

# Terrorism In Dictatorships

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## Abstract

A key finding from the literature on terrorism suggests that autocratic countries experience less terrorism than democracies. However, we have few explanations for why some dictatorships experience substantial threats from terrorism while others do not. A growing body of work on authoritarian politics focuses on political institutions in these regimes to explain a broad range of political outcomes. Building on this literature, we argue that opposition political party activity increases the collective action capacity of regime opponents, and that elected legislatures channel this mobilized capacity into support for the government. However, when active opposition parties operate in the absence of legislatures, political opponents increasingly turn to terrorism. We find evidence that terrorist groups are most likely to emerge in authoritarian regimes with opposition political parties but no elected legislature. These regimes also experience the highest volume of subsequent attacks.

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## Introduction

Shortly after the 1973 coup in Chile, the military regime shut down the legislature and banned political parties. Nearly a decade later, in mid-May 1983, opposition political parties and unions organized the first widespread national protests against the Pinochet regime. Still technically illegal, parties mobilized opposition rallies, lobbied reformers in the military, and coordinated meetings of various opposition groups in the Asamblea de la Civilidad (Garretón, 1988; Oxhorn, 1995). While the military regime responded with continued intimidation and repression, opposition party activity proceeded apace. Thus by the mid-1980s there were active and organized parties even though the legislature remained closed. In the next two years political parties and union groups staged monthly protests. Moreover, numerous anti-government terrorist groups began to emerge in the year following the start of the protests. Between 1984 and 1986 there were five active terrorist groups in Chile, both left-wing and right-wing. One of these groups, the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), attempted to assassinate Pinochet in 1986 and was estimated to have between 500 and 1,000 members at its height. Chile experienced 563 attacks in 1984, among the highest totals experienced by any authoritarian regime since 1970.

In contrast to cases such as Chile, many Soviet bloc dictatorships in Eastern Europe ruled with legislatures and incorporated a range of social groups into the ruling party (Jowitt, 1975; Staar, 1982). For example, under the dictatorship of Josif Broz Tito, Yugoslavia's Communist Party held regular elections, stood up a national legislature, and incorporated large segments of the industrial working class into its political structure (Pateman, 1970; Burks, 1982). No substantial terrorist group emerged in the two decades prior to the end of the regime and Yugoslavia only experienced three errant attacks during this period.

The majority of research on regime type and terrorism demonstrates that democracies are more likely targets of terrorism (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994; Weinberg and Eubank, 1998; Eubank and Weinberg, 2001; Pape, 2003; Li and Schaub, 2004; Li, 2005; Chenoweth, 2010). Non-democracies, are considered to be relatively "safe" from terrorist violence.<sup>1</sup> However, similar to Chile many non-democracies have multiple active terrorist groups and suffer from a substantial number of violent attacks. More specifically, of the 2021 groups which existed globally from 1970 to 2007, roughly

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<sup>1</sup>We use the terms 'non-democracy', 'dictatorship', and 'authoritarian regime' interchangeably.

one-quarter emerged in authoritarian regimes.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, of the nearly 84 thousand attacks in the Global Terrorism Database during the same period, 40% (over 33 thousand) occurred in non-democracies (START, 2008).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as the cases of Chile and Yugoslavia clearly illustrate, not all non-democracies are equally likely targets of terrorism.

Many explanations for the relative lack of terrorist activity in non-democracies compared to democracies highlight the ability of non-democratic executives to brutally suppress discontent groups without concern for protecting civil liberties (Pape, 2003; Li, 2005). However, these ideas about repression do not have much to say about why Chile under the Pinochet regime, one of the most repressive military governments in Latin America, experienced more terrorism than the former Yugoslavia under Tito.<sup>4</sup> Other explanations point to the fact that non-democracies lack civil liberties, such as freedoms of movement and association, which significantly limit the ability of terrorist organizations to organize and commit violence (Schmid, 1992; Eubank and Weinberg, 1994; Weinberg and Eubank, 1998; Eubank and Weinberg, 2001; Eyerman, 1992). However, not all non-democracies limit the ability of discontented groups to organize to the same extent. For example, some dictators allow opposition political parties to participate in legislatures, while others do not.

More recently, terrorism scholars have started to move beyond a dichotomous classification of regime type. For instance, Li (2005) draws attention to the differences among democracies in terms of their electoral institutions and the level of executive constraints, and finds evidence that institutional variation among democracies has implications for terrorism. We find such efforts to move beyond the dichotomous classification of regime type essential to fully understand how domestic political institutions influence terrorism. Similar to democracies, non-democracies exhibit considerable variation in their institutional arrangements and we argue that this variation explains why some non-democracies experience more terrorism than others.

Despite many theories that explain why dictatorships experience less terrorism, there is neither a theory nor systematic evidence about how and why terrorism occurs in dictatorships and why

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<sup>2</sup>Data obtained from Young and Dugan (2010).

<sup>3</sup>We assume a democracy has a Polity score of at least 6.

<sup>4</sup>Between 1976, the first year of available data, and 1989, the year of the referendum on Pinochet's rule in Chile, the average score on the Political Terror Scale (AI) for Chile is significantly higher (4 on a 5-point scale) than for Yugoslavia (3).

some experience more terrorism than others. We argue that some non-democracies are more likely targets of terrorism because of their political institutional structure. Specifically, we focus on the role of two political institutions in non-democracies: political parties and legislatures. Many dictatorships have elected legislatures that meet regularly and even house multiple parties. For example, dominant party rule in Mexico under the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) and Lukashenka's dictatorship in Belarus both had multiparty legislatures. Others lack a legislature but have active opposition political parties, as in Pakistan during the early years of military rule under Musharraf (1999-2002) or the Pinochet regime in Chile during the mid-1980s. Still others rule without the aid of formal political institutions, such as the Saudi Arabian monarchy. On the surface, the existence of different authoritarian institutions might look like nothing more than mere "window dressing". However, the literature on authoritarianism suggests otherwise, and demonstrates that political institutions can influence how long a dictator survives in power as well as many political outcomes and policy choices (Smith, 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Gandhi, 2008; Wright, 2008; Gandhi and Kim, 2010; Blaydes, 2011). An important argument in this literature suggests that authoritarian institutions are often instrumental in helping a dictator secure the tacit support of potential opponents and discontented groups (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Gandhi, 2008; Boix and Svolik, 2008).

Building on the insights from the literature on authoritarian institutions, we posit that political institutions shape the incentives and opportunities for discontented political actors to turn to terrorism as a method to achieve their political goals. Political party activity under dictatorships can help mobilize discontented opposition groups. Moreover, when these parties are housed within a legislature, the mobilized opposition has an opportunity to express grievances and potentially shape policies. However, the existence of opposition political parties in the absence of an active elected legislature increases the incentives and the ability of the discontented groups to pursue violence. Without an institutionalized venue within which mobilized groups can obtain concessions from the regime, opposition groups often turn to more radical measures. Thus, we argue that autocracies with opposition political parties but no legislature are more likely targets of terrorism than others.

