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By DENIZ AKSOY, DAVID B. CARTER, and JOSEPH WRIGHT*

Introduction

WHILE recent events in the Middle East and North Africa have turned scholars' attention to understanding when it is that mass uprisings force dictators from power, the principal threat most autocratic leaders face stems from regime insiders and not directly from popular revolutions.[1] Milan Svolik, for example, shows that nearly three-quarters of dictators that lose power do so as the result of a coup.[2] We examine how political accountability functions in a nondemocratic setting by studying the influence of different forms of domestic political dissent on coup activity in dictatorships. To pinpoint the accountability of dictators to the elite with an interest in preserving the regime, we introduce a new distinction between coups that *reshuffle* the leadership but leave the regime intact, and *regime-change* coups, which replace the group of elite atop the regime. The former, we argue, better capture whether elite supporters hold the dictator accountable because while reshuffling coups replace the leader, the core regime supporters retain power.

A large literature examines the factors that lead to coups in dictatorships.[3] Numerous studies assess whether failed economic policies or losses in interstate conflicts influence coups. This work shows that dictators are often held accountable and punished for their failures by being physically removed from office by a coup.[4] We find two main gaps

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[1] Haber 2006.

[2] Svolik 2009.

[3] Finer 1988; Luttwak 1968; Linz 1978; Thompson 1975; Decalo 1990; Londregan and Poole 1990.

[4] Nordlinger 1977; Gasiorowski 1995; Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Weeks 2008; Chiozza and Goemans 2011; Kim 2014.

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in the existing literature. First, most studies examine issues for which leaders have direct control over the timing of decisions that determine whether a policy succeeds or fails; for example, a dictator's involvement in interstate conflict is usually the direct result of his or her own strategic decision. A leader may choose to initiate a diversionary conflict in an attempt to deflect an anticipated coup by rallying around the flag, as may have been the rationale for the 1982 Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands (Las Malvinas) by the military junta. When the leader has direct influence over the decision to engage a policy issue that may end in failure and thus result in punishment, it becomes difficult to demonstrate that the leader is held accountable for this particular event.

Second, most of the research focuses on the consequences of interstate conflicts and overlooks domestic political violence. Domestic political dissent and violence, such as terrorism, are among the important yet understudied political events that often trigger coups. Recent research shows that even though democracies are thought to be the most likely targets of terrorism, many dictatorships are targets of a substantial number of terrorist attacks.[5] In fact, many dictatorships experience as much terrorist violence as democracies.[6] Moreover, we observe important cases in which autocratic leaders were forcibly removed from office following episodes of mass protest and political violence, for example, in Egypt in July 2013. But neither the literature on political violence nor studies of authoritarian politics provide much guidance for understanding how domestic political dissent and violence influence incumbent dictators and their regimes. The extant literature on terrorism focuses almost exclusively on the consequences of violence for democratic incumbents.[7]

We build on existing research by providing a more direct test of domestic accountability in dictatorships. To do so, we examine the political consequences of different forms of observable political dissent and violence: terrorist attacks, large-scale protests, and civil wars. Our goals are twofold: first, to understand whether and how episodes of observable political dissent and violence influence coup activity in dictatorships; second, to provide a more direct test of domestic

[5] See Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2012 or Wilson and Piazza 2013.

[6] Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2012.

[7] For example, Berrebi and Klor 2006; Williams, Koch, and Smith 2012; or Aksoy 2014. Following the large literature on terrorism and political violence, we define terrorism as politically motivated violence against noncombatants. The use of the tactic of terrorism by a group does not preclude the use of other tactics (that is, guerilla tactics or peaceful protest), as well. See Hoffman 2006 for a good discussion of these issues.

accountability in dictatorships and to understand whether dictators are held accountable for their failures in preventing violence. Observable episodes of dissent or violence may lead to coups either by providing an opportunity for regime opponents to topple the regime or by motivating regime supporters to protect the regime by holding the leader accountable for the failure. To pinpoint the accountability mechanism, we introduce a distinction between two types of coups, those that replace the autocratic leader but not the autocratic regime, and those that upend the entire autocratic regime by ousting the leader and the leader's primary support coalition from power. We call the former reshuffling coups and the latter regime-change coups.

Reshuffling coups, we argue, are a mechanism for regime supporters to hold the leader accountable while preserving the power of the regime. Such coups do not seek to overthrow the entire regime but simply replace the leader with another from within the same group of political elite and keep the core regime supporters in power. In contrast, regime-change coups do more than simply hold a leader accountable; they entail sweeping changes to the political system that replace one group of ruling elite with another. Revolutions—for example, the 1979 revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua—are not ostensibly about accountability within a particular government, but instead entail the removal of the entire ruling group. Similarly, the coups that brought an end to dynastic rule in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s not only replaced the king with another member of the royal family but also upended monarchies to establish new republics. This distinction between reshuffling and regime-change coups allows us to distinguish when political violence provides opportunities for regime opponents to change the regime or simply motivates regime insiders to hold the incumbent leader accountable. Accordingly, this distinction helps us assess the existence of accountability in dictatorships.

We argue that dictators are held accountable for their failures to prevent domestic political violence. Moreover, different forms of observable political dissent have distinct effects on coup activity in dictatorships. Terrorism, we posit, should be associated with reshuffling coups, whereas large-scale protests and civil wars are more likely to motivate regime-change coups. Protests and civil wars require support from a significant segment of society and typically reflect more broad-based opposition than terrorism. Thus, large-scale dissent sends a clear signal of weakness to regime opponents, increasing the opportunity for regime change. Further, to suppress large-scale protests and especially

to counter insurgencies, dictators often must mobilize their military forces. This mobilization provides a new opportunity for military officers discontented with the existing regime to coordinate their actions and attempt a regime-change coup.

In contrast, terrorism is a tactic used by relatively small and weak groups that are often on the fringe of broader public opinion.[8] Unlike civil wars and large-scale protests, terrorism does not require broad-based opposition to the regime. Consequently, terrorist attacks do not necessarily signal to regime opponents that the regime is weak, and thus the attacks are unlikely to provide an opportunity for these opponents to attempt a coup. Moreover, dictators can usually counter terrorism without the mobilization of their military apparatus. Thus, terrorism does not increase coup opportunities for discontented members of the military. But terrorist violence is publicly observable evidence of a leader's failure and can motivate regime supporters to hold the leader accountable and preserve the regime by replacing the leader in a reshuffling coup.

Using original data on coup attempts and coup successes in dictatorships since 1970 and data on terrorist attacks, antigovernment protests, and civil wars, we show that terrorist violence is associated with a higher risk of reshuffling coups but is unrelated to regime-change coups. Protests and civil wars, on the other hand, are unrelated to reshuffling coups but sometimes influence the likelihood of regime-change coups. In the following sections we discuss the relevant literature on coups in dictatorships. We explain why we focus on coups and the importance of distinguishing between reshuffling and regime-change coups. Next, we develop a theory of when and how political violence is detrimental to incumbent dictators. Then we introduce the data and research design, present the empirical findings, and briefly outline several robustness tests.[9] We probe the mechanism that links dissent and violence to coups with a case study of Tunisia, and then we conclude.

Autocratic Regimes and Their Leaders

Much existing research on coups in dictatorships conflates autocratic leaders and the regimes they head, leading researchers to overlook important conceptual distinctions across coups in dictatorships. Thus,

[8] Richardson 2006; Shughart 2006.
[9] The robustness tests are in Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

before presenting our main argument, we clarify the definition of *autocratic regime* and explain the distinction between reshuffling coups and regime-change coups.

Building on previous work, Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz propose a definition of an autocratic regime as a set of formal and informal rules for choosing leaders and policies.[10] Informal rules are included because in autocracies the rules that shape and constrain political choices are often hidden. In autocracies informal rules coexist along with some of the formal institutions seen in democracies. The informal rule central to distinguishing one autocratic regime from another is the one that identifies *the group from which leaders can be chosen* and that determines who influences personnel choice and policy. Accordingly, one autocratic regime is distinguished from another by the groups of elite who hold power. Autocratic regimes are not simply the identity of the person who nominally leads the regime; one autocratic regime can have multiple successive leaders, and one autocratic regime can replace another. For example, from 1918 to 1962 Yemen was ruled as a kingdom, and the group from which leaders could be chosen was the al-Qasimi family. In 1962, military officers brought down the dynasty and replaced the monarchy with Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal and the junior military officers who backed him. This was the beginning of a new autocratic regime in Yemen.

The above definition of autocratic regime is consistent with the meaning of *regime* as it is used in numerous studies of comparative political transitions. In his essay on postcommunist transitions in the 1990s, Michael McFaul outlines the "paths from ancien règime to new regime that can account for both outcomes—democracy and dictatorship."[11] The political change in post-Soviet states was not simply one leader replacing another or tinkering with the institutional setting of the ancien règime; rather, these changes meant new groups took power, and the set of formal and informal rules for choosing leaders and policies was altered. Similarly, Susan Shirk and Philip Roeder identify the groups of elite in China and Soviet Russia, respectively, who controlled leadership selection and policy choices in these countries.[12] These groups had the capacity to make executive leadership changes or establish a mechanism for rotating leadership.

[10] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.
[11] McFaul 2002, 213.
[12] Shirk 1993; Roeder 1993.

Two Types of Coups: Reshuffling and Regime Change

By definition, coups against democratic incumbents constitute a regime change because the democratic rules for choosing leaders and making policy are interrupted, and at least for a period, a dictatorship replaces them. In democracies, therefore, successful coups replace the regime in power. Similarly, in autocracies it is possible for coups to lead to regime change; however, in many cases these coups entail only replacing the incumbent leader with another member of the ruling elite to which the leader belongs. Thus, political events that researchers code as successful coups in autocracies sometimes result in a regime change but many times result only in a leader change.

Reshuffling coups are coups in which the leader atop the regime changes but the group of elite in power remains the same. When the longtime dictator in Togo, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, died in a 2005 plane crash, the military swiftly installed his son in power—a move that international observers labeled a coup. Though a son replaced his father as the leader, the autocratic regime remained intact. That is, the group from which the leader could be selected did not change, in this case, the Eyadéma family. The 2005 coup in Togo is not an isolated event; there are numerous examples of reshuffling coups in dictatorships. For instance, the coups in Argentina during the early 1970s were executed against incumbent military rulers and did not in themselves end military rule. Each coup replaced the junta leader but did not replace the group—in this case the junta—that could select leaders and make key policy decisions. The 1980 and 1984 coups in Mauritania each sacked one member of a military junta, the Military Committee for National Salvation, and replaced him with another. In Sierra Leone in 1996, the military junta sent its leader to exile in the UK and selected a new member as head.[13] In sum, reshuffling coups are executed by members of the ruling elite with an interest in replacing the incumbent leader but preserving the existing regime and their power in it.

