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Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders*

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Scholars for a long time theorized about the role of political leaders, but empirical research has been limited by the lack of systematic data about individual leaders. Archigos is a new dataset with information on leaders in 188 countries from 1875 to 2004. We provide an overview of the main features of this data. Archigos specifically identifies the effective leaders of each independent state; it codes when and how leaders came into power, their age, and their gender, as well as their personal fate one year after they lost office. We illustrate the utility of the Archigos dataset by demonstrating how leader attributes predict other features of interest in International Relations and Comparative Politics. Crisis interactions differ depending on whether leaders face each other for the first time or have had prior interactions. Irregular leader changes can help identify political change in autocracies not apparent from data that consider only the democratic nature of institutions. Finally, transitions to democracy in the third wave are more likely to fail in instances where autocratic rulers were punished after leaving office. Our examples illustrate new empirical findings that simply could not be explored in existing data sources. Although selective, our overview demonstrates how Archigos bears considerable promise in providing answers to new and old research questions and opens up new avenues for research on individual leaders as decisionmakers.

Introduction

Scholars in Comparative Politics and History have long emphasized the role of individual political leaders, and this perspective recently

also gained currency in International Relations research. This approach has the advantage of a clear focus on decisionmakers, their incentives and constraints, and how these are shaped by the political environment, which

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enables the construction of theory on a solid methodologically individualist basis. Moreover, a common focus on leaders in Comparative Politics and International Relations helps us incorporate insights and accomplishments from one field into research in the other and, thus, brings these fields into closer contact.

A major stumbling block for empirical research, however, has been the limited data on leaders across time and space. Pioneering data collection efforts by Blondel (1987), Bienen & van de Walle (1991), and Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson (1995) all suffer from some measurement problems – such as when two or more leaders were coded to rule a country at the same time – as well as significant gaps in the sequence of leaders in power. Furthermore, these data sources contain very little information on the individual leaders beyond their date of entry and exit.

This article introduces a new dataset entitled *Archigos* (from the Greek term for ruler) that we believe can facilitate further research on leaders, promote cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches across fields, and open up new avenues for research. *Archigos* contains information on leaders for 188 countries from 1875 to 2004. In this article, we first briefly survey the merits of focusing on leaders and then illustrate how important empirical questions can be addressed with the new information in *Archigos*. We show that leaders who exit from power in an irregular manner are much more frequently punished after they lose office. We further demonstrate that the normative force of a prior crisis settlement carries over into subsequent crises only between leaders who have interacted previously and does not apply when new leaders from the same countries face each other for the first time. Whereas data focusing on the degree to which states are democratic, such as Polity, tell us little about instability within autocracies, *Archigos* allows identifying political transitions in

autocracies by considering *how* one leader loses office and *how* his or her successor enters office. Finally, we show that transitions to democracy in the third wave have been more likely to fail in instances where autocratic rulers were punished after leaving office. We end with a brief discussion of other potentially fruitful avenues of research that can be explored with *Archigos*.

Leaders as the Unit of Analysis

Four decades ago, the study of leaders figured prominently in the field of International Relations. In the 1960s and 1970s, many scholars examined international behavior by focusing on individuals, in particular, leaders, largely from an organizational and psychological perspective (Snyder, Bruck & Sapin, 1962). However, the role of the international system became increasingly prominent as the primary unit of analysis, even more so in the wake of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979). In turn, this focus on the system was, to a large extent, superseded by a new focus on state characteristics and dyadic relations in the 1990s, with work on the democratic peace as a prominent example. This shift was, of course, significantly facilitated by a wealth of new data sources on country characteristics, such as the Polity data. More recently, the field has come full circle as researchers increasingly examine international political behavior from the perspective of leaders (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Goemans, 2000b; Gelpi & Grieco, 2001; Chiozza & Choi, 2003; Chiozza & Goemans, 2003, 2004; Marinov, 2005; Horowitz, McDermott & Stam, 2005).

Scholars in Comparative Politics often focus on the specific cabinets and governments as fundamental units (Dodd, 1984; King et al., 1990; Warwick, 1994; Grofman & Van Roozendaal, 1997; Diermeier & Stevenson, 1999; Leblang & Bernhard, 2000). However, building on the path-breaking work of

Bunce (1981), Blondel (1987), Ames (1987), and Bienen & van de Walle (1991), researchers have begun to systematically focus on the leaders who set policy (Betts & Huntington, 1985/86; Cheibub & Przeworski, 1999; Przeworski et al., 2000; Stokes, 2001).

