

Share It or Lose It? Power-Sharing and Regime Stability in Multi-Ethnic Autocracies.

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Abstract

How does ethnic power-sharing affect autocratic survival? The recent literature identifies formal power-sharing institutions as key source of regime stability. Unfortunately, most institutionalist analyses remain silent on the identity of those who share power, the degree to which power is shared, and the effects of actually observed levels of power-sharing. Using data on the ethnic composition of authoritarian ruling coalitions allows us to overcome these limitations. Our analysis of authoritarian regime duration reveals that ethnic power-sharing stabilizes personalist and party-based regimes but destabilizes military dictatorships. Including potential ethnic challengers reduces the risk of external threats to regime stability but may at the same time invite internal challenges. The institutionalization of elite cooperation in party-based regimes and the personalization of power under “big man rule” both relax this key dilemma of authoritarian politics. Under military rule, however, inherent commitment problems lead to shorter durations of multi-ethnic ruling coalitions.

Introduction

The authoritarian regimes in Syria, Malaysia, and Gabon rank among the longest-lasting dictatorships in the post-WWII era. In explaining the extraordinary longevity of these regimes, scholars often highlight specific strategies of dealing with deep-rooted ethnic divisions prevailing in all three countries at hand (Quinlivan, 1999; Mauzy, 2006; Baker, 1998). And yet, the ethnic politics of these regimes could not be more different. The Syrian Assad regime almost exclusively staffs key positions in the state apparatus and security services with the ruler's Alawite co-ethnics and relies on the Baath Party to coopt relevant individuals. The post-independence regimes in Malaysia and Gabon have forged broad multi-ethnic coalitions. In Gabon observers attribute the stability of an ethnically diverse ruling coalition to former president Omar Bongo's personal charisma and his skillful use of ethnically targeted cooptation strategies. In Malaysia, on the other hand, ethnic power-sharing has been institutionalized in a multi-ethnic "Alliance Party."

In this paper, we systematically investigate the relationship between ethnic power-sharing and authoritarian durability. Despite a long-standing debate on the merits and demerits of power-sharing as a strategy of conflict prevention and resolution in diverse societies (see e.g. Lijphart, 1977; Horowitz, 1985; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005; Cederman et al., 2015), there is little systematic work on ethnic power-sharing under autocratic institutions. Perhaps most relevant for our purpose, recent quantitative work has shown that ethnic power-sharing reduces the risk of ethnic rebellion (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010) but may at the same time increase the risk of both coups (Roessler, 2011; Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015) and democratic transitions (Bormann, 2014). While coups, rebellions, and democratization constitute important threats to authoritarian survival they are not the only relevant challenges. In addition, these findings point in opposite directions as far as the relationship between ethnic power-sharing and autocratic survival is concerned.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of ethnic power-sharing in authoritarian regimes, we stress two important conceptual points. First, sharing power along ethnic lines can have different effects on two distinct threats to regime stability. While the

cooptation of potential ethnic challengers into the ruling coalition reduces threats from outside of the regime, doing so may invite challenges from within (Roessler, 2011; Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015). Second, the degree to which there is indeed a trade-off between internal and external threats crucially depends on the regime's internal organization.

These claims build directly on a key insight from recent work on authoritarianism: Dictators have to share at least some power to stay in office but pervasive commitment problems make authoritarian power-sharing inherently fragile (Magaloni, 2008; Svolik, 2012). A number of studies has highlighted the role of regime types and formal institutions in making authoritarian power-sharing work (Svolik, 2012; Wright and Escriba-Folch, 2012; Geddes, 1999; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). In a pioneering article, Barbara Geddes (1999) distinguishes between personalist, party-based, and military dictatorships arguing that the former two types are in a much better position to resolve regime-internal factionalism than their military-led counterparts. Subsequent empirical works show how autocrats use nominally democratic institutions such as political parties, authoritarian legislatures, and competitive elections to coopt potential challengers and make power-sharing more credible. (see e.g. Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Boix and Svolik, 2013).¹

While providing novel insights into the sources of authoritarian stability, analyses of regime types and formal power-sharing institutions rarely specify the most relevant elite actors involved (Slater, 2010). As Pepinsky (2014) has recently argued, authoritarian politics is not only shaped by institutions, but primarily by the preferences and power struggles of the most important social agents. Against this backdrop, formal institutions undoubtedly provide opportunities for the cooptation of potential regime challengers. However, most of the literature remains opaque as to who these challengers are and whether they are indeed coopted through formal institutions. Shifting the attention to politically relevant ethnic groups and their elites' representation in the ruling coalition thus seems a promising way forward.

¹Other relevant studies highlighting the role of formal cooptation institutions include Levitsky and Way (2002), Levitsky and Way (2010), Lust-Okar (2004), Brownlee (2007), and Wright and Escriba-Folch (2012).

More specifically, we focus on ethnic groups' representation in the executive apparatus of authoritarian regimes. In many cases, executive power-sharing seems equally important for regime stability as the presence or composition of legislative institutions (Arriola, 2009; Lindemann, 2011). Generally, when confronted with potential ethnic challengers, incumbents can either repress their demands or coopt their representatives into the ruling coalition. The latter strategy reduces the respective groups' motivation to challenge the regime from the outside but may simultaneously present those coopted challengers with opportunities to do so from within (Roessler, 2011). Thus, ethnic power-sharing only contributes to regime stability where rulers prevent internal challenges. Drawing on Geddes (1999), we expect this to be case in personalist and party-based regimes but not in military autocracies.

To test this argument, we combine two well-known data sources on autocratic regimes (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014) and ethnic groups' representation in government (Vogt et al., 2015). Distinguishing between externally and internally driven regime collapses allows us to more directly study the effects of power-sharing than analyses of general regime stability or other failure types such as democratic or autocratic transitions, regular or irregular regime change, and violent or non-violent breakdowns of authoritarian rule. Our analyses show that ethnic power-sharing reduces the risk of regime failure due to external challenges but does not have a homogeneous effect on internally driven collapses. Instead, it is associated with a higher risk of internal breakdown in military regimes, but not in personalist and party-based autocracies where the effect is reversed. These findings are robust to a variety of specifications including competing risks proportional hazards models, fixed effects models that account for unobserved heterogeneity across countries, and two-stage least squares models addressing potential endogeneity of power-sharing to regime stability.

This paper speaks to several important debates in the literature. First, we contribute to recent work on authoritarian power-sharing by highlighting the importance of the executive-level ruling coalition and explicitly studying the effects of sharing power across politically salient identity lines. Second, we show that even in weakly institutionalized

personalist regimes, ethnic power-sharing can be stabilizing. Third, this paper improves our understanding of the implications of ethnic inclusion for regime survival and political stability more generally. As opposed to previous studies on civil wars, coups, and democratic transitions (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Roessler, 2011; Bormann, 2014), we stress the importance of authoritarian institutions in moderating the effects of ethnic power-sharing.

In what follows, we first lay out our theoretical reasoning and derive hypotheses. Subsequently we describe our data and methodology and present the empirical analysis, before concluding with a discussion of the results and some implications for further research.

