Leaders and International Conflict

GIACOMO CHIOZZA AND
H. E. GOEMANS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107660731

First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Chiozza, Giacomo.
Leaders and international conflict / Giacomo Chiozza and H. E. Goemans.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-107-01172-4 (hardback)
1. Politics and war. 2. Political leadership. 3. International relations. 4. Politics and war – Case studies. 5. Political leadership – Case studies. 6. International relations – Case studies. I. Goemans, H. E. (Hein Erich), 1957– II. Title.
JZ6385.C55 2011
303.6′6 – dc23 2011020738

ISBN 978-1-107-01172-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-66073-1 Paperback

Contents

Tables

Figures

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Jeffrey Arnold, Carol Atkinson, Rand Blimes, Tim Büthe, Kevin Clarke, Eugene Gholz, Ron Hassner, Susan Hyde, Brenton Kenkel, Deborah Larson, Jeffrey Lewis, Nikolay Marinov, Sandra Morton, Michael Peress, Dan Posner, Norrin Ripsman, Bruce Russett, Ken Schultz, Glenn Scrimshaw, Curt Signorino, Duncan Snidal, Randy Stone, Marc Trachtenberg, R. Harrison Wagner and in particular Alexandre Debs and Arnd Plagge. Muhammet Bas provided extremely helpful research assistance.

We have benefited from the comments of the participants at the Peace Studies Program at Cornell University, the University of Chicago, PIPES, the University of California, Berkeley, UCLA, the University of Texas at Austin, Yale University.

Mistakes, omissions, and other assorted infelicities are our own responsibility.

Online appendices

Online appendices have been supplied as supplementary material for Chapters 3, 4, and 6. Please find the online appendices at:
http://sites.google.com/site/giacomochiozza/
or
http://www.rochester.edu/college/faculty/hgoemans/research.htm/
Links to these sites can also be found on the book's homepage at:
www.cambridge.org/9781107660731

1 *Leaders*

Joaquim Alberto Chissano, the second President of Mozambique, stepped down from power on February 2, 2005 after serving his country for 19 years. During his rule, Mozambique experienced economic progress, democratic development, and pacification. The civil war that had ravaged the country for 16 years came to an end in 1992 when a UN-sponsored peace accord was signed in Rome between President Chissano and the Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Elections were held two years later and again in 1999, which Chissano and the Frelimo party won. In 2004, President Chissano announced that he would not run for a third term, even though Mozambique's constitution would allow him to do so. Rather, he voluntarily retired and let a successor be selected. For all his services to his country, President Chissano was awarded the first Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, a great honor meant to celebrate his outstanding contributions to peace, prosperity and democracy, but also . . . *a lot of money*: 5 million US dollars over 10 years and 200,000 US dollars annually for life thereafter, in addition to up to 200,000 US dollars a year for 10 years towards the winner's public interest activities and good causes.

The prize is the brainchild of Dr. Mo Ibrahim, a Sudanese businessman and telecommunications mogul, who, after selling his main business, set up a charity foundation devoted to fostering democratic governance and economic development in Africa. But rather than funding health care projects or civil works, Dr. Ibrahim's foundation adopted a revolutionary approach to charity: to promote development by changing the incentives that drive political leaders in office.

Aid and development projects, two of the traditional approaches of charity organizations, are discounted, because they do not directly address the political sources of the persistent stagnation and underdevelopment of African societies and economies. Aid and development projects do not alter how leaders govern their countries. Development and prosperity, in Dr. Ibrahim's view, flow from good governance; and

good governance depends on how leaders strike a balance between private gains and public benefits to pursue their political careers.

The assumption that underlies the Mo Ibrahim Prize is that the fate of leaders once they are *out of office* is a key determinant of how they run their countries. The assumption runs as follows: When leaders face impoverishment and retribution once they are out of office, they would be doggedly determined to enrich themselves, squash any opposition, trample over any legal restraint in order to cling onto power. Power is their lifeline. When leaders can expect a safe retirement, however, they would take a different perspective on how to govern. In a recent interview with the *Financial Times*, Dr. Ibrahim explained that

> African leaders [. . .] look to retirement as they would to the edge of a cliff, beyond which lies a dizzying fall towards retribution and relative poverty. "We don't have financial institutions for ex-presidents to go and run, or boards of great companies. There is life after office in other parts of the world. I just read that Tony Blair was paid half a million pounds to make a speech in China. People like Blair always have a place in society, they have secure financial futures," he says. Ibrahim believes he has created an attractive alternative to clinging on to power.[1]

In this book, we show that Dr. Ibrahim's intuition identified a fundamental factor that drives leaders' performance in office. Not just with respect to good governance, but also with respect to international conflict, leaders and their political incentives make a difference. We argue that the fate of leaders and the political processes of

[1] The interview was published on February 15, 2008 in the celebrated series *Lunch with the FT*, and is available at www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c6a7d87a-d93b-11dc-bd4d-0000779fd2ac.html. See also BBC News, June 3, 2005, "Is There Life after the Presidency?" http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4607269.stm, which quotes the National Democratic Institute to say "many African presidents cling to power beyond constitutionality and democratically tolerable limits, in part because life after the presidency is seen to offer little in compensation to the riches, stature and security of being in power." In the feedback below the article, one respondent from Zimbabwe wrote: "Former presidents should be respected because of what they did for a country. However at the same time, when Mugabe becomes a former president, my views will change." Finally, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the former leader of Ethiopia, who was deposed in 1991 and fled to Zimbabwe, lamented to his interviewer: "African leaders are unlucky. There are very few who can live among their people after they lose power . . . I worked so hard, so tirelessly for Ethiopia. It grieves me that I cannot grow old on Ethiopian soil" (quoted in Baker (2004, 1492)).

leadership turnover shape leaders' decisions to initiate international conflict. We explain *why* and *when* political leaders decide to initiate international crises and wars. Our theory of conflict presents a new and, we believe, powerful way to look at the fundamental question of international relations: what are the causes of war and the conditions for peace? Our answer simply reformulates a famous dictum about war by the historian E. H. Carr (1946, 109): "War lurks in the background of international politics just as revolution lurks in the background of domestic politics," argued Carr. In our theory, war lurks in the background of international politics *because* revolution – a forcible or violent removal from office – lurks in the background of domestic politics. As the domestic political conditions that create stable and peaceful processes of leadership turnover improve, therefore, the scourge of war will also fade.

Our leader theory of international conflict sheds new light on the momentous finding of a small, but growing, group of scholars that has documented a profound transformation in the nature of war over the twentieth century and beyond. Mary Kaldor (1999), Robert Jervis (2002), Jeffrey Record (2002) and, above all, John Mueller (2004) have pointed out that modern war, the type of interstate war that developed from the Napoleonic revolution, has been in decline, a rarer and rarer occurrence, soon to become a relic of the past. Incredible though this claim might sound while the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are raging, there has been a marked decline in the number of conflicts which we might legitimately call interstate wars. Instead, we have been experiencing, directly or indirectly, new forms of warfare, increasing instances of internationalized civil war, asymmetric warfare, or insurgent warfare where the boundaries between what is war and what is violent crime and terrorism are vanishing (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). These scholars argue that technological transformations, democratic institutions, the memories of the carnage of World War I, and new attitudes about violence in modern societies all contribute to make war between modern developed nations an anachronism. In their view, war can no longer serve as a viable mechanism to solve international disputes.

Our argument explains this empirical trend, while eschewing any teleological undertones that might creep into alternative explanations. We argue that the taming of political violence in leadership succession significantly contributes to the taming of international political

violence. What remains of warfare when the risk of violent and forcible removal from office is reduced to nil is what modern, civilized, and decent societies have to do to police thugs and to protect their citizens and innocent populations from the violent actions of bandits, criminals, and brigands.

1.1 The central question

Now, as always, states fight wars. As one of the most destructive forms of human behavior, war and its study lie at the very heart of the discipline of international relations. It is not surprising, therefore, that much theoretical work has been done to explain the causes of war initiation. What is surprising, however, is the relative paucity of effort to understand and explain why and when leaders decide to engage their country in war. In theories that explain war as the result of impersonal forces such as capitalism, the offense–defense balance or multipolarity, leaders appear irrelevant. However, almost all wars begin because of conscious decisions by leaders. This book, therefore, seeks to answer the question: why and when do leaders go to war?

1.2 The central argument

Our answer starts from what is by now the conventional wisdom. The fundamental cause of international conflict is that the opposing parties have incompatible demands: each side demands more than the other side is willing to concede. From the perspective of the political leaders in charge of the conduct of foreign affairs, an explanation of international conflict thus requires an explanation of why and when leaders demand more than their opponent is willing to concede. We propose that a leader's international demands crucially depend on his calculations of the *private* costs and benefits of international conflict. Such private benefits can severely shrink or altogether eliminate any bargaining range created for unitary rational actors by the costs of war. This argument by itself is not new. A significant literature in international relations and comparative politics argues that leaders choose policy with an eye to one particular private benefit: their continued stay in office. Theories of diversionary war – which we discuss in detail in the next chapter – for example, argue that leaders seek to initiate international conflict when they face a high probability of

losing office. We argue that such a focus on just the leader's tenure in office is too narrow. Our fundamental innovation is to argue that leaders consider a broader range of private costs and benefits. Specifically, leaders choose policy with an eye not only on the probability, but also the *manner* and *consequences* of losing office. For perhaps less than obvious reasons, the manner and consequences of losing office turn out to be closely related. Leaders who lose office as a result of a lost election, term limits or voluntary retirement – more broadly, in a regular manner – rarely suffer subsequent personal punishment. Leaders who lose office in a violent or forcible manner such as a coup or revolution, however, almost always suffer additional punishment in the form of exile, imprisonment or death.

Starting from this broader range of potential costs and benefits, we argue in Chapter 2 that leaders who anticipate a regular removal from office – e.g. term limits, elections, etc. – have little to gain and much to lose from international conflict. They have little to gain because even victory does not decrease their probability of a regular removal from office. They have much to lose because defeat increases the probability of a forcible removal from office, with all its unpleasant consequences. Leaders with a high risk of a regular removal from office, we argue, become *less* likely to initiate international conflict. In a nutshell, we identify a mechanism for peace: international *peace* obtains because of such leaders' domestic political insecurity.

In marked contrast, leaders who anticipate a forcible removal from office – e.g. a looming revolt, revolution or coup – have little to lose and much to gain from international conflict. The ability to choose the time, place, and circumstances of conflict initiation gives leaders a golden opportunity to neutralize dangerous rivals who threaten a revolt or coup. More importantly, with an already high risk of a forcible removal from office – with its unpleasant associated consequences – potential defeat is less of a deterrent for such leaders: their punishment is truncated. Leaders with a high risk of a forcible removal from office, therefore, become *more* likely to initiate international conflict. In a nutshell, we argue that such leaders are, literally, *fighting for survival*.

1.3 Leaders in the study of international politics

We next briefly describe the historical arc of research on leaders in international relations. Since Waltz (1954) introduced the three

"images" of international relations, scholars have based their explanations of international relations in general and international conflict in particular on one of these three images or levels of analysis (Singer, 1961).[2] While scholars accept the usefulness of the three images to structure their research, at various times the field as a whole favored one image over the others. In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, following the path-breaking work of Snyder, Bruck and Sapin (1962), a majority of scholars in the field focused on individuals and leaders and their psychological attributes to explain international relations. (A decade earlier Leites (1951) blazed this trail with his work on the organizational code of the politburo.) The seminal work of Waltz (1979) forced a major shift in focus, as the field by and large switched its focus to the international system. The discovery of the 'democratic peace' in the late 1980s – early 1990s (Doyle, 1983a, b; Russett, 1993) brought another shift in focus, this time to the state and its attributes. In the wake of the rational choice revolution and its emphasis on methodological individualism, in the last five years scholars such as Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (2003) have brought the field full circle by a renewed focus on the role of leaders. This time, however, the focus is not so much on the psychological attributes of leaders as on their incentive structures and institutional constraints.

In particular, Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (ibid.) build a general theory of politics, the *selectorate theory*, that explains the balance between the production of public goods – policies that benefit everyone in a society such as civil freedoms, national security, and economic prosperity – and the production of private benefits for rulers and their supporters. They define the selectorate as the set of people who potentially have a say in the selection of leaders, while the winning coalition is the set of people whose support the leader needs to retain to remain in power. In their theory, the balance between the provision of public and private goods depends upon the size of the selectorate and the size of the winning coalition. Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (ibid.) show that in societies where leaders are selected by large winning coalitions

[2] The first image proposes that the attributes of individuals are central to explanations of international relations; the second gives pride of place to the attributes of states; while the third seeks explanations for international relations in the attributes of the international system. Of course, other political scientists have proposed different levels of analysis. Wolfers (1962, 3–24) proposed two, Jervis (1976, 15) four, and Rosenau (1966) five levels of analysis.

with large selectorates, leaders find it more efficient to resort to the production of public goods rather than private benefits to remain in power. In a concise summary of their theory, Morrow *et al.* (2008, 394) claim that "Democratic politics in our theory is a competition in competence to produce public goods; autocratic politics centers on the purchase of the loyalty of key supporters."

Like Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (2003), we too place leaders at the center of our analytical approach. As they do, we postulate that political leaders are the central node that mediates the political and military dynamics that underlie the threat and use of force in the international arena. In our theory, however, it is not just staying power *per se* that matters; it is the personal fate that leaders would envision for themselves when they are *out of office*. As a consequence, while recognizing that Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* (ibid.) offer a fundamental contribution to the study of politics, we do not privilege coalition building as the key explanatory factor of leaders' policy choices. Nor do we evaluate how specific personal characteristics of leaders, from their cognitive styles to their educational and military backgrounds, affect their decisions about war and peace (Hermann, 1977; Horowitz, McDermott and Stam, 2005).

Rather, we assess how leadership turnover, and what happens when the leaders no longer control the levers of power, shapes leaders' decisions about international conflict. Our theory cuts across the important comparison between the conflict patterns of democratic and non-democratic countries, the fundamental question in international relations theory in the last 20 years. We echo Samuel Huntington's famous opening statement in his celebrated treatise, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, in downplaying the importance of the form of government to understand politics. When it comes to decisions about international conflict, the most important political distinction among countries concerns how leaders are selected, replaced, and treated when in retirement.

1.3.1 Is war costly for leaders?

In our previous research on leaders and conflict, we established two empirical facts. First, we showed that leaders are more likely to initiate an international conflict when they face a low *overall* risk of losing office (Chiozza and Goemans, 2003). In other words, contrary to

traditional theories of diversionary war, we showed that when leaders are more likely to lose office they become less likely to initiate international conflict.[3] Second, we showed that the assumption that war is *ex post* inefficient which underpins the foremost rational-choice explanation for war, the bargaining model of war, does not hold for leaders (Chiozza and Goemans, 2004b).

The assumption that war is *ex post* inefficient is incompatible with our claim that leaders can obtain private benefits from war. The assumption posits that "[a]s long as both sides suffer some costs for fighting, then war is always inefficient *ex post*" for rational unitary-actors (Fearon, 1995, 383). The assumption that war is *ex post* inefficient simply means that the "pie" at stake between two actors will be smaller after a war than before war, because war shrinks the available pie.[4] Hence *both* sides could gain if they could come to an agreement that would avoid such costs of war; there would be more pie to divide. Rational unitary actor explanations of war must then explain what impedes bargains that avoid the costs of war. Fearon (ibid., 381) proposed that three – and only three – mechanisms could form the basis for rational explanations for conflict between *unitary* rational actors. Private information (and incentives to misrepresent such information), commitment problems, and issue indivisibilities explain why unitary rational actors sometimes end up in *ex post* inefficient conflict.[5]

We posit that even though their country-as-a-whole will surely suffer as a result of war, under certain circumstances war may pay for leaders. Fearon (ibid., 379, fn. 1) explicitly recognized this could form the basis of alternative mechanisms to explain war, but did not explore this possibility.[6] To explore the potential of this approach, we assessed

[3] In our previous research (Chiozza and Goemans, 2003) we deliberately considered only the overall probability of losing office, and did not distinguish between the probability of a regular and the probability of a forcible removal from office.

[4] The intuition is powerful: of course war destroys lives, industries, productive capacity. However, as Burk (1982) and others have shown, sometimes war provides a boost to the domestic economy that could not be achieved by any other means.

[5] Powell (2006) shows that issue indivisibilities reduce to commitment problems.

[6] As we will briefly discuss in Chapter 6, in almost all the unitary rational-actor explanations of war, it is unclear what the potential benefits of war could be, except "more is better." This omission has important implications for future research.

whether Fearon's crucial assumption that war is costly also applies to contending leaders (Chiozza and Goemans, 2004b). If war is costly also for leaders, we are back to Fearon's basic explanations. If, however, war is not necessarily *ex post* inefficient for dueling leaders, then there exists room for new leader-level explanations for war.

To that end, in our 2004 article we examined whether contending leaders are worse off after fighting a war than they would otherwise be after fighting a crisis or staying out of conflict altogether. Under the war-is-costly assumption, the tenure-pie to be divided among the opposing leaders must be strictly smaller after war than after a crisis that did not escalate to war. Operationally, the hazard of losing office for winners and losers in wars must be higher than the hazard of losing office for winners and losers in crises and than that of leaders who remained at peace. War would not be negative-sum, for example, if leaders did not face a higher hazard after a draw – which by definition includes both sides – in a war than after a draw in a crisis. When we tested the empirical record about how international conflict affected leaders' hold on power, we found that leaders' tenure prospects were not systematically shortened by international conflict. Moreover, we found that wars are not more politically harmful to leaders than are crises short of war. In other words, war does not seem to necessarily be *ex post* inefficient for leaders. If leaders do not necessarily stand to suffer political consequences from conflict, therefore, a leader perspective on conflict potentially covers a larger spectrum of mechanisms than those built on private information and incentives to misrepresent or commitment problems (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2006).

We do not seek to supplant rational unitary actor explanations for war, rather, we aim to offer additional rational explanations. Specifically, we argue that leaders sometimes go to war because they can obtain private benefits from international conflict. In Chapter 2, we explain what leaders have to gain and what they have to lose from international conflict. More precisely, we show that there exists a class of political leaders, those who are at risk of being forcibly removed from power, that might use international conflict as their last gamble to save their personal survival. These leaders *fight for survival*.

The mechanisms that explain war in the bargaining model of war continue to be operative. More transparency, more reliable information, and greater role of third parties certainly help reduce the risk

of war (Walter, 2002). These mechanisms, however, need to be complemented. For some leaders, only conflict can interrupt the political dynamics that might lead to their forcible or violent removal. When the noose of the executioner is getting closer, international conflict is a more palatable alternative. We illustrate this theoretical claim empirically in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

In the next chapter, we develop our theory and discuss in detail the most prominent competing leader-level theory, the theory of diversionary war. In Chapters 3 and 4 we test our theory with the help of *Archigos*, our new data set on leaders.[7] In Chapter 3 we examine first whether international conflict indeed does bestow private costs and benefits on leaders. To that end we assess how international conflict affected the hazard and manner of losing office for the leaders in our sample between 1919 and 2003. In Chapter 4 we test our central claim that as the risk of a forcible removal from office increases, so does the probability of conflict initiation. Although Chapters 3 and 4 use some fairly advanced statistical models, we have made an effort to ensure that our arguments and exposition is not cluttered by unnecessary technical details and jargon. For maximum readability we have moved the technical discussions to several appendices, available on the web at the addresses listed on p. xi. In Chapter 5 we leave the data behind to present a detailed historical examination of Central American leaders between 1840 and 1918. We focus on Central America in order to examine the behavior of leaders who face a high risk of a forcible removal from office to trace our causal mechanism up close. *Archigos* indicates that Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the five states of Central America experienced the most forcible removals from office between 1875 and 1919. We examine Central America rather than Hispaniola because the historiography on the latter region before the nineteenth century is very meagre indeed. The history of Central America between 1875 and 1919 displays a striking pattern, whereby a change in the regional ideological balance of power increased the risk of a leader's forcible removal from office. As a result, such leaders repeatedly invaded their neighbors and went to war. We sum up our conclusions and review the explanatory power of our leader-level approach in Chapter 6.

[7] We very briefly describe the data in Appendix A. We earlier introduced the data set to the academic community in Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza (2009).

1.4 Conclusions

With our new theoretical and empirical focus on leaders, we aim to open up new avenues of research on international conflict. Leader-level theories not only can offer new, but also more powerful explanations for international conflict than state- or system-level theories of war (see Chapter 6). Above all, however, we favor a focus on leaders, because this approach highlights the political nature of the choice between war and peace.

2 *Why and when do leaders fight?*

The decisive means for politics is violence. . . . Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant.

Max Weber

In this chapter we present a new theory which explains why and when leaders seek or avoid international conflict. In our theory, the strategic interaction that leads to or away from war is to be found at the domestic, rather than the international level. To provide the reader a roadmap of the first half of this chapter, we briefly sketch the main logic of our theory. We begin generically with a leader and an opposition locked in a competition over power and policy. An exogenous shock (temporarily) changes the domestic balance of forces in favor of the leader's political opposition. Leaders who worry mainly about a regular, peaceful, removal from office are willing and able to make credible political concessions to the opposition because they can reasonably assume a safe retirement and even the possibility of returning to office. For such leaders, an increase in the risk of a regular removal from office makes them less likely to initiate international conflict. Those leaders who must worry about a *forcible* removal from office, unfortunately, cannot credibly commit to concessions. Because concessions that weaken their power increase their risk of a forcible removal from office and subsequent personal punishment, such leaders have incentives to try to take back any concessions they made once the tide swings back in their favor. In turn, the opposition has every incentive to capitalize on its (temporary) advantage and try to overthrow the leader. Leaders then can use international conflict as a means to fight against their domestic opposition – for example, if rebels concentrate forces across the border[1] – or to seek gains from conflict that can

[1] As Grégoire noted in 1791, spreading the French Revolution might be necessary to protect it from its opponents: "When my neighbor keeps a nest of vipers, I

be used to bolster their domestic position. A (temporary) shock and increase in the risk of a forcible removal from office therefore increases the probability of international conflict.

In the second part of this chapter we discuss the most prominent current competing leader-central theories of international conflict, collectively known as the theory of diversionary war. As we will show, the singular "theory" is inappropriate, because the various existing versions of diversionary war each articulate a different logic. Although different versions suggest different mechanisms, we show they share common flaws: they fail to convincingly explain why and when international conflict benefits leaders, and fail to consider the full range of potential costs of international conflict.

Our main theoretical innovation is twofold. First, we argue that leaders care not just about the probability, but also the manner and associated consequences of losing office. This allows us, second, to distinguish two distinct political processes whereby leaders lose office. In the first, leaders lose office through peaceful, regular processes and can look forward to peaceful, perhaps prosperous, retirement. In the second, leaders lose office through the threat or use of force and must fear for their personal safety afterwards. Whether a leader is likely to find himself removed by the first or the second process fundamentally affects the choice for or against international conflict. Since these two processes are fundamental for our theory, we first elaborate our logic on the processes whereby leaders lose office.

2.1 How leaders are removed from office

In his classic article on rationalist explanations for war between *unitary* actors, James Fearon (1995, 379, fn. 1) notes in passing that "war may be rational for . . . leaders if they will enjoy various benefits of war without suffering costs imposed on the population." It is on these *private* benefits and costs of war that we focus. A leader's private costs and benefits are not limited to his time in office. Instead, leaders consider not just the probability, but also the *manner* and *consequences* of losing power (Goemans, 2000b, 37). The potential private costs of international conflict thus are not limited to just the loss of office.

have the right to smother them lest I become their victim" (quoted in Walt (1997, 79)).

Leaders can lose office in a variety of ways – e.g. in a regular and peaceful or an irregular and potentially violent manner – and the manner in which they lose office is significantly associated with their subsequent fate. Some leaders can look forward to a profitable retirement. For example, in their tax filings for the 2008 presidential campaign, the Clintons revealed they had made over $109 million since leaving office in 2001.[2] Other leaders must deal with a very real threat of exile, imprisonment or even death after they are removed from office. Saddam Hussein, for one, seems to have been well aware that nothing good awaited him once he lost power. In their policy decisions, we argue, leaders take these potential private benefits and costs into account.

Our recognition that leaders can lose office through *two* distinct processes allows us to explain and improve upon the poor empirical record of diversionary wars.[3] As noted above, we propose that leaders can lose office as the result of a "*regular*" process involving their country's established norms, procedures, and institutions. Removal in a regular manner is thus typified by defeat in elections, voluntary retirement, and term limits. Alternatively, leaders can lose office through the threat or use of force by what we call an "*irregular*" or "*forcible*" process. This second process typically culminates in coups, insurrections, and revolutions.[4]

The distinction between these two processes in itself is not new; indeed, it constitutes a cornerstone in research about regime type in comparative politics. Thus Popper (1963, 124) claims:

[2] *The New York Times*, April 5, 2008, "Clintons Made $109 Million in Last 8 Years." As President George W. Bush put it when asked about his plans after he leaves the White House, "I'll give some speeches, just to replenish the ol' coffers." ("In Book, Bush Peeks Ahead To His Legacy," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2007, p. 1.) For a broader discussion of the prospect of retiring leaders, see "Into the sunset. How ex-leaders adjust to life with less power." *Financial Times*, Thursday, December 27, 2007, p. 7.

[3] The failure to disaggregate the different ways leaders lose office implicitly assumes that voluntary retirements, term limits, the natural death of leaders, coups, and revolutions and foreign interventions to overthrow the leader all result from effectually similar political processes. In other words, a policy choice such as international conflict initiation has the same effect on the probability of voluntary retirement, the probability of losing office as a result of term limits or illness, the probability of a coup or a revolution, and the probability of removal as the result of a foreign invasion.

[4] For a fascinating and insightful discussion of the tactics of coups, see Farcau (1994).

we may distinguish two main types of government. The first type consists of governments of which we can get rid without bloodshed – for example, by way of general elections; that is to say, the social institutions provide means by which the rulers may be dismissed by the ruled, and the social traditions ensure that these institutions will not easily be destroyed by those who are in power. The second type consists of governments which the ruled cannot get rid of except by way of a successful revolution – that is to say, in most cases, not at all. I suggest the term "democracy" as a short-hand label for a government of the first type, and the term "tyranny" or "dictatorship" for the second.

More recently, Przeworski *et al.* (2000, 15) very similarly distinguish between democracy and dictatorship by differentiating between

(1) regimes that allow some, even if limited, regularized competition among conflicting visions and interests; and
(2) regimes in which some values or interests enjoy a monopoly buttressed by the threat or the actual use of force.

The limited, regularized competition of Przeworski *et al.* (ibid.) corresponds to our regular process. The removal of leaders of regimes who rely on the "threat or actual use of force" typically requires the threat or actual use of force by either domestic or foreign opponents, and therefore corresponds to our second, forcible, process.

The difference between these two processes, according to Riker (1982, 6–7, emphasis added), stems from the presence or absence of institutions to protect politicians and leaders after they lose office:

> Almost everything . . . that we think of as civil liberties (the rights of a speedy trial, habeas corpus, and security against unreasonable search and seizure, for example) originated to *protect politicians who feared prosecution if and when they lost office*. Thus the historic purpose of these fundamental democratic liberties has been not to provide freedom as an end in itself, but to render effective both political participation and the process of choice in voting.

Leaders of countries which do not rely on such well-established norms, rules, and procedures lack institutional protections and shields after they lose office against subsequent, sometimes severe, punishment. Riker's argument thus suggests a close institutional link between the manner and consequences of losing office. Leaders lose office in a regular manner because they can afford to. Leaders lose office in an

irregular manner, because holding on to power provides their only protection against potential punishment; the only way to remove them from office is by the use or threat of force.

We have gone into some detail about these two processes because they fundamentally structure a leader's incentive for or against war. In contrast to the earlier literature in comparative politics and the currently dominant approach in international relations, we do not rely on regime type as an indicator of the regular and irregular removal from office, but model these processes directly. This strategy has several important advantages. First, by focusing on these two fundamental processes *directly*, we isolate their effects and do not conflate them with other potentially important institutional factors of different regimes which could affect international conflict in different, potentially offsetting ways. Second, our focus on the two fundamental processes allows us to empirically examine any residual effects of regime type on war, whereby other institutional factors could potentially systematically affect international conflict.