Since Downs (1957), scholars in both International Relations and Comparative Politics have adopted the simplifying assumption that leaders choose policies to stay in office. Anticipating the effect of their policies on their tenure, leaders pick policies that maximize their time in office. This perspective has been applied to decisions to initiate and continue conflict (Fearon, 1994; Downs & Rocke, 1994; Leeds & Davis, 1997; Schultz, 2001b; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Colaresi, 2004; Mansfield & Snyder, 2005; Horowitz, McDermott & Stam, 2005; Lai & Slater, 2006), to impose or comply with sanctions (Marinov, 2005), to promote economic development (Bates, 1981; Wintrobe, 1998; Przeworski et al., 2000; Jones & Olken, 2005), to initiate political reform (Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson, 1997), and the timing of elections (Warwick, 1994; Smith, 2003; Kayser, 2005). The tenure-maximizing leader assumption proved enormously influential and fruitful. Archigos makes it possible to more directly test such arguments by allowing scholars to examine whether a certain policy choice affects the tenure of leaders.¹

This renewed focus on the incentives of individual leaders holds much promise. First, it sits well with the methodological individualism of rational choice theory. Second, a focus on individual leaders and their incentives can help increase explanatory variation (Jones & Olken, 2005; de Marchi, 2005). Even though it is a central tenet of the logic of comparisons

that one cannot explain variation with a constant (Przeworski & Teune, 1970), a great deal of research in International Relations relies on indicators that are dangerously close to time-invariant (Bennett & Stam, 2004). Typical explanatory variables such as regime type, great power status, and contiguity change too little – if at all – to account for dynamic phenomena such as conflict or sanctions initiation and termination or international financial instability. A focus on leader characteristics introduces more variation, as leaders vary considerably in some important political and personal characteristics and their time and security in office.

The Archigos Data: A Brief Overview

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the *Archigos* database of political leaders. Archigos specifically identifies the *effective* leader of each independent state, as coded by Gleditsch & Ward (1999), between 1875 and 2004. By effective leader, we mean the person that de facto exercised power in a country. We relied upon primary and secondary sources, as well as our knowledge of the particulars of each state, to inform our coding decisions.²

In most cases, it is relatively clear and uncontroversial to identify the effective ruler, but in some cases, the coding may be more contentious. Many countries, for example, have multiple heads of state. In some cases, the formal head of a state may primarily be a ceremonial position – as in most present day monarchies in Europe – and executive power is delegated to another position such as a prime minister. In other cases, a strongman (or woman) may formally step down but remain the effective leader behind the

¹ A more ambitious approach could consider the endogeneity of a policy choice, and Archigos can be used to generate an instrument for the latent risk of losing office. Chiozza & Goemans (2003), for example, use a two-stage estimator to explore the reciprocal relationship between the probability of losing office and crisis initiation.

² Principal sources include Lentz (1994, 1999), Keesing's, <http://www.rulers.org>, <http://www.worldstatesmen.org>, and in particular for the pre-1900 leaders, Proquest Historical Newspapers, <http://www.umi.com/proquest>.

scenes, as in the case of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, who did not formally occupy the presidency between 16 August 1938 and 18 May 1942, but remained the *de facto* ruler of the country.

We generally followed a simple coding rule. In parliamentary regimes, the prime minister is coded as the leader, in presidential systems, the president. In regimes that combine elements of both parliamentary and presidential systems – such as Finland, France, and Portugal – we code the president as the leader since in these regimes, presidents typically control foreign policy. In communist states, we generally code the chairman of the party as the effective ruler. The extensive case description file available online – currently about 500 pages – specifies the full rationale, reasoning, and references for our coding of potentially controversial cases.

