

Citizen Loyalty, Mass Protest and Authoritarian Survival*

Beatriz Magaloni
magaloni@stanford.edu
Stanford University

and

Jeremy Wallace
jeremy.wallace@stanford.edu
Stanford University

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1) Introduction

Most of the existing literature on dictatorships has focused on elites and elite politics. Tullock (2005) stresses that dictators face three potential sources of danger. The first of these are the high officials of the regime, the second is foreign intervention and the third is genuine popular uprising, which he claims is “rare, not only in my own opinion but in that of most people who have seriously looked into the matter” (44).

Bueno de Mesquita *et al's* (2003) well-know theory parts from the notion that dictators do not face a general threat from the rest of society, but instead face a threat from a subset called the “selectorate.” In Haber (2005), the principal danger to dictators comes from political entrepreneurs that lead organizations and can coordinate opposition against the ruler. In Geddes' (2003) seminal study about types of dictators, the main danger comes from divisions within the ruling elite.

In this paper we depart from these theories by looking at the effects of mass politics on political survival. Citizen loyalty is instrumental for dictatorial survival for various reasons. First, dictators can't simply rule by repression. The more dictators rely on the armed forces and security apparatus to sustain their rule, the more vulnerable they become to being ousted by these very same players (Wintrobe, 1998). Second, where there is strong dissatisfaction among the masses, dictators are more vulnerable to destructive power struggles within

the ruling coalition and challenges from the armed forces. Third, if there is wide spread citizen dissatisfaction, scattered acts of resistance can more easily escalate into an explosion of civil unrest that can trigger a dictatorship's collapse in a matter of days (Kuran, 1991).

To sustain their rule, dictators must discourage vicious power struggles within their ruling coalitions, the entry of outside rivals, and the formation of subversive coalitions. A common way in which dictators deter these threats is by manufacturing an image of invincibility. For example, dictators mobilize crowds to participate in ritualistic ceremonies, have walls and streets painted with the official party's emblem, obtain huge turnout at the polls and win with crushing margins, etc. Dictators manufacture this image of strength to signal to potential elite opponents that they are indestructible and that there is no point in conspiring a palace coup or plotting a rebellion. Dictators also want to appear invincible in the eyes of their subjects because few individuals dissenting with impunity can bandwagon into general disobedience if the regime's unpopularity and weakness becomes common knowledge. Mass protest and riots are hence not trivial events in the life of dictatorships, although most of the recent literature on authoritarian politics has paid scant attention to them.¹ Our questions are threefold: how common are acts of mass unrest in different types of dictatorships? How much is political survival threatened by protest and demonstrations? What determines an authoritarian regimes' capacity to resist disruption in the streets?

¹ Yotam Margalit (2005) is one of the most notable exceptions. We follow his lead in taking protest seriously in a study of autocratic survival.

The paper unfolds as follows. The first section discusses the sources of citizen loyalty to dictatorships and why it is important for regime survival. The second section presents our categorization of dictatorships and describes patterns of protests in these regimes. The third section presents our hypotheses about the effects of protests on democratic and authoritarian survival and how they impact the various types of dictatorships. The fourth section presents our results regarding about political survival. The fifth section discusses the factors explaining whether mass protests might trigger democratization or an authoritarian backlash in the form of a military coup. We end with a conclusion.

2) Citizen loyalty and the survival of dictatorships

Citizen loyalty to dictatorships has different behavioral manifestations. Citizens display loyalty by performing some functions for the dictator –e.g, participating in public ceremonies, hanging banners, spying on their neighbors, turning out to vote, etc. Citizens' might also show loyalty by passively obeying the dictator's commands and accepting the prescribed ritual. This form of loyalty is clearly pictured by Havel (1979) with his example about the greengrocer, who obediently hangs a banner in his store with the slogan, "Workers of the World, unite!." In following the prescribed ritual, citizens in authoritarian regimes become players of the game, "thus making it possible for the game to go on, for it to exist in the first place" (Havel, 1979: 136).

Citizen loyalty to authoritarian regimes is constructed through a combination of public polices and economic performance; ideological appeals and indoctrination; material side-payments; and threats of violence (Magaloni, 2006). Authoritarian regimes that manage to generate economic prosperity might enjoy genuine popular support. However, even in the absence of prosperity and staggering economic mismanagement, authoritarian regimes can keep their subjects loyal through a combination of rewards and punishments. The greengrocer places the slogan in his window because he is afraid of what can happen if he refuses to do so –he might no longer receive the onions and carrots that he sells or he might even be accused of disloyalty. Voters support long-lasting ruling parties to a large extent because of the fear of being withdrawn from the spoils systems if they defect to the opposition. Thus, loyalty to authoritarian regimes translates into some reward, the minimal of which is a guarantee to be left alone, but is sustained because of credible threats of punishment –the threat of not being able to obtain access to housing, food, health services, land, government subsidies and the like (Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast, 2001).

Citizens can exhibit disloyalty to dictatorships by refraining from participating in the system of rituals. This form of disloyalty involves personal acts of dissent and differs from acts of disloyalty in which dissidents purposely seek to coordinate with others. The explosion of civil unrest in the form of protest and rioting is thus one clear indication of disloyalty to a dictatorship, although not the only one.

Citizen loyalty to a dictatorship, as it is clear in Kuran's (1991) seminal study, often results from "preference falsification": citizens are loyal to the dictatorship out of fear, and because they realize that in isolation each individual is powerless to bring its collapse. In public they signal their loyalty, but in private each citizen has a "true preference" that might range from detesting the regime, to feeling apathetic, to strongly endorsing it.

This theory uncovers a great vulnerability of dictatorships to mass protest. It shows that public sentiment can turn against apparently unshakable dictatorships with amazing velocity, as small oppositions cascade into overwhelming majorities. The mechanism is given by a tipping phenomenon in which the participation in acts of public protests by a small group can cascade, triggering a bandwagon of dissent.