In the next section we provide some basic rationalist underpinnings to explain the domestic use of force, as in failed or successful attempts to forcibly remove a leader. A better understanding of the causes of attempts to forcibly remove a leader enables us to explain why and when international conflict can mitigate those dangers.

2.1.1 Explaining the forcible removal from office

The threat or use of force to remove a leader raises the *ex post* inefficiency puzzle discussed in Chapter 1, but places it in the context of domestic politics. If both the leader and the opposition seek to control their country's resources, why would they use force if violence decreases a country's total resources? In other words, what prevents a deal which avoids the costs of the use of force? Not surprisingly, Fearon (2004, 289–90) argues there basically exist two rationalist explanations of insurgencies, revolts and coups: (1) private information and incentives to misrepresent and (2) commitment problems. We agree with Fearon that commitment problems constitute powerful explanations for coups, insurgencies, and revolts.[5]

[5] Fearon (2004, 290) finds private information-based explanations less convincing, as do we. It is unclear, moreover, how international conflict would reveal the relative strength of the leader versus coup plotters. See also Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001, 2006); Fearon (2004); Powell (2006).

Fearon (ibid., 290) succinctly describes how a commitment problem might produce civil conflict:

> a temporary shock to government capabilities or legitimacy gives coup plotters or rebels a window of opportunity. During such moments, the ruler might want to commit to paying the junior officers more, or giving more autonomy to a region, but such commitments are rendered incredible by the knowledge that the shock is temporary.

Coup plotters or rebels will therefore try to lock in and extend their temporary advantage by fighting and taking over the government.[6] (See Fearon (ibid.) for a formal model along these lines.) A strength of Fearon's argument is that it encompasses a variety of empirical pathways that trigger the commitment problem and thus domestic conflict. As a result, his model does a good job explaining the civil wars in his sample.

However, and as should be obvious, temporary shocks in the domestic balance of power – as in mid-term elections – by no means always or even most of the time trigger such pernicious commitment problems. Temporary shocks are common, but coups, civil wars, and revolutions are not. Leaders who worry only about a regular removal from office can accede to demands of the opposition for more power or for policy concessions, because they can expect to regain power and pursue policy priorities of their own if and when the tide swings back in their favor. Coups, civil wars, and revolutions are unlikely in such systems, because the opposition does not face strong incentives to take advantage of any temporary power-swing in their favor. After all, if leaders lose office through a regular process, the opposition also has the same regular process as a way to gain power. Thus, the opposition can reasonably anticipate they will be winners in the future, as a result of the next election or other regular transfers of power (Przeworski, 1991). The combination of the costs of domestic violence with the reasonable chance of gaining power in the foreseeable future makes the opposition in systems characterized by regular removals from office relatively unwilling to use force to gain power. In contrast, in systems

[6] Note that the logic of this commitment problem suggests an additional reason to punish such leaders after they lose office. In the formal literature, commitment problems are typically solved by "extermination" of one side. Simply put, when one player is removed from the game, there is no more commitment problem. Even out of office, a surviving leader might regain his strength and present the new leader with the same commitment problem.

where leaders typically lose office by the use of force, the opposition can anticipate the leader will try to stay in office as long as he can, if only to avoid personal punishment.[7] Cut off from any other reasonable prospects of gaining power, the opposition has incentives to make the most of any significant temporary advantage and launch a coup attempt, insurgency or civil war. Thus, countries which lack the institutions and safeguards to credibly protect leaders after they lose office will easily be caught in "coup-traps" where one leader after another loses office through forcible means.

In the next section we explain what leaders who fear a forcible removal from office have to gain from international conflict, and what leaders who need worry only about a regular removal from office have to lose from international conflict.

2.1.2 Fighting and gambling for survival

We argued above that in countries that lack institutional protections for their former leaders, a temporary shock in the leader's capabilities or legitimacy creates a commitment problem which increases his risk of a forcible removal from office. International conflict can "solve" this commitment problem in two basic ways. First, in the formal literature, commitment problems are almost always "solved" by the elimination of one player (Fearon, 2004; Powell, 2006). If one player is removed from the game, by definition the commitment problem goes away. International conflict can solve the problem in this way if it increases the probability the leader (completely) defeats his *domestic* opponents. Second, the commitment problem would be solved if its cause, a temporary shock in favor of the opposition, can be quickly reversed. International conflict can reverse the temporary shock because victory can quickly bring the leader increased legitimacy and capabilities.[8] We explain and explore these solutions in more detail below.

[7] Note that the opposition might also be concerned by any former leader's future attempt to regain power. Since it is difficult for any such leader to credibly commit not to return to office, the opposition can perhaps most easily solve this commitment problem by eliminating the former leader altogether.

[8] Simply put, we argue that leaders rationally go to war when war pays. This innocuous, perhaps obvious claim, nevertheless highlights more than one fundamental confusion in the field. Recent research, particularly on the democratic peace, misinterprets the finding that democratic leaders are overall more likely to lose office (Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson and Woller, 1992;

International conflict can increase a leader's probability of victory against his *domestic* opponents in at least two ways.[9] First, simply sending soldiers to fight can increase a leader's chances against his opponents. We refer to this as *fighting for survival*. Second, victory in international conflict increases the leader's legitimacy and capabilities and thereby both increases the probability of victory against his domestic opponents and addresses the shock that produced the commitment problem in the first place. Because conflict initiation increases the probability of victory (Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson and Woller, 1992), leaders who seek to lower their risk of a forcible removal this way have incentives to initiate conflict. We refer to this as *gambling for survival*. We first explain how simply sending troops to fight in an international conflict can improve a leader's chances against his domestic opponents.[10]

The ability of Challengers – leaders who initiated the conflict – to pick the time and place of their conflict can help to significantly

Chiozza and Goemans, 2004b) to mean that democratic leaders are also more likely to lose office as a result of international conflict (Debs and Goemans, 2010). In other words, scholars tend to confuse the unconditional probability of losing office and the probability of losing office *conditional* on (the outcome of) a conflict. As we will briefly elaborate in the conclusion, it surely does not come as a surprise that leaders go to war when we include "war" as a positive contribution in their utility function. However, other explanations often leave completely unexplored why war pays.

[9] It is important to again stress that our focus here is on probability of success of attempts to irregularly remove the leader *conditional on the outcome of conflict*. The overall – unconditional – potential benefits of overthrowing the leader center around direct control over policy-making, which produces better protection of the military's (corporate) interests, the interests of allied elites, and the satisfaction of personal ambitions (O'Kane, 1983, 1993; Londregan and Poole, 1990; Belkin and Schofer, 2003, 2005; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006). The overall potential costs include an increased probability of the loss of one's job, freedom or life, and an increased probability of civil war.

[10] We mention in passing a common practice of the late Middle Ages: to send troops abroad in order to have them live off their neighbor's land and save the costs of maintaining the troops, and the dangers of having them stationed back home. Thus, for example, in late 1791 the minister of finance of the French National Assembly wrote: "We must maintain a state of war; the return of our soldiers would increase the disorder everywhere and ruin us." In turn, Roland noted, "It is necessary to march the thousands of men whom we have under arms as far away as their legs will carry them, or else they will come back and cut our throats" (both quoted in Walt (1997, 82, fn. 114, see also 111)). This practice seems to have died out after the French Revolution.

decrease the probability of a forcible removal from office. The initiation of or participation in international conflict can provide leaders with unique opportunities to deal with the actors most likely to remove them forcibly from office: rebels and potential coup plotters. Examples where the explicit goal of international conflict was to deal with domestic rebels abound in history (see Walt (1997) and Chapter 6). At the end of December 1791, when France began to prepare for war with Austria, Hérault de Séchelles sums up the logic particularly succinctly:

> [I]n time of war measures can be taken that would appear too stern in time of peace. War will justify all your steps; for, in brief, it is at home that war must be made on rebels before it is carried abroad.
>
> (quoted in Clapham (1899, 136); see also Walt (1997, 65–8))

To deal with potential coup plotters in the military, the leader can send them to the front to fight and die for the country. In *The Sign of the Broken Sword*, G.K. Chesterton neatly encapsulates one way how picking an international conflict offers leaders an opportunity to get rid of potential opponents. In the short story, Father Brown asks Flambeau:

> "Where would a wise man hide a leaf? In the forest." The other did not answer. "If there were no forest, he would make a forest. And if he wished to hide a dead leaf, he would make a dead forest." There was still no reply, and the priest added still more mildly and quietly: "And if a man had to hide a dead body, he would make a field of dead bodies to hide it in."

Lest this sounds far-fetched, an historical example makes the point. Following the ancient example of King David and Uriah the Hittite,[11] Idi Amin, the leader of Uganda, apparently used the same strategy to eliminate opposition from within the armed forces. In 1977 Great Britain broke off diplomatic relations and together with the United

[11] The bible, 2 Samuel 11, tells the story of King David, Bathsheba, and Uriah. David seduced and impregnated Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was a prominent military officer who could thus pose a threat to David. To deal with this threat, David sent Uriah to the front at Rabbah and instructed his commander, Joab: "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die" (Barker, 1995, 433–4). David's plan worked, Uriah was killed in the battle and David took Bathsheba for his wife. Undoubtedly, Chesterton was well aware of the story of Uriah the Hittite.

States, imposed harsh economic sanctions on Idi Amin's Uganda. These dramatically worsened an already faltering economy and, worsening his ability to buy off his core supporters in the military, created unrest among those (former) supporters (Omara-Otunnu, 1987, 139–41). Determined to maintain control, Amin began to purge his inner circle, most prominently his long-time second in command, Vice-President and Commander of the Armed Forces, General Idris Mustafa Adrisi (Smith, 1980, 176–8; Avirgan and Honey, 1982, 48–51). After Adrisi suffered a highly suspicious car accident, his supporters in the army, particularly the crack Simba (Lion) Regiment, and the Chui (Leopard) Regiment, began an open revolt. While the revolt was brutally suppressed, survivors fled across the border into Tanzania (ibid., 178). The 1978 war between Uganda and Tanzania started when Amin sent his soldiers in pursuit of the rebels. Contemporaries agree that Amin's primary goal of the invasion was to deal with a threat from his *own* military forces. Milton Obote, the former president of Uganda, in exile in Tanzania, put it bluntly at the time: the invasion "was a desperate measure to extricate Amin from the consequences of the failure of his *own* plots against his *own* army" (quoted in Avirgan and Honey (1982, 52), emphases in original). By going after some of his remaining core supporters, Amin risked antagonizing the very forces underpinning his brutal regime. Thus, he tried to blame the Tanzanian forces for the executions of rebels from the Simba Regiment. After the Tanzanian forces recaptured the Kagera Salient, they found "[s]cattered in the bush . . . the bodies of 120 Ugandan soldiers. There had been no Tanzanian troops in the area before, and there was no sign that Tanzanian artillery had landed there" (ibid., 69). The conclusion was inescapable: "The Tanzanian commanders deduced the corpses had been dumped to look as if they were battle fatalities, although they were actually executed mutineers" (Kamau and Cameron, 1979, 306).

Conflict can also allow leaders to undermine potential rivals and the sources of their power in more subtle ways. Gordon Tullock (1987, 29) offers a particularly striking example how Mao used the Korean War to deal with domestic military rivals:

> When Mao Tse-Tung seized control of China, he actually was the head of an organization in which there were in essence 5 armies all of which had been built up by one leader from practically nothing and which were to a considerable extent loyal to that leader. Mao may have been able to deal

with this by ordinary methods, but the Korean War gave him a wonderful opportunity. He in essence drafted from each of these armies specific units to send to the Korean War. These units were then rotated back to China on a regular basis, but were not returned to their original army. As a result at the end of the Korean War the 5 major armies had melded into one. Mao was then able to remove the four most important generals from their positions of personal power.

The examples above seem to raise a question: why would military leaders who plan to overthrow the leader obey orders to go to the front and thus have their coup plans foiled? First, a failure to obey orders immediately identifies these officers as committed plotters. Once positively identified, they can relatively easily be isolated and rendered harmless. Second, their unique position makes it extremely difficult for military leaders and soldiers alike to disobey orders to deploy. Military leaders would lose their legitimacy if, called upon, they would forego their duty. As a result, potential coup plotters are caught in a Catch-22 situation. Obey orders, and a coup or rebellion becomes much more difficult, if not impossible, to stage. Once at the front, after all, military leaders have other pressing and immediate concerns. Do not obey orders and identify yourself as a committed plotter and, moreover, lose legitimacy.[12]

The mere act of sending troops to fight, and initiating a conflict can also boost a leader's legitimacy if his initial reluctance to do so undermined his legitimacy and increased the probability of a revolt. An example along these lines stems from the War of the Pacific 1879–84,

[12] Schroeder (1994, 177–9) describes how the Directorate's fears about Napoleon's ambitions and potential plans for a military takeover created such a Catch-22 situation, which led to Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798:

> Following the collapse of the peace talks at Lille, the Directors, particularly Reubell, again took up the idea of a cross-Channel invasion. . . . But Bonaparte, given command of the proposed invasion force, soon decided that he would not sacrifice his popularity in this hopeless enterprise. With invasion infeasible and revolutionary subversion and raids on British commerce clearly inadequate, the idea of undermining Britain's will and capacity to fight by seizing Egypt and threatening the route to India seemed more attractive. Other purposes, however, were at least as important. The Directors wanted Bonaparte out of France, while Bonaparte was eager for action and hoped to see the government decay further in his absence.
>
> The example also highlights how confident military leaders might gain added prestige and power from success, and thereby turn the tables.

between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. Prominent Chileans (Subercaseaux, 1936, Ch. XXXVI, 369), Chilean newspapers (Sater, 1986, 9–10), and international diplomats warned of an insurrection or coup if Chilean President Anibal Pinto failed to take military action against Bolivia, and Pinto himself was well aware of the dangers (Pinto, 1921; 1922, 362, entry of April 1879). As the Bolivian envoy, José Antonio de Lavalle (1979, 62) wrote in his memoirs, "it was impossible, completely impossible [for Chilean President Pinto], to arrive at a peaceful solution, although Pinto's government would have been disposed to go to any lengths to avoid this end. However, if [the dispute] had been resolved peacefully, Pinto would have been violently overthrown and the war would still have taken place." In his book on the War of the Pacific, the historian William Sater (1986, 15–16) concurs, "Aware of Lima's activities, the war party so inflamed the public that Pinto had little choice . . . [T]he president faced two options: either enforce Chile's treaty obligations or be overthrown."[13] To be sure, defeat in this war would not have boded well, but Pinto's immediate concern was an impending revolt that could only be forestalled by going to war.

Domestic pressures for war played a similar role in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Five years after the Six Day War, Sadat had not made good on any promises to reverse its outcome, and the army continued to grow each year as general mobilization remained in place. The enormous demands on "Egypt's economic and human resources [created] increasing internal pressure with every day that passed" (El-Gamasy, 1993, 175) (see also Rubinstein (1977, 215–18, 223, 282–3)). Sadat knew "that his popularity was at stake, [and as a result he] made a series of statements with which he tried to reassure the people that the decision for war was beyond question or discussion" (El-Gamasy, 1993, 140–1). On September 30, 1973, Sadat addressed the National Defense Council with a stark warning:

> Each of you has had his say. Fine, I now want to tell you that our economy today is at zero and we have commitments till the end of the year which we will not be able to fulfill with the banks. When 1974 arrives in two

[13] This example is invoked by Mansfield and Snyder (2005) as an example of diversionary war because of impending elections. It is important to note, however, that these were congressional elections; presidential elections were two years away.

months time, we won't have a loaf of bread for our people. And I can't ask any Arab for a single dollar because the Arabs tell us that they are paying compensation for [lost] Suez canal revenues and that's enough. If there's no war, there's nothing.

(Sadat quoted in ibid., 186)

Even the Israelis apparently recognized the domestic pressures on Sadat. Israeli head of military intelligence, General Eliahu Za'ira, told the chiefs of staff that "the possibility exists that Egypt and Syria might carry out a military operation as a palliative to distract attention away from poor domestic political conditions in both countries or as a spectacle for local public consumption" (quoted in ibid., 190).[14]

Sending troops across the border can decrease a leader's probability of forcible removal from office in yet another way. An invasion across the border increases the probability of decisively defeating domestic rebels. Invading troops can pre-empt or disrupt an invasion of exiles who organized in safety across the border (see Chapter 5). Similarly, troops in pursuit of fleeing rebels can cross the border and invade another country to deal the rebels a final, decisive, defeat. In a revealing interview, Amin claimed that the 1978 war between Uganda and Tanzania alluded to above was the result of his attempt to deal with rebels across the border: "It was not Uganda's intention to invade Tanzania, we took it merely as a precautionary measure to prevent exiles from infiltrating into Uganda" (cited in Kamau and Cameron (1979, 304)). In passing, Kamau and Cameron (ibid., 301) note that the invasion of Tanzania would lower Amin's risk of a forcible removal also because he apparently hoped that the opportunity to plunder would at least temporarily buy off any rebellious soldiers: "Capture of the Kagera Salient would preempt the return of rebels and exiles – and with trade sanctions against Uganda beginning to bite, it would provide his soldiers with a chance of easy plunder." In a more recent example, exiled Hutu militants and the Banjamulenge threatened the stability of Paul Kagame's Rwandan regime, and to deal with that

[14] Anecdotal evidence suggests that personal survival motives of Nasser also lay at the root of the Six Day War. Major-General Indar Jit Rikhye, the commander of the UN peacekeeping forces in the Sinai, maintains that fear of a coup by the military, and especially General Hakim Amer, convinced Nasser to stand firm and (prepare to) attack Israel in 1967 (WGBH, 2007) (see also Rikhye (1978, 167–8), Thant (1978, 482), and Mor (1991, 361, 368–9), El-Gamasy (1993, 84–5), James (2005, 33)).

threat Rwanda invaded the Congo. We believe that "international" conflicts of this sort are fairly common. Recent research by Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz (2008) found that among countries involved in a civil war between 1946 to 2001, about 22 percent of all their MID initiations were the result of such externalizations of domestic conflict.

These examples show not only that conflict initiation and participation can improve a leader's chances against his domestic opposition and thus decrease the probability of a forcible removal from office. They have another striking feature in common. Although the leader initiates an *international* conflict, the enemy is domestic in character. More importantly, *defeat of the international opponents is not required to lower the risk of a forcible removal from office*. To be sure, the international opponent may fight back, and even stage a counter-invasion, and thus the initial attack can backfire. But the intended enemy is a domestic faction. Rightly in our opinion, such behavior does count as international conflict.[15] This surprising feature, whereby "international" conflict may not be aimed at the defeat of an international opponent, distinguishes our *fighting for survival* explanation of international conflict from earlier explanations.

We now turn to discuss how victory against the *international* opponent can increase a leader's probability of victory against his domestic opponents and reverse the temporary shock that produced a commitment problem. Victory in an international conflict can bring leaders the increased prestige, legitimacy, capabilities, and resources to either reverse the temporary shock which introduced the commitment problem or increase the leader's chances against his domestic opponents. Moreover, if coups are caused by a "tipping" process (Fearon, 2004), victory decreases the probability of a coup, because victory inhibits attempts to coordinate to remove the leader (Kuran, 1991; Goemans, 2000b). Because of the leader's demonstrated success and increased legitimacy, fewer people will believe that a sufficient number of others will join in the coup to make it successful. This belief, in turn, makes a coup both more costly and less likely to succeed. Finally, leaders who seek to obtain the benefits of victory have incentives to initiate

[15] Our focus here is on the initiation of conflict. It might be argued that targets not only lack the advantages of initiators outlined above, but that they suffer through an indirect pathway, whereby being a target increases the risk of defeat and, as a result, the risk of a forcible removal from office.

conflict not just in the hope of obtaining the benefits of victory, but additionally because the opportunity to pick the time and place of conflict increases the probability of victory (Reiter and Stam, 1998).

Levy and Vakili (1992) show how a (temporary?) domestic political shock against the Argentine Navy led to the 1982 Falklands War against Great Britain. The Argentine Navy apparently thought they could halt the slide in their domestic power, and perhaps even improve their domestic political position by attacking the Falklands. Levy and Vakili (1992, 131, 133–4) persuasively argue how intra-military conflict – particularly among the army and air force on one side and the navy on the other – forced Galtieri's hand in the Malvinas/Falklands War of 1982. (See also Makin (1985, 145), *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1982, pp. A1, A5: "Argentina's Tough Stance Laid to Navy" and in particular, *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1982, pp. G1–G2: "About the Politics of Personality".)

> Though the recovery of the islands would bring prestige to the military as a whole, the navy had a particular interest in the Malvinas operation. Successful invasion would not only extend their power into the South Atlantic, but also give them a disproportionate share of the glory on the basis of their primary operational responsibility for the military operation. This would be an opportunity to increase their influence within the military and perhaps even replace the army as the traditionally dominant service, at a time when the priority given to the internal war against subversion had diminished the navy's role.[16]

Saddam Hussein's personal survival played a crucial role in his wars against Iran in 1980 and against Kuwait in 1991 (and arguably also against the United States in 2003). Relatively fresh to the presidency, in 1980, Saddam Hussein worried about the threats to his survival after the Iranian Revolution and increased Shi'a restiveness in Iraq.[17]

[16] Other sources also indicate the military were worried about a return to civilian rule and the possibility of investigations into those responsible for the disappearances of dissidents under their brutal rule. Victory, they hoped, would silence such calls for justice and revenge. See *The Washington Post*, January 28, 1982, pp. A1, A18: "'The Final Stage'," *The Washington Post*, February 12, 1982, pp. A33–A34: "Catholic Church, in New Stance, Criticizes Government," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1982, p. F1: "Argentina's Military May Well Have Made Its Fatal Mistake."

[17] Freedman and Karsh (1993, 29) note that: "Saddam had a paranoiac obsession with personal and political survival, . . . He had never lost sight of his

Khomeini declared that "the people and Army of Iraq must turn their back on the Baath regime and overthrow it" (quoted in Walt (1997, 239)). A failed Iranian-sponsored assassination attempt on Tariq Aziz (Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister) led Saddam to clamp down hard on the Iraqi Shi'a minority. Freedman and Karsh (1993, 20, see also 19) argue that:

> As these measures failed Saddam invaded Iran, as a pre-emptive strike to shore up his personal rule. He apparently believed that a limited campaign would suffice to convince the revolutionary regime in Tehran to desist from its attempts to overthrow him, and did not intend to engage in a prolonged drawn-out conflict. If he entertained aspirations beyond the containment of the Iranian danger – as he may have done – they were not the reasons for launching the war but were incidental.

Although Saddam survived, "the protracted war against Iran had somewhat loosed Saddam's grip over the officer corps, the main potential threat to his personal rule" (ibid., 29). From November 1988 on, he faced several attempts on his life, most worrisomely in January 1990, when "he narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by army officers while he was riding in his car through Baghdad" (ibid., 19–20). Strikingly, Saddam Hussein himself acknowledged he was *fighting for survival* in 1990. As reported in *The New York Times*, "Mr. Hussein told his interrogator on one occasion that a principal reason for invading was his belief that he needed to keep his army occupied. One senior intelligence official familiar with that interview said Mr. Hussein seemed to suggest that he distrusted what his restive officer corps might do if they were not otherwise distracted."[18] But Saddam probably was also *gambling for survival*, hoping to gain resources from a victory against Kuwait to jump-start the long overdue reconstruction of Iraq. With his economy in a shambles, Saddam needed the spoils of victory to offer at least modest prospects for the civilian population

> predecessors' fate. When in July 1958 the pro-Western Hashemite dynasty . . . was overthrown by a military coup headed by General Abdal-Karim Qassem, the mutilated body of the Iraqi regent was dragged by a raging mob in the streets of Baghdad. Five years later, Qassem's bullet-ridden corpse was screened on television to the entire nation. Saddam was determined to use whatever means were required to avoid a similar fate."

[18] *The New York Times*, July 2, 2004. Section A, p. 1: "Hussein, In Jail, Reportedly Said Little of Value." See also Freedman and Karsh (1993, 54).

and for employment for the hundreds of thousands of returning and idle soldiers. As noted by Freedman and Karsh (ibid., 62):

> By adding Kuwait's fabulous wealth to the depleted Iraqi treasury, Saddam hoped to slash Iraq's foreign debt and launch the ambitious reconstruction programmes he had promised his people in the wake of the war with Iran. Given Iraq's historic claim to Kuwait, its occupation could lift Saddam's national prestige by portraying him as the liberator of usurped Iraqi lands. Last but not least, the capture of Kuwait could make Iraq the leading power in the Arab world and give it a decisive say in the the world oil market. In short, in one stroke his position would be permanently secured.

It is not difficult to find other examples of leaders who recognize the potential benefits of both fighting and gambling for their personal survival. However, leaders also recognize international conflict can threaten their survival as well.

In their decision for international conflict, leaders not only weigh the dangers of inaction against the potential benefits of fighting and victory, they must also consider the costs of potential defeat. In a nutshell, we argue that defeat carries a significant risk of a forcible removal from office. This provides little deterrent to leaders who already face a high risk of a forcible removal from office, as their punishment is *truncated*. On the other hand, the dangers of a forcible removal from office, and subsequent exile, jail, or death, as a result of defeat serve as a stark deterrent for leaders who worry only about a regular removal from office.

Two historical examples show how defeat undermined the leader's legitimacy, "tipped" the domestic opposition against the leader, and led to his removal in a coup. The first example stems from the Greek war against Turkey in 1920–2. The gross incompetence shown by the royalist leadership in Greece undermined its legitimacy and gave the liberalist opposition the political cover and support to oust the royalists. Colonels Plastiras and Gonatas overthrew King Constantine I in September 1922 after a series of disastrous Greek defeats in Asia Minor. While Constantine was allowed to go into exile, many of the former civilian leaders were executed in front of a firing squad. As *The Washington Post* (December 3, 1922, p. 27 "Palliates Greek Executions") reports, the Greek people:

> called aloud for the punishment of those whom they rightly blamed for the death and maiming of their sons and brothers, of sweethearts and of fathers, who had been sacrificed by the incompetence, the neglect, and the

cowardly intrigues of their officers in the pursuit of foolish and hopeless enterprises undertaken for no other purpose than to keep in office and in power those wretched, dishonest and corrupt politicians who have from time immemorial been the curse and the blight of an industrious, thrifty, and, in many respects, admirable people. If Dictator Gonatis [sic], now at the head of the revolutionary government, had not brought these men to justice, it is more than probable that his administration would have been unset, and that Athens and, indeed, all Greece, would have become a prey to anarchy of the most sanguinary character.

Bolivia's defeats in the Chaco War (1932–5) produced a very similar dynamic. After the disastrous performance of the Bolivian forces against Paraguay, General (and Vice-President) José Luis Tejada Sorzano forced the Bolivian civilian leader Daniel Salamanca to resign, threatening to hold *him* responsible for the outcome and sign *any* peace treaty with Paraguay (Farcau, 1996, 206), thereby absolving the military.[19] Tejada Sorzano, in turn, was overthrown by Colonels Toro and Busch, who blamed him for the terms of the peace treaty with Bolivia and the misery and poverty of the returning soldiers. The *Los Angeles Times* (May 19, 1936, p. A4 "Bolivia Goes Haywire") describes the motives behind the overthrow of Tejada Sorzano as follows:

The Chacoan peace has never been popular either with the army or with the large portion of the civilian population who felt themselves cheated because of the advantages gained by Paraguay. To the army the war had come to mean steady jobs providing at least food and clothing for all able-bodied males and home work for the women in the field, mines and civil pursuits. With the war ended and the repatriation of thousands of prisoners from

[19] It is noteworthy that the coup leaders made an effort to minimize the potential costs of the coup and make this transition appear regular and constitutional. As Farcau (1996, 206) notes:

> Apart from an almost traditional desire by all Latin American armed forces to cloak their periodic seizures of power with a thin screen of legality, the Bolivian military had a more practical reason for wanting the transfer of power to appear as natural as possible. A much-needed loan of four hundred thousand pounds sterling was pending in London, and the conspirators feared that a coup d'état would risk losing this loan as well as future ones and arms purchases abroad. Thus they were willing to go some lengths, although it is impossible to say whether they really would have signed "any" peace treaty with Paraguay or not, to obtain Salamanca's signature.