This paper is the first study on the relationship between authoritarian political institutions and

terrorism. We show evidence that countries with multiple political parties but no elected legislature are the most prone to terrorism. In the rest of the paper, we outline our main argument, and subsequently analyze data on the emergence of new terrorist groups and the volume of terrorist attacks across time to examine how political institutions affect terrorism in 138 authoritarian regimes between 1970 and 2007. After presenting cross-national evidence consistent with our theory, we illustrate the logic of our argument with a case study of Algeria. We conclude with a discussion of our findings.

## **Terrorism and Political Institutions in Dictatorships**

Terrorist organizations are discontented political actors who attempt to achieve political goals through the use of violence against non-combatants.<sup>5</sup> Groups use violent attacks as instruments to reach political goals (Hoffman, 2006, 5). However, attacks are costly instruments because they drain the groups' limited resources and cause group member casualties (Kydd and Walter, 2002; Pape, 2003; Kydd and Walter, 2006). Thus, if their goals can be achieved without the use of violence, or with minimal violence, discontented groups are unlikely to expend resources and assume the risk associated with conducting violent attacks.

The choice of violent tactics by discontented political actors partly depends on the constraints they face and the alternative opportunities they have to pursue their goals. The political institutional structure of the country in which the groups operate is an important determinant of these constraints and opportunities. Thus, the relationship between political institutions and terrorism has been a topic of interest for terrorism scholars. However, the debate on political institutions and terrorism has largely focused on comparing democracies and non-democracies (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994; Weinberg and Eubank, 1998; Eubank and Weinberg, 2001; Pape, 2003; Li and Schaub, 2004; Li, 2005). Similarly, selectorate theory generates its clearest predictions about terrorism through a comparison of democracies and non-democracies (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Findley and Young, 2011). Accordingly, a large body of research demonstrates that the majority of terrorist attacks target democratic countries which provide citizens with peaceful means to raise

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<sup>5</sup>We utilize the relatively conventional definition of terrorism “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” (START, 2008)

their concerns (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994; Weinberg and Eubank, 1998; Eubank and Weinberg, 2001; Pape, 2003; Li and Schaub, 2004; Li, 2005; Chenoweth, 2010), even though some studies in the literature do not find corroborating evidence for this argument (e.g., Drakos and Gofas (2006); Wade and Reiter (2007)).<sup>6</sup>

Research on regime type and terrorism has only recently moved beyond the dichotomous classification of regime type. Particularly, with respect to democracies, several scholars highlight the implications of institutional differences among democracies for terrorism. Some show that alternative electoral rules in democracies generate different cost and benefit calculations for terrorist groups (Li, 2005). Others emphasize the link between terrorism and different party systems in democracies (Piazza, 2010). Relatedly, another set of work attributes patterns in terrorism to variables such as interest group density and the number of veto points – measures which tend to be correlated with democracy (Chenoweth, 2010; Young and Dugan, 2011).<sup>7</sup>

However, to date the literature has not explored how institutional variations among non-democracies make some of these countries more likely targets of terrorism than others. Just like democracies, non-democracies also exhibit significant variation in their political institutional arrangements. For example, Geddes (1999, 121) points out that “different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy.” A fundamental way in which these regimes differ from each other is related to the existence of political parties and legislatures under such regimes. For example, among the dictatorships that existed between 1946 and 2008, nearly 70 percent had an elected legislature, just under one-half had an opposition party that existed outside the regime front, and 36 percent had opposition parties housed in an elected legislature (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010). We argue that political parties and legislatures in authoritarian countries have important implications for patterns of terrorism observed in these countries.

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<sup>6</sup>Several studies even suggest that transnational terrorism is more likely to emanate from non-democracies (Pluemper and Neumeyer, 2010) and that democracies tend to be the targets of such attacks (Kurrild-Klitgaard, Justesen and Klemmensen, 2006). This is significant, as many studies that uncover a relationship between democracy and terrorism use data on transnational attacks (e.g., Li (2005)).

<sup>7</sup>This point is not intended as a criticism of either Chenoweth (2010) or Young and Dugan (2011). Both studies make major contributions to the literature by providing a better explanation of why some regimes receive more terrorism than others. In contrast, in this paper we more specifically focus on why some autocratic regimes systematically receive more terrorism than other autocracies.

### **Why do dictators allow political institutions?**

Dictators both repress and purchase loyalty as part of a strategy to stay in power. However, repression is a costly and potentially risky strategy (Wintrobe, 1998; Haber, 2006; Svolik, 2010). It requires an organization, such as a security service or police force, with sufficient collective action capacity and power to deal with potential opponents (Haber, 2006). Even though an organization with such a capacity can be useful for the dictator, it also poses a potential threat as the organization itself can overthrow the dictator.

The risks associated with repression lead many dictators to turn to purchasing loyalty. The currency for this exchange can take the form of rents, if the dictator has sufficient resources, or policy and power-sharing concessions (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Gandhi, 2008; Boix and Svolik, 2008). Political concessions, however, require the dictator to make credible promises, and political institutions provide a mechanism to make concessions credible. By incorporating potential opponents into the formal structure of power, dictators can repeatedly bargain with the same groups and lower the transaction costs associated with political exchange (Gandhi, 2008). Institutions also provide information and lower uncertainty about future interactions. For example, Boix and Svolik (2008) emphasize this informational role, positing that legislatures enhance power-sharing agreements among elites by providing information about the true size of dictator's budget in an exchange of benefits for loyalty. One general implication of these arguments suggests that political institutions in non-democracies help dictators stay in power by co-opting potential opponents.

### **How do authoritarian political institutions affect terrorism?**

While political parties may be instrumental for the activities that facilitate co-optation (Lust-Okar, 2006; Magaloni, 2006; Brownlee, 2007; Blaydes, 2011) – such as elite bargaining, career advancement in the party, or the efficient distribution of rents– they can also increase the collective action capacity of potential opponents. Standard theories about political parties in democracies argue that they are an organizational solution to collective action problems (Aldrich, 1994). Even in dictatorships, party activity entails communication between elites, political activity at the local level, and the dissemination of information and personal connections among both elites and non-elite

groups.<sup>8</sup> While legislatures typically meet in a central location at specific times, party activities take place throughout the country and can occur without the full knowledge of the dictator or even the regime's security apparatus. Thus, we argue that if opposition party activity exists, this increases the collective action capacity of regime opponents. Indeed, the literature on competitive authoritarianism suggests that multiparty elections that include organized opposition can result in liberalization, particularly if opposition parties coordinate (Howard and Roessler, 2006; Levitsky and Way, 2002). Central to the very definition of this regime type is the existence of political parties that increase the collective action capacity of the opposition.<sup>9</sup>

Legislatures in non-democracies often function as a forum for bargaining over the exchange of policy concessions for loyalty (Gandhi, 2008). Gandhi (2008) argues that the existence of a legislature opens up a venue for the opposition to express political grievances without threatening the survival of the regime and provides an arena that enhances bargaining for policy concessions. Thus, where political parties organize the discontented opposition, organized opposition can also obtain some policy concessions by working from within the legislature. If the dictator has an incentive to co-opt the opposition – whether to secure their participation in vital economic activity or to prevent them from turning against the regime – party supporters can secure some concessions. Moreover, co-opting moderate opponents into a legislature can also give them a stake in the regime; they will thus be less likely to side with radicals in opposing the dictator, lest they risk losing their share of the spoils (Lust-Okar, 2005). When some mobilized opponents have been co-opted through a legislature, the opposition should thus have less of an incentive to pursue potentially risky and violent means to pursue their policy goals.

