International Studies Quarterly (2016) **60**, 73–84

Living by the Sword and Dying by the Sword? Leadership Transitions in and out of Dictatorships

Alexandre Debs
Yale University

What makes certain dictatorships more likely than others to democratize? I argue that *military dictators*, as specialists in violence, often remain threats to their successors. However, when democratic systems replace military dictatorships, that expertise presents less danger to new incumbents. Because democracies select leaders through elections, they reduce the importance of military expertise—and the role of associated violence—in contests for office. Thus, military dictatorships should prove more likely to transition quickly to democracy; military dictators will expect a lower likelihood of punishment—including death—at the hands of their successors than if they are replaced by other dictators. Therefore, incumbent military dictators see democratic systems as less dangerous to them; they face specific incentives to ensure a quick and effective transition to democracy. I provide support for my theory with evidence from the post-World War II period.

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, military dictatorships stand out for their instability. More precisely, military dictatorships have been short-lived and quicker than other dictatorships to democratize.[1] What explains this pattern?

The dynamics of the Arab Spring illustrates this historical pattern. While the Middle East and North Africa house some of the most durable dictatorships, some proved more fragile than others. Leaders who came to office as military officers, including in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, have either fallen from power or are currently engaged in a protracted violent struggle for survival. In contrast, leaders in the region who came to office as monarchs have, for the most part, weathered the Arab Spring and faced comparatively limited unrest.[2]

To understand why military dictators experience a short tenure and transition more quickly than civilian dictatorships to democracy, I begin with a critical—but so far underexplored—distinction between them: military dictators enjoy a comparative advantage in using the means of violence. Paradoxically, this may become a liability. Since they represent a great threat to any successor, military dictators face a greater risk of elimination, should they lose office, relative to their civilian counterparts.

Given this apparent paradox, military dictators face incentives to ensure their replacement by democratic systems. Democracy provides a credible commitment to reduce the importance of military expertise in subsequent contests for office. It thus promises a significant improvement in the post-tenure fate of military dictators as it reduces the threat that they pose to their successors. This insight derives from two fundamental properties of democracy: inclusiveness and public contestation in the selection of leaders (Dahl 1971, 4). With a greater degree of inclusiveness, a democracy reduces the political importance of skill in using the means of violence. Instead, the success of democratic politicians comes from appealing to large constituencies. Such leaders therefore gain little from using violence to eliminate political opponents. With a greater degree of public contestation, democratic institutions protect the rights of elected politicians, thus reducing the threat presented by a departing dictator. As a result, relatively low levels of violence in democracy can become self-enforcing.

Military dictators face a severe commitment problem when it comes to refraining from violently contesting for control over the state. They therefore should expect to benefit more from a transition to democracy than other kinds of dictators. In turn, democratic transitions should, all things being equal, generate the greatest improvement in their post-tenure fate. This suggests that military dictators will democratize at a quicker rate than non-military dictators.

The paper develops this argument below through a formal model and discusses three illustrative case studies: Lesotho, Uruguay, and Haiti. An Online Appendix contains proofs and additional evidence.

Theory and Literature

Recent seminal work on political transitions describes democratization as a concession from a unified, rich, political elite to the poor, meant to stave off a revolution (Acemoglu

Alexandre Debs (PhD, MIT, 2007) is associate professor (on term) in the political science department at Yale University. His work focuses on the causes of war, nuclear proliferation, and democratization.

Author's note: I thank the editors and three anonymous reviewers, as well as Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, Gary Cox, Barbara Geddes, Susan Hyde, Nuno P. Monteiro, Milan Svolik, Joseph Wright, and numerous seminar participants for their helpful comments. All remaining errors are my own.

[1]This pattern obtains for a variety of typologies, whether based on the characteristics of the leader or the constituency holding the leader in power. Results here rely on the Democracy-Dictatorship dataset of Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010). See also Gandhi (2008, 177); Geddes (1999, 133, 2003, 78); Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014, 320); Hadenius and Teorell (2007, 150–2); Magaloni (2008, 735); Wright and Escriba-Folch (2012, 301–2).

[2]On the stability of monarchies in the Middle East and on the Arab Spring, see Anderson (1991); Bellin (2012); Benstead, Jamal, and Lust (2015); Dalmasso (2012); Lawrence (2014); Menaldo (2012).

Debs, Alexandre. (2016) Living by the Sword and Dying by the Sword? Leadership Transitions in and out of Dictatorships. *International Studies Quarterly*, doi: 10.1093/isq/sqv014

and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003).[3] Many scholars have since enriched our understanding of internal political dynamics in dictatorships.[4] In particular, the role of the military has come under closer scrutiny (Acemoglu, Ticchi, and Vindigni 2010; Albertus 2015; Svolik 2012a). Some scholars debate whether military officers act as guardians of the nation or champions of the middle class (Nordlinger 1977, 24–26; Biglaiser 2002; Albertus 2015). In particular, Michael Albertus (2015, 108–9) argues that the Peruvian military expropriated the rich and redistributed to the middle class to show its loyalty to the middle class, which could have organized resistance against the regime. This literature produces a strong stylized fact: military dictatorships have a short life span and they are quicker than other dictatorships to transition to democracy.[5] Yet we still lack a convincing explanation for the finding.

Two prominent hypotheses stand out. First, members of the military may have a greater preference for unity and value coordination in choosing to leave office (Finer 2002, 6; Geddes 1999, 126, 2003, 54; Nordlinger 1977, 38). Second, they may cede power because they can extract favorable terms for their exit due to their greater capacity for violence (Geddes 1999, 131, 2003, 63; Huntington 1991, 116).[6]

Yet neither of these explanations has reached a consensus. Some argue that members of the military distinguish themselves for their weak preference for unity. "The relatively frequent changes of person at the top level of the military regimes reflect the tensions often found in military ranks between different branches (army, air force, and so on); and between different generations and cohorts" (Hadenius and Teorell 2007, 150). This is because military regimes, as Ulfelder points out, are "more likely than other kinds of authoritarianism to suffer from visible splits among ruling elites" (2005, 318). Thus, the short tenure of military dictators could result either from a strong or a weak preference for unity. *A priori*, it is difficult to arbitrate between these contradictory assumptions.

One could instead build on the assumption that military officers enjoy a comparative advantage in the use of violence. After all, becoming a military officer requires extensive training in the use of force. Consistent with this postulate, military dictators typically enter office through the use of violence: between 1946 and 2004, 68 percent of military dictators entered office using 'irregular means,' while only 24 percent of non-military dictators did so. Moreover, military dictators rarely win the first election in a new democracy: only 10 percent of military dictators did so, compared to 24 percent of non-military dictators.[7] Theories of 'voting and fighting' may view electoral results as a proxy for the level of support that different political leaders could muster. For example, Przeworski (1999, 48) characterizes voting as "'flexing muscles:' a reading of chances in the eventual war." Yet Przeworski adds that this result relies on an important, and typically forgotten, premise: "If all men are equally strong (or armed) then the distribution of vote is a proxy for the outcome of war" (Przeworski 1999, 48). It seems reasonable to assume that men are not equally strong or equally armed.

If we accept the postulate that military officers have a 'comparative advantage' in the production of violence, then we might expect them to remain in power for a longer period or enjoy a safer post-tenure fate. In a two-player game, the stronger player would eliminate the weaker player and extend his tenure (Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2008).[8] However, military officers have a short tenure and face an unfavorable post-tenure fate (Debs and Goemans 2010, 441). Moreover, any complete theory should explain why any player would use violence as doing so always imposes costs (Fearon 1995).

The answer lies in recognizing a fundamental commitment problem: circumstances and political fortunes change. A politician cannot commit to refrain from using violence if his political fortune improves. A military dictator, in particular, represents a significant threat, given his comparative advantage in using the means of violence. Any challenger would thus eliminate him, whenever he has an opportunity, even if doing so entails a cost.[9]

A transition to democracy can alleviate the dictator's commitment problem. Two fundamental properties of democracy offer this possibility: inclusiveness and public contestation in the selection of leaders (Dahl 1971, 4). Given its greater degree of inclusiveness, a democracy favors politicians who can win elections. Such leaders do not necessarily have an advantage in using violence. They would not prevail in future violent contests. Thus, they would not reap much of the reward from eliminating a specialist of violence. Given its greater degree of public contestation in the selection of the executive, a democracy reduces the incentive to eliminate violent threats. Indeed, because democracy protects their political rights, elected politicians expect any future attempt to depose them through violent means to encounter significant opposition.[10] Therefore, leaders of a new democracy have weaker incentives to eliminate their potential rivals. Put differently, under the right circumstances, democracy becomes self-enforcing (Fearon 2011; Przeworksi 2006).