But coups in dictatorships can also lead to the loss of power for the regime itself; as a result of the coup, the group of elite who hold power and the way decisions are made changes, as when military officers ousted monarchs in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen to bring down dynasties. During the 1962 coup in Yemen, Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal and his backers among junior officers not only replaced the incumbent

[13] This coup replaced a military junta leader with another member of the ruling group who subsequently allowed multiparty elections. See Marinov and Goemans 2014 for why military coups are likely to lead to democratic elections in the post–Cold War period.

rulers, but also abolished hereditary succession, confiscated the ruling coalition's property, and executed and exiled some of the supporters of Imam Muhammad al-Badr, the last king of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen.[14] The Algerian military ousted the National Liberation Front (FLN) regime in 1992, and in 1994 junior military officers in Gambia toppled the longtime ruling party of Dawda Jawara. These coups resulted in new autocratic regimes because the group with the power to select the leader and make key policy and personnel decisions changed.

Distinguishing between different types of coups helps us explain whether dictators are held accountable for their failures. Successful reshuffling coups and regime-change coups are fundamentally different in their outcome. Reshuffling coups are most often conducted by regime insiders who are either members of the ruling elite or operating on their behalf. These coups do not oust the group that selects the leader and are thus a method for regime insiders to replace the country's leader while preserving (or even enhancing) their own power and position within the regime. Reshuffling coups are often attempts by the elite to sanction the leader for reneging on a power-sharing agreement.[15] As Svolik notes, "Under dictatorship, the only effective deterrent against [the leader's] opportunism is the ruling coalition's threat to replace the leader."[16] Reshuffling coups are therefore a mechanism for regime elite to hold the leader accountable while keeping the regime itself intact.

Regime-change coups, in contrast, entail replacing the group with the power to select the leader and in doing so typically change the set of elite that control policy and personnel decisions. Thus, a regime-change coup can, for example, oust a monarchy or despotic family and replace it with a military junta or empower one group of ethnic elite at the expense of another. These coups are not primarily motivated by an interest in holding the leader accountable but rather an interest in changing the group with access to power and its attendant benefits.

This distinction between coups has implications for how researchers observe mechanisms of accountability in dictatorships. In most

[14] Burrowes 1987, 22.

[15] Power-sharing in an autocratic regime is an arrangement to split decision making and spoils between the autocratic leader, or dictator, and the dictator's ruling coalition, who together hold sufficient power to control the state; Geddes 1999; Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2009. Importantly, a change in the power-sharing agreement between the dictator and his elite supporters does not in itself constitute an end to the regime. That is, even if one actor or set of actors in the ruling coalition gains or loses power relative to the leader, the set of formal and informal rules for choosing leaders, and hence the group from which the leader can be chosen, does not change.

[16] Svolik 2012, 58.

autocratic settings, coups are the primary technology available to regime insiders for holding the leader accountable. Accountability in this scenario need not be solely linked to regime supporters' perception of heightened chances of coup success. Rather, accountability entails a change in regime insiders' assessment of leader competence or quality —often in response to an observed policy failure or reneging on a prior power-sharing arrangement. While accountability assumes that there exists a technology for removing the leader, it does not necessarily entail a change in the likely success of such a move. In democracies, for example, where incumbents can be voted out of office, accountability does not mean changing the rules to increase the baseline odds that any incumbent will lose; rather, accountability entails voters updating their beliefs about the quality of a specific incumbent in response to policy failures. Similarly, if we interpret coups as a mechanism for accountability in dictatorships, then we need to isolate the coup events that reflect a change in the ruling coalition's assessment of the incumbent dictator. Reshuffling coups, we posit, reflect a change in the appraisal of the leader and are thus a mechanism of accountability. Regime-change coups, in contrast, arise when opponents perceive a change in the opportunity to grab power by replacing the ruling coalition.

How Does Violence Influence Coups?

Much of the extant literature on coups emphasizes two factors important to understanding when and where coups are most likely to occur: opportunity and motivation. Events, including domestic political dissent and violence, that alter the opportunities and motivation of potential coup plotters to attempt coups increase their likelihood. However, the elite who support the regime and those who prefer to replace it have different motivations and opportunities for attempting coups. This implies that different forms of domestic political dissent can have distinct effects on these two groups of potential coup plotters.

Elite who support the regime differ in their coup motivations from opponents because the former have an interest in preserving the regime and their place within it, whereas the latter seek to overturn the existing regime. Thus, regime supporters plotting a coup must account for how a coup attempt might adversely influence regime stability.[17] If

[17] Regime supporters' propensity to attempt reshuffling coups should not necessarily be increasing in the severity of political violence encountered by the state because higher levels of violence may not translate into more instability for the regime. For example, nonviolent mass movements can be more successful in destabilizing incumbents than violent movements. Stephan and Chenoweth 2008.

supporters' reshuffling attempts contribute significantly to the risk of regime collapse, such attempts bear an additional cost for them. Regime opponents, in contrast, bear little direct cost if their coup activity contributes to regime collapse because this is consistent with their goal.

Regime supporters and opponents also have different baseline coup-opportunity structures because elite supporters are more likely to come from the privileged group from which new regime leaders are chosen, often a specific family, ethnic group, or junta of high-ranking military officers. Thus regime supporters who contemplate a coup have better information than opponents about how the regime works and are more likely to be stationed in or near the capital city: better information and closer proximity increase the baseline opportunity for coups. In contrast, potential coup plotters who oppose the regime are less likely to be members of the group from which leaders are chosen and thus lack access to the same quality of information about how the regime functions. Moreover, potential regime opponents in the military are more likely to be based outside the capital city, as when the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein stationed many military officers—even some in the supposedly loyal Republican Guard but who were not from his own tribe—outside of Baghdad.[18] With relatively poor information and little access to the capital city, regime opponents in the military have fewer opportunities to attempt a coup.

These points suggest three related conclusions. First, because regime supporters have better information and are closer to the seat of power, the baseline probability of success should be higher for supporters attempting a reshuffling coup relative to regime opponents attempting a regime-change coup. Second, and more interestingly, because regime opponents have limited coup opportunities, triggering events and political shocks that increase coup opportunities by weakening the regime are more important for regime opponents than for supporters. That is, triggering events that destabilize the regime should have a greater marginal effect on the probability of a coup attempt for regime opponents than for regime supporters. Thus, regime-change coups depend more on large shocks that increase coup opportunities, whereas reshuffling coups are less dependent on such shocks. Third, because regime supporters are motivated to preserve the regime, political dissent that

[18] Al-Marashi 2003; Hirst 1993. The 1958 Iraqi coup that ousted the Hashemite monarchy was orchestrated by Colonel Aref, who only had access to Baghdad because he had been ordered by the king to move the Twentieth Brigade to Jordan via Baghdad in preparation for aiding the Lebanese against pro-Nasser rebels. Haddad 1971, 94–95. Aref transformed this brigade into the elite Republican Guard after a failed coup bid by the National Guard in 1963. Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 97.

threatens to destabilize the regime should not necessarily be associated with an increased propensity for reshuffling coups, whereas it should increase the propensity of regime-change coups.

In other words, while elite supporters and opponents of the regime attempt coups in response to triggering events that alter their opportunity structure, we expect regime-destabilizing events to be associated with regime-change coups but not with reshuffling coups. Accordingly, forms of political dissent and violence that entail broader public support and pose a greater threat to regime stability are likely to trigger regime-change coups. In contrast, weaker but still costly forms of dissent that do not rely on broad public support are less likely to destabilize the regime and thus do not increase the opportunity for regime opponents to attempt regime-change coups. However, weak but costly dissent, even if not destabilizing to the regime, can still motivate regime supporters to hold the leader accountable. The fact that organized groups, even if marginal, are able and willing to contest the regime in such a widely observable manner signals discontent with current policies and motivates regime supporters to replace the leader. The fact that this dissent is not fundamentally destabilizing to the regime is a plus for regime supporters, because they hesitate to rock the boat in the face of broad-based opposition when regime opponents have greater opportunity to topple the incumbent regime. Moreover, observable and costly dissent also provides needed justification to a broader audience. Thus, in the face of dissent that is not broad-based or destabilizing to the regime, regime supporters find reason and justification to remove the leader and can do so without increasing coup opportunities for regime opponents.

Next, we distinguish among three forms of domestic dissent in dictatorships: mass protest, civil war, and terrorism. We then articulate a logic for why broad-based forms of dissent, such as mass protest and insurgency, are more likely to motivate regime-change coups, whereas more narrow but still costly dissent, such as terrorism, should be associated with reshuffling coups.

Political Dissent and Coups

How Terrorist Threats Differ from Protest, Dissent, and Civil War

Terrorism differs from other forms of opposition behavior, such as protest and civil war, in two key ways. First, the groups that execute

terrorist attacks do not need broad citizen support. Groups that primarily attack soft civilian targets tend to be small and are often on the fringe of broader public opinion.[19] In contrast, both mass protests and armed insurgencies require larger opposition organizations with significant support from citizens.[20] For instance, antiregime protest movements in countries as diverse as Chile, Iran, Poland, and Thailand all garnered the support of large segments of society.[21] Similarly, violent groups that are large enough to engage in civil war with the state must field a large number of fighters and, relatedly, need the support of a significant share of the population; for example, the Latin American insurgencies of sufficient size to effectively take on state forces all required mass support from the peasants.[22] The idea that insurgencies require a large number of fighters and considerable public support, either sincere or coerced, but that terrorism does not is empirically accepted and reflected in recent theory.[23] The fact that violent groups that also control territory tend to attack state forces whereas violent groups that do not control territory tend to carry out terrorist attacks also suggests that nonterritorial groups have less public support and that the military would be less useful in countering them.[24] As William Shughart notes, most terrorist campaigns after 1968 lacked any real public support and were on the fringe of public opinion.[25]

Second, combating observed threats from mass protests and especially armed insurgencies requires the mobilization of military forces, which to be effective entails providing enhanced coordination capacity to well-placed individuals with guns. As Svolik notes, the military—not the everyday foot soldiers of the internal security apparatus—is the regime's last resort for countering "mass based, organized, and potentially violent" opposition groups.[26] Mass protests can necessitate mobilization of the military, for example, Egypt in 2011, and threats from organized insurgencies are even more likely to require military mobilization. Thus, shocks in the form of mass dissent lead to military mobilization, which in turn increases the opportunity for coups.

[19] Richardson 2006; Shughart 2006.

[20] Sambanis 2008, 181.