The underlying distribution of citizens' true preferences toward the dictatorship is always unknown. Some citizens are afraid and therefore unquestionably loyal; others are loyal because of the privileges and side-payments they obtain. To measure the percentage of "true believers" ideally we would need to order the population along something like an "ideological spectrum" and determine the number of people whose ideal preferences are closer to the dictatorship than to an alternative political organization (e.g., an opposition party or a dissident group). This "sincere preference" must be measured as the utility derived by citizens from the dictatorship without considering their side-payments and threats of violence. All those individuals who lie closer to the alternative organization irrespective of side-payments and

threats of violence are *sincere opponents* whose support to the dictatorship results solely from "preference falsification," using Kuran's (1991) terminology. Or we can follow this work in defining for each citizen an internal payoff for supporting the opposition; the higher this pay-off, the more costly it is to support the regime or suppress antigovernment feelings.

Thus, public discontent makes dictatorships vulnerable by generating potential for political mobilization. The more the dictatorship rules by confiscating property; levying harsh taxation on its citizenry; preying on economic activity; or attempting to control the day-to-day existence of citizens, the more rulers will have to fear from their own people. By contrast, if dictators make their citizens prosper, or if they rule by claiming a divine or traditional right to a throne, as in monarchies, there is less potential for anti-regime political mobilization.

However, public discontent is not a sufficient condition for the emergence of mass protest. Potential opponents need ways to coordinate (Olson, 1965). First, they need to find ways to infer the size of the opposition. The larger the opposition, the lower the expected risks of dissenting and the larger the probability to overthrow the dictatorship, giving individuals "power in numbers" (Di Nardo, 1990). Second, potential opponents must find ways to know that others also know that their tolerance for the dictatorship is below the line and that they would join the protest if others do likewise. Finally, potential opponents need some form of public signal or "focal point" to turn in great numbers to the streets. In the East European revolution all these happened

spontaneously, as Kuran (1991) and Lohman (1994) explain. However, in most cases, mass protest presupposes some form of political organization –e.g., a dissident movement that mobilizes people into the radical cause or pre-existing organizations (labor unions, women's groups, Churches) that can call the protest.

Mass protest is also a function of a dictatorship's responsiveness, which following Di Nardo (1990), we define as the propensity to trade concessions for tranquility rather than use violence. It seems to us uncontroversial that the East European population would not have flooded the streets had they anticipated that the USSR would send tanks to repress them, as it had done in the 1950s and 1960s during the failed East European revolutions. The higher the regime's responsiveness, the more likely that groups will turn to the streets to voice their demands.

This simple framework allows us to derive some predictions about the factors that account for protest in dictatorial regimes. *Ceteris paribus*, we should expect more potential for mobilization where: 1) There is more underlying public dissatisfaction against the dictatorship; 2) the dictatorship permits the existence of independent or semi-independent political organizations capable of organizing the masses; and 3) the regime is less willing to use violence against its people, trading instead material or policy concessions in exchange of tranquility.

3) Protest and Dictatorial types

To explore the role of mass protest in authoritarian survival, we build on Geddes (2003), who stresses systematic difference among different types of dictatorial regimes. She distinguishes between personalistic, military and single-party dictatorships, suggesting that the latter are significantly more stable because of their relative immunity to elite splitting. However, her approach generates numerous “hybrid regimes,” often making the distinctions between the types unclear. Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) and Gandhi (in press) classify autocracies into civilian, military and monarchies. Hadenius and Teorell (2007) and Magaloni (2008) divide autocracies into military, monarchy, single-party and multiparty.

To explore mass protest in dictatorships, we begin by classifying dictatorial regimes. Our approach to regime classification distinguishes autocratic regimes according to two basic criteria: the dictators’ “launching organization” (Haber, 2006); and the number of political parties. The launching organization is the political organization that controls access to political office and the main power positions. We distinguish three types of launching organizations: political parties, the military, and royal families. We use simple criteria to classify autocratic regimes. The first one is to determine whether a country is democratic or not. In order to make this call, we employ the update of the Przeworski et. al (2000) classification of political regimes up to 2000 from Matt Golder (2006).

Once democracies are separated, we employ the Banks dataset to classify autocratic regimes as in Magaloni (2008). The rules are relatively simple and can be easily replicated.

1. A regime is a **democracy** when it fulfills the competitive selection of executive and legislative, as well as the alternation rules, according to Przeworski et. al (2000).
2. An autocratic regime is a **monarchy** when the effective executive type in the Banks classification (S21F5) is a monarch
3. An autocratic regime is classified as **single-party autocracy** when political parties exist and exactly 100 percent of the legislature is composed of members of one ruling party.
4. An **hegemonic-party autocracy** are all the other autocracies where political parties exist (i.e. the ruling party has less than 100 percent of the legislative seats).
5. A regime is a **military autocracy** when the Banks' "type of regime" variable (S20F7) is coded as military or military-civilian
6. When the above criteria lead to no classification of a regime, the data is marked as missing, except when this is one year in the middle of a clearly identified regime where no leadership change has occurred, in which case it is recoded to the value of that regime.

Table 1 displays the categorization of political regimes from 1950 until 2000. Single-party autocracies constitute the most common dictatorship. These account for 32 percent of the dictatorship-years, followed by hegemonic-party autocracies (23%), military dictatorships with no political parties (14.3%), and absolutist monarchies (9.7%). Military dictatorships with political parties and electoral monarchies are not that common.

The autocracies are primordially concentrated in Africa (24.7%), followed by South America (17.5), then Asia (14%), Middle East/North Africa (14%), and the USSR/the former Soviet bloc (8.57%). Single-party autocracies constitute the most common observation, accounting for 20% of the country-years,

followed by hegemonic-party autocracies (15%), then military regimes (9%) and monarchies (6%).

