

OXFORD STUDIES IN DEMOCRATIZATION

**FOREIGN PRESSURE
AND THE POLITICS OF
AUTOCRATIC SURVIVAL**

ABEL ESCRIBÀ-FOLCH
AND JOSEPH WRIGHT

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OF AUTOCRATIC SURVIVAL

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Series editor: Laurence Whitehead

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Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival

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JOSEPH WRIGHT

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Preface

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In the decade after the 2001 terrorist attacks against the U.S., Western military intervention aimed at regime change triggered a wave of political instability, factional violence, and further terror attacks. Toppling dictatorships with military force in Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq has not brought a new era of stable democracy in these countries much less in the rest of the Middle East. Instead, at the time of this writing (fall 2014), insurgent forces threaten to topple the U.S.-backed regime in Baghdad, a militia group now controls Tripoli, and even though Afghans bravely elected a new government in 2014, it looks as if any Kabul-based regime will have to contend with long-term Taliban control over substantial portions of Afghan territory. The failure of these military incursions, coupled with the vast external resources and many soldiers still invested in these countries, suggests that the capacity of the lone global military power to pursue future military interventions against dictators is diminishing.

This book examines how common foreign policy tools such as aid, economic sanctions, and human rights shaming and prosecutions influence the survival of autocratic regimes. We then compare the effectiveness of these policies to military intervention. In this effort, we make two advances in studying foreign pressure targeting dictatorships.

First, we show that authoritarian regime collapse and democratization are not the same things. While democratization is often equated with the demise of autocratic rule, it is just one possible outcome after an autocratic regime collapses. Many times, instead of democratization, regime collapse means that a new dictatorship replaces the old one. For example, when Islamic revolutionaries overthrew Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran in 1979, one autocratic regime fell and another took its place. As critics of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq have pointed out, toppling a dictatorship does not necessarily promote democracy. These are instances of regime change, but they are not democratization.

Thus autocratic regime collapse can result in one of two outcomes: a transition to a democracy or a transition to a subsequent authoritarian regime. We examine both scenarios in this project and show that different foreign policy tools are more effective for producing one type of failure than another. To understand the usefulness of particular foreign policy tools, policymakers need to know if foreign pressure can destabilize a regime. Once an autocratic

regime collapses, we also want to know if the subsequent government is likely to be a democracy or simply a new dictatorship.

Prior to U.S. military interventions, dictatorships in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya shared many similarities. Unlike dictatorships in Egypt, Iran, or Tunisia, top military officers and security commanders in the countries attacked by the U.S. were either blood relatives of the man in power or members of the same narrow sectarian group. None had a professionalized military with a corporate identity separate from the dictator. And unlike autocratic regimes in China, Cuba, and Vietnam, Gaddafi and the Taliban never formed supporting political parties. Even though Saddam Hussein rose to power through the Ba'ath party, by the time of the U.S. invasion he had transformed it into a tool for Sunni—and increasingly Tikriti—domination. Thus, the countries targeted by U.S. military interventions lacked both de-personalized militaries and strong, broad-based support parties.

Our second innovation in this study is to look closely at the domestic politics of a range of different types of dictatorships to explain how foreign pressure undermines autocratic regimes. We distinguish personalist rule—the type of dictatorship found in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya—from party-based regimes and military dictatorships. We then show how these distinct institutional settings influence dictators' strategies for surviving in power, such as buying support and repressing opponents, as well as the propensity with which these leaders are punished after a regime transition. From these insights, we build a theory linking foreign pressure to autocratic survival strategies, and ultimately to regime collapse.

Hindsight makes it easy to criticize the recent U.S. military interventions for not only failing to promote stable democracies, but also for unleashing brutal violence that has killed or displaced hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. However, the two key points we advance in this study—that not all regime collapses end in democracy and that foreign pressure that topples personalist dictatorships rarely leads to stable democracy—provide an empirically grounded framework for understanding why the post-2001 military interventions have ended disastrously.

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Acknowledgements

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The idea of writing this book first came up in 2008 during a conversation in a coffee shop in Princeton, where the authors met in person for the first time at a conference on dictatorships after having exchanged numerous emails. The idea further developed next year, 2009, in Chicago, where we were both attending a conference. By then, Abel was a post-doctoral researcher at IBEI. He later moved to Universitat Pompeu Fabra. He is grateful to many people at both institutions for their support. Joe started work on this project while in residence at the Kellogg Institute for International Development and then moved to Pennsylvania State University. He thanks colleagues at both institutions for support. Joe also received funding from the National Science Foundation (BCS-0904463) to support this research, which he gratefully acknowledges.

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Portions of the book build on research that has been previously published as: “How Foreign Aid Can Foster Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(3): 552–71 (2009). “Dealing with Tyranny: International Sanctions and the Survival of Authoritarian Rulers.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 54(2): 335–59 (2010). “Authoritarian Institutions and Regime Survival: Transitions to Democracy and Subsequent Authoritarian Regimes.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 42(2): 283–309 (2012). “Authoritarian Responses to Foreign Pressure: Spending, Repression, and Sanctions.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(6): 683–713 (2012). While the material we present in the following chapters is similar to material published in these articles, we have updated the data set used in the empirical

work and thus present distinct results. In Chapters 1, 2, and 3 we present modified figures from previously published work, “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(2): 313–31 (2014). These have been reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press. Finally, much of the material in Chapter 8 is a revised and edited version of a forthcoming article with Cambridge University Press: “Human Rights Prosecutions and Autocratic Survival.” *International Organization*.

