Beyond Democracy-Dictatorship Measures

A New Framework Capturing Executive Bases of Power, 1789-2016

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1. Introduction

This paper suggests a new theoretical framework that goes beyond extant dichotomous, typological, and continuous measure of dictatorship and democracy. While both typologies and continua are useful for varying research questions, we argue that extant regime measures miss critical variation in terms executive's bases of power, by appointment and dismissal. We argue that conceptually, as well as empirically, this variation is to a large extent independent of extant regime types/continua and in that sense, our theoretical framework "cuts across" them. We capture that variation by five dimensions, and show empirically that they are to varying degrees independent of extant regime measures. In addition, we show how the framework, and the measures of it, can shed new light on situations where the widely used selectorate theory's predictions are wrong, and generate a set of novel hypothesis from those excursions.

The distinction between autocracies and democracies is probably the most widespread existing categorization of regimes. Yet, since it glosses over vital variation in the underlying structure of regime types, the field has produced finer-grained typologies parsing different types of democracies and autocracies. For example, students of democracy often distinguish between presidential and parliamentary democracies,[1] commonly also allowing for the hybrid type of "semi-presidentialism".[2] These precisions demonstrate that the ways in which chief executives are appointed to and dismissed from 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.

Correspondingly, scholars observe that "different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy",[3] and accordingly distinguish alternatively

between single-party, military and personalist dictatorships;[4] civilian, military and monarchical dictatorships;[5] closed dictatorships, hegemonic and competitive electoral authoritarian regimes;[6] or monarchical, military, single-party, multiparty and no-party autocracies.[7] Again, distinctions between pathways to and dismissal from executive power are found consequential across a range of important outcomes, such as longevity, probability of democratic transitions, economic development, and prowess to civil war.[8]

We argue that, regardless of whether one holds the view that the difference between democracy and dictatorship is a difference in kind or degree,[9] an unresolved issue is that both of these literatures ignore the other side of the crossroads. Is it really the case that authoritarian bases of executive power in terms of accession and dismissal are never relevant when analyzing democratic regimes, and the other way around? We argue that they are.

Consider, for example, Cheibub's[10] theory of why presidential democracies are less long-lived than parliamentary. According to Cheibub, this is not due to that these democracies are presidential *per se* but because of a "military-presidential nexus" leading to presidentialism replacing military regimes. Yet, even if Cheibub's[11] approach is based on a crisp distinction between "democracy" and "dictatorship", the theory assumes that the military continues to be a political actor in democracies since this is key to explain why presidential democracies superseding military dictatorships are less long-lived. We thus need to include authoritarian bases for executive power also when analyzing democracies.

Seen from the other side of the divide, consider an autocracy dressed up like a democracy.[12] Also known as "hybrid regimes",[13] "electoral authoritarianism"[14] or "competitive authoritarian regimes",[15] they allow for multiple parties to compete in seemingly democratic elections, but

are due to different types of illicit tactics far from the democratic regime end of the continuum. Having many of the trappings of democracy, the extent to which hybrid regimes are of the "presidential" or the "parliamentary" type is surprisingly underexplored – not to mention the extent to which this matters for political dynamics, regime change, or survival. With notably few exceptions,[16] this question has never been seriously examined.

The purpose of this paper is to address this problem by submitting a new theoretical framework that is relevant for the regimes *writ large*. We accomplish this by theorizing five bases of executive power, by appointment and dismissal: hereditary, military, ruling party, direct election, and confidence. We argue that these five dimensions are conceptually distinct making it possible to measure them separately, and demonstrate empirically that a regime in a particular country and point in time may exhibit more than one basis for appointment and/or dismissal simultaneously. Hence, we do *not* propose another regime typology, but a theoretical framework of key regime dimensions that may be more or less present simultaneously in various polities at different points in time.[17] Drawing on data from the Varieties of Democracy project,[18] we provide theoretically justified measures of these five dimensions that are available for a global sample of 192 countries from 1789-2016. We compare and contrast these five continuous dimensions to extant typological approaches and demonstrate that the five dimensions provide a more encompassing understanding of the bases of executive power across regimes. Finally, we present three exploratory probes into three outcomes of interest – repression, corruption, and the survival of individual heads of state and government – showing that the well-established selectorate theory[19] fails to account for important empirical outcomes. With the new framework we instead generate a novel set of hypotheses demonstrating the theoretical value added.

2. A Theoretical Framework: Five Bases of Executive Power, by Appointment and Dismissal

Our theoretical framework rests on two assumptions. First, we presume there are sovereign or semi-sovereign political units in need of some form of governmental structure functionally differentiated from the surrounding society.[20] Second, we assume that governments of these units are headed by an executive performing two central functions: (a) representing the state unit in relation to other state units; and (b) acting as the chief officer of the executive branch of government, typically by presiding over a cabinet responsible for the day-to-day governing. If these two functions, which we call the head of state (HOS) and the head of government (HOG) respectively, are performed by the same person the executive is unitary. The executive is nominally dual if the two functions are carried out by two different persons,[21] but taking the relative power of the HOS vis-a-vis the HOG into account, nominally dual systems may be unitary in practice.

Given these assumptions, we submit that five bases of executive power, by appointment and dismissal (or *de facto* dimensions of leadership selection), jointly account for most significant variation of executives not captured in extant typologies/interval regime measures. Across the five dimensions, we hold as a general *dictum* that appointment rules should be given equal status to dismissal rules,[22] although for measurement purposes we cannot always incorporate both aspects. In the following, we theorize the distinguishing features of each dimension in the framework, treated here in their "ideal-type" condition.