Theory & Hypotheses

No dictator can rule alone. Even the most cruel, power-crazed, and cunning individual needs a group of supporters to rise to the helm of political power and maintain her position thereafter (Svolik, 2012). The central task for every acting autocrat is therefore to assemble a ruling coalition whose size and composition ensure the highest odds of political survival (De Mesquita et al., 2003). This is easier said than done. Authoritarian power-sharing amounts to a difficult balancing act that consists of warding off outside rivals while simultaneously avoiding challenges from within the regime (Magaloni, 2008). Any measures taken to counter external threats may at the same time heighten the dictator's vulnerability to internal hazards and vice versa. This general trade-off comes in various forms. Roessler (2011) argues that the inclusion of potential ethnic challengers increases the risk of coups. Svolik (2013) shows how repressing external threats makes regimes dependent on the country's security forces which may in turn lead to coups. Hollyer, Rosendorff and Vreeland (2016) suggest that autocrats intentionally facilitate mass protests in order to make coups less likely. In the following paragraphs, we describe this trade-off in more detail and relate it to the question of ethnic power-sharing.

External challenges to the incumbent order can take different forms: Regime outsiders

may stage protests, general strikes, riots or revolutions. In the most extreme cases, external challenges take the form of armed rebellions that seek to unseat the current ruler. Confronted with such external threats, autocrats in general respond with either sticks or carrots, resorting to a mix of repression and cooptation (Wintrobe, 1998).

Cooptation is the strategic targeting of resources, government posts, and policy concessions to potential regime challengers (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). The aim is to buy their loyalty and provide them with a vested stake in the continued survival of the regime (Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014). The inclusion of potential outside challengers in the ruling coalition is the most far-reaching form of cooptation. In contrast to merely handing out patronage goods or implementing specific policies to appease external rivals, inviting them to high-level regime positions rewards them with direct political influence and prestige. It thus ties their individual career paths to the fate of the regime. It is this form of cooptation through power-sharing that this paper investigates.

While power-sharing is likely to reduce coopted elites' motivation to challenge the incumbent, it may increase their opportunities to do so. Coopted former rivals face strong temptations to further increase their power by plotting a coup against the dictator. In other cases, tough regime-internal bargaining results in negotiated regime change. Transitional elections as a way to proceed from military to civilian rule are one prime example (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). Just as in the case of coups d'état, these attempts at regime change are initiated by regime insiders.

At the same time, the dictator faces a similar commitment problem as her allies. Any proposed power-sharing arrangement may be a hollow promise. What prevents the ruler to renege on her promises as soon as an immediate threat abates or the internal balance of power shifts in her favor (Svolik, 2009)? This double credibility problem paired with the need for at least a minimum of power-sharing has been described as the fundamental dilemma of authoritarian politics (Magaloni, 2008). As third-party enforcement is weak or absent in most authoritarian regimes, both the dictator and her allies frequently threaten or use violence to punish defectors and uphold their coalition partners' commitment to power-sharing (Svolik, 2012).

Recent scholarship identifies formal, nominally democratic institutions such as regime parties and authoritarian legislatures as potential solutions to the dilemma. Authoritarian institutions facilitate cooptation in two main ways. First, they provide posts and forums, in which coopted elites can be placed and in which they can further their interests (Malesky and Schuler, 2010; Schedler, 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006). Second, they reduce uncertainty and enhance the credibility of authoritarian power-sharing arrangements. Formalized procedures and repeated interaction within legislative bodies and regime parties alleviate both the dictator's and ruling coalition members' fears of the other party's defection from a power-sharing deal (Geddes, 1999; Brownlee, 2007; Boix and Svolik, 2013; Magaloni, 2008).

We see two reasons why a more nuanced understanding of authoritarian cooptation strategies requires moving beyond formal institutions. First, the mere absence or presence of certain institutions does not tell much about the degree to which cooptation is actually achieved. Even in the absence of authoritarian legislatures and parties, potential challengers may be coopted through informal channels, as e.g. the literature on neopatrimonialism suggests (Jackson and Rosberg, 1984; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994). Second, most institutionalist analyses treat the ruling coalition as a black box and do not identify the relevant social actors that are coopted. In the following, we introduce the concept of politicized ethnicity and aim to offer a route to overcome these two problems.

Politicized Ethnicity and External Threats to Regime Stability

In many authoritarian regimes, ethnicity is one societal fault line along which political competition takes place and challenges to the incumbent order are organized. Where ethnic cleavages are salient, ethnic identity often serves as a key criterion in the formulation of authoritarian cooptation strategies. Therefore, the ethnic composition of the ruling coalition becomes crucial to understand regime dynamics in multi-ethnic autocracies. However, the effects of ethnic power-sharing are not straightforward. As stated above, both exclusive ethnocracies and highly inclusive coalition regimes are represented among the world's most durable dictatorships. This indicates that there are different

ways to resolve the dilemma of authoritarian power-sharing.

Salient ethnic identities provide both opportunity and motivation to challenge the current rulers. As far as opportunities are concerned, ethnic identities serve as a powerful tool to mobilize support and organize collective action. First, co-ethnics often live in geographically concentrated settlement areas within a country and share a common language, religion or culture. This makes it easier to organize politically and influence where public goods spending is targeted, what language policies are chosen, and which religious or cultural practices and symbols are allowed or even actively promoted (Hardin, 1997; Bates, 1974). Second, a shared language and common norms facilitate communication and in-group cooperation (Habyarimana et al., 2007). Third, denser social networks within than across ethnic groups facilitate the identification and punishment of potential defectors (Fearon and Laitin, 1996). Finally, in-group norms of cooperation and reciprocity also contribute to a higher organizational capacity of ethnically homogeneous regime challengers (Habyarimana et al., 2007).

Turning to the motivational side, a lack of access to the regime provides ethnic elites and their followers with material and non-material incentives to change their lot. In many developing-world autocracies, the state is the key source of economic rents and opportunities (Olzak, 1983; Cooper, 2002; Arriola, 2009). As clientelist networks in neopatrimonial systems are often structured along ethnic lines, securing access to the pool of resources that is the executive apparatus is highly important for ethnic patrons and their clients (Clapham, 1996). Furthermore, ethnonationalist ideologies can make political domination by ethnic others appear particularly intolerable (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013). The Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s are but one example of the destructive potential of such ideologies. Thus, both hard material interest and ethnonationalist grievances motivate ethnic elites outside of the regime to challenge the existing order. Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010) have shown that exclusion from state power is associated with a higher risk of ethnic civil war. In principle, however, both the opportunity and the motivation mechanisms may facilitate other forms of regime challenges as well, regardless of whether they take the form of electoral competition by an ethnic opposition party, a

popular uprising, or a coup plot in the name of a particular group.

