

Chapter 2

Managing the State

1 Introduction

The state can serve as a powerful tool to keep a leader in power. Core tasks of governing can be re-purposed to co-opt those that the leader needs to support him and coerce those likely to challenge his rule. A leader cannot carry out his own dirty work, however. This chapter presents a theory of how a leader manages bureaucrats – who is recruited into the state, where these bureaucrats are posted, and how frequently they are shuffled between posts – in the leader’s attempt to meet his most political goals.

Reliance on bureaucrats begets a principal-agent problem. A leader expects a bureaucrat to use her state-endowed authority as directed, but the bureaucrat can shirk from his demands and use that authority in line with her own preferences. Existing literature has suggested two broad classes of strategies to alleviate shirking, but implementing either class of strategies in full promises to threaten a leader’s stability in a manner separate from ensuring compliance from bureaucrats. Indeed, the most prominent solution proposed by existing literature – packing the state with the leader’s in-group bureaucrats – inhibits a leader from incorporating rival elites who demand that *their* in-group members are given valuable state jobs. Many leaders thus purposefully do not pack the state so as not to preclude the ability to solve pressing elite threats. The principal-agent problem remains.

This chapter argues that the leader minimizes the risks of shirking and ensures the necessary bureaucratic action that keeps him in office by strategically managing bureaucrats. Bureaucrats are posted and shuffled across the country to ensure compliance in the sub-national jurisdictions where compliance is most important. To strategically shuffle bureaucrats, the leader weighs the political *alignment* of each jurisdiction to him, each bureaucrat’s *loyalty* to him, as well as the bureaucrat’s *local embeddedness* in a given jurisdiction. Leaders post loyal bureaucrats who are willing to comply to those parts of the country where co-optation or coercion is most necessary, while posting bureaucrats liable to shirk away from these vital areas. The local embeddedness of bureaucrats is increased in areas that the leader wants co-opted, to promote the social connections that make the bureaucrat more able and willing to co-opt. Local embeddedness is lowered elsewhere so that a bureaucrat’s social connections do not interfere with her willingness to coerce.

The theory shows that leaders are willing to vary how they solve the principal-agent problem sub-nationally. Existing work on the topic assumes that a leader’s management solutions are implemented

uniformly across the country, with an implicit understanding that other strategies to solve the principal-agent problem are wrong. This chapter, instead, argues that the strategies suggested by past work are useful in some, but not all, environments. I build a theory that attempts to lay out the conditions under which each solution is most useful.

Further, understanding the theoretic foundations for patterns of the sub-national management of bureaucrats helps us understand how the country is governed. This chapter shows that the way in which the state interacts with citizens is a deliberate choice (Boone 2003), and as such, provides us with a mechanism to understand variation in important livelihood outcomes, from the amount of public goods provided to the level of coercion that the area can expect. Citizens' livelihoods are a product of the management decisions that the leader makes.

In the rest of this chapter, I first examine the range of elite and popular challenges that leaders may face. Next, I discuss why the state is a useful tool in addressing these threats. I then lay out the principal-agent problem that reliance on state bureaucrats brings up. I give an overview of existing solutions to solve the principal-agent problem and why they are insufficient. I then present my theory about the strategic management of bureaucrats and its empirical implications. The chapter next lays out alternative arguments before concluding.

2 A Leader's Elite and Popular Threats

All leaders face elite and popular threats. Here, I describe what these threats look like in autocratic versus electoral regimes.

2.1 Elite and Popular Challenges

The theory and empirics of this book differentiate between two regime types. I look at *electoral* regimes that hold multi-party elections for the leader and *autocratic* regimes that do not. To be sure, this bifurcation overlooks the vast variation in regime type within each of those two categories: much work on autocracy tends to classify autocracies based on their regime institutions (Geddes 1999) and my focus on the presence of elections, as opposed to their quality, means that I lump together consolidated democracies with competitive authoritarian regimes in which elections are not free nor fair (Levitsky & Way 2010).¹

Variation within these two broad regime types has been shown to have downstream effects on important outcomes,² yet I stick with the coarse distinction because of this book's main outcome of interest: how

¹For other typologies of authoritarian regimes see Cheibub, Gandhi & Vreeland (2010) and Boix, Miller & Rosato (2013), or see Bratton & van de Walle (1994) for a typology specific to sub-Saharan Africa. For other criteria and/or nomenclature to differentiate between democracies and other regimes that hold multi-party elections, see Schmitter & Karl (1990), Zakaria (1997), Schedler (2002), Munck (2006), Bogaards (2009), and Morse (2012).

²Numerous studies find variation in outcomes based on different types of authoritarian regimes. Geddes (1999) and Bratton & van de Walle (1997) find differences in democratization outcomes based on authoritarian regime type; Davenport (2007a) finds differences in the level and type of repression that citizens encounter based on authoritarian regime type; Weeks (2012) finds differences in international conflict based on authoritarian regime type. For instance, Davenport & Armstrong (2004) find variation

leaders manage bureaucrats in an attempt to prevent challenges to their rule. The very presence of multi-party elections changes the nature of elite threats and the nature of popular threats (Bueno et al. 2003).³ Even when multi-party elections are dominated by a ruling party, the country's leader must take into account the possibility that a viable opposition challenger may emerge and that voters will leave the party *en masse* (Magaloni 2006, Greene 2009, Blaydes 2011).

Leaders face two broad classes of domestic challenges, or threats, across these two regime types: those from rival elites and those from the population. An *elite* is a politician with popular mobilization capacity in a geographic area, and whose initial mobilization capacity is at least somewhat separate from bureaucratic postings in the area.⁴ I assume that elites who are currently incorporated into the state have access to sufficient resources – such as those needed to launch a coup d'état – that they can introduce at least some executive constraints on the leader.⁵ Leaders also face popular challenges – widespread collective action that aims to weaken, destabilize, or remove the current leader. In authoritarian regimes, popular challenges often take the form of episodic protests, strikes, rallies, riots, or marches. Episodic collective action of this form is liable to be even more frequent in countries with multi-party elections (Tilly 2004),⁷ but the larger popular threat that leaders in electoral regimes face emanates from the ballot box: voters may support the opposition and electorally remove the leader from power.

Elite and popular threats are often intertwined. Popular threats are difficult to launch and spread because of the collective action problem. It is hard to organize a large number of civilians to act collectively because individual dissenters face high personal costs. This is clear in authoritarian regimes where participants put their lives in danger when they protest. But even in electoral regimes, the government may strike back against protesters by imposing “temporary” constraints on civil liberties (Davenport 2000, Carey 2006) or

in human rights violations based on the openness of electoral regimes. Much research also finds variation in outcomes based on whether a country is a democracy or a competitive authoritarian regime. Albeit unsurprising, I find variation between the level of state involvement to skew elections in favor of the incumbent during Moi's competitive authoritarian regime (1992 - 2002) versus the much more open electoral regime of his successor Kibaki.

³One benefit of looking at electoral regimes together within the context of my case is that this coarse bifurcation sidesteps the debate about how to classify Mwai Kibaki's (2002 - 2013) regime. The 2002 election in which Kibaki won has been the country's only free and fair election, thereby suggesting that his reign was democratic. After he took office, however, he maintained strong executive power and his administration oversaw many “irregularities” and illegal administrative activities for both Kibaki's re-election and that of his co-ethnic successor (see Weis (2008), Gibson & Long (2009), Ferree, Gibson & Long (2014)). Indeed, Freedom House has consistently rated Kenya only “partially free” since 2002.

