DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOODS:
THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM NEARBY CIVIL WARS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The consequences of civil wars are not contained by international borders, and states face externalities from an ongoing civil war that affect leaders and domestic groups alike. The immediate neighbors of civil war states are uniquely vulnerable to these externalities and uniquely able to respond with a variety of policy responses which are not always available to more distant states. Much of the previous research on civil war externalities either treats affected states as passively suffering those consequences, or if they do respond, as if they only have the choice to intervene directly or do nothing. This project considers the active role state leaders play in responding to nearby civil war violence, particularly in the range of policy choices that they can select from in that response. In addressing the issues of why and how leaders respond, the project considers the following questions: 1) How does nearby civil war affect leader survival? 2) How do leaders maintain and consolidate domestic power in response to that conflict? 3) How do leaders signal support of one warring side or the other without risking direct intervention?

The theory I develop in this project argues that civil war neighborhoods present a unique threat environment due to the uncertainty experienced by both regime leaders and key domestic groups in a neighbor state, as well as conflict characteristics of proximate violence and affinity ties. I explore the implications of this theory by considering the effect of nearby conflict on leaders facing domestic challenges to their rule, on their propensity to engage in coup proofing, and on the likelihood that leaders produce visible signals of support for the civil war state or rebels.

My findings reveal that nearby civil wars do pose a threat to leader survival, particularly when warring parties share ethnic ties with regime leaders or violence reaches a shared border. Whether out of desperation or sensing a temporary strategic advantage, leaders engage in coup proofing behavior to consolidate their power relative to key military actors when facing such conflict conditions. Finally, ethnic ties between politically important groups in the neighbor state and the civil war state predict a higher likelihood of cooperative signals from state leaders even where direct intervention does not occur. These findings highlight the value of considering civil war neighborhoods as unique threat environments and an important piece of larger questions of leader survival, civil-military relations, and domestic pressure.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

The Republic of South Sudan is the world's newest country, officially gaining independence from Sudan in 2011 after six years as an autonomous region. Though the region has been plagued by conflict and instability since before independence, the current civil war began in December 2013 when South Sudan's president, Salva Kiir, accused his deposed vice president, Riek Machar, of orchestrating a coup attempt. Supporters of each leader are generally divided along ethnic lines, and the resulting conflict has led to civilian victimization, infrastructure destruction, and widespread food shortages exacerbated by a drought that engulfed the entire region in early 2017. Violence by both government and rebel troops, along with other conflict-related factors, has led to over 50,000 deaths[1] and driven millions of South Sudanese from their homes, either to other parts of the country or across international borders as refugees.[2]

Civil wars have devastating human, societal, institutional, and environmental effects in the states in which they occur, but the consequences of civil war violence are rarely if ever contained by international boundaries. The spillover effects, or externalities, from the South Sudan conflict have drastic effects on the leaders and populations of neighboring states. Each of South Sudan's contiguous neighbors hosts some number of South Sudanese refugees, with Ethiopia (400,000+), Sudan (840,000+), and Uganda (800,000+) being the recipients of the largest numbers.[3] Cross-border smuggling, losses in trade and business cooperation, and other factors also affect neighboring states. The impact of these externalities on the region around a civil war leads to the fundamental questions of this project: why and how do state leaders respond to civil war violence in a neighboring state?

The civil war in South Sudan threatens leaders and the public in Uganda along several fronts and across multiple dimensions.[4] Uganda now hosts one of the largest number of refugees in

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[1] This is the low estimate. Other estimates range as high as 300,000 deaths.
[2] Updated statistics and an overview of the conflict can be found here: https://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/civil-war-in-south-sudan
[3] Numbers are current as of March 2019. See updated figures here: http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php
[4] Information in this section comes from the following sources: http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/07/25/refugee-scandal-unfolding-uganda http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/east-africa/uganda-counts-losses-south-sudan/ http://safeprogram.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/April-MCA-2017.pdf

Africa as well as what is thought to be the world's largest refugee camp, with the vast majority of refugees coming from South Sudan as a result of the ongoing civil war. The Ugandan response to the influx of refugees, both on a national and a local level, has been impressive and generous, but the strain on local and national resources is beginning to put pressure on the government to adapt its policies. The sheer number of refugees has severely depleted critical resources like land, water, and firewood, as well as the infrastructure and public services required to sustain the increased population in border regions. Locals worry about incoming arms and weapons, increases in cattle smuggling by refugees and South Sudanese who traverse the border, lumber smuggling, the spread of human and livestock diseases, and a host of other consequences from the conflict.

