Introducing the Diplomatic Visits with France Dataset, 1950-2020*

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Abstract

Scholars have long argued that France maintains a significant degree of influence in Africa as a regional major power but have often lacked systematic data to empirically test their theories. This article introduces a novel dataset on leader visits with France spanning from 1950 to 2020 and includes both visits *from* French leaders as well as visits *to* France, amounting to more than 2,600 leader visits in total. We demonstrate the utility of our new dataset by replicating two prominent studies on major power diplomacy. Specifically, we test the theories of extended deterrence (McManus, 2018) and leader survival (Malis and Smith, 2021). Our analysis adds relevant nuance to our understanding of major power diplomacy. First, our findings generally support the theory of extended deterrence; yet we show that the effect of major power leader visits is somewhat weakened when using the updated leader visits from France. Second, we show that French leader visits, when adjusted for, weaken the effect of U.S. leader visits on the incumbent survival in African countries. We believe that this dataset will prove useful to scholars who study leader visits, major power diplomacy, and African politics.

*Thanks to ....

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Introduction

Major power diplomacy has been an important area of study for International Relations scholars, who have studied the determinants and consequences of leader visits of major powers (e.g., Lebovic and Saunders, 2016; McManus, 2018; Malis and Smith, 2021). This data feature article provides a novel dataset specifically on leader visits conducted with France, which could help scholars advance our understanding of major power diplomacy.

The key contributions of this data feature article are twofold. First, we provide a comprehensive novel dataset on leader visits with France, consisting of leader visits *from* France as well as leader visits *to* France. Our data contains approximately 120% more observations than the pre-existing dataset on French leader visits (McManus, 2018). Moreover, our data collection includes leader visits to France, making it the first of its kind for a major democratic power other than the United States. Second, we demonstrate the utility of our new dataset by replicating two prominent studies on leader visits. Specifically, we test the theory of leader survival (Malis and Smith, 2021) and the one of extended deterrence (McManus, 2018).

While scholars have long argued that France maintains a significant degree of influence in Africa as a regional major power, relatively little statistical evidence has been provided to this effect. We demonstrate the utility of the novel dataset by replicating the findings on extended deterrence by McManus (2018) and those on regime survival by Malis and Smith (2021). The preliminary findings in this data feature article help add nuance to our understanding of major power diplomacy. First, our analysis generally supports the theory of extended deterrence; yet we show that the effect of major power leader visits is somewhat weakened

when using the updated database. Second, we nuance the regime survival theory. French leader visits, when adjusted for, weaken the effect of U.S. leader visits on the incumbent survival in African countries. This provides *prima facie* evidence that effective strategic competition between the United States and France has been a systematic feature of the diplomatic interplay between major powers. Furthermore, we cannot neglect the possibility of a selection effect in the case of France and African leaders, which is consistent with the relative opacity of French diplomacy.

The rest of this data feature article proceeds as follows. First, we briefly discuss why a new dataset on leader visits with France is warranted, in particular with the view of advancing research on major power diplomacy. Second, we discuss the data collection process and describe our data. Third, we demonstrate the utility of our novel dataset by replicating two prominent studies on leader visits. Fourth, we conclude with some suggestions for future researchers.

Why Data on Leader Visits with France?

Leader visits with France have not yet been analyzed systematically by scholars of major power diplomacy,[1] despite the country's global status, notably as a nuclear power, and recent increasing interest in diplomatic efforts of countries, such as Japan (Hoshiro, 2020), or Turkey (Balci and Pulat, 2024). Much of what we know about major power diplomacy comes from the literature on U.S. leader visits (Goldsmith and Horiuchi, 2009; Koliev and Lundgren, 2021; Lebovic and Saunders, 2016; Malis and Smith, 2021; Ostrander and Rider, 2019), or, more generally, from studying major powers as a group (e.g., McManus, 2018). However,

[1]For the remainder of this article, we use the term leader visits *with* France to denote both leader visits *from* France as well as leader visits *to* France.

both lines of research leave unattended the possibility of potentially noticeable differences between the diplomatic behavior patterns of major democratic powers. As we argue below, this has implications for the generalizability and further validation of relevant theories.

Generally, the task of collecting data on leader visits with France was motivated out of two considerations: practical and theoretical. The practical consideration was to provide more comprehensive data with fewer missing observations on leader visits from France, which come from McManus (2018). We first noticed that this dataset contains many missing observations. As the dataset is not only used for the original analysis on extended deterrence (McManus, 2018) but also for the research on signals of support (McManus and Nieman, 2019), we assessed that providing more comprehensive data with fewer missing observations would be beneficial to future scholars. Thus, the first theory we replicate for further validation is the one of extended deterrence by McManus (2018).