Paraguay under way the labor market was glutted. Professional soldiers were disgruntled, thoroughly dissatisfied with the result and, worse than all, idle. The country was unable to absorb the rank and file. Former soldiers found themselves on their own resources which were nil. The Sorzano government, having negotiated the unpopular treaty, was blamed for resultant conditions and turned out of office by leaders of a provisional government composed of army officers and civilians.[20]

Defeat in an international conflict increases the risk of a forcible removal from office in a second way, because defeat weakens the military which, in countries that lack protections for leaders, typically also doubles as the leader's repressive apparatus. With such a weakened repressive apparatus, the leader's probability of victory against revolutionaries and insurgents decreases and the probability of a forcible removal from office increases. Third, in all-out war, defeat may leave the country and its leaders at the mercy of their foreign opponents. This has two effects. First, the foreign opponent may choose to remove the leader and replace him with someone more to their liking.[21] In Hitler's conquest of Europe, for example, the leaders of many – but not all – of the subjugated countries were forcibly removed from office. Second, the victor may overhaul, change, replace or otherwise not honor the established norms, procedures, and institutions that guide the process of regular removal. Indeed, it is often impossible for the victor to credibly guarantee the safety of their defeated foes, which can extend the duration of wars (Goemans, 2000b). Such a shock to the system will forcefully introduce the commitment problem discussed above, as leaders can obtain credible guarantees about their safety from neither domestic nor foreign opponents and defeat significantly weakened the leader's capabilities and legitimacy.

Leaders can rationally choose to go to war and *gamble for survival* when, compared to the baseline of staying at peace, the probability and consequences of victory outweigh the probability and consequences of

[20] See also *The New York Times*, May 18, 1936, pp. 1 and 9, "Bolivian Coup Puts The Army In Power; President Ousted."

[21] Between 1919 and 2003, 478 leaders were removed in an irregular manner. Most of these were at the hands of domestic forces, but 43 leaders were removed by foreign forces. Irregular removal from office is overwhelmingly the result of the threat or use of force as exemplified in coups, (popular) revolts, and assassinations.

defeat.[22] For leaders who already face a high probability of a forcible removal from office, and whose punishment is thus truncated, a large decrease in the probability of forcible removal in case of victory can outweigh a small increase in the probability of a forcible removal in case of defeat. The similarity to the well-known gambling for resurrection mechanism (Richards *et al.*, 1993; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Smith, 1996, 1998; Goemans and Fey, 2009) should be obvious. What distinguishes our mechanism, however, is that in our theory leaders act to save their lives, rather than just their job.[23]

We have so far emphasized how the risk of a forcible removal from office structures leaders' incentives for or against international conflict.[24] We developed two novel mechanisms to explain why

[22] The "gambling for survival" explanation of conflict initiation fits seamlessly with the argument in Goemans (2000b) on the causes of war termination. Goemans (ibid.) argues that decisions to continue or terminate war depend in part on the anticipated consequences for the leader's personal fate. Thucydides (1972, Book Eight, 593) illustrates how the overriding concern for their personal safety informed the Oligarchs' calculations whether to continue the war and the terms they would accept. "What they wanted in the first place was to preserve the oligarchy and keep control over the allies as well; if this was impossible, their next aim was to hold on to the fleet and fortifications of Athens and retain independence; but if this also proved beyond them, they were certainly not going to find themselves in the position of being the first people to be destroyed by a reconstituted democracy, and preferred instead to call in the enemy, give up the fleet and the fortifications, and make any sort of terms at all for the future of Athens, provided that they themselves at any rate had their lives guaranteed to them."

Rothenberg (2007, 62) argues that the Directory that came to power in 1795 had no interest in making peace with France's enemies for similar reasons.

[23] A simple example illustrates the logic of gambling for resurrection. Suppose the leader has the opportunity to initiate an international conflict in which his country has a 60% chance of defeat and a 40% chance of victory. Suppose furthermore that victory pays him an additional 1,000 days in office, whereas defeat would cost him 1,000 days in office. On the face of it, this would seem like a bad gamble: the expected value of international conflict is a loss of 200 days in office. Now suppose the leader calculates he has only 100 days in office left. Now the gamble is one between a 60% chance of losing 100 days and a 40% chance of gaining 1,000 days. The expected value of this gamble is a gain of 340 days in office. Because the leader expects to have only 100 days in office, his stake is only those 100 and not the full 1,000 days. Now the expected value of international conflict is greater than the expected value of staying at peace, and the leader rationally initiates conflict.

[24] It might seem that leaders who fear an imminent irregular removal from office could choose to exit in a regular manner and voluntarily resign. However, as we noted, such leaders typically live in countries that lack protections for

leaders can rationally choose to initiate international conflict: *fighting* and *gambling for survival*. Leaders, however, can also lose office through the regular process of elections, term limits, and voluntary retirements. We now turn to examine how prospects of a regular loss of office structure leaders' incentive to initiate or abstain from international conflict.

2.1.3 International conflict and regular removals

The regular process of leader removal is structured by norms, procedures, and institutions such as regularly scheduled elections. These institutions are largely unaffected by the onset or continuation of conflict, but can be fundamentally affected by their outcome, in particular by defeat in war. Nevertheless, two factors explain why Challengers – leaders who initiated the conflict – lower their probability of a regular removal from office. First, Challengers enjoy the benefits of picking the time and place of their conflicts. By carefully timing their initiation, for example, before important elections, leaders can gain the benefits of any "rallying around the flag," however short this effect may be (DeRouen Jr., 2000). Second, in times of war, scheduled elections often are postponed until after the war, as was the case in Britain in both world wars. We therefore expect that Challengers enjoy a lower hazard of a regular removal from office. Challenging could also affect the probability of a regular removal from office through a second, *indirect*, pathway.[25]

leaders who stepped down. It is therefore difficult for potential successors to credibly commit not to punish the former ruler or his family for their misdeeds in office. Pinochet of Chile, for example, before turning over power, tried to obtain iron-clad guarantees for his security. Even he, however, subsequently faced trouble as he was pursued by the Spanish and Chilean courts. Moreover, if potential successors could credibly commit to the former leader's safety, that would introduce a moral hazard problem, since departing dictators would face even less constraints on their actions.

[25] Targets – leaders who were attacked – do not choose the time and place of conflict. As a result, they may be more likely to suffer defeat and through this indirect pathway suffer an increased probability of a regular removal from office. Along a more direct pathway, Targets might enjoy a somewhat lower probability of a regular loss of office if the conflict lasts and elections are postponed. We are unable to *ex ante* specify which effect dominates, and thus make no predictions. Traditional theories of diversionary conflict posit that an increased risk in international conflict, be it as an initiator or a target, triggers

Scholars have proposed that Victory and Defeat reveal the foreign policy competence of leaders, and thereby influence the potential benefits of replacing the leader (Richards *et al.*, 1993; Smith, 1996, 1998). By this logic, there would be few benefits in removing victorious leaders with demonstrated competence, but large benefits in removing defeated leaders who demonstrated foreign policy incompetence. Thus, Victory should lower the hazard of a regular removal from office. It is important to keep in mind, though, that the process of regular removal is influenced not just by foreign policy competence, but also by regular domestic politics. Thus, Winston Churchill, Bülent Ecevit, and George H. W. Bush lost office in elections after their victories in World War II, the 1974 Cyprus War, and Gulf War I. In all three instances, foreign competence was trumped by (perceived) economic incompetence.[26] Thus, in elections contested on several dimensions, foreign policy competence is only one factor to weigh in decisions to replace the leader. Moreover, the question always remains of how much credit a leader can claim for victory. Sometimes, finally, the outcome of conflict has little to do with competence, but everything with blind luck, as Frederick the Great learned to his advantage in the Seven Years War. Mussolini's son-in-law and Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, noted more cynically in 1942, "As always, victory finds a hundred fathers, but defeat is an orphan" (Ciano, 2002, 546, diary entry of September 9, 1942).[27] With these caveats in mind, it

a rallying-around-the-flag effect and thus a decreased risk of losing office. Inheritors – leaders who inherited the conflict from a former leader – should not be held "culpable" for the war and therefore not significantly different from leaders who remained at peace (Croco, 2008).

[26] Complicating things further still are extra-rational factors. Whether the people interpret the outcome as a victory or defeat can depend on several factors (Johns, 2006; Johnson and Tierney, 2006).

[27] Farcau (2000, 51) provides a fascinating example from the 1879–84 War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia how victory can actually endanger a leader's hold on office:

> President Pinto [of Chile] found himself in a position at the outbreak of the war similar to that of U.S. President James K. Polk during the war with Mexico earlier in the century. Both chief executives were obliged to fight a largely unplanned war with senior generals, all of whom were members of the opposition party and very likely candidates for the presidency in their own right in the coming elections, particularly if they should manage to secure noteworthy victories in the war. Each president was thus placed in a no-win situation in which a defeat in the war would redound to his own disgrace as

nevertheless seems reasonable to hypothesize that victory should lower the probability of a regular removal from office.

Crucially, for our arguments, we claim that leaders who are defeated in an international conflict will be removed in a forcible manner and not in a regular manner. First, the victor often decides to replace the leader, a forcible removal from office *par excellence*. Second, as we argued in the previous section, the victor almost always overthrows the norms, rules, and institutions that previously guided the regular transfer of power. As a result, leaders and their domestic opposition find themselves inescapably in the commitment problem outlined in section 2.1.1. With the regular process aborted, leaders should, highly counter-intuitively, face a *lower* risk of a regular removal from office after defeat, because that process is crowded out by the dramatically increased risk of a forcible removal.

Consider now how defeat affects leaders subject to a regular process compared to leaders subject to the forcible process of leader removal. For the latter, defeat may increase their probability of a forcible removal, but it was already relatively high, and their punishment is truncated. For the former, anticipating a regular removal and a safe retirement, defeat dramatically increases their risks of a forcible removal from office and exile, imprisonment or death. Thus, for leaders subject to the regular process, their punishment is anything but truncated. In other words, leaders who normally need to worry little about an irregular removal have relatively little to gain but much to lose from international conflict. For such leaders, Challenging and Victory may somewhat decrease their hazard of a regular removal from office, but Defeat significantly increases their hazard of an irregular removal from office, with its associated unpleasant consequences. For these leaders, thus, international conflict constitutes a dangerous gamble. Should, then, the security conditions of their countries call for the use of force, these leaders will be more inclined to initiate conflict when they are secure in office. Their firm control of power would serve as

> author of the nation's war policy, while victory, under the guidance of a general who was a partisan of the opposition, would almost certainly lead to defeat for the president's party in the next general elections . . . Chile's President Pinto, however, came up with a unique solution for his political dilemma, albeit one that seriously handicapped the armed forces in their struggle with the external enemy and might easily have led to defeat in the war.

an insurance policy against the risks that conflict engenders. In other words, leaders who would normally rely on the regular process of leader replacement will seek to avoid wars when they face a high risk of losing office in a regular manner. Our reconsideration of the private costs and benefits of international conflict thus offers a novel explanation for why democratic leaders go to war early in their tenure when they are most secure in office (Gaubatz, 1991; Smith, 1996; Chiozza and Goemans, 2003).

2.2 Competing leader-level explanations of international conflict

Above we presented our new theory of conflict initiation which focused on how conflict affects the leader's manner of losing office. Current leader-central explanations of international conflict, as articulated in various strands of "diversionary conflict," consider a significantly smaller range of potential costs and benefits. Below, we disentangle the various strands of diversionary war by a focus on their conceptions of the leader's costs and benefits of international conflict. The first strand proposes that leaders gain from international conflict because it triggers in- and out-group bias among the populace, which in turn produces (temporary) increased support for the leader. The second strand argues that international conflict allows some leaders to reveal their competence in ways not otherwise possible, and thereby gain additional support. We do not examine the latest leader-level explanation for war, which revolves around audience costs, because this has proven prohibitively difficult to empirically examine with real-world data on leaders (Schultz, 2001b).

2.2.1 In- and out-group bias

The first theoretical articulations of diversionary conflict build on the well-known work of Simmel (1898, 1955) and Coser (1956). This strand in the literature postulated the "in-group/out-group" hypothesis. According to the first variant of this hypothesis, when a state becomes involved in an international crisis, in-group – in particular, national – identities become salient. This, in turn, produces in-group bias and greater cohesion among in-group members. In the literature on diversionary war, this effect has become known as "rallying around

the flag," whereby the people supposedly put aside their differences with their leaders to support them in times of crisis (Mueller, 1973; Levy, 1989). Rallying around the flag, then, is argued to bolster a leader's chances to remain in office. A second variant emphasizes the out-group bias that international conflict supposedly triggers among in-group members. Specifically, out-group bias supposedly allows leaders to blame and scapegoat foreign enemies for their policy failures (Clark, 2003). Because of their psychological foundations, we classify theories that rely on the in-group/out-group hypothesis as *psychological* explanations of diversionary conflict.

Psychological explanations of diversionary conflict thus suggest that as people perceive a foreign threat, they become more likely to support their leader, bolstering his time in office, which becomes the reason why a leader might provoke a foreign crisis in the first place. These psychological explanations postulate a fully reciprocal relationship: as leaders become more likely to lose office, they become more likely to initiate an international conflict, while at the same time as an international conflict becomes more likely – and in-group identity becomes more salient, or the out-group more hated – leaders become less likely to lose office. Thus, the central hypothesis of psychological explanations of diversionary conflict posits a fully reciprocal relationship. As the leader's risk of losing office increases, the probability of conflict initiation increases, while at the same time, as the risk of international conflict increases, the probability of losing office decreases. Note that for this effect to obtain, it is not necessary that a war has already broken out; a foreign threat, or a threat of international conflict should be enough to produce the in- or out-group bias that produces "rallying around the flag."

A third, slightly more sophisticated, psychological variant posits that the people only rally around their leader at low and intermediate levels of pre-existing *domestic* inter-group conflict (Coser, 1956). At high levels of domestic inter-group conflict, the emergence of a foreign threat only further exacerbates domestic conflict, and thus endangers the leader's hold on power. Hence, in cases of extreme domestic inter-group conflict, such as civil war, leaders have a *dis*-incentive to initiate international conflict. However, once we "take out" such high levels of domestic inter-group conflict – by controlling for the endogenous risk of civil war – the risk of losing office should again monotonically increase the probability of conflict initiation.

The third psychological variant posits a curvilinear – inverse "U"-shaped – relationship between domestic inter-group conflict and the gains to be had by international conflict initiation. Controlling for civil war – the highest level of domestic inter-group conflict – a linear, and again reciprocal, relationship between the risk of losing office and international conflict initiation should remain.

In the following section, we offer a brief critique of both the fundamental theoretical mechanisms and the large statistical literature that purports to test this strand of the literature.

2.2.2 Evaluation

In both their theoretical conception and in the many empirical attempts to test them, psychological explanations of diversionary conflict suffer from several fundamental flaws. First, while psychological research has indeed found that an increased threat to the group produces in-*group* and – to a lesser degree (Brewer, 1999) – out-*group* bias (Labianca, Brass and Gray, 1998, 56), to the best of our knowledge, no psychological research shows whether this in turn translates into greater political support for group leaders. The relationship between greater affinity for other group members (in-group bias) and political support for the leader therefore remains an unexamined assumption. Similarly, while out-group bias might turn a foreign enemy into a convenient scapegoat, it remains unclear whether this produces greater political support for the leader.

Second, even if this psychological mechanism translates into greater political support for the leader, it is unclear how long this support lasts. (As we will see below, research on "rallying around the flag" suggests that any support is short in duration (DeRouen Jr., 2000).) Moreover, scholars in this strand of the literature have failed to examine the potential downside of international conflict. In particular, it is unclear when and why a short boost in tenure is worth the risk of an increased probability of losing office as a result of defeat.

Given these theoretical flaws, it is perhaps not surprising that the in-group/out-group hypothesis enjoys only mixed empirical support. Note, first, that this strand of the literature posits a broad and *general* theory of international conflict: leaders should initiate international conflict whenever they feel insecure in office. This broad and general theory dramatically over-predicts international conflict. Between 1919

and 2003, 1,977 leaders held and lost office. All of these leaders at some time in their tenure must have faced a high risk of losing office and thus had incentives to initiate conflict. However, in this same time span leaders initiated significantly fewer than 500 international conflicts (International Crisis Behavior Project, 2007).

Moreover, almost all empirical examinations of the in-group/out-group hypothesis suffer from two fundamental flaws: first, the failure to model the reciprocal, endogenous relationship between the loss of office and international conflict initiation and second, the near exclusive reliance on states, rather than leaders, as the unit of analysis.

First, almost all empirical research based on the psychological explanations examines only how a leader's popularity or approval affects international conflict initiation *or* how international conflict affects the leader's popularity. Until Chiozza and Goemans (2003), no one had estimated a system of equations that combined these, as explicitly suggested by psychological theories of diversionary war. Typically, scholars obtain indicators of a leader's popularity and include these in their regressions on international conflict. A regression which simply examines the effect of the president's or prime-minister's popularity as measured in public opinion polls on the probability of conflict, however, ignores the theoretical expectation that the leader's popularity is in turn affected by the risk of international conflict. Coefficients on variables which purport to capture the leader's risk of losing office will therefore be irretrievably biased.

Second, while diversionary conflict is theoretically pitched at the level of the leader, most empirical studies, by far, have instead relied on country-level data and use regime type as their main explanatory variable.[28] These studies, as well as those that do explicitly focus on leaders, find at best mixed support for the hypothesized diversionary behavior (Ostrom and Job, 1986; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; James

[28] Almost every possible regime type has been suggested as particularly prone to engage in diversionary war, including regimes in transition, unstable, autocratic, democratic, and oligarchic regimes (Wilkenfeld, 1968; Hazelwood, 1975; Lebow, 1981; Domke, 1988; Levy, 1989; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Miller, 1995; Smith, 1996; Gelpi, 1997; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005). None of the hypotheses linking regime type with the diversionary use of force, however, has met with general quantitative empirical support (Zinnes and Wilkenfeld, 1971; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995, 2005; Gelpi, 1997; Leeds and Davis, 1997; Miller, 1999).

and Hristoulas, 1994; Meernik, 1994; DeRouen Jr., 1995; Meernik and Waterman, 1996; Fordham, 1998a, b; Gowa, 1998; Morgan and Anderson, 1999). Meernik and Waterman (1996, 573), for example, "find little evidence of any kind of link between domestic political conditions in the United States and uses of force or international crises" (see also Lian and Oneal (1993); Meernik (1994); Gowa (1998); Lai and Reiter (2005)). Studies on leaders tend to overwhelmingly rely on US presidents – not the average leader by any measure – term-limited after 1952, with a fixed term of office, and ruling a superpower. In a particularly interesting analysis, Stoll (1984) examined whether US presidents are more likely to use force when they are up for re-election. He found that if the United States was not already involved in a conflict, in their re-election year US presidents were actually less likely to resort to the use of force (see also Gaubatz (1991)). When Morgan and Anderson (1999, 799) extended the analysis beyond the United States to Great Britain, they found that "the level of public support for the British government is in fact associated with the probability that Britain threatens, displays, or uses force abroad" (see also Lai and Reiter (2005)). In short, while some studies do find diversionary behavior, just as many reject their diversionary hypothesis.

There has been much less empirical research on the second stage of the relation between tenure and international conflict, the stage which posits that international conflict, or the risk of international conflict, decreases the probability of losing office. Several studies have investigated whether the popular standing of American presidents increases in time of war and international conflict (Ostrom and Job, 1986; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Lian and Oneal, 1993). In general, however, the evidence for the "rally-around-the-flag" phenomenon has again been decidedly mixed (Mueller, 1973; Brace and Hinckley, 1992; Lian and Oneal, 1993; DeRouen Jr., 1995; Oneal and Bryan, 1995; James and Rioux, 1998; DeRouen Jr., 2000; Baker and Oneal, 2001).

In earlier work (Chiozza and Goemans, 2003), we presented the initial data and a two-stage method to assess the postulated logic of the psychological explanation of diversionary conflict. There, we focused on the risk of losing office and thus collapsed the regular and forcible manner of losing office into one overall category. We found that as the risk of losing office increases, the probability of conflict initiation strongly and significantly *decreases*. Moreover, as the risk of a crisis increases, the probability of losing office also increases. In

other words, approaching conflict led to no discernible rallying around the flag, and instead worsened the leader's hold on office. In short, our findings strongly contradicted the psychological variant of diversionary war. We now turn to the more modern rationalist explanations of diversionary conflict.

2.2.3 *Competence*

The second main strand in the literature on diversionary conflict proposes a rationalist mechanism that has become known as "gambling for resurrection", as we described above (Richards *et al.*, 1993; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Smith, 1996; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Goemans and Fey, 2009). International conflict, in this framework, constitutes a *high variance* strategy. The leader prefers the higher variance in his probability of staying in office associated with international conflict, because the lower variance associated with peace leaves him very likely to lose office.

At the heart of this rationalist explanation lies the assumption that, relative to peace, victory decreases the leader's probability of losing office. Victory in an international conflict decreases a leader's probability of losing office, because international conflict supposedly allows leaders to reveal their "competence" (or cover up incompetence) in ways not otherwise possible (Richards *et al.*, 1993, 511; Hess and Orphanides, 1995, 829; Smith, 1996, 134).[29] Typically, leaders have private information about their competence and incentives to misrepresent it; the only way to credibly reveal competence is by demonstrated success.[30] In the case of foreign policy competence, as Downs and Rocke (1994, 362) put it, "the constituency must base its decision to retain an executive on the outcome of a conflict." Competent leaders are thought to be more likely to gain victory, therefore victory allows

[29] Downs and Rocke (1994, 365) alternatively consider leaders with private information about the costs and benefits of international conflict, and voters who assess whether the leader acted as they would have, if they had the same information.

[30] Note that this does not mean that only competent leaders enjoy success; sometimes incompetent leaders obtain successes. Because competent leaders are more likely to obtain successes than incompetent leaders, successful but unbeknownst to the public incompetent leaders are rewarded with longer tenure.

the constituency to update its belief about the leader's competence. Since the constituency generally benefits from competent leadership, it will reward victorious and competent leaders with longer tenure.

Because victory pays, and *the punishment of leaders is truncated at the loss of office*, leaders rationally initiate international conflict in a "gamble for resurrection." In other words, as in current strands of the literature, the higher the risk of losing office, the more likely leaders are to initiate international conflict. However, while in the psychological explanations international conflict pays because of "rallying around the flag," and little attention is given to the potential costs of international conflict, in the rationalist leader-level literature, the benefits of international conflict must be traced to the benefits of victory, while the potential costs of war are truncated.

While almost all of the literature on the diversionary use of force focuses on conflict *initiation*, recently Smith (1996) has argued that diversionary incentives are more likely to be reflected in the selection of targets in international conflict. Almost all of the literature on the diversionary use of force has focused only on the strategic interaction between leaders and citizens relevant to the leader's tenure; scholars rarely consider how this domestic interaction affects international interactions. However, as Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson (1995) argued, leaders select their international conflict strategically and therefore could well take into account the relevant domestic circumstances of potential opponents. In his discussion of endogenous crisis formation, Smith (1996) was the first to examine how the domestic political diversionary incentives of leaders affect the potential conflict incentives of other leaders. (More recently, Clark (2003) and Tarar (2006) have developed models that incorporate the strategic interaction between not just leaders and the domestic audience, but also a foreign opponent.) In a nutshell, Smith (1996, 149) suggested that "other nations avoid creating crises when democracies are likely to intervene," but this argument can be broadened to all types of leaders who feel diversionary pressures.[31] Because they gain a private benefit from conflict – the increased likelihood of staying in power – diversionary leaders can credibly demand a premium in interstate bargaining. *Ceteris paribus*, other leaders would thus gain less from a peaceful

[31] Smith (1996, 149) proposes a curvilinear relationship between the risk of losing office and the probability of becoming a target.

settlement with diversionary leaders, while international conflict would be more likely (because the bargaining range shrinks). In other words, given the ability of potential foreign opponents to read and play against a leader's diversionary incentives, leaders could have dis-incentives to target other leaders with diversionary incentives.

This strategic interaction formulation of diversionary conflict thus postulates that leaders with the strongest diversionary incentives – because they face a high probability of losing office – will get the fewest opportunities to exploit those incentives. In other words, this variant argues that the higher the probability of losing office, the less likely leaders are to become *targets* in international crises.

While Smith (1996) introduced strategic interaction between leaders and their foreign opponents, he built his insights on the assumption that diversionary conflict can pay because it enables constituents to learn more about the leader's competence. In other words, the assumption that victory increases the overall tenure of leaders is also fundamental to the strategic interaction strand in the rationalist literature on diversionary conflict.

Note, however, that the logic of strategic interaction could also operate in tandem with the earlier psychological explanations for diversionary conflict. In other words, if diversionary conflict pays because of a rally-around-the-flag effect, other leaders still would want to avoid leaders with diversionary incentives. This variant thus posits a reciprocal relationship between the loss of office and becoming a target in an international conflict.

Since this variant again postulates a *reciprocal* relationship, leaders should be less likely to be targeted as their risk of losing office increases, while at the same time the probability of losing office decreases as the risk of becoming a target increases. In the next section, we evaluate the contemporary rationalist approach to diversionary conflict.

2.2.4 *Evaluation*

The gambling for resurrection and strategic interaction rationalist formulations of diversionary conflict offer elegant mechanisms, but fail empirically on two fronts. First, we showed in Chiozza and Goemans (2003) that as the risk of losing office increases, contrary to the prediction of gambling for resurrection, the probability of conflict initiation *decreases*. Second, and as we argue here to be of central importance,

the mechanism's fundamental assumption that punishment of leaders is truncated at the mere loss of office is false and misleading. As shown in Goemans (2008) (and also in Chapter 3), about a quarter of all leaders lose office as the result of the threat or use of force. Of the leaders who lost office in such a forcible manner, fully 80 percent suffered some form of punishment in the form of exile, imprisonment or death. Of the leaders who lost office in a regular manner, in stark contrast, only 7 percent suffered such punishment. Gambling for resurrection becomes a doubtful proposition if, compared to staying at peace, a leader significantly increases the probability of a fate much worse than merely losing office.

Several scholars have attempted to test empirically the rationalist strategic interaction approach to diversionary conflict as first suggested by Smith (1996). Specifically, scholars examined whether states avoid targeting democracies whose leaders might have diversionary incentives. Gaubatz (1991) was the first to note that democratic leaders initiate foreign conflict *early* in their tenure, when they are most secure and least in need of diversionary conflict to stay in office. Miller (1995) finds that under conditions of low policy resources and highly autocratic political systems, targets are indeed more likely to respond with force if their economy is doing poorly. Similarly, Leeds and Davis (1997, 831) find that in their sample of 18 democracies, domestic political vulnerability appears to enhance deterrence. All three studies, however, employ the country as the unit of analysis and limit their sample to democracies. Clark (2003, 1031) appropriately focuses on leaders – e.g. American presidents – and finds that "high levels of [presidential] approval increase opportunities for U.S. use of force, although . . . approval appears not to directly affect whether the United States actually uses force or not abroad . . . " Clark (ibid., 1035), however, also finds ample room for presidents to manufacture crises if they so desire. If leaders can create crises when they need to, there may thus be relatively little other leaders can do to avoid leaders with diversionary incentives.

Finally, the psychological variant of the strategic interaction formulation of diversionary conflict posits an endogenous relationship between becoming a target and the loss of office. The generally mixed results about "rallying around the flag" discussed above weigh against this formulation. In another of our earlier articles (Chiozza and Goemans, 2004a) we provided a rigorous test of the strategic

interaction variant of diversionary conflict. There we found that, as postulated, an increase in the probability of losing office indeed decreases the probability of becoming a target in an international conflict. However, and somewhat contrary to the theory, the risk of becoming a target did not significantly affect the probability of losing office.

Our evaluation of the competing theories of diversionary conflict revealed gaps in their theoretical scaffolding and, at best, mixed support. In the next two chapters, we present carefully crafted empirical tests of our re-conceptualization of the diversionary use of force.