[21] Garretón and Antonia 1988; Bernhard 1993; Foran and Goodwin 1993; Thabchumpon and McCargo 2011.

[22] Wickham-Crowley 2001, 143–145.

[23] For example, Bueno de Mesquita 2013.

[24] de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2012; Carter 2015b.

[25] The only notable exceptions in the twentieth century were pre-1968 anticolonial groups like the FLN in Algeria. Shughart 2006.

[26] Svolik 2012, 127. Occasionally, a dictator may not need to rely on the military for mass repression when foreign militaries are employed to fight domestic dissidents.

In contrast, terrorist attacks, even large ones, rarely necessitate military mobilization by the dictator. Effectively combating terrorist groups, which historically tend to be very small, may entail a larger investment in police forces or internal security and intelligence organizations, but does not require augmenting the mobilization capacity of the military. For example, in Chile, when Augusto Pinochet's regime faced the possibility of violent antiregime attacks from armed leftist groups after the 1973 coup, the junta quickly abandoned the military as the key organization tasked with fighting these threats and instead created the National Intelligence Directorate (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional, or DINA) to pursue domestic repression. This was a strategic decision based on the fact that the military was incapable of pursuing the selective repression that the regime deemed necessary to counter domestic dissent.[27] Indeed, much of the literature on counterterrorism emphasizes that fighting terrorist groups is best thought of in a law-enforcement framework, rather than in a military framework.[28] In fact, many states that consistently faced a threat from terrorist groups established special counterterrorism units that were not tied to their military.[29] In short, dictators do not respond to terrorist groups, which are generally small in size and do not tend to control territory, by mobilizing the military. Moreover, most terrorist campaigns are not large enough to threaten the stability of the regime itself, which also suggests that military mobilization is unnecessary.

Thus terrorism differs from other forms of dissent both in the extent to which it threatens the regime and in the level of popular support the dissenting group needs. These observations have implications for the opportunities and motivations of potential coup plotters—regime supporters and opponents.

Linking Dissent to Coups

To explain how observable forms of political dissent like protest, terrorism, and civil war influence coups, we build on the two prior observations: regime opponents are more sensitive to changes in the coup opportunity structure than are regime supporters and large-scale dissent requires military mobilization, whereas smaller forms of dissent do not.

[27] Policzer 2009.

[28] This is especially true with domestic terrorist groups, because transnational groups sometimes elicit a military response against foreign states and bases. Schultz 2010; Carter 2012; Carter 2015a. However, targeting foreign groups does not necessitate large-scale deployment of the military domestically, as fighting domestic insurgency usually does.

[29] For example, Chalk 1993.

Because dictators often mobilize the military to combat mass protests and insurgencies, these two forms of dissent increase the opportunity for opponents in the military to oust the regime and should therefore be associated with regime-change coups. In contrast, while terrorism is observable and costly, it requires neither substantial public support nor military mobilization. Accordingly, terrorism should not be associated with regime-change coups. Rather, we posit that terrorism should be associated with an increased risk of reshuffling coups.

Mass protest and insurgency in a dictatorship indicate widespread opposition to the regime. Both forms of opposition require a nontrivial number of individuals that openly and observably participate. In contrast, terrorist attacks require only a small cell of individuals who do not even necessarily publicly participate. Consequently, protest and insurgency are more likely than terrorism to weaken the regime and provide regime opponents with an enhanced opportunity for ousting the regime; for example, large-scale protest campaigns reveal public dissatisfaction and can thus provide a coordinating signal for elite contemplating a coup.[30] Terrorist attacks, which by definition target civilians, are rarely sufficiently widespread to weaken the regime and are often carried out by small clandestine groups. Thus, observed coups in times of regime crises that arise from mass opposition, for example, insurgency or mass protests, likely reflect a *change in the opportunity structure* to the advantage of military elite who prefer to topple the regime. Moreover, if opposition movements with broad support pose a threat to regime stability and thus increase the opportunity for regime opponents to attempt a coup, this also implies that regime supporters have incentive to refrain from a potentially regime-destabilizing leadership change that rocks the boat. Thus, we expect civil wars and mass protests to increase the likelihood of regime-change coups but not reshuffling coups.

In contrast, terrorism should increase the risk of reshuffling coups because organized groups willing to carry out costly attacks against a dictatorship signal to regime supporters that the dictator is unable to deter violent dissent—even if these groups are small and lack widespread public support.[31] Terrorism thus provides an observable justification

[30] Galetovic and Sanhueza 2000; Casper and Tyson 2014.

[31] Of course, the level of violence that constitutes a significant increase in terrorism varies across regimes. In other words, ten terrorist attacks in a year in a country that has experienced little to no violence historically is qualitatively different from twenty-five terrorist attacks in a country that has on average experienced this level of violence. For example, it is important to compare levels of violence in Egypt in 2011 to average levels of violence in Egypt. Empirically, this condition suggests that it is essential to employ country fixed effects in our regression models.

for regime supporters to replace an incompetent leader whose continued rule may jeopardize regime stability. For example, when former Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba was removed from power in 1987 by a regime insider, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, following terrorist attacks by members of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), the coup was widely credited to Bourguiba's perceived lack of competence in dealing with opposition groups.[32] Even though the terrorist attack in this case, which targeted a tourist hotel, highlighted the regime's inability to provide security, it did not fundamentally undermine regime stability in the short term. Terrorism, we posit, should therefore increase the *motivation* of regime supporters to take action against the incumbent even if terrorism does little to alter the *opportunity* for regime opponents to oust the regime via coup. Regime supporters, beyond perhaps being ambitious and wanting to advance their own position by removing the leader, also worry that failing to remove a leader in the face of increasing terrorist dissent can transform the threat into a large-scale violent antiregime campaign that ultimately leads to regime change—as occurred in Algeria in the 1990s when military opponents toppled the FLN-led regime in a coup.

Authoritarian leaders face a trade-off when they rely on the military to combat mass protest campaigns and insurgencies: military forces are large enough to effectively counter large-scale threats, but their mobilization entails providing them with coordination goods that increase the opportunity for coups.[33] The vast majority of coups in dictatorships originate with members of the military because these forces are more intensively organized and better able to coordinate action than other actors.[34] Dictators' concerns about threats from the military are evident from their attempts to employ a variety of strategies—from buying acquiescence with increased military budgets to creating parallel security forces and purging top military officers—to reduce the risk soldiers will oust them.[35]

When dictators face mass protests and especially when they face organized insurgencies, they need to mobilize their military to quash rebellion and dissent. But in doing so, the dictator accepts the increased risk from potential coup plotters in the military who now have enhanced coordination capacity, thus increasing the probability of coup success. The military officers' augmented collective-action capacity that

[32] Vandewalle 1988, 603.
[33] Svolik 2012.
[34] Finer 1988; Geddes 1999.
[35] Huntington 1957; Quinlivan 1999; Belkin and Schofer 2003; Pilster and Böhmelt 2011.

follows from military mobilization increases the opportunity to oust the regime and put a new one in power. Accordingly, we expect mass protests and insurgencies to increase the likelihood of regime-change coups. But since dictators do not need to mobilize the military to counter terrorism, this form of political violence should be less likely to increase the opportunity for regime opponents in the military to attempt a regime-change coup.

To sum up, we argue that different forms of observable domestic dissent have distinct effects on coup activity. Large-scale protests and civil wars are more likely to motivate regime-change coups, whereas increased levels of terrorism should be associated with reshuffling coups. Widespread forms of opposition signal regime weakness to opponents, and dictators mobilize the military to counter protests and insurgencies and thus incur an increased risk of regime-change coups by discontented members of the military. In contrast, terrorism does not necessarily indicate regime fragility and thus is less likely to increase the opportunity for regime opponents to oust the regime. Terror attacks are, however, publicly observable evidence of the leader's failure to quell organized groups from participating in costly dissent and can thus motivate regime supporters to hold the leader accountable by ousting the leader in a reshuffling coup.

Testing this argument has implications for assessing accountability mechanisms in dictatorships. Coup attempts that occur in response to mass dissent that in turn requires the dictator to mobilize the military may reflect a change in the opportunity structure (the dictator provides the military with more coordination goods) and a change in motivation (that is, the military's assessment of leader competence). In contrast, coup attempts in response to smaller-scale violent dissent that does not present an immediate threat to regime survival and also does not require mobilization of the military—that is, terror attacks—are a cleaner test of accountability in dictatorships precisely because this type of dissent is unlikely to change the opportunity structure for potential coup plotters.

Data

We introduce new data that distinguish among coups by whether they change the regime or simply its leader. We start with the list of attempted coups identified by Jonathan Powell.[36] Similar to Powell, we

[36] Powell 2012.

define a coup as *a concrete and observable action by at least one member of the regime's current military or security apparatus to unseat the incumbent regime leader using unconstitutional means*.[37] We leverage several data sources to distinguish between reshuffling and regime-change coups and gather information on successful coups and failed attempts. Below, we first describe our coding strategy for distinguishing among successful reshuffling and successful regime-change coups and then discuss how we code failed coup attempts.

Successful Coups

We use data collected by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz on autocratic regimes to code successful regime-change coups.[38] These data provide a brief narrative of the historical political event used to identify regime collapse as well as the calendar date on which that event occurred. When an autocratic regime-collapse event entailed a rebel group ousting the incumbent dictatorship in Zaire in 1997, for example, these data record the calendar date on which the rebels took control of the capital city from the incumbent regime. In instances when a military junta ousts a monarchy in a coup, for example, Egypt 1952, the date of this coup is recorded as the regime-collapse event. When an authoritarian incumbent loses a multiparty election to the opposition and steps down afterward, for example, Mali 1993, the date of the final round of the election marks the regime-collapse event. From this information, we match regime-collapse events with the coup data from Powell to identify the subset of successful coups that entail regime change. We code coups that match the regime-collapse event in Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's data as *regime-change coup*s.[39]

[37] We examined each case in Powell 2012, making minor changes in cases that do not fit our definition of a coup event. For example, when coding unsuccessful coup attempts, we exclude cases identified by Powell in which the regime leader, as identified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014, is not the target of the coup attempt. The data appendix contains the coding rules, lists all the coup events (failed and successful attempts) in the analysis, and provides a brief description of each event with an explanation for our coding, see Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

[38] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.