However, in the absence of an elected legislative body, mobilized opponents can only influence the political process from outside the formal structure of power. Under this scenario, parties help mobilize discontented groups but they do not have a venue for obtaining credible concessions from the dictator. Thus, we argue that in the absence of a legislature, the opponents who are mobilized and organized through political party activities can resort to more violent means to obtain their

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<sup>8</sup>Selectorate theory does not account for political parties in dictatorships as it does not explicitly consider parties at all (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 34). However, in dictatorships with limited opportunities for opposition collective action, we argue that party structures play a key role in terrorism even if their members are not considered members of the selectorate.

<sup>9</sup>Some scholars refer to these authoritarian regimes as 'hybrid regimes' (Diamond, 2002).

political goals. There are two ways in which mobilization of parties can move regime opponents to violence in the absence of a legislature.

First, moderates might become radicalized. Seeing little opportunity to press their position within the regime structure, they turn to outside avenues of influence, including violence. Second, opposition party activity can give cover to the mobilizing activities of radicals. As Lust-Okar (2005) points out, when moderates protest against the regime, radicals have an incentive to join because the dictator is less likely to repress moderates than radicals. The former are typically a larger group and repression against moderates is more likely to produce backlash. When radical and moderates join in a larger protest, it is less likely any group within it can be targeted by the repressive apparatus.<sup>10</sup> However, dictators can use a legislature to split these two groups if the moderates fear losing access to power when the radicals join the protest. Thus, the risk of punishment for anti-regime activity is lowest when moderates are protesting. Importantly, the moderates are most likely to stop mobilizing against the regime when radicals join them due to the risk of losing access to power. Even in cases where some kind of political protest starts, such protests are much less likely to last or escalate if moderates are co-opted through a legislature. In contrast, in the absence of a legislature to co-opt moderates with promises of rents and policy influence, opposition activity will be more likely to persist when radicals join. Thus, when there are opposition parties and no legislature terrorist violence is relatively likely to begin and to result in more attacks.

In the case of Chile, the protest movement not only included moderate parties but also radical left-wing parties linked to terrorist groups. Protest rallies were supported by the moderate Alianza Democrática, which included the Christian Democrats as well as smaller right-wing parties, but also the Movimiento Democrático Popular.<sup>11</sup> This latter group included the banned Communist Party and the Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR)(Garretón, 1988, 12). While the MIR supported the protests, they also pursued violent tactics to resist military rule, assassinating General Carlos Urzua in August 1983 (Spooner, 1994, 193). After the success of protests led by the centrist Alianza Democrática, a coalition of left-wing parties, including the Communists, organized their own marches (Garretón 1988; Spooner 1994, 195). Party-led mass demonstrations also aided re-

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<sup>10</sup>In the Chilean case, middle class involvement in the protests reduced the risk of repression by the police (Martínez, 1986, 39).

<sup>11</sup>The Christian Democrats and the radical left parties did not form a coalition, even though they supported many of the same protests (Oxhorn 1995, 211-12; Baldez 2002, 156-160).

cruitment. While unarmed self-defense groups were formed to help protect demonstrators from the police, these same groups also served as recruiting grounds for violent anti-regime groups (Oxhorn, 1995, 222-23). Party activity in Chile provided the radical left with an opportunity to mobilize support for their organizations, using the cover of moderate party activity to shield their members from further repression.<sup>12</sup>

Our data do not allow us to distinguish whether terrorism in non-democracies emerges because radicals mobilize or moderates radicalize, though we find evidence of both in our Algeria case study. That said, we should note that both proximate mechanisms lead to the same expectation about how political institutions affect terrorism: *when opposition political parties exist – whether legal or not – but the opposition does not have access to a legislature, anti-government groups are more likely to turn to terrorism.* Thus, we expect that non-democracies with opposition parties but no legislature will experience a higher risk of group emergence. Moreover, the increased collective action capacity of the opposition implies that such groups will produce more violence after adopting terrorism relative to other institutional setups. Thus, we expect that non-democracies with opposition parties but no legislature will experience a higher volume of attacks.

## Data

We analyze terrorist group activity in authoritarian countries with two complementary measures: emergence of new terrorist groups, and volume of terrorist attacks. We find it appropriate to use these two measures for several reasons. First, the measures are clearly related, as attacks are carried out by groups after they emerge. Second, our argument that active opposition parties facilitate collective action has implications for both group emergence and the volume of attacks. According to our argument, regimes with active and organized opposition should be at a higher risk of new group

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<sup>12</sup>While our argument focuses on the collective mobilization that becomes possible when opposition parties are operational, the emergence of opposition groups can be a response to other opposition organizations. It could be that presence of other organizations ‘crowds out’ some terrorist groups; or competition among groups might escalate into violence. Indeed some theoretical treatments of terrorism build on this insight to model terrorist mobilization when factions compete with each other to recruit members (Bueno de Mesquita, 2008). But even in this strategic environment, strengthening institutions for non-violent expression of grievances reduces terrorist group mobilization – a logic consistent with our argument. In Algeria, as we discuss below, terrorist groups linked to the elected Islamist party emerged as a response not only to the absence of a legislature but also as a strategic move to counter the loss of their members to pre-existing groups that had re-emerged. While our institutional account does not seek to explain these inter-group dynamics, they would not be possible without collective action, which we argue, is in part the product of opposition political party mobilization.

emergence, especially in the absence of a legislature to coopt the opposition. In such cases, high rates of group emergence should naturally be associated with high volume of subsequent attacks, unless a regime’s repressive apparatus is able to shut groups down once they emerge. However, the existence of an active and organized opposition suggests that the regime has not been effective at repression. Finally, the two dependent variables nicely complement each other since they have different strengths and weaknesses (Young and Findley, 2011), which we will outline below.

The information on terrorist groups comes from the most comprehensive group data available to our knowledge. The data set was created by Young and Dugan (2010), who generated the list of groups from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) of terrorist attacks (START, 2008). The GTD is an event data set that purports to record each terrorist attack globally. The group behind each attack is identified in approximately 50% of all attacks in GTD. Young and Dugan utilize this information to build a database of 2021 groups that existed from 1970–2007.<sup>13</sup> Although it is the most comprehensive data of its kind, the limitation of the groups data is that only around 50% of attacks in GTD are clearly attributed to a group. Accordingly, when we analyze group emergence nearly half of the data is lost because there is not credible information identifying the attacking group.

Thus, we also use the full GTD to obtain information on the volume of terrorist attacks (START, 2008). To analyze the volume of attacks we do not necessarily need to identify the attacking group and we only need to identify the country in which an attack takes place. Thus, the attacks data includes all groups regardless of whether they are clearly identified in GTD. This shields us from a criticism that any of our results are affected by “losing” data due limitations in identifying the attacking group.