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Introduction

The Arab Spring uprisings in 2011 surprised academics and up-ended long-standing foreign policy towards the region.¹ In response, Western powers pursued just about every foreign policy tool at their disposal. Events in Tunisia unfolded quickly, but this did not stop the European Union from freezing Ben Ali's assets. Despite warming relations between Libya and the West in the decade prior to the Arab Spring, international organizations moved swiftly to support the insurgents and condemn the regime. Economic sanctions, military intervention, and the indictment of key regime elites, including Gaddafi, at the International Criminal Court (ICC) soon followed. Egypt had received more Western foreign aid than any other dictatorship in the decades since the Camp David Accords (1979). But when protesters mobilized and Mubarak's security forces responded with lethal force, U.S. officials began questioning their aid commitments. The U.S. did not suspend aid, however, until the military overthrew President Mursi in mid-2013.² In Yemen, the European Union condemned Saleh's efforts to quell protests, and threatened to impose economic sanctions.

Perhaps the most difficult case for foreign policymakers was Syria. The initially peaceful anti-regime protests were met with brutal repression from the Ba'thist regime, marking the start of a conflict that devolved into full-scale civil war. Despite attempts at diplomatic solutions and numerous defections from the military, the regime remains in power. In dealing with Syria, Western officials have debated all the foreign policy tricks in the book. A human rights shaming campaign was aided by thousands of video-clips documenting government violence (Hänska-Ahy and Shapour, 2013). Democracies first imposed economic sanctions against the regime elite, but later extended them to restrict oil imports and impose a travel ban on the President's wife. Nearly a year into the conflict, the U.N. Human Rights Council accused the Syrian regime of crimes against humanity. Finally, in response to chemical weapons attacks on its own civilians, the U.S. threatened to bomb Damascus.

¹ See, for example, Gause (2011) and Lust-Okar (2011).

² A year later, however, the U.S. restored military aid to Egypt's military government.

Democracies, in particular the U.S., have not been shy about using foreign pressure in attempts to sway the outcome of events in these countries. Yet there exists little consensus from academic studies as to which foreign policy tools are likely to pressure dictators to reform, much less leave power. If anything, the conventional wisdom suggests that foreign pressure, particularly economic pressure in the form of aid conditionality or sanctions, may be more likely to entrench autocratic rulers than force them from power.³ In light of the fact that democracies continue to engage dictatorships, this book looks inside the domestic politics of dictatorships to examine how foreign pressure influences their stability. Central to this task, we argue, is understanding the institutional structure of autocratic rule, in particular the relationship between the regime leader, the military, and the support party.

Consider the differences between Gaddafi's regime in Libya and that in neighboring Tunisia. Who controlled the military in these regimes? Were elites in the supporting political party and military likely to survive if the dictator fell? Would the military or regime party help protect the interests of elites if the dictatorship conceded democracy and the opposition won elections?

In Gaddafi's dictatorship, two of his sons, Khamis and Mutassim, commanded key security organizations crucial to supporting his rule and fighting rebels. His regime was the rare dictatorship that lacked a supporting political party. In Tunisia, in contrast, the leaders of the military and key security organizations were *not* blood relatives of the man in power; and the political party that helped the regime rule for over five decades was founded in 1920.

Dictators who install their family members in high-ranking military positions are better placed to use armed repression to quell protests and fight rebels, which increases the chances that the dictator will fight to the end and decreases the prospect of a negotiated transition. As a result, when these regimes fall, elites typically lose power as well. Muammar Gaddafi and two of his sons are dead; another is in prison. Ben Ali's top military officer in Tunisia, in contrast, not only remained head of the military after the dictator's ouster, but retired peacefully two years later with a medal of honor from the new president.⁴ And although Ben Ali and his family fled to exile, one of the regime's elite figures, a former interior and defense minister, oversaw the first post-transition election and led the strongest non-Islamist party, Nidaa

³ See, for example, Pape (1997), Marinov (2005), and Lektzian and Souva (2007) on economic sanctions; Smith (2008), Kono and Montinola (2009), Morrison (2009), and Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010) on foreign aid.

⁴ See "Tunisian Army chief of staff announces resignation," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 26 June 2013.

Tounes, to victory in the second post-transition election.⁵ Beji Caid el Sebsi's party is no instrument of populist personal power, but rather a coalition of former members of Ben Ali's political machine (RCD) and elites from the neo-Destourians and the main labor union, which at various points was co-opted to support the ousted regime.⁶ Thus, in Tunisia, elites jettisoned the dictator and still have power.

This book builds upon these types of distinctions to examine how foreign policy tools such as aid conditionality, sanctions, human rights shaming and prosecutions, and military intervention influence the survival of autocratic regimes. Our explanation for how foreign pressure influences dictators relies on a careful understanding of elite politics in different autocratic contexts. Classifying dictatorships by whether the dictator is a personalistic ruler, a member of a ruling military junta, or relies on a broad-based political party will prove useful in understanding when and why some forms of foreign pressure can be destabilizing. Just as important, focusing on the type of autocratic rule provides leverage on the question of "what comes next?" when dictators fall. If foreign pressure successfully deposes an autocratic regime, we want to know whether this leads to a democratic transition or if a new dictatorship will simply arise to take its place. Some democracy promotion strategies might thus succeed in destabilizing dictatorships but as a result simply replace one dictatorship with another.

Even if the Arab Spring uprisings lead to a few new democracies, dictatorship will still persist in every region of the world. According to one source, the Freedom House, only 40 percent of the world's population lived in fully free and democratic countries in 2013. According to another measure, nearly half of the countries in the world were not fully democratic in that year.⁷ A large share of the world remains under autocratic rule.

