

Social Cleavages, Conflict and the Fates of Autocratic Regimes.

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Abstract

This article focuses on two specific social cleavages, ethnic and economic inequality and analyses their respective effects within autocratic regimes. The primary mechanism that was tested was the relationship between these two, and non-state conflict, (defined as a conflict with more than 25 combat fatalities, and the state not directly taking part). The results show support for a positive correlation between ethnic cleavage and non-state conflict, and an inverse effect for economic inequality. To further understand how this affects the regimes in question I then find that non-state conflict increases the chances of regime failure, a finding which can be further strengthened by looking at the relation between the two cleavages and regime duration directly. The findings show cleavages affect the duration of a regime in the opposite direction of their effect on non-state conflict (which correlated with regime failure). The article also analyses a sub categorisation of regimes, based on electoral competitiveness, but these findings are not as statistically certain.

Keywords: Autocracy, dictatorship, social cleavage, economic inequality, ethnic cleavage, conflict, non-state conflict

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1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

All societies are divided, and an integral part of understanding the politics of a country is understanding the ways these divisions are present, and their effects on the political climate. Social cleavages are in short a concept of political issues that divide the population into distinct groups with conflicting interests. This in turn leads to these groups mobilising along their respective sides of the cleavage according to their interests. Among these cleavages, two are particularly prominent, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. This is best exemplified by how salient questions of ethnicity and inequality are at large within the current political discourse.

The effects of social cleavages have often been studied within a democratic context, where their effects can be measured through the outputs of the party and electoral systems. But how do these divisions affect autocracies, where politics are not as open, electoral campaigns have no real chance of achieving power, or where elections are absent altogether? By autocracy I draw from Geddes, Wright and Franz' definition of the term which reads as follows: "... a [non-democratic] set of formal and/ or informal rules for choosing leaders and policies, there can be multiple within an autocratic spell [The total years the country has been autocratic in a row]. (Geddes et al, 2014:1).

Analysing autocracies requires a different theoretical framework than democracies due to the different nature of their politics. Outcomes that would be untenable within a democracy are tolerable within an autocracy, provided the incumbent stays in power. Usually popular influence over politics is far more limited under these regimes, and the primary interest group is the so called winning coalition, consisting of the groups that are necessary for the incumbent to remain in power. These regimes often make use of nominally democratic institutions such as elections to strengthen their rule, although the exact mechanisms through which

this is achieved is still debated. Since autocratic elections are a known tool for managing threats to the incumbent and social cleavages mobilise groups that may be in conflict with the regime, a question then arises whether or not elections are an effective tool for preventing this type of mobilisation.

Furthermore there are questions regarding what effects these cleavages have on the longevity of autocratic regimes. If these divisions mobilise groups with (at least perceived) incommensurable interests to the point of conflict, is this in favour of or against the incumbent? Conflict could on one hand be seen as costly in terms of resources for the autocrat trying to maintain control of their territory, on the other hand it could serve the autocrat's interests by dividing the opposition, thereby potentially preventing the opposition from unifying against the regime.

While there are studies analysing the social cleavages of particular autocracies, more general studies of the phenomena on a statistical level seem to be less common. The ambition of this study is to analyse the effects of two social cleavages within autocracies, more specifically their effects on non-state conflict. I will then evaluate the effectiveness of elections in mitigating these effects, and the interaction between conflict and regime durability. As these regimes remain a large portion of the world's governments, with significant effects on the world, as shown in recent events, understanding them is of vital importance for politics at large. Furthermore, my hope is that providing answers to these questions has uses for further theoretisation within the research subject, by evaluating potential factors that could be added to the theories of autocratic rule and shedding some light on the effects of social cleavages within this specific context.

1.2 Research questions

With this said, what follows are the research questions:

- Does ethnic and economic cleavage correlate with non-state conflict?
- What is the effect of non-state conflict on the durability of autocracies?
- To what extent does this effect vary depending on different cleavages or types of autocracy?

To further elaborate these questions; non-state conflict refers to non-state conflict within a state, i.e conflicts where at least 25 people are killed as a result of fighting in a year and without the state as one of the parties directly involved (Pettersson,2019:4). By type of autocracy I refer to a categorisation of autocracies based on whether they hold elections, and to what degree these are competitive. which will be presented in detail in the following theory sections. This will be presented in more detail in the following sections.

1.3 Research design

What follows is a presentation of the presuppositions and science philosophy that is behind the coming methodological and theoretical choices in the following chapters.

The science-philosophic foundation for the method is based on structuralism. To borrow Hollis' words in *The Philosophy of Social Science* it is grounded in a naturalistic ontology, where actors' wills and behaviour are seen as a result of "the real foundation" consisting of material and structural conditions (2012:8).

Methods giving a high generalisability are well suited for the evaluation of theories based on this type of analysis. The choice of using a statistical method is motivated by the method adjusting for the effects of individual actors, and thus providing the tools to find the structural conditions having effects with greater certainty.

Since social cleavages can be quantified in many ways there are of course always aspects that will be left out of an operationalisation. In order to be congruent with

the structuralist foundation of the paper this study will focus on analysing the underlying conditions behind a social cleavage as the indicator for its severity.

Although, as will be explained within the theory, the primary risk might be that social cleavages are not completely analogue to their underlying causes/conditions. A country could have significant discrimination against particular groups, but if they lack power, or are not mobilised that will not be significant.

Regardless of if my measures are found statistically significant or not, the explanations of causality that are based on social cleavage theory must be considered preliminary since some relevant aspects of those theories will remain untested at the end of the study, due to restrictions in available material and the span of the article.

2. Previous Research

Due to the breadth of the research subject there is an abundance of potentially relevant research. What follows is a brief presentation of previous works which I found most relevant for the subject of this paper to give the reader an overview of what work has been done prior to this paper.

One of the most central articles for the purposes of this study is *Elections and Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes* by Daniela Donno (2013). It analyses the relationship between elections in autocracies and democratisation, which makes it highly relevant both methodologically and theoretically for my study. Donno uses the GWF regime dataset over the years the studied regimes were in power, complemented with data over electoral institutions from the World Bank to classify regimes into subtypes. Of particular interest is the division into competitive authoritarian regimes (CAR) and hegemonic authoritarian regimes (HAR), presented in the following theoretical sections. The insight that the type of electoral arrangements in an autocracy has an effect on the weaknesses and strengths of the regime will be relevant for my analysis.

Another highly relevant article is De luca, Sekeris and Vargas' *Beyond divide and rule: Weak dictators, natural resources and civil conflict* (2017). In part it examines what this study also aims to, by evaluating economic factors as a source of civil conflict, as well as the effect of conflict on autocratic regime survival. One of their key findings is that allowing inter-group fighting is costly for autocrats while it allows them to allocate more resources towards increasing tax rates, thus strengthening the regime. While being more in the realm of political economy, the article gives important insights into why conflict within a regimes' territory is not necessarily always a disadvantage. This will be the basis for one of my hypotheses.

Social Cleavages and Civil War Onset by Marc Scarcelli does not specifically evaluate autocracies, but it does provide some general insight into the effects of economic inequality and ethnicity on the likelihood of civil war. One central finding is that overlapping cleavage structures, where the people are divided

amongst lines of both class and ethnicity, tend to further increase the most civil war (2013). Although similar to this study in premise, there are two key differences. Firstly, civil war and non-state conflict are not the same, and there is no guarantee that these will disadvantage regimes. Secondly, these two cleavage indicators are not guaranteed to have the same effects within autocracies as they do in democracies due to the differences between these systems.