Table 1: Classification of political regimes, 1950-2000

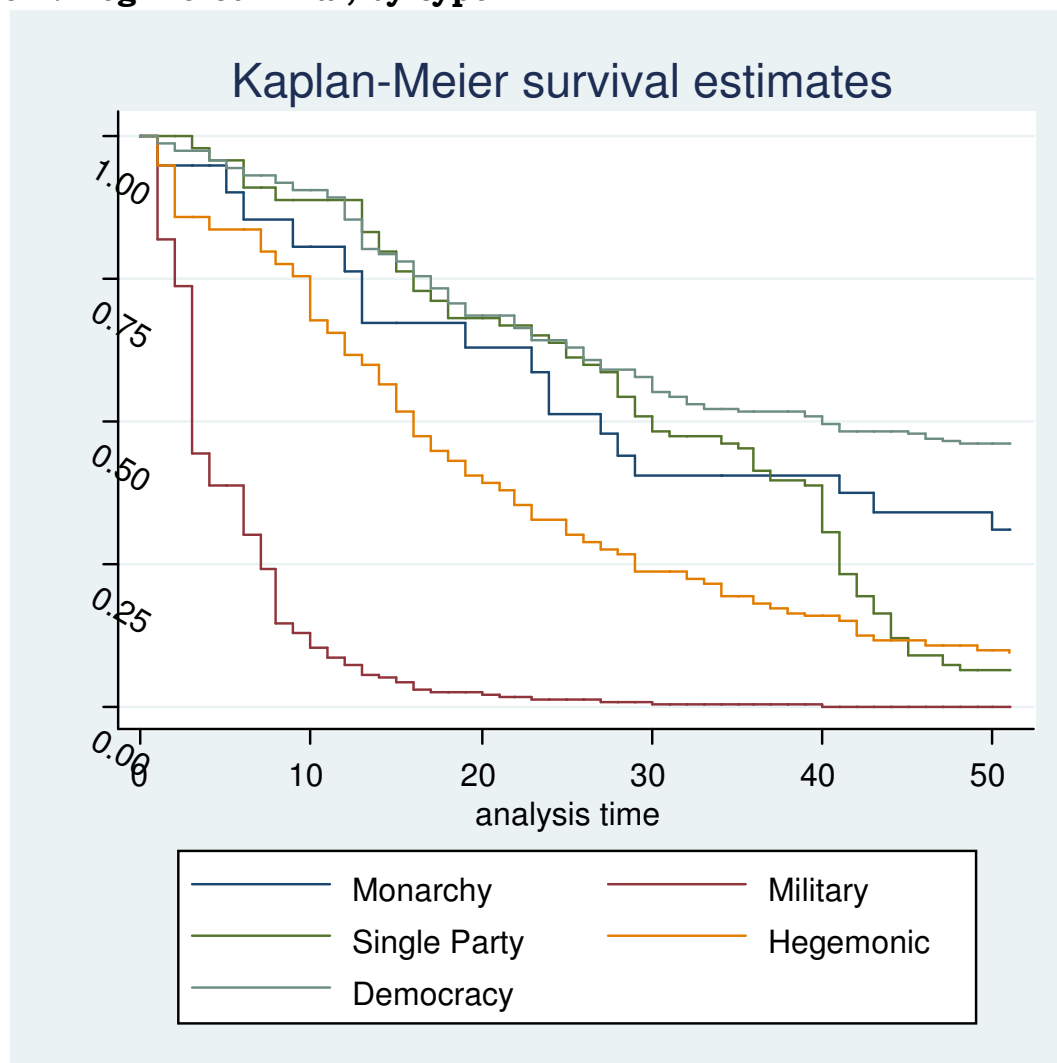
REGIME TYPE		Regime Years	% total Dictatorships	% total Regimes
Party Autocracies	Single Party (SP)	1,430	32.6	20.4
	Hegemonic Party (HP)	1,002	22.8	14.3
Monarchies	Absolutist Monarchy	427	9.7	6.1
	Monarchy, multiple parties	63	1.4	0.9
	Monarchy, one party	0	0.0	0
Military	Military Dictatorship	630	14.3	9
	Military Dictatorship, one party	91	2.1	1.3
	Military Dictatorship, multiple parties	120	2.7	1.7
Total Autocracies		4,393	100	61.9
Democracies		2,701		38.5
Total		7,094		100

Source: Magaloni (2008)

Figure 1 displays Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for the various types of dictatorial regimes and the democracies. The first thing to highlight is that military regimes are significantly shorter lived than the other dictatorial regimes. The cumulative survival rate of military regimes drops to 50 percent in

only five years and is less than 10 percent after ten years. These mean that only a handful of military dictators are as long-lasting as, for example, the Pinochet regime in Chile.

Figure 1. Regime Survival, by type



Source: Magaloni (2008)

Party dictatorships (both single-party and hegemonic) are significantly more enduring than military regimes. Single-party dictatorships are the most stable of the dictatorial regimes, followed by monarchies. Hegemonic-party autocracies are shorter-lived than single-party dictatorships. The cumulative

probability that a dictatorship will survive beyond ten years is 95 percent for single-party dictatorships and close to 75 percent for hegemonic-parties. Single-party dictatorships reach a 50 percent cumulative threshold at approximately 30 years while hegemonic-party regimes reach this threshold at 20 years. The cumulative survival probabilities of single-party regimes, however, fall dramatically after forty years. Most of these regimes transformed into hegemonic-party autocracies in the 1990s.