Solving the dictator's commitment problem has the largest impact on military dictators. Such dictators would otherwise represent the greatest threat to their successor, since they have a comparative advantage in using the means of violence. Therefore, if they decided to democratize, military dictators should experience the largest improvement in their post-tenure fate. The expectation of such an improvement, in turn, induces military dictators to democratize quickly.

Turning to the data, we see that military dictators face the greatest risk of jail or death at the hands of their nondemocratic successor (see Table 1): 29 percent of military dictators are jailed or killed after transitioning to another dictator, and 21 percent of non-military dictators face the same fate after transitioning to another dictator.[11]

[3]For other views of social classes and democratization, see Collier (1999); Leventoglu (2014). On violent and non-violent campaigns, see Bakke (2010); Chenoweth and Stephan (2011); Cunningham and Beaulieu (2010); Pearlman (2010). On the extension of the franchise to women, see Paxton (2000); Teele (2014).

[4]On institutions and elections in non-democracies as instruments of regime survival, see Albertus and Menaldo (2012); Blaydes (2011); Boix and Svolik (2013); Cox (2009); Ezrow and Frantz (2011); Gandhi (2008); Lust-Okar (2004); Magaloni (2008); Magaloni and Kricheli (2010); Svolik (2012b).

[5]See the references in footnote 1 above.

[6]On the military's time-inconsistency problem, see Escriba-Folch (2013, 162); Huntington (1991, 116,120–1); Sutter (1995, 111–2).

[7]See Table 2 below.

[8]For a similar analysis in the context of international relations, see Niou, Ordeshook, and Rose (1989).

[9]For similar analyses of commitment problems, see Acemoglu and Robinson (2006); Debs and Monteiro (2014); Fearon (1995); Powell (2006).

[10]This protection may come from parliamentary immunity, *habeas corpus*, an independent judiciary, popular protests, and international sanctions after democratic breakdown.

[11]Results obtained using the Democracy-Dictatorship dataset (Cheibub et al. 2010). This typology best matches my theoretical approach, which builds on differences between the *leaders* of non-democratic regimes.

Table 1. The fate of domestically ousted dictators: transitions to another dictatorship, 1946–2004[a]

	Ok	Exiled	Jailed	Killed	Natural death	Unknown	Total
Military	83 (41%)	60 (30%)	30 (15%)	28 (14%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	203
Non-Military	162 (59%)	53 (19%)	36 (13%)	21 (8%)	1 (0%)	2 (1%)	275

[a]The table reports the number of leaders with a given post-tenure fate (percentage for each type). Data on the post-tenure fate of leaders taken from Archigos. Coding rules about regimes taken from the Democracy-Dictatorship classification. Cases of natural deaths are such that the leader is first domestically ousted and subsequently dies of natural consequences up to six months after leaving office. A leader who loses office through natural death is not domestically ousted and is thus excluded from this table.

Table 2. The fate of dictators: transitions to democracy, 1946–2004[a]

	Become Democratic leader	Domestically ousted				
		Ok	Exiled	Jailed	Killed	Total
Military	5 (10%)	40 (78%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	51
Non-Military	11 (24%)	29 (64%)	2 (4%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	45

[a]The table reports the number of leaders with a given post-tenure fate (percentage for each type).

More importantly, military dictators face the greatest improvement in their post-tenure fate after democratization (see Table 2, in comparison with Table 1). No leader is killed after a transition to democracy: 6 percent of military dictators are jailed after a transition to democracy, relative to 7 percent of non-military dictators. Focusing on the set of leaders who do not become the first leaders of a new democracy, we see that 7 percent of them are jailed or killed after transitioning to democracy, relative to 9 percent of non-military dictators. Put differently, transitioning to a democrat, instead of transitioning to another dictator, reduces the probability of being killed by 14 percent for military dictators and only 8 percent for non-military dictators. Transitioning to a democrat, instead of transitioning to another dictator, reduces the rate of punishment by 22 percent for military dictators and only 12 percent for non-military dictators. These differences are statistically significant, controlling for confounding factors.[12] More importantly, these differences are substantively important, given the consequences of severe punishment. I argue that such differences affect a dictator's decision to democratize.

Thinking about the circumstances under which military dictators wish to democratize can give us additional empirical leverage. Military dictators find it most attractive to democratize if they can expect a 'consolidated democracy' where violence plays a minimal role. A consolidated democracy reduces their potential influence. Yet for this very reason military dictators can expect a safer post-tenure fate.[13]

Developments on the international scene can fuel the belief that violence would play a minimal role in politics. Initial studies documenting the short tenure of military dictatorships focused on the Cold War sample (Geddes 1999, 133, which covered the 1946-1998 time period). Yet recent studies show even stronger results since the end of the Cold War (Marinov and Goemans 2014, 2). This increased eagerness to hold elections could result, in part, from stronger norms in favor of elections and election observations (Hyde 2011; Kelley 2012; see also Donno 2010). The model can accommodate such developments: stronger norms in favor of holding elections help alleviate the commitment problem of military dictators and makes them keener to democratize.

The increased alacrity of military dictatorships to transition to democracy since the end of the Cold War could also result from a stronger norm in favor of the prosecution of human rights violations (Sikkink 2011). *A priori*, such a development could have competing effects on the rate of democratization (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2013, 1–2; Nalepa and Powell 2015, 2). On the one hand, the threat of prosecution helps solve the dictator's commitment problem and hence, facilitates their decision to democratize. On the other hand, transitional justice could incentivize dictators to hold on to power so as to avoid prosecution.[14] Yet for our purposes such developments actually strengthen differences between military civilian dictators. Solving the commitment problem benefits military dictators the most. Increasing the risk of prosecution does not necessarily threaten military dictators the most (this depends on the number and severity of crimes committed while in office). Therefore, a stronger norm in favor of human rights prosecutions might actually strengthen differences between military and civilian dictators discussed here.

Lastly, although military dictators may react to international developments, they could themselves try to affect beliefs about the future importance of violence in politics. In particular, military dictators should want to invest in institutions that would help consolidate democracy and reduce the importance of violence in politics. Such institutions would help alleviate the dictator's commitment problem and lead to the largest improvement in their post-tenure fate. As a result, we should expect military dictators to engineer pacts or set up constitutions for the new regime (Albertus and Menaldo 2014).

The Model

Set-up

This game captures a strategic interaction between N players, a dictator (player 1) and $N-1$ factions (players 2 to N).[15] Players interact over three rounds. In round 0, the

[12]See the Appendix.

[13]Put differently, military dictators wish to democratize when the 'stakes' of holding office are small (Alexander 2002, 8–9).

[14]Possibly as a result of such competing factors, empirical results are mixed. Some conclude that the International Criminal Court can lengthen dictatorships under some circumstances. For example, it can weaken the shielding effect of the opposition's 'skeletons in the closet' on a dictator's culpability (Nalepa and Powell 2015, 5–6). Prosecution in neighboring countries can induce dictators with especially weak institutional backing to stay in power (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2013, 16). Yet overall the literature does not endorse the claim that the International Criminal Court lengthens dictatorships or that neighboring prosecutions deter military dictatorships from giving up power (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2013, 3–4).

[15]Faction here refers to any individual who may play a role in politics, whether or not she belongs to the inner circle of the regime or of the military.

dictator chooses the country's regime type $R \in \{D, ND\}$, where D stands for a democracy and ND for a non-democracy.[16] In round 1, players revise their status in the regime. In a dictatorship, players may eliminate each other or force the dictator to step down peacefully. In democracy, an election occurs, determining a new leader.[17] In round 2, players divide the spoils of office in the shadow of political violence. Write the status of a player i at the start of round t as $s_{i,t} \in \{l, f, e\}$, where l stands for leader, f for faction, and e for eliminated. I will generally use the female pronoun 'she' for the players, the leader and the dictator, reserving the impersonal pronoun 'it' for a faction.