⁴While bureaucrats can gain popular mobilization capacity in the area to which they are posted, their power there is endogenous to their assignment to the area.

⁵Roessler (2017) makes a distinction between insider political elites who have been incorporated within the state and more distant opposition elites who have been excluded. This distinction is in service of his broader point about threats from insider elites versus threats from outsider elites. While I follow Roessler (2017) and differentiate between threats from insider versus outsider elites, I prefer my classification of elite threats versus popular threats because the strategies that leaders use to temper elite threats do not differ between elites who are currently inside or outside the state.

⁶Coups are possible within autocratic and electoral regimes alike. However the incidence of coups is lower in electoral regimes. When a leader is chosen through multi-party elections, attaining office through the ballot box is viewed as the only legitimate way to power so elections are often quickly re-introduced after a successful coup attempt (Marinov & Goemans 2014). Similarly, constraints on executive power are possible across regime type, but are more common in electoral regimes where elites begin with more power relative to the leader than in autocracies (Posner & Young 2007).

⁷Within sub-Saharan Africa, Salehyan et al. 2012 document an increase in social conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, including protests, riots, strikes, and other forms of unrest, since the political openings after the end of the Cold War.

against opposition strongholds by channeling fewer state resources to the area (Magaloni 2006, Blaydes 2011). Sometimes, popular discontent is sufficiently high that mobilization happens organically – if conditions are so bad and blame is clearly attributable to the leader, popular discontent tips and elite involvement is not necessary to organize a popular threat (Thomson 2018). But many attempts at mobilization only succeed when an elite with sufficient clout *and* ill-will towards the leader coordinates the actions of her followers.⁸ Outsider elites, elites who have never been incorporated or who were excluded from the government, are the most likely to organize popular threats against the leader because their only means to political power is through a challenge that comes from the outside (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Roessler 2017). At the same time, outsider elites are still elites, and thus have the clout to mobilize a segment of the population. In this way, elite and popular threats are closely entwined. Well-resourced elites that are not incorporated into the regime can help their followers solve the collective action problem, creating serious popular threats to a leader’s rule.

A leader must prepare himself against the emergence of a popular threat regardless of the state of elite threats. In the leader’s best case scenario, in which he only faces a popular threat should an elite defect, the leader deems it prudent to prepare for the popular consequences of an elite defection. But in the leader’s worst case scenario, popular discontent against him is so high that incorporating a representative elite does little to stem the underlying potential for mobilization, or may provide the elite with more resources to better mobilize her supporters.

3 Preventing Popular Threats Through the State: Opportunities and Risks

The state’s duties to maintain control over a given territory can be repurposed by the executive to prevent popular threats to his rule. However the leader cannot carry out his own “dirty work.” For a complete understanding of how leaders stay in power, and more broadly meet their political goals, we must theorize the incentives and behavior of the individuals who actually carry out the state’s orders – bureaucrats. Focusing attention on bureaucrats prompts us to consider the principal-agent problem that a leader faces: after endowing individuals with state authority, bureaucrats can shirk from the leader’s demands.

This section first introduces the initial scope conditions of the argument. It then explains how the state proves useful in co-opting or coercing popular threats to help the leader stay in office. Next, I discuss the “field” bureaucrats who carry out the leader’s demands and the principal-agent problem that reliance on them introduces.

3.1 Focus on Countries with Salient Identity Cleavages

I focus on countries with salient identity cleavages. In-group members of the same salient identity cleavage tend to cluster geographically. This means that the state can target a group by targeting the areas they inhabit.

⁸See, for instance, McCarthy & Zald (1977), Popkin (1979), Bates (1981), Lichbach (1998), Robertson (2010), and Tarrow (2011).

Though I speak specifically about ethnic cleavages given the Kenyan context, this theory is directly applicable to countries where the salient identity cleavage differs, such as by religion (e.g., as India, Myanmar), sect (e.g., Iraq, Lebanon, Syria), or language (e.g., Zambia). The existence of a salient identity cleavage means that all three actors in the theory – the leader, bureaucrat, and local area – have strong and credible signals about the preferences of the other actors. To extend the theory beyond ethnic politics, one needs simply to replace the word “ethnic” with the salient cleavage in their case.

Many of the insights from the theory also travel to contexts where society’s dominant political cleavages is (l)earned, such as partisanship (e.g., Russia, U.S.) or political faction (e.g., China), for two reasons. First, while acquired traits such as partisanship and faction are often theorized as mutable, they are often fixed identities, at the very least, in the short run. A leader of a country without salient identity cleavages is likely to apply the tenants of the theory, so long as he is aware of the distribution of the acquired trait across bureaucrats and the population. Second, the theory emphasizes that non-identity factors including patronage between the bureaucrat and leader and learned embeddedness through long tenure in a post play an important role in eliciting bureaucratic compliance. One could easily apply the theory to countries with acquired identities by focusing on the non-identity factors that help the leader alleviate the principal-agent problem.

3.2 The State is a Powerful Tool to Coerce or Co-opt Popular Threats

The leader is expected to use the state to govern and meet policy goals, but the state can be repurposed to help the leader rule and meet his political goals. The state is especially useful in putting down popular threats because it interfaces with the population.

The state is especially useful in this regard because it can *coerce* the population. At its most basic, the state is the entity that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence within a territory (Weber 1958). This definition of statehood underscores the necessity of violence: the state needs the threat of force behind it to maintain control. But this authority can be directed to violate the civil liberties or personal integrity of its citizens.⁹ State coercion can take one of two forms. First, the leader can demand outright violence through acts of “high-intensity coercion” – coercive actions that target large numbers of people, well-known individuals, or major institutions (Levitsky & Way 2010).¹⁰ Separately, leaders can demand “low-intensity coercion” that “involves less visible (but often highly systematic) efforts to monitor and suppress opposition activities” (Way & Levitsky 2006, 392).¹¹ Some examples include surveillance, low-scale harassment of regime opponents, the use of bureaucratic procedures to administratively hinder rival elites, and low levels of ballot rigging.

⁹The state can violate people’s rights regardless of regime type, as described in Davenport (2007a) and Davenport (2007b), though violations are more likely under non-democratic regimes. Also see Goldstein (1978), Moore (2000), Davenport (2007a), Pierskalla (2010), and Ritter (2014).

¹⁰High-intensity coercion has also been termed “situational repression” (Koopmans 1997) and “overt repression” (Davenport 2005).

¹¹Low-intensity coercion has also been termed “institutional repression” (Koopmans 1997), “covert repression” (Davenport 2005), “systematic procedural violations” (Ziblatt 2009), and “smart authoritarianism”(Frantz & Morgenbesser 2016).

States are also expected to organize society through the administration of citizens, the regulation of social relationships, the extraction of resources, and the subsequent distribution of those resources as public goods and services. A leader can thus also use the state to *co-opt* some sub-national jurisdictions and the citizens who live there through, for example, the delivery of state resources beyond what the area requires or what bureaucratic formulas dictate, incorporating local leaders into decision-making processes, relying on conciliatory dispute-mechanisms to maintain law and order, or being lenient in the enforcement of legal statutes. Co-optation requires more than erratic or one-time preferential treatment, however. Instead, co-optation necessitates a long-term relationship between the leader and the group such that the group expects a steady stream of state resources now and in the future (Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez & Magaloni 2016).