The data on political institutions in non-democracies is from Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010). The authors code democracies as countries where the legislature and the executive are elected; multiple parties compete in elections; and executive power turns over via elections. All other regimes are considered non-democracies.<sup>14</sup> Overall, the institutions data covers 140 countries

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<sup>13</sup>The most comparable data set that covers a similar period, 1968–2006, and includes groups that are not transnational is that of Jones and Libicki (2006), which includes 648 groups. We do the same analysis below using the Jones and Libicki (2006) list of groups and find similar results.

<sup>14</sup>The universe of authoritarian regimes includes relatively peaceful countries with multi-party elections but no party turnover in the executive – for example Botswana and Malaysia – but excludes democratic countries even if election fraud occurs (e.g., Argentina in the last two decades) or if the government is mired in civil war (e.g., Sri

from 1946 to 2008 while terrorist group data covers the period from 1970 to 2007. Thus, in this paper we employ data for 138 authoritarian regimes from 1970 to 2007.

## Dependent Variables

We use two dependent variables to explore patterns of terrorism: group emergence and volume of attacks. Our first dependent variable measures whether at least one group emerges that targets a country in a given year.<sup>15</sup> Groups are coded as emerging in a given country if they carry out the bulk of their attacks across their existence within that country (Young and Dugan, 2010).

Each country ( $i$ ) either has a group emerge that targets it in year ( $t$ ) or not. Accordingly, the first dependent variable,  $y_{i,t}$  takes the following form:

$$y_{i,t} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if no group emerges in country } i \text{ in year } t \\ 1 & \text{if at least one group emerges in country } i \text{ in year } t. \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

We should note that each group that counts only once in the year it first emerges. However, a country which has already experienced a group emergence in a year is always at risk of seeing a new group (or set of groups) emerge in subsequent years. This dependent variable nicely captures the idea that a country’s political system has “failed” to keep political violence at bay when a new terrorist group emerges.

Our second dependent variable is a count of the number of attacks,  $x$ , experienced by country  $i$  in year  $t$ .<sup>16</sup> The attacks variable takes the following form:

$$y_{i,t} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if there is no attack in country } i \text{ in year } t \\ x & \text{if there are } x > 0 \text{ attacks in country } i \text{ in year } t. \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

## Independent Variables

Our theory centers on the idea that different combinations of authoritarian political institutions shape the incentives and the ability of the discontented opposition groups to turn to violence. To

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Lanka).

<sup>15</sup>We also construct a count variable that measures the number of groups that emerge in a country in a given year. The results are no different than those for the binary variable, so we do not report them in the manuscript.

<sup>16</sup>Given the importance of domestic terrorism to our theoretical story, we also estimated all models of attacks using only attacks that were specifically coded as domestic attacks by Enders, Sandler and Gaibulloev (2011). We find very similar results and include those results as a robustness check in the appendix. This is unsurprising given that most attacks in the GTD are domestic rather than transnational.

recap, we argue that the existence of opposition political parties in the *absence* of an active elected legislature will lead to the emergence of more groups and attacks across time. In contrast, when opposition political parties exist and can participate in an elected legislature, the incentives to pursue violence diminishes.

To assess our argument we need information on political parties and legislatures under autocracies. The institutions dataset by Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) includes a variable which indicates whether a country in a given year has an active, elected legislature (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010). We chose this measure, rather than the existence of *any* legislature, to capture the expressive element of an elected legislature. Non-elected legislatures that are appointed by the dictator should be less effective at co-opting potential opponents.

The institutions data set from Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) also includes a variable indicating the de facto existence of multiple political parties outside the regime front. While in many cases, this measure coincides with de jure, or legalized, opposition parties, this does not have to be the case. For example, the Pinochet regime in Chile quickly outlawed leftist political parties after the 1973 coup, and did not officially legalize them until 1987 shortly before the referendum on a return to civilian democracy. Nonetheless, in mid-1983 opposition political party activity aided national protests against military rule. We use the measure of de facto existence of opposition parties for two main reasons. First, opposition parties do not have to be legal to help increase the collective action capacity of the regime opponents. When an opposition party actively mobilizes support through rallies, communication with supporters, and even intra-party elections, it helps increase collective action capacity of the regime opponents even though the party might be strictly illegal. Second, the measure indicates the existence of *at least one* party outside the regime front. While token opposition parties may exist to give the impression of multi-partyism, in many cases these parties do not actually represent opponents. For example, a number of European Communist regimes retained front parties that were not technically Communist parties. The measure excludes cases where parties that are supposed to be in opposition are actually part of the the regime front and exclusively includes cases where such parties are actually outside of the regime front.

Using the information on active elected legislatures and de facto existence of opposition political parties from Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010), we develop two related independent variables.

The first one, *Opposition Parties and No Legislature*, is a binary variable that is coded one if a given regime has at least one opposition party and no elected legislature in a given year, and zero otherwise.<sup>17</sup> Because our theory points to the institutional arrangement with opposition parties and no legislatures as the most likely to breed terrorism, the binary variable allows a straightforward assessment of our main argument.

We also develop a more fine-grained second independent variable which ensures that our findings are not due to aggregating institutional arrangements. Accordingly, our second variable breaks authoritarian institutions into four exclusive categories as follows:

1. Opposition Parties with No Legislature: Coded one when a country de facto has at least one party outside of the regime front but does not have an active elected legislature, zero otherwise.
2. Opposition Parties with Legislature: Coded one when a country de facto has at least one party outside of the regime front and also has an active elected legislature, zero otherwise.
3. No Parties: Coded one when a country does not have any political parties, zero otherwise.
4. Single Regime Party: Coded one when a country has a single political party which is the regime's party, zero otherwise.

Table 1 shows the number of cases in each category. Clearly we have many observations within each of the four institutional arrangement categories.

[Table 1 about here.]

We expect the risk of terrorism to vary across countries with different institutional settings. To recap, our main expectation is that countries in the first category will be the most likely targets of terrorism. Under such regimes, the opposition is organized through political parties but not

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<sup>17</sup>This binary variable is not simply capturing the level of 'democraticness' in a dictatorship, at least as measured by the Polity scale. For non-democracies from 1970-2008, the mean Polity score is -3.92 for cases where our binary variable is coded 1 and -3.66 where the binary variable is coded zero— a difference that is not statistically different from zero. Algeria and Chile during periods of multiparty politics and a closed legislature had Polity scores of -7 and -6, respectively. The Polity score for Yugoslavia under Tito, a single-party regime with a legislature, was -7 until 1980, and rose to -5 after 1980. In contrast, monarchies that operate without parties and legislatures, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have Polity scores of -10.

co-opted through a legislature, which provides the incentives and the organizational capacity to resort to violence.

Countries under the third and fourth categories will be the least fertile for terrorism. Single-party regimes under category 3 are typically extremely resilient as they have successfully co-opted opposition groups into their party structure. Further, these are the ‘closed authoritarian’ regimes in which mobilization outside the state structure is severely limited. For example, Robertson (2011, p. 26) argues that in these regimes “dissidents are organizationally isolated and have an extremely hard time creating organizations that can sustain a movement beyond narrow personal circles.” The countries with no parties under category 4, are mostly monarchies and some military regimes. These have almost no need to allow institutions because they have other apparatus to deal with the opposition (i.e. military or security services) (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Gandhi, 2008). Accordingly, since single-party and no-party regimes tend to have other political apparatus to co-opt opposition groups, the opposition in these regimes has the least collective action capacity to mobilize and organize violent anti-regime groups.