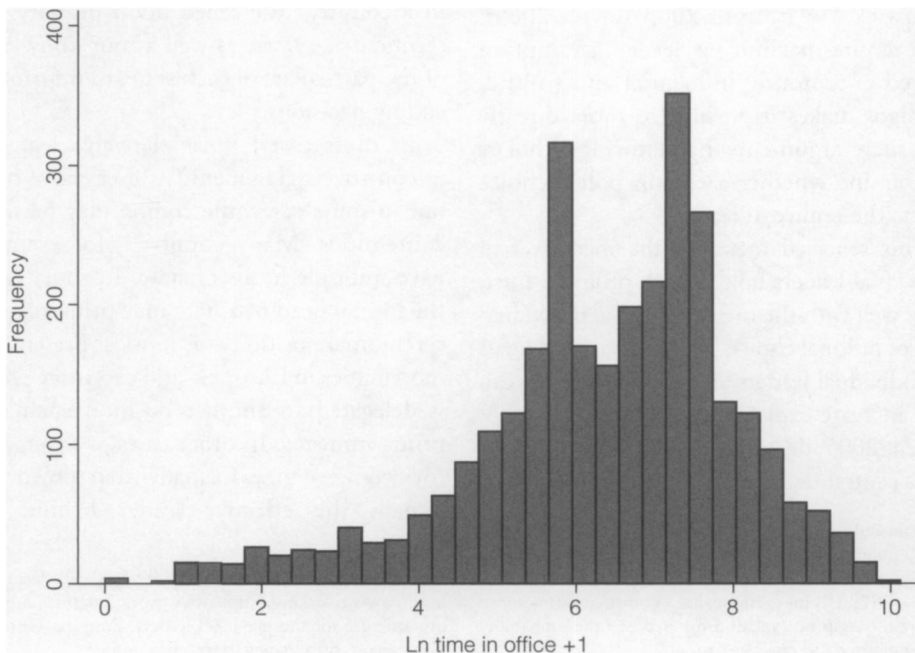
The distribution of time in office for individual leaders in Archigos shows that the bottom fifth percentile spend less than

three weeks in office, while the upper fifth percentile stay in power for more than 16 years. The distribution of time in office has a long tail, with the mean (1,523.24 days) much higher than the median (729 days). Given this skew, we plot the more informative natural log of time in office for leaders in Figure 1.³ This histogram reveals a large spike around the one-year mark (note that $\ln(365+1)$ is approximately 5.9). The peak of the distribution suggests that many leaders serve one or two consecutive three- or four-year terms (e^8 and e^7 translate to about 8.2 and 3 years, respectively). However, a substantial number of leaders remain in power much longer.

Archigos also identifies how the leader gained and lost power. Leaders can enter in (1) a *regular manner*, according to the prevailing rules, provisions, conventions, and norms of the country, (2) an *irregular*

³ We add 1 to time in office before taking the log, since we have some leaders in power for less than a full day.

Figure 1. Histogram of Natural Log of Tenure + 1



manner, such as a coup, and (3) through *direct* imposition by another state. In cases where a previous leader exits in an irregular fashion, but a designated successor – such as a vice-president – takes over, or an interim leader is appointed by the legislature as prescribed by rules and procedures of the country, the new leader's entry is coded as a regular entry. Note that support for a particular leader or indirect attempts to influence leader selection by a foreign state alone do not amount to imposition.

Leaders can lose office in (1) a *regular manner*, according to the prevailing rules, provisions, conventions, and norms of the country, (2) an *irregular manner*, (3) through *direct* removal by another state, and (4) as a result of a *natural death*, under which we include illness or suicide. Examples of a regular loss of office include voluntary retirement, term limits, and defeat in elections. A loss of office is considered irregular when the leader was removed in contravention of explicit rules and established conventions. Most irregular removals from office are the result of the threat or use of force as exemplified in coups, (popular) revolts, and assassinations (more on this below) and occur at the hands of domestic opponents. Assassinations may or may not have a clear political motivation; we prefer to make no judgments about the 'real' intention behind assassinations. In a few cases, it may be disputed whether a leader dies of natural causes or is assassinated. We clarify our judgments in the case descriptions. As in the case of entry into office, we restrict removal by another state to direct interventions, as in the case of a successful invasion. We do not code cases where another country is perceived or known to have orchestrated the removal of a leader through a coup carried out by domestic forces (for example, Allende in Chile or Mossadeq in Iran) as foreign removal, but simply as an irregular loss of office.

For leaders who lost office after 1918, the data contain more detailed information on the circumstances behind a leader's irregular loss of office.⁴ We distinguish the following categories: leaders can be irregularly removed from office by (1) domestic popular protest with, or (2) without, foreign support, (3) domestic rebel forces with, or (4) without, foreign support, (5) domestic military actors with, (6) or without, foreign support, (7) the threat or use of foreign force, (8) assassination by an unsupported individual, (9) a power struggle within the military, without changing institutional features such as a military council or junta, or (10) other means or processes (a residual category with 13 irregularly removed leaders, 8 of whom were removed by domestic actors and 5 of whom were removed by foreign actors). We are confident this extensive coding will enable future research on the causes and consequences of military and civilian coups.