Co-optation and coercion have drawbacks that make it difficult to implement either strategy uniformly across the country. Co-optation is expensive. Most leaders lack the necessary resources to co-opt all groups within a society. And, more importantly, to the extent that co-optation is about a group perceiving that the leader is looking out for their best interests against the interests of other groups, a leader cannot co-opt all groups at once: co-optation is at least partly zero-sum and requires that other groups receive a smaller share of the pie (Gurr 1970). Relying solely on coercion is dangerous for a leader as well. Too much coercion and the leader loses his legitimacy or threatens the country's overall level of economic growth (which is necessary to incorporate elites). Acts of high-intensity coercion are especially dangerous. Visible acts of state-coercion draw international criticism or spur destabilizing international actions such as the imposition of sanctions, diplomatic isolation, or arrest warrants through international courts (Nielsen 2013, Carter 2015).¹²

3.3 The Bureaucrats Who Carry Out the Co-optation and Coercion The Leader Demands

Co-optation and coercion by the state are carried out by bureaucrats. Of the range of officials that any state employs, this book looks specifically at “street-level” or “field” bureaucrats who carry out the functions of their office in the periphery and speaks less about “desk” bureaucrats operating in the headquarters of the capital city. Field officials are the frontline officers that a leader uses to forestall popular threats to his rule because they work and live in the distinct sub-national jurisdiction to which they are assigned, and therefore, regularly interact with citizens. In Weberian terms, field officials have fixed and official jurisdictional areas; an official's actions within her position are paramount both in the territorial area in which she physically serves as well as in the specific duties she is tasked with completing (Weber 1958, 196). Put simply, these bureaucrats have a large docket of duties that give them authority to both execute the mandate of their position and recourse to punish citizens who object.

Bureaucrats vary in their ability to co-opt or coerce on behalf of the leader based on the formal mandate of their office. Bureaucrats tasked with administration and the distribution of public goods – the local water engineer, district education officer, county health inspector – are better equipped at co-opting an area.

¹²Though it seems that the international community is recognizing the dangers of low-intensity coercion too. Freedom House noted in 2014 that “leaders devote full-time attention to the challenge of crippling the opposition without annihilating it, and flouting the rule of law while maintaining a plausible veneer of order, legitimacy, and prosperity” (Freedom in the World 2014).

These officials can use their discretion to privilege (some) local residents, waive taxes or fees, or implement central directives in a manner that benefits the area. State officials tasked with maintaining law and order – a police officer, a member of the gendarmerie or paramilitary – are well-equipped to coerce. These officers can instead use their discretion to create administrative hurdles for known opposition supporters, jail local dissidents, seize funds, or prevent local attempts at collective action. Other bureaucrats, including members of Kenya’s Provincial Administration and dozens of other similar bureaucracies across the world, have formal duties that give them the ability to both co-opt and coerce well.

3.4 Reliance on Bureaucrats Creates a Principal-Agent Problem

A leader relies on bureaucrats within the state to limit popular threats to his rule, but faces a *principal-agent problem* in eliciting compliance. The survival of the leader (the principal) is dependent on the behavior of the bureaucrats (agents) he employs. Yet a bureaucrat’s preferences may diverge from the leader’s. After endowing bureaucrats with state authority, how can a leader ensure that bureaucrats act in line with his demands as opposed to their own preferences?

There are three primary ways officials can shirk, disobeying the leader’s demands and undermining the leader’s local popular support. First, and most damaging to the leader, a bureaucrat’s interests might be completely in opposition to the leader’s such that she would prefer that the leader leave office and a different leader take power. Just as the leader demands that bureaucrats use their authority to benefit the leader himself, bureaucrats can use their authority to aid a political rival of the leader. Bureaucrats who do not exert sufficient effort or who engage only in their formal, state-mandated tasks are shirking against the leader too: refusing to augment the leader’s local support is a veiled way of keeping that support down.

Second, the preferences of a bureaucrat might align with the interests of residents in the jurisdiction to which she is posted. A field officer’s behavior affects the livelihoods of residents. A lingering danger in their deployment, therefore, is that they become too *locally embedded* in the community in which they live and let their social relationships dictate compliance.¹³ This embeddedness can be acquired through an officer’s long tenure in a station as the official establishes deep social ties with area residents. Herbert Kaufman (1960, 76) describes the dangers of embeddedness through long tenure in the US Forestry Service:

field men regarded by their chiefs as emissaries sent to live among local populaces and represent the agency to the people, become so identified with the communities in which they reside that they become community delegates to headquarters rather than the reverse ... though devoted to their leaders, rangers might be cowed by local pressures.

But embeddedness can also be “innate” if the state official is a co-ethnic of the area. “Native” state officials are already enmeshed in local networks, are familiar with local customs, and know local elites.

¹³Embeddedness, broadly defined, can also refer to an officer’s relationship with others in her bureaucracy, as described in Pepinsky, Pierskalla & Sacks (2017). However embeddedness within a bureaucracy is often perceived as a larger problem for desk officials (e.g., Woldense 2016).

Third, bureaucrats may use their authority to benefit themselves and predate from society. The leader is especially wary of high levels of predation that substantially worsen the leader's support in an area, as well as of cases in which bureaucrats amass sufficient local clout and resources that they themselves become new rival elites (Migdal 1988, Barkey 1994).

Officer predation is often less of a concern for leaders than the above forms of shirking. In many cases, the leader turns a blind eye against small to moderate levels of officer predation or even encourages modest levels of predation (Ang 2016). As such, the theory prioritizes the prevention of shirking on behalf of another elite or the local area over the prevention of predation.

These forms of shirking are interrelated. Each problem can bleed into the next and an officer may succumb to multiple forms of shirking at once. Local embeddedness can make it easier for an officer to predate. Or an officer may be so locally embedded that she is more susceptible to becoming an agent of local political elites who are the leader's rivals. While I recognize these empirical realities, at their core, each form of shirking is conceptually distinct in that the officer becomes an agent of another principal; either an elite rival, the local community, or the bureaucrat herself.

4 The Insufficiency of Existing Solutions to the Principal-Agent Problem

Research on the principal-agent problem suggest two broad categories of solutions to ensure bureaucratic compliance. First, a leader can create neopatrimonial bonds with bureaucrats such that they benefit from him staying in office and therefore have a personal incentive to comply with orders. Second, a leader can reduce the ability of officers to shirk. These two classes of solutions, however, are insufficient to explain how leaders manage bureaucrats for two reasons. First, each strategy produces negative externalities that inhibit the leader's tenure in a manner separate from ensuring compliance from bureaucrats. If a leader were to fully implement either type of solution, the now higher levels of bureaucratic compliance would not outweigh the increased likelihood of elite or popular threats that the solution creates. Second, each solution focuses only on the relationship between leader and bureaucrat or between bureaucrat and local area, and in doing so does not fully solve the principal-agent problem. I discuss each class of solutions and the problems with each in turn.

4.1 Developing Neopatrimonial Ties with Bureaucrats: Patronage and Packing

One class of solutions to the principal-agent problem is to create neopatrimonial links between the leader and bureaucrats. If a bureaucrat believes that her livelihood is tied to the leader staying in office, then she has a personal incentive to comply with the leader's directives.

