respectively. Only incidents in which both actors are coded as Government are kept.

6. In the Appendix (Table B2), I show that the results are largely consistent with the one reported in the text if this type of incidents are not filtered out.

same level of interactions multiple times on a single day, it is difficult to judge whether the inclusion of these events is due to their multiple appearances in the different news articles. As a result, about 26% of the total directed-state-dyads had not engaged in any type of interaction during the period under study (1945-2014). In the main tests that are reported in the next section, I restrict the analyses to the sample that excludes these dyads that have no interactions, for interactions among these states might be systemically missing due to the lack of media attention and thus cannot be treated equally as "no events" and imputed with zeros.[7]

I use the cleaned data to construct two dependent variables that measure the frequency and the tenor or quality of the cooperation initiations respectively.

Number of Cooperation Initiation: The first DV is a simple count of the number of cooperative interactions initiated by the "Challenger" (which is labeled as Initiator in this chapter) towards the target in a given year. Each incident in the dataset has been assigned an intensity score for conflict and cooperation generated by J. S. Goldstein (1992) and then later updated by Schrodt (2007), ranging from -10 (most conflictual) to 10 (most cooperative). I use two cut points to extract cooperation initiations. First, I include all non-negative interactions (Golstein Score $\geqslant 0$). Second, I include those events with a Goldstein Score $\geqslant 4$ (e.g., Express Intent to Cooperate is coded as 4; Express intent to cooperate economically is coded as 5.2; Express intent to ease administrative sanctions is coded as 7; Demobilize armed forces is coded as 9).[8] I then collapse both measures to the yearly sum of total cooperative interactions between the initiator and the target.

7. Results, however, do not change substantively if these dyads are included.

8. For events that have a Goldstein Score that is greater than zero but lower than four, some examples include: Discuss by telephone is coded as 1; Make a visit is coded as 1.9; Host a visit is coded as 2.8; Praise or endorse is coded as 3.4, Appeal for diplomatic cooperation is coded as 3.4.

Depth of Cooperation: The simple count measure of cooperation may suffer from two shortcomings. First, it cannot capture the quality of the cooperation. As the theoretical discussion above indicates, some scholars believe that substantial departure from previous relations, especially in the context of rival relationships, may only arise when hawks are in office, for they can convince their domestic audience that cooperation is not a manifestation of weakness or lack of resolve. Thus, to fully examine how leadership turnover may affect the pattern of interstate cooperation, it is important look at not only the frequency but also the quality of any possible cooperative interaction. Second, from an empirical perspective, there might be a concern about over-reporting of certain dyads (e.g., major powers) relative to others. As a result, the higher frequency of cooperative interactions might only reflect more media attention rather than the theoretical dynamic. To account for these concerns, following Leeds (1999) and Mattes and Rodriguez (2014), I aggregate the individual Goldstein Scores of each event into a yearly measure by summing the values of the Goldstein Scores for each dyad in a given year and then dividing this by the number of cooperative events in the year. In terms of this specific measure, in addition to calculate the average cooperation score on two cutting points used in the above measure of frequency, I also construct a yearly average of the Goldstein score of all events, both negative and positive interactions, to examine how to overall interactions between national leaders vary across the target's tenure.

Since all these measures of cooperation are yearly based, I change the measure of both the target's and the initiator's tenure to the number of years since they take office. Most of the control variables used in the previous chapter are also employed in the following analysis, including the *Initiator Tenure*, *Initiator Age*,

Target Age, *Initiator Gender*, *Target Gender*, *Target Previous Experience*, *Relative Power*, *Bilateral Trade*, and *Joint Democracy*. I drop the *Distance* variable, which tends to have less theoretically plausible influence on interstate cooperative interactions. Peace years and the cubic polynomials are also dropped from the regression.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 The frequency of cooperation

Given the count nature of the frequency measure of cooperation, Negative Binomial Models are employed to test the relationship between the target's direction of preference change, their time in office, and the number of cooperation initiation from the foreign rival.[9]

These results are largely consistent with the theoretical expectation. In all models, the coefficient of the interaction term between *DPC=1* × *Target Tenure* is positive and significant at 5% level, suggesting that leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor tend to receive more cooperative initiation from a foreign rival as their time in office increases. In contrast, the relationship between targets' tenure and the number of cooperative gestures they can receive is less consistent and robust for the other two types of target leaders. On one hand, for leaders who did not experience party change (the baseline group), Model 2 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between this type of leaders' tenure and the number of cooperation initiation they can receive, while Model 3, 7, and 8 shows a statistically significant negative relationship (in Model 8 it is only significant at 10% level). On the other, for leaders who are more right-leaning than

9. In the Appendix, I report results from Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Models.

Table 4.1: Negative Binomial Model Results on Cooperative Events

	Goldstein Score≥0				Goldstein Score≥4			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
				Post-1979				Post-1979
Target Tenure	0.034	0.046**	−0.038**	−0.021	−0.009	0.005	−0.066**	−0.055*
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.029)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)								
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	0.437**	0.041	−0.189	−0.225	−0.012	−0.537**	−0.694***	−0.628***
	(0.201)	(0.199)	(0.154)	(0.161)	(0.251)	(0.266)	(0.223)	(0.225)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	1.053***	1.173***	0.329**	0.101	1.188***	1.123***	0.363*	0.262
	(0.168)	(0.178)	(0.134)	(0.140)	(0.229)	(0.234)	(0.200)	(0.200)
Interaction Terms								
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.132***	0.152***	0.122***	0.096***	0.242***	0.254***	0.208***	0.184***
	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.058)	(0.054)	(0.042)	(0.044)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.072*	−0.066*	0.027	0.044	−0.079	−0.061	0.021	0.024
	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Controls								
Initiator Tenure		−0.037***	−0.013**	−0.024***		−0.052***	−0.022***	−0.027***
		(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)		(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Initiator Age		0.037***	0.015***	0.007**		0.040***	0.016***	0.010**
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Target Age		−0.048***	−0.0005	−0.018***		−0.043***	0.005	−0.003
		(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Male Initiator		−0.228	0.221	0.233		0.067	0.173	0.278
		(0.296)	(0.382)	(0.358)		(0.376)	(0.515)	(0.516)
Male Target		0.492**	0.057	0.629***		0.511*	−0.029	0.414
		(0.223)	(0.177)	(0.176)		(0.277)	(0.280)	(0.269)
Previous Experience		−0.768***	−0.407***	−0.222*		−0.971***	−0.532***	−0.358**
		(0.122)	(0.103)	(0.126)		(0.177)	(0.150)	(0.170)
Bilateral Trade			0.069***	0.044***			0.065***	0.035*
			(0.011)	(0.012)			(0.020)	(0.020)
Relative Power			2.186***	2.419***			2.140***	2.356***
			(0.188)	(0.224)			(0.281)	(0.318)
Joint Democracy			0.158	0.098			0.389**	0.386**
			(0.110)	(0.111)			(0.154)	(0.156)
Cold War			−2.209***	−1.506***			−2.191***	−1.516***
			(0.079)	(0.099)			(0.128)	(0.154)
Constant	0.259**	1.021*	−0.850	0.631	−1.008***	−0.730	−2.141**	−1.305
	(0.120)	(0.534)	(0.563)	(0.582)	(0.144)	(0.743)	(0.860)	(0.870)
Observations	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657
Log Likelihood	-4,862.424	-4,721.341	-4,166.013	-3,412.234	-2,561.053	-2,462.863	-2,163.711	-1,928.118

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

their predecessor, Model 1 and 2 reveal a negative relationship between tenure and the number cooperation initiation that is statistically significant at 10% level.

Put aside the inconsistent findings regarding the No Party Change and Left to Right types (in terms of both direction and significance), another notable feature that comes out of Table 4.1 is that the magnitude of the tenure effect appears to be much larger for the Right to Left types than the other two types (based on simple comparison of the coefficients). After all, social scientists care about not only statistical significance but also substantive significance (Gross 2015).