This concern and tension translate into increased political mobilization and pressure on the government to respond, particularly when locals perceive refugees as the beneficiaries of food and other aid not available to Ugandans. The losses in trade and cross-border jobs, along with other economic factors related to the instability of conflict, have led to decreased economic growth both in border communities and in the country overall. The government of Uganda has appealed for greater funding from the UN and the international community, but as of this writing (Spring 2019), it is not clear whether political pressure either from locals to the national government or the government to the international community will have a sustained effect on international conflict management efforts, domestic policy changes, or leader turnover. Looking at the effects of civil war violence on neighboring states, it is clear why leaders and the public would *want* to respond, but not immediately *how* they might do so.

Traditional studies of civil war intervention focus on the external intervention of powerful states through military, economic, or diplomatic means. The goal of this project is to examine the threats faced by neighbor-state leaders and populations, along with the accompanying policy responses. I focus on neighbor states because their proximity makes them both uniquely vulnerable to civil war externalities and uniquely capable of responding with a diverse array of policy responses. These policy choices are not limited to direct intervention into the conflict, as many responses to civil war violence nearby involve adjustments in domestic policy. This particular focus on neighbor states and the range of their policy options in response to nearby

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http://safeprogram.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/USAID-SAFE-Monthly-Conflict-Assessment-Report-June-2017.pdf

conflict leads to the key contributions of this project, which I will discuss explicitly later in this chapter.

I focus on neighbors because proximity to a civil conflict affects both a state's *opportunity* to respond to the consequences of ongoing violence as well its *willingness* to do so. In the conceptual framework advanced by Most and Starr (1989), both opportunity and willingness influence the likelihood of a policy response. In the context of a neighboring civil war, direct contiguity can enable a state to respond with a wider range of policy options to conflict externalities, but it also exposes it to those externalities in ways that can be more severe and damaging to the well-being of the neighbor state (Joyce and Braithwaite 2013). The opportunity comes from the wider range of options, while the willingness comes if the consequences of inaction are severe enough to motivate policy adoption or adaptation.

This project explores how the relationship among threats from nearby conflict, political constraints on leaders, and policy goals can be used to explain policy response both externally and internally. More specifically, in this dissertation I seek to explore the following questions: 1) What effect does nearby civil war violence have on leaders' political survival in a neighbor state? 2) How do neighbor-state leaders consolidate and maintain their power in response to ongoing violence from a nearby conflict? 3) If neighbor-state leaders want to show support for one side or another in the neighboring conflict through domestic signals, which side do they choose?

In brief, the theory I develop in Chapter 2 argues that nearby civil wars create an environment of uncertainty and threat for both leaders and domestic groups in a neighbor state. The ability of domestic groups to constrain and compel leaders in regard to the leaders' policy responses to the conflict is higher in democratic or authoritarian states with higher levels of executive constraint. Leaders with fewer constraints, which are typically those in authoritarian states, have more latitude in policy decisions but may also have less reliable information about the opinions and likely actions of key domestic groups. The same institutional and political structures that enable authoritarian leaders to maintain a tight grip on power may also render them less able to respond appropriately to domestic demands in response to civil war externalities that harm key domestic interests. The responses they do choose may be result of

misunderstanding or underestimating the risk posed by domestic actors which are threatened by the ongoing violence across the border.

Leaders' concern with instability up to and including civil war violence in neighboring state is clearly manifest in the events of the Arab Spring. The wave of protests and violent rebellions across the Middle East and North Africa during 2011 shocked many leaders across the region into action, whether to confront ongoing dissent in their own countries directly or to adopt policy measures meant to prevent similar domestic unrest. Some countries, such as Tunisia and Egypt, experienced regime turnover. Others erupted into civil war either as a direct result of 2011 protests (Libya, Syria) or due to institutional and political changes resulting from those protests (Yemen). Even those regimes that have so far survived this tumultuous period have faced high degrees of threat and uncertainty related to dissent and conflict in the region. The varied policy responses of Arab regimes in regard to regional unrest from 2011 to the present provide an instructive look into the priorities of leaders who find themselves in conflict-prone neighborhoods.