Existing literature suggests that a leader can create these neopatrimonial bonds by distributing vast amounts of *patronage* to bureaucrats and directly showering them with state resources.¹⁴ For instance, a

¹⁴Jackson & Rosberg (1982), Clapham (1985), Chabal & Daloz (1999), Brownlee (2002), van de Walle (2003), Pitcher, Moran & Johnston (2009).

leader can give bureaucrats additional compensation (bonuses), buy officers new uniforms and equipment, grant them access to preferential loans or state benefits, and importantly, link internal promotions to bureaucrats' compliance with the leader's orders as opposed to the formal mandate of their position. Further, leaders can allow a bureaucrat to use their position to predate and shield the bureaucrat from punishment. In forging a direct monetary relationship between himself and state officials, the leader turns them into his clients from whom he expects compliance (Bratton & van de Walle 1997). The distribution of patronage makes it clear that the bureaucrat's cushy financial situation is directly attributable to the leader.¹⁵

Alternatively, the leader can build neopatrimonial bonds with bureaucrats by *packing* the institution with in-group members.¹⁶ In-group bureaucrats in packed states are, by definition, given a preference in hirings and promotions. The bureaucrat's entry into the state and the progression of her career is therefore directly tied to the leader staying in power. As such, in-group officers have personal incentives to comply with the leader and are seen as loyal. A leader can trust that in-group bureaucrats will not use their authority to help a rival elite because these bureaucrats will anticipate a purge of the state should the leader leave office (Horowitz 1985, Brown 1994, Quinlivan 1999, Slater 2003, Bellin 2012). In this way, the fate of in-group state officials becomes intrinsically linked to the leader's.

4.1.1 Creating Neopatrimonial Relationships Worsens Stability

Though the creation of neopatrimonial institutions through bonds of money or bonds of blood induces bureaucrats to comply, it can create even worse political challenges for a leader by instigating new elite or popular threats.

The leader's ability to stave off elite threats is directly at odds with a leader's ability to create neopatrimonial state institutions. Leaders are thought to incorporate rival elites into nominally-democratic institutions or directly into the state to preemptively share resources with them. Elites demand this incorporation because they need to reinforce *their own* level of popular support among their in-group through clientelistic appeals, such as the distribution of state resources and positions within the state to their in-group members (Chabal & Daloz 1999, Wantchekon 2003, Lust-Okar 2006, Baldwin 2013, Roessler 2017).¹⁷ Resources that go to buy officer loyalty reduce the total amount available that the leader can use to acquiesce elites.

¹⁵Patronage is thus especially useful to buy the loyalty of the leader's out-group bureaucrats. More often than not, these bureaucrats made it into the state through the lobbying of their own incorporated elite. Absent patronage from the leader, these out-group officers are likely to be loyal to their own in-group elite, not necessarily the leader, and use their authority on that elite's behalf. But as the leader delivers more and more patronage to an officer, she begins to re-align her interests away from her elite and towards the leader.

¹⁶There is a large literature on why we should expect the leader's in-group state officials to be the most loyal. For instance, see Enloe (1973), Jackson & Rosberg (1982), Horowitz (1985), Brown (1994), Quinlivan (1999), Slater (2003), Bellin (2004), McLaughlin (2010), Sassoon (2011), Bellin (2012), Decalo (2012), and Nepstad (2013). Much of the packing literature has been developed with regards to the coercive apparatus specifically, where leaders worry about compliance with orders as well as the possibility of a coup. Yet many of the lessons translate to less coercive state bodies as well. A similar strategy is to pack the state, and especially the security forces, with a minority group separate from the leader's. By wedding the fate of a minority group to the regime or labeling a group a "martial class" or a "community of trust", the leader re-creates many of the same material and symbolic logics for in-group loyalty (see Enloe (1973), Migdal (1988), Makara (2013), Osborne (2015), Wilkinson (2015), and Greitens (2016).

¹⁷Positions to an elite's in-group show the elite's ability to secure resources for his group and also provide the elite with an agent who can siphon off state resources for the elite's coffers (Sigman 2017).

And a leader who packs the state with his in-group members is unable to distribute valuable state positions to the in-group members of incorporated elites.

Separately, a leader may refrain from creating neopatrimonial state institutions for other reasons. Neopatrimonial states are thought to be less efficient in carrying out their goals (Evans & Rauch 1999, Rauch & Evans 2000). Further, the creation of patrimonial institutions can disrupt bureaucratic norms. Bureaucrats may push back against abrupt changes to their agency's autonomy or long-standing compensation and hiring practices. And precisely because state jobs are seen as cushy, a leader who privileges his own co-ethnics will be perceived as disproportionately channeling state resources to his own group. This perception increases popular dissatisfaction against the leader from other groups.

4.2 Reducing Bureaucrats' Ability to Shirk

A second solution to the principal-agent problem is to reduce bureaucrats' ability to shirk (or to shirk without reprimand). This strategy says less about re-aligning the incentives of bureaucrats such that they have a personal stake in seeing the leader stay in office and more about lowering the level of damage that a bureaucrat can carry out should she shirk.

Much existing literature suggests that the monitoring of bureaucrats can reduce shirking, since bureaucrats who are monitored will fear getting caught and reprimanded. One common monitoring tactic is to measure quantifiable outputs of the bureaucrat's actions. Here, the leader can simply compare distilled data about the bureaucrat's outputs to projected targets. Another typical monitoring strategy is to increase the level of oversight in the organization by the leader.

Other literature suggests that lowering the embeddedness of a bureaucrat in a post makes it more difficult for the bureaucrat to shirk. The leader can lower embeddedness by either constantly shuffling bureaucrats across stations or deliberately preventing the assignment of bureaucrats to their co-ethnic ("home") areas.¹⁸ Unembedded bureaucrats have less information about the area, so their efforts to shirk will not prove as effective. Looking at the Ottoman case, Alexandre Debs (2007) writes that "the rotation of officials prevented an alliance between [officials] and peasants against the central state, explaining the absence of peasant rebellions in the 17th century." In China, there are strict term limits for any state administrative officer in a given station and many officials are rotated halfway into their first term as "willful policy to combat corruption" (Landry 2008, 92).¹⁹ Similarly, the regime (and the imperial leaders before them) practice the "law of avoidance" where top administrative cadres are institutionally prohibited from working in their "home" province, where they run the greatest risk of colluding with local elites (Miyazaki 1976, McCulloch & Malesky 2014).

¹⁸There is a separate, but related literature about how leaders shuffle top elites within different top posts (e.g., cabinet members, parastatal heads, army commanders). The logic behind this "elite shuffle" is similar, albeit more attuned to the particular coup risk that elites present. Namely, leaders weigh the efficiency gains of having an elite serve a long tenure in a post against the increased potential that the elite can create a following within the agency or amass significant resources with which to directly challenge the leader. See, among others, Tordoff & Molteni (1974), Migdal (1988), Bayart (1993), Chabal & Daloz (1999), Joseph S. Bermudez (2001), Hashim (2003), Kapucinski (2006), Bethke (2012), Francois, Rainer & Trebbi (2014), Francois, Rainer & Trebbi (2015), Carter (2015), Woldense (2016), Kroeger (2017), and Huber & Martinez-Gallardo (2008).

¹⁹Also see Huang (2002) and Zeng (2015).

4.2.1 Reducing Bureaucrats' Ability to Shirk Reduces Bureaucrats' Ability to Govern

Attempts to decrease a bureaucrat's ability to shirk – through monitoring or artificial changes to local embeddedness – are not costless. This class of solutions reduces bureaucrats' ability to carry out the leader's demands, therefore making bureaucrats less effective at pre-empting popular threats.