Including ethnic elites into the ruling coalition may thus be a viable strategy to reduce the risk of external challenges. Ethnic cooptation of this form turns regime outsiders into insiders and makes them invested in the maintenance of the current order (Geddes, 1999; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006, 2007). Both, the individual rents and opportunities that ethnic elites secure from holding office and their ability to distribute patronage toward and politically represent their ethnic constituency depend on the further existence of the regime (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010; Brancati, 2014). As Arriola (2009) points out, granting access to executive power is at least equally important to credibly promise the continued flow of patronage as inviting outsiders to join authoritarian parties or legislatures. Even where the access to patronage is limited or policies are still far from what coopted elites and their constituencies want, these elites tend to prefer trying to change the system from within to openly challenging it. Mounting a rebellion amounts to a risky gamble that may well result in the complete exclusion from political power and patronage (Padró i Miquel, 2007). This leads to our first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 *Ethnic power-sharing reduces the risk of regime breakdown due to external challenges.*

Power-Sharing and Internal Threats across Authoritarian Regime Types

However, external challenges are not the only relevant threat. In fact, authoritarian regimes more often fail at the hands of regime insiders than through rebellions, revolutions and foreign invasions combined (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014; Svobik, 2012). In this sense, coopting external rivals may just shift the problem to another, potentially more dangerous location – the dictator’s inner circle. Thus, we do not expect ethnic cooptation to have an unambiguously positive effect on regime stability. Inviting potential challengers to the ruling coalition will only increase the longevity of regimes if the inherent risks of power-sharing are addressed. A dictator’s ability to protect herself against internal challenges varies across authoritarian contexts. According to Geddes (1999), military

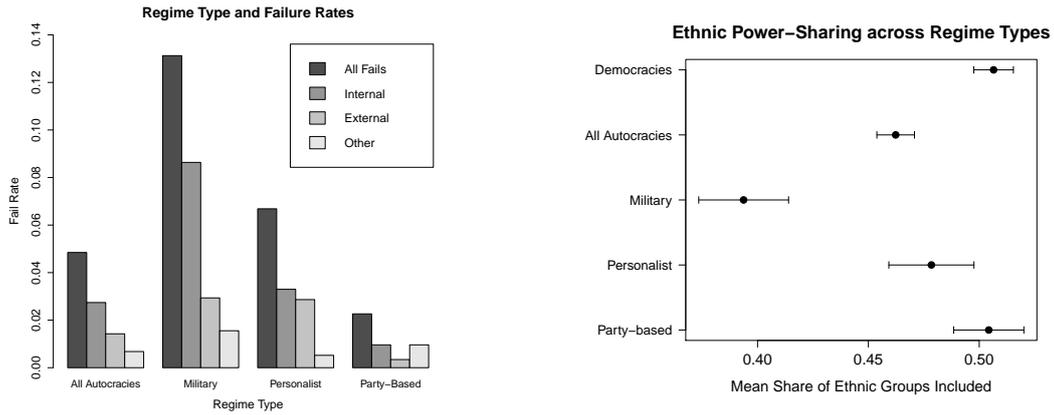


Figure 1: Failure Rates and Ethnic Power-Sharing across Regime Types

dictatorships are far more vulnerable to internal factionalism than their personalist or party-based counterparts.

Figure 1 presents descriptive data in line with Geddes’s findings. The left-hand panel shows that autocracies fail more than twice as often as a result of internal challenges than due to external ones. This gap is even more pronounced in the case of military dictatorships, which also have a much higher general fail rate than personalist or party-based regimes. While Personalist dictatorships break down almost as frequently by external challenges as military regimes, they are far less vulnerable to internal ones. The fail rates of party-based regimes are even lower. The right-hand panel suggests that ethnic power-sharing may be one factor contributing to the diverging vulnerability to internal challenges. It plots the mean share of included ethnic groups and 95% confidence intervals across regime types. Power-sharing is significantly more common in personalist and party-based autocracies than in military regimes.²

The recent authoritarianism literature identifies two key factors that explain this divergence; the balance of power within the ruling coalition, as well as the formal and informal rules of the regime that may foster or impede credible power-sharing (Svolik, 2012). In some authoritarian ruling coalitions, the balance of power between the dictator and her coalition favors the ruler to such an extent as to make coordinated challenges by her allies close to impossible. Geddes (1999) classifies such regimes as “personalist”, whereas Svolik (2009) speaks of “established dictatorships.” Where such concentration

²See below for data sources and variable definitions.

of power is absent, internal challenges are more likely unless an appropriate institutional framework makes authoritarian power-sharing credible. Previous studies point to authoritarian parties and legislatures as institutions that enable both the dictator and her allies to commit to long-term power-sharing (Geddes, 1999; Magaloni, 2008; Boix and Svobik, 2013).

In what follows, we examine how Geddes’s and other scholars’ characterization of different authoritarian regime types relate to the specific problem of ethnic power-sharing. We begin with military regimes in which neither the concentration of power nor institutionalized bargaining prevent internal challenges.

Military Regimes. Military elites are better at seizing power than at maintaining it. The military is involved in most successful coups d’état, and not surprisingly, most military regimes originate in a coup (Powell, 2012; Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). Once in place, however, military regimes often fail to consolidate their power. Military dictatorships experience more coup attempts (Powell, 2012), have higher rates of leader turnover (Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Escribà-Folch, 2013), and break down earlier than other autocracies (Geddes, 1999; Magaloni, 2008). This apparent fragility of military rule is often attributed to two interrelated factors: first, the inherent difficulty of credibly committing to power-sharing and second, the premium military elites place on unity, discipline, and the corporate interest of the armed forces.

What exactly makes power-sharing more challenging under military rule? Most military regimes seize power by violent means. Successful coups create a legacy that serves as a precedent that may inspire others. [Finer \(1962\)](#) describes how military interventions in the political arena deteriorate a country’s “political culture” and make following interventions appear less illegitimate. [Londregan and Poole \(1990\)](#) as well as [Powell \(2012\)](#) present quantitative evidence for the existence of such “coup traps.”³ In addition, the inner circle of the regime is populated by men with experience in using coercive means ([Svobik, 2013](#)). Under such conditions, credibly ensuring each other to refrain from

³In a recent article, [Sudduth \(2017\)](#) argues that successful coups decrease the likelihood of counter-coups in their immediate aftermath. As she explicitly theorizes a temporary reduction in coup risk, her logic is compatible with the existence of coup traps in the medium- to long-term.

coup-plotting is a difficult task. Even where the top officers manage to create trusting relations, disgruntled junior officers may undermine the bargain. Only if the military is professionalized and sufficiently disciplined, will top officers be in a position to pledge not only their own but all of their subordinates' loyalty (Geddes, 1999).

These conditions are unlikely to be met where the armed forces are divided along ethnic lines. Horowitz (1985) documents how ethnic loyalties often override professional ones within the security apparatus of multi-ethnic states. In many cases, this kind of ethnic factionalism within the military is the result of biased recruitment strategies during the colonial era. Post-independence leaders' attempts to change the composition of the security forces lead to some well-represented groups being worse off and thus heighten the salience of ethnicity (Horowitz, 1985; Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). Consequently, coup threats loom even larger in ethnically heterogeneous military regimes. In fact, the case study literature on coups, especially in the African context, shows that many coup attempts are ethnically motivated (Luttwak, 1968; Decalo, 1976; Luckham, 1971). If military rulers inherit an ethnically divided security apparatus upon rising to power or rely on co-conspirators from other groups to unseat their predecessors, commitment problems soon arise (Roessler, 2011). Given such scenarios, some factions may opt to engage in plotting a counter-coup. Co-conspirators have already proven their coup-plotting capacity and may use their skill set to defect from a power-sharing deal. Anticipating these dynamics, military rulers often take ethnic identity as a means to ensure loyalty and purge both the regime and the security apparatus of ethnic others (Horowitz, 1985). This creates what Roessler (2011) calls an "internal security dilemma," where the leader tries to narrow the ethnic base of the regime in order to avoid future coups while ethnic coalition partners plot coups in order to avoid being kicked out.