In Magaloni (2008) political parties enhance authoritarian survival because they are instrumental in solving commitment problems. If dictators cannot commit to not abusing their loyal friends—those who choose to invest in the existing autocratic institutions rather than in forming subversive coalitions— they will be in permanent danger of being overthrown, both by members of the ruling elite and by outside rivals. The dictator can't solve his dilemma simply by co-opting their potential rivals with private transfers on the spot because this creates commitment problems on the other end – rivals can consume these transfers or use them to strengthen their subversive coalitions so as to overthrow the dictator by force. To solve these commitment problems, Magaloni (2008) argues, dictators must create institutions that can guarantee some form of power-sharing with their ruling coalitions. Autocratic political parties and elections (both one-party and multiparty) work at mitigating these commitment problems, making power-sharing possible and enhancing the longevity of authoritarian rule.

A stable power-sharing deal that generates unity within the ruling elite requires mass loyalty. Magaloni (2006) finds, for example, that the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary (PRI) party managed to survive to a large extent because it gave millions of ordinary citizens a vested interest in the survival of the regime. The PRI was more vulnerable to elite divisions, she claims, when there was strong latent voter dissatisfaction, giving top-level party cadres dissatisfied with not obtaining the party's presidential nomination an opportunity to split the ruling party and challenge the regime as opposition. To assess whether this argument is a characterization of political survival that can be generalized across dictators, we explore in this paper the role of mass protest in triggering authoritarian collapse. We assess the relative invulnerability of different types of dictatorships to outside shocks, as they are manifested in riots and demonstrations.

Table 2 shows the frequency of riots and demonstrations in the various types of dictatorships. The table also shows these regimes' average Polity scores. These data reveal little about the underlying mass dissatisfaction in each of these regimes. The first thing to highlight is that protest is relatively common in hegemonic-party regimes and uncommon in single-party regimes. These differences in frequency of protests seem to be in part driven by constitutional rules. Hegemonic-party regimes tolerate oppositions and the existence of semi-independent and independent political organizations, whereas single-party regimes do not. Thus, hegemonic-party regimes are almost by definition more responsive to civil unrest, and thus more willing to trade concessions in

exchange for tranquility. A reason why these regimes are willing to trade concessions rather than repress the population is that killing people in the streets is likely to trigger a cascade in favor of the opposition in the next elections.

Table 2: Protest in Authoritarian Regimes

	Democracy	Military	Single Party	Hegemonic Party	Monarchy
Riots	25%	19%	12%	21%	8%
Demonstrations	20%	18%	12%	22%	7%
Polity Score	8.0	-5.8	-7.1	-1.4	-8.3

The second thing to highlight from this table is that protest is quite common in military regimes. We believe that protest in these regimes is in part the product of the inherent weakness of military regimes, the most unstable of all of the dictatorships. Most of them come from democracies, which mean that in many of them there is a variety of pre-existing political organizations that go temporarily underground, yet they remain active and capable of coordinating the opposition. By contrast, in many single-party regimes, there is little underground opposition. Many of these single-party regimes are communists, where protest seldom happens to a large extent because independent organizations capable of mobilizing the people into the streets are outlawed.

The third noteworthy datum from the table is the relative infrequency of protest in monarchies, even compared with single-party regimes. It seems

unlikely that the repressive capacity of monarchies exceeds that of single-party regimes, and that this might account for the discrepancy in the rate of observed protests. A more fruitful track may be to examine the desire to protest. Monarchies are, on average, the richest autocratic regime type in the dataset, perhaps wealth reduces the likelihood of protest; however, in the overall data, there does not seem to be a strong link between per capita income (logged) and the variables for measuring protest.² If there exists a link between underlying loyalty and observed protests, as this paper puts forward, then there exists a high implied level of loyalty in monarchies.

4) Does protest affect survival?

The processes by which protest might disturb the stability of an autocratic regime to the extent of precipitating a downfall are varied, including both direct and indirect pathways. Behind these various mechanisms is the link between protest, loyalty, and the information conveyed about the latter by the former.

Public protest aimed at political leadership demonstrates that there is discontent within a society. By the fact that protests are public, they are information held in common by the population and by elites and threats to the

² Correlations vary depending on the measure but never exceed 0.11 in absolute value terms, with the 0.11 a positive correlation between the two and so counter to the logic of wealth decreasing the likelihood of protest.

survival of a regime can come from either source.³ Here we first explore threats to survival coming from the population and later reflect on how protest affects elite politics.

Under what conditions does public protest explode into a revolutionary bandwagon? For this to happen, following Kuran's (1991) theory, the actions of the first protesters must move the generally held conceptions about the regime enough that they cross a threshold value and trigger popular bandwagoning against a regime. There are a number of conditions that must be met for a revolutionary movement to emerge. If the distribution of private preferences about the desirability of the regime's continued survival are relatively unfavorable to the opposition, then it is clear that a bandwagon will not occur. That is, a population that is both outwardly and inwardly loyal will not revolt simply upon seeing demonstrations in the streets. While a favorable underlying distribution of preferences is necessary for revolutionary bandwagoning following a protest to occur, it is not sufficient. It is at this point that analysis becomes difficult. As Kuran (1991) points out, it is hubris for a researcher to assume that she understands more about a society and the likelihood of protest transitioning to revolution than the autocratic regime that is fighting for its survival. However, one can say that the more informative a protest is and the more it changes perceptions, then the more likely the threshold will be crossed.

³ The assumption here that a protest is a "public" event, is an assumption. Protests can be swept under the rug and the degree to which protests are public could be seen as a variable in the analysis that follows.