2.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, we presented our new leader theory of international conflict. Our theory turns on the claim that leaders can lose power through two distinct processes. There exists a regular, institutionalized process which usually provides the leader a safe retirement; and there is a forcible, coercive process associated with death, imprisonment or exile. With this distinction in place, we amended the key assumption that leaders base their policies on how these affect their probability of staying in power (Downs, 1957; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 2003). In its place we propose that leaders base their policies not just on the probability, but the manner and consequences of losing office. We develop a simple theoretical argument, building on Fearon (2004), to explain why and when leaders should anticipate a forcible removal from office. In countries that lack the institutional protection to safeguard leaders after they lose office, a temporary shock in the leader's legitimacy or capabilities introduces a commitment problem. To buy off the strengthened opposition, the leader would like to make some concessions, but this deal is not credible, since the leader will revoke any concessions once he regains his strength. Since the clash between opposition and leader cannot be avoided through peaceful deals, this commitment problem results in coups, revolts, and insurgencies. We then analyzed how international conflict can solve this commitment problem by increasing the probability of victory against the leader's opponents, e.g. by elimination of the other player in the game, as well as by reversing the temporary shock. Our analysis led us to propose two new leader-level explanations for war: *fighting for survival* and *gambling for survival*. In addition, we presented a *peace through*

insecurity mechanism whereby leaders who need fear only a regular removal from office have dis-incentives to initiate conflict.

In the next chapter we empirically scrutinize the core claims and predictions of our new theory of diversionary conflict: how international conflict affects the overall tenure of leaders – as in the traditional literature – as well as how conflict affects the manner of losing office, specifically the hazards of a regular and an irregular removal from office. Thus in Chapter 3 we examine the connection between the processes of removal from office and the leader's subsequent fate, as well as the following core claims:

- Challengers enjoy a lower hazard of a regular removal from office.
- Challengers enjoy a lower hazard of an irregular removal from office.
- Victory decreases the hazard of a regular removal from office.
- Victory decreases the hazard of an irregular removal from office.
- Defeat increases the hazard of an irregular removal from office.
- Defeat does not increase the hazard of a regular removal from office.

In that chapter, we bolster our claim that international conflict has not much to offer to leaders who face the prospect of a regular removal, but has much to offer to leaders who fear for their life and liberty. In Chapter 4, we focus on our central contribution, to examine how the risks of a forcible removal from office and the risks of a regular removal from office affect the probability of conflict initiation. We examine the following central claims:

- As the risk of a forcible removal from office increases the probability of conflict initiation also increases.
- As the risk of a regular removal from office increases the probability of conflict initiation decreases.

In Chapter 5, finally, we examine the history of Central America between 1840 and 1919 to historically trace the explanatory power of our proposed mechanisms.

3 *International conflict and the fate of leaders*

3.1 Introduction

"I am reasonably sure of only three things today," *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen (1991) wrote on March 3, 1991, "that George Bush will be re-elected President in 1992; that if he chooses either Colin Powell or Norman Schwarzkopf as his running mate, he might win by the largest landslide in the history of the nation, and that we are incredibly skilled at war." These were reasonable claims that many at the time would have shared. In a military campaign that lasted 100 hours and gripped the attention of the American people in front of the television screen, the United States had liberated Kuwait and achieved a decisive victory against the Iraqi Army.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that of the three assertions made by Anna Quindlen (ibid.), the last one is undoubtedly true: Americans are indeed quite skilled at war. The second could have been true, but we will never know. The first one – the prediction that President George H. W. Bush was going to win re-election easily – however, turned out to be false. On election day, November 3, 1992, just twenty months after the victorious conclusion of the Gulf War, President Bush was defeated by Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton by a wide margin: 43% vs. 37% of the popular vote.

In that very same issue of *The New York Times* where Anna Quindlen liberally prophesied about US presidential politics, James E. Akins (1991), former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, made a very reasonable prediction about Saddam Hussein's fate. While dismissing any facile euphoria about the prospects for peace in the Middle East, Ambassador Akins was nonetheless very confident that Saddam Hussein would no longer be one of the political factors to be reckoned with in the Middle Eastern political landscape. "In fact," he wrote, "there is little reason to concern ourselves with Saddam. He has been defeated and humiliated and will soon be dead at the hands of his own people

unless some unlikely country gives him refuge. And the martyrdom he has courted will elude him unless we or the Saudis bring him before a war crimes tribunal and execute him."[1] In the end, Saddam Hussein met the fate Ambassador Akins predicted: death at the hands of his own people. That occurred, however, on December 30, 2006, not in 1991. Saddam was to remain in power for twelve more years, until the United States, under the leadership of George W. Bush, toppled his regime in 2003, and a new democratically elected government, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, was in power in Baghdad.

If we were ever in doubt that the business of prediction is a minefield for experts of politics, these two examples would put those doubts to rest. But as we assess the different fates of the victorious and the defeated leader of the Gulf War of 1991, we can also notice a pattern that our theory of the costs and benefits of conflict would help us explain. As we argued in Chapter 2, international conflict generates fleeting and limited benefits for leaders ruling countries with well-established, non-violent, processes of leadership change, as was the case for US President Bush. For leaders of countries where the risk of a forcible removal is high, on the other hand, defeat in an international conflict makes that risk higher, as Saddam Hussein experienced from the Kurdish and Shi'a uprisings he mercilessly suppressed after retreating from Kuwait. International conflict, though, might still be a *gamble* worth pursuing if the alternative is no different: a high risk of forcible removal.

In this chapter, we place these two examples in a broader context. To understand how leaders could view international conflict as a rational strategy in light of their double goal of staying in power and safeguarding their personal fates, we need to establish that (*a*) *regular* and *forcible* processes of leadership turnover are systematically associated with the post-tenure fate of leaders; and (*b*) that international conflict affects not just *whether* but also *how* leaders lose power. Specifically, we need to establish when and how international conflict affects the risks of a forcible removal from office separate from its effect on the risks of a regular removal from office and *vice versa*.[2]

[1] See also Mueller (2004, 124) for a reflection on these predictions.

[2] Although providing important insights, the limited but ongoing research into the causes (and consequences) of coups (O'Kane, 1983; Gupta, 1990; Londregan and Poole, 1990; Person and Tabellini, 1994; Alesina *et al.*, 1996;

Since we argue that leaders anticipate when and how they might lose office – and base their policy choices on this anticipation – we examine how international conflict alters the timing and the manner of leaders' removal under a broad range of economic and domestic political conditions that directly address the fundamental assumptions of our theory. Thus, we first distinguish political systems that can credibly commit to the safety of their leaders, e.g. democracies as Riker (1982) suggested, from political systems that cannot make such credible commitments, mixed regimes, and autocracies. Second, we compare leaders who face a high risk of a forcible removal from office with leaders under no such a threat. To do so, we split our data into two; one sub-sample contains leaders involved in civil war, the other sub-sample contains leaders at civil peace. Third, we explore a second potential dimension to differentiate systems that can credibly promise their leaders a safe retirement by splitting our sample by the levels of economic development. Finally, we seek to assess the effects of a temporary shock in the leader's capabilities and resources by splitting our sample into one sub-sample of leaders who experienced positive economic growth and one sub-sample of leaders who experienced economic recession.

In sum, in this chapter we assess the major building blocks of the theory developed in Chapter 2. We show that starting, winning or losing an international conflict have a different impact on regular vs. forcible processes of leadership change; and thus we show that international conflict entails different costs and benefits *for leaders* depending upon the manner in which they might lose power.

While we bracket the issue of the endogeneity of conflict initiation in this chapter, we tackle this head-on in Chapter 4, where we investigate the mechanisms for conflict initiation we derived from our theory: *peace-through-insecurity*, *fighting for survival*, and *gambling for survival*.[3]

Feng, 1997; Belkin and Schofer, 2003, 2005) – a subset of our cases of forcible removal from office – fails to examine whether the same factors that increase the risk of a coup also and similarly raise the risk of a regular removal from office. Our empirical analysis, therefore, not only covers a broader set of cases of forcible removal, but it also has broader theoretical implications for the study of leadership selection and turnover.

[3] For this analysis, as well as the analyses in the subsequent chapters, we use the new data on leaders we gathered for this book, "Introducing Archigos" (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009). Our data set contains information

3.2 The manner and consequences of losing office

Leaders can lose power in two fundamental ways: in a regular and peaceful manner, which we call *regular* removal, or in an irregular and potentially violent manner, which we call *forcible* removal. Regular removals include elections, parliamentary votes of confidence, or hereditary successions. Forcible removals include coups, insurrections, or assassinations. In general, regular processes are prevalent. From 1919 until 2003, about two-thirds of the leaders in power lost office in a regular manner. Forcible removal is less common. Overall, more than a quarter of all leaders lost office in an irregular manner, which makes the danger of such an overthrow a real threat and not a remote possibility for leaders.[4] To be sure, as we see in Figure 3.1, some countries, particularly in Latin America, Central Africa, and Central Asia are systematically more prone to such forcible removals from office. Ecuador and Bolivia top the list with 19 and 17 instances of leaders who were forcibly removed, respectively. Leaders in Western European countries, in contrast, rarely lose office in a forcible manner.

Forcible removal might occur through several processes, involving different political forces and players, with and without foreign support. As we show in Table 3.1, of the 495 leaders who lost power in a forcible manner since 1919, the largest majority – 262, or 53% – were unseated in a coup executed by the military with no foreign support. Some 93 leaders owed their fate to some form of direct or indirect foreign intervention. But regardless of how it occurs, forcible removal is fundamentally different from a regular process of leadership change because it is systematically associated with severe punishment for leaders.

We distinguish four alternative fates for leaders who lose power. Overall, leaders might expect to remain free citizens who might keep a public profile or stay outside of politics, but with no threats to their own personal lives. Or leaders can be punished: they can be forced

not just about when, but also how the leader lost office, and about his post-exit fate up to one year after he lost office. The information on leaders' fate was collected independently of the manner of the leader's removal. We limited the scope of our analysis of the leader's post-tenure fate to one year in order to preclude the possibility that the leader's behavior after he lost office rather than his behavior in office provided the cause for any form of punishment.

[4] Leaders, of course, can also die while in office or step down because of ill-health, a third mode of leadership change, which plays only a marginal role in our argument, given that it is truly exogenous to any policy choice.

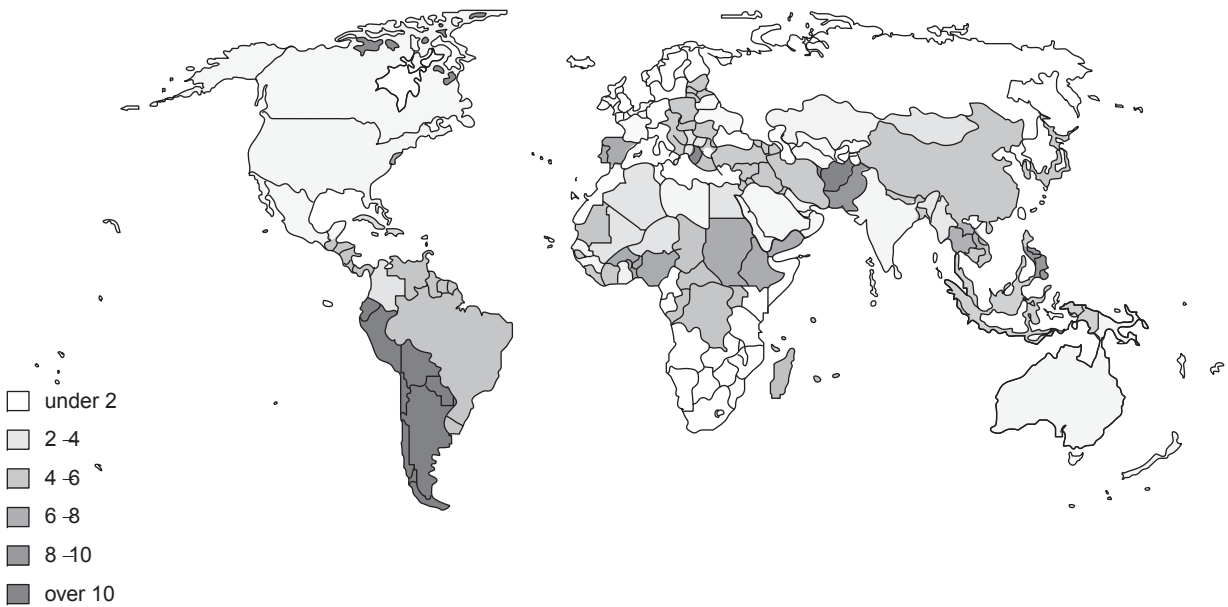

Figure 3.1: Number of forcible removals, 1919–2003

Table 3.1: ***Forms of forcible removal***

	Foreign Support		
	With	Without	Total
Domestic popular protest	1	26	27
Domestic rebel forces	11	40	51
Domestic military actors	4	262	266
Other domestic government actors	4	40	44
Threat or use of foreign force	44		44
Assassination by unsupported individual		21	21
Other means or processes	29	13	42
Total	93	402	495

Table 3.2: ***How leaders lose office and the consequences***

	OK	Exile	Jail	Killed	Total
Ill health	30	3	1	0	34
%	88.24	8.82	2.94	0	100
Regular	1380	70	33	2	1485
%	92.93	4.71	2.22	0.13	99.99
Forcible	97	198	112	82	489
%	19.84	40.49	22.9	16.77	100
Total	1507	271	146	84	2008

Note: Pearson χ^2 (6) = 1074.189, p-value < 0.001.

into *exile*; sent to *jail*; or *killed*.[5] Leaders can thus be *OK*, the label that we use, with irony, in Table 3.2. They would write books, run foundations, serve as opposition leaders, or simply retire. They might still risk having their freedoms curtailed, as General Pinochet learned when on October 17, 1998 – about ten years after stepping down as dictator of Chile – he was arrested while seeking medical treatment in Britain. But even considering scenarios like Pinochet's, the fate of leaders who are "ok" is very different from the fate of leaders who face punishment when they lose power.

[5] In our coding rules, exile includes refuge in a foreign embassy, since such an embassy is considered foreign soil; imprisonment includes house arrest.

There is undoubtedly a qualitative difference between the three forms of punishment of exile, imprisonment, and death. Compare, for example, the fate of Dr. Mohammad Najibullah, the fourth and last President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, with the fate of Mohammed Zahir Shah, the last king of Afghanistan. After the fall of his regime in 1992, Najibullah remained in a UN compound in Kabul until 1996, when the capital fell to the Taliban. He was then captured, tortured, mutilated, shot and hung from a lamppost (Burns, 1996). Mohammed Zahir Shah, instead, was ousted in a coup orchestrated by former Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud Khan in 1973. He spent 29 years in exile in Rome, playing golf, chess and tending his garden (Gall, 2007), hardly a bad life despite suffering minor wounds in an assassination attempt in 1991 (Bearak, 2007). He even stood a chance of being reinstated as Afghanistan's head of state in 2002 when, after the fall of the Taliban regime, a new constitution for Afghanistan was negotiated at the *loya jirga*, the grand council, that in the end elected Hamid Karzai as president (Jones, 2009).

As the experience of Zahir Shah testifies, exile is not a punishment *per se*, unless other conditions would intervene, such as the confiscation of property. No less an authority than Thomas Hobbes (1996 [1651], 209) wrote that exile is "an escape, a public commandment to avoid punishment by flight" and, citing Cicero, "a refuge of men in danger."[6] What makes exile a form of punishment for ousted leaders, therefore, is not necessarily the hardship it might impose, but the fact that he and his followers must depend for their safety and possessions on the leader of the country where they are allowed to reside. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, the former head of the military junta in Ethiopia, managed to escape to Zimbabwe after he was overthrown in 1991. In an interview, he suggested not only how much he missed Ethiopia, but also how he now was at the protective mercy of his hosts and feared for his life: "As you can see, in my day-to-day life I and my family lack nothing. Like any Ethiopian exile, I miss my country . . . I have many enemies. You know that they have tried to kill me before how . . . I fear for my life" (quoted in Baker (2004, 1492)). In 2003, Mugabe of Zimbabwe allegedly considered leaving office and going

[6] Hobbes (1996[1651], 208) lists exile as one of the human punishments, i.e. the punishments "inflicted by the commandment of man," which also include corporal punishment, pecuniary punishment, and ignominy.

into exile, but refused to do so because his safety could not be guaranteed. "Senior Zanu-PF party sources told a journalist that Mugabe 'wants to leave but his personal security fears, the fate of his family and property . . . are his main obstacles'" (ibid., 1487). As a consequence, even for the leaders who expect to be punished with exile, holding office becomes something more than their motivational drive and a source of privileges; it is the way to preserve their personal freedom and their lives.

What, then, is the relationship between the manner of losing office and the fate of leaders? In Table 3.2, we report a simple cross-tabulation to establish this point, which is central to our theory.[7] Although simple, this cross-tabulation produces a straightforward and powerful result. The manner of exit is strongly associated with the leader's subsequent fate in the period up to one year after losing office. Of the leaders who lost office in a regular manner, fully 93 percent retired safely from their office and only 7 percent suffered some form of punishment. Of the leaders who were removed in a forcible manner, however, only 20 percent suffered no punishment; 40 percent were exiled or fled the country in self-imposed exile, 23 percent were imprisoned for some time; and 17 percent were killed.

Even for the leaders who step down through regular processes, there exists no "bullet-proof" guarantee that their life and freedom will never be in danger. Still, only two leaders were killed within a year after losing power in a regular manner, Dogsomyn Bodoo of Mongolia and Bonifacio Ondó Edú of Equatorial Guinea. Both leaders ruled their countries through the processes that led to creation of independent nations. In highly unstable conditions, a resignation, for Bodoo, and an electoral defeat in elections certified as free and democratic by the United Nations, for Ondó Edú, were not sufficient to save their lives (Campos, 2003; Atwood, 2004). But even with these two exceptions, the findings in Table 3.2 firmly establish the association between how leaders lose power and their fate out of office.

[7] Post-exit fate is considered missing for 134 leaders who lost office as a result of natural death, 15 who lost power as a result of illness, and 3 who committed suicide in office. Post-exit fate is also missing for 5 leaders who lost office in a regular manner, and 1 who lost office in an irregular manner but died within six months after losing office. For 26 leaders, no information could be found on their post-exit fate; of these, 21 lost office in a regular manner, 4 lost office in an irregular manner, and 1 could not be determined.

Table 3.3: ***The fate of leaders and conflict involvement***

	How many leaders	In power	Natural death	OK	Exile	Jail	Killed
No conflict	2069	8023	132	1242	230	124	73
%		81.67	1.34	12.64	2.34	1.26	0.74
Challengers	196	449	8	18	5	6	4
%		91.63	1.63	3.67	1.02	1.22	0.82
Targets	286	484	9	55	22	10	4
%		82.88	1.54	9.42	3.77	1.71	0.68
Inheritors	91	92	0	23	6	5	1
%		72.44	0	18.11	4.72	3.94	0.79

Note: Entries are the number of leaders every year given their conflict involvement and their fate.

3.2.1 International conflict and the fate of leaders

Before we test the hypotheses from our theory, we present two simple tables and discuss specific leaders and events to give the reader a deeper and richer understanding of the connections between international conflict and the fate of leaders out of office. We distinguish two possible sources of costs and benefits for leaders: (*a*) those that obtain from participation in conflict, which relate to the mechanism of *fighting for survival*; and (*b*) those that accrue as the result of the outcomes of conflict, which relate to the mechanisms of *peace through insecurity* and *gambling for survival*.

At any given time, as we show in Table 3.3, most leaders are in power and out of conflict. If removal occurs, it is mostly associated with a safe retirement for the leader. Only few experience some form of punishment. This result is analogous to the one we reported in Table 3.2, this time using a different unit of analysis – leaders-per-year rather than leaders *per se*. International conflict participation, however, changes the picture drastically.

A Challenger leader – a leader who started a conflict – will see his political prospects in power improve. Challengers rarely lost office when the conflict was still ongoing. If they did – an outcome that befell 41 out of 196 Challenger leaders (21%) – they were more likely to preserve their personal freedom than they were to experience some form of punishment. Of the 41 leaders who lost power when they

were involved in a conflict they initiated, 18 (44%) managed to preserve their freedom, 15 (37%) suffered some form of punishment, and 8 (20%) died in office. As we quoted Hérault in Chapter 2, the decision to initiate a conflict creates political possibilities which are perhaps not available during peace. With the cover of an ongoing conflict, the leader can take steps to mute the opposition and disrupt potential coup plans by sending the conspirators to the front. This empirical pattern reflects our conjecture about leaders fighting for their survival.

Leaders who suffer an attack – the Targets – on the other hand, were less able to protect their political and personal fate. While most of the time a Target leader stayed in power when the conflict was ongoing as was the case for the Challengers, a larger number – 100 out of 286 (35%) – lost office. Of these 100 leaders, 55 were "ok" afterwards; 36 were punished, most commonly by sending them into exile, and 9 died in office. Finally, few leaders qualify as inheritors, that is, leaders who get into power while a conflict is still ongoing. Overall, these leaders experienced shorter periods of time while in conflict, as we would expect from leaders who gain the reins of power during a long protracted conflict with the explicit mandate to bring it to a conclusion. This obvious conjecture is reflected in the fact that the 91 "conflict-inheriting" leaders in our data accumulated only a total of 92 years in power when the conflict was still ongoing. When inheritors lost power, they were usually able to preserve their personal freedom (see Croco (2008)); still, 12 of them were punished. One, Inukai Tsuyoshi of Japan, was killed during a coup attempt carried out in 1932 by elements of the Japanese Imperial Navy in the power struggle between the civilian leadership and the armed forces as Japan had launched its imperial expansion in Manchuria.

From this simple analysis, we gather some preliminary evidence of the benefits of international conflict for leaders. In particular, the difference between the fates of leaders that initiated conflicts compared to those who suffered an attack gives support to the mechanism of fighting for survival, while adding yet another weak finding to the long list of inconclusive results for the alternative hypothesis of the in-group/out-group bias theory. Any benefit that might accrue to leaders does not follow involvement in international conflict *per se*, but primarily involvement in the conflicts that the leaders themselves *started*. Suffering an attack, therefore, poorly serves the purpose of undermining rebels and coup plotters.

Table 3.4: *The fate of leaders and the outcomes of conflict*

	International crises					Wars				
After	In power	Nat. death	OK	Punished	Total	In power	Nat. death	OK	Punished	Total
					Victory					
1 yr.	133	2	13	4	152	40	0	2	3	45
%	87.5	1.32	8.55	2.63	100	88.89	0	4.44	6.67	100
2 yrs.	110	5	17	6	138	44	2	1	0	47
%	79.71	3.62	12.32	4.35	100	93.62	4.26	2.13	0	100
3 yrs.	90	4	12	3	109	36	2	3	0	41
%	82.57	3.67	11.01	2.75	100	87.8	4.88	7.32	0	100
4 yrs.	73	4	10	3	90	32	1	2	1	36
%	81.11	4.44	11.11	3.33	100	88.89	2.78	5.56	2.78	100
					Defeat					
1 yr.	103	1	10	13	127	25	2	3	19	49
%	81.1	0.79	7.87	10.24	100	51.02	4.08	6.12	38.78	100
2 yrs.	79	3	13	14	109	18	2	4	1	25
%	72.48	2.75	11.93	12.84	100	72	8	16	4	100
3 yrs.	64	3	5	8	80	15	0	1	1	17
%	80	3.75	6.25	10	100	88.24	0	5.88	5.88	100

4 yrs.	49	1	8	5	63	12	0	0	2	14
%	77.78	1.59	12.7	7.94	100	85.71	0	0	14.29	100
					Draw					
1 yr.	168	3	14	4	189	49	2	4	0	55
%	88.89	1.59	7.41	2.12	100	89.09	3.64	7.27	0	100
2 yrs.	134	3	25	9	171	41	1	3	4	49
%	78.36	1.75	14.62	5.26	100	83.67	2.04	6.12	8.16	100
3 yrs.	110	4	10	5	129	32	0	3	2	37
%	85.27	3.1	7.75	3.88	100	86.49	0	8.11	5.41	100
4 yrs.	95	1	9	3	108	23	1	4	1	29
%	87.96	0.93	8.33	2.78	100	79.31	3.45	13.79	3.45	100

Note: Entries are the number and percentage of leaders experiencing a given fate given the outcome of conflict over time. See Table B.43 in the Appendix for the disaggregate data for the punishment fates.

The second aspect of conflict that affects leaders' fate is the outcome of conflict. In Table 3.4, we again show that leaders in general know how to weather the consequences of international conflict. Most of the time, leaders remain in power after the termination of conflict.[8] In general, about 80 percent of the leaders in power at the end of a conflict continued to remain in power afterwards, regardless of the outcome. The exception is the fate of leaders who lost a war. Of the leaders defeated in war, 25 (51%) remained in power, 24 (49%) lost power. Of these, 12 were sent into exile, 7 were jailed, 2 died a natural death, and only three preserved their freedom. Unsurprisingly, defeats in war led to higher rates of removal. More surprisingly, however, the negative consequences of a war defeat were short-lived. For the leaders who managed to survive the immediate aftermath of a war defeat, their survival chances improved. Only four leaders suffered punishment: King Abdullah Al-Hussein of Jordan and Benito Mussolini of Italy, who were executed in 1951 and 1945, respectively; Shukri al-Quwatli of Syria and King Farouk of Egypt, who were sent into exile in 1949 and in 1952, respectively.

Within a year of a defeat in an international crisis, 24 leaders lost power, 10 of them in an "ok" manner, 13 of them with punishment; still, 103 (81%) remained in power. A defeat in an international crisis short of war had only a limited impact on leaders' survival. However, losing an international crisis had longer lasting effects than losing a war. From two to four years after the unsuccessful conclusion of an international crisis, leaders continued to experience a risk of turnover analogous to the one they experienced within one year.[9] In sum, then, defeats decreased the ability of leaders to stay in power and preserve their freedom when out of power. Defeats, however, were not

[8] It might look puzzling that we list 40 leaders in power after 1 year of a victory in war and 44 leaders in power after 2 years of a victory in war. This depends on the fact that while our data covers the period from 1919 to 2003, we coded the delayed effect of outcomes that occurred in 1918. For example, the Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, who was in power from October 27, 1915 until February 3, 1923, receives credit in 1919 – the first observation for Australia in our data – for the victorious outcome of World War I that accrued to him in 1918. We also report the table with the three punishment fates disaggregated in Table B.43.

[9] Two years after a defeat, 30 (28%) leaders lost power; three years after, the number slightly declined to 16 (20%) leaders; four years after, 14 (22%) leaders lost power.

necessarily a catastrophic event under two conditions: first, if leaders managed to avoid the escalation of a conflict to full-scale war; and second, in case of war, if they managed to stop domestic opponents from orchestrating a coup within a year of the conclusion of the war.

Victories and draws appear to have little effect. In general, leaders who could reach a victory or a draw apparently continued to remain in office at similar rates. Only a handful of leaders experienced removal with punishment. But before generalizing from these patterns, we should acknowledge that our crude first-cut description is not appropriate to sort out more complicated multivariate causal relations. For example, one of the leaders killed two years after the conclusion of a victorious crisis is US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who prevailed in the first Pathet Lao crisis in May of 1961. During his tenure, though, President Kennedy also reached a draw – in the Berlin Wall crisis – and was soundly defeated in the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs. Whether any of these events played any role in his assassination would be just a matter of historical speculation, or fodder for conspiracy theorists.