A few definitional terms need to be clarified first to avoid confusion. In this project I am primarily concerned with civil war neighbors and civil war states. The second term is more straightforward, as I use it to refer simply to a state that is currently fighting an ongoing war with an organized rebel group (or groups) within its territory. I consider as "civil war neighbors" those states that are near enough to feel threatened by the civil war state. As the case of the Arab Spring demonstrates, however, state leaders worry not only about civil wars in their region, but also about regime overthrow or dissent that might lead to larger conflicts in that same area. My empirical strategy will require a careful delineation of the types of unrest and domestic violence that constitute a civil conflict, as well as exactly what constitutes a "neighborhood".

I will explain what I mean by "uncertainty" in more detail in Chapter 2, as that is where it plays a key role in my theory. To situate the use of the term in later sections this chapter, however, I briefly outline how this term is related to nearby civil war. Various aspects of civil conflicts create uncertainty along multiple dimensions for both leaders and key domestic groups (civilian and military) in the neighbor state. Beyond a lack of certainty over which side is likely to win and the consequences of that victory, there is also difficulty in predicting a) whether to

not certain externalities will begin or continue, b) the likely effect of those externalities, and c) whether policy responses by leaders (if they occur at all) are likely to help alleviate them.

From this point, I will first discuss the main contributions of this project and where it fits in the broader world of civil war research. I then provide a short case study of Saudi Arabia's response to regional instability and violence since 2011 to illustrate the effect of domestic and international constraints on regime response. Using this case to illustrate broader points about threat and response, I then give an overview of the primary role of political survival in leaders' decision-making priorities as well as a description of research on how civil war violence nearby can threaten that survival. The chapter concludes with a discussion of both direct and indirect spillover from civil war violence, as well as the effects of that spillover on neighbor states.

The Contribution

In the remainder of this chapter and in the first sections of Chapter 2, I will discuss current research trends in civil war externalities, leader survival, and domestic responses to nearby civil war. Before beginning this discussion, I will discuss the three main contributions of this project.

This project contributes to recent movement in research on civil war toward disaggregating responses to violent conflict. Traditional studies on intervention, for example, treat the decision to intervene as all or nothing (empirically, at least). Many states choose not to intervene into an ongoing civil war, even when the violence is occurring in a neighboring state and creating negative externalities for leaders and domestic groups in the region. This project considers the domestic policy choices made by those leaders short of intervention, and in doing so provides a window into the effects of civil war in states where intervention is either politically inadvisable or materially impractical. This has important implications for policymakers who can benefit from a better understanding of the effects of civil war on political stability and civil-military relations in the region.

The second contribution of this project is to identify civil war neighborhoods as unique threat environments. Studies of leader survival and coup proofing that do not consider the proximity and underlying issues of nearby conflict can miss important mechanisms driving threats from and responses to those conflicts. Civil war externalities pose a threat to leader survival and

motivate response, but the effect of those externalities is intensified by the location of combat events, the type of conflict, and other factors that make negative consequences more salient to key domestic audiences. These insights can assist academics and policymakers in identifying those conflict contexts that are most likely to be threatening to neighboring political leaders, as not all conflict externalities will affect domestic groups or leaders in the same way.

Finally, this project demonstrates how leaders often survive challenges to political survival, and how that can play out in the context of a nearby civil war. While it is the rare case where conflict externalities have benefits for neighboring states, a conflict-prone neighborhood does provide opportunities for power consolidation which savvy (or lucky) leaders can use to remain in power despite domestic discontent. The theory and findings in this project show how the uncertainty of a civil war neighborhood motivates leaders to respond to domestic pressure but does not guarantee that said pressure leads to loss of office. Leaders have a variety of tools at their disposal to maintain power, and civil war on the border presents options to use some of those tools in ways that may not exist during other times. Among other implications, the findings here show that a nearby civil war provides opportunities for coup proofing that are not predicted by studies that do not consider these unique threat environments. To illustrate how leaders respond to and survive civil war externalities, I now turn to a discussion of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia's Response to Regional Conflict: 2011-Present

A cursory look at Saudi Arabia's fate during and following the Arab Spring might reveal little of interest, as the Saudi regime faced only isolated protests and domestic pressure. The regime emerged from that period with little if any institutional or cultural change. The absence of externally visible challenges or changes does not mean that the regime was not concerned about or threatened by turmoil in surrounding states, however, as a closer look at the Saudi response to the crisis demonstrates.

