The Toppler Effect: Irregular leader transitions and the rate of state failure recovery

by

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ABSTRACT

State failure is becoming increasingly prevalent across the globe, creating human suffering, black markets, lost economic opportunities, and safe havens for militant actors. It is imperative that the international community find a way to combat state failure. This study investigates the effects of irregular leadership transitions on state failure recovery.

Irregular leadership transitions occur when the executive of a state comes to power through unconstitutional means. Regular leaders are more likely than irregular leaders to have personal experience as a ruler, beneficial domestic and international ties, and familiarity among the population. Irregular transitions may damage bureaucracies, damaging government functionality and halting development projects that had already been underway. Regular leaders benefit from a legacy that was likely able to pass spoils onto an elite group. This elite group is likely to resist relative losses to power more than lower status groups would fight to gain power because of the cognitive principles of risk aversion, and the sensitivity to status inherent to social identity theory. Regular leaders also have traditional legitimacy, while irregular leaders are more likely to have to gain legitimacy.

State failure and failure recovery are overdetermined, so it is impossible to be able to confidently determine the direction of causal flow. Every determinant of failure is related to every other, and it is difficult to separate their effects. The role of leadership regularity is therefore investigated as a proxy that can predict variation on the rate of failure recovery.

The quantitative analysis consisted of multi and bivariate regressions investigating the effects of leadership regularity on failure duration, as well as the relative explanatory power held by several factors associated with leadership regularity. Robustness checks were performed using Bayesian statistics, and survival analyses. Irregular leadership transitions were found to predict a roughly five year increase in state failure duration.

The Afghan Civil War was used as an illustrative case, describing the ways in which Daoud, Taraki, Amin, Karmal, Massoud, Hekmatyar, and Mullah Omar all overcame, or failed to overcome, different obstacles associated with their irregularity and how these obstacles affected their relative levels of success attempting to extend governance.

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Laila Wahedi

Introduction

The problem of failed states has become increasingly potent in modern history. In a largely globalized world, the domestic affairs of one country have an impact on the entire international community. Much research has been dedicated to the factors that lead to state failure recovery, but as is usually the case in a field dominated by structuralist arguments, too little attention has been focused on the leaders themselves.

Although scholars have speculated on the role of governance and governing institutions on failure recovery, especially in specific cases, no comprehensive work has yet attempted to categorize rulers by whether they have executive experience, or to identify the factors that allow a leader to successfully consolidate control over a territory. Despite the use of coups and forcible regime changes, little attention has been paid to whether regularly ascending or irregular rulers are more capable of extending state power of a territory in order to recover from state failure. On the one hand, it might seem intuitive to suspect that old and corrupt leaders are the cause of the failure, and thus that new leaders are arbiters of change and recovery. However, there is no reason to suspect a new leader to be any less corrupt or more competent than their predecessor. In fact, there are many factors that are more associated with regular leaders that are likely to

\textsuperscript{1}The Toppler Effect is a word play combining “topple,” as in a the removal of a ruler, and the Doppler Effect—a principle of physics that occurs when waves emitted from a moving object move faster in the direction the object is traveling and slower in the backwards direction, relative to a stationary observer. For example, when a noise-making object travels towards an observer, the noise sounds higher pitched, (the sound waves have a greater frequency). Once it has passed the observer, the noise sounds lower pitched, (the sound waves have a lower frequency). Similarly, the Toppler Effect predicts that before an irregular leadership-change event, (the event is analogous to the object passing the observer,) the rate, or frequency, of recovery is greater than after the leadership-change event.
contribute to state failure recovery. The next section will assess the literature and describe the theoretical underpinnings behind these factors. The following section will operationalize relevant variables. The next section contains a quantitative analysis, followed by an illustrative case featuring a series of leaders during the Afghan Civil War and a brief conclusion.
Literature and Theory

With Woodrow Wilson’s declaration of America’s commitment to self determination, the norm of colonization was broken and the Westphalian idea of state sovereignty was, at least theoretically, extended throughout the world. Wars have continued to be waged, but the norm has shifted from one of colonizing and conquering territory to one of fixed borders and a global impetus to protect those fixed borders in order to preserve the status quo.

In theory, the idea of fixed borders seems very equitable and peaceable. If states, on the whole, have reduced their conquest ambitions, then it might follow that there would be less interstate war. However, there is a dark side: an increased prevalence of intrastate conflict and instability. Charles Tilly described the formation of European states through military competition during which weakened regions were conquered (1985). But when fixed borders are the norm, weakened areas are left to fester and conflict can continue indefinitely.

The failure of a coercive state occurs when its government no longer maintains a monopoly over legitimate use of force within its territory, resulting in ungoverned territories. The failed state cannot extend governance to, nor extract resources from, these regions because another group challenges its legitimate use of force and its control in the area. In the most extreme form of failure, the majority of the country is not governed by the state authority, if such an authority even exists, and civil war ensues. Examples would be Afghanistan in 1978, or Somalia today. In more mild forms, only certain swathes remain ungoverned. On the other extreme, the UK maintained control over the majority of its territory in between 1971 and 1982, but failed to extend governance into Northern Ireland because the IRA challenged state authority and monopoly over violence. Any ungoverned territory leaves the population without access to state provided services such as security and results in domestic humanitarian concerns as well as
concerns for the international community—they provide safe havens for terrorists and other militant actors launching into neighboring states, represent lost economic opportunities and resources, and are home to illicit weapon, human, organ, drug, and WMD trafficking.

As the threats from interstate war decreased since the Second World War, the threats from intrastate conflict and instability have increased. Over half of the worlds states are weak, failing, or failed, (Hanlon, 2010), and while global trends for state fragility have improved slightly in the past fifteen years, the prospects for these states are still grim, (Marshall & Cole, 2009). Because these ungoverned territories are so dangerous, much scholarship has been dedicated to an attempt to understand what makes a state fail and what helps a state to recover from failure. The present study investigates one factor related to state failure recovery: the effects of irregular leader succession.

Much research on conflict and failure relies heavily on rational choice based approaches, assuming that parties to a conflict behave in rational ways. These theories go a long way, describing how alliances between groups shift to prolong conflict (Christia, 2008), commitment issues and other barriers to conflict resolution (Mason & Fett, 1996; Mattes & Savun, 2009; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Kirschner, 2010), the efficacy of intervention (Fortna, 2008), and the role of class based preferences in shaping policy and institution (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001). Rational choice is based off the assumption that humans generally behave rationally and that given the proper information, they will behave in similarly rational ways. However, rational choice only goes so far when dealing with real humans. This is not to suggest that rational choice does not contribute to our understanding of civil conflict and instability, rather that something is missing from the approaches we currently employ to understand conflict, and as such, that we have an incomplete understanding. Human rationality is bound and constrained by cognitive
processes. By placing an emphasis on rational choice explanations of behavior, the literature on leadership and cognitive psychology largely gets ignored. Instead, cognitive constraints on rationality should be incorporated into any analysis of conflict.

The overreliance on rational choice based explanations leads to a general dismissal of leadership—if states behave purely rationally, a certain level of sameness can be attributed to all regimes with similar structural characteristics, thereby excluding variation arising from leaders themselves, and how they interact with diverse populations. This is a dangerous assumption to make, especially when the leader is not constant and thus when variations due to leadership are not constant. Leaders in different situations interact with their constituencies and their environments in different ways, and have different access to different resources based on who they are. Together, rational arguments and cognitive approaches can be used to examine the efficacy of different types of leaders in order to paint a more complete picture of state failure, and the factors that contribute to failure recovery. Specifically, given their differing situations, how do irregularly ascending leaders and regular leaders differ in their ability to reconsolidate control over failed states?

Regular leadership transitions occur when a ruler is replaced through constitutional means. Even when a state lacks a formal Constitution, traditions and norms direct how, when, and by who the executive or ruler is replaced. Irregular leadership transitions occur when constitutional norms and traditions are broken. It is not enough for the old leader to be deposed in an irregular way; in order to constitute an irregular leadership transition; the ascension of the new leader must be irregular. A transition might be classified as regular even if a ruler is assassinated, as long as they are replaced in a constitutional manner. For example, if a vice president succeeds an assassinated president with the acceptance of the governing body
responsible for sanctioning the executive, then the transition is regular. If a president is assassinated and there is a forced takeover of the government, the transition is irregular.

The newness of a leader is less important than whether they are regular. New regular leaders differ from new irregular leaders because the new regular leaders can benefit from the resources at the disposal of the old leader. They act in their place and assume their role, rather than needing to establish themselves. Regular and irregular leaders, on the other hand, differ considerably overall in the formal and informal assets they can utilize, and the way that they interact with and are perceived by the public. Some of these assets may arise, at least in part, from a given leader’s regularity. Others may merely be proxied by leadership regularity, and may arise in part from the circumstances which either kept a regular leader in, or brought an irregular leader to power. In either case, these assets are crucial in the case of state failure. Irregular leaders are more likely to be at a disadvantage when attempting to reestablish state control unless they are somehow able to access these assets.

The most obvious set of assets that are more likely to be available to regular leaders relate to from increased experience in the executive position. An old leader has had time dealing with governing in a failed state, and has thus had more of an opportunity to learn how to do so effectively. Even a new but regular leader is likely to have more of an advantage than an irregular leader—a new leader who comes to power through constitutional means is likely to benefit from support mechanisms that are traditionally in place to ease the transition between executives.

The executive is not the only one required to have experience in order for the government to function; a strong bureaucracy is needed to carry out the everyday tasks of governing. Irregular leader transitions, however, are likely to result in a bureaucratic shift. When an old

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2 See green branches on trees in Appendix A.
leader is deposed, their close supporters, party members, and ethnic kin all may be purged from the government, or may leave voluntarily. This causes a loss of experience throughout the government and means that for the same amount of effort, the bureaucratic machine is more likely to keep rolling more efficiently for a regular leader than it would under an irregular leader. This greater efficiency suggests that the regular leader will be able to direct his attention toward creating stability, which could lead to a decreased propensity for civil conflict.

In a time of crisis, bureaucratic loss might be catastrophic. Stronger institutions are likely to lead to an increased propensity for avoiding domestic conflict (Brownlee, 2007), and state capacity, related to bureaucratic strength, predicts a decreased propensity for civil conflict onset (Braithwaite, 2010). Peic and Reiter make a convincing institutional claim, suggesting that foreign imposed regime changes only lead to civil war when the governing institutions of a state have been damaged (2010). The argument can easily be extended from cases of foreign intervention to any irregular leadership change during a violent crisis. For example, after the soviet sponsored coup in Afghanistan, many experienced bureaucrats and technocrats left, others were killed or imprisoned and were replaced by inexperienced party members who would toe the party line but were ineffectual. Much of the army dissolved. The government was left non-functional, and those development programs that the state had been attempting were abandoned in favor of starting new programs from scratch, thereby losing all the invested time and resources that had gone into the previous programs. Though the extent of bureaucratic loss experienced by irregular leaders may vary, old leaders face no bureaucratic shifts, and new regular leaders are more likely to be able to maintain the bureaucracy than irregular leaders. This predicts that the stronger the formal institutions and bureaucracy of a state prior to an irregular transition, the better that state will be able to function after the transition.
The experience and preservation of the bureaucracy favors regular leaders, but it is possible for some irregular leaders to overcome this obstacle by taking care to retain the institutions and bureaucracy of the old leader. If an irregular leader can retain the formal institutions and bureaucracy of the old leader, then they will have a better functioning state and more power. They will be more prepared to establish control if, for example, the military remains intact, and the experienced technocrats remain in place. For example, when Hitler came to power, he retained the elites and bureaucrats and in so doing, maintained a functioning government. It was only later that he gradually began replacing them with party supporters.

Through their increased experience, regular leaders have also had time to gain personal relationships with different power-holding groups both within and outside the country. Regular leaders have had time to develop these personal connections, and as regular leaders, are likely to have had personal connections and agreements passed down to them from previous leader. Irregular leaders are more likely to have to start building their networks from scratch. By default, regular leaders have had access to more sectors of the population, and have had more time to form personal ties and patronage networks. While irregular leaders might attempt to make these connections prior to taking power, they are always at a disadvantage because before they take power they are unable to use their position to make assurances and build coalitions of support. This means that regular leaders have had more time to make more effective connections with greater ease, than irregular leaders.

These ties help leaders to gain funds, and to build the coalitions necessary to reconsolidate power over a failed state. This is especially important in areas where the executive depends on support from pockets of the population that might otherwise oppose the central

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3 Though Hitler came to power legally, he did so through a loophole and created an effective regime change. Because it was such a fundamental change, it can be compared to an irregular change in this regard.
government. For example, in states with tribal structures, the executive depends on the support of tribes. In pre-Soviet Invasion Afghanistan, the weak central monarchy traditionally depended on personal connections with tribal groups to maintain control of the country. In Libya, it was not until after the leadership of the country’s two largest tribes declared their opposition to Ghaddafi that the uprising against him was able to flourish. As an old leader, he had ties to these groups, but when he lost his ties to the tribes, he lost considerable power.