Cross-cuttingness, Cleavage Structures and Civil War onset (2010) by Joel Selway is similar to the previous work, but instead tests another set of cleavages: ethnicity and religion but also makes an inclusion of two cleavage structure variables for the study: cross-cuttingness and cross-fragmentation. Selways results indicate that ethno-religious cross-cuttingness is a significant predictor of civil war, when interacting with ethnic fractionalisation.

Both Selway and Scareilly are statistical studies of social cleavages and their interaction with conflict and probably the ones with the most overlap with my article. The difference is that Selway and Scarcelli both analyse civil war onset in relation to different social cleavages while this study evaluates similar cleavages to Scarcelli in relation to non-state conflict, within a narrower subset of states due to the focus on autocracies.

3. Theory

The theoretical section is divided into three parts. First an introduction to social cleavages, followed by the theoretisation on autocracies, and thirdly a combination of these two theoretical fields. The hypotheses will be developed throughout the theory section as they become relevant to finally be summarised in list form at the end.

3.1 Social cleavages

When defining social cleavages, it is helpful to look at the classical conceptualisation by Lipset and Rokkan. In *Cleavage Research: A critical appraisal* Mark Franklin provides a practical summary of their theory, mentioning three central criteria for cleavages to have effects according to the classical cleavage theory.

- An objective distinction between the interests of both sides of the divide.
- Those affected recognise the importance of that distinction.
- Some means of political expression for those affected. (Franklin:2010)

The first point defines the cleavage. The second reflects its severity, and the third one defines the channel through which it has effect. In order for an indicator to quantify the cleavage itself it needs to capture point one and two. This means that the indicators for ethnic and economic cleavage need to contain which groups are affected, their relative size to the population, and an approximation of their respective incentives.

The third criteria is limited or missing in the absence of democratic elections. In place of traditional political expressions, this study analyses the use of non state violence.

Defining ethnicity scientifically is somewhat difficult, as highlighted by Chandra in *What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?*. She argues that many of the common criteria for classifying ethnicities are inconsistent and prove to be logically insignificant since many of them are not intrinsic to ethnicity (2006:399). I would argue that this is not necessarily a problem for the study. Although ethnicity is often arbitrarily defined, it does not change the fact that such group distinctions are widely considered as objective societal factors. In this study ethnicity is defined according to the proposition by Chandra: “descent based attributes”. Such attributes can be genetic, e.g skin colour, hair type, eye colour, or inherited culturally, like for instance name, language and place of birth (Ibid:400). Ethnicity is hard to define, and using a rigorous criteria to identify these groups will certainly leave out groups that are usually considered as ethnic. This is why I chose one of the most general criteria Chandra presented.

Another article on ethnic cleavages which has some information of relevance is Posner’s *The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi (2004)*. Within the article Posner examines why two specific ethnic groups are allied in one country and adversaries in another. The most central finding within the article is that in the country where the groups are hostile, they constitute large parts of the population and are therefore mobilised as a result of political coalition building. If we extrapolate this for this study’s purposes we get one component of what we need to measure for the cleavage indicators: Relative group size of all sides of a cleavage.

An analysis of cleavages through societal factors instead of class is a conscious choice, since the latter is a politically charged term with connotations to other political theories outside this study’s framework. I conceptualise this cleavage in minimalist terms, as material inequality within a country. This captures the first point that Lipset and Rokkan presented, by pointing out a distinction between groups in material terms. As material inequality increases it also increases the salience of this difference between groups, connecting back to the second point. Using a more substantive term would decrease its extension and therefore run the risk of becoming too difficult to measure without sacrificing validity.

We know from Posner (2004) that the size of the affected groups has an effect on the intensity of the cleavage. Since socioeconomic cleavage is defined in minimalist terms it encompasses the entire population. This doesn't mean that socioeconomic cleavage is automatically the most important cleavage in every context, since the mechanism through which group size converts into cleavage intensity is political mobilisation.

Conceptual stretching could pose a risk for this study due to its general scope, i.e. concepts being applied to additional cases and being distorted due to the concept not fitting (Collier, Mahon:1993:845). I would however argue that this is not a significant problem. One motivation to focus on socioeconomic cleavage as formulated, is that it has a low intension and therefore a high level of generalisability (ibid:846). Ethnicity however is a more problematic concept. As an illustrative example I would point out that there are disparities in what groups are usually considered ethnic groups and those that can be identified by an analytically rigorous principle, such as those Chandra presents (Chandra, 2006:413). I therefore choose the identification principle with the largest extension and the least intension: groups in which membership is mostly determined by common ancestry.

3.2 Autocratic regimes

Elections within autocracies, counter-intuitive as the concept might seem, are useful tools for these regimes. It has been previously shown that autocracies holding elections in general are more durable than those that do not (Gandhi, 2009:404). However, the reasons for this, or the exact function of these elections remains contested in research. Whether elections are instituted as a means for co-optation of the opposition (ibid) or as power sharing mechanisms (Magaloni) the fact remains that the durability of autocratic regimes' is increased by the presence of elections.

Given that autocratic elections have uses that facilitate elite cooperation, as well as co-opting the interests of those within the opposition, there is probable cause to

expect electoral regimes to have lower levels of non-state violence in comparison to those without.

Electoral authoritarianism and democracy differ on the basis of the quality of their electoral competition. Electoral autocracies allow for multiple parties to compete for votes, but also undermine the quality of the elections in order to favour the incumbent. The analytical distinction between what makes an electoral autocracy hegemonic rather than competitive is based on its electoral dominance (Donno, 2013:704). For the purposes of comparison I also create a residual category of authoritarian regimes that do not meet the requirements of CAR or HAR.

As mentioned by Donno, the expectations for elections will vary between CARs and HARs. Within HARs there will be little expectation for free and fair elections, and the population will in general be aware that elections primarily centre around the access to state resources. (Ibid:707). While this may still be the case in CARs it is to a lesser extent. This is a meaningful difference and its implications will be further explained within the coming sections.

This categorisation should also be evaluated based on its risk for conceptual stretching like the concepts for social cleavages. Electoral autocracies as a concept are a subcategory of autocracies, that differ in that they have elections. This is a concept with a high extension which makes it applicable within the spatial and temporal confines of the study. The same goes for the subdivision between hegemonic and competitive authoritarian, since the differentiating criteria is whether or not the incumbent won 75% or more votes or seats in elections for the executive or legislature respectively. Thus making it a general classification that can easily be distinguished for every electoral autocracy.

3.3 Social cleavages in Autocracies

The outcomes of elections within autocracies vary significantly between CARs and HARs. Only within CARs does the opposition stand a chance to win actual influence over politics. This is a means of political expression and therefore one channel for social cleavages to be expressed through, albeit to a lesser degree than

in democracies. Given that this channel is closed, cleavages should instead have consequences through other means. If non-violent means such as electoral campaigns are ineffectual policy-wise and protests are prohibited by force or other means it may lead to the population instead resorting to violence. I expect both types of cleavages to have a positive correlation with non-state conflict though I do not yet have any predictions regarding which will prove more significant.