Archigos records the leader's post-tenure fate in the period up to one year after the leader lost power, to properly attribute any punishment to the leader's behavior while in office.⁵ Archigos records one of four types of post-exit fates: when a leader suffers (1) *no punishment*, (2) *is exiled*, (3) *imprisoned*, or (4) *killed*. Since the territory of an embassy legally is considered as belonging to a foreign state, we code cases where leaders take refuge in the embassy of another state as exile. We code house arrest as imprisonment. Archigos records only the highest level of punishment (there are many cases where a relatively brief house arrest was followed by exile). For leaders who died while in office, we code their

⁴ In the near future, we will endeavor to complete detailed coding for the 148 leaders who were removed in an irregular manner before 1919.

⁵ The case description file will, in some instances, record whether a leader was exiled, imprisoned or killed more than one year after he or she lost office. We do not claim, though, that we provide a comprehensive coding of the leaders' fate beyond one year after they lost office.

post-tenure fate as missing, as we do for leaders who died less than six months after they left office.

Table I shows descriptive statistics for the key new variables in Archigos. Although the majority of leaders enter and exit in a regular manner and experience no post-tenure punishment, a substantial number of leaders exit irregularly and/or suffer post-tenure punishments. As we show below, this information tells us a great deal about the likely behavior or fate of leaders beyond what could be inferred from their time in office alone. In addition to the features shown here, Archigos records several personal characteristics of the leader, such as date of birth and death, gender, and number of previous spells in office.

Exploring the Utility of Archigos

In this section, we present examples of how the data may be used to provide new insights into international conflict behavior and regime transitions. The descriptive patterns we show are striking and highly suggestive, but we do not attempt to provide exhaustive empirical analyses or explanations of the origins of these patterns here.

Leader Entry and Exit

The information in Archigos suggests that leader-specific characteristics beyond time in office – such as the manner in which leaders attain office, or the number of their previous spells in office – have a strong influence on subsequent events and behavior. For example, a leader who came to power irregularly is over three times more likely to lose power in an irregular manner. Exploratory analysis further reveals that a leader's manner of entry has a significant impact on several policies ranging from domestic to international conflict, economic growth, and political reform. Moreover, preliminary analyses suggest that the impact of an irregular manner of entry,

while typically initially strong, dissipates over time.⁶

Just as the leader's expected manner of exit varies with manner of entry, the chances of punishment after leaving office differ dramatically by the manner of exit. Table II demonstrates that although the majority of leaders do not suffer any punishment in the year after leaving power – that is, in about 75% of all cases – the chances of post-exit punishment are very high for leaders who lose office in an irregular manner at the hands of domestic forces. In particular, only about 20% of such leaders manage to avoid post-tenure punishment altogether, while almost half of all leaders who lose office irregularly are quickly forced into exile (e.g. 43%). Hence, to understand the incentives of individual leaders, we may need to consider the likely consequences of policies beyond the mere loss of office.

To elaborate, consider the 'gambling for resurrection' theory, which argues that leaders become more likely to initiate or continue seemingly inefficient conflict when they face a high risk of losing office (Downs & Rocke, 1994; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Goemans, 2000b; Siverson, 1996). Despite decades of research on diversionary war, empirical support for the proposition that leaders resort to conflict when facing problems at the domestic scene remains weak (Leeds & Davis, 1997; Levy, 1989; Gelpi, 1997b; Miller, 1999). We believe that one reason stems from the common assumption in empirical studies that losing office is the worst that can happen to leaders. (For an exception see Goemans [2000a,b].) Most European and North American heads of state can indeed look forward to a comfortable retirement in the wake of a foreign policy failure, but this is not the case for many

⁶ Hence, researchers should consider not just the role of manner of entry to office, but also time since irregular entry and their interaction.