Not only do old leaders have access to tangible advantages based on their experience, but they also have several intangible, cognitive advantages. One example is the familiarity preference. The easier something is to process, the more an individual prefers it (Winkielman, Halberstadt, Fazendeiro, & Catty, 2006). This holds for basic sensory processing as well as for more complex processing—the greater an individual’s processing capacity, the more pleasing that individual will judge a complex image or sound (Saffran, Loman, & Robertson, 2000; Smith & Cuddy, 1986; Smith & Melara, 1990; Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004), sounds from familiar languages are more pleasing and trustworthy, (Nazzi, Bertoncini, & Mehler, 1998; Mehler, Jusczyk, Lambertz, Halsted, Bertoncini, & Amiel-Tison, 1988), and the more familiar a face the more attractive and trustworthy an individual will judge the person to be (Langlois & Roggman, 1990; Rubenstein, Kalakanis, & Langlois, 1999; Burton, Bruce, & Hancock, 1999; Rhodes, 2005; Peskin & Newell, 2004). Old leaders have had plenty of time to become familiar, and among the less polarized elements of the population, may appear more trustworthy than a new leader.

It is tempting to discredit the value of familiarity. When groups are polarized, a given side’s champion is likely to be familiar to that group. In the case of ethnic divisions, the very facial features of a leader will appear more familiar to their constituency than leaders from another
ethnic group. However, an old leader has had a chance to publicize themselves among the entire population. Their policies and way of doing business, even the corrupt ones, become familiar and easier to understand. Everyone knows how to work within the system. Their quirks become commonplace and no longer stand out. Furthermore, moderates, or at least those with median views, shape the outcome of any contest of wills. Even if other factors, such as the ability to mobilize resources, or relative power, play a larger role, the desires of the median citizen largely impact the winner and the ease with which they take office. Appearing trustworthy to the least polarized demographic could therefore be extremely beneficial. Similarly, in a multi-dimensional decision-making space, or a society in which there are strong crosscutting cleavages, the familiarity of an old leader will give them an advantage within every possible constituency.

Even in situations that are highly polarized, where there is no significant moderate constituency, familiarity preference favors old leaders. While irregular leaders might have to struggle to establish themselves as the predominant voice and the sole object of support among their potential constituencies, old leaders have the benefit of already being familiar. Regular leaders are established, and therefore likely to receive more unified support from their potential constituencies. The party or constituency of an established regular leader is therefore less likely to fragment, because it is clear who the constituency should support.

The familiarity preference may be the basis for another set of advantages more likely to be possessed by regular leaders: representation of the elite group in society. The familiarity preference is believed to be a possible underlying mechanism behind social identity theory, (Wahedi, p. working paper). Social identity theory is a useful framework for understanding the effects that different leaders might have on a population. On a basic level, social identity theory says that individuals have an in-group preference and an out-group prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 4

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4 See orange branches on the trees in Appendix A.
This means that they prefer other individuals within their in-group across a variety of contexts from trust to recognition to altruistic actions to companionship (Kinzler, Dupoux, & Spelke, 2007; Kinzler, Shutts, DeJesus, & Spelke, 2009; Kinzler, Corriveau, & Harris, 2010; Leman & Lam, 2008; Fehr, Bernhard, & Rockenbach, 2008). Not only do they prefer the in-group, but they have a prejudice against the out-group: they are more likely to distrust and dislike out-group members and are more likely to attribute blame or malicious intention to out-group members.

On a basic level, social identity theory makes sense from a rational choice perspective: in a world where resources are limited and unknowns pose threats, favoring the in-group is more likely to be beneficial and safe for an individual. If group formation were purely rational, it would not favor regular or irregular leaders, but the most powerful actors. But social group biases transcend rationality: individuals show these biases even when it is against their best interest (Brewer, 1999). Groups clash in ways that do not make sense strategically (Bornstein, 1992), participation within a given group is not always strategic for an individual, and individuals tend to form groups even when there is no clear strategic advantage (Dawes & Messick, 2000; Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997). Furthermore, social groups become part of an individual’s identity, meaning individuals cannot easily select into or out of a group rationally. Social pressures from the community keep group members within their groups. Sometimes, these social pressures are extremely strong, as is the case with ethnic groups. A person is born into and raised in an ethnicity that can be more or less pronounced depending on the social context. Even in states where ethnic groups are relatively less salient, they still play a role in how

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5 While there is evidence that individuals can cross-identify with other ethnic groups, this is relatively rare and generally occurs when the individual was raised with the ethnic group, granting them special privileges as an honorary member.
individuals identify themselves and with whom they align. The irrational and fixed nature of social groups suggests that an irregular leader may have trouble co-opting support from the groups that had supported their predecessor.

Co-opting support is made even more difficult for irregular leaders because of another principle called cognitive dissonance, which makes social groups even less malleable. When individuals hold conflicting beliefs or conduct an action that is in conflict with some of their beliefs, they change them in order to reduce their cognitive dissonance. If they make a choice, they change other beliefs to make the choice seem more rational, they justify it to themselves. Similarly, if an individual aligns themselves with a party, their beliefs will change in order to justify that decision, making it harder to change parties even when it would be more rational to do so. There is a cognitive barrier to changing a choice that suggests that even if an irregular leader wields the power of the state, and even if it would be in the best interest for groups to support him, groups who had supported his predecessor are less likely to shift their alliances.

On a first order approximation, the rigidity of social groups and social identity theory as a whole might appear to suggest that a leader, either regular or irregular, who is more representative of more of the population, or is part of a power sharing government, will more effectively reduce conflict. However, social group interactions are not so simple—social groups are sensitive to the status of their in-group. Although high status groups show the classical pattern of in-group preference and out-group prejudice, low status groups sometimes adopt some of the high status group’s preferences and prejudices, perpetuating negative social stereotypes (Baron & Banaji, 2009; Lane, Mitchell, & Banaji, 2003; Dasgupta, 2004).

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6 As an example, consider the pressure on the Black community to vote for Barak Obama in the US 2008 election. Ethnic identity played a role even in a state where ethnic ties are relatively less salient.

7 Once an individual makes a decision between two options, beliefs about the two options tend to become increasingly polarized over time, even if the individual believed their merits were roughly equal in the beginning.
Sensitivity to status adds another layer of complexity to the implications of social identity theory, suggesting that merely being representative is not necessarily what causes a leader to be effective, and explaining the observation that relative reversals of ethnic group status lead to increased conflict\textsuperscript{8}. This sensitivity predicts that leaders that represent a high status group are more likely to be successful, whether that group is the majority or not. Regular leaders' parties tend to have held power for longer; they have been able to transfer spoils to the social groups that traditionally favored them, granting them greater resources and influence in society\textsuperscript{9}. Regular leaders can also use their position to create a patronage network of support among the elite. Regular leaders are also simply more likely to have elite support because they are the leaders who survived without being deposed. Leadership regularity is therefore associated with elite support.

Elite support is especially important to leaders in weak states. Elites control access to the resources that leaders need to run a functioning government. For example, the Karzai administration in Afghanistan focuses on taxing the elite without bothering to tax lower classes because they provide the only non-negligible source of tax revenue (Crout, 2010; Zamzani, 2010). Elites are in the best position to challenge the leader's power, whether they control important government positions, assets that the state needs access to, or territory. When elites lose formal power, they are able to utilize their assets to manipulate the political system so that it continues to favor them (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2008).

\textsuperscript{8} The cost to losing an ethnic conflict are greater, so the cost to not fighting is greater. With more incentive to fight on both sides, greater conflict arises.

\textsuperscript{9} This is not always the case. Sometimes an irregular leader transition is the result of the ascension of a leader that does not represent the elite, such as Salvador Allende in Chile. Allende was a Marxist who failed to represent the country's economic elite, and was subsequently deposed by Augusto Pinochet in a military coup. As a consolidated democracy, however, Chile was a special case. Overall, regular leaders have had a greater opportunity to confer spoils and create an elite constituency.
Support from high status groups is also important because any loss in power is likely to be met with resistance. This resistance may be explained by the cognitive principle that humans are loss averse. This means that people are more sensitive to loss than they are to gains and are more willing to accept uncertainty in regards to gains than they are to loss. Given a choice, individuals are more likely to gamble to increase their winnings than to decrease their loss (Pratt, 1962). The likelihood that an individual will take the gamble depends on the amount of risk, or the likelihood of success, and the ratio of potential loss to potential gain. This means that given the same level of risks, individuals are unwilling to accept uncertainty in regard to loss and are willing to pay to reduce uncertainty, even when taking the risk is the statistically and rationally superior option (Thaler, Tversky, Kahneman, & Schwartz, 1997). Similarly, individuals will work harder to avoid loss than they will to attain gains (Khaneman & Tversky, 1979). This predicts that if an irregular leader brings a new group to power and takes away the spoils of power from the old elite, the old elite are liable to resist. The old elite will not accept being marginalized, whereas another group with grievances might have been appeased more easily. Because irregular leaders necessarily have a transition from regular leadership, status drops are more likely to occur during the onset of their tenure.

The effects of loss aversion can be seen in Afghanistan where the Pashtun tribe reacted violently to a drop in status in the most recent Afghan war. Though they still maintain predominance, a reduction in their relative power was enough to cause major opposition, even to the Pashtun executive who is viewed as a Panjshiri puppet or sympathizer. The Karzai administration attempted to co-opt some old power holders, such as the warlord Sayyaf, who now holds a legislative seat, or the warlord Ismail Khan, who was a governor and is now a

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10 This sentiment was apparent based on many interviews of Pashtuns throughout Kabul, where individuals are most likely to support the government because it means a preservation of their way of life, and job security. This view pervaded among government supporters as well opponents.
minister. Other powerful actors have resisted the drop in status; Gulbuhdin Hekmatyar was excluded from the new government and now sponsors an insurgent group. Similarly, the Sunni’s in Iraq lost power to the Shia majority and consequently were the largest supporters of the insurgency. The Sunni party had been relatively secular, so their opposition was due more to status than religious differences.

Losses of elite power and status have the potential to create opposition from powerful groups and lead to prolonged state failure. Elite support is associated with regular leaders, and an irregular leadership transition provides an opportunity in which elites may lose status and formal power. Regular leadership therefore likely predicts shorter failure durations.

The final group of assets that leaders can access relates to their legitimacy to rule. Leaders, both old and irregular, differ in the way they achieve their legitimacy. Max Weber was among the first to attempt to characterize different types of leaders. He identified rational, traditional and charismatic leaders (Weber & Parsons, 1964). Rational leaders derive their claim to rule through a formal mechanism such as laws and a state. Democracies and autocracies can both have rational leaders as long as their right to rule is dependent upon their fulfillment of their responsibilities as heads of state. Citizens allow their rule because they provide the goods and services that the citizens expect. Traditional leaders derive their claim to rule from historical claims such as divine right or familial lineage. Their position is not contingent upon their delivery of goods and services, but upon who they are or how they got there. Again, both democracies and autocracies can have traditional leaders. Charismatic leaders differ from rational and traditional leaders because their rule is not dependent upon independent mechanisms, but rather their own personality. They are perceived to have superhuman characteristics and command the devotion of their constituency. Weber’s description of

11 See blue branches on trees in Appendix A.
Charismatic leaders is extreme, and includes requires the populous to perceive the leader as almost magical. A less extreme definition allows charisma to exist on a spectrum. The most charismatic leaders may appear god-like, but leaders can still have some charismatic legitimacy if their right to rule and their acceptance by the population is derived from their persona. Each leader type maintains their right to rule in different ways, and therefore must behave differently to maintain power.

Charismatic leaders interact differently with the population than other leaders. Their charisma grants them leeway in their behavior and allows them to do things that might not be accepted from rational or traditional leaders. For example, studies of US presidents show that presidents scoring high on measures of narcissism and charisma have higher approval ratings\(^\text{12}\) (Deluga, 1997; Deluga, 2001). Higher approval ratings might translate into greater amounts of leeway and thus different behavior. Even in non-democracies, a leader’s source of legitimacy and power constrains their behavior. Two autocrats, Muammar Ghaddaf of Libya and Park Chung-Hee behaved very differently. Chung-Hee was a rational leader who derived his support from because he effectively championed modernization. As a leader, his actions were thus constrained by the rationality of those who kept him in power. Chung-Hee behaved different than Ghaddaf, who came to power as a nationalist and built a personality cult around himself. As a charismatic leader, Ghaddaf was able to maintain his legitimacy while engaging in a wider range of behaviors—until his fiscal irresponsibility went too far and he lost popular support. Charismatic leaders, whether regular or irregular, are less constrained and more likely to receive the popular support necessary to consolidate power.

\(^{12}\) Narcissism and charisma have been extensively linked. See Jerrold Post (1986) for a discussion of the appeal of narcissist leaders to the public, and Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) for a review of the connections between narcissism and leadership.
Regular leaders have a certain amount of traditional legitimacy that irregular leaders tend to lack because of the means by which they took power. Because regular leaders are more likely to have better functioning bureaucracies and continuous development, they are also more likely to have rational legitimacy. Their greater familiarity might also help regular leaders to build personality cults around themselves, though it is also possible that irregular leaders take greater care to establish their charismatic legitimacy because they face traditional legitimacy deficits. Regular leaders are also more likely to have the support of the elite and high status groups, which lends them legitimacy among the subgroups that have the power to overthrow them. Regular leaders are more likely to have been recognized by the international community, while irregular leaders must gain recognition after their ascension. International recognition also grants a leader some legitimacy as the true executive of the state. Regular leaders are the ones who did not get deposed, meaning that they held on to power either because they had greater support or greater force. In either case, they are likely to have greater legitimacy than their deposed counterparts and the irregular leaders who replaced them.