Kennedy's crisis record is hardly unusual. By the time of his violent death, Anastasio Somoza Debayle of Nicaragua had both victories and defeats on his record; Abdul Karim Kassem of Iraq and Yitzhak Rabin of Israel had a defeat and a draw; Liaquat Ali Khan of Pakistan had a draw and a victory. Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic not only generated much hatred during his brutal rule, but also accumulated victories and defeats in international crises, which contributed to his violent removal. Trujillo's assassins, all former associates of his, were allegedly driven by a range of motivations, "patriotism, political ambition, and greed to revenge (Trujillo had ordered the execution of the brother of one of them, and the brother of another had been sentenced to a long prison term)" (Atkins and Wilson, 1998, 119). His failed attempt to assassinate Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt in June of 1960, however, was the straw that broke the camel of US support.[10] The United States joined the Organization of American States (OAS) in imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions against the Dominican Republic and cut off military aid, though

[10] A brief overview of the international crisis triggered by the attempt to assassinate Betancourt can be found in International Crisis Behavior Project (2007) at www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/dataviewer/.

the extent of CIA involvement in the plot to kill Trujillo is obviously disputed.[11]

Only two leaders had a victory and no other crisis outcome on their records when they were assassinated: Inukai Tsuyoshi of Japan, who lost his life during a failed coup attempt in 1932 at the hands of radical elements in the Japanese Navy who saw Inukai as an obstacle to their expansionist goals; and Ngo Dinh Diem of the Republic of Vietnam, who was executed during the coup d'état orchestrated by Duong Van Minh with the consent of the United States in 1963. These leaders met their fate because of a combination of factors during periods of domestic and international crisis rather than any reason that can be specifically linked to the outcomes of an international confrontation short of war. The political benefits of a success in an international crisis, therefore, were no match against other forces conspiring to forcibly remove these leaders.

The cases of exile and imprisonment after victories and draws also have an idiosyncratic character. Eleftherios Venizelos of Greece went into exile to Paris in 1920 after the political and constitutional crisis that followed the death of King Alexander, who died of blood poisoning from a monkey bite.[12] Dimitrios Ioannides, also of Greece, was sent to jail after the war defeat in Cyprus in 1974. Obviously, the initial success in the overthrow of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus did not matter much, given that it triggered a military intervention from Turkey, which then set into motion the downfall of the military junta of the colonels. The other leader who suffered imprisonment after a crisis success is Shehu Shagari of Nigeria, who lost power in a coup led

[11] According to Atkins and Wilson (1998, 119–20), "The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) then encouraged, organized and planned the assassination, promising to provide automatic rifles." In a secret memorandum prepared in January 1975, Associate Deputy Attorney General James Wilderotter, however, portrays a more limited and indirect role: "With respect to Trujillo's assassination on May 30, 1960, the CIA had 'no active part;' but had a 'faint connection' with the groups that in fact did it." The Wilderotter memorandum was declassified in 2007 in conjunction with the release of the "Family Jewels" Report, which had been compiled at the request of CIA Director James R. Schlesinger to document illegal and inappropriate actions taken by the CIA from the 1950s until the 1970s. It can be accessed at the National Archives via www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB222/family_jewels_wilderotter.pdf.

[12] Apparently, he was bitten in a delicate place on his body.

by General Muhammadu Buhari in 1983. Prevailing in a dispute with Chad in the spring and summer of 1983 was at best a minor palliative to reverse the impact of endemic corruption and economic decline on the decision to stage a coup.

In sum, Tables 3.3 and 3.4 suggest that the only sizeable effect of international conflict is the reduction in the risk of removal for the leaders who had started a conflict while this conflict was ongoing. Otherwise, the tenure costs and benefits appear very uncertain. Eighty-four leaders, that is 18 percent of leaders who lost a crisis, also lost power afterwards. Forty were punished in some manner. The effects of victories and draws were similar: 15 percent and 11 percent of the leaders who won a crisis or reached a draw lost power afterwards.

International conflict might very well be *costly* from the perspective of a state and its populace, but for leaders international conflict triggers political forces that make it more difficult to orchestrate a removal when the conflict is ongoing. When the conflict is over, its outcome factors as only one parameter in a larger array of political forces that combine to drive the probability and manner of losing office.

The findings in these tables, however, only serve to illustrate and describe some basic patterns in the data. While they offer *prima facie* evidence in support of the causal mechanisms in our leader theory of international conflict, they do not directly speak to the political effects of international conflict *compared to staying at peace*. To do so, we turn to statistical modeling in the next section.

3.3 Competing risks: regular and forcible removals

From our theoretical perspective, but also from the perspective of the leaders themselves, staying in power is only one component of what drives policy choices. The preservation of personal freedom and life when out of office is also a fundamental component of leaders' "utility functions." From this assumption, it follows that the analysis of the factors that affect leaders' time in office is not sufficient to explain leaders' decisions to start a conflict, important though it is (Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 2003; Chiozza and Goemans, 2004b). We also need to know what factors influence the *manner* of office removal, that is, not just whether a leader is likely to lose power, but also how a leader loses power. In our analysis, we concentrate on the effects of international conflict, both in terms of conflict participation and conflict outcomes.

Specifically, we test six (of the eight) hypotheses that summarize our theory in Chapter 2.

To answer these questions, we estimate what is known as a competing risks model (Diermeier and Stevenson, 1999; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004), which allows us to examine how a variable affects the timing of one type of office removal *separate* from its effect on the other type of office removal failure.[13] The competing risks model generates two sets of regressions coefficients: those pertaining to the hazard of regular removal and those pertaining to the hazard of forcible removal. In both cases, a positive regression coefficient indicates that, compared to a condition in which no conflict occurred, a given conflict variable *increases* the risk of office removal; a negative coefficient indicates that, compared to no conflict, a conflict variable *decreases* the risk of office removal. We report the coefficients and the 95 percent confidence intervals; confidence intervals that cross zero indicate that there is too much uncertainty in the empirical patterns to claim that a variable is consistently related to office removal.[14]

3.3.1 Testing the hypotheses

In Figure 3.2, we present the results from an encompassing investigation of international conflict for all the leaders in power over an

[13] We estimate competing risks Cox proportional hazard models with a frailty term, clustered at the country level. Tests for the existence of non-proportional hazards yield a non-significant finding both in the global test and in the coefficient tests. We report the full set of results, as well as a discussion of our method, in the Appendix. This approach requires that two fundamental assumptions are satisfied. First, as we posited in the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter, the hazards of losing office for one manner of exit must be independent of the other potential modes of exit. While we leave further details of this approach to the Appendix of this chapter, we briefly note that appropriate statistical tests showed that, as required, the hazards of a regular and a forcible removal from office were indeed statistically independent of each other.

[14] It is important to remember, though, that the mechanisms we developed in Chapter 2 suggest that both the risk of losing office and the risk of conflict initiation could be endogenous. Our competing risks model in this chapter ignores such potential endogeneity. The statistical analysis in the next chapter directly addresses this issue and, thus, offers a second set of empirical tests of different elements of the main causal mechanisms of our theory of conflict onset. The analyses here lay the necessary foundations before we pursue more complicated statistical models.

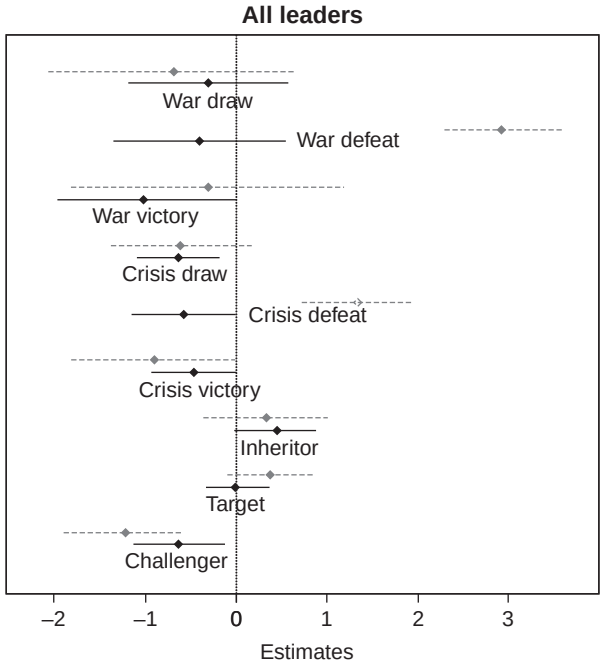

Figure 3.2: International conflict and the manner of losing office

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Table B.44 in the Appendix.

80-year period. As we contended, the disaggregation of the different ways leaders can lose office produces striking results. In a nutshell, there are benefits from international conflict which accrue to leaders if they fight as Challengers. There are uncertain gains from victory. There are *serious* costs for leaders if they lose a war or a crisis. Strikingly, but consistent with our expectations, defeat in an international crisis reduces the risk of regular removal from office.

In more detail, Challengers on average enjoyed significantly lower risks of both a regular and a forcible removal from office, although the effect is both statistically and substantively stronger for the hazard of

a forcible removal.[15] Contrary to the logic of rallying around the flag, where a foreign threat leads to in- or out-group bias and support for the leader, targets did not enjoy a significantly lower hazard of either a regular or a forcible removal from office. Our analysis shows that it is more difficult to unseat an incumbent after he started a conflict. The fact that leaders who started a conflict obtained political benefits gives support for the fighting for survival mechanism we outlined in the previous chapter.

The leaders who entered into office when a conflict was ongoing – the inheritors – were on average more likely to experience a regular removal than leaders who had remained at peace, while they were as likely to be forcibly removed as the leaders who did not fight. The office tenure of inheritors is thus shorter than that of the leaders who did not participate in conflict. What they gain, though, is a lower risk of a forcible removal. If a leader comes into office to bring a conflict to a conclusion, then he will not be able to obtain the political advantages of a Challenger, but at least he will be able to avoid the adverse consequences that might follow from a long and persistent conflict (Croco, 2008).

The remaining six coefficients in Figure 3.2 summarize the effects of conflict outcomes. Focusing first on victory, we see that victory in a crisis and victory in a war both reduced the hazards of either form of removal, although the large confidence intervals indicate that much uncertainty surrounds these estimates. Victory in a crisis decreased the hazard of both a forcible and regular removal from office; while the effect fails to reach the 5% level, it is significant at the 10% level.

Victory in war decreased the hazard of both a regular and a forcible removal from office. The effect of victory on a regular removal again barely misses the 5% level, but is significant at the 10% level. The effect of victory on a forcible removal fails to reach significance. For both the regular and forcible removals from office, the coefficients are offset by large standard errors, indicating the high levels of uncertainty about the political benefits of victory in war. Overall, it appears as if a leader who prevails in a crisis can reduce the prospects of a forcible removal, while victory in a war does not generate similar benefits, as Winston Churchill and George H. W. Bush would certainly attest.

[15] Recall that a leader who initiated a conflict is coded a Challenger for each year of the conflict. Similarly, a defending leader is a Target for each year of the conflict.

A victorious war, thus, seems to hold out the somewhat uncertain prospects of increased time in office (but see Chapter 4); it makes it more likely, though, that when leadership transition takes place, it will follow regular and non-violent processes. This pattern is consistent with the empirical fact that democracies have strong records of war victories (Reiter and Stam, 2002). If the victorious leaders are democratic for the most part, they gain at best some political benefit when they win a war, as indicated by a decreased hazard of regular removal; these benefits, however, are just one of many parameters democratic publics consider when they vote to re-elect the incumbents, which then would account for the uncertainty in this finding. As our *peace through insecurity* mechanism contends, leaders who are predominantly concerned about regular removals have relatively little to gain even from prevailing in international conflicts.

The apparently insignificant effect of victory in war on the hazard of a forcible removal from office also runs contrary to the *gambling for survival* mechanism proposed in the previous chapter. Before we reject this mechanism, however, we need to consider two potential explanations for this apparent insignificance. First, as found by Reiter and Stam III (1998), conflict initiation may significantly increase the probability of victory. As a result, the coefficient for challenging would be inflated while the coefficient for victory would be deflated. Second, victory could have an insignificant effect because of the endogeneity of conflict initiation. We explore these potential confounding factors in the next chapter.

When we examine the effects of defeat, our model reveals a striking pattern. As we claimed in the previous chapter, defeat had either a *decreasing* or an insignificant effect on the hazard of regular removal. Notably, and again confirming our argument, defeat in both crises and wars substantially increased the risk of a forcible removal. Before jumping to the conclusion that *even* in the case of defeat, an international crisis serves as a boon for the political career of a leader, we should explain again why we expected to find a *negative* coefficient on regular removals. The reason is that after a defeat a coercive removal becomes so likely that few leaders managed to avoid it.[16] While only 21

[16] Technically, the leaders who lost power by forcible removal are coded as "censored" in the model that predicts regular removal. Thus, the negative and significant coefficient (p-value = 0.054) on the crisis defeat variable is generated by the fact that many leaders left the sample as censored in the regular removal model.

percent of the leaders who did *not* lose an international crisis stepped out of office by forcible means, the percentage nearly doubled (39%) among the leaders who *did* lose an international crisis. If we look at the findings on the two manners of leadership turnover simultaneously, therefore, we see that a defeat triggered strong political dynamics that led to coercive and irregular losses of power for many leaders. The leaders who managed to prevent a forcible removal were of a special kind: tyrants and charismatic leaders like Kim Il-Sung, Marshal Tito, King Hussein of Jordan, or Fidel Castro. As we see in Table 3.5, all the leaders who were still in power fifteen years after a defeat in a crisis or a war were leaders that, for better or worse, made history for their countries.

These findings about defeat directly contradict the logic of the traditional *gambling for resurrection* argument (Richards *et al.*, 1993; Downs and Rocke, 1994) which assumes that the punishment of leaders is truncated at the mere loss of office. We find, to the contrary, that the punishment for defeat typically implies a forcible removal from office, with its associated unpleasant subsequent consequences for leaders. The punishment for war defeat is, therefore, *expanded* and not truncated. A leader who is about to lose power cannot view war just as a risky gamble whose potential negative consequence is the "mere" loss of office. A war that ends in defeat implies more than loss of office. It implies a high risk of *loss of life* or *liberty*.

Finally, we find that draws in crises reduced the hazard of regular removal, but did not have a statistically significant impact on the hazard of forcible removal. We also find that draws in war did not significantly affect either manner of losing office. When both sides to a conflict can claim they obtained something, either because they managed to reach a compromise or they fought and bargained to a stalemate, they were not any better or any worse off than a leader who stayed at peace.

If taken as a whole, the findings in Figure 3.2 show that, on average, the leaders who started a conflict and kept it to the level of low intensity of a crisis were able to benefit from more secure time in office, as long as they were not defeated. International conflict would seem to bring uncertain benefits, but can be quite costly in case of defeat for leaders who anticipate a forcible removal from office. These results, however, do not take into consideration the domestic political conditions in which conflict might make a difference, and as such, they can

Table 3.5: *Leaders in power after fifteen years of a defeat in a war or crisis*

Leader	Country	In power		Manner of exit
		from	to	
Biya	Cameroon	1982–11–06	2004–12–31	In power
Castro	Cuba	1959–01–02	2004–12–31	In power
Masaryk	Czechoslovakia	1918–10–28	1935–12–14	Ill health
Husak	Czechoslovakia	1968–08–28	1989–12–17	Regular
Mobutu	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	1965–11–25	1997–05–16	Forcible
Rafael Trujillo	Dominican Republic	1930–08–16	1961–05–30	Forcible
Rawlings	Ghana	1981–12–31	2001–01–07	Regular
Hussein Ibn Talal El-Hashim	Jordan	1952–08–11	1999–02–07	Natural death
Qaddafi	Libya	1969–09–01	2004–12–31	In power
Kim Il-Sung	North Korea	1948–09–09	1994–07–08	Natural death
Al-Assad H.	Syria	1971–02–22	2000–06–10	Natural death
Chiang Kai-shek	Taiwan	1950–03–01	1975–04–05	Natural death
Yahya	Yemen Arab Republic	1904–06–04	1948–02–17	Forcible
Tito	Yugoslavia	1945–03–06	1980–05–04	Natural death
Kaunda	Zambia	1964–10–24	1991–11–02	Regular

only serve as a broad baseline. Obviously, factors other than international conflict affect the fate of leaders (Goemans, 2008).[17] In the next section, we investigate which leaders, under which conditions, might find international conflict politically beneficial.

3.4 Under what conditions?

We analyze whether, compared to the general case we have analyzed so far, domestic political institutions, domestic unrest, economic development, and growth change the costs and benefits of international conflict for leaders' personal and political well-being.[18] These four different conditions address specific assumptions of our theory; i.e. the ability to commit to safeguard the fate of deposed leaders, which is related to the nature of domestic political institutions and the level of economic development of a country; the existence of a high risk of forcible removal, which we measure by the involvement in a civil war; and the role of unexpected shocks to a leader's capabilities and legitimacy, as they are captured in the disruption to the normal patterns of functioning of the economy that occurs during a recession.

3.4.1 Conflict and domestic political institutions

In the footsteps of Riker (1982), we argued in Chapter 2 that the development of domestic political institutions is closely tied with credible guarantees of the leader's post-tenure safety. These credible guarantees of safety are in turn closely related with how leaders lose office. Riker (ibid.) suggested that these guarantees were a hallmark of democracy. We would therefore expect that democratic leaders are significantly

[17] In a recent analysis, Goemans (2008) has presented an extensive model of the causes of office removal. For instance, a poor growth rate assuredly increases the hazard of a regular as well as an irregular removal from office.

[18] Rather than estimating an encompassing model with a long list of potential control variables, we "split the samples," that is, we evaluate the impact of conflict in a set of countries and leaders who meet a specific condition. Our approach complements the larger analysis presented in Goemans (2008). As is the case for the model in Figure 3.2, we estimate competing risks Cox proportional hazard models with a frailty term, clustered at the country level. We add a penalty term to the likelihood for the parameters associated with variables where no failure outcomes occur, i.e. the "empty cell" problem (Therneau and Grambsch, 2000, 120–4).

less likely to lose office in a forcible manner.[19] Therefore, we rely on regime type as a – noisy – indicator for political institutions that can or cannot credibly guarantee the leader's post-tenure safety. Autocracies and mixed regimes, then, are systems that lack such institutions and as such should be typically associated with the forcible process of leader removal. Presidential and parliamentary democracies should be systems that do provide credible guarantees and thus should be associated with regular removals from office.

If this classification captures our theoretical distinction, international conflict should have the effects postulated by our theory most strongly for leaders of autocracies and mixed regimes. These provide the weakest protections for leaders and thus tend to remove their leaders in a forcible manner. We would thus expect that for leaders of autocracies and mixed regimes, Challenging lowers their hazard of a forcible removal from office, while democratic leaders would gain less, if any, advantage from Challenging. The leaders that rule in autocratic and mixed regimes, in other words, would be the ones that gain the most from fighting for survival. For leaders of democracies, on the other hand, the combination of insecurity *in office* and security *out of office* makes staying at peace a preferable option for their political careers.

In Figure 3.3, we show that domestic political institutions do indeed significantly mediate how international conflict roles and outcomes affect the tenure of leaders. First, we find that international conflict presents significant risks and benefits for Autocratic leaders, especially with respect to the prospect of forcible removal. If they start a conflict, Autocrats can expect to strengthen their hold on power as long as a conflict they initiated is ongoing. Only one leader in our data, Ioannides of Greece, was removed from power regularly while still in the role of Challenger. If we consider that this event occurred during the final days of the Greek regime of the Colonels, we can conclude that autocratic

[19] This expectation is borne out in Goemans (2008), who found that leaders of parliamentary and presidential democracies enjoy a lower hazard of a forcible removal from office than do autocratic leaders and leaders of mixed regimes. The difference between presidential and autocratic leaders did not reach statistical significance. Leaders of parliamentary democracies were not significantly different from leaders of presidential democracies. See an "Additional" paper accompanying Goemans (2008), available at http://mail.rochester.edu/~hgoemans/research.htm.

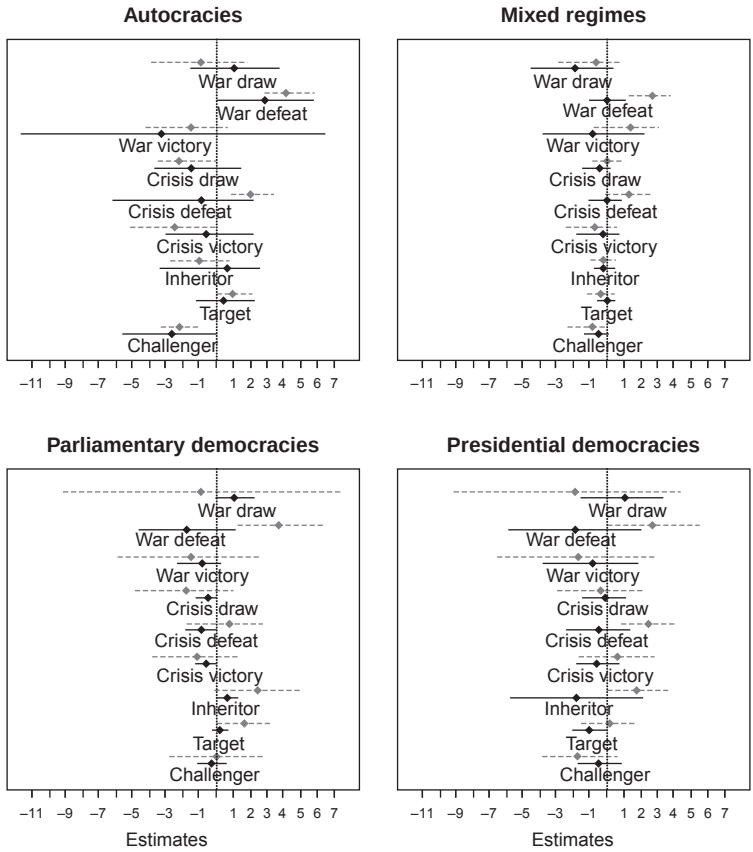

Figure 3.3: The manner of losing office: conflict and domestic political institutions

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.45, B.46, B.47, and B.48 in the Appendix.

leaders have a substantial track record of avoiding regular removals as Challengers.

Analogously, only six autocratic Challenger leaders were forcibly removed from power. These leaders, who are listed in Table 3.6,

Table 3.6: ***Autocratic challengers who suffered a forcible removal***

		In power		
Leader	Country	from	to	Fate
Mullah Omar	Afghanistan	1996–09–27	2001–11–13	Unknown
Galtieri	Argentina	1981–12–12	1982–06–17	Jail
Hitler	Germany	1933–01–30	1945–04–30	Suicide
Mussolini	Italy	1922–10–30	1943–07–25	Killed
El-Atassi, N.	Syria	1966–02–25	1970–11–13	Jail
Amin	Uganda	1971–01–25	1979–04–11	Exile

Table 3.7: ***Autocratic targets who suffered a forcible removal***

		In power			Externally
Leader	Country	from	to	Fate	deposed?
Zogu	Albania	1925–01–10	1939–04–12	Exile	Yes
Schuschnigg	Austria	1934–07–30	1938–03–11	Jail	Yes
Sihanouk	Cambodia	1953–11–09	1970–03–18	Exile	No
Pol Pot	Cambodia	1975–04–11	1979–01–07	OK	Yes
Sampson	Cyprus	1974–07–16	1974–07–23	Jail	No
Dubcek	Czechoslovakia	1968–01–05	1968–08–20	Jail	Yes
Cedras	Haiti	1991–09–30	1994–10–14	Exile	Yes
Kun	Hungary	1919–03–21	1919–08–01	Exile	Yes
Nagy	Hungary	1956–10–25	1956–11–04	Jail	Yes
Saddam Hussein	Iraq	1979–07–16	2003–04–09	Jail	Yes
Jabir As-Sabah	Kuwait	1978–01–01	1990–08–02	Exile	Yes
Jonathan	Lesotho	1966–10–04	1986–01–20	Exile	No
Anastasio Somoza Debayle	Nicaragua	1967–05–01	1979–07–17	Killed	No
Noriega	Panama	1983–08–15	1990–01–03	Jail	Yes

however, owe their fate to the fact that were also on the losing side of the conflict in which they were involved. We also find that Autocratic leaders who were targeted in a conflict were more likely to suffer a forcible removal. Indeed, as we illustrate in Table 3.7, ten of the

fourteen Target leaders who lost power in a forcible manner were deposed by a foreign country.

Once the conflict terminates, Autocratic leaders gained some benefits from Victories and Draws in crises, but incurred large tenure punishments from Defeats. The sign and size of the coefficients for Victories and Draws indicate that the chances to remain in power and to avoid a coercive removal from power improve. The large standard errors, however, show that the effects of Victory and Draws are relatively uncertain – most likely because few Autocrats manage to prevail in War and Crises (Gelpi and Griesdorf, 2001; Reiter and Stam, 2002). Moreover, to add uncertainty to this finding, the Autocrats who prevailed in war often ended up suffering major defeats as well, as was the case for King Hussein of Jordan, Nasser, Hitler, and Mussolini. Saddam Hussein is a perfect illustration of how short-lived the benefits of war can be for an authoritarian leader. He conquered Kuwait in 1990 allegedly dampening the risk of a coup, only to be defeated by a large international coalition a few months later. The defeat heightened the risk of an insurrection, which Saddam Hussein brutally repressed to reconsolidate his power.

Defeats were another matter. Losing a war increased the hazard of both forms of removal. The effects of losing a crisis were no less damaging. While the coefficient on crisis defeat is statistically insignificant, and negative, this estimate is due to the fact that the leaders who lost a crisis experienced a disproportionately high rate of forcible removals, which implies that few leaders remained at risk of a regular removal. Those who avoided a coercive removal from power remained in office for long spells – from three years in the case of Kruschev to fourteen and twenty-two years in the case of Nyerere and Husak, respectively – before losing power in a regular manner. Taken together, the results suggest that autocratic leaders might both *fight* and *gamble for survival*, although the latter mechanism appears most likely to work to the Autocrat's advantage as long as he can limit the conflict to a crisis.

For leaders of mixed regimes and of democratic regimes, we find only a few systematic patterns in the data. As postulated, Challenging leaders of mixed regimes lowered their risk of a forcible removal from office. The effect (just barely) fails to reach significance at the 5% level but is significant at the 10% level.[20] Thus, for leaders of mixed

[20] As we report in Table B.46 in the Appendix, the significance levels are 0.083 and 0.114, respectively in the case of forcible and regular removal.

regimes, international conflict initiation appears to bring relatively uncertain benefits. Moreover, victory does not reduce the probability of a forcible removal from office. Defeat, on the other hand, significantly increases the risk of a forcible removal, particularly if the conflict escalated to war. Given that we postulated mixed regimes would lack the institutions to protect leaders after they lose office, these results are disappointing for the *fighting for survival* mechanism, but not sufficient to outright reject it. Leaders of mixed regimes can still fight for survival, because Challengers do gain some reduced hazard of a forcible removal.

Leaders of democracies, in contrast, enjoy the safeguards after their retirement; they therefore need not fear a forcible removal from office and thus have little to gain from conflict initiation or victory. As expected, leaders of both presidential and parliamentary democracies do not appear to fight or gamble for survival: Challenging does not affect their hazard of either a forcible or regular removal from office, and neither does victory.

Very few other conflict variables achieved statistical significance: leaders of parliamentary democracies who were attacked face an increased hazard of forcible removal; inheritors in parliamentary democracies face an increased hazard of regular removal. These significant findings, though, reflect very specific conditions. Three of the four democratic prime ministers who lost power irregularly after an attack were the leaders defeated by Nazi Germany in the terrible year of 1940.[21] The cases of democratic prime ministers inheriting a conflict and losing power shortly afterwards were predominantly in the French Fourth Republic (nine cases) and in Spain during the Civil War (three cases).

It might seem puzzling to observe that in the case of democratic prime ministers a defeat in a crisis has a negative and significant coefficient on regular removal, and a non-significant coefficient on forcible removal. Recall, however, that we predicted in the previous chapter that defeat might actually lower the risk of a regular removal from office. Certainly, the fact that, of the twenty-one prime ministers who lost an international crisis, only two – Yitzhak Rabin of Israel in 1995

[21] The fourth leader was Sayyid Khalil of Sudan, who lost power in a bloodless coup in November of 1958 during a period of tensions with Nasser's Egypt. Specifically, Khalil was involved in a minor border dispute with Egypt in February of 1958.

and Omar Sharif of Pakistan in 1999 – lost power irregularly afterwards explains why there is no systematic relation between crisis defeat and forcible removal. Of the remaining leaders, fifteen lost power by regular means; one, Stauning of Denmark in 1940, died of natural causes in office two years later; one, Borden of Canada, retired because of ill-health in 1920; and another one, Simitis of Greece, was still in power at the end of 2003, the last year in our data set. Table 3.8 lists all the cases of defeated prime ministers, and the time elapsed from the crisis defeat to the loss of office.