[39] The subset of all coups coded as *regime-change coups* includes those coups that occur as part of the regime-collapse event but are chronologically prior to the date used to mark the end of an autocratic regime, as coded by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014. For example, although Powell 2012 marks two separate coups in Congo-Brazzaville in August 1968, we count both of them as part of the same regime collapse, which Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014 date as occuring on September 4, 1968. A month prior to the regime-collapse date (August 3), the military ousted President Alphonse Massamba-Débat, only to reinstate him a day later. This altercation led his main military opponent, Marien Ngouabi, to create a rival ruling council, the National Revolutionary Council. See *New York Times* 1968. Later that month, after Massemba-Débat had been missing from the capital city for a couple of weeks, Cuban-trained paramilitary forces loyal to Massamba-Débat refused to submit

In contrast, coups that simply exchange one senior military officer for another or replace a president with one of his cabinet members do not typically alter the rules of the regime or the group of elite from which leaders are chosen. We code these events as *reshuffling* coups. Most are easy to code, such as the Argentine coup of 1970 in which General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse, the army commander, replaced General Juan Carlos Onganía.[40]

We also code as reshuffling coups those that occur under autocratic rule and in which one military officer replaces another—even when the coup leader calls for new elections. We do this because at the time of the coup and despite promising fresh elections, we do not know if and when the military will give up power and hold new elections. Some promised elections occur as scheduled. After a 1999 coup in Niger, for example, the coup leader, Lieutenant Colonel Daouda Malam Wanké, announced new elections eight months later.[41] While promising to allow a transition back to civilian rule, Wanké reappointed Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara's prime minister and established an all-military ruling council, which allowed the military "to dictate the pace of this crucial period."[42] New elections were held as promised later that year; the opposition won, marking the end of the autocratic regime.[43]

However, not all coup leaders who promise fresh elections follow through. After a successful 2008 coup in Guinea, for example, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara promised new elections within a year and

arms to Ngouabi, and fighting broke out between the two groups. Decalo 1976, 155. Four days later, Ngouabi announced that Massemba-Débat had resigned the presidency. Massamba-Débat's resignation and Ngouabi's ascent marked a shift in power away from southerners to Ngouabi's supporters in the north, which makes these events an autocratic-regime collapse, in which one dictatorship replaces another. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 2014. Thus, even though there are two records in the Powell and Thyne data in which the military ousted the same leader within a month, we treat both as part of the same transition from one autocratic regime to another.

[40] The coup leader in this case "acted as the spokesman for, and the with the support of, a broad spectrum of military opinion among both active and retired officers." Potash 1996, 307.

[41] Ibrahim 1999.

[42] Ngubane 1999, 54. In other cases when a coup leader promises fresh elections, the coup entails a transfer of power to a civilian group, marking regime collapse. We code these as *regime-change coup*s. For example, during the 1991 coup in Mali, Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré not only ousted President Bakaye Traorè, but within three days handed power to the civilian-dominated Transition Committee for the Well-Being of the People, which named a new civilian prime minister and made the decisions about the transition to democracy. Nzouankeu 1993, 46. This case is different from the 1999 Nigerien coup because in Mali, a new civilian ruling council was established with an opposition prime minister to oversee the transition. In the Nigerien case, the new ruling council was entirely military, and even though civilian groups opposed to Maïnassara backed the coup, military officers made decisions about the transition period and did not relinquish power until after new elections. Thus, even though election promises were fulfilled after both the 1991 Malian and the 1999 Nigerien coups, only the Malian coup entailed the direct transfer of power to civilians at the time of the coup. Thus we code the Malian event as a regime-change coup, but the Nigerien ouster as a reshuffling coup.

[43] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.

declared that he would not contest them.[44] Later, though, he reversed course and announced that he would compete in the elections, which he then postponed. In the end, new elections were not held until Dadis Camara had been violently removed from office. Even though the 1999 coup in Niger was followed by a democratic election within a year, it was not possible to determine at the time of the coup whether election promises would be kept or if it would turn out more like the 2008 Guinean coup.

Unsuccessful Coups

Distinguishing failed regime-change coup attempts from failed reshuffling coup attempts is more difficult than differentiating among successful coups because we do not observe the outcomes of the failed coups. We therefore develop coding rules to assess whether a failed coup attempt would have led to a reshuffling of elite within the regime, or to the establishment of a new regime as defined by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz if it had been successful.[45] To code regime change, they focus on whether a leadership change in a nondemocratic setting entailed a change in the rules for selecting the leader and making key policy and personnel decisions. They do this by looking for evidence that, for example, the new leader empowered a previously excluded ethnic group, narrowed to his family the group of people who could select key personnel, or included a previously excluded political party in the ruling coalition. Accordingly, when we code failed coup attempts, we use objective information on this same set of factors to identify whether coup attempters would change the regime or not. This coding strategy also helps ensure consistency across our coding of coup attempts and successes.

To assess whether coup attempters would have overthrown the regime or simply reshuffled the leadership, we collected information from news reports, case studies, and historical encyclopedias about the main coup actors to record whether they were junior officers in the military, blood relatives of the regime leader, part of the same politically relevant ethnicity as the regime leader,[46] or affiliated with a political party that

[44] See *New York Times* 2008.

[45] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014. The coding rules, a description of each case and how we coded it, and a list of sources used to code each case are provided in the data appendix, see Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

[46] To code politically relevant ethnicity, we use the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) data set which focuses on ethnic inclusion in the executive branch. Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009. In cases where ethnicity is not relevant, such as intra-Sunni (Iraq) or intra-Arab (Libya) tribal cleavages, we follow the EPR logic of assessing whether coup plotters were from a junior allied tribe or the regime leader's tribe.

was not the regime leader's party. The coding rules we developed translate this information on the coup plotters, as well as contextual information about the circumstances surrounding the coup attempt, into an assessment of whether the coup leader, had he been successful, would have changed the group in power.[47]

We code failed attempts in which the coup plotters' aim was to restore military officers' power vis-à-vis the regime leader as reshuffling coups,[48] unless there is evidence that the plotters would rule without the regime leader's family members (in cases of observed intrafamily leadership succession) or ethnic supporters. Failed attempts in which coup plotters came from an excluded (or junior partner) ethnic group, alternatively, are coded as regime-change coup attempts, according to the logic that empowering a new ethnic group at the expense of the incumbent group entails change in the group that has the power to select leaders and set policy. Other rules for recording failed regime-change attempts include those in which evidence indicates that postcoup leaders would rule (1) with a newly elected civilian leader in cases where the incumbent regime leader nullified a prior election result; (2) with an opposition party leader in cases where the regime leader ruled without an executive from that opposition party; or (3) with a new group of ethnic elite who were previously excluded from (or junior partners in) the ruling coalition.

In the sample of autocratic countries from 1971 to 2006, there are seventy-eight successful coups and 150 failed coup attempts.[49] Of the failed attempts, we code seventy-seven as regime-change attempts and seventy-three as reshuffling attempts. We identify thirty-eight successful regime-change coups and forty successful reshuffling coups in autocratic regimes.[50]

[47] We cannot use information from the coup plotters' stated objectives or from statements by the regime leader who survived the coup attempt for two reasons. First, this type of information is missing for many cases. Second, post hoc assessments by (surviving) plotters or the leader are likely to be biased because they each have an incentive to misrepresent their motivations. For example, coup plotters have an incentive to publicly state as their motivation ousting a corrupt regime and giving power to the people even when they are primarily motivated to sanction the leader for reneging on a power-sharing agreement.

[48] We interpret these types of failed coups as attempts by the military to deter the dictator's opportunistic behavior or to oust the leader in retaliation for revising the power-sharing arrangement.

[49] The success rate is comparable in the population of post–World War II coups analyzed by Powell 2012.

[50] We list all coup attempts and successes and describe their coding in detail in Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

Independent Variables

We measure the number of terrorist attacks experienced by a country in a given year using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).[51] The GTD is an event data set that purports to record each terrorist attack globally from 1970. The data distinguish among attacks that are successfully carried out and those that failed in implementation; we focus exclusively on successful attacks because these are more relevant to assessing the leader's inability to quell violence.[52] Moreover, narrowing the focus to successful attacks alleviates concerns about the difficulty in consistently observing and measuring unsuccessful attacks across cases, as failed attacks are less likely to be documented in the media. We lag the number of attacks by one year, as coups in year t are likely to be affected by the volume of terrorism that was observed over a number of months prior to the coup, that is, year t–1. Additionally, lagging the attacks helps us avoid concluding that attacks that are perhaps a reaction to a coup affect the probability of a coup.[53] Finally, we take the natural log of the lagged attacks variable, as it is highly right-skewed. Logging the attacks variable also accounts for the plausible idea that the effect of one additional attack after 150 prior attacks in a year is weaker than a first or second attack.[54]

We measure protest with an indicator of the number of antigovernment protests in a country in year t–1. We employ data on general strikes, riots, and antigovernment demonstrations from Arthur Banks and Kenneth Wilson to create a measure of protests in a given country-year.[55] We also take the natural log of protests, because this variable is also highly right-skewed. While the terrorism variable measures violent attacks, the protest variable measures events that are mostly peaceful. Moreover, the protest data entails dissent that is public for the individuals involved, which usually suggests that the cause has some popularity among the public. In contrast, most of the terrorist attacks happen such that most of the individuals involved are not publicly visible

[51] Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2008.

[52] The number of unsuccessful attacks is quite small and their inclusion does not affect our results.

[53] We provide additional robustness checks in the supplementary material that suggest lagging the attacks variable is effective in mitigating these sorts of concerns. This material contains results very similar to those that we report below in which we include attacks in year t, but only if they occurred prior to the coup in years where a coup was successful. Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

[54] We find similar results with the unlogged variable. Model comparison statistics suggest that the logged variable is more appropriate.

[55] Banks and Wilson 2012. A common critique of the Banks data is that it misses many smaller protest events that are not reported in the *New York Times*. This is unlikely to be problematic here as our theory identifies mass protests rather than more minor protest events.

near the time of the attack or even present at the time of the attack. Accordingly, the correlation between these two variables is a relatively low 0.30, because they measure very different phenomena. Furthermore, if we examine the top ten countries in terms of the number of terrorist attacks in a given year and the number of protests in a given year, there are only two countries on both lists.

We measure the presence of insurgency using civil war data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo data project. Specifically, we create two mutually exclusive variables that indicate whether a country is involved in a civil war in year $t-1$ that crosses the threshold of twenty-five battle deaths per year but not that of one thousand battle deaths (low-intensity civil conflict), or is involved in a civil war in year $t-1$ that crosses the one thousand-battle-deaths threshold (high-intensity civil conflict).[56] The reference category comprises all countries that did not experience civil war in year $t-1$. We account for both high-casualty and low-casualty civil wars to ensure that our results are not dependent on which measure we prefer. The one thousand-battle-deaths threshold is better at picking up relatively severe civil wars, while the twenty-five-deaths threshold accounts for the numerous conflicts that involve organized insurgents but do not result in a high number of yearly casualties. The correlation between both of the civil war variables and our terrorism variable are similar to the correlation between terrorism and protests, that is, around 0.30.