Finally, the countries in the second category will experience more terrorism compared to those in the third and fourth categories and less terrorism than those in the first category. Our explanation suggests that opposition party activity is the key facilitator of terrorist group mobilization. Thus, regime opponents in countries in the second category should have the same capacity if not the same incentive to pursue anti-government strategies compared to those in the first category. However, the existence of a legislature will facilitate the co-optation of at least some of the organized opposition. Accordingly, the risk of terrorism should be lower where there is an elected legislature.

To sum, if we are correct, countries under category 1 should experience more terrorism than those under the categories 2, 3, and 4. Additionally, countries under category 2 should have the second highest risk of terrorism. Finally, those under categories 3 and 4 should experience the lowest volume of attacks and probability of group emergence. To provide a comparison of our findings with the existing literature (e.g., Li (2005)), we also estimate several models that include democracies along with the different categories of non-democracies. We measure democracy using the democracy indicator variable in Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010).

We include several variables that measure the internal instability of countries as both terrorism

and institutions may result from political instability. An indicator of internal turmoil is a measure of whether a country is currently embroiled in a civil war. We utilize the 1000 battle deaths threshold employed by the correlates of war (Sarkees, 2000), but also estimated all models using a 25 battle deaths threshold and find similar results (Gleditsch et al., 2002).<sup>18</sup> Additionally, as a proxy for political instability, we include a measure of the number of times an autocratic leader left power in a country since 1946 (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010). In chronically unstable countries anti-government groups might view instability as an opportunity to pursue violence.<sup>19</sup> The log of a country’s population is also included, as prior studies find that larger countries experience more terrorism (e.g., (Li and Schaub, 2004; Li, 2005)). Finally, we include the log of GDP per capita, as this has been widely found to influence internal conflict (e.g., Fearon and Laitin (2003); Li (2005)). The GDP data is obtained from Maddison (2007) and covers the entire time period.<sup>20</sup>

## Results

We use two primary empirical models to explore how authoritarian institutions affect the emergence and volume of terrorist activity. First, we estimate models of group emergence using logistic regression. We show that authoritarian institutions affect the probability that a regime experiences group emergence in a given year. Specifically, we demonstrate that regimes with multiple parties and no active legislature are the most prone to group emergence. Second, we estimate negative binomial models of the volume of terrorist attacks across time.<sup>21</sup> Our results demonstrate that authoritarian institutions affect the volume of terrorist attacks across time in much the same way as they affect group emergence.<sup>22</sup>

We do several things to ensure that our findings accurately reflect the influence of institutions and not some other country-level or temporal factor that is correlated with the institutional measures. First, in the logit models we account for the time since a given country has experienced the

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<sup>18</sup>We treat civil war as a control variable and note that when we exclude observations of civil war years, our results are similar if not stronger. This suggests that our institutional explanation applies specifically to non-civil war environments.

<sup>19</sup>We also tested the past number of coups as a proxy for political stability. Including or excluding either of these measures does not alter the main result.

<sup>20</sup>We also utilize Gleditsch (2002) and find similar results. However, the Gleditsch data does not cover 2005–2007.

<sup>21</sup>Our volume of attacks dependent variable shows considerable over-dispersion, which suggests that a negative binomial model is appropriate.

<sup>22</sup>See the appendix for our preliminary assessments of our argument using simple cross-tabulations.

emergence of a terrorist group. A country which experienced group emergence last year is more likely to experience another emergence relative to a country that last experienced emergence a number of years ago. We include a cubic polynomial in time since last group emergence (i.e.,  $t$ ,  $t^2$ , and  $t^3$ ) in all models (Carter and Signorino, 2010).<sup>23</sup> Second, we estimate models with year-fixed effects to account for any general time trends in group emergence in autocracies. Previous research finds different trends during and after the cold war (e.g., Enders and Sandler (1999)), which year-fixed effects easily accounts for. Third, we estimate models that include country specific random effects. This ensures that any findings for the institutional variables are not a function of more general cross-sectional differences that are correlated with our measures of institutions. We calculate Huber-White robust standard errors clustered by country in each model.<sup>24</sup>

[Table 2 about here.]

Table 2 reports results from six models. Models I–III estimate the influence of authoritarian institutions on the emergence of terrorist groups while models IV–VI estimate the effect of institutions on the number of attacks. The key variable in table 2 is *Opposition Parties and No Legislature*. We first focus on models I–III, which are logit models where the dependent variable indicates whether a new group emerged in a country in a given year (i.e., expression 1). We briefly discuss the control variables for all models simultaneously below as they perform similarly across the models.

The results of the logit models in table 2 consistently show that dictatorships with opposition parties but no legislature experience a significantly higher probability of group emergence relative to all other dictatorships. The finding is robust across specifications that include year-fixed effects (i.e., models II and III), as well as country-specific random effects (i.e., models II and III).<sup>25</sup> Using the estimates from model II, if we compare a “median dictatorship” (i.e., all other variables are held at median values) with active opposition parties and no legislature to a “median dictatorship” with a different institutional setup (e.g., single regime party), the dictatorship with opposition parties and no legislatures experiences a nearly 60% higher probability of group emergence.

<sup>23</sup>We do not show these coefficients in the tables to economize on space.

<sup>24</sup>We also tried bootstrapped standard errors where we sampled by country and found similar results.

<sup>25</sup>In the appendix, we also show that the results are robust to the inclusion of a press freedom measure, the inclusion of an observed “repression” and does not change if we exclude civil war cases from the sample.

We add democratic regimes to the sample in model III. Our finding that dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature experience significantly more terrorism than other dictatorships still holds. Additionally, although the coefficient on democracy is larger than that of dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature, the coefficients are not significantly different at the 0.05 level. This finding indicates that it is certainly not the case that all dictatorships experience significantly less terrorism than democracies.

Models IV–VI in table 2 show that institutions also significantly influence the volume of attacks experienced by autocracies.<sup>26</sup> In general, the findings of the three negative binomial models of attacks are very similar to those of logit models I–III. Dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature experience significantly more attacks. Again, this result is robust to the inclusion of democracies to the sample.

We also consistently find that countries which have experienced greater volatility in leadership or are currently embroiled in civil war are more likely to experience group emergence and a higher volume of attacks. The inclusion of the *Civil War* and *Past Leader Removals* variables ensures that our findings for dictatorships with active opposition parties and no legislature are not an artifact of these regimes also experiencing more internal turmoil. We find some evidence that wealthier dictatorships with higher GDP per capita are more likely to experience group emergence, although the effect loses significance in some of the group emergence models with country-specific effects (e.g., models II and III). Finally, we find that countries with larger populations consistently experience more terrorism, which is consistent with previous research.

## **An Alternative Measure of Institutions**

The results reported in table 2 use a simple binary measure of authoritarian institutions. The measure is theoretically appropriate given our focus on the negative effects of opposition parties with no legislature. However, the main weakness of the binary measure is that it aggregates three different institutional setups into one excluded category. In this section, we employ the more fine-grained second measure that splits autocracies into four categories: 1.) Opposition Parties with No Legislature, 2.) Opposition Parties with Legislature, 3.) No Parties, and 4.) Single Regime Party.