There are clearly many potential ties between leadership and prolonged conflict, and two studies have explored the relationship between regime change and civil strife in particular. More specifically, both investigated the use of regime change as a tool. Peic and Reiter find that following an interstate war, foreign imposed regime changes (FIRCs) lead to civil war outbreak, suggesting that if civil conflict is an unfavorable outcome, regime change may not be a wise course of action (2010). They make an institutional argument, claiming that regime change predicts civil war when the political institutions of the state have been damaged. They only observe FIRCs, of which their data set contains only 40 cases, but their study suggests that a change in leadership predicts conflict and that it would potentially prolonging state failure.
Alex Downes casts the implications of Piec and Reiter’s findings into doubt with his analysis (2010). He finds that FIRCs only lead to civil war when they bring a new leader to power, and not when they restore an old leader to power. His explanation rests on legitimacy, suggesting that FIRCs lead to civil war because when a foreign power imposes a new leader, that leader is illegitimate unless they have some other claim to legitimacy. Old leaders do not have the same drop in legitimacy as new leaders because they already had a claim on legitimacy—they were not in power solely because a foreign power placed them there. If leadership change only leads to conflict because foreign intervention reduces legitimacy, then it might follow that non-intervention induced leadership changes would not lead to prolonged conflict. Such an assumption, however, is overhasty.

Downes’ theoretical claim concerns legitimacy far more than it concerns leader-specific attributes in general. As such, his distinction between new-leader FIRCs and restoration FIRCs is better described as a proxy for legitimacy, however he fails to test his assumption that it is a good proxy. Legitimacy is difficult to operationalize, and he never attempts to justify this claim with evidence, quantitative or qualitative. His use is particularly troublesome when looking at his dataset: he includes ninety nine cases of FIRCs from 1820 to the present, but only twenty seven were after 1945. In his pre-Wilsonian cases, nationalism was not yet as prevalent and the norms of legitimacy were different. Furthermore, accepting his use of pre-1945 cases, restoration and new leader FIRCs were not evenly distributed. There were only twenty-two restoration FIRCs, nine of which were in the first ten cases and consisted of the actions of the quintuple alliance as it restored monarchs across Europe. Another three consisted of European interventions in European states during one of the world wars. It is hard to imagine those cases being very
comparable to the sort of FIRCs seen today or in more recent history, or to the new leader FIRCs in his study. Robustness checks with different case selections were not performed.

While Downes’ finding that new leader FIRCs are different from restoration FIRCs is questionable, both he and Peic and Reiter find that overall, FIRCs do lead to an increased likelihood of civil war onset. Downes’ legitimacy explanation seems insufficient in light of all the potential effects of leadership change, and its persistence across swathes of time during which legitimacy norms shifted. If legitimacy is not the only explanation, perhaps there are other leader-specific factors that cause regime change to lead to civil conflict. And if these factors lead to conflict onset, then perhaps they lead to conflict extension as well. The present paper investigates the effects of irregular succession of leaders on state failure recovery in hopes of understanding state failure a little bit better and predicting how likely states are to recover.

No single variable can claim complete explanatory power. Leadership change is just one potential variable that is associated with a whole host of factors that prolong or curtail civil conflict and state failure. Civil conflict occurs when there are grievances among a sector of the population, and when the costs are low and potential gains are high\textsuperscript{13} (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001). We can therefore predict whether conflict will occur in each situation based on how it might affect these criteria.

\textsuperscript{13} Conflict resolution agreements tend to be more successful when they address these issues (Mattes & Savun, 2009).
Operationalization

To test the effects of irregular leadership transitions, all cases of state failure identified by the Political Instability Task Force' (PITF) State Failure Problem Set as ethnic or revolutionary failures were used (Marshall, Gurr, & Harff, 2010). This dataset was used both because its selection mechanism corresponded with the present definition of state failure, and because it is the best accepted list of failures in the field. Failure events were classified as events in which at least one thousand or more people were mobilized and a total of one thousand were killed over the course of the event, with at least one year reaching one hundred fatalities. At least 5% of the fatalities must have been inflicted by the non-state side in order to classify it as state failure and not a genocide or politicide, and to indicate that the state opposition posed a genuine threat to state authority. Organized violence is a good measure of failure because it indicates a failure of the state’s hold over the monopoly of legitimate violence. States were classified as “failed” when there was significant organized violence and were considered “recovered” when the violence was terminated. Cases classified as failures solely on the basis of aversive regime change were excluded because they were tautological and because regime change precipitated the failure; they could not be considered a treatment on failure. Politicides and genocides were excluded because they deviated from my definition of failure. While the state fails to deliver goods and services to targeted groups, genocide and politicide do not necessarily represent an absence of control in a region. There is a functioning state, whether or not it is an abusive state.

Only cases between the years of 1955 and 2004 were included for two reasons. First, the problem set begins in 1955. It was not feasible to extend the study earlier, nor could I presume to do a sufficient job in comparison to the entire team at the Political Instability Task Force. An attempt to extend the problem set would have resulted in inconsistency and bias. However, even

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14 Regime change leads to prolonged state failure because regime change leads to state failure.
if the problem set could be extended, it should not be. Many of the measures used lack accurate data for earlier years, in part because so many other scholars collecting data have used the PITF and thus began their measurements in 1955, and in part because data for earlier years is unavailable or unreliable. Even more importantly, cases from before circa-1955 are not comparable to cases post-circa-1955 because of the rise of nationalism and the establishment of Wilsonian norms of fixed borders. The relationship between peoples and their rulers, as well as treatment by the international community, changed, making 1955 a reasonable start date in a study of modern failure and irregular leadership transitions.

Irregular leader changes were coded using the Archigos dataset of leaders (Goemans, Gleditsch, & Chiozza, 2009). The Archigos dataset is among the most complete list of rulers and ruler transitions covering the selected time period. It lists every year a ruler transitioned, and specifies how. Irregular leadership changes occurred when a new leader took power through non-constitutional means. A list of irregular and regular transitions can be found in Appendix B.

In addition to looking at failure durations, several other measures can be used to test the theological underpinnings of the hypothesis. The effects of leadership transition depend upon leaders’ differing access to several assets of varying importance. Not all of these assets can be feasibly measured, but some can, and their relative effects can be compared.

V2: Bureaucratic Strength

State infrastructures and bureaucracies are formal institutions that function at least semi-independently of the top power-holders whereas informal institutions depend upon the elites and power-holders. These institutions might include a formal tax collecting apparatus, whereas the equivalent might be personal agreements with regional commanders. If a greater percentage of the functions of the state were performed informally, an irregular leader might be at a
disadvantage. On the other hand, if a greater percentage were formalized institutions, they may be utilized by the irregular leader, reducing the negative impact of irregular leader change.

Regular leaders can utilize formalized and informal mechanisms of governance, but irregular leaders have access only to formal institutions and those connections they were able to develop without the benefits of being heads of state. This predicts that stronger bureaucracies would benefit irregular leaders more than regular leaders. This does not mean that strong formal institutions will completely negate the effects of irregular leadership change, however. In an irregular transition, it is likely that the institutions will either suffer, or have been weaker to begin with. Experienced supporters of the old leaders may either be targeted, or leave voluntarily, predicting that regular leaders have stronger bureaucratic strength. These two predictions can be tested in order to illuminate the relative importance of bureaucratic strength and experience as an explanatory factor in the effects of irregular leadership change.

Bureaucratic strength was measured with an indicator of executive constraint, reported by the Polity IV (Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers, 2010). The measure is a score ranging from 0, where the leader is not constrained at all, to 7, where the leader is completely constrained. Although this indicator does not measure the strength of institutions directly, it serves as a good proxy. If the functioning of the government is dependent upon informal institutions, then it will be easy for a leader to unilaterally make decisions and changes in policy, and will receive a low constraint score. On the other hand, if there are strong formal institutions and a functioning bureaucracy, the government will be able to chug along without a leader’s personal connections, and it will be harder for that leader to unilaterally and quickly make changes and implement policies—resulting in a higher constraint score.

**V3: Ethnic Power Shift**
Groups threatened with a loss of power are likely to strongly resist the shift in power, which predicts that new leaders who cause a shift in power are likely to have prolonged failure. Irregular leaders are more likely to cause shifts because their ascension was a transition point at which such a shift could have been made. Regular leaders are more likely to have the support of the elite because their position allowed them to make their constituency elite.

There are many types of shifts in power, ranging from a few elites being removed from high level positions, to the reduction in status of an entire party or ethnic group. Shifts in ethnic status were used because of data availability and because such shifts have wide-reaching repercussions throughout society. The measure of ethnic shifts in power was derived from the Elite Characteristics Dataset composed by Barbara Harff and Tedd Gurr, and included in the PITF frequently tested variables database (Harff & Gurr, 2000). The dataset measures whether the ruling elite represent the ethnic majority, ethnic minority, or whether ethnicity was not salient among the population. If the ethnic character of the ruling elite changed, the case was coded as having had a shift in ethnic status. The measure was used to test whether regular leaders have fewer ethnic power shifts, and whether these shifts contribute to the effects of leadership regularity.

\textit{V4: Majority Representation}

The effects of ethnic power shifts must be compared to the effects of representing the majority of the population in order to determine whether representing the elite is really more important than representing the majority. On the one hand, it is possible that a large support base could serve to marginalize the elites. Furthermore, a ruler’s power largely depends upon their ability to extract resources from the population, and insofar as achieving aims depends upon the cooperation of the population, representativeness is likely to be important. The more
representative a government, the smaller the pool of potential opponents becomes. On the other hand, elites are likely to resist losses to power, are likely to control access to resources, and may even control means of mobilizing opposition to the government. Harf and Gurr’s measure of the ethnic character of the elite was used to indicate leaders who represent the ethnic majority, leaders who represent the ethnic minority, and cases in which ethnicity was not salient.

**V5: Ethnic Fractionalization**

Ethnic divisions can be volatile, leading to civil violence and conflict. This is especially the case when representatives from ethnic groups are excluded from governance (Cederman, Wimmer, & Min, 2010). The cognitive principles favoring regular leaders are especially important in the case of ethnic conflict. A division along clear ethnic lines makes social-group identity all the more salient. Because of its salience, status reversals are more likely to be viewed in social-group terms and biases are likely to be enhanced. Ethnic divisions contribute to social identity with more salience than other divisions because they cannot be changed. Because they are so intrinsically linked, ethnic divisions serve as grounds by which to unify for rebellion.

Because ethnicity can be used to define a person, it becomes more difficult for ethnic members of the old leader to remain in the government after a power transition, resulting in a brain drain and loss of experience and capacity. The irregular leader would have to focus on rebuilding lost capacity where an old leader would not. This predicts that ethnic divisions strengthen the effects of irregular leadership transition.

Fearon and Laitin find that ethnic divisions do not matter when other factors are controlled for (2003), however, the many sound theoretical claims surrounding ethnic divisions
have been made. Ethnic divisions can tend to have higher stakes, raising the barrier to non-participation in violent conflict. Furthermore, other studies have found that ethnic divisions do prolong conflict (De Rouen Jr., 2004). Although their importance is contentious, they are still worth further investigation.

An indicator of ethnic fractionalization was taken from the PITF database of commonly used variables. The indicator is the probability that two randomly drawn citizens of a state will be from the different ethnic groups.

V6: Ethnic War

Simple ethnic diversity could signify a more egalitarian society where ethnicity is less salient, but could signify more violence in a state where ethnicity is more salient. Donald Horowitz finds that ethnic divisions are important where they are salient, but a simple measure of ethnic fractionalization does not indicate salience. However, a measure of whether parties to civil conflict are drawn on ethnic lines does. The PITF state failure problem set contains an indicator of ethnic conflict. This allows for separate analysis of pure ethnic diversity, and of salient ethnic divisions between violently conflicting groups. Considering the contention surrounding the role of ethnicity in civil conflict, both measures are necessary to understand the nature of role the ethnic divisions play.

V7: Legitimacy

Downes’ theoretical argument about the importance of legitimacy was valid. Old leaders are the status quo, and as such have a certain degree of legitimacy just by being in power. They are familiar to the population as a whole and are thus are more likely to gain the trust of the population than an unfamiliar new leader. Irregular leaders are generally revisionist and have a

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15 For example, weak leaders sometimes use ethnic divisions to maintain their power, leading to sustained conflict (Bienen, 1993). Donald Horowitz provides a review of the importance of and the effects of ethnic divisions in societies in which these divisions are highly salient (Horowitz, 1985).
higher bar to meet in terms of legitimacy. They must invest effort in proving themselves in order to prevent opposition, and as such can invest fewer resources into stabilizing the state. Similarly, a regular leader is more likely to hold power among old power-holders. Having legitimacy amongst a more powerful group might lead to more substantive support for the leader, which can help him to regain stability. Legitimacy was not measured empirically, so whether regular leaders really have greater legitimacy was not tested. However, the role of legitimacy and how it is used by irregular leaders was observed in the illustrative case. It is therefore necessary to carefully describe what counts as legitimacy.