We control for several other factors that may influence coups. Most of the literature on military coups points to the coups' structural determinants, such as poverty, the history of the coups, ethnicity, and economic inequality.[57] It is well established that coups are more common in economically poorer countries.[58] To measure this, we include the natural log of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as given by Angus Maddison, lagged by one year. We also include the one-year lag of a country's population, also given by Maddison.[59] Thus, we account for the possibility that larger or smaller countries are more coup prone. To account for the possibility that coups are affected by ethnic divisions, we include in models without country fixed effects a common fractionalization measure we obtain from James Fearon and David Laitin.[60]

[56] Gleditsch et al. 2002.
[57] See, for example, Londregan and Poole 1990; Jenkins and Kposowa 1990; and Svolik forthcoming.
[58] Londregan and Poole 1990.
[59] Maddison 2007.
[60] Fearon and Laitin 2003.

In the supplementary material, we report a number of additional robustness checks.[61] In terms of additional independent variables, we estimate models that also account for a country's coup history with the logged number of past coups a country has experienced since 1950, as is typical in the coup literature. Additionally, we assess the importance of the dictator's per-soldier spending on the military, as prior literature has found that keeping the military flush with funds reduces the risk of a coup. We obtained the military expenditures data from the Composite Index of National Capability of the Correlates of War project.[62] We also include coup-proofing measures such as the number of effective organizations.[63] None of these factors consistently matters or changes our key findings. However, the coup-proofing measures do greatly diminish the size of our sample, so we report them in the appendix rather than in the main text.

Finally, to further test our argument that domestic accountability from regime supporters drives the relationship between terrorism and reshuffling coups, we specify a theoretically relevant scope condition that centers on personalist dictatorships. These are regimes in which the individual leader has accumulated power and in the process subdued the independent mobilizing capacity of organizations, such as the military and the support party, that could hold the leader accountable. Accordingly, some of the coding rules used to identify personalist regimes include information on whether the regime leader has the power to select party leaders and appoint high-ranking military officers.[64]

A related feature of these dictatorships—strong personal or ethnic ties between the regime leader and powerful people in the security apparatus—also weakens the incentive for regime insiders with the capacity to remove the leader to do so. Often, this takes the form of creating new security organizations, led by members of the regime leader's own family or ethnic/tribal group, to protect the leader from coups emanating from the military. Because elite in personalist dictatorships depend upon the leader for their positions, they have much to lose in unseating the leader. In other dictatorships, in contrast, the institutional autonomy of organizations such as the military and the support party means that the power and resources of the regime elite are not solely dependent on the leader, making it less costly for the elite to remove the leader. Simply put, because personalist dictatorships are those in

[61] Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.
[62] Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972.
[63] Pilster and Böhmelt 2011; Powell 2012.
[64] Geddes 2003.

which the leader has accumulated power at the expense of the regime elite, accountability should be much less prevalent. Indeed, the extant literature has shown that leaders of personalist regimes have relatively few constraints.[65] We therefore expect that terrorism should be unrelated to our measure of accountability—namely, reshuffling coups—in personalist regimes.

Results

Before estimating the regression models of coup attempts and successes, we summarize the raw data to assess the empirical plausibility of our arguments. Table 1 summarizes the levels of terrorism in the year prior to different types of coup attempts and in all years in which a country does not subsequently experience any coup attempt. To ensure that we are not reporting numbers that also reflect civil war, we exclude all cases in which a civil war is associated with a coup. The first column shows the mean number of terrorist attacks in the year prior to each type of coup attempt and in years in which a dictator does not subsequently experience coup activity. The raw data suggest that reshuffling coups are preceded by much higher levels of terrorism than regime-change coups, as the mean number of successful attacks is almost seventeen in the year prior to a reshuffling coup and only a little more than two a year before a regime-change coup.[66] In fact, years in which there is no coup have a quite similar level of terrorism, with the mean being just under three attacks. Our theory suggests that terrorism and civil war have very different effects on coup activity. Accordingly, to make this comparison we report the percentage of dictator-years that experience civil war prior to coup attempts in the second column. To ensure that the data reflect civil war and not terrorism, we focus on years in which the number of attacks in each dictatorship is below the within-country mean. The data suggest that there is a stronger association between civil war and regime-change coup attempts than reshuffling coup attempts.[67] Around 36 percent of regime change attempts were preceded by civil war and below-average levels of terrorism, while this is true of only 22 percent of reshuffling coup attempts and 18 percent of years in which a dictator experiences no coup attempt.

[65] For example, Weeks 2008.

[66] The numbers are similar if we either do not remove the civil war cases or focus on attacks in the same year as the coup but prior to the coup.

[67] As do all the empirical models reported below, the summarized data in Table 1 excludes civil wars that resulted from coups as identified by Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009. This helps guard against making incorrect inferences about the direction of the trend.

TABLE 1
TERRORISM, CIVIL WAR, AND COUP ATTEMPTS

	Mean Terrorist Attacks with No Civil War	*Any Civil War with Low Terrorism (%)*
No coup	2.97	18
Any coup	9.90	29
Reshuffling coup	16.79	22
Regime-change coup	2.34	36

To more precisely identify the effects of political violence and dissent on coup activity in dictatorships, we now move to estimation of multivariate regression models that condition on additional variables that matter for understanding coup activity. Specifically, we estimate several logit models to analyze how different factors affect the likelihood of coup attempts and successful coups in dictatorships.[68] For each of our dependent variables, we estimate models with country fixed effects and country random effects. Inclusion of country-specific fixed or random effects allow us to focus on how within-country variation in terrorism affects the propensity of different types of coups. Since our theory identifies within-country variation, country fixed effects make sense and ensure that our results do not simply reflect correlation between coup activity and cross-country variation in terrorism and instability. We estimate both fixed- and random-effects models to balance the trade-offs between the two approaches. Fixed effects cannot be estimated for countries that never experience coups. Thus, countries with no coups are dropped in the country fixed-effects models. A random-effects logit provides a straightforward alternative that still captures unobserved heterogeneity among countries but does so without removing observations with no variation in the dependent variable. However, a random-effects model imposes additional assumptions, namely, those of exogeneity between the observed covariates and the country-specific intercept. Given the trade-offs, we present estimates from both models. We also include decade fixed effects in each model to capture any differences among decades in coup propensity, as well as any differences during the Cold War and after.[69] We first present

[68] See Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015 for a number of additional robustness checks.

[69] We also estimate models with year fixed effects and find very similar results. However, inclusion of year fixed effects leads us to lose almost a third of our data, as all years in which no coup occurs are dropped. See Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015 for results with year fixed effects. .

models of coup attempts then proceed to focus on successful coups and the connection between attempts and success.[70]

Coup-Attempt Models

Table 2 presents the results of six models of coup attempts. We first focus on the models that pool all coup attempts without distinguishing between regime change and leadership-reshuffling coup attempts. Both models 1 and 4 show that when dictators experience higher levels of terrorism, the risk of experiencing any type of coup attempt increases. The logged number of terrorist attacks in the prior year has a positive and significant effect on the probability that a dictator experiences any coup attempt, although the effect is only significant at the 0.10 level in the fixed-effects model (model 1).

Models for reshuffling and regime-change coup attempts show that the positive relation between terrorism and all coup attempts are driven by reshuffling coups. Both models 2 and 5 show that when a dictator experiences an increase in terrorist attacks relative to her country's mean, the risk of a reshuffling coup attempt is significantly higher. This result is statistically and substantively significant in both the fixed-effects and random-effects models. Substantively, when a country experiences an increase from seven attacks in the prior year to twenty, the probability of a reshuffling coup attempt increases by about 60 percent. If the number of attacks in the prior year increases from seven to fifty, there is a roughly 150 percent increase in the probability of a reshuffling coup attempt. In contrast to the findings for reshuffling coup attempts, we do not find that terrorism increases the probability of a regime-change coup attempt (models 3 and 6). In fact, the relationship between terrorism and regime-change coups is negative, although it is well below any conventional threshold of statistical significance. In sum, when dictators experience relatively high levels of terrorist activity, they are at increased risk of having figures within their regime attempt to remove them from power. However, the level of terrorist activity is unrelated to the probability of a coup attempt that seeks to oust the entire regime.

Our findings for both the volume of protest activity and the existence of a civil war contrast sharply with our findings for terrorist violence. In the random-effects model of regime-change coup attempt, we find that

[70] All models drop cases in which a civil war is the product of a coup, ensuring that we do not have cases in the data for which a coup is not possible because the opposition has already attempted one and is now fighting the state. We identify these cases using data from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009. We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this.

TABLE 2
TERRORISM AND COUP ATTEMPTS: RESHUFFLING VERSUS REGIME-CHANGE COUPS

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*	*Model 6*
Log of terrorist attacks$_{t-1}$	0.24*	0.43**	−0.04	0.25**	0.47**	−0.11
	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−1.51**	−1.26	−1.61*	−0.89**	−0.67**	−0.99**
	(0.59)	(0.83)	(0.85)	(0.21)	(0.28)	(0.24)
Log population$_{t-1}$	0.64	2.20	−0.70	−0.17	−0.12	−0.18
	(1.05)	(1.55)	(1.58)	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.14)
Low-intensity civil war$_{t-1}$	0.29	0.28	0.25	0.41	0.20	0.68*
	(0.36)	(0.52)	(0.48)	(0.32)	(0.47)	(0.40)
High-intensity civil war$_{t-1}$	−0.07	−0.02	−0.06	−0.35	-0.85	0.07
	(0.53)	(0.79)	(0.71)	(0.49)	(0.74)	(0.60)
Log of protests$_{t-1}$	0.31*	0.30	0.28	0.35**	0.30	0.46*
	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.24)
Economic growth$_{t-1}$	−2.67	−0.77	−3.75	−3.18*	−1.13	−4.50**
	(1.92)	(3.13)	(2.45)	(1.77)	(2.80)	(2.08)
Neighbor coups	−0.10	−0.58*	0.37	−0.11	−0.64**	0.42
	(0.22)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.21)	(0.31)	(0.29)
Pre-1960 civil war				0.04	−0.09	0.04
				(0.18)	(0.25)	(0.17)
Ethnic fractionalization				0.09	−0.08	0.02
				(0.56)	(0.79)	(0.53)
Constant				4.86**	2.16	4.80**
				(2.13)	(2.83)	(2.26)
Dependent variable	attempted coup	attempted reshuffling coup	attempted regime-change coup	attempted coup	attempted reshuffling coup	attempted regime-change coup
Log likelihood	−296.76	−150.37	−166.32	−449.94	−260.10	−260.52
Decade fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Country random effects	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
N	1,384	872	966	2,813	2,813	2,813

Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses; ** $p<.05$, * $p<.10$

low-intensity civil wars have a positive and significant association with regime-change coups but no significant relation to reshuffling coups. High-intensity civil war, which is considerably rarer, has no significant relation to any type of coup attempt. This further shows the need to distinguish between reshuffling and regime-change coups. The findings are similar, albeit a bit stronger, for dictators who experience an

unusually high volume of protest activity. Protest activity is not related to reshuffling coup attempts in either model 2 or 5 but is significantly related to regime-change coups in model 6, which includes random effects. The relation between protests and regime-change coup attempts is strong enough in the random-effects specification to make the association with all coup attempts positive and significant in model 4. The connection between protests and regime-change coups is not robust to country fixed effects, although the finding remains in the fixed-effects model of all coup attempts.

