Elite Divisions, Party Origins, and Political Liberalization in Autocracies

Adrian del Río
Masaaki Higashijima

October 2022

Users Working Paper
SERIES 2022:50
THE VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
DEPT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a unique approach to conceptualization and measurement of democracy. The headquarters – the V-Dem Institute – is based at the University of Gothenburg with 20 staff. The project includes a worldwide team with 5 Principal Investigators, 22 Project Managers, 33 Regional Managers, 134 Country Coordinators, Research Assistants, and 3,700 Country Experts. The V-Dem project is one of the largest ever social science research-oriented data collection programs.

Please address comments and/or queries to:

V-Dem Institute
Department of Political Science
University of Gothenburg
Sprängkullsgatan 19, Box 711
405 30 Gothenburg
Sweden
E-mail: contact@v-dem.net

V-Dem Working Papers are available in electronic format at https://www.v-dem.net
Copyright ©2022 by authors. All rights reserved.

Disclaimer: V-Dem does not do quality control and therefore does not endorse the content of the papers, which is the responsibility of the authors only.

Elite Divisions, Party Origins, and Political Liberalization in Autocracies [1]

Adrian del Río
Humboldt Post-Doctoral Fellow
Centre for East European and International Studies

Masaaki Higashijima
Associate Professor of Political Science
Graduate School of Information Sciences, Tohoku University

[1] We are grateful for the excellent feedback from participants at the 2022 meeting of the Japanese Society for Quantitative Political Science at Waseda University, the European Political Science Association conference in Prague, and the American Political Science Association in Montreal.

Abstract

Internal elite divisions in autocracies are an important step toward political liberalization and democratic transitions. Yet, we know little about when and how such divisions contribute to initiating democratic reforms. We argue that whether elite divisions lead to political liberalization depends on authoritarian parties' origins. Dictators with parties emerging from violent conflicts can effectively prevent elite divisions from pushing for democratic reforms through organized violence and eliminating alternative power centers. Dealing with endogeneity threats by employing the panel data matching estimator, cross-national statistical analyses demonstrate that internal elite divisions open up the prospect of political liberalization. However, such effects diminish when ruling parties were built during violent struggles such as through revolutions, independence movements, and insurgencies. Our findings also suggest that in the face of internal divisions dictators armed with such parties do not provide concessions to the opposition and are more likely to react with blatant repression and tighten political control, contributing to deterring the threats of internal divisions.

Introduction

When do autocracies initiate democratic reforms? Comparative political scientists have long explored the sources of political liberalization and democratization (e.g., Moore 1966; Przeworski et al. 2000; Boix 2003; Treisman 2015; Miller 2021).[2] Among various explanations of regime transitions, elite divisions have been regarded as an important driving force that pushes for democratic reforms (O'Donnell and Schmitter1986; Przeworski 1991; Collier 1999). Elite divisions refer to the situation where internal elites provoke disagreement over leadership and policies, often expressed as within-regime dissent, organizations of factions within the ruling coalition, and ultimately defections to the opposition camp.

Despite the prevailing view that internal elite divisions are an important prerequisite of democratization, we know little about when such divisions result in democratic reforms. Once elite divisions erupt, autocrats may also attempt to isolate such threats through various methods such as purges and personnel reshuffling (Sudduth 2017; Hassan 2017), co-optation of defectors (Brownlee 2006), or by marginalizing dissenters through repression and pro-regime mass mobilization (Magaloni 2006; Simpser 2013). Indeed, according to the Varieties of Party Organization and Identity (V-Party) Data (Lührmann et al. 2020), of 138 country-election cases of major elite divisions from the authoritarian ruling party, only 40 percent experienced political liberalization thereafter. Why do some elite divisions initiate democratic reforms, while others not?

This paper focuses on one factor that scholars have yet adequately studied but is pertinent in explaining political liberalization in autocracies: *historical legacies of ruling parties*. When an internal division occurs, whether it gains momentum for democratic changes depends on the government's capacity to marginalize dissenters.

Autocratic ruling parties whose founding origins are in violent conflicts can effectively control the state and the military to eliminate alternative power centers from which the strong opposition emerges. These mechanisms also enhance their coercive capacities to fiercely repress opponents. Consequently, elite divisions fail to serve as strong ties between regime opponents and the masses to challenge the regime.

To test these theoretical expectations, we conduct cross-national statistical analyses on the relationship between internal divisions, authoritarian party origins, and political liberalization. Identifying the causal effects of elite divisions on democratic reforms is an elusive task. Determinants of elite divisions might correlate with those of political liberalization that do not go through elite divisions (i.e., omitted variables). Simultaneously, ruling elites are most likely to challenge the dictator

[2] By political liberalization and democratic reforms, we mean movements toward democracy, without necessarily reaching a high level of democracy, namely democratic transition and democratization (Treisman 2015, 928).

when the regime becomes weak and thus is likely to democratize (e.g., reverse causality). To mitigate these endogeneity concerns, we apply a panel matching analysis (Imai, Kim, and Wang 2021). This estimator enables us to compare the treatment and control groups in the short and long run, where the only treatment variable (presence of internal divisions) is different while matching other covariates that are likely to affect both elite divisions and political liberalization.

Our findings suggest that elite divisions are more likely to increase the prospect of political liberalization in general and such effects become galvanized under regimes without violent origins of ruling parties. However, the positive association between internal divisions and democratic reforms became statistically indistinguishable from zero when authoritarian parties emerged from violent conflicts at their inception. These results hold after matching other characteristics of dominant parties that have been seen as important in explaining regime change, such as strengths of elite constraints, personalization of parties, and grass-roots party organizations. Finally, we explicitly test additional observable implications. We find that ruling parties forged in violent origins are not hesitant to blatantly repress political opponents, thereby preempting the liberalizing effects of elite divisions.

This study makes several important contributions. First, this research contributes to the literature on democratization in general and elite defection in authoritarian regimes in particular (Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Reuter and Szakonyi 2019; del Río 2022). While presuming that elite divisions are an important first step for regime change, extant research has focused primarily on the causes of elite defections. In contrast, democratization studies have long noted the importance of elite divisions as a pertinent mechanism inducing regime change (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Casper and Taylor 1996). Surprisingly, however, we have little cross-national work investigating the link between internal divisions and democratization. Building upon these two strands of research, we offer a first cross-national quantitative investigation to explore the relationship between internal divisions and political liberalization in dictatorships.

Second, our research also speaks to the literature on dominant parties in autocracies (Huntington and Moore 1970; Geddes 1999; Reuter 2017; Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima 2019). The previous literature has focused on the importance of authoritarian ruling parties from institutional perspectives. Party-based regimes are resilient to regime change because credible power sharing in those regimes allows elites to be cohesive (Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012) and dense grass-roots networks of political parties enable dictators to mobilize high levels of mass support (Greene 2009; Reuter 2021). While acknowledging the importance of party institutions, this paper also builds upon an emerging research program emphasizing historical legacies (Levitsky and Way 2013; Miller 2020; Meng and Paine 2022). In doing so, we suggest that violent roots of regime parties serve as critical junctures from which autocrats cultivate political dominance of regime parties and sharpen overwhelming

coercive tools. This makes the regimes resilient to pressures of political liberalization even in the midst of internal divisions.

Elite Divisions and Political Liberalization

Divisions within the ruling coalition are one of the most prominent threats to authoritarian rule (Djuve, Knutsen, and Wig 2019; Svolik 2012). These elites are essential for regime survival as they have the resources and skills to assist the ruler in controlling mass unrest, winning elections, and administering territories.

When divisions within the ruling coalition prompt, the risk of regime breakdown increases. For example, the leader might face a coup, or repressive agents might refrain from stopping pro-democracy mobilizations from toppling the authoritarian government (Svolik 2012; Neptsad 2013). Among dictatorships ruled under the aegis of a ruling party, party divisions have also precluded regime change, especially after the Cold War (Levitsky and Way 2010; Schedler 2013; Morse 2019).[3] Divisions among party members have contributed to regime change by exposing the regime's vulnerabilitiesin the area of spoil distribution, candidate selection, appointments, electoral dynamics, or corrupted practices (Langston 2006; Brownlee 2006; Reuter and Szakonyi 2019; delRío 2022; Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Reuter and Gandhi 2011). These weaknesses have also acted as a signal that helps the opposition rally the masses and elites against the regime. On some occasions, ruling party elites have abandoned their affiliation and joined the opposition, depriving the leader of access to political machinery and support to implement the leader's policy agenda (Hale 2015). And, when running for elections is a possibility, defectors helped divide the regime's vote share and improve the opposition's electoral prospects, sometimes leading to winning elections (Howardand Roessler 2006; Greene 2007).

Beyond authoritarian breakdown, the transitology school of democratization studies suggested that internal divisions also initiate democratic reforms (e.g., Przeworski1991; Casper and Taylor 1996). As O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) put it starkly: "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself" (19). In many examples of the Third Wave democratic transitions, elite divisions within the government and military preceded democratic reforms. In the process, regime soft-liners aligned with the moderate opposition embarked on political reforms and competitive elections. Such elite-led initiatives pave the way for democratic transitions (O'Donnell and Schmitter1986). Moreover, even

[3] Some examples include the collapse of the Soviet Union (Solnick 1998), and electoral autocracies inplaces like Mexico and Taiwan in the late 1990s (Langston 2006), the Philippines in the early 1980s(Brownlee 2006, 185-187), Malaysia in 2018 (Boyle 2018), Nigeria in 2015 (Animashaun 2015), Kenya in 2002 , Ukraine in 2004 (Way 2003, 138), and Georgia in 2003 (Mitchell 2009, 35-37).

if mass mobilization led to the democratization process, subsequent elite splits ushered in successful transitions toward democracy (Bratton and van de Walle1997; Collier 1999; Teorell 2010).

Despite the scholarly consensus on the importance of elite divisions for political liberalization, we still lack systematic empirical analysis on whether internal divisions trigger democratic reforms. Arguably, this research agenda has relied upon case studies due to the absence of cross-national data on elite divisions (O'Donnell, Schmitter, andWhitehead 1986; Casper and Taylor 1996). The lack of fine-grained data has hindered researchers' ability to estimate the effect of elite divisions on democratization prospects and assess how far the findings travel. To the best of our knowledge, this research is a first attempt to cross-nationally investigate the impacts of elite divisions on political liberalization. By using a newly collected data set by the V-Party (Lührmann et al. 2020), we examine when elite divisions lead to democratic reforms.

All other things being equal, we argue that autocracies facing internal divisions are more likely to initiate democratic reforms compared to those that do not face such elite disruptions. The breakdown of elite coalitions might embolden regime soft-liners to mobilize resources (e.g., followers, money) and actors (e.g., regime insiders) to challenge the government. By doing so, the ruler is not only deprived of some tools togovern effectively, but also regime soft-liners and their elite supporters can use their resources to cement anti-regime alliances. For example, defections from the ruling party and business elites in Kenya in 2002 were instrumental in gathering opposition forces and raising a credible electoral challenger, the Rainbow Coalition, ending 64 years of authoritarian rule (Arriola 2012). On other occasions, anti-regime protests led by the opposition may emerge, pushing for democratic reforms in the face of elite divisions (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Bratton and van de Walle 1997).