Table I. Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Manner of entry</i>		
Regular	2,433	80.43
Irregular	549	18.15
Foreign imposition	41	1.36
Unknown	2	0.07
N	3,025	100.00
<i>Manner of exit</i>		
Regular	1,955	64.63
Death by natural causes	184	6.08
Retired due to ill health	60	1.98
Suicide	5	0.17
Irregular	577	19.07
Deposed by another state	72	2.38
Still in office	169	5.59
Unknown	3	0.10
N	3,025	100.00
<i>Details on how leader lost power</i>		
Regular manner	2,376	82.59
Popular protest with foreign support	3	0.10
Popular protest without foreign support	28	0.97
Rebels with foreign support	11	0.38
Rebels without foreign support	43	1.49
Military with foreign support	4	0.14
Military without foreign support	256	8.90
Other government actor with foreign support	3	0.10
Other government actor without foreign support	39	1.36
Threat or use of force by other state	45	1.56
Assassination by unsupported individual	24	0.83
Internal power struggle	32	1.11
Other irregular	13	0.45
N	2,877	100.00
<i>Post-tenure fate</i>		
None	1,925	63.64
Exile	376	12.43
Imprisonment	154	5.09
Death	116	3.83
Suicide	2	0.07
Natural death	217	7.17
Unknown	48	1.59
Less than a year out of office	16	0.53
Still in office	171	5.65
N	3,025	100.00

Table II. Post-Tenure Fate by Manner of Entry

<i>Manner of exit</i>	<i>Post-tenure fate</i>				<i>Row sum</i>	
	<i>OK</i>	<i>Exile</i>	<i>Imprisonment</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>(% of total N)</i>	
Regular	1,762 (93)	93 (5)	35 (2)	3 (0.2)	1,893	(74)
Natural death	37 (90)	3 (7)	1 (2)	—	41	(2)
Irregular	110 (19)	241 (43)	102 (18)	114 (20)	567	(22)
Foreign deposed	16 (22)	39 (54)	16 (22)	1 (1)	72	(3)
Column sum (% of total N)	1925 (75)	376 (15)	154 (6)	118 (5)	2,573	(100)

Entries in the table are counts, with percentages out of row totals in parentheses.

autocratic rulers in developing societies.⁷ While standing firm or escalating conflict might seem a very risky gamble to scholars who consider only the leader's overall probability of losing office, this behavior could be eminently rational if the leader anticipated more severe punishment.

Leaders and Deterrence

In an oft-cited article, Huth (1997: 43) suggested that reputations pertain to leaders more than to countries:

The importance of reputations may well fade as the international strategic environment changes over time and as new leaders assume power within defender states.... Given the centrality of initial potential-attacker expectations about the actions of defenders in this approach, the first requirement will be to construct a data base cast at the level of the individual policy maker.

Archigos fills this gap and makes it possible to evaluate whether individual leaders may acquire reputations in deterrence interactions or in the face of agent-specific sanctions (McGillivray & Smith, 2000).

⁷ For example, President Bush can confidently look forward to 'give some speeches, just to replenish the ol' coffers' while Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, who resigned due to the parliamentary discussion of Dutch responsibility in the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, subsequently went on to hold important and very well-paid positions on the boards of several large companies and in the European Union. By contrast, autocratic rulers like Saddam Hussein perceive a high likelihood of post-tenure punishment.

As an illustration of Archigos's potential in this area, we identified the leaders involved in the 122 repetitive international crises compiled by Gelpi (1997a). These data illustrate how challengers' choices to escalate, back down or seek a compromise solution are mediated by two factors: (a) the defenders' strategies, and (b) the presence or absence of a previous settlement agreement. An analysis of the same data from a leaders' perspective shows that the largest proportion of repetitive crises involves the *same* challenger squaring off with the *same* defender (41.80%), and that about 77.87% of those deterrence encounters involved at least one leader who had been involved in a previous interaction.

Bargaining choices also reflect the history of previous interactions between leaders. For example, Gelpi (1997a) found that a prior legitimate settlement induces challenger states to comply or seek a compromise solution to the crisis. Our leader-based analysis in Table III qualifies this finding by showing that this pattern pertains only to crises that are re-initiated by the *same* leader involved in the previous interaction, and that new challengers disregard the presence of a previous settlement when they determine their final response in a crisis. The normative force of a crisis settlement, in other words, does not carry over to *new* challengers, who likely attempt to change the status quo out of their dissatisfaction with the achievements of their predecessors.

Table III. Challenger Resolve and Previous Settlement

	Same challenger			Different challenger		
	No	Settlement Yes	Sum	No	Settlement Yes	Sum
Compliance	8 (22.22)	11 (28.21)	19 (25.33)	6 (31.58)	11 (39.29)	17 (34.78)
Compromise	2 (5.56)	12 (30.77)	14 (18.67)	3 (15.79)	5 (17.86)	8 (17.39)
Intransigence	26 (72.22)	16 (41.03)	42 (56.00)	10 (52.63)	12 (42.86)	22 (47.83)
Sum	36 (100)	39 (100)	75 (100)	19 (100)	28 (100)	46 (100)
χ^2	9.89	p = .007		0.45	p = .800	

Entries in the table are counts, with percentages out of column totals in parentheses.