To summarize, the findings in Table 2 show that it is essential to distinguish between reshuffling and regime-change coups because terrorism, protest, and civil war have distinct effects on different types of coups. Terrorism is consistently associated with coup attempts by regime supporters who will simply reshuffle the regime leader but keep the regime structure intact, whereas it has no systematic relation to transformative regime-change coups. In contrast, we find that protests and low-intensity civil wars are associated with regime-change coup attempts but have no systematic relation to reshuffling coup attempts. The findings suggest that the literatures on coups and authoritarianism need to pay more attention to terrorist violence, as the volume of terrorist attacks is the most consistently important variable in our models of coup attempts.

The other variables included in the models generally either conform to our expectations based on findings in the extant literature or fail to consistently attain statistical significance across specifications. The log of GDP per capita has a negative and significant coefficient in all models except model 2. Consistent with the extant literature, we find that as a country's wealth increases, it is less likely to experience coup attempts. Similarly, we find that in periods of stronger economic growth, dictators are less likely to experience any coup attempts in general, and regime-change coup attempts in particular. However, this finding is not robust to any of our fixed-effects specifications. Interestingly, we find that when neighboring countries experience coup activity, dictators are less likely to experience an attempt by regime supporters to reshuffle the regime leader (models 2 and 5). However, coups in neighboring countries have an insignificant and positive effect on regime-change coup attempts (models 3 and 6). None of the other variables attain statistical significance in any specification.

Coup Attempts against Personalist Dictators

In Table 3 we provide an additional test of our argument that accountability to regime supporters drives the relationship between terrorism

and reshuffling-coup attempts. Specifically, we interact the terrorism variable with an indicator of whether a regime is a personalist regime, as classified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz.[71] Personalist dictators, almost by definition, have marginalized and eliminated potential opponents who could hold them accountable via a reshuffling coup. A large literature shows that personalist leaders have relatively few constraints and are resistant to change that is not transformational.[72] Thus, the accountability mechanism is not nearly as plausible in personalist regimes, and the positive relationship between terrorism and reshuffling coups should disappear when we focus on personalist regimes. Indeed, the models in Table 3 show that the relationship between terrorism and reshuffling coups disappears in personalist regimes, whereas it remains robust in nonpersonalist regimes.[73] These results provide a useful additional check on our explanation for why terrorism is associated with reshuffling coups but not regime-change coups.

Coup-Success Models

Although our primary theoretical interest is coup attempts, we also examine whether coups are successful or not. This analysis allows us to explore whether the relations between terrorism and reshuffling coups and other forms of dissent and regime-change coups are reflected in success rates. Theoretically, we expect regime supporters to be the most successful at implementing coups because they presumably have better information, are better positioned to take power, and also are attempting to undertake a less transformational coup relative to regime opponents.

The models in Table 4 suggest that the connection between terrorism and reshuffling coup attempts is robust to examining only successful reshuffling coups. The fixed-effects model of successful reshuffling coups, that is, model 2, shows a positive and significant effect of terrorism on successful attempts, although the relationship is slightly weaker than for all reshuffling attempts. The relationship is stronger in the random-effects specification of model 5. In fact, we find a significant positive effect of terrorism on all coup successes in the random effects specification in model 4. This result shows the strength of the effect of

[71] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.

[72] On constraints, see, for example, Weeks 2008. On resistance to nontransformational change, see, for example, Goldstone 2011 and Goldstone 2014.

[73] In the supplementary material we also report analogous results for coup successes as well as alternative dependent variables derived from the Archigos data that focus on irregular leadership failures. Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

TABLE 3
TERRORISM AND COUP ATTEMPTS: PERSONALIST REGIMES

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*	*Model 6*
Log of terrorist attacks $_{t-1}$	0.20	0.45**	–0.27	0.23**	0.43**	–0.15
	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.19)
Personalist	–0.27	–0.85	0.05	0.22	–0.37	0.48
	(0.36)	(0.63)	(0.45)	(0.29)	(0.49)	(0.30)
Personalist × log of terrorist attacks $_{t-1}$	–0.37	–0.82*	0.22	–0.29	–0.47	0.07
	(0.23)	(0.50)	(0.30)	(0.20)	(0.36)	(0.26)
Log GDP per capita $_{t-1}$	–1.52**	–2.12**	–1.21	–0.84**	–0.76**	–0.86**
	(0.58)	(0.89)	(0.79)	(0.20)	(0.30)	(0.21)
Log population $_{t-1}$	–0.18	–2.68	–2.09	–0.21	–0.12	–0.23**
	(1.01)	(1.81)	(1.40)	(0.13)	(0.20)	(0.13)
Low-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	0.22	0.37	0.04	0.35	0.29	0.56
	(0.34)	(0.53)	(0.44)	(0.31)	(0.47)	(0.37)
High-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	–0.00	0.38	-0.14	-0.13	-0.21	0.08
	(0.46)	(0.72)	(0.62)	(0.43)	(0.63)	(0.54)
Log of protests $_{t-1}$	0.29	0.26	0.27	0.32*	0.28	0.38*
	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.17)	(0.22)	(0.23)
Economic growth $_{t-1}$	–2.32	–0.20	–3.16	–2.87*	–1.86	–3.28
	(1.86)	(3.02)	(2.37)	(1.71)	(2.74)	(2.03)
Neighbor coups	–0.09	–0.53*	0.36	–0.06	–0.60**	0.41
	(0.20)	(0.30)	(0.27)	(0.20)	(0.30)	(0.26)
Pre-1960 civil war				0.14	-0.02	0.18
				(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.15)
Ethnic fractionalization				0.27	-0.15	0.32
				(0.50)	(0.79)	(0.47)
Constant				4.72**	2.90	4.15
				(1.99)	(2.91)	(2.07)
Dependent variable	attempted coup	attempted reshuffling coup	attempted regime-change coup	attempted coup	attempted reshuffling coup	attempted regime-change coup
Log likelihood	–339.91	–158.19	–199.36	–500.26	–275.54	–301.64
Decade fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Country random effects	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
N	1,515	935	1,120	2,813	2,813	2,813

Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses; ** $p<.05$, * $p<.10$

TABLE 4
TERRORISM AND SUCCESSFUL COUPS: RESHUFFLING VERSUS REGIME-CHANGE COUPS

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*	*Model 6*
Log of terrorist attacks $_{t-1}$	0.24	0.42*	−0.01	0.29**	0.48**	−0.00
	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.27)	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.22)
Log GDP per capita $_{t-1}$	−1.37	−0.17	−2.43*	−0.90**	−0.46*	−1.50**
	(1.05)	(1.55)	(1.46)	(0.23)	(0.27)	(0.35)
Log population $_{t-1}$	1.04	3.16	−0.41	−0.24*	−0.26	−0.23
	(1.65)	(2.53)	(2.25)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.17)
Low-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	0.32	0.17	0.45	0.43	0.09	0.78
	(0.49)	(0.73)	(0.66)	(0.41)	(0.58)	(0.52)
High-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	−0.66	−0.65	−0.57	−0.79	−1.52	−0.09
	(0.79)	(1.29)	(0.99)	(0.68)	(1.14)	(0.81)
Log of protests $_{t-1}$	−0.05	0.04	−0.18	0.14	0.11	0.21
	(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.42)	(0.24)	(0.31)	(0.36)
Economic growth $_{t-1}$	−1.32	0.88	−2.30	−0.34	1.21	−1.70
	(3.12)	(4.96)	(4.06)	(2.51)	(3.63)	(3.28)
Neighbor coups	−0.16	−0.64	0.32	−0.16	−0.69*	0.32
	(0.28)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.27)	(0.40)	(0.38)
Pre-1960 civil war				0.12	0.02	0.16
				(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.20)
Ethnic fractionalization				−0.20	0.06	−0.61
				(0.54)	(0.74)	(0.62)
Constant				5.28**	1.74	8.54**
				(2.18)	(2.74)	(3.08)
Dependent variable	successful coup	successful reshuffling coup	successful regime-change coup	successful coup	successful reshuffling coup	successful regime-change coup
Log likelihood	−176.41	−88.73	−94.95	−284.47	−163.54	−157.93
Decade fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Country random effects	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
N	1,022	612	710	2,813	2,813	2,813

Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses; ** $p<.05$, * $p<.10$

terrorism for reshuffling coups, as there is no effect of terrorism on successful regime-change coups in any specification.

In sharp contrast to our models of coup attempts, we find no significant relation between successful regime-change coups and either protests or civil war. Low-intensity civil war, which had a positive significant effect on regime-change coup attempts, has an insignificant effect on

coup successes. Similarly, protests are not significant predictors of successful regime-change coups in any of the specifications in Table 4. Accordingly, an uptick in protest activity in the prior year is related to coup attempts by regime opponents but is not systematically related to successful regime-change coups.[74] Thus, although Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth show that peaceful resistance groups tend to be more successful than violent groups against dictators, the level of protest does not significantly increase the risk that a dictator is removed by a coup.[75] However, in our context, a successful coup is not necessarily an indication of "success," as resistance groups are often not aiming to help topple a dictator, only to have a powerful regime supporter or opponent take power. In general, the fact that low-level insurgency, and to a lesser extent mass protest, are better predictors of regime change attempts than successes is consistent with our argument that regime-change coups are harder to execute than reshuffling coups.

Similar to our findings in the reshuffling coup attempts models, we find in model 5 that successful reshuffling coups are less likely when there is coup activity in a neighboring country. Thus, when dictators and regime supporters observe a coup in a neighboring country, the risk of a reshuffling attempt and the risk of a successful coup are significantly lower. Given that this variable is also a significant predictor of reshuffling-coup attempts, this again suggests that the factors influencing regime supporters to attempt coups are also closely related to the success of these attempts. That this is not true of regime-change coups—for example, the different effect of civil war or protests on attempts and successes—again suggests that regime supporters' attempts are made with better information. Moreover, the effect of neighboring coups on regime-change coups is always insignificant, which further suggests that the underlying factors that drive reshuffling coups differ from regime-change coups.