When will a protest be particularly informative? We posit that protests are more likely to be informative and trigger a mass bandwagon when there is high general dissatisfaction against the dictatorship (low loyalty) and the institutional environment is closed (little space for dissent and high repression). When there is large room for dissent and acts of protest entail no significant risks, as in democracies, protest is a normal aspect of politics, a routine similar to other activities such as lobbying, voting, and the like. Furthermore, when protest is frequent and relatively risk free, it becomes compartmentalized to particular issues –taxes, civil rights, credit, housing, etc— unlikely to translate into anti-regime bandwagons. In many hegemonic-party regimes, protest is even sponsored by the official party. In Mexico organizations affiliated to the PRI (e.g., the national teacher’s unions, the oil worker’s union, taxi drivers’ organizations), routinely engaged in street demonstrations as ways to obtain policy and other material concessions from the president and the PRI’ central leadership. These regime-sponsored protests took place in parallel to a significant number of anti-regime protests, mostly post-electoral, which never triggered a bandwagon against the PRI as they also became compartmentalized and linked by nature of the dynamics of electoral competition with other policy issues dividing opposition voters among themselves. The routinization of policy-specific protest is also evident in China today. Protesters calling on the center to solve their local problems is seemingly condoned and is even used to monitor local government performance while protests targeting the center are dealt with harshly (O’Brien 1996, Lorentzen 2006).

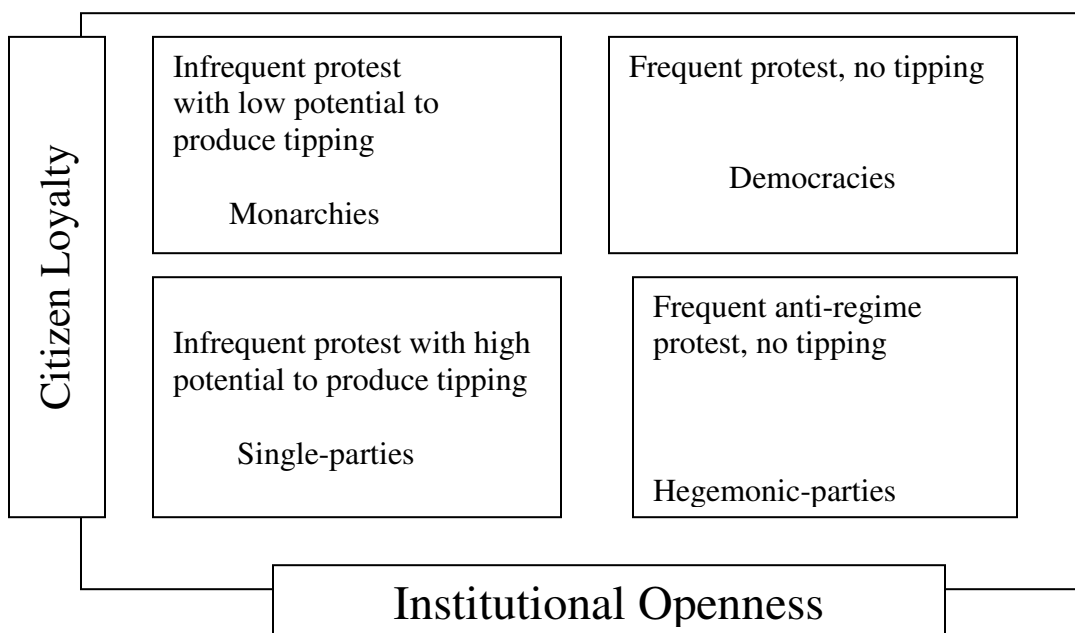
Another factor affecting the information content of a protest is the number of protests that have occurred. It is difficult to make claims about the relative import of the first protest compared with the second. Obviously, the first protest can be seen as a relatively strong signal of the latent discontent in the population. However, in terms of judging the competence of a regime, the first protest is perhaps less informative than a second protest. It is not reasonable for a government to be aware of all possible threats at all possible moments, and so a first protest would inform not only the population about the level of discontent but also let the authorities know about this now-realized threat. A second protest, however, might contain more information about the government's ability or lack thereof to control threats and its disposition to repress. But as protests become more frequent, they should become less and less informative than the first.

Putting some of these ideas together, we can think of protest and their signaling effects as a product of two underlying issues: the distribution of citizen loyalty and the degree of institutional openness, which is inversely correlated with repression. The more costly it is for dissenters to go public and the lower citizen loyalty, the fewer protests there will be but those that erupt are likely to be highly informative. If dissent is very costly but there is high citizen loyalty, there is likely to be very few and scattered protests among a small group of dissenters, who are likely to inspire little sympathy among the rest of the masses. If there is significant institutional openness and high loyalty, as in democracies, protest is likely to be frequent, yet unrelated to regime

issues and hence less dangerous to the stability of the regime. Finally, if there is low citizen loyalty and significant institutional openness, there is likely to be a large number of protests about non-regime issues –taxation, social policy, housing, wages, and the like – as well as anti-regime protest. Protest in this case is likely to be less dangerous for survival than where there is low citizen loyalty and high institutional closeness.

Figure 2 presents some of these hypotheses graphically. The vertical axis shows the prevailing distribution of loyalty and the horizontal axis the degree of institutional openness, measured with the Polity scores reported in table 2. The lower left quadrant is occupied by highly closed autocratic regimes with low citizen loyalty. Our hypothesis is that protest will be more likely to trigger regime collapse in these regimes. Many of the single-party regimes fit this characterization. In the upper left quadrant are highly closed autocratic regimes with high citizen loyalty. Here protest should be relatively uncommon and not that destabilizing. Some monarchies where there is high citizen loyalty resulting from a combination of economic prosperity fueled by oil and belief in the historic legitimacy of the dynastical family occupy this quadrant. The upper right quadrant is occupied by democracies, where protest is relatively common and not destabilizing. Finally, protest should also be relatively common in autocratic regimes that are more open and where loyalty is low. Protest is not likely to trigger authoritarian collapse in these regimes.

Figure 2: The Tipping potential of demonstrations



5) Data Analysis

Given the canonical work of Kuran (1991) and the images of protestors taking down the Berlin Wall and the associated autocratic governments, the unsurprising answer to the question does protest affect survival is yes. However, that simple answer masks interesting divergences between the effect of protests on different types of authoritarian regimes that can shed light on the connections between mass politics and autocratic regime survival.