Cleavages can potentially find their expressions in party politics within CARs and these regimes are as such expected to have lower levels of non-state violence. Also the lower levels of political dominance may reduce the possibility for these regimes to respond to non-state violence to the same extent that HARs can, indicating that these regimes might be more vulnerable to non-state violence.

HARs, on the other hand, will not offer the same non-violent means of participating in politics as in CARs. For this reason I argue that the causal link between cleavage and non-state violence should be stronger within HARs. These regimes may be more capable of responding with repression, but as the cleavage makes the conflicts of interests increasingly salient, violence becomes a more viable option for the people negatively affected. However, I argue that HARs should not be as vulnerable to non-state violence since they are not under the same constraints as CARs.

While armed conflict within a country might be seen as a drain on the regimes' resources due to costs of maintaining order, and therefore harming its chances of survival, that is not entirely the case. Connecting back to Donno's study we know empirically that oppositional coalitions are important factors for democratisation within CARs. Since the type of conflict this study aims to analyse is committed by non-state actors, the direct damage to the state is less significant, whilst said conflict also serves to divide the wider population, making coalitions within the opposition less feasible. In conjunction with De Luca et al's finding that conflicts also enable autocrats to put more resources toward taxation, this leads us to the predictions.

Based on the reasoning within this chapter I hypothesise the following:

H1: Both indicators of social cleavages will correlate with higher levels of non-state conflict.

H2: Non-state conflict will have a positive correlation with regime durability.

H3: Non-electoral regimes will have the strongest link between cleavage and conflict.

H4: The link between social cleavages and non-state violence is stronger within HARs than CARs.

H5: Non electoral regimes and HARs will have a stronger link between conflict and regime durability than CARs.

4. Method

The following chapter is a presentation of the planned research design for the study, as well as an overview of what data will be used and some methodological reflections.

4.1 Research design

The research design is statistical as previously mentioned. What follows is a more detailed structure for the study. In order to answer the research questions this statistical analysis will be divided into two steps. First regressions will be done between the two cleavage indicators and non-state conflict. The second step is to examine the relationship between non-state conflict and regime failure. Both of these steps will contain additional analysis comparing the results for the different regime types.

To strengthen this result I will test the correlations with random effect regressions. If the data for the cleavage indicators covered more countries then fixed effect would be more appropriate, but a significant amount of regimes in the GWF dataset are not covered and thus had to be excluded. To make inferences for the total population without having data for all regimes, random effects are instead more appropriate.

The first regression will be done in order to establish any link between conflict and regime durability. The type of conflict studied is non-state violence. The theory that has been established over the previous sections stipulates social cleavages as a potential motivation for violence, primarily for the disadvantaged people along the cleavage, since those in office within an autocracy rarely belong to these groups, such incentives are not present for these actors. Therefore it wouldn't be congruent with the theory to include state violence within this study. While this indicator does not give us the full insight into all the aspects of non-state conflict within a country, it does shed light on the theoretically relevant

type of conflict that does not directly originate from the state, making it sufficient for the purposes of the study.

The second regression is done for the purposes of examining the relationship between non-state violence and the indicators for social cleavages. The theoretical reasoning for this link is that social cleavages are a source of political mobilisation. When this mobilisation as – as a result of the regime – cannot be funnelled into the type of electoral behaviour we observe in democracies, it will instead lead to an increased use of violence within the affected parts of the population. Thus two cleavages, socioeconomic as well as ethnic, are tested separately through fixed effect panel data regressions in relation to non-state violence.

4.2 Data & Operationalisations

Some of the theoretical concepts introduced in the previous sections need to be operationalised before we move on to the actual analysis. Within this section I will present the different datasets used, which variables that will represent the different concepts.

For the data over regimes a pair of datasets will be used. The first of these is the GWF regimes dataset. This documents among other factors all autocratic regimes within the time interval, which years they lasted and the nature of their regime failure (Geddes, Et al, 2014). Although this dataset includes a categorisation of regimes I will use another for the analysis, based on the presence of elections and the competitiveness of these. I use the same method as *Donno* in *Elections and Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes*, by applying the World Bank's indices over executive and legislative competitiveness. A value of 5-6 as the highest value within any of the two indices means that the regime is hegemonic and a value of 7 means that the incumbent received less than 75% of the votes and is thusly coded as competitive (2013:707-708). In addition to this I also create a residual category

of authoritarian regimes spanning the values lower than the hegemonic category. The purpose of this category is to test the effects of elections by including a group of non-electoral regimes.

For the data on conflict the study will rely on Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) Non-State Conflict Dataset. It defines non-state conflict as organised non-state groups using armed force and causing a minimum of 25 battle-related casualties in fighting with each other (Sundberg et al:2012:352-353). This dataset documents all such conflicts over the world for the time period of 1989-2008. Since this paper's theory only aims to explain how cleavages give those adversely affected incentives for violence it would be unfitting to use data that includes conflicts involving the state which would be outside of this study's theoretical scope.

The chosen indicator for socioeconomic cleavage is income inequality. I argue that what is most central to socioeconomic cleavage is the degree of material inequality existing within the population, by having a direct effect on the lives of those affected, as well as acting as a differentiating criterion between socioeconomic groups. The chosen indicator for ethnic cleavage is the degree of political discrimination. This is a theoretically anchored indicator through the first two points of Lipset & Rokkan that were already presented in the theoretical section. While this might not capture the more overtly political aspects of economic cleavage, this is the closest approximation that I could achieve within the confines of the data that is available.

Ethnic cleavage will be operationalised through an aggregation of data contained in the Ethnic power relations (epr) dataset. This is global and has data over each ethnic group's access to state power within each country for four different time periods. For my purposes I need to transform this into a yearly national variable. What I want to capture with an operationalisation of a social cleavage is the groups with incentives to rebel, and some approximation of the strength of these incentives along with what fraction of the population is affected as a direct result of ethnic divisions within a country. To do this I create a new variable in two

steps. I use the ordinal variable for political status of each group as a basis for a numeric weight ranging from 1-6 with the most political oppression denoted by a value of 6 and 1 for the most politically dominant groups, denoted in the formula as (P) . Though the exact values of weights are always open to be debated I want to emphasise the relevance of these to illustrate social cleavage. According to my hypothesis groups that are marginalised politically will have stronger incentives to go against the current status quo. However just capturing how stark the differences between the political rights of each group are is not sufficient, since it gives us no insight into how many people are affected by said differences. To adjust for this I also incorporate the size (S) of the groups relative to the total population, a value ranging from 0-1. Once combined this gives us a measure of what percentage of people are affected by different degrees of ethnic discrimination and the strength of their combined incentives against the status quo. What follows is the formula for the variable:

$$\sum (P_n \cdot S_n) = \text{aggcl}$$

The data over economic inequality is gathered from the World Inequality Database. This dataset has data over the share of wealth and income by percentile, which is a sufficient indicator of economic inequality for the purposes of the study. However, only using wealth inequality as the sole measurement of socioeconomic cleavage is not exactly analogous to the indicator for ethnic cleavage. To also get this variable to contain information regarding group incentive strength and sizes I create the economic cleavage variable according to this formula:

$$(0.1 / ws) + (0.9 / (1 - ws)) = \text{ecocl}$$

0.1 and 0.9 refers to the top 10% wealth wise and 0.9 the bottom 90%. WS denotes the share of total wealth held by the top 10%, which is the data I have access to. The intuition is this: as the wealth share for a group increases, their

incentives against the status quo decreases, the sum of this formula reflects these incentives for both groups along with what fraction of the population they constitute. This lacks the further refinement of the ethnic cleavage variables' inclusion of all distinct groups, but will have to suffice for the study's purposes.

