

ELITE PURGES IN DICTATORSHIPS

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Abstract

Elite Purges in Dictatorships examines the causes of elite purges under autocracy. An elite purge is when a dictator forcibly removes an official from their inner circle. I examine why some dictators purge elites and others do not (cross-national variation), and why dictators purge only specific elites (within-regime individual-level variation). Conventional wisdom highlights dictators' fears of coups to explain purges. My central claim is that a dictator's fear of being unseated by a foreign state or revolution also shapes whether dictators purge elites, who to target, and when to do so.

With an original global cross-national quantitative dataset on elite purges, I show dictators are more likely to purge elites when there are reduced threats from foreign adversaries or of a revolution occurring. At the individual-level, I use an original dataset on elite politics in North Korea under Kim Jong Un and show that Kim was most likely to purge a disloyal elite when doing so would not exacerbate threats from foreign adversaries or the people. I also conduct historical qualitative analysis on individual cases of elite purges in South Korea under Park Chung-hee to show that the individual-level theory's causal mechanisms functions as theorized.

Chapter 1

Introduction

[W]hen you see the servant thinking more of his own interests than of yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything, such a man will never make a good servant, nor will you ever be able to trust him.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

However, despicable human scum Jang, who was worse than a dog, perpetrated thrice-cursed acts of treachery in betrayal of such profound trust.

Korean Central News Agency, *Traitor Jang Song Thaek Executed*

Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?

Apocryphal quote attributed to Henry II concerning
Thomas Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1710.

Kim Jong Un had a problem. After succeeding his father in December 2011, the North Korean leader's uncle, Jang Song Thaek, remained a prominent elite in the regime. Powerful elites are not necessarily problematic for dictators but Jang behaved disloyally towards Kim. Jang oversaw an independent patronage system, which meant some party officials relied on him rather than Kim; he sought to dismantle the personality cult of the Kim family; and he promoted Chinese-style economic reforms, contrary to Kim's wishes.¹

¹Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 43; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: The Dramatic Fall of Jang Song Thaek," *38 North*, December 9, 2013, <https://www.38north.org/2013/12/amansourov120913/>.

As the quotes above illustrate, disloyal elites within a regime are hugely problematic for dictators.² After all, dictators are removed by power by other elites, more than any other method.³ Dictators therefore frequently purge elites for these kinds of disloyal behaviors through significant demotion, imprisonment, or even execution. Indeed, Kim executed the prominent General Ri Yong Ho in July 2012 immediately following similar economic policy disagreements. Yet, despite Jang’s behavior, Kim refrained from purging him for the first two years of his rule. Why did Kim purge Ri Yong Ho immediately following disagreements, but initially refrained from purging Jang Song Thaek?

Existing political science scholarship provides little guidance with which to explain why a dictator refrains from purging a disloyal elite and why, at other times, a dictator purges them. In fact, we have little to go on to explain various patterns of elite purges in dictatorships. Across regimes, we do not know why some dictators purge elites but others do not.⁴ Within regimes, as well as not knowing why a dictator might refrain from purging a disloyal elite, we also do not know why a dictator sometimes decides purging a loyal elite is worthwhile. This manuscript attempts to explain these cross-national and within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges in dictatorships to answer the following question: What causes elite purges in dictatorships?

The little knowledge that we do have suggests that threats to a dictator’s survival from elites are crucial to explaining the causes of elite purges. A dictator may be most likely to purge elites when they are incentivized by the threat of a coup d’état.⁵ Alternatively, a dictator may purge elites most aggressively when there is a low coup threat. At these

²The manuscript uses ‘autocracy’ and ‘dictatorship’ interchangeably.

³Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, “Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009), pp. 269-83; Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴One exception is a study by Jun Koga Sudduth, but this focuses exclusively on military purges; see: Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

⁵Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter Three.

times, dictators have greater opportunity to purge elites with reduced fear of retaliation.⁶ Either way, threats from elites are thought to be essential to understanding occurrences of elite purges.

I argue that this represents, at best, a partial explanation of elite purges and does not reflect contemporary knowledge about dictatorships. Basing explanations of elite purges solely on threats from elites risks misinforming our knowledge about how dictators use elite purges to hold on to power.

Dictators interested in staying in power do not just face threats from coups. They also face threats from the people and from foreign states.⁷ This is not to say that elite threats do not affect purges. On the contrary, dictators operate under two axioms: they are unseated most frequently by coups, but they also cannot rule alone.⁸ Thus, in considering whether, who, and when to purge, dictators balance their desire to avoid being unseated by a coup versus the need to retain sufficient and appropriate elites to mitigate threats from the people and foreign states. This manuscript's central argument is therefore as follows: Threats to a dictator's survival from the people and foreign states shape whether a dictator purges elites, who to target, and when to act.

Across dictatorships, it is not just reduced coup threats that motivate dictators to purge elites, as suggested by previous research. Instead, variations in threats from the people and foreign states also shape elite purges. When threats from the people and foreign states are low, *ceteris paribus* dictators have diminished need for elites to help them navigate these threats. Dictators can then pay greater attention to the tension between themselves and their inner circle, and they can purge disloyal elites. Conversely, when threats from the people and foreign states are high, dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites. In

⁶Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

⁷Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), p. 23.

⁸For example, see Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi, "Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2019), pp. 552-568.

these circumstances, dictators frequently purge elites as scapegoats to try and alleviate the increased threat to their rule.

Within a regime, why does a dictator purge specific elites? When threats from the people and foreign states are low, a dictator generally does not purge all disloyal elites. Similarly, when threats are high, a dictator does not purge all loyal elites. Why, then, does a dictator purge certain elites but not others?

A dictator is more likely to purge, than retain, an elite who wittingly or unwittingly signals disloyalty. Such behavior heightens a dictator's sensitivity to the coup threat. However, a dictator's decision to purge an elite is moderated by a dilemma: Dictators are cautious of purging an elite if the timing of the purge could exacerbate threats from the people or foreign states. To resolve this dilemma, a dictator is more likely to retain a disloyal elite if there is a heightened threat from the people or a foreign state *and* the elite holds a position relevant to helping the dictator alleviate the type of threat that is heightened.

A dictator uses a similar logic to identify which loyal elite to purge as a scapegoat. It is tricky in these circumstances for a dictator to 'kill two birds with one stone' and simultaneously purge a disloyal elite. Wittingly or unwittingly signaling disloyalty is costly for elites; empirically, elites tend to be loyal rather than disloyal. When a threat from the people or foreign states is heightened, a dictator aims to target an elite whose position is relevant to the heightened threat. Without this connection, the dictator cannot convincingly pass the buck via scapegoating. Hence, when targeting an elite for scapegoating, a dictator prioritizes the relevance of their position rather than whether they are loyal or disloyal.

Overall, the manuscript purports to explain patterns of elite purges across dictatorships and across individual elites within regimes. To test these arguments, I use a range of quantitative and qualitative data about elite politics across and within dictatorships.

I test the cross-national argument with the first global quantitative dataset on military and civilian elite purges, and examine variations in elite purges within dictatorships using qualitative data from South Korea under Park Chung-hee and quantitative data on North Korea under Kim Jong Un. Taken together, the manuscript's empirical analyses show how and when dictators purge elites to navigate threats from elites, the people, and foreign states as they attempt to stay in power.

1.1 The Importance of Understanding Elite Purges

Why should we study elite purges? The manuscript's primary theoretical contribution is to improve our understanding of authoritarian survival. However, this is not just important from an academic perspective. The role of elite purges in authoritarian survival has had crucial implications for world history, as well as the lives of millions of people. Joseph Stalin's purges of elites including Politburo members Nikolai Bukharin and Sergei Kirov enabled him to consolidate power. During Stalin's leadership of the Soviet Union, experts estimate that 2.3 million people were executed or died in prison camps.⁹ Saddam Hussein's purges of elite members of the Ba'ath Party in 1979 paved the way for his thirty-four year rule, which included three major interstate wars and a genocide of the Kurdish people. Xi Jinping's purges of elites such as former Politburo member and Minister of Public Security Zhou Yongkang and former Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai are widely viewed as crucial to personalizing his leadership of China, which has included the internment of between one to three million Uyghur, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz minorities.¹⁰ In these and other autocracies, elite purges have been essential to dictators'

⁹J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn, and Viktor N. Zemskov, "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence," *American Historical Review*, October 1993, p. 1024.

¹⁰Sheena Chestnut Greitens, "Domestic Security in China Under Xi Jinping," *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 59 (2019), <https://www.prclleader.org/greitens>; Sheena Chestnut Greitens, Myunghee Lee, and Emir Yazici, "Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression: China's Changing Strategy in Xinjiang," *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (2020), pp. 9-47.

abilities to hold on to power. In turn, autocratic endurance has frequently led to gross violations of citizens' human rights to an inordinate degree.

Our knowledge of the causes of elite purges remains limited. Yet, scholars have gone to great lengths to research the circumstances giving rise to other tactics of authoritarian survival. For instance, we know that dictators regularly use political parties to co-opt elites,¹¹ they construct domestic security bodies like a secret police to mitigate the most proximate type of threat to their rule,¹² and they sometimes weaken units in their own army, intentionally or otherwise, to hinder the military's ability to carry out a coup.¹³ However, we know little about how dictators use elite purges to stay in power. One exception is Jun Koga Sudduth's study on the causes of military purges. Sudduth argues that autocrats purge military elites (and lower ranking officers) when the latter's abilities to conduct a coup are low. However, the study's theoretical and empirical focus is exclusively on military purges and, as discussed above, it only incorporates one of the three primary threats to a dictator's survival.¹⁴ Other research on elite personnel management in dictatorships has focused on personnel being excluded from the beginning of a regime,¹⁵ or the work has largely centered around formal models that only partially relate to elite purges and they are not subjected to empirical tests.¹⁶

¹¹Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹²Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators & Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions & State Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹³Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁴Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

¹⁵Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2011), pp. 300-46.

¹⁶Daron Acemoglu, Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin, "Coalition Formation in Non-Democracies," *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 75 (2008), pp. 987-1009; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2003), pp. 382-3; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), p. 739; B. Pablo Montagnes, and Stephane Wolton, "Mass Purges: Top-down Accountability in Autocracy," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (2019), pp. 1045-1059. Also, note that work by Philip Roessler (2011) has been characterized by Sudduth (2017: 1769) as being about purges but its focus is actually on whether ethnic groups are excluded from the ruling coalition. As I show in my definition below, the act of being

There is a similar absence of research on elite purges at the individual-level; in other words, studying within-regime patterns of autocratic purges across specific elites. Milan Svolik suggests that a dictator arbitrarily selects targets to purge in order to ‘publicly signal independence from any official.’ This is not the primary focus of Svolik’s work, however, so little theoretical justification is given for the claim and he does not test the expectation.¹⁷ Several scholars have examined elite shuffling and promotions, but none of these studies explain why a dictator purges specific elites at particular times.¹⁸

Once we better understand the origins of elite purges, then we can better comprehend their potential range of effects. The claim at the start of this section—that dictators use elite purges to try and stay in power—is true by assumption. However, whether purges prolong a dictator’s tenure is an empirical, and in fact, contested question. Several studies find that purges can aid a dictator’s goal of staying in power by making civil conflict reoccurrence less likely,¹⁹ or deterring potential coup conspirators.²⁰ Yet, other studies find that purges are risky for power-hungry dictators because they increase the likelihood of coups.²¹ This illustrates how the nascent study of the effects of purges has been hamstrung by, among other fundamental concerns discussed below, a failure to properly consider the causes of purges. Once we have a comprehensive understanding of the causes of elite purges, we can better understand their relationships to not just authoritarian survival, but topics including autocratic personalization, interstate and intrastate

excluded—and potentially never having been part of the ruling coalition—is fundamentally different to a purge.

¹⁷Milan Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 80.

¹⁸Pierre F. Landry, Xiaobo Lü, Haiyan Duan, “Does Performance Matter? Evaluating Political Selection Along the Chinese Administrative Ladder,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 8 (2018), pp.1074-1105; Josef Woldense, “The Ruler’s Game of Musical Chairs: Shuffling During the Reign of Ethiopia’s Last Emperor,” *Social Networks*, Vol. 52 (2008), pp. 154-166.

¹⁹Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016): pp. 1-6.

²⁰Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

²¹Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, “Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), pp. 453-79; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, “When to Expect a Coup d’état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), pp. 293-313.

conflict, economic development, and human rights, among other questions. As Malcolm Easton and Randolph Siverson wrote in 2018, “the role of purges in the politics of the state cries out for theoretical advancement, which is, at present, lacking in its development.”²² This manuscript takes up that challenge.

1.2 What is a Purge?

Before describing arguments of the causes of elite purges in dictatorships, we first need to establish what a purge is and what it is not. At present, there is no shared clear and logically consistent definition of a purge. This is problematic because, as noted by Giovanni Sartori in his seminal article on concept formation, “conceptual mishandling, and, ultimately, conceptual misinformation” have significant negative implications for formulating causal arguments.²³ In studies on autocratic purges, failure to properly conceptualize the term has thus far: undermined our ability to measure purges; facilitated contradictory findings; meant it is difficult to compare findings across studies; and, led to problems within studies where it is hard to ascertain what the research shows. Any causal argument is fundamentally shaped by the definition of the term.²⁴ Thus, the failure to adequately define the term ‘purge’ has inhibited our understanding of the causes and effects of the phenomenon.

In this section, I first analyze existing definitions of purges, elite and non-elite, showing that there are contradictions and logical inconsistencies across research, and even within one study. This provides the motivation for a comprehensive conceptualization of the term. I then describe my conceptualization strategy before putting it into action.

²²Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 607.

²³Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), p. 1053.

²⁴For a similar point made regarding democracy, see: David Collier, and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Information in Comparative Research,” *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1997), p. 432.

This leads to a definition of an autocratic elite purge as an event in which *a dictator forcibly removes an individual from the ruling coalition.*

1.2.1 Existing Definitions

Table 1.1 documents definitions of purges in previous political science research. Other scholarship has referred to purges but these are the only books and articles that provide direct definitions of purges²⁵ or indirect definitions via operationalization of the concept when it is included in an empirical analysis.²⁶ There are inconsistencies across and within these definitions on four key aspects: the identity of the target; the number targeted, the outcome, and the dictator's motivation.

²⁵Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 461; Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 383-4; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), p. 711; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601; Kristine Eck, "Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935; Paasha Mahdavi, and John Ishiyama, "Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), p. 223; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782.

²⁶Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, "Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), pp. 1390; Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63 No. 2 (2011), pp. 302-3.

Table 1.1: Definitions of Purges in Previous Political Science Studies

Author	Definition
Wintrobe (1998: 198)	“At periodic intervals, the suitability of large numbers of individuals for membership in the Party and participation in its decision making was explicitly called into question.”
Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003: 383-4)	“[T]he elimination from membership of some in the winning coalition or the selectorate or both.”
Gandhi (2008: 193)	“Number of systematic eliminations by jailing or execution of political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition.”
Roessler (2011: 302-3)	Roessler’s claims about purges are based on an operationalization of whether ethnic groups are excluded from central government.
Boe and Rivera (2015: 461)	“[T]he removal of elite members through violent means, constitute an instrument to eliminate potential threats within the leader’s inner circle.”
Eck (2015: 935)	“[T]he removal (from a position or from the government) or substantive demotion of one or more individuals within the military apparatus on the basis of a power struggle with an opposing faction. I further specify that the purge must have either been sweeping or have affected the top levels of the military leadership.”
Braithwaite and Sudduth (2016: 3)	A purge is “when one or more military officers are dismissed, demoted, or arrested for at least one of the following reasons: the officer was popular among other elites and is suspect to threaten the leader’s political survival, the officer had different policy preferences and criticized the dictator’s positions, and/or the officer was (presumed to be) responsible for plans to overthrow the regime.”
Gassebner et al. (2016: 308)	They do not define a purge but their data from Banks and Wilson (2018) defines a purge as “any systematic elimination by jailing or execution of political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition.”

Continued on next page

Table 1.1 – *Continued from previous page*

Author	Definition
Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2017: 711)	“Purges involve reducing the number of essential supporters, concentrating political power in the remaining (smaller) group of supporters. Purges often entail the execution, imprisonment, or exile of those purged.”
Sudduth (2017: 1782)	<p>Elite elimination focuses on elites “that have access to physical forces-officers in the military or other security apparatus and civilian elites that are at the top of the security apparatus” and “dictators’ actions to dismiss, replace, purge, or demote individuals from key positions who demonstrate high levels of ability and ambition.”</p> <p>Targets must be either “(a)... popular among other elites and thus are suspected to be potential threats to his political survival, (b) who have different policy preferences and criticize the dictator’s policy, and (c) who (are suspected to) have planned to overthrow the leader or the regime.”</p>
Easton and Siverson (2018: 597)	“[T]he permanent removal of members of the state leader’s winning coalition.”
Narang and Talmadge (2018: 1390)	The authors do not define a purge but in their data collection they ask whether a “purge of the officer corps has occurred in the last five years.”
Mahdavi and Ishiyama (2020: 223)	“[T]he removal of other elites through violence.”
Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (N.d.: 2)	“[T]he regime leader imprison[s]/kill[s] officers from groups other than his own without a reasonably fair trial.”

Notes: Montagnes and Wolton propose a formal model of mass purges, which they distinguish from elite purges, but they do not define the term.

First, scholars disagree on several aspects concerning the *identity of the purge's target*. Most scholars contend that the target must be within the regime.²⁷ However, Gandhi's and Gassebner et al.'s definitions explicitly state that the target can come from within the regime or the opposition.²⁸ Thus, for these scholars, the imprisonment of Alexei Navalny, formerly of the opposition Progress Party in Russia, would be as much a purge as the execution in 1940 of Nikolai Yezhov, former head of the Interior Ministry under Stalin.²⁹ To a degree, the point is also true of Bove and Rivera's work because although their definition states that purge targets come from within the regime, they use the same data as the above authors to measure purges meaning their analysis also captures violence against opposition outside of the ruling coalition or selectorate.³⁰ The goal is not yet to say that either of the above events are not purges, but to illustrate that quite different events are classified as purges by Gandhi's, and Gassebner et al.'s definitions compared to other authors.

Additionally, there are inconsistencies among scholars who agree that purges can only be directed at targets within the regime. Several scholars—notably those associated with selectorate theory³¹—emphasize that targets of a purge must be elites; essentially senior figures within the winning coalition.³² Thus, for these authors, in contrast to historical

²⁷Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, "Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), pp. 1379-1405; Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2011), pp. 300-46; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

²⁸Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308.

²⁹Vladislav Zubok, and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1996).

³⁰Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 464.

³¹For readers unfamiliar with selectorate theory, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), esp. p.38. The selectorate are the residents who have a "formal role in expressing a preference over the selection of the leadership that rules them, though their expression of preference may or may not directly influence the outcome," and the winning coalition are a subset of the selectorate whose "support is essential if the incumbent is to remain in power." Essential means that "they control the resources vital to the political survival of the incumbent."

³²Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), pp. 707-43; Malcolm R.

research, only some of events like the Russian Great Terror of the 1930s that targeted elites and non-elite party members would be classified as purges.³³ Other scholars either implicitly through their model³⁴ or explicitly via their definition have stated that targets can both include and go beyond elites, such as regular soldiers.³⁵ In the language of selectorate theory, the implication of these studies is that purge targets can be from the winning coalition or the selectorate.

A related point is whether targets must come from the military and other security apparatuses (military personnel), or can come from elsewhere (civilian personnel). Braithwaite and Sudduth, Geddes et al., and Sudduth only examine whether elites are targeted “who have legitimate access to physical forces capable of violence.”³⁶ These elites are important in being able to organize coups.³⁷ Eck, and Narang and Talmadge also only focus on the military.³⁸ In contrast, most authors suggest that targets do not have to be members of the military or have other access to physical forces.³⁹

Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608. Although Bueno de Mesquita et al. (*The Logic of Political Survival*, 2003: pp. 383-4) previously stated that targets of purges could come from the winning coalition or selectorate.

³³Vladislav Zubok, and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1996), p. 82.

³⁴B. Pablo Montagnes, and Stephane Wolton, “Mass Purges: Top-down Accountability in Autocracy,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (2019), pp. 1045-1059.

³⁵Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

³⁶Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782. See also Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “A Measure of Personalism in Dictatorships,” Working paper.

³⁷Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1796, fn. 1.

³⁸Kristine Eck, “Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), pp. 924-46; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, “Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), pp. 1379-1405.

³⁹Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, “Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), pp. 453-79; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, “Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), pp. 707-43; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*,

Second, there are inconsistencies in existing definitions on the *number of people* who must be targeted for an event to count as a purge. Of the authors who discuss scale, Gandhi, Gassebner et al., and Wintrobe all indicate that a purge entails more than just one person being targeted.⁴⁰ Conversely, other authors write that for an event to be classified as a purge it can target swathes of individuals but this is not a necessary condition.⁴¹

Third, there are inconsistencies related to the *outcome* of a purge. Some scholars suggest that the target must be jailed or executed, or at least violently removed,⁴² while others write that a target could be simply dismissed or demoted.⁴³ Additionally, most studies are silent on the question of whether the outcome of a purge is permanent. Only Easton and Siverson engage with this point directly, stating that their conception of a purge is “the permanent removal of members of the state leader’s winning coalition.” But in the same

Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, “When to Expect a Coup d’état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), pp. 293-313; Paasha Mahdavi, and John Ishiyama, “Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea.” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), pp. 221-240; Philip Roessler, “The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa,” *World Politics*, Vol. 63 No. 2 (2011), pp. 300-46.

⁴⁰Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, “When to Expect a Coup d’état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308; Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 198.

⁴¹Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Kristine Eck, “Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601.

⁴²Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, “Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 461; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, “Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), p. 711; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, “When to Expect a Coup d’état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308; Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “A Measure of Personalism in Dictatorships,” Working paper; Paasha Mahdavi, and John Ishiyama, “Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea.” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), p. 223.

⁴³Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 597; Kristine Eck, “Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935; Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782.

paragraph they write that, “some people who are purged at one time may be rehabilitated at a later time, as in the case of Deng Xiaoping, who was twice purged but ultimately became the leader of China.”⁴⁴ Clearly, a target cannot be permanently removed yet rehabilitated and purged again later.

Fourth, existing definitions are inconsistent in terms of discussing the *dictator’s motivation* to purge. Most authors do not discuss a dictator’s motivation. Conversely, Braithwaite and Sudduth’s and Sudduth’s studies provide clear reasons that at least one of which must be present for the event to count as a purge. In these studies, targets must have been removed from office due to being popular among their colleagues, holding different policy preferences to the leader, or actively planning to overthrow the leader or regime.⁴⁵ Easton and Siverson also state that the motivation for a purge is to remove those responsible for an attempted coup against the dictator, but they focus exclusively on purges in the wake of coups so they may contend that motivations vary in different contexts.⁴⁶ Again, at this stage I do not argue that motivations are a necessary part of the definition or that they are invalid, but simply highlight inconsistencies between authors in previous attempts to define a purge.

In sum, the study of authoritarian survival could benefit greatly from a logically consistent and falsifiable definition of purges.

1.2.2 A New Conceptualization of a Purge

Conceptualization Strategy

I define a purge with a three-pronged approach. I first examine definitions of purges in

⁴⁴Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601.

⁴⁵Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782.

⁴⁶Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 597.

existing political science scholarship to identify broad common features of current understanding of the term.⁴⁷ Second, I compare these features against historical work—mainly from Russia, and to a lesser degree China, as historians have written about purges in these countries in the most detail—to ascertain whether these features are consistent with broader academic usage of the term.⁴⁸ Finally, I investigate the etymological history of the term to confirm that my definition is consistent with the word’s nuances and connotations that linguists recognize, as well as the meaning of the term over time.

I use this strategy to produce a mid-level concept that is generalizable but not universal so that there are certain behaviors the concept does not encapsulate. As Sartori wrote, a high-level universal concept “indiscriminately points to *everything*.”⁴⁹ A mid-level concept requires some qualifiers to imbue it with a degree of preciseness, but not so many qualifiers that the concept results in narrow-gauge theory and always requires contextual definition. As the investigation of the causes and effects of purges is situated within the study of Comparative Politics, we require a concept that can travel across diverse contexts and that has consistent meaning.⁵⁰ In summary, I utilize this strategy to produce a term that is:

1. Sufficiently broad so that it can be applied to different contexts.

⁴⁷This echoes Powell and Thyne’s approach to conceptualizing coups d’état. They emphasize identifying common features of definitions in existing political science scholarship to ensure that the final concept does not stray too far from existing conceptual agreement among political scientists; see: Jonathan M. Powell, and Clayton L. Thyne, “Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (2011), p. 249.

⁴⁸I also compare these features against other historical cases of purges so as not to fall victim to the criticism I made earlier that our understanding thus far of purges has been largely shaped by events within these countries.

⁴⁹Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), p. 1042.

⁵⁰Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), pp. 1034 and 1044.

2. Sufficiently specific so that the categorization of actions within the concept is falsifiable. In other words, we can identify actions that both are and are not purges. This helps maintain a plausible link to empirical evidence.⁵¹
3. Acceptable to scholars and commentators familiar with authoritarian politics.
4. Intuitive so that readers less familiar with authoritarian politics understand its meaning.

Overall, what we are searching for in defining purges is Sartori's ideal of making "extensional gains (by climbing the abstraction ladder) without having to suffer unnecessary losses in precision and empirical testability."⁵² Achieving these aims will help produce a concept that avoids concept misinformation and acts as a useful data container to produce theories about the causes and effects of purges.

Conceptualization

I first examine existing definitions of purges in political science to establish what dimensions should be included in the definition as well as what the most consistent points are regarding the content of those dimensions. As I showed above, existing political science definitions of purges have focused on four main dimensions: target, breadth, outcome, and motivation. Table 1.2 breaks down these definitions to show points of divergence and convergence among existing definitions.

There are two further aspects not discussed by any political science scholarship on purges: timing and location. Regarding the former, several authors focus on purges in specific moments, but the implication of these studies is that they are examining a sub-type of purge. For example, Easton and Siverson study purges following attempted coups.⁵³

⁵¹Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), p. 1035.

⁵²Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), p. 1041.

⁵³Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

Table 1.2: Breakdown of How Previous Political Science Studies Define Purges

Author (year)	Identity of Target	Number of People	Outcome	Motivation
Wintrobe (1998)	Members of the party (198)	'large numbers' or 'a number' (198)	Memberships were not renewed or "much more dramatic steps were taken" (198)	
Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003)	The winning coalition or selectorate (383-4)		"elimination" (383)	
Gandhi (2008) (Definition—outlined here—differs from operationalization, which relies on Banks (1996).)	"political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition" (193)	"systematic eliminations" (193)	Jailing or execution (193)	
Roessler (2011)	Elites within central government (308, 315)			
Bove and Rivera (2015) (Definition—outlined here—differs from operationalization, which relies on Banks (2008).)	"elite members" of the ruling bodies (461)		"removal" (461)	
Eck (2015)	"individuals within the military leadership" (935)	One or more but it also "must have either been sweeping or affected the top levels of the military leadership" (935)	Removal or substantial demotion (935)	
Braithwaite and Sudduth (2016)	Regular soldiers through to the highest military ranks (3)	One or more (3)		"the officer was popular among other elites and is suspected to threaten the leader's political survival, the officer had different policy preferences and criticized the dictator's positions, and/or the officer was (presumed to be) responsible for plans to overthrow the regime" (3)
Gassebner et al. (2016) (Data and definition, come from Banks and Wilson (2012).)	Political opposition within the regime or opposition (308)	Systematic (308)	Jailing or execution (308)	
Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2017)	Essential supporters (711)		Execution, imprisonment, or exile (711)	
Sudduth (2017)	Elites "that have access to physical forces—officers in the military or other security apparatus and civilian elites that are at the top of the security apparatus" (1782)		"Elite elimination is defined here as dictators' actions to dismiss, replace, purge, or demote individuals" (1770-1)	Targets "(a) who are popular among other elites and thus are suspected to be potential threats to his political survival, (b) who have different policy preferences and criticize the dictator's policy, and (c) who (are suspected to) have planned to overthrow the leader or the regime" (1782)
Easton and Siverson (2018)	Winning coalition (597), which includes the military, members of a cabinet, or political party (601)	One individual, dozens, or millions (601)	Loss of office, exile, imprisonment, or death (601)	The aim is to remove those responsible for an attempted coup against the dictator (597)

Note: Blank space indicate the dimension is not discussed in that particular study.

There is no reason, however, why purges could not occur anytime, and empirically, they often do. Regarding location, could a purge occur beyond a nation-state's borders or does it have to take place inside the dictator's territory? Most events classified as purges by historians, such as China's purges in the 1950s, have occurred inside a dictatorship's borders.⁵⁴ Again though, there is no reason to restrict the definition of a purge based on location. For example, a dictator could conceivably have a member of the winning coalition assassinated on foreign soil. Similar to previous authors, I therefore do not include either of these dimensions in the definition because they do not necessitate any qualifiers to delineate what a purge entails.

Regarding the target of a purge, as discussed, studies diverge on whether targets must come from within the regime or if they can come from the opposition too. The broad consensus though is that targets come from within the regime.⁵⁵ The only exceptions come from studies that utilize data from Arthur Banks' *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive*.⁵⁶ In fact, as noted, Bove and Rivera acknowledge that a purge does not include the targeting of opposition figures but utilize the Banks data as they did not have superior data.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), Chapter Five.

⁵⁵Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 461; Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 383-4; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), p. 711; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 597 and 601; Kristine Eck, "Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935; Paasha Mahdavi, and John Ishiyama, "Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), p. 223; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, "Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), p. 1390; Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2011), pp. 308 and 315; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782; Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁵⁶Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308.

⁵⁷Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 464.

Punishment of non-regime personnel has also been subject to significant study within the umbrella of an alternative concept: repression.⁵⁸ Classifying the targeting of non-regime personnel as purges would leave any definition vulnerable to Sartori's charge of it being a high-level universal concept that "indiscriminately points to everything."⁵⁹ Thus, there is good reason to restrict the definition of purges to the targeting of regime personnel.

Studies also lack consensus on whether targets must be within the regime elite or can be less senior regime figures, and relatedly whether targets must be in the military. Montagnes and Wolton justifiably point out that most studies have focused on elite purges.⁶⁰ Elite purges are undeniably important but if purges are restricted solely to elite-level targets then we would also have to discount some of the individual-level events that make up the purges in Russia in the 1930s or China's anti-corruption purges since 2013 under President Xi. Yet other political science studies, as well as historical and media sources routinely refer to events such as these as purges suggesting they should be incorporated within the definition.⁶¹ This does not mean that purges can encompass the targeting of individual citizens but they can include the targeting of junior figures within the regime. This latter category could include regular soldiers or junior party members. In terms of selectorate theory, the targeting of members of the winning coalition and selectorate is included in the definition but the targeting of disenfranchised residents is excluded.⁶²

⁵⁸For examples, see: Eva Bellin, "Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders." In *Authoritarianism in the Middle East*, eds. Marsha Pripstein Pousney and Michele Penner Angrist (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005); Christian Davenport, "State Repression and Political Order," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 10 (2007), pp. 1-23; Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2010), pp. 117-37.

⁵⁹Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (1970), p. 1042.

⁶⁰B. Pablo Montagnes, and Stephane Wolton, "Mass Purges: Top-down Accountability in Autocracy," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (2019), pp. 1045-1059.

⁶¹Risa Brooks, "An Autocracy at War: Explaining Egypt's Military Effectiveness, 1967 and 1973," *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2006), pp. 396-430; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 383-4; John Arch Getty, *Origins of The Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press 1985), Chapter Two.

⁶²Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), Chapter Two.

Finally, on the question of the target, are purges exclusively directed at the military or can civilian figures within the regime also be targeted by a purge? On this point, there is broad consensus. While certain studies have focused exclusively on military purges, the implication from authors is that these are a subset of purges. Sudduth exclusively examines military purges, justifying it based on the role of the military in coups but she does not claim that military figures are the only people who can be targeted by purges.⁶³ The point is reinforced by alternative studies whose scope includes military and civilian figures.⁶⁴ Establishing a definition of purges along these lines is also consistent with the intuitive meaning of the term in media and popular writing. For example, the investigation, arrest, and expulsion from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of the civilian former head of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, Zhou Yongkang, was identified by international media as a purge.⁶⁵

The second dimension is the number of people. There is broad agreement on this aspect with numerous scholars writing that purges often target more than one person but this is not a necessary condition to define a purge.⁶⁶ Again, the only exceptions are studies that use Banks' Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive, which write that purges must be 'systematic.'⁶⁷ If targeting more than one individual is not a necessary condition of a purge, this would also reflect common accounts of purges. For example, individual cases

⁶³Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1768-1801.

⁶⁴Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), pp. 707-43; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

⁶⁵James T. Areddy, "China's Former Security Chief Zhou Yongkang Sentenced to Life in Prison," *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-former-security-chief-zhou-yongkang-sentenced-to-life-in-prison-1434018450>.

⁶⁶Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), p. 3; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601; Kristine Eck, "Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935.

⁶⁷Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308.

like the former Chief of Intelligence Khin Nyunt in Myanmar being jailed in 2005 for 44 years and mass cases like Saddam Hussein's efforts in 1979 to execute 60 senior members of the Ba'ath Party are both described as purges.⁶⁸ Similarly, historical scholarship on twentieth century Russia has described individual and mass targeting as purges.⁶⁹

The third dimension discussed by existing studies is what happens, or the outcome for targets. A range of possibilities are covered, with some synonyms across studies: demotion, replacement, dismissal or loss of office, exile, jailing or imprisonment, and execution or death.⁷⁰ Notably, resignation or retirement are never included as possible outcomes.

Despite the lack of a uniformly agreed outcome for purges, two common themes emerge. There is an involuntary aspect to the event where the action is imposed on the target by the dictator. Additionally, all outcomes entail a loss of power. This is true whether a target is executed or simply demoted. Including this wide range of potential outcomes under the banner of a 'loss of power' also reflects how the term is commonly employed. For example, Jang Song Thaek's execution in 2013 in North Korea has consistently been labeled a purge,⁷¹ as was the aforementioned expulsion from the CCP of Zhou Yongkang.

⁶⁸Joe Boyle, "Five Infamous Purges," *BBC*, December 13, 2013, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25363097>.

⁶⁹Vladislav Zubok, and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 82.

⁷⁰Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 461; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), p. 711; Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601; Kristine Eck, "Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (2015), p. 935; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 193; Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), p. 308; Paasha Mahdavi, and John Ishiyama, "Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), p. 223; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1770-1.

⁷¹Choe Sang-Hun, "In Hail of Bullets and Fire, North Korea Killed Official Who Wanted Reform," *The New York Times*, March 12, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/world/asia/north-korea-executions-jang-song-thaek.html>.

As losing power is quite a vague phrase, an example is helpful to illustrate what level of power loss constitutes a purge. Vyacheslav Molotov—famous for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Germany in 1939—was Stalin’s Foreign Minister from 1939 to 1949 and again from 1953 to 1956. In 1949, Molotov was replaced by Andrei Vyshinsky in 1949 after his wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, was arrested in 1948 and sent to a concentration camp after being accused of being a ‘Zionist.’ However, Molotov remained First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. In their history of the Soviet purges, Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov do not frame Molotov being replaced by Vyshinsky as a purge but Zhemchuzhina, who was an important party member herself, did have all her power and influence taken from her.⁷² Although Molotov was replaced, which is one of the outcomes identified by certain political science studies as a purge, Molotov was not purged in 1949 as he retained notable power within the regime. Similarly, Emmerson Mnangagwa was not purged by former President Mugabe in October 2017 when he was stripped of his role as Justice Minister as he maintained the Vice Presidency. But Mnangagwa was purged when he lost this position too on 6 November 2017.⁷³

While these examples are hopefully helpful individually, we require clear criteria to identify across regimes and individuals what level of power loss constitutes a purge. I argue that, in selectorate theory terms, if an individual loses power against their wishes to the extent that they are moved down at least one selectorate theory group, or they are killed, then they are purged. In other words, if a member of the winning coalition is stripped of power to the extent that they become a member of just the selectorate or worse, then they have been purged. If a member of the selectorate loses power to the extent that they become a disenfranchised citizen or worse, then they have been purged.