Monitoring through the use of quantifiable targets is thought to lower effectiveness. To begin, bureaucracies that see monitoring increases are likely to see their morale or effort drop (Frey 1993, Falk & Kosfeld 2006). In addition, the introduction of targets is thought to be especially detrimental within bureaucracies whose outcomes are hard to quantify. This includes officers in Kenya's Provincial Administration that are expected to engage in low-intensity coercion or to improve local development outcomes. When the discrete quantifiable outputs that bureaucrats can point to do not closely correlate with the outcomes that they are mandated to carry, attempts to introduce reporting criteria will change the bureaucrat's behavior such that they work to meet output targets instead of doing what they were hired to do (Wilson 1989, Honig 2018). James Q. Wilson (1989, 162) describes this pitfall,

In no agency was the "stat game" played with greater zeal than in the FBI during J. Edgar Hoover's tenure as director. Agents were expected to produce ever higher numbers of arrests, recoveries (for example, of stolen cars), apprehended figures, and savings) every agent was under enormous pressure to produce these "stats." This resulted in FBI agents getting lists from local police departments of stolen cars that had been found so that the agents could claim them as "recoveries" even though the agents had done little or nothing to find the cars. The number of fugitives apprehended could be maximized by concentrating on deserters from the armed forces (most of whom were found at home) rather than on major felons who had gone underground to escape serious punishment. By the 1970s, a bureau survey disclosed that 60 percent of the cases that the FBI presented for prosecution to local U.S. attorneys were being declined. In many cases the reason for the declination was that the case was too trivial to warrant prosecutorial effort.

Attempts to increase oversight are thought to introduce inefficiency into the bureaucracy as well. A principal delegates tasks to agents precisely because the principal does not have the time or mental bandwidth to carry out numerous tasks. Increasing monitoring makes the act of delegation redundant. Further, oversight reduces bureaucratic discretion, which is thought to have a detrimental effect on the bureaucrat's ability to carry out her mandate (Aghion & Tirole 1997, Honig 2018, Rasul & Rogger 2017).²⁰

Separately, reducing local embeddedness through constant shuffling or the deliberate posting of out-group officers has negative effects on the officer's ability to effectively carry out the leader's orders to co-opt.²¹ The general training that a bureaucrat receives provides a good foundation of the agency's mission and an overview of the basic tasks that an officer is expected to carry out. But all jurisdictions are different and will require bureaucrats to adapt general mandates to specific situations (Scott 1998). An embedded

²⁰On the origins of bureaucratic discretion, see Carpenter (2001) and Huber & Shipan (2002).

²¹See Meier & Nigro (1976), Evans (1995), Tsai (2007a), Pepinsky, Pierskalla & Sacks (2017), Bhavnani & Lee (2018), Carter & Hassan (2016) on the merits and pitfalls of local embeddedness.

officer knows the local power players and the wheels to grease to get societal approval (e.g., to get local buy-in when she launches a new program or needs to call an important meeting), is more efficient in using the resources available to her (e.g., by hiring the best rated contractors for a job), and can identify recipient beneficiaries who are either the most in need or the most loyal to the leader. During Kenya's colonial era, for instance, regime elites extolled the benefits of long tenure on an officer's ability to implement local development:

[the officer] entered upon his third year as District Agricultural Officer and the District is now beginning to reap the profits of the continuity of his three year direction of agricultural affairs. The benefits accruing from this continuity of star are to be seen also in the progress of coffee in the District and in the agricultural advance of the hitherto backward Western Division.²²

In Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire, Young & Turner (1985, 226) find that "a number of sub-regional commissioners were assigned to their own ethnic areas, on a trial basis, on the ground that they would better understand local problems." Evidence from China suggests that bureaucrats who have long tenures are more willing to spend time on long-term projects that have the largest impact on an area's development, as opposed to restricting themselves to smaller activities with more limited effects (Eatona & Kostka 2014).

In addition, locally embedded bureaucrats are more willing to co-opt the jurisdiction to which they are posted. Officers with innate embeddedness are members of the local group, and officers with learned embeddedness, in a sense, become members of the local group. Either way, embedded bureaucrats have a sense of obligation to residents in the jurisdiction and emotionally care about residents' livelihoods. Evidence on Chinese bureaucrats finds that embedded officers are more likely to provide local public goods because they receive moral standing from the community for their actions (Tsai 2007b, Tsai 2007a). Regime elites in the Ottoman Empire found that locally embedded officers were more just in their rulings: "the governor-general [should] be appointed for longer periods of time, because without permanent secure positions, the [state officials] are liable to resort to injustice and when injustice prevails the people are in discomfort and the country is in distress and disorder" (Barkey 1994, 79). Further, residents trust locally embedded officers more and are thus more willing to cooperate with the state, as this excerpt from the Kenyan colonial record suggests:

Continuity in the form of a District Commissioner is essential if a district is to develop in any particular way ... a personal loyalty tends to develop between the African and the [officer], but it does take some time to do so. If changes are made too quickly, suspicion inevitably grows and nothing is achieved.²³

Separately, locally embedded bureaucrats are more able to coerce. An embedded bureaucrat knows the local area and therefore has a better sense of who is liable to instigate a popular threat, has a deep network of informants who alert her about new local opposition elites, and has a sense of which symbolic events or

²²Elgon Nyanza 1959 Annual Report, pg. 12. Kenya National Archives, Nairobi, Kenya.

²³North Nyanza 1958 Annual Report, pg. 8. Kenya National Archives, Nairobi, Kenya.

religious celebrations people are likely to use as cover to protest.²⁴ Moreover, greater knowledge of the area means that an embedded bureaucrat can apply targeted, discriminate coercion that quickly ends a popular threat, as opposed to indiscriminate violence across the entire jurisdiction that decreases the leader's popular support unnecessarily.²⁵

In sum, leaders are reticent to implement any solution to the principal-agent problem – the creation of neopatrimonial relationships to induce officer loyalty, or efforts to reduce bureaucrats' ability to shirk – in full. Each broad category of solutions risks worsening a leader's grip on power in a manner separate from bureaucratic shirking. In what follows, I present a theory of how leaders manage bureaucrats to alleviate the principal-agent problem and maximize reliance on the state to stay in power. In doing so, I argue that leaders only partially implement the above strategies.

5 Managing the State to Stay in Power

Leaders make management decisions with an eye towards averting both elite and popular threats. I first discuss a leader's considerations about management of the state to avert pressing elite threats before discussing considerations about management of the state to prevent popular threats. I then consider the role of regime type in determining the parts of the country that the leader deems most important in his fight to stay in power.

5.1 Reliance on the State to Prevent Elite Threats

A leader needs to address both elite and popular challenges, but he prioritizes addressing elite challenges. This is for two reasons. First, elite threats are more dangerous. Elites who are currently incorporated into the government are the most likely to bring about the leader's downfall because of their proximity to the leader and the resources that they can muster. Looking at coup d'états in particular, Phillip Roessler (2011, 308) reminds us that whereas a popular threat "requires a sustained ... operation before it presents a credible challenge to the ruler's grip on power, the coup, as a swift surprise strike, poses a much more immediate and unpredictable threat." Second, solving elite threats can sometimes temper popular discontent among the elite's followers, and thus quell popular threats in the process.

Many leaders pre-empt elite threats by incorporating rival elites through a party, legislature, or directly into the state through the cabinet or state-owned enterprises. To solidify the incorporation, the elite often requires that the leader hire the elite's followers into the state. Incorporated elites need to reinforce *their own* level of popular support through clientelistic appeals such as the distribution of state resources to their followers (Chabal & Daloz 1999, Wantchekon 2003, Lust-Okar 2006). An elite is only viewed as a threat

²⁴The ability of in-group officers to better coerce an area even holds during wartime. Lyall (2010) finds that co-ethnic soldiers are more effective at weeding out counter-insurgents than non-co-ethnics for the same reasons described here.