In my analysis, I build on the premise that a democracy differs from a non-democracy along two dimensions in the selection of the executive leader: the degree of inclusiveness and the degree of public contestation.

With a greater degree of inclusiveness, a democracy puts greater weight on a player's relative popularity, rather than on her capacity for violence, in the selection of a leader. Let $\rho_{i,t}$ be the popularity of player i in round t and let $\gamma_{i,t}$ be her capacity for violence ($\rho_{i,t}, \gamma_{i,t} > 0 \ \forall i,t$).

If the dictator does not democratize, she remains in office unless a faction eliminates her or credibly threatens to do so. Nature chooses a player to make the elimination decision. If Nature chooses the dictator, she may eliminate any faction. If Nature chooses a faction, it may eliminate the dictator. Eliminating another player comes at a cost, as explained below. The probability that Nature chooses player i to make the elimination decision in round 1 in non-democracy is given by her relative capacity for violence $\left(\frac{\gamma_{i,1}}{\sum_{j=1}^{N}\gamma_{j,1}}\right)$.

If the dictator democratizes, she agrees to step down to the winner of an election. With probability p_{in}, player $i=1$ wins an election with probability $\frac{\rho_{i,1}}{\sum_{j\neq 1}\rho_{j,1}}$, and with probability 1-p_{in}, she wins the election with probability $\frac{\gamma_{i,1}}{\sum_{j\neq 1}\gamma_{j,1}}$. The variable p_{in} represents the degree of inclusiveness of democracy, $p_{in} \in [0,1]$.

With a greater degree of contestation, a democracy increases the cost of using violence to eliminate political opponents. If the dictator does not democratize, the cost of using violence in round $t \in [1,2]$, c_t is drawn from $F_{con}(c)$ with probability p_{con} and F(c) with probability 1-p_{con}.[18] $F_{con}(c)$ puts greater weight on higher realizations of the cost of violence. Technically, $F_{con}(c)$ first-order stochastically dominates F(c), where $F(1) > 0$ and F(c) is strictly increasing when $F(c) < 1$, while $F_{con}(1) = 0$. The variable p_{con} represents the degree of contestation of democracy, $p_{con} \in [0,1]$.[19] For now, I treat the degree of contestation and inclusiveness in democracy as exogenous. They may depend on international factors (for example, Cold War dynamics). In section 3.3, I discuss an extension where a dictator can take actions to increase the expected degree of contestation and inclusiveness in the ensuing democracy.

[16]I use dictatorship and non-democracy interchangeably.

[17]The results would still hold if the departing dictator could run for office, as long as she benefits from a weaker incumbency advantage than in non-democracy.

[18]Nature chooses the cdf, and the cost given any cdf, independently at the start of each round.

[19]Allowing for a random cost of violence helps generate probabilities for the outcomes of interest: elimination and democratization.

To understand why violence might occur despite its inefficiency, I allow for peaceful bargaining in each round (Fearon 1995). In round 1, the leader may offer to step down and transfer her status to become a faction, if she has not done so already through democratization. In round 2, the leader may offer a share of the spoils of office to the factions. Write v_j for the share of the spoils of office that the leader at the start of round 2 offers to player j. Any player eliminated from the game faces severe consequences and receives a payoff of $-k$, where $k > 0$. Any other player receives a payoff equal to her share of the spoils of office minus any cost of eliminating another player. Write $\Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1, R)$ for the probability that a leader is eliminated at the start of round 2, conditional on her ouster, her type, and the political regime.

With this model, I wish to compare the propensity of military and non-military dictators to democratize. I assume that military dictators have a comparative advantage in the production of violence. Formally, there exist two 'types' of players $t_i \in \{t_L, t_H\}$, where t_L (t_H) refers to the type with low (high) capacity for violence. Type t_H corresponds to a military officer. A player's capacity for violence depends on her type and on her status in the game, $\gamma_{i,t} = \gamma_t(t_i) + \gamma_s(s_{i,t})$. Type t_H has a comparative advantage in the production of violence in that $\frac{\gamma_t(t_H)}{\gamma_t(t_L)} > \frac{\rho_t(t_H)}{\rho_t(t_L)}$.

A leader has greater access to the state's means of repression so that $\gamma_s(l) > \gamma_s(f) = 0$. Types are common knowledge. At least one faction has a high capacity for violence at the start of the game so that no player begins with complete control of the means of violence.[20] Formally, write $N_{H,t}(N_{L,t})$ for the number of factions with type $t_H(t_L)$ at the start of round t. I assume that $N_{H,t} \geq 1$.

Taking stock, the game proceeds as follows:

Round 0

1. Player 1 chooses whether to democratize.

Round 1 - Non-Democracy

1. Nature chooses player i to make the elimination decision and draws the costs of violence c_1 .
2. Player 1 offers to step down or not.
3. Player i makes her elimination decision.

Round 1 - Democracy

1. Nature elects a leader i and draws the costs of violence c_1 .
2. Player i makes her elimination decision.

Round 2

1. Nature chooses player j to make the elimination decision and draws the cost of violence c_2.
2. The leader in round 2 offers a division of the spoils of office.
3. Player j makes her elimination decision.
4. Players obtain their payoffs.

Set-up

I solve for a subgame-perfect Nash equilibrium of this game, using backward induction, and writing * for equilibrium strategies.

[20]Any dictator, even military dictators, must rely on other agents to perform some tasks of repression.

The Division of the Spoils of Office

Let us solve for the equilibrium of round 2. In this round, violence does not occur in equilibrium, given its inefficiency. If Nature chooses the leader to make the elimination decision, she claims all the spoils of office. If Nature chooses a faction instead, the leader offers enough of the spoils of office to stave off elimination.

We can establish a few properties of this equilibrium. First, a player's payoff increases with her capacity for violence. The greater her capacity for violence, the greater the probability that Nature chooses her to make the elimination decision, and the greater the expected share of the spoils of office that she receives. Second, the leader has a 'proposal advantage.' Even if Nature chooses another player to make the elimination decision, she can keep part of the spoils of office. Third, since violence does not occur in equilibrium, the payoff of every player lies strictly between 0 and 1, the maximum value of the spoils of office. More precisely, the payoff of a player is a weighted average of her relative capacity for violence and what we could call a 'de jure' payoff (the payoffs tied to her status, as leader or faction). Write θ_R for the weight given to these 'de jure' payoffs. Fourth, democracy puts a strictly greater weight on de jure payoffs, due to its greater degree of contestation ($\theta_D \geq \theta_{ND}$, with the inequality being strict if $p_{con} > 0$). In non-democracy, players can credibly threaten to eliminate each other. In democracy, threats of elimination may lack credibility (since $F_{con}(1) = 0$). In this case, the democratic leader could keep all the spoils of office. Put differently, if attempts to usurp power through force trigger great resistance, then de facto power plays a small role in politics. In sum:

Lemma 1. (a) There is a unique subgame-perfect Nash equilibrium in round 2. If Nature chooses the leader at the start of round 2 (call her player i) to make the elimination decision, she keeps the spoils of office ($v_i^* = 1$) and does not eliminate any player. If Nature chooses a faction $j \neq i$ to make the elimination decision, it receives $v_j^* = \max\{1 - c, 0\}$ from the leader, who keeps $v_i^* = \min\{c, 1\}$ for herself, and j accepts the offer if and only if it receives $v_j \geq 1 - c$.

(b) The payoff of a player in round 2 who avoided elimination in round 1 takes the following form:

$$\pi_i = \theta_R u(s_{i,2}) + (1 - \theta_R)\frac{\gamma_{i,2}}{\sum_{j:s_{j,2}\neq e}\gamma_{j,2}} \quad (1)$$

with $u(l) = 1$, $u(f) = 0$, $\theta_{ND} = \int_0^1 (c-1)dF(c) + 1$, and $\theta_D = p_{con} + (1 - p_{con})\,\theta_{ND}$.