The spatial and temporal parameters of the study have been determined by what data is available. The narrowest of the datasets is the UCDP non-state conflict data, which covers the time period 1989-2010. This is the temporal limit of the study. However, the case selection is not total for these year. There are some gaps between the GWF dataset and what countries are covered within the data for ethnic power relations and economic inequality. Therefore the selection is further narrowed down to observations of 1321 regime years within 122 distinct autocratic regimes.

4.3 Critical reflections

What follows are some methodological reflections about the validity of the study. The primary validity concerns are related to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of social cleavages and will be addressed first.

As one might gather from the previous part there are a lot more social cleavages in the world apart from ethnicity and wealth inequality. Depending on a country's culture, history and other factors their politics might be divided along different cleavages entirely. The goal with this study is not to definitively prove or disprove the effects of all social cleavages, but to evaluate the effects of these two particular social divisions.

The lack of measurements within the realm of political psychology is of some concern for the validity of the cleavage measurements, since a lot of the theoretisation is concerned with inter-group antagonisms as a motivator. This is also a direct result of the limitations in the data available on that scale. In order to counter this I would like to reiterate the structural focus of the study's theoretical scope. Instead of focusing on maximal validity in accordance with previous

cleavage theories I try to reformulate their central claims into structural conditions that can be evaluated in a global context. For this end the measurements of ethnic and socioeconomic cleavage are sufficient.

Another operationalisation is the one dividing regimes into three categories depending on their electoral system. The distinction has its roots in previous literature analysing the effects of different electoral arrangements within autocracies. The categories of CARs and HARs are directly inspired by previous theory and as such not all too problematic with regards to validity. Additionally I create one new category, named Residual Authoritarian Regimes from all the included regimes that fall outside the requirements of CARs and HARs. This will be a very heterogeneous group of regimes and the only thing that groups them together is lower levels of electoral competition than HARs. Elaboration of this category is not of high importance, since its inclusion mostly serves as a control group for the electoral regimes, in to determine the effects of electoral arrangements.

The use of non-state conflict is also a highly conscious choice. While it does rule out the state as a directly involved actor that might be affected by social cleavages, including those types of conflicts would risk bringing about other more significant concerns. In the cases of including conflicts started by or involving the state directly there would be some problems. Including the state in this way would bring in other concepts such as repression, state violence as potential motivators for conflict making the goal of assessing the effects of cleavages unnecessarily complicated.

On a more technical note, since the analysis will be done within regimes for the most part this means only a relatively small set of the total potential analysis objects will be used; 122 to be precise. As mentioned within *Att fråga och att svara* by Teorell and Svensson is that a probability selection is a necessity for statistical inference. According to their rule of thumb at least a 100 units of analysis should be included (2020:156). The measures of cleavages have had to be based on period-wise levels that are generalised to the included years. This means that the co-variance captured by r-squared will in all likelihood be less ideal.

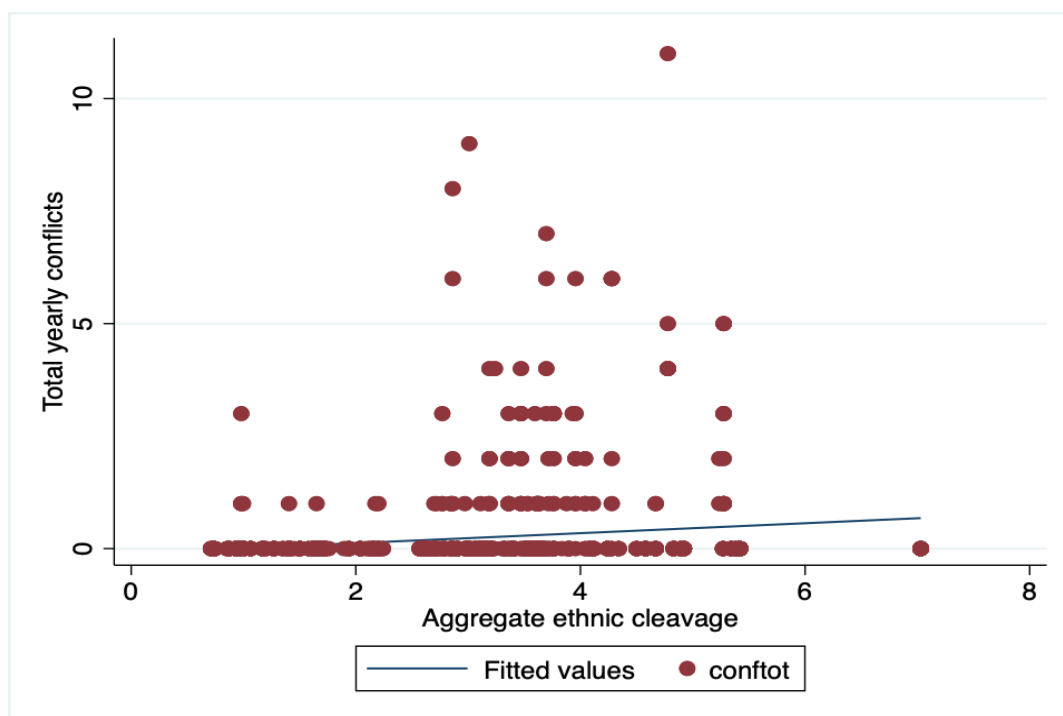
5. Results & Analysis

This section will be subdivided into several parts. Parts 5.1 - 5.3 will present the results for the various regressions that were laid out previously and analyse the more technical aspects of the findings. Then in part 5.4 these findings are related back to the research questions and hypotheses.

5.1 Ethnic cleavage and conflict

Initially I would like to present the results of a regular regression between a regime's average total non-state conflicts and the corresponding levels of the measure of ethnic cleavage.

Graph 1.



Total yearly observed conflicts and corresponding levels of ethnic cleavage for the same regime and year.

Table 1: Conflict and Ethnic cleavage regular regression

	Total yearly conflict
Ethnic cleavage	0.111*** (5.73)
_cons	-0.0996 (-1.62)
<i>N</i>	1173
<i>R</i> ²	0.027

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

From this we see a positive correlation of good significance that seems to back up the claim that higher levels of ethnic divisions correspond with a higher propensity for non-state violence among the people. This points somewhat in favour of the predictions. But, since this was done by a regular regression we need to further examine this relationship to make more definite statements on the subject.

If we instead examine this by using a GLS random effect panel data regression we get the following result:

Table 2: Random effect regression for total conflict and ethnic cleavage

(1)	
Total yearly conflict	
Ethnic cleavage	0.0472 (1.39)
_cons	0.113 (1.00)
<i>N</i>	1173
<i>R</i> ²	0.027

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

What is found here is still an effect on the likelihood of conflict, albeit with a weaker coefficient and *t* statistic. Though not as strongly in support of the theoretical hypotheses it still speaks for the hypothesis being true. I don't want to overstate this however. As one might gather from the r^2 , where only a portion of the variation in conflict can be explained by variations within aggregate ethnic cleavage. Weak *r*-squared values are something to be expected, since the independent variable of ethnic cleavage in particular is measured in periods and thus show little yearly variations. In short, the results seem to support the theory, albeit with somewhat weak statistical certainty when examined more thoroughly.