Facing growing opposition, insecure autocrats may begin to think about embarking on political liberalization to minimize violent threats and increase the prospect of staying in power. By refraining from repression and electoral fraud as well as strengthening rule of law and independent election management bodies, autocrats thwart violent threats from political opponents and try to win less fraudulent elections to credibly signal their resilience (Magaloni 2010; Chernykh and Svolik 2015; Rozenas 2016; Higashijima and Washida 2021). Furthermore, resorting to coercive measures is counter-productive at this phase and invites escalation of violence: repression and electoral fraud serve as a focal point around which the emerging opposition successfully unites to challenge the regime (Escribà-Folch 2013; Slater 2010; Tucker 2007).

In this respect, our argument concurs with Miller (2021), who argues that violent events (e.g., coups and civil wars) precede democratic regime changes because such disruptions erode autocratic power and make the option of political liberalization lesser evil for autocrats. Beyond the major violent events that Miller (2021) focused on, this paper shed light on internal elite divisions, another

game changer altering the dictators' calculations and thus preparing the phase of democratic reforms and democratic transitions.

Hypothesis 1: Internal elite divisions are more likely to induce political liberalization

While we acknowledge the significance of elite divisions in autocracies, this paper also sheds light on an important puzzle on the relationship between elite divisions and political liberalization: Why do some elite divisions successfully lead to democratic reforms, while others not? To offer an answer to this question, this paper focuses on the historical origins of the dictator's party, which heavily influences the relationship between the military and government and, thus, the regimes' approach to opponents.

Autocratic Party Origins, Internal Divisions, and Political Liberalization

According to the literature on autocratic politics, authoritarian ruling parties are a strong predictor explaining regime stability (Huntington and Moore 1970; Geddes 1999; Brownlee 2006; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Wright and Escriba-Folch 2012). Researchers have mainly focused on two mechanisms through which autocratic ruling parties help autocracies stay in power. On the one hand, ruling party organizations extensively grip grass-roots supporters. By organizing dense networks of party organizations, dominant party-based regimes enable dictators to streamline patronage distribution and derive a wide range of mass support (Greene 2009; Higashijima 2022).On the other hand, dominant parties discipline ruling elites. By institutionalizing career promotion as well as collective decision-making within the party, dictators canmake credible power-sharing deals with ruling elites (Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012), which is conducive to deterring elite defection and coup attempts.

Nevertheless, ruling parties could also have unexpected consequences for authoritarian leaders. Parties might be designed to bolster authoritarian survival, but they can also become the means by which some members of the ruling coalition push for political liberalization. Capitalizing on the party's bland, ruling politicians can cultivate their own reputation and political experience in their strongholds. Since the dictator is not able to always monitor ruling party elites, potential opponents can incubate collective action and mobilize anti-regime elites and citizens against the dictator (Wright and Escriba-Folch 2012). Indeed, major divisions within the ruling coalition are often led by would-be opponents who organize the opposition first within the structure of the ruling party and later defect, joining the pro-democracy group. For example, leaders of opposition parties in Mexico 1988, Kenya

2002, and Malaysia 2003 organized elite and citizen support while they were members of the ruling party before defecting and creating opposition parties.[4] Even if defectors did not defeat the incumbent like in the cases of Mexico and Malaysia, defections served as defining moments for these parties, influencing their ruling strategy: repress or co-opt dissent.

When dictatorships face pressures to democratize, security agents' response to democratic aspirations is key to explaining its success or failure (Albrecht and Ohl 2016; Brooks 2019). If the military takes sides with democratizers, they are reticent about using the guns to block pro-democracy forces. As the cases of Egypt and Tunisiain the Arab Spring show, the military might disobey the autocrat's order to pull guns on the citizenry or even declare their support for protesting citizens (Bellin 2012; Brooks 2017). These forms of military dissent enable defected ruling elites and opposition figures to organize their actions and intensify pressures on the government, forcing it to guarantee political rights and civil liberties and hold competitive elections. In other words, military dissent lowers the costs of collective action, paving the way for opening up the political space. By contrast, if the military continues supporting the autocrat even in the presence of internal divisions and growing public dissent, he canuse coercive measures to repress these regime opponents and refuse to initiate political liberalization. The cases of Syria and Bahrain during the Arab Spring illustrate this point (Khaddour 2015; Brooks 2017).

How do authoritarian leaders ensure the loyalty of the military when the ruling coalition unravels? The literature on civil-military relations pointed to several determinants of military insubordination under regime crisis. For instance, high levels of military hierarchy or specialization facilitate principal-agent problems between the autocrat and military, so the autocrat can use security apparatus to quell mass protests (Albrecht and Ohl 2016; Dworscha 2020). When facing widespread elite divisions, the security apparatus might be hesitant in suppressing the threat to authoritarian rule because it might imply fighting a lost battle and endanger the much protected organizational cohesion of the military (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). As scholars pointed out, military leadership eschews ordering deployments that may be divisive among soldiers, and that could lead to group-level defections (Lutscher 2016, 356); (Pion-Berlin and Grisham. 2014, 233-35). During a transition, the military also may support and bargain with parties that are likely to do well in subsequent elections andprotect their organizational interests (Colomer 1991; Karl 1990; Albertus 2018).

Beyond these institutional and organizational mechanisms, the security apparatus is more likely to become a loyal agent of authoritarian leaders when it is organized along patrimonial lines via shared ethnicity or violent legacies with the ruling party. Such violent origins refer to conflicts like

[4]This is the case of Cuauhtemoc Cardenas's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in Mexico, Kibaki's National Alliance Party of Kenya and Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party, which formed the Rainbow Coalition in Kenya in 2002, Anwar's People's Justice Party (PKR) in Malaysia.

revolutions, independence movements, and insurgencies that have engendered the ruling party and the military. Under these circumstances, the leader comes to firmly control the state and security apparatus in the process of those conflicts. For example, the dictator appoints high-ranking officers from the violent struggle to top political positions and purges would-be opponents as well as fosters perceptions of "linked fate" among cadres, contributing to regime stability thereafter (Meng and Paine 2022; Huntington 1968; Lyons 2016; Levitsky and Way 2013).

When divisions within the ruling party occur, the parties' violent legacies take on two channels through which dictators can prevent internal divisions from developing into political liberalization. First, violent conflicts nurture strong coercive capacities and attitudes of autocrats. By utilizing state power and well-disciplined security forces that ruling parties forged in the process of violent conflicts, autocrats are not hesitant to crack on popular dissent through systematic repression. Moreover, since the military supports the autocrat, citizens will also refrain from expressing discontent with the regime or taking the streets, fearing likely possibilities of blatant state repression. Against this backdrop, internal divisions are unlikely to pave the way for democratic reforms as the military prevents them from aligning with the masses and gathering popular support. Thus, dissenters are highly uncertain about where anti-regime citizens are, how many they are, and whether others will join their attempt to challenge the leadership.

Second, the ruling party's violent origins encourage leaders to violently eliminate alternative power centers (namely, strong opposition presence) in the first place, which defectors can rely on for pursuing power. On the flip side, autocratic regimes that won political conflicts have advantages in achieving political dominance by creating the sole power center around the state (Levitsky and Way 2013). These mechanisms strengthen authoritarian ruling parties' monopolization of the political landscape in the post-conflict periods. As stated in the previous section, dissenters need to forge cooperative relationships with other elites within and outside the regime to successfully challenge the regime and initiate democratic reforms. As ruling parties with violent origins are less likely to face strong opposition power, internal elite divisions will fail in gathering a handful of strong elites whose resources and skills can credibly threaten the regimeand push for democratic reforms.

Hypothesis 2: When autocrats are armed with ruling parties emerging from violentstruggles, internal divisions are less likely to induce political liberalization

Due to these two mechanisms, autocratic parties which emerge from violent conflicts are better at preventing internal divisions from initiating the processes of political liberalization and democratic transitions. Our argument resonates with the critical junctures perspective in that we suggest historical roots of authoritarian political parties affect regime transitions (Smith 2007; Levitsky and Way 2013; Miller 2020) and the survival of autocratic successor parties after democratization

(Grzymala-Busse 2002; Riedl 2014; Miller 2021; Loxton 2021).

Similarly, our argument builds on Levitsky and Way (2013)'s theory on how features of ruling parties with revolutionary origins enhance regime survival but differs in one critical aspect. Levitsky and Way (2013) argue that ruling parties forged in violent conflicts combine patronage distribution with strong identities and solidarity ties, which bolster elite unity and leads to regime survival. Instead, we do not assume that elite unity is the mechanism that connects party's violent origins with regime survival. We suggest that such party origins shape the autocrat's incentives and capacities to repress dissent and alternative power centers.

Indeed, based on the V-Party data, Table 1 shows that 59 out of 129 widespread divisions occur in regimes whose ruling party is forged in violent origins – in contrast to other party origins. The category of violent origins is the most frequent one and represents 10% of election-year observations. Contrary to Levitsky and Way (2013) argument, ruling parties forged in violent conflicts are not exempt of significant widespread divisions. The next sections empirically examine how ruling party's features can break the chain between internal elite divisions and democratic reforms.

Table 1: Party origins and Elite divisions

		Types of Party Origins						
		No Ruling party	Dictator-created	Communist	Elite Coalition-Created	Violent Origins	Military-Created	Total
Elite Divisions	No elite division	0 (0)	29.9 (81)	25.4 (69)	16.6 (45)	21.4 (58)	6.6 (18)	49.3 (271)
	1	0.7 (11)	30.1 (44)	4.1 (6)	18.5 (27)	30.8 (45)	8.9 (13)	26.3 (146)
	2	4.1 (3)	15.2 (11)	15.2 (11)	23.6 (17)	41.7 (30)	0 (0)	13.1 (72)
	3	1.8 (1)	9.1 (5)	1.8 (1)	25.4 (14)	50.9 (28)	1.9 (6)	10 (55)
	Widespread defections	0 (0)	50 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	50 (1)	0 (0)	0.03 (2)
	Total	2.7 (15)	25.9 (142)	15.8 (87)	18.8 (103)	29.5 (162)	6.7 (37)	100 (549)

Note: the table shows the percentage of cases per column and the total number in brackets.