1. Hereditary Dimension: Hereditary succession is invoked when lineage or bloodline is a basis for accession to executive power. The clearest instance is inheritance of the throne in monarchies, such as through primogeniture (from father to son) or agnatic seniority (from

brother to eldest brother).[23] But a decision within a royal family, as is typically practiced in today's Gulf monarchies, also scores high on the hereditary dimension as long as bloodline to the former chief executive is the basis for the succession order.[24] The historically quite common practice of electing kings (in the Holy Roman Empire, for example) highlights the fact that monarchies are not necessarily based on hereditary succession.[25]

By definition, hereditary succession implies tenure for life, even if in practice a monarch can step down and hand over to the successor before actually passing away. At first glance this would seem to imply that the hereditary dimension only applies to the appointment, not the dismissal, of the executive. What should matter for the behavior of the holder of executive office, however, is whether he or she *expects* ex ante to be replaced by hereditary succession after having deceased.[26] In effect, hereditary succession is thus more important as a dismissal than as an appointment rule. This also affects how we treat contemporary examples of *de facto* hereditary succession from father to son, such as the Alievs in Azerbaijan or the al-Assads in Syria,[27] where the basis of bloodline is not invoked explicitly and hence cannot be assumed to form the expectation for the future. Accordingly, these cases do not score high on the dimension of hereditary succession.[28]

2. The Military Dimension: This dimension comes into play to the extent that appointment or the dismissal of the executive is based on the threat or actual use of force.[29] The most obvious example of this in action is a military coup d'état. The military is archetypally controlling the vast majority of the monopoly of violence bestowing the state with internal sovereignty. It is typically directly or indirectly involved in any successful coup whether a violent takeover staged by the military itself, or headed by a civilian (or a group of civilians) with some level of tacit approval of the military.[30]

Executive appointment can also be based on a *threat* of force highlighting the fact that the military, the security apparatus or other actors with high capacity to use of force, can to varying degrees rule behind the scenes, occasionally controlling seemingly peaceful and regular alternations of civilians to the helm of the executive.[31] One might even argue that "violence is an ever-present and ultimate arbiter of conflicts in authoritarian politics",[32] and from that deduce that any other basis of power for leadership appointment and dismissal could always be overruled (or always need to be undergirded) by force. Yet, that would arguably be overstretching it. A substantial number of peaceful leadership successions in the world occur without an engaged consent by the military, security agencies, or other such institutions, even in autocratic regimes.[33] In order to score on the military dimension, we therefore impose that the military as an institution must either (a) be directly involved in the staging of a coup or (b) to some degree actively control the appointment or dismissal of the executive.

3. Ruling Party Dimension: The ruling, or single-party dimension applies to the extent that appointment or dismissal of the executive is to some degree influenced by the rank-and-file of a (*de facto*) single or dominant political party, defined as "an organization that pursues a goal of placing its avowed representatives in government positions".[34] It is important to note this does not require internal party democracy. To the contrary, this dimension materialized in its extreme is the Leninist democratic-centralist party in which higher ranks *de facto* control lower levels of the organization, and where all other parties are banned. Yet, as the case of South Africa makes clear, a *de facto* dominant party is compatible with multiparty elections, universal suffrage and even modestly clean elections. While obviously incompatible with full democracy, executive appointment and dismissal can thus be characterized by the ruling party dimension to varying degrees across regimes.

The typical appointment procedure captured by the ruling party dimension is based on the tacit approval by a congress of party members, or a select group of party minions at the top level.[35] The criterion of *direct* appointment is important, however. This distances the dimension from settings in which nominations of candidates by a party leadership is confirmed by the electorate. Barring term limits, direct appointment in this dimension also implies powers of dismissal. If the party can appoint the incumbent's successor without restraint, by implication it can also dismiss the incumbent.

4. Direct Election Dimension: This dimension captures the extent to which the executive's basis of power is dependent on being directly elected by the population, or indirectly if the intermediate electoral college performs a mechanical function by weighing votes differently across constituencies, such as in the United States.[36] Second, the "by the population" requirement precludes (direct) election by an intermediate body, as in many medieval electoral monarchies for example. Finally, we define "elections" minimally and require nothing in terms of the *share* of the population that is entitled to vote, nor in terms of the competitiveness or fairness of the election process. Thus, this dimensions is also applicable across the regime spectrum.

Since very few presidents get elected for life,[37] one could argue that appointment through direct election implies an expectation of continued appointment through direct election, and that there is therefore also the possibility of dismissal through direct election. However, since extremely few states in the world practices executive recall elections at the national level,[38] we maintain that the direct election dimension in practice only applies to executive appointment.

5. Confidence Dimension: This dimension applies to the extent that the executive's survival in office rests on the confidence of a legislature. The confidence requirement can be institutionalized in several different ways. One version is the investiture vote cast when a cabinet is appointed. Another is the vote of no confidence by a legislative majority (or plurality) forcing the executive to step down. Some systems also allow for a motion from the floor of the legislature or initiatives of the government itself leading to removal from office.[39] Although constitutive in definitions of parliamentarism typically associated only with democracies,[40] it can also be found to varying degrees as a *de facto* basis for executive power in other regimes as long as they have legislatures.

The key characteristic captured by this fifth dimension when it is fully developed is thus that a legislature has power to dismiss the executive, should it wish to do so. Implicit approval by the legislature in the appointment of the executive is not enough, unless it is accompanied by the unequivocal power to dismiss. This excludes the standard impeachment procedure, which by definition implies only a conditional power to dismiss the executive, for example on grounds of serious crime. Symmetric to the dimension of direct election, the nature of procedure through which the legislature itself is elected is irrelevant to the definition. The legislature may thus be elected in single- or multiparty, competitive or sham elections, or be appointed. Again, there is no necessary relationship to extant regime types or continua.