The third wave of democracy, which started in 1974 with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, has been the largest and most rapid wave of democratization. In 1974, only 25 percent of world's countries were democratic; a quarter century later, this number grew to one-half. The rapid rise of

⁵ David D. Kirkpatrick, "Interim Tunisian Leader With Ties to Old Ruler Defends a Gradual Path," *The New York Times*, 3 October 2011. Nidaa Tounes defeated the incumbent Ennahda party in October 2014, to gain a parliamentary majority. See Carlotta Gall, "Islamist Party in Tunisia Concedes to Secularists," *The New York Times*, 27 October 2014.

⁶ See Monica Marks and Omar Belhaj Salah, "Uniting for Tunisia?," *Sada*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 28 March 2013. See Anderson (1986, 232) and Vandewalle (1988, 605) on regime co-optation of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT) during the independence period.

⁷ Autocracies are those countries coded six or lower in the Polity IV index, which ranges from -10 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic).

democracy provides evidence from an array of cases to help us understand how foreign pressure influences dictatorships. While the first and second waves of democratization were “inside jobs,” driven primarily by domestic factors, external forces have been more influential in the third wave (Huntington, 1991b).

To understand how international factors affect democratization during the third wave, we consider how democratic countries and international organizations interact with dictatorships. Foreign military intervention and less forceful forms of international pressure have long served as important foreign policy tools for democracies, and continue to do so today. This book seeks to explain when foreign pressure can destabilize autocratic governments by altering domestic politics in these regimes. By using insights about how autocratic regimes work, the nature of their support coalitions, the domestic constraints they face, and the relationships between leaders and elites in the military and their support parties, we uncover the strategies that are most likely to destabilize dictatorships.

In the past fifteen years, the United States military invaded and occupied Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). These incursions were officially aimed at fighting international terrorism and liberating these countries from dictatorship. Yet, despite the new rhetorical emphasis on democracy promotion, the military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq resulted in protracted conflicts, each with high costs in treasure, troops, and renewed terrorist attacks. The difficulties of these interventions have prompted scholars and policymakers to (re)evaluate other tools for promoting democracy and respect for human rights. While many policymakers at the time assumed these invasions would yield durable democracy, there was little discussion of whether other foreign policies might be more effective in pursuing democratic regime change.

The existing literature analyzing the effectiveness of foreign policy techniques is fragmented, using different theoretical approaches, samples, empirical strategies, and definitions of success. There is, as a result, a large disagreement about whether these foreign policy instruments are effective or not. Further, studies of foreign policy tend to focus on either the senders or on a single policy tool with little (if any) discussion of other policy alternatives (Hafner-Burton, 2014; Krasner and Weinstein, 2014). As Baldwin (2000, 176) emphasizes, “[k]nowledge about the likely success of a foreign policy instrument provides no useful guidance to policy makers as to whether it should be used. Only comparative analysis of the prospective success of alternative instruments provides policy relevant knowledge.” To that end, in addition to assessing military interventions, we examine how foreign aid conditionality, economic sanctions, and human rights shaming and prosecutions influence autocratic survival.

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

The advantages of democracy are widely acknowledged: democratic countries rarely fight one another, are less prone to civil war, show greater respect for human rights, provide more public goods, offer better governance and accountability, and improve the material well-being of their citizens. Democracy also constitutes a universal human value that embodies freedom and enables participation in public life (Sen, 1999). Be it for normative or strategic reasons, democracy promotion has gained increasing prominence since the end of the Cold War in the development and foreign policy agendas of international organizations, such as the United Nations (U.N.) and the European Union (E.U.), as well as individual countries (Carothers, 1999; McFaul, 2010).

The international consensus in favor of protecting state sovereignty has weakened just as international norms for promoting democracy and human rights increased. During his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirmed that:

In the 21st century . . . the mission of the United Nations will be defined by a new, more profound awareness of the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race or religion. This will require us to look beyond the framework of States, and beneath the surface of nations or communities.⁸

This statement reflects the growing acknowledgement that democracy, broadly defined, is a universal right, which is increasingly incorporated as a norm in international law (Franck, 1992; Sen, 1999; Rich, 2001). Further, recent evidence shows that when asked about whether democracy is the best form of government, people across all regions of the world overwhelmingly answer in the affirmative (Inglehart, 2003; Diamond, 2008).

Consistent with emerging consensus of democracy, there has also been an increasing willingness to enforce human rights and democracy norms by governments, international organizations, and other non-governmental actors (Schraeder, 2002; McFaul, 2004, 2010). Thus, for example, the U.N. has institutionalized pro-democracy campaigns: in 1992, it created the Electoral Assistance Division; four years later it approved the Agenda for Democratization; and in 2000 the Millennium Summit Declaration named democracy promotion as a key goal for future U.N. action (Newman and Rich, 2004). This process culminated in 2005 with the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund.

⁸ See McFaul (2004, 154).

U.S. democracy promotion efforts persisted through numerous changes in the international context, including the end of the Cold War and the rise of China as a global power (Cox et al., 2000; McFaul, 2010). In the 1960s, the U.S. provided large-scale foreign aid to develop the economies of poor countries, with the hope that this would lead to democratic political change.⁹ In 1961, the U.S. State Department created the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement foreign aid policy. Latin America, through the Alliance for Progress, received increased attention after the Cuban revolution in 1959, when U.S. officials became concerned that supporting dictatorships might increase the chances of communist revolutions in the region.