The second practical consideration was to provide a novel dataset that would allow scholars to probe the scope conditions of the argument advanced by Malis and Smith (2021). This study focuses solely on the United States. It argues that leader visits with a major power help to reveal information about the strength of the incumbent leader in a minor power, either visited or visiting, thereby prolonging the survival of the incumbent regime by deterring political opponents from challenging it. As for a major democratic power, the credibility of a visit with such a power lies in the reputational costs faced by its leader, especially with his or her domestic audience, if the interlocutor of a minor partner country is removed. More specifically, the logic behind Malis and Smith's (2021) argument is that U.S. presidents would be concerned about the consequences of meeting and making deals with leaders who would soon be ousted from power as they would be punished by their domestic constituents.

As France is a prominent democratic major power, this suggests that we should see a similar effect of leader visits with France on the survival of either visited or visiting incumbent leaders of minor powers.

However, some features of French diplomacy potentially make the effect of the theoretical mechanism outlined by Malis and Smith (2021) less robust in the case of diplomatic visits with France. First, it is not clear whether the society at large in France strongly demands transparency regarding French diplomacy. For instance, in comparison to the United States, much of the data on French diplomacy are often shrouded. There are no clear and comprehensive data available regarding high-level visits conducted with France. Importantly, French foreign and defence policy has been well known as the "*domaine reservé*" of the executive power, amply allowing the President to take initiatives without either involving or accounting to the Parliament. Such opacity of French diplomacy calls into question whether the same mechanism of incurring domestic political costs would hold for the case of leader visits with France. Given that France is also a robust democracy that is often classified as a major power, testing the replicability of the results with leader visits with France serves as a useful exercise to check the viability of the theoretical mechanism proposed by Malis and Smith (2021). Considering the differences noted above between French and U.S. diplomacy, France presents a more challenging case to test the generalizability of the theory proposed by the authors.

There are also good theoretical reasons to consider leader visits conducted with France in the context of autocratic politics in Africa more specifically. Qualitative scholars have long argued that France has maintained a significant amount of influence over African countries (e.g., Schraeder, 2000; Vallin, 2015). France maintains a significant influence over the

monetary policy of countries that use Franc of the Financial Community of Africa (Taylor, 2019). Moreover, according to Vallin (2015), France has behaved as the gendarme of Africa. France has maintained an impressive network of formal alliances with and military presence in its former colonies (Leeds et al., 2002). We also believe that our dataset on leader visits with France is timely and appropriate for future research given the recent events in western Africa. As former French colonies (Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso) increasingly distance themselves from strategic cooperation with Paris, it is important to systematically assess whether France has effectively played a significant role in the region and whether (as well as why) there has been a shift in this regard. While there has been an abundance of qualitative works on French diplomacy, scholars have indeed lacked a reliable dataset on French diplomacy to investigate systematic evidence. We believe that our dataset could be an important first step towards this endeavour.

One simple way to test French influence in Africa would be to use our dataset to observe whether the effect of U.S. leader visits on incumbent survival weakens when we include leader visits conducted with France as a confounder. While France has often been classified as a major power since 1945 according to the Correlates of War project, other scholars have argued that France has acted as a *regional* major power. It is well-known that France maintains close political ties with many of its former colonies. For example, many former French colonies use the CFA franc administered by Paris, and de Gaulle even attempted to topple the Touré regime ("Opération Persil") when Guinea refused to join the CFA union (Keita, 2021).

Some scholars have also argued that the United States and France have engaged in strategic competition over many African countries from time to time. For example, Muehlenbeck

(2012) argues that Kennedy sought to prevent de Gaulle from wielding influence over African countries by forming close diplomatic ties with African countries that became newly independent. Schraeder (2000) also argues that the United States and France often competed strategically in Africa.

Qualitative accounts equally suggest that France has also sought to wield a significant amount of influence over countries in Africa that were *not* once its former colonies. We note three examples in particular. It is well-known that Sarkozy's conducting of leader visits with Libya under Gaddafi stirred a significant amount of controversy in French politics. The historical relationship between France and Libya is complicated as France once engaged in a strategic competition with Tripoli over Chad (Powell, 2020, 217). However, France later changed course under the Sarkozy presidency when Gaddafi was invited to visit France under despite the widespread domestic political opposition (Crumley, 2007). Scholars have also widely noted that France has sought to wield influence over Rwanda when Habyarimana was in power (Callamard, 2017; Beloff, 2023). Our dataset does indeed show that many leader visits with France took place during the Habyarimana regime. While Omar al-Bashir visited France twice in 2003 and 2007, Paris refused to invite Omar al-Bashir to the France-Africa summit in 2010 (Simons, 2010). Such refusal is an example of France's capability to use diplomatic visits to wield influence even over African countries that were not once its former colonies. This example also highlights how data on leader visits to France could be important for scholars as the public refusal to invite a certain leader to a multilateral conference hosted by Paris could function as the revelation of a signal to sanction a particular leader.