There are many different approaches to defining legitimacy. Weber gives a somewhat abstract definition focusing on citizens’ beliefs. He suggests that a government is legitimate when its citizens orient their actions in accordance with the belief that it is legitimate. For example, a thief believes in the legitimacy of the state if he hides his actions because he believes that disobeying the law is wrong. The thief does not believe in the legitimacy of the state if he only hides his actions in order to avoid punishment. Fritz Scharpf measures legitimacy by looking at actions rather than beliefs (Scharpf, 2007). He says that “the function of legitimacy is to ensure voluntary compliance with unwelcome enterprise of governing authority.” Like Weber, he does not believe that fear of violence can contribute to legitimacy. Margaret Levi & Audrey Sacks’ definition differs slightly in that they allow fear of retribution to contribute to legitimacy (Levi & Sacks, 2006). They describe legitimacy as when citizens act with semi-voluntary compliance, meaning that they are willing to follow unwanted government edicts that are backed by coercion. Some scholars also use measures of state efficacy and accountability to measure legitimacy (Levi & Sacks, 2006; Weatherford, 1992).
Weber and Scharpf’s definitions most closely capture the concept of legitimacy used here. Measures using capability and accountability are flawed because it is possible for a non-responsive or ineffectual leader to have legitimacy, as long as the population supports his right to rule. Observations of capability and accountability are also less useful when observing failed states. It is also important to distinguish between legitimacy and coercion. In order to be legitimate, the citizens of a state that relies on enforcing compliance through a strong coercive apparatus would have to believe that the strongest actor has the right to rule. The leader would only be legitimate if society viewed his use of force as a legitimating factor. Citizens must believe that their ruler has the right to rule, and believe that it is right to follow his laws and dictates.

Special focus was paid to charismatic legitimacy because it endows leaders with special privileges that help them to gain support and consolidate control. Rather than relying on reinforcement mechanisms to promote rule of law, charismatic leaders effectively transform self interest to collective interest and inspire collective action and even devotion toward the leader’s goals. Instead of appealing to rationality, they effect emotional attachments by creating a common identity and highlighting the importance of duty (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). As a result, they are especially adept at unifying a population. However, because the state apparatus depends upon a single personality, when the leader dies, or is removed, the government is subject to collapse. In order for a state to remain stable after the removal of a charismatic leader, it must routinize and become either a traditional or rational state. Nonetheless, charisma can help a new leader to rally support for the government and unify a population against opposition, thereby helping a leader to reconsolidate power.
Along with variables used to test the validity of the theoretical underpinnings of the effects of leadership transition regularity, several other important controls were derived from the literature on conflict termination. They are not predicted to interact with the explanatory variable, but must be controlled for because it cannot be assumed that they are evenly distributed between irregular and regular cases of failure.

Greater levels of current violence

Higher casualties in a conflict create a higher perceived cost for not participating in violence if a threat arises, leading to an increase in propensity for renewed conflict (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003). Furthermore, whatever grievance that is causing the violence is probably more severe if there is more severe violence. Because humans are risk and loss averse, they will prefer to continue fighting rather than risk complete loss if levels of violence are high. This holds true for both sides—it should not matter whether there is an old or irregular leader in power. However, it is also possible that violence is not evenly distributed between groups. More violent conflicts may be more likely to induce irregular leadership change. If this were the case, prolonged failure could be the result of more intense conflicts, not of the irregular leader. Controlling for the intensity of the conflict eliminate this potential bias.

Intensity of violence was taken from the magnitude of failure score from the PITF State Failure Problem Set because it represents the number of conflict related deaths.

Hard power

The importance of hard power is straightforward: if a state is more capable of exerting force, it is more likely to be able to regain a monopoly over legitimate force, extract resources, and regain stability. It does not matter whether the irregular or regular leader has this capacity.
For example, if an irregular leader comes to power through a military coup, then they are no less likely to be able to wield hard power than a given regular leader.

It is not entirely clear that how important hard power is. On the one hand, randomized violence has been suggested to be effective in reducing conflict, (Lyall, 2009). On the other hand, the success of insurgencies and terrorist organizations shows that overwhelming conventional military power might not be enough to deter civil conflict. After all, Soviet occupation, for example, was violently opposed in many states, despite their overwhelming power capabilities. Still, because state power plays so strongly into any analysis measuring the cost of engaging in civil conflict, it must be controlled for.

Two indicators were used to measure hard power: military spending per capita and the percentage of the labor force enrolled as military personnel. Neither measure is perfect, but together they represent two facets of hard power. Spending indicates how well funded the military is, which relates to its capability. This measure is flawed because different amounts of spending can buy different amounts of force in different locations. Deploying an American soldier for a year costs roughly one million US dollars. Deploying a soldier within a failed state is likely to cost considerably less. The percentage of participation in the military hints at its legitimacy, professionalism, and size relative to the population. Percentage of military personnel is also an effective measure because an effective counterinsurgency strategy depends largely on a large number of personnel relative to the population.

Population and GDP were also controlled for in order to ensure that like countries were being compared. Countries with higher GDP are likely to have more capacity and greater ease of recovery and small countries might behave differently from large countries in many ways.
Data Limitations

No matter how many controls are used, there are certain limitations inherent to the study. State failure is highly overdetermined. No single factor can ever account for all variation in failure duration, nor can any variable ever be truly independent, and leadership regularity is no exception. While the theory section articulated a causal story predicting the effects of leadership regularity, there is no way to truly determine how much of any variation predicted by leadership variation is due to those factors which are caused by the leadership variation, and which are caused by correlated factors. For example, it is entirely possible that states with Regular leaders have shorter durations not because states in which Irregular transitions occurred were overall weaker. In the Regular group, leaders were strong enough to hold on to power, which could mean that the states were stronger, and better equipped to recover from failure. Endogeneity issues are certain to play a role in the predicted effects of irregular transitions, but there is no way to tell how much of a role they play relative to the effects of the variable. One must be very cautious, therefore, when drawing inferences from the findings of the quantitative analysis.

There is no way to be confident that the effects of leadership regularity are causal. Rather, any effects should be viewed as predictive.
Quantitative Analysis

Because this analysis focuses on the effects of irregular leader change, the group in which no change occurred will serve as the functional control group, while the treatment group will consist of those cases in which an irregular leadership change occurred. The universe of cases is all failed states since 1955.

The initial exploration of the effects of irregular leader transitions consisted of a simple cross tabulation. The mean time until recovery from failure onset in the control group was compared to the mean time until failure recovery from leadership change in the irregular group. This is not a fair comparison because the years of failure prior to leadership change are only excluded in the treatment group, making the treatment duration of failure shorter. However, the bias is against the direction of the hypothesis, making it an even stronger test: if the control group has a significantly shorter duration despite the bias in favor of the treatment group, the results are more robust. To overcome this bias, the mean for the transformed control was also calculated. In the transformed control, the sum of all truncated years in the irregular group was subtracted from the sum of all durations in the regular group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>8.573</td>
<td>1.347</td>
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Table 1: Cross tabulations of the mean time until failure recovery from failure onset in the control group and irregular leader change in the treatment group. Transformed control had the total number of truncated years from the treatment group subtracted prior to averaging. This supports the hypothesis, suggesting that irregular leadership change prolongs state failure.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show that the preliminary findings support the hypothesis. Even the control group durations are significantly shorter than the treatment durations, despite the bias in favor of the treatment group, suggesting that irregular leader change does predict prolonged failure.
Using the treated control group, in which the mean length of the time until irregular 
leader change from the treatment group, a regression analysis was conducted. By using the 
treated control, the durations between both groups were comparable. The results are shown in 
Figure 2 and Table 2.

Table 2: The 
regression 
coefficient is 5.49, 
suggesting that an 
irregular leader 
change predicts a 
roughly five and a 
half year increase 
in failure duration. 
Results are 
significant beyond 
a 95% confidence 
interval.

The regression coefficient was 5.49, with greater than 99.9% confidence. This means that 
the bivariate model suggests that irregular leadership change predicts that state failure will last 
roughly five and a half years longer. The figure shows negative values for the duration of failure
for some of the control cases. This is because the control cases were treated by subtracting the
mean time until irregular leadership change from the treatment cases.

Although it seems counterintuitive to have negative years, there is no mathematical reason not to. In fact, dropping treated cases that had negative years, or setting them to zero, would bias the results. The results would be the same if they were transformed such that the lowest duration was shifted to 0.

The multivariate regression is shown in Table 3. Controlling for other factors only reduced the coefficient to 5.11, with 99.7% confidence. This means irregular leadership change predicts a roughly five year increase in failure duration, but which variables associated with leadership regularity explain this effect?

\textbf{V2: Bureaucratic Strength}

The distribution of bureaucratic strength between the two groups was measured using a regression. Table 4 reports the results. Cases in the Irregular group had leaders who were roughly 10%, with 94.2% confidence, less constrained by their bureaucracy, suggesting that Irregular leaders do tend to have lower bureaucratic strength.

\textbf{Figure 2:} Bivariate regression of the effect of irregular leadership change on years of failure duration. Irregular leader change predicts an increase in duration of failure compared to leader change. Note that the negative values in the control group exist because mean durations from the treatment group were subtracted.

\textbf{Figure 2:} Bivariate regression of the effect of irregular leadership change on years of failure duration. Irregular leader change predicts an increase in duration of failure compared to leader change. Note that the negative values in the control group exist because mean durations from the treatment group were subtracted.
Table 3: Multivariate regression analysis. The regression coefficient is 5.11, suggesting that irregular leadership transitions predict a roughly five year increase in failure duration.

Table 4: Distribution of political constraint between treatment and control groups. Results show a trend with 92.4% confidence suggesting that irregular leaders are 10.1% more constrained, and thus have weaker bureaucracies.

To determine how much of the variation of bureaucratic strength between the two groups is due to leadership regularity, and how much is due to endogenous control factors, a multivariate regression was conducted. The results are reported in Table 5. Once the controls were used, all statistical significance dropped, suggesting that while bureaucratic strength is associated with leadership regularity, the weaker bureaucracies in the Irregular group were not weaker because of the leader's irregular ascension. It is likely that states with weak bureaucracies were more likely to suffer irregular leadership change, for whatever reason.
Although leadership regularity does not explain variation in bureaucratic strength, it does predict it, suggesting irregular leadership acts as a good proxy.

Table 5: Multivariate Regression on the distribution of bureaucratic strength between treatment groups. Statistical significance was not reached, suggesting that leadership regularity does not cause, but does predict variation in bureaucratic strength.

V3: Ethnic Power Shift

The distribution of ethnic status reversals between the treatment groups was measured using a bivariate regression. Results are reported in Table 6. Irregular cases were 29.5%, with 97% confidence, more likely to have ethnic reversals of power. Table 7 shows the results of a multivariate regression. Confidence was reduced to 90.9%, which means that the variation of ethnic status reversals cannot be confidently attributed to the leadership regularity.

Table 6: Bivariate Regression Analysis. Irregular cases were 29.5% more likely to have ethnic power reversals.
V3 Cont*

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<tr>
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Number of obs = 100
F( 6, 93) = 5.07
Prob > F = 0.0002
R-squared = 0.2464
Adj R-squared = 0.1978
Root MSE = .44683

| treatment | Coef. | Std. Err. | t     | P>|t|   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| V3        | .2144471 | .125445   | 1.71  | 0.091 | -.0346618 - .463556  |
| Cont_pop  | -6.05e-10 | 2.65e-10 | -2.28 | 0.025 | -1.13e-09 - .78e-11  |
| Cont_gdp  | -.0875325 | .0651567 | -1.34 | 0.182 | -.2169207 - .0418557 |
| Cont_mag  | .1681348 | .0461064 | 3.65  | 0.000 | .0765768 - .2596929  |
| Cont_milex| -2.96e-09 | 4.76e-09 | -0.62 | 0.536 | -1.24e-08 - .50e-09  |
| Cont_milper| -3.832721 | 6.076339 | -0.63 | 0.530 | -15.89913 - .233663  |
| _cons     | .644997 | .5095133 | 1.27  | 0.209 | -.3667955 - 1.65679   |

reg treatment V3 Cont*

V4: Majority Representation

The importance of majority representation can be compared to the importance of ethnic power shifts. Table 8 shows the results of a bivariate regression investigating the distribution of majority representation. There is no statistically significant difference between the amount of majority representation between the two groups.

reg treatment V4

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.64</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 100
F( 1, 98) = 1.57
Prob > F = 0.2138
R-squared = 0.0157
Adj R-squared = 0.0057
Root MSE = .49747

| treatment | Coef. | Std. Err. | t     | P>|t|   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| V4        | -.091881 | .0734228 | -1.25 | 0.214 | -.2375863 - .0538242 |
| _cons     | .5292097 | .0869295 | 6.09  | 0.000 | .3567009 - .7017185  |

reg treatment V4

Table 7: Multivariate regression Analysis measuring the distribution of ethnic power shifts between treatment groups. Statistical significance dropped to .091, suggesting ethnic power reversals are represented by, but not necessarily caused by irregular leaders.

Table 8: Bivariate regression analysis analyzing the distribution of majority representation between treatment groups. There was no significant difference between groups.

The relative effects of majority representation on failure duration were compared to the effects of ethnic shifts in status. Table 9 shows that ethnic reversals do explain more of the variance. The measure of ethnic power shifts reached 99.8% confidence, while the measure of ethnic representation did not reach significance.
The distributions of ethnic fractionalization, and of ethnic war between the two treatment groups were investigated with bivariate regressions. The results in Table 10 and 11 show that ethnic fractionalization and ethnic war, respectively were evenly distributed between the Regular and Irregular groups. Neither was a significant predictor of failure recovery time, nor were interactions with the leadership recovery significant. These findings suggest that ethnic fractionalization was not a confounding factor.