3.4.2 *Conflict and domestic political unrest*

How does international conflict alter the timing and manner of losing power for leaders who face severe domestic political unrest in the form of a civil war?[22] If we take civil war as indicative of the absence of credible guarantees of the leader's safety and of a high risk of losing office in a forcible manner, this amounts to a most likely scenario for the *fighting for survival* mechanism. Therefore, we would expect Challenging to significantly decrease the risk of a forcible removal from office for a leader engaged in a civil war, while having no impact on the risk of regular removals. Importantly, though, this analysis also offers an additional contribution to the study of warfare, beside assessing one of the causal mechanisms of our theory. Given the pervasive spillover effects of domestic unrest into international conflict, as documented in Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz (2008), our empirical analysis also grounds the processes of externalization into the domestic political incentives of leaders who care about surviving politically *and* personally.

In Figure 3.4 we report the findings of the competing risks model for the leaders involved in a civil war.[23] We find that in general, international conflict – both in terms of roles and of outcomes – did not affect processes of regular leadership turnover. None of the conflict coefficients was large enough to be statistically discernible from a null

[22] Goemans (2008) found that, as one would expect, leaders who experienced a civil war were less likely to be removed from office in a regular manner. Interestingly, Goemans also found that for leaders caught in a civil war, the risks of a forcible removal increased over time.

[23] We report the findings for the leaders who enjoyed domestic political peace in Table B.50 in the Appendix.

Table 3.8: *Leaders of parliamentary democracies and crisis defeat*

Country	Leader	Year	Conflict	Adversary	Out of power
Belgium	van Zeeland	1936	Remilit. of Rhineland	Germany	1937–10–25
Belgium	Lefevre	1962	Katanga	Dem. Rep. of Congo	1965–07–27
Canada	Borden	1919	Russian Civil War	Russia	1920–06–10
Denmark	Stauning	1940	WWII	Germany	1940–04–09
France	Millerand	1920	Russian Civil War	Russia	1920–09–03
France	Sarraut	1936	Remilit. of Rhineland	Germany	1936–06–03
France	Chautemps	1938	Alexandretta	Turkey	1938–03–12
France	Daladier	1938	Alexandretta	Turkey	1940–03–21
France	Daladier	1939	Alexandretta	Turkey	1940–03–21
Germany	Adenauer	1961	Berlin Wall	DDR	1963–10–15
Greece	Simitis	1996	Aegean Sea	Turkey	2004–03–10
Israel	Ben Gurion	1949	Sinai Incursion	UK	1953–12–08
Israel	Ben Gurion	1956	Suez	USSR	1963–06–16
Israel	Begin	1981	Al-Biqa Missiles	Syria	1983–10–10
Israel	Rabin	1993	Operation Accountability	Lebanon	1995–11–04
Pakistan	Sharif	1999	Kashmir Kargil	India	1999–10–12
Turkey	Demirel	1976	Aegean Sea	Greece	1977–06–21
Turkey	Demirel	1992	Nagorny-Karabakh	Armenia	1993–05–16
United Kingdom	Lloyd-George	1919	Russian Civil War	Russia	1922–10–19
United Kingdom	Churchill	1940	Closure Burma Road	Japan	1945–07–27
United Kingdom	MacMillan	1961	Berlin Wall	DDR	1963–10–18

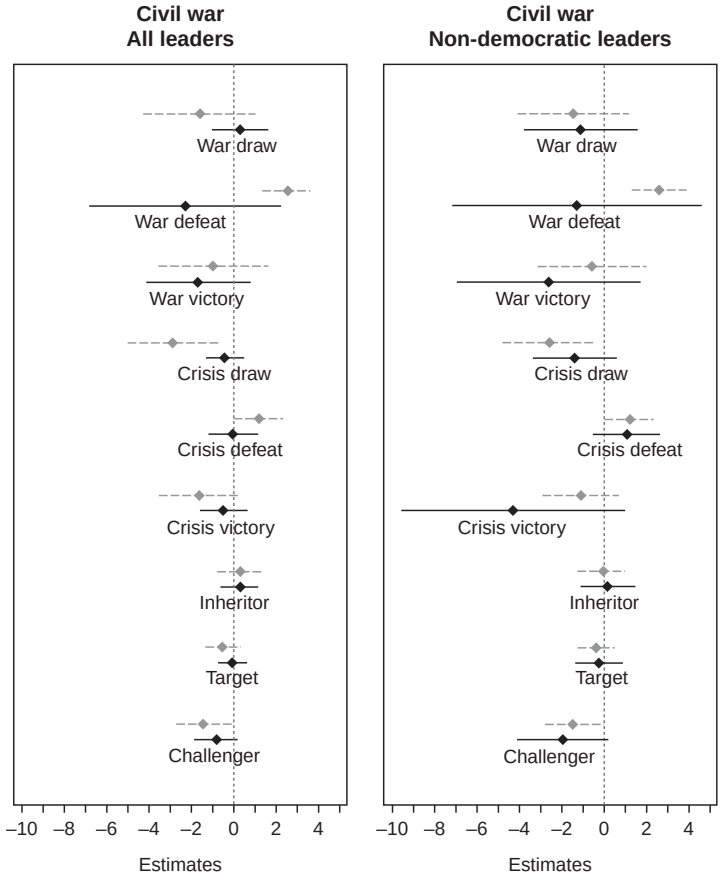

Figure 3.4: The manner of losing office: conflict and domestic political unrest

Note: we report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.49 and B.51 in the Appendix.

effect. Of the 327 leaders who stepped out of power while a civil war was ongoing, 129 (39%) suffered a forcible removal, while 181 (55%) left power in regular way, and 17 (5%) were still in power at the end of our period of analysis. More leaders, thus, left power in a regular

manner than otherwise. This result underscores the experience of countries like Britain, Israel, and India, that suffered serious domestic political unrest. For British, Israeli, and Indian leaders, a civil war was certainly a political concern, a national tragedy, and occasionally a threat to their lives. In these cases, however, the risk that the civil war would imperil the foundations of regular processes of leadership turnover was inconceivable. It is not surprising, therefore, that we found no connections between civil war, international conflict, and regular removal.

For leaders who would face removal with punishment, however, international conflict opened up a window of opportunity for their survival. Initiating an international conflict in the midst of a civil war significantly reduced the hazard of a coercive leadership change. In our sample, there were eleven leaders who lost power while they were involved simultaneously in an international conflict they had started and in a civil war; four were forcibly removed – Mullah Omar of Afghanistan, Patrick Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Idi Amin of Uganda, and Al-Sallal of the Yemen Arab Republic; five lost power regularly – Habibie of Indonesia, Golda Meir and Menachem Begin of Israel, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, and Namaliu of Papua New Guinea; and two died a natural death in office – Neto of Angola, and Eshkol of Israel. Most often, the leaders who initiated a conflict during a civil war managed to avoid removal at a remarkable rate. Of the 55 leaders who took the risk of initiating a conflict during a civil war, 44 were able to stay in power throughout the duration of the conflict. Under conditions of a civil war, fighting helped survival.

Once the conflict was over, only defeats strongly affected the risk of forcible removal. Of the ten leaders who lost a war when their countries were undergoing major domestic unrest, only two – Ben Gurion and Nehru – were not removed with force. Of the remaining eight, only one, the Cambodian tyrant Pol Pot, avoided punishment after losing office.[24]

If defeats were a nearly sure recipe for punishment, victories and draws were not systematically associated with the fate of leaders. The

[24] The negative and insignificant coefficient on war defeat in the model predicting regular removal is due to the fact that only one leader, Ben Gurion, experienced such an outcome, seven years after the Suez debacle.

large negative signs indicated that victories and draws improved survival prospects; the large confidence intervals indicated the high degrees of uncertainty associated with their effects. Among the ten war victors, for example, we have democratic leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Golda Meir who did not suffer punishment, on the one hand, and dictators like Mengistu Mariam of Ethiopia and Habre of Angola who were sent to exile, on the other. Overall, then, as long as they avoided defeat, the leaders who initiated an international conflict "bought" extra time in office for themselves while the conflict was ongoing, and some risky chances of making it fine at the end of it. If the alternative was a high risk of punishment in the *absence* of an international conflict, we see why leaders have personal political incentives to externalize conflict during civil war.

When we distinguish between democratic and non-democratic (i.e. both authoritarian and mixed regimes), we find that the personal and political fates of the non-democratic leaders drove our results (right panel of Figure 3.4). For democratic leaders, international conflict during civil war did not have any discernible impact on their survival as leaders.[25] After all, there were only thirteen democratic leaders who suffered a forcible removal from power when their countries were involved in a civil war. Of these leaders, *none* had either initiated a conflict or suffered an attack; only one – Miaja of Spain – had suffered a defeat in a war that he had "inherited" in 1939. The benefits and costs of conflict during civil war only accrued to the non-democratic leaders.

The results strongly suggest that non-democratic leaders involved in a civil conflict *fight for survival*, since Challenging clearly reduced their risk of a forcible removal from office. We suspect that leaders involved in a civil war initiate an international conflict to deal, not so much with their international enemies, as to deal with domestic enemies. Operations to eliminate safe havens across the border can significantly reduce a leader's risk of a forcible removal. As suggested in Chapter 2, victory against a foreign leader and country does not appear to be necessary to obtain the private benefits of conflict. We find less evidence in favor of *gambling for survival*, since victory does not appear to significantly affect either manner of losing office. However,

[25] The findings for the democratic leaders are reported in Table B.52 in the Appendix.

as noted above, this might be the result of the endogeneity of conflict initiation or of the fact that initiation is significantly associated with victory.

3.4.3 Conflict and economic development

In Figure 3.5, we distinguish three levels of economic development: (*a*) poor countries; (*b*) middle-income countries; and (*c*) rich countries.[26] Building upon one of the most venerable research traditions in comparative politics (Lipset, 1959; Huntington, 1968; Przeworski *et al.*, 2000), we contend that relatively under-developed countries systematically lack the political institutions to guarantee political leaders their safety after they lose office, and thus should be most likely to exhibit the process of forcible removals from office.[27] If this conjecture is correct, we would expect conflict to have the biggest effect on the forcible removal from office among the poorer countries. In other words, Challenging should decrease the risk of a forcible removal from office among poor, but not among rich countries.

Both among poor and rich countries, international conflict does not have much to offer to leaders. Starting from the right panel, we find that defeat in war increased the risk of regular and irregular removals for leaders of wealthy countries, while neither victory nor a draw significantly affected leaders' survival. To have a sense of this pattern, we should note that seventeen leaders of wealthy countries achieved victories in war. All these leaders but one – Al-Assad of Syria – were democratic leaders – from Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Israel, New Zealand, and the United States. None of these leaders suffered a forcible removal; none suffered any form of punishment.

On the other hand, there were only five "rich losers." Of these, two were forcibly removed – General Galtieri of Argentina in 1982 and Kuwatli of Syria in 1949; two were removed regularly – Ioannides of

[26] We define economic development on the basis of the distribution of the GDP per capita (logged) of the countries in our sample. Poor countries are those in the bottom 20% of the distribution (below $990); middle-income countries are those between the 20th and the 80th percentile in the distribution; and rich countries are those in the top 80% of the distribution (above $6,180).

[27] Goemans (2008) did indeed find that countries with a higher GDP per capita are significantly less likely to experience a forcible removal from office.

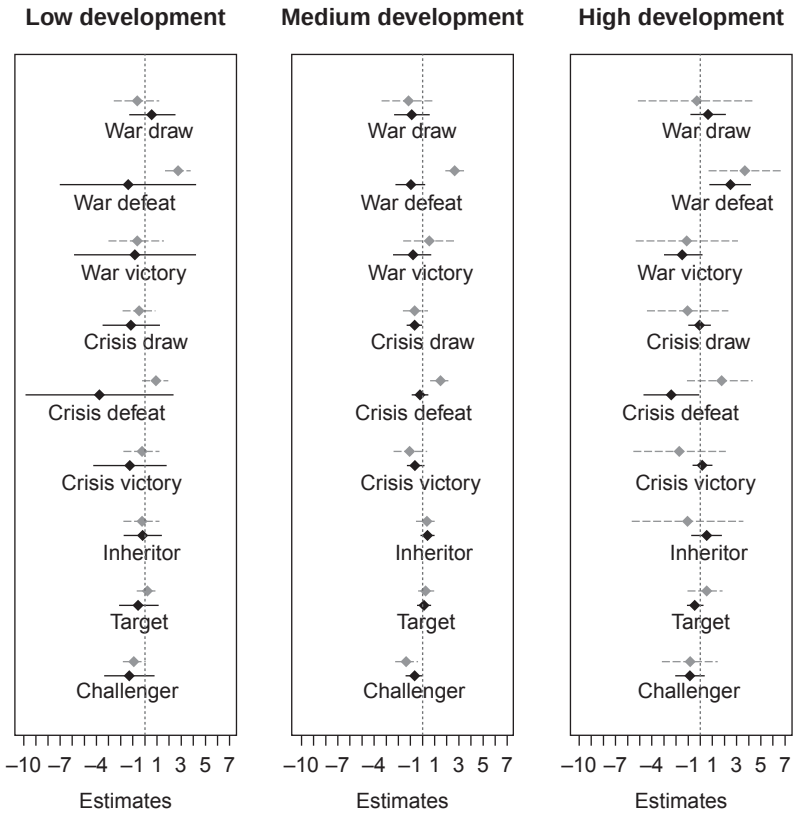

Figure 3.5: The manner of losing office: conflict and economic development

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.53, B.54, and B.55 in the Appendix.

Greece in 1974 and Costa Gomes of Portugal in 1976; one died in office – Al-Assad of Syria in 2000, who also claimed a victory.

Analogously, we also find that international conflict was not a major determinant of leaders' fate in poor countries. Again, a war defeat significantly increased the hazard of forcible removal, while we estimated

that a defeat in war had no effect on the hazard of regular removal. No leader in a poor country who suffered a defeat in war lost power in a regular manner. All the "poor losers" were forcibly removed, with the exception of the democratic leader of India, Nehru, who died in office. All the leaders forcibly removed, with the exception of Pol Pot, also suffered punishment: Zogu of Albania (1939), Mobutu of the Democratic Republic of Congo (1997), Farouk of Egypt (1952), Selassie of Ethiopia (1936), and Idi Amin of Uganda (1979) were sent to exile; Yahya Khan of Pakistan (1971) was imprisoned; and Yahya of the Yemen Arab Republic (1948) was killed.[28]

All the "action" in terms of conflict effects and leaders' survival takes place among the middle-income countries. There we find that defeats and initiation were significantly associated with leaders' fate, while victory and draw in crisis were close to statistical significance. To explore how the effects of economic development mix with those of regime type, we "split" the group of middle-income countries again, this time adding the distinction between democratic and non-democratic countries.

In Figure 3.6, we find that in countries that have reached medium levels of economic development, democratic leaders were rewarded with lower hazards of regular removal from office after victories in crises. Initiating a conflict, on the other hand, did not generate tenure benefits. For the democratic leaders in middle-income countries, conflict was a political resource when they could claim that a victory in the international arena was a sign of their superior competence. Unlike the leaders of non-democratic countries where the risk of a forcible removal is high, however, the leaders of middle-income democracies could not use international conflict to disrupt potential coup plotters by sending them to the front. The insignificant coefficient on the variable measuring whether a leader started the conflict underscores a specific aspect of the relationship between conflict and

[28] The negative and insignificant coefficient, therefore, indicates that all the possible regular removals were censored events. This coefficient can only be estimated by placing a penalty term for it in the likelihood. The fact that there are no failure events for the war defeat implies a monotone likelihood with infinite coefficient and standard error. The penalty term "shrinks" the coefficient towards zero (Therneau and Grambsch, 2000). For an example of this problem, also see Goemans (2000a), as well as the discussion in Section B.5 in the Appendix.

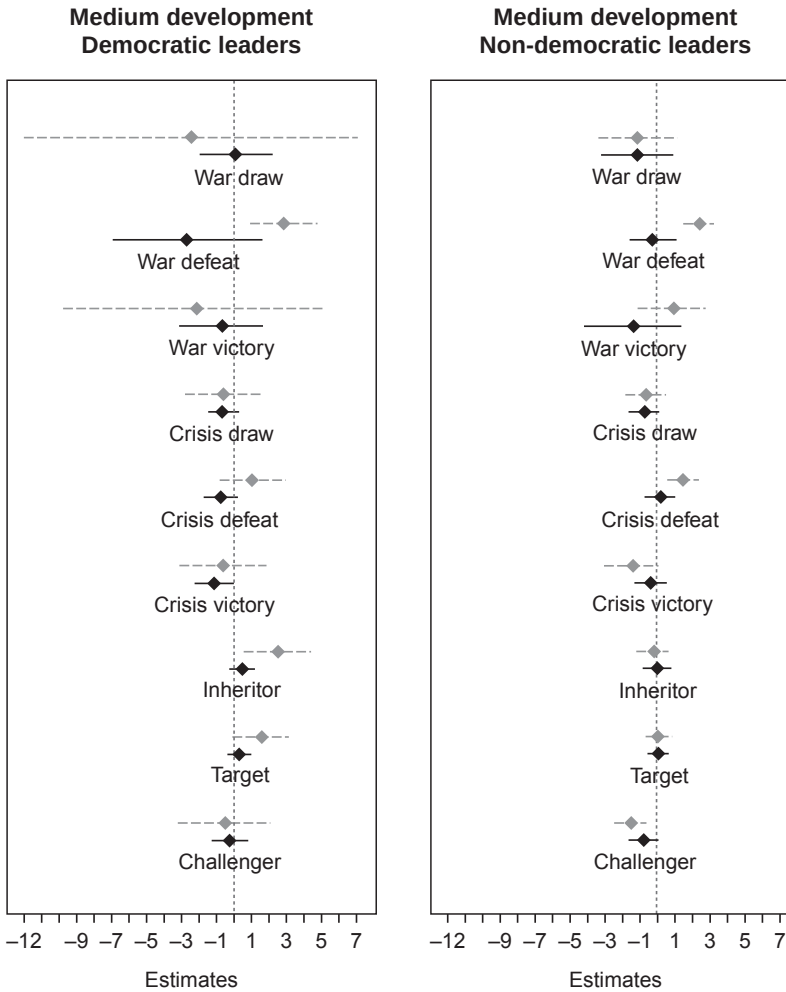

Figure 3.6: The manner of losing office: conflict, regime type and economic development

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.56, and B.57 in the Appendix.

tenure in countries where the life and liberty of the leaders is hardly at risk.

International conflict, however, also entailed substantial risks for the leaders of middle-income democracies. When their countries were targeted in an international conflict, they experienced increased risk of forcible removal, a fate that befell six of them – Pierlot, de Geer, and Nygaardsvold at the hands of Nazi Germany in 1940; Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus in 1974, Shagari of Nigeria in 1983, and Bosch of the Dominican Republic in 1963. Tenure was also shorter and more likely to end in a forcible manner for the middle-income democratic leaders who "inherited" a conflict when they acceded to power. The leaders in question were predominantly the leaders of the French Fourth Republic between 1920 and 1949, and the leaders of Spain at the time of the Civil War.[29] Should a war end in defeat, the middle-income democratic leaders faced serious risks of forcible removal. A war defeat occurred to only six leaders; three were forcibly removed: Miaja of Spain, Pierlot of Belgium, and Nygaardsvold of Norway; of the remaining three, two were removed regularly – Ben Gurion of Israel and Briand of France; one, Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, retired because of ill-health in 1935, more than 15 years after suffering a war defeat against Hungary.[30]

In the right panel of Figure 3.6, we also find that international conflict substantially affected leaders' fate in middle-income non-democratic countries. This time, however, initiating a conflict rather than winning mattered. Challengers were significantly less likely to suffer a regular removal, and with slightly weaker statistical significance, to experience a forcible removal. Conflict outcomes, on the other hand, were mostly ineffectual, with the exception of losing. In the case of regimes where coups were not just a distant prospect, leaders were able to maneuver their domestic opponents by initiating a conflict, and thus secure for themselves reduced chances of a forcible removal. As before, these findings indicate support for the *fighting for survival* mechanism, but not for *gambling for survival*.

[29] We already identified these leaders when we discussed the fate of prime ministers in parliamentary democracies.

[30] The paucity of cases of democratic leaders losing a war generates the negative and highly insignificant coefficient in the model predicting regular removals.

3.4.4 Conflict and economic growth

The final set of conditions we investigate is the state of the economy. We concentrate on the most dire situation, negative economic growth. This scenario should arguably come closest to capturing a temporary shock in the leader's legitimacy and capabilities. As the literature on civil war has extensively documented, coups and domestic political unrest become more likely when the economy suddenly declines (Londregan and Poole, 1990; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004), which in turn should make conflict initiation most attractive for leaders who now anticipate a forcible removal from office. As a result, we expect Challenging to pay for leaders experiencing negative economic growth and less, if at all, for leaders experiencing positive growth.

The presence of severe economic recession affected about one-third of the observations in our data, an outcome common enough to make the analysis relevant. Overall, the findings in Figure 3.7 are not that different from those we just discussed for non-democratic leaders of middle-income countries. When the economy tanked, the leaders who started a conflict saw their survival chances improve. Similarly, the outcomes of conflict, with the exception of defeat, were not systematically related to the fate of leaders. For comparison, we also report the results we obtained when we estimated our competing risks model on the leaders who were in power when the economy was experiencing positive growth. In general, we did not find any new or relevant patterns under such a broad condition as positive economic growth. Sudden "jumps" in the economy, steady slow progress, and double-digit growth are all different conditions that are lumped together in the blanket category of positive growth.

A disproportionate number (76%) of the observations in the sample of countries experiencing severe economic recession were non-democratic, either authoritarian or mixed regimes. We, therefore, disentangle some of the forces that change the effects of international conflict on leaders during good and bad economic times by focusing on non-democratic leaders and on leaders of middle-income countries.

In the top part of Figure 3.8, we show that for non-democratic leaders, international conflict provided a risky but beneficial strategy for their survival when the economy was in bad condition, but not when it was in good shape. Only the coefficient measuring the impact of

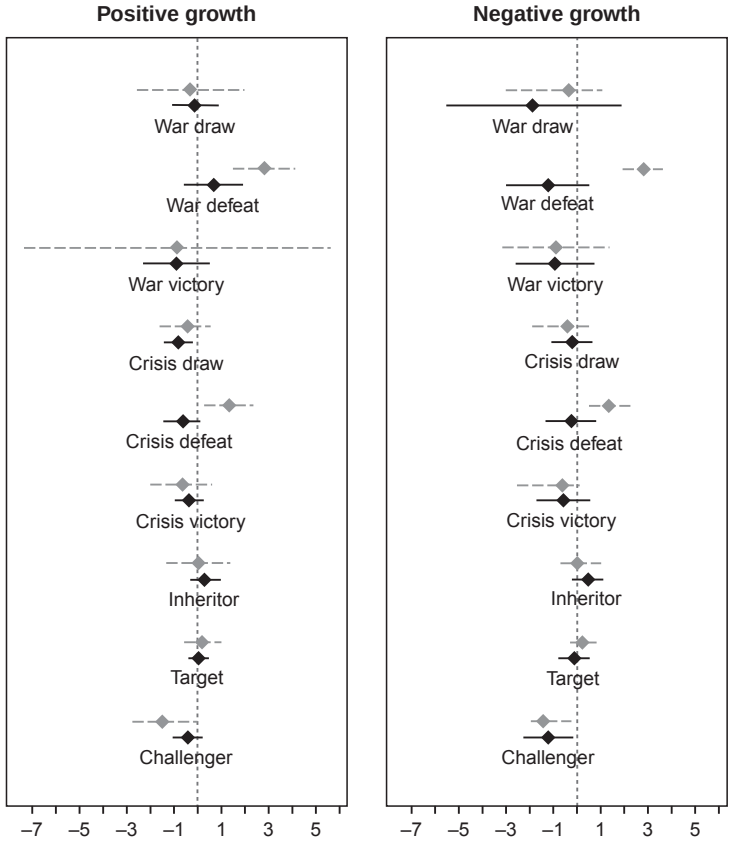

Figure 3.7: The manner of losing office: conflict and economic growth

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.58, and B.59 in the Appendix.

war defeat on forcible removal was statistically discernible from zero when a country was experiencing positive growth. All the other coefficients were close to zero, or had very large standard errors. Leaders who managed to keep the economy growing did not find it necessary or helpful to resort to international conflict to bolster their prospects

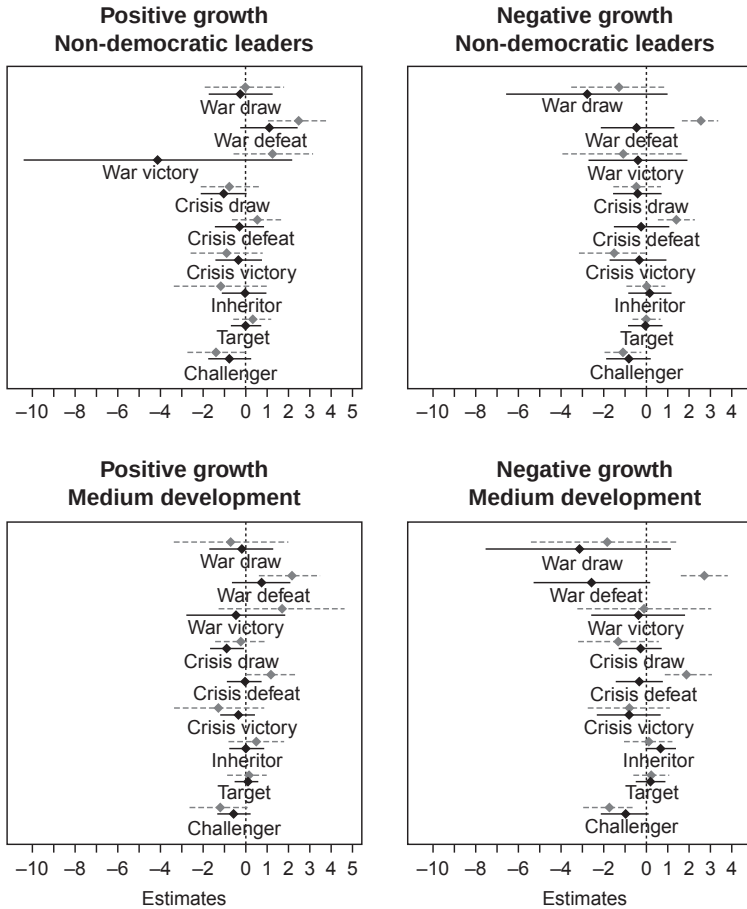

Figure 3.8: The manner of losing office: conflict and economic growth for middle-income and non-democratic leaders

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a competing risks Cox proportional hazard model with a frailty term. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the hazard of office removal; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in the hazard of office removal. These results can be found in Tables B.60, B.61, B.62, and B.63 in the Appendix.

in office. When the economy was in dire straits, however, starting a conflict provided the opportunity to postpone a forcible removal. Certainly, the leaders who made that decision took a risk. If their gamble ended in defeat, they would expose themselves to heightened risks of forcible removal. But if the risk of being thrown out of office violently, with its associated risk of punishment, was already high, international conflict paid off.

A similar pattern emerges in the bottom part of Figure 3.8 where we investigate how international conflict and economic conditions interacted in the group of middle-income countries. Again when the economy was good, the leaders of middle-income countries did not find their fate in office systematically affected by international conflict. When the economy was doing poorly, however, starting a conflict reduced the hazards of both regular and forcible removals.

Overall, there were fifty-six leaders of middle-income countries that started a conflict when the economy was in a recession. Only six of these lost power when they were involved in the conflict they started. All the others pushed the day of their political reckoning further away in time. The leaders who lost power included the leaders of the Axis countries: Hitler, who committed suicide, Mussolini, and Tojo.

If negative economic growth represents a temporary shock to the leader's capabilities and legitimacy, we would expect leaders of countries that cannot credibly guarantee their safety after losing office to gain from conflict initiation. Accordingly, leaders of non-democracies or medium levels of development should gain a lower hazard of a forcible removal from office. Leaders of developed or democratic countries, in contrast, should have little reason to fear a forcible removal from office and therefore have little to gain from conflict initiation. These patterns are confirmed in the data, and indicate support for our *fighting for survival* mechanism. The results provide only very tentative support for *gambling for survival*, since victories in crises hold out only uncertain benefits.