While the above examples highlight that France wields a significant amount of influence over many countries in Africa, it is not apparent that France maintains the same degree of

political influence in other regions of the world. For example, while France once possessed colonies in Southeast Asia, its influence was ended with the withdrawal of French troops from the region. While France apparently seems to maintain some degree of influence over small Pacific island countries, the lack of ties between France and Australia or New Zealand is exemplified by the fact that Hollande was the first French president to visit Australia in 2014.

The above discussion implies that a significant proportion of the effect of U.S. leader visits with Africa on their regime survival would be weakened when we control for leader visits conducted with France for African countries but should not affect the results for other regions. In other words, leader visits with France are likely to be an important confounder for countries in Africa as they might seek to play off Washington against France who might vie for influence in the region. However, the decrease in the effect of U.S. leader visits on incumbent survival is likely to be smaller in magnitude or even absent for regions outside Africa as there is less likely to be a strategic interaction between the United States and France for such regions.

Data Collection Process

We elaborate on the data collection process as the process was far from straightforward. While the data on leader visits for the United States are readily available on the United States government website, such data are often difficult to collect for other countries − even democratic ones − as governments often neglect to make the data publicly available in a systematic format. As such, we used various sources to collect our data including government records (both French and foreign) and newspaper articles. Relying on the French government

records was often insufficient as they often contained factual inaccuracies or incomplete data.[2] Thus, we corroborated our data with external sources whenever possible. In our dataset, we have provided the source for each observation for future researchers to cross-check if necessary.

There were three main types of government data that we relied on to compile our dataset. The first type of government records consist of data from the *Archives nationales* of the French government website. The dataset provided by this website provides a useful start, but also contains many factual inaccuracies as noted above. The second type of government data were from the ceremonial protocol data from the French *Archives nationales*. Some records were questionable and we once again excluded these visits. The third type of government data we used were from foreign embassies based in France. Many minor power embassies based in France contained detailed records of bilateral leader visits. We deem these to be generally reliable.

Our data cover both leader visits *to* and *from* France. Our classification of leaders was based on the Archigos dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009). While we realize that the dataset provided by McManus (2018) contains observations of leader visits from France, we noticed that there were many missing cases of leader visits from France. Our dataset represents a great expansion of this dataset with approximately 120% of the dataset covering new leader visits from France that were not included in McManus (2018). Moreover,

[2]Some of the more blatant examples of factually inaccurate information from the French government website include the following: 1) The original government dataset contained a record of Kim Il-sung's supposed visit to France in 1986. Once questioned by the authors, the personnel in charge working at the *Archives nationales / Direction des fonds* clarified that it was actually a South Korean president visiting in the same year. 2) A French government webpage on French relations with Paraguay claims that there were no bilateral visits between Paraguay and France when Alfredo Stroessner was in power other than de Gaulle's visit to Paraguay in 1964, but there is a clear record of Stroessner visiting France when Pompidou was the French president.

our new dataset contains observations of leader visits *to* France. The number of leader visits *to* France greatly exceeds the number of visits *from* France: the compilation of these two types of visits would help scholars in the future to study major power diplomacy and French diplomacy in particular. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no comprehensive dataset covering leader visits to France and our collection represents a first of its kind for a democratic major power other than the United States.

Descriptive Statistics

Each observation in the dataset is provided with a Correlates of War code, year, and the leader identification based on Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza (2009), as well as the source used. One feature that immediately stands out from our data is that leader visits *to* France are much more common than leader visits *from* France. This is expected and consistent with the previous findings on leader visits conducted with the United States (Koliev and Lundgren, 2021). The total number of documented leader visits from (to) France between 1950 and 2020 amount to approximately 790 (1,600) unique country-year visits.[3] The differences in the number of observations and coverage for leader visits *from* France in our dataset is substantially different from that of McManus (2018): for comparison, there are 612 leader visits from France in our dataset between 1950 and 2012 (excluding visits to the United States, Russia and China) compared to 275 visits in McManus (2018).[4] Thus, our dataset represents approximately a 120% increase in recording the number of cases of French leader

[3]As there are some years with multiple leaders conducting visits with France during years in which power transition took place, the number of cases are even bigger in the dataset. Our subsequent explanation of descriptive statistics and analyses use unique country-year visits.

[4]Our dataset does contain observations of leader visits conducted with these three major powers, but they are beyond the scope of McManus (2018)'s theory.

visits. We also note that our dataset excludes some of the observations in the McManus (2018) dataset for which we could not verify or believe that there were mistakes in the process of coding visits.