⁷²Vladislav Zubok, and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1996), p. 80.

⁷³Moyo, Jeffrey, “Mugabe Fires Vice President, Clearing Path to Power for Wife,” *The New York Times*, November 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/world/africa/zimbabwe-mugabe-mnangagwa.html>.

Consider a hypothetical example. Kim Yo Jong is Kim Jong Un's sister; in December 2018, she was Vice Director of the Workers Party's Propaganda and Agitation Department.⁷⁴ If Kim Yo Jong had her position taken away from her by Kim Jong Un and she was left just as a member of the Korean Workers' Party, then she would no longer be a member of the winning coalition and would only be a member of the selectorate. Under the above criteria, we could say she has been purged. One might counter that as Kim Yo Jong remains a member of the selectorate, and therefore part of the regime, she has not yet been purged. However, her status would have changed to a significant degree such that it might impact various political phenomena—including but not exclusively: regime tenure, economic development, foreign policy decisions—that we might hope to explain with purges. In response to the potential concern that this rule is slightly arbitrary, it has the advantage of establishing consistency across regimes and, as the hypothetical example of Kim Yo Jong hopefully shows, has face validity. It is also broadly consistent with the one study on purges—Easton and Siverson's—that explicitly states what level of power loss constitutes a purge.⁷⁵

Finally, in terms of outcome, a purge need not entail permanent loss of power, although it can also be permanent. As noted above, Easton and Siverson include this in their definition but then give the example of Deng Xiaoping being purged twice, which contradicts the point.⁷⁶ No other previous studies in political science discuss purge outcomes being permanent. Furthermore, given the potential outcomes include demotion, replacement, or exile, there is no logical reason why a person cannot be rehabilitated after

⁷⁴James Pearson, and Park Ju-min, "North Korea's 'Princess' Moves Closer to Center of Power," *Reuters*, November 29, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151126100412/http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/30/us-northkorea-politics-kim-idUSKCN0JC04A20141130>.

⁷⁵Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601.

⁷⁶Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), p. 601. Easton and Siverson (2018, 601) may mean an individual can be purged permanently if they are not rehabilitated until a new regime forms, but Deng was purged twice by Mao Zedong; see Susan L. Shirk, "China in Xi's 'New Era': The Return to Personalistic Rule," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2018), p. 22.

a purge and subsequently purged again. For example, returning to the case of Jang Song Thaek, Jang was purged in 2013 but he was also purged in 2004.⁷⁷ Jang's rehabilitation between these dates meant that he became a member of the ruling coalition again, before being purged in 2013.⁷⁸

The fourth and last dimension covered by existing political science studies is motivation. This is discussed at length exclusively by Sudduth, and Sudduth and Braithwaite.⁷⁹ Sudduth's dataset identifies purges on the basis that targets are: either popular among other elites and are believed to threaten the leader's political survival; have alternative policy preferences to the dictator and criticize the dictator's policy; or are suspected to have plotted to remove the dictator. Sudduth includes motivations in her definition to attempt to distinguish purges "from incidents where dictators dismiss officers purely because of their incompetence or other nonpolitical reasons."⁸⁰

However, a motivation should not be part of the definition for several reasons. First, motivations of actors in authoritarian regimes are generally very difficult to accurately collect data on. Can we really accurately judge the popularity of military or civilian personnel among other elites across dictatorships? Secondly, and more importantly, including a motivation prejudices the explanatory factors involved in the causal theory. If a purge is defined using Sudduth's criteria, then any theory about the causes of purges will inevitably focus on threat to the dictator's power as that is what all three motivations relate to. Although threat is likely an important factor in explaining purges, Montagnes and Wolton's model shows an alternative plausible explanation could focus on improving

⁷⁷Barbara Demick, "Kim Jong Il Purges Relative from Power, Paving Way for Songs," *The Seattle Times*, December 9, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20070929175140/http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2002113774_kim09.html.

⁷⁸For further reading on the dilemma for autocrats of needing to officials accountable but also maintain stability in the cadre corps, see: Ciqi Mei, and Margaret M. Pearson, "The Dilemma of "Managing for Results" in China: Won't Let Go," *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 37 (2017): pp. 203-216.

⁷⁹Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

⁸⁰Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782.

the accountability of officials to aid policy in authoritarian regimes.⁸¹ Third, Sudduth’s efforts to distinguish purges from so-called ‘nonpolitical reasons’ for targets’ dismissals is problematic.⁸² Returning to Montagnes and Wolton’s model, if dictators conduct purges to improve policy—or as Sudduth says, dismiss officials due to incompetence—this is likely political. It is difficult to argue that dictators want good fiscal or macroeconomic policy purely for its own benefit. A more complete explanation likely includes the possibility that good macroeconomic policy provides them with greater resources to provide both public and private goods to citizens and supporters and ensure their survival in office.⁸³ Dictators can use purges to help reduce corruption and consolidate power simultaneously. These goals are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, excluding motivations allows the analysis of events that are regularly cited as purges including the anti-corruption purges in China since 2013. It also supports the internal validity of the measure of purges as there is huge variation across dictatorships in our abilities to assess motivations.

Table 1.3 summarizes the characteristics for the above dimensions that should be included in the definition of a purge, based on this analysis of existing political science studies on purges and checks against historical sources.

Table 1.3: Characteristics to Include in the Definition of a Purge

Timing	Location	Identity of Target	Number of People	Outcome	Motivation
Any	Any	Within the regime The winning coalition or selectorate Military or civilian	One or more	Loss of power by at least one group (in terms of selectorate theory) Permanency not required	No prejudged motivation necessary

⁸¹B. Pablo Montagnes, and Stephane Wolton, “Mass Purges: Top-down Accountability in Autocracy,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (2019), pp. 1045-1059. See also Ciqi Mei, and Margaret M. Pearson, “The Dilemma of “Managing for Results” in China: Won’t Let Go,” *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 37 (2017): pp. 203-216.

⁸²Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1782.

⁸³Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003).

Finally, the characteristics in Table 1.3 are consistent with the word's etymological history. Figure 1.1 shows the word's past-to-present derivational path. The word 'purge' comes from the old French word 'purgier,' which in turn comes from the Latin word 'purgare.'⁸⁴

Figure 1.1: Past-to-Present Derivational Path of the Word 'Purge'

purgare → purgier → purge

The important etymological question, however, concerns semantics: the aspect of etymology that examines how the meaning of a word has changed over time. The earliest attested form of the word is the Latin word 'purgare.' All meanings associated with the Latin word relate to cleansing and purifying. These meanings apply to a range of contexts—none of them political—including removing impurities from one's body; freeing oneself from a religious taint; getting rid of troubles; and apologizing for oneself or a third person. None of the meanings of 'purgare' relate to violence or killing.

The old French word 'purgier' derives from 'purgare.' Old French was spoken between the 8th and 14th centuries in northern France. 'Purgier' also refers to washing, cleaning, and purifying.⁸⁵ The word's meaning was similar to the Latin word and still did not relate to political purposes. It was not until the 1600s and 1700s that the word purge started being used in the English language and with a political purpose. For example, Thomas Fuller's historical account of the Church of England in 1655 described "the Purge of Paganisme out of the Kingdome of Northumberland."⁸⁶ Later, in 1722, the historian Robert Wodrow wrote in his account of the Church of Scotland that "a thor-

⁸⁴Online Etymology Dictionary, "Origin and Meaning of Purge," <https://www.etymonline.com/word/purge>.

⁸⁵Online Etymology Dictionary, "Origin and Meaning of Purge," <https://www.etymonline.com/word/purge>.

⁸⁶Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain: From the Birth of Jesus Christ until the Year M.DC.XLVIII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1655), p. 72.

ough Purge is made of our Scots Council.”⁸⁷ At this stage, the word’s meaning began to move away from its Latin roots of exclusively relating to cleansing and purifying. However, even though the meaning began to take on a political connotation, there were still not any restrictions implied in terms of who within a political entity can be targeted, the number of people targeted, whether their purge was permanent, or if it necessarily entailed violence or death. One could find historical examples of when the word purge was used in the 1700s with violence or death, but the characteristics identified in Table 1.3 are consistent with the word’s etymological roots.

Overall, this conceptualization strategy leads to a definition that is consistent with previous political science research on purges—except for the dimension regarding motivation—and also reflects historical and popular use of the term as well as the word’s etymological roots. An autocratic purge is when a dictator takes significant power away from a person within the regime against their wishes. As the theoretical and empirical focus of this manuscript is elite purges, however, we can define an autocratic elite purge as an event in which: *a dictator forcibly removes an individual from the ruling coalition.*

1.3 Overview of the Manuscript

Chapter 2 describes the manuscript’s theoretical argument and the research design employed to test it. For the former task, I first summarize the threat environment that dictators operate under and identify the elites who a dictator may wish to purge. I then describe how this autocratic threat environment shapes patterns of elite purges across dictatorships, before turning to within-regime individual-level variations of elite purges. Within regimes, I describe why dictators sometimes refrain from purging disloyal elites and why dictators sometimes purge loyal elites. Both across dictatorships and across indi-

⁸⁷Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1722), p.598.

viduals within regimes, it is not just the threat of a dictator being unseated by a coup that shapes elite purges, as previously suggested. Instead, threats from the people and foreign states affect whether, who, and when dictators purge elites. In the chapter’s final section, the research design justifies my key choices to comprehensively test the theory’s expectations, including: the use of quantitative and qualitative data, varied research methods, and a diverse set of cases.

Chapters 3 through 5 contain empirical tests of the hypotheses suggested by the theory. The theory’s varied expectations—that operate across dictatorships and across individuals within-dictatorships—necessitate a diverse range of data and methodological tools. Table 1.4 summarizes the data and methods used in these analyses. The analyses include original quantitative data on military and civilian elite purges across dictatorships between 1992 and 2015, original quantitative data on elite politics within North Korea under Kim Jong Un, and qualitative data on elite purges in Park Chung-hee’s South Korea. The quantitative analyses test the hypotheses against alternative explanations while demonstrating that the findings are not unique to specific cases. The qualitative analysis examines both the covariation between the posited independent and dependent variables, as well as whether the causal mechanisms described by the theory function as hypothesized.

Table 1.4: An Outline of the Manuscript’s Empirical Analyses of Elite Purges

Chapter	Level of Analysis	Form of Analysis	Empirical Evidence
3	Cross-national	Hypothesis testing	Global cross-national quantitative dataset on dictatorships (1992-2015)
4	Within-regime individual-level	Hypothesis testing	Individual-level quantitative dataset on North Korea (2012-2015)
5	Within-regime individual-level	Causal process-tracing	Individual-level qualitative data on Park Chung-hee’s South Korea (1961-1963)

Consistent with the theory, I find from the cross-national quantitative analysis that dictators are more likely to purge elites when threats from the people or foreign states are low, and especially when they are high. This is true for civilian and military elites. From the within-regime analysis on Kim Jong Un's North Korea, I find that Kim is more likely to purge a disloyal elite than retain them. However, the pendulum swings towards retention when there is a heightened threat from the people or foreign states and the elite holds a position relevant to helping Kim alleviate that threat. This was the case for Jang Song Thaek, who Kim resisted purging until the threat of Chinese interference receded, which Jang had helped Kim manage. Finally, the theory-testing process-tracing from Park Chung-hee's South Korea provides evidence that elite purges occur in the manner described by the causal mechanisms in Chapter Two. Park purged disloyal elites including the initial *de jure* chairman of the military junta and a prominent general who vocally disagreed with him, when threats from the people and foreign states were low. However, Park initially retained the chairman because he was helping Park alleviate heightened external pressure from the Americans. Finally, Park purged a carefully selected prominent loyal elite in response to heightened threat as a scapegoat for the reason behind the elevated threat.

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings and their implications for wider scholarship in political science, as well as suggesting fruitful areas for further study.

Chapter 2

Explaining Elite Purges Across and Within Dictatorships

What causes elite purges in dictatorships? Their importance to political survival means they are essential to understand not just to comprehend how dictators stay in power, but also to interpret democratic backsliding; aspirational autocrats often copy tactics from more established dictatorships. Understanding these events, which can range from mundane demotions to dramatic executions, also has practical applications. Intelligence about the internal politics of dictatorships should inform states' foreign policies.

In this chapter, I provide a theory of elite purges in dictatorships. Elite purges are not just a product of coup threats. Instead, they are shaped by the broader autocratic threat environment. My central argument is that threats to a dictator's hold on power from the people and foreign states shape whether a dictator purges elites, who he purges, and when he chooses to purge. The chapter starts by describing the structures of authoritarian rule that shape elite purges: the broad threat environment; and that dictators cannot govern alone, but must do so with the assistance from elites. I then set out an explanation for cross-national patterns in elite purges. In other words, I explain why some dictators purge elites but others do not. Dictators conduct two ideal types of elite purges. First, dictators take advantage of a reduced need for elites' assistance when threats from the

people and foreign states are low, and engage in *punishment* of disloyal elites. Second, when these threats are high, dictators sometimes *scapegoat* loyal elites to relieve pressure.

However, a dictator does not purge all disloyal elites, nor does he purge all loyal elites. Put differently, there is significant variation within a regime in why a dictator purges specific elites, but not others. I explain these within-regime individual-level patterns of purges by emphasizing that whether a purge occurs depends on the position held by an elite. *Ceteris paribus*, a dictator is more likely than not to purge a disloyal elite. However, the chance of retention increases when there is an elevated threat from the people or foreign states that is relevant to a position held by a disloyal elite. Similarly, a dictator is more likely to purge a loyal elite who holds a position that relates to the reason behind the threat from the people or foreign states being heightened.

Taken together, these arguments provide a comprehensive account of cross-national and individual-level patterns of elite purges under autocracy. After setting out the empirical expectations derived from these arguments, I describe the main alternative explanations. For cross-national theories of elite purges, the most prominent alternative explanations are that regime type or threats from elites determine which dictators purge elites. For individual-level patterns, the main alternative arguments are that dictators select targets arbitrarily, or that dictators purge incompetent elites. The final section of the chapter outlines a research design to test the argument's observable implications, discussing the logic behind the selection of methodological tools and cases with which to examine the argument, as well as its scope.

2.1 Structures of Authoritarian Politics

2.1.1 The Autocratic Threat Environment and Elite Purges

Being a dictator is scary. While fully democratic leaders contend primarily with a single threat to their power—elections—dictators face multiple threats.¹ Assuming that dictators are interested in staying in power, they must navigate three primary threats. A dictator can lose power to an *external* authority, as King Harold did when William of Normandy invaded and conquered England in 1066; they can lose power to *popular* movements as Fulgencio Batista did in 1959 during the Cuban Revolution; or they can suffer at the hands of *elite* regime insiders. Examples of the latter include the assassination that removed Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic in 1961 or the 2006 coup by the Royal Thai Army that overthrew Thaksin Shinawatra’s government.² Thus, threats to dictators come from: regime elites, the people, and foreign adversaries.³ I refer to the combined threat from the people and foreign adversaries as ‘non-elite threats’ to distinguish them from elite threats, predominantly coups.

Threats to a dictator’s rule do not operate independently from one another. An increase in one type of threat often positively co-varies with another type of threat.⁴ This possibility is problematic for dictators because it heightens the danger of all types of threat. For instance, external threat in the form of foreign pressure may not immedi-

¹Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), p. 23. Democratic leaders can theoretically also lose power to foreign invasions but as democracies do not go to war with each other, and democracies are very rarely the target of invasion by autocracies, this threat is negligible; see Stephen L. Quackenbush, and Michael Rudy, “Evaluating the Monadic Democratic Peace,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2009), pp. 268-285.

²Dictators can also face secessionist movements but these do not necessarily entail threats to their power. See Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators & Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions & State Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 19.

³Schedler uses slightly different terminology for elite (horizontal or lateral), popular (vertical), and external (also external) threats; see Andreas Schedler, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, “Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017), pp. 707-743.

ately trouble a dictator's position. If western media run campaigns advocating boycotts in companies owned by the Sultan of Brunei due to Brunei's discriminatory treatment of minority groups, as they did in 2019, this is unlikely to lead to the Sultan's demise.⁵ Even the threat of sanctions is unlikely to directly undermine his position. However, over time, diminished economic activity due to boycotts or sanctions can reduce the resources available to a dictator with which he provides private goods to satisfy his key supporters. Alternatively, popular protests can be problematic not just because they threaten to unseat a dictator but because they may lead to defections of the dictator's key supporters. This chain of events was instrumental in the demises of autocrats including Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania, and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Dictators more frequently fall to elite threats than any other method,⁶ but increases in all types of threats are problematic for dictators because of interdependencies among different types of threats.

Scholars of authoritarianism have long shown that these various threats shape dictators' strategies to stay in power. Regarding external threats, foreign policy tools used against dictators such as sanctions, external support for civil society, and military intervention shape how dictators construct their external security apparatus and domestic political institutions.⁷ Regarding popular threats, Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman show

⁵Megan Specia, "Facing Uproar, Brunei Says Stoning Law is Meant to 'Educate' and 'Nurture'," *The New York Times*, April 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/12/world/asia/brunei-stoning-law-defense.html>.

⁶Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009), pp. 269-83; Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza. 2009. "ARCHIGOS: A Data Set on Leaders, 1875-2004, Version 2.9." <http://www.rochester.edu/college/faculty/hgoemans/Archigos.2.9-August.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2018); Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 4-5.

⁷Abel Escribà-Folch, and Joseph Wright, *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); see also Wondeuk Cho, "Making Dictators' Pockets Empty: How Do U.S. Sanctions Influence Social Policies in Autocratic Countries," *Defence and Peace Economics*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (2019), pp. 648-665; Abel Escribà-Folch, "Authoritarian Response to Foreign Pressure: Spending, Repression, and Sanctions," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6 (2012), pp. 683-713; Carl Henrik Knutsen, "Security Threats, Enemy-Contingent Policies, and Economic Development in Dictatorships," *International Interactions*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2011), pp. 414-440.

that dictators' fears of losing power to public protests inform how they use tools including propaganda and the secret police.⁸ Regarding elite threats, Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer argue that dictators create new military or paramilitary forces to balance the traditional military—a tactic known as counterbalancing—to diminish the threat of a coup. They even suggest that dictators sometimes engage in military conflict to exacerbate rivalries within the armed forces which, in turn, also reduces the likelihood of a coup.⁹ In short, the autocratic threat environment shapes political behavior and institutions in dictatorships.

Previous accounts of the causes of purges have followed this tradition, describing how elite threats across dictatorships influence why and when dictators conduct elite purges.¹⁰ Perhaps most notably, Jun Koga Sudduth shows that dictators are counter-intuitively more likely to purge military officials when the coup threat recedes; under these circumstances, dictators can purge with reduced fear of the military retaliating against purges with a coup.¹¹ In Milan Svoblik's structural account of purges, dictators are also driven by their fear of elite threats. Svoblik writes that the 'problem of authoritarian power sharing' between dictators and elites is that there is a conflict of interest between the dictator and his inner circle, or ruling coalition. Regime elites are concerned that the dictator could use his position to acquire power at their expense and may remove them from the ruling coalition, while dictators worry that elites will rebel. Based on this inherent tension, Svo-

⁸Sergei Guriev, and Daniel Treisman, "Informational Autocrats," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2019), pp. 100-127; see also Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Susanne Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989-1991," *World Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1994), pp. 42-101.

⁹Aaron Belkin, and Evan Schofer, "Coup Risk, Counterbalancing, and International Conflict," *Security Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2005), pp. 140-77; see also Erica De Bruin, "Preventing Coups d'état: How Counterbalancing Works," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018): pp. 1433-58; Ulrich Pilster, and Tobias Böhmelt, "Coup-Proofing and Military Effectiveness in Interstate Wars, 1967-99," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2011), p. 335; James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1999), pp. 141-49; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Coup Risk, Coup-Proofing and Leader Survival," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2017), pp. 3-15.

¹⁰Daron Acemoğlu, Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin, "Coalition Formation in Non-Democracies," *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 75 (2008), pp. 987-1009.

¹¹Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

lik argues that dictators use their control of the executive to remove elites from the ruling coalition.¹²

However, basing explanations of elite purges exclusively on threats from elites offers only partial explanations of elite purges. As noted above, dictators also face threats from the people and foreign states; we cannot explain many instances and patterns of elite purges in dictatorships without accounting for this broader autocratic threat environment. Across dictatorships, we cannot explain why patterns of elite purges differ across regimes with high levels of coup threats. For example, the Taliban in Afghanistan conducted very few elite purges, despite factional infighting between so-called moderates and hardliners.¹³ Conversely, Chile's Augusto Pinochet also faced threats from powerful military elites and confronted this head on, purging other generals who helped him seize power.¹⁴

Explanations of elite purges that rely on how elite threats motivate dictators also cannot explain within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges. We do not know why a dictator purges some disloyal elites but retain others. For example, in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, two members of the Politburo threatened Stalin's authority by behaving disloyally. Nikolai Bukharin disagreed with Stalin's economic policies while Vyacheslav Molotov openly disagreed with a Party decision at a Politburo meeting.¹⁵ Puzzlingly, Bukharin fell from power almost immediately whereas Molotov remained in the Politburo.¹⁶ Explanations based on elite threats also cannot explain why dictators purge

¹²Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), see Chapter 3, and esp. p. 58 and fn. 10.

¹³Jason Burke, "Brutal purge by divided Taliban Amid claims of a coup plot, hardliners in Afghanistan's Islamic movement are cracking down on moderates, reports Jason Burke in Jalalabad," *The Observer*, November 1, 1998.

¹⁴Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), p. 56.

¹⁵Molotov's dissent was over the decision to expel his wife (Polina Zhemchuzhina), a prominent official herself, from the Party. Molotov's indiscretion was so severe that the historian Geoffrey Roberts writes that, "[n]o one else in Stalin's inner circle ever behaved in such a way." See Geoffrey Roberts, *Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2012), p. 17.

¹⁶Paul R. Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010), esp. chapters 15-17; Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (Bury St

specific loyal elites. For example, in 2018, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sacked the deputy intelligence chief, Major General Ahmed al-Asiri. Asiri never behaved disloyally towards the Crown Prince and he was not thought to pose any kind of threat towards the regime.¹⁷ Overall, explanations based on elite threats offer only a partial explanation of cross-national and within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges in dictatorships. We must incorporate a dictator's broader threat environment to offer a more complete and accurate theory of elite purges.

2.1.2 Dictators and Their Elites

In their attempts to stay in power, dictators do not navigate these threats alone.¹⁸ Dictators cannot hope to deter or resist popular protests and foreign powers without assistance from key supporters. In return for their efforts to help a dictator stay in power, these supporters receive rewards, typically in the form of private goods. This could be an appointment to head a prestigious government department or simply financial rewards. But who are these elites are pivotal to dictators' attempts to stay in power, but who also may fall victim to a purge?

I define autocratic elites as a group of regime insiders who a dictator must retain sufficient support from to stay in power. Without this support, a dictator will likely lack the necessary assistance to deal with popular or external threats. This group of elites have commonly been referred to as the winning or ruling coalition. The terms can effectively be used interchangeably. Bueno de Mesquita et al. define a winning coalition as a "subset of the selectorate [those who have a formal role in expressing a preference over lead-

Edmunds: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 340; Geoffrey Roberts, *Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2012), p. 17.

¹⁷Al Jazeera, "Who is Ahmed al-Asiri, the sacked Saudi intelligence official?" *Al Jazeera*, October 20, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/ahmed-al-asiri-sacked-saudi-intelligence-chief-181019235211120.html>.

¹⁸For example, see Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi, "Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2019), pp. 552-568.

ership selection] of sufficient size such that the subset's support endows the leadership with political power over the remainder of the electorate as well as over disenfranchised members of the society."¹⁹ Similarly, Svoblik defines a ruling coalition as "the dictator's allies who jointly, with him, hold enough power to be both necessary and sufficient for a regime's survival." Svoblik emphasizes through examples of Hafiz al-Assad in Syria and Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet government that dictators depend on the support of members of the ruling coalition to retain political power.²⁰

Now that these key structures of authoritarian rule are established—that dictators face three primary threats to their power and they navigate these threats with the support of elite individuals—we can theorize the causes of elite purges in dictatorships.

2.2 Cross-National Explanations of Elite Purges

2.2.1 Punishment: Purging Disloyal Elites

The Problem of Disloyal Civilian and Military Elites

Disloyal elites are problematic for dictators because they directly threaten a dictator's survival.²¹ They can do this by participating in plots or other actions designed to weaken or remove a dictator. Disloyal elites can also threaten a dictator's position indirectly. If a dictator does not trust certain disloyal elites, this can have unintended negative consequences for the dictator. For instance, the presence of disloyal military elites can impact where a dictator feels able to deploy these officials. Positioning disloyal military elites close to one another can be dangerous as the officials may use their proximity to conspire

¹⁹Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 38 and 51.

²⁰Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 57-58.

²¹I discuss in the following section how dictators identify disloyal elites.

against the dictator.²² Thus, disloyal military elites can heighten a dictator's vulnerability to foreign enemies by restricting a dictator from employing an optimal military strategy. In short, a dictator must take action to negate the threat from disloyal elites to avoid being undermined or, potentially, removed from office.

Disloyal military elites are extremely problematic for dictators given the frequency with which they remove dictators. Between 1946 and 2004, Goemans et al. find that domestic military actors removed dictators on 189 occasions, without foreign support. This was by far the most common irregular way that autocrats were removed from power.²³ Of course, coups are not only conducted by military *elites*. As Naunihal Singh points out, coups can also be conducted by middle (e.g., majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels) and lower ranked (e.g., enlisted men non-commissioned officers, and junior officers) military figures. However, coups from military elites stand a greater chance of success than coups launched by lower ranked officers; disloyal military elites are therefore hugely concerning for dictators.²⁴

Civilian elites are also problematic for dictators. Military elites are often, but not always, the orchestrators of coups. Even when military elites are behind coups, however, they may not be able to successfully unseat the dictator, or if they can, hold on to power without civilian actors. Similar to Goemans et al., Svobik finds that coups are the most common way that dictators lose power.²⁵ Note, however, that Svobik does not distinguish between military and civilian perpetrators. In their seminal article on coups, Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne define these events as "illegal and overt attempts by the mil-

²²Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

²³Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009), pp. 269-83; Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza. 2009. "ARCHIGOS: A Data Set on Leaders, 1875-2004, Version 2.9." <http://www.rochester.edu/college/faculty/hgoemans/Archigos.2.9-August.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2018).

²⁴Naunihal Singh, *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

²⁵Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 4-5.

itary or *other elites* within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive."²⁶ In short, disloyal civilian elites can directly threaten a dictator's position; civilian actors removed dictators on 25 occasions between 1946 and 2004.²⁷ Disloyal civilian elites can also indirectly threaten a dictator's position by coordinating a coup with military elites. For example, in Argentina in 1955, Juan Perón was overthrown as president by a coup coordinated between large parts of the military *and* civilian elites. Overall, disloyal civilian and military elites can directly and indirectly threaten a dictator's position; their disloyal behavior compels dictators interested in staying in power to take action.

Purges and an Autocrat's Survival Toolkit

Dictators can address threats from elites by purging them. However, purging is one of a number of tactics available to an autocrat that they can use to mitigate elite threats, which most commonly take the form of coups. These tactics are known as coup-proofing.

There is an extensive literature on how dictators use different tools from their autocratic survival toolkit to mitigate threats from civilian and military elites. Dictators can use nominally democratic institutions to co-opt elites where concessions can be made to restive elements in the regime without ceding too much power. After independence from France, the kings of Morocco used limited democratic parliamentary institutions to manage threats from nationalist leaders that otherwise could not be contained.²⁸ Dictators can shuffle or rotate officials to disrupt threatening cliques in their regime, as Emperor Haile

²⁶Jonathan M. Powell, and Clayton L. Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (2011), pp. 249-259 (emphasis added).

²⁷Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009), pp. 269-83; Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza. 2009. "ARCHIGOS: A Data Set on Leaders, 1875-2004, Version 2.9." <http://www.rochester.edu/college/faculty/hgoemans/Archigos.2.9-August.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2018).

²⁸Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter Two. See also Erica Frantz and Natasha Ezrow, *The Politics of Dictatorship: Institutions and Outcomes in Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), p.7; Ellen Lust-Okar, "Elections under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan," *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2006), pp. 456-471; Beatriz Magaloni, "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4/5 (2008), pp. 715-741; Benjamin Smith, "Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule," *World Politics*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (2005), pp. 421-451.

Selassie did in Ethiopia between 1941 and 1974.²⁹ They can engage in counterbalancing by dividing existing branches of the military or creating new military or paramilitary forces to balance the traditional powers of internal or external security forces. Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, for example, created the President's Own Guard Regiment to counterbalance the traditional military.³⁰ Alternatively, dictators can reduce coups threat from their coercive institutions by designing them to be fragmented and socially exclusive. Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippines' sixth president, ensured the Armed Forces of the Philippines possessed both these characteristics to negate the threat of a coup from his military and security forces.³¹

To resist the threat of a coup, an autocrat may purge elites in addition to using a number of other coup-proofing tactics. Indeed, it would be risky to rely on just one tool. Further, dealing with the different types of civilian and military elites that can threaten a dictator makes certain options more attractive in different situations. Civilian elites' demands can be mitigated via cooptation into nominally democratic institutions while creating of paramilitary organizations can inhibit the capabilities of threatening military elites. The use of purges does not preclude the use of other tactics in the dictator's survival toolkit.

However, despite the various benefits of these tools to autocrats, if carried out successfully, purging has a unique appeal for a dictator dealing with threatening elites. Purging completely removes individuals from the resources and networks that enable them to threaten the dictator's position.³² Alternative tactics aim to persuade elites not to move

²⁹Josef Woldense, "The ruler's game of musical chairs: Shuffling during the reign of Ethiopia's last emperor," *Social Networks*, Vol. 52 (2018), pp. 154-166.

³⁰Erica de Bruin, "Preventing Coups d'état: How Counterbalancing Works," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), p. 1434. See also Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer, "Coup Risk, Counterbalancing, and International Conflict," *Security Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2005), pp. 140-77; Ulrich Pilster and Tobias Böhmelt, "Coup-Proofing and Military Effectiveness in Interstate Wars, 1967-99," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2011), pp. 331-50.

³¹Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Chapter Four.

³²As discussed in Chapter One, since purges need not entail execution, elites are cut off unless the dictator brings them back to the ruling coalition.

against the dictator, or engineer temporary reductions in elites' capabilities to act. Cooperation may even have the reverse effect of empowering elites by providing access to resources and networks to pose a greater threat. Overall, sometimes dictators require a certain kind of tactic to deal with elites if other coup-proofing tactics fail to dissuade elites from taking action or they fail to sufficiently undermine elites' capabilities to challenge the dictator. For this reason, while they may be used alongside other tactics, dictators are likely to use purges to alleviate threats from elites and ensure their continued survival in office.

The Guardianship Dilemma

Dictators cannot purge elites, who may be disloyal, *ad infinitum*. If autocrats completely decimate their military leadership through purges, for instance, they risk increasing their vulnerability to a foreign adversary. It is true that dictators sometimes intentionally weaken their military and sacrifice battlefield effectiveness to reduce coup threats. Caitlin Talmadge shows, for example, how Saddam Hussein's fears of coups led him to severely weaken his military at considerable cost on the battlefield in the first six years of the Iran-Iraq War.³³ However, dictators need to be careful not to take this to the extreme. For a dictator, losing battles can be tolerable but being overthrown is not. Talmadge writes that in 1986, Hussein seemingly "calculated that not only would these practices likely lose the war against Iran, but they might well result in the overthrow of his regime." Hussein therefore shifted away from coup-proofing the military.³⁴ Similarly, dictators may weaken domestic security services through elite purges to eliminate the risk of figures from these institutions launching a coup but this also entails risk. Weakening internal security apparatuses can lead to dictators losing control over the people. Once citizens become aware of security forces being unwilling or, more importantly from our perspective, unable to

³³Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), Chapter Four.

³⁴Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), p. 140.

engage in repression, this can diminish people's fear of the consequences of revolting and make it more likely that people protest *en masse* against the dictator.³⁵ In Romania in 1989, people in Bucharest and Timioara were more willing to protest against Nicolae Ceausescu's regime once they believed that security forces were not going to repress them.³⁶ Given the risks for dictators, to fully understand when they might purge disloyal elites we need to also consider under what circumstances they might refrain from doing so.

A dictator's decision of whether to purge elites relates to the age-old 'guardianship dilemma:' who guards the guardians? The question lies at the heart of the study of civil-military relations. The dilemma originally stems from discussions in democratic theory about how governments can be strong enough to protect the citizens but not so strong that they become tyrannical. More commonly today, the discussion relates to balancing whether militaries are strong enough to ward off or defeat external threats, but not so strong that they overthrow the government. Peter Feaver succinctly describes this dilemma: "On the one hand, the military must be strong enough to prevail in war...On the other hand, just as the military must protect the polity from enemies, so must it conduct its own affairs so as not to destroy or prey on the society it is intended to protect."³⁷

In recent years, the question has been applied to autocracies. Greitens argues that the autocratic version of the dilemma is slightly different, in part because "the dictator rather than the people, is both the principal overseeing coercive agent and the object to be protected from them. An autocrat seeks not to preserve society's ability to govern, but his own. He does not worry about the security services destroying democracy or the polity, but about the security services destroying *him*." To further quote Greitens, "[w]hen it comes to their security forces, autocrats face a fundamental "coercive dilemma" between

³⁵Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1991), pp. 7-48.

³⁶Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 36-41.

³⁷Peter D. Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (1999), p. 214.

empowerment and control."³⁸ Returning to Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu's chief instruments of control over the people were the Ministry of Interior's militia and the Department of State Security, but he also feared them because he saw them as the most likely source of a coup.³⁹

Broadening our focus beyond domestic coercive institutions reveals that in managing elites, dictators must account for all of the threats facing them. This means that dictators face a slightly different 'guardianship dilemma' than the 'coercive dilemma' described by Greitens. Greitens writes that in designing coercive institutions, autocrats face an internal tradeoff as much as an internal-external tradeoff. For Greitens, dictators balance two different internal threats from coups and the people.⁴⁰ Dictators still, however, face threats from foreign states. Military and civilian elites are crucial to helping dictators alleviate threats not just from the people, but from foreign states as well. A dictator needs elites, who may be disloyal to be sufficiently empowered that they can help him stave off being overthrown by a foreign state or a revolution, but not so strong that they can overthrow the dictator. Thus, whether to curtail or enable disloyal elites more broadly concerns a tradeoff between elite threats (coups) and non-elite threats (revolutions and foreign states).

Autocrats often depend on disloyal elites to survive. They must sufficiently empower military and civilian elites for tasks that help them resist threats from the people and foreign states. Tasks including helping them lead the military, manage domestic security institutions, and oversee government departments related to finance and propaganda. However, imbuing elites with too much power means that a dictator's sources of control over non-elite threats can be turned against him via a potentially fatal coup. Dictators

³⁸Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators & Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions & State Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 23.

³⁹Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 40.

⁴⁰Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators & Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions & State Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 22.

must therefore manage disloyal elites carefully, at times purging them from their ruling coalition to curtail or completely eliminate their power. The following section describes how dictators manage these competing influences and under what circumstances they are likely to purge disloyal elites.

Resolving the Guardianship Dilemma

Purges of disloyal elites are then an essential tactic in the dictator's survival toolkit. Empirically, however, there is much variation in these purges across autocracies, and across time within regimes. Such variations could be the product of the threat of coups; one dictator may take advantage of a diminished likelihood of being removed by a coup and purge elites, while another dictator may not have the same opportunity.⁴¹ However, as discussed, dictators facing comparable levels of coup threats often exhibit varying patterns of elite purges. What, then, explains these cross-national variations in elite purges?