Table 9: Multivariate regression comparing the effects of representing the ethnic majority to shifts in ethnic power. Representing the majority was not statistically significant, but ethnic power shifts predicted 6.42 more years of failure, with 99.8% confidence.

Table 10: Bivariate regression investigating the distribution of ethnic fractionalization between the two treatment groups. Distribution was found to be equal.
Comparison of Variables

The largest imbalances were found for bureaucratic strength and ethnic power shifts. The relative importance of these variables were contrasted with each other and the control variables. The results are shown in Table 12. None of the control variables reach statistical significance, suggesting that they do not predict variation within the dependent variable. Bureaucratic strength and ethnic power shifts did predict variation. Irregular leadership predicted a 2.75 year increase in failure duration when there was no bureaucratic strength, or ethnic power shifts. Each point increase in political constraint predicted a .19 year increase in failure duration, or a 1.35 year increase when going from no constraint to full constraint. An ethnic power shift predicted a .60 year increase in duration time. Bureaucratic strength therefore represents more of the variation predicted by leadership regularity than ethnic power reversals. Neither variable represent all of the variation because the effects of leadership regularity remained significant when they were controlled for. This makes sense, since only some of the related factors could be measured. It is puzzling that constraint predicted an increase in failure time. It is possible that having more constraint in a corrupt environment limited the executive’s ability to govern effectively. The political constraint measure indicated strong bureaucracies, not effective bureaucracies.
Table 12: Multivariate regression analysis investigating the relative effect size of executive constraint (V2) and ethnic power shifts (V3). V2 is measured out of 7, and has a stronger effect.

Alternative Quantitative Methodology

Subtracting the mean time-until-irregular-change is a good first attempt to make the control and treatment groups comparable, but it is only appropriate if the distribution of times until irregular change are centered around the mean. If they are not, using the mean will generate a bias in the opposite direction to the direction that the times are skewed. If they are right skewed, the mean is a low estimate of the amount that should be subtracted. If they are left skewed, the mean is a high estimate. Figure 3 shows that the distribution of times is better represented by an exponentially decaying, or a poisson model. Postestimation suggests that it is well represented by a poisson distribution with lamda = 1.57, with a confidence interval greater than 99.9%. A multivariate regression in which the Regular group was treated by subtracting randomly generated onset times from a poisson distribution with lamda = 1.57 and mean 4.568 shows the results remain significant, with a regression coefficient of 4.77 and confidence of .993, as shown in Table 13.
Despite the goodness of fit of a Poisson distribution, no parametric model can adequately represent the data. The poisson distribution in the Irregular group is right skewed; when lamda=1.57, the probability of a time longer than ten years is virtually zero, yet the actual
distribution contains many cases in which the duration is longer than zero. Because the poisson
distribution fails to adequately represent the distribution, a non-parametric approach is
appropriate.

A non-parametric method requires taking onset times from the Irregular group and
subtracting them from the Regular group. To do this, a yoked control design was used. Each case
from the control group was paired with a randomly drawn case from the treatment group. The
time prior to irregular change was then subtracted from the control case. This was done using
bootstrapping.

Bootstrapping is a Bayesian technique that attempts to draw inferences about a
population parameter from limited sample data. By making the assumption that the cases within
the sample represent the overall distribution of the population, it attempts to overcome variations
in the sample by randomly drawing new sample sets from the data given. In experiments, this is
equivalent to rerunning the experiment several times and creating a histogram to calculate the
confidence intervals. In non-experimental studies, it takes random variation into account,
determining whether, if things happened to have occurred slightly differently, if the same result
would have been obtained. The key difference between Bayesian estimations and traditional
likelihood estimations is that a likelihood estimate determines the percentage of the time, (95% for
scientific significance,) that the true parameter will fall within the sample confidence interval,
while the Bayesian estimation gives a confidence interval in which the sample parameter will fall
95% of the time. This distinction is especially important when limited data makes it difficult to
use distinct samples to develop and test a model because it reduces the potential for over-fitting.

In the present study, 1000 iterations of the 56 regular cases each were drawn. In each
iteration, each control case was randomly paired with an irregular case from which the time-prior
to irregular leader change was taken and subtracted from the total failure duration of that regular case. Figure 4 shows that the randomly drawn values represent a similar distribution to the values from the irregular group. After each iteration, a regression analysis was conducted, the coefficients from which were averaged to determine the coefficient estimates shown in Table 14. The regression coefficient was reduced to 4.72, meaning that irregular leaders predict nearly five years of prolonged conflict.

Figure 4: As predicted, the distribution of randomly drawn truncation times for the Regular Group closely match the truncation times shown in Figure 3.
Table 14: Regression coefficients from the Bayesian regression analysis in which the regular leader group was truncated using non-parametric bootstrapping. The coefficient was reduced to 4.72, but remained above a 95% confidence interval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval, Lower Bound</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval, Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>8.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Expenditure</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel</td>
<td>-40.65</td>
<td>-251.54</td>
<td>170.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Multivariate Regression analysis of bootstrap-treated data. Suggests that irregular leadership change predicts prolonged failure.

In addition to regression analyses, a survival analysis was performed using the cox proportional hazard model. The benefit to a survival analysis is that it allows comparison among
the strongest cases and among the weakest cases, allowing for variation within a group. It is more appropriate than a regression analysis for Bernoulli variables such as whether or not irregular leader change occurred. In a scatterplot, a line of points exists over each value. In a survival function, each of those lines is viewed along an axis such that similar cases can be compared, and the overall shape of the distribution can be observed.

The cox proportional hazard model requires there to be no missing data. Because data is collapsed by case, data missing from specific years was not problematic because it was collapsed across years. However, certain cases had extensive missing data and were not used. From the treatment group, only Iraq 2003 was excluded. From the control group, Djibouti 1991-1994, Ethiopia 1999-2000, Pakistan 2004, Rwanda 2001, Turkey 2004, Thailand 2004, the UK 1971-1982, Yemen 2004, Yemen 1994, and Yugoslavia 1998-1999. The majority of these cases did not have data because they were too recent.

Figure 5 shows the empirical cumulative distribution function (eCDF) of the bootstrapped data, accounting for censoring, and Figure 6 shows its derivative, the probability distribution. The eCDF and probability distribution show any patterns the data might contain. The eCDF is equal to 1 - S(t), or one minus the survival function. It shows the probability that a state has recovered from failure at time t. Figure 5 shows that for nearly all time points, the probability of Irregular cases having recovered is lower than the probability of Regular cases having recovered. It predicts that at a given time after leader change, states experiencing leader change are more likely to have recovered.
Figure 5: Bivariate Empirical Cumulative Distribution Function of the control and treatment groups after bootstrapping.

Figure 6: Failure Durations in Regular and Irregular groups. Failure durations are on the whole shorter in the Regular group.

The cox proportional hazard model allowed a multivariate analysis of the survival function. The survival function relates to the eCDF as:

\[ F(t) = 1 - S(t) \]
and represents the percentage of states still in the dataset, or states that have yet to recover, over time. The survival function can be calculated from the cumulative baseline hazard function, which represents the cumulative relative risk at of failure at each time point, conditional upon survival until that time point. It relates to survival function as

\[ H(t) = -\log(S(t)). \]

The baseline cumulative hazard function can be calculated from empirical data with the cox proportional hazard model. The model is ideal because it integrates out the baseline hazard, meaning that—unlike other survival models such as Weibull—it does not constrain the data with pre-estimated parameters. Instead, it is used to calculate the effects of the control variables without specifying a functional form. The results of the Hazard model are shown in Figure 7. Like in the eCDF, the probability of recovery was higher in states that had not experienced an irregular transition at for every possible duration.

**Figure 7:** Multivariate Hazard Model. For all failure durations, regular leaders have a higher probability of recovery.
The hazard coefficient from the multivariate hazard analysis was -.3369. Confidence was reduced to just shy of significance, at 94%, suggesting an extremely strong trend. A coefficient of -.3369 means a .3369 reduction in the hazard rate, which is the rate of failure recovery. This means that the rate of failure recovery is roughly thirty four percent greater.

The hypothesis was supported by most of the statistical measures, and the only measure in which it was not supported reached 94% confidence, suggesting that irregular leadership transitions do predict increased failure durations. However, the quantitative analysis suffers from considerable selection effects. Irregular leadership change is non-random: something about the states that selected into the treatment case caused them to be there. For example, in the control case, if the leader withstood challenges to their power, they must have been more capable in some way in order to do so. If they did not face challenges, then they are also inherently different from treatment cases where there was a challenger strong enough to succeed. There is no way to know how long treatment group failure would have endured if not for leader change.

The discrepancy in state strength was partly accounted for by conditioning on failure: states undergoing failure are already suffering conflict and are thus more comparable than a universe of all states. Furthermore, controlling for magnitude of failure and overall duration helps to compare cases with similar situations. The intuition behind the selection effects can also be counterbalanced with an opposing intuition: that any leader that has led a state to failure is inadequate, but that every leader change is an attempt at getting it right.

Selection effect can never be fully overcome and the model can never prove causal direction. The theory must also be tested and analyzed in greater detail through the use of a case
study. The following section uses the succession of leaders through the Afghan Civil War as illustrative examples.
The Afghan Civil War

The Afghan civil war provides an excellent case study for leadership and state failure. There can be no argument that Afghanistan was a failed state by 1978, by even the most restrictive definition. It suffered a very protracted civil conflict, governance was not extended throughout the territory, and the government held no monopoly over the use of legitimate violence. In fact, the government probably held less legitimacy over the use of violence than much of the resistance. From the moment the soviets made inroads into the country, the mujahidin opposition had legitimacy. The communist leaders failed to consolidate control, and using the above definition of a failed coercive state, Afghanistan failed.

The Afghan case provides a clear example of the difficulties faced by irregular leaders as they attempt to consolidate control over a territory. The new communist leaders lacked the informal personal connections that the old leadership had cultivated with the tribal groups, had a neutered bureaucracy as experienced bureaucrats and technocrats either left or were forced out, challenged the status of the ethnic and religious elite, were unfamiliar and attempted to institute policies that were unfamiliar to the majority of the country, lacked traditional legitimacy because they were not only irregular but attempted to institute an entirely new regime, lacked rational legitimacy because they failed to address the needs of the people, lacked legitimacy because of their soviet backing, and failed to develop a charismatic persona.

The failure of the communist regime can be contrasted to the relative successes and failures of the Mujahidin, and later the Taliban. Different ethnic groups occupied different regions. During the civil war, Mujahidin commanders took control of various territories. Some of these commanders were able to extend control and consolidate power within their region, creating a monopoly over legitimate violence within a territory that they were able to hold.
some regions, the leaders even extended governance throughout their territory, and were able to provide resources and services. In others, the predominant leader was less successful at creating a state-like territory. Because of the relative similarity between the regions, the successful and unsuccessful commanders can be compared, and the importance of the different variables contributing to the effects of leadership regularity can be assessed. How did they consolidate control within their regions, why were they unable to extend this control beyond their regions, and how did the Taliban succeed as irregular leaders where others failed? Each leader faced similar challenges and had similar resources, but each had a different approach in their attempt to consolidate power. Each leader was irregular, and only the Taliban succeeded in consolidating control over the country. Those with more success than others were hindered because they were irregular and lacked the benefits that a regular leader might have had. However, they each had different levels of success because they each attempted to gain access to the assets of regularity in different ways. By comparing the successes and failures of each major party commander both within their areas of influence and in the country at large, it is possible to illustrate the roles of the factors related to leadership regularity. A summary of how each leader addressed these factors is found in Appendix C.

The dice are stacked against irregular leaders because they must exert influence rather than merely maintain it. They must be exceptional in some way in order to consolidate control and help a state to recovery from failure. They can do this by utilizing old structural institutions and bureaucracy, by being representative of the elite, by having a strong and well recognized claim on legitimacy, or by being particularly charismatic. Different Afghan warlords were able to use different strategies to consolidate power within their region of influence, but were unable to use these strategies effectively in other regions. The Taliban, on the other hand, eventually
emerged and were able to first spread their power through the south, and then to project power into other regions eventually controlling the majority of the country.

Before beginning any discussion on the Afghan Mujahed commanders, a disclaimer must be made. I in no way intend to glorify any of these men. They all committed terrible atrocities and contributed to the destruction of the country. Not one was innocent. When I speak of their successes or of positive attributes, know that I have not forgotten the negative, and I mean no disrespect to those who have lost their lives and livelihoods because of the violence they perpetrated.

**Fall to Failure**

Prior to 1973, Afghanistan was a constitutional monarchy under King Muhammad Zahir Shah. The state was highly decentralized. The state controlled the cities and lines of communication, but extended governance throughout the rural areas, where roughly 85% of the population resided, through personal alliances with tribes and local leaders. Tax collection was minimal, and tax rates were negotiated through personal agreements with these local leaders. The state, therefore, has a highly decentralized and informal infrastructure, depending on the king and his bureaucracy.

As a hereditary ruler, the king had traditional legitimacy, which he could confer upon his elected prime ministers. Being a Sunni Muslim gave him legitimacy among the majority of the population’s religious leaders, and as a Durrani Pashtun, he represented the ethnic elite as well as the slight ethnic majority.