If we move on to another of the goals of the study, comparing this relationship within our sub-categorisation of regimes, the result is as follows:

Table 3: Comparison between regime types

	(1) Residual	(2) Competitive	(3) Hegemonic
	Total yearly conflicts	Total yearly conflicts	Total yearly conflicts
Ethnic cleavage	0.0968	0.0207	0.128*
	(1.77)	(0.38)	(2.25)
_cons	0.0219	0.165	-0.183
	(0.12)	(0.92)	(-0.99)
<i>N</i>	450	450	273
<i>R</i> ²	0.057	0.0015	0.079

statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

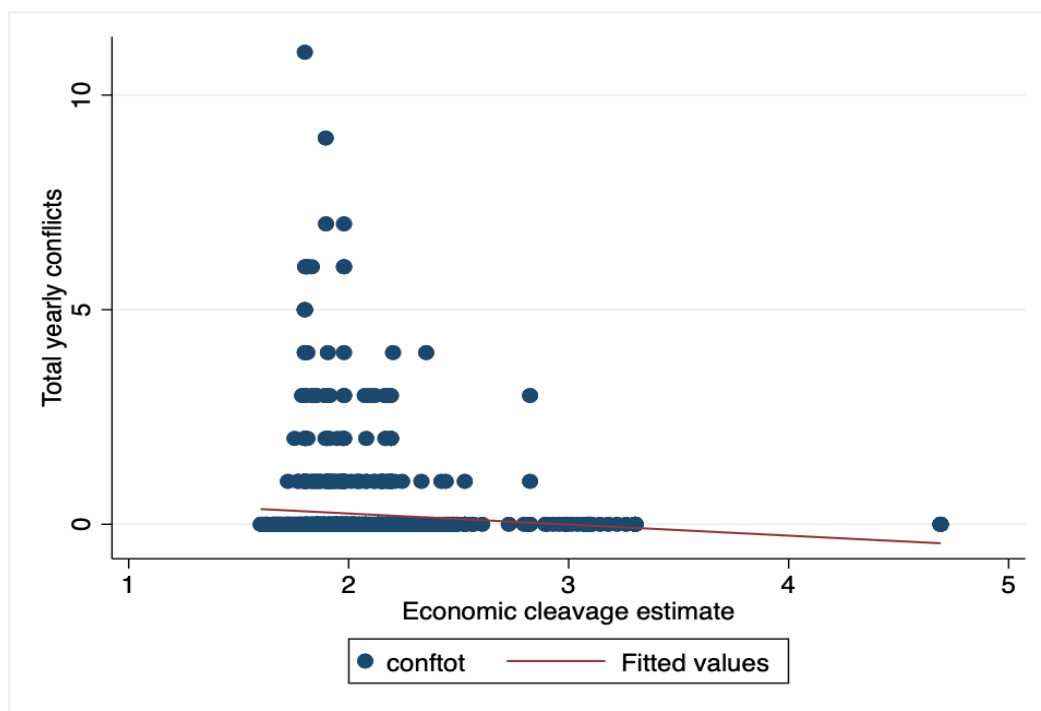
As shown in table 3, Hegemonic Authoritarian regimes had the strongest link between conflict and ethnic cleavage, which gives us some evidence that the link between conflict and cleavage is stronger in less competitive electoral regimes. What goes against that notion is the results for the residual category, showing a coefficient between the other two categories.

Since this is a subdivision of an already limited set of analysis objects the statistical certainty for some of the findings in table 3 is questionable. The R-squared for these regressions also falls short of the standard thresholds, which means this requires some scepticism.

5.2. Economic cleavage and conflict

Knowing that ethnic cleavage as operationalised here showed some correlation with non-state conflict in the previous section, we now turn to the measure of economic cleavage and examine the relationship with conflict. If done by a simple regression the result looks as follows:

Graph 2:



The graph plots total yearly conflict and the economic cleavage variable.

Detailed information is found within table 4.

Table 4: Total yearly conflict and economic cleavage

(1)	
Total yearly conflict	
Economic cleavage	-0.258***
	(-3.34)
_cons	0.767***
	(4.75)
<i>N</i>	1257
<i>R</i> ²	0.009

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

This result is striking for a couple reasons. Instead of lacking a correlation with conflict, the results instead show a negative one of stronger magnitude than the ethnic cleavage variable. This goes against all expectations of economic inequality being a predictor of non-state conflict and will require further examination. In further inspection using a GLS random effect regression we see a similar result:

Table 5: Random effect GLS regression for total conflict and economic cleavage

	(1)
	Total yearly conflicts
Economic cleavage	-0.350** (-2.59)
_cons	0.970*** (3.43)
<i>N</i>	1257
<i>R</i> ²	0.008

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

We see that the total number of conflicts does not positively correlate with economic cleavage as expected. Instead this variable seems to indicate lower levels of conflict within unique regime observations. What could explain this is as of yet unclear and will need to be discussed within the conclusions.

To further examine and understand this let us observe how this varies across regime categories:

Table 6:

	(1) Residual	(2) Competitive	(3) Hegemonic
	Total yearly conflict	Total yearly conflict	Total yearly conflict
Economic cleavage	-0.184 (-0.93)	-0.187 (-0.83)	-0.312 (-1.70)
_cons	0.709 (1.71)	0.606 (1.29)	0.865* (2.17)
<i>N</i>	477	489	291
<i>R</i> ²	0.006	0.0108	0.0111

statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

As with all of the subcategorisations, these comparisons are not statistically certain enough for making any definitive statements regarding the levels within each category. However, it seems that economic inequality measured in this particular way does not have meaningfully differing effects on non-state conflict, based on the country's electoral system (or lack thereof).

Table 7: Comparison of effects

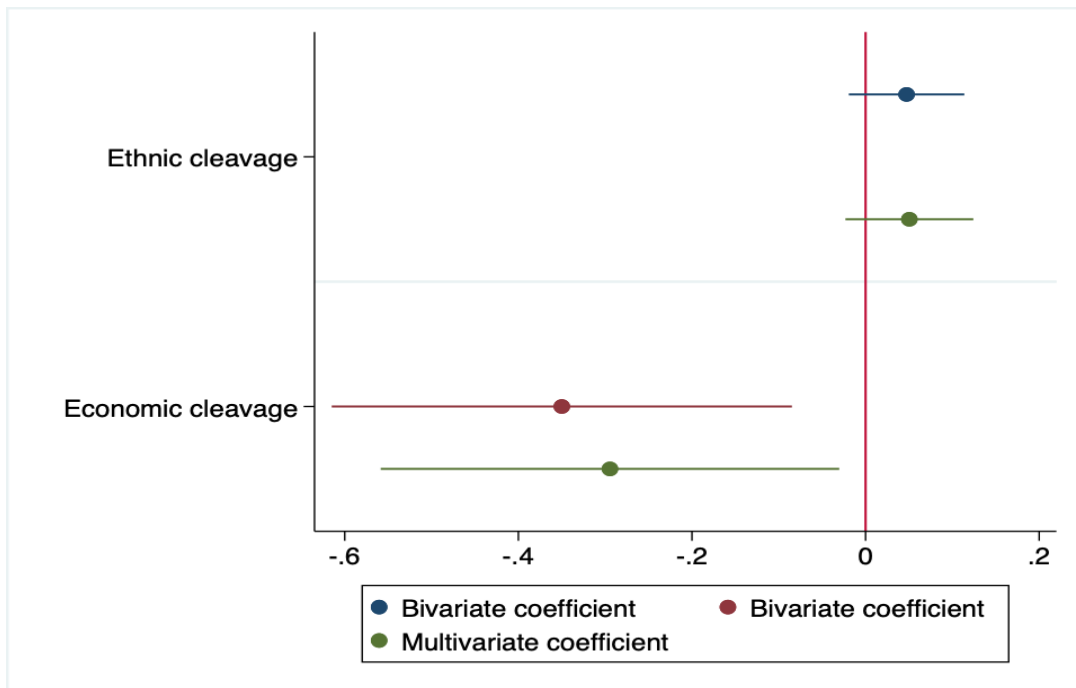
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total yearly conflict	Total yearly conflict	Total yearly conflict
Ethnic cleavage	0.0472 (1.39)		0.0505 (1.34)
Economic cleavage		-0.350** (-2.59)	-0.294* (-2.19)
_cons	0.113 (1.00)	0.970*** (3.43)	0.712* (2.34)
<i>N</i>	1173	1257	1118

statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Above are the results for the two cleavage measures individually in (1) and (2). Within (3) are the results of a multivariate regression model using both. What is remarkable is that both coefficients increase as a result. When there is both economic and ethnic cleavage the conflict-mitigating effects of economic cleavage are weakened and the effects of ethnic cleavage strengthened. Below I include graph 3 which plots these different coefficients.

Graph 3: Coefficient plot of both cleavage indicators and conflict



This visualisation shows there is a difference in directionality for the two different cleavages' effect on conflict. There is still a slight chance of the null hypothesis for ethnic cleavage to be true, as shown by the margins of error. The green lines are the coefficients for the same variable within the multivariate model. Though it might not show too clearly on the coefficient plot, both coefficients increase in value when put together as previously mentioned. This does have some implications regarding cross cleavage structures, in that the effects of both individual cleavages are moved in the direction of increased conflict, when both are taken into account. There will be further reflections regarding this in the conclusions chapter. For now we instead move on to the next part of the analysis.

5.3 Autocratic regime survival

In order to analyse the effects of non-state conflicts on the survival of autocratic regimes a couple of correlations are tested. The primary regression for this part is an RLS random effect regression and is done between the regime failure variable and the total yearly amount of non-state conflicts. To further connect these results to the previous part of the analysis I will also perform regressions for regime durability and the cleavage variable in order to identify any congruent pattern for how these phenomena interact.

Table 8:

(1)	
Regime failure	
Total yearly conflicts	0.0195** (2.60)
_cons	0.172*** (6.52)
<i>N</i>	1321
<i>R</i> ²	0.002

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Unlike predictions of a uniformly strengthened rule as a result of non-state conflict, the data shows an increased propensity for regime failure within states more affected by non-state conflict. As can be gathered by the ** next to the

coefficient this is highly significant and gives us reason to abandon the null hypothesis. If this regression is done separately by regime type the result instead look like this:

Table 9:

	(1) Residual Regime failure	(2) Competitive Regime failure	(3) Hegemonic Regime failure
Total yearly conflicts	0.0216 (1.66)	0.0171 (1.30)	0.0412* (2.26)
_cons	0.166*** (4.38)	0.113*** (3.32)	0.0805* (2.07)
<i>N</i>	397	516	301
<i>R</i> ²	0.001	0.002	0.007

statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

This shows that non-state-conflict ridden Hegemonic Authoritarian regimes are at the most risk of regime failure out of all of the three categories. Since the residual category was more vulnerable than the competitive category it seems that my predictions were off. Notable is that the variations between categories does not follow the same order as the categorical levels in electoral competition, implying that something else might explain these differences.

Graph 4: Ethnic cleavage in relation to autocratic regime duration

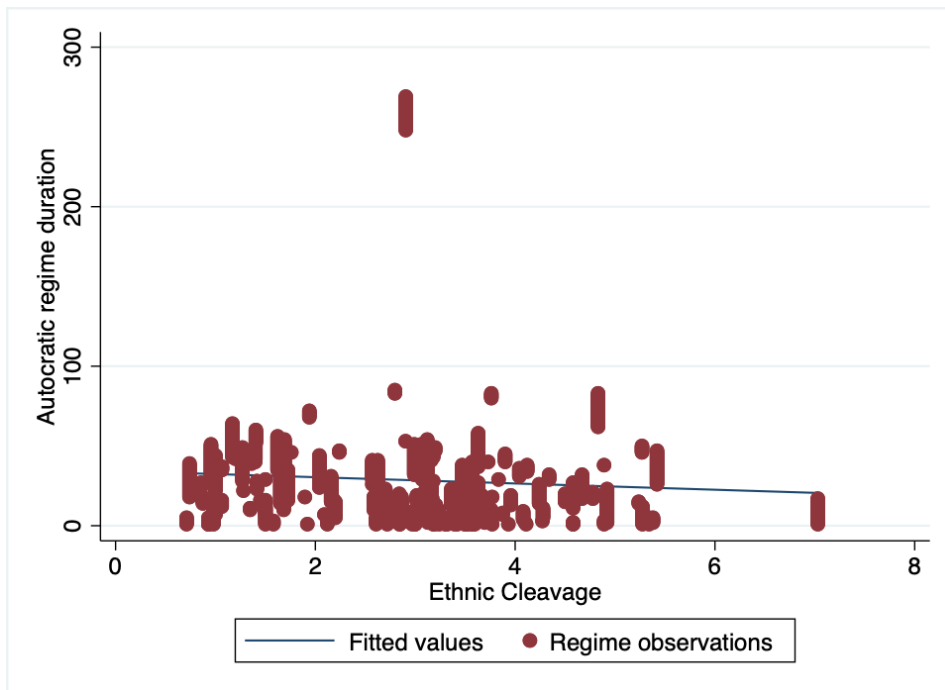


Table 10: RLS regression for regime duration variable and ethnic cleavage.

(1)	
Regime duration	
Ethnic cleavage	-1.197** (-2.75)
_cons	25.93*** (8.47)
<i>N</i>	1173
<i>R</i> ²	

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The coefficient of -1.197 might appear relatively small, compared to how long some regimes last. But it proves to be significant, as can be observed from the P value. What makes this interesting is that autocracies with larger disparities in the access to state power between different ethnic groups last a shorter time in power than those regimes with smaller disparities. This can be further nuanced by examining the variations between regime types:

Table 11:

	(1) Residual	(2) Competitive	(3) Hegemonic
	Regime spell	Regime spell	Regime spell
Ethnic cleavage	-2.200	0.716	-3.667***
	(-0.90)	(1.31)	(-5.06)
_cons	55.34***	26.82***	44.28***
	(7.27)	(14.47)	(20.29)
<i>N</i>	361	450	273
<i>R</i> ²	0.002	0.004	0.086

statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notable is that not every type of regime seems to be disadvantaged by governing an ethnically divided society. In contrast to the other two, competitive authoritarian regimes are largely unaffected or even mildly benefitted by ethnic cleavage, which is something I will return to in the conclusions section.