After a period of realism during Nixon's presidency, American foreign policy focused on human rights during the Carter administration. His policy relied on diplomatic and economic pressure targeting dictatorships that abused human rights. For example, the U.S. participated in an international campaign of denunciation and shaming against Argentina's military junta (Sikkink, 1993, 412). In the early 1980s, during the Reagan administration, the U.S. institutionalized democracy promotion in U.S. foreign policy infrastructure with the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). While this pro-democracy move coexisted with a military-oriented anti-communist policy in Central America, it set the stage for subsequent U.S. democracy promotion efforts by providing funds to countries throughout the world with the aim of strengthening nascent democratic institutions, supporting pro-democracy groups, and developing civic education.¹⁰

Foreign policy liberalism re-emerged at the end of the Cold War as the U.S. increased investment in democracy assistance programs. Coercive instruments, such as foreign aid conditionality and economic sanctions, were used with increasing frequency. Under the "Democracy Initiative," USAID placed democracy assistance as its central goal in 1990. Eastern European and sub-Saharan African countries received the most attention during the Clinton administration, with the aim of preventing new democracies from backsliding into authoritarianism. Through the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) program, for example, the U.S. spent roughly \$1 billion in democracy programs in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Carothers, 1999).

⁹ Lipset's influential article arguing that development is a precursor to democracy was published in 1959.

¹⁰ The democracy-promoting efforts of NED have been questioned in some cases. For example, critics argue that funding from NED was directed to groups that participated in the 2002 coup against Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. See Brendan Koerner, "Bush Aims To Raise Whose Budget?," *Slate*, 22 January 2004.

Paralleling this new wave of assistance programs, aid donors viewed democracy as a vital component of successful development. The largest bilateral donors—the United States, Britain, and France—as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank, placed political conditionality as a central component of broader developmental objectives (Crawford, 1997). Coercion and conditionality gained momentum when democracy promotion became the center of U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush's *Freedom Agenda*. For example, in 2004, the U.S. created the Millennium Challenge Corporation, another bilateral aid agency separate from USAID that emphasized conditionality based on specific governance performance indicators.

This new international context prompted other actors to follow suit. In Europe, early initiatives date to the 1950s with the establishment of the German Stiftungen (party foundations), which supported pro-democratic opposition parties (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1991). At the regional level, the E.U. became a key actor in advancing democracy, establishing electoral democracy as a condition for membership.¹¹ The 1989 Lomé IV Agreement between the E.U. and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group, marked the beginning of European foreign policy focusing on democratic development beyond neighboring regions. A revision of this agreement (Lomé IV bis) included specific procedures for imposing sanctions in response to violations of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In 1994, the European Parliament created the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR, later renamed the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) to support programs in human rights, democratization, and conflict prevention. Finally, in 2003, the European Neighborhood Policy was adopted to offer economic incentives to neighbor countries in exchange for economic and democratic reforms.

The regulation of human rights in international law has also increased in the past few decades (Hafner-Burton, 2013), accompanied by a new model of enforcement that focuses on individual criminal accountability rather than just state responsibility (Sikkink, 2011). One outcome is a substantial rise in the number of trials for past violations. The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002 marked a further step towards the universalization of human rights. The ICC works as a permanent, independent court with the charge of prosecuting individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

¹¹ See Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) for an empirical assessment of this policy.

Increased concern for democracy and human rights has been accompanied by the proliferation of transnational non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Murdie, 2014). By the late 1990s, there were nearly 300 registered human rights organizations throughout the world, more than half of which had been formed since 1979 (Ron et al., 2005, 558). Organizations such as Freedom House, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch lobby governments, publicize human rights violations, and initiate shaming campaigns to spur international action and shape public opinion.

Widespread international consensus thus places a premium on the value of democracy and the desire to promote democracy where autocratic rule persists. In this book we examine how common tools of coercive foreign policy influence politics in autocratic countries. This approach contrasts with the bevy of studies that examine efforts in the past two decades by Western powers to promote democracy by funding and monitoring multi-party elections (Bunce and Wolchik, 2011; Hyde, 2011; Kelley, 2012b; Donno, 2013). Focusing on elections is understandable because for many in the democracy-promotion industry, elections are a *sine qua non*. Yet for many dictatorships, the threat posed by elections and democracy is not their only, or indeed, their main concern.

Instead of looking directly at the international actors who shape electoral practice and outcomes, we focus on the explicit policies these actors employ to examine how they influence domestic politics in a variety of authoritarian contexts across different time periods. To understand the consequences of democracy promotion efforts, we examine how these foreign policy strategies affect autocratic survival because defeating authoritarian regimes does not always lead to democracy. Thus we study how international pressure influences authoritarian power, not just democratization.

DEALING WITH DICTATORSHIP

Strategies for Regime Change

A range of foreign policy tools directed at promoting democracy and improving human rights exists. These can be classified along different dimensions, such as the degree of legitimacy, multilateralism, or the extent to which they are coercive rather than persuasive or voluntary.¹² We follow the latter

¹² See, for example, Baldwin (1985), Schraeder (2003), Diamond (2008), and Krasner and Weinstein (2014).

Table 1.1. Foreign policy tools for democracy promotion

<i>Policy Area</i>	<i>Policy Tool</i>	
	Persuasive	Coercive
Cultural	Educational and cultural exchanges; propaganda; value dissemination; socialization	None
Diplomatic/Political/ Judicial	Diplomatic persuasion and bargaining; electoral assistance	Naming and shaming campaigns; indictments and prosecutions
Economic	Democracy aid (civil society/ governance); economic assistance	Economic sanctions (trade/ financial); foreign aid conditionality
Military	Military aid and training to opposition groups	Show or threat of military force; military intervention/occupation

classification, and situate democracy promotion and regime change on a dimension measuring soft and hard power, to use Nye's (2004) terms. Thus we distinguish between democracy assistance and persuasion (soft power) and foreign coercion (hard power). The latter entails coercive measures seeking to destabilize incumbent autocratic governments by imposing political conditions and economic costs on the target country or by threatening or seeking to punish domestic elites or to use force in order to alter the status quo. A second dimension marks the area of influence: whether the foreign policy takes the form of cultural, political, economic, or military action. Table 1.1 presents a summary of these policy instruments using this two-dimensional classification.