King Zahir Shah, along with his Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan (Daoud), hoped to modernize the state in order to reduce tribal power and protect the country against Pakistan’s rise. Zahir Shah courted the US in hopes of receiving defense funding but was
refused because of the burgeoning relationship between the US, and Iran and Pakistan. A stronger Afghan state would have been seen as a threat to both of those countries, and would not have benefited the US, where it was believed that no amount of strengthening of the military would protect against a Soviet invasion (Wafadar K., 1981). Heartened by Khrushchev’s peaceful coexistence policy, Daoud turned to the USSR for support instead. As a result, the Afghan Army was primarily funded and trained by the Soviets. The Americans wanted to avoid shifting the balance of power in Asia and did not wish to give Afghanistan up to Soviet influence. Instead of providing defense funding, they invested in development projects in the South, focusing on the Helmand area.

In 1963, the King introduced a new constitution in a push for a more democratic constitutional monarchy. Daoud was targeted in the constitution, which contained a provision preventing any members of the royal family from running for Prime Minister. Daoud stepped down, and a series of less effectual, rapidly alternating Prime Ministers replaced him until 1973, when he deposed King Zahir Shah in a bloodless coup while he was in Rome seeking medical treatment\(^\text{16}\). Daoud proclaimed a Republic, though his government was somewhat more authoritarian than the monarchy had been.

The transition was relatively smooth, and although it technically constituted a regime change and an irregular leader transition, it lacked many of the trappings of an irregular change. Daoud was returning to an executive position that he had inhabited before, and for the most part, was able to continue on as he had before he had been removed. The transition did not result in any tumultuous changes domestically or internationally. Although his rise went against the formal written constitution, it was not seen as a significant change in the eyes of many Afghans. He was a member of the royal family, and though he chose not to use the title, was technically a

\(^{16}\) The ways he addressed the obstacles associated with leadership irregularity are summarized in Appendix C.
Prince. He was the king’s cousin through marriage, the nephew of the first two prime ministers, and held office as the third prime minister. In the eyes of much of the population, he was just another Durrani Muhammadzai successor, and one whose authoritarianism was more promising than the previous monarch’s.

Only eight were killed during the coup. All but two members of the royal family were allowed to leave, one remained by choice, and none were harmed. Only one major political opponent, the former Prime Minister Mohammad Hashem Maiwandwal, was killed after an attempted countercoup, and his death was probably an accident. He had been imprisoned, and likely tortured, but it is unlikely that Daoud had intended his execution. Because of his popularity, his death created negative press that Daoud would have wished to avoid. The bureaucracy from the previous regime was therefore mostly retained.

The little opposition Daoud did face was present prior to his ascension. In the weeks leading up to the coup, there was talk of a potential regime change. Many suspected that the King would be persuaded to step down in favor of his son-in-law, Sardar (Prince) Abdul Wali. Abdul Wali represented a group of powerful actors who would have risen to power had Daoud not seized the opportunity first. Abdul Wali represented Daud’s main opposition, and was therefore the only member of the royal family to be imprisoned and who was prevented from leaving the country. However, because this opposition also challenged the King, it was not new to Daoud’s regime and is therefore not a symptom of irregular leadership change.

Daoud’s international ties remained primarily the same as the king’s. China, for example, never acknowledged the Coup, aside from a single congratulatory letter. Relations went on unchanged. The USSR and India were the first to recognize Daoud’s new Republic. Daoud was more adamant about a unified Pashtunistan than his predecessor had been, which was favorable

\[17\] The royal family was Durrani Pashtun, from the Muhammadzai clan.
for India, and thus for its Soviet ally. Both countries looked favorably upon the coup, and relations were marginally strengthened, but not so strengthened as to be damaging to Daud’s reputation. The US adopted a wait-and-see approach, but relations were not strained. In Iran, there was concerned over the renewed tensions with Pakistan because the Shah feared a renewal of conflict in Baluchistan, but he still made attempts to strengthen his relations with Daoud. Therefore, Afghanistan was no less recognized by the international community, and continued to receive the same, if not more, aid funding.

Daoud represented the dominant religious and ethnic group, giving him support from high status the high status group, the elite, and the majority. He strengthened his ties to the Pashtuns through a strong pro-Pashtun campaign. He very adamantly supported a unified Pashtunistan, and contested the Durand line. The Durand line, which divided the ethnic Pashtuns between Afghanistan and Pakistan, was a border agreement drawn up by the British and accepted by the Pakistanis, but never by the Afghans. Daoud’s challenge increased tensions with Pakistan.

In addition to his traditional legitimacy as a member of the royal family, Daoud attempted to solidify his rational and charismatic legitimacy. He was the charismatic head of the coup coalition and commanded some popular appeal (Mukerjee, Afghanistan Under Daud: Relations with Neighboring States, 1975). He also strengthened the drive for modernization. He viewed the cold war as a short-term opportunity in which the world’s two great powers were willing to engage in development. He hoped to maximize this opportunity to strengthen the traditionally weak Afghan state, to continue to attempt to extend governance into the rural areas, and to modernize. So despite being an irregular leader, Daud had personal experience, personal ties domestically and internationally, continued the development programs of the old leader, retained the bureaucracy of the old regime, represented the ethnic elite, religious elite, and
political elite, had traditional legitimacy, some charismatic appeal, and began his tenure with rational legitimacy.

Afghanistan had never had a strong state. Previous monarchs made deals with semi-autonomous rural leaders, effectively outsourcing governance. Daoud’s increasing attempts to extend state control challenged local authority and generated opposition, even among the Pashtuns. Furthermore, his attempts at modernization were not always successful, despite tremendous aid money.

Daoud continued the wildly unsuccessful dam building project that had begun under his first tenure as prime minister\(^{18}\). The dam project was intended to irrigate the arid areas around the Helmand river in order to create high yield farmland. The intention was to settle the Pashtun nomads in order to prevent them from crossing the Pakistani border. More importantly, the new farmland would be near government infrastructure and would allow the state to tax more effectively, as well as to extend governance. However, the nomads resented the settlement attempts because they viewed themselves as freer and better off than the peasants whose land they passed. This resentment began brewing long before Daoud’s presidency, but was heightened when it became increasingly clear that the dam program would not work.

The dams caused the water table to rise, waterlogging and destroying crops, as well as collecting salt deposits and making many fields permanently infertile. Deep water reservoirs cooled the water, destroying orchards and making the land useful only for wheat—but not even wheat could grow in the damaged farmlands. Even when new breeds of high efficiency wheat were introduced, yields continued to fall. In 1970, a drought began and by the time Daoud entered office in 1973, the Helmand river had nearly dried up. As a result, his rational legitimacy

\(^{18}\) See (Cullather, 2002) for an extensive analysis of the effects of the dam projects on Afghan development and failure.
depended on him being able to fix the problem that he had started during his time as Prime
Minister. He tried to fix it by continuing the dam project. When America threatened to cut off
funding, he begged Henry Kissinger to continue it. The US relented because it feared losing
influence in Afghanistan to the Soviets. Giving up on the dam project would have been viewed
as a tremendous failure. So Daud continued to pour American money into a flawed plan that had
little chance of success.

The USSR was displeased that Daoud courted US aid, and began to exert influence
through the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). However, the influence that the
soviet did exert, both through Daoud and through the PDPA, caused an opposition to begin to
form. The less Daoud bent to Soviet direction, the more they attempted to exert control through
the PDPA, and the more the opposition feared soviet influence.

While the US had a strong presence in the South, the USSR had a presence in the north
and in the non-Pashtun areas where they had ethnic ties. The USSR contained Uzbekistan and
Tajikistan, and had a presence in the Uzbek and Tajik areas to the north and north-east of Kabul.
This was resented by the religious leadership, who feared Soviet atheism. This resentment was
exhibited in one of the coup attempts against Daoud, which was led by two clerics, one from
Herat to the east, and one from the north. These clerics believed, falsely, that Daoud was under
heavy Soviet influence (Mukerjee, 1975).

Opposition to the state was brewing across the country because of fears of Soviet
influence, failed modernization, and attempts to strengthen the central state. The country was
falling into a crisis at about the time that the USSR finally gave up on attempting to influence
Daoud, and sponsored a violent and disruptive coup, resulting in Daoud’s death, and the rise of the PDPA under Nur Muhammad Taraki\textsuperscript{19}.

**Taraki, Amin, and Karmal, PDPA**

Three communist factions started to grow in Kabul after the liberalization of politics under King Zahir Shah’s 1963 constitution, though official parties were illegal. Shu-Li Javid was pro-China, but was put down by Daoud. The other two were Soviet backed. Parcham had greater support from the Persian speaking Kabul-dwellers and the Hazara’s, while Khalq claimed greater support from the rural Pashtuns, though in reality, neither party had a significant base of support (Wafadar K., 1981). Together, the two pro-soviet groups formed the PDPA. As Daoud tried to balance Soviet influence with support from Iran and the Arab world, the USSR pumped support into the PDPA in order to pressure Daoud and increase soviet influence. In response, Daoud attempted to influence PDPA leadership within the government. This alienated the coup coalition that had brought him to power, and with their support, the PDPA was able to launch a coup with Soviet backing\textsuperscript{20}.

Unlike the coup that brought Daoud to power, the PDPA coup was bloody. Daoud was killed, and Nur Mohammad Taraki came to power with Babrak Karmal as second in command. Taraki was a member of the Khalq faction, Karmal was a member of the Parcham faction. But shortly thereafter, Taraki made a move to sideline the Parchami’s. Karmal was sent abroad, and then dismissed and replaced with Hafizullah Amin.

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\textsuperscript{20} The ways each subsequent communist leader addressed the obstacles associated with leadership irregularity are summarized in Appendix C.
The irregular transition that brought the PDPA to power was nothing like the smooth transition that brought Daoud to power. Daoud was a member of the royal family to whom the formal and informal assets of old monarchy were transferred. He was able to continue the plan for reform that had been set before his ascension. Taraki, on the other hand, did not enjoy any of the same benefits, and his early actions in office distanced him further from the population. The transition was anything but smooth, and the roughly one hundred thousand man strong army that Daoud had built up, dissolved after the coup. The bureaucracy and formal institutions that Daud had been working hard to build lost considerable functionality.

Daoud, a member of the royal family who tried to distance himself from the Soviets, received opposition because it was feared that he was under too much soviet influence. Taraki, on the other hand, was a Ghilzai Pashtun instead of a Durrani Pashtun, and was clearly under direct Soviet influence. He was openly anti-religious, which earned him even more opposition from the religious elite across rural Afghanistan. As though he was determined to lose support from all sectors, he also instituted pro-Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, and Nuristani legislature, which would have reduced Pashtun influence in favor of minority groups. He even excluded the Tajiks, the second largest and most powerful group. The laws was too strongly opposed for to be implemented, but his attempt to enact them established him as a threat to the status quo. His support for these minority, low status ethnic groups might have been influenced by their proximity to the Soviet border. It is possible that he hoped to gain support from the constituency he saw as most likely to support him, and saw little chance of support from the Pashtuns. But his policy failed; Taraki did not represent the religious, political, or ethnic elite, or a majority.

Taraki also attempted to institute massive reforms regarding land redistribution, the status of women, and customary family law. These were met with massive opposition from the rural
religious, village, and tribal leadership because the reforms attempted to change their way of life and drastically reduce their local autonomy. The land reform was met with hostility, and Taraki resorted to violence to compensate, losing him any chance of support among the rural base that his platform had nominally been built on. Meanwhile, armed opposition continued to foment.

The Parchami’s resented having been sidelined, so Taraki even lost support within his own party. When the USSR recommended that Taraki replace Amin with Karmal as second in command in order to unify the communist supporters, Amin launched a coup and killed Taraki. The coup took place in September of 1979.

Amin attempted to regain support among the Pashtuns by pursuing a policy of Pashtunization. He also attempted to improve relations with religious leaders by appealing to Islam. He attempted to distance himself from the Soviets by appealing to the West. In this way, he was attempting to gain support among the important sectors that Taraki had neglected. These attempts were undermined when he resorted to violence. He killed roughly twelve hundred intellectuals in Kabul who were suspected of opposing him. He was unable to shake his soviet reputation to gain support among the sectors he courted, but also alienated the USSR, losing him support across all sectors. The USSR eventually lost patience with Amin and launched an invasion in December of 1979, putting Karmal in his place.

It was hoped that Karmal would have some support because of how hated Amin had been, but Karmal had even less legitimacy because rather than merely being influenced by the Soviets, Karmal had depended upon an actual invasion in order to take power. The Khalqi’s felt betrayed by the soviets for being sidelined in favor of Karmal, which meant that he did not even enjoy support from the few thousands communist supporters left in Kabul. Some Khalqi’s joined the mujahidin, and fighting in the streets erupted nightly between Khalqi and Parchami partisans.
Karmal further sidelined the Khalqi’s by replacing bureaucrats with less experienced Parchami party-members, especially in the previously Khalqi dominated ministry of interior and national security police. This hollowed out the bureaucracy, leaving it nonfunctional. Important positions were filled with young party members rather than with experienced bureaucrats or technocrats. These party members had little real responsibility, and instead reported directly to soviet advisors. There was little incentive for them to behave honestly, and many Khalqi’s within the government supported the Mujahadin. The bureaucratic machinery was stilted, and completely dependent upon the soviets.