The method of analysis is a Cox proportional hazards model. While most methods of survival analysis are parametric – that is they assume that the hazard rate follows a particular distribution – the Cox proportional hazard

model is semi-parametric.⁴ The baseline hazard function can take any form and follows the data rather than conforming to a particular distribution by assumption (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones 1997; Beck Katz Tucker 1998).⁵

Coefficient values greater than one represent an increase in the hazard rate and thus a decrease in the estimated survival of the regime, with values below one having the opposite interpretation.

The primary independent variable is a measure of the presence or absence of protests in a given country-year. The measure is created by treating all country years that have either anti-government demonstrations (S18F1) or riots (S17F6) as coded in the Cross-National Time Series dataset by Banks. Control variables for gross domestic product (logged), a moving average of per capita economic growth over three years, an index of religious fractionalization, and size of a country (either measured with population size or land size, which tend to be collinear). The data comes from Banks, The World Bank, and Alesina et al 2003. The results are presented in tables 3 and 4.

The principal finding emerging from these results is that protest decreases the survival of dictatorships but not of democracies. This result highlights, as we have suggested, that dictatorships can't be properly understood without paying attention to mass politics. Our results also indicate that wealth increases the stability of regimes, democracies *and* dictatorships.

⁴ Sometimes referred to as the Cox Regression Model which allows for time-varying covariates.

⁵ Switching analysis types and using parametric methods and assuming a Weibull distribution has no substantial effect on the results presented above.

On other words, poverty is associated with political instability or a higher propensity to transit from and to authoritarian rule.

Table 3. Hazard Analysis of Regime Survival

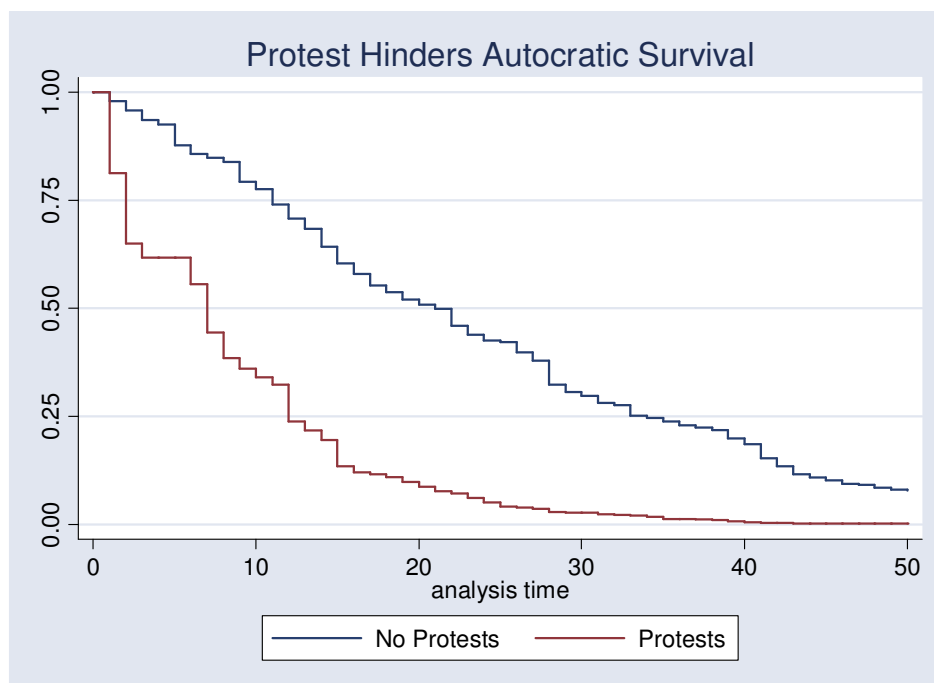
Independent Variables	All Country Years	Democracies	Dictatorships
Per Capita GDP (logged)	0.60*** (0.04)	0.40*** (0.10)	0.79*** (0.06)
Protest	1.74*** (0.24)	1.17 (0.43)	1.83*** (0.24)
Per Capita GDP Growth (moving 3 year avg)	0.07** (0.08)	0.45 (2.07)	0.07** (0.07)
Religious Fractionalization	0.52** (0.16)	0.85 (0.70)	0.46** (0.15)
Population (logged)	1.01 (0.06)	1.10 (0.17)	0.99 (0.06)
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.58* (0.37)	5.41** (4.14)	1.03 (0.20)
E. Europe	1.66* (0.50)		
N. Africa/ME	1.42 (0.37)	1.64 (0.84)	0.76 (0.19)
L. America	2.06*** (0.49)	3.22** (1.84)	1.72** (0.41)
Observations	5219	2098	3115
Log Pseudolikelihood	-1373.02	-117.94	-1076.84

n.b. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Coefficients greater than one are associated with higher hazard rates, those below one with lower hazard rates. Zero effect is associated with coefficient estimates of 1.

What these results suggest, however, is that there are more transitions from one form of dictatorship to another in poorer countries, *not* that democratization is less likely in richer countries, a point to which we return below. We also demonstrate that economic growth enhances the longevity of dictatorships, again suggesting to us that citizen loyalty plays an important

role in authoritarian politics. An intriguing finding we obtain is related to religious fractionalization, which seems to enhance the survival of autocracies. We interpret this result as an indication that dictators can profit from coordination problems among the opposition that are more severe in more heterogeneous societies. We come back to this point when analyzing the impact of this variable on the different types of dictatorships. Our regional dummies indicate that Latin America is particularly unstable, as both democracies and dictatorships collapse more rapidly in this region controlling for levels of development. Sub-Saharan Africa is also significantly more unstable. Yet in this region instability is associated with democracy, not autocracy. We ran models with a dummy for oil producers, various measures of ethnic and linguistic fractionalization from Fearon (2002) and Alesina et al (2003), and export diversification and none of them were statistically significant.