The early years of independent Syria provide an example of the inherent instability of inter-ethnic bargaining under military rule. In the twenty years post independence, Syria experienced at least ten coup attempts of which eight were successful (Powell and Thyne, 2011). At the same time, the ethnic base of the consecutive military regimes narrowed from all-inclusive power-sharing to Hafez al-Assad's Alawi ethnocracy, over which his son

presides until today. The first civilian regime after independence was led by Sunni Arab elites but also included representatives of the Kurdish and Christian communities (Vogt et al., 2015). Two coups under Kurdish leadership in 1949 and 1951 put the country under military rule (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). The coups also brought Alawi and Druze elites to power. French military recruitment in colonial times specifically targeted these communities to keep the Sunni majority at bay (Quinlivan, 1999).

After a counter-coup, civilian rule was restored and resulted in the largely Sunni-backed pan-Arab experiment of the United Arab Republic. In 1961, another coup ended the Union with Egypt and led to a military regime in which all groups except the Kurds were represented. The Baathist coup in 1963 further strengthened Alawi and Druze military elites although the presidency remained in Sunni hands (Perlmutter, 1969). After the military wing of the movement defeated the civilian one in yet another coup in 1966, the Alawi generals further consolidated their positions. However, the coup plotters still installed the Sunni Nureddin al-Atassi as figurehead president (Pipes, 1989). After a failed coup under Druze leadership, the Alawi faction purged their Druze counterparts from the officer corps (Quinlivan, 1999). Perhaps wary of further internal conflict, Assad himself grabbed power in 1971 and staffed key positions in the regime and security apparatus with close family members and ethnic peers resulting in long-lasting minority rule still ruling Damascus today (Horowitz, 1985, p. 551-52).⁴

In short, the higher baseline risk of coups and ethnic factionalism in the security forces make multi-ethnic military regimes particularly prone to breakdown. They either fall prey to the internal security dilemma and collapse in a coup, or they alleviate the dilemma by narrowing their ethnic base and resorting to repression instead of ethnic cooptation. As Horowitz (1985, p. 531) concludes “the ethnocracies that have emerged from lethiferous sequences of attritional coups and purges appear to be significantly narrower and more brutal than could have been produced by civilian regimes alone.”

However, where the officers at the very helm of the regime are genuinely interested in

⁴The Assad regime included a few Sunni loyalists in positions of power, yet none of them was allowed to establish an independent power base within the strictly Alawi dominated hierarchy (Hinnebusch, 2004).

maintaining an inter-ethnic bargain, they often decide to hand over power to civilians. In fact, military regimes even more frequently end in transitional elections or other internally negotiated transitions than in coups d'état (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). Anticipating the risks of ethnic power-sharing for themselves and the military as an institution, military elites may relinquish political power more or less voluntarily. Doing so often enables them to maintain lucrative positions within the armed forces even after transitions to civilian rule or democracy (Nordlinger, 1977; Huntington, 1991). In that sense, the personal and professional fate of ruling elites depends less on the continued survival of the regime than in party-based or personalist autocracies (Geddes, 1999). Therefore, we expect multi-ethnic military regimes to collapse comparatively early, be it in a coup or in a negotiated transition. The narrower the ethnic base of a military regime, the less likely these internal forms of regime change will be. This leads to our second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 *In military dictatorships, ethnic power-sharing heightens the risk of regime breakdown due to internal challenges.*

Personalist Regimes. Personalist regimes concentrate control over access to political power and key policy decisions in the hands of an individual leader (Geddes, 1999). Neither the military, nor political parties, members of the ruling elite, or formal rules and institutions constrain the ruler. Typically, personalist regimes emerge from intense internal power struggles in which the dictator manages to concentrate sufficient amounts of power minimizing the threat of coups or other internal challenges (Svolik, 2009). The style of rule in personalist regimes is often characterized as “neopatrimonial” or “sultanistic” in the sense that authority is based on an informal trade of material benefits for political loyalty (Médard, 1982; Chehabi and Linz, 1998). Public sector employment, regional infrastructure investment and aid or natural resource rents are among the most commonly used currencies in this support-buying exercise (Lemarchand, 1972; Burgess et al., forthcoming).

The aim of such patronage politics is to coopt potential challengers while at the same time preventing them from building independent power bases within or outside of the regime. To that end, most personalist rulers frequently reshuffle key regime personnel

(Jackson and Rosberg, 1984; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994). This kind of revolving door politics credibly signals the dispensability of individual coalition members and serves as punishment for elites that the ruler comes to see as overly ambitious (Svolik, 2012). At the same time, however, potential regime challengers prefer collaborating with the dictator to openly challenging her. Securing a share of regime patronage or a lucrative public sector job is often more attractive than mounting a coup against a ruler, who has established herself as the only show in town. Once coopted, these elites become complicit in the regime’s corruption and are unlikely to reinvent themselves as reformist coup plotters or opposition leaders. (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994).

What implications do the internal dynamics of personalist autocracies have in multi-ethnic states? Perhaps counter-intuitively, we expect ethnic inclusion to contribute to regime stability under personal rule. On the one hand, the patron-client networks characteristic of “big man rule” often follow ethnic lines and personalist dictators tend to favor their own group (Geddes, 1999; Franck and Rainer, 2012). On the other, they have strong incentives to broaden the ethnic base of their regime. Doing so not only coopts potential instigators of external regime challenges but also makes internal challenges less likely. If the ruling coalition is ethnically fragmented, coordinating coup attempts becomes more difficult. Organizing internal challenges becomes even more difficult where potential collaborators fluctuate in and out of the inner regime circle (Horowitz, 2014; Arriola, 2009). Placing potential rivals from various groups into oversized cabinets or the bloated administrative and security apparatus can enhance the chances of autocratic survival. In the African context, the skillful management and exploitation of ethnic rivalries and loyalties within the regime has been identified as a key source of the extraordinary longevity of some personal regimes (Jackson and Rosberg, 1984).

Omar Bongo’s 41-year long rule in Gabon illustrates this point. Hailing from the Batéké minority, Bongo recognized the difficulty of basing his rule on co-ethnic support alone. Instead, he resorted to a strategy of ethnic balance and ensured the representation of all relevant groups in the administration and security apparatus (Gardinier and Yates, 1996). This was no small achievement given that political affiliations in Gabon were

structured along ethnic lines and smaller groups feared the ambitions of the Fang majority (Ndombet, 2009). Bongo always included Fang elites in the regime but prevented them from becoming serious challengers. Bongo's personal charisma as well as his skill in using oil revenues and strategic appointments to coopt potential rivals reinforced his authority (Yates, 1996). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the regime nonetheless came under substantial pressure due to economic discontent and international calls for democratic reform. Reluctantly, Bongo agreed to multi-party competition and free elections. After narrowly winning the presidential election against a Fang rival amidst serious allegations of fraud, Bongo had to deal with considerable public unrest. By forging a government of national unity, coopting his main ethnic rivals, and simultaneously dividing all remaining opposition, he managed to consolidate his grip on power yet again (Baker, 1998).