3.4.5 Summary

What do all these findings amount to? Our analyses probed into the costs and benefits of conflict for leaders that face different risks of forcible and regular removal. The differences in the chances of either type of removal might be due to structural conditions, such as

economic and political institutions that do not guarantee safe retirements, or to specific events unfolding in their countries, such as domestic political unrest or economic recession. In either set of circumstances, we documented how leaders who are afraid of losing power through forcible means stand to benefit from initiating conflicts, as long as they manage to avoid defeat in the end. Winning, on the other hand, generates too uncertain benefits to motivate leaders.

Specifically, both Autocratic and Mixed regimes lack the provisions that can effectively guarantee leaders their safety after losing office. As a result, leaders in these systems are likely to lose office in a forcible manner and have the most to gain from the initiation from conflict. As expected, we found that Challenging autocratic leaders lowers their risk of a forcible removal from office, although Challenging brought only relatively uncertain benefits to leaders of mixed regimes.

The converse relation also applies. When leaders are reasonably confident about their lives and freedom out of office, as is the case for leaders in Democracies, they would have little to benefit from initiating conflict. Indeed, democratic leaders did not lower their already low risk of a forcible removal, nor did they postpone their regular removal by resorting to international conflict. Given that leaders in Democracies do not have much to gain from conflict even when they win, we can infer that they would prefer resorting to conflict when they are fairly secure in power, as our *peace through insecurity* mechanism suggests.

Not just the structural features of political and social institutions, but also temporary "shocks," such as domestic political unrest and economic recessions, can alter the risk of forcible removal for leaders. Following this logic, we would expect that leaders in a civil war gain from Challenging, a pattern that was confirmed in the data. Similarly, if negative economic growth constitutes a plausible temporary shock to the leader's legitimacy and capabilities, our theory suggests that leaders experiencing such negative economic growth – particularly, leaders of non-democracies – should significantly lower their risk of a forcible removal from office. The data again supported this conjecture.

3.5 Conclusions

Our theory of conflict initiation establishes a relationship between the risk and the manner of losing office and the decision to initiate an international conflict. Leaders who face no risk of forcible removal

might decide to start a conflict when they are secure in office and their removal is an unlikely event. Leaders who are at risk of a forcible removal, on the other hand, are more likely to initiate a conflict when the prospects of removal with punishment are high. Security in *and* out of office affects conflict onset differently, on the basis of two distinct processes of leadership turnover.

These propositions, which we call *peace through insecurity* and *fighting* and *gambling for survival*, are premised on the fact that international conflict entails specific political costs and benefits for political leaders. For secure leaders, international conflict is at best a risky prospect that generates political costs for uncertain benefits. For leaders who see grim prospects for their lives and well-being once out of office, international conflict again holds out risky gains.

In this chapter, we provided an assessment of the six hypotheses that serve as the foundation for our argument. We found that (*a*) initiating international conflicts reduces the risk of both regular and forcible removals; (*b*) victory in crises or wars in general brings very uncertain (statistically insignificant) benefits on the two manners of losing office, with the exception of victory in crises short of war, which reduces the risk of forcible removal; and (*c*) defeat in crises and wars makes forcible removals more likely, while it has no significant impact on regular removals. Overall, the result suggested support for our *fighting for survival* mechanism, whereby conflict initiation – Challenging – pays more-or-less independent of the outcome. Surprisingly, we found that victory paid only occasionally, and its effect was associated with a fair amount of uncertainty, while defeat increased the risk of forcible removals. These results, therefore, appear to weigh against the *gambling for survival* mechanism, which requires that conflict can pay.

In their entirety, these results reformulate the claims about conflict initiation and political survival now predominant in what we would call the standard theory (Reiter and Stam, 2002). Initiation does not help survival, because it gives leaders the ability to start conflicts that they are more likely to win; rather, it helps the political *and* personal survival of leaders because it helps solve their *domestic* political problems, i.e. their hold on power *and* the dynamics of their succession. In this light, the apparently disparate cases of (*a*) Anwar Sadat, who started the War of Attrition and the Yom Kippur War and lost, but improved his political standing at home; (*b*) Mao Ze Dong, who intervened in the Korean War for a stalemated outcome internationally and

a disruption of the networks of potential coup plotters domestically; and (*c*) Idi Amin, who launched an attack against Tanzania to settle scores against his own army, can all be subsumed under our leaders theory of conflict. The apparently paradoxical fate of Saddam Hussein and George H. W. Bush after the first Gulf War, a fate that, as we saw, so extensively challenged the predictive abilities of regional experts and political commentators (Akins, 1991; Quindlen, 1991), can also be subsumed into the larger pattern explained by our theory.

To fully probe our mechanisms of conflict initiation, *fighting for survival*, *gambling for survival*, and *peace through insecurity*, in the next chapter we explicitly model the endogeneity of both the risk of conflict initiation and the risk of losing office in a regular, as well as the risk of losing office in a forcible manner.

4 *The fate of leaders and incentives to fight*

4.1 Introduction

On April 2, 1982, the Argentinian armed forces invaded and occupied the Falklands Islands, a small archipelago 250 nautical miles off the coast of Argentina. The islands were, and still are, sovereign territory of Great Britain, one of the many territorial legacies of the British maritime empire. Argentinians call the islands Malvinas and claim them – in the words of their Constitution – as "integral part of the National territory [whose] recovery and the full exercise of sovereignty (. . .) are a permanent and unrelinquished goal of the Argentine people."[1] The attack occurred at a time when Argentina had been undergoing a period of economic decline and domestic strife, with mounting inflation, repeated economic contractions and mass unrest (Dabat and Lorenzano, 1984; Pion-Berlin, 1985; Oakes, 2006; Fravel, 2010). Only three days before the invasion, on March 30, fifteen thousand people took to the streets to demonstrate against the ruling military junta under the slogans of "Peace, Bread, and Work", and "The Military Dictatorship Is Near Its End" (Dabat and Lorenzano, 1984, 75; Fravel, 2010, 321).

The coincidence of economic decline, domestic unrest, and war has led many scholars to conclude that the Argentinian attack on the Falklands constitutes an instance of diversionary war theory (Dabat and Lorenzano, 1984; Lebow, 1985; Oakes, 2006), a venerable theory with a contradictory record (Levy, 1989; Miller, 1995; Gelpi, 1997; Oneal and Tir, 2006). The theory claims that leaders go to war to shore-up domestic support by focusing the public's attention away from

[1] These are the words in the First Temporary Provision in the Argentinian Constitution, which can be accessed at www.argentina.gov.ar/argentina/portal/documentos/constitucion_ingles.pdf.

domestic political troubles; what Richard Ned Lebow (1981, 66) calls "the time-honored technique of attempting to offset discontent at home by diplomatic success abroad."

But even in this case, the evidence for diversionary war is limited and questionable. How can it be diversionary war, asks Taylor Fravel (2010, 325), when the domestic support that followed the invasion came as a surprise for the leaders of the Argentinian junta? If it were an instance of diversionary war, popular support should have been what they were counting on, not an unexpected outcome. Moreover, not all the people cheering for regained sovereignty of the Argentinian irredenta were also cheering for the junta. As David Pion-Berlin (1985, 71) points out:

> The estimated 250,000 people that crowded in front of the presidential palace on April 6 to back the Malvinas operation, also shouted their disapproval of the regime itself. In fact, organized labor and the multiparty coalition made it clear to the president that they would press for swift restoration of their social and political freedoms at war's end. Consequently the war had not altered the agenda of the opposition nor drawn them into Galtieri's "movement."

While the central expectations from diversionary war theory fail to match the empirical record, it might still be the case that domestic political concerns played a role in the decision to invade the Falklands Islands (Levy and Vakili, 1992). As a leader who had come to power through a coup, General Leopoldo Galtieri, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and leader of the military junta, should have been well aware both of divisions within Argentina's armed forces and of how his tenure could terminate as the result of a coup by other members of the armed forces. Rather than the opposition in the labor movement and the political forces organized under the multiparty coalition the *Multipartidaria*, General Galtieri might have been worried about his fellow generals, who were restive and divided (Pion-Berlin, 1985; Levy and Vakili, 1992). At a time of social unrest and political uncertainty, the invasion of the Falklands was a unifying mission for an institution that was lacking a sense of purpose and mission, and allegedly the quid-pro-quo that earned General Galtieri the support for his rule from the navy commander, Admiral Jorge I. Anaya (Hastings and Jenkins, 1983, 46; Pion-Berlin, 1985, 70; Cardoso,

Kirschbaum and van der Kooy, 1987, 1–23 and 72; Thornton, 1998, 74).[2]

Even in this most favorable case for diversionary war theory, we find signs of the causal mechanism we proposed. We argued that leaders fight when they face domestic unrest or potential rebellions and plots that expose them to the risk of a forcible removal from power. As King Henry IV told his son and heir, the future Henry V, on his deathbed in Shakespeare's play,[3]

> Yet, though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,
> Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green;
> And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,
> Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;
> By whose fell working I was first advanced
> And by whose power I well might lodge a fear
> To be again displaced: which to avoid,
> I cut them off; and had a purpose now
> To lead out many to the Holy Land,
> Lest rest and lying still might make them look
> Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,
> Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,
> May waste the memory of the former days.

[2] As an illustration of the sources cited above, Pion-Berlin (1985, 70) writes that: "Under strong prodding from navy commander Almirante Jorge I. Anaya, who had backed the new government on condition that they break the deadlock over the Malvinas, the junta decided, on January 6, to go ahead with an invasion." Analogously, Cardoso, Kirschbaum and van der Kooy (1987, 72) write that: "But Anaya, however, had agreed to support Galtieri's access to the Casa Rosada, only in return for the green light on the Falklands. Any futher postponement would finish this pact, bringing with it, sooner or later, deep dissension in the heart of the military regime." To this, Levy and Vakili (1992, 140, fn. 32) add, "Galtieri might have needed Anaya's backing not simply to assume the presidency but also to maintain his position as commander-in-chief." This version of the events, however, is disputed among historians. Amy Oakes (2006, 446–7) writes that: "In this same vein, it was rumored that Galtieri promised Anaya that he would invade the Falklands if the admiral backed his bid for the presidency. There is, however, no consensus regarding whether such a deal was ever made."

[3] These lines come from Act 4, Scene V of *King Henry IV* Part 2, which is available at www.online-literature.com/shakespeare/henryIV2/16/.

When peace – "rest and lying still" – makes potential *domestic* rivals too keen on unseating the ruler, that is the time to start a war, in Henry IV's words, "to lead out many to the Holy Land." The reason, and causal mechanism, is not to distract the public, as diversionary war theory maintains, but to engage potential contenders for power in foreign lands and thus disrupt any plots to remove the leader from power.

Conversely, in countries where leadership succession takes place through regular (peaceful) channels, conflict initiation is too risky an endeavor to bolster a shaky hold on office. As a consequence, leaders who govern with the expectation that they will be replaced peacefully have few incentives to initiate a conflict when their rule is about to end. Rather, it is politically more prudent for them to initiate conflict when the prospects of being replaced in office are low. This finding thus turns the venerable proposition of diversionary war theory on its head: in the case of regular institutionalized channels of leadership turnover, peace – not war – follows from office insecurity. Diversionary leaders still do exist – these are the leaders who are ready to initiate a conflict to postpone or avert a forcible removal, and thus preserve their lives or liberty.

In this chapter, we present a direct empirical test of the central proposition of our theory of conflict onset. We show that the leaders at risk of suffering a forcible removal from power are *more* likely to initiate military conflict than the leaders who are either safe in office or at risk of losing office in a regular manner. We also show that the leaders who face the prospect of losing power through the regular channels in their countries are less likely to initiate military conflict than leaders who are safe in office. As the theory of diversionary war maintains, leaders' hold on power affects their decisions to initiate international conflict. But unlike the diversionary war argument, it is the manner of leadership succession that makes a difference, not just the desire to stay in power. Our empirical findings identify two specific conditions that link leaders' hold on power to international conflict. Conflict follows from domestic political *insecurity* when loss of power puts the personal freedom and the lives of leaders in jeopardy. When the loss of power does *not* entail direct personal consequences for the leaders, however, domestic political insecurity leads to *peace*.

The analysis in this chapter starts with a description of how we obtain an empirical estimate of the risk to lose power in either a regular or forcible manner. We use statistical modeling to assess when

and how leaders are at risk of losing office from their historical experience. Our approach takes a comprehensive view of the institutional, societal, and individual factors that affect leaders' tenure rather than focusing specifically on economic conditions or domestic unrest. Consistent with the analysis we pursued in our 2003 article in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, we also evaluate how the endogenous risk of international conflict initiation in turn affects the tenure of leaders. In other words, we allow for rallying around the flag or other potential simultaneous relations to affect the probability of losing office depending on the risk of an international conflict initiation. We innovate our previous analysis by assessing how the two manners of losing office affect leaders' propensity to initiate a conflict.[4]

4.2 Measuring the risk of losing of office

In 1991, in the immediate aftermath of his military defeat in the Gulf War, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq faced a serious threat to his rule. With the encouragement of US President George H. W. Bush (1991), who urged Iraqis to take the fate of their country into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein out of power, rebellions erupted in the Kurdish areas in the North and in the Shi'a regions in the South.[5] The rebellions rapidly spread; but when the rebels started to move towards the capital Baghdad, support from the coalition forces

[4] In the previous chapter we examined conflict initiation as an independent variable; in this chapter conflict initiation functions as an (endogenous) independent variable as well as a dependent variable. However, we discuss initiation from a rather different perspective here, which merits brief discussion to avoid confusion. In Chapter 3 we sought to isolate the effects of conflict initiation on the hazard and manner of losing office. To that end, we focused on Challengers, and coded leaders who initiated a conflict as Challengers *for each year of the conflict*. In this chapter, initiation is a dummy variable, coded as 1 when the leader initiated a conflict in a particular year and 0 otherwise. The endogenous variable of the risk of conflict initiation thus measures the risk of conflict initiation in a given year.

[5] As President Bush (1991) stated, "But there's another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside and to comply with the UN and then rejoin the family of peace-loving nations. We have no argument with the people of Iraq. Our differences are with Iraq's brutal dictator."

that had just expelled Saddam's army from Kuwait failed to materialize. Saddam reacted swiftly and brutally and reaffirmed his hold on power.[6] Our statistical model of leadership turnover captures these events and estimates that Saddam Hussein faced a very high probability of forcible removal, nearly 85 percent, the second highest probability for all the leaders in power from 1919 until 2003. Only the long-forgotten Gyula Peidl of Hungary, the last leader of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, faced a higher risk of forcible removal in 1919 (94%). And indeed, as predicted, Peidl was forcibly removed in a coup, and sent into exile.

When Saddam Hussein's hold on power was in peril, other leaders safely slept in their beds, with no risk of ever facing a forcible removal. For example, Saddam's nemesis, US President George W. Bush, faced a 0.002 (1 out of 500) probability of forcible removal. President Bush certainly faced higher risks of regular removal. In 2003, for example, our statistical model estimates that President Bush faced a 6 percent probability of regular removal, the fifth-lowest probability of regular removal for any US president since Woodrow Wilson. From a constitutional viewpoint, that probability was zero, given that 2003 was not an electoral year in the United States. Our estimate, therefore, counts not as measure of what is going to happen *per se*, but rather as a measure of how confident a democratic leader is about his security in office and his likelihood to be re-elected in the next electoral cycle.[7]

These estimates present a few examples of what we can measure with our statistical model – a simultaneous-equation probit regression model – which predicts whether a leader is going to suffer office removal, by regular or forcible means, in a given year. In our analysis, we are not privy to any classified information that would constantly track the fluctuations in a leader's security in office. As the King in Italo Calvino's (1988) short story, leaders are always listening to the rumors that might portend the end of their rule.[8] We definitely are not in a

[6] For a brief overview of these events see Malanczuk (1991); Makiya (1993); Brownlee (2002) as well as the Frontline report at www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/iraq501/events_uprising.html.

[7] This argument is analogous to the argument that presidential approval ratings in US politics serve as a functional surrogate of a monthly confidence vote from the electorate, and therefore become a form of political capital that affects US presidents' ability to lead and govern (Marra, Ostrom and Simon, 1990).

[8] The short story is entitled "Un Re in Ascolto" ("A King Listens").

position to gather that kind of information, nor is anyone working in our discipline, political science. It is beyond the means of our science, for example, to relate the recurrent crises in the Korean peninsula, from the threats to launch long-range missiles or to resume the operations of the nuclear plant at Yongbyon or the (alleged) attack to the South Korean patrol boat *Cheonan*, to any real or imagined weakening in the control of Kim Jong-Il, the North Korean leader, though those connections are routinely made in the press (Oliver, 2010). Nonetheless, using statistical analysis and publicly available information, we can obtain an assessment of how the prospects of leadership change vary between leaders in different countries and vary over time for a given leader.

To do so, we rely upon a series of systematic indicators about the state of the economy, domestic political institutions, domestic conditions, and the personal characteristics of the leader himself, from his age to his previous experience in power. These indicators offer an encompassing picture of the systematic determinants of leadership turnover. Specifically, we evaluate the extent to which we are able to predict whether a leader was removed from power using the following indicators:[9]

- *domestic political institutions*: (*a*) regime type, distinguishing between autocracies, mixed regimes, parliamentary democracies, and presidential democracies;
- *domestic political conditions*: (*a*) involvement in a civil war; (*b*) whether the current leader entered into power by regular (constitutional) means or not, discounted by time; (*c*) days elapsed since the previous election (logged);

[9] We present a detailed description of how we measured these variables in the Appendix. As often the case with political science data, our data set is affected by the presence of missing values on some of the variables, which leads to the loss of valuable information and potentially biases estimates and inferences. Following Schafer's (1997) approach, we impute the missing values using data augmentation under a multivariate normal model based on all the explanatory variables as well as the dependent variables. We run five parallel chains of 500 steps each, and we set the starting values for each chain by using the EM estimates of the model parameters computed on a bootstrap sample a quarter of the size of the whole data set (Allison, 2002, 38, fn. 11). We then run our analysis on five data sets with the missing values filled through multiple imputation. We present the model for the missing data in more detail in Appendix B.

- *state of the economy*: (*a*) level of GDP per capita (logged); (*b*) economic growth; (*c*) levels of trade openness and their growth; (*d*) size of the population;
- *leader's features*: (*a*) age; (*b*) number of days in office; and (*c*) previous experiences in office; (*d*) conflict record, distinguishing whether the leader achieved victories, defeats or draws in international crises and wars (discounted by time);
- *country's international political context*: (*a*) major power status; (*b*) military mobilization; (*c*) number of borders; (*d*) whether the country was targeted in an international crisis or war in a given year; (*e*) involvement in an ongoing international crisis or war; and (*f*) number of days since the last crisis initiation.

Our model generates a parameter, the regression coefficient, for each of these indicators. We measure how economic growth or victory in war, for example, affect the risk of regular and forcible removal, net of all the other factors. As we would expect, we find that democratic leaders faced higher risks of regular removal, and lower risks of forcible removal, compared to leaders of authoritarian and mixed regimes. Similarly, our model documents how defeats in war put office tenure in jeopardy. The results from the regression coefficients are important, as they replicate the findings we presented in Chapter 3.[10] What is more important, however, is that our statistical model generates a reasonable measure of the underlying propensities of losing office by regular or forcible means for a leader every year of his tenure. By reasonable, we mean that our model passes several tests of goodness-of-fit for nonlinear regression models like our probit regression model.[11] We can,

[10] We present the regression results in detail in Appendix C.

[11] We primarily rely on McKelvey and Zavoina's pseudo–R^2, the measure of fit that most closely approximates the R^2 of linear regression models (Hagle and Mitchell, 1992) and also least vulnerable to changes in the proportion of 1s in the sample (Windmeijer, 1995, 112). As we report in Table C.2 in the Appendix, our models yield a measure of the McKelvey and Zavoina statistics well above the 0.1 threshold that is conventionally used to discriminate between weak and valid measures (Bollen, Guilkey and Mroz, 1995, 119; Bound, Jaeger and Baker, 1995, 444). In Table C.2 we also report several alternative measures of goodness-of-fit: Efron's, McFadden's, Cragg-Uhler's likelihood ratio-based pseudo–R^2 measures; Hosmer and Lemeshow's χ^2 measure; the area under the ROC curve; and the percentage of events correctly predict while fixing the probability threshold to identify an event at 0.5. All

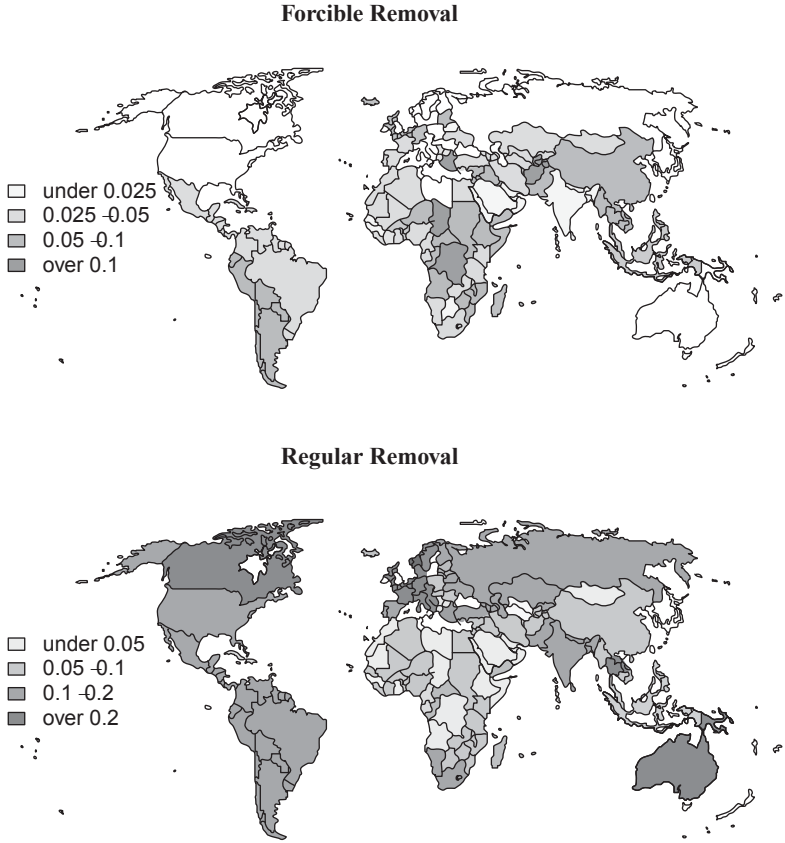

Figure 4.1: Average probability of forcible and regular removal, 1919–2003

therefore, have confidence that our measures capture the fluctuations in the underlying propensities to lose office by either forcible or regular means.

We can have a better sense of how our model operates from Figure 4.1, where we plot the average probability of losing power that leaders faced over the entire time period in our dataset. The probabilities have low ranges in general. After all, we mostly observe

these measure indicate that our models generate values that are closely related to the observed measures, and therefore can serve as proxies for our key theoretical concepts.

leaders in office, given that for any leader who loses power a new leader comes in. The maximum probability is 0.33 for the risk of regular removal, a record obtained by France as a consequence of the high turnover rates in the Fourth Republic; and 0.16 for the risk of forcible removal, a record obtained by Tajikistan, a country that experienced a period of high political instability after gaining independence in 1991, before Emomalii Rahmon engineered a series of constitutional reforms that allowed him to run repeatedly for office and consolidate his power. Figure 4.1 gives an overview of four different political environments for the leaders. There are parts of the world where stable political processes of leadership change has been the common practice – the countries in the darker shades. There are parts of the world where forcible removal has been a serious risk – the countries in the darkest shades. But if we look at Libya or North Korea in Figure 4.1, we notice that on average the probability of leadership turnover was low both in the case of forcible removal and in the case of regular removal. These are two examples of countries where leaders have been protected from any forms of removal, have persevered in office year after year, and will mostly likely succumb in old age when illness and death will have the final say.

Notably, our measures of forcible and regular removal do not just evaluate differences in political environments across countries, but also *over time*. There are moments in the political career of a leader when the risk of removal is high, as we explored in Chapter 3. In Figure 4.2, we illustrate how our model assessed security in office over time for the leaders of four countries: Great Britain, Chile, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia.

Britain, as a consolidated democracy, experienced only minimal risks of forcible removal for its leaders. Throughout the 85 years covered in our data set, British leaders never found themselves in a situation in which they faced serious prospects of forcible removal. Occasional threats to their lives certainly occurred. On October 12, 1984, for example, Prime Minister Thatcher narrowly escaped an assassination attempt when the Irish Republican Army bombed the hotel where the Conservative Party was holding a conference. These threats, real though they were, never undermined the constitutional fabric of Britain, and the usual processes of leadership change through elections and party politics.

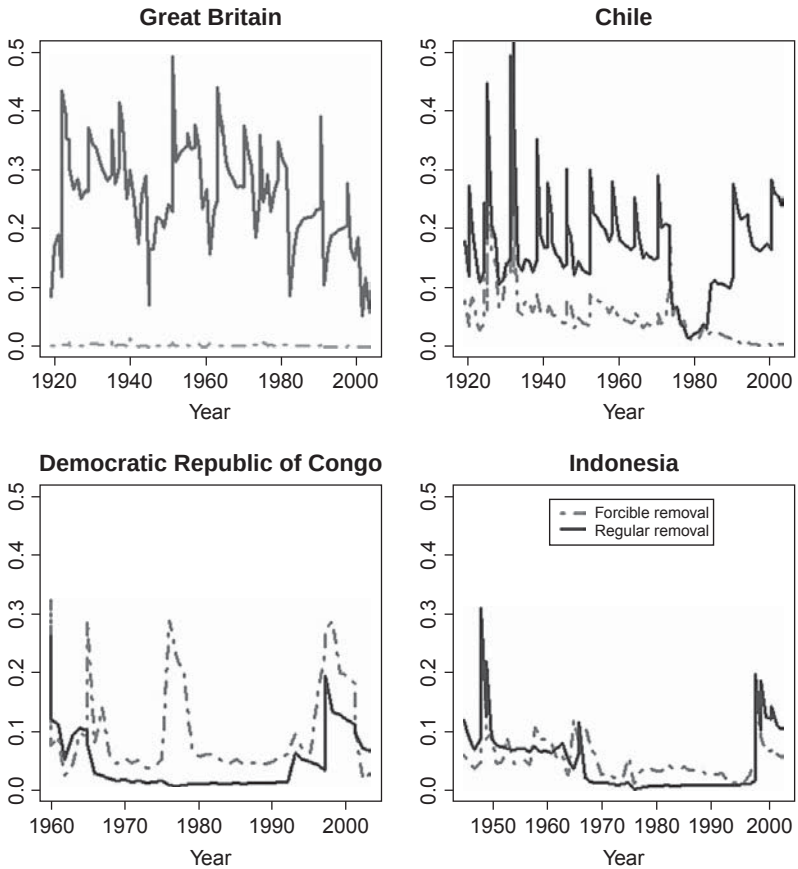

Figure 4.2: Probability of forcible and regular removal from office in four countries

The estimates for Chilean leaders show that regular removal was the common process of leadership change for the most part of Chile's history. The large fluctuation in the probability of regular removal until the 1970s indicates a country that experienced a certain degree of political instability, but not major threats to its normal political processes of leadership change. Interestingly, our model captures the change in political conditions that occurred when General Pinochet gained power in a violent coup in 1973. During the darker years of Pinochet's rule, from the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, both the probability of regular and forcible removal were very low, which indicates the

degree of control and oppression imposed by the dictatorship. As the political system started to open up in the late 1980s, the probability of regular removal started to increase again, but not the probability of forcible removal, which seems to have become a matter of the "past" in Chilean politics.

In the bottom part of Figure 4.2, we show two countries that have been ruled by a single authoritarian leader for a long period of time. Consistently with our intuition that time in office is not synonymous with security in office, our model is able to distinguish a secure hold on power from a long spell in office. For example, our model shows that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the threat of violent removal has been a staple feature of its political processes. For most of the period since gaining independence in 1960, the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo faced higher risks of forcible removal than of regular removal. That was the case during the more than 30-year rule of Mobutu Sese Seko, and it continued to be the case during the rule of Laurent Kabila and Joseph Kabila, who entered into power in 1997 and 2001, respectively. The graph for Indonesia shows how a leader, Suharto, was able to consolidate his power, minimizing both the risk of regular and forcible removal, during his 32 years in power from 1966 until 1998. In his case, time in office went hand-in-hand with security in power. In the end, Suharto's rule terminated in the exceptional circumstances of the deep economic crisis triggered by the Asian financial crisis of 1997, when he decided to step down after his attempt to run for re-election in 1998 was met with mass demonstrations and popular protests.