When this dimension is fully realized, the prototypical executive subject to confidence is dual, and the vote of (no) confidence applies to a head of government who is not simultaneously head of state. But this dimension may apply also to unified executives.[41] This brings "semi-presidentialism" to the fore, typically defined as some combination of a directly elected head of state ("president") and a head of government ("prime minister/premier") ruling on the basis

of confidence.[42] This also exemplifies that more than one dimension usually applies to a varying degree in specific regimes, and clearly delineating the bases for executive power by appointment and dismissal as in the present framework, precisely allows for identifying such dispensations.

The Residual: There are some rare bases for appointment and dismissal not captured by this theoretical framework. Switzerland, for example, has a unique executive that, apart from being collective, can be characterized as the negation of *all* the five bases captured by the dimensions above. The Swiss Federal Council is certainly not hereditary; it is not imposed by the threatened or actual use of force by the military; it does not emanate from the echelons of a ruling party; it is not directly elected by popular vote; and it cannot be voted out of office by a vote of censure or no confidence by the legislature.[43] 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.[44] We shall treat the Swiss system as "*sui generis*" together with a mixed bag of a few other uniquely devised executives and "institutionless polities"[45] where none of the five dimensions apply, such as Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, and thus refrain from theorizing this (small group) further.[46]

3. Data and Measurement

To operationalize the theoretical framework of five dimensions, we rely on data from Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). The V-Dem dataset (v7.1) covers 178 country units (sovereign or semi-sovereign territories) from 1900 to 2016,[47] but by also including the historical V-Dem dataset we incorporate data on 81 units from 1789.[48] Table 1 provides an overview of the indicators (questions and response categories) used to measure each dimension. As advised above, the direct election dimension is meaningfully measured only through appointment,

whereas the confidence dimension only applies to dismissal. The three remaining dimensions have measures of both appointment and dismissal. To allow both sides of the dimensions to come into play, we then use the average of the two. All measures are scaled to range from 0 to 1.[49] In nominally dual systems, where the head of state (HOS) and the head of government (HOG) is not the same individual, V-Dem provides data separately for the HOS and the HOG. The dataset includes information, including names and titles, of 3,937 individual HOSs and 2,874 HOGs (as well as for 196 leaders who have served as both HOS and HOG). We determine the relative power of the HOS *vis-a-vis* the HOG by comparing the two executives' power over the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers (see Appendix A for details on question wording). We then aggregate across the two executives by taking the average weighted by their relative powers over cabinet formation and dismissal.

TABLE 1. Measuring the Five Dimensions

Dimension	Appointment measure	Dismissal measures
	How did the head of state/government reach office?	*Which of the following bodies have the power (de facto) to remove the head of state/government?*
1. Hereditary	"Through hereditary succession"; or "Appointed by a royal council"	"A royal council"
2. Military	"Through the threat of or application of force, such as a coup or rebellion"; or "Appointed by the military"	"The military"
3. Ruling party	"Appointed by the ruling party (in a one-party system)"	"The ruling party or party leadership body"
4. Direct Election	"Directly elected"	*NA*
5. Confidence	*NA*	"The legislature, without having to level accusations of unlawful activity and without the involvement of any other agency"†

† See Appendix A on the variables v2exremhsp/v2exremhog for the exact question wording for the confidence measure.

The dimensions can be simultaneously manifest to varying degrees at any particular time in a political unit. In principle, one could imagine an executive with a directly elected monarch that could be deposed alternatively by the royal house, the military, a ruling party, and through a

vote of no confidence in the legislature, although this extreme is nowhere to find in practice. As shown in Appendix D, empirical patterns confirm that the dimensions are only modestly negatively correlated, and that executives typically score to some degree on several of them. The hereditary dimension is negatively correlated with the others in the range of –.16 (with the military) to –.26 (with the confidence dimension). Other than that, correlations are indisputably weak with the next strongest correlation between the direct election and confidence dimensions at –.09. Thus, the dimensions are both conceptually distinct, and by and large empirically independent of each other.

In Figure 1, we present summary statistics for the five measures from 1789-2016.[50] The separate horizontal bar graphs for each displays their mean, between- and within-country variation, respectively. In terms of prevalence across the last two centuries, the ruling party dimension has been the least present basis for executive power by appointment and dismissal, by a small margin trumped by the hereditary dimension. The military and direct election dimensions have both been more prominent, while perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the most prevalent dimension has been the confidence requirement. These overall averages mask huge amounts of variation both within- and among countries, however. Particularly noteworthy is the variation within countries, which for all dimensions except the hereditary is on par with or larger than the between-country variation. There is thus ample variability to explore with these measures also when country-fixed effects are taken into account.

FIGURE 1. Descriptive statistics of five regime dimensions

[See file 'Figure 1.pdf']

Note: No of observations: 23,439; no of countries: 192; average no of years per country: 122.

Figure 2 displays the global development since the French revolution (smoothed by 5-year averages). Since V-Dem covers a much larger sample of countries from the beginning of the 20th century than the historical V-Dem sample in the 19th century, the graph is split at the year 1900. Levels should thus only be compared before or after that split, but the general trends are not sensitive to this. As should be expected, there has been a decline in the prevalence of hereditary succession, and a steady uptake in executives scoring higher on direct election and the confidence requirement, particularly in the last decades. Direct election is today the most prevalent of all dimensions. Both the military and ruling party dimensions as bases of executive power have been in decline over the last decades. Naturally, such trends hide significant spatial variation across the world. As shown in Appendix E, the military dimension has been most present in the Americas and Africa, whereas hereditary rule has dominated in Europe and Asia. Similarly, direct election is more prevalent in the Americas, the confidence requirement in Europe. Party rule displays no clear pattern of regional variation.