These variations occur because dictators contend with a variety of threats to their rule. Although dictators are removed more by coups than by other means, they also contend with threats from the people and foreign states. This threat environment, coupled with the aphorism that dictators do not rule alone, means that variations in popular and external threats also shape cross-national patterns of elite purges.

A dictator is less likely to purge disloyal elites when external threats are high because he requires elites performing their jobs effectively to maximize his chances of not losing power to an external threat. The military functions most effectively when it is staffed by officials who can focus on battlefield tactics and strategy. Purging military elites, even if they are disloyal, can disrupt the chain of command, remove officials who were performing crucial tactical and strategic roles, and generally inhibit the military's ability to perform at its optimum level. A dictator is also less likely to purge disloyal civilian elites under these circumstances because he does not just require military expertise to directly

⁴¹Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

and indirectly tackle external threats. External threats do not just come on the battlefield. They can also come via international pressure such as sanctions, opposing alliances, or bilateral or multilateral diplomatic threats. Dictators sometimes require civilian elites to provide non-military solutions to these external challenges; this has a direct effect on helping dictators navigate external threats. Civilian elites also indirectly help dictators navigate external threats. When dictators are engaged in a war, for example, they can ill-afford to have problems elsewhere that distract them or necessitate the redirection of resources away from the battlefield. Civilian elites that engage in preventive or reactive repression to keep civilians in line are essential to ensure a dictator does not have to redirect military resources away from the battlefield to deal with problems at home. Purging civilian elites inhibits their ability to carry out these tasks effectively that can directly and indirectly help a dictator stave off external threats. An autocrat facing heightened external threats, then, will overall be less likely to purge disloyal military and civilian elites.

Dictators are also less likely to purge disloyal elites when popular threats are high for the same reason that they require top military and civilian officials performing their jobs effectively when facing heightened threats of unrest from the people. Dictators are less likely to remove civilian elites who carrying out functions like leading the police, managing internal security organizations, or overseeing government departments related to the economy or information dissemination when facing a heightened threat from the people. These civilian elites are required to successfully coordinate responses to street protests, and even direct the use force when necessary. They also oversee preventive functions including distributing government propaganda or managing the state's economy. Purging civilian elites has a negative effect on such tasks being carried out effectively. Military elites are also sometimes required by dictators when people take to the streets, if the action coordinated by civilian officials is insufficient to quell threats from the people. Purging military elites can undermine the organizational capacity of the military and its ability to quickly redirect resources to help respond to popular threats. *Ceteris paribus*, an auto-

crat facing heightened popular threats will also be less likely to purge disloyal military and civilian elites.

2.2.2 Scapegoating: Purges of Loyal Elites

When and Why Do Dictators Purge Loyal Elites?

Under what conditions do dictators purge loyal elites? Unlike disloyal elites, dictators do not purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are low. Dictators do not have the same motivation to purge loyal elites, as they do disloyal elites; hence, they do not need to take advantage of reductions in non-elite threats and purge loyal elites.

An alternative perspective is that dictators should, and do, consistently look to reduce the size of their ruling coalition; purging is one way that dictators can accomplish this. By reducing the size of their ruling coalition, dictators can reduce the amount of private goods that they must distribute to elites, and can keep a greater share of resources and power for themselves.⁴² It is true that dictators sometimes purge officials and abolish government departments to subsume these responsibilities.

But these moves are intended to secure a dictator's position, not to reduce the size of a ruling coalition *ad infinitum*. Axiomatically, all dictators need elites to survive. Even when non-elite threats are low, dictators know that they may need the support of elites in the future. Thus, when dictators purge elites, they more often replace them with others. For example, when Muammar Gaddafi purged Libya's security agency due to American demands following the bombing of Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988, he installed a new chief of foreign intelligence, Yussef Abdul-Qader Dobri.⁴³ Over-

⁴²Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith, *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), Chapter One.

⁴³William Drozdiak, "Libya Launches Bid to Boost Western Ties," *The Washington Post*, January 26, 1992, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/01/26/libya-launches-bid-to-boost-western-ties/71d9996f-00a3-41e9-940d-c637b9c0610e/>.

all, while dictators take advantage of low non-elite threats to purge disloyal elites, this is done out of necessity to reduce elite threats as dictators identify a moment at which they can purge elites without leaving themselves vulnerable to non-elite threats. We should not expect dictators to also purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are low because there is no need to do so.

Dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are high. When non-elite threats are high, there is a reason driving the high level of threat. For the people, grievances about economic conditions or physical repression may underpin dissatisfaction with the dictator. A dictator can respond by purging one or more loyal elites to scapegoat them. This serves the twin purposes of diverting blame for grievances from the dictator to the loyal elites, and providing a public demonstration that grievances have been heard and the dictator is responding. For example, Kim Jong Il had Park Nam Gi, Director of the Planning and Financial Department of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party, executed in a stadium in Pyongyang on March 12, 2010. Park was scapegoated for a disastrous currency reform in 2009 that was intended to crack down on the black markets and revive socialism, but instead wiped out many ordinary people's savings. This led to reports of civil disobedience, protests, and even physical attacks on government officials in North Korea.⁴⁴

Dictators also purge loyal elites due to increased non-elite threats from foreign states. Foreign states may consider taking action against a dictator due to behaviors that they attribute to people or institutions within the dictator's regime. This could be due to military action by the regime, the regime's treatment towards its people, or other actions that negatively impact a foreign state. For example, members of the United States Congress introduced legislation in 2019 that would levy sanctions on Brunei government officials who

⁴⁴Lee Sung-jin, "Execution Confirmed by Capital Source," *Daily NK*, April 5, 2010, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/execution-confirmed-by-capital-sou/>; Marcus Noland, "North Korea's Failed Currency Reform," *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, February 5, 2010, <https://www.piie.com/commentary/op-eds/north-koreas-failed-currency-reform>.

enforced the state's law criminalizing homosexual activity.⁴⁵ In 2018, the United States also imposed sanctions on 17 Saudi officials for their role in the killing of the journalist, Jamal Khashoggi.⁴⁶ In these situations, dictators can purge loyal elites to scapegoat them, shifting responsibility for the foreign state's grievance away from the dictator, and publicly showing that the dictator recognizes and is responding to the grievance. For example, Saudi Arabia purged several elites including the deputy chief of intelligence, General Ahmed al-Asiri, to blame him for the murder of Khashoggi.⁴⁷ Overall, both due to threats from the people or foreign states, dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are high, than in other circumstances.

Purging Loyal Elites Versus Alternative Tactics

An alternative possibility is that high non-elite threats create the conditions under which dictators most need loyal elites' assistance to survive and so do not purge them. This would be consistent with the axiom that dictators do not rule alone and need elites to help them survive. Because of this, we should not expect dictators to purge all loyal elites when non-elite threats are high.⁴⁸ This does not mean, however, that we should not expect any purges of loyal elites when non-elite threats are high.

Similar to when dictators decide whether to purge disloyal elites, dictators have a range of tools available to them to deal with high non-elite threats. Faced with protests from the people, dictators can utilize government propaganda to blame foreign forces for manufacturing discontent, or levy indiscriminate repression to dissuade people from

⁴⁵Zack Budryk, "Omar Introduces Bill Sanctioning Brunei Over Anti-Homosexuality Law," *The Hill*, May 16, 2019, <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/444120-omar-introduces-bill-sanctioning-brunei-over-anti-homosexuality-law>.

⁴⁶Patricia Zengerle, and Stephen Kalin, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions for Khashoggi Killing, Saudis Seek Death Penalty," *Reuters*, November 15, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-khashoggi/us-imposes-sanctions-for-khashoggi-killing-saudis-seek-death-penalty-idUSKCN1NK2VB>.

⁴⁷Al Jazeera, "Who is Ahmed al-Asiri, the sacked Saudi intelligence official?" Al Jazeera, October 20, 2018.

⁴⁸In the next section, I discuss why a dictator cannot scapegoat disloyal elites, and why he purges specific loyal elites but not others, under conditions of high non-elite threats.

protesting.⁴⁹ China used both tactics when attempting to mitigate threat from protests in Hong Kong in 2019.⁵⁰ Faced with increased threat from foreign states, dictators can utilize tactics including leaning on their allies for support, or employing military action.⁵¹ In 1991 and 2003, Saddam Hussein used military action to attempt to defend his regime from foreign incursion.

The availability and use of these alternative tactics does not preclude, however, dictators from purging loyal elites to try and alleviate non-elite threats. There are some situations when non-elite threats are high but purging loyal elites is unlikely to help the dictator. In 2003, for example, purging loyal elites would unlikely have dissuaded George W. Bush from invading Iraq. But when a dictator can conceivably pass on responsibility for the cause behind the increased non-elite threat to loyal elites within the regime, purging is an attractive option. In this scenario, purging directly tackles the source of the problem—by showing the people or foreign states that the ‘guilty’ party behind the grievance has been punished—and can therefore reduce the non-elite threat facing the dictator. Overall, we therefore expect an increased likelihood of purges of loyal elites when non-elite threats are high.

⁴⁹Erin Baggott Carter, and Brett L. Carter, “Propaganda and Protest in Autocracies,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2020; Abel Escribà-Folch, “Repression, Political Threats, and Survival Under Autocracy,” *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (2013), pp. 543-560.

⁵⁰James Palmer, “Hong Kong’s Violence Will Get Worse,” *Foreign Policy*, November 11, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/11/police-killing-protests-beijing-lam-xi-hong-kong-violence-will-get-worse/>; Ben Westcott, “China is Blaming the US for the Hong Kong Protests. Can That Really Be True?” *CNN*, July 31, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/31/asia/us-china-hong-kong-interference-intl-hnk/index.html>.

⁵¹Abel Escribà-Folch, and Joseph Wright, *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2.3 Within-Regime Individual-level Explanations of Elite Purges

In this section, I explain why dictators purge specific disloyal elites, and why dictators purge specific loyal elites. The processes of how dictators select certain disloyal or loyal elites for retention or purge are similar, but because the purposes of the purges are different—punishing disloyal elites and scapegoating loyal elites—the outcomes are different. A dictator is more likely to retain a disloyal elite when there is a heightened non-elite threat and the elite holds a position relevant to helping the dictator alleviate that threat; these conditions mean purging the disloyal elite could leave a dictator vulnerable to a non-elite threat. Conversely, a dictator is more likely to purge a loyal elite when there is a heightened non-elite threat and the elite holds a relevant position such that the dictator can connect them to the reason for the non-elite threat being heightened; these circumstances make scapegoating the loyal elite credible and effectively shift blame away from the dictator.

2.3.1 Distinguishing Disloyal from Loyal Elites

To decide which disloyal elites and which loyal elites to purge, dictators first need to identify these types of elites. Put differently, they need to distinguish disloyal elites from loyal elites. A disloyal elite would often prefer, however, that the dictator is unaware of their disloyal type. So how do dictators identify disloyal elites?

To overcome this problem, dictators identify elites as disloyal based on several specific behaviors. Some signals are overt while others are discrete; some indicate an immediate threat while others suggest the elite cannot be trusted in the long-term. The need for dictators to identify elites who pose an immediate threat is self-explanatory, but dictators must also identify disloyal elites who do not pose a threat now but may do so in the future. If

dictators can identify such elites, it increases their ability to remove threatening elites before it is too late. Failure to do this raises the possibility of the elite successfully retaliating when targeted and removing the dictator via a coup, as former army commander-in-chief Idi Amin did in Uganda in 1971 when then-President Milton Obote attempted to purge him.⁵² There are four individual-level elite behaviors that make a dictator likely to identify them as disloyal:

Plotting to overthrow the dictator: The most transparent signal of disloyalty is when dictators uncover evidence of a member of the ruling coalition plotting to overthrow them. This can include individual or group plans to assassinate the leader, planning to participate in a coup, or conspiring with a foreign power to unseat the dictator. Plotting to overthrow the dictator demonstrates that the elite cannot be trusted. For example, in the Central African Republic in 1969, Major Jean Claude Mandaba arrested Lieutenant Colonel Banza for plotting a coup against the dictator, Jean-Bedel Bokassa. Bokassa had Banza purged via execution. Incredibly, the second-ranking minister in the government, Minister of Public Works Auguste M'Bongo was also later purged in 1973 for attempting to enlist the same Major Mandaba in a plot against Bokassa.⁵³ Such behaviors increase elite-based threats against the dictator's goal of staying in power.

Opposing the dictator's rise to power: Members of the ruling coalition can signal disloyalty through their behavior during the dictator's rise to power. Whether dictators gain power via a coup or other means, there are often members of the ruling coalition who oppose their rise to power. Once in power, dictators cannot trust these elites as they have signaled a preference for an alternative leader. Before consolidating power, Stalin was opposed by Trotsky and Zinoviev among others; both were subsequently purged.

⁵²Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1771.

⁵³Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 58 and 152.

Leading a faction: Members of the ruling coalition can signal disloyalty by establishing their own power base. There may be a particular group within the military or other security services or a group of cabinet ministers who all follow a specific high-profile member of the ruling coalition. This concerns a dictator because it suggests that members of the ruling coalition and their followers may not depend on the dictator for their resources or power. Since dictators generally satisfy members of the ruling coalition by providing private benefits including financial resources or positions of power that enable them to accumulate resources, this can be seen to represent an attempt to acquire independence from the dictator. For example, under Stalin, the Leningrad party chief Sergei Kirov gained a significant faction within the Politburo and his speech at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 received huge ovations. Stalin is widely believed to have had Kirov subsequently assassinated in 1934 to nullify the threat posed by Kirov's faction to Stalin's power.⁵⁴

Disagreeing with the dictator: A less direct sign of disloyalty is policy divergence between members of the ruling coalition and dictator. Members of the ruling coalition may directly oppose a dictator's policy or promote a policy that the dictator is opposed to. Willingness to act in a manner that goes against the dictator's wishes signals that these members of the ruling coalition cannot be trusted. In Egypt, Anwar Sadat purged his War Minister Mohammed Ahmed Sadiq who promoted an anti-Soviet approach in the 1970s to deal with Israel, contrary to Sadat's policy, and also opposed Sadat's strategy of trying to seize a strip of land in the Suez Canal as a prelude to political negotiations with Israel.⁵⁵ If elites promote a course of action contrary to the dictator's wishes, they demonstrate a willingness to oppose the dictator. Dictators reasonably perceive that such insubordination signals that the individual(s) may, in future, not just oppose a policy but oppose the

⁵⁴John Arch Getty. "The Politics of Repression Revisited." In *The Stalinist Dictatorship*, ed. Chris Ward (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 121-2.

⁵⁵Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 127-8.

dictator himself. Thus, policy divergence provides dictators with perceptions of future elite threats.

Identifying specific traits of disloyalty helps show why elites might behave disloyally given the potentially fatal consequences. Across the signals of disloyalty described above, there are different reasons as to why an elite would behave in such a way. When plotting to overthrow the dictator or opposing the dictator's rise to power, the elite engages in an 'all or nothing' move. If the elite is successful, they may become the dictator themselves, or preserve a favored place in the ruling coalition. A cost-benefit analysis of these risky actions can therefore make them worthwhile endeavors.

The reasons for elites engaging in other types of disloyalty are slightly more varied. Elites may disagree with a dictator over policy because they believe a specific course of action will have unforeseen negative consequences for the regime and thereby the dictator. Nikolai Bukharin, for example, fervently supported the New Economic Policy long after Stalin abandoned and even started opposing it because he believed pursuing an alternative course would have disastrous economic consequences for the peasantry.⁵⁶

Finally, elites sometimes engage in factionalism because they perceive that it will better protect themselves from being targeted for removal, and may one day even provide them with sufficient support to mount a coup. Across regimes, elites have consistently sought to appoint their favored personnel into key positions. For example, Jang Song Thaek was able to place individuals in key positions across the (North) Korean Workers' Party due to his prominent positions including Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission under Kim Jong Il. However, while this explains elites' motivations for engaging in factionalism, it often fails to protect them when targeted by a dictator for a purge.

⁵⁶Paul R. Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010), especially Chapters 15-17.

Dictators are at an advantage to individual elites due to the structural conditions of autocratic regimes. Svoblik wrote: “authoritarian elites operate under distinctly hazardous conditions. They cannot rely on an independent authority to enforce mutual agreements, and violence is the ever-present, ultimate arbiter of their conflicts. These dismal circumstances ensure that any dictator’s aspiration to become the next Stalin is matched by the opportunity to do so.”⁵⁷ In other words, dictators’ informational and material resource advantages over elites mean they can generally successfully plot and execute the removals of elites with little concern for elites’ abilities to individually resist.

Dictators have several reasons to similarly not fear an elite’s allies retaliating against a purge. It is difficult for elites to coordinate collective action under the weak informational structural conditions of autocracy.⁵⁸ Further, the removal of an elite creates opportunities for their subordinates. Machiavelli wrote that when a leader “proceed[s] against the life of someone...men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony.”⁵⁹ As Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote of the Bolshevik purges in Russia in 1918 and 1919, they “opened up new career opportunities.”⁶⁰

In this section, I discussed four signals that when dictators observe, they can distinguish disloyal elites from loyal elites. This contains an implicit assumption that a dictator’s default position is to expect elites to be loyal. Conversely, there are cases where dictators purge elites arbitrarily, which could suggest dictators purge at random in case elites are disloyal. However, the empirical evidence in the subsequent chapters shows that there are systematic patterns to elite purges within dictatorships, which supports the assumption that dictators do not automatically expect elites are disloyal. Once dictators have distinguished disloyal elites from loyal elites, they can then identify specific disloyal

⁵⁷Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 55.

⁵⁸Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 55.

⁵⁹Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

⁶⁰Carl J. Friedrich, and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p.65; on similar sentiments in the Central African Republic under Jean-Bedel Bokassa, see Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), p.152.

elites to purge to reduce elite threats, or scapegoat certain loyal elites to address non-elite threats. How do dictators select specific elites to purge?

2.3.2 Heightened Non-elite Threats and Different Purposes of Purges

There are two necessary conditions that cause surprising variations in how dictators treat disloyal and loyal elites. We expect a dictator to purge disloyal elites and retain loyal elites; so what explains why a dictator might retain a disloyal elite and purge a loyal elite. Consistent with the cross-national explanation of elite purges, the first necessary condition is a heightened non-elite threat.

When purging a disloyal elite, the dictator's goal is to reduce elite threats. The disloyal elite's presence heightens elite threats so purging them improves a dictator's chances of surviving. However, because dictators cannot rule alone, when non-elite threats are heightened, this raises the possibility that a dictator might need a disloyal elite as purging them could leave the dictator vulnerable to non-elite threats. A heightened non-elite threat is therefore a necessary condition for a dictator to consider retaining a disloyal elite.

When purging a loyal elite, the dictator's goal is to alleviate non-elite threats that endanger a dictator's position. When non-elite threats are low, a dictator does not need to purge a loyal elite as they do not require a scapegoat. However, when non-elite threats are raised, a dictator has a motivation to purge a loyal elite to publicly blame them for the reason behind the heightened non-elite threat and subsequently reduce the danger to the dictator's position.

2.3.3 Connecting Elites to Heightened Non-elite Threats

The second necessary condition that precipitates a dictator retaining a disloyal elite, or purging a loyal elite, is the elite possessing a position that is relevant to the heightened

non-elite threat. Variation in this connection across elites shapes whether a dictator retains or purges specific elites.

Non-elite threats can increase from a number of different sources. External threats to a dictator can increase through traditional means like alliances between other foreign states against the dictator, increased military spending by rival states, or through militarized interstate disputes. They can also increase by alternative means such as through campaigns by people or media in western states against the dictator, foreign aid being rescinded, or through international non-governmental organizations imposing sanctions. This heterogeneity in the sources of external threats is also true of popular threats. Popular threats can arise from citizens holding grievances such as economic deprivation or inequality, discriminate or indiscriminate repression, or the dictator's refusal to give up power. Scholars have long recognized that threats to an autocrat can come in different forms and arise from varying sources, but theoretical frameworks in the study of authoritarianism generally conceive of elite, external, and popular threats to a dictator as homogenous entities.⁶¹

An elite whose position is relevant to type of heightened non-elite threat may not be relevant to another type of elevated non-elite threat, or even another variant of the same type of non-elite threat. Put simply, different elites have different responsibilities. For example, the head of an internal security service like the Ministry for State Security in East Germany, is generally responsible for managing and coordinating preventive and reactive repression. They do not however possess economic responsibilities, nor do they coordinate military action. Alternatively, a foreign minister, for example, neither oversees military action, nor manages domestic security institutions, but they do play a key role in the regime's relations with other states and multilateral institutions.

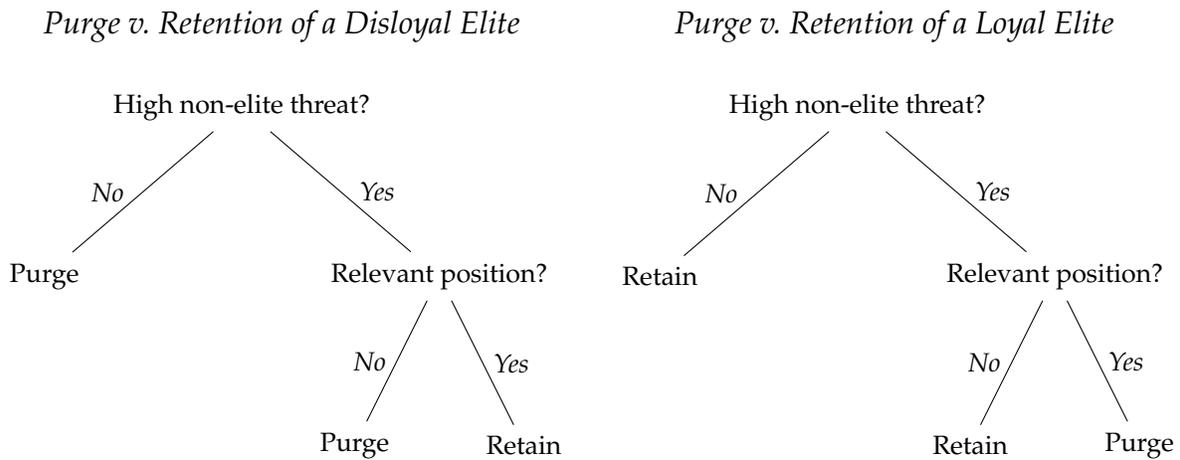
⁶¹For recent examples, see: Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators & Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions & State Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 32-36; Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

When a disloyal elite possesses a role that is relevant to helping a dictator alleviate a heightened non-elite threat, the dictator is less likely to purge the elite and more likely to retain them. For instance, if a dictator is confronted with a disloyal foreign minister but also subject to increased external threat due to sanctions being levied by the United Nations against his regime, then the dictator is more likely to retain the disloyal foreign minister. At this moment of elevated increased threat, the dictator can ill-afford the disruption to his relationships with key foreign states at the United Nations that would come with purging the foreign minister. Alternatively, if the dictator was confronted with the same disloyal foreign minister and a heightened external threat but this time based on a rival state building up arms, we would not expect the dictator to be more likely to retain the disloyal elite. In these circumstances, the elite does not possess a position relevant to helping the dictator negate the specific variant of external threat that is raised.

When a loyal elite holds a position relevant to a heightened non-elite threat, they are at a greater risk of being purged by the dictator as the latter looks to scapegoat someone for the grievance that underpins the non-elite threat. This connection between the elite's position and the heightened threat is essential for the dictator to credibly pass blame to the elite and gain the benefit from purging of reducing the threat to his rule. For instance, if popular threats are heightened due to repression against the citizens, then the dictator can purge the head of the domestic security apparatus and blame him for independently coordinating violence against the citizens that ran against the dictator's wishes.

Since dictators need to purge disloyal elites who raise elite threats, and they can alleviate non-elite threats by scapegoating elites, why not purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats are high? This could 'kill two birds with one stone' by simultaneously alleviating elite threats and scapegoating the same disloyal elite to alleviate non-elite threats. However, because the identities of purged elites are carefully chosen to match the variant of popular or external threats that is heightened, the chances of a dictator being able to scapegoat a disloyal elite are low for two reasons. First, as discussed, the targeted elite

Figure 2.1: Explaining Individual-level Variations in Purges of Disloyal and Loyal Elites



must be clearly connected with the relevant threat. Second, because behaving disloyally is extremely costly for elites, they tend to be loyal rather than disloyal. These two factors mean that the chances are low that a dictator can purge a disloyal elite and simultaneously credibly scapegoat them.

Figure 2.1 the theoretical framework that explains variations in purges of disloyal (left panel) and loyal elites (right panel). When non-elite threats are high, if a disloyal elites holds a positive relevant to helping the dictator alleviate that threat, then retention becomes more likely and a purge less likely. The same factors create the circumstances that make purges of loyal elites more likely.

2.4 Empirical Expectations

The above theory suggests several hypotheses about cross-national and within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges. The cross-national hypotheses are:

H_{1a}: Dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites when popular or external threats are low.

H_{1b}: Dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites when popular or external threats are high.

However, the unit of analysis for the cross-national quantitative analysis of elite purges is autocratic leader-year. Given this structure of the dataset, it is not possible to capture heterogeneity in elites' types within each observation. In other words, the cross-national data cannot test whether dictators are more likely to purge disloyal or elite elites under certain conditions.

The theory does suggest another testable prediction about elite purges. If dictators tend to purge disloyal elites under low non-elite threats, and loyal elites under high non-elite threats, then we should expect a *u*-shaped relationship between the overall probability of elite purges and non-elite threats. I therefore test the following hypothesis:

H_{1c}: Dictators are more likely to purge elites when popular or external threats are low or high, and less likely to do so at medium levels of popular or external threats.

The within-regime individual-level theory of elite purges suggests several testable predictions. These concern which disloyal elites a dictator purges, and which loyal elites a dictator purges. Uncovering evidence in favor of these hypotheses would also be consistent with the cross-national trends described in **H_{1a}** and **H_{1b}**, that dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats are low, and more likely to purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are high. The within-regime individual-level hypotheses are:

H_{2a}: A dictator is less likely to purge a disloyal elite when there is a heightened popular or external threat, and the elite holds a position relevant to the heightened threat. Absent either of these conditions, a dictator is more likely to purge a disloyal elite.

H_{2b}: A dictator is more likely to purge a loyal elite when there is a heightened popular or external threat, and the elite holds a position relevant to the heightened threat. Absent either of these conditions, a dictator is more likely to retain a loyal elite.

The theory about within-regime individual-level elite purges is as much about micro causal processes, as it is about causal outcomes. If the causal stories described above reflect reality, then there are certain steps we should expect to observe in empirical evidence when a dictator purges or retains a disloyal and a loyal elite. These steps are summarized in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

Table 2.1: Causal Processes of Purge or Retention of a Disloyal Elite

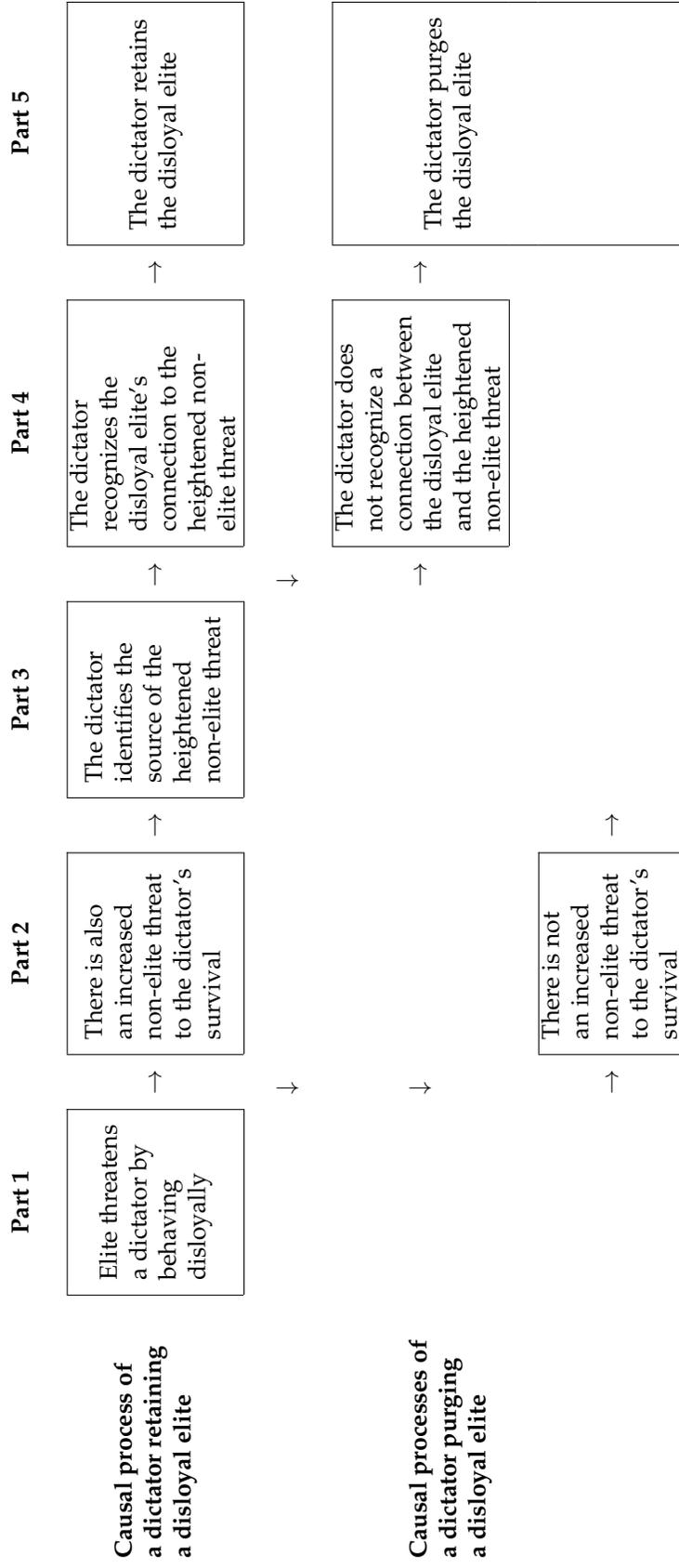
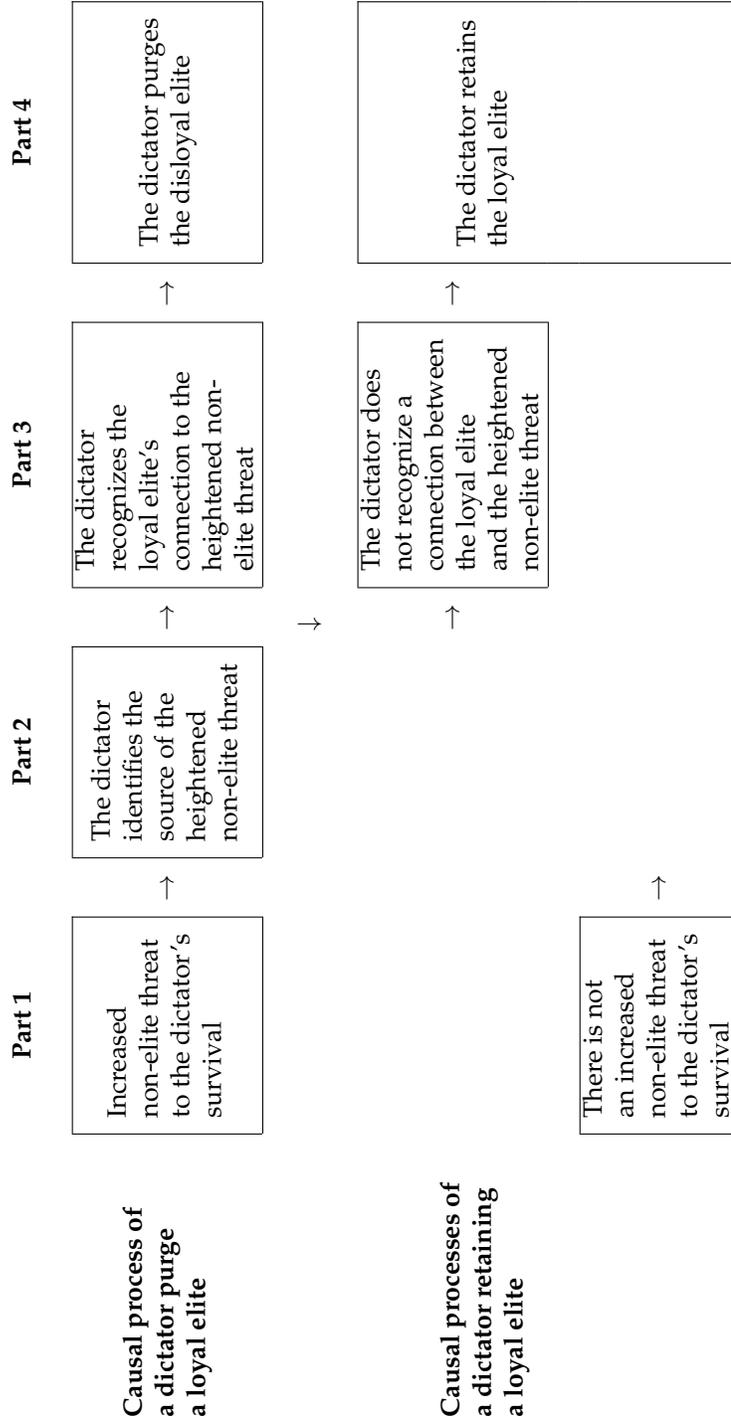


Table 2.2: Causal Processes of Purge or Retention of a Loyal Elite



2.5 Alternative Explanations

My theory of elite purges across and within dictatorships differs significantly from existing explanations. Across dictatorships, the most prominent alternative explanation is that purges are shaped by coup threats. However, my theory based on the broader threat environment, can explain a wider range of cross-national patterns of elite purges. Overall, this is true of all the primary alternative explanations of elite purges across and within dictatorships. There are some cross-national or individual-level patterns of dictatorships that they offer compelling explanations for, but overall these alternative arguments have weaker explanatory power than my theory.

2.5.1 Alternative Explanations for Cross-National Patterns of Elite Purges

Reduced coup threats

The predominant theory of the causes of elite purges in dictatorships is Jun Koga Sudduth's explanation of military purges based on levels of coup threats.⁶² The argument is premised on the strategic interaction between dictators and military figures. Critiquing previous explanations for focusing only on either a dictator's opportunity or motivation to purge, Sudduth incorporates both aspects into her model. This suggests that despite dictators being motivated to purge the military when the threat of a coup increases, dictators resist purging at these times due to their fear of the military retaliating. Sudduth therefore argues that dictators purge the military when they have less reason to fear retaliation. Paradoxically, then, dictators purge the military when the threat of a coup diminishes. Sudduth proposes, and finds corroborating evidence, that one such moment of reduced threat is immediately following a coup. At these times, military figures are

⁶²Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

unlikely to retaliate if a dictator conducts a military purge because they have just helped install the incumbent in power.

Sudduth's explanation of military purges based on coup threats is the most comprehensive previous theory and set of empirical tests related to elite purges. However, while the theory explains military purges under specific circumstances of diminished coup threat, it cannot explain why dictators purge elites under heightened coup threats. For example, in Zimbabwe, the removal of President Robert Mugabe in November 2017 was preceded by months of intra-elite machinations about who would succeed Mugabe. Despite the heightened coup threat, however, Mugabe still purged then-vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa and "warned that he was planning to purge others."⁶³ Mugabe's purge of Mnangagwa had disastrous consequences, with Mnangagwa replacing Mugabe as president following the 2017 coup. However, while Mugabe's outcome supports Sudduth's rationale as to why dictators *should* be cautious of purging when elite threats are high, the purge still occurred and suggests there may be circumstances when heightened elite threats increase, rather than decrease, the likelihood of elite purges.