²⁵For instance, Deng & O'Brien (2013) find that officers with social ties to protesters are able to talk them out of protesting, as opposed to resorting to violence. On higher levels of violence by unembedded officers or combatants, see Kalyvas (2006), Lyall (2010), Arriola (2013), Greitens (2016), Lewis (2017).

to the leader – a threat that needs to be bought off – if she has sufficient support among her own base and therefore can credibly mount a challenge against him. As such, incorporated elites use their incorporation, in part, to distribute coveted state positions to their own in-group.

To be sure, some leaders find it too dangerous to incorporate rival elites. Providing rivals with resources increases the likelihood of that elite's success should she decide to challenge the leader. As such, some leaders preemptively exclude an elite who is deemed as amassing too much power or will refuse to incorporate an elite who is not genuinely willing to trade regime incorporation for acquiescence.²⁶ That said, the vast majority of leaders across both autocratic and electoral regimes take the risk of elite incorporation.

5.2 Reliance on the State to Prevent Popular Threats

A leader can rely on the state to co-opt or coerce groups in an attempt to forestall popular threats. Decisions about the management of bureaucrats to ensure compliance and avert the principal-agent problem require that the leader consider the relationships between the leader himself, a bureaucrat, and the area to which the bureaucrat is posted. The *alignment* of an area towards the leader determines the likelihood of a popular threat emerging, and in response, whether the leader opts to co-opt or coerce the area; the *loyalty* of a bureaucrat to the leader determines her willingness to comply; the *embeddedness* of a bureaucrat to her post affects her ability, and to an extent her willingness, to carry out the leader's directives.

5.2.1 Area Alignment Towards Leader: Sub-National Variation in Popular Threats

A group's *alignment* towards the leader is dependent on the group's perceptions about whether the current leader or a viable replacement will credibly share relatively more state resources with the group in the future. Alignment is important because it determines the risk of the group launching or sustaining a popular threat.

Alignment between the leader and an area is best conceived of on a spectrum, but can be broken up into three categories. On one end, we have the leader's *aligned* groups who expect significant state resources in the future. The leader's promise to redistribute resources are seen as most credible among his in-group, though other societal groups may also perceive his promises as credible.²⁷ These groups are content with the status quo and their expected future stream of resources. Not only is a popular threat unlikely to launch in or spread to areas they inhabit, but they support the leader at high levels because they realize that their situation would be worse under a different leader whose promises about resource distribution are less credible (Padro i Miquel 2007).

On the opposite end of the alignment spectrum, we have the leader's *misaligned* groups. Misaligned groups are often the in-groups of excluded elites. An excluded elite will try to sow dissatisfaction among the entire population through promises of a future stream of resources should she take office, but these promises

²⁶This catch-22 has been noted by much of the literature on authoritarian regimes. See, for instance, Magaloni (2006), Debs (2007), Gandhi & Przeworski (2007), Frantz & Kendall-Taylor (2014), Harkness (2016), and Roessler (2017).

²⁷Other aligned groups tend to include groups that have long-standing historic or symbolic linkages with the leader, or groups with significant economic or social ties between the leader and the group such that the leader or his group would suffer if he reneged on his promises.

are the most credible among her own in-group. The high level of dissatisfaction with the leader among misaligned groups, and the willingness of their respective in-group leader to coordinate them, make them the most likely to launch a popular threat against the leader.

There are also *unaligned* groups. Their level of expected resources in the future from the current leader versus a viable replacement is uncertain or in-between that of aligned and misaligned groups. These groups are unlikely to have enough dissatisfaction with the regime to launch a popular threat. But popular threats that have already been launched might spread to unaligned groups and the areas they inhabit (or at least, they are more likely to spread to areas inhabited by unaligned groups as opposed to areas inhabited by aligned groups). This is especially true in electoral regimes. Unaligned groups are the country's "swing" voters. Whereas the votes of aligned and misaligned groups are locked in for the leader and opposition respectively, unaligned groups provide the critical electoral support to help the leader or an opposition candidate create a minimum-winning coalition.

5.2.2 Bureaucratic Loyalty Towards Leader: Variation in Officer Willingness to Comply

A bureaucrat's *loyalty* to the leader depends on her career prospects. Bureaucratic loyalty affects the willingness of the bureaucrat to comply with the leader's demands.

All else equal, bureaucrats prefer to materially gain from their position. The leader's most *loyal* bureaucrats are those that have a neopatrimonial relationship with him. Regardless of their ethnicity, high-ranking bureaucrats at the very top of an organization are showered with resources or are allowed to use their position to predate. These bureaucrats can only expect to do worse should the leader leave office; a new leader is likely to dismiss his predecessor's high-level appointments because they owe their loyalties to the old leader and these bureaucrats are likely to be the first punished for carrying out the old leader's politicized actions. Further, in many ethnicized countries, the leader's co-ethnic bureaucrats expect some level of favoritism in promotions to cushy, high-ranking posts. They expect to be more likely to rise through the ranks with an in-group leader in power. Lower-level in-group bureaucrats, thus, benefit from seeing the leader stay around and have an incentive to comply with his orders as well.

Loyalty also exists on a spectrum, with the leader's most *disloyal* bureaucrats being those that have the highest expected benefit from the leader losing office and who can expect to forge a neopatrimonial relationship with a new leader. An out-group, lower-level bureaucrat – of whom the majority of officers are likely to be when the organization is not packed – expects to fare better should her in-group elite become the new leader because the new leader will instead privilege her own group for promotions. Not all elites have a viable path to the presidency, however, and thus not all bureaucrats have equally misaligned incentives with the leader. Instead, lower-level bureaucrats whose in-group elite is a viable rival of the leader are likely to be the most disloyal to the current leader. They have a strong incentive to shirk from the leader's demands, and instead, use their authority to increase their elite's chances to coming to power

5.2.3 Bureaucratic Embeddedness within a Jurisdiction: Variation in Ability to Govern

Officers differ in their degree of *embeddedness* within a jurisdiction, which affects the bureaucrat's ability, and at times willingness, to carry out the leader's orders.

Whether innate or learned, locally embedded bureaucrats are better able to carry out the leader's demands. Bureaucrats who are members of the same in-group as locals or who have been posted there long are best able to adapt central mandates to local conditions. Embeddedness also affects bureaucrats' willingness to co-opt or coerce precisely because of the social bonds that innateness or long tenure bring with them. Embedded bureaucrats are more willing to co-opt the area because they have a sense of obligation to residents and are emotionally vested in the area's development. But for these same reasons, embedded bureaucrats are less willing to coerce an area and its residents, despite the fact that they typically have the greater local knowledge that would make them more effective at coercion.

5.3 Regime Type and The Relative Importance of Different Areas

The presence or absence of multi-party elections affects the leader's perception of where the most damaging popular threat will emerge. Autocrats consider aligned and misaligned areas more important for their survival than unaligned areas. A leader's aligned groups are critical to the continuation of his rule as they provide the popular legitimacy and support that is necessary to sustain the regime. At the same time, an autocrat assumes that should a popular threat emerge, it will originate in misaligned areas. Misaligned groups are liable to be mobilized for collective action by their elite, or may have sufficient dissatisfaction with the autocrat that they mobilize on their own.

The leader's calculus about the importance of different areas changes in contexts where there are multi-party elections. In electoral regimes, the leader needs to build a minimum-winning coalition. The leader counts on his aligned groups. But they might not have the numbers to re-elect the leader on their own. Since misaligned groups are unlikely to vote for him absent large amounts of costly co-optation or coercion, the leader focuses attention to unaligned areas. He finds it cheaper to win the votes of (or suppress their votes for the opposition) unaligned groups than misaligned groups.