Proof. See the Appendix. ■

Moving up to round 1, players understand that they face a commitment problem. Indeed, they cannot commit to refrain from using violence in claiming the spoils of office in round 2. In any regime, eliminating a player in round 1 eliminates a future violent threat. Let us solve for an equilibrium in round 1 to understand how each regime affects the severity of such commitment problems and the process of leadership transition.

Leadership Transitions in Dictatorships

If Nature chooses the leader to make the elimination decision in round 1, she eliminates a faction with high capacity for violence for sufficiently low values of the cost of violence. If Nature chooses a faction i to make the elimination decision, she may want to eliminate the leader who poses a future violent threat. She may also want to acquire the proposal advantage of acting as a leader. For high values of the cost of violence, the leader remains in office. For intermediate values of the cost of violence, the leader cannot remain in office, but staves off elimination by offering to step down. For low values of the cost of violence, the leader is ousted and eliminated.

To see this formally, write $\triangle g_i(p, q)$ for the increase in relative capacity for violence of player i, when she eliminates player p, and would otherwise have status q in round 2:

$$\triangle g_i(p, q) = \frac{\gamma_t(t_i) + \gamma_s(l)}{\sum_{j\neq p}\gamma_t(t_j) + \gamma_s(l)} - \frac{\gamma_t(t_i) + \gamma_s(q)}{\sum_{j=1}^{N}\gamma_t(t_j) + \gamma_s(l)} \quad (2)$$

Then I state:

Lemma 2. There is a unique subgame-perfect Nash equilibrium in round 1 in non-democracy. If Nature chooses the leader (player 1) to make the elimination decision, she eliminates a faction p with high capacity for violence if

$$c_1 < (1 - \theta_{ND})\ \triangle g_1(p, l) \quad (3)$$

and she eliminates no player otherwise. If Nature chooses a faction (player $i = 1$) to make the elimination decision, then player 1 offers to remain in office if

$$c_1 \geq \theta_{ND} + (1 - \theta_{ND})\ \triangle g_i(1, f) \quad (4)$$

She offers to step down if

$$(1 - \theta_{ND})\ \triangle g_i(1, l) \leq c_1 < \theta_{ND} + (1 - \theta_{ND})\ \triangle g_i(1, f) \quad (5)$$

She makes any offer if

$$c_1 < (1 - \theta_{ND})\ \triangle g_i(1, l) \quad (6)$$

The faction making the elimination decision (player $i=1$) accepts player 1's offer to remain in office if and only if (4) holds. It accepts her offer to step down if and only if (6) does not hold.

Proof. See the Appendix. ■

I can now compare the fate of leaders as a function of their type. First, the benefit of eliminating the dictator increases with her capacity for violence ($\triangle g_i(1, s)$ increases with γ_1). At the limit where type t_L has no capacity for violence, then the dictator with low capacity for violence poses no threat to the new dictator. Such a leader avoids elimination along the equilibrium path.[21] In sum:

Claim 1. A dictator with low capacity for violence is least likely to be eliminated, conditional on her ouster. Formally, there exists a threshold $\overline{\gamma_t(t_L)} < \gamma_t(t_H)$ such that for any $\gamma_t(t_L) \in (0, \overline{\gamma_t(t_L)})$, the following hold

$$\Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1 = t_L, ND) < \Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t1 = t_H, ND) \quad (7)$$

[21]The results would still hold if the cost of eliminating a leader depended on her type, as long as $F(0|t_i) = 0$ and $F(c|t_i) > 0$ for any $c > 0$ and any $t_i \in \{t_L, t_H\}$.

Proof. See the Appendix. ■

By focusing on the fact that a dictator remains in office unless another political player can credibly threaten to oust her, the model offers a new perspective on the length of tenure of dictators. Conventional wisdom suggests that a greater capacity for violence promises a longer tenure. Yet the model highlights the fact that a greater capacity for violence increases the credibility of violent threats against a leader. Therefore, a lower capacity for violence might actually lengthen a dictator's tenure. Most interestingly, a greater capacity for violence could induce a dictator to engineer a transition to democracy. To see this, I analyze leadership transitions out of dictatorships.

Leadership Transitions out of Dictatorships

By democratizing, the leader offers to step down to the winner of the election. In round 1, the first democratic leader decides whether to eliminate the former dictator. She will do so if the departing dictator represents a violent threat in round 2 and the cost of violence takes a sufficiently low value (see Figure 1, bottom panel). Formally:

Lemma 3. There is a unique subgame-perfect Nash equilibrium in round 1 in democracy. The new leader (player i) eliminates the departing dictator if and only if

$$c_1 < (1 - \theta_D) \ \triangle g_i(1, l) \tag{8}$$

where $\triangle g_i(1, l)$ is as defined in equation (2) above.

Proof. Straightforward. ■

As a result, a departing dictator faces a risk of elimination that depends on her capacity for violence, on the degree of contestation in democracy, and on the degree of inclusiveness in democracy. A former dictator represents a greater threat to the first democratic leader if she has a high capacity for violence ($\triangle g_i(1, l)$ takes a greater value if $t_1 = t_H$ than if $t_1 = t_L$). Therefore, a dictator with high capacity for violence faces a greater risk of elimination, compared to a dictator with low capacity for violence.

Consider the effect of a greater degree of contestation (p_{con}). As p_{con} increases, then the cost that a new leader must pay to use violence increases. In addition, as p_{con} increases, then the cost that a departing dictator would face in round 2 to claim the spoils of office increases (θ_D increases with p_{con}). Therefore, a greater degree of contestation ameliorates the dictator's commitment problem and thus improves her post-tenure fate.

Now consider the effect of a greater degree of inclusiveness (p_{in}). As p_{in} increases, then the probability that the new leader has a low capacity for violence increases. A leader with low capacity for violence has less to gain from eliminating the dictator. Nature rarely chooses such a leader to make the elimination decision in round 2. Therefore, a greater degree of inclusiveness improves the former dictator's post-tenure fate.

Now consider the effect of an increase in the degree of contestation and inclusiveness for dictators of each type. At the limit where $\gamma_t(t_L)$ tends to zero, then a dictator with low capacity for violence does not represent any threat to her successor. Thus, she avoids elimination in any regime. Therefore, dictators with high capacity for violence benefit the most from increases in the degree of contestation and inclusiveness. In sum:

Claim 2. A transition to democracy reduces the probability of elimination conditional on ouster, with a larger effect for dictators with high capacity for violence. Formally, there exists a threshold $\gamma_t(t_L) < \gamma_t(t_H)$ such that for any $\gamma_t(t_L) \in (0, \gamma_t(t_L))$, the following hold:

$$\begin{aligned} &\Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1 = t_H, ND) - \Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1 = t_H, D) \\ &\geq \Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1 = t_L, ND) \\ &- \Pr(s_{1,2} = e | s_{1,2} \neq l, t_1 = t_L, D) \geq 0 \end{aligned} \tag{9}$$

where either inequality holds strictly if $p_{in} > 0$ or $p_{con} > 0$.