None of the structural factors that we control for in our models are consistent predictors of coup success. When dictatorships are wealthier they are less likely to experience any type of successful coup, as the coefficients for GDP per capita are all negative. However, while GDP per capita is significant in the random-effects models, it is only significant in the fixed-effects model of regime-change coups. Relatedly, we find no support for the idea that periods of higher economic growth reduce

[74] The results are very similar if we focus on the level of protest activity in year *t* rather than protest activity lagged by one year.

[75] Stephan and Chenoweth 2008.

the probability of a coup, which contrasts with our results for coup attempts. The coefficient of population is significant only in model 4, and it suggests that population growth has a negative effect on the probability of any successful coup. However, the coefficient does not have a consistent sign across all specifications and is not significant in any of the remaining models. Finally, we also include a measure of ethnic fractionalization used by Fearon and Laitin and an indicator of whether a country had a coup before 1960 in the three random-effects models.[76] We find no significant relationship between successful coups and either ethnic fractionalization or pre-1960 civil wars.

The three models in Table 5 take a different approach to modeling successful coups. Rather than assessing the effects of key variables with country-specific effects as in Table 4, the models in Table 5 analyze coup success only in the cases where an attempt is made. All three models are simple selection models, in the sense that they analyze the determinants of successful coups after potential coup-makers have selected themselves into the set of coup attempters.[77]

The relationship between terrorist attacks and successful reshuffling coups is robust to modeling successful coups as conditional on coup attempts. Although there are only 138 observations in which there is a coup attempt, the log of terrorist attacks in the prior year still has a positive and significant effect on the probability of a successful reshuffling coup. The effect of attacks on the probability of any successful coup is also still positive, although it is no longer statistically significant. Regime-change coups are again unrelated to terrorist attacks. In sum, our key finding that high levels of terrorist activity is associated with successful reshuffling coups is robust.

Robustness Checks

We subject our results to a number of robustness checks and a simple placebo test. The most important robustness checks are briefly described here.[78] One of our key arguments is that when dictators experience high levels of terrorism, regime supporters are much more likely

[76] Fearon and Laitin 2003. We do not include the indicator of a coup before 1960 in the fixed-effects models because it does not vary within country.

[77] We also estimated Heckman probit models that allow for correlation between the error terms of the coup-attempt equations, that is, models similar to those in Table 2, but we found that the error terms of the two equations were independent in all cases. Thus, we present the results of the simpler (and more efficient) models here.

[78] All results discussed here are available in Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015, where we report and discuss numerous additional tests.

TABLE 5
TERRORISM AND COUPS: SIMPLE SELECTION MODELS

	Successful Coup	*Successful Reshuffling Coup*	*Successful Regime-Change Coup*
Log of terrorist attacks $_{t-1}$	0.25	0.39*	–0.17
	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Log GDP per capita $_{t-1}$	–0.61*	0.51	–1.43**
	(0.35)	(0.39)	(0.54)
Log population $_{t-1}$	–0.19	–0.12	–0.18
	(0.21)	(0.26)	(0.23)
Low-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	–0.43	–0.54	0.11
	(0.66)	(0.78)	(0.72)
High-intensity civil war $_{t-1}$	–1.16	–0.89	–0.63
	(0.84)	(1.28)	(0.89)
Log of protests $_{t-1}$	–0.38	–0.50	0.09
	(0.33)	(0.35)	(0.51)
Economic growth $_{t-1}$	6.05*	5.48	3.32
	(3.45)	(3.50)	(4.51)
Neighbor coups	–0.54	–0.96*	0.13
	(0.41)	(0.56)	(0.47)
Pre-1960 civil war	–0.00	–0.36	0.30
	(0.25)	(0.27)	(0.25)
Ethnic fractionalization	–0.72	–0.59	–0.35
	(0.69)	(0.78)	(0.78)
Constant	7.16**	–2.27	10.52**
	(3.63)	(4.16)	(4.82)
Log likelihood	–86.29	–66.33	–68.76
Decade fixed effects	yes	yes	yes
Country fixed effects	no	no	no
N	138	138	138

Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses; ** $p<.05$, * $p<.10$

to attempt a reshuffling coup. We lag attacks by a year to assess how the build-up of terrorism in the previous year influences the risk of coup attempts in the current year, as we expect the buildup over the prior year to influence regime supporters' perceptions of the leader. If our argument is correct, we should not expect to find that terrorist attacks in the year subsequent to the coup, that is, year t+1, to have significant effect on the probability of a coup in the current year. Indeed, we do not find a significant relationship between coups in year t and terrorist attacks in year t+1, which increases confidence that our argument is correct. In fact, we do not even find a significant relationship

between *all* attacks in year *t* and coups in year *t*. However, if we measure only attacks that occur prior to a coup in years in which a coup occurs, we find a very similar relationship to that reported above. These tests suggest that the buildup of terrorism in the prior year and prior to the coup influences the regime supporters' propensity to reshuffle the leadership in a given year.

We also try several different specifications of our terrorism variable to ensure that our measure is appropriate. The logged number of casualties that result from terrorist attacks carried out in *t*–1 performs similarly for coup attempts, although the relationship between terrorism and coup success is weakened. This reflects the fact that the average terrorist attack does not produce a high number of casualties and that regime supporters in dictatorships are not typically very sensitive to casualties. Accordingly, we prefer our simpler measure of attack volume. Additionally, we try two measures of whether terrorism is increasing or decreasing in the years prior to coup activity. First, we include the difference between the number of attacks in years *t*–2 and *t*–1. This measure does not perform well, as it is not systematically associated with either coup attempts or successes. A three-year moving average of terrorism performs similarly in that it is also a very poor measure of terrorism in our reshuffling coup models. These tests suggest our simple measure of the number of attacks in year *t*–1 is better than these alternatives.

Second, we code an alternative dependent variable that measures whether irregular leadership failures of any type in dictatorships result from regime *insiders* or regime *outsiders*. If our theory of accountability is correct, we should find evidence that terrorist attacks influence only the risk of being deposed by insiders but not by outsiders, just as we found that terrorism influences reshuffling but not regime-change coups. We start with all irregular exits of autocratic leaders who held power on January 1 in a given year in the Archigos data set.[79] To identify when irregular leadership change occurs in autocracies, we combine the Archigos leader data with autocratic regime data from

[79] This list excludes foreign ousters. Simply using the Archigos data to identify irregular leader exits stacks the results in favor of the hypothesized relationship because some irregular leader exits result from ousters by forces outside the incumbent regime, including in one case a terrorist attack that killed the leader (in Sri Lanka in 1993). Many irregular exits result from civil war or insurgencies that force the leader to flee the capital city or from antiregime protesters forcing the leader to resign. Thus, inclusion of these events as instances of accountability would mean that the dependent variable might be endogenous by construction because these are cases in which antiregime groups may use violent tactics that also target civilians. The main explanatory variable and the dependent variable would thus in some cases be capturing the same event, such as when the leader is assassinated by rebel bomb that also kills civilians.

Geddes, Wright, and Frantz.[80] Next, we code all irregular exits that are not part of a regime change event but which Svolik and Seden Akcinaroglu code as military coups constituting *insider irregular exits*.[81] Of the remaining irregular exits, which Svolik and Akcinaroglu code as missing, other, assassinations, revolts, and civil wars, we determine whether the leader was ousted by a regime *insider* or a regime *outsider*.[82] Regime insiders include family members of the leader, current military officers, bodyguards, government ministers, and other regime elite. Military officers who defect from the regime and start an insurgency at a prior date are coded as outsiders. We code the situation in which the military refuses to use violence against antiregime protesters and the regime leader flees as ouster by outsiders, even if factions of the military are sympathetic to the protesters.[83] This dependent variable thus distinguishes between irregular exits in which a regime outsider ousted the leader and irregular leader exits due to assassination or some other form of unconstitutional replacement by a regime insider. Consistent with the result reported above, we find that terrorism increases the risk of insider irregular exits but not outsider irregular exits. This alternative coding of our dependent variable provides a substantial robustness check for our argument and key findings.

Third, to ensure that our results are not dependent on the specific model specifications reported above, we estimate models without country-specific fixed or random effects. Thus, while the models in Tables 3 through 5 show the effect of changing levels of terrorism within a country on coup success, the models with no country-specific fixed effects focus on variation across all countries. The finding that terrorism increases the probability of a reshuffling coup but not a regime-change coup is robust to this specification. We hasten to note that we do not think the model without fixed effects is theoretically appropriate. However, it does help establish that our results are not overly model dependent. Similarly, we also estimate a model with year fixed effects instead of decade fixed effects, and a model with no temporal fixed effects. The finding that terrorism increases the risk of a reshuffling coup but not a regime-change coup is unchanged. The relationship between terrorist attacks and reshuffling coup attempts is also robust to the simplest specifications, namely, a bivariate logit model with only the attacks

[80] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.

[81] Svolik and Akcinaroglu 2007.

[82] The coding details for these cases are listed in the data appendix, see Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

[83] We detail the coding of each case in Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2015.

variable as a regressor and a bivariate ordinary least squares model with or without fixed effects.

Fourth, we show that our finding for terrorism and reshuffling coups is not solely driven by military regimes nor is it an artifact of a few influential cases. To demonstrate that military regimes do not drive the result, we interact an indicator of whether a dictatorship is a military regime according to Geddes, Wright, and Frantz with our terrorism variable in all models reported above.[84] We find that military regimes that do not experience terrorism in the prior year are more likely to experience reshuffling coups. However, the interaction between terrorism and military regimes is *negative* and insignificant in all models of reshuffling coups. Finally, to demonstrate that influential cases do not drive our findings, we reestimate our models of reshuffling coups after removing the three cases with the highest levels of terrorism in year $t-1$ that also experienced reshuffling-coup attempts the following year. We also report results after we jackknife standard errors by country, and they are very similar to those reported in the main text.