Figure 1: New Observations of Leader Visits from France in Comparison with McManus (2018) between 1950 and 2012

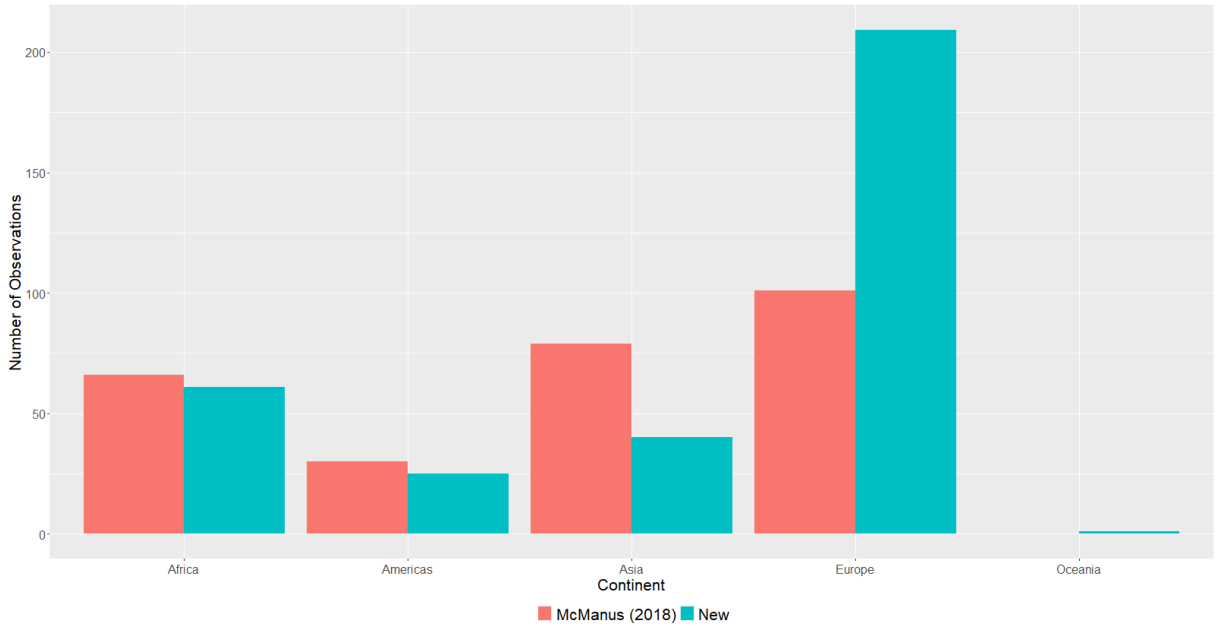
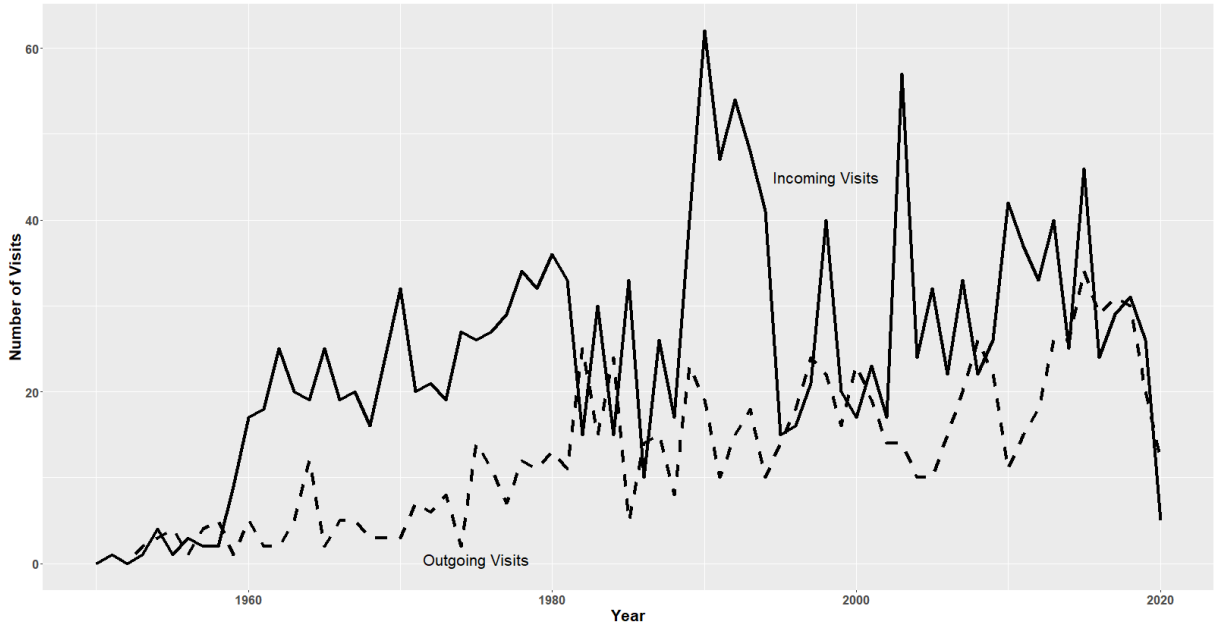


Figure 1 shows the number of new observations for each geographic region for the period 1950-2012. We see that a significant proportion of the difference stems from leader visits to European countries that McManus (2018) overlooked. For example, while there are only four recorded cases of French leader visits to Spain in the McManus (2018) dataset, we have added 17 additional leader visits to Spain between 1984 and 2007.