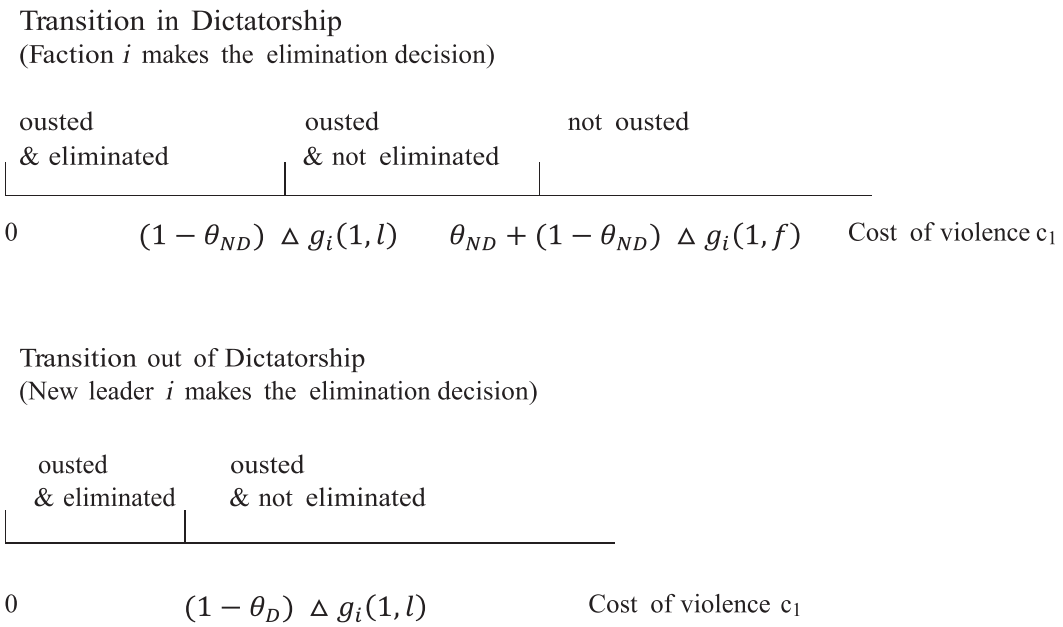

Figure 1. The fate of the dictator, theoretical predictions

Proof. See the Appendix. ■

Moving up, consider the dictator's decision to democratize. On the one hand, democratization reduces the probability that the dictator can claim the spoils of office. On the other hand, democratization could improve the dictator's post-tenure fate. Since dictators with high capacity for violence see the largest improvement in their post-tenure fate, for any increase in the degree of contestation and inclusiveness, they democratize at the highest rate. Formally, write $\underline{p_{con}}(t_1, p_{in})$ for the minimum degree of contestation that the dictator of type t_1 democratizes, given democracy's degree of inclusiveness p_{in}. We conclude:

Claim 3. A dictator with high capacity for violence is most likely to democratize. Formally, there exists a $\underline{p_{con}}(t_1, p_{in}) < 1$ such that a dictator democratizes if $p_{con} \geq \underline{p_{con}}(t_1, p_{in})$. There exist $\underline{k}$, $\overline{\gamma_t(t_L)} < \gamma_t(t_H)$ such that for any $k > \underline{k}$ and $\gamma_t(t_L) \in (0, \overline{\gamma_t(t_L)})$, the following hold:

(a) $\underline{p_{con}}(t_1, 0) > 0$ and if $\underline{p_{con}}(t_1, p_{in}) > 0$, then $\frac{\partial \underline{p_{con}}(t_1, p_{in})}{\partial p_{in}} < 0$.

(b) $\underline{p_{con}}(t_H, p_{in}) < \underline{p_{con}}(t_L, p_{in})$.

Proof. See the Appendix. ■

The above results form the main testable implications of the model. Beyond these specific predictions, the theory offers broader lessons for the literature. I now turn to a discussion of such extensions.

Extensions and Discussion

First, the paper can be extended to allow for varying levels of democratic consolidation. In the above game, no coup occurs in equilibrium after a transition to democracy. This could suggest that the results hold only if the new democracy quickly consolidates. Here, I extend the model with an additional round, call it 1a, which occurs between rounds 1 and 2 and follows the same timing as round 1 in non-democracy.[22]

In this revised game, a democratic leader may have to leave office in equilibrium (in round 1a). Still, the results of the baseline model extend to this game. Departing dictators with a high capacity for violence represent the greatest threat to their successor. They suffer a greater risk of elimination in round 1, and they benefit the most from a transition to democracy.[23]

Next, I investigate the incentives of dictators to invest in institutions prior to a democratic transition. A greater degree of contestation (p_{con}) and a greater degree of inclusiveness (p_{in}) improve the fate of former dictators. The increase in welfare looms especially large for military dictators, who face the most severe commitment problem. Granted, a greater degree of contestation limits the ability of such dictators to come back to office. However, given the harsh consequences of elimination, the ex ante benefit attached to an improvement of their post-tenure fate trumps any other effect. As a result, dictators—and especially military dictators—should invest in institutions to manage a transition to democracy (Albertus and Menaldo 2012, 2014).

Second, the paper proposes a mechanism through which monarchical and semi-democratic institutions may enhance the tenure of dictators, by conferring them a greater degree of 'legitimacy' (Boix and Svolik 2013, 309; Menaldo 2012, 709). In the language of the model, a greater degree of 'legitimacy' translates into greater constraints on the use of violence, if factions wish to usurp the spoils of office. Naturally, the incentives to violently oust a leader decrease with his/her legitimacy. Legitimate leaders face a smaller risk of elimination. As a result, they democratize with relatively low probability.

Third, the paper provides a useful perspective on different approaches in the conceptualization of regimes. The paper builds on a classification scheme based on the characteristics of the leader upon acceding office. An alternative and influential approach uses a classification scheme based on the leader's selectorate. Using this approach, some observe that personalist leaders often behave in significantly different ways from other dictators (Escriba-Folch 2013, 165; Geddes, Frantz, and Wright 2014, 158; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014, 321). Such an approach can capture significant patterns, but it presents some risks for predictive purposes. We may find that personalist dictators rule in a ruthless manner and that collegial military regimes transfer power peacefully. Yet the classification scheme relies on observed behavior, the very behavior that we may seek to explain in some cases.[24] Therefore, for some questions, a classification scheme based on the characteristics of the leader upon acceding office might have greater predictive power.

Fourth, the model offers a rich perspective on the causal effect of the type of a dictator on outcomes of interest. Consider the outcome of democratization, discussed here. Perhaps military officers rule under particular circumstances (for example, with weak constraints on the use of violence). Such circumstances may, in and of themselves, destabilize dictatorships and trigger a transition to democracy. We may thus worry that the type of a dictator has no causal effect on democratization. First, the model acknowledges such selection effects. Under weaker constraints on the use of violence, military dictators gain office with greater probability. Second, the paper shows that violent circumstances destabilize dictatorships and trigger democratization precisely because the military holds executive office. In extreme cases without any constraint on the use of violence, non-military dictators remain in power with certainty. Put differently, the model highlights how military dictators transition to democracy to alleviate their commitment problem, whether or not violent circumstances exacerbate such a commitment problem.

Now consider the outcome of foreign conflict. Debs and Goemans (2010, 434–5) argue that the cost of replacing leaders has a causal effect on the probability that they become involved in war.[25] The greater the importance of violence in the replacement of leaders, the greater the cost of concessions for such leaders, and the greater the likelihood that diplomacy fails and war occurs. Debs and Goemans (2010, 435) argue that this mechanism offers an

[22]Again, Nature chooses the cdf, and the cost given the cdf, independently at the start of each round. See the Appendix for formal results and proofs. Also, I assume that if a faction comes to office through violent means (eliminating the leader or threatening to do so), then the country becomes a non-democracy. In that case, the cost of violence in round 2 comes from the cdf F (c).

[23]This amendment of the baseline setup increases the complexity of the model, requiring additional assumptions on F(c) and $\gamma_s(l)$. See the Appendix for details.

[24]The majority of personalist leaders rose to power as military officers (Geddes, Frantz, and Wright 2014, 158).

[25]Other studies on the relationship between regime type and war include Weeks (2012, 2014). Other analyses of individual leaders' decisions to go to war include Debs and Weiss (2014); Saunders (2011); Talmadge (2013); and Whitlark (2013).

explanation for the democratic peace. They also offer an out-of-sample prediction by comparing the involvement in war of different non-democratic regimes. Using the typology discussed here, they find that military dictators are involved with greater probability in interstate wars. However, they say very little about military dictatorships. The theory presented here spells out a mechanism consistent with their overall argument. Military dictators, the specialists of violence, are costly to replace and may come to office when circumstances favor the use of violence. Teasing out the effect of circumstances on the selection of leaders from the effect of the type of leaders, holding fixed the constraints on violence, represents a very interesting and important empirical question for future research.

Further testing the empirical purchase of the model requires a closer look at leadership transitions in historical cases. For that purpose, I present qualitative evidence on the democratization process in three case studies, Lesotho, Uruguay, and Haiti.

Illustrations

What mechanisms explain the post-tenure fate of leaders and the propensity of military dictators to democratize? Do civilian dictators stay in office because they consolidate power? Do military dictators manage a transition to democracy because they can come back to office or because they worry about violent infighting should they maintain the dictatorship? When does democratization become appealing?