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<sup>26</sup>We also tried a zero-inflated negative binomial model, which produced very similar results. Given that the results do not change, we report the results of the simpler model.

Estimating the same models using this fine-grained measure of institutions ensures that we find the expected relationship between terrorism and institutions across all categories of institutions. Specifically, we expect to find that dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature, i.e., category 1.), experience more terrorism relative to the other three categories, i.e., categories 2.)–4.). We therefore use category 1.) as the excluded category and include the remaining three categories in our empirical models. Thus, the coefficients reported in table 3 for the three included institutional variables are all interpreted relative to countries that have opposition parties but no active elected legislature. Accordingly, we expect the coefficients of all the included authoritarian institutional categories to be negative.

[Table 3 about here.]

The results across all models in table 3 consistently show that dictatorships with multiple parties and no legislature experience the most terrorism relative to other dictatorships. As in table 2, the first three columns (i.e., models VII–IX) are logit models of group emergence, while the last three columns (i.e., models X–XII) are negative binomial models of attacks. Other than the institutional variables, all six models in table 3 are specified identically to those in table 2.

In all the three models of group emergence, dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature on average experience the highest probability of group emergence. That being said, there are some informative differences across different institutional arrangement categories. For instance, regimes with a single regime party are always significantly less likely to experience the emergence of a new group. Similarly, regimes with no political parties are always less likely to experience group emergence. This accords with our expectations, as we argue that the absence of an organized opposition makes collective action quite difficult in such regimes.

Dictatorships with active opposition parties and an elected legislature are generally less likely to experience group emergence, although the result becomes insignificant in model IX. The consistently lower coefficient suggests that countries with opposition parties and a legislature are more likely to see group emergence relative to single party regimes or regimes with no parties. This result is consistent with the collective action argument, as collective action should be harder for a regime to control when opposition political parties are active. Interestingly, democracies are *not* significantly more likely to experience group emergence than dictatorships with opposition parties

and no legislature. This provides further evidence against the notion that democracies generally experience significantly more terrorism than all dictatorships.

Models X–XII in table 3 show similar effects of authoritarian institutions on the volume of attacks across time. In fact, the difference between dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature and the other four categories is more consistently significant when we analyze the number of attacks. In all models, dictatorships with a single regime party or no parties experience a significantly lower number of attacks. The effect of having multiple parties and a legislature is also always significant and negative, although the coefficient is only significant at  $p < 0.10$  in the model with country random effects and democracies. In sum, the results for the effect of authoritarian institutions on the volume of attacks across time largely mirror those for group emergence in table 3.

Our results suggest that in dictatorships terrorism is more likely when opposition groups have the opportunity to mobilize through party structures, but lack an institutional avenue to influence the government through a legislature. The robustness of the institutional variables to the inclusion of variables such as civil war and the number of leadership removals, as well as year and country specific effects indicates that authoritarian institutions have an important influence on patterns of terrorism.<sup>27</sup> In the following section, we discuss the case of Algeria in the late 1980s and early 1990s to illustrate how our institutional mechanism operates in detail.

## **Political institutions and terrorism in Algeria**

Amidst a deepening economic crisis in Algeria, riots in October 1988 forced the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) to pursue political reforms. A new constitution legalized opposition parties the next year, quickly followed by a series of elections. The main opposition party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), won a majority in the legislature and appeared poised to take power in 1992. This brief period of multiparty politics was cut short by a palace coup in January when the military shut down the legislature and forced President Bendjedid to resign. Later that year, two terrorist groups emerged, comprised of both ex-FIS activists as well as anti-state groups that had

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<sup>27</sup>The appendix contains a section which addresses the possibility that unobserved factors that influence the selection of institutional arrangements in dictatorships may be correlated with terrorist activity. The results of the selection model yield similar results to those reported in the main text.

previously rejected electoral politics.

Our sketch of these events underscores two points. First, we show how electoral mobilization during the period of multiparty politics resulted in expanded collective action capacity of Islamic groups. Central to our theory is the contention that opposition collective action during periods when parties exist is instrumental for the emergence of terrorist organizations. When opposition parties operate in dictatorships, anti-regime groups can mobilize support for both moderate and radical factions, thereby increasing their capacity to form terrorist groups. Once mobilized, these opposition groups have increased ability to turn to violence when they are denied access to political power in a legislature.

Second, we trace the process of group formation that begins with opposition party mobilization and ends in the emergence of terrorist groups following the closing of the legislature in 1992. We show not only that members of the main opposition party helped organize anti-regime groups in the aftermath of the coup, but that the collapse of the legislature sapped the legitimacy of the democratic path to power for Islamic groups. The loss of legitimacy, in turn, increased support for armed Islamic groups and radicalized moderates.

### **The FLN and the Islamists prior to 1989**

Following independence in 1962, the National Liberation Front (FLN) dominated Algerian politics. The party maintained power by building a large coalition of supporters with patronage funded from the state-owned oil sector, using public sector employment and state spending to prevent social protest and buy political support (Leca, 1990; Chhibber, 1996). When oil revenues declined in the 1980s, support for the FLN unraveled (Entelis, 1996, p. 46). This prompted a series of economic reforms, such as reducing public sector employment and selling state-owned businesses (Chhibber, 1996, p. 133). These measures, however, were not enough to placate political opposition, and after a series of riots in late 1988, the regime conceded political reform.

Prior to the political opening, Islamic groups had little influence. Prominent Islamic leaders were repressed and the FLN effectively coopted and incorporated Islamic groups into its fold (ICG, 2004, p. 1). For example, the FLN incubated a conservative Arabist wing to reconcile the socialist goals of the FLN with the principles of shari'a (Kepel, 1995, p. 121) and granted policy concessions

– such as a regressive family law in 1984 – to coopt Islamists (Mortimer, 1996; Kalyvas, 2000). The military suppressed a brief Islamist uprising in the mid-1980s, killing its founder while imprisoning other leaders (Hafez, 2000; Kepel, 1995).

As a result of cooptation and repression, Islamic groups were relatively weak prior to 1989, and “engaged in very little overt political opposition or extra-institutional protest,” (Hafez, 2004, p. 44). In short, prior to multiparty mobilization in 1989, Islamic groups had little capacity to organize and even less power.

### **Islamist mobilization and multiparty politics, 1989-1991**

In February 1989, a national referendum won support for a revised constitution that legalized independent political organizations, allowing civil society groups to mobilize support for numerous opposition parties. Brumberg (1991, p. 62) estimates that by the end of 1989, over 10,000 new political and professional associations had been formed, among them 22 new political parties. The mass mobilization of new organizations was not limited to Islamic groups, but involved “Islamic, civic, secular, feminist, student, labour and farmer groups” (Entelis, 1992, p. 73).

While multiparty politics encouraged the formation of various political organizations, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had an early advantage. Using ‘independent’ mosques – those that escaped state regulation because they were not completely built – to organize support for their party, the FIS provided basic social services where the state (FLN) had failed (Chhibber, 1996, p. 141). Fifteen Islamic parties competed in the December 1991 elections, but few apart from the FIS had a strong, identifiable base: “[t]he others were creations of the government or of individuals, without any economic or political foundations” (Martinez, 2000, p. 44). In the June 1990 local elections, the FIS won two-thirds of the regional assemblies and 55 percent of municipal councils, while the FLN placed a distant second.