The Politics of Punishment and Retribution

Archigos can help address research questions that have hitherto been overlooked. For example, what is the fate of authoritarian leaders when a dictatorship collapses, and what does their fate presage for the stability of a new democracy? Huntington (1991: 231) suggested that for new democratic leaders, ‘the least unsatisfactory course may well be: do not prosecute, do not punish, do not forgive, and, above all, do not forget’. Huntington’s (1991) claim is provocative and controversial, but its empirical accuracy has remained largely unexplored.⁸ Archigos can contribute to an empirical evaluation of the implications of the punishment of previous autocrats for the longevity of a democratic transition and the quality of democratic institutions.

In Table IV, we examine the relationship between the fate of leaders and the stability of democracy since 1974, the conventional starting year of the third wave of democratization. The Polity data identify 56 instances

of democratic transitions.⁹ In most instances, previous non-democratic leaders did not see any personal punishment, and only a handful were sent to exile or prison (16 out of 56). Figure 2 presents Kaplan-Meier estimates of the survival probabilities for the third-wave democracies. It shows a marginally higher failure propensity for the transitions in which the authoritarian leaders suffered some form of punishment.

The very high frequency of post-tenure punishment in many states is a question interesting in its own right. In Haiti, no fewer than 64% of previous leaders have suffered post-exit punishments. Between Presidents Nord, removed in December 1908, and Velbrun-Guillaume, removed in July 1915, Haitian presidents were, successively, exiled, exiled, bombed and blown up, imprisoned, exiled, executed, exiled, and, particularly gruesome, dragged from the French legation by an angry mob and ‘impaled on the iron

⁸ Kaminski, Nalepa & O’Neill (2006: 298) note that systematic research on this topic may have suffered from the belief that each transition is the outcome of a unique experience.

⁹ We count as transitions to democracy cases where the Polity scale crosses the threshold of +7 (Atkinson, 2006: 517–518). We recognize that Polity identifies some potentially controversial transitions, such as the transfer of power from Yeltsin to Putin in March 2000. However, the potential controversies stem from the Polity data rather than Archigos. For the purposes of this example, we use the transitions identified by Polity as given.