To investigate these questions, I examine three cases: Lesotho, Uruguay, and Haiti. Each type of dictator, military and non-military, ruled in each country. Moreover, international constraints on the use of force arguably differed between these three cases. As discussed above, international developments may play a crucial role in determining the constraints on the use of force. These three countries belonged to different regions that, one could argue, differed in their strategic importance to the United States. Washington probably had greater incentives to intervene on the American continent given geographic proximity and the historical tradition of the Monroe doctrine. In addition, the costs to the United States of a humanitarian crisis in Haiti created greater incentives for Washington to intervene there. These three countries thus represent a broad spectrum with respect to constraints on the use of force, which should help us to understand the circumstances under which democratization becomes appealing.

Lesotho, 1966–1994

Three dictators ruled over Lesotho between independence (1966) and democratization (1993). Chief Leabua Jonathan, a civilian, became the first dictator and experienced the longest tenure (1966–86). Leader of the Basotho National Party, he refused to recognize his defeat to the Basutoland Congress Party in the 1970 elections, suspending the constitution and declaring a state of emergency. Recognizing the importance of violence in gaining executive office, the Basutoland Congress Party organized the Lesotho Liberation Army to wrest power away from Jonathan. Meanwhile, the youth league of the Basotho National Party became increasingly militant, resorting to violence to support the regime and undermine the Lesotho Liberation Army. Fearing that the regime used the youth league to consolidate power, the military deposed Jonathan in 1986 (Machobane 2001, 52).

As such, Chief Jonathan did not rule under favorable circumstances, nor did he extend his rule because of a high capacity for violence. As Kabemba notes, "Both the period of one-party government and the period of military rule were marked by factionalism and instability within the governing elite, and neither arrangement was able to centralize power in the hands of a strong executive" (2003, 5). His low capacity for violence secured him a relatively favorable post-tenure fate. After his ousting, Jonathan spoke against the new regime, to the annoyance of the military council, who "could not understand why Jonathan and associates did not feel fortunate that they were not killed in the coup d'etat" (Machobane 2001, 85).

Any hope that the military was united in managing a transition to democracy was dashed. L.B.B.J. Machobane, Minister of Education in Lesotho between 1987 and 1992, acknowledged that "[a]s late as the end of 1989 there was still no concrete structure devised in anticipation of a handover" (2001, 92). In his view, the political climate nevertheless remained tense. The military regime understood the risk of maintaining the dictatorship: "A serious case of paranoia engulfed the military council. The fear of mutual assassination pervaded the corridors of power and crept through the military ranks" (2001, 107).

The first military dictator, Major-General Justin Lekhanya who took office after Jonathan (1986-1991), fell to a military coup. Once in office, Lekhanya sent his most serious rival, Colonel Joshua Letsie, to a 15-year prison sentence for the three-year-old murder of political opponents of the regime. Unfortunately for Lekhanya, junior officers forced him at gunpoint, in May 1991, to announce his resignation on national radio. Lekhanya still commanded the loyalty of many officers; some attempted a coup only a few weeks after he was removed, but this attempt failed. Fearing his continued popularity with segments of the military, the new regime put Lekhanya under house arrest (Southall 1995, 29).

Major-General Elias Tutsoane Ramaema then took over power (1991–1993). Conditions seemed ripe for democratization. With the end of the Cold War and negotiations for a democratic transition in neighboring South Africa, political actors could reasonably expect strong institutional constraints against the use of violence. In March 1993, Ramaema set up elections and the Basutoland Congress Party claimed victory. Democracy met its first test when Lesotho's young king, Letsie III, attempted a coup in August 1994. Yet the international community, led by South Africa, strongly resisted the king's coup attempt. Letsie III had to relinquish office to the leader of the Basutoland Congress Party.[26]

Uruguay, 1973–1985

In June 1973, President Juan Maria Bordaberry closed down the National Assembly, causing the downfall of democracy in Uruguay. Bordaberry remained in office for three years. Yet his tenure did not extend because of his high capacity for violence or because of favorable circumstances. The country faced an insurgency from the guerrilla group Tupamaros, and the National Assembly

[26]At the time of writing, the ruling party has completed more than two terms without ceding power, though it has suffered from internal splits. It transitioned from the Basutoland Congress Party to the Lesotho Congress for Democracy and finally the Democratic Congress. According to the rules of the Democracy-Dictatorship dataset, Lesotho qualifies as a 'type 2' dictatorship. When the ruling party cedes power, the country will qualify retroactively as democratic since the last change of rules.

refused to lift the immunity of one of its members, Senator Enrique Erro, who had suspected ties with the group. Once installed as a dictator, Bordaberry remained "submissive" toward the military (Kaufman 1979, 33). He lost office only when he attempted to concentrate power in his hands, purge officers from his government, and abolish political parties. According to one author, "as a civilian president, however, Bordaberry did not have the resources to create a docile military" (Biglaiser 2002, 79). The military then replaced him with Alberto Demichelli (1976), his 80-year-old vice-president and, shortly thereafter, with Doctor Aparicio Mendez (1976-1981). Both appeared weak relative to the military.

The military finally took executive power in 1981 under General Gregorio Alvarez (1981-1985). Why did the military have such a reluctance to control executive office? It was because of the fear of violent infighting. For the Uruguayan military, generally characterized as highly collegial (Gillespie 1986, 173), preserving cohesion was "a continuing problem" (Remmer and Merkx 1982, 32). As one influential air-force colonel alleged, the military feared acquiring "too much power." The danger, as Charles Guy Gillespie (1991, 67, 179) explained, was that "'politicization' of the armed forces might subvert the internal hierarchies and discipline on which they relied," leading to "occasional purges." Especially powerful members of the junta represented a danger for the regime: "Generals who assumed too much power, such as Chiappe Posse in the early years, were ousted." Consistent with my model, a military dictator would expect a harsh post-tenure fate.

Once in office, the military hoped to manage a transition to democracy. To do so, key political actors had to agree that they would not use violence to reclaim power. In such circumstances, civilian authorities need not fear the military. Such an arrangement should protect the interests of the military and gain broad support among political leaders. Military authorities proposed a new constitution, which would create a number of safeguards during the transition: the National Security Council, controlled by the military, would keep the right to dismiss any civilian official, including the president; there would be a single candidate in the first transitional election; leftist parties would be prohibited. This constitution was rejected in a plebiscite in 1980. Using my model, it seems that before the plebiscite, and even more so after its rejection, political actors could not reasonably expect important constraints on the use of violence to capture the spoils of office.

The prospect for democracy improved in early 1984. At the time, General Seregni, the leader of Frente Amplio and freed from prison in March, adopted a compromising stance. According to Ronald Munck, "[t]he result was to grant the military a trouble free retreat" (Munck 1989, 166). Opposition parties worried about the protection of political rights and insisted on recognition of *habeas corpus* (Gillespie 1991, 176). The military and political parties agreed on a framework for the return to democracy in August 1984, known as the Naval Club Pact, with the first elections to be held in November 1984. Doctor Julio Maria Sanguinetti, who would eventually win the first democratic elections, promised to oppose revenge trials in his nomination speech for the Colorado party. Once elected, he engineered the passage of a law in late 1986 to protect members of the military and successfully fought off an attempt to overturn it, through referendum, in April 1989.

Haiti, 1957–1991

Francois Duvalier (1957-71) became dictator of Haiti during one of the most turbulent periods in the country's history. In December 1956, General Paul Magloire stepped down after meeting great resistance when he claimed that his presidential term extended until May 1957. No politician could consolidate power. Military factions feared their leadership and the army chief himself hesitated to assume executive office. The country saw no less than six leadership changes before Duvalier's inauguration in October 1957. Consistent with the theory, Duvalier rose to power, in part, because he did not appear threatening. The leader of the army, General Antoine Kebreau, who presided over the presidential election of September 1957, saw in Duvalier the promise of a stable, but feeble, government. In fact, most "supposed" that Duvalier would be so weak that he would be "no more than the army's puppet" (Ferguson 1987, 37).