Sudduth's theory also cannot explain why dictators that face comparable levels of coup threats engage in similar patterns of purges. There are cases of multiple dictators that face similarly high coup threats but exhibit different patterns of purges. Sudduth's theory incorporates only elite threats and, as this chapter has shown, dictators operate under a broader threat environment, comprised predominantly of threats from coups, revolutions, and foreign states. In short, Sudduth's theory is invaluable in explaining certain instances of military purges but to explain further patterns of military and civilian elite purges we require a theory that incorporates the whole autocratic threat environment.

Autocratic regime subtype

Different types of autocratic regimes are associated with varying levels of violence. Abel

⁶³BBC, "Zimbabwe's sacked Vice-President Mnangagwa flees," *BBC*, 8 November, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41914768>.

Escribà-Folch shows that personalistic autocracies increase repression towards citizens more than other types of autocracy when faced with sanctions.⁶⁴ Erica Frantz and her co-authors also find that more personalistic autocracies are more repressive.⁶⁵ Personalistic autocracies that are predisposed to one type of violence (repression) may also be more likely to engage in another form of violence (purges).⁶⁶ Historically, personalistic regimes including China and Russia have conducted extensive elite purges.⁶⁷ Similar patterns are evident in personalistic regimes in Africa, notably the Central African Republic under Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Equatorial Guinea under Francisco Macias Nguema, and Uganda under Idi Amin.⁶⁸ Having won their power struggles with the military or party institution that helped bring them to power, personalistic rulers may purge elites more frequently than other subtypes of autocratic regimes because leaders face fewer constraints.⁶⁹

However, such an explanation may have limitations. If an autocratic regime becomes personalistic by winning struggles with rivals in the party or military, then it may have done so through elite purges. As Chapter Five shows, Park Chung-hee's early victories over military rivals occurred via elite purges. Kim Il Sung also defeated rivals for power in the 1950s by having them purged.⁷⁰ Regime type may therefore be endogenous to elite purges. Further, an explanation based on autocratic regime subtype cannot explain why personalistic dictatorships exhibit varying levels of elite purges over time. For example, Kim Jong Il purged elites more frequently between 1994 and 1999 than he did between

⁶⁴Abel Escribà-Folch, "Authoritarian Response to Foreign Pressure: Spending, Repression, and Sanctions," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6 (2012), pp. 683-713.

⁶⁵Erica Frantz, Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Joseph Wright, and Xu Xu, "Personalization of Power and Repression in Dictatorships," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 82, No. 11 (2020), forthcoming.

⁶⁶Conceptually, as described in Chapter One, purges do not necessarily entail violence; I use the term 'violence' figuratively.

⁶⁷For examples, see: Carl J. Friedrich, and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

⁶⁸Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).

⁶⁹Joseph Wright, "The Latent Characteristics that Structure Autocratic Rule," *Political Science Research and Methods*, forthcoming.

⁷⁰James F. Person, "New Evidence on North Korea in 1956," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 16, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin16_p51.pdf.

2000 and 2011.⁷¹ Overall, whether regime type is exogenous to purges is an important question worthy of further study. However, it is beyond the scope of this book. I bracket the question for now and in Chapter Three simply test autocratic regime subtype as an alternative explanation of elite purges.

2.5.2 Alternative Explanations for Within-regime Individual-level Patterns of Elite Purges

Group-based explanations

A first set of alternative explanations for within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges in dictatorships hinges on groups or factions within a dictatorship. Roessler's study about how ethnic exclusion affects the occurrence of civil war suggests that leaders purge elites based on co-membership of an ethnic group.⁷² More broadly, scholars have long-studied how internal factionalism in autocracies affects political outcomes. Studies on Chinese politics have especially highlighted factionalism in affecting promotion and career prospects.⁷³ This trend is not unique to China studies. For example, explanations of which elites Kim Il Sung chose to purge or retain also center around factions.⁷⁴

Group-based explanations diverge from my theory; I suggest that leading a faction, rather than membership, is a signal of disloyalty and could lead to a purge. Dictators do not necessarily need to purge everyone associated with a purged elite; purging one elite can create opportunity for others. Thus, dictators do not automatically fear that purging an elite will lead to enmity and possibly retribution from the target's allies. Patterns of elite purges may sometimes be consistent with group-based explanations, but we must be careful not to mistake correlation with causation. Process-tracing elite purges in Chapter

⁷¹Data come from author's cross-national dataset.

⁷²Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2011), pp. 300-346.

⁷³Andrew Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 53 (1973), pp. 34-66.

⁷⁴Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999).

Five shows that Park Chung-hee did not purge prominent elites including Kim Tong-ha due to their affiliation to a certain faction. Instead, Park purged Kim Tong-ha because he displayed flagrant disloyalty towards Park and represented a threat to his rule.

Idiosyncratic explanations

A final alternative explanation posits that patterns of within-regime elite purges may be unpredictable. Dictators may effectively randomly select which elites to purge and which to retain. There are several reasons why this may be the case. Milan Svoblik suggests that a dictator dismisses public officials “to *publicly signal* the dictator’s independence from his administrators.” Thus, who a dictator removes is ‘arbitrary.’⁷⁵ Alternatively, some historical research suggests that some dictators may be mentally unstable. A dictator therefore may not act rationally in selecting which elites to purge. In Equatorial Guinea, Francisco Macias Nguema purged his Education Minister for using the word ‘intellectual’ in a cabinet meeting; Nguema despised the word due to an inferiority complex about his own intellect.⁷⁶ Within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges may exhibit equifinality—where the outcome can arise through different means—but we still may expect who a dictator chooses to retain or purge to be unpredictable.

Famous instances of purges like Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Joseph Stalin in Russia, or Mao Zedong in China give rise to the story that dictators target individuals in a bloody and often random manner. However, this is very much an atypical story and there is swaths of historical evidence that suggests dictators carefully select both the target and the timing of a purge. I build on this evidence in Chapters Four and Five, demonstrating that there is significant evidence of dictators conducting individual elite purges in a systematic manner. In North Korea, Kim Jong Un not only predominantly chose to purge disloyal elites, but he was careful to wait until they no longer had utility in helping alleviate popular or external threats. In South Korea, Park Chung-hee behaved

⁷⁵Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 80.

⁷⁶Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), p. 51.

in a similar manner, retaining disloyal elites when they had value to him, and also purging loyal elites when doing so could help prolong his tenure. Overall, an explanation grounded in rationality, rather than one predicated on the idea that dictators choose who to purge randomly, can better explain variations in individual-level elite purges.

2.6 Research Design

This manuscript's empirical contributions comprise of quantitative cross-national tests using an original dataset of civilian and military elite purges in autocracies, quantitative individual-level analysis of elite purges in Kim Jong Un's North Korea, and qualitative individual-level analysis of elite purges in Park Chung-hee's South Korea. In this chapter's final section, I first outline the logic for a mixed-methods research design, before discussing the scope of the manuscript's argument. I then discuss the reasons behind selection of the country contexts and cases for tests of the individual-level arguments. These choices are informed by the use of specific methods, and the goals of accounting for alternative explanations, generating external validity, and investigating causal processes.

2.6.1 A Mixed Methods Approach

The theory's cross-national and within-regime individual-level hypotheses necessitate a diverse set of data and methodological approaches. I employ a mixed-methods research design to be able to test all the hypotheses, examine the posited causal processes, and overcome methodological challenges. More specifically, the generalizable nature of the cross-national argument and the need to account for alternative explanations suggests quantitative analysis as an optimal approach for hypothesis-testing. The individual-level within-regime arguments similarly propose generalizable findings that apply across countries, and a need to account for alternative explanations. However, the focus in the

within-regime argument on causal processes, as well as a relatively small amount of variation on the outcome of interest, means that qualitative tools are also essential to test all the hypotheses, and overcome these barriers to making causal inferences when testing the argument about within-regime elite purges. I therefore use quantitative analysis to test the cross-national argument, and mixed-methods to examine the within-regime argument.

I test the theory's cross-national argument with an original global time-series cross-sectional quantitative dataset on elite purges in 53 autocracies between 1992 and 2015. I require an original dataset because—as discussed in Chapter One—conceptualizations of purges that existing datasets rely on do not match my conceptualization. These datasets also focus exclusively on military purges,⁷⁷ post-coup purges,⁷⁸ or they suffer from internal validity concerns as measures of purges do not distinguish between action taken against regime insiders or civilians.⁷⁹ I analyze elite purges under autocracy between 1992 and 2015 because the data collection relies in part on media sources. Coverage of internal politics in often opaque dictatorships has improved significantly in recent years thanks to the increase in transnational information flows between the media, academics, and think tanks. Media sources rely significantly on this increasingly transnational work. I also use country-specific studies to (dis)confirm reports of purges and, more generally, collect further information on events.

⁷⁷Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, "Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict," *Research & Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, "Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), pp. 1379-1405; Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

⁷⁸Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

⁷⁹Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, "Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies," *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), pp. 453-79; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, "When to Expect a Coup d'état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants," *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), pp. 293-313.

I test the individual-level theories of disloyal and loyal elite purges using mixed-methods, combining quantitative and qualitative tools. Mixed-methods research designs have an increasingly prominent place in comparative political science.⁸⁰ In an initial response to Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba's argument that qualitative and quantitative methods share similar logics of inference, Sidney Tarrow chided them for not engaging with the value of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.⁸¹ Evan Lieberman then offered a more systematic template for using mixed-methods with his discussion of 'nested analysis,' where researchers are encouraged to integrate approaches to support claims of causal inference.⁸² More recently, Jason Seawright's comprehensive book advocates an alternative integrated strategy, where one method provides causal inference and other methods test the crucial assumptions made in that inference.⁸³

My use of mixed-methods is closer to Liberman's model than Seawright's, although I expand on Liberman's suggestions in several important ways. I first use quantitative analysis to test the theory about why dictators purge disloyal elites. This accounts for alternative explanations and examines whether the explanatory variables and outcome of interest are related across a broad set of cases.⁸⁴

I then use qualitative tools to further test the individual-level arguments for two reasons. First, qualitative tools enable a test of theory about purges of loyal elites. The use of qualitative analysis is uninhibited by little variation on the outcome of interest. Testing the theory of purges of loyal elites using quantitative data would be problematic be-

⁸⁰A few recent examples include: Jesse Driscoll, *Warlords and Coalition Politics in Post-Soviet States* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Naunihal Singh, *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

⁸¹Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Sidney Tarrow, "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Political Science," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (1995), pp. 471-474.

⁸²Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (2005), pp. 435-452.

⁸³Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁸⁴Note that cases here refers to individual elites who may or may not be purged; countries are simply the context.

cause, in the individual-level quantitative data I collected, there is very little variation in the outcome of whether loyal elites are purged. Second, the individual-level arguments about purges of disloyal and loyal elites are as much about causal mechanisms as they are about outcomes. Qualitative tools are better suited than their quantitative counterparts to studying causal processes.⁸⁵

Lieberman advocated small-*N* analysis to assess the plausibility of findings from large-*N* analysis. My use of qualitative tools, specifically process tracing, to examine how the independent variables are related to purges of disloyal elites shares similarities with Lieberman's advocacy of "process tracing evidence from cause to effect."⁸⁶ However, my research design deviates from Lieberman's 'nested analysis' in several important ways. I use qualitative methods to test for the presence of, and illuminate causal mechanisms; this is a more ambitious task than simply showing the plausibility of large-*N* findings. Additionally, and consistent with recent methodological guidance about the purpose of process tracing, my approach to case selection also differs notably from Lieberman (see below). Overall, I use mixed-methods because they provide different types of tests of my theory's implications, all of which are important to provide confidence in the hypothesized mechanisms and outcomes.

2.6.2 Scope

This manuscript seeks to explain elite purges under autocracy. The manuscript's empirical focus is on dictatorships since the end of World War Two, but there are no structural reasons why the theory could not be applied to historical dictatorships. The theory is rooted in the autocratic threat environment, which says that a dictator's survival is pri-

⁸⁵ Andrew Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010); Alexander George, and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

⁸⁶ Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (2005), p. 444.

marily threatened by popular unrest, coups, and foreign adversaries. Roman Emperors, for instance, faced similar threats such as the women's protests in 195 BC, Brutus's assassination of Julius Caesar, and invasion by the Barbarians.⁸⁷

My focus is authoritarian regimes, but personnel management techniques used by autocrats may be used similarly by democratic leaders. Cabinet purges, for instance, are a common feature of Britain and other democracies. However, a democrat's threat environment is fundamentally different to an autocrat's. In democracies, elections are the principal threat to a leader's power. Even leaders in competitive authoritarian regimes, where the playing field is biased in favor of the incumbent, can be removed by elections.⁸⁸ Thus, the causes of elite purges may be different in regimes that are not fully autocratic. In Chapter 5, I end the analysis of elite purges in Park Chung-hee's South Korea after March 1963 because Park deviated from autocratic rule by announcing an election. It is notable that Park then stopped purging elites, having previously purged them regularly from May 1961 to March 1963.

2.6.3 Individual-level Country Contexts and Case Selection

There are several points to consider in selecting cases for the within-regime mixed-methods analyses. First, since cases are instances of individual elite purges rather than countries, how should one select the autocratic context in which to examine cases of elite purges? Then, how should one select cases of elite purges to examine? Given the challenges of studying elite politics in often opaque autocracies, my chief concern for quantitative and qualitative case selection to test the individual-level arguments is the methodological need to accurately identify values of the explanatory variables and outcome of interest. Put differently, I require quantitative and qualitative cases where I can reasonably iden-

⁸⁷Laura McCormack, "The Women's March: Rome," *History Today*, January 8, 2018, <https://www.historytoday.com/history-matters/womens-march-rome>.

⁸⁸Steven Levitsky, and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press).

tify the positions held by elites, whether they were loyal or disloyal, the levels of threats facing a dictator, and whether the elite was purged.⁸⁹

For the quantitative test of the individual-level argument about purges of disloyal elites, I examine purges in Kim Jong Un's North Korea between 2012 and 2015. The primary purpose of this part of the mixed-methods analysis is to examine whether explanations of individual-level purges of disloyal elite are robust to alternative explanations. Alternative explanations can be controlled for by studying elite purges under Kim Jong Un. Examining purges under one leader during a short time-period helps account for factors like the dictator being incompetent. In North Korea, it is also possible to control for alternative explanations, including the possibility that an elite is removed because they belong to a specific group. The kind of ethnically-driven purges witnessed in other countries are accounted for by examining the ethnically homogenous society of North Korea.⁹⁰

This relates to a more general advantage of studying purges in North Korea. There are (perhaps surprisingly) practical benefits that aid the identification of data about elites in Kim Jong Un's North Korea. The country's strategic importance means elite politics are watched closely by numerous government, media, private sector, independent, and academic analysts. Access to numerous sources on elite politics in North Korea facilitates fact-checking; encouragingly, there was strong consistency in the data across sources. Further, elite purges often occur during a dictator's early years when they are trying to consolidate power. Kim Jong Un was by no means unconstrained when he succeeded his father. Given his need to eliminate potential threats to his rule, we can expect variation on the dependent variable, which we may not see if we examined a dictator's later years. For example, Kim Jong Un's father and grandfather, Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung, con-

⁸⁹Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, "Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms," *Sociological Research & Methods*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2018), p. 858.

⁹⁰Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2011), pp. 300-346.

ducted the majority of their purges in their early years.⁹¹ Additionally, while we should not resort to outdated stereotypes that describe North Korea as the ‘hermit kingdom,’ the project contributes to the nascent trend of integrating North Korea into mainstream political science.⁹² Finally, the geostrategic importance of North Korea means that there are policy and practical benefits to studying purges under Kim Jong Un. Improved understanding of elite politics in North Korea can inform US policymakers’ choices of foreign policy tactics to achieve favorable outcomes.

My strategy for qualitative case selection differs from that often employed in comparative qualitative approaches. Researchers frequently use variants of case selection consistent with Mill’s methods of difference and agreement.⁹³ Scholars, for instance, regularly follow Arend Lijphart’s description of the comparative method to “establish a general empirical relationship among two or more variables” while controlling for all other explanations.⁹⁴ However, I use qualitative analysis to examine causal processes between hypothesized explanatory variables and elite purges, rather than examining whether the posited factors co-vary while other factors are held constant. For this task, I use theory-testing process tracing. As Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen argue in their book on *Process-Tracing Methods*, the method has previously been largely treated as a one-size-fits-all approach. This masks distinctions among different types of process-tracing where the aim, as Beach and Pedersen write, may include “testing whether a causal mechanism is present in a case, building a theoretical mechanism, and crafting an explanation

⁹¹Data come from author’s cross-national dataset on elite purges, analyzed in Chapter Three. For data on purges under Kim Il Sung, see: Adrian Buzo, *The Guerrilla Dynasty* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999), Chapter Two.

⁹²John Ishiyama, and Paasha Mahdavi, “Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea,” *Comparative Politics* (2020), forthcoming; Hanhee Lee, “Analyzing the Political Survival Prospects of Kim Jong-un’s North Korean Regime Through the Framework of Selectorate Theory,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 19 (2018), pp. 474-488.

⁹³John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence, and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012/1843).

⁹⁴Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (1971), pp. 682-693.

that accounts for a particular outcome.”⁹⁵ I use theory-testing process-tracing as it reflects my goal of examining whether the causal mechanisms are present and function as theorized.⁹⁶ In selecting cases for theory-testing process tracing, one should select cases where the outcome is present and the values on the explanatory variables take on the values that means “a priori we can expect the theorized $X \rightarrow Y$ relationship through the theorized mechanism to be present.”⁹⁷ Conversely, the comparative method suggests one of the selected cases should exhibit alternative values on the explanatory variable. However, this has little value when using theory-testing process tracing since the goal of the method is to explore whether the causal mechanisms operate as the theory suggests. To further quote Beach and Pedersen, “what would tracing nonexistent mechanisms...tell us about causal processes in cases where the mechanism was present?”⁹⁸

I use theory-testing process tracing to analyze individual elite purges in Park Chung-hee’s military regime in South Korea between May 1961 and March 1963. The relatively short timeframe is immaterial since the cases examined are individual cases of elite purges; expanding the timeframe would not necessarily mean more data are analyzed as this is dependent on how many individual cases are studied. I examine purges in Park’s regime because the plethora of data available on elite politics from the era supports claims of strong internal validity for the explanatory variables and outcome of interest. As stated, cases examined with theory-testing process tracing should exhibit the values of the variables that my theory suggests should lead to elite purges. South Korea’s later democratization means that there is a plethora of Korean and English-language primary sources, as

⁹⁵Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 11.

⁹⁶Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 12.

⁹⁷Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, “Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms,” *Sociological Research & Methods*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2018), p. 848; see also Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), pp. 146-154.

⁹⁸Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, “Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms,” *Sociological Research & Methods*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2018), p. 850.

well as historical analysis, available on the internal elite and international politics relevant to the Park Chung-hee era. It is therefore relatively easy to identify whether elites were disloyal or loyal, what levels of threats Park faced, what positions elites held, and who was purged. All these factors provide leverage in testing whether the causal mechanisms occurred as hypothesized.⁹⁹

Overall, the empirical tests described in the following chapters enhance our understanding of how across and within regimes, dictators engage in conflict with elites to quell threats from the ruling coalition, cohabit with elites to alleviate popular and external threats, and achieve their goal of maintaining authoritarian power.

⁹⁹In future, I will examine cases of individual elite purges in single-party and personalist autocracies to test whether the theory travels across different types of autocracies. The purpose is to test for, and hopefully demonstrate, that causal homogeneity exists; this would support claims that similar mechanisms are present across cases and across types of autocracies. See Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, "Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms," *Sociological Research & Methods*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2018), p. 859.

Chapter 3

The Causes of Elite Purges Across Dictatorships

Why do some dictators purge elites but others do not? Conventional wisdom suggests that dictators are influenced by the likelihood of a coup occurring. Some scholars contend that dictators are more likely to purge elites when the coup threat is low, as this provides them with opportunity to act without needing to fear retaliation.¹ Others contend that dictators are more likely to purge elites when the coup threat is high; under these conditions, dictators have greater motivation to purge elites.² Either way, the threat of a coup is thought to be central to whether dictators purge elites.

But in Bahrain, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa purged three ministers, following the Arab Spring protests in 2011, holding them responsible for the crisis.³ And in Saudi Arabia, following significant pressure from foreign states due to the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018, the Saudi leadership purged numerous prominent officials, including General Ahmed Asiri, the deputy chief of intelligence.⁴ In these cases, threats to

¹Jun Koga Sudduth, "Strategic Logic of Elite Purges," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

²Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics*, Vol. 63 (2011), pp. 300-346.

³Reuters, "Al Jazeera says Bahrain king sacks 3 ministers," *Reuters*, February 25, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/bahrain-ministers-idUSLDE7102C220110225>.

⁴Al Jazeera, "Who is Ahmed al-Asiri, the sacked Saudi intelligence official?" *Al Jazeera*, October 20, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/ahmed-al-asiri-sacked-saudi-intelligence-chief-181019235211120.html>.

these dictators' positions from the people and foreign states were crucial to shaping elite purges.

In Chapter Two, I set out the argument that dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites when threats from the people and foreign states are low. At these times, dictators can survive threats from the people and foreign states without these disloyal elites. Conversely, dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites when threats from the people and foreign states are high. Under these circumstances, dictators purge loyal elites to provide scapegoats to alleviate pressure. Dictators generally cannot purge disloyal elites under these conditions because they need to purge elites who hold positions relevant to the type of heightened threat; it is rare that they are able to simultaneously purge a disloyal elite.

In this chapter, I test the cross-national hypothesis that dictators are increasingly likely to purge elites when threats from the people and foreign states are especially high or low. I do this using an original cross-national quantitative dataset on civilian and military elite purges between 1992 and 2015. From these cross-national data, I cannot test whether dictators are more likely to purge *disloyal* elites when threats are low or *loyal* elites when threats are high. The data do not capture variation in elites' types within countries. This is examined in more detail in the within-regime individual-level analyses in Chapters Four and Five.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Identifying Autocracies

Between 1992 and 2015, I analyze elite purges in 96 distinct autocratic leadership spells across 53 countries. An autocratic leadership spell is distinct from an autocratic regime,

or the duration of an autocratic spell.⁵ It makes sense to analyze purges within autocratic leadership spells because even when an autocratic regime continues—like the CCP in China or the Kim regime in North Korea—a new leader may have different reasons to purge elites. For instance, elites who are loyal to one autocrat may be disloyal to the successor, or vice versa. I analyze elite purges between 1992 and 2015 because data on often opaque autocracies improves following the end of the Cold War, as transnational information flows between academics, journalists, and think tanks dramatically expanded. This matters because work by these groups is the main source of data on autocratic elite purges. I end data collection after 2015 because it generally takes time to identify events accurately in dictatorships.

To explain elite purges across autocracies, we first need to establish criteria for identifying countries as autocratic in a given year. Several existing datasets classify countries into autocracies, democracies, and other regime types. José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland's 'Democracy and Dictatorship' dataset features categories including 'civilian dictatorships,' 'military dictatorships,' and 'royal dictatorships.' But the dataset extends only to 2008 and autocracy is defined as a "residual category."⁶ Put differently, countries are classified as an autocracy if they do not fit into one of the other regime types. Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz's dataset that classifies regimes extends to 2015. However, in defining autocracies, while they include detailed consideration of contestation, they provide little attention to inclusion. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz discuss inclusion to the extent that at least ten percent of the total population are able to vote, but they do not discuss the degree of participation or scrutiny that an opposition or citizens are able to engage in outside of elections.⁷ Elsewhere, scholars

⁵Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2014), p. 320.

⁶Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2014), p. 317.

⁷Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2014), p. 317.

commonly use arbitrary cutoffs of Polity or Freedom House to distinguish autocracies from democracies, as does one other well-known dataset of regime types, but this masks significant heterogeneity in regime types across the world.⁸

I use an alternative approach to identify autocracies. Autocracies differ on many dimensions,⁹ but they share the characteristics of fundamentally lacking in democratic procedures and institutions. I define countries as autocracies when they completely lack the Dahlsian criteria for polyarchy of contestation and inclusion. Contestation refers to ‘citizens’ abilities to formulate and signify preferences, and have them considered equally.’ Inclusion refers to the ‘proportion of the population that is able to participate on broadly equal terms to contest and control the government.’¹⁰ In other words, contestation closely relates to how free and fair elections are, and inclusion captures whether opposition figures can legitimately compete for political power.

This definition excludes democracies, competitive authoritarian regimes, and even electoral autocracies because they contain varying non-trivial degrees of contestation and inclusion. Competitive authoritarian regimes, like Zambia under Edgar Lungu since 2016,¹¹ feature an uneven playing field due to the abuse of state institutions for partisan purposes and a handicapped opposition. However, contestation and inclusion are present since “major opposition candidates are rarely excluded, opposition parties are able to campaign publicly, and there is no massive fraud.”¹² Even in electoral autocracies

⁸Michael Wahman, Jan Teorell, and Axel Hadenius use “the mean of the Freedom House and Polity scales...[to] draw the line between democracies and autocracies at 7.0.” See page five of the codebook: Michael Wahman, Jan Teorell, and Axel Hadenius, “Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited: Updated Data in Comparative Perspective.” *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2013): pp. 19-34.

⁹Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (1999), pp. 115-144; Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁰Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), p.2.

¹¹Edward Goldring, and Michael Wahman, “Democracy in Reverse: The 2016 General Elections in Zambia,” *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2016), pp. 107-121.

¹²Steven Levitsky, and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 10.

like Russia under Vladimir Putin since the late 2000s,¹³ elections may serve as an instrument of autocracy,¹⁴ but as Yonatan Morse writes, “[o]pening all major offices for regular contestation shifts the basis of authoritarianism from raw power to some responsiveness to an electorate.”¹⁵

To measure a lack of contestation, I use a question from the Varieties of Democracy dataset on whether elections are free and fair. I retain countries where elections are coded either as “fundamentally flawed and the official results had little if anything to do with the ‘will of the people’” and where “irregularities affected the outcome of the election.” To exclude electoral autocracies that feature at least minimal contestation, I omit countries that have at least ‘some’ competition.¹⁶ At this stage, I also retain countries with missing data to ensure countries that do not bother with the pretense of elections—North Korea, for instance—are not omitted from the dataset.

To measure a lack of inclusion, I use a second question from the Varieties of Democracy dataset on the degree to which opposition parties are “able to exercise oversight and investigatory functions against the wishes of the governing party or coalition.” I include countries that are unable to exercise any oversight or investigatory functions, as opposed to those that can do so regularly or ‘occasionally.’¹⁷ Again, I retain countries with missing

¹³Grigorii V. Golosov, “The Regional Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (2011), pp. 623-639.

¹⁴Andreas Schedler, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁵Yonatan L. Morse, “The Era of Electoral Authoritarianism,” *World Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (2012), pp. 165-166.

¹⁶Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jefferey Staton, Agnes Cornell, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerlow, Valeriya Mechkova, Johannes von Römer, Aksel Sundtröm, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt, “V-Dem Codebook v9,” *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project* (2019), p. 60.

¹⁷Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jefferey Staton, Agnes Cornell, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerlow, Valeriya Mechkova, Johannes von Römer, Aksel Sundtröm, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt, “V-Dem Codebook v9,” *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project* (2019), p. 136.

data to ensure countries that have widespread reputations as autocracies are not dropped from the dataset.

Including countries with missing data on these dimensions prevents notable autocracies being excluded, but it also means that numerous small countries that are not autocracies are left in the dataset due to poor data coverage, such as the Bahamas or San Marino. I therefore also restrict countries based on their record on civil liberties. A lack of civil liberties is associated with more maximalist definitions of autocracy—notably, Freedom House. Since the theory’s scope is explicitly autocracies, however, it is preferable to use an additional factor to contestation and inclusion—in this case, civil liberties—to restrict the countries analyzed to ensure the theory is not tested on countries where we may not expect it to hold, than to include clearly non-autocratic countries. I retain countries that have a rating of civil liberties of at least five, on a scale of one to seven, where seven signifies the worst record on civil liberties and one is the best.¹⁸

Finally, I identify these autocracies’ leaders using Archigos.¹⁹ I drop several observations for unique reasons. I omit Iraq in 2004 because Archigos lists Paul Bremer as the leader; Bremer was the American in charge of the Provisional Coalition Authority following the deposition of Saddam Hussein. I also drop several observations due to the countries’ statuses as failed states or the leader not being in charge of significant geographic areas of the polity; these are Afghanistan (1993-1996 and 2002-2003) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1993-1996).

To summarize, this provides a dataset of 96 autocratic leadership spells across 53 countries between 1992 and 2015. These leaders and their autocratic spells are listed in Table 3.1.

¹⁸Freedom House, “Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 1973-2020,” (2020), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>.

¹⁹H.E. Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, “ARCHIGOS: A Data Set on Leaders 1875-2015,” February 29, 2016, https://www.rochester.edu/college/faculty/hgoemans/Archigos_4.1.pdf.

Table 3.1: Autocratic Leaders Analyzed, 1992-2015

Country	Leader	Leader start year	Leader end year
Afghanistan	Mohammad Najibullah	1991	1992
Afghanistan	Mullah Omar	1997	2001
Algeria	Liamine Zérroual	1997	1999
Algeria	Abdelaziz Bouteflika	2000	2011
Algeria	Abdelaziz Bouteflika	2014	2015
Azerbaijan	Ayaz Mutalibov	1991	1991
Azerbaijan	Heydar Aliyev	1995	1996
Azerbaijan	Heydar Aliyev	2000	2003
Azerbaijan	Ilhma Aliyev	2004	2015
Bahrain	Isa Ibn Al-Khalifah	1991	1999
Bahrain	Haman Isa Ibn Al-Khalifah	2000	2001
Bahrain	Haman Isa Ibn Al-Khalifah	2014	2015
Belarus	Alexander Lukashenko	2000	2015
Bhutan	Jigme Singye Wangchuck	1996	1998
Bhutan	Lyonpo Jigme Thinley	1999	1999
Bhutan	Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup	2000	2000
Bhutan	Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba	2001	2001
Bhutan	Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk	2002	2002
Bhutan	Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji	2003	2003
Bhutan	Lyonpo Jigme Thinley	2004	2004
Bhutan	Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba	2005	2005
Bhutan	Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup	2006	2006
Bhutan	Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk	2007	2007
Brunei	Hassanal Bolkiah	1991	2015
Burundi	Pierre Buyoya	1991	1992
Cambodia	Hun Sen	1991	1992
Cameroon	Paul Biya	1991	2011
Chad	Idriss Déby	1991	2012
China	Deng Xiaoping	1991	1997
China	Jiang Zemin	1998	2003
China	Hu Jintao	2004	2012
China	Xi Jinping	2013	2015
Cuba	Fidel Castro	1959	2008
Cuba	Raul Castro	2009	2015
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mobutu Sese Seko	1991	1997
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Laurent Kabila	1998	2001
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Joseph Kabila	2002	2002

Continued on next page

Table 3.1 – *Continued from previous page*

Country	Leader	Leader start year	Leader end year
Djibouti	Gouled Aptidon	1991	1999
Djibouti	Ismail Omar Guelleh	2000	2015
Egypt	Honsi Mubarak	1991	2010
Egypt	Mohamed Mansour	2014	2014
Egypt	Abdel Fattah al-Sisi	2015	2015
Equatorial Guinea	Teodoro Obiang Ngueme Mbasogo	1991	2015
Eritrea	Isaias Afwerki	1992	1994
Eritrea	Isaias Afwerki	1999	2015
Ethiopia	Meles Zenawi	1994	1994
Ethiopia	Hailemariam Desalegn	2013	2015
Guinea	Lansana Conté	1991	2002
Guinea	Lansana Conté	2008	2008
Guinea	Moussa Dadis Camara	2009	2009
Guinea-Bissau	João Bernardo Vieira	1991	1993
Indonesia	Suharto	1991	1997
Iraq	Saddam Hussein	1991	2003
Ivory Coast	Félix Houphouët-Boigny	1993	1993
Ivory Coast	Henri Konan Bédié	1994	1994
Kazakhstan	Nursultan Nazarbayev	1999	2015
Laos	Kaysone Phomvihane	1991	1992
Laos	Nouhak Phoumsavanh	1993	1998
Laos	Khamtai Siphandon	1999	2006
Laos	Choummaly Sayasone	2007	2015
Libya	Muammar Gaddafi	1991	2011
Malaysia	Mahatir Bin Mohammad	1993	2002
Maldives	Maumoon Abdul Gayoom	1991	2004
Mauritania	Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya	1991	1995
Myanmar	Saw Maung	1991	1992
Myanmar	Than Shwe	1993	2010
Nepal	Surya Bahadur Thapa	2004	2004
Nepal	Sher Bahadur Deuba	2005	2005
Niger	Mahamane Ousmane	1996	1996
Niger	Ibrahim Baré Mainassara	1997	1998
Nigeria	Ibrahim Babangida	1993	1993
Nigeria	Sani Abacha	1994	1997
North Korea	Kim Il Sung	1991	1994
North Korea	Kim Jong Il	1995	2011
North Korea	Kim Jong Un	2012	2015
Oman	Qaboos bin Said	1991	1999

Continued on next page

Table 3.1 – *Continued from previous page*

Country	Leader	Leader start year	Leader end year
Qatar	Khalifah Ath-Thani	1991	1995
Qatar	Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani	1996	2013
Qatar	Tamim ibn Hamad Al Thani	2014	2015
Rwanda	Juvénal Habyarimana	1993	1993
Rwanda	Paul Kagame	1995	2007
Saudi Arabia	Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud	1991	1997
Saudi Arabia	Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud	1997	2015
Sierra Leone	Joseph Saidu Momoh	1992	1992
Sierra Leone	Valentine Strasser	1993	1995
South Sudan	Salva Kiir Mayardit	2011	2015
Sudan	Omar al-Bashir	1991	2014
Swaziland	Mswati III	1991	1997
Swaziland	Mswati III	1999	2007
Syria	Hafez al-Assad	1991	2000
Syria	Bashar al-Assad	2001	2015
Tajikistan	Emomoli Rahmon	1994	2015
Thailand	Yingluck Shinawatra	2014	2015
Thailand	Prayut Chan-o-cha	2015	2015
Tunisia	Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali	1991	2010
Turkmenistan	Saparmurat Niyazov	1991	2006
Turkmenistan	Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov	2007	2015
United Arab Emirates	Khalifa bin Zayad Al Nahyan	1991	2004
United Arab Emirates	Khalifa bin Zayad Al Nahyan	2005	2015
Uzbekistan	Islam Karimov	1991	2015
Vietnam	Nguyen Văn Linh	1991	1991
Vietnam	Do Muoi	1992	1997
Vietnam	Le Kha Phieu	1998	2001
Vietnam	Nong Duc Manh	2002	2011
Vietnam	Phu Trong	2012	2015
Yemen	Ali Abdullah Saleh	1991	2002
Zimbabwe	Robert Mugabe	1993	1994
Zimbabwe	Robert Mugabe	2000	2008

Notes: Start and end years refer to the years that the leader is in the dataset, not the years that the leader held power or when the regime started or ended.

In years where the leader changed, I identify the leader based on 1 January in a given year.

Data come from Archigos, v4.1; see Henk E. Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009): pp. 269-283.

3.1.2 Measuring Purges

In Chapter One, I conceptualized an autocratic elite purge as an event in which a dictator forcibly removes an individual from the regime’s ruling coalition. I compiled an original cross-national dataset on autocratic elite purges, consistent with this conceptualization, from reports of purges from LexisNexis news searches and country-specific literatures.²⁰ For an event to count as a purge, a dictator must remove the elite from the ruling coalition against their wishes. Additionally, purges can entail outcomes including the elite being significantly demoted to the point that they are no longer in the ruling coalition, firing the elite, jailing them, or killing them. I therefore could not use machine-learning techniques to collect data as these techniques cannot accurately capture the nuances in the conceptualization from the above sources. Instead, I hand-coded tens of thousands of articles on purges in the 96 autocratic leadership spells across the 53 countries in Table 3.1.