Cross-National Statistical Analysis

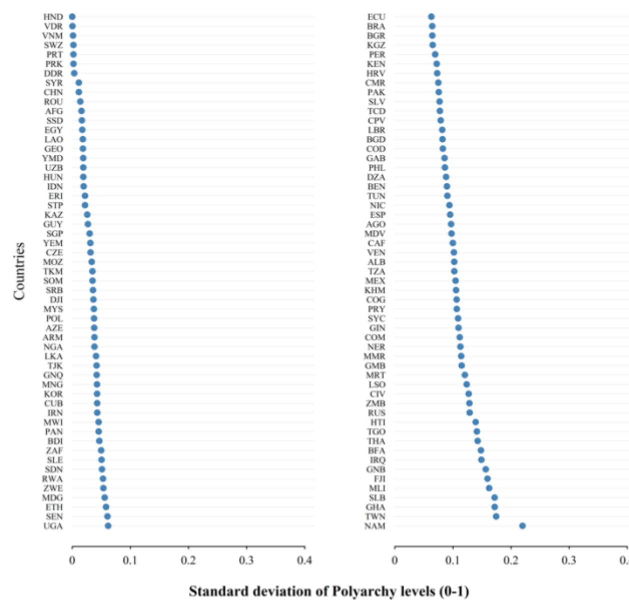
Outcome Variable

As we are interested in the relationship between internal divisions and incremental changes in political regimes (i.e., political liberalization rather than democratic transitions), we rely on the V-Dem's polyarchy index to measure continuous changes in political regimes (Coppedge et al. 2022b; 2021). The polyarchy index measures the extent to which countries achieve core values, formal rules, and procedures for the idealof electoral democracy by aggregating the following subcomponents: (1)

freedom of expression index (*v2x_freexp*), (2) freedom of association (*v2x_frassoc_thick*), (3) share of population with suffrage (*v2x_suffr*), (4) clean elections (*v2xel_frefair*), and (5) the presence of elected officials (*v2xel_elecoff*).

To delineate the sample of authoritarian regimes, we first follow V-Dem's *v2reginfo* indicator to establish the starting and ending dates of each political regime (Djuve, Knutsen, and Wig 2019, 6).[5] We then use the mode of V-Dem's "regime of the world scores" (*v2x_regime*) to classify each political regime into democracy and autocracy. In this indicator, values 0-1 denote authoritarian regimes, and 2-3 are defined as democracies. Therefore, political regimes whose mode value ranges from 0 to 1 are included in the sample as authoritarian regimes.

Figure 1: Variation in the Polyarchy levels across countries



Note: The effects of ln tenure are calculated based on Models 3 of Tables 3 and 4.

By adopting this procedure, we are able to capture authoritarian governments which initiate substantive democratic reforms, but autocratic rule still remains due tothe absence of government alternation via free and fair elections, as Mexico under thePartido Revolucionario Instituticional (PRI) rule illustrates this point. The regime was considered democratic in 1997 according to "regime of the world scores" (*v2x_regime*)as a result of implementing significant electoral reforms that levelled the playing field further. However, the PRI regime will not see its end until the party lost the 2000 presidential elections. Thus, 1999 is the last observation for the authoritarian PRI regime in our sample. Figure 1 depicts the standard deviation of polyarchy levels across countries, showing there is

[5] According to Djuve, Knutsen, and Wig (2019)'s definition, political regime is the formal and informal rules essential for selecting political leaders and maintaining them in power.

a substantial variation to explore.[6]

Explanatory Variables

We examine the effect of internal divisions on political liberalization (Hypothesis 1).We also hypothesized that the effect of internal divisions may differ depending upon historical origins of ruling parties (Hypothesis 2). A ruling party denotes a political party that is either the supreme ruling power or is the regime's significant vehicle of power and preeminent among all parties (Miller 2020, 762). This means that our sample of autocracies premises the presence of meaningful ruling parties in any autocratic regime types (e.g., military, monarchy, and personalist dictatorships) beyond party-based autocracies which focus on autocracies where the dominant party controls leadership selection and policies (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014).

To classify party origins, we use Miller (2020)'s party origin data, which we updated to cover the period of 1945-2020. Violent origins of ruling parties refer to parties originally organized either as revolutionary organizations or non-revolutionary but pro-independence organizations. When party origins fall into either of these two categories, we coded the variable "violent origin" as 1 and otherwise 0. This binary indicator has the advantage of keeping a precise focus on violent origins.

To measure the other variable of interest, internal divisions, we rely on the V-Party project data set which includes information on virtually all political parties represented in parliaments between 1970 and 2020 (Lührmann et al. 2020).[7] "Internal division" is a binary variable that we created by re-scaling the V-Party's internal cohesion index (*v2padisa_ord*). The value 1 means "divided elite coalition." It captures that"party elites display visible and major disagreements over party strategies" which ranges the values from 0 to 2 in *v2padisa_ord*. By contrast, the value 0 means "united elite coalition," denoting meaningless or no disagreements among internal elites. Since the V-party codes the presence of internal divisions prior to each election, we fill the values of non-election years by using those of the last election.

Research Design

We adopt a panel matching design that exploits within and across country variation over time to deal with endogeneity concerns (Imai, Kim, and Wang 2021). Internal divisions are not necessarily randomly assigned. For example, when a new autocratic regime emerges, its leader may employ co-optation and/or repression strategies against elite rivals, which may influence the calculation of ruling elites over internal divisions. In so doing, some ruling parties may be better able to maintain unified

[6] When we use alternative binary indicators like Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2008) to classify political regimes to democracy and autocracy, the results in Appendix Table C2 remain unchanged.

[7] Selecting the V-Party dataset implies losing country-year observations during the 1945-1969 period. However, we gain fine-grained data on important party characteristics to test our hypotheses and examine alternative explanations.

coalitions than others (Brownlee 2006). Similarly, elite divisions might be endogenous to expectations about the incumbents' ability to survive conflicts within the regime and electoral battles. This may also serve as a factor confounding the causal relationship between elite divisions and political liberalization. The quantity of interest is the average treatment effect of internal divisions on democratization among the treated (ATT). The standard model is as follows:

$$\delta(F, L) = \mathrm{E}\{Y_{i,t+F}(X_{it} = 1, X_{i,t-1} = 0, \{X_{i,t-l}\}_{l=2}^{L}) - Y_{i,t+F}(X_{it} = 0, X_{i,t-1} = 0, \{X_{i,t-l}\}_{l=2}^{L}) | X_{it} = 1, X_{i,t-1} = 0\}$$

where indexes each country and indexes each year. F is the number of leads, representing the levels of democracy at F time periods after an elite division occurred (the treatment). We estimate the short- and long-term effects of elite divisions on political liberalization in authoritarian regimes. L is the number of lags and helps evaluate whether past treatment status could be a confounder affecting the outcome and treatment. Treated observations are the ones that experience internal divisions, that is, $X_{i,t-1} = 0$ and $X_{i,t} = 1$. This quantity represents the average causal effect of internal divisions on political liberalization.

$Y_{i,t+F}(X_{i,t} = 1, X_{i,t-1} = 0, \{X_{i,t-l}\}_{l=2}^{L})$ is the potential outcome among treated units, while $Y_{i,t+F}(X_{i,t} = 0, X_{i,t-1} = 0, \{X_{i,t-l}\}_{l=2}^{L})$ represents the rest of the treatment history. Symbol (4,4) is the average causal effect of internal divisions on democratization on four time periods after the treatment, while assuming that the potential outcome only depends on the treatment history up to four time periods back.

Our main analyses specify combinations of F and L up to four prospective time units each, since most regimes under analysis hold national elections within a four-year window. Greater values of L improve the credibility of estimates as the average changes in political liberalization are more likely to be equal across treatment and control groups in the absence of the treatment. To satisfy this "parallel trends" assumption, we create a more comparable control group based on covariate balancing propensity scores (Imaiand Ratkovic 2013).[8]

Using a weighting scheme on "united elite coalition" constructs a control group that is a more appropriate comparison to "elite divided coalition" (the treatment), with similar trends in previous democracy levels and a set of other covariates described in the next section. In particular, we

[8] Covariate balancing propensity score is an alternative to standard matching techniques for pre-processing data in observational studies with a binary treatment. The preprocessing step involves re-weighting units to improve the covariate balance between the treatment and control groups. It allows the weights to vary smoothly across units instead of discarding unmatched units. These features facilitate then sorting out optimization problems related to balance conditions.

specify a set of moment conditions that are constant across the treatment and control groups. The algorithm searches for weights for different observations in the control group, achieving full balance across covariates between the treatment and control groups L time units (i.e., pre-treatment). This procedure guarantees that ruling coalitions under the treatment and control group will have identical trends in the pre-treatment period and will be balanced on several other important covariates.

In using this modeling strategy, the remaining threats to estimating the effect of internal divisions on democratization would be factors that change over the analysis period, co-vary with internal divisions, and is causally prior to the time in which the treatment takes place. One possible candidate emerges in the form of spillover effects. Regime instability in proximate countries might open opportunities for disgruntled elites to push the government and change its ruling strategy. Such neighboring effectsmight attract portions of internal elites to express disagreements and challenge the extant regime to achieve their political goals thereafter. The other candidate is associated with bandwagon processes: as more elites defect, the opportunity costs of joining the opposition become lower (Del Río 2020). For instance, the impact of the first defector on the defection of other ruling elites is smaller than those of later defectors.

We account for these threats in three ways. We include year and regional dummies to account for time-related (e.g., economic shocks, fall of the Soviet Union) and region-specific confounding factors. Second, we consider potential regime fragility by including an indicator that captures time since the last regime change in addition to its square and cubed terms. Young regimes are often more fragile, and this fragility is a nonlinear function of regime duration (Carter and Signorino 2010; Svolik 2012). Finally, we allow that the treatment status can go back to the control condition before the outcome is measured (treatment reversal). Our estimates thus relax the assumption of stable treatment status.

Covariates for the matching procedure

Treatment and control groups are balanced across a set of political and economic variables a year before the treatment takes place. In addition to party origins, how autocratic parties gained power is likely to affect the manners in which autocrats deal with internal divisions and the prospect of regime change. We thus add a categorical variable measuring ruling party's road to power. We use a re-coded and updated version of Miller (2020)'s variable, where we distinguish between "dictator supported," "communist-imposed" "coup" armed takeover of the state ("revolution"), "military-imposed," "elections" and "others."[9]

[9] The other category includes a variety of a few cases where the ruling party was foreign-imposed or other hybrid forms of the five categories presented above. Descriptive analyses in Appendix Table A1 shows a significant variation between party origins and party's road to power in line with Miller (2020)'s findings.

To consider other party characteristics that are seen as important by the existing literature on regime change, we include the ruling party's levels of personalization (*v2paind_gov*) as well as the strength of mass-based organizations, which includes the average of ruling party's connections with social organizations (*v2_pasoctie*) and the presence of local party activists and personnel (*v2_paactcom*). These indicators are based on the V-Party dataset (Coppedge et al. 2022a).

Authoritarian regime types are also another relevant factor. To capture this, we include V-Dem's five indices of executive power sources. Each index is measured by using an interval scale ranging between 0 and 1: the extent to which the appointment and dismissal of the chief executive are based on hereditary succession, military force, the ruling party, direct elections, and legislatures (Teorell and Lindberg 2019).

We also account for contextual factors. We include a dummy variable to account for the year in which national elections take place. We match for the log of GDP per capita and a long-term economic downturn (5 years moving average of economic growth) using Fariss et al. (2021)' dataset. Finally, we include the V-Dem's civil liberties index (*v2x_civilb)*[10] to capture general levels of repression in a given country and an indicatorof democratization levels in proximate countries which help mitigate problems associated with the spillover effects as mentioned above.[11] All covariates for the matching procedure precede the treatment as they are lagged by one year.