We first describe the frequency of leader visits conducted with France both temporally and geographically. We see in Figure 2 the general trend of leader visits conducted with France. The number of leader visits from France seems to have steadily increased over time. We also see in Figures 3 and 4 that there are large differences across different geographic

regions in terms of the number of leader visits. Not surprisingly, we see that Western European countries tend to conduct frequent leader visits with France. We also see that former colonies of France tend to conduct a high number of leader visits with France. One salient feature of leader visits with France in Africa is that there are many more visits *to* France compared to visits *from* France. The number of leader visits to France also seem to increase when Paris hosts the France-Africa Summits.[5]

Figure 2: Annual Leader Visits from and to France, 1950-2020



[5]France hosted these summits in 1973, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

Figure 3: Total Visits from France by Country, 1950-2020

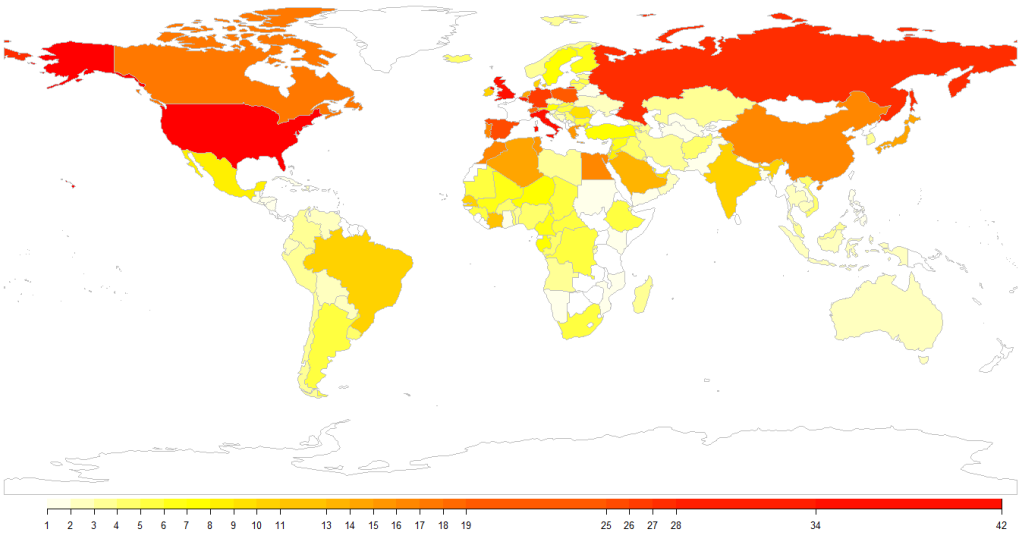
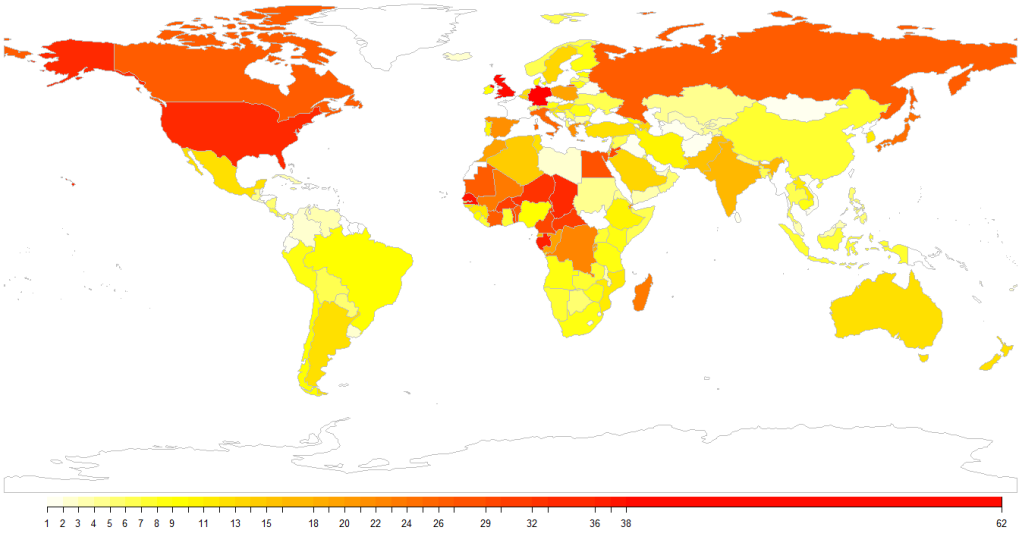


Figure 4: Total Visits to France by Country, 1950-2020



Leader Visits and Extended Deterrence

McManus (2018) argues that leader visits *from* major powers help to deter regional adversaries of the host countries because leader visits carry signals of resolve. As the authors link the credibility of such resolve to the potential reprobation by the domestic audience if a major power abandons a receiving minor power, their theory is especially relevant for powerful democracies.