Karmal also depended on the Soviets for security. The military still suffered from loss of cohesion and moral. Desertion was rampant. To attempt to rebuild the military, a draft was established. The central government only had real influence in Kabul, which meant that the draft was conducted almost exclusively there. No one wanted to fight for the soviets, but the ever desperate government passed laws requiring males to serve in the military before they could complete their education. They resorted to searching homes and marketplaces for able-bodied males to fight. This lost Karmal even greater support among the intellectual community, who fled Kabul, and created a brain drain that further exacerbated damage that had been done to the governing bureaucracy. It also left the military poorly functioning. Desertion and poor coordination only increased, and like the central government, the military was left open to mujahidin intelligence and subversion.

Karmal lost additional rational legitimacy when the economy continued to get worse. Inflation reached 200% in 1980. In that same year, the population in Kabul doubled and continued to increase as time went on. Government income dropped, causing Karmal to give up on land reform. Soviet military campaigns bombed villages and destroyed crops and farmland,
which increased urbanization as refugees fled the rural areas, and contributed to a fuel shortage and famine during the winter. The Mujahidin made matters worse for the government by closing supply lines. They successfully fended off soviet attacks which reduced the Soviet military’s reputation for invulnerability, and the legitimacy of the armed resistance. As the opposition gained legitimacy, the central government lost it, and failure was worsened.

Protests erupted in Kabul and other major cities. Many of these protests were put down forcefully, including one on the part of high school girls, in which hundreds were killed. Karmal and the Soviets reacted violently to opposition, leveling villages and bombing cities. Refugees flocked to Kabul and Jalalabad for security while Herat and Kandahar were left with a fraction of their pre-war populations. Much of Herat was destroyed by bombing in response to a Mujahadin military victory in which they took control of several outposts. The Mujahadin made advances on Kabul and successfully attacked the elite neighborhoods. Karmal’s inability to prevent the attacks lost him credibility among the few elite supporters he had left. The violence continued to escalate, and Karmal continued to lose any chance he had of mass support. He relied on coercion and failed to build legitimacy.

Karmal did try to regain some legitimacy. He called a series of loya jirgas, or congressional assemblies, for which villages and tribes were supposed to elect representatives. The loya jirgas were a failure. Only a fraction of villages—those located along supply lines—participated, and they did so reluctantly. Once the first assembly convened, it was dominated by Khalqi and Parchami infighting, resulting in greater violence. He also created a new, nonpartisan political party in hopes of distancing himself from Soviet communism. The party was supposed to be a nationalist party for all Afghans, but it received little support and participants were often assassinated by the Mujahidin. He also attempted to regain some religious legitimacy by making
an effort to appear more publically devout and changing the military insignia to include Islamic symbols. However, these gestures were all superficial and did little to gain him legitimacy or support.

Karmal also attempted to gain support among the Hazara’s, by appointing a Hazara leader as prime minister, and by promising them a certain level of autonomy. His attempts to court the Hazaras largely failed, and only served to emphasize the Pashtun reversal of power.

As an irregular leader, Karmal and his communist predecessors lacked legitimacy and charismatic appeal, which prevented them from unifying even the country’s few communist supporters. They alienated the base of support which they were meant to represent, as well as the country’s religious, local, and ethnic elite. Rather than unifying their own movement, they created so much devastation that they further legitimized the Mujahidin, pushing state failure to a greater extreme. They also neutered the bureaucracy that had been left over from the previous regime, removing experienced technocrats and bureaucrats in favor of inexperienced partisans. Their rise disrupted all of Daoud’s development projects. They instituted new projects that were widely opposed and ineffectual. Land and family law reforms alienated the rural and religious elite that the Afghan government traditionally relied on to enforce governance. While Taraki, Amin, and then Karmal failed to establish control, Mujahadin power grew and several regional commanders began to consolidate control within their regions.

**Ahmad Shah Massoud, Jamiat-i-Islami**

Ahmad Shah Massoud was a regional commander within Jamiat-e-Islami (Jamiat)\(^{21}\). He controlled the northwestern part of the country, surrounding the Panjshir valley. Massoud was a university student when the soviets began making inroads into Kabul. He joined the youth branch of Jamiat, where he met Dr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, the leader of the organization.

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21 The ways he addressed the obstacles associated with leadership irregularity are summarized in Appendix C.

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Massoud was able to ascend to prominence because he was the right person in the right place and time. He was involved from the very beginning of the conflict as a member of the youth movement in Jamiat. When fighting broke out, he started to gain experience and make a name for himself by traveling around the country to fight with different groups. Massoud returned to the Panjshir valley where he began recruiting fighters for a small opposition group. This was hardly unique—hundreds of commanders defended their villages with small bands of men. These groups worked together against the Soviets. As some commanders gained power relative to others, either through their reputations or ability to garner weapons and funds, they were able to collect alliances. Massoud was able to distinguish himself both through his prowess on the battlefield and his personal charismatic appeal. His personal connection to Rabanni gave him credibility and access to international funds. He quickly gained a reputation in the Panjshir valley that drew supporters and external donors, eventually making him one of the most prominent of the Afghan regional commanders.

Massoud’s success in the north arose because he was able to gain access to the assets that are usually associated with regular leaders—he gained expertise as a military commander through experience, and developed personal ties throughout the country and internationally, he had charismatic appeal, he represented the powerful majority in the north, he had legitimacy as a successful Mujahadin, and he was able to create centralized institutions and a functioning bureaucracy.

Massoud was a charismatic young leader. Nicknamed the Lion of Panjshir, he had a reputation for being a successful, brave fighter in the war against the Soviets. He was loved in the north, and his image can still be seen all over Mazar-e-Sharif and the Panjshiri parts of Kabul. During the 2010 election, one legislative candidate included photographs of him standing
with Massoud in his campaign materials. Fond remembrances by his followers describe him as an excellent, practical commander; intelligent, always studying military strategy; honest rather than big talking; and a very good listener who was always gathering intelligence and council; and a good Muslim who prayed regularly\textsuperscript{22}. To those who knew him personally, he was soft spoken, thoughtful, and a good listener. He also made an effort to create a positive image across Afghanistan and abroad by welcoming every chance to speak to the media. Massoud’s charisma can be contrasted with the comparably successful Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hizb-i-Islami (Hizb), who was more often described, even by the Pashtun’s he represented, as clientalistic and selfish.

Massoud earned legitimacy by earning admiration and respect from the masses and the elite in the north. He appealed to the warrior culture by exhibiting his skill on the battlefield, while appealing to the religious masses by giving the impression of being pious. This was a key combination necessary for any Afghan leader to gain legitimacy; by being a successful warrior, he earned respect and proved that he was willing to fight for his country. By being a good Muslim, he proved his moral superiority and become a moral authority in the eyes of the Afghans, thereby allowing him to excuse violent actions that would otherwise reflect poorly.

Massoud was able to use personal connections and ties to create a reputation and attain allies and supporters. He came from an affluent family in the Panjshir valley, giving him some level of renown from the beginning. He met Rabbani while attending university in Kabul, and though he was not directed by Jamiat, he remained nominally a Jamiat commander and was able to receive funds and alliances through Jamiat. In the time between when President Daoud overthrew the king, and when Massoud became a commander, he traveled and participated in resistance activity throughout Afghanistan and in Peshawar, making himself familiar. By making

\textsuperscript{22} This impression was derived from personal interviews his casual supporters as well as one of his executive civil advisors
himself known and expanding his reputation he was able to overcome some of the bias against unknown actors. He organized a resistance group in Panjshir, beginning with only thirty followers, but his forces quickly expanded and he was eventually able to coordinate the resistance throughout the entire Northeast of Afghanistan.

Massoud had an education, which boosted his reputation and gave him expertise. He spent a lot of his free time studying guerilla military tactics and developed an organization around his theories. He focused on hit and run attacks on weak targets, rather than the traditional focus on continued attacks on large protected targets. This earned him a great deal of success and further renown.

He organized the resistance in a way that made his strategy effective, but also created an institutional structure in the region. He organized his military forces into three types of groups: stationary groups to hold territory, mobile groups to go where necessary, and mobile strike forces. He then divided the Panjshir valley into military districts in which a band of stationary forces maintained security. These districts then served as functional political districts, each with economic and political committees and judges, and a committee of religious authority. He was therefore able to establish institutions and extend them throughout his territory by relying on his military structure.

Massoud was an effective politician who created an effective bureaucracy around himself. He was said to have been constantly listening to others to collect intelligence and council, as well as delegating tasks. In addition to establishing a functional bureaucracy, this made his organization more resistant to decapitation. By creating a formal structure, he transferred his personal power and personal ties to the organization, allowing it to continue even after his death. His military organization therefore created the framework for a government
structure that could expand as his territory expanded, and that could survive him. He was not only able to create a following around his charismatic personality, but to routinize the organization.

Massoud had tremendous success consolidating power throughout the Northeast of Afghanistan. He was always willing to talk to the press, which helped gain him familiarity both domestically among the population and the elite, and internationally. Why, then, was he unable to capture and keep Kabul, and to extend influence to the south?

Massoud was representative of the powerful actors in the north. He attempted to gain some representation over other ethnic groups by co-opting commanders, but these alliances were weak and subject to disruption. He was never truly able to represent any group other than the Tajiks, and most closely represented the more elite Panjshiri Tajiks. Among the Tajiks, he had legitimacy and a centralized state-like organization, but he was unable to do more than co-opt commanders as allies in other regions, or to gain sufficient support where Tajiks were neither the elite nor the majority.

The military success of the Panjshiris did award them a certain amount of status as they enjoyed relative spoils, but this material success could not overcome historical Pashtun feelings of superiority. As a whole, the Pashtuns consider themselves the true Afghans and resent the rise of any other ethnic group. The Panjshiris never did gain control of the country or surpass Pashtun power, but they were able to close the gap, threatening the Pashtuns. Today, the Pashtuns enjoy the executive and maintain primacy within the country, but they are still wary of Panjshiri power and make claims that the government is under Panjshiri control. Within Kabul, the two groups dress differently and often self segregate, signifying that there still is deep rooted resentment and
conflict\textsuperscript{23}. For the Pashtuns, any Panjshiri power is too much Panjshiri power. Resistance to an ethnic reversal of power was too great for Massoud to overcome.

\textbf{Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Hizb-i-Islami}

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar controlled Hizb-i-Islami (Hizb), the predominant Pashtun resistance group\textsuperscript{24}. He used a different strategy to consolidate power. Rather than winning unified support as a loved representative of the region, he used clientalism and patronage ties to consolidate control. This was effective because of the tribal nature of the region. Villages and tribes were used to experiencing some level of autonomy under the old regime, but when the king fell and the soviets started taking power, the village and tribal elders were less willing to support the central authority. Hekmatyar was able to co-opt the support of local leaders by alliances of convenience, threat, and payment. They either had similar goals as him, were bullied into supporting him, or were incentivized with aid. He kept power by either pitting groups that became too powerful against one another, or conveniently not coming to their aid if they were attacked.

Creating this patronage network allowed Hekmatyar to maintain relative stability in the region, or at least manageable chaos, while nominally claiming the support of a plurality of the Afghan people. Unlike in Massoud’s heartland, commanders throughout his territory had shifting alliances, but he always maintained control among enough to keep a majority and to fuel his own power.

Hekmatyar’s claimed representation of the Pashtune was necessary for him to maintain his relative bargaining position among the other major parties, especially in Peshawar and when seeking support and aid abroad. This allowed him to collect extensive aid from Pakistan, which

\textsuperscript{23} While in Kabul, where Tajiks and Pashtuns both reside, I was warned to stay away from the boys wearing Kufeyas because they were allegedly Panjshiri. Pashtun girls also often wore a different style of headscarf.

\textsuperscript{24} The ways he addressed the obstacles associated with leadership irregularity are summarized in Appendix C.
in turn allowed him to fund his campaigns and remain successful. He could support claims to power by saying that he had majority support.

He was Pashtun, which earned him credibility and some level of legitimacy among the Pashtuns, but only because he was Pashtun. The fact that he had the support was irrelevant, if another Pashtun came along, they could take away his support. He could ally with other ethnic groups, as long as Pashtuns did not lose their perceived power. Hekmatyar lacked the charisma necessary to tie his supporters to him, and as a result experienced a lot of in-fighting. He was more concerned with maintaining his own power than with consolidating a stable governing body, and pitted internal groups against one another, at times forcing them to seek alliances with other parties such as the Taliban or Jamiat.

Hizb did provide institutions within the south. Like in the north, there were some schools and hospitals, there was a tax system, and even a postal system. However, the military structure was more patronage based than Massoud’s, and he failed to develop a centralized authority.

As evidence of his lack of Charisma, Hekmatyar is not remembered fondly today. His picture is not put up in the streets, the Pashtuns do not speak positively of him or recount his valor. Even the Taliban are remembered more positively than he is. Unlike the Tajiks in the north, who claim Massoud as their hero, the Pashtuns in Kabul say today say that none of the warlords were any good. He was not well liked enough, or militarily powerful enough, for his organization to be sustainable.

Hekmatyar did manage to create a patronage network that could conceivably have allowed stability to develop if the correct steps were taken, but he was unable to extend control because he lacked the charisma to unify the Pashtuns to victory. In order to maintain his own
personal power, he acted divisively. Even though he technically represented the country’s elite, he failed to mobilize them to take control in areas where they were not the majority.