Results

Table 2 and Figure 2 show supporting evidence for Hypothesis 1 through panel matching analyses. The results show that internal divisions are more likely to increase levelsof electoral democracies over three years after the treatment took place. Indeed, levels of electoral democracy increase by 0.016 when elite divisions occur. In the following three years, such an increase in levels of political liberalization reaches and average of 0.029 points. This effect size is substantial, given that the standard deviation of the polyarchy index is 0.07.

Figure 3 presents the results for Hypothesis 2, which states that the effects of internal divisions on political liberalization are likely to be suppressed when the ruling party originates in violent conflicts. The upper panel shows the effect of internal divisions on political liberalization in absence of ruling

[10] This measure is substantively and conceptually not overlapped by our outcome variable measure of electoral democracy. The civil liberty index measure is made by aggregating (1) private dimensions of civil liberties (property rights, freedom from forced labor, freedom of religion, religious organization repression, freedom of foreign movement, and freedom of domestic movement and (2) political dimensions of civil liberties (government censorship effort to media, harassment of journalists, media self-censorship, freedom of discussion, freedom of academic and cultural expression,party ban, barriers to parties, opposition parties autonomy, civil society entry and exit, and civil society repression. Removing this variable from the models does not affect our main results. Results can be found in Appendix D.2

[11] We use a spatial weighting matrix W where $W_{ij,}$ is the normalized geographic proximity weight so that $\sum W_{I,J} = W$ to 1.

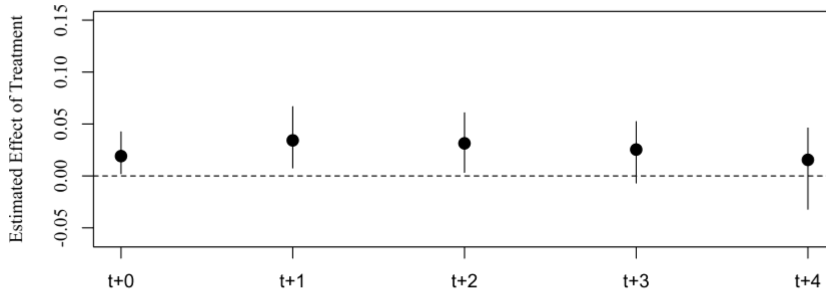
parties with violent origins. The effect size is twice as high as when these divisions occur in authoritarian regimes in general.

Table 2: Panel Matching Results

	Four years lag				Two years lag			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.016+	0.019*	0.034*	-0.0001	0.15*	0.17*	0.025*	0.001
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.003)
T_{+1}	0.031*	0.034*	0.062**	-0.001	0.038**	0.038**	0.059**	0.004
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.02)	(0.008)
T_{+2}	0.03*	0.031*	0.053*	0.004	0.043**	0.041**	0.062**	0.008
	(0.015)	(0.01)	(0.022)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.01)
T_{+3}	0.026+	0.025+	0.042+	0.005				
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.024)	(0.017)				
T_{+4}	0.019	0.016	0.023	0.006				
	(0.018)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)				

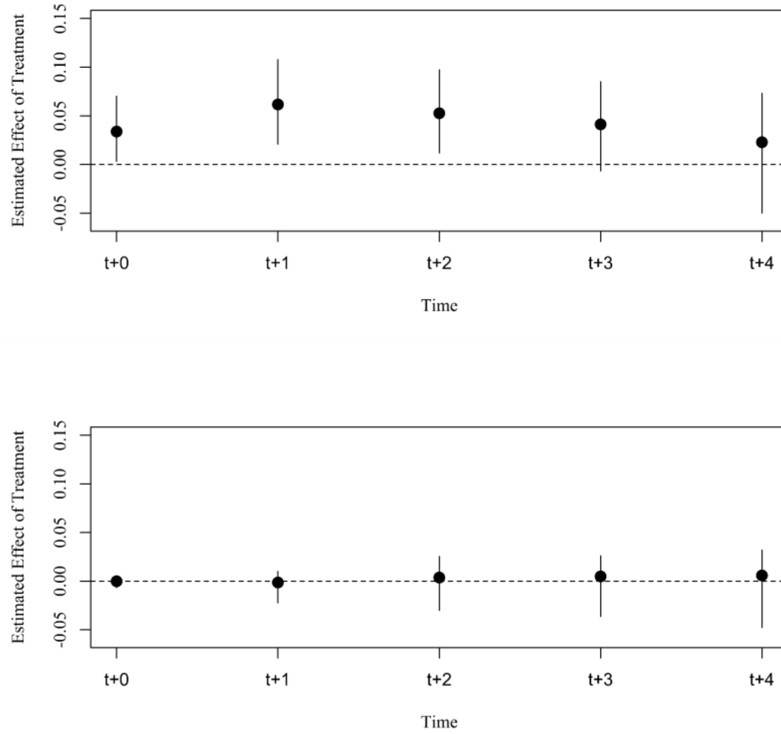
Note: None means that no refinement method for matching was used; CPBS refers to covariate balanced propensity scores for weighting. Excluding time trends leads to similar results. The size match is five observations. Appendix C.2 shows the average treatment effect among the control groups.

Figure 2: Internal Divisions and Political Liberalization



Note: The bars are the 95% Confidence interval.

Figure 3: Internal Divisions, Party Origins, and Political Liberalization



Note: The bars are the 95% Confidence interval.

By contrast, the lower panel shows that the effect size of internal divisions becomes statistically indistinguishable from zero when ruling parties have their origins in violent conflicts. Indeed, when ruling parties were forged from violent conflicts, internal divisions do not lead to political liberalization in both the short and long terms.[12] These results are in support of the Hypothesis 2.

Exploring Additional Implications

Violent Origins and Repressive Agents

We argued that internal divisions do not necessarily result in political liberalization when the ruling party emerged from violent struggles. As the mechanisms behind the relationship between these variables, we assumed that parties forged in violent origins are better able to control the state and security apparatus. Under these conditions, leaders have strong incentives to repress dissent and alternative power centers even when elite divisions erupt. To empirically test this implication, we test the effects of party origins on physical integrity and appointment of military officers to cabinet positions. We expect that autocracies with the ruling party's violent origins are more likely to increase the

[12] These results remain robust to different matching procedures (none and cpbs) and models as well as L specifications. See Appendix Table C1 for this sensitivity analysis.

levels of state repression and make military appointments, compared to those without violent party origins.

To test this expectation, we introduce two outcome variables. First, we use V-Dem's physical violence index (*v2x_clphy*). This measure operationalizes to what extent the government resorts to high-intensity state repression by aggregating two variables, freedom from torture (*v2cltort*) and freedom from political killings (*v2clkill*) through a Bayesian Item Response Theory technique. Higher values indicate that freedom fromstate repression is guaranteed. As the second outcome variable, we measure whether the leader appoints high-ranking military officers to important cabinet positions. When the military occupy these positions, the leader underpins the institutional links between the executive branch and the military (Meng and Paine 2022). We rely on Nyrup and Bramwell (2020)'s WhoGov data set to create a dummy variable where 1 means that high-ranking military officers occupy ministries categorized as "Government, Interiorand Home Affairs" or "Defense, Military and National Security."

The key explanatory variable is the party's violent origin dummy. As the party origins variable does not rarely change over time, we are unable to apply the panel matching method. Therefore, as an alternative estimator, we use panel linear models with standard errors clustered by regimes to consider error correlation within regimes. As control variables, we include the matched covariates introduced in the panel matching models presented in the previous section. All the variables are lagged by one year.[13]

Table 3 presents the results. Party violent origins worsen physical integrity and thus increase the use of state repression against opposition groups by 0.1. Although high-ranking military officers in general are not necessarily appointed as ministers (the first column), they tend to be more appointed as the cabinet positions when they are also affiliated with the ruling party (the second column vs third column). The results suggest that the military and autocrat are tightly linked through the party and cabinet.

[13] Country-fixed effects are employed as the standard to control for unit-level heterogeneity. However, this strategy is unfeasible with our data. The ruling party's violent origin varies little over time within a country. Among 110 countries who have experienced authoritarianism, 16 countries have multiple party origins. Thus, by applying country-fixed effects, the effect of party origins on the dependent variables will be biased downward. So, to control for unit-level heterogeneity, our models condition the effect of violent origin on their respective country means, as a substitute for country fixed effects (Wooldridge 2002). Other authors also use the same technique to explain regime breakdown (Escribà-Folch and Wright 2015; Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima 2019).

Table 3: Direct Effects of Violent Party Origins

	Military in the cabinet	Party military in the cabinet	No party military in the cabinet	Physical integrity
Violent origins	-0.004	0.09*	-0.04	-0.09**
	(0.05)	(0.046)	(0.032)	(0.01)
Constant	0.54**	0.40**	0.16*	0.012
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.03)
Control variables	x	x	x	x
Time trends	x	x	x	x
Region dummies	x	x	x	x
year fixed effects	x	x	x	x
Unit means	x	x	x	x
N. Observations	2199	2171	2171	2121
Countries	97	97	97	97
AIC	2771.9	2352.7	790.17	-3139.3
Loglikelihood	-1306.9	-1252.2	-316.08	1648
	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)

Note: +p< 0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regime level. Excluding time trends leads to similar results. OLS estimators lead to the same results. Appendix E.1 shows the resultsof testing alternative hypotheses regarding the direct effects of violent party origins.

Violent Origins Affects How Leaders React to Internal Divisions

We now establish evidence for the second implication of our theory: in the presence of internal divisions, autocrats with violent party origins should increase levels of repression and marginalize opposition groups. In other words, we should expect that ruling parties armed with violent origins respond to elite divisions by strengthening the control of political environment and levels of repression. By doing so, the regime further suppresses alternative power centers, while citizens and elites become reluctant to challenge the regime.

To test this implication, we again employ the panel matching estimator and measure barriers to parties,[14] opposition parties' autonomy, and physical violence index as outcome variables. The physical violence index proxies for levels of blatant repression, while the remaining dependent variables capture the opposition's ability to contest power based on the V-Dem dataset (2021). Table 4 shows panel matching results, in which we use violent party origins as a moderator. Since the internal divisions variable is time-variant and the outcome variables are continuous, we apply the same panel matching method used for the main analysis.

The upper and middle panel of Figure 4 plots the effect of elite divisions on manipulating the playing field to undermine the opposition. Results suggests that after major elite divisions take place the government progressively increases barriers to forming parties (upper right panel) average and reduces opposition parties' autonomy (middle riight panel), compared to autocratic regimes without

[14] Barriers to parties operationalizes as the average of barriers to political parties (v2psbars) and partybans (v2psparban)

violent party origins (upper and middle right panels). This suggests that requirements for membership, financial deposits, and harassing alternative political centers increase in accordance with internal divisions, but also the ruling party deprives opposition parties of financial and political autonomy after the events. Manipulating the playing field is indeed a major change inthe ruling party strategy. In Appendix Table D1 we show the direct effect of party origins on barriers to parties and opposition autonomy, following the empirical strategy in the above section. Results suggests that parties with violent origins tend to impose fewer barriers to the political competition than regimes armed with other party origins. This suggests that the presence of widespread internal divisions changed drastically the government's ruling strategy to prevent dissenters to become relevant electoral challengers.