We now replicate the analyses of McManus (2018) with our new dataset as shown in Table 1. Models 1 to 3 present the original analyses of McManus (2018) and models 4 to 6 present the new results with the updated dataset. The most important point to note about the new results is their overall consistency with the previous ones, despite a significant increase in the number of observations of leader visits from France. We do see a slight decrease in statistical significance for Model 6 compared to Model 4, suggesting that major power leader visits might not be as effective in deterring fatal militarized disputes as previously thought.

Table 1: Replication of McManus (2018) with New French Leader Visit Dataset

	Original McManus (2018)			New Visits Dataset		
	Violent MID Model 1	Any MID Model 2	Fatal MID Model 3	Violent MID Model 4	Any MID Model 5	Fatal MID Model 6
Major Power Leader Visits	-0.194**	-0.155**	-0.109+			
	(0.0481)	(0.0396)	(0.0582)			
New Major Power Leader Visits				-0.190**	-0.178**	-0.0717
				(0.0468)	(0.0393)	(0.0572)
Constant	-2.986	-7.430**	-1.054	-3.271	-7.847**	-1.000
	(2.676)	(2.483)	(3.464)	(2.691)	(2.496)	(3.514)
N	93258	93243	93293	93258	93243	93293
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Temporal Dependence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

To parse out why there is this difference in the effect of major power leader visits for fatal militarized interstate disputes, we conducted further regression analyses just for the fatal militarized interstate dispute as the dependent variable. Since most of the new observations come from visits to Europe as shown in Figure 1, we split the sample of target state observations into two groups − Europe and other regions − and conducted the analyses with the same model specifications. The results are presented in Table 2. We observe that most of the difference arises from target states located in Europe as indicated by the discrepancy between the coefficient estimates of Models 1 and 3. The results suggest that a more careful investigation of the effect of leader visits on deterring fatal militarized interstate disputes might be warranted.

Table 2: Replication of McManus (2018) with New French Leader Visit Dataset by Region

	Original McManus (2018)		New Visits Dataset	
	Europe Model 1	Other Regions Model 2	Europe Model 3	Other Regions Model 4
Major Power Leader Visit	-0.227^{+}	-0.0511		
	(0.128)	(0.0589)		
New Major Power Leader Visit			-0.123	-0.0409
			(0.129)	(0.0570)
Constant	-3.423	-2.004	-2.590	-2.026
	(7.585)	(3.591)	(7.950)	(3.636)
N	33331	586767	33331	586767
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Temporal Dependence	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Leader Visits and Regime Survival

Malis and Smith (2021) argue that leader visits with the United States, including both visits from and to this major power, help to prolong the survival of foreign minor powers' leaders because these visits credibly reveal information about the strength of the incumbent leader, thereby deterring potential domestic challengers. We first replicate the original analysis conducted by Malis and Smith (2021) to demonstrate the utility of our dataset. For clarity, for our replication we adopt the same research design and variable operationalization as presented by Malis and Smith (2021), including the dependent variable denoting removal. We replace dyadic variables involving the United States with those involving France where appropriate.[6]

Table 3 presents the results. We see that the results are statistically significant for leader visits involving France, providing a *prima facie* evidence that the same type of mechanism could be at work for France as a democratic major power, even with the opacity of its diplomatic behavior. However, we were not able to rule out potential selection effects as strongly as Malis and Smith (2021). The selection argument would imply that "domestic instability weakens the relationship between visits and leader removal" (Malis and Smith, 2021, 253, 254): the negative interaction effect is presented in the study as evidence that refutes the selection mechanism and supports the deterrence hypothesis outlined in Malis and Smith (2021). However, we were not able to observe a negative effect when leader visits with France were interacted with the instability index of the host regime as shown in Table 4.

[6]In particular, we replace the ideal point distance to the United States with the ideal point distance to France; (logged) trade with the United States with (logged) trade with France; (logged) economic aid from the United States with (logged) economic aid from France. The only dyadic variable we omit is (logged) French military aid from France to the host country due to the lack of data availability.