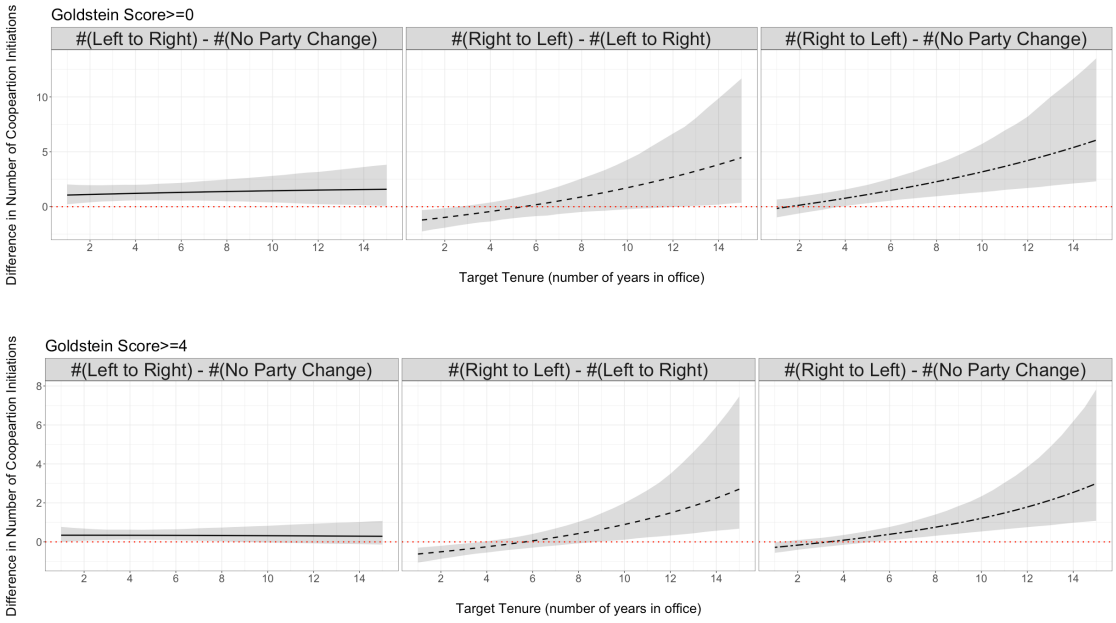
Figure 4.1: Predicted Number of Cooperative Events

Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

To assess the substantive effects, I again turn to simulations and graphical presentation. Figure 4.1 plots how the predicted number of cooperation initiation changes over a target leader's tenure conditional on their direction of preference change based on Model 3 and Model 7. Clearly, the increase in the number of cooperation initiation received by leaders who are more left-leaning than their pre-

decessor (the upper-right and bottom-right plot) is much sharper than the decrease in the same quantity for No Party Change and Left to Right types. Taking the case that uses Goldstein Score⩾0 DV as an example, substantively, the average number of cooperation initiation that might be received by the Right to Left types during the first year of their tenure is about 4.27 times, which increases by 29% to about 5.5 times and by 80% to about 7.71 times after they remain in office for 4 and 8 years respectively. The drop in this quantity of interest for the No Party Change types over the same time span is much smaller, which is 11% and 23% respectively.[10]

Figure 4.2: Difference in Predicted Number of Cooperative Events



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

Another quantity of interest that deserves discussion is the difference in the number of received cooperation initiation between difference types of targets, and

10. The drop for the No Party Change type is from 4.57 times to 4.08 times after 4 years and 3.50 times after 8 years.

how this difference changes over time. Figure 4.2 plots this dynamic cross-type comparison. Two features that come out of this plot warrant attention. First, as the target leaders' time in office increases, Right to Left types tend to receive significantly more cooperation initiation from foreign adversaries than do the other two types, especially when the more restrictive definition of cooperation is adopted (Goldstein Score$\geqslant$4 in th lower panel), which further confirms the theoretical expectation that foreign adversaries have incentive to play the long-term game and to not rush into any substantive move when the new dovish leader is still domestically weak and likely to face barriers to reciprocating cooperation.

Second, and surprisingly, leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor appear to receive slightly more cooperation initiation than the other two types during the early years of their tenure, and this pattern is especially significant in the upper panel of Figure 4.2 where the less restrictive definition of cooperation is employed and thus more lower-level cooperative interactions are included.[11] There are two possible reasons for the rise of this pattern. First, this is likely caused by the nature of the yearly frequency of the dependent variable, and the relatively rough measure of leaders' tenure as number of years in office. One consequence of this setup is that the last year of the outgoing leader will overlap with the incoming leader's first year, causing them to share the same year's observation. And for the Left to Right types, there is always a probability that they take the office from a Right to Left type predecessor who might receive more cooperative attempts in the last year of tenure. Thus, it is likely that the number

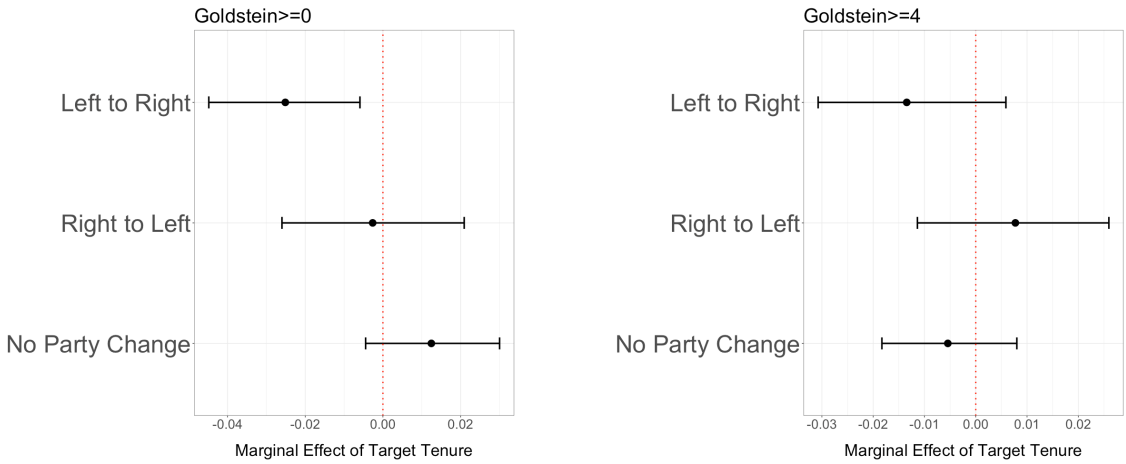
11. Note that this is not merely driven by the fact that the Right to Left types are significantly less likely to receive cooperation early, for Left to Right types also tend to receive more cooperation moves from the adversary than do the No Party Change types.

of cooperation initiation received by the Left to Right types in their first year is biased up. Second, there is also a theoretical reason why this appears to be the case. Findings from the previous chapter demonstrates that militarized challenges against new leaders are mostly driven by status quo challengers who seek to signal resolve to the new but more hawkish leader in the target state. These challengers thus should have incentive to more carefully manage the situation to prevent it from getting out of control. As a result, both threats and assurances are needed (Kydd and McManus 2017). Cooperation initiation towards the more hawkish leaders during the early stage of their tenure can be seen as a form of signaling assurance. Returning to the example in which China turned to a more assertive way in their handling of US reconnaissance missions after the election of a more hawkish George W. Bush, what parallels China's tougher stance is that China also " sent Vice Premier Qian Qichen to Washington, an early attempt to build cooperation and rapport with the new administration" (Miura and Weiss 2016, 9).

If this dynamic — both threats and assurance are more likely to be issued towards a new but more hawkish leader in the rival state — is indeed at play, then the more appropriate way to test it should be focusing on the occurrence of cooperative interaction instead of the frequency of cooperation. This is because the foreign adversary may want to signal assurance early but do not want to send too much assurance message that may undermine the credibility of their resolve. I therefore run several additional logit models to test the relationship between the target's tenure and the occurrence of cooperation initiation from a foreign adversary. The dependent variable in these additional models is a binary one that captures whether there is any cooperation initiation from an adversary in a given year based on the two cooperation threshold used above (Goldstein Score$\geqslant$0 and

Goldstein Score⩾4). For years that multiple events are recorded, I only keep the one with the earliest occurrence date. I also shift back to the number of days as the measure of target and initiator tenure. I only graphically present the simulated marginal effect of target tenure in Figure 4.3, while leaving the regression table to the Appendix.

Figure 4.3: Marginal Effect of Target's Tenure on the Probability of Receiving Cooperation Initiation



Note: error bars are 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

As Figure 4.3 shows, there is indeed a statistically significant negative effect of target tenure on the Left to Right type when the less restrictive definition of cooperation is employed (the left panel with Goldstein Score⩾0). Substantively, a one percent increase in the Left to Right type's tenure is associated with a decrease in the probability of receiving cooperation by about 2.5%. This effect, however, becomes insignificant when the more restrictive operationalization of cooperation is adopted. Taken together, these findings suggest that leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish then their predecessor are more likely to receive low-level cooperative gestures from their foreign adversaries early in their tenure, as attempts

to signal assurance.[12] Interestingly, although leaders who are perceived as more dovish than their predecessor (Right to Left types) tend to receive more cooperation initiation as their time in office increases, their tenure does not have any significant influence on the single occurrence of these cooperative interactions. This is likely because the binary nature of the dependent variable cannot accurately reflect the intensity of cooperative attempts from the adversary, which is more sensitive to their evaluation of the target's experience and ability to reciprocate.[13] Foreign adversaries may still engage in some low-level cooperative interactions with a lower frequency to keep the bilateral relationship warm, or at least from getting too cold to be restored.

4.4.2 The depth of cooperation

I next turn to examine the quality of the cooperation. It would be immature to conclude that more cooperative moves can be automatically translated into more intensive or deeper cooperation effort. Besides, the count measure can also be more vulnerable to reporting bias due to the inherently higher media attention certain countries get. Thus, I reassess the models presented above by using an alternative dependent variable, which is a continuous measure of the yearly average of all

12. The median and mean Goldstein Score of all the occurred cooperation (those that happened earliest in a given year) when the less restrictive definition is employed is 1.9 and 2.2 respectively, while the same values for the more restrictive DV is 4 and 5.

13. This is also why the main tests use the number of cooperative interactions as DV. The event dataset captures many more low-level interactions between states with greater granularity than does the MID data. A binary measure thus can hardly handle the multiple occurrences of events in the same year. On one hand, if all events are included in the analysis, then the sample will be disproportionately inflated in a way that biases the probability of occurrence upward. This is because all the additional entries are marked by 1 instead of 0 in dependent variable. On the other hand, if only the first occurrence of an cooperative interaction is included (which is method these additional models employ), then the granularity of the content of interaction will be lost.

Table 4.2: OLS Model Results on the Degree of Cooperation

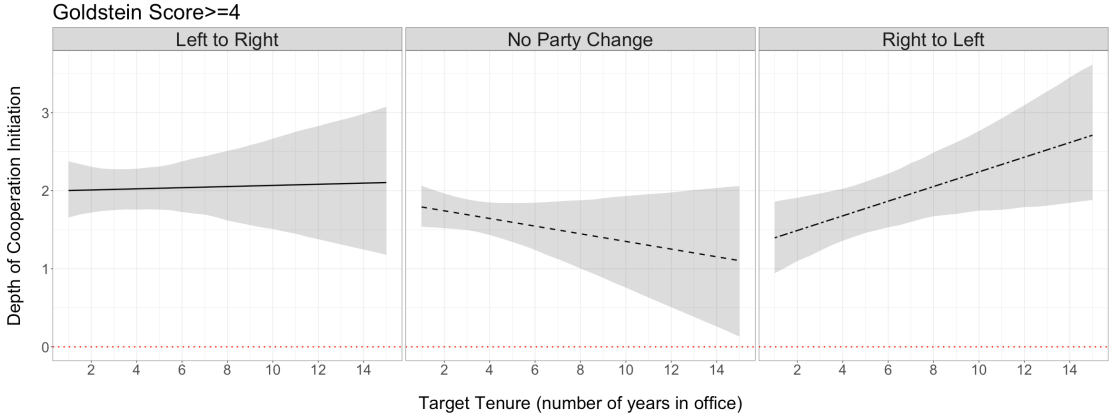
	Goldstein Score≥0				Goldstein Score≥4				All Events
	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
				Post-1979				Post-1979	Post-1979
Target Tenure	−0.004	0.010	−0.011	−0.019	−0.015	0.007	−0.025	−0.049	−0.033
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.037)	(0.021)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)									
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	−0.073	−0.113	−0.142	−0.230	−0.266	−0.366**	−0.405**	−0.538*	−0.230
	(0.122)	(0.124)	(0.113)	(0.186)	(0.187)	(0.184)	(0.164)	(0.298)	(0.208)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	0.349***	0.387***	0.204*	0.128	0.376**	0.404**	0.119	0.154	0.039
	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.117)	(0.178)	(0.180)	(0.178)	(0.160)	(0.262)	(0.194)
Interaction Terms									
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.071***	0.064**	0.043*	0.052*	0.140***	0.133***	0.098***	0.143***	0.067**
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.046)	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.053)	(0.033)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.015	−0.035	−0.013	0.008	0.003	−0.019	0.016	0.056	−0.006
	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.034)	(0.055)	(0.038)
Controls									
Initiator Tenure		−0.008*	−0.001	−0.011*		−0.026***	−0.012**	−0.019**	−0.008
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.007)
Initiator Age		0.017***	0.007**	0.005		0.027***	0.008*	0.012*	0.002
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Target Age		−0.009**	0.001	−0.007		−0.017***	−0.001	−0.010	0.006
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)		(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Male Initiator		0.153	0.492**	0.582**		−0.133	0.431	0.548	0.962***
		(0.157)	(0.222)	(0.241)		(0.528)	(0.599)	(0.745)	(0.297)
Male Target		−0.257	−0.309*	0.186		0.022	−0.054	0.487	0.118
		(0.175)	(0.159)	(0.257)		(0.191)	(0.182)	(0.321)	(0.327)
Previous Experience		−0.255***	−0.138**	−0.021		−0.408***	−0.217**	−0.061	0.058
		(0.071)	(0.066)	(0.118)		(0.102)	(0.091)	(0.198)	(0.135)
Bilateral Trade			0.037***	0.029**			0.065***	0.078***	0.009
			(0.006)	(0.012)			(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.013)
Relative Power			0.493***	0.655***			1.077***	1.851***	0.928***
			(0.129)	(0.207)			(0.194)	(0.372)	(0.244)
Joint Democracy			0.111	0.056			0.296**	0.299	0.190
			(0.088)	(0.117)			(0.147)	(0.207)	(0.124)
Cold War			−0.850***	−0.438***			−1.355***	−1.029***	−0.387***
			(0.071)	(0.115)			(0.116)	(0.172)	(0.125)
Constant	0.719***	0.551	0.300	0.559	0.872***	0.808	0.372	−0.126	−0.725
	(0.100)	(0.366)	(0.371)	(0.570)	(0.145)	(0.703)	(0.741)	(1.131)	(0.676)
Observations	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657	1,657
Adjusted R^2	0.125	0.153	0.235	0.138	0.162	0.198	0.310	0.231	0.118

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

selected events' Goldstein Scores.

Table 4.2 reports the results from nine OLS regression models, which mirror the setup of the models reported in Table 4.1. The one additional model (Model 17) uses a dependent variable that is based on the average Goldstein Score of all events, including both negative and positive moves initiated by foreign adversaries. These results are largely consistent with findings above. The significant relationship between cooperation initiation and the targets' time in office is only present for leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessors (Right to Left type) and this relationship is positive.[14]

Figure 4.4: Predicted Change in the Depth of Cooperation Initiative



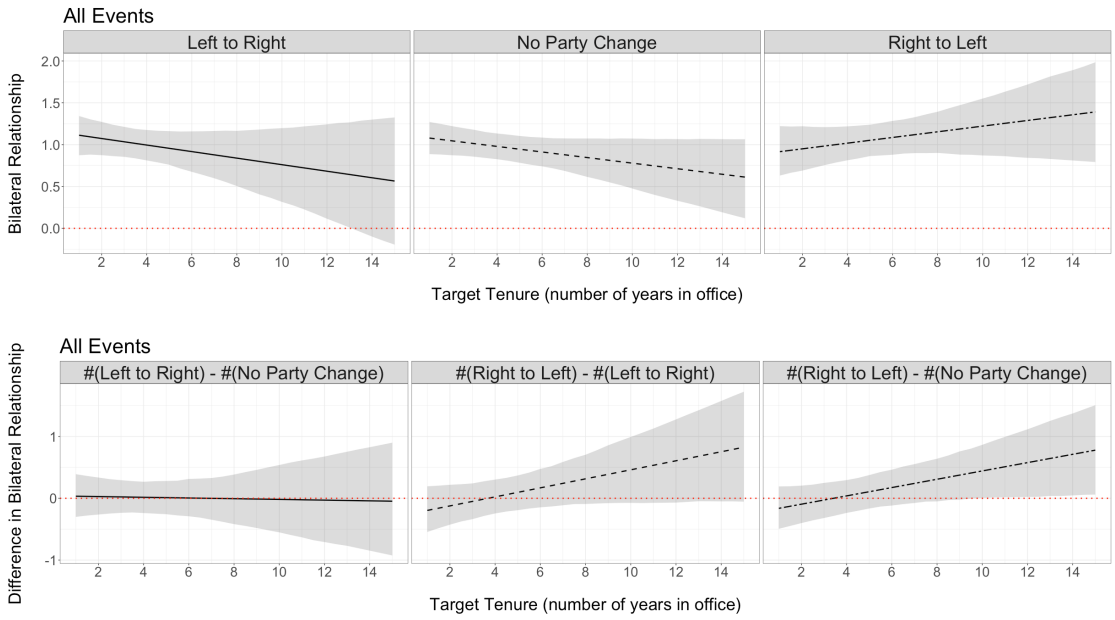
Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

This relationship is visualized in Figure 4.4, which plots how the predicted value of the depth of cooperation initiation varies across the target's tenure for all three types of target leader based on Model 16. While specific values of the dependent variable lack substantive interpretation, we can clearly see that there is an upward trend for the Right to Left type of targets. These results, combined with

14. In Model 11 and 12, this pair of relationship is significant at 10% level.

findings revealed above, indicate that foreign adversaries not only tend to initiate more cooperative moves to their new and more dovish counterpart as she become more experienced, but also seek to develop more deeper and more meaningful cooperation as she become more able to clear any potential domestic barriers for conciliatory policies.

Figure 4.5: Comparison of Overall Interstate Relationship under Different Leaders



Note: shaded areas represent 95% credible intervals generated through 1000 draws of new coefficients from the posterior.

Last but not least, the dependent variable used in Model 17 is constructed based on all observable interactions between the pair of states. This can be conceptualized as a rough measure of the overall relationship between two states. Thus, in Figure 4.5, I plot how the bilateral relationship between rivalries changes over time (the upper panel) and how the difference in bilateral relationship under different target leaders varies over time (the bottom panel). The result is interesting as the difference in bilateral relationship under leaderships is almost never significantly

different from zero. Only the right-panel shows that there is a significant increase in bilateral relationship when the new and more dovish leader has been in office for more than ten years compared to the case in which the leader in the target state did not bring preference change. Yet generally speaking, neither the initial tension associated with the emergence of a new hawk nor the more frequent and deeper cooperation associated with a more experienced dove can significantly alter the bilateral relationship.[15] The null finding from these comparisons actually reflects a relatively stable long-term relations between rivalries (Rasler, Thompson, and Ganguly 2013).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter reveals two major patterns of how foreign adversaries' cooperation initiatives, in terms of the occurrence, frequency, and depth, toward the new leader in the target state varies across her tenure conditional on the direction of her preference change. First, both the number and depth of cooperation initiation received by leaders who are perceived as being more dovish than their predecessor increase as their time in office increases. Second, when it comes to the mere occurrence of cooperation initiation from an adversary (not the number or depth), leaders who are perceived as being more hawkish than their predecessor are more likely to receive low-level cooperative gestures earlier in their tenure. I attribute these actions to the challengers' effort to signal assurance along with their demonstration

15. It should be acknowledged that this finding and its interpretation need to be taken with caution, for the rough measure of the bilateral relationship is based on one-directional interactions between two states (from the challenger/initiator to the target). A more accurate measure should take into consideration of two-way interactions. But that would require a different structure, a non-directed-dyadic structure, to handle the data.

of resolve (in term of crisis initiation revealed in chapter 3). Additionally, relying on a rough measure of bilateral relationships based on the average Goldstein Score of all observable (one-directional) interactions between two states, I find that the overall relationship between rivalries are relatively stable as there is no significant difference in this measure under different leaderships of the target state.

These findings can advance our understanding of international cooperation as well as the consequences of leadership turnover. To begin with, the findings indicate that there is not necessarily a tension between the hawk's advantage and the dove's advantage arguments in the international cooperation literature. Both dynamics appear to be at play in shaping an adversary's calculation of whether and when to deliver the olive branch to a rival leader. Rushing into intensive attempts to seek for cooperation may not only risk exacerbating the already harsh environment facing the new dove in reciprocating a less trusted foreign adversary, undermining her domestic support, but also harm the initiator's reputation at home when the cooperation initiation fails to be reciprocated. As a result, recognizing that hawks may enjoy advantages in clearing domestic barriers to conciliatory policies toward a foreign adversary, and in the same time, motivated by desire to deal with a more dovish foreign counterpart in the longer-term, foreign adversaries tend to approach the new and more dovish leader in their rival state cautiously and patiently.

China's unusually late congratulation to Joe Biden's win in the 2020 US president election can to some extent manifest this dynamic. Clearly, there is little hope that a quick and warm congratulation from Xi to Biden can significantly alter the course of downward spiral of bilateral relations, especially when there is an unprecedented high bipartisan focus on countering China. More importantly, an early move from Beijing "would risk being singled out as trying to tip the scales in

Biden's favor," which may make it more difficult for Biden to repair the relationship if that is indeed on his agenda (Tiezzi 2020).

These findings, combined with the pattern of targeting of new leaders in militarized crises, also show the sophistication of the challenger's handling of the contentious and potentially dangerous period shortly after leadership turnover, especially when there is a new hawk in the target's office. Previous research has demonstrated that both threats and assurance are necessary for a successful crisis bargaining, but only when the message sender attempts to change the status quo in a way that may cause significant shift in balance of power (Kydd and McManus 2017). The empirical pattern revealed here — that a leader who is perceived as being more hawkish than her predecessor is more likely to face both militarized challenges and low-level cooperative gestures from an adversary earlier in her tenure — might suggest that assurance is also needed when the challenger is largely motivated to preserve the status quo. Although signaling resolve to a more hawkish rival leader is important, without assurance the tough message might risk accelerating the spiral of hostility and thus lead to the worst outcome the challenger initially seeks to avoid.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

This investigation began with a simple question: are leaders more likely to face militarized international challenges early in their tenure? Previous efforts to answer this question are characterized by divergent theoretical expectations and mixed empirical findings. I have established in preceding chapters that this is due to an important missing variable — the direction of the preference change associated with the leadership turnover in the target state.

Taking this factor back into the equation allows me to develop a contingent explanation of why not all new leaders are evaluated in the same way and why some leaders are more trouble-attractive than others during the early stage of their tenure. Leaders who are perceived as more hawkish than their predecessor can trigger the challenger's fear of suffering an immediate and possibly unacceptable loss, lower the challenger's tolerance for any drop in relative capability due to the target's gaining of experience in the future, and weaken the constraining power of opportunity costs concerns. These vectors incentivize the challenger to initiate crisis early on only when a new hawk is in the target's office, as attempts to signal resolve, to preempt a possibly unavoidable conflict, or to lock in a better payoff.

Chapter 3 tests this contingent hypothesis in a sample of rival dyads char-

acterized by democratically elected target-side leaders. Operationalizing the hawk versus dove as leaders' political party affiliation, with rightist leaders interpreted as signaling hawkishness and leftist leaders signaling dovishness, I find that there is a strong and robust negative relationship between the target's time in office and her probability of being targeted in militarized disputes, but only for leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor. And this relationship is strongest when the new leader lacks experience in serving as the national head before. Moreover, this relationship appears to be mostly driven by low-intensity actions initiated by status quo challengers, indicating that it is the signaling mechanism that dominates crisis initiations against new hawks.

In contrast, Chapter 4 reveals that leaders who are more left-leaning than their predecessor tends to receive significantly more and deeper cooperative initiatives from foreign adversaries as their time in office increases. I attribute this pattern to the adversary's recognition of the existence of hawk's advantage in clearing domestic barriers to adopting conciliatory policies toward enemies and the adversary's preference to deal with a more dovish foreign counterpart in the long-term. These two motives incentivize the adversary to not rush into seeking substantive cooperation with a new dove, as such moves may risk undermining her domestic support if she does reciprocate or harming the adversary's own reputation at home if there is no reciprocation. Moreover, I also find that leaders who are more right-leaning than their predecessor are also more likely to receive low-level cooperative gestures from an adversary earlier in their tenure, which reflects the adversary's effort to signal assurance along with the demonstration of resolve. This manifests the sophistication of the challenger's handling of the volatile and dangerous period shortly after a new hawk takes office in the rival state. Last but

not least, relying on a rough measure of overall interstate relationship, this chapter also shows that neither the initial tension with a new hawk nor the later efforts to seek cooperation with a new dove can significantly alter the bilateral relationship between rivals.

There are two primary conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis presented here. First, the period shortly after leadership turnover is indeed unstable, accompanied with a higher risk of militarized conflicts. However, it depends on who the new leader is and what preference change may ensue. This study offers a theoretically and empirically compelling explanation for why we did not have a consensus before, that is, because new leaders are incorrectly treated as a homogeneous group and thus any related theoretical expectations are overgeneralized. Second, leadership turnover may also present states an opportunity to restore relationship, or at least unease the tension, through more cooperation. Yet it might take longer to happen, for the adversary has incentive to approach a new dove with caution and patience.

In the reminder of this chapter, I first discuss the implications of this study for two other major topics of international relations: the relationship between regime type and conflicts and the role of uncertainty in general. I then discuss the remaining limitations of the study and future work.

5.1 Implications for Regime Type and Conflicts

The fact that democratic states rarely, if ever, wage war against other democratic states has widely been considered to "come as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations" (Levy 1988, 662). The flip side of the

same coin — that conflicts are more likely to occur between democracies and non-democracies — has also been repeatedly proved to be a robust pattern. A particular puzzle that arises from this latter set of findings is that despite their better performance in the battlefields, democracies are more likely to be targeted in international disputes or militarized conflicts by autocratic challengers (Rousseau et al. 1996; Leeds and Davis 1999; Grieco 2001; Gelpi and Grieco 2001; Reiter and Stam 2003).[1]

Conventional wisdom tends to attribute democracies' vulnerability to their institutional constraints, which make democratic leaders more cost sensitive (see, for example, Filson and Werner (2004)). Additionally, free media associated with democracies also make public opinion loom bigger in affecting foreign policy formation in democracies, which may further constraint democratic leaders from engaging in long and costly wars, and thus render them perceived as easier target (Baum and Potter 2015). Japan's bid that the American public opinion would be directed toward opposing a prolonged war before their attack on Pearl Harbor is one extreme case of this type of reasoning (Sagan 1988).

This study provides an alternative way to think about this puzzle. Democratic institutions not only constrain leaders, but also tend to produce new leaders more frequently, and these new leaders can signal their different foreign policy preferences through open and competitive elections. Findings of this dissertation indicate that these leadership transitions are likely to be quite destabilizing, at least when the election rhetoric signals a hawkish turn of the state's policy. Foreign

1. This by no means indicate that democracies do not initiate wars or conflicts against autocracies. In fact, Rosato (2003) argues that violent conflicts occur between democracies and non-democracies either because democracies try to free the people from authoritarian rule or because democracies have to defend themselves from attacks or engage in preemptive strikes.

challengers may not be necessarily greedy actors who seek to explore democratic leaders' weakness, but are worried about the future and feel the need to establish upfront a willingness to confront new leaders in democracies perceived to have hostile intentions. This can be particularly salient in the context of democracy-autocracy dyads, for democratic noise and the autocratic challenger's relative lack of knowledge of democratic domestic politics might further plague the communication and exacerbate misperception (Potter 2007).

5.2 Implications for the Role of Uncertainty

Closely related to the point raised above, the analysis in Chapter 3 also yields suggestive evidence that autocratic leaders who come into power peacefully are not more likely to be challenged earlier in their tenure, and when new autocratic leaders are seen as representing a different source of leader support, they appear to become significantly more likely to be challenged later in their tenure (Model 12 in Table 3.2). Depending on how we interpret the literature, autocratic leadership turnover can represent a situation accompanied with *higher uncertainty* about the new leader's policy preference. And this high uncertainty seems to be able to prevent hasty behavior from an adversary. This may ask us to rethink about the role of uncertainty in international relations.

The dominant view in the IR literature is that uncertainty rooted in private information is a major source for international conflicts (Fearon 1995). However, as Powell (2006) puts it, the run up to WWII in Europe was not driven by lacking information about Adolf Hitler's private information. To the contrary, the British decided to fight Hitler only after he revealed more and more information about his

ambition, which made British decision makers more and more certain that Hitler cannot be accommodated. Powell (2006, 176) treats this case a s critique of the basic model setup adopted by informational approach to international conflicts, which is that "there would be no fighting if states had complete information about each other."

Thus, the findings of this study, accompanied with Powell's critique, suggest that a dichotomous understanding of uncertainty — that high uncertainty is accompanied with high risk of conflicts — can be insufficient. On one hand, uncertainty due to lacking information may lead to inaction. As a useful analogy, if a person is thrown into a dark room without any information, her first reaction should be to stay where she is, instead of trying to probe the surrounding area. In international conflicts, a potential challenger might be discouraged from taking any action if there is too little information about the target. This can be either because of the higher perceived risk associated with misjudging the other's power or due to some sort of (misperceived) optimism that the enemy might be appeasable. To some extent, North Korean leaders have been playing well with uncertainty, and able to use mystery to protect their survival. The implication here is that we may need to think more carefully about the challenger's calculation before the "screening game" begins, for "not screening" can be a theoretically meaningful corner solution.[2]

On the other, at a higher level of abstraction, an important distinction can be made when it comes to forming predictions of an unknown quantity: (a) uncertainty about possible values for the quantity and (b) uncertainty about whether a given prediction is correct. This distinction has been more thoroughly examined

2. In economics, a similar issue is related to the debate between marginal analysis and inframarginal framework (Cheng, Sachs, and Yang 2000).

by psychologists, but has not gained enough attention from political scientists. Peterson and Pitz (1988), for example, term the former type as *uncertainty* and latter as *confidence*, and find through experiments that increasing information flow can lead to both a higher uncertainty and overconfidence. Applying this distinction to this study, then foreign leaders are likely to deal with forming a possible prediction of the new leader's preference (uncertainty) when a leadership turnover happens in North Korea, but instead seek to evaluate whether their prediction of a new U.S. president's preference is correct (confidence). Findings from this study suggests that these different tasks can result in different risk tolerance, with the latter one making leaders more risk-acceptant (due possible to overconfidence) and take quick actions and the former one leading to risk-aversion and inaction.

The general IR work, especially formal models, appear to exclusively treat uncertainty as being uncertain about some possible values of interests. For example, the value of one's perceived cost of war is drawn from a continuous probability distribution, and thus uncertainty corresponds to the variance of the distribution, or the range between the lower and upper bound of the distribution. The above discussion suggests that uncertainty can be a directional attribute, and thus should be handled accordingly. In other words, we may need to explore models where uncertainty is about evaluating the confidence about some point estimates in addition to variance.

5.3 Limitations and Future Work

With all that being said, this study still suffers from limitations. While the empirical findings on the relationship between leaders' tenure, the direction of preference

change they represent, and probability of being challenged are robust, there are a number of areas that warrant expansion, clarification, and additional research.

To begin with, one important extension of this research program will be exploring additional measures of the direction of preference change. While it a widely adopted approach to operationalize hawk versus dove on the left-right spectrum of political ideology, such a measure may not be granular enough to capture the complexity and evolution of interstate relations. For instance, Putin's clear preference for Trump over Biden poses a serious challenge to the simple measure adopted here. Thus, future work should consider constructing dyad-specific measures of the perceived preference change. One potential path is to explore text-as-data approach. For instance, text analysis of U.S. presidents' pre-office rhetoric, such as campaign statements, presidential debates, and inaugural speeches would allow us to more precisely measure the preference change regarding specific issues and particular states or areas. The challenges facing this approach may include data availability (both cross-sectional and temporal coverage may be limited) and potential language barriers in non-English speaking cases.

Secondly, the agency of the changer has not been fully unpacked in the analysis presented here. Theoretically, it is implicitly assumed that the prescribed interactions happen when there is a leadership turnover only in the target state, while the leader in the potential challenger state is held constant. Empirically, all the statistical models only account for challenger's age, gender, and tenure, but leaves the possible preference change following leadership turnover in challenger state unmodeled. It is worth exploring in the future whether and how the conflict participation behavior may vary across the challenger's tenure conditional on the direction of her preference change.

Thirdly, despite best efforts, the MID dependent variable may still not be able to accurately capture the specific forms of crisis initiation prescribed by the theory. Future works should explore some other more narrowly defined events as dependent variables. For instance, territorial conquest through *fait accompli* data might be able to provide more insight of aggressive actions taken by possibly revisionist players (Altman 2017). The challenge for exploring this data, however, is that it involves a very different population of dyads (those who have territorial disputes), which make the coding of preference change more challenging (since many states covered by the Manifesto data do not have ongoing territorial disputes). In terms of possible actions aimed at signaling resolve, data collection initiatives on the dynamic of military exercises can provide a plausible path to follow (see, for example, D'Orazio (2012)).

Fourthly, the empirical analysis presented in both Chapter 3 and 4 are dyadic, meaning that I explored the relationship between leadership turnover and the incidence of conflict or cooperation within pairs of states. This approach was adopted primarily because this unit of analysis is the one that is most commonly used in existing literature. Thus, keeping this basic structure allows me to make clear comparison between my findings and those from previous works. However, given the increasingly complex network of interstate interactions, it is worth further exploring whether leadership turnover in state A can affect state B's policies and actions toward state C. There can be some very complex configuration of the relationship between these three states depending on the bilateral relationship between each pair of them. But the point here is that there is a theoretical possibility that there might be a spillover effect of leadership turnover in one state that may affect third party interactions as well. If we assume that left-leaning leaders are

more committed to maintaining an alliance, then allied states might be encouraged to take more hardline policies toward their own adversaries by the emergence of a new leftist leader in their protector state. Anticipating this dynamic, that adversary might also have incentive to act quick to preempt those moves. As a result, although findings presented here indicates that the emergence of a new leader who is more left-leaning than her predecessor is not immediately followed by an increase in the probability of conflict between this new leader's state and her own adversaries, there might be an increase in the risk of conflicts between this leader's allies and their own adversaries. Anecdotal incidents suggests that this is more than a theoretical concern. The escalation of tension between Ukraine and Russia shortly after the election of Biden is to some extent consistent with this logic.

Last but not least, this study does not take into consideration of other important decision-makers such as foreign ministers or national security advisors. Yet some relatively low-level government officials can exert significant influence on states' foreign policy or the specific conduction of certain policies. For instance, Malis (2021) finds that the turnover of a US ambassador can lead to a significant decrease in US exports to the country experiencing the turnover, and increase the risk of onset of a militarized dispute between that country and the US. Future works, thus, should explore how the stay or change in key foreign policy positions may dilute or amplify the effect of leadership turnover revealed here. Such an extension will have important policy implications. If there is indeed a strong mediating effect from these players, then given the potential disturbance caused by the change of national leaders, a more stable and smooth transition in these positions may help preserve institutional knowledge and and effectively offset the destabilizing effect of the turnover of national leaders. This is particularly important for democra-

cies where appointments of these positions might be tainted by domestic partisan politics.

Appendix A to Chapter 3

Table A1 Summary Statistics of Variables used in the Main Tests of Chapter 3

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
MID Initiation	3,842	0.041	0.199	0	1
Target Tenure (logged)	3,842	6.591	1.203	0.693	9.036
Direction of Preference Change	3,842	0.898	0.863	0	2
Challenger Tenure (logged)	3,842	7.316	1.431	0.000	9.795
Challenger Age	3,842	60.420	11.595	19	94
Target Age	3,842	62.571	9.072	31	87
Challenger Gender	3,842	0.996	0.066	0	1
Target Gender	3,842	0.958	0.200	0	1
Previous Experience	3,842	0.244	0.429	0	1
Relative Power	3,842	0.358	0.331	0.0002	1.000
Joint Democracy	3,842	0.155	0.362	0	1
Bilateral Trade (logged)	3,842	12.705	7.658	0.000	24.907
Distance	3,842	4.101	2.213	1	6
Cold War	3,842	0.678	0.467	0	1
Peace Years	3,842	12.930	12.174	0	68

Table A2: Logit Models with Different Fixed Effects

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID			
	(A1)	(A2)	(A3)	(A4)
	No Fixed Effect	Year-Fixed	Target-Year-Fixed	Dyad-Fixed
Target Tenure	0.043	0.022	−0.033	−0.011
	(0.099)	(0.105)	(0.117)	(0.109)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)				
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	−0.386	−0.244	0.301	−0.061
	(1.171)	(1.324)	(1.462)	(1.325)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	2.143**	2.647**	3.266***	3.012***
	(1.009)	(1.127)	(1.211)	(1.093)
Interaction Terms				
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.126	0.128	0.047	0.083
	(0.172)	(0.195)	(0.219)	(0.197)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.299**	−0.363**	−0.476***	−0.435***
	(0.152)	(0.169)	(0.183)	(0.166)
Controls				
Challenger Tenure	0.036	0.024	−0.029	−0.009
	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.070)	(0.076)
Challenger Age	−0.011	−0.012	−0.011	−0.016
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Target Age	0.025***	0.033***	0.054***	0.042***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Male Challenger	−0.715	−0.975	−0.917	−0.785
	(0.712)	(0.777)	(0.806)	(0.765)
Male Target	−0.592	−0.761*	−0.886*	−0.890**
	(0.368)	(0.411)	(0.458)	(0.429)
Previous Experience	−0.370	−0.525*	−0.390	−0.223
	(0.262)	(0.280)	(0.312)	(0.298)
Relative Power	0.746***	0.767***	1.663***	0.910
	(0.281)	(0.291)	(0.489)	(1.515)
Joint Democracy	−0.352	−0.534**	−0.005	0.167
	(0.245)	(0.261)	(0.324)	(0.394)
Bilateral Trade	0.033***	0.030**	−0.026	−0.007
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.025)
Distance	−0.128***	−0.111**	−0.252***	−0.273
	(0.042)	(0.046)	(0.071)	(0.278)
Coldwar	−0.413**			−0.131
	(0.183)			(0.260)
Peace Year	−0.113***	−0.155***	−0.095**	0.029
	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.060)
Peace Year^2	0.004	0.005**	0.003	−0.004
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Peace Year^3	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	−2.831**	−19.927	−18.097	−18.643
	(1.294)	(3,017.845)	(2,683.388)	(4,561.236)
Observations	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842
Log Likelihood	-615.280	-571.249	-540.666	-523.974
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,270.560	1,318.497	1,311.332	1,287.948

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A3: DPC is Measured by Current Values of Party Ideology

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Target Tenure	−0.092	0.031	0.049	0.006	0.054	0.001
	(0.077)	(0.096)	(0.106)	(0.109)	(0.104)	(0.107)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)						
DPC=1 (Right to Left)		−0.759	−0.349	−0.040	−0.284	0.031
		(1.245)	(1.302)	(1.273)	(1.251)	(1.194)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)		1.837**	2.750***	3.288***	2.688***	3.117***
		(0.906)	(0.959)	(0.990)	(0.955)	(0.987)
Interaction Terms						
DPC=1 × Target Tenure		0.065	−0.006	−0.030	−0.017	−0.039
		(0.180)	(0.187)	(0.184)	(0.180)	(0.174)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure		−0.247*	−0.304**	−0.403**	−0.300**	−0.389**
		(0.144)	(0.150)	(0.158)	(0.150)	(0.156)
Controls						
Challenger Age	−0.012			−0.002		−0.012
	(0.009)			(0.008)		(0.009)
Target Age	0.032***			0.033***		0.039***
	(0.012)			(0.011)		(0.012)
Male Challenger	−0.575			−0.920		−0.674
	(0.635)			(0.572)		(0.605)
Male Target	−0.587			−0.853**		−0.810*
	(0.441)			(0.421)		(0.434)
Previous Experience	−0.094			−0.214		−0.173
	(0.223)			(0.241)		(0.243)
Relative Power	1.600***				1.323***	1.635***
	(0.488)				(0.469)	(0.490)
Joint Democracy	0.075				0.054	0.103
	(0.328)				(0.316)	(0.328)
Bilateral Trade	−0.015				−0.011	−0.017
	(0.019)				(0.019)	(0.019)
Distance	−0.261***				−0.263***	−0.259***
	(0.082)				(0.078)	(0.079)
Cold War	−0.513**				−0.258	−0.425*
	(0.221)				(0.203)	(0.220)
Peace Year	−0.058		−0.099**	−0.085**	−0.081*	−0.060
	(0.042)		(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Peace Year^2	0.002		0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Peace Year^3	−0.000		−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	−0.298	−3.375***	−3.001***	−2.725**	−1.599*	−1.173
	(1.318)	(0.615)	(0.746)	(1.255)	(0.880)	(1.343)
Target State Fixed Effect	✓	No	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842	3,842
Log Likelihood	-588.936	-659.171	-605.154	-598.855	-592.034	-583.869
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,263.872	1,330.342	1,282.308	1,281.710	1,266.068	1,261.738

Note: Robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A4: Simple Comparison Between Autocratic and Democratic Leaders

	Dependent variable: Initiation of MID			
	(A5)	(A6)	(A7)	(A8)
Target Tenure	−0.032	−0.084	−0.034	−0.089
	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.072)	(0.074)
Regime Type				
Autocratic Target	−1.874**	−1.923**	−1.728**	−1.682**
	(0.776)	(0.763)	(0.763)	(0.749)
Interaction Term				
Autocratic Target × Target Tenure	0.236**	0.235**	0.231**	0.222**
	(0.104)	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.101)
Controls				
Challenger Tenure		0.016		0.033
		(0.045)		(0.046)
Challenger Age		0.006		0.00002
		(0.006)		(0.006)
Target Age		0.016**		0.020***
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Male Challenger		0.312		0.239
		(0.409)		(0.391)
Male Target		−0.558		−0.508
		(0.408)		(0.422)
Previous Experience		−0.282		−0.263
		(0.209)		(0.210)
Relative Power			1.692***	1.730***
			(0.308)	(0.313)
Joint Democracy			0.210	0.218
			(0.271)	(0.276)
Bilateral Trade			−0.028***	−0.030***
			(0.011)	(0.010)
Distance			−0.231***	−0.225***
			(0.043)	(0.043)
Cold War			−0.408**	−0.454**
			(0.187)	(0.187)
Peace Year	−0.127***	−0.125***	−0.107***	−0.104***
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Peace Year^2	0.004**	0.004**	0.004**	0.004**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Peace Year^3	−0.000*	−0.000	−0.000**	−0.000*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	−2.185***	−2.905***	−0.600	−1.299
	(0.554)	(0.955)	(0.631)	(0.979)
Observations	8,649	8,649	8,649	8,649
Log Likelihood	-1,364.103	-1,358.810	-1,329.544	-1,324.217
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,946.205	2,947.621	2,887.087	2,888.434

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A5: Logit Models with Uncleaned MID as DV

	Democracy Only		Autocracy & Democracy			
	(A9)	(A10)	(A11)	(A12)	(A13)	(A14)
Target Tenure	−0.007	−0.000	−0.048	−0.047	0.015	0.011
	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.058)	(0.057)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)						
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	0.027	0.163				
	(0.944)	(0.935)				
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	1.932**	1.995**				
	(0.882)	(0.897)				
Interaction Terms						
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.052	0.034				
	(0.144)	(0.143)				
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.280**	−0.290**				
	(0.135)	(0.137)				
Regime Type						
Autocratic Target			−1.318**	−1.234*		
			(0.632)	(0.637)		
Autocratic Target × Target Tenure			0.119	0.113		
			(0.080)	(0.079)		
Target Type (Autocratic Targets Included)						
TT=1 (Autocracy & Preference Change)					−1.161	−1.188
					(1.174)	(1.121)
TT=2 (Democracy & No Preference Change)					0.778	0.669
					(0.755)	(0.756)
TT=3 (Democracy & Right to Left)					0.904	0.877
					(0.913)	(0.919)
TT=4 (Democracy & Left to Right)					2.636***	2.448***
					(0.861)	(0.877)
TT=1 × Target Tenure					0.240	0.234
					(0.159)	(0.152)
TT=2 × Target Tenure					−0.016	−0.011
					(0.102)	(0.100)
TT=3 × Target Tenure					0.017	0.012
					(0.127)	(0.125)
TT=4 × Target Tenure					−0.290**	−0.275**
					(0.121)	(0.121)
Controls						
Leader-Level Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dyad-Level Controls	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Constant	−1.540	−0.209	−2.477***	−0.911	−3.768***	−2.104**
	(1.045)	(1.125)	(0.806)	(0.845)	(0.813)	(0.896)
Observations	3,682	3,682	8,658	8,658	8,658	8,658
Log Likelihood	-826.705	-802.957	-1,875.334	-1,830.826	-1,868.054	-1,824.117
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,731.411	1,693.914	3,980.668	3,901.651	3,978.108	3,900.234

Note: Robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B to Chapter 4

Table B1: Summary Statistics of Variables used in the Main Tests of Chapter 4

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of Cooperative Events (Goldstein Score⩾0)	3,837	2.165	7.079	0	107
Number of Cooperative Events (Goldstein Score⩾4)	3,837	0.567	2.252	0	34
Depth of Cooperation (Goldstein Score⩾0)	3,837	0.717	1.357	0	8
Depth of Cooperation (Goldstein Score⩾4)	3,837	0.833	1.941	0	8
Bilateral Relationship (All Events)	3,837	0.485	1.442	−10	8
Target Tenure (in years)	3,837	3.832	2.830	1	24
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)	3,837	0.898	0.864	0	2
Initiator Tenure (in years)	3,837	8.803	8.659	1	50
Initiator Age	3,837	60.421	11.598	19	94
Target Age	3,837	62.568	9.071	31	87
Male Initiator	3,837	0.996	0.066	0	1
Male Target	3,837	0.958	0.201	0	1
Previous Experience	3,837	0.244	0.429	0	1
Bilateral Trade (logged)	3,837	12.697	7.659	0.000	24.907
Relative Power	3,837	0.358	0.331	0.0002	1.000
Joint Democracy	3,837	0.154	0.361	0	1
Cold War	3,837	0.678	0.467	0	1

Table B2: Negative Binomial Model (Include Events without Geographic Information)

	Goldstein Score≥0				Goldstein Score≥4			
	(B1)	(B2)	(B3)	(B4) Post-1979	(B5)	(B6)	(B7)	(B8) Post-1979
Target Tenure	0.046	0.051*	−0.031	−0.010	0.019	0.021	−0.069***	−0.061**
	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)								
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	0.401	0.029	−0.196	−0.205	0.146	−0.340	−0.575***	−0.502**
	(0.272)	(0.262)	(0.189)	(0.210)	(0.320)	(0.326)	(0.220)	(0.221)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	0.917***	1.051***	0.246	0.040	0.941***	0.956***	0.133	−0.032
	(0.215)	(0.230)	(0.156)	(0.164)	(0.278)	(0.280)	(0.196)	(0.189)
Interaction Terms								
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.120*	0.151***	0.117***	0.085**	0.169**	0.200***	0.162***	0.129***
	(0.063)	(0.050)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.076)	(0.065)	(0.038)	(0.040)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.065	−0.052	0.038	0.045	−0.071	−0.052	0.060	0.060
	(0.048)	(0.042)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.066)	(0.055)	(0.038)	(0.040)
Controls								
Initiator Tenure		−0.037***	−0.013*	−0.023***		−0.045***	−0.020**	−0.025***
		(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.007)		(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Initiator Age		0.039***	0.018***	0.010**		0.042***	0.021***	0.014**
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)		(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Target Age		−0.047***	−0.0002	−0.018**		−0.043***	0.003	−0.005
		(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.008)		(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Male Initiator		−0.226	0.171	0.166		−0.0002	0.252	0.348
		(0.355)	(0.497)	(0.474)		(0.333)	(0.483)	(0.491)
Male Target		0.464*	−0.062	0.638***		0.476	−0.002	0.462*
		(0.273)	(0.208)	(0.171)		(0.312)	(0.295)	(0.255)
Previous Experience		−0.781***	−0.433***	−0.250*		−0.914***	−0.475***	−0.339*
		(0.187)	(0.137)	(0.148)		(0.238)	(0.183)	(0.177)
Bilateral Trade			0.072***	0.046***			0.086***	0.052***
			(0.015)	(0.016)			(0.022)	(0.020)
Relative Power			2.161***	2.433***			2.070***	2.510***
			(0.242)	(0.304)			(0.279)	(0.318)
Joint Democracy			0.252	0.184			0.336**	0.323**
			(0.158)	(0.167)			(0.145)	(0.139)
Cold War			−2.149***	−1.427***			−2.108***	−1.403***
			(0.113)	(0.130)			(0.158)	(0.182)
Constant	0.593***	1.110	−0.667	0.717	−0.547***	−0.486	−0.875	0.233
	(0.197)	(0.777)	(0.729)	(0.784)	(0.205)	(0.941)	(0.853)	(0.818)
Observations	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657	3,230	3,230	3,230	1,657
Log Likelihood	-5,448.628	-5,291.753	-4,711.375	-3,801.948	-3,103.618	-2,994.903	-2,573.737	-2,249.626

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B3: Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Model

	Goldstein Score⩾0		Goldstein Score⩾4	
	(B9)	(B10) Post-1979	(B11)	(B12) Post-1979
Target Tenure	0.013	0.0003	−0.013	−0.022
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)				
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	−0.318**	−0.351**	−0.788***	−0.699***
	(0.149)	(0.159)	(0.209)	(0.216)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	0.250*	0.003	0.295	0.191
	(0.136)	(0.142)	(0.192)	(0.192)
Interaction Terms				
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	0.074**	0.064**	0.168***	0.139***
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.040)	(0.040)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	0.043	0.073**	0.037	0.055
	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Controls				
Initiator Tenure	−0.017***	−0.031***	−0.027***	−0.034***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Initiator Age	0.017***	0.010***	0.014***	0.009*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Target Age	−0.014***	−0.027***	−0.016***	−0.019***
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Male Initiator	0.070	0.316	0.206	0.437
	(0.373)	(0.356)	(0.506)	(0.494)
Male Target	0.797***	1.425***	0.937***	1.305***
	(0.196)	(0.182)	(0.303)	(0.281)
Previous Experience	−0.429***	−0.247**	−0.673***	−0.509***
	(0.099)	(0.126)	(0.162)	(0.189)
Bilateral Trade	0.096***	0.078***	0.065***	0.061***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Joint Democracy	−0.098	−0.189**	0.126	0.051
	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.124)	(0.115)
Relative Power	1.112***	0.916***	1.128***	0.961***
	(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.215)	(0.183)
Cold War	−2.357***	−1.685***	−1.615***	−1.692***
	(0.080)	(0.097)	(0.208)	(0.140)
Constant	−1.291***	−0.330	−1.837***	−1.750***
	(0.490)	(0.482)	(0.694)	(0.675)
Zero-Inflation Part				
Bilateral Trade	0.014	−10.125	−0.156***	−1.327
	(0.042)	(1,236.484)	(0.032)	(1.416)
Relative Power	14.112***	5.329***	1.407**	5.518*
	(3.101)	(1.962)	(0.603)	(2.948)
Joint Democracy	−0.210	24.158	0.286	9.106
	(0.639)	(12,921.750)	(0.412)	(13.183)
Cold War	14.769	−0.608	3.705***	−0.011
	(177.449)	(0.956)	(0.566)	(1.226)
Constant	−27.218	−4.225***	−1.365**	−3.503*
	(177.478)	(1.356)	(0.655)	(2.018)
Observations	3,230	1,657	3,230	1,657
Log Likelihood	-4,339.197	-3,538.070	-2,279.049	-2,021.469

Note:Standard errors are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B4: Logit Model on the Occurrence of Cooperation Initiation

	Goldstein Score⩾0				Goldstein Score⩾4			
	(B13)	(B14)	(B15)	(B16)	(B17)	(B18)	(B19)	(B20)
Target Tenure	0.105	0.166**	0.094	0.098	−0.023	0.008	−0.065	−0.068
	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.088)	(0.085)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Direction of Preference Change (DPC)								
DPC=1 (Right to Left)	0.798	1.160	0.808	1.086	−1.064	−1.135	−1.227	−1.101
	(0.703)	(0.706)	(0.701)	(0.715)	(1.138)	(1.014)	(0.976)	(0.969)
DPC=2 (Left to Right)	2.509***	3.177***	1.790***	2.288***	1.556**	1.884**	0.547	0.905
	(0.551)	(0.578)	(0.604)	(0.613)	(0.769)	(0.823)	(0.882)	(0.863)
Interaction Terms								
DPC=1 × Target Tenure	−0.031	−0.119	−0.075	−0.117	0.220	0.196	0.195	0.165
	(0.112)	(0.109)	(0.106)	(0.108)	(0.173)	(0.154)	(0.146)	(0.145)
DPC=2 × Target Tenure	−0.262***	−0.398***	−0.179**	−0.270***	−0.130	−0.208	−0.003	−0.077
	(0.087)	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.132)	(0.132)
Controls								
Initiator Tenure		0.085**		0.113***		0.025		0.067
		(0.036)		(0.041)		(0.046)		(0.055)
Initiator Age		0.019***		0.010*		0.026***		0.016**
		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.006)		(0.007)
Target Age		−0.009		0.011		−0.019*		0.011
		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.010)		(0.011)
Male Initiator		0.569		0.979		1.492		1.675**
		(0.754)		(0.642)		(0.941)		(0.847)
Male Target		−0.443		−0.556**		0.455		0.245
		(0.284)		(0.277)		(0.432)		(0.446)
Previous Experience		−0.582***		−0.378**		−0.821***		−0.618***
		(0.153)		(0.157)		(0.229)		(0.227)
Relative Power			0.037**	0.038**			0.059***	0.057***
			(0.015)	(0.016)			(0.019)	(0.020)
Joint Democracy			1.219***	1.034***			1.806***	1.585***
			(0.285)	(0.307)			(0.402)	(0.409)
Bilateral Trade			−0.050	0.033			0.277	0.329
			(0.173)	(0.182)			(0.221)	(0.227)
Cold War			−1.342***	−1.309***			−1.559***	−1.532***
			(0.134)	(0.139)			(0.183)	(0.193)
Years with no event		−0.400***	−0.260***	−0.259***		−0.393***	−0.265***	−0.259***
		(0.050)	(0.048)	(0.049)		(0.049)	(0.052)	(0.053)
Years with no event^2		0.016***	0.008**	0.009**		0.015***	0.011***	0.011***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Years with no event^3		−0.0002*	−0.00002	−0.00004		−0.0002***	−0.0001***	−0.0001***
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)		(0.00005)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	−2.006***	−2.349**	−0.944*	−3.355***	−1.893***	−2.992**	−0.952	−4.724***
	(0.448)	(1.002)	(0.544)	(0.999)	(0.562)	(1.299)	(0.717)	(1.345)
Observations	3,230	3,229	3,229	3,229	3,230	3,229	3,229	3,229
Log Likelihood	-1,632.315	-1,441.967	-1,378.863	-1,360.339	-1,118.696	-964.646	-903.153	-889.101

Note: Target state fixed effects are used in all models and robust standard errors clustered on directed-leader-dyads are in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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