Table 4: Indirect Effects of Violent Party Origins

	Opposition autonomy				Barriers to parties			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.14	0.15	0.25	-0.01	0.16	0.16	0.30	-0.022
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.22)	(0.03)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.03)
T_{+1}	0.09	0.08	0.18	-0.04	0.19	0.18	0.40	-0.12**
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.09)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.33)	(0.10)
T_{+2}	0.001	-0.02	0.06	-0.12*	0.18	0.16	0.40	-0.15**
	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.27)	(0.12)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.37)	(0.14)
T_{+3}	-0.12	-0.15	-0.15	-0.15**	0.18	0.15	0.40	-0.18**
	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.41)	(0.12)	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.40)	(0.16)
T_{+4}	-0.06	-0.14	-0.046	-0.27**	0.20	0.12	0.34	-0.17
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.6)	(0.18)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.50)	(0.22)
	Physical Integrity				Military appointments			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.02	0.025	0.05*	-0.01	0.09+	0.10*	0.16	0.03*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.034)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.024)
T_{+1}	0.06+	0.06*	0.12*	-0.015+	0.14*	0.15*	0.24*	0.03*
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.014)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.02)
T_{+2}	0.05	0.06+	0.12*	-0.02*	0.14*	0.14*	0.16	0.12
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.016)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.10)
T_{+3}	0.05+	0.05	0.1+	-0.02**	0.15	0.15	0.18	0.12
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.016)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.16)	(0.11)
T_{+4}	0.03	0.03	0.072	-0.02**	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.13*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.11)
	Partisan military appointments				No-partisan military appointments			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.09	0.11*	0.16	0.04*	0.001	-0.000	0.003	-0.005
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.02)
T_{+1}	0.09	0.10	0.16	0.03	0.009	0.001	0.002	-0.001
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.16)	(0.4)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.12)
T_{+2}	0.16	0.17	0.13	0.23	-0.03	-0.04	0.013	-0.11
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.12)
T_{+3}	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.26*	-0.03	-0.05	0.01	-0.14
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.17)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.13)
T_{+4}	0.10	0.10	-0.007	0.27*	-0.023	-0.04	0.03	-0.12
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.21)	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.13)

Note: +p< 0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01. None means that no refinement method for matching was used; CPBS refers to covariate balanced propensity scores for weighting.

Similarly, Figure 4 shows that in regimes whose ruling party is armed with violent origins, elite divisions tend to generate a wave of repression over the following four years, undermining the prospect of political liberalization (lower left panel panel). By contrast, the government responds to elite divisions by respecting physical integrity ofcitizens when the ruling party does not possess violent origins (lower right panel panel). Indeed, authoritarian leaders seem less hesitant to resort on repressive measures as they ensure the support of repressive agents first. In particular, in Table 4 the results suggests that leaders armed with violent party origins are more likely to appoint high-ranking military officers to ministerial positions that control the repressive agents when elite divisions erupt. This effect seems to be driven mainly by the appointment of military officers affiliated with the ruling party.

The overall results show that violent origins shape how leaders respond to internal divisions. Even if internal divisions happen, the government reacts to the threat by repressing citizens and opposition parties as well as manipulating the playing field.

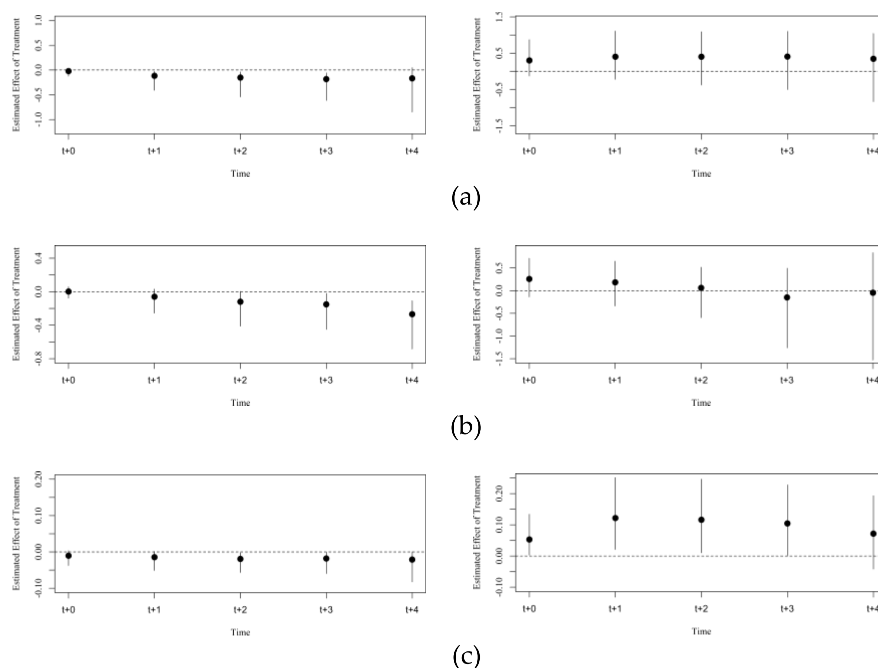
Alternative explanations

The results thus far indicate that historical origins of political parties are closely related to the levels of political liberalization mainly through the mechanisms of capturing the military and weakening alternative power centers. That said, scholars view differently on how party origins matter. This is because scholars assume different mechanisms linking between party origins and regime change. With this in mind, we test a battery of alternative mechanisms.

One possible alternative explanation is that violent struggles may produce a generation of charismatic leaders. Their unquestionable authority then is conducive to disciplining internal elites, directing particular policy guidelines, and streamlining the distribution of state resources in subsequent authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2013). Therefore, parties with violent origins serve as the leaders' governing tool and thus helps them maintain autocratic rule. To test this expectation, we conduct additional analysis in Table 5, wherein we interact violent origins with the party personalization index (from V-Party) to explain political liberalization. The results show that party personalization and its interaction with violent origins are not associated with levels of political liberalization in statistically significant ways.[15]

[15]To run the panel matching model, personalization index was re-coded as a dummy variable. The values 0 to 2 from the ordinal scale were coded as 1, denoting that most of the party strategies satisfy the leader's will. The remaining values (3 and 4) are coded as 0.

Figure 4: Effects on Barriers to Parties (a), Opposition Autonomy (b), and Physical Integrity (c).



(a)

(b)

(c)

Note: The dots are point estimates and the bars are the 95% confidence intervals. The right panels show the case of ruling parties without violent origins whereas the left panels show the case of rulingparties with violent origins. The upper panels stand for effects of internal divisions on physical integrity. The middle panel stands for effects of internal divisions on removing barriers to parties. Thelower panel stands for effects of internal divisions on opposition autonomy.

Another possible mechanism is that violent origins may help the dictator complicate anti-government collective actions at the citizen level by constructing dense party networks. Violent struggles generate a polarized society around which the ruler can easily capitalize upon and build a stable mass support base (Levitsky and Way 2013). Through a well-developed mass-based organization, the autocrat is able to mobilize popular support to show his electoral muscle or respond to political threats. Along this line, we conduct two empirical tests. We first expect that well-developed mass-based organizations spur authoritarianism when the leader relies on ruling parties armed with violent origins. Second, violent origins should also increase the number of pro-authoritarian mobilization.

To test these implications for this alternative mechanism, we rely on a model specification identical to the main analysis, but here we interact mass-based organizations with violent origins to predict political liberalization. Panel matching analysis in Appendix Table 5 indicates that autocracies with well-developed mass organizations arenot associated with political liberalization. Such organizations do not decrease political liberalization levels when the regime relies on the ruling party rooted in violent origins. This suggests that cross-national data analysis does not support the explanation of mass-

based organizations.[16]

Table 5: Alternative Mechanisms

	Personalization				Mass-based organizations			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.003	0.002	0.008	-0.013
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.015)	(0.02)
T_{+1}	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.00	-0.002	0.005	-0.018
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.025)
T_{+2}	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.001	0.002	0.012	-0.015
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.018)	(0.02)
T_{+3}	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.009	0.011	0.018	-0.001
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.001)	(0.011)	(0.14)	(0.02)
T_{+4}	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.24	0.006	0.012	0.012	0.008
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.015)	(0.03)

	Pro-autocracy mobilizations				Coups attempt			
Time	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	-0.05	-0.04	-0.11	0.06	0.14	0.09	0.22	-0.11
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.12)
T_{+1}	-0.13	-0.12	-0.27	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.15	-0.006
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.17)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.011)
T_{+2}	-0.13	-0.12	-0.27	0.08	0.14	0.13	0.29	-0.09
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.18)
T_{+3}	-0.13	-0.13	-0.29	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.18	-0.02
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.026)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.19)	(0.03)
T_{+4}	-0.06	-0.06	-0.17	0.09	0.14	0.16	0.29	-0.2
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.29)	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.22)	(0.03)

Note: $+p < 0.1$; $*p<0.05$; $**p<0.01$. None means that no refinement method for matching was used; CPBS refers to covariate balanced propensity scores for weighting.

Panel regression models in Table D1 also show that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, ruling parties with violent origins tend to be negatively associated with pro-autocracy mobilization, suggesting that those autocracies may encourage citizens to take distance from politics by demobilizing pro-regime mass activities. In this line, in Table 5 panel matching analyses[17] indicate that internal divisions do change the relationship of ruling parties armed with violent origins with pro-autocracy movements, thereby the government keeps citizens demobilized.

Internal divisions may invite coups by ruling elites, which may lead to political liberalization thereafter (Miller 2021, e.g.,). Table 5 also discard the alternative hypothesis of elite divisions as a focal point around which the armed forces mobilize to depose the ruler via coups. We use Powell and Thyne (2011)'s data to measure the presence of coup attempts as the outcome variables. The findings suggest that the effect is not distinguishable from 0. Moreover, Panel regression models in Appendix Table D1 shows that the direct effects of party origins are statistically non-significant. The

[16] To run the panel matching model, mass-based organization index was re-coded as a dummy variable. The values 0 to 1 from the ordinal scale were coded as 1, denoting that the ruling party has strong and widespread mass-based organizations. The remaining values (2 to 4) are coded as 0. This association is not significant. Moreover, since ruling parties with violent origins do not tend to mobilize citizens in defense of autocracy, we are skeptical that violent origins help the dictator solvecollective action problems at the citizen level.

[17] To conduct the panel matching analysis, we include the same right-hand covariates employed in the main analysis.

results suggest that coups are not a variable linking internal divisions and political liberalization.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the conditions under which internal elite divisions contribute to political liberalization. In many cases of political liberalization and democratic transitions, internal divisions are an important first step to initiate democratic reforms. Whether elite divisions lead to political liberalization, however, depends upon to what extent autocrats and their military have an incentive to refrain from using repressive measures to quell growing public dissent. As a factor encouraging the autocrats' use of state repression to respond to elite divisions, this paper has focused on historical origins of ruling parties. It suggested that ruling parties that emerged from violent struggles like revolutions and independent movements are more likely to use repressive measures because they keep the military in line and incur fewer costs of resorting to violence due to weak alternative power centers nurtured during and after the phases of violent conflict. Through these mechanisms, internal elite divisions do not necessarily lead to political liberalization under regime parties with violent origins. The panel matching estimator has demonstrated that internal divisions are more likely to lead to political liberalizations but such effects diminish in the presence of ruling parties with violent origins. Our additional analyses also suggested that this is because those regimes tend to blatantly use repression and have the weak opposition on which defected elites could rely on.