Table 3: Replication of Malis and Smith (2021) with New French Leader Visit Dataset

	Visits with U.S.				Visits with France			
	By Visit Type		Pooled		By Visit Type		Pooled	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Visit from U.S.	-0.731**	-0.898**						
	(0.184)	(0.213)						
Visit to U.S.	-0.984**	-1.118**						
	(0.108)	(0.118)						
Any U.S. Visit			-1.083**	-1.242**				
			(0.107)	(0.118)				
Visit from France					-0.587**	-0.691**		
					(0.186)	(0.177)		
Visit to France					-1.373**	-1.370**		
					(0.138)	(0.152)		
Any France Visit							-1.206**	-1.234**
							(0.115)	(0.111)
Constant	-1.459+	-10.63	-1.509+	-10.59	-0.157	-5.581	-0.272	-5.998
	(0.883)	(7.897)	(0.892)	(8.000)	(0.665)	(8.419)	(0.672)	(8.439)
N	6023	6023	6023	6023	6095	6095	6095	6095
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects		✓		✓		✓		✓
Year Fixed Effects		✓		✓		✓		✓

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Survival Analysis: Interaction with Instability Index

	Visits with U.S.		Visits with France	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Visit from U.S.	-1.002***	-0.817***		
	(0.235)	(0.235)		
Visit to U.S.	-1.137***	-0.876***		
	(0.119)	(0.130)		
Instability Index$_{t-1}$	0.149*		0.128^{+}	
	(0.065)		(0.070)	
Visit from U.S. × Instability Index$_{t-1}$	-0.751*			
	(0.330)			
Visit to U.S. × Instability Index$_{t-1}$	-0.268			
	(0.200)			
Any Instability$_{t-1}$		0.185*		0.102
		(0.092)		(0.093)
Visit from U.S. × Any Instability$_{t-1}$		-0.224		
		(0.350)		
Visit to U.S. × Any Instability$_{t-1}$		-0.648***		
		(0.190)		
Visit from France			-0.700***	-0.824***
			(0.175)	(0.242)
Visit from France × Instability Index$_{t-1}$			0.061	
			(0.247)	
Visit to France			-1.374***	-1.484***
			(0.154)	(0.200)
Visit to France × Instability Index$_{t-1}$			0.205	
			(0.218)	
Visit from France × Any Instability$_{t-1}$				0.252
				(0.291)
Visit to France × Any Instability$_{t-1}$				0.310
				(0.332)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	6023	6023	6095	6095
Number of Leaders	1156	1156	1169	1169
Failures	955	955	959	959
LogLikelihood	-738.662	-737.027	-746.043	-746.998

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

To test the intuition that leader visits conducted with France is potentially an important confounder for leader visits with the United States for only African countries, we replicate the analysis and examine the effect of including leader visits with France as a confounder by region. Table 5 presents the results. Model 1 follows the exact same model specification as Malis and Smith (2021) but with the region specified as Africa. Model 2 is the same as Model 1 except that now there are additional confounders of leader visits with France. Models 3 and 4 are analogous to Models 1 and 2 except that the region is now specified as all other countries. We see in Model 2 that the coefficient estimate of leader visits from the United States weakens substantially when the control variables *Visits from France* and *Visits to France* are added. On the other hand, we do not see much noticeable difference between Model 3 and Model 4 in the coefficient estimates of U.S. leader visits.[7]

[7]The analysis in Table 5 assumes that visits with the United States are the "treatment." In the appendix, we show statistical results where we consider visits with *France* as the "treatment." Both *Visit from France* and *Visit to France* have a statistically significant effect in prolonging the survival of the host regime and remain robust to the inclusion of visits with the United States as a confounder.

Table 5: Weibull Analysis: Visits with the U.S. as the Treatment

	Countries in Africa		Other Regions	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Visit from U.S.	-1.326	-1.273	-0.866**	-0.779**
	(1.177)	(1.419)	(0.197)	(0.218)
Visit to U.S.	-0.806+	-0.613	-1.193**	-1.141**
	(0.420)	(0.503)	(0.122)	(0.124)
Visit from France		-2.010*		-0.577**
		(0.811)		(0.212)
Visit to France		-2.047**		-1.181**
		(0.366)		(0.199)
Constant	14.70	3.963	-19.44*	-18.01*
	(21.93)	(20.89)	(7.654)	(7.899)
N	1915	1915	4278	4278
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Are French leaders more willing than U.S. presidents to meet African leaders even if they are autocratic? We have noted that it is difficult to establish causal claims between visits with France and the survival of the host incumbent regime in light of the results in Table 4. In other words, it is plausible that French leaders are self-selecting themselves into meeting African leaders who are capable of holding onto power for a long time. Even if we cannot establish a causal claim regarding leader visits with France and the survival of incumbent leaders in Africa, we can derive an important implication from the above qualitative accounts and statistical analyses, notably the analysis of leader visits with France as a confounder in the case of the United States. That is, French leaders may be more willing to meet autocrats from Africa compared to U.S. presidents. This adds nuance to our understanding of major democratic power diplomacy and, more generally, the interaction between democracies and autocracies. Scholars have long noted that citizens in democracies are less fond of autocracies due to dissimilar values and norms (e.g., Russet, 1994; Tomz and Weeks, 2013). As such, democratic leaders in general may be less willing to grant an audience with autocratic leaders. However, given that 1) there is a negative statistical association between leader visits with France and the termination of office for African leaders; and 2) many regimes in Africa are autocratic, we might expect that French leaders might be more willing to grant an audience with autocratic African leaders compared to U.S. presidents.