Figure 3 illustrates the importance of mass politics in assessing autocratic survival. Regimes that suffer protests disintegrate at substantially faster rates than do those that are able to avoid them. Figure 3 is a Kaplan-Meier plot depicting the data and does not include control variables. The rapid decline of regimes suffering from protest is reminiscent of the short duration of military regimes on average depicted in Figure 1. Yet while the differences in elite politics between military and other authoritarian regimes have been well-examined, the importance of protest has been understated in the literature. This is particularly true of differences in the effects of protest on different types of authoritarian regimes.

Figure 3. Autocratic Regime Survival, by protest

We now turn to exploring differences among dictatorships. Table 4 demonstrates that, as expected, protests hurt single-party regimes the most, leaving less affected hegemonic-party autocracies and monarchies. Military regimes are also hurt by acts of mass unrest, although the magnitude of the effect seems to be smaller than in the single-party regimes. Our results demonstrate that economic growth help hegemonic-party regimes survive. Although positive, this variable is not statistically significant for the other autocratic regimes. The finding is consistent with Magaloni (2006), who argues that hegemonic-party regimes rely on voter loyalty to survive. In her approach, citizen loyalty is key for the survival of hegemonic-parties even when these face no overt competition, because it serves to deter ruling party defections and threatening electoral splits. This finding is also consistent with Gandhi (2007).

Table 4. Hazard Analysis of Autocratic Regime Survival, by type

Independent Variables	Military	Monarchy	Hegemonic Party	Single Party
Per Capita GDP (logged)	1.122 (0.140)	0.535 (0.262)	0.725 (0.155)	0.947 (0.149)
Protest	1.492** (0.245)	1.997 (1.051)	1.44 (0.478)	3.121*** (0.849)
Per Capita GDP Growth (moving 3 year avg)	0.491 (0.974)	0.000824 (0.00394)	0.00065** (0.00199)	0.0499 (0.112)
Religious Fractionalization	0.717 (0.252)	0.0293 (0.132)	0.327* (0.202)	0.857 (0.519)
Population (logged)	1.014 (0.0688)	1.205 (0.214)	0.99 (0.117)	0.704*** (0.0636)
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.102 (0.300)	2.904 (6.004)	0.453* (0.195)	1.120 (0.384)
E. Europe			0.734 (0.508)	1.196 (0.451)
N. Africa/ME	0.655 (0.230)	2.044 (2.272)	0.426* (0.191)	1.695 (1.032)
L. America	1.261 (0.344)		0.590 (0.255)	3.254** (1.818)
Observations	856	366	923	970
Log Pseudolikelihood	-386.02	-21.73	-150.34	-166.90

n.b. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Coefficients greater than one are associated with higher hazard rates, those below one with lower hazard rates. Zero effect is associated with coefficient estimates of 1.

Income per capita continues to be positively associated with autocratic survival, but not in the military regimes. We also find that single-party regimes are more stable in large countries, suggesting to us that these dictatorships are much harder to dislodge where the opposition faces the enormous challenge to create an alternative organization with *national* reach in a large and regionally diverse political terrain. The regional dummies indicate that hegemonic-party

regimes are more stable in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. Finally, the religious fractionalization variable is only statistically significant in the hegemonic-party regimes. This finding suggests to us that these regimes can profit the most from coordination dilemmas among the opposition precisely because electoral institutions work at intensifying pre-existing divisions, as in Magaloni (2008b).

5) Mass protest, elite politics and democratization

Protests can affect the survival of autocratic regimes without the bandwagoning associated with a mass revolution by affecting the probabilities of coups, elite splits, and factional politics at the top of a regime. Although the actors involved are different, the fundamental importance of the information conveyed by the protest remains. A strongly unified elite might not crack given a protest but all else equal, a highly informative protest, as described above, is more likely to cross the threshold necessary to induce elite defections, whether they be in the form of a military coup, a party splitting in two, or the toppling of a monarch.

Thus, protests might trigger authoritarian breakdown by the way they empower regime insiders, generating incentives for powerful elites to withdraw their support to the dictatorship. Geddes (2003) has argued that single-party regimes are relatively invulnerable to regime divisions. However, the section above demonstrates that these regimes are particularly vulnerable to societal threats like protests and demonstrations.

A theory about how mass protest translates into authoritarian breakdown should hence also look at the way in which protest can trigger divisions within the ruling elite. It is our contention that in the absence of mass support even seemingly cohesive dictatorships are likely to fall prey of elite splits or military coups. The early democratization literature uncovered the process through which social mobilization translated into divisions between “hard-liners” and “soft-liners”, which eventually worked at toppling authoritarian regimes (O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). This literature implicitly assumed that democratization was the most likely outcome of an authoritarian breakdown. In this perspective, democratization emerged as a result of an elite pact between reformers within the regime and moderates in society. However, most authoritarian regimes get replaced by another dictatorship, which suggests that members of the ruling clique can use social mobilization to their advantage by responding to the weakening of the current regime by with the establishment of a new dictatorship.

The full range of post-war regime transformations are displayed in table 5, which shows the transitions between regimes among the 169 countries coded in the dataset from 1950 to 2000. The way to read this table is to note that each row represents a regime before it makes a shift, while the column headings represent the regime it morphs into. It is clear in the cell that moves democracy to other regimes that 37 democratic regimes broke down into military dictatorships. The cell that transforms military regimes into other institutional arrangements shows that 45 military regimes moved towards

democracy. Most of these were returns to democracy after it had been interrupted.

In the line for hegemonic party systems there are virtually the same number of transitions into military and single-party rule, as towards democracy. Monarchies rarely transit into democracy. Single-party regimes are very likely to be deposed by military coups or transform into hegemonic-party systems. This last transformation, from single-party, to hegemonic party, to democracy is the one that Hadenius and Teorell (2007) have uncovered, but it is only the more prevalent one during the last decades. By concentrating in regime change after 1972, the analysis by Hadenius and Teorell (2007) overestimates the likelihood that hegemonic parties will become democratic.