In explaining possible causal links between internal divisions, party origins, and liberalization, our argument centers on how ruling parties' violent origins help autocrats produce the weak opposition and hold tight grip on the military, thereby lowering the cost of repression. Meanwhile, our empirical analyses also showed that a couple of possible alternative explanations suggested by the previous research may need rethink: We could not find supporting evidence that ruling parties' violent origins deter political liberalization via the channels of unquestionable authority and strong mass-based organizations.

References

Albertus, Michael, Menaldo Victor. 2018. *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Albrecht, Holger, and Dorothy Ohl. 2016. "Exit, Resistance, Loyalty: Military Behavior during Unrest in Authoritarian Regimes." *Perspectives on Politics* 14(1): 38–52.

Animashaun, M. A. 2015. "Nigeria 2015 Presidential elections: the votes, the fears and the regime change." *Journal of Peace Research* 14(2): 186–211.

Arriola, L. R. 2012. *Multiethnic coalitions in Africa: business financing of opposition election campaigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44(2): 127–149.

Bodea, Cristina, Carolina Garriga, and Masaaki Higashijima. 2019. "Economic Institutions and Autocratic Breakdown: Monetary Constraints and Fiscal Spending in Dominant-Party Regimes." *The Journal of Politics* 81(2): 601–615.

Boix, Carles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Boix, Carles, Michael K Miller, and Sebastian Rosato. 2008. "A Complete Data Set of Political Regimes, 1800-2007." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(12): 1523–54.

Boyle, D. 2018. "Defections spark acrimony in malaysian government." Voanews.

Bratton, Michael, and Nicholas van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brooks, Risa A. 2017. "Military Defection and the Arab Spring.".

Brooks, Risa A. 2019. "Integrating the Civil–Military Relations Subfield." *Annual Reviewof Political Science* 22(1): 379–398.

Brownlee, Jason. 2006. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, David B., and Curtis S. Signorino. 2010. "Back to the Future: Modeling TimeDependence in Binary Data." *Political Analysis* 18(3): 271–292.

Casper, Gretchen, and Michelle Taylor. 1996. *Negotiating Democracy: Transitions from Authoritarian Rule.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Chernykh, Svitlana, and Milan W. Svolik. 2015. "Third-Party Actors and the Success of Democracy: How Electoral Commissions, Courts, and Observers Shape Incentives for Electoral Manipulation and Post-

Election Protests." *The Journal of Politics* 77(2): 407–420.

Collier, Ruth Berins. 1999. *Paths toward Democracy: The Working Class and Elites inWestern Europe and South America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Colomer, Josep. 1991. "Transitions by Agreement: Modeling the Spanish Way." *American Political Science Review* 85(1): 1283–302.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Nazifa Alizada, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Joshua Krusell, Anna Lührmann, Seraphine F. Maerz, Kyle L. Marquardt,Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Juraj Medzihorsky, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Josefine Pernes, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundström, Ei tan Tzelgov, Yi ting Wang, Tore Wig,Steven Wilson, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2021. ''V-Dem [Country–Year/Country–Date] Datasetv11.1". Varieties of Democracy Project.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Seraphine F. Maerz, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundtröm, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2021." V-Dem Codebook v11.1" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

Del Río, Adrián. 2020. *Should I stay or should I go? On the determinants of elite defections in electoral autocracies*. Florence: Thesis Manuscript, European University Institute.

Del Río, Adrián. 2022. "Strategic Uncertainty and Elite Defections in Electoral Autocracies: A Cross-National Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies*.

Djuve, Vilde Lunnan, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Tore Wig. 2019. "Patterns of RegimeBreakdown Since the French Revolution." *Comparative Political Studies* 53(6): 923–58.

Dworscha, C. 2020. "Jumping on the Bandwagon: Differentiation and Security Defection during Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(7-8): 1335–1357.

Escribà-Folch, Abel. 2013. "Repression, Political Threats, and Survival under Autocracy." *International Political Science Review* 34(5): 543–60.

Escribà-Folch, Abel, and Joseph Wright. 2015. *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fariss, C., T. Anders, J. Markowitz, and M Barnum. 2021. "Replication Data for: NewEstimates of Over 500 Years of Historic GDP and Population Data." 14.

Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of*

Political Science 2: 115–144.

Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2014. "Autocratic Breakdown andRegime Transitions: A New Data Set." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2): 313–331.

Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greene, Kenneth. 2007. *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Greene, Kenneth. 2009. "The Political Economy of Authoritarian Single-Party Dominance." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(7): 807–834.

Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. 2021. "National Material Capabilities (NMC) Data Version 6.0." *Correlates of War Project* p. 243–263.

Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2002. *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Haggard, Stephan, and Robert Kaufman. 1995. *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Hale, Henry. 2015. *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hassan, Mai. 2017. "The Strategic Shuffle: Ethnic Geography, the Internal Security Apparatus, and Elections in Kenya." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 382– 395.

Higashijima, Masaaki. 2022. *The Dictator's Dilemma at the Ballot Box: Electoral Manipulation, Economic Maneuvering, and Political Order in Autocracies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Higashijima, Masaaki, and Hidekuni Washida. 2021. "Disguising as Democrats: The Origins and Outcomes of Partially Independent EMBs in Autocracies." Paper presented at the Pacific International Politics Conference Online Seminar Series.

Howard, Marc, and Philip Roessler. 2006. "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Comparative Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 365–381.

Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Havern: Yale University Press.

Huntington, Samuel, and Clement Moore. 1970. *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society:The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*. Basic Books.

Imai, Kosuke, and Marc Ratkovic. 2013. "Covariate balancing propensity score." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 76(10): 243–263.

Imai, Kosuke, In Song Kim, and Erik H. Wang. 2021. "Matching Methods for Causal Inference with Time-Series Cross-Sectional Data." *American Journal of Political Science*n/a(n/a).

Karl, Terry L. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 23(2): 1–21.

Khaddour, Kheder. 2015. "Assad's Officer Ghetto: Why the Syrian Army Remains Loyal.".

Langston, Joy. 2006. "Elite Ruptures: When Do Ruling Parties Split?" In *Electoral authoritarianism: The dynamics of unfree competition*, ed. Andreas Schedler. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2013. "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 23(3): 5–17.

Loxton, James. 2021. *Conservative Party-Building in Latin America: Authoritarian Inheritance and Counterrevolutionary Struggle*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lutscher, Philipp M. 2016. "The More Fragmented the Better? The Impact of Armed Forces Structure on Defection during Nonviolent Popular Uprisings." *International Interactions* 42(2): 350–75.

Lyons, Terrence. 2016. "From victorious rebels to strong authoritarian parties: prospects for post-war democratization." *Democratization* 23(6): 1026–1041.

Lührmann, Anna, Nils Dupont, Masaaki Higashijima, Yaman Berker Kavasoglu, Kyle L. Marquardt, Michael Bernhard, Holger Doering, Allen Hicken, Melis Laebens, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jurai Medzihorsky, Anja Neundorf, Ora John Reuter, Saskia Ruth-Lovell, Keith R. Weghorst, Nina Wiesehomeier, Joseph Wright, Nazifa Alizada, PaulBederke, Lisa Gastaldi, Sandra Grahn, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Johannes von Roemer, Steven Wilson, Daniel Pemstein, and Seim Brigitte. 2020. "Codebook Varieties of Party Identity and Organisation (V-Party) V1." *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)Project*.

Magaloni, Beatritz. 2008. "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 715–741.

Magaloni, Beatritz, and Ruth Kricheli. 2010. "Political Order and One-Party Rule." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 123–143.

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise inMexico*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2010. "The Game of Electoral Fraud and the Ousting of Authoritarian Rule." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(3): 751–765.

Meng, Anne, and Jack Paine. 2022. "Power Sharing and Authoritarian Stability: HowRebel Regimes Solve the Guardianship Dilemma." *American Political Science Review*0(0): 1–18.

Miller, Michael. 2020. "The Autocratic Ruling Parties Dataset: Origins, Durability, andDeath." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(4): 756–782.

Miller, Michael K. 2021. "Don't Call It a Comeback: Autocratic Ruling Parties After Democratization." *British Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 559–583.

Mitchell, L. A. 2009. *Uncertain democracy: US foreign policy and Georgia's rose revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the making of the Modern World*. Beacon Press.

Morse, Yonatan. 2019. *How Autocrats Compete: Parties, Patrons, and Unfair Elections in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Neptsad, S.E. 2013. "Mutiny and nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring military defections and loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria." *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3):337–349.

Nyrup, Jacob, and Stuart Bramwell. 2020. "Who Governs? A New Global Dataset on Members of Cabinets." *American Political Science Review* 114(4): 1366–1374.

O'Donnell, Guillermo, and Philipe Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule:Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. John Hopkins University Press.

O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead. 1986. *Transitionsfrom Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. John Hopkins University Press.

Pion-Berlin, David, Diego Esparza, and Kevin Grisham. 2014. "Staying Quartered." *Comparative Political Studies* 47(2): 230–59.

Pemstein, Daniel, Kyle L. Marquardt, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Juraj Medzihorsky, Joshua Krusell, Farhad Miri, and Johannes von Römer. 2021. "The V-Dem Measurement Model: La- tent Variable Analysis for Cross-National and Cross-Temporal Expert-Coded Data". V-Dem Working Paper No. 21. 6th edition. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute.

Powell, Jonathan M, and Clayton L Thyne. 2011. "Global instances of coups from 1950to 2010: A new dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 48(2): 249–259.

Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market*. New York: Cambridge UniversityPress.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi.2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Reuter, John Ora. 2017. *The Origins of Dominant Parties: Building Authoritarian Institutions in Post-Soviet Russia*. New

York: Cambridge University Press.

Reuter, John Ora. 2021. "Why Do Ruling Parties Extend Authoritarian Rule? Examining the Role of Elite Institutions and Mass Organization." *The V-Dem Working Paper Series*118: 1–26.

Reuter, John Ora, and David Szakonyi. 2019. "Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia." *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 552–568.

Reuter, Ora John, and Jennifer Gandhi. 2011. "Economic Performance and Elite Defection from Hegemonic Parties." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 83–110.

Riedl, Rachel Beatty. 2014. *Authoritarian Origins of Democratic Party Systems in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rozenas, Arturas. 2016. "Office Insecurity and Electoral Manipulation." *The Journal ofPolitics* 78(1): 232–248.

Schedler, Andreas. 2013. *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simpser, Alberto. 2013. *Why Governments and Parties Manipulate Elections: Theory, Practice, and Implications*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Slater, Dan. 2010. *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, Benjamin. 2007. *Hand Times in the Lands of Plenty: Oil Politics in Iran and Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Solnick, Steven. 1998. *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sudduth, Jun Koga. 2017. "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(13): 1768–1801.