Scholars and policymakers have noted that of the Arab regimes, the only ones to suffer regime change or civil war were republics, while each monarchical regime emerged relatively unscathed. A simplistic reading of this situation might argue that monarchies are inherently more stable than authoritarian republics, but this ignores variation both between and within regime types. Yom and Gause (2012) move beyond traditional cultural or institutional

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explanations to argue that Arab monarchies survived the Arab Spring through a strategic combination of coalition mobilization, targeted provision of welfare and development assistance to the public, and requests for foreign assistance.

A full breakdown of Saudi Arabia's response to nearby instability is far beyond the scope of this project. However, the regime's response to that instability highlights the important role of domestic audiences and the constraints they place on state leaders, even in cases where contagion from a nearby civil war is unlikely. Few people, if any, predicted or would anticipate the downfall of the Saudi regime in response to the events of the past several years, but leaders there still have chosen from a multitude of potential policy options to address the crisis and maximize both the likelihood of political survival as well as the likelihood of achieving broader domestic and foreign policy goals of the regime. This example also illustrates that a country need not face a full-scale civil war (as Saudi Arabia only did once the Yemen conflict started in earnest in 2015) to be threatened by nearby instability and conflict.

The Saudi regime perceived the events of the Arab Spring as part of a regional upheaval that threatened its domestic and foreign policy goals across multiple domains. Among other threats, the Arab Spring led to an increase in sectarian conflict, a resurgent Iran bent on expanding its influence, an increased role for the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements, and the strengthening and creation of new strains of jihadist identities like those that led to the formation of ISIS (Wehrey 2015). These threats not only concern the royal family's domestic hold on power, as movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood (a pseudo-democratic force) threaten the regime's legitimacy, but the larger regional trends have made it more difficult for Saudi Arabia to wield as much influence in regional politics as its leaders would prefer.

Without discussing each of these threats in greater detail, it is important to note that unrest and conflict in Saudi Arabia's neighborhood has threatened both the political survival of Saudi leaders (as an "outbreak" of constitutionalism or civil society reform in one or more Gulf countries could spread to Saudi Arabia) and the ability of those same leaders to achieve a wide range of political goals related to regional influence. Facing threats in both areas, state leaders enacted a range of policies to minimize domestic dissent and ensure regional influence and stability. Among other domestic policy responses, the Saudi regime arrested

protesters, encouraged clerics to publicly denounce political challenges to the regime, and arranged for more than $100 billion in increased social spending for Saudi citizens in the six months following the start of the Arab Spring movement.[5] With protests mainly confined to the Eastern Province, with its higher proportion of Shia residents, the regime was also able to frame the unrest in sectarian terms (Wehrey 2015). This allowed leaders to claim that introducing anything remotely like democratic reforms in the country would lead to bloody sectarian conflict - a narrative strengthened both at the time and in later years by conflict in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

As an authoritarian, monarchical regime with a high degree of state capacity, what determines Saudi government responses to public unrest? The government of Saudi Arabia is made up of an alliance of three domestic groups: the (quite numerous) al-Saud family, the conservative Wahhabi Islamic movement, and various regional business leaders (Yom and Gause 2012). As long as the highest members of the royal family maintain the support of all three groups, it is hard to imagine the magnitude of domestic threat that would be necessary to topple the regime. Still, public opposition, particularly in extreme cases of mass unrest, could threaten regime goals, if not political survival overall. Maintaining both general public support and coalition loyalty requires a high level of material patronage, but Saudi Arabia's vast hydrocarbon resources have allowed it to use social spending and targeted aid to diffuse tension or public discord (*ibid.*). The recently decreasing oil prices coupled with economic struggles may threaten this strategy moving into the future, however.