To sum up, from the point of view of statistical fit and the point of view of historical accuracy, our statistical model generates a measure of the risk of regular and forcible removal that can serve as a valid proxy for the theoretical concepts in our theory. Along the same lines, the statistical model allows us to generate a measure of the risk of a conflict initiation. Armed with these measures, we now turn to evaluate our propositions about conflict onset.

4.3 A statistical test of our theory of conflict initiation

In Chapter 2 we presented three basic mechanisms to explain conflict initiation. *Peace through insecurity* proposes that as the risk of a regular loss of office increases, the probability of conflict initiation

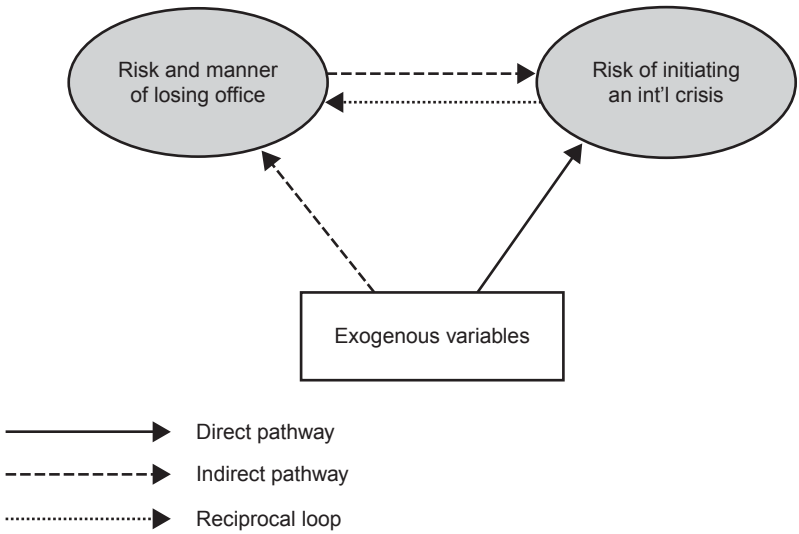

Figure 4.3: A graphical representation of direct and indirect effects

decreases. The other two mechanisms focus on the risk of a forcible removal from office. *Gambling for survival* proposes that leaders initiate conflict as the risk of a forcible removal from office increases because victory reduces that risk. *Fighting for survival* proposes that leaders initiate conflict when the risk of a forcible removal increases because fighting itself decreases the risk of a forcible removal from office. The traditional literature on diversionary war – in particular, the psychological variant – argues that the risk of an international conflict, in turn, can crucially affect a leader's probability of losing office. To not rule out *by fiat* such potential competing explanations, we estimate a fully reciprocal model, as presented in Figure 4.3. We test this model with a simultaneous-equation probit model similar to the model we estimated in Chiozza and Goemans (2003).[12] We make

[12] We coded our conflict onset variable using the international crisis events Gelpi and Griesdorf (2001) coded on the basis of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997). We updated the Gelpi and Griesdorf series using version 7 of the ICB data International Crisis Behavior Project (2007). In our data, we list 342 instances in which a leader triggered an international crisis between 1919 and 2003 (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997, 4–5).

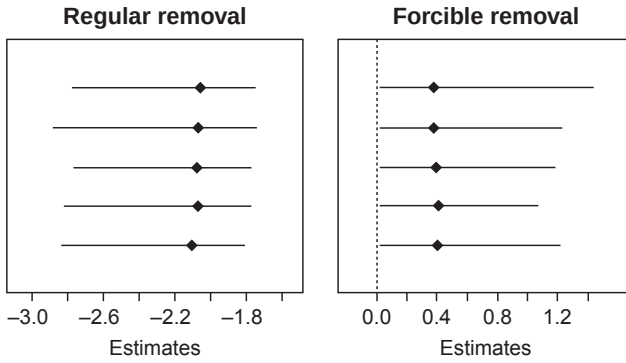

Figure 4.4: Coefficients for the risks of losing office on conflict intiation

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% (bootstrapped) bias-corrected confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a simultaneous equation probit model with three endogenous regressors. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the risk of office removal increases the probability of conflict onset; negative coefficients indicate an increase decreases the probability of conflict onset. The models are based upon five data sets with missing values estimated through multiple imputation. These results can be found in Tables C.3, C.6, C.9, C.12, and C.15 in the Appendix.

sure that the statistical relationships are not due to chance using bootstrapping, a computer-intensive technique that generates more conservative estimates of the degree of certainty associated with statistical parameters.[13]

In Figure 4.4 we present the main findings of this chapter.[14] In a nutshell, the positive and significant coefficient for the risk of forcible removal shows that leaders could *fight for survival* or *gamble for survival*; the negative and significant coefficient for the risk of regular removal shows that peace becomes more likely *through insecurity*.

[13] We drew 1,000 samples with replacement from the system of equations in our model. We report bias-corrected confidence intervals, as they offer the most "conservative" assessment of the null hypothesis, i.e. the assessment most likely to report in favor of the null hypothesis against the hypotheses derived from our theory. We explain our modeling approach in Appendix C.

[14] Figure 4.4 reports five coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals, one per data set with multiple imputation of missing values (as described in fn. 9 on page 97).

The statistical evidence summarized in our model is consistent with the predictions of our theory about the private costs and benefits of conflict for political leaders.

Concretely, the probabilities of conflict involvement that these coefficients generate are also of substantial magnitude. For example, if we take a leader in a parliamentary democracy who is "average" on all dimensions, with stable institutions and a low risk of forcible removal, we observe that, on average, the probability of starting a crisis *declines* from about 1.1% to basically zero (0.005%) when the probability of losing office in a *regular* manner increases from a 1-in-10 chance to 3-in-10 chance. For a leader of a mixed regime who is again "average" on all dimensions, facing a low risk of regular removal, the probability of starting a crisis *increases* from about 8.1% to 13.6% when the probability of losing office in a *forcible* manner increases from a 1-in-10 chance to 3-in-10 chance.

As we showed earlier in our discussion of the measures for the regular and forcible removal from power, a 1-in-10 and a 3-in-10 probability of removal are high values that rarely occur. In Table 4.1, therefore, we report a broader set of comparisons to convey the substantive impact of our theoretical propositions, while distinguishing across different regime types. Specifically, we assess how the probability of conflict onset changes as the risk of regular and forcible removal takes on representative values we empirically observe in our dataset. The low, median, and high risk of removal are the observed values that occur at the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile of the distribution of the risk of removal, respectively. These values, as we should expect, are different across regime types. For example, leaders of mixed regimes faced higher risks of forcible removal than leaders of democracies; conversely, leaders of democracies systematically faced higher chances of regular removal than leaders of autocracies. We directly account for these differences in the calculation of probabilities in Table 4.1 to offer a more realistic assessment of our claims.

When we look at the probabilities of conflict onset under more realistic scenarios, we have a better appreciation of the importance of the manner and consequences of leadership turnover. Not only do the risk of regular and forcible removal substantially alter the risk of crisis initiation, but note also that it takes a small shift towards more regular and peaceful processes of leadership turnover to reduce the occurrence of international crises.

Table 4.1: ***Estimated probabilities of crisis onset***

		Risk of regular removal		
	Overall effects	Low	Median	High
Autocracy	.80	4.11	1.06	.39
Mixed regime	.72	1.52	.60	.20
Parliamentary democracy	.24	.77	.32	.08
Presidential democracy	.66	.27	.10	.03
		Risk of forcible removal		
	Overall effects	Low	Median	High
Autocracy	.80	6.88	7.87	9.11
Mixed regime	.72	5.38	6.23	7.39
Parliamentary democracy	.24	2.08	2.58	3.13
Presidential democracy	.66	.68	.80	.98

Note: Overall effects are computed from the reduced-form equations. Low, median, and high risks of regular and forcible removal are set to the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles empirically observed in our data for each regime type, respectively. All remaining explanatory variables are set at their median values.

4.3.1 The risk of conflict initiation

We first examined whether and how the risk and manner of losing office affects the probability of conflict initiation. We now reverse the causal arrow to examine the effect of the risk of conflict initiation on the probability of a regular and forcible removal from office. Figure 4.5 shows the results. In a twist on the traditional psychological variant of diversionary war, an increase in the risk of conflict initiation significantly reduces the probability of a regular, but not of an irregular removal from office. Thus, there may indeed exist some rallying around the flag, but these results suggest that citizens (voters) only rally around leaders safely embedded in the regular process of leadership turnover. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, an increase in the risk of conflict initiation also increases the risk of a forcible removal. This result suggests that leaders do not seem to be systematically able to profit from an impending conflict to send potential opponents to the front to fight and die. The Father Brown

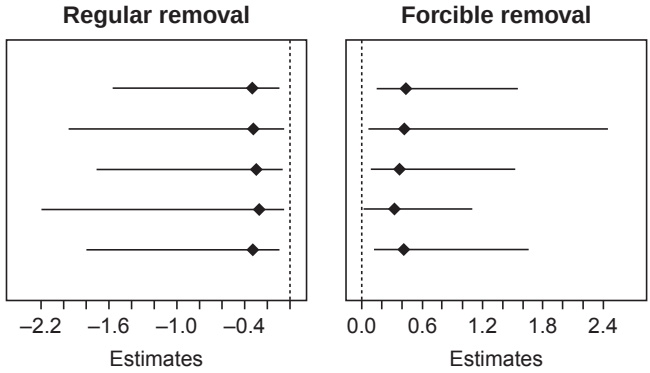

Figure 4.5: Coefficients for the risks of conflict initiation on the manner of losing office

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% (bootstrapped) bias-corrected confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a simultaneous equation probit model with three endogenous regressors. The solid lines measure the coefficients for the risk of regular removal; the dotted lines measure the coefficients for the risk of forcible removal. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the risk of office removal increases the probability of conflict onset; negative coefficients indicate an increase decreases the probability of conflict onset. The models are based upon five data sets with missing values estimated through multiple imputation. These results can be found in Tables C.4, C.7, C.10, C.13, and C.16 and in Tables C.5, C.8, C.11, C.14, and C.17, respectively, in the Appendix.

story, whereby a leader takes advantage of a crisis to fight for survival, seems to be outweighed by other dynamics.[15] Note, though, that the results in Figure 4.5 in no way contradict the *fighting for survival* mechanism in a broader sense, because they capture only one narrow variant. It is not so much the threat or risk of conflict initiation, but rather actual conflict that allows a leader to rotate the troops of his domestic enemies to different commanders, as Chairman Mao skillfully did (Tullock, 1987). As we will see below, the risk of conflict initiation increases the risk of a forcible removal from office because it opens the door to defeat, with all its devastating consequences.

[15] The Father Brown story is discussed in Chapter 2.

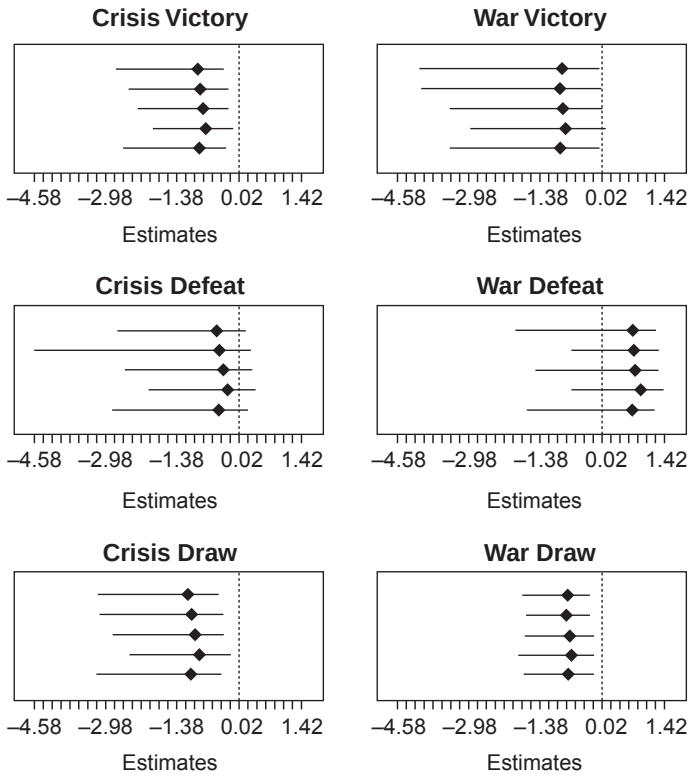

Figure 4.6: Endogenous conflict and irregular removal

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a simultaneous-equation probit model, on five imputed data sets. These results can be found in Tables C.5, C.8, C.11, C.14, and C.17 in the Appendix.

4.3.2 Conflict outcomes

Finally, we examine how controlling for the endogenous risk of conflict initiation affects the probability and manner of losing office. Recall we suggested in Chapter 3 that initiation might systematically increase the probability of victory and thereby affect the coefficients for the outcome of conflict. In Figure 4.6 we report how international conflict affects the probability of a forcible removal from office, once we control for the endogenous risk of conflict initiation.

Figure 4.6 allows us to tease out more precisely how the outcome of conflict affects the probability of a forcible removal from office. In the previous chapter, we found that Victory in a crisis appeared to decrease the risk of a forcible removal, but just barely failed to reach significance at the 5% level.[16] We postulated that this (marginal) insignificance might be the result of the fact initiation increases the probability of Victory, and that the true effect of Victory would therefore be masked by the Challenger variable. The results in Figure 4.6 suggest this is indeed the case. Once we isolate and control for the effect of initiation, we find that Victory in a crisis does significantly decrease the probability of a forcible removal from office, as posited by our *gambling for survival* mechanism. Victory in war also seems to decrease the risk of a forcible removal from office, but fails to reach significance at the 5% level.[17] Note, moreover, that defeat no longer significantly increases the probability of a forcible removal from office. This latter pattern we would expect to hold if *compared to staying at peace* leaders estimated that by initiating conflict they would not significantly increase their risk of a forcible removal from office, even as the result of victory. In other words, the results suggest that if indeed leaders with a high risk of a forcible removal from office initiate conflict, they can rationally choose to do so because their punishment is truncated. Even the worst case outcome of an international conflict does not significantly worsen their prospects for survival.

Figure 4.6 delivers one final striking result. A draw in an international conflict, be it a crisis or a war, significantly decreases the risk of a forcible removal from office. A distinguishing feature of our *fighting for survival* mechanism is that it does not require a victory against the international opponent to yield private benefits for the leader. Indeed, the international opponent is not the real target of such "international" conflicts; rather, the real target is the domestic political opposition. A leader who obtains a draw against the international opponent can lower his risk of a forcible removal from office if, in the process of

[16] As we report in Table B.44 in Appendix B, the significance level for Crisis Victory in the hazard-model predicting forcible removal is 0.051.

[17] As we report in Tables C.20, C.23, C.26, C.29, and C.32 in Appendix C, in four out of the five imputed data sets, the coefficient on War victory in the forcible removal model is significant at the 10% level.

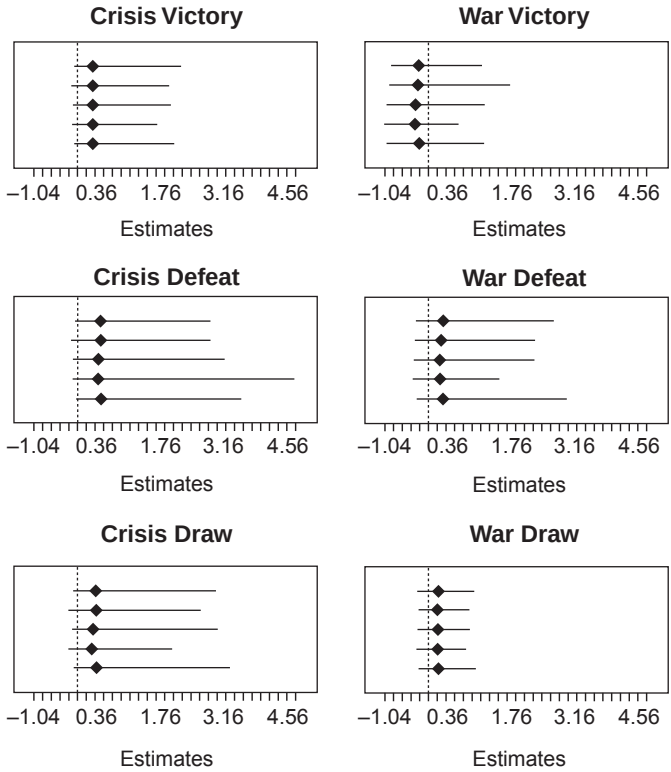

Figure 4.7: Endogenous conflict and regular removal

Note: We report the coefficients and the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of a simultaneous-equation probit model, on five imputed data sets. These results can be found in Tables C.4, C.7, C.10, C.13, and C.16 in the Appendix.

fighting an international enemy, he secures a decisive victory against his domestic enemies.

Once we control for the endogenous initiation of international conflict, defeat does not increase the risk of a forcible removal from office. Yet victories and draws decrease such a risk of a forcible removal from office. These results show that leaders at risk of a forcible removal from office can rationally *fight* as well as *gamble for survival*.

To complete our analysis, Figure 4.7 reports the effects of conflict on the probability of a regular removal, controlling for the endogenous

risk of conflict initiation. None of the coefficients, we see, comes even close to significance. In other words, neither the conflict role nor the outcome of an international conflict is significantly associated with the probability of a regular removal from office. To be sure, defeat increases the risk of a regular removal, but the effect is not significant.

At first blush, these results might seem surprising, but they become less so once we consider they emerge from a model that controls for the endogenous risk of conflict initiation. Recall that leaders who find themselves safely ensconced in the regular process of leader removal have little to gain from victory, but could suffer much as a result of defeat. Since these incentives structure their decisions, such leaders initiate conflict only if they are secure in office, to have a safety cushion, as it were, in case of defeat.

4.3.3 An overview of the findings from the statistical model

What other findings does our model – the simultaneous-equation probit regression model – yield, beyond the key result showing that the dynamics of leadership succession have a direct bearing on the likelihood of conflict initiation? In this section, we present an overview of all the findings with regard to (*a*) regime type; (*b*) state of the economy; (*c*) the country's international political context. As is the case in all simultaneous-equation models, we need to assess two sets of results: those that pertain to the so-called reduced-form equation and those that pertain to the so-called structural equation. Both are important because both shed empirical light on different aspects of the dynamics modeled. The reduced-form estimates yield a measure of the long-run effects of the exogenous variables, whereas the structural coefficients assess the net effects of the explanatory variables controlling for the effect induced by the endogenous regressors (in our case, the two variables measuring the risk of regular and forcible removal, respectively).

Single-equation regressions that include exogenous variables which may affect a leader's time in office – i.e. the typical models in the quantitative literature on conflict initiation, as well as in the models we reported in Chapter 3 – can only measure the *overall* effect of an exogenous variable on international conflict. However, as we illustrated in Figure 4.3, an exogenous variable may affect conflict initiation through two pathways: indirectly, through its effect on the probability of losing office by either forcible or regular means, as well as directly net of

its effect on the two distinct probabilities of losing office. It is crucial to recognize that an exogenous variable may therefore have differing, even opposite, direct and indirect effects on international conflict. Hence, by failing to model endogeneity – i.e. the reciprocal relationship between the risk and manner of losing office, on the one hand, and the risk of initiation of a conflict, on the other hand – the typical models in the conflict processes literature could present a misleading picture and even fail to find a real and significant relationship between that variable and international conflict. It is also important to recognize that the reciprocal loop involves two distinct processes, the ones related to regular removal and the ones related to forcible removal. The long-run effects (summarized in the reduced-form equations), therefore, are a summary aggregation of these two effects. With this in mind, we can now turn to the results.[18]

Regime type

We start with the results about domestic political institutions, one of the most studied relationships in conflict processes research in the last twenty years (Russett, 1993; Ray, 1995; Gleditsch and Hegre, 1997). First, recall that we examine four regime types: autocracies, mixed regimes, parliamentary democracies, and presidential democracies, where autocratic regimes serve as the excluded baseline category. A careful examination of the effects of the regime-type variables shows how the leaders of the four regime types are affected by tenure considerations in their decisions to initiate international conflict.

Recall that our simultaneous-equation probit model estimates two sets of equations. In the first set of equations – the reduced-form equations – we estimate three separate regressions. One of these has conflict initiation as the dependent variable, the other two have the regular and the forcible removal from office as their dependent variable. These regressions then allow us to create instruments for the risk of conflict initiation, the risk of a regular and the risk of a forcible removal from office, which we include in the structural equation.

In the reduced-form equation, we find that, on average, the leaders of mixed regimes and presidential democracies are about as likely to initiate conflict as leaders of autocratic regimes, whereas leaders

[18] We report the full set of results and coefficients for all the models in section C.4 of Appendix C.

of parliamentary democracies were significantly less likely to initiate than autocrats. In the structural equation, however, we find that both in democracies and mixed regimes the propensity to initiate conflict is greater than that attributed to authoritarian leaders. These differences between the results from the structural and the reduced-form equations must be attributed to the effect of controlling for the endogenous risk of losing office by either regular or forcible means.

To understand this apparent discrepancy, we must turn to the findings in the two equations that predict the probability of losing office, those very equations that generated our empirical measures of the risk of losing office. In those models, we find that democratic leaders are significantly more likely to lose office by regular means than autocrats. Thus, both in parliamentary and presidential systems, democratic leaders have a higher probability of losing office through regular processes of leadership succession; and the higher the probability of losing office by regular means, the lower the probability of conflict initiation. In addition, again both in parliamentary and presidential systems, democratic leaders are less likely to experience forcible removal than leaders of autocracies and mixed regimes. This second effect further reduces the propensity of leaders of parliamentary democracies to resort to crisis initiation to protect their life and liberty, as our theoretical arguments led us to expect. Why this effect does not also obtain for leaders of presidential democracies remains a puzzle, though we might conjecture that, as we have shown in Chapters 2 and 3, democratic leaders, in particular prime ministers, have not much to gain and plenty to lose from that course of action.

In the case of leaders of mixed regimes, our findings identify two divergent tendencies. On the one hand, compared with autocrats, their relatively higher probability of losing office by regular processes constrains their decisions to initiate a conflict. On the other hand, leaders of mixed regimes face higher risks of forcible removal than leaders ruling in any other institutional settings, which makes them more prone to fight for their survival by initiating an international crisis. These two countervailing effects "average" out to make leaders of mixed regimes overall about as likely to initiate conflict as leaders of autocracies. The impact of the different chances of removal for leaders in different regime types generates the patterns we present in Table 4.1.

In sum, these findings suggest that the overall relative peacefulness of democratic leaders should be attributed to their (relatively) higher

probability of losing office by regular means and their (relatively) lower probability of losing office by forcible means. Thus, the main mechanism through which democratic institutions constrain leaders' propensity to start a crisis is the institutionalized mechanism of leadership succession through peaceful and constitutional elections. As we argued in Chapter 2, this finding substantiates our claim when it comes to the decision to start an international crisis, the manner in which leaders are selected, replaced, and treated when in retirement forms the fundamental political distinction that differentiates countries. The public's ability to control their officials through repeated elections creates strong incentives for democratic leaders to avoid military adventures in the international arena and complements the informational advantages attributed to democracy (Schultz, 2001a). Furthermore, our results suggest that the contradictory findings on the possible existence of a monadic democratic peace might be the result of the extent to which different researchers included or omitted control variables that affect the leader's manner of losing office.

State of the economy

We next shift our attention to the impact of the variables that measure a country's domestic economic features. We find that the conflict onset is (*a*) more likely to occur in countries that have larger economies; (*b*) but less likely to occur during periods of economic growth; (*c*) and also less likely to occur in countries with open economies. Change in levels of economic openness and the size of the market, as measured by population size, have no direct effect on crisis initiation. Net of the effects that the state of the economy has on leaders' positions in power, economic growth and trade openness inhibit the incentives to start an international crisis.

In the reduced-form equation, however, we find that, with the exception of population size, which is positively correlated with conflict onset, the variables measuring the state of the economy do not reach statistical significance. In its long-run effects, therefore, the state of the economy is a poor predictor of whether a leader would decide to initiate an international crisis. On the one hand, when the economy grows, for example, an international conflict would disrupt business transactions or undermine the expectations of stable returns to investments, which would then account for the lower propensity to initiate a conflict we measured in the structural equations. At the same time, however,

economic growth makes a leader more secure in power. When the economy grows, leaders are less likely to experience forcible or regular removal from office.

If we combine these results, our empirical investigation offers a new perspective on the relationship between economic conditions and conflict. Unlike the conventional theory of diversionary war that posits a linear relationship between the economy and conflict – to simplify, a bad economy makes conflict more likely; a good economy makes conflict less likely – our approach disentangles two countervailing (non-linear) tendencies. In good economic times, leaders have the incentive to maintain the stability that favors investments and makes business flourish, and thus avoid international crisis; at the same time, in good economic times, leaders can find the political conditions to initiate an international crisis out of choice, rather than necessity, under the belief that should things go poorly, their security in office would serve as an insurance guarantee against loss of power or even loss of life or liberty.

In sum, our empirical analysis documents how economic conditions operate *both* independently of leaders *and* through leaders. On the one hand, when we say *independently* of leaders, we mean that there exist economic conditions that make conflict more or less costly, and thus a preferable course of action, *for a country*. On the other hand, when we say *through* leaders, we mean that the same economic conditions create a political context that directly affects *the leader* by altering his risk of facing regular or forcible removal. As economic conditions change, a leader can find himself in a position to absorb the potential costs of conflict without endangering his power or personal survival. From this perspective, then, conflict can ensue because of, rather than despite, a favorable status of the economy. Again, to reiterate our point, our leader approach distinguishing the effects of the likelihood and manner of leadership succession recasts the theory of diversionary war in a new direction.

International political context

The variables measuring the international political context turn out to be strong predictors of crisis initiation, and our results are consistent with previous results reported in the literature (Diehl, 1985; Bremer, 1992; Beck, Katz and Tucker, 1998; Bennett and Stam, 2004). Conflict onset is more likely to occur in countries that have major power status and in countries with many borders, which are potentially more

exposed to the risk of conflicting claims and interests. We also replicate the conventional finding about decreasing likelihood of conflict associated with the passing of time since the last onset. We do not find, however, a correlation between the levels of military mobilization and conflict onset. As countries increase the size of their armed forces, they are as likely to defuse a potential conflict as they are to trigger one.

4.4 Conclusions

The claim that leaders care about staying in power is a common refrain among disillusioned citizens, and a powerful assumption for scholars (Downs, 1957; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 2003). Our theory accepts this basic premise about politics, but extends it to embrace the consequences of losing office. We argue that there is more than the "simple" goal to stay in power for a leader. Their fate out of office is also of paramount importance; it is for many leaders the proverbial question of life and death.

In this chapter, we have presented statistical evidence in support of our leader theory of conflict onset. As leaders assess their risks of being removed from office by regular (peaceful) or irregular means, they view the onset of international conflict in a different light. An international crisis is a risk of uncertain rewards to be pursued when secure in power, for the leaders who govern stable countries with regular institutionalized processes of leadership succession. An international crisis, instead, is a palatable option for the leaders that face the prospect of a forcible removal. Through fighting, those leaders can interrupt the forces that conspire against their rule, and thus save their lives and liberty. In a large sample of all the leaders in power for about 85 years, from 1919 to 2003, our statistical model has shown that leaders fight when they are secure in power if facing a the prospect of a regular removal; leaders fight when they are at risk of losing power if facing the prospect of a forcible removal. Our statistical models provided support for the *peace through insecurity*, as well as the *gambling* and some versions of the *fighting for survival* mechanisms we developed in Chapter 2. In the next chapter, we continue our empirical investigation of our leader theory of conflict onset with a case-study analysis of conflict processes in Central America.