Terrorism and the 1987 Coup in Tunisia

In early August 1987, several bombs injured fourteen people in Monastir, the hometown of Tunisia's president, Habib Bourguiba. In response, the Tunisian regime arrested dozens of Islamists alleged to be behind the bombings. During the subsequent trial, evidence emerged that the main Islamic opposition group, the MTI, was not responsible for the attacks, and the detainees were acquitted. Despite this ruling, President Bourguiba demanded a retrial and requested the death sentence for the main opposition leader, Rashid Ghannouchi. On November 7, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the recently appointed prime minister, surrounded the presidential palace with National Guard troops and forced Bourguiba from office. The bloodless coup took place in the context of growing conflict between Islamist groups and the government, recent cabinet reshuffles, and an emerging consensus that Bourguiba was failing as a leader. As one observer noted, "There is little doubt that Ben Ali was right in thinking that the President was becoming a liability for Tunisia."[85] While terrorist attacks like the bombing in Monastir were not uncommon in other countries in the region, such as Turkey or Israel, Tunisia did not have a history of terrorism. Accordingly, the regime elite took these attacks and Bourguiba's response as a strong

[84] Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014.
[85] Murphy 1999, 77.

signal of his growing incompetence as a leader.[86] Moreover, while private observation of Bourguiba's behavior likely led many regime supporters to at least question his competence prior to the attacks, the terrorist attacks were a publicly observable failure visible to a much wider audience. The role of terrorism in Bourguiba's ouster is consistent with our argument that terrorism is a useful signal to regime supporters in part because it is publicly observable evidence of the failure to rein in or deter regime opponents.

Our sketch of these events underscores three points. First, we demonstrate that the coup entailed a reshuffling of elite within the dominant-party dictatorship but did not upend the regime itself. Second, we show that Ben Ali's power grab was an attempt to rid the regime of an incompetent leader in a time of crisis. Third, we establish that the regime did not deliberately influence the Monastir bombings in an attempt to breed chaos and set the stage for a coup. In fact, there is little reason to believe that the regime faced an existential threat as a result of the terrorist attacks.

The Tunisian regime dates from the independence movement in the 1950s, with Bourguiba as the first postindependence president ruling a clientelistic party-state with the aid of the dominant Neo-Destour Party (later called Parti Socialiste Destourien, or PSD).[87] The Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens, perhaps the most powerful organization that could counter the PSD in the first decade of independence, was quickly co-opted into the regime. The military, while highly professionalized and dominated by officers with extensive foreign training, was small and largely isolated from politics.[88]

Bourguiba ruled Tunisia until the November coup. While some Bourguiba cronies were stripped of their positions and later detained under house arrest, Ben Ali's new government did not change the role of the dominant party and his new cabinet comprised almost exclusively Bourguiba insiders.[89] Ben Ali retained the defense minister and his new prime minister was "one of the most senior of Bourguiba's statesmen, Hedi Baccouche."[90] Even Bourguiba's son resumed his position at a state-owned bank after the coup. In short, Emma Murphy explains,

[86] This point has a clear connection to our estimation of fixed-effects models in Table 2, as the number of attacks in Tunisia in 1987 were a marked increase relative to what was typical in Tunisia. Thus, the meaningful comparison of attacks in Tunisia in 1987 is to the average level of violence for Tunisia, not to the average level of violence in the sample of all countries.

[87] Vandewalle 1988, 604.

[88] Ware 1988, 37–38.

[89] Foreign Broadcast Information Services 1987, 23–24; Ware 1988, 592–93; Murphy 1999, 166–67.

[90] Murphy 1999, 166.

"Ben Ali chose . . . to draw the old and new guards of the party together in a coalition . . . reassuring the party that its role was still intact."[91] Ben Ali's coup therefore constitutes a reshuffling of elite atop a regime, not the collapse of the regime itself.

Prior to the coup, Tunisia was beset with growing conflicts that led regime supporters to worry about Bourguiba's effectiveness as a leader. In November 1986, the main opposition parties boycotted Bourguiba's election, raising political tensions and suggesting his inability to competently manage regime politics.[92] In the spring of 1987, Bourguiba stepped up a repressive campaign against Islamist movements and arrested the MTI leader, Rashid Ghannouchi.[93] Mounting pressure to effectively deal with Islamist dissent prompted Bourguiba to try to recast his own government; within a week of the August attack, Bourguiba named Ben Ali as prime minister, in the hope of using a military man to pursue yet more repression against the Islamists.

Bourguiba was not able to effectively counter the Islamists, as they continued to operate in opposition to the state and even discussed a more serious challenge to the state if the retrial of the MTI leaders proceeded.[94] The attacks and Bourguiba's inability to quell dissent from a marginalized group put Ben Ali in a position to act and gave regime supporters incentive to support Bourguiba's removal. The military had been called upon to put down protests in 1978 and 1984, a risky action that many regime supporters wanted to avoid repeating. For instance, prior to the events of 1987, one observer emphasized that the military feared "social disintegration" and would intervene in politics if "the cohesion of the officer corps is threatened."[95] Dirk Vandewalle notes that by 1987, Ben Ali stepped in because he was "wary of a possible breakdown in public order after the violent confrontations with the Islamists in the previous months."[96] Some analysts even go so far as to suggest that "Bourguiba's struggle with the Islamists had pushed Tunisia to the brink of civil war," although it is far from clear that civil war was imminent.[97]

It is important to note that despite the crisis situation and the unusual emergence of terrorism as part of the crisis, the terrorist attacks did not pose an existential threat to the regime. Rather, the spate of

[91] Murphy 1999, 167.
[92] Murphy 1999, 75.
[93] Murphy 1999, 76.
[94] Borowiec 1998, 40; Hamdi 1998, 57; Murphy 1999, 74.
[95] Ware 1985, 41–42.
[96] Vandewalle 1988, 604.
[97] Alexander 2010, 52.

terrorist attacks simply provided further evidence for a regime elite increasingly inclined to view Bourguiba as incompetent. Christopher Alexander intimates that Bourguiba's demand for a retrial of the Islamists "came amidst growing concerns about his senility."[98] Another observer noted that "while Ben Ali and the other ministers faced continual frustrations in dealing with the ailing and senile President, the last straw came . . . when Bourguiba suddenly insisted that new trials of Islamic fundamentalists should be carried out."[99] Citing his erratic behavior and growing senility, Ben Ali offered this explanation after ousting the longtime ruler:

> I had the feeling . . . that Bourguiba was no longer in full possession of all his faculties. . . . Bourguiba, overtaken by age and illness, hostage to a disreputable entourage, had let himself adopt a political behavior which would menace the foundations of the modern state he had spent so long building up. Faced with many crises, the country was no longer governable. There was a need for change.[100]

Ben Ali's coup, therefore, can be interpreted as an attempt to preserve the Bourguiba regime—and the military's power—by replacing an incompetent leader.

Finally, it is useful to note that the terrorist attacks in August 1987 were not even orchestrated by the largest Islamic opposition group, the MTI. Rather, the marginal and small Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.[101] Even though a more extreme party line was adopted at the MTI convention in 1986, the main leadership of the group, including Ghannouchi, did not sanction the bombings at Monastir and did not favor future terrorist attacks.[102] By demanding a retrial of the apparently innocent MTI defendants, Bourguiba revealed his incompetence and inability to defuse what should have been a minor threat. Furthermore, there is little evidence that Ben Ali or members of the military welcomed the attacks. Instead, the military feared it would be called upon to once again intervene to defend Bourguiba and that this might lead to a turn of events that would actually threaten regime stability.[103]

In short, the attacks at Monastir in August 1987 led directly to Bourguiba's ouster. The subsequent trial of suspected Islamists, their acquittal, and, in particular, Bourguiba's demand for a retrial underscored

[98] Alexander 2010, 52.
[99] Boulby 1988, 613.
[100] Quoted in Hopwood 1992, 102–3.
[101] Foreign Broadcast Information Services, 1987a; Murphy 1999, 76.
[102] Murphy 1999, 74.
[103] Alexander 2010, 52.

his ineffectiveness in dealing with the Islamists, thus serving as widely observable evidence of his incompetence. With support for Bourguiba waning, Ben Ali forced him from power to preserve the regime.

Conclusion

Even though the recent literature on terrorism and political violence demonstrates that some dictatorships experience significant amounts of terrorism, existing research does not examine the effects of political dissent and violence on dictators or the regimes they lead. Are dictators held accountable and punished for their failures to prevent domestic political violence? We study the political consequences of different forms of observable political dissent and violence: terrorist attacks, large-scale protests, and civil wars. To pinpoint the accountability of dictators to elite with an interest in preserving the regime, we introduce a new theoretical distinction: that between reshuffling coups and regime-change coups. Reshuffling coups change the leadership but leave the regime intact, while regime-change coups change the regime by completely removing the group of elite atop it. We argue that reshuffling coups are a mechanism for elite supporters to hold a dictator accountable because they are intended to preserve the regime while replacing the leader atop it. Using newly collected data on attempted and successful regime change and reshuffling coups in all autocracies since 1970, we show that terrorism hurts dictators but does not fundamentally transform dictatorships. Dictators who experience significant increases in terrorist attacks are at increased risk of reshuffling-coup attempts by regime supporters, but regime-change coup attempts that aim to transform the regime are not related to increases in terrorism. In general, regime-change coup attempts follow episodes of political dissent and violence that require a sizable amount of public support and participation, such as mass protest and insurgency.

Our findings and the distinction we introduce between reshuffling and regime-change coups have at least two implications for the literatures on terrorism and authoritarianism. First, there is an accountability mechanism in dictatorships by which leaders are punished for "allowing" observable instances of organized political violence to take place under their watch. Even though the mechanism of removal from office in dictatorships is not as regular and institutionalized as losing an election in democracies, dictators are held accountable by their ruling coalition for failures. Second, terrorism has significant repercussions for dictators despite not being associated with regime instability

or transformational regime-change coups. Thus, it is not correct to assume that terrorist attacks against civilians are insignificant for autocrats because they are not accountable to the public through elections. This implication is at odds with a common argument in the terrorism literature that suggests terrorism has more impact on democracies than on autocratic regimes.[104]

The relationship we observe between terrorism and reshuffling coups provides evidence that dictators are accountable to regime supporters for their performance. However, it is important to note that reshuffling coups do not necessarily imply that there is clear accountability to the larger public or an interest among regime supporters to protect the public from terrorism in dictatorships. Regime supporters intervene and remove the dictator to protect themselves and the regime in which they occupy a privileged place. Terrorism usually is not a regime-destabilizing event; rather, it indicates that a small but relatively well organized group is unhappy with the current regime. In fact, this is precisely why terrorism is associated with reshuffling coups—because regime supporters have the incentive to remove the leader when neither the risk of regime collapse nor the coup opportunities for regime opponents in the military are high. Accordingly, publics living under dictatorships are very unlikely to get a new regime as a result of high levels of terrorism absent broad-based movements of political dissent.

Supplementary Material

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[104] For prominent examples, see Li 2005 or Pape 2003.

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