FIGURE 2. Global trends, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 2.pdf']

Note: Lines display global means aggregated at 5-year intervals; the vertical lines at 1895-1900 mark where the historical V-Dem country sample shifts to the contemporary V-Dem country sample.

4. Comparison with extant regime typologies

We now turn to an exploration of how our dimensional measures compare to extant regime typologies. In Figure 3, we map our five dimensions onto the six categories of Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland[51], which is the classification scheme closest in spirit to ours. The general patterns mostly confirm that our regime dimensions are picking up what they are expected to: the confidence dimension is strongest in parliamentary democracies, direct election in presidential

democracies, the military dimension in military dictatorships, and hereditary succession in monarchies. The patterns also show that semi-presidential democracies are dominated by the combination of direct election and the confidence requirement, as expected, interestingly with the latter being most prevalent. The ruling party dimension is also most prevalent in civilian dictatorships, but this category is even more marked by the presence of direct election.

FIGURE 3. Comparison to Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 1946-2008

[See file 'Figure 3.pdf']

Note: No of observations: 8,071; no of countries: 170; average no of years per country: 47.

A comparison with the Geddes, Wright and Frank[52] typology (see Appendix F) support the same general conclusion, with the addition that personalist regimes, not surprisingly, rely on a mixture of military force and direct elections. These patterns speak to the congruent validity of our measures.[53]

Critically, these comparisons also expose important differences that speak to the added value of the theoretical framework suggested here. Notably, there is still important variation in the prevalence of our dimensions within each of the extant regime categories. This demonstrates the tendency among extant typologies to collapse multiple, conceptually different dimensions of both authoritarian and democratic politics into mutually exclusive categories.[54] We can now reveal hitherto unexplored patterns depicted in Figure 2, such as the military presence in all three types of "democracies," or the co-existence of military rule, ruling party dominance, direct elections *and* confidence requirements in "civilian dictatorships" or "party regimes".[55]

Second, and by implication, our five dimensions of the bases of executive power by appointment and dismissal, are present on both sides of the criså divide between democracies

and dictatorships that part of the literature depends on. As is further illustrated in Figures 4 and 5, this also applies across the regime continua that adherents of continuous approaches prefer. These box plots show how two core aspects of electoral democracy, or "polyarchy",[56] vary within and between observations covered by our regime five dimensions. For purposes of expositional clarity we rely here on dichotomized versions of our five dimensional measures, only taking executive appointment into account, which means we are effectively underestimating the extent to which our measures cover overlapping segments of the democracy-dictatorship continuum. Figure 4 shows how elections, to the extent they are at all held, are generally less free and fair when executives are appointed through military force. Less self-evident, however, is that elections under directly elected executives are about as marred by fraud when hereditary succession dominates as when executives are elected according to the ruling party mechanism. Even more importantly, there is great variation in election integrity under the presence of each of our dimensions, and large overlap in how free and fair elections are across them. The only elections that really stand out in terms of freedom and fairness are the ones held under an executive subject to the confidence requirement. With this major exception, the measures we propose here thus evidently captures important variation in dimensions of bases of power of executives in both more authoritarian and more democratic settings.

FIGURE 4. Free and fair elections, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 4.pdf']

Note: To allow dichotomous classifications the first four dimensions have here been measured by appointment only, the confidence requirement after collapsing the ordinal scale at the category "yes" (1<); *n* refers to the number of elections covered by each dimension when set to 1. The shaded boxes depict the 25th and 75th percentile of the

each variables distribution, the vertical white stripe inside boxes the median, the whiskers the upper and lower adjacent values (extending two thirds the width of each box). Observations marked with a dot are extreme values.

With respect to suffrage, showed in Figure 5, the overlap is less pronounced with executives appointed through hereditary succession typically residing over very restricted electorates, whereas party rule almost without exception implies universal suffrage (hence, the "box" here is outside the range of the figure to the right). As the broad boxes for the other three dimensions show, however, one cannot assume that certain regime dimensions are predestined to coincide with the democratic principle of full participation (suffrage). The military principle dimension illustrates this most clearly, with suffrage extensions ranging from the very limited to universal, but the range is almost the same within regimes ruled by executives relying more on the confidence requirement as those where the direct election dimension is strong .

FIGURE 5. Extension of the suffrage, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 5.pdf']

Note: See note under Figure 4; *n* however here refers to the number of country years covered for each dimension when set to 1. The reason that no box appears for ruling party is that both its median and 25th percentile is at 1.

As a final point distinguishing our measures from extant typologies, the length of our time-series is unprecedented: approximately four times longer than that of Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland[57] and Geddes, Wright and Frank[58], and about twice as long as that of Archigos[59]. Research on issues such as how leaders select policy, the effect on their survival and on other outcomes of interest, can now be explored going all the way back to the late 18th century.