In sum, regime type affects the relative importance of different areas. Autocratic leaders consider aligned and misaligned areas the most important, whereas elected leaders consider aligned and unaligned areas the most important.

6 Empirical Implications of the Theory

I lay out the empirical implications of the theory for the hiring, posting, and shuffling of bureaucrats. Whereas hiring patterns are dictated by elite threats, posting and shuffling patterns are a response to the leader's popular threat, which change fundamentally between autocratic and electoral regimes. As such, I split the hypotheses for posting and shuffling bureaucrats by regime type.

6.1 Hiring

Regardless of regime type, we should expect the composition of the state to reflect the leader's degree of elite incorporation. Countries with low levels of elite incorporation will see a packed state precisely because the leader does not need to solidify bonds with out-group elites. Countries in which the leader does incorporate other elites will have a diverse state, with the break-down of the state by group resembling the break-down of out-group elites who have been incorporated. The empirical observations for posting and shuffling bureaucrats assume some degree of elite incorporation, as in the Kenyan case.

6.2 Governance Under Autocracy: Posting and Shuffling Patterns

Aligned groups can expect to be co-opted. These groups are unlikely to launch a popular threat so long as the leader continues to favor them. In other words, it is cheaper for the leader to prevent a popular threat in aligned areas by co-opting residents than coercing them. As such, the leader governs these areas with embedded bureaucrats. The autocrat will disproportionately post loyal bureaucrats, given the importance of the area to his survival. Further, the autocrat will artificially increase the embeddedness of officers in aligned areas. He will post bureaucrats who are members of the same group as residents and will refrain from shuffling bureaucrats posted in these jurisdictions so as to increase embeddedness. (An autocrat's most aligned areas will be those inhabited by his in-group. Therefore, the posting of loyal bureaucrats is simultaneously the posting of an innately embedded officer).

Misaligned groups can expect to be coerced under autocracy. The areas that misaligned groups are unwilling to be bought off by the autocrat because they expect better outcomes should their in-group elite come to power. Moreover, they are deemed important for the autocrat's survival because they are likely to launch a popular threat. The autocrat will post loyal bureaucrats to this area because they can be expected to comply. Given the need for coercion, the autocrat will refrain from posting loyal officers who are in-group members with the misaligned group and the autocrat will shuffle officers in these posts quickly. This is to prevent the embeddedness that could reduce officers' willingness to coerce.

Unaligned groups under autocracy can also expect to be coerced, but at lower levels than misaligned groups. These groups may sustain a popular threat that misaligned groups launch, but are unlikely to launch one on their own. The autocrat will post officers of suspect loyalties – including those bureaucrats hired into the state to appease rival elites – to this area. The consequences of shirking by these bureaucrats is lowest in unaligned areas where the autocrat does not need to maintain support nor is he seriously worried about a popular threat. At the same time, the leader will refrain from posting bureaucrats who are in-group members with the local area, and he will shuffle bureaucrats quickly.

6.3 Governance Under Electoral Regimes: Posting and Shuffling Patterns

As under autocracy, leaders who face multi-party elections will continue to co-opt aligned areas. These groups will form the core of the leader's minimum winning coalition so long as they are co-opted now, and

thus can expect resources in the future. Posting and shuffling patterns of bureaucrats in aligned areas under electoral regimes will resemble patterns under autocracy.

Given their importance to winning the upcoming election, the leader will target unaligned groups. These groups are likely to receive both more coercion and co-optation than unaligned groups during authoritarian regimes. Coercion is clearly useful – the leader can lower the opposition’s vote share in the area or force residents to vote for the leader (Robinson & Torvik 2009). The leader may simultaneously try to co-opt unaligned groups. Unlike misaligned groups, the leader stands a chance at co-opting unaligned groups given their uncertain resource streams under either the leader or the opposition. Precisely because of this uncertainty, however, unaligned groups are hesitant to trade their electoral support for state resources as the leader can renege if he finds another unaligned group willing to be co-opted for less. As such, co-optation of unaligned groups in electoral regimes works best through discrete acts that transfer resources that the leader cannot take back (Albertus 2013). However the cooptation that bureaucrats are best equipped to carry out – the more routine, day-to-day actions that benefit residents through bureaucratic discretion as opposed to large-scale activities– is too tenuous for unaligned groups to accept. The leader thus finds it more effective to have bureaucrats coerce these groups than to co-opt them.

Coercion of unaligned groups under an electoral regime will look like coercion of misaligned groups under an autocratic regime. The leader will post loyal bureaucrats to unaligned areas because these are the bureaucrats that can be expected to comply. Moreover, the leader will refrain from posting loyal officers who are in-group members with the unaligned group and will shuffle officers quickly.

The leader will also coerce misaligned groups. Since compliance with orders in misaligned areas is less important than other areas – misaligned areas are written off in electoral regimes – the leader is willing to post officers of questionable loyalty. Though the leader demands that bureaucrats coerce, shirking will have less of an effect on the election outcome than shirking in unaligned areas. Regardless of who is posted to misaligned areas, the leader will ensure that bureaucrats are unembedded – that they are not co-ethnics of residents and that bureaucrats posted there are shuffled frequently – to forestall shirking in the first place.

7 Alternative Solutions to How Leaders Stay in Power

Above I provide a theory of how leaders will manage their state to prevent elite and popular threats. In this section, I discuss alternative solutions proposed by existing work on how leaders stay in power: reliance on nominally-democratic institutions and manipulating formal institutions of the state. Both strategies are thought to allow a leader to efficiently co-opt or coerce elites or the population. But both strategies are insufficient in understanding how leaders tramper their threats.

7.1 Reliance on Nominally-Democratic Institutions to Prevent Threats

Much existing research points to the role of nominally-democratic institutions – such as parties, legislatures, courts, and (local-level) elections – in preempting elite and popular threats. In electoral regimes, these

institutions help the leader involve elites and citizens into the decision making process. If powerful elites and wide swaths of society can shape important policy debates, or at least perceive that their views are taken into account, they are less likely to challenge the regime (Huntington 1968).

The ability of nominally-democratic institutions to allay elite and popular threats have made them pervasive among autocracies: nearly half of all authoritarian regimes since 1946 have had a ruling party (Reuter 2017), another half have legislatures (Gandhi 2008, Svobik 2012), and nearly all have a functioning judiciary and local-level elections.²⁸ This alternative explanation seems especially plausible in Kenya during its authoritarian years, when it boasted a ruling party (Widner 1992), a functioning legislature (Opalo 2016) and an active judiciary (Shen-Bayh N.d.).

Nominally-democratic institutions are thought to prevent elite threats under autocracy because they create a credible commitment that binds the autocrat into sharing spoils with them. Lisa Blaydes (2011, 2) argues that parliamentary elections in Egypt “ease important forms of distributional conflict, particularly conflict over access to spoils within Egypt’s broad class of elite, that represent an important source of support for the regime.” Jennifer Gandhi (2008, xviii) writes that “[l]egislatures and parties serve as a forum in which the regime and opposition can announce their policy preferences and forge agreements ... nominally democratic institutions are instruments of co-optation.” Turning to authoritarian parties, Milan Svobik (2012, 164) contends that, “[c]o-optation via authoritarian parties breeds an enduring rather than momentary stake in the regime’s survival ... what makes co-optation via a party so effective is not the distribution of benefits by itself ... [r]ather it is the conditioning of those benefits on prior costly service.” One-party regimes lower the risks of elite defection by making promotions to more lucrative positions contingent on past loyalty and more generally by building a sense of elite unity (Grzymała-Busse 2002, Brownlee 2007).