I collected data on purges of civilian and military elites in autocracies. In Chapter 2, I identified elites as members of the ruling coalition, those whose “support is essential if the incumbent [dictator] is to remain in power.”²¹ The identities of these elites varies across autocracies, but not as much as one might expect. Generally, autocrats in different types of regimes—in other words, across military regimes, monarchies, party-based regimes, and personalist regimes—use similar institutions to manage their key supporters. This makes sense given the diffusion across autocracies of techniques designed to proof a regime from succumbing to autocratic breakdown and democratization.²²

²⁰Although my conceptualization differs from Sudduth’s, our data collection approaches are the same. See Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), p. 1781.

²¹Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), p.38.

²²Edward Goldring, and Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “Rethinking Democratic Diffusion: Bringing Regime Type Back In,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 2019; Karrie J. Koesel, and Valerie J. Bunce, “Diffusion-Proofing: Russian and Chinese Responses to Waves of Popular Mobilizations against Authoritarian Rulers,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2013), pp. 753-768.

Table 3.2: Positions of Civilian and Military Elites in Dictatorships

Civilian elites	Military elites
Cabinet member	Head of military branch
Minister	Member of military leadership body
Central party manager	Marshal
Ruling party member of legislative body	Vice Marshal
Provincial leader	General
Leader of domestic security institution	Major General
Senior members of the leader's clan/family	Brigadier
	Similar positions in paramilitary organizations

The identities of civilian and military elites are listed in Table 3.2. Across all types of autocracies, military elites are crucial, given the military's prominent role in helping the dictator maintain a monopoly on violence to secure the polity. I identify military elites as individuals with a minimum title of Brigadier, as shown in Table 3.2. I also identify individuals as military elites if they hold a similarly senior role in a paramilitary organization. For example, the Commander of the Syrian Special Forces was investigated and replaced in 1994. This counts as an elite military purge.

Across different types of autocracies, there is strong consistency in the positions that civilian elites hold whose support is important for an autocrat to survive. The key institution that autocrats have used in recent decades to organize officials is political parties. Thus, the key civilian elites that a dictator depends on are often, but not always, connected to parties. Party-based civilian elites include: members of cabinets, ruling party members of (generally nominal) legislative bodies, senior ruling party officials like party secretaries, and provincial governors. I also include leaders of domestic security organizations and, especially important in monarchies and personalist regimes, members of the royal family or leader's clan. In Iraq, for example, Saddam Hussein often awarded prominent positions to members of his fellow Tikriti families. In these types of regimes,

membership of the ruling coalition is often partly based on familial or clan connections to the ruler.²³

The primary dependent variable is *Elite purge*, a binary indicator that equals one if a dictator purges civilian or military elites in a given year, and otherwise equals zero. I use a binary dependent variable to reduce measurement error. Although the data collected contains more information on the scale of purges and their types of outcomes, claiming to precisely and consistently count the exact number of elites purged across 53 dictatorships of varying degrees of opacity would raise concerns about the internal validity of the data. Finally, although my theory does not specify distinct expectations about civilian or military elite purges, I also test whether the argument applies to these disaggregated types of purges, using binary variables of *Civilian elite purge* and *Military elite purge*.

3.1.3 Measuring Non-Elite Threats

The primary explanatory factors for my cross-national theory of the causes of elite purges are threats from the people and foreign states to a dictator's survival. One of the clearest signs that a dictator's position is threatened by the people is protests. This helps solve the dictator's dilemma of ascertaining what the people truly think of him.²⁴ However, there are different types of protests and we should be wary of capturing protests that do not threaten a dictator. For example, Jessica Chen Weiss shows that the Communist Party in China sometimes strategically permits protests to try to persuade foreign states during negotiations that domestic pressure prohibits them from being more flexible.²⁵ Thus, a general indicator of protests may not accurately capture whether variation in threats from the people towards a dictator's position.

²³ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003).

²⁴Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁵Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Instead, I use an indicator from the Varieties of Democracy dataset on the level of mass mobilization among the people for democracy. Pro-democratic protests clearly threaten a dictator's tenure by advocating the end of the governing institutions that the autocrat uses to sustain his tenure.²⁶ *Democracy mobilization* is an ordinal variable that captures the frequency and scale of pro-democratic mass mobilization events. For an autocratic-year, it is coded as 0 if there 'have been virtually no events,' 1 if 'there have been several small-scale events,' 2 if 'there have been many small-scale events,' 3 if 'there have been several large-scale and small-scale events,' and 4 if 'there have been many large-scale and small-scale events.'²⁷

To measure external threat from foreign states, I use Jonathan Markowitz and Christopher Farris's measure of *Geopolitical competition*. This continuous variable captures the level of geopolitical competition that an autocracy faces. It incorporates "the geographic position of the state, relative to other states; the relative economic power of each other state; and the degree to which it has compatible interests with each other state."²⁸

I include quadratic terms of *Democracy mobilization* and *Geopolitical competition* to account for the non-linear relationship described by the hypothesis: that elite purges increase at lower and upper levels of popular and external threats but decrease at mid-level values.

²⁶Some autocrats stay in power following the end of an autocracy as they transition to a democratic leader. However, these transitions still entail the end of the autocracy, which is the regime type we are concerned with here. See Dan Slater, and Joseph Wong, "The Strength to Concede: Ruling Parties and Democratization in Developmental Asia," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2013), pp. 717-733.

²⁷Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jefferey Staton, Agnes Cornell, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerlow, Valeriya Mechkova, Johannes von Römer, Aksel Sundtröm, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt, "V-Dem Codebook v10," *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project* (2020), p. 215.

²⁸*Geopolitical competition* is calculated as $Competition_{it} = \frac{\sum_j (\frac{g_{jt}}{\sum_j g_{jt}} \times p_{ijt} \times w_{ijt})}{\sum_j w_{ijt}}$ where i = state, j = other states, t = year, w_{ijt} = the inverse of the natural log of distance in km between state i and state j in year t , g = GDP, and $p = 1$ if both states are not democracies. I multiply the variable by 10,000 to aid interpretation of the coefficients. See Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Christopher J. Farris, "Power, Proximity, and Democracy: Geopolitical Competition in the International System," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2017), p. 79.

3.1.4 Control Variables and Model Specification

I include several control variables to account for possible alternative explanations of elite purges. Patterns of elite purges might vary across subtypes of autocratic regimes. We have little empirical evidence to work from but intuitively certain autocratic regimes may purge elites more or less frequently. For instance, personalist leaders might purge elites more because the leader is less encumbered by constraints; alternatively, the consolidation of power around the individual leader could provide fewer incentives to purge elites. I include several binary indicators to capture subtypes of autocratic regimes based on Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's typology of autocracies.²⁹ I include binary indicators of *Single-party regimes*, *Personalist regimes*, and *Military regimes*; the base category is monarchies.

I include a binary indicator for *China*. The logic for this variable's inclusion is akin to models of the determinants of foreign aid distribution that include indicators for Egypt and Israel due to the extensive economic support they receive from western powers.³⁰ The Communist Party of China has conducted elite purges to a degree incomparable to other autocracies. From the years in the dataset that China conducts elite purges, even North Korea only purges elites in 63% of that number of years. Summary statistics are in Table 3.3.

I use logit models to test the hypothesis given the binary dependent variable. I cluster robust standard errors by autocratic leader to account for heteroskedasticity of observations within a given autocratic leadership spell. I also account for duration dependency by including *Years since elite purge* which measures how many years have passed since

²⁹ Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2014), pp. 313-331.

³⁰For example, Alberto Alesina, and David Dollar, "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?" *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2000), pp. 33-63.

Table 3.3: Summary Statistics of Variables from Cross-National Analysis of Autocratic Elite Purges, 1992-2015

Variable	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Mode
Elite purge	0	0	0.10	1	0
Civilian elite purge	0	0	0.08	1	0
Military elite purge	0	0	0.05	1	0
Democracy mobilization	0	0	0.93	4	
Democracy mobilization ²	0	0	16	2.52	
Geopolitical competition	57.40	60.01	60.45	66.38	
Geopolitical competition ²	3,294.58	3,601.51	3,656.66	4,405.80	
Single-party regime	0	0	0.43	1	0
Personalist regime	0	0	0.31	1	0
Military regime	0	0	0.06	1	0
China	0	0	0.03	1	0
Years since elite purge	0	4	5.69	24	
Years since elite purge ²	0	16	62.40	576	
Years since elite purge ³	0	64	876.60	13,824	
Years since elite military purge	0	5	6.21	24	
Years since elite military purge ²	0	25	71.04	576	
Years since elite military purge ³	0	125	1,019.47	13,824	
Years since elite civilian purge	0	4	5.79	24	
Years since elite civilian purge ²	0	16	63.46	576	
Years since elite civilian purge ³	0	64	887.44	13,824	

the previous elite purge in that autocratic leadership spell, and *Years since elite purge*² and *Years since elite purge*³ following Carter and Signorino.³¹

3.2 Results

The results from the analysis are in Table 3.4. The main tests of the hypothesis are Models 1 and 4 in Table 3.4.³² The combination of negative coefficients for *Democracy mobilization* and *Geopolitical competition* and positive coefficients for their quadratic terms supports the expectation that dictators are increasingly likely to purge elites at low and high levels of

³¹David B. Carter, and Curtis S. Signorino, "Back to the Future: Modeling Time Dependence in Binary Data," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 18 (2010): pp. 271-292. I include equivalent versions of these time-related variables for models with dependent variables *Civilian elite purge* and *Military elite purge*.

³²The sample is smaller for tests relating to popular threat (Models 1-3), due to missing data on *Democracy mobilization*.

Table 3.4: Effects of Popular and External Threats on Autocratic Elite Purges, 1992-2015

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Elite purge	Military elite purge	Civilian elite purge	Elite purge	Military elite purge	Civilian elite purge
Democracy mobilization	-1.00 [†] (0.56)	-0.62 (0.79)	-1.22 [†] (0.64)			
Democracy mobilization ²	0.28* (0.14)	0.18 (0.20)	0.33* (0.16)			
Geopolitical competition				-14.56*** (3.62)	-15.04** (5.20)	-13.55*** (3.33)
Geopolitical competition ²				0.12*** (0.03)	0.12** (0.04)	0.11*** (0.03)
Single-party regime	2.55** (0.96)	15.42*** (0.64)	2.47* (0.97)	1.01 (0.63)	1.56 (1.15)	0.80 (0.63)
Personalist regime	1.83 [†] (1.02)	14.57*** (0.73)	1.52 (1.05)	1.03 (0.78)	1.80 (1.33)	0.86 (0.77)
Military regime	3.70** (1.23)	17.22*** (1.06)	2.52 [†] (1.40)	2.40** (0.69)	3.40** (1.14)	1.19 (0.76)
China	2.70*** (0.51)	1.89** (0.72)	2.32*** (0.44)	3.56*** (0.53)	2.56** (0.75)	3.23*** (0.41)
Years since elite purge	-0.41* (0.19)			-0.32 [†] (0.19)		
Years since elite military purge		-0.38 [†] (0.22)			-0.42 [†] (0.24)	
Years since elite civilian purge			-0.30 (0.20)			-0.28 (0.19)
Constant	-3.72*** (0.94)	-17.49*** (0.32)	-3.73*** (0.96)	439.81*** (112.06)	445.57** (159.78)	407.15*** (103.14)
Expected percent correctly predicted	85.95%	91.61%	87.63%	87.05%	91.10%	88.89%
Expected proportional reduction in error	25.00%	12.74%	23.09%	28.15%	16.20%	26.47%
<i>N</i>		612			729	

Notes: Standard errors clustered by autocratic leader.

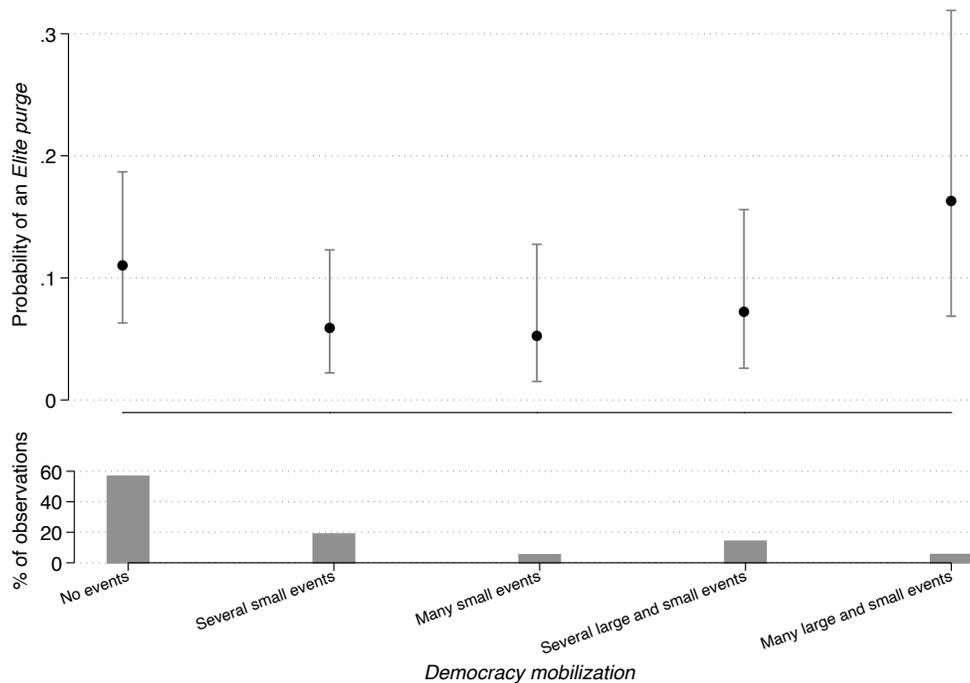
*Years since elite purge*², *Years since elite purge*³, and their military and civilian equivalents are included in the models but not shown to aid clarity.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, [†] $p < 0.10$

non-elite threats, but less likely at mid-levels of non-elite threats. These results are statistically significant for popular and external threats at least at 95% and 99.9% confidence, respectively. The models in Table 3.4 consistently expect to predict about 90% of observations correctly, and for elite purges generally and civilian purges specifically there is generally a 25% expected proportional reduction in error compared to a model that predicts the modal outcome. In short, the models have quite strong predictive power for forecasting occurrences of autocratic elite purges.

The non-linear nature of the hypothesized relationships between the variables means that the effects of different types of non-elite threats on elite purges is best shown graphically. Figure 3.1 illustrates that the probability of a dictator purging elites increases when there are no instances of the people mobilizing for democracy and also at the opposite end of the variable, when there are many large and small events in support of democracy.

Figure 3.1: Likelihood of a Dictator Conducting an *Elite purge* as *Democracy mobilization* Increases



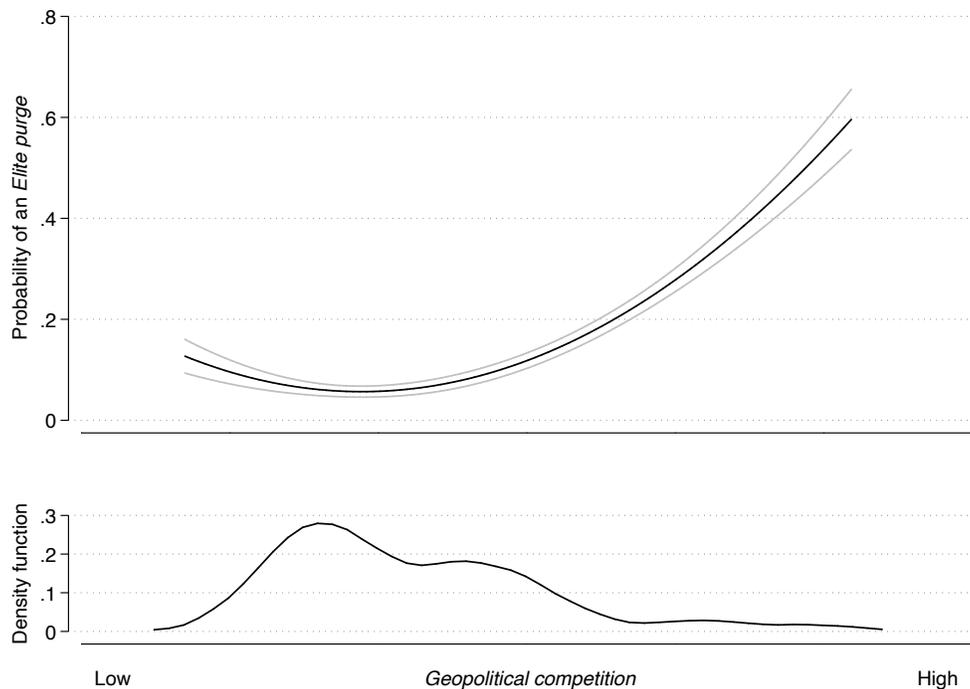
Notes: 95% confidence intervals displayed in top panel. Figure calculated after estimating Model 1.

Conversely, the probability of an elite purge is lowest for mid-range values of *Democracy mobilization*. The confidence intervals in Figure 3.1 overlap but there is evidence of a *u-shaped* relationship, and the coefficient of *Democracy mobilization*² is statistically significant at least at 95% confidence, suggesting evidence in favor of the hypothesis.

Autocratic elite purges exhibit a similar pattern, as expected, based on variations in threats from foreign states. Figure 3.2 shows that dictators are more likely to purge elites when *Geopolitical competition* decreases, and especially more likely to purge elites when *Geopolitical competition* increases.

I did not explicitly hypothesize about the relationships between various non-elite threats and disaggregated types of elite purges, but I examine these patterns in Models 2-3 and 5-6. Table 3.4 shows that variation in popular and external threats is associated

Figure 3.2: Likelihood of a Dictator Conducting an *Elite purge* as *Geopolitical competition* Increases



Notes: Gray lines in top panel represent 95% confidence intervals. Figure calculated after estimating Model 4.

with similar *u*-shaped patterns of both military (Models 2 and 5) and civilian elite purges (Models 3 and 6). All these results are statistically significant at least at 95% confidence, except for the relationship between *Democracy mobilization* and military elite purges (Model 2), although the coefficients are in the expected direction.

Substantively, what do these results mean? As stated, analysis of these cross-national data cannot distinguish whether dictators purge disloyal and loyal elites at low and high levels of non-elite threats, respectively. We can, however, explore the size of the effects of variations in popular and external threats on elite purges across different types of autocracies.

Table 3.5 shows the results of analyzing changes in the predicted probability of *Elite purge* based on variations in *Democracy mobilization* and *Geopolitical competition*. Specifi-

cally, I examine the effects on the likelihood of elite purges occurring by altering the levels of popular and external threats from the median to the 5th and 95th percentiles across single-party, personalist, military, and monarchical regimes. In all scenarios, I expect to see decreases and increases in non-elite threats lead to increases in the probability of a dictator purging elites, but I am interested in how the sizes of actual and relative changes in the probability of elite purges occurring vary. When calculating these changes in predicted probabilities of a dictator purging elites, I hold all control variables at their mean for continuous variables and mode for binary variables.

The first key takeaway from Table 3.5 is that, *ceteris paribus*, military leaders are more likely than other types of dictators to purge elites. The percent changes in the predicted probabilities of elite purges in military regimes is relatively smaller than in other types of autocracies. However, the actual levels of the predicted probability of elite purges occurring is always greater in military regimes than in other types of regimes under equivalent circumstances. For example, altering *Geopolitical competition* from the median to the 95th percentile in military regimes, leads to a 144.06% increase in the likelihood of a dictator purging elites. This is less than the percent changes in the predicted probability of an *Elite purge* occurring under the same conditions in single-party regimes (208.99%), personalist regimes (207.66%), and monarchies (230.77%). However, the actual levels of the predicted probability of an *Elite purge* is 0.1691 when *Geopolitical competition* is held at its median, and 0.4127 when *Geopolitical competition* is at its 95th percentile. Both of these predicted probabilities are notably greater than all the predicted probabilities under the same conditions in single-party, personalist, and monarchical regimes.

The second key takeaway from Table 3.5 is that, consistent with Figures 3.1 and 3.2, an increase in popular or external threats leads to a greater increase in the likelihood of a dictator purging elites, than a similar decrease of popular or external threats. If the theory that dictators purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats decrease and loyal elites when these threats increase, then this suggests that dictators are far more likely to respond to

Table 3.5: Changes in Predicted Probability of *Elite Purge* Based on Variation in *Democracy mobilization* and *Geopolitical competition*, Across Sub-types of Autocracies

	<i>Democracy mobilization</i>		<i>Geopolitical competition</i>	
	Median to 5 th percentile	Median to 95 th percentile	Median to 5 th percentile	Median to 95 th percentile
<i>Single-party regimes</i>				
Change in predicted probability	0.0611 → 0.1182	0.0611 → 0.1728	0.0484 → 0.0937	0.0484 → 0.1495
Percent change in predicted probability	93.45%	182.82%	93.60%	208.88%
<i>Personalist regimes</i>				
Change in predicted probability	0.0305 → 0.0609	0.0305 → 0.0918	0.0496 → 0.0958	0.0496 → 0.1526
Percent change in predicted probability	99.67%	200.98%	93.35%	207.66%
<i>Military regimes</i>				
Change in predicted probability	0.1692 → 0.2956	0.1692 → 0.3954	0.1691 → 0.2926	0.1691 → 0.4127
Percent change in predicted probability	74.70%	133.69%	73.03%	144.06%
<i>Monarchies</i>				
Change in predicted probability	0.0050 → 0.0103	0.0050 → 0.0160	0.0182 → 0.0363	0.0182 → 0.0602
Percent change in predicted probability	106.00%	220.00%	99.45%	230.77%

Notes: 5th percentile, median, and 95th percentile values of *Democracy mobilization* are 0 ('no events'), 1 ('several small events'), and 4 ('many large and small events'), respectively. The median value of *Democracy mobilization* is in fact 0, so altering this to the 5th percentile would not change anything. However, as the mean is close to 1 (0.93), I use 1 to proxy the median as it constitutes a real value in the dataset. 5th percentile, median, and 95th percentile values of *Geopolitical competition* are 58.28796, 60.01261, and 64.19928, respectively.

All other variables held at their mean (continuous) or mode (binary).

Changes in predicted probability calculated after estimating Models 1 (*Democracy mobilization*) and 4 (*Geopolitical competition*).

increased threats by scapegoating loyal elites, than they are to purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats are low. Whether dictators do in fact purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats are low, and loyal elites when non-elites threats are high, requires within-regime qualitative process-tracing of specific cases of elite purges, which features in Chapter Five.

3.2.1 Alternative Explanations and Robustness Tests

The results from the control variables also suggest elite purges are more likely in military regimes, and also single-party regimes, than in other types of autocracies. Autocrats in China are also more likely than autocrats elsewhere to purge elites, *ceteris paribus*. The likelihood of dictators purging elites also diminishes as more years pass following an elite purge.

To check that popular and external threats shape patterns of elite purges, and not the other way around, I re-estimate the models in Table 3.4 using one-year lagged variables of *Democracy mobilization*, *Geopolitical competition*, and their quadratic terms. Purging elites might lead to increased or diminished levels of non-elite threats. Purging elites could, for instance, undermine cohesion and expertise in the military leadership and increase the regime's vulnerability to foreign states. Alternatively, purging elites could be perceived as a dictator consolidating power and make them a less attractive target for foreign states. Whether purges help dictators consolidate power or destabilize them is an unanswered question.³³ As the academic and former director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council under George W. Bush, Victor Cha, said of purges in North Korea, "[e]very time we hear rumors of more executions, we have to wonder whether it's a sign of authority or an inability to keep things under control."³⁴

However, my theory describes how variations in non-elite threats *cause* purges of loyal elites. To provide increased confidence that this is the case, Table 3.6 shows the results of models with these lagged variables, ensuring that the proposed cause occurs before the effect. The sizes of the coefficients are largely unchanged and the statistical significance of the results is slightly strengthened. *Democracy mobilization (lag)*² is statistically significant

³³One exception is Easton and Siverson's finding that post-coup purges help a dictator extend his tenure. See Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

³⁴Simon Mundy, and Tae-jun Kang, "North Korea Executes Defence Minister: Intelligence Reports," *Financial Times*, May 14, 2015, <https://www.ft.com/video/ab6a6238-4c6d-3c19-848e-9247a25f85f0>.

Table 3.6: Robustness Tests: Effects of Popular and External Threats on Autocratic Elite Purges, 1992-2015

Dependent variable	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
	Elite purge	Military elite purge	Civilian elite purge	Elite purge	Military elite purge	Civilian elite purge
Democracy mobilization (lag)	-1.34* (0.61)	-0.78 [†] (0.41)	-1.35* (0.60)			
Democracy mobilization ² (lag)	0.37* (0.16)	0.22* (0.11)	0.37* (0.16)			
Geopolitical competition (lag)				-13.05** (4.11)	-16.13** (5.54)	-10.95** (3.76)
Geopolitical competition ² (lag)				0.11** (0.03)	0.13** (0.04)	0.09** (0.03)
Single-party regime	2.56** (0.96)	4.36*** (0.29)	2.48* (0.96)	1.16 (0.73)	15.11*** (0.69)	0.86 (0.72)
Personalist regime	1.83 [†] (1.03)	4.02*** (0.33)	1.53 (1.05)	1.40 [†] (0.82)	15.33*** (1.10)	1.19 (0.81)
Military regime	3.83** (1.24)	5.52*** (0.59)	2.57 [†] (1.40)	2.75*** (0.73)	17.10*** (0.55)	1.65* (0.79)
China	2.66*** (0.52)	0.98** (0.38)	2.28*** (0.44)	3.40*** (0.53)	2.58** (0.82)	3.10*** (0.42)
Years since elite purge	-0.43* (0.19)			-0.41 [†] (0.21)		
Years since elite military purge		-0.22 [†] (0.12)			-0.35 (0.22)	
Years since elite civilian purge			-0.32 (0.20)			-0.29 (0.20)
Constant	-3.66*** (0.93)	-5.48*** (0.07)	-3.68*** (0.96)	391.55** (127.45)	474.93** (170.63)	324.28** (116.14)
Expected percent correctly predicted	86.04%	91.66%	87.65%	87.60%	91.70%	89.36%
Expected proportional reduction in error	25.47%	13.21%	23.26%	29.63%	19.79%	27.62%
<i>N</i>		612			676	

Notes: Standard errors clustered by autocratic leader.

*Years since elite purge*², *Years since elite purge*³, and their military and civilian equivalents are included in the models but not shown to aid clarity.

Model 8 estimated using probit due to issues with non-convergence when using logit.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, [†] $p < 0.10$

at least at 95% confidence in Models 7-9, and *Geopolitical competition (lag)*² is statistically significant at least at 99% confidence in Models 10-12.

3.3 Conclusion

The results in this chapter show that dictators are more likely to purge elites when threats to their rule from the people or foreign states increase or diminish. Of these two threats, the effect is greater when threats from the people and foreign states are high, rather than low. Conversely, the likelihood of a dictator purging elites is lowest when either of these threats are at a medium level. This analysis cannot test, as suggested by the theory, whether dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites when non-elite threats are low,

nor whether dictators are more likely to purge loyal elites when non-elite threats are high. The theory-testing process-tracing of elite purges in South Korea in Chapter Five explores which types of elites dictators purge at different levels of non-elite threats. However, the evidence presented here supports the hypothesis that dictators are more likely to purge elites when non-elite threats are low or high, but not when they are at a medium level.

This analysis raises the question: why do dictators purge certain elites but not others? When non-elite threats are low, dictators do not purge all elites who have exhibited any sign of disloyalty, and when non-elite threats are high, dictators do not purge all loyal elites. So why do dictators purge certain disloyal elites but not others, and why do dictators purge certain loyal elites but not others? I explore these questions in Chapters Four and Five through within-regime individual-level quantitative and qualitative analysis of elite purges in Kim Jong Un's North Korea and Park Chung-hee's South Korea.

Chapter 4

Testing the Individual-Level Argument: Elite Purges in North Korea

Kim Jong Un's tenure as Supreme Leader of North Korea has been synonymous not just for brutal human rights violations against North Korean citizens,¹ but for frequent and supposedly unpredictable purging of his own top officials. Kim Jong Un has allegedly executed elite personnel for falling asleep at Korean Workers' Party (KWP) meetings,² had them killed with anti-aircraft guns,³ and even fed them to a pack of dogs.⁴ These rumors have created the impression that dictators like Kim Jong Un purge elites within their regime at the slightest sign of disloyalty. For dictators, the risk of losing power to a coup d'état supposedly turns them into ruthless overlords, willing to purge elite officials whose undying fealty slips momentarily.

Dictators sometimes do venomously punish disloyal elites, but at other times they demur, preferring for some reason to tolerate the continued presence of the disloyal elite in their ruling coalition. Joseph Stalin, for example, hardly famed for his restraint in his

¹Sandra Fahy, *Dying for Rights: Putting North Korea's Human Rights Abuses on the Record* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019).

²Louise Ridley, "North Korea Defence Chief Hyon Yong Chol 'Executed With Anti Aircraft Guns For Falling Asleep In Meeting,'" *Huffington Post*, May 13, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/vnmafzv>.

³Jane Onyanga-Omara, "Report: N. Korea executes officials with anti-aircraft guns for 'enraging' Kim Jong Un," *USA Today*, February 27, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/02/27/report-n-korea-executes-officials-enraging-kim-jong-un/98468748/>.

⁴Anthony Zurcher, "Did Kim Jong Un feed his uncle to dogs?" *BBC*, January 3, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-echochambers-25597324>.

dealings with disloyal elites, chose to retain Vyacheslav Molotov in the Politburo after Molotov publicly disagreed with official policy at Communist Party meetings.⁵

Why do dictators purge some disloyal elites but retain others? Chapter Two argued that a dictator is more likely to purge a disloyal elite than retain him. However, retention of a disloyal elite becomes more likely when two factors are present: 1) there is a heightened popular or external threat to the dictator's hold on power, and 2) the elite holds a position relevant to helping the dictator ameliorate the heightened threat. This chapter tests this argument by analyzing within-regime individual-level patterns of elite purges in North Korea under Kim Jong Un.

4.1 Background to Elite Politics and Purges in North Korea

Before describing how I test the argument, I first provide a brief historical overview of elite politics and purges in North Korea. Following Japan's surrender at the end of World War Two, the Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel by the USA and USSR. Looking for a Korean who would be amenable to Soviet tutelage and acceptable to the Korean people, the Soviets installed as leader of the new North Korean state a man with reasonably good command of Russian and a history of fighting for Korean independence.⁶ That man was Kim Il Sung.

Prior to the division of the Peninsula, Kim Il Sung had fought for Korean independence in Northeastern China in the 1930s, and then commanded a battalion in the 88th

⁵Paul R. Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010), esp. chapters 15-17; Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (Bury St Edmunds: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 340; Geoffrey Roberts, *Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2012), p. 17.

⁶Paul French, *North Korea: State of Paranoia* (New York, NY: Zed Books, 2014), p. 1; Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 4; Hazel Smith, *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 81.

Brigade of the Soviet Army in the early 1940s.⁷ Before his selection by the Soviets, he was by no means the only contender to lead this new nation. There were various powerful factions and alternative leadership candidates from the fragmented campaign against Japanese colonization that Kim Il Sung had to contend with when he came to power.⁸

Elite politics under Kim Il Sung can be grouped into three periods. In the first period, primarily the 1950s, Kim Il Sung purged key members of the prominent Soviet and Yan'an factions in North Korea who had the capacity to challenge him as leader.⁹ In the second period, largely in the 1960s and through to 1977, Kim Il Sung purged key members of the KWP Politburo who were willing to debate and sometimes even challenge his decisions. Although the KWP remained an important vehicle for his management of personnel, this period can be characterized as when Kim Il Sung transitioned from governing at the head of a single-party regime to leading a personalist autocracy.¹⁰ In the third period, from 1977 until his death in 1994, Kim Il Sung's authority was largely unchallenged and there were few *elite* purges.¹¹ The most notable personnel changes occurred beneath the surface,

⁷Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2004), chapter 3; Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), pp. 53-57; Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 2; Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2004), chapters 3-4.

⁸Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999), chapter 1; Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2004), p. 127; Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), chapter three, esp. 78-86; Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2004), chapter 4, esp. pp. 52-56; Hazel Smith, *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 84-86.

⁹Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999), chapter 1; Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), chapter three, esp. 91-109; Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2004), chapter 6, esp. 106-107 and 109-111; James F. Person, "New Evidence on North Korea in 1956," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 16, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWHPBulletin16_p51.pdf; Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 37-39, 43, and 60-61.

¹⁰Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999), p. 58, and 72-73; Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2004), chapter 16, esp. p. 293.

¹¹Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999), p. 33. Note that there is a well-known theory by a North Korean defector, Jang Jin-Sung, who would disagree with this version of events. Jang alleges that in Kim Il Sung's later years he became a figurehead, and Kim Jong Il held the real power

however, as Kim Jong Il populated many second and third tier positions with favored officials to cement his ability to succeed his father.¹²

Purges under Kim Jong Il followed a similar pattern, occurring mainly in the early years of his rule and then quieting down, with a few notable exceptions. After Kim Jong Il came to power in 1994, between 1997 and 2001 there were several purges of high profile figures like Prime Minister Kang Song San, as well as broader purges of more junior officials.¹³ Then, despite the subsequent stability of Kim Jong Il's ruling coalition from 2002 onwards, there were two high-profile purges that merit further description. In 2004, Kim Jong Il arrested his brother-in-law and prominent elite, Jang Song Thaek. Jang, who is discussed at greater length later in the chapter, was married to Kim Jong Il's sister, Kim Kyong Hui. He did not reappear publicly until 2006.¹⁴ Then in 2010, Kim Jong Il executed an official called Park Nam Gi who had been Director of the Planning and Finance Department. Park Nam Gi was held responsible for the disastrous 2009 currency devaluation that wiped out thousands if not millions of North Koreans' savings overnight.¹⁵ Park Nam Gi's purge is important to be aware of partly because in the subsequent 2013 announcement of Jang Song Thaek's execution, North Korea accused Jang of collaborating with Park, a 'traitor for all ages' (만고역적, *mangoyeogjeog*).¹⁶

behind the throne. Parts of this theory though, specifically that the center of power in North Korea is a government department called the Organization and Guidance Department, have been widely disagreed with by most prominent North Korea watchers. See Jang Jin Sung, *Dear Leader* (Croydon: Ebury Publishing, 2014), pp. 125-141; and, for example, Michael Madden, "Kim Jong-un: North Korea's supreme leader or state puppet," *The Guardian*, May 27, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/27/kim-jong-un-north-korea-supreme-leader-or-state-puppet>.

¹²Jang Jin Sung, *Dear Leader* (Croydon: Ebury Publishing, 2014), pp. 125-141, esp. 137.

¹³See, for example: Shin Na, "PM's 'dismissal' linked to Pyongyang purge theory," *South China Morning Post*, February 22, 1997; The Sun, "Foreign Digest," *The Baltimore Sun*, February 19, 1998.

¹⁴BBC, "Profile: Chang Song-thaek," *BBC*, December 12, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25197601>; Ra Jong-yil, *Inside North Korea's Theocracy: The Rise and Sudden Fall of Jang Song Thaek* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), chapter five.

¹⁵Alicia P.Q. Wittmeyer, and Elias Groll, "Jang Song Thaek's Execution Is Even Weirder Than You Think," *Foreign Policy*, December 14, 2013, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/14/jang-song-thaeks-execution-is-even-weirder-than-you-think/>.

¹⁶Martyn Williams, "Full text of KCNA announcement on execution of Jang," *North Korea Tech*, December 13, 2013, <https://www.northkoreatech.org/2013/12/13/full-text-of-kcna-announcement-on-execution-of-jang/>.