Stabilizing its domestic power base was not the only policy priority of the Saudi regime during and after the events of the Arab Spring. As a regional power with a desire for greater influence, the Saudi government responded with a variety of policy measure in the face of unrest in neighboring states. Concerned about the growing power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Saudi regime gave financial aid to both military and media groups in Egypt that were seen as viable opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood. Once the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for president, Mohammed Morsi, was elected, the aid ceased. It resumed following the military ouster of Morsi in 2013.

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[5] http://www.arabianbusiness.com/arab-spring-has-cost-gulf-arab-states-150bn-419429.html

Events in Bahrain spurred more than financial intervention, as Saudi leaders worried that mobilization by Bahrain's majority Shia population could lead to a similar move in the Eastern Province. The massive protests in Bahrain (totaling over a quarter of the country's citizens) strained the ability of Bahraini military and police forces, and the Saudi government spearheaded a military intervention by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This influx of over 1500 troops guarded sites and important installations in Bahrain, but more importantly freed up Bahraini security forces to suppress the protests. Bahrain and Oman are two of the Gulf monarchies least able to rely on hydrocarbon rents to pay off specific sectors of society, so in the midst of the Arab Spring movement Saudi Arabia also set up funds of over $10 billion each to stabilize those regimes.

Perhaps the starkest example of an aggressive policy response to neighboring unrest is on display in Yemen, where the Saudi-led GCC coalition entered the country in support of deposed President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi against the Houthi movement in 2015. The history of the Yemeni conflict is long and complex, but Saudi Arabia's current motivations to intervene seem to rest primarily on its desire to check perceived Iranian influence behind the Shia Houthi movement and its desire to stabilize a volatile situation on its southern border. The intervention has contributed to a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and the security and stability of Saudi Arabia's southern region has also deteriorated severely.

Each of these policy responses to the various events of the Arab Spring and its aftermath highlight the complex interaction between regime preferences and domestic constraints. Long-term goals of regional influence and economic wealth interact with the need to satisfy domestic religious and business elites whose support is vital to the survival of the Saudi regime. It is not that case that the Saudi regime only cares about the Muslim Brotherhood, the Shia sect of Islam, or other religious movements because of its reliance on the support of the Wahabi movement at home. Similarly, the regime's action to secure its borders and maintain stable trade flows is not only in response to its reliance on business elites. The reliance on these key groups can elevate these goals, however, giving them priority over other regime desires due to the need for the support of these key domestic actors.

Even with these caveats in mind, understanding the ability of these groups and the public to threaten the survival of Saudi leaders is vital to clarifying how, when, and why Saudi Arabia

responds to unrest in its neighborhood. The Saudi Arabia example also demonstrates how regimes have a variety of policy responses available to deal with neighboring unrest, and how levels of conflict severity, the issues at stake, and other factors in a conflict can change the effect of conflict externalities on neighbor-state response.

The domestic policy responses of the Saudi regime seemed to focus primarily on tamping down dissent and shoring up popular support for both the regime and its foreign policy goals. These policies included repression (increased arrests), targeted messaging (both the government and influential clerics warned against the destabilizing effects of sectarianism and dissent), and increased spending on social welfare programs. These domestic responses provided enough stability at home that the Saudi Arabian foreign policy responses, which included intervention of different types into the situations in Egypt, Bahrain, and Yemen, were acceptable to enough of the key political actors within Saudi Arabia to maintain the regime's position.

But why did Saudi leaders care about public opinion at all, and why was the opinion of particular groups in society so vital to the regime's survival and policy goals? As the story of Saudi Arabia's response to the Arab Spring shows, domestic actors are far from the only factor influencing regime action, but they are a crucial link in telling a story of how external conditions translate into policy choices. Leaders have personal goals related to holding office, and when nearby conflict threatens either those goals or the likelihood of holding office altogether, understanding domestic constraints is vital to explaining leader response.