Figure 2. Fate of Leaders and Democratic Survival

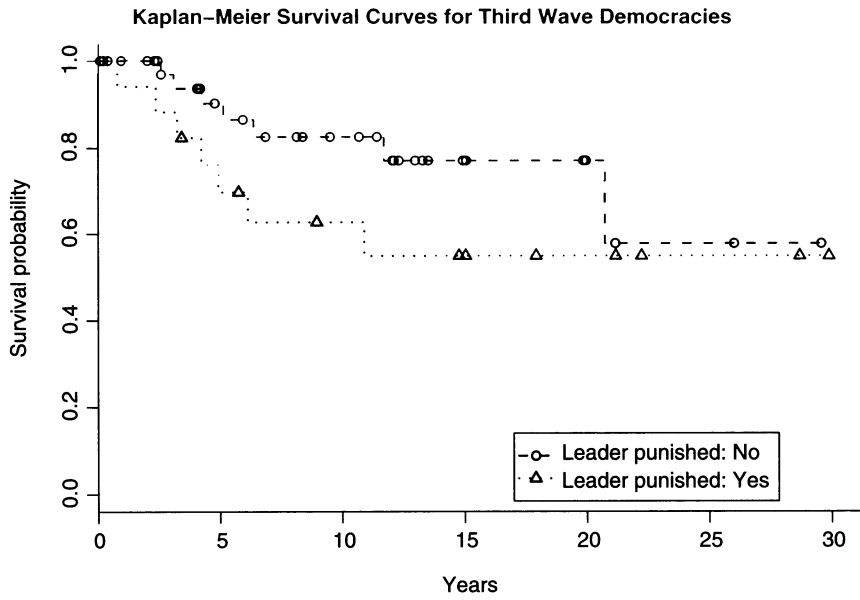


Table IV. Democratic Transitions and the Fate of Leaders, 1974–2004

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date of transition</i>	<i>Collapsed?</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Within 1-year fate</i>
Cyprus	14/02/1975	0	Sampson	Prison
Greece	08/06/1975	0	Gizikis	No punishment
Portugal	26/04/1976	0	Caetano	Exile
Spain	30/12/1978	0	Franco	Natural death
Ecuador	30/04/1979	1	Poveda Burbano	No punishment
Nigeria	02/10/1979	1	Obasanjo	No punishment
Peru	29/07/1980	1	Morales Bermudez	No punishment
Bolivia	11/10/1982	0	García Meza Tejada	Exile
Argentina	31/10/1983	0	Bignone	Prison
Turkey	07/11/1983	0	Evren	No punishment
Brazil	16/01/1985	0	Figueiredo	No punishment
Uruguay	02/03/1985	0	Alvarez Armalino	No punishment
Sudan	02/04/1986	1	Nimeiri	Exile
Philippines	03/02/1987	0	Marcos	Exile
Pakistan	17/11/1988	1	Zia	Death
Chile	16/12/1989	0	Pinochet	No punishment
Panama	21/12/1989	0	Noriega	Prison
Hungary	03/02/1990	0	Grosz	No punishment
Bulgaria	30/03/1990	0	Zhivkov	Prison
Czechoslovakia	09/06/1990	1	Husak	No punishment
Haiti	16/12/1990	1	Avril	Exile
Poland	02/07/1991	0	Jaruzelski	No punishment
El Salvador	26/09/1991	0	Cristiani	No punishment

(Continued)

Table IV. (Continued)

Mongolia	14/01/1992	0	Batmonh	No punishment
Mali	09/06/1992	1	Traore	Prison
Paraguay	23/06/1992	1	Stroessner	Exile
Thailand	14/09/1992	0	Kraprayoon	No punishment
Madagascar	26/11/1992	0	Ratsiraka	No punishment
Taiwan	20/12/1992	0	Lee Teng-Hui	No punishment
Niger	27/12/1992	1	Seibou	No punishment
Lesotho	28/03/1993	1	Ramaema	No punishment
Moldova	04/08/1993	0	Snegur	No punishment
South Africa	27/04/1994	0	deKlerk	No punishment
Ukraine	19/07/1994	1	Kravchuk	No punishment
Haiti	16/10/1994	1	Cedras	Exile
Nicaragua	06/07/1995	0	Daniel Ortega	No punishment
Guatemala	16/01/1996	0	Serrano Elias	Exile
Dominican Republic	17/08/1996	0	Balaguer	No punishment
Romania	16/11/1996	0	Vacariou	No punishment
South Korea	26/02/1998	0	Kim Young Sam	No punishment
Honduras	27/01/1999	0	Reina	No punishment
Paraguay	29/03/1999	0	Cubas Grau	Exile
Senegal	20/03/2000	0	Diouf	No punishment
Russia	26/03/2000	0	Yeltsin	No punishment
Croatia	26/10/2000	0	Tudjman	Natural death
Yugoslavia	27/10/2000	1	Milosevic	Prison
Mexico	01/12/2000	0	Zedillo	No punishment
Peru	28/07/2001	0	Fujimori	Exile
Lesotho	05/06/2002	0	Mosisili	Still in power
Albania	25/07/2002	0	Meta	No punishment
Macedonia	15/09/2002	0	Georgievski	No punishment
Kenya	30/12/2002	0	Moi	No punishment
Georgia	25/01/2004	0	Shevardnadze	No punishment
Solomon Islands	15/08/2004	0	Kemakeza	Still in power
Indonesia	20/10/2004	0	Megawati Sukarnoputri	No punishment
Ghana	07/12/2004	0	John Agyekum Kufuor	Still in power

fence surrounding the legation and torn to pieces' (Lentz, 1999: 219). Given such horrendous fates, why would someone want to take such a risky job as being the president of Haiti? One possible answer is that even if the risk of death is high for presidents in states such as Haiti, the opportunity costs of *not* being in power may be even higher. A contender not in power risks persecution from ruling leaders, the risk of post-tenure punishment is not necessarily worse, considering the alternatives, and holding office offers the possibility of accumulating vast amounts of personal wealth, which might

make assuming the presidency sufficiently attractive. Although we need better theories to understand the incentive structures of contenders in unstable states, Archigos provides an empirical basis for research along these lines.