In testing the immediate relation between economic cleavage and regime duration we observe the inverse effect:

Graph 5:

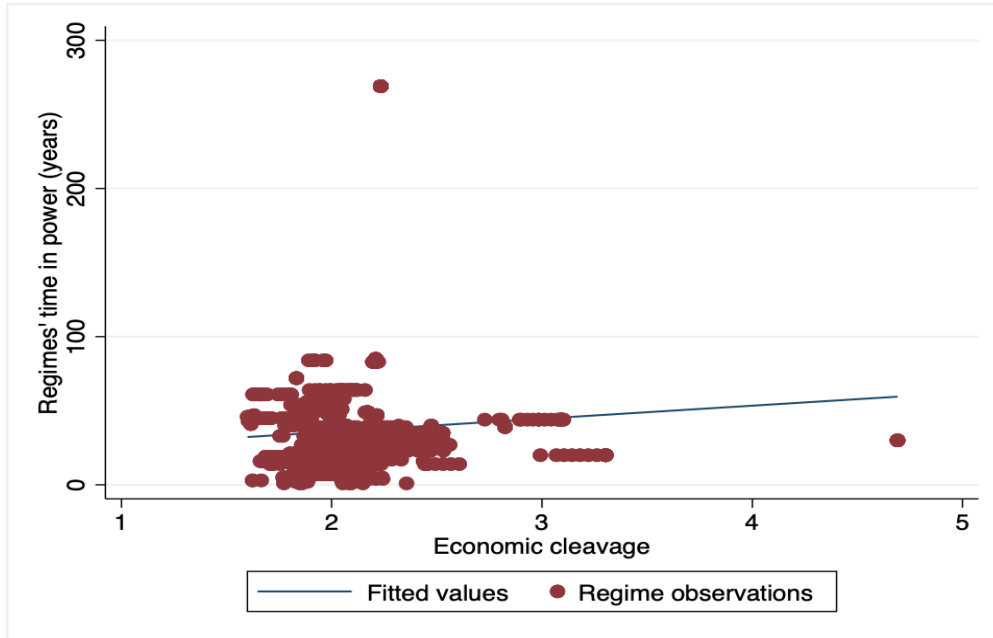


Table 12:

(1)	
Regime Duration	
ecocl	8.816** (2.88)
_cons	18.17** (2.84)
<i>N</i>	1257
<i>R</i> ²	0.007

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

	(1)Residual	(2)Competitive	(3)Hegemonic
	Regime spell	Regime spell	Regime spell
ecocl	18.61** (2.62)	7.957** (3.20)	-1.508 (-0.55)
_cons	7.901 (0.54)	12.21* (2.34)	36.69*** (6.33)
<i>N</i>	477	489	291
<i>R</i> ²	0.014	0.021	0.001

statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

By putting this result in conjunction with the previous regressions, an interesting pattern becomes evident. First, recall the results for conflict and regime failure: we observed an increased risk for regime failure as a result of non-state conflict. Second, economic cleavage and ethnic cleavage both have effects on the duration of regimes. These effects are in the inverse direction of their effects on non-state conflict, i.e economic cleavage corresponding with lower levels of conflict and longer regime durations and vice versa for ethnic cleavage.

5.4. Summary and Reflections

We now have all the pieces of the puzzle necessary to answer the research questions and evaluate the hypotheses. First, a reiteration of these:

- Does ethnic and economic cleavage correlate with non-state conflict?
- What is the effect of non-state conflict on the durability of autocracies?
- To what extent does this effect vary depending on different cleavages or types of autocracy?

Hypotheses:

H1: Both measures of social cleavages will correlate with higher levels of non-state conflict.

H2: Non-state conflict will have a positive correlation with regime durability.

H3: Non-electoral regimes will have the strongest link between cleavage and conflict.

H4: The link between social cleavages and non-state violence is stronger within hegemonic authoritarian regimes than competitive authoritarian regimes.

H5: Non electoral regimes and HARs will have a stronger link between conflict and regime durability than CARs.

From the data we can conclude that there is a negative relationship between non-state conflict and the durability of regimes, or in alternative terms, a positive relationship with regime failure. This means hypothesis 2 is falsified and the answer to question 2 is that regimes are harmed by non-state conflicts rather than benefitted by them. Both of the examined cleavages correlate with conflict, but the direction of this link is not the same for them- meaning that hypothesis 1 is false in predicting all cleavages to increase non-state conflict. Moving on to question 3, there are some further differences and similarities between the two cleavages. Both of the coefficients when put in a multivariate model, will have a coefficient more in the direction of increased conflict although they are still having effects in opposite directions. The answer to the second part of the third question is that there are differing levels in the coefficients for these regime types, but most of the results for these comparisons are of somewhat questionable

reliability, and in none of the comparisons between regimes the results match the corresponding levels of electoral competitiveness in either direction. In short, there is variation in the effect on non-state conflict between cleavages but it is hard to make any definitive statements regarding the regime types with a statistical certainty. There is insufficient support to back up the claim that levels of electoral competitiveness are the explanation for these differences.

6. Conclusions

The research puzzle for this study has been to examine how the different theoretical components of social cleavages, conflict, and autocracy interact on a generalised global scale. To answer the questions, my theory bears repeating. The initial expectations were that cleavages in and of themselves increase the incentives for conflict within the different populations, and that the resulting non-state conflict was going to increase regime durability by dividing the population while not directly involving the regime. The degree of political competition which was differentiated by including three regime types was expected to mitigate conflict accordingly. As the previous chapter has shown, the results are not always in accordance with the hypotheses and the theory will need to be amended/corrected in a couple of ways to be fully congruent with the empirical findings.

In summary, the results show mixed support for the hypotheses in the previous sections. A somewhat surprising finding was that the measure of ethnic cleavage was the only one of the indicators that actually had a positive correlation with non-state conflict. There was only partial support for *H1* (that all cleavages cause heightened non-state conflict) since only one of the two cleavages positively correlated with non-state conflict. Heightened non-state conflict is not universally the result of all cleavages, as the results show.

There are of course many potential explanations as to why this might be. One initial explanation is that the aggregate ethnic cleavage measure might have a more direct link to conflict in that it already includes a measure of to what extent groups are excluded from state power to various degrees of intensity. At the highest levels of discrimination this could reflect actual conflicts in and of themselves.

Since there are other studies that have found a positive link between similar economic inequality and conflict I will not try to declare socioeconomic cleavage irrelevant for conflict initiation at large. One explanation for these differing result could be that those studies measured civil wars and not just non-state conflict, which has consequences for the selection of the conflicts to study. If so, it is possible that both results are correct, and not in conflict with each other.

But taken at face value, socioeconomic cleavage appears to hinder non-state conflict instead of causing it. One key difference between the two conceptualised cleavages is that economic inequality is not as obvious with its group distinctions, which could mean that there is less of a clear antagonism between the affected groups. Without this, economic inequality simply means that the poorer percentiles will have less resources to spare for conflict, unless they are at a point where they perceive themselves to have nothing to lose. Considering the size of these groups, *if* a significant part of the bottom 90% are incentivised towards conflict, the scale of this would resemble a civil war rather than the 25 total deaths minimum of a non-state conflict, and the state not being involved is far less likely if such a large scale conflict were to take place within its territories.