In sum, we expect skillful personalist rulers to use ethnic cooptation strategies to their advantage. Including potential ethnic challengers accommodates threats from outside of the regime. Playing them off against each other and replacing them before they become too powerful even further reduce both the internal pressure for reforms and the threat of coups.

Hypothesis 3 *In personalist autocracies, ethnic power-sharing reduces the risk of regime breakdown due to internal challenges.*

Party-Based Regimes. In party-based autocracies, formal rules and procedures make both the dictator's and her allies' commitment to power-sharing more credible. The party apparatus provides posts to coopt potential rivals into a power-sharing arrangement (Geddes, 1999). By delegating parts of her discretion over appointments and policies to party-internal bodies of collective decision-making, the dictator signals her long-term commitment to power-sharing and policy compromises (Magaloni, 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006). This makes regime outsiders more likely to accept a role in the ruling elite, since they can be more certain that their upfront investment in terms of loyalty and effort will pay off in the long term. The most high-ranking regime elites typically reach their positions after a long march through the party hierarchy. During the process, they become increasingly invested in the survival of the regime (Svolik, 2012, ch. 6).

On top of that, the regime can monitor the loyalty and performance of party members and punish and reward them accordingly. Similarly, party-based regimes make it easier for the ruling coalition to detect and punish defections on behalf of the dictator ([Boix and Svobik, 2013](#)). Both the dictator and the ruling coalition stick to the bargain, as both are aware of being monitored and they are facing credible threats of punishment. Thus, regime parties make commitments to long-term power-sharing more credible and reduce the risk of coups and other internal challenges. In addition, repeated interaction creates trust and norms of cooperation among members of party-based coalition regimes ([Myerson, 2008](#)).

Where ethnic cleavages inside the ruling coalition complicate authoritarian power-sharing, the institutionalization of ethnic bargains through a regime party seems particularly important. Not surprisingly, [Geddes \(1999\)](#) describes party-based regimes as ethnically more representative and concludes that “cooptation rather than exclusion is the rule in established single-party regimes.” However, ethnic power-sharing in party-based regimes differs markedly from the multi-ethnic patronage coalitions under personal rule. While the precise makeup of personalist coalitions changes frequently and depends to a large degree on the ruler’s discretion, regime parties institutionalize long-term ethnic bargains.

The inter-ethnic alliance underpinning the Malaysian party regime exemplifies this pattern. Even prior to independence, the political space in Malaysia was largely defined in ethnic terms. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) emerged as the umbrella organizations representing the three largest ethnic communities ([Mauzy, 2006](#)). Under British pressure, the leaders of these organizations negotiated what came to be known as “the bargain” ensuring full citizenship rights for the economically dominant Chinese and Indian minorities as well as political, religious, and cultural privileges for the significantly poorer Malay majority. At the same time, the three ethnic organizations institutionalized power-sharing under the umbrella of the Alliance Party in which the UMNO was clearly the senior partner ([Giersdorf and Croissant, 2011](#)). After comfort-

ably securing parliamentary supermajorities in the first few elections post independence, the Alliance regime came under pressure in the 1960s. The Malay majority failed to catch up in economic terms and some elements accused the Alliance of selling out Malay interests to the Chinese and Indian business elite (Slater, 2012). The Chinese and Indian minorities were dissatisfied with the cultural and political dominance of the Malay majority and promoted the notion of a Malaysian instead of a merely Malay Malaysia (Mauzy, 2006).

These dynamics created an opening for ethnically based opposition movements. In the 1969 elections, the alliance lost its two-thirds supermajority due to the successes of the largely Chinese-backed Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Gerakan (PG) as well as the Malay nationalist Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS). In the wake of the elections, Kuala Lumpur saw serious ethnic riots between celebrating Chinese and disgruntled Malays. The regime responded with both repression and cooptation (Giersdorf and Croissant, 2011). It declared a state of emergency but at the same time forged an even more inclusive ethnic bargain. The Alliance incorporated several opposition movements including the PG and PAS and reinvented itself as the Barisan Nasional regime party that rules the country until today (Giersdorf and Croissant, 2011). It is difficult to imagine how the multi-ethnic power-sharing arrangement could have survived this series of crises and policy reforms without the previous experience of institutionalized power-sharing and intra-elite cooperation across group boundaries (Case, 1996).

Thus we expect the following hypothesis to hold true.

Hypothesis 4 *In party-based autocracies, ethnic power-sharing reduces the risk of regime breakdown due to internal challenges.*

In conjunction H1-H4 allow us to answer the question that motivated this article: How does ethnic power-sharing affect regime duration? In short, we assume that only where the personalization of rule makes the dictator appear invincible or a regime party institutionalizes bargaining within the ruling coalition, can authoritarian leaders escape the trade-off between external and internal threats. If one of these conditions is met, including elites from other groups into the ruling coalition will contribute to regime

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses.

	External Fail	Internal Fail	Any Fail
All Autocracies	↓ (H1)	?	?
Military Regimes	↓ (H1)	↑ (H2)	? (H5)
Personalist Regimes	↓ (H1)	↓ (H3)	↓ (H5)
Party-Based Regimes	↓ (H1)	↓ (H4)	↓ (H5)

stability.

Hypothesis 5 *Ethnic power-sharing fosters regime stability in personalist and party-based but not in military regimes.*

Table 1 briefly summarizes our theoretical expectations.

Data & Variables

To test these hypotheses, we firstly identify all multi-ethnic autocracies for the period 1946–2010. To judge whether a country-year is autocratic, we rely on the data set provided by [Geddes, Wright and Frantz \(2014\)](#), henceforth GWF). This data set lists all authoritarian regimes, records the date and type of regime failure and classifies regimes as personalist, party-based, military, or monarchical. Since we only develop hypotheses for the former three regime types, we restrict the sample to non-monarchical regimes. [Geddes \(2003, p. 44\)](#) defines a political regime as a “set of formal and informal rules” determining who will rule, how the rulers will be chosen and how the basic distributive decisions will be made. It is autocratic, if it comes into existence in a non-democratic way, if it suspends democratic rules once achieving power, or if it emerges from nominally competitive elections in which one or more parties with realistic chances of success are banned ([Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014](#), p. 317).

We use the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) data set ([Vogt et al., 2015](#)) to limit the GWF sample to countries in which ethnic cleavages are politically salient. The EPR data identifies all politically relevant ethnic groups in independent states with more than 500’000 inhabitants for the period 1946–2013 and codes whether these groups have access to executive state power or not. A group is deemed politically relevant if it is either

represented by at least one political organization active at the national level or “subjected to state led discrimination” (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010). We regard ethnicity as politically salient in all autocratic country years in which more than one group is coded as active in the EPR data. This condition holds in more than 80% of the original sample of non-monarchical autocracies.

Autocratic regimes survive as long as the given set of key formal and informal rules remains in place. They are replaced in various ways. The previous literature prominently distinguishes autocratic from democratic failure events depending on the type of successor regime (see e.g. Wright and Escriba-Folch, 2012; Wright, Frantz and Geddes, 2015). Another useful distinction is between regular and irregular regime change, where the latter denotes coerced and extra-institutional forms of authoritarian breakdown (see e.g. Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Escribà-Folch, 2013). What matters most for our analysis, however, is whether a regime collapses at the hand of regime insiders or outsiders. The GWF data set provides a categorical variable coding nine forms of failure events that can be used to distinguish between external and internal regime failures. More specifically, we regard all regime failures due to popular uprisings, successful rebellions, and foreign invasions as external. We define internally caused regime failures as successful coups, internal reforms that are sufficiently far-reaching for Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014) to code a new regime, or transitional elections in which neither the incumbent nor any of her allies competes. While it is often the case that internal reforms are motivated by external pressures or external challenges form against regimes that are already seen as internally disintegrating, we are interested in the actors that do the heavy lifting in terminating a regime. In this respect, the GWF failure categories provide sufficient clarity to determine whether or not the main thrust of the failure event is internal or external to the regime.

Based on these failure types, we classify 131 failure events as internal and 51 ones as external. We refrain from classifying the remaining 30 authoritarian breakdowns that are due to electoral defeat or state collapse. When autocrats lose an election and comply with the verdict, regime-external and internal forces coincide. On the one hand, the holding

of elections, the level of fairness or fraud, and the ultimate decision to step down upon electoral defeat have a lot to do with internal regime dynamics (see e.g. [Rundlett and Svolik, 2016](#)). On the other, it takes a great deal of political mobilization and organization outside of the regime to make an opposition victory possible. In the empirical analysis, we use three dummies – *External Fail*, *Internal Fail*, and *Any Fail* – as our dependent variables.

Our main explanatory variable is an *Ethnic Power-Sharing* proxy coded from the EPR data set. More specifically, we calculate the share of included groups by dividing the number of groups with access to the executive government by the total number of politically relevant ethnic groups in a given country-year. To test for the hypothesized heterogeneity across regime types, we use the classification into military, personalist and party-based regimes by [Geddes, Wright and Frantz \(2014\)](#). However, the GWF data set codes hybrid regimes that have a regime party (i.e. “party-military”, “party-personal”, and “party-military-personal”) as party-based. Since our theoretical expectations and causal mechanisms differ for party, personal, and military regimes, we deviate from this convention and code a dummy for pure party-based regimes only. In all models, we include logged per capita GDP and population as well as the annual rate of economic growth as control variables. The data comes from the latest version of the Penn World Tables ([Feenstra, Inklaar and Timmer, 2015](#)). In addition, we control for the total number of politically relevant ethnic groups as coded in the EPR data set to account for the fact that the share of included groups tends to be higher in countries with only two or three groups than in countries like Russia, with dozens of minority groups. Finally, we include a count of previous regime failures in the country to account for event dependence. In all models, we lag time-varying explanatory variables by one year.

Analysis & Results

We run Cox proportional hazards models of regime failure to test our hypotheses. The Cox model is well suited to analyze partially right-censored duration data and does not

require a specific functional form of the baseline hazard (Beck, Katz and Tucker, 1998). Wherever we use *External Fail* or *Internal Fail* as the outcome variable, all other failure events are competing risks. The models thus estimate the probability of, for example, an external fail in a given country-year conditional on the regime under question not having failed from any cause before. Regimes that failed due to other reasons are treated as right-censored. Therneau and Grambsch (2000) nonproportionality tests reveal that both the annual growth variable and the ethnic group count are likely to violate the proportional hazards assumption. We address potential specification errors by further adding the squared and cubed group count variable and interacting GDP growth with time as recommended by Keele (2010). With these additional covariates, we fail to reject the Null of proportional hazards.

Table 2: Proportional Cause-Specific Hazards Models of Regime Failure

	External Fail		Internal Fail		Any Fail	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Ethnic Power-Sharing	-1.952*** (0.743)	-1.658 (1.783)	-0.520 (0.457)	-0.345 (1.025)	-0.471 (0.338)	-0.335 (0.795)
Power-Sharing × Military		-0.639 (2.602)		2.360** (1.218)		1.666* (0.970)
Power-Sharing × Personal		0.660 (1.990)		-1.145 (1.289)		-0.468 (0.962)
Power-Sharing × Party		-2.343 (2.900)		-1.832 (1.577)		-0.766 (1.066)
Military Regime		0.911 (1.037)		-0.231 (0.651)		0.313 (0.500)
Personalist Regime		0.477 (0.941)		0.574 (0.644)		0.550 (0.491)
Party-Based Regime		0.239 (1.247)		0.227 (0.782)		0.063 (0.561)
GDP Growth Rate	0.559 (2.509)	0.644 (2.516)	1.105 (1.558)	1.089 (1.511)	0.556 (1.246)	0.568 (1.232)
GDP Growth × Time	-0.536*** (0.173)	-0.524*** (0.177)	-0.448*** (0.147)	-0.410*** (0.145)	-0.422*** (0.087)	-0.394*** (0.087)
GDP per Capita, log	-0.327** (0.180)	-0.298* (0.184)	-0.016 (0.112)	-0.035 (0.113)	-0.051 (0.084)	-0.070 (0.086)
Population, log	-0.158 (0.150)	-0.182 (0.157)	-0.038 (0.098)	-0.116 (0.101)	0.038 (0.075)	-0.027 (0.076)
No. of Ethnic Groups	0.397 (0.280)	0.539* (0.303)	-0.271 (0.198)	-0.091 (0.195)	-0.050 (0.102)	0.068 (0.126)
No. of Ethnic Groups, sq	-0.348 (0.243)	-0.470* (0.258)	0.145 (0.214)	-0.001 (0.206)	-0.047 (0.086)	-0.127 (0.113)
No. of Ethnic Groups, cu	0.468 (0.431)	0.639* (0.441)	-0.295 (0.572)	-0.023 (0.513)	0.097 (0.123)	0.203* (0.163)
No. of Prior Fails	0.179 (0.108)	0.081 (0.124)	0.121** (0.069)	0.006 (0.081)	0.123** (0.053)	0.023 (0.062)
Observations	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329
Log Likelihood	-178.031	-171.658	-460.236	-442.213	-753.687	-734.227
Countries	98	98	98	98	98	98
Regimes	229	229	229	229	229	229
Fails	45	45	101	101	175	175

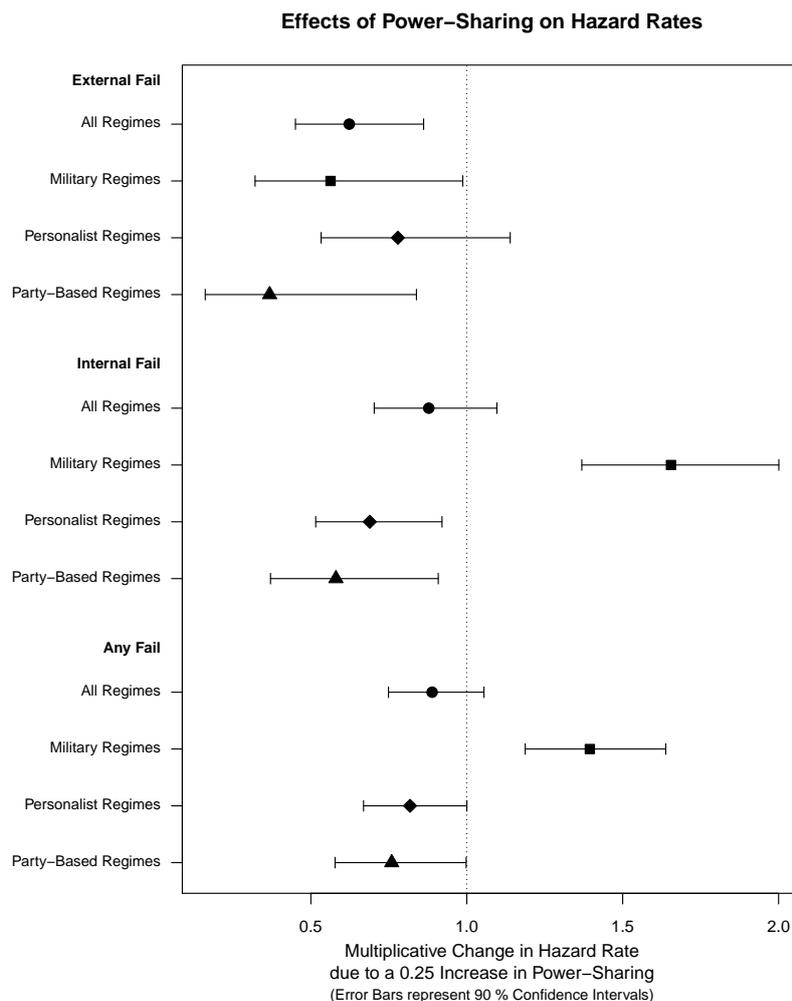
* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table shows coefficients, not hazard ratios.

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2 reports the results of six Cox models analyzing external, internal, and general regime failure in turn. The models in the odd-numbered columns do not distinguish between regime types, whereas the models in the even-numbered columns include interactions of our ethnic power-sharing proxy with three regime type dummies. Hybrid regimes constitute the baseline category. In line with our first hypothesis, higher levels of ethnic power-sharing are associated with a significantly lower risk of externally-caused regime fails (Model 1). Models 3 and 5 indicate that the effects on internal fails or overall regime stability are less straightforward, as expected by our theory. While both coefficients on the ethnic power-sharing variable enter with a negative sign, the effects are far smaller than in the case of external failure events and do not reach statistical significance.

Figure 2: Marginal Effects of Ethnic Power-Sharing across Regime Types and Failure Eventd.



We therefore turn to the interaction models to see whether there are indeed heterogeneous effects across different types of authoritarian regimes. To get at the marginal effects of ethnic power-sharing on the log hazard of the respective failure event across regime types, we add the coefficient on the regime-type interaction of choice to the constitutive term of ethnic power-sharing. The resulting coefficient sums are always negative with the two exceptions of the Power-Sharing \times Military interaction in the models of internal and all fail events (columns 4 and 6). To facilitate a more systematic interpretation of our results, Figure 2 plots the multiplicative effects of a 0.25 increase in power-sharing on the hazard rate of regime failure, both across all non-monarchical regimes (non-interactive models) and disaggregated according to regime type (interaction models). Values below one indicate a negative effect of ethnic power-sharing on the risk of the respective failure event, values above one indicate a positive effect. We choose to report the effects of a 0.25 change since this corresponds to about one standard deviation of our ethnic power-sharing variable. Changes in the magnitude of one standard deviation are frequent within countries, e.g. after the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 when new President Bakijev excluded ethnic Russians from his Kyrgyz-dominated government (Vogt et al., 2015).

Turning to external failure events first, Figure 2 shows that ethnic power-sharing reduces the hazard of externally driven fail events across the board. All four point estimates are smaller than one, indicating higher survival rates of the ethnically more inclusive coalition regimes. Only in personalist regimes, this stabilizing effect fails to reach the 10% significance level. Perhaps, potential ethnic challengers perceive power-sharing under personal rule as not credible or long-lasting enough to refrain from external attacks. In addition, the mere cooptation of ethnic elites into personalist regimes is less likely to benefit broader ethnic constituencies than in party-based autocracies where institutionalized bargaining may result in policy concessions to represented groups (Padró i Miquel, 2007). Thus, mere elite cooptation may not sufficiently redress ethnic grievances to avoid rebellion in personalist dictatorships (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010).

As far as internally driven regime failure is concerned, Figure 2 shows clear divergence across regime types. In military dictatorships, ethnic power-sharing has a large and signif-

icant *positive* effect on the hazard of coups or internally negotiated regime terminations. In personalist and party-based autocracies, on the other hand, power-sharing significantly reduces the hazard of internal fail events. In line with our theoretical expectations, these results suggest that party-based and personalist dictatorships make ethnic power-sharing work to their favor and can escape the supposed trade-off between external and internal threats.

Last but not least, Figure 4 summarizes the effects of ethnic power-sharing on general regime stability. The findings closely mirror the ones for internal failures. Power-sharing destabilizes military regimes but leads to longer expected durations in the case of personalist and party-based autocracies. Since regime insiders are generally more successful than outsiders in unseating incumbent regimes, especially so in military regimes, it is not surprising that the destabilizing effect on internal fails also detracts from the overall stability of military dictatorships. Taken together, these results indicate that ethnic power-sharing affects internal and external threats to regime stability in distinct ways. However, only in the case of military dictatorship does this imply a sharp trade-off of internal against external risks. In personal and party-based autocracies, an ethnically more representative ruling coalition seems unambiguously stabilizing.

Robustness

Although in line with our theoretical expectations, results from the type of broad, comparative, and observational analysis performed in this study need to be interpreted with caution.

The specifications used so far might suffer from two common threats to statistical inference: omitted variable bias and reverse causality. First, an unobserved variable such as the historically inherited levels of state capacity may affect both regime stability and our main explanatory variables power-sharing and regime type (Slater, 2012). Under this scenario the coefficients in our models may be biased. Second, dictators may base their decision on whether and with whom to share power on more or less correct assessments of their own stability. In this case, the causal arrow does not only run from power-sharing to

regime survival or breakdown, but also in the opposite direction. Rational autocrats can be expected to calibrate the size and composition of the ruling coalition to anticipated probabilities of political survival.

If military regimes only resort to power-sharing as a last-ditch effort to cling to power when confronted with serious pressure, our coefficients may overestimate the destabilizing effects of ethnic power-sharing under military rule. Similarly, if party-based and personalist regimes mainly include potential challengers when they feel relatively secure, we may overestimate the stabilizing effects of power-sharing in these regimes. However, we do not regard these scenarios to be particularly likely. Our brief case descriptions in the theory section reveal that the successive Syrian military regimes chose *less* instead of more power-sharing when the threat of internal challenges loomed increasingly large. Omar Bongo’s personalist regime as well as the Malaysian grand coalition resorted to *more* ethnic cooptation when faced with serious threats to regime survival. At least for these cases, naive regressions would thus underestimate the effects of ethnic power-sharing. In the empirical appendix to this paper, we perform a series of robustness checks to address endogeneity and other potential problems of our models.

Addressing Omitted Variable Bias. First, we add several additional control variables plausibly correlating with regime stability and at least one of our main independent variables to our Cox specifications. We focus on variables that are widely used in quantitative authoritarianism research and include a time-varying proxy of a regime’s responsiveness (Fariss, 2014), the log of per capita petroleum rents (Ross, 2012), and a conflict dummy, indicating whether there is an ongoing civil war (UCDP/PRIO). Moreover, we control for formal authoritarian institutions by adding a legislature dummy as well as dummy variables for the existence of one or more than one political party (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010). The results from these augmented specifications are very similar to the baseline results reported above.

Second, we run fixed effects linear probability models that are identified from within-country variation only and thereby address unobserved, time-invariant differences across countries. We choose this specification over a conditional logit or stratified Cox model in

order to avoid losing all observations from regimes that have never seen the respective failure event. By also including duration-year fixed effects, we emulate the semi-parametric baseline hazard from the Cox setup. We decided against estimating random effects logit or shared frailty models. The assumption that the country-specific random component of the error term does not correlate with the right-hand side of our model is unlikely to be met. The fixed effects models amount to a hard test of our theoretical expectations. Regime breakdowns, especially external ones, are a rare event and there is significantly less variation in power-sharing within than between countries. Nonetheless, the results remain stable. Only in the external fail models, the coefficients are somewhat less precisely estimated.

Addressing Reverse Causality. To deal with potential reverse causality, we exploit the fact that ethnic power-sharing is temporally relatively sticky. This allows us to use historically ‘inherited’ power-sharing as a less endogenous proxy for actually observed levels of ethnic inclusion. More specifically, we calculate the value of power-sharing in the year prior to the current regime’s takeover to predict power-sharing over the course of this new regimes’ existence. We thus isolate variation in power-sharing that is beyond the direct control of the current regime. As opposed to more short-term manipulations, which are often implemented with an eye to regime stability, inherited levels of power-sharing are less likely to be affected by this form of reverse causality. We use this proxy in two specifications: First, we repeat the Cox analysis from the main part of the paper. Second, we estimate two-stage least squares linear probability models where we instrument contemporaneous with inherited power-sharing. For the 2SLS-IV setup to uncover true causal effects, the ‘inherited power-sharing’ variable needs to satisfy the exclusion restriction requiring the instrument to only affect regime stability through its impact on current levels of power-sharing. As there are plausible scenarios under which this assumption is violated, we do not make strong causal claims based on the 2SLS-IV results alone. Instead, we see these models as a robustness check producing results that are less endogenous to the current regime’s threat perceptions and corresponding cooptation strategies. The results of both specifications are well in line with what is reported above

and, if anything, strengthen our conclusions.

Addressing Concerns about Regime Types. While we believe that Gedess’s regime types capture important variation with respect to the internal balance of power and institutionalization of autocracies, her typology is not without problems. [Svolik \(2009\)](#) argues that the personalization of rule is a dynamic process resulting from repeated power grabs by the dictator. As a result, the time-invariant coding of personalist autocracies may fail to adequately reflect the fact that many of these regimes start out as party-based or military dictatorships and become more personalized over time. The main concern is that outcomes of interest such as regime stability inform regime type classifications ([Pepinsky, 2014](#); [Svolik, 2009](#)). Unfortunately, we cannot observe temporally varying levels of personalization within authoritarian ruling coalitions. What we can do, however, is to check the robustness of our results to the inclusion of time-varying proxies for military and institutionalized dictatorships. More specifically, we estimate additional models in which ethnic power-sharing is interacted with dummy variables indicating (a) whether the effective head of government has a military background, (b) whether there is an elected legislature, and (c) whether at least one party exists in a given country-year ([Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010](#)). The results are in line with our previous analyses. Power-sharing reduces the hazard of external failures regardless of both the leaders’ background and institutional context. Only where parties or legislatures institutionalize ethnic bargains is power-sharing associated with a lower risk of internally caused regime ends. Combining all forms of regime breakdown, ethnically inclusive regimes with civilian leaders or power-sharing institutions tend to survive longer than their military or non-institutionalized counterparts.

Cause-Specific vs. Subdistribution Hazards. Finally, the competing risks specifications as cause-specific hazard models may be problematic. The fundamental problem of competing risks analysis lies in the fact that once a regime fails due to a specific risk, the failure and censoring times for all other risks are no longer observed. This may lead to biased estimates where covariates have differential effects on different risks ([Beyersmann](#)

and Schumacher, 2008). If ethnic power-sharing significantly increases the risk of internal fail events in military regimes, the set of military regimes at risk of external fail event gets reduced over time and a cause-specific hazard analysis may mistakenly conclude that power-sharing also raises the hazard of external fails. To alleviate this concern, we also estimate proportional subdistribution hazard models that impute unobserved censoring times from the censoring distribution in the data (Beyersmann, Allignol and Schumacher, 2011). The results remain essentially the same.

Conclusion

In sum, our analyses yield strong support for our theoretical expectations. Ethnic power-sharing only stabilizes authoritarian regimes where credible institutions or the personalization of power prevent the risk of internal challenges to regime stability. The results of our Cox PH analysis show that in personalist and party-based autocracies, ethnically more inclusive regimes survive longer and are less likely to fail at the hands of regime insiders than their less inclusive counterparts. In military regimes, on the contrary, ethnic power-sharing increases the risk of internal threats and thus reduces expected regime duration. As far as external challenges to regime stability are concerned, ethnic cooptation seems to have a stabilizing effect across different regime types and institutional contexts. The sensitivity analysis in the appendix to this paper suggests that these results are more than a mere artifact of some latent country-level characteristic explaining both power-sharing and regime stability. While incumbent regimes most probably formulate their ethnic cooptation strategies with an eye on regime stability, such potential for reverse causality does not explain away our findings, as the ‘inherited power-sharing’ analysis reveals. Moreover, using proxies for authoritarian institutions instead of regime types does not fundamentally alter our conclusions. Overall, the findings are well in line with theoretical expectations from the previous literature on authoritarian power-sharing (Geddes, 1999; Svobik, 2012). However, we move beyond previous analyses in important respects. Identifying politicized ethnicity as an important source of threats to regime

stability has allowed us to conceptualize and observe the degree of power-sharing in the executive apparatus of authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, the distinction between external and internal threats to regime survival is crucial to formulate and test hypotheses relating power-sharing to regime stability under different authoritarian institutions.

The finding that ethnic power-sharing has stabilizing effects not only in party-based, but also in personalist regimes suggests that there are viable paths to power-sharing beyond formal institutionalization in a regime party. This finding is consistent with much qualitative work on personalist or ‘neopatrimonial’ regimes ([Jackson and Rosberg, 1984](#); [Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994](#)). The global analysis performed in this paper also contributes to this strand of literature. Our findings on the stability of inclusive party regimes signal a complementary relationship between the institutionalization of authoritarian rule in political parties and executive power-sharing.

Finally, the paper speaks to recent work on ethnic conflict. Our results on ethnic power-sharing and external threats to regime stability mirror findings on the link between ethnic exclusion and civil war ([Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010](#)). The heterogeneous effects on internally caused regime breakdown, however, reveal that ethnic inclusion is not unambiguously stabilizing. At the same time, however, our analysis shows that the fundamental trade-off between internal and external challenges is not necessarily as constraining as [Roessler’s \(2011\)](#) analysis of the Sub-Saharan African “coup-civil war trap” suggests.

Avenues for future research on authoritarian power-sharing include more detailed analyses of authoritarian ruling coalitions and their effects. Better data on the background and identity of individual members of authoritarian cabinets, legislatures, and security forces will greatly facilitate such studies. In-depth cases studies, qualitative and quantitative, may be used to carefully trace the causal processes behind the results of the comparative analysis performed in this paper.

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