Regime Instability: Exit and Entry

Archigos makes it possible to identify forms of political instability other than changes in a country's overall degree of democracy. Almost all work on institutional features in international relations and cross-national research over the last two decades has focused on the

distinction between democratic and non-democratic institutions. However, whereas democracy is a relatively well-defined category and different definitions by and large classify the same states as democracies, non-democracy is a residual category, defined essentially in terms of what it is not. As such, a number of very different types of political systems are often lumped together as ‘non-democracies’, including hereditary absolute monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, socialist autocracies such as the Soviet Union, fascist regimes such as Nazi Germany, and kleptocracies such as Mobutu’s Zaire, which have little in common apart from not being democratic.

Moreover, a great deal of instability and change between quite different regimes would not appear as changes in measures of democracy. Consider the revolutions in Cuba and Iran in 1959 and 1979, respectively, which entailed fundamental political changes. Since both states remain ‘non-democracies’ before and after their revolutions, however, neither would be considered to be undergoing substantial political changes by common measures assessing only the degree of democracy.¹⁰ Some researchers have tried to identify variation within autocratic regimes by looking at the structure of their institutions (i.e. whether they have a personalistic government with a single ruler, or are ruled by a dominant party) or identifying large changes in policy. However, these approaches tend to rely on post hoc classifications of whether we see large or influential changes or not.¹¹

Archigos allows us to identify irregular regime changes or changes in ruling coalitions in autocracies by examining whether leader

entry and exit occur in a prescribed (as in the case of transfers to a designated successor) or an irregular manner (as in the case of the Iranian revolution). Obviously, not all leader changes can be considered changes in the ruling coalition and regime changes. Papa Doc’s transfer of power to his son Baby Doc can hardly be characterized as a change of regime. Hence, we consider only cases where leaders are removed irregularly relative to the prevailing rules and practices of a state *and* the new leader enters irregularly. We add the clause on irregular leader entry, to exclude cases where leaders are forced to resign or removed irregularly, but where a designated vice-president then assumes power as prescribed by a formal constitution or practices.

Table V compares the population of years with and without irregular transitions, measured as irregular exit followed by irregular entry within a window of twelve months, with years in which we observe transitions in the Polity data, in terms of changes that move countries to and from the threshold for democracy. As can be seen, we have almost 30% more cases of irregular transitions than transitions between democracy and autocracy. Moreover, there is relatively little overlap between irregular regime transitions and tran-

Table V. Irregular Regime Changes by Polity Transitions, Yearly Observations

<i>Polity transitions</i>	<i>Irregular transition</i>		<i>Sum</i>
	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
To autocracy	68	6	74
No	11,476	230	11,706
To democracy	107	9	116
Sum	11,651	245	11,896

Moreover, rulers sometimes find it helpful to set up ruling parties and other institutions. For example, President Calles of Mexico founded the party later known as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to stop the violent struggle for power among factions in the wake of the revolution. His influence in the party then allowed him to dominate the government from the end of his term in 1928 until 1934.

¹⁰ In the Polity data, for example, Iran is assigned a Polity score (institutionalized democracy-autocracy) of -10 before the 1979 revolution and a score of -6 after 1981. Likewise, Cuba’s Polity score increased from -9 to -7 after Castro replaced Batista.

¹¹ Moreover, policy orientation and institutions reflect strategic decisions and need not be associated with changes in ruling coalitions. Many leaders who have pursued centralized economic planning have later enacted privatization and market reforms when opportune.

sitions to and from democracy in the Polity data, reinforcing the claim that a great deal of political change in autocracies is simply not reflected in data on democracy. Gleditsch & Choung (2006) conduct an empirical analysis of autocratic regime crises and the likelihood of transitions to democracy or new autocracies. Similarly, Archigos should also be helpful for studies of the effects of political instability on growth and conflict (Feng, 1997; Mansfield & Snyder, 2005).

Conclusion

Archigos provides an extensive systematic dataset on political leaders, with additional information about leaders not contained in existing sources. We have shown that this information is associated with striking differences in political behavior and outcomes. Our examples illustrate new empirical findings that simply could not be explored in existing data sources. Although selective, our overview demonstrates how Archigos bears considerable promise in providing answers to new and old research questions and opens up new avenues for research on individual leaders as decisionmakers.

Although we believe Archigos will be useful for many research questions, we stress that the data remain work in progress. We will continue to update and extend the dataset. For example, we plan to collect finer-grained data on the manner of entry, presidential term limits, and family relations with previous leaders and extend our temporal domain. We also wholeheartedly welcome extensions to the Archigos data by other researchers.

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