Kim Jong Il's sudden death in December 2011 led to his 27-year-old son, Kim Jong Un (hereafter, Kim), being declared Supreme Leader.¹⁷ The dominant reaction of the outside world was uncertainty. What kind of leader would Kim be? Would his Swiss education provide him with a more Western perspective of the world? Would he perhaps try to reform his country's economy in the manner that Deng Xiaoping had in China? Or would his young age impede him from truly seizing control of the levers of power? And would he essentially be a puppet for the military or his aunt and uncle, Kim Kyong Hui and Jang Song Thaek?

These questions were resoundingly put to bed after the first decade of Kim's rule. Kim is a strongman ruler with seemingly little interest in opening up his country's economy *if* doing so means relaxing political control.¹⁸ And most importantly from the view of examining elite purges in North Korea, Kim is certainly in charge. Under Kim, there have been numerous notable events, including the assassination of his half-brother Kim Jong Nam and the summits with US President Donald Trump. But there have been two other main features relevant to elite politics in North Korea under the first decade of his tenure.

First, Kim worked to secure his military credentials in his early years. He continued the country's 'military first' (선군, *songun*) policy until 2013. A key part of this was the rapid development of the nuclear weapons program. Kim conducted nuclear weapons tests in 2013, twice in 2016, and in 2017, following the earlier tests in 2006 and 2009.¹⁹ By the end of 2017, analysts including Jeffrey Lewis, Director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, stated their belief in

¹⁷There is debate about Kim Jong Un's true birth year but in her biography of Kim Jong Un, Anna Fifield recounts that Kim Jong Un's aunt, Ko Yong Suk, firmly attests to it being 1984; see Anna Fifield, *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un* (New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, 2019), p. 26.

¹⁸I mean 'strongman' in the colloquial sense but the description also matches Jessica Weeks' use of the term as a "personalist military" leader; see Jessica L. Weeks, "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2 (2012), p. 330.

¹⁹Kelsey Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear Missile and Diplomacy," *Arms Control Association*, November 2019, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

North Korea's claim that it could put a nuclear warhead on an intercontinental ballistic missile that was capable of reaching the west coast of the US mainland.²⁰

Second, arguably the defining events of elite politics under Kim have been several high-profile purges of elite officials. The most notorious was the December 2013 execution of his uncle, Jang Song Thaek. The sensationalist and sometimes false details mentioned in this chapter's introduction garnered most of the headlines. However, the most interesting aspect of the execution was that the North Korean state's public announcement explicitly mentioned that Jang Song Thaek was guilty of organizing hostile factions and trying to overthrow the regime.²¹ This was an extremely rare public recognition of the potential for divisions within the North Korean ruling coalition.

The three North Korean leaders share common reputations for ruthlessness but their tenures have each featured distinct patterns of elite politics and purges. This matches the broader perception of dictators like Joseph Stalin, Fidel Castro, and Idi Amin as leaders who simply do not tolerate disloyal elites. However, in the subsequent sections I show that, even under Kim Jong Un in North Korea, dictators sometimes moderate their response to disloyal elites due to their fear of losing power to the people or foreign adversaries.

4.2 Research Design

In this section, I describe how I test the argument that a dictator is more likely to purge than retain a disloyal elite, but retention becomes more likely when there is a heightened popular or external threat to the dictator's survival *and* the elite holds a position relevant

²⁰Uri Friedman, "North Korea Says It Has 'Completed' Its Nuclear Program," *The Atlantic*, November 29, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/north-korea-nuclear/547019/>.

²¹Martyn Williams, "Full text of KCNA announcement on execution of Jang," *North Korea Tech*, December 13, 2013, <https://www.northkoreatech.org/2013/12/13/full-text-of-kcna-announcement-on-execution-of-jang/>.

to helping the dictator alleviate that threat. I conduct quantitative analysis of an original dataset of North Korean elites between May 2012 and April 2015. The timeframe captures the period in which Kim Jong Un consolidated power, starting when he became indisputably the *de jure* leader of North Korea and ending three years later, primarily due to data availability. Quantitative tools aid external validity, showing the findings are not unique to any specific elite but instead apply to a broader set of cases. The quantitative approach also shows that the findings are robust to accounting for alternative explanations.

4.2.1 Data

Assessing the argument first requires identifying elites in North Korea under Kim Jong Un. The composition of ruling coalitions varies across autocratic (and other types of) regimes, so a regime-specific approach is necessary to identify who was a member of Kim's ruling coalition between May 2012 and April 2015.

As the theory provides an explanation of why dictators purge or retain disloyal elites, the sample could be comprised exclusively of disloyal elites. However, I compiled a dataset of elites who may be both loyal and disloyal for two reasons. First, identifying disloyal elites depends on subjective claims relating to dictators' perceptions of disloyalty. Thus, any dataset of exclusively disloyal elites could be subject to charges of elites being selected to generate favorable results. Second, compiling a dataset of loyal and disloyal elites does not preclude testing the argument and it facilitates testing the scope condition that dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites.

A few authors have previously tried to identify members of North Korea's ruling coalition. These methods, however, have various shortcomings. Scholars have principally used on-the-spot guidance (OSG) visits to identify North Korean elites. OSG visits are when the North Korean leader visits a location publicly, such as a factory, hospital, children's park,

or a military unit. At these events, the leader is accompanied by a group of officials that can range from a single person to a much larger number.²² Kim observes the facility and dispenses advice to officials who tend to scribble every instruction down in individual notebooks. Scholars have tracked the officials who attend these events to identify North Korean elites.²³

An alternative method, used to my knowledge exclusively by Haggard, Herman, and Ryu, is to identify North Korean elites based on the rankings of officials published by the state media. The (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) generally publishes not just the names of officials who attend events but also a numbered ranking of each official. Haggard, Herman, and Ryu use five of these lists to identify North Korean elites between 2005 and 2013.²⁴

To test the hypothesis quantitatively, I require a time-series cross-sectional dataset where at a given point in time an elite is either included or excluded in the ruling coalition. The data collection approaches described above provide rich sources of information about the identity of North Korean elites, but they pose several problems that would require arbitrary coding choices to identify members of the North Korean ruling coalition. Conversely, my data collection procedures overcome these problems.

First, should there be a minimum number of OSGs an elite must attend to be part of the ruling coalition? Similarly, should there be a minimum ranking provided by the KCNA? Intuitively, it would seem questionable to include an official who attended just

²²For example, the Korean Central News Agency—North Korea’s state news agency—published a list of 30 officials when Kim Jong Un paid his respects to his departed father, Kim Jong Il, at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun on December 17, 2012 (NK News, “NK Leadership Tracker: Event List,” *NK Pro*, <https://www.nknews.org/pro/nk-leadership-tracker/bigdata>).

²³Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, “Political Change in North Korea: Mapping the Succession,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2014), p. 790; John Ishiyama, “Assessing the Leadership Transition in North Korea: Using Network Analysis of Field Inspections, 1997-2012,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 47 (2014), p. 139; John Ishiyama, and Paasha Mahdavi, “Dynamics of the Inner Elite in Dictatorships: Evidence from North Korea,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020).

²⁴Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, “Political Change in North Korea: Mapping the Succession,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2014), p. 790.

one OSG in a five-year period, for example, but problematic to exclude an official who attended 20 OSGs in the same time period. Ishiyama includes elites who attended at least four OSGs between 1997 and 2011 under Kim Jong Il or one OSG in 2012 under Kim Jong Un.²⁵ However, these levels are arbitrary. For example, thresholds of seven for Kim Jong Il and three for Kim Jong Un, are equally defensible.

Second, using data from OSGs or from the political rankings published by the KCNA could bias the composition of the dataset towards the inclusion of officials with public-facing roles. For instance, elites concerned with policy areas related to the economy are far more likely to accompany the leader on OSGs than elites concerned with domestic internal security. As Haggard, Herman, and Ryu acknowledge, attending an OSG visit does not guarantee an official any personal interaction time with Kim nor does it mean the elite is particularly powerful.²⁶

Third, should all visits be given equal weight? If one official attends five OSGs at schools and hospitals but another official visits two factories and three military facilities in the same period should they be counted similarly? Scholars have previously assigned equal weights to visits. This and the other points described above are not intended as criticisms. These approaches, largely based on OSGs, may produce lists of names that bear close resemblance to the true identity of North Korea's ruling coalition. However, for my objective—identifying North Korean elites *ex-ante* to generate causal inferences about elite purges—these techniques raise more questions than answers about the composition of Kim's ruling coalition.

As an alternative, I adopt an institutional approach to identify elites in North Korea. The primary institutions in North Korea between May 2012 and April 2015 were the KWP and the Korean People's Army (KPA). This is reflected in the 'military first' (선군,

²⁵John Ishiyama, "Assessing the Leadership Transition in North Korea: Using Network Analysis of Field Inspections, 1997-2012," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 47 (2014), p. 139.

²⁶Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, "Political Change in North Korea: Mapping the Succession," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2014), p. 791.

songun) policy that North Korea pursued from 1994 to 2013 and the subsequent ‘parallel development’ (병진, *byungjin*) policy that focused on the twin goals of developing nuclear weapons and economic growth. From 2012 to 2015, the KWP Political Bureau (Politburo), the Central Military Commission (CMC), and the National Defense Commission (NDC) were the main bodies that oversaw the party and the military.²⁷ Elites enter my dataset when they are a member of at least one of these bodies, and exit the dataset when they are no longer a member of any of them. The number of members in each of these bodies varies slightly over time, but in the three-year period I analyze there are 21 unique elites who are members at some point of the Politburo, 20 unique elites in the CMC, and 19 in the NDC.²⁸

Haggard, Herman, and Ryu employed a similar approach as part of their analysis of the political leadership in North Korea. They tracked membership of the NDC, Politburo, and the KWP Secretariat. The Secretariat has the vague responsibilities of implementing and enforcing the Party’s decisions.²⁹ Haggard, Herman, and Ryu exclude the CMC because, “it concerns itself largely with military issues” and they prefer to focus on “the three central political institutions at the top of the political hierarchy.”³⁰ This is surprising since the the military is an inherently political institution in North Korea and they include the NDC which, as the name suggests, is also concerned with defense; in other words, military-related concerns. Specifically, the NDC’s responsibilities include ‘guiding the overall armed forces,’ ‘establishing central organs of the national defense sector,’

²⁷Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 140. The NDC transitioned to the State Affairs Commission in June 2016; see John G. Grisafi, “North Korea Creates New Lead Government Body Headed by Kim,” *NK News*, June 29, 2016, <https://www.nknews.org/2016/06/north-korea-creates-new-lead-government-body-headed-by-kim/>.

²⁸For the Politburo, full members and members of the presidium are counted as members; for the CMC, full members or vice chairmen are counted; and for the NDC, full members, vice chairmen, and the ministers of the People’s Armed Forces, State Security, and People’s Security are counted. Alternate members of the various bodies are excluded.

²⁹Michael Madden, “Party Secretariat,” *North Korea Leadership Watch*, <http://www.nkleadershipwatch.org/secretariat-of-the-central-committee-kwp/>.

³⁰Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, “Political Change in North Korea: Mapping the Succession,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2014), p. 779.

and ‘conferring military titles above the general-grade officer rank.’³¹ Regarding the Secretariat, although Kim Jong Il revived it after his stroke in 2008, North Korean leadership analyst Ken Gause does not identify it as one of North Korea’s ‘main leadership bodies’ under Kim Jong Un.³²

The period of analysis begins when Kim was securing his position as Supreme Leader. Although Kim Jong Il died in December 2011, Kim Jong Un did not acquire the formal titles that identified him as leading the key military and civilian bodies—the Politburo, CMC, and NDC—until April 2012. Kim has contended with the problem of authoritarian power sharing throughout his tenure but by May 2012—when the analysis starts—he undoubtedly formally led the state. The three-year period of analysis ends after April 2015, primarily due to data availability. While any data on North Korea (and elsewhere) must be treated carefully—this analysis included—as of 2020, data concerning members of North Korea’s winning coalition after April 2015 diminishes in availability and quality. For example, rumors circulated in May 2019 that Kim Hyok Chol was purged: he had accompanied Kim Jong Un to Hanoi for the summit with US President Trump; and there were subsequent rumors that Kim Jong Un purged Kim Hyok Chol over the summit’s lack of progress.³³ Only a few days later at the start of June 2019, however, credible reports emerged that Kim Hyok Chol had not been purged.³⁴ In short, I end the analysis a few years prior to the time of data collection because it takes time to ascertain the accuracy of data on elite politics in North Korea.

I identify members of these bodies as well as data on purges and individual elites’ characteristics from various English and Korean-language sources. These include aca-

³¹Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 142.

³²Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), pp. 126 and 140.

³³Yong-soo Lee, “Purge Halts Negotiations with N.Korea,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, May 31, 2019, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/05/31/2019053101574.html.

³⁴Will Ripley, “‘Executed’ North Korean Diplomat is Alive, Sources Say,” *CNN*, June 4, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/03/asia/north-korea-diplomats-intl/index.html>.

demic sources, the North Korea-focused media, international media, South Korean government websites, and think tank reports. I also conducted interviews in Seoul with North Korean and South Korean experts on elite politics in North Korea to verify/disconfirm information. I drew especially heavily on four sources: The Republic of Korea's Ministry of Unification's online portal on North Korean elites; Ken Gause's book, *North Korean House of Cards*; Michael Madden's North Korea Leadership Watch website; and the NK News online leadership tracker of North Korean elites. From these sources, I constructed an elite-year quantitative dataset with 120 elite-year observations based on 37 elites. I use elite-year rather than elite-month as the unit of analysis to minimize measurement error about uncertainty of when elites left an institution and because the independent variables do not vary by month (described below). The identities of the elites included in the analysis and the periods they served in the Politburo, CMC, and NDC are shown in Table 4.1.

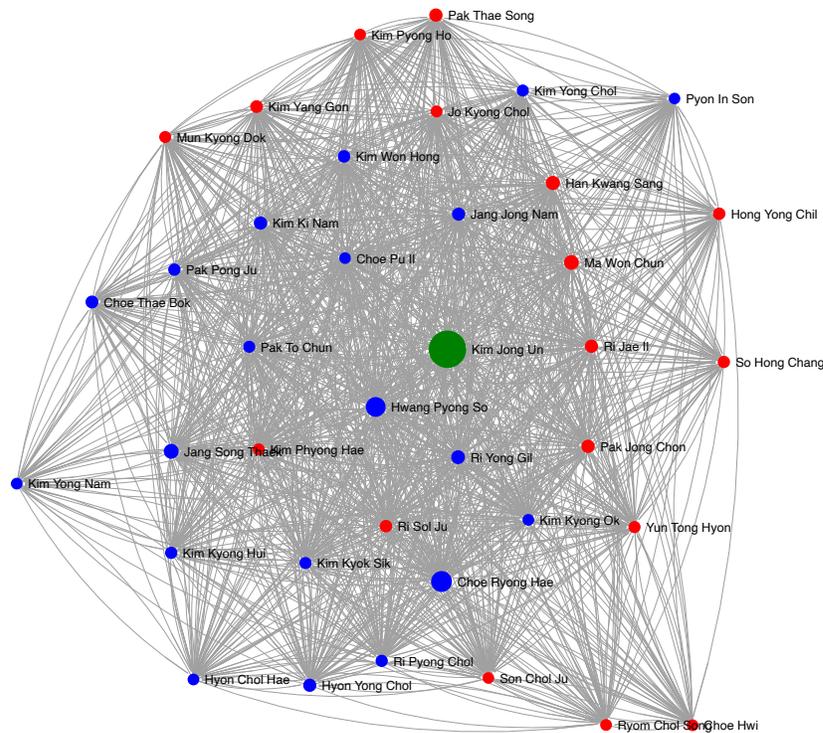
Despite the reasons for skepticism of using OSG data to identify elites in North Korea, I compare the composition of elites in my dataset against an equivalent number of the top-ranking elites (37) in the same time period using the OSG data. Figure 4.1 uses network analysis to show which elites surrounded Kim between May 2012 and April 2015 based on the 37 elites that attended the most OSGs with Kim. Put differently, Figure 4.1 identifies the top 37 elites in North Korea based on OSGs, not my institutional approach. Data on OSGs comes from NK Pro.³⁵ Elites that feature in both datasets are displayed in blue, while elites that are included only based on OSGs are displayed in red. At first glance, my institutional approach appears to perform well at identifying elites closer to Kim. Over the three-year period, 20 of the 37 elites identified through my institutional approach attended 1,504 OSGs between them at an average of 75.2 OSGs. 17 elites identified solely by OSGs attended 936 OSGs between them at an average of 55.05. Users of

³⁵NK News, "NK Leadership Tracker: Event List," *NK Pro*, <https://www.nknews.org/pro/nk-leadership-tracker/eventlist>.

Table 4.1: Membership of North Korea's Ruling Coalition, May 2012-April 2015

Member	Politburo	Central Military Commission	National Defense Commission
Choe Kyong Song 최경성		9/10-end	
Choe Pu Il 최부일		9/10-end	2/13-end
Choe Ryong Hae 최룡해	4/12-end	4/12-14	4/12-9/14
Choe Thae Bok 최태복	9/10-end		
Choe Yong Rim 최영림	9/10-end		
Hwang Pyong So 황병서	7/14-end	7/14-end	9/14-end
Hyon Chol Hae 현철해	1/13-5/13		
Hyon Yong Chol 현영철	7/12-3/13	7/12-end	6/14-end
Jang Jong Nam 장정남			5/13-9/14
Jang Song Thaek 장성택	4/12-2/13	9/10-12/13	4/09-12//13
Jo Chun Ryong 조춘룡			4/14-end
Ju Kyu Chang 주규창		9/10-2014	4/09-4/14
Kang Sok Ju 강석주	9/10-end		
Kim Chun Sop 김춘섭			4/15-end
Kim Jong Gak 김정각	4/12-3/13	9/10-2013	4/09-4/13
Kim Ki Nam 김기남	9/10-end		
Kim Kuk Thae 김국태	9/10-12/13		
Kim Kyok Sik 김격식		9/10-end	10/12-4/14
Kim Kyong Hui 김경희	9/10-end		
Kim Kyong Ok 김경옥		9/10-end	
Kim Rak Gyom 김락겸		4/12-end	
Kim Won Hong 김원홍	4/12-end	9/10-end	4/12-end
Kim Yong Chol 김영철		9/10-end	
Kim Yong Chun 김영춘	9/10-end	9/10-end	4/07-4/14
Kim Yong Nam 김영남	9/10-end		
O Kuk Ryol 오극렬			2/09-end
Paek Se Bong 백세봉			9/03-3/14
Pak Pong Ju 박봉주	3/13-end		
Pak To Chun 박도춘	4/12-end		4/11-4/15
Pyon In Son 변인선		9/10-2/15	
Ri Myong Su 리명수	4/12-3/13	4/12-3/13	4/11-2/13
Ri Pyong Chol 리병철		9/10-end	9/14-end
Ri Yong Gil 리영길		4/14-end	
Ri Yong Ho 리영호	9/10-7/12	9/10-7/12	
Ri Yong Mu 리영무	9/10-end		1998-end
Yang Hyong Sop 양형섭	9/10-end		
Yun Jong Rin 윤정린		9/10-end	

Figure 4.1: Elites in North Korea Based on On-the-Spot Guidance Visits, May 2012-April 2015



Note: Blue nodes indicate elites are also in my dataset; red nodes indicate they are not. The green node is Kim Jong Un. Bigger nodes indicate the elite attended more on-the-spot guidance visits. The location of the nodes is determined by modern multidimensional scaling.

network analysis often, however, employ more complex descriptive statistics to “capture key structural features of networks.” The most appropriate in this instance is eigenvector centrality which essentially shows the importance of nodes—in this case, elites—based on their connections to one another.³⁶ The face validity of the measure is supported by Kim having the highest value of eigenvector centrality (.18259466), while the average eigenvector centrality measure for ‘blue’ elites is higher (.1628475) than it is for ‘red’ elites (.1581277). In summary, this brief comparison between the methods of elite identification

³⁶Michael D. Ward, Katherine Stovel, and Audrey Sacks, “Network Analysis and Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 14 (2011): pp. 249-250.

suggests that my institutional approach is an internally valid method of identifying the most important elites in North Korea.

4.2.2 Dependent Variable: Elite Purge

Consistent with the conceptualization of a purge described in Chapter One, the dependent variable—*Elite purge*—is a binary variable coded as one when an elite loses their positions on all of the Politburo, CMC, and NDC against their wishes, and zero otherwise. Put differently, *Elite purge* captures when a dictator forcibly removes an elite from the ruling coalition. The number of individuals and organizations observing North Korean politics between May 2012 and April 2015 makes it relatively straightforward to identify and verify when elites joined or left any of the Politburo, CMC, and NDC.³⁷ This is shown in Table 4.1. It is a more nuanced task, however, to identify whether they departed one or more of these bodies against their wishes or did so voluntarily.

There are effectively only two types of voluntary departures, or resignations, in North Korean politics. First, elites may defect from North Korea. There have been some high-profile defections in recent years—notably, North Korea’s deputy ambassador to the United Kingdom, Thae Yong Ho, defected in 2016—but none of the elites under examination here defected. This just leaves the task of distinguishing between truly voluntary retirements and purges.

I distinguish between the two by closely reading, and interviewing, multiple sources about the careers of all 37 elites in the dataset. I triangulate between different sources to confirm or falsify events and I also use interviews to gather further detail or check previously unconfirmed reports. For example, one prominent western media outlet reported that the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of National Defense believed General Ri

³⁷There are two exceptions to this: Kim Kyong Hui and Pak To Chun. I later conduct a robustness test with these elites excluded and the results are unchanged.

Yong Ho had attempted a coup, and troops loyal to him had engaged in a firefight with other North Korean soldiers.³⁸ However, numerous North and South Korean interviewees independently and consistently dismissed this story as inaccurate. Additionally, as discussed earlier, ending the analysis in April 2015 helps increase confidence in the accuracy of reports of events. Time elapsed since April 2015 enables new reporting to emerge that provides further reason to believe or doubt previous reports. Table 4.2 shows the names of all the individuals who left the ruling coalition between May 2012 and April 2015, whether I coded an elite as being purged or not, and a summary of the reason for that coding. Overall, seven out of ten elites who left the ruling coalition during the time period were purged.

Table 4.2: Departures of North Korean Elites from the Ruling Coalition, May 2012-April 2015

Name	Ruling coalition departure date	Purged	Justification for coding
Hyon Chol Hae 현철해	5/2013	No	Retired and came off the Politburo due to health reasons. His departure appears voluntary and he continued to appear at some leadership functions. In 4/2016, he was also made a Marshal of the KPA.
Jang Jong Nam 장정남	9/2014	Yes	Removed from the NDC in 9/2014, which was the only position that qualified him as a member of the ruling coalition. There is no evidence he retired or otherwise chose to leave. He returned as a member of the CMC in 5/2015.
Jang Song Thaek 장성택	12/2013	Yes	Purge and execution were extensively covered by domestic and international media, and announced by the KCNA.

Continued on next page

³⁸John Hudson, "Kim Jong-un May Have Just Suppressed a Coup," *The Atlantic*, July 20, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/07/north-korea-may-have-just-suppressed-coup/325627/>.

Table 4.2 – Continued from previous page

Name	Ruling coalition departure date	Purged	Justification for coding
Ju Kyu Chang 주규창	4/2014	No	Upon leaving the NDC in April 2014, Ju Kyu Chang took semi-retired status. He remained influential in North Korean politics, returning as an alternate member of the WPK Central Committee in 5/2016 before dying in 9/2018. Kim attended his funeral and met with family members to “express deep condolences.”
Kim Jong Gak 김정각	4/2013	Yes	Removed from Politburo and NDC in 3/2013 and 4/2013 respectively. There is no evidence that he retired.
Kim Kuk Thae 김국태	12/2013	No	Died of congestive heart failure in 12/2013. Kim did not attend his funeral but sent a wreath to express condolences.
Paek Se Bong 백세봉	3/2014	Yes	Removed from office after making a power grab for stewardship of the space, and weapons of mass destruction program’s following Jang Song Thaek’s purge.
Pyon In Son 변인선	2/2015	Yes	Although observers have been unable to confirm the source of the disagreement, there is broad consensus that Pyon was executed for disagreeing with Kim.
Ri Myong Su 리명수	3/2013	Yes	Purged via removals from all of the Politburo, CMC, and NDC by 3/2013, and interrogated in 12/2013 in relation to Jang Song Thaek’s purge.
Ri Yong Ho 리영호	7/2012	Yes	Removed from all positions and there was a plethora of reports about his execution. Most frequently named reasons for his removal relate to disagreeing with Kim about whether the KPA or KWP would manage specific profitable businesses.

4.2.3 Independent Variables

To examine whether dictators are less likely to purge a disloyal elite when there is a heightened non-elite threat *and* the elite holds a position relevant to helping alleviate that

threat, I first require data on whether elites are disloyal or loyal. The formal modeling literature on the loyalty-competence tradeoff has discussed the disloyalty of elites at length, but as far as I am aware the concept has not been operationalized on the individual-level before.³⁹ Recall from Chapter Two that it is not the ‘true’ type of the elite that matters—whether they are actually loyal or disloyal—but the dictator’s view of their type. I argued that dictators use four signals to ascertain whether an elite may be disloyal now or in the future: 1) Did the elite plot to overthrow the dictator? 2) Did the elite oppose the dictator’s rise to power? 3) Does the elite lead a faction? 4) Does the elite disagree with the dictator?

I use two of these measures to operationalize whether elites are disloyal in North Korea in a given year: whether they lead a prominent faction, and whether they disagree with the dictator. I only use these two as the others are not applicable to North Korea between May 2012 and April 2015; I found no verifiable evidence that any elite plotted to overthrow Kim or opposed his rise to power.⁴⁰ I code an elite as leading a prominent faction in a given year if at that point the sources described above identified the elite as leading a patronage system or network, or having strong factions behind them. I did not code elites as leading a faction if they were simply part of a patronage network or they were a prominent figure. Kim Yong Nam, for example, was not coded as leading a faction despite him being President of the Supreme People’s Assembly between 2014 and 2019 because, despite his prominence, there is no evidence that he independently oversaw a patronage system. I code an elite as disagreeing with Kim where there is evidence that they advocated a viewpoint different to Kim’s in a given year. This could be over formal government policy, as was the case when Jang Song Thaek disagreed with Kim over economic policy in 2013, or over which government bodies oversaw state-owned enterprises,

³⁹Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin, “Dictators and Their Viziers: Endogenizing the Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off,” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (2011), pp. 903-930; Alexei V. Zakharov, “The Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off in Dictatorships and Outside Options for Subordinates,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (2016), pp. 457-466.

⁴⁰There were rumors that Ri Yong Ho and Jang Song Thaek considered attempting to overthrow Kim but interviews with a range of experts on North Korean elite politics in Seoul unanimously and independently dismissed these rumors as sensationalist reporting.

as was the case with Ri Yong Ho in 2012. *Disloyal* is a binary variable coded as one if an elite exhibits either of these behaviors in a given year, and zero otherwise.

Because the argument suggests that both a high level of non-elite threat *and* an elite holding a relevant position are necessary to diminish the effect of disloyalty on a dictator's propensity to purge an elite, I combine these two measures in a variable called 'replacement costs.' This captures the disruption that removing an elite in a relevant position alongside a heightened non-elite threat would have on a dictator's attempts to stay in power.

I construct two measures of replacement costs based on popular and external threats. For each variable, I first create a binary indicator of whether the elite held a position relevant to helping Kim Jong Un alleviate popular or external threats (see Table 4.3). I identify positions as important to specific types of threat based on close reading of the sources described above to understand the tasks that each position focuses on. I then capture the level of popular and external threats facing Kim Jong Un. For popular threats, I proxy the level of unrest among North Korean citizens with the annual number of North Koreans who claimed South Korean citizenship. Although this could be a reflection of the aggressiveness of North Korea's internal security apparatus, variation over time suggests it captures levels of popular unrest. Two of the highest years are 2009 and 2010; these are the years of and following North Korea's disastrous currency reform, which effectively wiped out people's savings overnight.⁴¹

For external threats, I use Markowitz and Fariss's measure of geopolitical competition: this captures the level of threat a state faces as "the spatially weighted level of threat it [in this case, North Korea] faces from all other states in the system."⁴² *Popular replacement*

⁴¹NK Pro, "North Korea Statistics Database," *NK News*, November 4, 2019, <https://www.nknews.org/pro/north-korea-statistics-database/>; Marcus Noland, "North Korea's Failed Currency Reform," *Peterson Institute for International Economics* February 5, 2010, <https://www.piie.com/commentary/op-eds/north-koreas-failed-currency-reform>.

⁴²Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Christopher J. Fariss, "Power, Proximity, and Democracy: Geopolitical Competition in the International System," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2017), p. 84.

Table 4.3: Positions Held by Elites Relevant to Helping Kim Jong Un Alleviate Popular and External Threats

Popular	External
Commander, Korean People's Internal Security Forces	Chief/Director KPA General Staff (Operations Bureau)
Director, WPK Propaganda and Agitation Department	Director, KWP Machine-Building Industry Department
First Deputy Director, WPK Organization and Guidance Department	Director, NDC
Minister of State Security	General Adviser of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces
Minister of People's Security	Marshal, KPA
	Military Commander (Air Force, Army Corps, Navy, or Strategic Rocket Force)
	Minster of the People's Armed Forces
	Vice Chairman, NDC
	Vice Chairman, WPK Central Military Commission
	Vice Marshal, KPA
	Vice Minister of the People's Armed Forces
	WPK Secretary for Military and Machine-Building Industry

costs (log) is the natural log of whether the elite held a position relevant to helping Kim alleviate popular threats multiplied by the annual number of North Koreans who claimed South Korean citizenship. *External replacement costs (log)* is the natural log of whether the elite held a position relevant to helping Kim alleviate external threats multiplied by the level of geopolitical competition North Korea faced in a given year.⁴³

As I am interested in whether replacement costs moderate the effect of disloyalty, I interact *Disloyal* with the two replacement costs variables. $Disloyal \times External\ replacement\ costs\ (log)$ and $Disloyal \times Popular\ replacement\ costs\ (log)$ are therefore the two main variables of interest. Finally, I also control for whether elites were members of the Politburo, CMC, or NDC to address the possibility that Kim may have used purges to weaken or strengthen specific bodies. Indeed, Kim disbanded the NDC in 2016.

⁴³Before logging these variables, I add one to each variable to mitigate the presence of zeroes in each indicator.

4.3 Results

To assess the individual-level determinants of elite purges, I use linear probability models (OLS).⁴⁴ The main outcome variable, *Elite purge*, takes a value of 1 if Kim purges the elite in a given year, and 0 otherwise. Each observation is an individual elite-year. The models include fixed effects for individual elites⁴⁵ and use heteroskedastic robust standard errors to account for the variance of the error term not being constant and the errors being correlated across time.⁴⁶

In the following analysis, we expect *Disloyalty* to have a positive effect on *Elite purge*. The other main coefficients of interest are the interaction effects between disloyalty and replacement costs. While *Disloyalty* should be positively related to *Elite purge*, as replacement costs increase the effect of *Disloyalty* should diminish. Thus, we should expect negative coefficients for *Disloyalty* \times *External replacement costs (log)* and *Disloyalty* \times *Popular replacement costs (log)*.

The results, shown in Models 1 and 2 of Table 4.4, support these predictions. Models 1 and 2 estimate the effect of *Disloyalty* on *Elite purge*, interact *Disloyalty* with the two different types of replacement costs, and include the control variables described above. Model 1 examines how *External replacement costs (log)* moderates the effect of disloyalty, while Model 2 does the same with *Popular replacement costs (log)*. In both models, Kim is more likely to purge a disloyal elite, but the effect of *Disloyalty* is reduced as replacement costs

⁴⁴I prefer linear probability models to Logit or Probit models “to avoid issues of separation that arise in models that include covariates that change slowly over time.” See Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi, “Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2019), p. 563. For further reading, see Peter M. Aronow, and Benjamin T. Miller, *Foundations of Agnostic Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Chapter 5.

⁴⁵Hausman tests suggest that for both models the differences between the coefficients of using fixed effects and random effects are systematic; see Jerry A. Hausman, “Specification Tests in Econometrics,” *Econometrica*, Vol. 46 (1978), pp. 1251-1271.

⁴⁶Trevor S. Breusch, and Adrian R. Pagan, “A Simple Test for Heteroscedasticity and Random Coefficient Variation,” *Econometrica*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (1979), pp. 1287-1294; R. Dennis Cook, and Sanford Weisberg, “Diagnostics for Heteroscedasticity in Regression,” *Biometrika*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1983), pp. 1-10; Jeffrey Wooldridge, *Econometric Analysis of Cross Section and Panel Data* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

Table 4.4: Effects of Disloyalty and Replacement Costs on Elite Purges

	Model 1	Model 2
Disloyal	0.94*** (0.05)	0.72** (.02)
External replacement costs (log)	-13.37 (12.70)	
Disloyal × External replacement costs (log)	-142.51*** (8.09)	
Popular replacement costs (log)		<0.01 (0.00)
Disloyal × Popular replacement costs (log)		-0.14*** (0.00)
Politburo	-0.03 (0.04)	0.34* (0.13)
CMC	0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)
NDC	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.02)
Constant	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.30* (0.11)
Individual-elite fixed effects	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	120	120

Notes: Unit of analysis is elite-year.

Dependent variable is *Elite purge*.

Both models use OLS with individual-elite fixed effects and heteroskedastic-robust standard errors clustered by individual elite.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

increase. Both interaction effects are negative, as expected, and statistically significant at 99.9% confidence. From the control variables, I found no consistent statistically significant evidence that Kim was more likely to purge an elite based on whether they were a member of the Politburo, CMC, or NDC.

The substantive interpretation of the effect of replacement costs is tricky since replacement costs are made up of two variables (the nature of the elite's position and the level of either popular or external threat). Interaction effects are also more easily interpreted visu-

ally so I examine the substantive effects of the interaction coefficients graphically.⁴⁷ Figure 4.2 displays the marginal effects of the interactions between disloyalty and both types of replacement costs on elite purges. It shows that the effect of *Disloyalty* significantly decreases when replacement costs increase. In other words, Kim was far more likely to purge a disloyal elite when replacement costs based on external or popular threats were low than when either type of replacement costs was high. As the right-hand panel of Figure 4.2 shows, there is more uncertainty around the interaction effect based on *Popular replacement costs (log)* as there were simply more elites in the ruling coalition who held positions relevant to external threat than popular threat between May 2012 and April 2015. Nonetheless, Figure 4.2 clearly shows that Kim was less likely to purge a disloyal elite when there were high replacement costs to doing so.

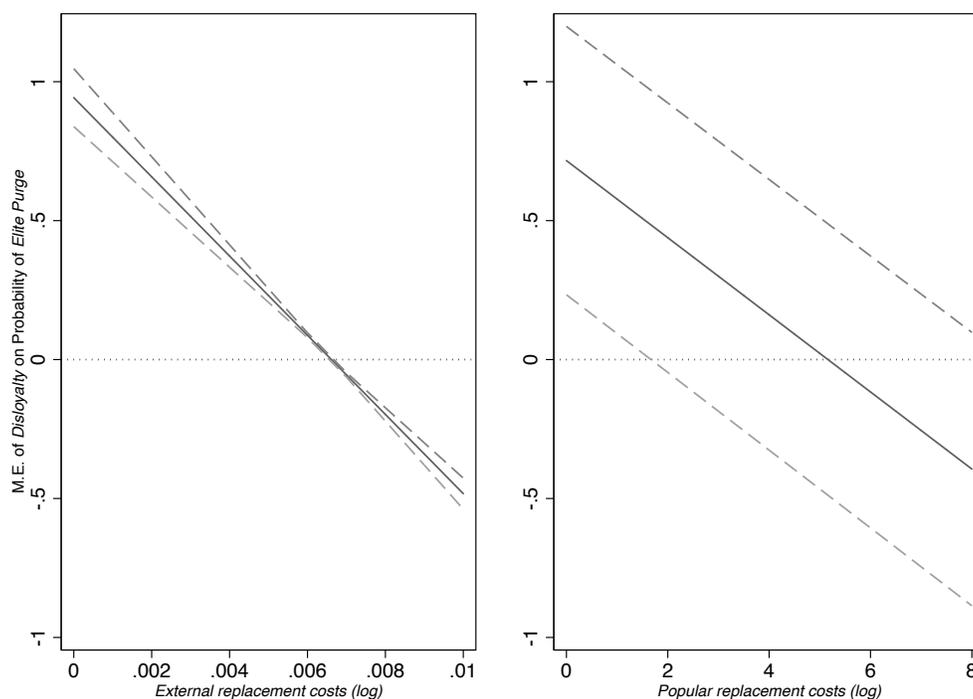
4.3.1 Alternative Explanations

The findings and data do not support alternative explanations of individual-level elite purges. First, the evidence does not suggest the results are a product of reverse causation or endogeneity. There are two issues to consider here. Rather than low replacement costs making a dictator more likely to purge a disloyal elite, it may be the case that there tend to be lower replacement costs to purging a disloyal elite in circumstances in which a dictator is more likely to purge them for other reasons. Additionally, it is conceivable that an elite behaving disloyally does not cause a dictator to purge them, but instead elites behave disloyally because they expect to be purged. In other words, an elite may develop a faction to try and protect themselves or they may increasingly disagree with the dictator over policy to reveal the dictator's fallibility to others.

The second idea is not well supported by previous research on disloyal elites in dictatorships. Research on the loyalty-competence tradeoff has consistently argued that dic-

⁴⁷Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder, "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14 (2006), pp. 63-82.

Figure 4.2: Marginal Effects of Disloyalty on Elite Purges Across Popular and External Replacement Costs



Note: Dotted lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figures calculated after estimating Models 1 (left panel) and 2 (right panel).

tators are likely to purge elites because they are disloyal, rather than elites behaving disloyally because they expect to be purged.⁴⁸ There is no such discussion on the potential endogeneity of replacement costs, but I attempted to account for both ideas in the above analysis. I was unable to use lagged independent variables—a common technique to refute accusations of endogeneity—due to the small number of observations in the dataset, but I used elite fixed effects in the analysis. This allowed me to incorporate not just measurable factors into the analysis but also unmeasurable attributes of an elite, including their ‘innate’ level of disloyalty or unspecified characteristics that might mean there are low replacement costs to purging them. Even with fixed effects included there was strong

⁴⁸Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin, “Dictators and Their Viziers: Endogenizing the Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off,” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (2011), pp. 903-930; Alexei V. Zakharov, “The Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off in Dictatorships and Outside Options for Subordinates,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (2016), pp. 457-466.

evidence that dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites and that high replacement costs weaken this effect.

Second, the evidence does not support Svobik's argument about patterns of individual-level purges. Recall from Chapter Two that because Svobik's argument suggests dictators use purges to demonstrate their independence, individuals purged are chosen "without an objective rationale."⁴⁹ The evidence presented here does not support this argument. The analysis of elite purges in Kim Jong Un's North Korea suggests that not only do dictators carefully select which elites to purge based on whether they are disloyal, but they also strategically adjust the timing of the purge to maximize the probability of their survival in office against all types of threat.

4.3.2 Robustness Tests

I conducted robustness checks to ensure that the findings are not driven by specific coding choices or particular data points. I began by estimating models that excluded elites whose departure dates from the ruling coalition are less certain. For all but two of the elites in Table 4.1, I was able to verify when the elite left any of the Politburo, CMC, or NDC, even if it was after April 2015. However, there are two elites who are in the dataset for all 36 months even though I could not confirm their exact departure dates from the ruling coalition. I found no evidence that Kim Kyong Hui (Kim's aunt) and Pak To Chun left their positions prior to April 2015 but I was also unable to confirm if they left these bodies after April 2015. I therefore re-estimate Models 1 and 2 from Table 4.4 with these two elites dropped from the analysis. Dropping these elites from the dataset reduces the number of elite-year observations to 112, but the size of the coefficients and the levels of statistical significance for the interaction effects remain unchanged (see Models 3 and 4 in Table 4.5).

⁴⁹Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 80.

Table 4.5: Robustness Tests: Effects of Disloyalty and Replacement Costs on Elite Purges

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Disloyal	0.94*** (0.06)	0.71** (0.24)	0.94*** (0.05)	0.72** (0.24)
External replacement costs (log)	-14.96 (14.11)		-13.42 (12.71)	
Disloyal × External replacement costs (log)	-141.40*** (8.98)		-143.87*** (8.24)	
Popular replacement costs (log)		<0.01 (0.00)		<0.01 (0.00)
Disloyal × Popular replacement costs (log)		-0.14*** (0.00)		-0.14*** (0.00)
Politburo	-0.04 (0.04)	0.34* (0.13)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.34* (0.13)
CMC	0.06 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)
NDC	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.02)
Constant	0.02 (0.04)	-0.28* (0.10)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.28* (0.11)
Individual-elite fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	112	112	120	120

Notes: Unit of analysis is elite-year.

Dependent variable is *Elite purge*.

Both models use OLS with individual-elite fixed effects and heteroskedastic-robust standard errors clustered by individual elite.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

I also estimated models with all departures from the ruling coalition recoded as purges. I summarized above the extensive data collection undertaken to ascertain which departures were voluntary and which occurred against the elite's wishes so that the coding of *Elite purge* would be consistent with the conceptualization described in Chapter One. It is conceivable, however, that the seemingly-voluntary departures of Hyon Chol Hae (5/2013), Ju Kyu Chang (4/2014), and Kim Kuk Thae (12/2013) were in fact purges. This seems unlikely given that Kim Jong Un offered public condolences upon Ju Kyu Chang's and Kim Kuk Thae's deaths and later made Hyon Chol Hae a Marshal of the KPA, but it is possible that North Korea went to extreme lengths to conceal fractious departures.

Again, however, the substantive and statistical significance of the findings are unchanged with these three observations recoded. The results from all these checks are in Table 4.5.

4.3.3 An Illustrative Case: Jang Song Thaek

The purge of Jang Song Thaek sent shockwaves around the world. Analysts, policymakers, and causal observers were transfixed as a stream of sensationalist and often inaccurate news stories broke about Kim's purge of his once-powerful uncle, as described in the chapter's introduction. More interestingly, however, Jang's purge also provides a clear illustration of the hypothesis at work: how the independent variables of non-elite threat and the elite's position shape whether the dictator purges a disloyal elite. The benefit of examining the purge of arguably the most prominent elite in North Korean history outside of blood relatives of the Kim family is an added bonus.

Jang had been Kim Jong Il's number two for many years and remained an extremely prominent figure when Kim Jong Un came to power in December 2011. However, Jang was a problem for Kim Jong Un, not just due to his power, but because he exhibited several signs of disloyalty. For example, Jang tried to compel the North Korean state to undertake Chinese style economic reforms against Kim's wishes and, aside from Kim, Jang was unparalleled among North Korean elites in the faction he commanded among KWP officials.⁵⁰ In fact, North Korean leadership analyst Ken Gause writes that according to North Korean defectors, Kim Jong Il made a point before his death of discussing with his sister and Jang's wife, Kim Kyong Hui, that Jang's continued presence "would not only undermine the Supreme Leader's position, but could also make the Kim family irrelevant within the wider leadership." To further quote Gause, "from the onset of the

⁵⁰Author interviews with experts on North Korean elite politics. See also: Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), pp. 43-58 and 194-195; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: The Dramatic Fall of Jang Song Thaek," *38 North*, December 9, 2013, <https://www.38north.org/2013/12/amansourov120913/>.

Kim Jong-un era, Jang Song-taek's [sic] fate was not a matter of if, but a matter of when."⁵¹ The key question is therefore: Given the clear signals of disloyalty exhibited by Jang in 2012 and 2013, why did Kim wait until December 2013 to purge Jang?

The answer lies in Jang's position and how it related to external threat, which was high until the end of 2013. At the start of his reign, Kim faced constraining Chinese influence. When policymakers speak of external threat to North Korea, they typically refer to the US. However, China posed a significant external threat in 2012 and most of 2013 due to its capacity to interfere in North Korean internal politics. China's main tool to interfere was financial, inhibiting Kim's ability to distribute private goods to consolidate power. In 2012, approximately \$1.7 billion of Kim family funds was frozen in Chinese banks in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Macau, and Shanghai. Withholding these funds inhibited Kim from developing his own patronage systems.⁵² Chinese investment in North Korea was also withheld, utilized as leverage for Chinese demands over the North Korean nuclear program.⁵³ Jang was crucial to managing North Korea's relationship with China.⁵⁴ Thus, at the start of his reign, Kim was inhibited from purging Jang since he faced a heightened external threat from Chinese interference, and Jang held a relevant position to help Kim deal with it.

However, by the end of 2013, several events had altered this dynamic. First, Jang visited China in August 2012 in part for an unsuccessful attempt to persuade China to un-

⁵¹Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 54. Readers may be surprised that Kim Jong Il would discuss this with Jang's wife, Kim Kyong Hui, even if she was his sister, but it was widely known that both Jang and Kim Kyong Hui had extra-marital affairs and that by the 2000s their relationship was difficult to say the least. See, for example, Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 57.

⁵²Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 55.

⁵³Ra Jong-yil, *Inside North Korea's Theocracy: The Rise and Sudden Fall of Jang Song-Thaek* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), p. 154.

⁵⁴Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 42.

freeze the Kim family funds.⁵⁵ Then, during 2013, Kim took various actions to consolidate his position by other means. This included cracking down on North Koreans defecting to China, conducting his first (and North Korea's third) nuclear weapons test, and according to Bank of Korea estimates, overseeing improved economic growth.⁵⁶ Thus, while Jang behaved disloyally in 2012 and 2013, by the end of 2013 Kim had begun to gain more financial leverage to help consolidate his position as Supreme Leader. Kim was therefore able to take steps to further reduce constraining external interference, including the purge of the disloyal Jang. Indeed, a senior Chinese official told former Deputy Head of South Korean intelligence Ra Jong-gil that China viewed Jang's execution as "an attempt to eliminate China's influence over North Korea."⁵⁷ Overall, while Jang still held positions relevant to dealing with Chinese interference, the actual threat of Chinese interference receded as Kim had established greater economic independence. Thus, by the end of 2013 both of these conditions were no longer present. The purge of Jang was therefore more likely, which in December 2013 is exactly what happened.

4.4 Conclusion

Overall, these findings suggest that dictators do not necessarily purge disloyal elites at the first sign of disloyalty. Instead, they wait for an opportune moment. Dictators are more likely to purge a disloyal elite when they have diminished need for that particular elite's services to stay in power in the face of popular or external threats. Conversely, dictators are less likely to purge a disloyal elite when they face a heightened popular or

⁵⁵Ken E. Gause, *North Korean House of Cards: Leadership Dynamics Under Kim Jong-un* (Washington D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2015), p. 55.

⁵⁶Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵⁷Ra Jong-yil, *Inside North Korea's Theocracy: The Rise and Sudden Fall of Jang Song-Thaek* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), p. 157.

external threat and the elite holds a position relevant to helping the dictator alleviate the heightened threat.

The type of analysis employed here, however—quantitative analysis—has limitations. It excels at demonstrating external validity, in this case showing that the findings are not specific to the case of just one elite, but it does not provide the same scrutiny of internal validity or causal mechanisms. Popular and external threats can come in many different forms. External threats, for example, can derive from aggressive international media attention on human rights abuses, foreign aid being withheld, sanctions, increased military spending by an adversary, or even foreign invasion. Using single indicators for popular and external threats does not facilitate a deep examination of the nature of those threats. Qualitative methods are much more suitable to examine the internal validity of key variables. The following chapter addresses this task, as well as moving beyond correlations and examining in detail the within-regime individual-level causal mechanisms of elite purges described in Chapter Two.

Chapter 5

Examining the Individual-Level Argument: Elite Purges in South Korea

The previous chapter showed, using quantitative data from Kim Jong Un's North Korea, the conditions under which a dictator purges some disloyal elites but retains others. *Ceteris paribus*, a dictator is more likely to purge a disloyal elite than retain them, but the probability of a dictator retaining a disloyal elite increases when two conditions both occur: 1) there is a heightened threat from the people or a foreign state, and 2) the elite holds a position relevant to helping the dictator alleviate that threat. This chapter tests further whether there is support for this argument with qualitative data from South Korea between 1961 and 1963 under Park Chung-hee. The argument in Chapter Two about why a dictator purges some disloyal elites but retains others described a causal mechanism. This chapter uses theory-testing process-tracing to examine whether all the consecutive and logical steps of the causal mechanism occur in specific cases of disloyal elites.¹ Put differently, this chapter tests whether the story described in Chapter Two, about why a dictator either purges or retains a disloyal elite, occurs in the real world.

This chapter also undertakes a second task. Chapter Two provided an argument to explain under what conditions dictators are more likely to purge a loyal elite. Due to

¹Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 11.

paucity of data, I do not test this expectation quantitatively. However, in this chapter I test for evidence of this argument's causal mechanism using theory-testing process-tracing with qualitative data on elite purges in Park Chung-hee's South Korea.

The chapter proceeds as follows: I first provide historical background information on Park Chung-hee and explain the logic behind the selections of specific cases of elite purges. I then test whether the theory's causal mechanisms function as hypothesized using process-tracing on individual cases of disloyal elites (Chang Do-yong and Kim Tong-ha) and a loyal elite (Kim Chong-p'il). The chapter's final section concludes by summarizing how the findings generally support the causal mechanisms but suggest one amendment about what behaviors signal disloyalty in the eyes of a dictator.

5.1 Historical Background and Case Selection

On May 16, 1961, Major General Park Chung-hee led a military coup that overthrew the South Korean government. Coup forces begun marching across the Han River in Seoul at around 3am. At 5am, announcements were made on the radio informing the people of the coup.² Following this swift seizure of power, Park Chung-hee ruled South Korea as an autocrat (1961-1963), a democrat (1963-1971), and then again as an autocrat (1971-1979) for the next eighteen years. His rule was eventually brought to an end when he was assassinated by the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Kim Jae-gyu, in 1979.

In this Chapter, I trace mechanisms of purges of individual elites during Park Chung-hee's (hereafter, Park) first two years of autocratic rule. In order to evaluate whether the evidence shows the causal mechanisms function as theorized, it is necessary to under-

²From COMUSK/CGEUSA to JCS WASHDC, May 17, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

stand the context that enables us to assess observations from this period as evidence.³ In this section, I first provide overviews of Park and the events that led to the coup, due to their importance to interpreting subsequent events, before discussing case selection.

5.1.1 Park Chung-hee and the May 16 Military Coup d'état

Park was born on September 30, 1917 to a poor family in North Kyongsang province in South Korea. He graduated from Daegu Normal School and spent time in the 1940s in the Manchurian and Japanese military academies, before entering the Korean Military Academy (KMA),⁴ graduating in the Second Class in December 1946.⁵

However, tragedy struck the Park family in 1946 when Park's older brother, Park Sang-hui, was executed by police on October 4, 1946 after participating in communist riots in Daegu.⁶ Although Park later undertook advanced military training in Oklahoma in 1954,⁷ according to the historian Kim Hyung-A, Park "developed an intense resentment toward rightist Korean police and American military officers in Korea, both of whom he believed to have caused his brother's death."⁸

³Marcus Kreuzer, "The Structure of Description: Evaluating Descriptive Inferences and Conceptualizations," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2019), pp. 122-139; Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (The University of Michigan Press, 2013), Chapter 5, esp. p. 73.

⁴When Park attended, the Korean Military Academy was known as the Korean Constabulary Officers' Training School.

⁵Biographic Information, General Chung Hee Park, Chairman, Supreme Council for National Reconstruction of the Republic of Korea, May 17, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Magruder memo for Chairman of the JCS Washington, May 17, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

⁷Biographic Information, General Chung Hee Park, Chairman, Supreme Council for National Reconstruction of the Republic of Korea, May 17, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

⁸Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 23.

It is unclear whether it began just before or in the months following his brother's death, but Park was a card-carrying member of the South Korean Workers' (Communist) Party from the end of 1946 until 1948.⁹ Park was no ordinary member either; he used his promotion to cadet commander in the KMA to enlist others, building a network of communists within the KMA.¹⁰ General Il Kwon-chung, who later served as Park's Foreign Minister, even *claimed* that Park temporarily went to North Korea in 1947 due to his frustration with the United States Military Government in Korea.¹¹

Park's burgeoning career suffered a severe setback when he was arrested; accounts differ over whether it was November 1948 or February 1949. Park was charged with mutiny over his role in the Yosu-Sunch'on Military Revolt, when left-leaning soldiers took up arms against the American-installed Syngman Rhee government over their suppression of a previous revolt on Jeju Island. Unlike most of his fellow arrestees, Park escaped a death sentence and received a lengthy prison sentence—again, accounts diverge over whether it was ten years or life—due to his cooperation with investigators, which led to around three hundred South Korean Communists being identified and arrested.¹² Park's seniors also respected his military acumen and he was fortunate that contemporaneously American advisers were warning President Rhee that too much 'purification' of the South Korean Army would destroy its fighting capabilities.¹³ These factors, combined with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, enabled Park to revive his career. On June 30, 1950,

⁹Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 37; Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 22.

¹⁰Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 23.

¹¹Leonard L. Bacon to Mr. McConaugh, May 24, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

¹²Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 37; Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 23; Magruder Memo for Chairman of the JCS Washington, May 17, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

¹³Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 25.

Park was reinstated under National Special Order No. 1 as head of the first section of the Army Intelligence Bureau. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel later in 1950, Colonel in 1951, Brigadier General in 1954, and Major General in 1958.¹⁴

Some of the most commonly cited factors behind the May 16 coup include dissatisfaction within the military due to heavy casualties in the Korean War and a post-war lack of promotions. Numerous military officers were also unhappy with developments in South Korean society, including their perception of widespread corruption, economic mismanagement, and the rigging of the March 1960 general election by the governing Liberal Party. Park and other military figures therefore started planning a coup for 1960. However, the coup plotters were forced to postpone their plans due to a student-led revolution in April 1960 that overthrew the Rhee government.¹⁵

Park and his fellow coup plotters perceived little change, however, in the new government led by Chang Myon. The political class was still viewed as corrupt, and there was intense resentment towards the government over its failed economic reforms.¹⁶ The American Embassy in Seoul describes a scene of chaos, with “frequent cabinet reshuffling of personnel, hoodlums on the streets, widespread corruption, and continuing demonstrations.”¹⁷

Planning for a military coup therefore resumed. There were about 250 military personnel involved in coup planning, ranking from two Major Generals—Park and Kim Tong-

¹⁴Yong-sup Han, “The May Sixteenth Military Coup,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 37; Hyung-A Kim, *Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 26; Magruder memo for Chairman of the JCS Washington, May 17, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

¹⁵Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Chairman Park’s Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

¹⁶Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Chairman Park’s Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

¹⁷Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

ha—down to second lieutenants. Many of the younger and junior officers were from the Eighth Class of the KMA, ties that would become important during the infighting in the early years of Park’s regime.¹⁸ One member of this class was Kim Chong-p’il, who was related to Park by virtue of being married to his niece. The coup plotters hoped to capitalize on the anniversary of the April 1960 student protests. But when the date passed with little fanfare, they put their plans into action the following month. On May 16, 1961, the plotters’ goal was realized when they swiftly overthrew Chang Myon’s government.

5.1.2 Case Selection

Park’s first two years were characterized by tumultuous elite politics. The historian Yang Sung-chul estimates that there were ten alleged cases of counter-conspiracy, eight top-level junta members were imprisoned, and the main ruling body underwent fifteen minor and major reshuffles.¹⁹ To select cases of elite purges to trace, however, we first need to identify elites in South Korea during this period. I analyze elite purges in South Korea from May 1961, as that was when the Park-led coup seized power, until March 1963, when Park announced that an election would be held. As discussed in Chapter Two, the causal process of elite purges may occur differently in regimes where leaders face the threat of losing power via elections.

During this period, I identify elites as the members of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR) and the Democratic Republican Party (DRP) Initiation Committee. Immediately following the coup, the Extraordinary Measures Law established the SCNR as “the supreme ruling organ of the Republic of Korea.”²⁰ The SCNR was “the supreme political authority replacing the three branches of government...[it was] com-

¹⁸Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

¹⁹Sung-chul Yang, *Revolution and Change: A Comparative Study of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Military Coup d’état of 1961 in Korea* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015), p.99.

²⁰U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1737, June 6, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

posed of the thirty highest-ranking military personnel, including the chiefs of all the branches of the armed forces.”²¹ The SCNR took precedence over other bodies, including the Cabinet; it had legislative authority, oversaw the budget, managed national administrative matters, and controlled appointments and dismissals including for the cabinet, supreme court, governor positions, and ambassadorships.²² Even the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Brigadier General Kim Pyong-sam, said that the SCNR was the “center of government power” and that cabinet simply acted as “an administrative device to carry out SCNR policies.”²³ Table 5.1 shows members of the SCNR, the years they became a member, and in some cases, when they departed. (Elites in bold and italics identify the cases chosen for process-tracing.)

From January 1963, I also identify members of the DRP Initiation Committee as elites. The DRP was the political party set up by individuals associated with the junta to try and maintain power when elections were held in October 1963. Due to Kim Chong-p’il’s work behind the scenes throughout 1962, when the DRP emerged in 1963 it already wielded significant influence within the government and even usurped some power from the SCNR.²⁴ The SCNR was not neutered, but the DRP was a significant and separate locus of power within the regime. Table 5.2 displays members of the DRP Initiation Committee. (Again, elites in bold and italics identify the cases chosen for process-tracing.)

²¹Hyung-A Kim, “State Building: The Military Junta’s Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 88.

²²Hyung-A Kim, “State Building: The Military Junta’s Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 88; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1747, June 7, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

²³U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1718, June 1, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram number unidentifiable, June 9, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

²⁴U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-593, February 8, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

Table 5.1: Members of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction in South Korea, May 1961-July 1963

	Departed in 1961		Departed in 1962		Departed in 1963, pre-July 20		Member as of July 20, 1963	
Appointed in 1961	Park Gi-seok	Han Ung-jin			Kim Yong-sun	Kim Yun-geun		
	Jang Gyeon-sun	Kim Je-min	Park Im-hang	Yu Won-sik	Kang Sang-uk	Park Won-bin	Park Jeong-hee	Kim Jun-ui
	Jeong Rae-hyeok	Park Chi-ok	Kim Seong-eun	Kim Sim	<i>Kim Tong-ha</i>	O Chi-seong	Lee Ju-il	Park Tae-sun
	Han Sin	Song Chang-ho	Son Chang-kyu	Lee Seong-ho	Kim Jae-jun	Jeong Se-eung	Kil Jae-ho	Ok Jang-ho
	Mun Jae-jun	<i>Chang Do-yong</i>			O Jeong-geun	Yu Pyeong-hyeon	Kim Jong-o	Hong Jong-chil
	Choe Ju-jeong	Che Myong-sin			Lee Seok-jae	Kim Hyeong-uk		
				Jo Shi-hyeong	Yu Yang-sh			
Appointed in 1962							Kim Du-chan	Jang Seong-hwan
							Lee Maeng-ki	
Appointed in 1963							Kang Ki-cheon	Jang Kyeong-sun
							Kim Yeong-sun	Min Ki-sik
							Park Won-seok	Park Yeong-seok
							Kim Hui-teok	Park Hyeon-sik
							Park Du-seon	Jang Ji-su
							Lee Won-yeop	

Notes: 'Departed' does not indicate whether the elite left voluntarily or was purged.

Data come from Han'guk kunsu hyöngmyongsa, I [한국군사혁명사, *A History of the Korean Military Revolution, Vol. 1*] (Seoul: Kukka haegön ch'oegohoeui Han'guk kunsu hyöngmyongsa p'yönch'anwiwönhoe, 1963), pp. 331-332.

To test the theory of when dictators retain or purge disloyal elites, I examine the cases of Chang Do-yong and Kim Tong-ha. Off all the elites listed Tables 5.1 and 5.2, why examine these cases? As discussed in Chapter Two, cases for theory-testing process-tracing should include expected values of the independent and dependent variables so that we can test “for the hypothesized causal mechanism to be present.”²⁵ Thus, for the argument about disloyal elites, I require elites that exhibited at least one of the characteristics of disloyalty described in Chapter Two. As the subsequent analysis demonstrates, both Chang Do-yong and Kim Tong-ha behaved disloyally. These cases also exhibit variation in the level of non-elite threats to Park, which is important because the theory's causal mechanism specifies expectations about the likelihood of a purge of a disloyal elite under low and high non-elite threats. A further advantage of examining these cases is their high-profile nature, meaning there is more information available.

To test the theory of loyal elites, I examine the case of Kim Chong-p'il. For the same case selection logic described above, I require a case where the elite was loyal. As far as

²⁵Derek Beach, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (The University of Michigan Press, 2013), Chapter 5, esp. p. 147.

Table 5.2: Members of the Democratic Republican Party Initiation Committee, January 1963

Chairman: <i>Kim Chong-p'il</i>		
Subcommittee on Operation	Subcommittee on Liaison	Subcommittee on Policy Research
<i>Chairman</i> Kim Song-jin	<i>Chairman</i> Chong Ku-yong	<i>Chairman</i> Ch'oe Kyu-nam
<i>Secretary</i> Kim Tong-hwan	<i>Secretary</i> Ho Sop	<i>Secretary</i> Yi Ho-pom
<i>Members</i> Yun Chu-yong Kim Chong-yol Pak Hyon-suk Cho Ung-ch'on So Kap-ho Hyon Chong-chu Yi Mary Nam Sang-ok Kim Yong-t'aek Kang Song-won So In-sok So Yu-yong Ko Myong-sik Yi Sang-yong Ch'oe Se-hwan Chang Hu-yong Yi Kap-song Kim Tong-t'aek Cho Nam-ch'ol O Hak-chin Chong-Man-sun Chong-Chi-kap Kim Yong-pok Chong Chi-won	<i>Members</i> Kim Chong-p'il Kim Chae-sun Kim Won-chon So T'ae-won Yi Won-sun Yi Yong-nam Yi Hae-nan Yi Chong-kuk Ko Chae-p'il Pak Chun Kim U-kyong Yi Song-su Pak T'ae-ik Sin Ki-sok Kim Pyong-sop Pak Chun-son Sin Yun-ch'ang Cho Ch'ang-tae Chang Tong-un So Sang-in Cho Chu-yong Song In-ki Son Ch'ang-kyu Chang So-ik O Won-son Yi Tong-yong O Ch'un-mok Kim Tong-ch'ae	<i>Members</i> Yun Il-son Yun Ch'i-yong Chon Ye-yong Pak Tong-yun Yi Tong-chun Kang Sang-un Yu Chin-san Kim Ch'ang-kun Yi Chong-kun Ch'oe Yong-kwan Kim Tong-ha Kim Chae-ch'un Yi Sok-che Kang Sang-uk O Chong-kun Kim Ch'i-yol Ch'oe Yong-tu Son Hui-sik Chong Pyong-t'ae

Notes: Data come from U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-530, January 24, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960- 63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

I am aware, historians have not previously classified Kim Chong-pil's removal in 1963 as a purge but I find comprehensive evidence consistent with the definition of a purge in

Chapter One, that his removal from the regime's ruling coalition occurred forcibly against his wishes.

5.2 Purges of Disloyal Elites

5.2.1 Chang Do-yong

In May 1961, at the time of the coup, Chang Do-yong (장도영; hereafter, Chang) was the Chief of Staff for the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA). In the early days of the new military regime, Chang also took on the positions of Head of the Cabinet, Minister of Defense, and Chairman of the SCNR. These facts could suggest that Chang was the leader of the new government, but he was Chairman of the SCNR in name only, with Park as the real power behind the junta.

Between May 16, 1961 and Chang's arrest on July 3, 1961, Chang behaved disloyally towards Park, and also went from being indispensable to helping Park alleviate external threats, to becoming disposable. Thus, Park purged Chang less than two months after the regime took power.²⁶ In this section, I use theory-testing process-tracing to examine Chang's purge and find strong support for the theorized causal mechanism of why dictators sometimes retain, and sometimes purge disloyal elites.

Chang's Disloyalty to Park

The first part of the mechanism suggests that an elite threatens a dictator's position by behaving disloyally. There is a large body of evidence that Chang behaved disloyally towards Park at a pivotal moment during Park's seizure of power; thus, we can reasonably infer that Park would subsequently be suspicious of Chang's continued loyalty.

²⁶Sung-chul Yang, *Revolution and Change: A Comparative Study of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Military Coup d'état of 1961 in Korea* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015), pp. 89 and 92.

Prior to the coup, Park and Chang had a positive relationship. Following Park's arrest due to his communist associations in the late 1940s, it was Chang who advocated for Park's reinstatement. In the midst of the rapid North Korean onslaught in 1950 at the start of the Korean War, Chang had found Park leading men to gather important charts and maps on the South side of the Han River in Seoul after they had escaped the North Korean forces on the North side of the Han. Chang subsequently successfully lobbied his military superiors to have Park's rank of major reinstated.²⁷

However, this all changed on the day of the coup. As noted, Chang was the ROKA Chief of Staff when Park launched the coup on May 16, 1961. Rather than supporting Park, Chang took several actions to try and defeat the coup on May 16: he ordered around 100 troops to the Han River Bridge to block the advancing coup forces; he instructed military police to round up coup plotters in the Sixth District Army; and he asked General Carter Magruder, as Commander-in-Chief UN Command, for a commitment of US forces to put down the coup.²⁸ The latter was denied to Chang but his efforts were not entirely unsuccessful. Thanks to Chang's actions, the 30th and 33rd Reserve Divisions in Seoul and the Airborne Division in Gimpo (김포) were unable to act as planned in the coup. In sum, Chang's actions on May 16 provide strong evidence in support of the first part of the mechanism: that Park would have felt his power was threatened by Chang due to the latter's disloyal actions.

Readers may wonder why Park then appointed Chang as Chairman of the SCNR. The answer—as I describe below—is closely related to why Park ended up purging him. Park required a prominent figure with a respectable public image who could help him

²⁷Chong-sik Lee, *Park Chung-hee: From Poverty to Power* (Seoul: Kyung Hee University Press, 2013), p. 269.

²⁸Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1524, May 15, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives. See also Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 50; Sung-chul Yang, *Revolution and Change: A Comparative Study of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Military Coup d'état of 1961 in Korea* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015), pp. 85-86.

circumvent the external threat of American interference in South Korean politics. On May 16, 1961, Chang's reputation as a moderate and his position as ROKA Chief of Staff meant he was ideally placed to fulfill this role.

Park and Non-Elite Threats

The second and third parts of the mechanism relate to a dictator facing high non-elite threats and identifying their source. This is strong evidence that Park faced a significant non-elite threat and that he successfully identified the threat's source.

Non-elite threats can stem from the people or foreign adversaries. The first of these was not a concern for Park. Student-led protests had successfully overthrown the Syngman Rhee regime only a year earlier in April 1960, but the unpopularity of the subsequent Chang Myon regime meant that people greeted the May 16 coup with a mixture of welcome and apathy. In the early days following the coup this was true of Seoul and other major urban centers.²⁹ Educated elements of urban society began to express some misgivings by June but there is no suggestion that the regime was concerned about the possibility of any notable popular unrest. Further, rural areas of the country exhibited no dissatisfaction with the coup.³⁰ In fact, citizens in various northern provinces expressed satisfaction with "the imposition of austerity measures, the arrest of grain holders, the continuance and development of the National Construction Service, and the distribution of free rice to the needy."³¹ In short, Park did not face any notable non-elite threat from the people.

²⁹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1557, May 17, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram UK 70316CC, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1615, May 21, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³⁰U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1763, June 9, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³¹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, May 31, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

There is, however, significant evidence of a high external threat in the first two months immediately following the coup. When one traditionally thinks of foreign threats to South Korea, North Korea is often identified. But to quote Kim Hyung-A, it “was especially important to reassure the US, which financed over 50 percent of Korea’s national budget and 72.4 percent of the defense budget.”³² South Korea’s dependence on the US meant that a priority for Park was ensuring American cooperation with, or at least tolerance of, his intervention into Korea’s civilian politics.

Evidence that the US might not tolerate or cooperate with the coup plotters came in two forms. First, on May 16, there were clear signals that the US would intervene to stop the coup. On the morning of the coup, General Magruder “issued a statement calling on all military personnel under his command to support the Government of the Republic of Korea headed by Prime Minister Chang Myon and restore order in the Korean armed forces.” A parallel statement was made by Marshall Green, who was then chargé d’affaires at the American Embassy in Seoul.³³ Magruder also lobbied then-President Yun Po-son to resist the coup by mobilizing troops.³⁴ Magruder wrote that his and Green’s statements were intended to “undermine the uprising by pressing the responsible commanders, from whose commands came the insurgent troops now in Seoul, to endeavor to get their troops to return to their duty.”³⁵ Magruder urged the State Department to give him permission to use military force to put down the coup, telegraphing that he believed General Lee Han Lim, who led the First Republic of Korea Army, would accept orders to use military action to suppress the coup and that chances of success were greater if they

³²Hyung-A Kim, *Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 69-70.

³³Statement to White House, Memorandum for the President, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives. See also U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, UK 70316CC, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³⁴Taehyun Kim, and Chang Jae Baik, “Taming and Tamed by the United States,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 63.

³⁵U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, UK 70316CC, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

proceeded immediately.³⁶ However, Magruder never received the green light for military action.

Once the immediate threat of American intervention subsided, Park still had good reason to believe the US would be concerned about a coup and regime led by him. America was in the midst of a global battle against communism. Due to his prior associations with the South Korean Workers' Party, the US was extremely concerned about Park in the early days of the regime. This is described in reports from the American Embassy in Seoul and a National Intelligence Estimate that highlighted Park's former communist ties and articulated concerns about his political leanings and true intentions.³⁷ For example, after having over two weeks to assess the coup and Park, a US Special National Intelligence Estimate wrote that, "we cannot rule out the possibility that he is a long-term Communist agent, or that he might redefect."³⁸ General Magruder also wrote to the State Department that, in his mission to protect Korea from internal subversion by communism, "the leader [Park] is a former communist and any uprising against the duly elected government may react to the advantage of the communists."³⁹ Put differently, Magruder made clear that even if the US believed Park was not a communist, the situation created by Park could be concerning for America if it gave a strategic advantage to the communists in North Korea.

Consistent with the third part of the mechanism, there is clear evidence that Park was aware of how this external threat could endanger his power. Immediately after over-

³⁶U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, UK 70316CC, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³⁷In addition to below citations in this paragraph, also see: Department of State to U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea, Telegram 1344, May 20, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; Office Memorandum for the President from Director of Central Intelligence, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1610, May 20, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³⁸Special National Intelligence Estimate, Number 42-2-61, May 31, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

³⁹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, UK 70316CC, May 18, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

throwing the government, the coup ringleaders announced six goals, the first of which emphasized the new regime's commitment to anti-communism.⁴⁰ The Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C. also delivered a note to the US National Security Adviser at the White House, McGeorge Bundy, highlighting this goal.⁴¹

Even more compelling is that Park raised the issue with Marshall Green. In a meeting on June 9, 1961, Green described Park as initially reticent but then speaking "at some length on his concern over rumors deriving from his past record on communism and said that he thought the American side appeared to "have some misunderstanding regarding Pak Chong-hui [sic]."" Even when Green tried to assure Park that he did not have these concerns, Park persisted that ""certain unsavory Americans" had this opinion; they had spread rumors, distorted the situation and had made it more difficult for him to achieve the objectives of the revolution."⁴² The American Embassy in Seoul shared this assessment that Park's priority was to win American support, writing to the State Department that the military junta believed America would provide "full support, and indeed increased economic aid, as long as [the] junta demonstrates it is clearly anti-communist."⁴³ In sum, in the regime's early days Park faced a heightened external threat from the US, of intervention and then abandonment, and successfully identified his communist history as the source of the threat.