To test this proposition with a simple test, we performed regression analyses with any leader visit conducted with France or the United States as the dependent variables of interest. For the ease of interpretation, we used the reverse democracy score from Pemstein, Meserve and Melton (2010) such that higher scores indicate more autocratic regimes. The results are presented in Table 6. Models 1 and 3 (2 and 4) examine any leader visit with France

(any leader visit with the United States) as the dependent variable. We include two-way fixed effects with temporal dependence terms (Carter and Signorino, 2010). Although the difference in the coefficient estimates seems minimal for the linear probability model, the results are broadly consistent with our expectation − French leaders are more likely than U.S. leaders to conduct leader visits with autocratic leaders from Africa. This is compatible with our discussion on the opacity of French diplomacy and further nuances the generalizability of the theory of leader survival. We emphasize that since we have not included any time-varying confounders, the results here are preliminary. Scholars may want to conduct further analyses into this question in the future.

Table 6: Autocratic Regimes and Major Power Leader Visits

	Logistic Model		Linear Probability Model	
	Model 1 Visit with France	Model 2 Visit with U.S.	Model 3 Visit with France	Model 4 Visit with U.S.
Africa	0.172	3.054**	-0.105**	0.632**
	(0.234)	(0.133)	(0.0322)	(0.0513)
Africa × Autocracy Score	0.872**	0.347	0.102**	0.0920**
	(0.209)	(0.222)	(0.0313)	(0.0285)
Autocracy Score	-0.754**	-0.778**	-0.0823**	-0.121**
	(0.149)	(0.126)	(0.0201)	(0.0199)
Constant	-0.633	-2.307**	0.544**	-0.0243
	(0.419)	(0.305)	(0.0482)	(0.0675)
N	7862	7825	8824	8824
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Temporal Dependence	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Conclusion

This data feature article makes two key contributions. First, it greatly expands the existing dataset on leader visits *from* France, originally created by McManus (2018). The difference in the number of observations in terms of coverage is substantial as seen from the descriptive statistics above. Second, this article allows scholars to better test the existing theories of extended deterrence and leader survival.

We have conducted two replication exercises to probe the sensitivity of the past findings. We find that our results are overall consistent with McManus's (2018) main findings but the effect of major power leader visits seem to weaken slightly for fatal militarized interstate disputes compared to the original results. Furthermore, using France as a challenging case, this data feature article nuances the generalizability of the regime survival theory proposed by Malis and Smith (2021). Although we find that leader visits with France tend to decrease the likelihood of foreign leader removal, we cannot neglect the possibility of a selection effect − it is possible that French leaders have self-selected into meeting African leaders who are already capable of maintaining power for a long time. At the same time, we suggest that more attention should be given to gaining fine-grained insights into major power diplomacy, particularly concerning the interplay between major powers as we find some evidence that French leader visits, when adjusted for, weaken the effect of U.S. leader visits on the incumbent survival in African countries.

We believe that our dataset will be useful to scholars who study African politics in particular. While scholars have long speculated that France may have had an important influence over many African countries. As the examples above and the subsequent analyses

highlight, French leader visits do seem to be politically relevant for African countries. The dataset provided would not only provide a useful tool for scholars conducting empirical analyses in the African context, but also provide a useful reference to learn about the details of each visit.

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Online Appendix for

Introducing the Diplomatic Visits with France Dataset, 1950-2020

List of Tables

Table A1: Summary Statistics

Variables	Obs	Mean	Sd	Min	Max
Visit from France	11,017	0.080	0.271	0	1
Visit to France	11,017	0.152	0.359	0	1
Any Visit with France	11,017	0.209	0.407	0	1

Table A2: Weibull Analysis: Visits with France as the Treatment

	Countries in Africa		Other Regions	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Visit from France	-1.948**	-1.969*	-0.726**	-0.660**
	(0.747)	(0.780)	(0.221)	(0.244)
Visit to France	-2.002**	-2.006**	-1.284**	-1.151**
	(0.351)	(0.370)	(0.175)	(0.185)
Visit from U.S.		-1.372		-0.759**
		(1.357)		(0.224)
Visit to U.S.		-0.792		-1.130**
		(0.495)		(0.125)
Constant	0.535**	0.548**	-0.155	-0.181
	(0.151)	(0.148)	(0.162)	(0.174)
N	1952	1952	4311	4311
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$