Soft power includes cultural exchange policies, persuasive efforts, and political aid seeking to transform certain institutions. These tools provide positive incentives, assistance, and information for gradual liberalization and democratic consolidation. For example, broadcasts of Voice of America (1942), Radio Free Europe (1949), and Radio Liberty (1951) aimed to provide independent information to foreign citizens during the Cold War to change beliefs about the benefits of U.S. democracy. Direct democracy assistance consists of technical and financial aid to support pro-democracy actors and initiatives. For example, the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, funded by the Social Democratic Party (SPD), developed various party-building programs to support opposition Socialist politicians during autocratic rule in Spain and Portugal (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1991, 55). Similarly, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy has supported democratic organizations, media, and civic movements in a number of countries such as Chile, Nicaragua,

Poland, and South Africa.¹³ Also, international involvement in foreign elections is gaining much importance, with electoral assistance and observation becoming a central strategy for democracy promotion and consolidation policies of international organizations such as the U.N. and the E.U., and some Western countries.¹⁴

Our focus is on international coercion. As Diamond (2008, 114) argues, “peaceful pressure to democratize generally takes three intentional forms: diplomacy, the conditioning of aid, and sanctions.” We seek to explain when these policy tools are likely to destabilize dictatorships and promote democracy, and then compare these strategies to hostile military interventions. Our book builds on existing research in two ways. First, it analyzes the main instruments of foreign coercion using an integrated theoretical framework. As Baldwin notes (1999/2000, 84), “[i]n the context of the logic of choice, the evaluation of one policy alternative in isolation from others makes little sense.” Second, the effectiveness of these alternative foreign policy tools is tested using the same sample of regimes and dependent variables throughout the book: regime change, democratic transitions, and autocratic transitions. As a result, we establish a consistent and clear standard of success and thus avoid problems of comparability common in existing scholarly work (Baldwin, 2000).

Under the rubric of diplomatic and judicial pressure, we examine international human rights shaming campaigns and prosecutions. Campaigns by international organizations, NGOs, and the media publicize and condemn human rights violations throughout the world, while prosecutions seek justice for perpetrators of human rights violations and aim to deter future abuse. Aid conditionality entails making foreign assistance contingent on political liberalization: donors demand that aid disbursements be accompanied by democratic reforms in recipient countries. There is an implicit threat, with varying degrees of credibility, that future aid will be reduced if these conditions are not met. Democratic countries and international organizations employ economic sanctions against another country’s government, or groups within it, to force policy change. To coerce, sanction senders seek to inflict costs on the target by restricting trade or by impeding financial exchanges (Hufbauer et al., 2007). Finally, hostile military interventions involve the realized threat of violent coercion using military forces to enter the target country’s territory (Pickering and Kisangani, 2009).

¹³ Some empirical evidence suggests that the role of NED support is significant in weakening autocratic regimes and preventing backslides (Scott and Steele, 2005). Likewise, USAID expenditures on democracy assistance and governance are found to be correlated with democratic improvements (Finkel et al., 2007; Scott and Steele, 2011).

¹⁴ On the impact of these policies, see, for example, Hyde (2011), Kelley (2012a, 2012b), Tusalem (2012), and Donno (2013).

The Rise of Hard Power?

The use of coercive foreign policy instruments has grown substantially in recent decades. While the number of military interventions decreased in the post-Cold War period, the number of economic sanctions and shaming campaigns increased. Aid to dictators has fallen since 1990, but this trend is caused, in part, by donor attempts to place political conditionality at the center of many aid agreements. If aid conditionality is enforced, some dictatorships will receive less aid, not more. Sanction episodes, shaming campaigns, and human rights prosecutions have all increased in the last two plus decades.

Figure 1.1 shows the number of hostile military interventions against dictators carried out by democratic states during the postwar period. Since the peak in the 1960s, military interventions to support or oppose incumbent dictatorships have declined. Neutral interventions spiked in the early 1990s as democracies sent militaries on humanitarian missions during civil conflicts after the Cold War ended. However, even these types of intervention fell steeply in the ten years from 1995 to 2005. Despite U.S. military invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq and the NATO attack against Libya, the use of military

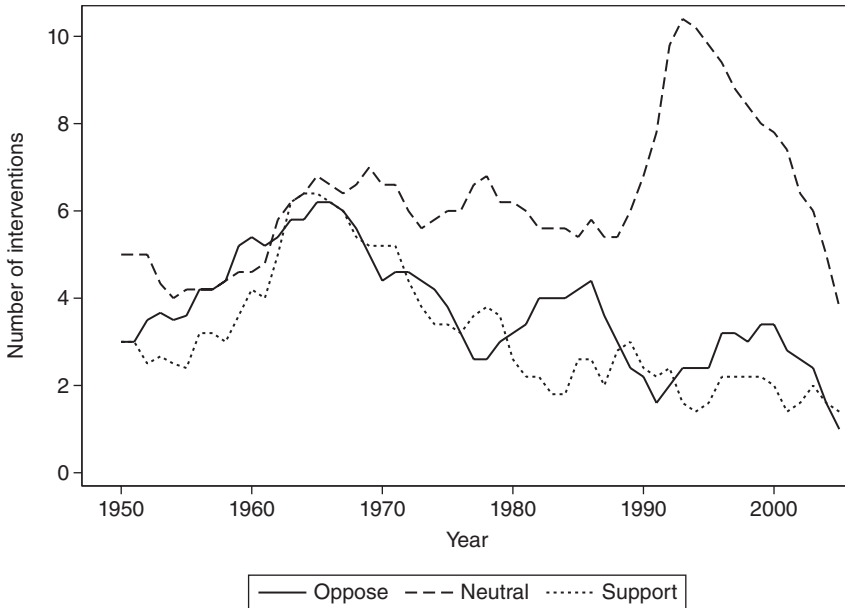


Figure 1.1. Foreign military interventions against dictators. Smoothed trend is the five-year moving average.