Table 5: Transition Frequencies between autocratic regimes and democracy

Regime at t+1	Monarchy	Military	Single-party	Hegemonic	Democracy
Regime at t					
Monarchy		6	2	8	1
Military	3		18	35	45
Single party	1	33		29	10
Hegemonic	4	23	25		21
Democracy	0	37	1	12	
Total	8	99	46	84	77

Thus, democratization is only one of the possible outcomes of authoritarian collapse, the others being replacement by a military regime and liberalization into a multi-party autocracy. A key question than emerges from this discussion is the extent to which protests trigger one form of authoritarian

collapse or the other –that is, replacement by another dictatorship or by democracy.

To answer this question, in this final section we investigate whether protests and riots are likely to trigger democratization, as the early literature suggested, or if they produce an authoritarian backlash in the form of a military coup. We thus model military coups and democratization controlling for regime-specific vulnerabilities, wealth, economic growth, a dummy for the post-Cold War era and country-fixed effects, which control for the history of instability in each country. We employ logit analysis. The democratization model conditions transition from authoritarian rule to democracy conditional on an autocracy being stable at times t and $t+1$ with results shown in table 6.

These data suggest that demonstrations are likely to trigger democratization, but also military coups. It thus seem that there is a high indeterminacy in transitions, as suggested by the earlier literature, wherein mass protests and civil unrest can either get out of hand, triggering democratization, or translate into an authoritarian backlash by inviting the military to intervene. Whether one path is taken or the other is determined by regime-specific characteristics, income per-capita, and country level idiosyncrasies. Military coups are more likely in poorer countries and in times of economic crisis, a finding that is consistent with Londregan and Poole (1990). By contrast, democratization is more likely in richer countries that are going through an economic recession. In this respect, our findings are tconsistent with the endogenous version of modernization theory (Boix and Stokes, 2003)

in that autocracies are more likely to transform into democracies in richer countries. Yet we also show that higher income per capita translates into political stability, be it in the form of democracy or autocracy. Put in other words, poor countries experience more autocratic instability but not more transitions to democracy.

Table 6. Logistic Regressions of Coups and Democratization

Independent Variables	Coups	Democratization
Per Capita GDP (logged)	-0.32*** (0.11)	0.28** (0.12)
Per Capita GDP Growth (moving 3 yr avg)	-8.70*** (1.78)	-5.22** (2.21)
Protest	0.79*** (0.20)	1.66*** (0.29)
Military Regime	3.65*** (0.47)	0.99*** (0.32)
Monarchy	0.10 (0.84)	-1.89 (1.15)
Single Party	1.02* (0.54)	-0.78* (0.42)
Hegemonic Party	1.32** (0.52)	
Post-Cold War (dummy)	0.38 (0.38)	-0.46 (0.51)
Year	-0.03*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)
Coups		0.67*** (0.25)
Constant	61.18*** (21.59)	-53.33 (41.02)
Observations	5348	3266
Pseudo R-squared	0.29	0.17

n.b. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. The baselines are democratic regimes and hegemonic parties, respectively.

6) Conclusions

Departing from most of the existing literature on dictatorships that overemphasizes elites and elite politics in detriment of mass politics, this paper uncovers the dangers of civil threats to the survival of dictatorships.

Dictatorships that confront mass protests are significantly less likely to survive controlling for levels of development, economic growth, and other variables. Democratic regimes, by contrast, are relatively invulnerable to civil unrest controlling for levels of development.

The most dangerous protests are those that can cascade into massive civil unrest and this is a function of their signaling potential. Our results demonstrate that single-party regimes are particularly vulnerable to mass protest, while hegemonic-parties and monarchies are not. Military regimes, for their part, are also threatened by civil unrest, although apparently not as much as single-party dictatorships. A dictatorships' relative vulnerability to acts of civil unrest can't solely be a product of its capacity to avert elite divisions. In fact, single-party regimes appear to be the most invulnerable to divisions within the ruling elite, yet the most vulnerable to mass protests.

We claim that a protest's danger is a function of its signaling potential – what citizens and elites can infer about other citizens' *true preferences* for the dictatorships. The most dangerous protests take place where there is generalized disloyalty and dissatisfaction, and where institutions are highly

restrictive and potentially repressive, as in many single-party regimes. When citizen loyalty is low and the institutional environment relatively tolerant, as in hegemonic-party regimes, anti-regime protests becomes less dangerous part of the everyday ritual of politics, compartmentalized along other policy-specific protests about taxation, subsidies, housing and the like. If citizen loyalty is high and the regime is highly restrictive, as in some of the extremely wealthy monarchies, protest will not have similar potential to cascade into mass revolutions.

However, protests can also affect the survival of dictatorships without the bandwagoning associated with a mass revolution by affecting the probabilities of military coups, elite divisions, and factional politics at the top of a regime. The actors involved are different but the fundamental importance of the information conveyed by the protest remains. Thus, in the absence of mass support even seemingly cohesive dictatorships can fall prey of factional politics at the top or military coups. To what extent are protests likely to translate into a bandwagon in favor of democracy, or cascade in favor of a regime insider seeking to displace the existing dictatorship with another one? To answer this question, the last section of the paper models the effects of mass protests on democratization and military coups. Our results support the contention about the indeterminacy and uncertainty of the regime transitions: protests can empower reformers and produce a transition to democracy, but they can also empower the military and produce a violent coup. Whether a transition moves one way or the other, we have demonstrated, depends on various factors,

including wealth, economic growth, and regime and country-specific characteristics. Democratization is more likely to be the outcome of the uncertain game in richer countries, whereas a military backlash is more likely to take place in poorer countries. However, protests are systematically correlated with both of these outcomes, suggesting that regimes transitions can't be properly understood without paying closer attention to mass politics.

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