My reasoning of perceived antagonisms in the previous paragraph might also be a potential explanation as to why the overlapping cleavage structure of both ethnicity and economic inequality has a higher coefficient for both variables than when those are evaluated separately which was shown by the multivariate model run in the previous chapter. The component of ethnic cleavage by itself gives somewhat clear group distinctions and incentives for violence and when put in conjunction with material disparities within the country, the latter only adds to the likelihood of conflict, while it by itself would have done the opposite.

As for the second hypothesis; that non-state conflict would correlate with increased regime durability, the data instead points towards non-state conflicts actually increasing the risk of regime failure. We can therefore consider this hypothesis falsified at a general level. This result is not entirely unexpected. As was explained within the theory and previous research chapters there are certain preconditions that make conflict favourable for a regime, and it might simply be

the case that these aren't present within the larger part of the regimes. These findings do not falsify theories of how conflict can benefit an autocratic regime. It might simply be the case that the necessary preconditions for conflicts for them to benefit regimes are not present within a majority of the studied autocracies.

Moving on to hypothesis three and four, we actually see results in the form of partial support of the theoretical expectations. The hypothesis states that level of electoral competition will have a negative effect on the correlation between cleavage and non-state conflict. Since the most foundational prediction regarding economic cleavage was wrong and it didn't cause increased conflict, the predictions for how it varies between regime categories are also incorrect.

The results that were presented in section 5.1 for ethnic cleavage and conflict however show us that the hegemonic category had by far the strongest correlation between ethnic cleavage and conflict, followed by the residual category and lastly the competitive regimes. When it comes to economic inequality, hegemonic regimes also have the strongest coefficient of the three regime types (although negative). Then followed by the competitive regimes and lastly the residual category.

There is then no uniform order of the regime types based on how affected they are in terms of conflict by social cleavages. However, it seems that the hegemonic category is the most affected by the cleavages in terms of non-state conflict, regardless of if that effect is positive or negative which seems to vary depending on the cleavage. Though not much can be said about these subgroups with any statistical certainty it is interesting that the hegemonic category had a stronger correlation between cleavage and conflict than the competitive category for both cleavages. Since the residual category was defined by not meeting the other two's requirements this heterogeneous group will both include electoral regimes below the thresholds for competitiveness of HARs as well as the non-electoral regimes. Since this group is more loosely defined, some of the regimes contained within will be very far removed from a Competitive or hegemonic regime in terms of their institutional arrangements. Explaining outcomes of cleavages and conflicts within such regimes will probably need to factor in other theoretical aspects than

electoral competitiveness to be satisfactory. Elections are not the only political instrument of co-optation that autocracies have, although it is an important one. This means that explanations of elections mitigating conflict could still be true for the more analytically well defined groups of CARS and HARs, which is reflected in HARs having a far higher coefficient than their competitive counterparts.

Returning back to the direct correlation between autocratic regime duration and ethnic cleavage there are a few things to be said. Firstly, the direction of the coefficients between the two cleavage indicators and regime duration are the inverse direction of the coefficients for the cleavages and their effects on conflict. In simpler terms, economic cleavage correlates with longer regimes, and lower non-state conflict, whilst ethnic cleavage correlates with shorter regimes and higher non-state conflict. This gives us some indication that social cleavages do affect the durability of regimes, and that mostly this seems to be through the mechanism of non-state conflict.

Furthermore, given that the only category of regime that is expected to rule longer within ethnically cleaved contexts are those that are electorally competitive, I think this might also be the key to understanding why. If we connect this all the way back to Donno's findings we know that these types of regimes are typically weak to oppositional coalitions. The power of these regimes is contingent on electoral success, at least to a larger degree than the hegemonic or residual categories. If ethnic cleavages make the population less likely to unify against the incumbent, and in extreme cases causes non-state conflict between the potential opposition groups, this will only further strengthen the regime. HARs and the residual category are not as reliant upon electoral success and thus what seems to be a primary advantage of such cleavage is less advantageous for them and does not make up for the costs of increased conflict as a result.

To reiterate, social cleavages are a complex phenomena and even cleavages along similar lines within differing countries will in all likelihood not look or function identically. How these questions of ethnicity and socioeconomic status are treated and seen will not be uniform. In order to counteract this I used very thin and

highly generalised conceptualisations of these cleavages to maximise applicability worldwide. Since these proved to have interactions with non-state conflict there is potentially further work to be done refining these measures. One way this could be done is to further add intension to the measure which if done correctly could more accurately capture variations. This would of course decrease the concepts' generalisability. But if another component is added that accurately reflects some additional aspect of social cleavage theory that can be measured in a way compatible with a statistical method, this could be a way to further increase the validity of these measures. There is of course much more that could be done than just marginal adjustments of this study. For instance another research puzzle that has become relevant in light of the conclusions chapter is the question of why economic cleavage in other studies is a significant predictor of civil war, but instead prevents non-state conflict as documented within this study.

From these findings and what we know previously from the articles in the field that I mentioned it seems further quantitative work on the civil societies of autocracies could be a fruitful endeavour for our understanding of them. In particular a model which can differentiate cleavage effects on specific types of conflict could be one way of integrating these findings with the others on cleavages and civil war which would intuitively seem to be the next step in continuing the work within this research-niche. Considering the effects ethnic cleavage had on non-state conflict it does not seem too far fetched to examine this within democracies. Although these types of conflicts might be seen as rare within rich democracies there are still many poorer and more violent democracies around the world, where this in all likelihood could be analysed.

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Appendix

Due to the large amount of data included in the study's dataset I choose to submit it as a separate file from the article itself. This appendix includes a list of the variables included within the dataset, their meaning and any necessary formulas.

Cowcode - Country code that is used to identify countries numerically.

Year - Float variable that counts the years for each following observation within the same country.

Gwf_country - String variable containing country names.

Gwf_casename - String variable that identifies distinct regimes, which can be within the same country.

Gwf_startdate + enddate - float variables that describe the start years and end years of regimes.

Gwf_spell - Time invariant count of number of years in power.

Gwf_duration - Time variable that counts the years in power.

Gwf_fail - Binary variable where a value of 1 indicates regime failure.

Regime - Categorical string variable that identifies either Residual, hegemonic or competitive authoritarian regimes. What decides this designation is based on the liec and eiec indices from the DPI dataset. These two indices indicate electoral competitiveness for the legislature and executive. A regime is considered hegemonic if it has a value of 6 or 5 on either index. Competitive regimes need a value of 7 on either index for that classification. The residual category consists of the remaining autocratic regimes that fell outside of the data for electoral competitiveness.

Conftot - This variable stands for total yearly non-state conflicts recorded by UCDP. It was created by compounding the number of conflicts that matched for year and country into single yearly observations.

Interval - Variable from the EPR dataset that sums up for what time period each groups political status is recorded for.

Aggcl - This is the ethnic cleavage variable that I have created. The EPR dataset observations are done by ethnic group and not country and also for larger time intervals instead of continuous. I therefore take the sum of this formula: $\sum (P_n \cdot S_n)$ = aggcl. I then drop the all group observations except for `_n==1` within the dataset. From there on I use the expand command in stata by the value of of the corresponding intervals. Then I create a year counter for every regime in order to make the dataset mergeable with the main one.

Ecocl - Economic cleavage variable $(0.1 / ws) + (0.9 / (1 - ws)) = ecocl$
Where ws is WID's variable for wealthshare held by the top 10% of the population.

Regimecode - numerical codes that identify to each distinct regime for purposes of panel data regressions.