Sources: Pickering and Kisangani (2009); Geddes et al. (2014a).

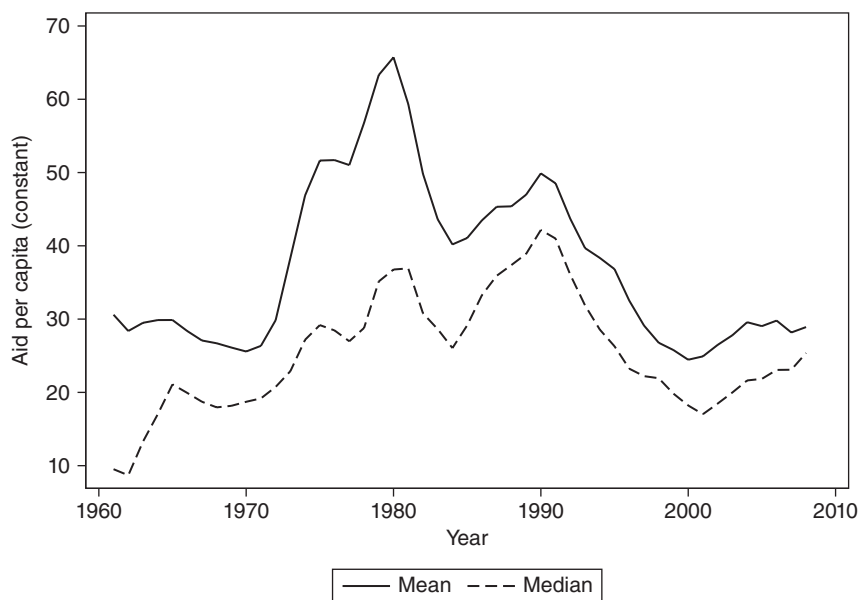


Figure 1.2. Foreign aid to dictatorships. Mean and median level of aid per capita in constant USD for all dictatorships in a given year. Smoothed trend is the three-year moving average.

Sources: World Bank (2010); Geddes et al. (2014a).

interventions against dictatorships aimed at forcibly changing the regime appears to be waning. However, the emergence of the “responsibility to protect” norm may lead to a rise in the number of humanitarian interventions in response to gross human rights violations.

The end of the Cold War also marked a decrease in foreign aid to dictatorships, as shown in Figure 1.2. Aid fell from nearly \$50 per capita in 1990 to roughly half that in the late 1990s before increasing slightly in the past decade. Two factors contributed to this decline. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union freed aid disbursements from major geostrategic considerations that benefited many autocratic governments. Second, development policy at International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the largest bilateral donors shifted to incorporate democracy and good governance as conditions for aid (Crawford, 2001). Because unelected and unaccountable governments were fingered as obstacles to sustained economic growth, donors had a rationale for cutting aid to dictatorships when these reform conditions went unmet. Thus, while aid to autocracies has decreased, the opportunity to buy political reform with aid expanded.

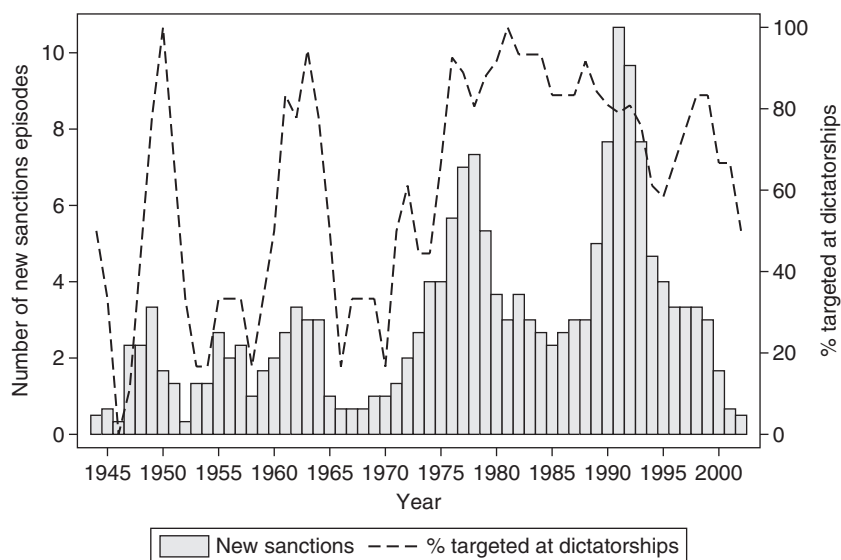


Figure 1.3. New sanctions and percent targeted at dictators. Smoothed trend is the three-year moving average. Dictatorship defined as *Polity2* score less than 6.

Source: Hufbauer et al. (2007).

Economic sanctions are also used with increasing frequency, as experts proclaimed the 1990s “the sanctions decade” (Cortright and Lopez, 2000). The shaded bars in Figure 1.3 show two clear peaks in the number of new sanction episodes in the post-war period. The first occurred in the late 1970s when the Carter administration placed human rights at the center of its foreign policy. A second peak, in the early 1990s, occurred once the U.N. was no longer subject to permanent blockage on the Security Council and became more active in imposing sanctions. While the U.S. has continued to be the main unilateral sender, the U.N. emerged as a prominent sender only after 1990.