Much of the work on nominally democratic institutions under autocracy has focused on elite threats, however there is evidence that nominally democratic institutions can also help preempt popular threats. For instance, Melanie Manion (2015) finds that local elections in China were introduced as a top-down measure to allow the center an opportunity to understand local needs before they mushroom into destabilizing unrest. Ruling parties under autocratic Africa helped leaders build mass support at the grassroots level, and in some cases, better respond to local demands (Zolberg 1966, Riedl 2014). In Jordan, Ellen Lust-Okar (2006) finds that elections allow the regime to use civilians to police legislative elites. Since only pro-regime candidates can deliver resources to their constituents, legislators have a strong incentive to toe the regime line so as to win re-election.

Reliance on nominally democratic institutions to prevent popular threats, however, ultimately involve the state. Indeed, many of the strongest one-party regimes achieved their stability because they created a

²⁸For literature on ruling parties, see Zolberg (1966), Huntington (1968), Geddes (1999), Grzymała-Busse (2002), Nathan (2003), Lazarev (2005), Smith (2006), Brownlee (2007), Greene (2009), Slater (2010), Magaloni & Kricheli (2010), Svobik (2012), Boix & Svobik (2013), Meng (2016), and Reuter (2017). For literature on legislatures, see Boix (2003), Gandhi (2008), Gandhi & Przeworski (2007), Wright (2008), Malesky & Schuler (2010), Opalo (2018). For literature on elections in authoritarian regimes, see Lust-Okar (2006), Magaloni (2006), Gandhi & Lust-Okar (2009), Blaydes (2011), Manion (2015), Gehlbach, Sonin & Svobik (2016). Literature on elite incorporation through the state has focused on cabinets. See Arriola (2009), Francois, Rainer & Trebbi (2014), Francois, Rainer & Trebbi (2015), Gandhi & Buckles (2017), Kroeger (2017). For literature on courts in authoritarian regimes, see Ginsburg & Moustafa (2008), Helmke & Rosenbluth (2009), Popova (2010), Hanson (2018) and Shen-Bayh (N.d.).

party-state. The party did not replace the state, but fused with it so as to improve bureaucratic compliance. More generally, ruling parties can address citizen dissatisfaction and temper popular discontent when they provide citizens an easy route to register their complaints with the state. Similarly, elections reveal to the center where to channel state resources. Ultimately, it is the state that follows through on the allocations or policy decisions that were made in an attempt to co-opt the population.

7.2 Changing the Formal Institutions of the State to Prevent Threats

Much work that looks at the role of the state in tempering a leader's elite and popular challenges has focused on the formal institutional design of a state's structure, or the distribution of power between national and sub-national units.²⁹ By delineating the powers of different tiers of government and the elites within them, formal changes to state structure are thought to allow the center to better co-opt elites and the population.

Conventional wisdom suggests that a leader should prefer a centralized state structure whereby he has direct control over the entire country, yet the empirical record shows that decentralized states better prevent challenges to a leader's rule.³⁰ Since decentralization is associated with increased economic growth,³¹ as the case of China suggests (Landry 2008), decentralized states have more resources to appease elites and the population both. Decentralization is thought to increase overall popular satisfaction with the regime since it allows local areas some autonomy over their livelihoods and shares power among more elites, including elites based outside the capital city. Federal states, where sub-national units are constitutionally guaranteed autonomy over policy decisions, are especially thought to be able to placate citizens who can "vote with their feet" and choose the sub-national unit that most closely aligns with their preferences (Tiebout 1956).³²

Much work examines how leaders intentionally initiate changes to state structure to pre-empt threats. Catherine Boone (2003) examines decentralization reforms and the resulting structure of states in post-independence West Africa.³³ She traces how leaders instituted different decentralization arrangements, sometimes within the same country, depending on the importance of an area to the leader and the ability of local elites to mobilize followers. Local elites who were willing to work with the center were devolved more authority. Separately, regions that were considered more valuable were allocated a denser presence of central bureaucrats. Kate Baldwin (2014) finds that leaders across Africa devolve land rights to local elites in areas inhabited by unaligned ethnic groups in exchange for those elites brokering votes for the leader.

²⁹A separate, but related literature looks at how leaders shape the initial state-building process in a manner that helps keep them in power. For instance, see Ziblatt (2006), O'Dwyer (2006), and Grzymała-Busse (2007).

³⁰To be sure, some work does argue that leaders centralize to pre-empt threats or meet policy goals. See for instance, Diaz-Cayeros (2006) and Ziblatt (2006).

³¹This claim is contested. See Rodden (2006) and Treisman (2006).

³²The concept of "voting with one's feet" is less applicable in countries where federalism is ethnically based and where state resources are not only dependent on residency but on membership in the larger group. For instance, individuals living outside of their "ancestral" homeland in Ethiopia (Mehretu 2012) and Nigeria (Kendhammer 2014) are denied full political rights.

³³Boone (2003), building off Cohen & Peterson (1999), differentiates decentralization reforms along one of two axes. First, the center can *deconcentrate* authority by creating more state outposts in increasingly rural areas and dispatching more central-government agents in hard to reach areas. Second, the center can *devolve* authority by giving local elites more authority to interpret and implement policy decisions. I refer to her argument, and the the rest of the work on decentralization more broadly, as decentralization broadly defined for simplicity.

Recent work on administrative unit creation is thought to preempt elite or popular threats. This form of decentralization entails the break-up of existing sub-national administrative units into smaller ones, with the new unit receiving the same level or share of resources as existing units.³⁴ Unit creation can prevent elite threats. District creation in Vietnam, according to Edmund Malesky (2009), was done to weaken regional elite opposition to the center's reform agenda. Elliot Green (2010) claims that district creation in Uganda has been driven, in part, by Museveni's desire to create more state positions for elites within the context of structural adjustment and a loss of traditional sinecure positions with which Museveni could buy-off elites.³⁵ Unit creation can also curb popular threats. As I argue elsewhere, leaders facing competitive elections are liable to create new units in the run-up to the election among areas inhabited by unaligned, or swing groups, in an attempt to co-opt voters.³⁶ In democratic Ghana, each major party has used their time in office to create new units among their core constituencies, which in turn provide cushy patronage jobs for the receiving unit (Ayee 2012). Further, unit creation helps the center monitor the population since more central government agents are posted in the new unit (Lewis 2014, Brierley 2017).

Fundamentally, however, a leader cannot temper elite and popular threats solely through changes to state structure. Neither the state as an entity nor its individual institutions can physically govern and carry out the actions that prevent elite or popular threats. Instead, individuals within each bureaucracy are granted the right to execute the functions of the state within their bureaucracy's domain. These bureaucrats are the ones who carry out the orders that the leader demands, whether those demands are the administration of government policies, the distribution of central state resources, or the repression of citizens. And these are the individuals who are granted more or less state authority or whose scope of duties change when a leader inaugurates reforms to the state's institutional design. An understanding of governance is therefore dependent on the incentives and actions of bureaucrats in the state.

³⁴To name just some of the recent work on this topic, see Kraxberger (2004), Kasara (2006), O'Dwyer (2006), Malesky (2009), Green (2010), Ayee (2012), Kimura (2013), Grossman & Lewis (2014), Lewis (2014), Hassan (2016), Pierskalla (2016), Hassan & Sheely (2017), Grossman, Pierskalla & Dean (Forthcoming), Saylor (2016), and Resnick (2017).

³⁵Grossman & Lewis (2014) provide a rebuttal to this finding.

³⁶Hassan (2016).

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