Svolik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Teorell, Jan. 2010. *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972–2006*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teorell, Jan, and Staffan Lindberg. 2019. "Beyond Democracy-Dictatorship Measures:A New Framework Capturing Executive Bases of Power, 1789-2016." *Perspectives onPolitics* 17(1): 66–84.

Treisman, Daniel. 2015. "Income, Democracy, and Leader Turnover." *American Journalof Political Science* 59(4): 927–942.

Tucker, Joshua A. 2007. "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist

Colored Revolutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(3): 535–551.

Way, L. A. 2003. "Authoritarian state building and the sources of regime competitiveness in the fourth wave: The cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine." *WorldPolitics* 57(2): 231–261.

Wooldridge, Jeffrey C. 2002. *Econometric Analysis of Cross Section and Panel Data*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wright, Joseph, and Abel Escriba-Folch. 2012. "Authoritarian Institutions and RegimeSurvival: Transitions to Democracy and Subsequent Autocracies." *British Journal of olitical Science* 42(2): 283–309.

Appendix

A Descriptive analyses

Table shows the distribution of party origins across types of party's road to power based on Miller (2020)'s data. The columns are a re-coded version of Miller's party origins as described below. Rows describes how the party won the executive office. We can see that some categories are clearly overlapped. Parties created by dictators tend to achieve the executive power because the dictator imposed it. A similar situation also occurs with military-created parties. Yet, there is a significant variation in other categories such as party forged in violent origins. 55% of such parties reached power through liberation movements and revolutions and 13% of these were imposed by a sitting dictator. Beyond this no-democratic means of reaching power, the data also shows that 44% of parties with violent origins achieved the executive office through elections.

Each category of the party origin variable is as follows:

- No-party: NA but the ruler governs without a ruling party
- Dictator-created: party created, and merged or split from previous parties by a sitting dictator
- Communist: organized as communist with international involvement
- Elite coalition-created: party founded, and merged or split from previous parties by non-executive elites to compete in politics, possibly in a prior regime or under colonialism
- Violent origins: parties first organized as a non-revolutionary, pro-independence organization or parties first organized as a violent revolutionary organization
- Military: party created by the military leadership, usually to represent it
- Others: foreign imposed parties

Table A1: Party origins and road to power

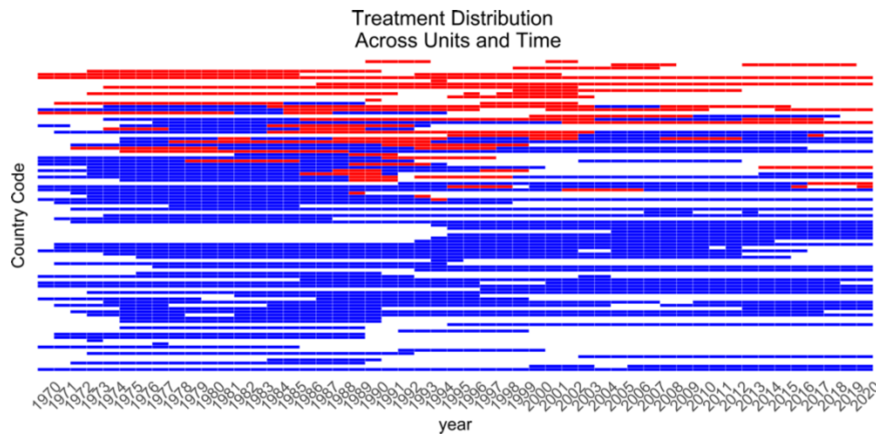
Party's road to power	No Ruling party	Dictator-created	Communist	Elite Coalition-Created	Violent Origins	Military-Created	Total
	Types of Party Origins %/(N)						
Dictator imposed	13.84 (112)	63.66 (515)	4.32 (35)	4.33 (47)	12.3 (100)	0 (0)	26.43 (809)
Communist imposed	0 (0)	0 (0)	100 (193)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6.3 (193)
Coup	0 (0)	38.99 (46)	0 (0)	32.20 (33)	27.12 (39)	0 (0)	3.86 (118)
Revolution	6.28 (35)	0 (0)	34.47 (192)	0 (0)	54.94 (306)	4.31 (24)	18.20 (557)
Military imposed	24.12 (48)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.5 (1)	0 (0)	75.37 (150)	6.5 (199)
Elections	6.05 (64)	12.77 (135)	2.93 (31)	34.44 (364)	43.80 (463)	0 (0)	34.53 (1057)
Other	0 (0)	18.75 (24)	21.87 (28)	59.37 (76)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.18 (128)
Total	8.47 (259)	23.52 (720)	15.64 (479)	17.02 (521)	29.66 (908)	5.68 (174)	100 (3061)

Note: the table shows the percentage of cases per column and the total number in brackets. Types of party origins rely on an updated version of Miller's (2015) dataset.

B Panel matching estimators

Table B1 shows the treatment distribution across units and over time. Country-year observations under the treatment groups are depicted in read, which represent 605 observations. In blue, Figure B1 plots the 2036 country-year observations that did not experience widespread divisions. The panel matching procedures uses these observations to build a comparable control group, in particular it selects a maximum of each observation per unit under the treatment condition over the L and F specified. Our analyses use a time window of four years and successfully matched treatment units with control units. In Appendix Table C1 replicates our analyses but uses fewer lags during the matching procedure. By decreasing the number "lags," the models are less data demanding and we reduce losing information from those regimes with ashort time-spam (less than eight years).

Figure B1: Treatment Distribution



B.1 Average treatment effect among the control group

Next, Table B1 shows the average treatment effect among the control group. In other words, the effect of elite divisions in autocracies among countries that do not experience elite divisions. This Table represents the counterfactual scenario of our main analyses and serve as our placebo test. As such, we should expect that a negative correlation or no statistically significant relationships between elite divisions and Polyarchy, and other outcome variables employed in the mechanism section (e.g., Physical integrity, barriers to political competition, Opposition Autonomy and military in the cabinet). Moreover, we should expect that the results of interaction effect between divisions and party origins on the outcome variables do not lead to the same conclusions in the maintext. Otherwise, the soundness of our research design and findings are threatened.

However, Table B1 shows that our analyses are robust to this sensitiveness test. The treatment effect among the control group is absent when the outcome variable is physical integrity and opposition autonomy. Moreover, the treatment effect among the control group shows a positive relationship when we look at the outcome variable "barriers to political competition" and the interaction effect of division on polyarchy levels when parties are armed with violent origins.

Table B1: Average treatment effect among the control group

	Polyarchy			Physical Integrity		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	-0.002	-0.009	0.014	0.005	0.004	0.01
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.02)	(0.05)
T_{+1}	0.001	-0.02	0.053+	0.014	0.015	0.013
	(0.02)	(0.017)	(0.07)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.039)
T_{+2}	0.0001	-0.03+	0.07*	0.002	0.020	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.017)	(0.10)	(0.023)	(0.04)	(0.029)
T_{+3}	-0.003	-0.03+	0.074*	-0.002	0.0045	0.011
	(0.021)	(0.02)	(0.011)	(0.02)	(0.039)	(0.037)
T_{+4}	0.009	-0.02	0.08*	-0.001	0.032	0.011
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.11)	(0.038)	(0.046)	(0.04)

	Barriers to political competition			Opposition Autonomy		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.016+	0.16	0.17	-0.07	-0.17	0.18
	(0.17)	(0.26)	(0.11)	(0.24)	(0.29)	(0.23)
T_{+1}	0.34*	0.37	0.33**	0.19	0.17	0.27
	(0.21)	(0.32)	(0.35)	(0.27)	(0.35)	(0.24)
T_{+2}	0.40**	0.42*	0.38**	0.29	0.24	0.29
	(0.22)	(0.35)	(0.40)	(0.27)	(0.35)	(0.26)
T_{+3}	0.37*	0.37*	0.37**	0.42*	0.41	0.36
	(0.19)	(0.29)	(0.40)	(0.26)	(0.34)	(0.25)
T_{+4}	0.35*	0.33	0.36	0.58*	0.42	0.34
	(0.20)	(0.25)	(0.40)	(0.34)	(0.29)	(0.25)

	Military in the cabinet		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.004	0.08	-0.2
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.1)
T_{+1}	-0.15	-0.14	-0.2
	(0.1)	(0.12)	(0.1)
T_{+2}	-0.31**	-0.23*	-0.2
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.1)
T_{+3}	-0.31**	-0.22*	-0.2
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.1)
T_{+4}	-0.25**	-0.14	-0.2
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.1)

C Robustness tests

C.1 Model specification

Appendix Table C1 replicates our analyses but uses fewer lags during the matching procedure. By decreasing the number "lags," the models are less data demanding and we reduce losing information from those regimes with a short time-spam (less than eight years). Although these models contain slightly worse control units, the results lead to the same conclusions in the main text. Therefore, we are confident in the robustness of our results.

Table C1: Replication main analyses, fewer lags

Time	Polyarchy (lag3)				Polyarchy (lag2)			
	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.016+	0.02*	0.03*	-0.001	0.016*	0.018*	0.03*	-0.0001
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.003)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.002)
T_{+1}	0.03*	0.03**	0.06**	-0.004	0.03**	0.03*	0.06**	-0.005
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.023)	(0.013)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
T_{+2}	0.03*	0.027*	0.048*	-0.001	0.03*	0.03*	0.05*	0.0002
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.014)	(0.02)	(0.01)
T_{+3}	0.03+	0.022	0.04	-0.002	0.02+	0.02	0.038	0.0004
	(0.01)	(0.15)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.015)	(0.024)	(0.02)
T_{+4}	0.02	0.12	0.02	-0.002	0.02	0.013	0.021	0.0001
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.017)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)

Time	Opposition autonomy (lag3)				Opposition autonomy (lag2)			
	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.14	0.15	0.26	-0.004	0.14	0.15	0.26	0.004
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.23)	(0.03)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.03)
T_{+1}	0.09	0.08	0.18	-0.05	0.09	0.08	0.18	-0.06
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.26)	(0.07)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.08)
T_{+2}	0.001	-0.03	0.017	-0.11+	0.01	-0.02	0.04	-0.15+
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.10)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.27)	(0.1)
T_{+3}	-0.15	-0.16	-0.20	-0.15**	-0.10	-0.14	-0.16	-0.15*
	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.46)	(0.11)	(0.23)	(0.24)	(0.47)	(0.10)
T_{+4}	-0.06	-0.12	-0.025	-0.27**	-0.04	-0.09	0.025	-0.26**
	(0.30)	(0.32)	(0.61)	(0.16)	(0.32)	(0.31)	(0.62)	(0.17)

Time	Barriers to parties (lag3)				Barriers to parties (lag2)			
	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.14	0.15	0.28	-0.025	0.15	0.15	0.30	-0.023
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.037)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.26)	(0.03)
T_{+1}	0.18	0.16	0.36	-0.11**	0.19	0.17	0.39	-0.11**
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.29)	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.31)	(0.09)
T_{+2}	0.17	0.12	0.31	-0.16**	0.18	0.13	0.35	-0.15**
	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.33)	(0.15)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.35)	(0.13)
T_{+3}	0.12	0.09	0.29	-0.19**	0.18	0.11	0.34	-0.18**
	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.38)	(0.17)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.42)	(0.15)
T_{+4}	0.18	0.071	0.30	-0.18	0.19	0.10	0.32	-0.16
	(0.26)	(0.30)	(0.27)	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.52)	(0.21)

Time	Physical Integrity (lag3)				Physical Integrity (lag2)			
	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	None	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.02	0.024	0.05*	-0.01	0.02	0.022	0.05*	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)
T_{+1}	0.055+	0.06*	0.11*	-0.001	0.055*	0.057*	0.11*	-0.013+
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.013)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.013)
T_{+2}	0.05	0.047+	0.098+	-0.017	0.05	0.047+	0.098*	-0.017+
	(0.035)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.014)	(0.033)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.014)
T_{+3}	0.05	0.040	0.085+	-0.015	0.047+	0.041	0.085+	-0.015+
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.014)	(0.03)	(0.032)	(0.05)	(0.014)
T_{+4}	0.03	0.02	0.05	-0.02	0.026	0.022	0.05	-0.02+
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.056)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.056)	(0.02)

C.2 Remove Civil liberties index from the analyses

One might argue that our main results are driven by the inclusion of the V-Dem's civil liberties index as a covariate for the matching procedure. Respecting civil liberties is associated with an increasing polyarchy levels and other outcome variables related to the levels of repression (e.g., physical integrity, barriers to political competition). For this reason, Appendix Table C2 replicates panel matching analyses in the main text but excludes the civil liberty index from our models. Results lead to the same conclusions pointed out in the main text.