Further, the majority of sanctions are imposed against autocratic regimes. From the mid-1970s through the 1990s, most new sanctions were imposed against dictatorships. According to the Hufbauer et al. (2007) data set, roughly one quarter of all sanctions in the post-war period were imposed against democracies.¹⁵ Almost half of the target countries were autocracies, with another one quarter coded as anocracies—countries that fall in the intermediate

¹⁵ Dictatorships are defined as regimes with a *Polity* score less than 6 on a scale that ranges from -10 (most autocratic) to 10 (most democratic).

category between democracy and closed dictatorship. The primary sender, the United States, has a similar target pattern: autocratic states represent 56 percent of the targets, 28 percent are anocracies, and only 16 percent are democracies. Further, Hufbauer et al. (2007) code the primary goal of sanctions as regime change for roughly half of the sanctions targeting dictatorships. Thus, not only are sanctions being used with increasing frequency, but they mostly target dictatorships, many with the primary goal of regime destabilization.

Human rights shaming campaigns have also increased in the past thirty years. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) did not start investigating countries for human rights abuses until 1967, even though it was established in 1946. The UNCHR's first human rights initiative that did not pertain to colonial powers, Israel, or apartheid South Africa, came in 1976 when it launched an investigation into Chile's military junta (Farer, 1987, 580). International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) have also targeted repressive leaders with reports highlighting human rights abuses. Amnesty International (AI) began its letter-writing campaigns in 1965, and Human Rights Watch (HRW) began monitoring human rights violations in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1978, shortly after the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975.

Media shaming is arguably a much older practice than the rise of international institutions suggests. It dates at least from the Spanish colonial era when the bishop of Chiapas, Bartolomé de las Casas, defended the rights of indigenous Mexicans. His shaming campaign helped pressure the Spanish crown to pass the New Laws of 1542, which abolished the enslavement of indigenous Americans in Spanish colonies (de las Casas, 1992). More than three centuries later, anti-slavery abolitionists in Britain relied on newspapers to shame slave traders. Edmund Morel's shaming campaign against abuses in the Belgian Congo began in a British weekly, the *Speaker*, and he later started his own newspaper to expose atrocities committed by King Leopold II's Congo Free State (Hochschild, 1998).

As the left panel of Figure 1.4 indicates, from 1976 to 2000, the proportion of dictatorships targeted by shaming campaigns increased steadily—particularly the share targeted by Amnesty International. While public resolutions by the UNCHR condemning these regimes are much less frequent than INGO or media targets, their number has risen from two in 1976 to roughly ten per year in the late 1990s.

Finally, the past three decades have also witnessed the rise of individual criminal accountability and a subsequent increase in the number of human rights prosecutions targeting leaders accused of human rights abuses. According to data from Kim and Sikkink (2010), human rights prosecutions in

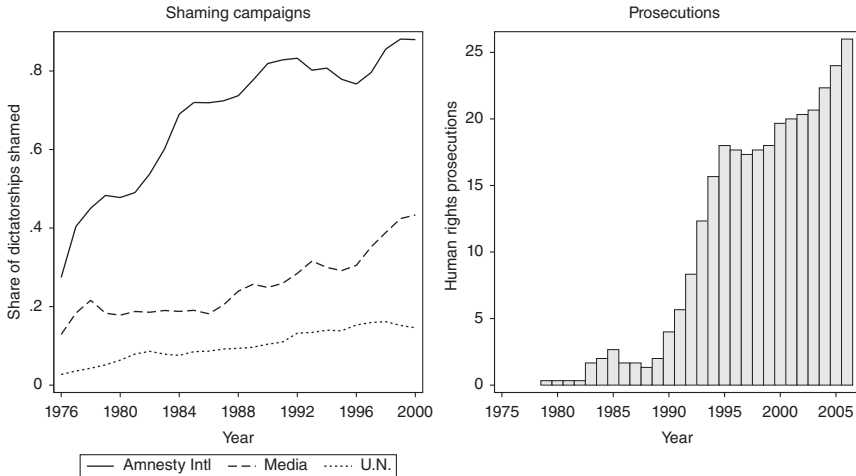


Figure 1.4. Human rights shaming and prosecutions targeting dictatorships. Smoothed trend is the three-year moving average.

Sources: Hafner-Burton (2008); Lebovic and Voeten (2009); Kim and Sikkink (2010), Geddes et al. (2014a).

transition countries have risen from one in 1979 to over twenty per year in the mid-2000s. Coupled with the new legal regime embodied in the International Criminal Court (ICC), human rights advocates no longer rely solely on shaming campaigns but also use international and domestic arenas of justice to enforce human rights norms and to prosecute human rights abusers in attempts to deter future repression (Schabas, 2001). The ICC's first arrest warrant for a sitting head of state targeted Sudan's President, Omar al-Bashir, in 2008. The warrant for Gaddafi in 2011 was the second. And the first successful ICC prosecution sentenced a former militia leader from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, in 2012 for war crimes committed during the Second Congo War.

Because we examine a variety of explicit and deliberate policies of foreign coercion, our approach moves beyond structural accounts of how the international environment influences authoritarian stability, such as Levitsky and Way's (2010). Their study begins with the assumption that external structural factors—such as geography, cultural ties, colonial heritage, and economic integration—constitute the international linkages that influence democracy in electoral autocracies during the post-Cold War era. Rather than looking inside the politics of dictatorships across different authoritarian contexts as we do, they posit that dependence on foreign support, or leverage, is the key intervening factor that explains when linkage is likely to matter.

Further, they restrict their analysis to one group of dictatorships, namely, competitive authoritarian regimes.

THE SENDERS

To date, there is little comparative evidence that examines how various foreign policy tools influence the prospects of democratization in dictatorships. As a result, policymakers have little systematic guidance on whether and how foreign policy tools are likely to work in particular cases (Baldwin, 2000), as the examples at the beginning of this chapter suggest. As McFaul (2004, 157) states, “[n]o blueprint is universally recognized as the most effective way to promote democracy.” This may explain why sending countries and organizations pay insufficient attention to domestic politics in target countries and often underestimate the perverse consequences of foreign coercion.

