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Jan Teorell
Staffan I. Lindberg

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
DEPT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Please address comments and/or queries for information to:

> The V-Dem Institute
>
> Political Science Department
>
> University of Gothenburg
>
> Sprängkullsgatan 19, PO 711
>
> SE 40530 Gothenburg
>
> Sweden
>
> Or E-mail: contact@v-dem.net

The Structure of the Executive in Authoritarian and Democratic Regimes:
Regime Dimensions across the Globe, 1900-2014*

Jan Teorell
Lund University

Staffan I. Lindberg
University of Gothenburg

Abstract

This paper attempts to integrate the literatures on authoritarian regime types and democratic forms of government. Based on different modes of executive appointment and dismissal, we propose a parsimonious theory of five regime dimensions that cut across the democracy/autocracy divide: the hereditary principle; the military principle; the ruling party principle; the presidential and the parliamentary principles, respectively. Relying on the Varieties of Democracy data, we provide alternative measures of these five regime dimensions for 173 countries across the globe from 1900 to today. A plausibility probe gauges the extent to which the five dimensions can predict the level of repression, rent-seeking and spending on public goods across space and time, controlling for the degree of democracy. We conclude by suggesting several avenues for future research that can be pursued with these data.

1. Introduction

The probably most well established perspective for classifying regime types in the world is to simply distinguish between autocracies and democracies. Yet such a crude classification glosses over some intriguing variation in the underlying institutional structure of executive power and its exercise. We have thus grown accustomed to also draw on finer-grained typologies separating among different types of democracies and autocracies. Along these lines students of democracy take care to distinguish between two different forms of government: presidential and parliamentary regimes (Linz 1990a; 1990b; Stepan & Skach 1993; Shugart & Carey 1992; Sartori 1997; Cheibub 2007; Norris 2008; Shugart 2009; Gerring, Thacker & Moreno 2009), commonly also allowing for the hybrid type of "semi-presidentialism" (Duverger 1980; Elgie 1998; 1999; cf. Siaroff 2003). There is in this body of literature an underlying assumption that the ways in which chief executives come to power, whether through direct elections or through the requirement of the legislature's confidence, have important repercussions for political dynamics, economic performance and even the survival of democracy.

Similarly, scholars of authoritarian rule has been drawn to the observation that "different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy" (Geddes 1999, 121). It has thus become common to distinguish among single-party, military and personalist dictatorships (Geddes 1999; 2003, Geddes, Wright & Frantz 2014); among civilian, military and monarchical dictatorships (Cheibub, Gandhi & Vreeland 2010); or among monarchical, military, single-party, multiparty and no-party autocracies (Hadenius & Teorell 2007; Wahman, Hadenius & Teorell 2013). Again, there is a presumption that these distinctions amount to more than just window dressing. Or, in other words, that even among the set of authoritarian regimes, the pathways to executive power shape the behavior and performance of different countries in different time periods (Svolik 2012).

The point of departure for this paper, however, is that there are fundamental problems with these two distinct yet related literatures. First and foremost, there are reasons to question the assumption that the overarching regime can be neatly dichotomized into being either democratic or authoritarian, and that there is a crisp difference between those two sets of regimes that can be easily observed (cf. Collier & Adcock 1999). As Jan Teorell has argued elsewhere (Teorell 2010, 31), not even the most well acknowledge dichotomous views of the democracy–dictatorship divide succeeds in defining the two concepts, at the theoretical level, without referring to differences in degree. If we were to accept that the difference between democracy and

dictatorship is continuous or graded rather than categorical or dichotomous, the question arises what happens at the crossroads between the two regime types.

There are two sides to this question: one concerning the extensions of authoritarian principles of executive power accession into nominally "democratic" regimes, the other concerning whether the classification schemes for differentiating among democracies are not applicable at all for understanding regime dynamics in nominally "authoritarian" settings. On the first issue, consider Cheibub's (2007) theory for explaining why presidential democracies are less long-lived than their parliamentary counterparts. According to Cheibub (2007), this is not due to the fact that these democracies are presidential per se. Instead, this difference in longevity can be accounted for by what he calls the "military-presidential nexus:" the fact that, historically, presidentialism has been the preferred form of government in democracies that replace military regimes. Ironically, however, being based on a crisp distinction between "democratic" and "authoritarian" regimes, Cheibub's (2007) approach cannot account for the potential influence of the military over the executive during democratic regime spells. He certainly must assume such an influence; otherwise, his attempt to explain why presidential democracies superseding military dictatorships are less long-lived would fail. Yet the fact that the military, according to his typological account, by definition are not allowed to play any role during democratic regime periods runs directly counter to this critical theoretical assumption of their prominent influence.

Second, seen from the other side of the divide, consider what is nowadays renowned to be the most common type of dictatorship in the world, that is, a dictatorship dressed up like a democracy (Teorell & Hadenius 2007; Wahman et al. 2013). Also known as a "hybrid regime" (Diamond 2002), an "electoral autocracy" (Schedler 2006) or a "competitive authoritarian regime" (Levitsky & Way 2002; 2010), this is a regime that holds elections, even allowing multiple parties to compete, but that either through ballot rigging, reliance on repression or through other illicit tactics still comes a far cry from the democratic regime end of the continuum. Having all the trappings of democracy, an issue that is surprisingly underexplored however is the extent to which hybrid regimes have forms of government of the "presidential" or the "parliamentary" type, not to mention the extent to which this matters for political dynamics or regime change. With notably few exceptions (cf. Norris 2008; Hale 2014), this questions has never been seriously examined, the most probable reason again being the (implicit) assumption that some regime dimensions (presidential vs. parliamentary forms of government) only matter in "democracies,"

whereas others (e.g., the influence of the military, the ruling party or the monarch) are only of interest in "dictatorships."

The purpose of this paper is to question this assumption by elucidating a theoretical framework for understanding the structure of the executive in all types of "regimes," be they authoritarian or democratic. We will attempt to accomplish this by theorizing five principles of executive appointment and/or dismissal: the hereditary principle, the military principle, the single-party principle, the presidential and the parliamentary principles, respectively. We shall argue these five dimensions are independent but not mutually exclusive. Hence, the purpose of this theoretical exercise is not to craft another regime typology, but to highlight a series of characteristics that may be more or less present simultaneously in different polities at different time points. Moreover, drawing on data from the Varieties of Democracy project (www.v-dem.net), we shall provide measures of these five regime dimensions, in addition to some other auxiliary characteristics, in a global sample of countries from 1900-2012. Finally, we will present some plausibility probes of the empirical utility of this theoretical framework for understanding repression, rent extraction and spending on public goods.

It should be noted already at the outset that the amount of information that is built into this theoretical framework is very bare bones, and that the overarching principle of our endeavor must obviously be couched in terms of parsimony: we are trying to explain as much as possible with as little as possible. In spirit, if not in practice, this also means that the previous work that comes closest to mine is the selectorate theory developed by Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow (2003). There are however some key differences between our approach and theirs. To begin with, by building on five familiar principles for executive appointment, whereas Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (2003) only rely on two abstract theoretical principles – the size of the selectorate (S), and the size of the winning coalition (W) – our theoretical framework will hopefully have a sleight edge over theirs in terms of concreteness. Second, our measurement strategy is much more closely tailored to the theoretical principles invoked, and should thus outperform theirs also in terms of construct validity. Finally, we will point at some empirical anomalies in terms of understanding the differences between military, monarchical and single-party regimes on the one hand, and between presidential and parliamentary regimes on the other, that cannot be easily explained from the perspective of selectorate theory.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. We start by elucidating the five theoretical principles and their interrelationships (section 2). We then present measurement strategy and present some descriptive illustrations of regime dynamics in a select number of countries over time (section 3), followed by the empirical plausibility probes (section 4). We end by summarizing our argument and discussing ways in which the sketched theoretical framework could be extended into accounting for other outcomes of theoretical interest (section 5).

2. The Structure of the Executive: A Theory of Five Regime Dimensions

As any theory, our theoretical framework for understanding the structure of executives rests on some fundamental assumptions about how the world works and what features of it needs to be theorized. Let me start by trying to state some of the most important of these assumptions.

First, we assume there are independent political units or entities in need of some form of governmental structure, functionally differentiated from the surrounding society. These units may be called "states", "countries", or "polities" – we have no strong preference for one terminology over the other, but since we assume the Weberian assumption of internal sovereignty is built into this choice, we will use the term "state." By implication, these units have a population and extends over some kind of territory (Weber 1978). Second, we assume that the government of these internally sovereign units are headed by an executive, the main purpose of which is to perform two central functions: (a) to represent the "state" in relation to other "states," and in performing domestic ceremonial functions; and (b) to act as the chief officer of the executive branch of government, typically presiding over a cabinet responsible for the day-to-day governing of the state. Third, if these two functions, which we might call the function of the head of state (HOS) vs. the head of government (HOG), are performed by the same person, the executive is called a unitary executive. If the head of state is not also acting as the head of government, however, the executive is dual (Blondel 1984; Elgie 1998; Siaroff 2003). Fourth, and finally, we assume the possible existence of different types of "accountability groups" intervening between the executive and the entire population, the most prominent being the military, a ruling party, and a legislature.

Given these assumptions, we hypothesize that there are five principles of executive appointment and/or dismissal that, taken together, can account for the bulk of variation across states:

Hereditary succession: The principle of hereditary succession is invoked when lineage or bloodline is the primary consideration for accession to executive power. The clearest instances are of course that of inheritance of the throne in monarchies, either through primogeniture (from father to son) or agnatic seniority (from brother to eldest brother) (Brownlee 2007; Kokkonen & Sundell 2014), but a decision within the royal family, as is typically practiced in today's Gulf monarchies, also counts as hereditary succession as long as bloodline to the former chief executive is the primary principles invoked in the succession order (Herb 1999). The historically quite common practice of electing kings (think of the Holy Roman Empire, for example) highlights the fact that monarchies are not necessarily based on hereditary succession (Kokkonen & Sundell 2014); the hereditary principle is thus narrower and more specific than the monarchical regime type. Another challenge is posed by contemporary examples of *de facto* hereditary succession in regimes such as North Korea, where the principle of bloodline is not invoked explicitly but, through two instances of leadership accession from father to son, has almost become the established practice (cf. Brownlee 2007). The critical distinction, from the perspective of theory, should be on the grounds of ex ante expectations vs. post hoc rationalizations (Tullock 1987); the latter should, as a principle, not be considered instances of hereditary succession.

By definition, hereditary succession implies appointment for life-long service. This principles thus only applies to the appointment, not the dismissal, of the executive.

Military force: The principle of military force, or the military principle for short, is invoked whenever the appointment or the dismissal of the executive is based on the threatened or actual use of force (Nordlinger 1977, 2). The most obvious example of this principle in action is of course the coup d'état. The military, by definition controlling the monopoly of violence that bestows the state its status of internal sovereignty, is typically directly or indirectly involved in any successful coup: either the violent takeover is staged by the military itself, or it is headed by a civilian with the tacit approval of the military. Similarly, the notion of executive appointment being based on the *threatened* use of force highlights the fact that the military can rule behind the scenes, sometimes through controlling seemingly peaceful and regular appointments of civilians to the whelm of the executive (Finer 1962, chaps. 10-11).

In some sense, one might of course argue that relying on the barrel of a gun as the ultimate arbiter of any conflict is "the nature of dictatorship" (Svolik 2012), and hence that any other

principle for leadership appointment or dismissal could always be overruled (or need always be undergirded) by the military principle. That would be giving to much leeway to the notion of a threatened use of force, however, which in order to count as an invocation of the military principle must be made more or less explicit. After all, a substantial number of leadership successions in the world occur peacefully, even in nominally autocratic regimes (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza 2009).

Ruling party: The ruling or single-party principle implies appointment (or dismissal) directly by the rank-and-file of a political party, which may be defined as "an organization that pursues a goal of placing its avowed representatives in government positions" (Janda 1980, 5; cf. Sartori 1976, 63-4). The principle, importantly, does not embody any notions of internal party democracy – on the contrary, the prototypical ruling party has historically been of the Leninist democratic-centralist type, through which higher levels de facto control lower levels of the party organization. The principle invoked by the single party thus has nothing to do with democracy, in the party organization or in the society at large. The typical appointment procedure in a ruling party is instead based on the tacit approval of a congress of party members, or even more typically a select group of party functionaries at the top level (Janda 1980; Svolik 2012, chap. 6). The criterion *direct* appointment is however important, since it excludes nominations of candidates performed at the party level that then need confirmation by the electorate in typical "democratic" settings. This brings us to the fourth principle.

Direct election: The prototypical definition of a presidential regime is one where the chief executive is (a) directly elected by the population (b) for a fixed term (Sartori 1997; Cheibub 2007; Shugart 2009). Since the second of these criteria relate to the confidence requirement (our fifth regime dimension), we shall leave it aside for the moment and instead concentrate on the first in isolation. Direct election, first and foremost, precludes indirect elections (although electoral college systems where the intermediate step in the election process performs a purely mechanical function, such as in the United States, could still be qualified as effectively direct). Second, the "by the population" requirement most importantly precludes (direct) election by an intermediate body, as in many medieval electoral monarchies for example. This principle, taken in isolation and at its purest extreme, however requires nothing in terms of the *share* of the population that is entitled to vote, nor does it make any stipulations as to the competitiveness or fairness of the election process. The presidential principle, as we define it, only stipulates that the executive is

directly elected, regardless of whether the election is a mere sham from the perspective of electoral democracy or some other more demanding normative standpoint.

The prototypical presidential executive is unified, meaning the directly elected president is not only head of state but also de facto head of government. The presidential *principle* of direct election, however, is by definition also invoked when the head of government in a dual executive is directly elected, such as in Israel in 1996-2006 and in post-revolutionary Iran, regardless of whether that then also applies to the head of state.

The Confidence Requirement: When the survival of the executive rests on the confidence of the majority of the legislature, what we call the parliamentary principle is being invoked (Sartori 1997; Shugart 2009). The confidence requirement can be institutionalized in several different ways, sometimes being an investiture vote that is cast when the cabinet is being appointment; sometimes being a vote of no confidence that, if approved by the legislative majority (or plurality), means the executive has to step down; sometimes being a motion from the floor of the legislature; and sometimes being at the initiative of the government itself (Huber 1996). The key characteristic is that the legislature, in case it should take actions to do so, has the power to dismiss the executive. Tacit approval by the legislature in the appointment of the executive is thus not enough, if it is not accompanied by the explicit power to also dismiss. As in the case of direct election, the nature of procedure through which the legislature itself is being elected lies outside of this definition. The legislature may thus be elected in single- or multiparty elections, in competitive or sham elections, or may even be appointed.

In theory (and, as we shall see, in some rare instances in practice), the principle may be invoked also for unified executives, yet the prototypical parliamentary executive is dual, with the vote of (no) confidence requirement applied to the head of government (who is then not also head of state). This brings to the fore one of the most widely discussed *combinations* of two of our principles: the system of "semi-presidentialism," typically defined as some combination of a directly elected head of state ("president") and a head of government ("prime minister/premier") appointed through the principle of the confidence requirement (Duverger 1980; Shugart & Carey 1992; Elgie 1998; 1999; Shugart 2009). But there are other ways in which this combination of principles may materialize itself, such as having a directly elected unified executive also subject to the confidence requirement (as in the case of Kiribati; Siaroff 2003, 295).

The residual: The possibility of combining principles finally raises the issue of whether there are other structural appointment or dismissal mechanisms not taken into account by our theoretical framework. Think about Switzerland, for example, a country with an (extremely unusual) executive that, apart from being collective, can be characterized as the negation of *all* the five principles above. The Swiss Federal Council is certainly not hereditary; it is not imposed by the threatened or actual use of force; it does not emanate from the echelons of a ruling party; it is not directly elected; and it cannot be voted out of office by a vote of censure or no confidence by the legislature. Instead, the Swiss "grand coalition" is formed by the four largest parties in the bicameral legislature with the presidency strictly rotating on a year-to-year basis (Lijphart 1999; Shugart & Carey 1992, 78). We shall treat the Swiss system as "sui generis," together with a mixed bag of other types of executives where none of the five principles apply, and will thus refrain from theorizing it further.

3. Data and Measurement

To operationalize these five regime dimensions tapping into the structure of the executive, we will rely on data from the Varieties of Democracy project (for a fuller description of the V-Dem methodology, see www.v-dem.net). At the time of writing (i.e., April 2015), we have completed data collection for 173 "countries" (or semi-sovereign territories) from 1900 to 2012; for 60 of these countries, we have also covered 2013-2014. The bulk of the V-Dem data stems from 177 indicators collected from country experts, mostly academics from each country in question, on a sample of countries covering the entire globe.[1] These experts have been recruited based on their academic or other credentials as field experts in the area for which they code (the 177 questions are subdivided into 11 different areas of expertise, and most experts code a cluster of three such areas), on their seriousness of purpose and impartiality. At least 5 experts per country respond to each question and year going back to 1900. This means that overall more than 2000 experts in all have helped us gather the data.

While we select experts carefully, they clearly exhibit varying levels of reliability and bias. Therefore we use Bayesian item response theory (IRT) modeling techniques to estimate latent country coding unit characteristics from our collection of expert ratings (see Pemstein, Tzelgov

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[1] A notable feature of the V-Dem data is that we code a "country" throughout its history (since 1900) as a semi-sovereign unit. This implies that most colonies, and also some current non-independent territories such as Kosovo and the Palestines, are also included in the sample.

and Wang 2015). The underpinnings of these measurement models are straightforward: they use patterns of cross-rater (dis)agreement to estimate variations in reliability and systematic bias across disparate measures of the same, or similar, concepts (i.e., multiple expert ratings). In turn, these techniques make use of the bias and reliability estimates to adjust estimates of the latent – that is, only indirectly observed – concept in question. This allows us to provide both point estimates and standard errors for each expert-coded indicator.[2]

Whereas expert-coding is our strategy for collecting information that requires informed expert judgments, there also a number of V-Dem indicators that are more "factual" in nature, the data for which have instead been collected by centrally recruited research assistants (RAs). Yet a third category of information lie at the cross-roads between requiring country-expert knowledge and being amenable for centrally coordinated RA coding. Information on these indicators have been collected by so-called "country coordinators," essentially RAs (typically a graduate student or recent graduate) from the country in question, in collaboration with a centrally coordinated RA. These questions are also factual in nature, but requires country-specific sources or other types of information that are not easily obtainable or accessible in all languages.

In this paper, we will employ two strategies for tapping into the five principles of executive appointment and/or dismissal. The first, which we call the appointment strategy, is for the most part based on the third type of V-Dem indicator just described, and draws on the response to the following simple question: *How did the head of state/head of government reach office?* – answered separately for the head of state (HOS) and head of government (HOG), if they are not the same individual (see Appendix A on question wording and response categories). The responses to this question have been mapped onto the first four regime dimensions in the following way:

The *hereditary* principle = "through hereditary succession"; or "appointed by a royal council";
The *military* principle = "through the threat of or application of force, such as a coup or rebellion"; or "appointed by the military";
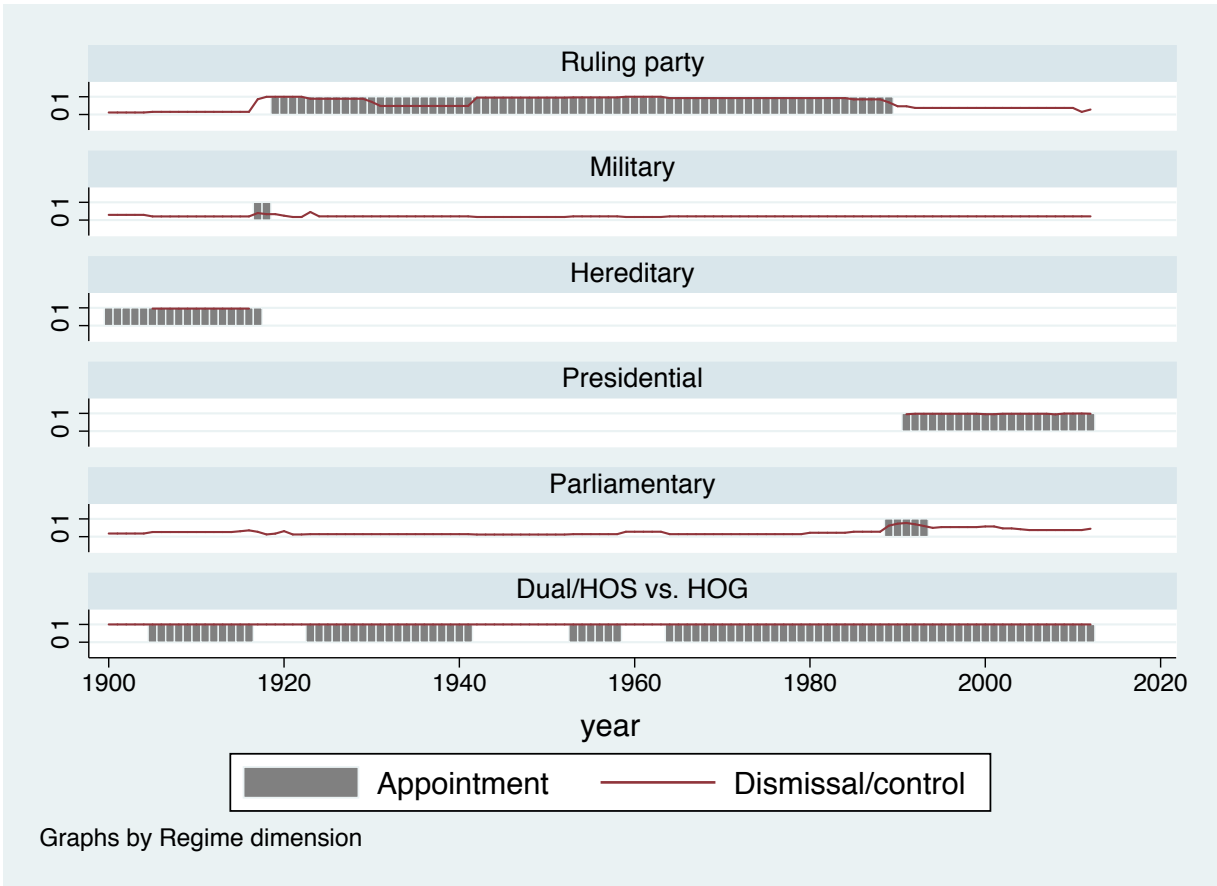The *ruling party* principle = "appointed by the ruling party (in a one-party system)"; and

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[2] Since our coders generally rate one country based on their expertise, we also utilize "lateral" coders. These are coders who rate multiple countries for a limited time period (mostly one year, but in some cases ten). We have at present about 370 lateral coders. In addition, we have over 300 "bridge" coders. These are coders who code the full time series (generally 1900-2012) for more than one country covering one or more areas ("surveys"). Essentially, this coding procedure allows us to mitigate the incomparability of coders' thresholds and the problem of cross-national estimates' calibration (Pemstein *et al.* 2015).

The *presidential* principle = "directly elected".

The *parliamentary* principle, however, requires a higher degree of expert judgment and has for that reason instead been measured by asking the following question to the multiple country experts: *If the legislature, or either chamber of the legislature, took actions to remove the head of state/government from office, would it be likely to succeed even without having to level accusations of unlawful activity and without the involvement of any other agency?* This question was again asked separately for the HOS and the HOG (if they are not the same), with the ordinal response categories 0 ("no, under no circumstances"), 1 ("no, unlikely"), 2 ("yes, probably") and 3 ("yes, most likely"). In the first and most simplistic measurement strategy, we dichotomize this question at when the predicted ordinal response from the IRT measurement model is larger than 1 (in other words, a "yes" as opposed to a "no," according to the worded response categories). In the more flexible empirical testing strategy, we instead draw directly on the underlying measurement model estimate, normalized to range from 0 to 1.

Let us look at an example to see how this first binary measurement strategy plays out. Figure 1 displays the results for a century of executives in Russia, with the grey vertical spikes in the first five rows portraying the appointment mechanism being invoked. From the perspective of solely looking into democratic vs. authoritarian regime types, Russia could easily be classified as a dictatorship until the fall of communism in the early 1990s, when a transition to "democracy" (in a nominal sense) occurred under Yeltsin that however in the 2000s slid back toward authoritarianism under Putin. Flying under the radar of such a gross description, however, is the fact that Russia until 1917 was a hereditary monarchy, from 1905 with executive powers shared between the tsar and a prime minister; that under singe-party rule, the role of head of government held by the First Secretary of the Communist Party was shared with a ceremonial head of state from Lenin's death in 1924 until 1942, then again under Khrushchev after Stalin's death, and after 1964 under Brezhnev; that the final years under communism can be portrayed as a semi-presidential system, as it were, with Yeltsin as the directly elected president and Ryzhkov as the Chairmen of the Council of Ministers, subject to the confidence requirement by the Highest Soviet; and that executive power since 1993, much as under the old tsarist regime, has been shared between a directly elected president and a prime minister, but with the latter so much an appointee of the former that the parliamentary principle cannot be said to apply. Also consistent with the typical portrayal of Russian politics is, with the brief exception of the Russian revolution that brought Lenin to power, the weak role of the military.

Figure 1. Regime Dimensions in Russia, 1900-2012
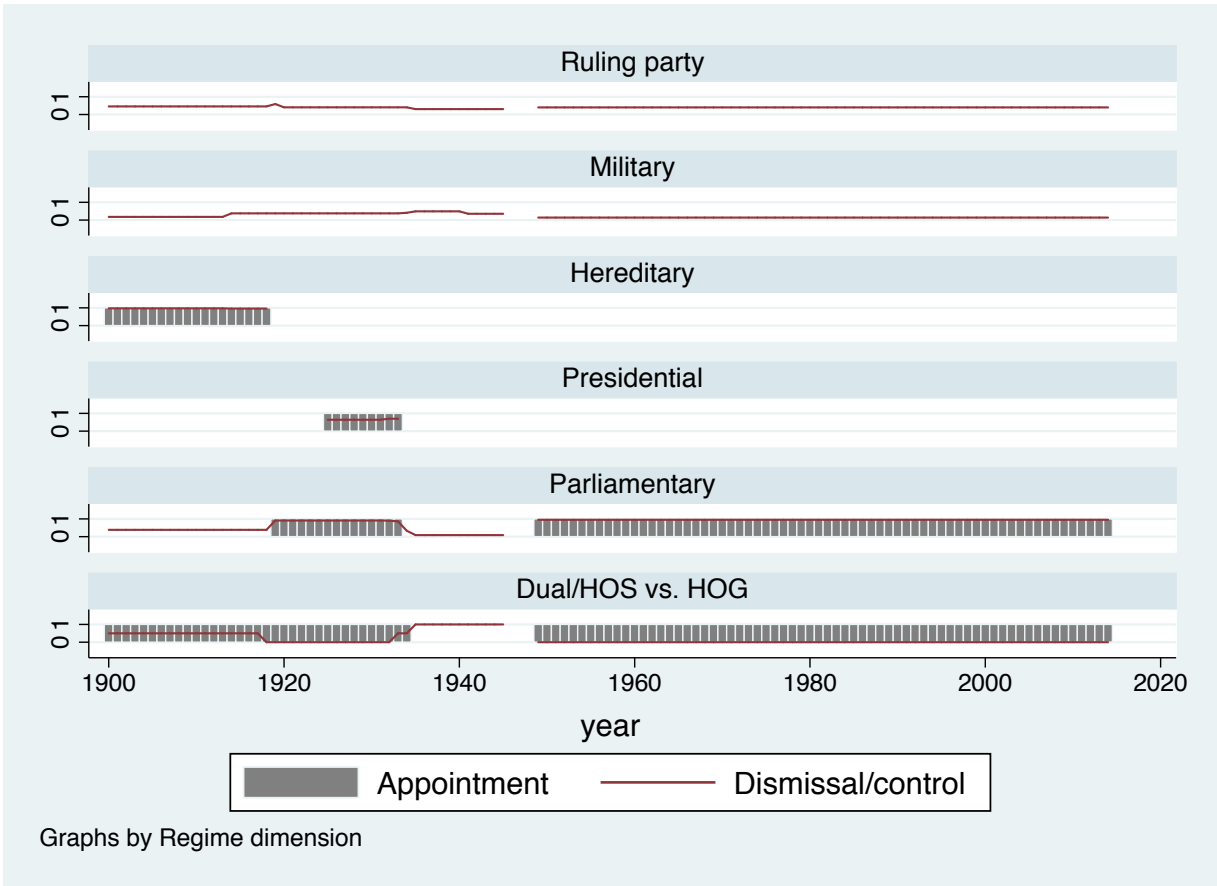

Graphs by Regime dimension

The red horizontal lines in the uppermost part of the figure are drawn from our second, and supplementary, measurement strategy, which also takes dismissal and more informal powers of various accountability groups into account. This is based on the binary responses to the following two questions (1)Which of the following bodies would be likely to succeed in removing the head of state/government if it took actions (short of military force) to do so?; and (2) In practice, from which of the following bodies must the head of state/government customarily seek approval prior to making important decisions on domestic policy?; both asked separately for the HOS and the HOG. The extent to which country experts among the possible multiple response categories have choses (a) "the ruling party or party leadership body", or (b) "the military", as captured by the IRT measurement model, can be used as a more fine grained measure of the party and military principles, respectively. A factor index of these two measurement model estimates, normalized to range from 0 to 1, are thus in the figure overlaid on top of the gray binary spikes for these two regime dimensions. As can be seen, the two measurement approaches in the case of Russia largely converge: the ruling party principle is, with an interesting exception during the

personalization of power in the hands of Stalin during the 1930s and 1940s, most clearly present during the Soviet regime, yet declining with the introduction of multiparty elections in the 1990s. Similarly, with the minor exception of some brief minor peaks around the revolution and the civil war, the military are portrayed as a consistently weak political force throughout Russian history.

As additional descriptive information, the lower-most panel of Figure 1 displays the periods (in gray spikes) during which the head of state in Russia was not also the head of government (dual vs. unified executives), and overlaid on top of that (in red) a measure of the *relative* power of the head of state and the head of government over the power to appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers. Moreover, the red lines during dual hereditary and presidential regimes portray the extent to which the dismissal and control questions for the head of government was answered with the response category "head of state." As can be seen, despite its numerous periods of having a dual executive, Russia has always been a head of state-centered executive, and both the tsar under the ancient regime and the president in present-day Russia were and are in full control of their prime ministers (in this sense). The red line for the parliamentary principle is simply the original non-dichotomized IRT measurement model estimate of the confidence requirement, normalized to range from 0 to 1. Apart from the brief interlude of "legislative" control over Ryzhkov, Russia has hardly any history at all of parliamentary rule.

Figure 2 depicts another prominent historical case: Germany. Again starting out as a hereditary monarchy, Germany pursues a distinctly different regime path after the end of WWI, first with the semi-presidential Weimar republic in the 1920s, the Nazi takeover and interlude in the 1930s, a break where no regime is coded during the allied occupation in 1945-1948, followed by the parliamentary republic of West Germany and later unified Germany (East Germany of course portrays different regime dimensions and have been coded separately). The over-time trajectories of relative power of the HOS vis-à-vis the HOG may be of some interest to students of semi-presidential regimes or constitutional monarchies. During imperial Germany, the Kaiser and the Reich Chancellor shared equal power over the appointment and dismissal of the cabinet, whereas in Weimar Germany these powers were entirely transferred to the Chancellor, although the directly elected president also held some control over the Chancellor from "behind the scenes." From the installation of the parliamentary republic in 1948, however, the president of Germany has played a solely ceremonial role.

Figure 2. Regime Dimensions in Germany, 1900-2014
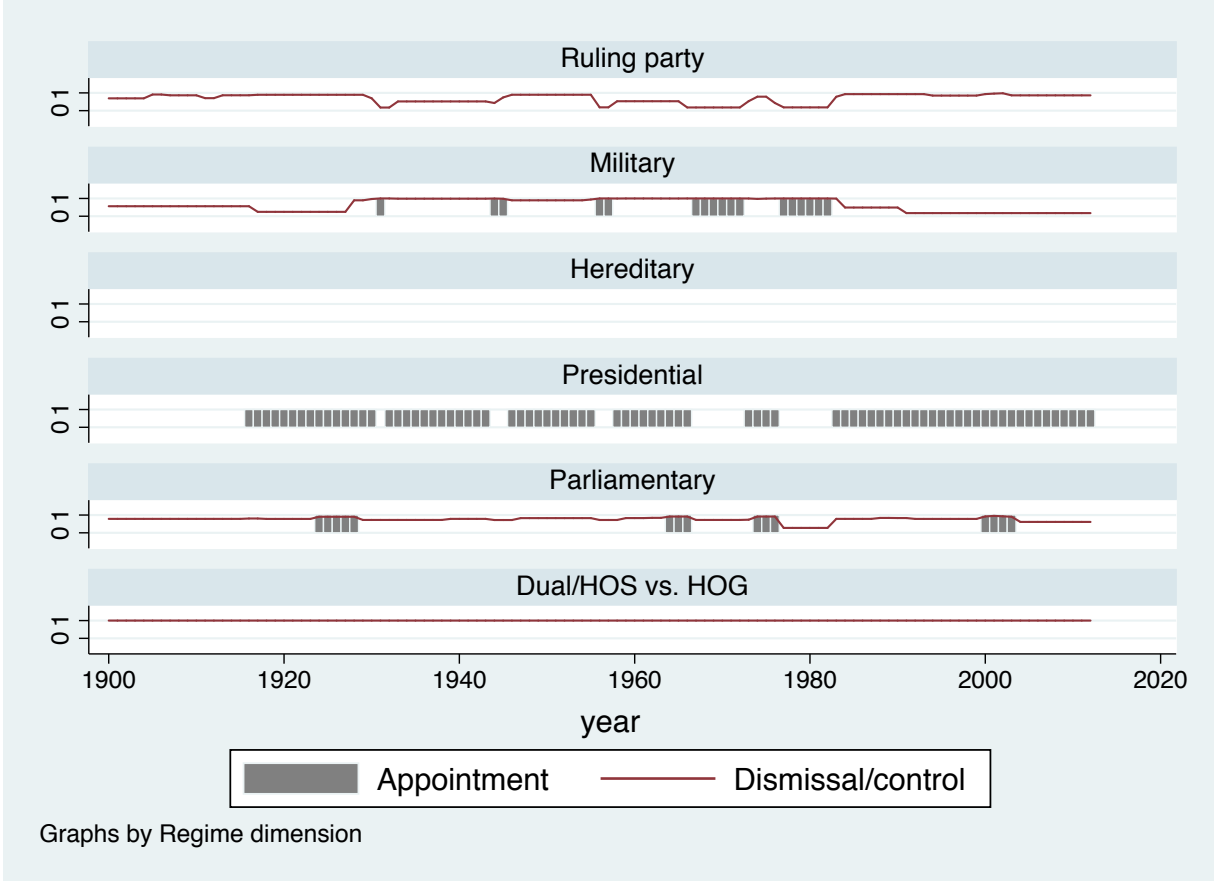

Graphs by Regime dimension

Another important feature of Figure 2 is the fact that the Nazi regime overall must be portrayed as an un- or under-theorized anomaly from the perspective of our five regime dimensions. Neither controlled by a strong ruling party, nor by the military (or at least only to a minor extent), Hitler's appointment to Reich Chancellor in 1933 and then to Führer in 1934, merging the powers of head of state and head of government, mostly comes out as a "residual" regime in our theoretical framework. To what extent this is a problem for our theoretical framework or says something about the sui generis character of the Nazi regime should be made subject to further study.

Now consider Argentina, a long-standing presidential republic, with directly elected and military-controlled presidents alternating in power in consistently unified executives, depicted in Figure 3. Interestingly, the dismissal/control measure of military rule depicts a long period of military dominance, sometimes merely behind the scenes, lasting from the 1930s to the 1980s – largely consistent with histories of Argentinian politics. More surprising, perhaps, are the interludes of

"parliamentarism" in what is conceived of as a prototypical presidential regime. It must be recalled, however, that the measure of the parliamentary principle is about the *de facto* requirement of majority support in the legislature, not about constitutional powers of the legislature to vote the president out of office. We are essentially asking our coders to assess a counter-factual: how *likely* the legislature would be in removing the president *if* it took actions to do so (barring impeachment procedures). Seen from this perspective, the brief "parliamentary" interludes of Argentinian politics depicted in Figure 3 are most probably reflections of comparatively weak presidencies, such as the presidency of Arturo Illia in the 1960s, of Isabel Peron in the 1970s, and – more obviously related to the parliamentary principle – the presidencies elected by congress in the aftermath of the "Argentine great depression" at the turn of the 21st century.

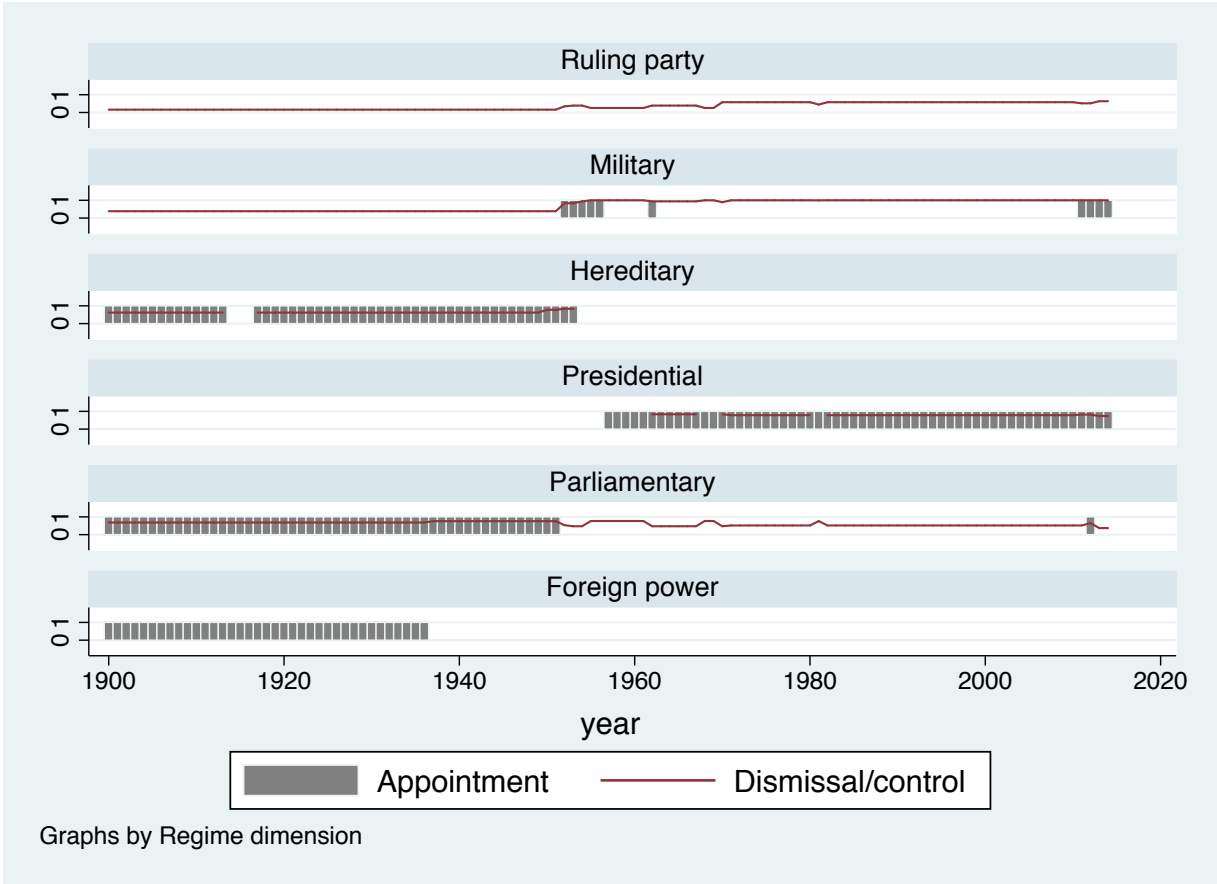**Figure 3. Regime Dimensions in Argentina, 1900-2012**

Another somewhat unexpected and potentially more problematic aspect of the data on Argentina in Figure 3 concerns the ruling party principle. According to the binary appointment measure, Argentina, as expected, has never experienced single-party rule. But according to the dismissal and control strategy, however, the data shows extensive spells of ruling party dominance. How can that be explained? Barring the development prior to military intervention in the 1930s, for which we have no plausible explanation, a striking feature of the data from WWII onward is that the peaks in ruling party control coincide with the party of the *Peronistas* in government. This applies to the period when Peron himself was in power, and also to post-1983 developments.[3] Although this interpretation fits nicely to the data, the fact that Argentina throughout its democratic history has allowed multi-party competition also comes as a reminder that the party principle may not always be captured by the coders in ways compatible with the theory of single-party rule.

Egypt, finally, depicted in Figure 4, highlights another feature of the V-Dem data: the fact that it also includes semi-sovereign territories such as colonies prior to independence. To showcase the extent to which this affected the appointment of the executive in Egypt, WE have in this figure replaced the lower-most row displaying whether the executive is dual (and the relative powers of the HOS vs. the HOG) with a simple binary indicator for whether the executive was appointed by a foreign power. As can be seen, the element of British colonial rule is evidently present through the appointment of the High Commissioner, de facto head of government of Egypt, along side the hereditary Sultan/King who served as de facto head of state. This foreign presence was not de facto altered until 14 years after formal independence, when the Anglo-Egyptian treaty was signed in 1936 and de facto power was transferred to the Egyptian prime minister, accountable to parliament. With the revolution of 1952 and later the military coup of Nasser, Egypt transferred to directly elected presidential rule under strong military influence. The brief spell of "return to parliamentarism" toward the end of the coding period is the consequence of the Arab spring in 2011, which was then again thwarted by direct military intervention under al-Sisi.

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[3] I owe thanks to Agnes Cornell for pointing out this interpretation of the Argentinian data.

Figure 4. Regime Dimensions in Egypt, 1900-2014

Graphs by Regime dimension

4. Some Plausibility Probes

Although their face validity, by and large, looks quite promising, WE now turn to some more systematic probes of the potential empirical utility of the five regime dimensions. These will be based on an assessment of the patterns of differences and similarities across the dimensions with respect to three different types of outcomes: repression; rent-seeking or corruption; and spending on public vs. private goods. These outcome measures are also taken from the V-Dem data, but (with the partial exception of corruption) from other than the executives survey. This implies that for most country units and time periods, the outcome indicators have been assessed by to at least some extent other experts than the ones responding to the dismissal and control questions on the executive. The repression measure is a simple factor index of two measures of the control of entry and exit as well as repression of civil society organizations, plus two measures of the protection of physical integrity rights (concentrated on torture and political killings) (see Appendix A5). The corruption measure is also a factor index incorporating six items on embezzlement and bribery in the executive itself, in the public sector at large, in the legislature

and in the judiciary (see Appendix A6). The public vs. private goods spending measure, finally, is a factor index of two questions on the profile of social and infrastructural spending in the national budget as well as the extent to which social policies are means-tested or universalistic (see Appendix A7).

To allow both measurement strategies for the regime dimensions to come into play, these tests will rely on the average of the "appointment" and "dismissal" measures of the military and the ruling party principles. Moreover, WE will systematically control for the "auxiliary" attributes introduced above: whether the executive is unified and dual; the measure of the relative power of the HOS vis-à-vis the HOG on the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers; and the presence of foreign rule.[4] To control for the potential overlap between the parliamentary principle and the "assembly-independent" regimes that make up the bulk of the "residual", WE will also control for a measure of whether the executive was appointed by the legislature, or whether the legislature's approval was necessary for the appointment of the executive. Finally, in order to show convincingly that the regime dimensions add something to the distinction between democracy and autocracy, WE will also controls for three key aspects of electoral democracy not related to the executive: freedom of expression; the extension of the suffrage; and the fairness of elections.[5]

The results from two basic specifications will be presented. First, a simple cross-country regression pooling across all years and country units, with robust standard errors clustered on the latter. This is thus a pure "descriptive" test. It merely shows the average differences in the outcome in question pertaining to the five regime principles. Second, WE present results with country- and year-fixed effects added. Although still not intended as a causal model but rather as another descriptive summary of regime differences, this "test" thus puts emphasis on within-country variation over time. Overall, both tests are based on time series of up to 115 years within 173 countries.

Starting with repression, there is a straightforward prediction that comes out of most formal models of the structure of the executive in authoritarian regimes: single-party autocracies should

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[4] Since preliminary analyses showed the interaction effect between the presidential and parliamentary principles was never statistically significant, I have omitted this more adequate test of the pure "presidential type", as well as the semi-presidential counterpart, from the models.

[5] On the construction of these three Bayesian factor analysis indices, see the codebook at www.v-dem.net.

be the most oppressive authoritarian species. This is, first and foremost, the prediction of the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (2003). Recall that they primarily draw on the size of the winning coalition (*W*) vs. the size of the selectorate (*S*). As a rule, the smaller *W*, in particular in relation to *S*, the less the incumbent leaders can rely on the loyalty of their current supporters, and the more they must coerce their acquiescence. "In summary", write Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (2003, 346),

> systems with a small winning coalition and a large selectorate encourage oppression, both in intensity and magnitude. Such systems present a greater incentive to challenge the leader, a greater incentive for the leader to hang onto power by all possible means, a greater possibility to recruit those who will carry out the threats, and greater credibility because of the longer tenure of their leaders.
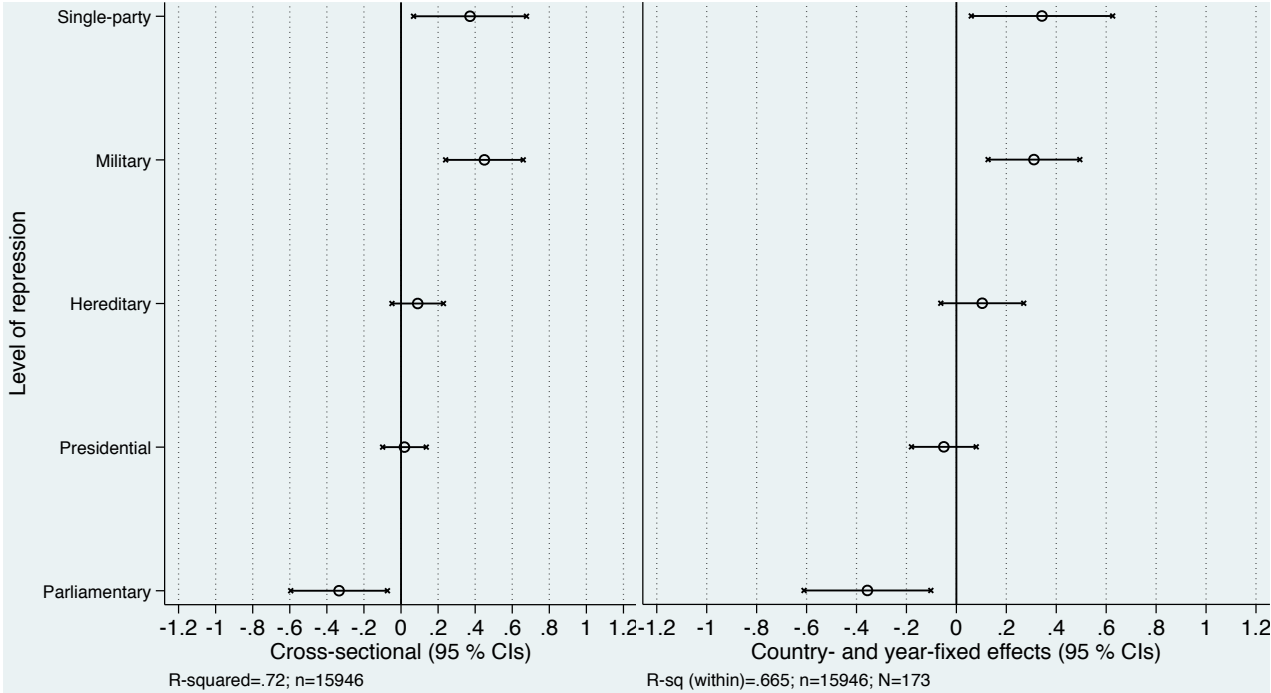
Since ruling party regimes according to selectorate theory have the smallest *W* in relation to *S*, they should be expected to be most repressive.[6] Monarchies and military regimes, by contrast, have both a small *W* and *S*, and should thus be less repressive than single-party regimes, yet more repressive than parliamentary or presidential democracies. Although not explicitly mentioned, since *W* is typically larger in presidential systems that requires the incumbent to win a majority of votes, as compared to parliamentary systems where minority governments are more likely to form (ibid., 54-5), selectorate theory predicts presidential regimes to be less repressive than parliamentary ones.

As Figure 5 makes clear, the prediction that executives appointed and/or dismissed by a ruling party are overtly repressive comes out very clear in the data, both when looking at the overall patterns across countries and within countries across time. What selectorate theory fails to predict, however, is the fact that military regimes are about as oppressive as their ruling party counterparts. What can explain this pattern? Without going into detail, WE would tentatively suggest that Fjelde's (2010) approach for explaining the onset of civil war in different types of authoritarian regimes should be highly applicable to this case. In brief, Fjelde (2010) argues that both single-party and monarchical regimes should be better than military dictatorships at co-opting their rivals. Hence, while the highly oppressive nature of ruling party regimes cannot

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[6] Similarly, Wintrobe (1990, 1998) predicts that dictators in "totalitarian" regimes always maximize repression, whereas "tinpots" (or dictators in "authoritarian" regimes) can use co-optation and repression as substitutes.

explained this way, the relative high levels of repression in military regimes can. Another pattern in Figure 5 left unexplained by selectorate theory is the less repressive nature of regimes relying on the confidence requirement as opposed to direct election. Since levels of repression has rarely been on the agenda of outcomes to explain among these regime types, this is a finding worthy of further study.
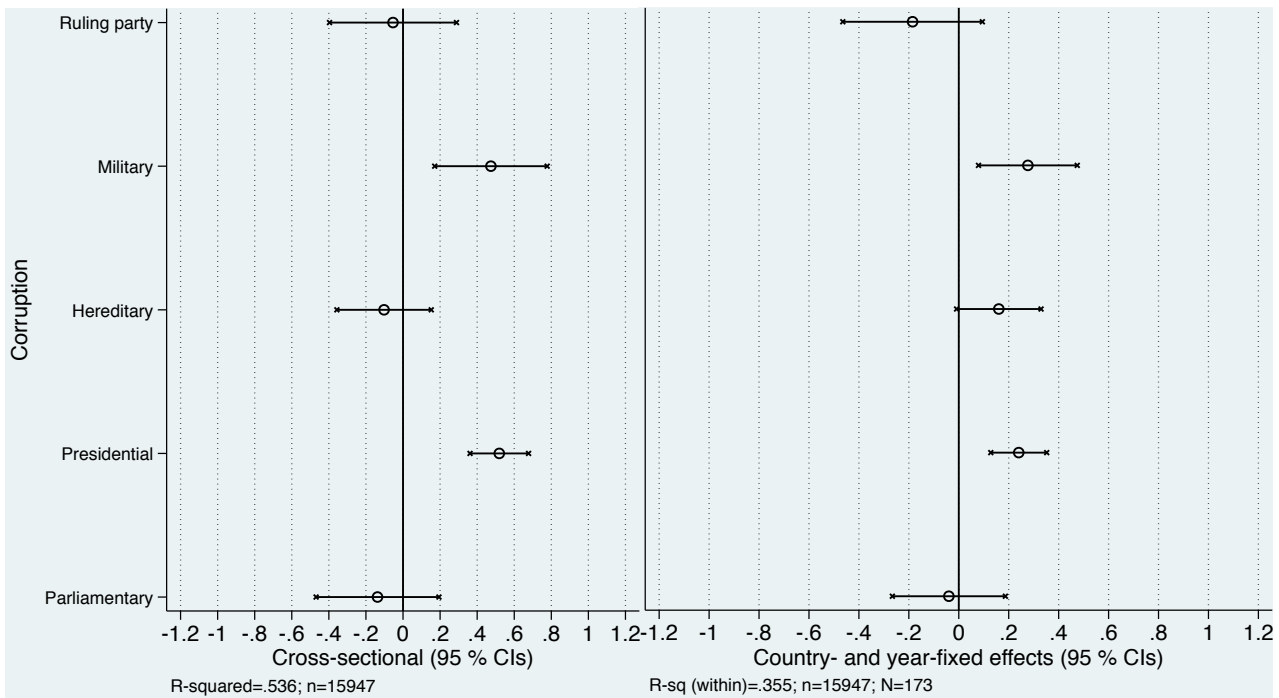
Figure 5. Levels of repression

Note: Both models also control for foreign appointment; appointment by or approval needed by the legislature; whether the executive is dual; the relative powers of the HOS vis-a-vis the HOG in the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers; and three component measures of the level of electoral democracy: freedom of association (not including repression), the extension of the suffrage, and the fairness of elections.

Turning next to rent-seeking or corruption, selectorate theory again predicts that leaders with small winning coalitions (W) will have fewer incentives to root out corruption, and might even endorse corruption as a way of rewarding supporters, particularly when S is large. By implication, parliamentary systems, having smaller winning coalitions than presidential systems, should also be expected to be more corrupt (Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 102-3). The latter is also predicted by Persson, Roland & Tabellini (1997), who argue that presidential systems as a rule should provide disincentives for rent-seeking on account of having clearer checsk and balances (cf. Persson & Tabellini 2003).
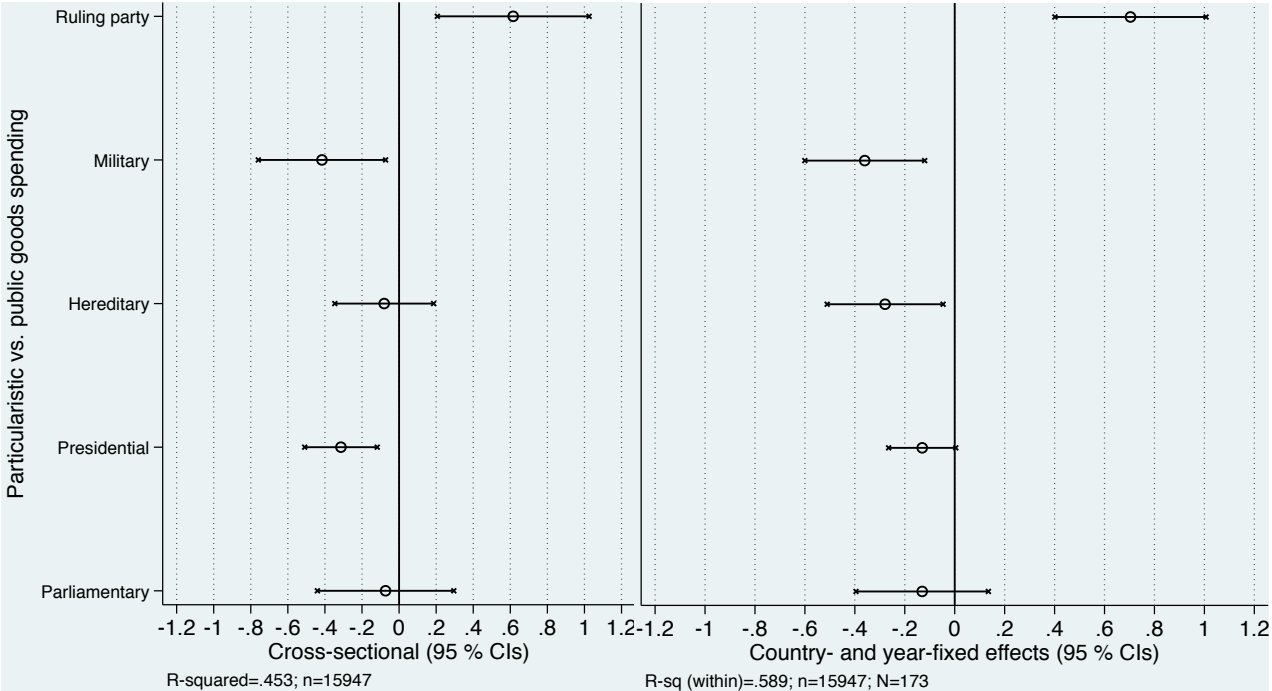
Figure 6. Levels of corruption

Note: Both models also control for foreign appointment; appointment by or approval needed by the legislature; whether the executive is dual; the relative powers of the HOS vis-a-vis the HOG in the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers; and three component measures of the level of electoral democracy: freedom of association, the extension of the suffrage, and the fairness of elections.

The results of Figure 6 however run counter to both these predictions. True, military regimes have small winning coalitions and also appear to be more corrupt on average. Yet they have larger *W* as compared to *S* than ruling party regimes, and about equally sized *W/S* as monarchies, which cannot explain why these two regimes are far less corrupt than their military counterparts. Also against expectations, presidential regimes are significantly more corrupt than parliamentary ones.

Charron and Lapuente (2011) propose a possible explanation for the first anomaly: military regimes have arguably shorter time-horizons than both single-party and monarchical regimes. Hence, they have weaker incentives to invest in long-term institutions to promote the welfare of their citizens, instead concentrating on short-term looting and even kleptocracy. With respect to the second anomaly, Gerring *et al.* (2009) conjecture that parliamentary regimes function as coordination devices that can thus help actors solve the collection-action problem of corruption (cf. Persson, Rothstein & Teorell 2013).

Turning finally to the issue of spending on public welfare as opposed to private goods, selectorate theory straightforwardly predicts public spending to be increasing in W (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). This expectation holds water for military and hereditary regimes when fixed effects are included in the model, but as Figure 7 makes clear, the clearly most public-oriented regimes are of the single-party type. The latter finding does not jell with selectorate theory, although it fits well with theories taking the *ideology* of ruling party regimes into account (Brooker 1995). Moreover, selectorate theory again gets the contrast between presidential and parliamentary regimes wrong, the latter being more public-oriented than the former in the cross-sectional tests but the two being more or less indistinguishable when solely within-country variation is taken into account. The cross-sectional but not the fixed-effect finding is more compatible with Persson, Roland & Tabellini's (2000) prediction that the confidence requirement produces more legislative cohesion, which allows spending toward broader programs benefiting a majority of voters (cf. Persson & Tabellini 2003).

Figure 7. Public vs. private spending

Note: Both models also control for foreign appointment; appointment by or approval needed by the legislature; whether the executive is dual; the relative powers of the HOS vis-a-vis the HOG in the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers; and three component measures of the level of electoral democracy: freedom of association, the extension of the suffrage, and the fairness of elections.

In sum, when the executive is appointed and/or dismissed by a ruling party, the regime becomes more repressive but also more geared toward egalitarian spending. When the military directly or

indirectly controls the executive arm of government, repression is again high on the agenda, but so is corruption and targeted spending to narrow support groups. Hereditary executives, all else being equal, spend less on broader welfare programs, instead favoring a targeted segment of the population. Directly elected executives are more corrupt on average. Their levels of egalitarian spending are not unequivocally predicted in the data. Executives that can be voted out of office by the legislature, finally, are less repressive.

5. Conclusion

We have in this paper proposed five regime dimensions, based on the procedure for appointing and dismissing the executive, that cut across the simple democracy-autocracy divide. These are, first, the hereditary principle, where the executive is appointed for life-long service based on bloodline; second, the military principle, where either the executive is directly appointed by the military, or where the survival of the executive is indirectly controlled by the military through the actual or threatened use of force; third, the ruling party principle, where the executive directly emerges from the rank-and-file of a party organization; fourth, the presidential principle, where the executive is directly and popularly elected; and fifth, the parliamentary principle, where executive appointment and/or dismissal is based on the confidence of the majority of the legislature. We have provided two alternative measurement strategies for these five principles, one based on the de facto procedure for appointing the head of state (HOS) or, if they are not the same person, the head of government (HOG), the other (albeit only for the military and ruling party principles) based on tacit powers to remove and control these (potentially) two arms of the executive. Controlling for some auxiliary characteristics and most importantly the level of democracy, a combination of these two measurement strategies explain a substantial portion of cross-country and within-country over-time variation in the level of repression, rent-seeking or corruption, and spending on public goods in a global sample of 173 countries from 1900 to the present.

We believe there are several potential uses for this new data. Let me end by briefly highlighting some of the most obvious ones. First, extending the logic of selectorate theory, the five regime dimensions could be deployed to explain differences in leadership survival across time and space. What explains the longevity of heads of state or heads of government? Do certain modes of appointment and dismissal give rise to more or less stable executives? Second, since they in principle straddle the divide between democracies and autocracies, the regime dimensions could be explored in an effort to explain the origins of that divide. Do certain modes of executive

appointment make countries more amenable to democratization, for example, or less likely to backslide into authoritarianism? Third, as a direct extension of the plausibility probes presented above, can we better understand and predict socio-political and economic outcomes – the results of what executives do – by studying the interaction between modes of executive appointment or dismissal, on the one hand, and other regime features such as the extension of the suffrage and the fairness of elections? Do executives based on the confidence requirement, for example, still outperform directly elected executives in terms of avoiding rent-seeking and corruption (as indicated by the preliminary results above) once these other regime interactions are taken into account? Fourth, and finally, we can employ the five regime dimensions to better understand the decision to go to war. Are ruling party and military regimes, apparently being more repressive domestically, also more aggressive towards other states? And, potentially flying under the radar of the democratic peace literature, is it the case that parliamentary regimes are more peaceful than presidential ones?

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Appendix A: List of V-Dem variables and/or indices used

A1. Dual vs. unitary executives and their relative powers

v2exhoshog – **HOS = HOG (A*):** Is the head of state (HOS) also head of government (HOG)? (0=no, 1=yes)

v2exdfcbhs/v2exdjcbhg – **HOS/HOG appoints cabinet in practice (C):** In practice, does the head of state/government have the power to appoint – or is the approval of the head of state/government necessary for the appointment of – cabinet ministers? (HOS: 0=No; 1= Yes, but only with respect to the head of the cabinet, and only with the tacit consent or explicit confirmation by the legislature, or Yes, but only with the tacit consent or explicit confirmation by the legislature; 3= Yes, without any need for confirmation by the legislature, but only with respect to the head of the cabinet, or Yes, without any need for confirmation by the legislature; HOG: 0 = No; 1 = Yes, but only with the tacit consent or explicit confirmation by the legislature; 2 = Yes, without any need for confirmation by the legislature.)

v2exdfdmhs/v2exdfdshg **– HOS dismisses ministers in practice (C)**: If the head of state/government took actions to dismiss cabinet ministers, would he/she be likely to succeed? **(**0 = No; 1 = Yes, but not at his/her own discretion, only when prompted to as a response to specific events; 2 = Yes, at his/her own discretion, but with restrictions; 3 = Yes, at his/her own discretion and without restrictions)

A2. The appointment of the executive

v2expathhs/hg – **HOS/HOG appointment in practice (B/A):** How did the head of state/government reach office? (HOS: 0=through coup/rebellion; appointed by 1=foreign power, 2=ruling party [in one-party system], 3=royal council; through 4=hereditary succession; appointed by 5=the military, 6=legislature; 7=directly elected; 8=other; HOG: 0=through coup/rebellion; appointed by 1=foreign power, 2=ruling party [in one-party system], 3=royal council; through 4=hereditary succession; appointed by 5=the military, 6=head of state, 7=legislature; 8=directly elected; 9=other)

A3. The confidence requirement

v2exremhsp/hog – **HOS/HOG removal by legislature in practice (C):** If the legislature, or either chamber of the legislature, took actions to remove the head of state/government from office, would it be likely to succeed even without having to level accusations of unlawful activity *and* without the involvement of any other agency? (0=no, under no circumstances, 1=no, unlikely, 2=yes, probably, 3=yes, most likely)

A4. Dismissal of and control over the executive

v2exrmhsol/hgnp – HOS/HOG removal by other in practice (C): Which of the following bodies would be likely to succeed in removing the head of state/government if it took actions (short of military force) to do so? (HOS: 0=none, 1=a foreign power, 2=the ruling party or party leadership body, 3=a royal council, 4=the military, 5=a religious body, =a tribal or ethnic council, 7=other; HOG: 0=none, 1=a foreign power, 2=the ruling party or party leadership body, 3=a royal council, 4=the military, 5=the head of state, 6=a religious body, 7=a tribal or ethnic council, 8=other)

v2exctlhs/hg – HOS/HOG control over (C): In practice, from which of the following bodies must the head of state/government customarily seek approval prior to making important decisions on domestic policy? (HOS: 0=none, 1=a foreign power, 2=the ruling party or party leadership body, 3=a royal council, 4=the military, 5=a religious body, =a tribal or ethnic council, 7=other; HOG: 0=none, 1=a foreign power, 2=the ruling party or party leadership body, 3=a royal council, 4=the military, 5=the head of state, 6=a religious body, 7=a tribal or ethnic council, 8=other)

A5. Repression

v2cseeorgs – **CSO entry and exit (C):** To what extent does the government achieve control over entry and exit by civil society organizations (CSOs) into public life? (0=monopolistic control/only government-sponsored orgs allowed to engage in political activity, repression of those who defy, 1=substantial control/government licenses all CSOs, active repression of those who defy, 2=moderate control/at least some orgs play an active political role, government does not or cannot repress them, 3=minimal control/constitutional provisions to ban anti-democratic movements, 4=unconstrained/government does not impede formation and operation)

v2csreprss – **CSO repression (C):** Does the government attempt to repress civil society organizations (CSOs)? (0=no/free to organize, 1=weakly/government uses material sanctions, 2=moderately/material sanctions and minor legal harassment, 3=substantially/material sanctions,

minor legal harassments, and arrests of oppositional CSO participants acting lawfully, 4=severely/violently and actively pursues all members of CSOs)

v2cltort – **Freedom from torture (C):** Is there freedom from torture? (0=not respected; 1=weakly respected; 2=somewhat; 3=mostly respected; 4=fully respected)

v2clkill – **Freedom from political killings (C):** Is there freedom from political killings? (0=not respected; 1=weakly respected; 2=somewhat; 3=mostly respected; 4=fully respected)

A6. Corruption

v2exbribe – **Executive bribery and corrupt exchanges (C):** How routinely do members of the executive (the head of state, the head of government, and cabinet ministers), or their agents, grant favors in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements? (0=it is routine and expected; 1=it happens more often than not; 2=it happens but is unpredictable; 3=it happens occasionally but is not expected; 4=it never, or hardly ever, happens)

v2exembez – **Executive embezzlement and theft (C):** How often do members of the executive (the head of state, the head of government, and cabinet ministers), or their agents, steal, embezzle, or misappropriate public funds or other state resources for personal or family use? (0=constantly; 1=often; 2=about half the time; 3=occasionally; 4=never, or hardly ever)

v2excrptps – **Public sector corrupt exchanges (C):** How routinely do public sector employees grant favors in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements? (0: It is routine and expected; 1: It happens more often than not; 2= It happens but is unpredictable; 3= It happens occasionally but is not expected; 4= It never, or hardly ever, happens)

v2exthftps – **Public sector theft (C):** How often do public sector employees steal, embezzle, or misappropriate public funds or other state resources for personal or family use? (0=constantly; 1=often; 2=about half the time; 3= Occasionally; 4= never, or hardly ever)

v2lgcrrpt – **Legislature corrupt activities (C):** Do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain? (0=commonly, 1=often, 2=sometimes, 3=very occasionally, 4=never, or hardly ever)

v2jucorrdc – **Judicial corruption decision (C):** How often do individuals or businesses make undocumented extra payments or bribes in order to speed up or delay the process or to obtain a favorable judicial decision? (0=always, 1=usually, 2=about half the time, 3=not usually, 4=never)

A7. Public vs. private goods spending

v2dlencmps – **Particularistic or public goods (C):** Considering the profile of social and infrastructural spending in the national budget, how "particularistic" or "public goods" are most expenditures? (0=almost all particularistic, 1=most are particularistic, but a significant portion [e.g. ¼ or 1/3] is public-goods, 2=evenly divided between particularistic and public-goods programs, 3=most are public-goods but a significant portion [e.g., ¼ or 1/3] is particularistic, 4=almost all are public-goods)

v2dlunivl – **Means-tested v. universalistic policy (C):** How many welfare programs are means-tested and how many benefit all (or virtually all) members of the polity? (0=there are no, or extremely limited, welfare state policies, 1=almost all of the welfare state policies are means-tested, 2=most welfare state policies means-tested, but a significant portion [e.g. ¼ or 1/3] is universalistic and potentially benefits everyone in the population, 3=the welfare state policies are roughly evenly divided between means-tested and universalistic, 4=most welfare state policies are universalistic, but a significant portion [e.g., ¼ or 1/3] are means-tested, 5=almost all welfare state policies are universal in character)