After assuming office, Duvalier defied expectations. Kebreau attended Duvalier's swearing in "without the least indication that he considered he was relinquishing the reins of power" (Abbott 1988, 77). In March 1958, Duvalier sacked Kebreau, taking him completely by surprise (Heinl and Heinl 1996, 556–7). Once it became clear that Papa Doc (Duvalier) could wield state resources to rule violently, he faced many attempts of violent removal.[27] Yet given the country's immediate history, a military officer would arguably have faced much greater resistance if he had attempted to gain office and consolidate power.

By contrast, Papa Doc's son, Jean-Claude, did not defy expectations. He represented the archetypal weak civilian leader, with a low capacity for violence. Even to his mother, Simone, and sister, Marie-Denise, he "offered the opportunity of power by proxy" (Ferguson 1987, 61). As his popularity fell, the military and Tontons Macoutes conspired from the fall of 1985 to replace him. The generals wished to implement "duvalierism without Duvalier" (Abbott 1988, 6; Bazin 1995, 238). They angled for "preserving the basic structure of the old regime and ridding themselves of its increasingly unpopular head" (Fatton 2002, 63).

Jean-Claude Duvalier lost power, replaced by the Conseil National de Gouvernement, led at the time by Lieutenant General Henri Namphy. The military attempted, unsuccessfully, to manage a smooth transition to democracy. The Conseil first held elections in November 1987. Soon, the Conseil canceled the elections when it became clear that the leading candidates, including Gerard Gourgue, would initiate legal actions against them. The military then allowed for another election in January 1988 after striking a pre-election bargain with the civilian Leslie Manigat. "Not only did he promise that his administration would not retaliate against them," writes Fatton, "he also pledged to appoint some of their key officers to important cabinet positions" (2002, 67). Perhaps Manigat could have enjoyed a long tenure. However, he attempted to undermine the army, first putting Lieutenant General Henri Namphy under house arrest. Unfortunately for him,

[27]Nine coup attempts occurred in total, including the following: from April to July 1963, by his former security chief, Clement Barbot; in August and September 1963, by a former army chief of staff, General Leon Cantave, who led an expeditionary force to invade the country; in the summer of 1964 by two different guerrilla groups, the 'Camocains' (June and July) and 'Jeune Haiti' (August); and again in 1968, 1969, and 1970, by exile-supported groups (Heinl and Heinl 1996, 602–6,621).

Manigat's attempt to consolidate power failed. He lost office in a bloodless coup.

Namphy came back to power, but divisions within the army remained. He lost power to a group of junior officers called *ti soldats* (little soldiers). They deposed him and chose General Prosper Avril as their leader. Yet the military remained "practically unmanageable" (Moise and Ollivier 1993, 132). Avril purged members of the military who had engineered his rise to power and fought off a coup attempt. Finally, under international pressure, he stepped down, paving the way for elections, which eventually brought Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.[28]

In sum, the cases of Lesotho, Uruguay, and Haiti confirm the logic of the model. Non-military dictators extended their rule, but not because of stable circumstances or the successful elimination of all political opponents. Instead, they extended their rule because of their expected weakness. Some rulers conformed to expectations, such as chief Jonathan Leabua of Lesotho, President Juan Maria Bordaberry of Uruguay, and Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti.[29] Even for leaders who defied expectations once in office, such as Francois Duvalier, the expectation of a low capacity for violence contributed to their rise in power. For military dictators, violent infighting represented a key concern. They managed a transition to democracy only under the right circumstances, which could sustain the belief of an improved post-tenure fate. Of course, the extent to which these mechanisms also operated in other cases remains an important question for future research.[30]

Conclusion

Given the stakes of holding—and losing—office, a leader's post-tenure fate plays an important role in his policy decisions. This is especially true for a leader's decision to democratize. Yet existing theories rely on debatable assumptions of preferences for unity or fail to explain why strong military leaders need to democratize quickly. This article provides a theory of democratization that is consistent with the evidence on the rate of democratization and post-tenure fate of different dictators. Military dictators democratize quickly because they expect a large improvement in their post-tenure fate. As specialists of violence, military dictators face a severe commitment problem: they cannot commit to refrain from using violence. Thus, they represent a great threat to their challengers and run the greatest risk of elimination. Democratization may alleviate this commitment problem, by reducing the importance of violence in selecting leaders and by offering greater protection against violent attempts to claim the spoils of office.

This article highlights the crucial role of beliefs about the importance of violence in politics, a variable which has hitherto remained underexplored. Future work should strive to gain a better understanding of the process generating such beliefs. Material conditions can play an important role, but quick developments within a given set of material conditions could also matter. Conversely, beliefs about the future importance of violence could remain sticky. Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa bear these properties. In Yemen, negotiations for the peaceful exit of Ali Abdullah Saleh failed and fighting still continues. In Libya, Colonel Qaddafi could not obtain guarantees for his personal protection in exchange for leaving office. In Syria, a peaceful transfer of power still seems out of reach. Of course, whether creating such conditions constitutes a desirable goal, given its moral consequences, remains an open question.

Finally, important questions about the pattern of political violence deserve further consideration. What explains the fate of different members of a regime? Under what circumstances do military splits occur? Who would be targeted in periods of repression and in what sequence? The framework developed here offers some guidelines on such questions. In particular, it suggests that military splits occur under weak constraints on the use of violence. Nevertheless, future work should better characterize and assess the determinants of the constraints on the use of violence.

[28]Of course, Haiti's history of tragic violence endured. In September 1991, Aristide lost office in a coup when he sought to undermine the power of the army. The military stayed in power until 1994. By that point, Washington clearly wanted a return to democracy. The United States sent a delegation, led by former President Jimmy Carter, which engineered the Port-au-Prince agreement. This agreement promised military rulers an "early and honorable retirement" by October 1994. However, the military and neo-Macoute paramilitary fired on pro-Aristide supporters, reneging on their promise to respect non-violent means to attain office. Washington then reneged on its commitment to the Port-au-Prince agreement and expelled the military by October 13.

[29]Certainly, datasets may differ from Archigos in identifying the leader in a regime. In particular, they may dismiss the above leaders as "too weak." In my view, a politician should qualify as a leader if and only if he or she makes executive decisions, whether or not he or she faces strong constraints. In fact, in this paper I attempt to explain how the strength of a leader impacts his/her tenure, post-tenure fate, and decision to democratize. I do not wish to dismiss leaders for their weakness if they do make the executive decisions in a regime.

[30]To some extent, other prominent civilian dictators who behaved violently once in office, such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, also owe their ascension in part to their expected weakness.

References

Abbott, Elizabeth. 1988. *Haiti. The Duvaliers and Their Legacy*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Acemoglu, Daron, Davide Ticchi, and Andrea Vindigni. 2010. "A Theory of Military Dictatorships." *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 2(1): 1–42.

Acemoglu, Daron, Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin. 2008. "Coalition Formation in Nondemocracies." *Review of Economic Studies* 75(4): 987–1009.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Albertus, Michael. 2015. "Explaining Patterns of Redistribution Under Autocracy: The Case of Peru's Revolution from Above." *Latin American Research Review* 50(2): 107–34.

Albertus, Michael, and Victor Menaldo. 2012. "Dictators as Founding Fathers? The Role of Constitutions under Autocracy." *Economics and Politics* 24(3): 279–306.

———. 2014. "Dealing with Dictators: Negotiated Democratization and the Fate of Outgoing Autocrats." *International Studies Quarterly* 58(3): 550–65.

Alexander, Gerard. 2002. *The Sources of Democratic Consolidation*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Anderson, Lisa. 1991. "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East." *Political Science Quarterly* 106(1): 1–15.

Bakke, Kristin M. 2010. The Turn to Violence in Self-Determination Struggles in Chechnya and Punjab. In *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, edited by Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, 221–47. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bazin, Marc L. 1995. *Haiti 92: Democratie sous Pression*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44(2): 127–49.

Benstead, Lindsay J., Amaney A. Jamal, and Ellen Lust. 2015. "Is It Gender, Religiosity or Both? A Role Congruity Theory of

Candidate Electability in Transitional Tunisia." *Perspectives on Politics* 13(1):74–94.