Because the Hekmatyar sought complete primacy, he was never willing to participate in any of the deals offered by other commanders in their attempts to make a unified government. Several attempts were made, some prompted by the Peshawar leaders and others by the regional commanders, but Hekmatyar wanted all or nothing and had enough power as the Pashtun representative to spoil attempts at unification. He was unwilling to permit not only an ethnic reversal of power, but any shift in the relative power.

Hekmatyar was successful in the south because he had developed personal ties domestically and abroad that gave him a patronage network of support, and access to funds and weapon, but he was unable to extend control beyond his region because he failed to create an effective, centralized bureaucracy or to gain enough legitimacy to create a unified Pashtun movement.

**Mullah Mohammad Omar, Taliban**

There are several origin stories for how the Taliban came into existence. They all begin in a Madrasa along the Pakistani border. Young Afghan refugees were not allowed to attend normal public school, so they were educated in Islamic schools where they could learn to read and write. In one such Islamic school, the headmaster, Mullah Omar, decided that he wanted to go to Jihad and brought his students and a small band of supporters with him.

What happened next is a little hazy. The Taliban went to the south of Afghanistan, either of their own volition, or because Pakistan requested that they do so. Pakistan was attempting to open a trade route through Afghanistan, but the first caravan to be sent had been captured. One possibility is that the Taliban freed the caravan out of the goodness of their hearts. Another is
that Pakistan requested that they do so in order to save face after the Caravan was taken. A third possibility is that the capture of the Caravan was a setup by the ISI, used to introduce the Taliban to the Afghan civil war scene and help them gain legitimacy. Whether or not the capture of the caravan was setup by the ISI, the action did gain them notice and legitimacy as one a notable player in the Afghan civil war\textsuperscript{25}.

They also derived legitimacy from their religious origins. Mullah Omar had authority as a religious figure. Talib is the Arabic word for student, and “-an” is the Persian plural suffix, so their name means the students. This is a reference to being students of Islam. Mullah Omar was not actually a learned Islamic scholar, he never actually received extensive training and did not have more than an elementary education, but he was still perceived as an Islamic authority and was respected as a Mullah. His deficient education led him to create a unique interpretation, similar to but not the same as the Deobandi tradition from which he came.

Mullah Omar was not an inherently charismatic figure, but he overcame this with his religious appeal. He earned the respect of those he met not because he was a good speaker or had a winning smile, but because he gave a pious impression that successfully impressed religious Afghans and foreign patrons. He also began not as an absolute leader, but as the head of a council which allowed newly co-opted local commanders and local elite to feel represented. This served to make him more accessible and thus more familiar and trustworthy. As the Taliban grew, Mullah Omar gradually became more absolute and secured more control in his own hands. He became the Amir al-Muminin, the commander of the faithful. This was a religious title of extreme importance, making him a holy figure and allowing him to command the same dedication over his followers as a charismatic personality.

\textsuperscript{25} The ways he addressed the obstacles associated with leadership irregularity in order to consolidate power across the country are summarized in Appendix C.
At first, the Taliban went unnoticed by the other major commanders. As new players, they had not yet had a great enough impact to warrant notice as a threat. Despite their lack of attention from the major commanders, the Taliban gradually started making connections in the south and building up a network of supporters. This was especially possible in the South because of the clientalistic way that Hekmatyar had structured his territory. The local commanders were not loyal to Hekmatyar, and were easily swayed by the Taliban. Local commanders were co-opted in several ways. Often, the Taliban possessed military superiority and Hekmatyar failed to support his commanders when the Taliban threatened them. Some joined the Taliban because of ideological ties. Others were bought off. Those groups that were not ideologically tied to the Taliban were disarmed to prevent further opposition.

The Taliban were more successful at truly representing the Pashtuns than Hekmatyar had been. By the time the Taliban were formed, Hekmatyar was well established in the region, but he failed to utilize the advantage that his familiarity and prominence gave him. His prominence made him the clear leader to whom others supporting his cause might have deferred had there been a unifying entity to which to defer. But Hekmatyar never formed a centralized structure. Instead, he relied on clientalistic, impersonal connections that were subject to dissolution. He pitted local groups against one another in order to maintain his primacy, rather than building a coalition of support. When the Taliban came, Hekmatyar failed to support the local commanders against their attack, thereby driving them into Taliban hands. For example, in January of 1995, Hiz attacked governor Qari Baba in hopes of pre-empting a Taliban attack. The attack just served to drive Qari Baba into an alliance with the Taliban.

The Taliban, on the other hand, had all of the same representative attributes as Hekmatyar and more. They were Pashtun and their religious claims were stronger than Hekmatyar’s. They
nominally represented all Pashtuns, but Mullah Omar and the majority of his council were Durrani, the higher status sub-tribe within the Pashtuns. They slowly spread through the region, making personal ties and strengthening their representativeness. Rather than pitting groups against one another, they were able to either co-opt groups and gain their support, or to defeat groups militarily when Hekmatyar failed to come to their rescue. Those groups that did not willingly commit to the Taliban were disarmed rather than bullied into joining so that the Taliban were less subject to the same type of loss of support that they were encouraging for Hezb. Mullah Omar included the relatively powerful commanders within his council, and made those that were not included less powerful.

As they took villages, the Taliban left policing and judicial systems. They created an organization for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Although the group was vicious, it was relatively egalitarian. It took power away from the elites, but was unobjectionable at first because, in a time when crime was rampant, it created a level of stability. The violence was predictable rather than arbitrary, meaning that it could be avoided. This promoted their rational legitimacy—Hekmatyar left crime and disorder in his territory, but the Taliban brought stability. They were viewed as the better choice.

By the time the other major commanders had taken notice of the Taliban, it was too late to stop their momentum. Pakistan shifted much of its support away from Hekmatyar and to the Taliban, providing them with weapons and intelligence support. The Taliban were able to overcome the south, reducing Hezb to an external front organization with little real power domestically.

The Taliban represented the Pashtuns, but they made attempts to represent others as well. Like Massoud, they attempted to co-opt members of other ethnic groups and emphasized their
positions in order to appear multi-ethnic and enhance their claims of representing all of Afghanistan. They made religious appeals, claiming that they were going to create an Islamic Emirate for all of Afghanistan, not just the Pashtuns.

This appeal did not work as well in the rest of Afghanistan as it did in the South because the major commanders in the other region had more centralized structures and greater stability. Their promise of stability was less convincing in regions such as Herat, where the heart of the territory was demilitarized and had some normalcy. In Herat, Mazar, and the Panjshir valley, society continued, life went on despite the war raging along the boundaries of the different regions and in Kabul. There was less of a need for the Taliban to come create stability, and the populous in those regions were more content with their leaders. In Herat, for example, Ismail Khan enjoyed wild public support—despite being defeated several times, he was able to recreate a militia every time he returned to his territory, and when he was removed as governor under the Karzai administration, there were major protests and demonstrations. The Heratis were less than eager for a new party to take power and disrupt their stability. In Mazar, the locals were less loyal to their commander, Dostum, but enjoyed the stability he had created in the city and also opposed the Taliban.

Various lower level commanders in the North and East joined with the Taliban for periods of time as they vied for greater influence in their region, but they never shared the same ideological ties that they did with those in the south. The Taliban failed to gain the support of the populations, or the local elite. For example, Abdul Malik defected to the Taliban in order to increase his influence in the area and get revenge on Dostum, whom he blamed for his brother’s death, only to switch sides again later.
Despite challenges in the north, Mullah Omar was on the verge of controlling the entire country in 2001 when the US invaded. They were able to take control because, unlike Hekmatyar, they had unified the elite Pashtuns. Once they had fully utilized that power, they were able to win the war.

The Taliban were a new force that swept the country and nearly ended decades of fighting. They succeeded where others had failed by unifying the elite constituency, earning legitimacy through providing stability in the south and through military victories, extending their claims of representation to all Muslims and winning even some non-Pashtun support, and through creating formal policing institutions that were able to hold control over the regions that they had already conquered. In areas where there was no strong governance, they were able to win rational legitimacy by creating a reputation for creating relative stability and predictability. In areas that had been controlled by other leaders, they were able to use military victories and to extend the policing institutions they had created in order to maintain relative order.
Conclusion

The selection effects endogenous to the leadership regularity and state failure are too
great to be able to make strong causal claims. However, leadership regularity was shown to
predict considerable variation in state failure duration. It acts as a good proxy for many factors
and assets that regular leaders tend to have access to, but irregular leaders tend not to.

Irregular leadership changes lead to a shift in power between two groups, potentially
causing a status reversal. Social identity theory predicts that a leader from a high status group is
more likely to viewed positively than leaders from a low status group. Status reversals can lead
to violence because a group previously holding power, with resources, connections, and
expectations, is then removed from power. Because humans are loss averse, this group is likely
to oppose the new leader in order to regain power. Similarly, because humans are risk averse, a
known leader might be more preferable to an uncertain irregular leader. If a group decides to
take a risk and support an irregular leader into power, it is because they expect a pay off high
enough to make the risk worthwhile. The irregular leader then has the added pressure of meeting
the elevated expectations of its constituency without access to the spoils that the old leader had
accumulated while in office.

While it cannot be taken for granted that irregular leaders will not have access to the
institutions that were available to regular leader, it can be argued that they might have a more
restricted access. Institutions such as the military might support the old leader and the loss of
supporters for the old leader might leave the bureaucracy suffering. This added challenge will
make it more difficult for an irregular leader to establish themselves and to provide security and
benefits to the population, making them more likely to face opposition.

Irregular leaders are also less likely to have the experience and power of old leaders.
While irregular leaders might have access to formal institutions left over from the old regime,
they are unlikely to have access to informal means of projecting power and wealth extraction.

For example, they are less likely to have the personal ties and access into licit and illicit markets that the old leader might have enjoyed. International alliances may also shift. The irregular leader will be left floundering to catch up while an old leader could have been dedicating his efforts to restoring stability.
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Appendix A: Summary of Factors Related to Leadership Regularity

V5: Ethnic Fractionalization
- Ethnic Divisions
- Social Identity Theory: High Status Preference

V3: Ethnic Power Shift
- Elite
- Risk Aversion

V6: Conflict drawn on ethnic lines
- Higher cost to not fighting

V4: Representative of Ethnic Majority
- Gain funds
- Majority

V7: Legitimacy
- Traditional
  - Rational
  - Charisma

EV: Leader Regularity

IV: Failure Duration
- Continuity of Development
- Formal Institutions

V2: Bureaucratic Strength
- Bureaucratic Experience
- Personal Experience
- Familiarity Preference
- Gain Funds
- International Ties
Appendix A: Summary of Factors Relating to Leadership Regularity

Key:
- Variables
- Assets related to experience
- Assets related to representativeness
- Assets related to legitimacy

Diagram showing relationships between factors such as Regular Leader, Unified Support, Personal Connections, and higher levels like Functioning Government and Continuity of Development, leading to Shorter Failure Duration and Legitimacy.
# Appendix B: List of Cases

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year Failure Began</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
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<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>Yemen</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Dropped</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1998</td>
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Appendix C: Summary of Afghan Leaders' Approaches to the Obstacles Related to Leadership Irregularity

### Daoud:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functioning Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Yes. Bloodless coup, retained bureaucracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Development</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>Yes. He was Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Yes. Prince and former Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Personal Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Retained ties from tenure as Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Alliances did not shift.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative of Elite</td>
<td>Yes. Durrani, Muhamazai, Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimacy</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Yes. He was a Prince.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Yes, initially Built platform on development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>Somewhat. Initial popular appeal</td>
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</table>

### Taraki, Amin, Karmal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functioning Bureaucracy</td>
<td>No, purged opponents in favor of partisans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Development</td>
<td>No, US development aid ceased, new development programs failed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>No. Small base of support, came out of nowhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Personal Ties</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Supported by USSR, but opposed by US, Pakistan, and Iran.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative</strong></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>No. Atheist or unconvincingly religious, antagonized the intellectual elite, attempted to represent low status minority groups rather than Pashtuns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimacy</strong></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>No. Policies were ineffective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>No. All were disliked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Massoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functioning Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Yes. Was able to create one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Development</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>No, but made up for it by studying insurgency and governing strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Yes. Traveled the country to fight with many groups. In the press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Personal Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Gained through Jamiat and travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Gained through Jamiat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Consolidated control in north where he represented the local ethnic elite. Unable to extend control to the south where he did not represent the elite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>No. He was not from the Muhammadzai clan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Yes. He created functioning governing institutions within his territory, and attempted to create a power sharing democracy for the whole country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>Yes. Had charismatic appeal as a hero.</td>
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### Mullah Omar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functioning Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Yes. Had a council of elders and left governing institutions in place whenever they took territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Development</td>
<td>Not Applicable-- though he did promote development by removing road blocks and establishing rule of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>No. Mullah Omar and the Taliban came out of nowhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Personal Ties</td>
<td>Yes. He led a grassroots movement in which he made personal ties as he expanded. Important leaders were invited to join his council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Ties</td>
<td>Yes. Had support of Pakistan and the US.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Yes. Mullah Omar was Durrani Pashtun, as was the majority of his council. Attempted to represent other groups by co-opting commanders into council.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Yes. Created traditional legitimacy using religious claims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Yes. Established rule of law. Violence was predictable rather than arbitrary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>Yes. Created a personality cult around himself as a religious leader. Became &quot;Commander of the Faithful.&quot;</td>
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