5. Exploratory Probes

We now turn to some systematic probes of the five dimensions value added by approaching the determinants of repression, rent-seeking or corruption, and leadership survival. These have been chosen in order to present different important policy outcomes across democratic and authoritarian regimes where some reasonable theoretical expectations can be drawn from the widely accepted selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita *et al*.[60]. This theory relies on only two regime dimensions: the size of the selectorate (*S*) and the size of the winning coalition (*W*). But the authors also argue that "all nominal regime types" can be mapped onto this two-dimensional space. In effect they argue that both monarchies and military regimes have both a small *S* and a small *W*; that single-party regimes have a large *S* and small *W*; that presidential regimes have a large *S* and a *W* at around .5; and that parliamentary regimes have a similarly large *S* but a *W* of less than .5.[61] We do *not* measure such distinct, mutually exclusive, regime types but instead dimensions of the power-base of executives in terms of both appointment and dismissal that can (in principle) be present simultaneously to varying degrees. Yet, we can derive expectations from selectorate theory on how our measures should perform in explaining the three outcomes of interest. This also leads to identification of some empirical anomalies that cannot be easily resolved with the selectorate theory, generating a set of new hypotheses congruent with descriptive analysis of global data covering 227 years in these probes. This arguably demonstrates also the theoretical importance and potential of the theoretical framework proposed here.

To maximize the number of valid observations, and since the analyses below should mainly be seen as exploratory probes, the outcome measures are also taken from the V-Dem data, but (with the partial exception of corruption) from other than the executives survey.[62] We systematically control for three auxiliary conditions: whether the executive is unified or

nominally dual; the measure of the relative power of the HOS *vis-à-vis* the HOG; and the presence of foreign rule.[63] To handle the potential overlap between the confidence dimension and the "assembly-independent" regimes such as Switzerland[64] constituting most of the residual, we 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, we control for the two key aspects of democracy used in the analysis above to show that the dimensions cuts across democracy and autocracy: the extension of the suffrage and the fairness of elections. We thus control for both inclusion and contestation, in Dahl's[65] famous diction. Unless noted otherwise, tests are based on time series of up to 228 years within 192 political units.

Repression

Following Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*[66], the smaller *W* (winning coalition), in particular in relation to *S* (size of the selectorate), the less executives can rely on the loyalty of their supporters, and the more they must coerce their acquiescence. "In summary", write Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*[67],

> 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, as noted above, the ruling party dimension should correspond to the smallest *W* in relation to *S*, it should be expected to have the strongest (positive) effect on repression. Executives relying to a greater degree on the hereditary succession or the military dimensions, by contrast, have both a small *W* and *S*, and should thus use less repression than when the ruling party dimension dominates, yet more than rulers that are directly elected or rely more on the

confidence dimension. Finally, since *W* is typically larger for directly elected executives who have to win a majority of votes, than for executives dependent on confidence associated with minority governments,[68] selectorate theory predicts the direct election dimension to result in less repression compared to the confidence dimension.

Figure 6 presents results from two basic specifications (the complete results are found in Appendix H). First, a simple cross-country regression pooling across all years and country units, with robust standard errors clustered on the latter, shows the descriptive relationships to repression.[69] The second panel has country- and year-fixed effects added. Although still another descriptive summary of differences between the dimensions, this test thus puts emphasis on within-country variation over time (while also controlling for the possibility of co-trending in the dimensions and the outcome).

FIGURE 6. Levels of repression, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 6.pdf']

Note: Regression coefficients, without (left-hand panel) and including (right-hand) country- and year-fixed effects, with controls as discussed in the text above. No of observations: 22,782; no of countries: 192.

The selectorate-theory prediction that executives dominated by a ruling party are more repressive is supported by the data in both panels. While neither the military nor the hereditary dimension are statistically significantly related to the use of repression (when country-fixed effects are applied), the relative size of the coefficients among the three are in accordance with selectorate theory. What this theory fails to predict, however, is the less repressive nature of executives scoring high on the confidence compared to the direct elections dimension. Note that levels of "democracy" does not explain this difference since both the extension of the suffrage and freedom and fairness of elections are used as controls. This presents a puzzle, but one that we suggest opens up for formulating a new hypothesis. There is an extensive literature[70]

on differences between the winner-takes-all logic of directly elected executives (typically presidential systems) and the consensus-building logic encouraging compromise in the legislature to ascertain a legislative majority in systems dominated by the confidence dimension (typically parliamentary systems). The costs of losing a direct election with 50 percent minus one vote are exceedingly high. The incumbent holding executive office as well as all political appointees, associated staff, and political allies risk losing everything they have in terms of influence and gains from office. Even the slightest threat to the hold on to power (not only the extreme situation of a one-vote difference) thus should present strong incentives to use repressive tactics to avert this hazard. Even if the person holding executive office may not be so inclined, strong pressures should come from all those dependent on that person staying in office.

In a regime where the confidence dimension scores high, the incentives from gains and losses in the legislature should be much less dramatic. Legislative majorities can typically be achieved by several constellations and via the committee system with iterative deliberation over multiple issue-areas most groups/parties can usually sustain some status, influence, and other gains. Even in authoritarian settings, the bargaining and relative gains potential of legislatures has been shown to be used as an alternative to repression.[71] Hence, in contrast to the prediction from the established selectorate theory, we hypothesize that the need to repress rivals is diminished in systems dominated by confidence requirement compared to direct election dimension.

Corruption

Turning next to rent-seeking or corruption,[72] selectorate theory predicts that executives founded by small winning coalitions (W) will have fewer incentives to reduce corruption, and might

even endorse corruption as a way of rewarding supporters, particularly when *S* is large. By implication, when the power basis of and executive score high on the ruling party dimension, it should be more corrupt than when relying more on hereditary succession or the military. Moreover, those scoring high on the confidence requirement should also be expected to be more corrupt than directly elected executives.[73]

FIGURE 7. Levels of corruption, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 7.pdf']

Note: Same as for Fig. 6 above. No of observations: 22,549; no of countries: 192.

The results in Figure 7 run counter to selectorate theory predictions. While executives heavily dependent on the military have small winning coalitions and also appear to be more corrupt on average, according to Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*[74] they have larger *W* relative to *S* than executives more dependent on the ruling party dimension, yet the latter are significantly *less* corrupt on average (when country-fixed effects are applied). Selectorate theory can neither explain why executives scoring high on the hereditary dimension do not have a similar effect on corruption to those scoring high on the military dimension when they have a similar *W*/*S* ratio. Finally, and again contrary to expectations generated by the established selectorate theory, executives where the direct election dimension is prevailing display a significant positive influence on corruption, whereas executives relying more on confidence are neither more nor less corrupt on average. In conclusion, the perhaps most established theory seems to fail largely on all accounts in this analysis.

Amongst others, Charron and Lapuente[75] suggest an intuition for the anomaly regarding executives more dependent on the military: these are typically short-lived (see also below). Another consistent finding[76] is that one of the strongest predictors of military coups is the past

number of coups in that country. Hence, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that executives scoring high on the military dimension would necessarily lead to shorter time-horizons than both their single-party and hereditary counterparts. Therefore their motivations to loot and by corrupt acts amass as much wealth as possible in the short-term are greater. The short duration and the fact that executives more dependent on the military are frequently overthrown by actors from within their own ranks, also suggests a lack of the kind of loyalty that can be mustered using a guiding ideology that ruling party executives often can provide, or a foundational myth that lineage traditions usually have. This provides intuition for another hypothesis: that executives have strong incentives to allow others in "the selectorate" to be corrupt as a way of buying the loyalty they need, when they depend more on military force to stay in power.

Regarding the failure of selectorate theory to predict the higher levels of corruption in systems where the direct election dimension dominates, a plausible intuition comes from Gerring *et al.*'s[77] conjecture that in the absence of a directly elected president, legislatures function as coordination devices that can thus help actors solve the collection-action problem of corruption.[78] The literature on presidential *vs.* parliamentary systems (referred to in the introduction above), also provides additional intuitions about differences in incentives and possibilities for corruption. The differences in opportunities stems from the dominance of the directly elected executive with vast influence over most issue-areas, that often comes with a large number of political appointees that are personally dependent on being in favors with the executive. The incentives stems from the same fact, making the directly elected executive more incentivized to accept corruption among those who are loyal, to avoid the high-stake risk of losing everything. Following the reasoning above about the nature of winner-takes-all distinct to executives scoring very high on the direct election dimension (and in some ways reminiscent of executives dependent on the military), thus leads us to hypothesize that both incentives and

opportunities for corruption should be greater in these executives than in the ones dominated by the confidence dimension. This is another building block in future theory-building that our probes based on the theoretical framework of executive appointment and dismissal provides.

Survival

As a final exploratory probe we turn to the survival of executives in office. Figure 8 presents the results of two Cox proportional hazards models, one including all executives, the other excluding executives with no power over the appointment or dismissal of cabinet ministers. Since the individual executive is the unit of interest in this analysis, HOSs and HOGs are entered separately, but by also taking into account whether the executive is nominally dual and the relative powers of HOSs and HOGs, we also control for that feature of the data.[79] As an additional check on country-specific sources of variance, standard errors are cluster by country.

FIGURE 8. Executive survival in office, 1789-2016

[See file 'Figure 8.pdf']

Note: Hazard ratios from a Cox regression, including all executives (left-hand), and only those with some power over the appointment or dismissal of cabinet ministers (right-hand panel). The controls are the same as in Fig. 6 and 7.

Selectorate theory predicts that executives with small *W* should enjoy longer tenure,[80] but this holds only for the hereditary dimension that seems to be associated with the most long-tenured executives by far. Executives scoring higher on the military dimension as a basis for power, by contrast, are significantly less durable on average despite predictions from selectorate theory. Contrary to previous studies,[81] we do *not* find that scoring high on the strong party rule dimension makes executives more secure in their seat. Rather, scoring higher on party rule as basis for appointment and dismissal has no significant influence on survival in office. The latter turns out to be a function of the unprecedented length of time the new data covers. Restricting

the sample to the 20th century only, akin to previous studies, the hazard ratio for ruling party executives is significantly lower than 1 (implying longer duration of rule; see Appendix Table H2, Model 3). We therefor hypothesize that longevity is not related to the size of *W*, but in the case of executives strong on the hereditary dimension it is rather a function of the comparative advantage this system enjoys in terms of solving the problem of leadership succession.[82]

Building on the intuition and extant findings about executives where the military mostly decide appointment and dismissal, we hypothesize that the nature of the underlying logic where force is the main arbitrator is also the reason for instability. The more the force has been used efficaciously to assert executive power, the more likely it should be to reoccur, in an almost self-reinforcing manner. Thus, the reasoning here regarding differences stemming from the hereditary and military dimensions produces a set of predictions different from selectorate theory, but that are congruent with the descriptive data at hand.[83]

5. Conclusion

This article provides a new theoretical framework of five dimensions for appointing and dismissing the executive that cut across the democracy-autocracy regime spectrum: the hereditary dimension, where the executive is appointed for life-long service based on bloodline; the military dimension, where either the executive is directly appointed by the military, or where the survival of the executive is actively controlled by the military through the actual or threatened use of force; third, the ruling party dimension, where the executive directly emerges from or can be dismissed by the rank-and-file of a party organization; fourth, the directly elected dimension, where the executive is directly and popularly elected; and fifth, the confidence dimension, where executive dismissal is based on the confidence of the majority of the legislature.

We propose novel measures of these five dimensions based on *de facto* procedures for appointing, and on tacit powers to dismiss, the executive, for a global sample of 192 countries 1789-2016. We demonstrate how the five measure each capture variation across the democracy-autocracy spectrum, as well as more nuanced variation within the mutually exclusive categories of extant regime typologies such as Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland[84] and Geddes, Wright and Frantz[85].

Finally, we demonstrate that while controlling for some auxiliary characteristics and, most importantly, the extension of the suffrage and fairness of elections, these measures explain a substantial portion of cross-country and within-country over-time variation in the level of repression, rent-seeking or corruption, and leadership survival. The well-established selectorate theory[86] does not fare well in in predicting these outcomes, and we use the discrepancies to generate a set of new hypotheses as a foundation for better theory.

As a final set of remarks, we would like to highlight some of our data's main limitations. First, as should be clear by now, we are not offering another regime typology. For students interested in, for example, crisp start and end dates of regimes; the nature of their support groups in a more sociological sense; and what the causes and consequences are of regime transitions, should thus look elsewhere for data. That said, the appointment measures we employ are more typological in nature, since they are coded in mutually exclusive categories. They can thus be usefully employed in combination with, or as a way of validating, other categorical regime measures. Second, as implied by the analyses presented above, one should be careful in drawing conclusions from our dimensions while controlling for the full set of democratic institutions implied by, for example, Dahl's[87] famous concept of polyarchy. When thinking about Dahl's

different institutional guarantees,[88] one should in particular be careful with combining the one called "elected offices" with our dimensions of direct election and the confidence requirement, since they are of course intrinsically related. There is also, by nature, a very strong relationship between our dimension of ruling party and the polyarchy component of "associational autonomy," since such autonomy is very much restricted in most single party regimes. Third, and finally, although our measures in principle allow for within-leader variation, so that both appointment and dismissal rules can vary across the term of any single HOS or HOG, there can be a built-in tendency in our data to underestimate such variation. The reason for this is that our information was collected with reference to specific leaders, named separately for the country experts and coders. If conspicuous events, such as constitutional changes, elections or coups (including autogolpes), occurred that in effect changed the appointment or dismissal rule during a leader's term, that should be reflected in our data. But other more subtle changes in informal rules and practices, by contrast, might have flown under the radar of our country experts and coders. These limitations notwithstanding, we believe there are several potential uses for these new measures.

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[1] Linz 1990a; 1990b; Stepan and Skach 1993; Shugart and Carey 1992; Sartori 1997; Cheibub 2007; Norris 2008; Shugart 2009; Gerring, Thacker and Moreno 2009.
[2] Duverger 1980; Elgie 1998; 1999; cf. Siaroff 2003, 2013.
[3] Geddes 1999, 121.
[4] Geddes 1999; 2003, Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014.
[5] Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010.
[6] Lindberg 2009; Schedler 2006, 2013.
[7] Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Wahman, Hadenius and Teorell 2013.
[8] e.g. Gandhi 2008; Svolik 2012; Kailitz 2013.
[9] cf. Collier and Adcock 1999, Munck 2005.
[10] Cheibub 2007.
[11] Cheibub 2007.
[12] Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Wahman, Hadenius and Teorell 2013.
[13] Diamond 2002.

[14] Schedler 2006.
[15] Levitsky and Way 2010.
[16] Norris 2008; Hale 2014; Roberts 2015.
[17] cf. Svolik 2012
[18] Coppedge et al. 2017a; Knutsen et al. 2017.
[19] Bueno de Mesquita *et al*. 2003
[20] Following Coppedge et al 2017c, under certain conditions this includes colonies and other semi-sovereign polities.
[21] Blondel 1984; Elgie 1998; Siaroff 2003.
[22] cf. Cheibub 2007, 36. To see why, consider Shugart and Carey's (1992, Ch. 6) "appointment-dismissal game" between a president and an assembly filling the post of an office holder, where appointment power is deemed equally important as dismissal power due to the first-move advantage ("the power of initiative").
[23] Brownlee 2007; Kokkonen and Sundell 2014.
[24] Herb 1999.
[25] Kokkonen and Sundell 2014; Kurrild-Klitgaard 2000.
[26] Tullock 1987.
[27] Brownlee 2007.
[28] A complicated borderline case is that of North Korea, where successions from father to son has not only happened twice, but where in addition official party propaganda invokes bloodline as the principle underlying the succession (we are grateful to one of our anonymous reviewers for pointing this out). However, as long as there are no formal rules or institutions in North Korea stipulating that also the next leadership succession shall follow dynastic lines, we err on the conservative side of not coding these as instances of hereditary succession but as instances of single party rule (see below).
[29] Nordlinger 1977, 2.
[30] Powell and Thyne 2011.
[31] Finer 1962, Ch. 10-11.
[32] Svolik 2012, 2.
[33] Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009.
[34] Janda 1980, 5; cf. Sartori 1976, 63-4.
[35] Janda 1980; Svolik 2012, chap. 6
[36] While the definition of the archetypal presidential regime is one where the chief executive is (a) directly elected, (b) by the population, and for (c) a fixed term (Sartori 1997; Cheibub 2007; Shugart 2009) we shall focus here on the first two since the third criterion relates to the confidence dimension (our fifth dimension, discussed below). 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 *dimension* of direct election, however, is by definition also invoked when the head of government in a dual executive is directly elected, such as in post-revolutionary Iran, regardless of whether that then also applies to the head of state.
[37] Baturo 2014, 68-9.
[38] Lijphart 1984, 201. The only exceptions we are aware of are Venezuela since 1999 and Taiwan since 1991. We are grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out to us.
[39] Huber 1996.
[40] Sartori 1997; Shugart 2009.
[41] Siaroff 2003, 295; 2013, 145.
[42] Duverger 1980; Shugart and Carey 1992; Elgie 1998; 1999; Shugart 2009.
[43] Siaroff 2013, 145.
[44] Lijphart 1984; Shugart and Carey 1992, 78.

[45] Kailitz 2013, 49.
[46] The exact size of the ”residual” depends on what measurement strategy is being applied (see next section), but by applying the measure combining appointment and dismissal and setting all five measures to zero, only 1,831 country years (or approximately 8 percent out of the total of 23,439) remain in the “residual.”
[47] Coppedge et al. 2017a.
[48] Knutsen et al. 2017. About half of V-Dem’s indicators are factual in nature with data collected by designated research assistants. The other half seeks to measure unobservables using in-depth knowledge held by country experts, who are mostly academics from each country in question. At least five independent experts provide data for each specific question-year-country combination going back to 1900, whereas the historical pre-1900 data is based on a single historian-expert from each country (who also codes an overlap period of 20 years, typically from 1900-1920). With the pool of some 18 million raw data from almost 3,000 country-experts, V-Dem uses a custom-designed Bayesian item response theory (IRT) model to estimate country-date and year point estimates and measures of associated uncertainty on a latent scale, taking country-specific and well as expert-specific characteristics and thresholds into account (Coppedge et al. 2017c; Pemstein et al. 2017). A notable feature of the V-Dem data is that a ”country” is coded throughout its history as a semi-sovereign unit. This implies that most colonies, and also some current semi-independent territories such as Kosovo and the Palestines, are included in the sample. In the sample of 81 units from 1789-1899, 14 ceased to exist during the 19th century. This is why we end up with 192 (178+14) country units. For details on countries covered, and not covered, see Appendix B.
[49] All appointment measures are dummies, and all dismissal measures except for confidence are proportions (the share of experts selecting the response alternative). The one indicator that is measured on a different scale is the confidence requirement, which is based on a latent estimate from the V-Dem measurement model. We rescale this indicator to the same 0-1 range as the other indicators by drawing on the ordinalized version (mapped back to the original 0-3 scale) divided by 3.
[50] For examples of how the separate measures play out in three concrete country examples – Russia, Germany, and Egypt – see Appendix C.
[51] Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010.
[52] Geddes, Wright and Frank 2014.
[53] Although based on fewer categories that are strictly comparable, the same conclusion applies to Archigos (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009; see Appendix G). As one would expect, our military dimension dominates when Archigos classify leadership entry as irregular, whereas confidence and direct election dominate when their classification is irregular entry. The main deviation appears to be the fact that many of our directly elected executives in Archigos terms have irregular entry (see Appendix G). This is a pattern that seem to mostly appear on Sub-Saharan Africa, where many executives originally coming to power through a coup later legitimized their rule through direct election. The explanation for this discrepancy is that whereas Archigos stick to the code for the executives original mode of entry, our coding reflects such later changes (but see discussion in conclusion).
[54] Svolik 2012, 28-32.
[55] Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010.
[56] Dahl 1971. These measures, v2x_suffr and v2xel_frefair, are scaled 0-1 and taken from the V-Dem dataset v7.0. On the construction of Bayesian factor analysis indices, see Coppedge et al. 2017b.
[57] Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010.
[58] Geddes, Wright and Frank 2014.
[59] Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009.

[60] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003.
[61] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 42, 51-54
[62] V-Dem engages different country experts with varying expertise for eleven "surveys" or areas and using measures from different surveys thus minimizes the risk that the same experts have been involved in submitting data for both the independent and dependent variables.
[63] Since preliminary analyses showed the interaction effect between the direct election and confidence dimensions was never statistically significant, we have omitted this test of the pure "presidential," as well as the semi-presidential counterpart, from the models.
[64] Shugart and Carey 1992
[65] Dahl 1971
[66] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003.
[67] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 346.
[68] ibid., 54-5.
[69] 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).
[70] e.g. Linz 1990a; 1990b; Shugart and Carey 1992; Gerring, Thacker and Moreno 2009.
[71] e.g. Lust-Okar, 2009.
[72] The corruption measure is 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 and McMann et al. 2016).
[73] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 102-3. The latter is also predicted by Persson, Roland and Tabellini (1997), who argue that directly elected presidents as a rule should provide disincentives for rent-seeking on account of residing in systems with clearer checks and balances (cf. Persson and Tabellini 2003).
[74] Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 51-5.
[75] Charron and Lapuente 2011.
[76] e.g. Londregan and Poole 1990.
[77] Gerring, Thacker and Moreno 2009.
[78] cf. Persson, Rothstein and Teorell 2013.
[79] We also drop 611 country-years from these analyses where the HOS or the HOG was not an individual but a collective body (such as in Switzerland). By construction, HOSs or HOGs remaining in office for less than 100 days are not included in the data. In a few instances, only comprising 28 country-years in total, a whole country-year was dropped due to a consecutives series of such short-lived HOSs or HOGs,
[80] Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, 294
[81] Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008; Svolik 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013.
[82] Tullock 1987; Kurrild-Klitgaard 2000; Kokkonen and Sundell 2014.
[83] Also contrary to predictions from selectorate theory, according to the expected difference in the size of their respective winning coalitions, executives who are strong on the confidence dimension are significantly more short-lived than directly elected executives. Although itself a corrective to selectorate theory, this finding is perhaps not so surprising given the ease of turning around the government in parliamentary systems.
[84] Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland 2010.
[85] Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014.
[86] Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003.
[87] Dahl 1971.
[88] On the measurement of these and the overall concept of polyarchy based on V-Dem data, see Teorell et al. (2018).