The FIS was not a monolithic party. The moderate faction, lead by Abassi Madani, advocated for an electoral path to power, stressing democratic and peaceful strategies to mobilize support for the Islamic movement (Brumberg, 1991). Madani’s leadership was also critical in establishing the national credentials of the FIS because he was a founding member of the FLN (Chhibber, 1996, p. 141). The radical faction, lead by a preacher who had been imprisoned by the FLN in the

mid-1980s, sought an Islamic state, which it viewed as incompatible with Western-style democracy (Brumberg, 1991; Entelis, 1996; Kalyvas, 2000).

Multiparty politics allowed both factions to mobilize supporters. While the moderate faction assumed formal control of the FIS, “the moderates did not manage to silence the radicals,” especially after the postponement of national elections from June to December of 1991 (Kalyvas, 2000, p. 387). Indeed Hafez (2004, p. 45-46) stresses the inclusive nature of FIS during the period before the coup. This inclusiveness allowed groups that would later be the basis of armed anti-government groups – such as Algerians who had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets and veterans of the Islamist uprising in the mid-1980s – to mobilize support under the FIS umbrella. While both moderates and radical factions mobilized supporters from 1989 to 1991, the promise of winning legislative power decreased the incentive to pursue violence. In the three years prior to the coup, Algeria experienced only 31 terrorist attacks, compared with over 200 in the year following closing of the legislature.

On 11 January 1992, the military staged a coup and forced FLN President Benjedid to resign. The military quickly closed the legislature, canceled the second round of elections, and imprisoned FIS activists. The dismantling of the legislature led to a power vacuum in Islamist movement, permitting the rise of radicals backed by armed Islamist groups. With the closure of formal political institutions, Islamic moderates were discredited. As Hafez (2000, p. 574) argues, “[t]he armed jihadists only gained prominence in 1992, after the military’s intervention... put an end to FIS’s electoral strategy.”

### **The formation of armed groups**

Two armed groups formed in the aftermath of the military coup: the Islamic State Movement (MEI) and the Islamic Armed Movement (MIA). Both were led by former members of the Bouyali group that had been repressed in the mid-1980s by the FLN (Hafez, 2000, p. 574). After a meeting in which these groups attempted to merge organizations was attacked by state security forces, surviving members opted to join an alternative organization under the banner of the Armed Islam Group (GIA) (Hafez, 2000, p. 574). From the start, the GIA maintained its independence from FIS leadership and would later become a rival of the FIS armed wing (Hafez, 2004, p. 47).

Despite the fact that the GIA was independent of the FIS, many activists from the latter joined

the GIA (Hafez, 2004, p. 46). Hafez (2004, p. 47) expresses little doubt about the cause: “[t]he political exclusion and indiscriminate repression of the FIS resulted in the migration of many FIS activists toward radical organizations that rejected democracy [and] the electoral process.” Roberts’ (1995, p. 40-41) observation concurs: “[t]he violence of the mainstream of the armed rebellion... has primarily been a reaction to the state’s decision to deprive it of a constitutional avenue.” Thus closing access to the legislature increased the incentive to pursue violence.

With the GIA gathering FIS activists, party leaders decided to form an alternative armed group, launching the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in July 1994 by merging existing groups from different parts of the country. The formation of AIS came on the heels of a numerous defections by senior FIS leaders leaving to join the GIA (ICG, 2004, p. 12). Thus FIS activists who were mobilized during the multiparty period became key members of both of the main armed anti-government groups by the end of 1994.

However, the migration of ex-FIS radicals towards violent anti-state groups was not the only legacy of a closed legislature. Many anti-regime moderates were also radicalized during this period. Political liberalization in 1989 unleashed a period of religious freedom in which radical Islamic clergy were able to gain access to mosques. Kalyvas (2000, p. 389), for example, notes that hundreds of independent mosques were built during this period. Party mobilization ended state control of religion, permitting new groups to advocate for an Islamic state, including some who rejected the democratic path. Martinez (2000, p. 49) argues that FIS activism during the period of open institutional access prior to the 1992 coup was instrumental in “spread[ing] the Islamist model and its language.” Entelis (1996, p. 62) underscores this point by arguing that armed Islamic groups were compromised of new militants who had been “‘re-Islamicized’ by the FIS and further radicalized following the interruption of the electoral process.” Thus the evidence from Algeria suggests that closing the legislature not only turned mobilized radicals to violence but also radicalized moderates.

Political mobilization during the brief period of multiparty politics led directly to the formation of terrorist organizations when the military closed access to the legislature after the 1992 coup. FIS activists not only helped start the main terrorist groups, the period of open political mobilization also allowed extreme groups to spread their message, increasing support for radicals. Violent attacks by armed Islamist groups did not begin until after the military closed the legislature and

canceled elections. According to the GDT data, two terrorist groups emerged after the military closed the legislature, leading to over 400 terrorist attacks from 1992-1994.

The Algerian case illustrates how closing legislative access to a mobilized opposition can foster the emergence of terrorist groups in an authoritarian regime. Prior to the period of multiparty politics Algeria experienced few terrorist attacks, successfully coopting potential opponents with formal political institutions such as a legislature and dominant party. When the military closed the legislature after a brief period of multiparty politics and opposition mobilization, violent groups quickly emerged. Military repression against Islamists and competition between the two main armed factions of resistance increased violent activity, leading to a brutal civil war that claimed the lives of nearly 150,000 Algerians. While many cases of terrorist group emergence occur shortly before or in the midst of civil wars, our explanation for their formation focuses on political institutions. The emergence of terrorist groups in Algeria clearly precedes the bloodiest periods of civil conflict, and was the direct result of a change in political institutions under dictatorship.

## **Conclusion**

The literature on terrorism has paid much attention to the influence of regime type. Almost every published work concludes that democracies are more prone to terrorism. Furthermore, a growing literature explores variation in patterns of terrorism experienced by democracies with different political institutional arrangements. However, little attention has been paid to terrorism in authoritarian regimes. Consequently, dictatorships have been largely treated as a homogenous category despite much evidence that they significantly differ from one another in terms of their institutional structure.

Our central argument is that variation in the institutional structure of authoritarian countries, namely, the existence of opposition political parties and elected legislatures, have significant yet overlooked influence on patterns of terrorism. More specifically, we argue that dictatorships with active opposition political parties and no legislature are the most prone to terrorism. Active opposition parties facilitate collective action in these repressive regimes where there are significant obstacles to collective action. When there is a legislature along with opposition parties, autocrats

manage to buy off or placate some of the opposition. However, when opposition parties are active but do not have access to a legislature, aggrieved groups have the incentive and the collective action capacity to pursue their goals via violence. Thus, dictatorships with active opposition parties but no legislature are the most prone to terrorism.

We provide a range of evidence in favor of the idea that dictatorships with opposition parties and no legislature experience more terrorism than other authoritarian regimes. First, we show that regimes with opposition parties and no legislature are the most likely to experience the emergence of violent groups. Second, we demonstrate that autocracies with this particular institutional arrangement are also the targets of a substantially higher number of terrorist attacks across time. In general, our results suggest that if opposition parties exist, access to an elected legislature weakens the incentives to use terrorism.

These results are both analogous and distinct to the role institutions play in democratic regimes. Much of the literature on democratic institutions suggests that internal turmoil is best avoided by allowing for the representation of a diverse set of interests. For example, Powell (1982) shows that proportional representation systems are associated with fewer instances of political violence, in part because PR systems are more effective in bringing a diverse set of organized interests into the political system (Lijphart, 1977; Powell, 1982; Krain, 1998; Saideman et al., 2002; Li, 2005). In authoritarian regimes, banning parties and repressing hostile groups takes place more regularly. Nonetheless, we show that parties and their ability to participate in a legislature play a key role in authoritarian countries. In fact, we find that democracies do not always experience a significantly higher level of terrorist activity than dictatorships with active opposition parties and no legislature.

Our institutional explanation for terrorism also has implications for other types of anti-government behavior, such as non-violent protest and civil war insurgency.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the Chilean case suggests that terrorist groups can emerge alongside a peaceful anti-government protest movement. In this instance, the peaceful manifestation of opposition mobilization helped defeat the dictatorship. The Algerian case shows how terrorism and the repressive response it elicits from a dictatorship can escalate into civil war where terrorist groups evolve into rebel insurgents. However, non-violent resistance and civil war may require the presence of other mobilizing factors to emerge. For

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<sup>28</sup>See Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) for an enlightening discussion of the effectiveness of non-violent protest.

example, the peaceful protest movement in Chile in the 1980s was fostered by elites from the Christian Democrats – a long-ruling party under prior democracy – in collaboration with a large, internationally-supported human rights network. In Algeria, neither of these types of actors were present. Instead, violent anti-state groups in the 1990s grew out prior terrorist networks that operated under dictatorship in the 1980s and an Islamist party that had never held power (though it won an election). Civil war may require more than institutional change under dictatorship, such as the presence of external funding (e.g. lootable resources or foreign support) or conducive terrain (e.g. mountains and jungles). For this reason, we concentrate on terrorist group activity and leave other forms anti-government behavior for future research.

Finally, this study also suggests a path for future research on the dynamics of interaction between opposition groups and dictators. First, our arguments about the importance of interaction among organized moderates and radicals suggests that data on the ideological composition of organized opposition is ideal to subject our explanation to further tests. Our country-level data is consistent with our explanation, but we rely on our case study of Algeria to provide micro-level evidence of a mechanism. Second, we provide a wide range of evidence in this article that dictatorships with active opposition parties experience more terrorism when they do not have an elected legislature. In a related ongoing project, we examine why some dictators with de facto opposition parties do not open legislatures despite their potential effectiveness in co-opting the opposition. Specifically, we explore how some dictators use the threat of domestic terrorism to consolidate their control over security forces and secure foreign aid from allies.

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Table 1: Authoritarian Institutions

Institutions	Number of Regimes	Percentage
Opposition Parties & No Legislature	379	12%
Single Regime Party	1125	36%
No Parties	523	17%
Opposition Parties & Legislature	1101	35%
Total	3128	100%

Table 2: Authoritarian Institutions and Terrorism: Multiple Parties & No Legislature

	Dictatorships	Dictatorships	All Regimes	Dictatorships	Dictatorships	All Regimes
	Logit	Logit	Logit	Negative Binomial	Negative Binomial	Negative Binomial
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI
Constant	-4.93** (0.94)	-7.03** (1.27)	-7.32** (0.82)	-7.45** (2.02)	-5.02** (0.52)	-4.60** (0.31)
Opposition Parties and No Legislature	0.54** (0.19)	0.59** (0.19)	0.41** (0.17)	1.65** (0.40)	0.49** (0.08)	0.44** (0.07)
Democracy		0.86** (0.18)				0.79** (0.07)
Log GDP per capita	0.17* (0.09)	0.14 (0.12)	0.05 (0.08)	0.39* (0.20)	0.24** (0.05)	0.18** (0.03)
Log Population	0.22** (0.07)	0.36** (0.09)	0.49** (0.06)	0.60** (0.13)	0.06** (0.03)	0.12** (0.02)
Civil War	0.68** (0.21)	0.73** (0.36)	0.38** (0.09)	0.96** (0.46)	0.86** (0.13)	0.14** (0.04)
Past Leader Removals	0.14** (0.03)	0.17** (0.04)	0.16** (0.03)	0.17** (0.06)	0.03 (0.02)	0.07** (0.01)
Cold War	-0.19 (0.14)		-0.32 (0.25)			
Dependent Variable	Group Emergence	Group Emergence	Group Emergence	Number of Attacks	Number of Attacks	Number of Attacks
Log-likelihood	-985.23	-913.05	-1828.12	-5529.38	-4935.26	-11525.10
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Country Random Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
N =	3128	3128	5790	3128	3128	5790

Standard errors clustered by target in parentheses  
 \*\*  $p < .05$  ; \*  $p < .10$

Table 3: Authoritarian Institutions and Terrorism: Comparison of Institutional Setups

	Dictatorships	Dictatorships	All Regimes	Dictatorships	Dictatorships	All Regimes
	Logit	Logit	Logit	Negative Binomial	Negative Binomial	Negative Binomial
	Model VII	Model VIII	Model IX	Model X	Model XI	Model XII
Constant	-4.37** (0.91)	-6.16** (1.24)	-6.69** (0.82)	-3.47** (1.72)	-4.72** (0.52)	-2.99** (0.26)
Single Regime Party	-0.98** (0.27)	-1.09** (0.25)	-1.02** (0.22)	-2.66** (0.49)	-1.07** (0.12)	-1.17** (0.09)
No Parties	-0.66** (0.26)	-0.80** (0.28)	-0.71** (0.24)	-1.94** (0.43)	-0.60** (0.12)	-0.74** (0.11)
Opposition Parties & Legislature	-0.39** (0.20)	-0.36* (0.21)	-0.15 (0.18)	-1.20** (0.41)	-0.27** (0.09)	-0.13* (0.07)
Democracy			0.34 (0.22)			0.27** (0.09)
Log GDP per capita	0.15* (0.08)	0.12 (0.12)	0.02 (0.08)	0.14 (0.18)	0.23** (0.05)	0.18** (0.03)
Log Population	0.15* (0.08)	0.12 (0.12)	0.51 (0.06)	0.14 (0.18)	0.23** (0.05)	0.14** (0.02)
Civil War	0.66** (0.24)	0.67** (0.36)	0.36** (0.09)	0.71** (0.35)	0.84** (0.13)	0.15** (0.04)
Past Leader Removals	0.13** (0.03)	0.15** (0.04)	0.12** (0.03)	0.14** (0.05)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06** (0.01)
Cold War	-0.02 (0.14)			0.16 (0.27)		
Log-likelihood	-978.01	-909.23	-1860.05	-5475.26	-4909.91	-11215.04
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Country Random Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
N =	3128	3128	5790	3128	3128	5790

Standard errors clustered by target in parentheses  
 \*\*  $p < .05$  ; \*  $p < .10$