Chang's Purge

Circumstances surrounding Chang's purge support the latter parts of the proposed mechanism. Park refrained from purging Chang while he believed there was a high external

⁴⁰U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1526, May 15, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁴¹State to White House, Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy, May 19, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁴²U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1764, June 9, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁴³U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1798, June 13, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

threat as Chang's reputation as a moderate in the role of Chairman of the SCNR helped Park alleviate the external threat from the Americans. Then, once Park was aware that the external threat had receded, he no longer needed Chang as Chairman so was able to purge him.

Chang was helpful to Park specifically because, as the inaugural Chairman of the SCNR, his image as a moderate tempered American concerns about Park, which Park correctly believed stemmed largely from his prior communist affiliations. As Army Chief of Staff at the time of the coup, Chang was already known by the Americans and they knew he had no prior communist associations. When Park seized power, Chang was coerced into being presented as the public face of the coup and new regime for several reasons.⁴⁴ First, Park only had the backing of around 3,300 troops when he launched the coup. It was vital that the impression was given that ROKA was overwhelmingly behind the coup. Having Chang as the Army Chief of Staff accept the title of Commander of the Coup Forces was therefore imperative to Park from a strategic military viewpoint.⁴⁵

Second, and more pertinently, Park used Chang to alleviate American concerns that he held communist or otherwise radical political leanings and would seek to enforce communism on South Korea, or at the very least give a strategic advantage to the North Koreans. American officials regularly made reference to Chang's moderating influence and, although they held doubts about his personal characteristics, they valued his presence as Chairman of the SCNR for this reason.⁴⁶

There was nothing special about Chang's skills or competencies that enabled him to fulfil this role of deflecting American concern about Park. Other prominent anti-communists,

⁴⁴Sung-chul Yang, *Revolution and Change: A Comparative Study of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Military Coup d'état of 1961 in Korea* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015), p.99.

⁴⁵Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

⁴⁶U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, June 8, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1926, June 30, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

such as General Lee Han Lim for example, could have fulfilled this role.⁴⁷ Unlike General Lee, however, Chang was not purged immediately following the coup because of his role as ROKA Chief of Staff.⁴⁸ Chang was the best-placed known moderate and anti-communist to take on the role of Chairman of the SCNR. Although Park was known by the Americans to be the coup's real leader,⁴⁹ Chang's continued prominence gave the impression of a moderating influence existing over the coup plotters.

The manner of Chang's purge provides stronger evidence that Park only refrained from purging Chang due to the latter holding a position that helped Park minimize threat from the Americans. On July 2, Marshall Green and Samuel Berger, the new American Ambassador to Korea, met with Park and told him that America was "prepared [to] work with [the] military government on [a] friendly and cooperative basis, [and] that economic and military assistance would continue."⁵⁰ Then, only a day after the Americans had inferred that they no longer held any doubts about him, Park placed Chang under detention.⁵¹ Park became Chairman of the SCNR and was then the *de facto* and *de jure* head of

⁴⁷Lee Han Lim did engage in countercoup efforts, but this need not have disqualified him from contention for Chair of the SCNR as Chang behaved similarly on May 16, 1961; see Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.

⁴⁸Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.

⁴⁹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1526, May 16, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵⁰U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1925, July 2, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵¹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 16, July 3, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; see also Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89. Chang officially resigned, attesting that he was too 'incompetent' to fulfil the role of Chairman of the SCNR (U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 16, July 3, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 17, July 3, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives).

the revolution.⁵² Park subsequently embarked on a charm offensive towards the Americans, telling them that he would consider American interests in policy decisions, and he would get to know the Americans in Seoul although not, he added, to the point of playing golf with them.⁵³

In sum, process-tracing of Chang's purge shows strong support for the theory's causal mechanism of how dictators purge or refrain from purging disloyal elites. Park did not purge the disloyal Chang when he viewed the external threat from the Americans as potentially fatal to his position as Chang could help Park mitigate that threat. Then, once the threat from the Americans had diminished, Chang's position of Chair of the SCNR was no longer a pertinent factor. As Han Yong-sup writes, "[w]ith the United States moving to build close ties with him [Park], he knew he could purge Chang To-yong [sic] without risking his leadership."⁵⁴

5.2.2 Kim Tong-ha

Kim Tong-ha (김동하) was born in Hamgyong (함경) province in what-is-now North Korea in April 1919. He was a classmate of Park's in the Second Class of the KMA and rose to command the First Marine Division in the ROKA.⁵⁵ However, Kim Tong-ha left the military in the 1960s after being accused of corruption and financial malpractices, his guilt in which is difficult to determine as he engaged in a partially successful counter-suit. In

⁵²U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 18, July 3, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵³U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 8, July 3, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 28, July 5, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 68, July 12, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵⁴Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 54.

⁵⁵Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 226, December 7, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

retirement, he became one of the chief coup plotters. Kim Tong-ha was a member of the SCNR from May 1961 and was perceived as a leader of a faction of prominent military figures who all came from Hamgyong (in North Korea).⁵⁶ He held various roles in the new regime, chairing the SCNR Finance and Economy Committee in 1961,⁵⁷ switching to Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee Chairman in 1962,⁵⁸ and was also a member of the DRP Initiation Committee in January 1963.⁵⁹

Applying process-tracing to Kim Tong-ha's purge, I find evidence consistent with the mechanism of when a dictator chooses to purge rather than retain a disloyal elite. Kim Tong-ha exhibited various signals of disloyalty towards Park: he led the Hamgyong faction from May 1961 and disagreed with the regime publicly in January 1963. By 1963, there was no evidence of heightened non-elite threats—the threat from the US had dissipated before 1963—and Park purged Kim Tong-ha by arresting him in March 1963. Overall, the mechanism of how dictators purge disloyal elites functions as hypothesized, although the evidence also suggests it may be necessary to reconsider what types of disloyalty concern dictators.

Kim Tong-ha's Disloyalty to Park

There is strong support for the first part of the mechanism, as Kim Tong-ha exhibited several signals of disloyalty towards Park. There is clear *ex-ante* evidence that two of these signals occurred prior to his purge. First, Kim Tong-ha led the notable Hamgyong faction within the SCNR. This was a group of Marine Corps generals in the SCNR, named as

⁵⁶U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 226, December 7, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵⁷U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 426, September 2, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵⁸U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 30, July 10, 1962, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁵⁹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-530, January 24, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

such because they all heralded from Hamgyong province in North Korea.⁶⁰ Kim Tong-ha was not the only leader of the faction; others, notably Park Im-hang, were also considered prominent figures.⁶¹ The Hamgyong faction was not as powerful as the younger group of colonels from the Eighth Class of the KMA, but it was still a significant force within Korean military politics.⁶²

Kim Tong-ha also behaved disloyally by publicly disagreeing over how the DRP was being run and trying to resign from it in January 1963.⁶³ This constitutes disagreement with Park since the DRP was set up by Kim Chong-p'il who—as the next section shows—was Park's closest ally. The precise source of Kim Tong-ha's frustrations is disputed by him and Park, but both acknowledge that Kim Tong-ha voiced public complaints about the DRP's management. According to Kim Tong-ha, he attempted to publicly resign from the DRP through the press because it was not a viable vehicle “to protect liberal democracy.”⁶⁴ Note that at this point Kim Tong-ha remained a member of the ruling coalition since his resignation was not accepted and Kim Tong-ha indicated that he might reverse his decision. Thus, when Kim Tong-ha was later purged via his arrest he was still an elite within the regime.⁶⁵ Park's version of events was that Kim Tong-ha and Kim Chong-p'il

⁶⁰Taehyun Kim, and Chang Jae Baik, “Taming and Tamed by the United States,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 70.

⁶¹See, for example: Department of State to U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea, Telegram 1344, May 20, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶²On the power of the faction revolving around the Eighth Class of the KMA, see: Background Paper on the Korean Military Government, May 16-August 15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Chairman Park's Visit Washington, November 14-15, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; Hyung-A Kim, “State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.

⁶³Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum, 25 January, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives. Kim Hyung-A writes that Kim Tong-ha refused to become a member of the DRP but this is inaccurate; Kim Tong-ha first became a member of the DRP Initiation Committee and then resigned (Hyung-A Kim, “State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms,” in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 109).

⁶⁴U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 507, January 21, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶⁵Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 215; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-553, January 30, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-

had personal disagreements and that when Kim Tong-ha joined the DRP Initiation Committee he started making unreasonable demands over its personnel. The American Embassy did not believe Park's claims and wrote to the State Department that Kim Tong-ha had resigned over Kim Chong-p'il's centralized control of the DRP.⁶⁶ In any event, Kim Tong-ha exhibited disloyalty to Park prior to his arrest via his public complaints about the DRP.

There were also suggestions by the regime that Kim Tong-ha plotted a coup against Park. However, the American Embassy at the time and subsequent historians have given these allegations short-shrift, depicting them as Park's attempt to publicly justify Kim Tong-ha's purge.⁶⁷

The Absence of Non-Elite Threats

The second part of the causal pathway of how disloyal elites are purged is that there should be an absence of non-elite threats. Put differently, there should be not be any significant threat to Park of being unseated by a foreign state or a popular protest. In addition to finding no evidence to contradict this part of the mechanism, there is also some evidence to support the claim that neither non-elite threat was heightened.

Taking each threat in turn, there is evidence that from January to March 1963, between when Kim Tong-ha spoke out against the DRP but before he was arrested, that foreign threats were not a concern. Importantly, recall from the purge of Chang Do-yong that any threat based on pressure from America had subsided in July 1961. Elsewhere and con-

63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-545, January 31, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶⁶U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, January 23, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶⁷For an example of the coup allegations, see: U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 630, March 12, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives. For an example of the American Embassy dismissing the allegations, see: U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-725, March 12, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

temporarily, the most proximate evidence of the level of external threats comes from March 1962 when the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research assessed that China would not support another North Korean invasion of South Korea given their concern about the US reaction and an anticipated lack of assistance from the Soviet Union. The State Department further assessed that North Korea was deterred from unilateral action by the high American military presence in South Korea.⁶⁸ The American military commitment to South Korea continued in 1963 so there is no reason to believe that American assessments of the lack of an external threat to Park would have changed after March 1962.

There is also no evidence of popular threats being high between January and March 1963. In 1961, the American Embassy constantly reported on the level of (or lack of) discontent among people in cities and rural areas. Between January and March 1963, this reporting is absent.⁶⁹ Overall, there are no suggestions in primary sources or the secondary historical literature of any significant protests between January and March 11 in 1963.

The Purge of Kim Tong-ha

Consistent with the final part of the mechanism of how disloyal elites are purged, Kim Tong-ha was arrested on March 11, 1963. He was charged under Article 1 of the National Security Law and Article 3 of the Special Crimes Law; both related to the accusation of coup plotting.⁷⁰ As noted above, however, these accusations received little credence by

⁶⁸Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "The Outlook for South Korea," March 5, 1962, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁶⁹The closest observation about the level of popular threat in 1963 is that on March 21, several hundred people were handing out leaflets in Seoul in opposition to the military government. But Kim was arrested on March 11, so this is immaterial. See U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 680, March 21, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁷⁰U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 626, March 11, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 110; Sung-chul Yang, *Revolution and Change: A Comparative Study of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Military Coup d'état of 1961 in Korea* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015), p. 95.

contemporary observers and have also been dismissed by historians.⁷¹ Kim Tong-ha was arrested with, and stood trial alongside other members of the Hamgyong faction. Most historical accounts of Kim Tong-ha's purge have attributed it to what I argued in Chapter Two constitutes a signal of disloyalty: his prominent role in the Hamgyong faction. Kim Hyung-A, for example, argues that Park's purge of Kim Tong-ha was driven by the dismantling of the northeastern faction—i.e. Hamgyong—that had been prevalent for over a decade in the ROKA.⁷² The American Embassy similarly believed that the purge was intended "to eliminate the power of the Hamkyong-do [sic] faction."⁷³ This narrative is consistent with the hypothesized mechanism: Kim Tong-ha behaved disloyally by leading a prominent faction, and non-elite threats were low, so Park purged him.

This does not explain, however, why Park waited until March 1963. Kim Tong-ha was known from May 1961 as one of the leaders of the Hamgyong faction. Other disloyal elites, such as Chang Do-yong, were purged in the months immediately following the coup. Further, as noted, since August 1961 there were no notable non-elite threats that constrained Park from purging Kim Tong-ha. What had changed however, by March 1963, is that in January 1963 Kim Tong-ha had publicly disagreed with Park over management of the DRP. In sum, there is strong support for the causal mechanism functioning as hypothesized. However, the evidence suggests that not all indicators of disloyalty are equally concerning for a dictator. It may be the case that an elite leading a faction is more worrying for some dictators or only concerns a dictator under specific circumstances.

⁷¹For example, see: Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Telegram A-870, April 23, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁷²Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 110; see also Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 37; Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 56.

⁷³U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-725, March 12, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

5.3 Purges of Loyal Elites

5.3.1 Kim Chong-p'il

Born in 1926, Kim Chong-p'il (김종필) was related to Park through his marriage to Park's niece. Kim Chong-p'il was in the Eighth class of the KMA and was one of the key coup plotters from an early stage. After the coup, Kim Chong-p'il became Head of the newly organized Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), one of the regime's most important and powerful figures.⁷⁴ Kim Chong-p'il was a member of Park's ruling coalition through his role as Chairman of the DRP Initiation Committee.⁷⁵

The evidence of Kim Chong-p'il's purge is consistent with the scapegoating mechanism of the circumstances under which a dictator purges a loyal elite. Kim Chong-p'il was arguably Park's most loyal elite. He also led a prominent faction from the Eighth Class of the KMA but, in line with the point discussed in the analysis of Kim Tong-ha's purge, this likely did not give Park sufficient reason to suspect he was disloyal. Kim Chong-p'il's purge occurred because there was a suddenly increased threat to Park from other elites because of widespread anger at Kim Chong-p'il's control over the DRP. Park purged Kim Chong-p'il to alleviate this threat and boost his chances of staying in power.

Kim Chong-p'il's Loyalty

Kim Chong-p'il was Park's most trusted advisor. In the new regime, Park leaned heavily on Kim Chong-p'il's advice and trusted him with plans for overseeing the intended transition from military to civilian rule, and also installed him as Director of the new KCIA.

⁷⁴U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1764, June 9, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 1799, June 13, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 311, August 15, 1961, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁷⁵U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-490, January 9, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

In terms of the specific signals of disloyalty described in Chapter Two, Kim Chong-p'il certainly did not oppose the coup; rather, he was heavily involved in its planning from the early days of October 1960.⁷⁶ There is also no evidence that Kim Chong-p'il tried to overthrow Park or that he disagreed with him over policy. In fact, the actions that Kim Chong-p'il took to centralize management of the new government political party, the DRP, that gave rise to the increased elite threat—described below—were consistent with Park's wishes.⁷⁷

However, Kim Chong-p'il led a faction of young colonels from the Eighth Class of the KMA.⁷⁸ He also developed strong factional support through his work to set up the DRP and its forerunner organization, the 8-15 Association, which was used to establish a political network across the country ahead of the launch of the DRP.⁷⁹ Consistent with the insight gleaned from tracing the purge of Kim Tong-ha, it seems that an elite leading a faction may not always signal their disloyalty to the dictator. I found no evidence of Kim Chong-p'il ever attempting to use the power he derived from his support in the KCIA or DRP to maneuver around Park or implement policies contrary to Park's wishes. Ideally, we might hope to distinguish between leader-supporting and rival factions within a regime but this is not possible *ex-ante*. Based on the observable evidence, Kim Chong-p'il worked closely with Park to set up the DRP and he behaved loyally to Park up to and including the time of his purge.

Elevated Threats

The first part of the mechanism of how dictators purge loyal elites is that there should be an elevated threat to the dictator's position. Kim Chong-p'il was purged in February

⁷⁶Yong-sup Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011), p. 46.

⁷⁷Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 127.

⁷⁸Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.

⁷⁹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-593, February 8, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

1963. There is no evidence that popular threats were a concern for Park at this time. There is also little evidence of external threats increasing. Americans in Korea and Washington had long viewed Kim Chong-p'il as a problem and wanted to reduce his role, and they even hoped for his dismissal.⁸⁰ General Magruder, for example, said that Kim Chong-p'il was "perhaps the foremost of the agitators whose elimination from the ROK Army I have sought over the past year."⁸¹ Park was likely aware of these sentiments as US Secretary of State Dean Rusk once asked an aide to communicate to Park that the head of espionage—then Kim Chong-p'il, as head of the KCIA—should not also be a core policymaker.⁸² However, the Americans repeatedly emphasized internally their desire not to meddle in internal intra-elite politics in South Korea. When Kim Chong-p'il's position grew more uncertain in early 1963, the American Embassy in Seoul wrote to the State Department that they should not "get too far ahead of Pak's [sic] own thinking...We still believe Kim [Chong-pil]'s deflation, if it occurs must come about by Korean not US action."⁸³

Events in January and February 1963, however, suddenly elevated elite-based threats to Park. Kim Chong-p'il had been unpopular with other members of the regime prior to 1963 due to his accumulation of power, first via the KCIA, and later with the DRP.⁸⁴ In January 1963, however, the scale of certain other elites' dissatisfaction with Kim Chong-p'il increased. Kim Chong-p'il had been organizing the setup of the DRP behind the scenes

⁸⁰Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), pp. 147 and 228; Memorandum for the President from McGeorge Bundy, June 20, 1962, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁸¹Magruder to Washington, May 25, 1961, Box 128: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library.

⁸²Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 149.

⁸³U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 504, January 18, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; see also Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 145.

⁸⁴Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 132; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 368, October 16, 1962, Box 127: Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, JFK Library; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-556, February 1, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

throughout 1962. On January 9, 1963, he resigned his position as Director of the KCIA to openly devote himself to the continued formation of the DRP.⁸⁵ At this point, it became clear to other elites the extent to which Kim Chong-p'il had established his control over the DRP through his development of political networks all across South Korea.⁸⁶ Anti-Kim Chong-p'il forces within the regime started mobilizing, making it clear that they were not willing to allow Kim Chong-p'il to control the DRP.⁸⁷ Park was certainly aware of the increased agitation among elites within the regime as he discussed it with the American Embassy and said he had concluded that Kim Chong-p'il might be compelled to resign and leave the country.⁸⁸ This is consistent with the second part of the mechanism: that a dictator will recognize the source of the suddenly elevated threat.

The pinnacle of this escalation in elite agitation occurred in mid-February 1963, when the Defense Minister Pak Pyong-gwon and the chiefs of staff of the army, air force, navy, and marines met with Park. They demanded that Kim Chong-p'il resign from the DRP and leave the country immediately.⁸⁹ This was significant for two reasons. First, although the military chiefs did not directly threaten to overthrow Park, their demand about Kim

⁸⁵U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-490, January 9, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁸⁶U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-593, February 8, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁸⁷U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-504, January 18, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁸⁸U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 517, January 23, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; see also Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 213; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 504, January 18, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-530, January 24, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁸⁹Taehyun Kim, and Chang Jae Baik, "Taming and Tamed by the United States," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 70; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 579, February 18, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-638, February 20, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 609, March 1, 1963,

Chong-p'il's removal made clear that the elite-based threat to Park would increase if he failed to purge Kim Chong-p'il. Second, the identity of these elites made this a credible and significant threat. Overall, consistent with the first and second stages of the mechanism, there was a suddenly increased elite-based threat to Park in January and February 1963, and Park undoubtedly successfully identified the source of the threat.

The Purge of Kim Chong-p'il

The third part of the mechanism is that a dictator purges a loyal elite to alleviate the elevated threat. In February 1963, Kim Chong-p'il resigned from his position as Chairman of the DRP, meaning he was no longer a member of Park's ruling coalition, and left the country. Kim Chong-p'il's departure from the DRP and South Korea was certainly not voluntary. He was purged by Park.

Following agitations from other elites, Kim Chong-p'il initially agreed to resign from the DRP on January 24, 1963.⁹⁰ However, it is questionable as to whether he ever truly intended to resign. His resignation was subject to a vote at the DRP Initiation Committee. Prior to the vote, Kim Chong-p'il took actions to ensure the vote would go in his favor.⁹¹ While he used a carrot for some members, others were met with a stick as he also prepared counter-measures against members who voted against him.⁹² These maneuvers were successful and the Committee voted to reject his resignation.⁹³ Kim Chong-p'il fol-

File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹⁰Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 213; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 521, January 24, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹¹U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 526, January 25, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹²U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 529, January 27, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 538, January 30, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹³Cho Kap-che, *Naemudöm-e ch'imül paet'öra: Kukka kaejo [Spit on My Grave] Vol. 5* (1998), p. 215; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 529, January 27, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

lowed this up by trying to consolidate his power over the DRP. Only two days after the meeting, it emerged that he had coordinated 125 party workers to set up party secretaries in election districts, and then on February 2, 1963, Kim Chong-p'il was voted by the DRP Initiation Committee as the Party's Chairman.⁹⁴

Kim Chong-p'il's consolidation of power over the DRP did not diminish elite opposition; if anything, it further galvanized agitation among other elites.⁹⁵ As described above, the Defense Minister and military chiefs met with Park in February 1963 to demand Kim Chong-p'il's removal. Following this meeting on February 17, Park forced Kim Chong-p'il to resign from the DRP.⁹⁶ His resignation was announced on February 20, 1963. After attempting to deny it for several days, on February 24th, Kim Chong-p'il confirmed at a press conference that he would leave the country, which he eventually did on February 25th for various countries in Asia and then Europe.⁹⁷ Thus, consistent with the third part of the mechanism, Kim Chong-p'il did not voluntarily resign from the DRP or leave the country. Rather, despite his best efforts, he was forced out of the ruling coalition by Park and made to leave the country. In his own words, even Kim Chong-p'il admitted that he

⁹⁴U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-545, January 31, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-579, February 6, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 549, February 6, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹⁵U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram 549, February 6, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-593, February 8, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹⁶Hyung-A Kim, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 87; Taehyun Kim, and Chang Jae Baik, "Taming and Tamed by the United States," in Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.) *The Park Chung Hee Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 70; U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-671, February 27, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

⁹⁷U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-662, February 26, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

was leaving only “partly at my own decision.”⁹⁸ Thus, Kim Chong-p’il is a case of a dictator purging a loyal elite to try and alleviate an increased threat to the dictator’s survival in power.

5.4 Conclusion

Process-tracing of elite purges in South Korea under Park Chung-hee suggests that the mechanisms described in Chapter Two function as hypothesized. Park refrained from purging a disloyal elite (initially, Chang Do-yong) when he faced a heightened non-elite threat *and* the elite held a position relevant to helping him alleviate that threat. Absent one of those conditions, Park moved to purge (later, Chang Do-yong; and Kim Tong-ha). Additionally, Park purged a loyal elite (Kim Chong-p’il) when he faced a suddenly elevated threat, consistent with the scapegoating mechanism.

The evidence suggests one alteration might be necessary to the theory. An elite leading a faction may not necessarily be a sufficient signal of disloyalty to justify a purge absent other indicators. A fruitful area for further research would be to examine the conditions under which factions are problematic or potentially helpful for a dictator interested in staying in power.

⁹⁸U.S. Embassy Republic of Korea to Department of State, Telegram A-671, February 27, 1963, File 795B.00/3-162, 1960-63 Central Decimal File, RG 59: General Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this manuscript, I set out to investigate the causes of elite purges in dictatorships. Elite purges are a frequently used tactic for dictators interested in staying in power. They fall within the menu of more frequently examined tactics in the study of authoritarian survival, such as repression, counter-balancing, and propaganda. Elite purges are hugely consequential. They have occurred at seminal moments in global history, often precipitating the personalization of autocratic leadership, and preceding great suffering for billions of people living in dictatorships.

Consistent with the theory in Chapter Two, I found that dictators are more likely to purge elites when threats from the people and foreign states are low or high. Conversely, dictators are less likely to purge elites when these threats are at a medium-level. Further, military leaders are especially likely to purge elites. These findings came from analyzing an original quantitative cross-national dataset on civilian and military elite purges between 1992 and 2015. The analysis cannot show whether dictators are more likely to purge disloyal elites when these threats are low, nor loyal elites when these threats are high, but subsequent process-tracing of elite purges in Park Chung-hee's South Korea supports these claims.

The individual-level analyses then examined why a dictator purges specific elites but not others. I first examined why a dictator purges certain disloyal elites but retains oth-

ers, through quantitative individual-level analysis of elite purges in Kim Jong Un's North Korea. I found that Kim was more likely to retain a disloyal elite when there was a heightened popular or external threat, *and* the elite held a position relevant to helping Kim alleviate that threat. The case of Jang Song Thaek illustrated the argument: Kim refrained from purging Jang when the threat of Chinese interference was high since Jang held a position relevant to helping Kim alleviate that threat. Once the threat from China receded because Kim established greater economic independence, Kim purged the disloyal Jang.

I then examined whether the theory's causal mechanisms of individual elite purges functioned as hypothesized through qualitative theory-testing process-tracing of elite purges in Park Chung-hee's South Korea. This also provided further tests of why a dictator purges certain disloyal elites under low non-elite threats, and why a dictator purges certain loyal elites under high non-elite threats. Overall, I found evidence consistent with the hypothesized causal mechanisms. Park refrained from purging the disloyal Chang Do-yong, the *de jure* chairman of the military junta, when Chang's position was helpful to alleviating the external threat from the Americans. Once this threat receded, Chang's position was no longer important so Park purged him. Park also purged the disloyal Kim Tong-ha almost immediately following his display of disloyalty. When Kim Tong-ha behaved disloyally, Park had no reason to wait to purge him as Kim Tong-ha was not helping Park alleviate any heightened non-elite threats. Finally, Park purged the loyal Kim Chong-p'il to scapegoat him for increased threats towards Park's rule.

In the remainder of the chapter, I first discuss three scholarly and policy contributions of the research. These are contributions for: 1) the study of authoritarianism; 2) analyzing contemporary trends about autocracy and democracy; and 3) informing foreign policies towards often strategically important but opaque dictatorships. The chapter concludes by discussing several important questions raised by the manuscript for future research.

6.1 Contributions

This manuscript purports to make contributions to knowledge about authoritarian survival, autocratic elite politics, and simultaneously integrate the study of East Asian autocracies within the comparative study of authoritarianism. Substantively, the research develops our knowledge about the causes of elite purges across dictatorships—why one dictator purges elites but another does not—showing how dictators punish disloyal elites and scapegoat loyal elites to enhance their overall chances of staying in power. The work also informs our understanding of micro politics within dictatorships, showing why a dictator purges specific elites but not others. The analysis of the cross-national theory contributes an original cross-national quantitative dataset on elite purges in 53 dictatorships, while parts of the individual-level evidence—especially on North Korea in Chapter Four—have not previously appeared in scholarship. The within-regime evidence also more broadly challenges historical and contemporary interpretations of elite political machinations during the Park Chung-hee and Kim Jong Un regimes.

The manuscript's primary theoretical contribution is to explain cross-national and within-regime patterns of elite purges in dictatorships. The main benefit of this contribution is to improve our understanding of how dictators survive. Political scientists have systematically studied other tactics—such as repression, counter-balancing, and propaganda—but very little attention has been devoted to purges, and especially, scholars have conducted minimal empirical research on purges. The historical frequency of purges and their association with pivotal moments in global history suggests this is an important gap to fill. Theoretically, the manuscript challenges the idea that dictators purge elites solely in response to variations in coup threats. The theory and findings show that it is essential, consistent with previous scholarship on authoritarianism, to account for the broader autocratic threat environment to better explain cross-national and individual-level elite purges.

The contribution of an original cross-national quantitative dataset on elite purges is a valuable resource for the study of authoritarianism and broader related topics. The systematic and distinct measurements of civilian *and* military elite purges between 1992 and 2015 improves upon existing datasets on purges that focus exclusively on military purges,¹ post-coup purges,² or they suffer from internal validity concerns.³ Further, the measurement of purges in the dataset stems from an extensive, logically consistent, and transparent conceptualization of the term ‘purge.’ Scholars researching purges in dictatorships have previously bemoaned the lack of accurate data on purges. In their study explaining coups in autocracies, Bove and Rivera used data that included repression against opposition figures as well as regime elites. They acknowledged that these data were not ideal but wrote that the data represented “the only measure of repression against the members of the incumbent regime, and hence it is the best proxy available to capture leaders’ coercion against the internal elite opposition.”⁴ The dataset rectifies this problem; it can support scholars researching purges as an outcome, explanatory factor, or where purges are included as a control variable.

Second, the research contributes to explaining contemporary trends about autocracy and democracy. There has been a global increase in authoritarianism since 1994.⁵ This has been underpinned by two trends: 1) the endurance of longstanding autocracies, and 2) democracies backsliding towards autocracy. Studying elite purges helps us understand

¹Jessica Maves Braithwaite, and Jun Koga Sudduth, “Military Purges and the Recurrence of Civil Conflict,” *Research and Politics*, January-March (2016), pp. 1-6; Vipin Narang, and Caitlin Talmadge, “Civil-military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 7 (2018), pp. 1379-1405; Jun Koga Sudduth, “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 13 (2017), pp. 1768-1801.

²Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, “Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d’état,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

³Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, “Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), pp. 453-79; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Martin Gassebner, Jerg Gutmann, and Stefan Voigt, “When to Expect a Coup d’état? An Extreme Bounds Analysis of Coup Determinants,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 169 (2016), pp. 293-313.

⁴Vincenzo Bove, and Mauricio Rivera, “Elite Co-optation, Repression, and Coups in Autocracies,” *International Interactions*, Vol. 41 (2015), p. 464.

⁵Lee Morgenbesser, “The Menu of Autocratic Innovation,” *Democratization*, 2020.

both these trends. The nascent empirical evidence⁶ and extensive historical evidence⁷ suggests that elite purges have been important in helping autocrats hold on to power. Elsewhere, aspirational autocrats like Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan copy tactics, including purges, from longstanding autocracies.⁸ Thus, studying purges is crucial to interpret contemporary political phenomena including the endurance and resurgence of authoritarianism.

Third, the research contributes to policy by informing grand strategy towards dictatorships. Grand strategy—the actions states take to defend their polities—should be informed by intelligence about the internal politics in autocracies. Democratic leaders like the president of the United States cannot make informed decisions about whether to pursue coercive strategies or engagement without accurate information about what is going on inside dictatorships. To this end, understanding the causes of elite purges can provide valuable insights for policymakers. For example, Kim Jong Un's pivot to the *byungjin* policy in 2013 was not a pivot away from the 'military first' approach that was at the core of the previous *songun* policy. A more nuanced reading of *byungjin* should recognize that it prioritized economic development *alongside* the existing emphasis on the military. Relatedly, Kim's purge of Jang Song Thaek should be interpreted as Kim's resistance to economic development under certain circumstances. Jang was a known advocate of Chinese-style economic reforms, which was one of the reasons behind his purge. Insights from Jang's purge should have informed American grand strategy towards North Korea, making it clear that emphasizing the economic benefits that North Korea could obtain by

⁶Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

⁷For example, see: Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); John Arch Getty, *Origins of The Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

⁸Larry Diamond, "Facing Up to The Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2014), p. 152.

unilaterally disarming its nuclear program—as President Trump did at the 2019 Hanoi summit with Kim Jong Un—was unlikely to be a successful strategy.

6.2 Questions for Future Research

This manuscript has provided a general theory of the causes of autocratic elite purges across regimes, and across individual elites within regimes. There are limitations to this work, and there are several ways it can be extended to enhance our understanding of authoritarian survival and related areas. The three main areas for future research entail studying: interdependencies among purges; the relationship between purges and authoritarian survival; and, the causes and effects of purges outside of autocracies.

6.2.1 Elite Purges as Interdependent Events

The manuscript has explained the causes of purges principally as independent events. However, elite purges may negatively or positively influence the possibility of further elite purges both within and outside the polity. Within a regime, elite purges might make future purges less likely. Once a dictator has purged the elites who pose the biggest danger, he may not need to act similarly again as he has successfully and sufficiently reduced the coup threat. Elite purges might also serve as acts of micro-deterrence, where purging a high profile figure deters others, thus negating the dictator's need to purge again. These stories of elite purges having a diminishing effect on the likelihood of future elite purges are consistent, for instance, with the decrease in elite purges witnessed during Kim Il Sung's leadership in North Korea.⁹ Alternatively, purging elites may lead to further purges, due to a dictator's paranoia or to prevent elites enacting a preemptive coup before they suffer a purge. The behavior of Idi Amin in Uganda, where swathes of elites

⁹Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd., 1999).

and junior officials were killed, certainly fits this narrative.¹⁰ Finally, elite purges may influence the occurrence of similar events in different regimes, where one dictator observes the benefit (costs) another dictator has experienced from purging elites so employs (resists) a similar strategy. In sum, the study of interdependencies between elite purges within and across regimes is an important and fruitful area for further research.

6.2.2 Elite Purges and Authoritarian Survival

A crucial area for future study is the effects of elite purges on a dictator's survival prospects. This chapter has emphasized that the project's primary theoretical contribution is to understand *how* dictators use elite purges to maintain power. It was imperative to conceptualize purges and study their causes first, but we can now properly investigate their effects, and more fully understand the relationship between purges and authoritarian survival. As noted in Chapter One, some scholars have already begun investigating this question. Easton and Siverson show that dictators who survive a coup attempt can extend their tenure through subsequent purges.¹¹ But not all dictators suffer a coup attempt, and those who do may also conduct purges prior to the coup attempt, or long after it. In short, there are many different scenarios and types of purges that dictators can conduct. We require comprehensive study of their effects to understand the relationship between elite purges and authoritarian survival. My cross-national quantitative dataset on civilian and military elite purges provides a useful tool with which to accomplish this task.

6.2.3 Purges Beyond Autocracies

Purges—conceptualized in Chapter One as when a leader takes significant power away from a person within the regime against their wishes—do not just occur in autocracies. In

¹⁰Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).

¹¹Malcolm R. Easton, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Leader Survival and Purges After a Failed Coup d'état," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (2018), pp. 596-608.

democracies, for instance, leaders often remove elites from cabinets. In fact, some of the seemingly most consequential purges happen in regimes transitioning from one societal structure to another. In South Korea in the late 1980s, South Africa in the mid 1990s, and Iraq in 2003, different combinations of senior and junior regime officials were removed from their positions as the previous autocracies were deconstructed. All three states have subsequently experienced very different political outcomes. South Korea has emerged as a flourishing democracy with a vibrant civil society;¹² South Africa regularly holds elections that generally meet with international approval yet it is highlighted as a country ripe for democratic backsliding, and it has never experienced national-level democratic alternation in power;¹³ while Iraq holds regular elections but there is massive corruption and security threats, including those associated with the rise of the so-called Islamic State that following the de-Ba'athification process after Saddam Hussein's defeat.¹⁴ We require cross-country and within-country analysis to examine how different kinds of purges and broader aspects of societal transitions shape short- and long-term prospects for political stability and democracy.

6.3 Conclusion

This manuscript has sought to provide the first systematic study of the cross-national and within-regime individual-level causes of elite purges in autocracies. The work shines a light on the often opaque intra-elite political machinations in dictatorships to better inform our knowledge of how dictators survive in power. The topic has significant consequences for how foreign countries can engage with dictatorships, as well as the economic,

¹²Freedom House, "South Korea," *Freedom House*, 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-korea/freedom-world/2020>.

¹³Jay Ulfelder, "Worrying about South Africa," *Foreign Policy*, September 14, 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/14/worrying-about-south-africa/>.

¹⁴Freedom House, "Iraq," *Freedom House*, 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-world/2019>.

physical, and psychological wellbeing of the billions of people who live under authoritarian rule today.

Chapter 7

Vita

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