Table C2: Replication Analysis, civil liberties excluded

	Polyarchy			Opposition autonomy		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.02*	0.034*	0.001	0.14	0.26	0.0009
	(0.01)	(0.017)	(0.002)	(0.13)	(0.22)	(0.044)
T_{+1}	0.035*	0.062**	-0.001	0.08	0.18	-0.06
	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.009)	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.10)
T_{+2}	0.032*	0.052*	0.004	-0.016	0.06	-0.12+
	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.01)	(0.17)	(0.27)	(0.12)
T_{+3}	0.026	0.04	0.005	-0.14	-0.15	-0.15*
	(0.015)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.25)	(0.44)	(0.13)
T_{+4}	0.016	0.024	0.006	-0.14	-0.034	-0.27**
	(0.02)	(0.032)	(0.02)	(0.35)	(0.60)	(0.18)
	Military appointments			Partisan military appointments		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.10*	0.25	0.029*	0.10**	0.16	0.04**
	(0.06)	(0.22)	(0.028)	(0.06)	(0.11)	(0.034)
T_{+1}	0.15*	0.24*	0.030+	0.1	0.16	0.027
	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.028)	(0.095)	(0.17)	(0.02)
T_{+2}	0.14*	0.06	0.12+	0.17	0.14	0.23+
	(0.07)	(0.27)	(0.11)	(0.10)	0.16)	(0.17)
T_{+3}	0.16+	-0.15	0.12	0.15	0.08	0.26*
	(0.10)	(0.41)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.17)
T_{+4}	0.12	-0.046	0.14*	0.11	-0.006	0.27*
	(0.12)	(0.6)	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.17)
	Physical Integrity			Barriers to political competition		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	-0.026	0.053*	-0.01	0.15	0.30	-0.022
	(0.021)	(0.034)	(0.01)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.03)
T_{+1}	0.063*	0.12*	-0.015+	0.17	0.40	-0.12**
	(0.036)	(0.06)	(0.013)	(0.19)	(0.33)	(0.10)
T_{+2}	0.059+	0.12*	-0.02*	0.16	0.40	-0.15**
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.013)	(0.22)	(0.37)	(0.13)
T_{+3}	0.052	0.1+	-0.018*	0.15	0.40	-0.18**
	(0.036)	(0.05)	(0.014)	(0.23)	(0.40)	(0.16)
T_{+4}	0.032	0.073	-0.02*	0.12	0.35	-0.17
	(0.037)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.27)	(0.48)	(0.18)

C.3 Different sample specification

Our results are also robust to different sample specification. Table C2 uses a sample of dictatorships based on Boix's (Boix 2003) criteria. We use an updated version of the dataset that covers the 1946-2020 period Miller (2021). Table C3 uses a sample that only contains those observations that both datasets identify as authoritarian. This implies removing 317 observations from our analyses.

Table C2: Replication main analyses, using Boix sample

	Polyarchy			Physical integrity		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.01 (0.007)	0.013 (0.011)	0.006 (0.008)	-0.015 (0.016)	0.007 (0.01)	-0.044* (0.034)
T_{+1}	0.026* (0.014)	0.035+ (0.019)	0.014 (0.02)	0.005 (0.03)	0.045 (0.040)	-0.050** (0.035)
T_{+2}	0.026* (0.013)	0.03 (0.02)	0.018 (0.02)	0.006 (0.03)	0.050 (0.04)	-0.054** (0.034)
T_{+3}	0.020 (0.014)	0.021 (0.02)	0.017 (0.021)	0.007 (0.03)	0.050 (0.041)	-0.05* (0.036)
T_{+4}	0.009 (0.018)	0.002 (0.029)	0.018 (0.022)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.015 (0.045)	-0.05* (0.04)
	Barriers to parties			**Opposition autonomy**		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.05 (0.11)	0.10 (0.20)	-0.022 (0.06)	0.03 (0.1)	0.10 (0.17)	-0.06 (0.06)
T_{+1}	0.05 (0.16)	0.17 (0.26)	0.11 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.12)	0.003 (0.20)	-0.14* (0.12)
T_{+2}	0.04 (0.19)	0.19 (0.30)	-0.17* (0.13)	-0.15 (0.14)	-0.10 (0.22)	-0.22** (0.14)
T_{+3}	0.015 (0.21)	0.19 (0.35)	-0.23** (0.17)	-0.26 (0.25)	-0.25 (0.34)	-0.26** (0.16)
T_{+4}	-0.03 (0.25)	0.12 (0.41)	-0.23+ (0.21)	-0.22 (0.28)	-0.13 (0.50)	-0.36** (0.18)
	Military appointments			**Share power**		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.015 (0.4)	0.023 (0.02)	0.023 (0.02)
T_{+1}	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.03)
T_{+2}	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	-0.07 (0.5)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.03)
T_{+3}	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.09 (0.11)	-0.04 (0.06)
T_{+4}	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.0002 (0.11)	-0.05 (0.07)

Table C3: Replication main analyses, using a conservative sample

	Polyarchy			Physical integrity		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.007	0.016	-0.002	-0.009	0.013	-0.016*
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.013)	(0.01)	(0.012)
T_{+1}	0.022+	0.042*	-0.006	-0.04	0.080+	-0.023**
	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.013)	(0.05)	(0.046)	(0.016)
T_{+2}	0.022+	0.040*	0.015	-0.03	0.08+	-0.027**
	(0.013)	(0.02)	(0.016)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.016)
T_{+3}	0.019	0.03	0.003	-0.034	0.074+	-0.020**
	(0.014)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.046)	(0.013)
T_{+4}	0.014	0.02	0.006	-0.03	0.046	-0.02+
	(0.019)	(0.03)	(0.022)	(0.05)	(0.048)	(0.018)

	Barriers to parties			Opposition autonomy		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.07	0.18	-0.07+	0.043	0.12	-0.05
	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.067)	(0.13)	(0.23)	(0.08)
T_{+1}	0.08	0.28	-0.15**	-0.04	0.03	-0.13+
	(0.21)	(0.33)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.27)	(0.12)
T_{+2}	0.07	0.29	-0.19**	-0.17	-0.13	-0.22*
	(0.25)	(0.42)	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.36)	(0.14)
T_{+3}	0.09	0.36	-0.24**	-0.28	-0.30	-0.27**
	(0.27)	(0.45)	(0.18)	(0.27)	(0.52)	(0.24)
T_{+4}	0.07	0.33	-0.24+	-0.27	-0.19	-0.36**
	(0.34)	(0.55)	(0.23)	(0.39)	(0.72)	(0.26)

	Military appointments			Share power		
Time	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)	CBPS	CBPS (no violent origins)	CBPS (violent origins)
T_0	0.00	0.00**	0.00	0.018	0.02	0.02
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.5)	(0.09)	(0.04)
T_{+1}	0.00	0.00	0.00**	-0.04	-0.065	-0.016
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.06)	(0.11)	(0.05)
T_{+2}	0.00	-0.00	0.00**	-0.06	-0.11	-0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.6)	(0.11)	(0.05)
T_{+3}	0.00	-0.00	0.00**	-0.04	-0.08	-0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.06)
T_{+4}	0.00	0.00	0.00**	-0.007	-0.003	-0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.06)

D Alternative hypotheses

Table D1 shows the direct effects of party origins on military expenditure, coups attemps, sharing cabinet portfolios with non-affiliated ruling elites, sharing cabinet portfolios with independents, pro-autocracy mobilization, opposition autonomy andbarriers to political competition.

We use Greig and Enterline (2021) dataset to measure government's military expenditure per capita and "Coups attempts" as a binary indicator. We operationalize the regimes' willingness to share power with the opposition. To do so, we use the share of ministers who are not affiliated with the ruling party in government, based on Nyrup and Bramwell's (2020) WhoGov data set. Cabinet posts give direct access to patronage and policy influence to actors necessary to enhance regime stability (Arriola 2009). Therefore, appointing outsiders to cabinet posts is a powerful tool to co-opt opposition elites and prevent them from mobilizing their support against the regime. To test thisobservable implication, we estimate the number of ministers who are not affiliated with the ruling party divided by the total number of ministers in a country-year. The index ranges between 0-1. We also use WhoGov dataset to measure the share of independents in the cabinet. Finally, we use V-Dem (2021) data to measure pro-autocracy mobilization, opposition autonomy and barriers to political competition.

As commented in the main text, we find that violent party origins do not lead to an increase in military expenditure, coups attempts and sharing power. Yet, dictators armed with such origins seem reluctant to share power with independent actors and mobilize citizens to support his rule. Moreover, we find that regimes with parties forged in violent origins allows opposition autonomy and that they face fewer barriers than regimes without such origins.

Table D1: Alternative mechanisms

	Military expenditure	Coups attempts	Sharing power	Sharing power with indp.	Pro-autocracy mobilizations	Opposition autonomy	Barriers to political competition
Violent origins	-0.016	-0.034	-0.046	-0.07**	-0.57**	0.52**	0.39**
	(0.13)	(0.023)	(0.03)	(0.026)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.08)
Constant	1.09**	0.17+	0.27**	0.25	0.46	-3.08**	-2.99**
	(0.24)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.76)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.24)
Control variables	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Time trends	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Region dummies	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
year fixed effects	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Unit means	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
N. Observations	2147	1599	2104	2104	2199	2199	2199
Countries	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
AIC	6566.7	-579.6	17152	-143.93	6313.8	6193.7	5416.5
Loglikelihood	-3206.34	368.78	-316.08	150.97	-3077.90	-3017.9	-2629.3
	(df=77)	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)	(df=79)

Note: +p< 0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regime level. Excluding time trends leads to similar results. OLS estimators lead to thesame results.