A recent poll by the Fund for Peace asked the following question: “What should the world do about failing states like Burma and Zimbabwe?”¹⁶ The options from which to choose were the following: a) Provide aid to these governments for them to distribute as they wish; b) Launch diplomatic offensives to get governments to reverse their policies; c) Undertake airdrops of aid in spite of government opposition; d) Censure the governments at the U.N. Security Council; e) Increase sanctions against the top leaders; f) Indict government officials for gross violation of human rights; g) Militarily intervene to provide humanitarian assistance, or h) Militarily intervene to overthrow the current regime.

This poll addresses some of the most controversial issues in international relations. In September 2009, the two most common responses to this poll were “militarily intervene to overthrow the current regime” and “indict government officials for gross violation of human rights,” each receiving 23.9 and 21.5 percent of the votes, respectively. Respondents viewed the other options, including foreign aid, economic sanctions, and shaming as less useful. Are these latter instruments of foreign policy really less effective? Are military interventions and indictments the best way to deal with dictatorships?

The poll question underscores the first key factor that senders tend to overlook. Note that the question did not distinguish between Zimbabwe and Burma, but placed both countries in the category of “failed states.” Yet these

¹⁶ See <<http://www.fundforpeace.org>>.

countries are ruled by very different regimes. President Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) entered into a power-sharing agreement with the opposition after the controversial 2008 election, and won outright in the 2013 presidential election, with his party controlling more than 75 percent of parliamentary seats. Though Mugabe has been president for over thirty years, the country holds regular elections in which the main opposition party participates and wins legislative seats. Even amidst high levels of repression, the ZANU-PF stands up a legislature and uses courts to ratify legislation.

In contrast, Burma has been ruled by a military junta since a coup in 1988. The 2010 election was the first in twenty years and was won by a new party created by the military. Prior to this, the junta ruled without an elected legislature for more than two decades. The regime recently allowed a multi-party by-election, won by the main opposition party, but still seeks to exclude the main opposition leader from the 2015 contest.

The preferences of leaders, the institutions they use to rule, and intra-elite relationships are different in party-based dictatorships and military juntas. These differences have implications for how foreign policy tools are likely to influence domestic politics in different autocratic contexts. Thus, we should not necessarily expect the same strategies to work in both Burma and Zimbabwe.

Foreign policymakers and governments have also paid too little attention to the variation in domestic politics in different dictatorships. For example, in his 2002 State of the Union Address, U.S. President George W. Bush referred to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the "axis of evil." He grouped these states with transnational terrorist organizations as the main threats to international peace and national security. In 2005, then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice identified six "outposts of tyranny" as threats to security, labeling them "fear societies" where freedom should be promoted. The list included Iran, Cuba, Belarus, Burma, North Korea, and Zimbabwe.¹⁷ Both lists established clear authoritarian targets for U.S. foreign policy. However, policymakers made no distinction between these regimes, advocating a similar approach to each even though these dictatorships differ immensely from each other. According to the classification we employ, the list includes two personalist regimes (Belarus and North Korea), a military regime (Burma), two party-based regimes (Cuba and Zimbabwe), and a theocracy (Iran).¹⁸

¹⁷ The U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 so it was struck from the list. See Nicholas Kralev, "Rice targets 6 'outposts of tyranny'," *Washington Post*, 19 January 2005.

¹⁸ Iran is treated as dominant party in the following empirical applications (Geddes et al., 2014a).

A second mistake often made by sending countries has been to ignore the political outcomes of different courses of action. Despite warnings from experts and public officials, the consequences of autocratic collapse have often been overlooked by foreign policymakers. As we stress throughout this book, the rise of a new dictatorship more often than not follows autocratic collapse. Further, whether ousting a dictatorship leads to a democracy or simply a new authoritarian regime varies systematically across different types of dictatorships.

Some public officials have been aware of such intricacies. Bringing attention to a key point about what comes next after dictatorships fall, Jeane Kirkpatrick, the former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. during the Reagan administration, criticized the Carter administration for not considering domestic power structures (Kirkpatrick, 1979). She noted that domestic characteristics largely explain what comes next once a regime collapses. Distinguishing between traditional and totalitarian regimes, she argued that adopting coercive measures against traditional (what we call personalist) dictatorships in Nicaragua and Iran would embolden existing domestic forces, which, if victorious, would inaugurate new revolutionary autocracies hostile to American interests.

In another example, the U.S. congressmen who imposed sanctions against Idi Amin's rule in Uganda understood that his power rested on revenue from coffee exports, which made the regime vulnerable to economic coercion (Nurnberger, 1982). However, while these officials correctly guessed that sanctions would destabilize Amin's regime, they paid little attention to other regime characteristics and underestimated his resolve. When sanctions undermined his patronage capacity, Amin initiated a war against Tanzania in an attempt to reduce threats from his own disloyal military units. Tanzanian forces and Ugandan exiles eventually ousted Amin, but his rule was not replaced by a democratic government. Rather, after a short provisional period, a former dictator, Milton Obote, returned to power only to be ousted again a few years later.

The Ugandan case raises a difficult question for foreign policymakers: Is it worth deposing rogue rulers if what comes next may be just as bad? As we show in the next chapter, destabilizing a traditional (or personalist) dictatorship may simply lead to more autocratic rule. This possibility must be weighed against the risks of allowing a personalist ruler, such as Amin, to remain in power because evidence suggests that these types of dictatorships are the most likely to initiate interstate wars and pursue nuclear weapons (Peceny and Beer, 2003; Weeks, 2008; Way and Weeks, 2014). Indeed, such considerations may have influenced U.S. policy discussions prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In her memoirs, Condoleezza Rice, by then the National Security Advisor, writes: