

Cities, Redistribution, and Authoritarian Regime Survival

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How does redistributive policy affect the survival of authoritarian regimes? I argue that redistributive policy in favor of cities, while temporarily reducing urban grievances, in the long-run undermines regime survival by inducing urban concentration. I test the argument using cross-national city population, urban bias, and nondemocratic regime survival data in the post-WWII period. The results show that urban concentration is dangerous for dictators principally by promoting collective action, that urban bias induces urban concentration, and that urban bias represents a Faustian bargain with short-term benefits overwhelmed by long-term costs.