BIGLAISER, GLEN. 2002. *Guardians of the Nation? Economists, Generals, and Economic Reform in Latin America*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

BLAYDES, LISA. 2011. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

BOIX, CARLES. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

BOIX, CARLES, AND MILAN W. SVOLIK. 2013. "The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships." *Journal of Politics* 75(2): 300–16.

CHEIBUB, JOSÉ ANTONIO, JENNIFER GANDHI, AND JAMES R. VREELAND. 2010. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 143(1-2): 67–101.

CHENOWETH, ERICA, AND MARIA J. STEPHAN. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.

COLLIER, RUTH BERINS. 1999. *Paths Toward Democracy: The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

COX, GARY W. 2009. Authoritarian elections and leadership succession, 1975-2004. Working Paper.

CUNNINGHAM, KATHLEEN, AND EMILY BEAULIEU. 2010. Dissent, Repression, and Inconsistency. In *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, edited by Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, 173–95. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

DAHL, ROBERT A. 1971. *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

DALMASSO, EMANUELA. 2012. "Surfing the Democratic Tsunami in Morocco: Apolitical Society and the Reconfiguration of a Sustainable Authoritarian Regime." *Mediterranean Politics* 17(2): 217–32.

DEBS, ALEXANDRE, AND H. E. GOEMANS. 2010. "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 430–45.

DEBS, ALEXANDRE, AND JESSICA CHEN WEISS. 2014. "Circumstances, Domestic Audiences, and Reputational Incentives in International Crisis Bargaining." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming).

DEBS, ALEXANDRE, AND NUNO P. MONTEIRO. 2014. "Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War." *International Organization* 68(1): 1–31.

DONNO, DANIELA. 2010. "Who Is Punished? Regional Intergovernmental Organizations and the Enforcement of Democratic Norms." *International Organization* 64(4): 593–625.

ESCRIBA-FOLCH, ABEL. 2013. "Accountable for what? Regime types, performance, and the fate of outgoing dictators, 1946-2004." *Democratization* 20(1): 160–85.

ESCRIBA-FOLCH, ABEL, AND JOSEPH WRIGHT. 2013. Human Rights Prosecutions and Autocratic Survival. Working Paper.

EZROW, NATASHA M., AND ERICA FRANTZ. 2011. "State Institutions and the Survival of Dictatorships." *Journal of International Affairs* 65(1): 1–13.

FATTON, ROBERT. JR. 2002. *Haiti's Predatory Republic. The Unending Transition to Democracy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

FEARON, JAMES D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49: (3):379–414.

———. 2011. "Self-Enforcing Democracy." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126(4): 1661–708.

FERGUSON, JAMES. 1987. *Papa Doc, Baby Doc. Haiti and the Duvaliers*. Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell.

FINER, SAMUEL E. 2002. *The Man on Horseback. The Role of the Military in Politics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

GANDHI, JENNIFER. 2008. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

GEDDES, BARBARA. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115–44.

———. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles. Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

GEDDES, BARBARA, ERICA FRANTZ, AND JOSEPH G. WRIGHT. 2014. "Military Rule." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 147–62.

GEDDES, BARBARA, JOSEPH WRIGHT, AND ERICA FRANTZ. 2014. "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2): 313–31.

GILLESPIE, CHARLES G. 1986. Uruguay's Transition From Collegial Military-Technocratic Rule. In *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*, edited by Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillipe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, 173–95. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

———. 1991. *Negotiating Democracy. Politicians and Generals in Uruguay*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

HADENIUS, AXEL, AND JAN TEORELL. 2007. "Pathways from Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 18(1): 143–56.

HEINL, ROBERT DEBS, JR., AND NANCY GORDON HEINL. 1996. *Written in Blood: the Story of the Haitian People. 1492-1995*. New York: University Press of America, Inc.

HUNTINGTON, SAMUEL P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. London: University of Oklahoma Press.

HYDE, SUSAN D. 2011. *The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

KABEMBA, CLAUDE. 2003. *From Military Rule to Mulitparty Democracy. Political Reforms and Challenges in Lesotho*. Johannesburg: Electoral Institute of South Africa.

KAUFMAN, EDY. 1979. *Uruguay in Transition. From Civilian to Military Rule*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

KELLEY, JUDITH G. 2012. *Monitoring Democracy: When International Election Observation Works, and Why It Often Fails*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

LAWRENCE, ADRIA. 2014. "Kings in a Democratic Age: Collective Protest and the Institutional Promise of Monarchy." Prepared presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, August 28–31.

LEVENTOGLU, BAHAR. 2014. "Social Mobility, Middle Class, and Political Transitions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(5): 825–64.

LUST-OKAR, ELLEN. 2004. "Divided they Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition." *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 159–79.

MACHOBANE, L. B. B. J. 2001. *King's Knights. Military Governance in the Kingdom of Lesotho, 1986-1993*. Roma, Lesotho: Institute of Southern African Studies.

MAGALONI, BEATRIZ. 2008. "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(4-5): 715–41.

MAGALONI, BEATRIZ, AND RUTH KRICHELI. 2010. "Political Order and One-Party Rule." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 123–43.

MARINOV, NIKOLAY, AND HEIN GOEMANS. 2014. "Coups and Democracy." *British Journal of Political Science* 44(4): 799–825.

MENALDO, VICTOR. 2012. "The Middle East and North Africa's Resilient Monarchs." *Journal of Politics* 74(3): 707–22.

MOISE, CLAUDE, AND EMILE OLLIVIER. 1993. *Repenser Haiti. Grandeur et miseres d'un mouvement democratique*. Montreal: Les Editions du Cidihca.

MUNCK, RONALDO. 1989. *Latin America. The Transition to Democracy*. London: Zed Books.

NALEPA, MONIKA AND EMILIA JUSTYNA POWELL. 2015. "The Role of Domestic Opposition and International Justice Regimes in Peaceful Transitions of Power." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming).

NIOU, EMERSON M. S., PETER C. ORDESHOOK, AND GREGORY F. ROSE. 1989. *The Balance of Power. Stability in International Systems*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

NORDLINGER, ERIC A. 1977. *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

PAXTON, PAMELA. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 92–111.

PEARLMAN, WENDY. 2010. A Composite-Actor Approach to Conflict Behavior. In *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, edited by Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, 192–219. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

POWELL, ROBERT. 2006. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60(1): 169–203.

PRZEWORSKI, ADAM. 1999. Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense. In *Democracy's Value*, edited by Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon, 23–55. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2006. Self-Enforcing Democracy. In *Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, edited by Barry R. Weingast and Donald A. Wittman, 213–328. New York: Oxford University Press.

REMMER, KAREN L. AND GILBERT W. MERKX. 1982. "Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism Revisited." *Latin American Research Review* 17(2): 3–40.

SAUNDERS, ELIZABETH N. 2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 2011. *The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions Are Changing World Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Southall, Roger. 1995. Lesotho's transition and the 1993 election. In *Democratisation and Demilitarisation in Lesotho: The General Election of 1993 and Its Aftermath*, edited by R. Southall and T. Petlane, 18–44. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Sutter, Daniel. 1995. "Setting Old Scores: Potholes along the Transition from Authoritarian Rule." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39(1): 110–28.

Svolik, Milan W. 2012a. "Contracting on Violence: The Moral Hazard in Authoritarian Repression and Military Intervention in Politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(5): 765–94.

———. 2012b. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Talmadge, Caitlin. 2013. "The Puzzle of Personalist Performance: Iraqi Battlefield Effectiveness in the Iran-Iraq War." *Security Studies* 22(2): 180–221.

Teele, Dawn. 2014. "Ordinary Democratization: The Electoral Policy that Won British Women the Vote." *Politics & Society* 42(4): 537–61.

Ulfelder, Jay. 2005. "Contentious Collective Action and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes." *International Political Science Review* 26(3): 311–34.

Weeks, Jessica L. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 106(2): 326–47.

Weeks, Jessica L. P. 2014. *Dictators at War and Peace*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Whitlark, Rachel Elizabeth. 2013. "All Options on the Table? Nuclear Proliferation, Preventive War, and a Leader's Decision to Intervene." Paper Presented at the NSR Conference, Austin, TX, October 17–19.

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