Scholars have devoted much time and energy to the study of civil war externalities and their effect on neighboring states. Much this research on the negative externalities of civil wars seems to treat the civil war state's neighbors as passive receptacles of these negative consequences. This tends to be the case whether the consequence in question is decreased economic growth, an influx of refugees, the cross-border movement of arms or rebel fighters, or domestic actors learning from rebel-government interaction across the border. Research on these topics tends to focus on explaining how each of these factors, in isolation or in conjunction with others, influences the risk of civil war onset in the neighbor state, economic growth, and/or trade. Even where civil war neighbors are studied as active rather than passive players, the focus seems to be on reactive policy choices rather than proactive measures

meant to minimize the future threat from a neighboring civil war. In the few examples of research on neighbor policy response, whether the response is intervention (Kathman 2010; 2011), increased military spending (Phillips 2015), or internal repression (Danneman and Ritter 2014), scholars tend to focus on reactions to ongoing violence rather than forward-looking policy to protect against predicted instability or violence from nearby states.[6] This project addresses this shortcoming, and to start, I consider prior research and theoretical arguments concerning political survival and threats from civil war.

Political Survival, Domestic Audiences, and Civil War

Leaders want to remain in power and doing so requires maintaining the support of key domestic actors. The most well-known formulation of this argument in recent times is the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003).[7] Maintaining support from key groups requires facing and resolving both domestic and international issues important to a leader's base of support where possible. When a regime observes or anticipates domestic conflict in a neighboring state, leaders may face different types and magnitudes of threat depending on the source of their support and the ability of the supporting group to constrain the regime's actions. If some group can credibly and effectively hold the regime accountable (i.e. threaten its political survival), the group's preferences for policy should be realized if feasible. Where the regime is relatively unconstrained, it should be the regime's preferences that win out (Weeks 2012). As Bueno de Mesquita et al. explain:

> *"Political leaders need to hold office in order to accomplish any goal . . . We take it as axiomatic that everyone in a position of authority wants to keep that authority and that it is the maneuvering to do so that is central to politics in any type of regime . . . We treat political survival as a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for leaders to achieve other personal objectives"*
> (2003:7,9,23).

Successful governments do not need the support of all a state's citizens, but rather mark an important distinction between their core constituents/supporters and the rest of the population,

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[6] Regan and Meachum (2014) is an exception. The authors consider interventions in cases of political instability that is likely to lead to war, but where civil war violence has not yet occurred.
[7] All information in this section is from Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) unless otherwise noted.

whose support is not necessary to maintain political power. The most centralized authoritarian state in the world still could not function without some level of support from key actors in society, though that number may be as small as 200 people in the case of the North Korean party officials, bureaucrats, and military leaders whose loyalty is enough to keep the Kim regime in power (Byman and Lind 2010).[8]

More concretely, selectorate theory divides the population of a state into several groups according to their role in affecting the political survival of a leader or leadership group. The *nominal selectorate* includes all individuals who have some say in selecting a leader whether or not they use that power. This could be registered voters in a democratic state or elites in another context whose support (financial, military, or other type) could either bring a leader into office or remove him or her. The *real selectorate* includes those individuals who actually select a leader, meaning they vote or otherwise act to influence the selection process. Finally, the *winning coalition* is the subset of the real selectorate who support is actually necessary to maintain political leadership. In other words, the winning coalition is (ideally, for the ruler) the minimum number of individuals upon which a leader can sustain his or her rule.

Both leaders and the winning coalition benefit from this relationship. Leaders are able to maintain power and work toward those goals for which possession of political power is a prerequisite, and supporters gain both material and less tangible benefits from the regime. In general terms, leaders choose a mix of public and private goods to grant to supporters based on the size of the winning coalition. Smaller coalitions make private goods provision a more desirable strategy, as members benefit from less competition for the rewards and leaders can minimize the amount of goods and services they need to provide, leaving more for themselves. As coalition size increases, governments come to rely more on public good provision, which is more efficient as the number of necessary recipients increases. In addition, targeting private goods to individual supporters becomes more and more difficult as the size of the coalition increases and the identification of levels of support becomes more difficult.

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[8] In an interview with *Salon*, Alastair Smith and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita refer to discussions with experts who argued that the number of truly important supporters in North Korea may be as low as 11. The exact number is not critical for my argument, but illustrates an interesting point. The article can be found here: http://www.salon.com/2017/02/04/all-political-leaders-would-rather-be-dictators-authors-of-the-dictators-handbook-on-whether-trump-can-pull-it-off/

This relationship between winning-coalition size and a choice between public and private goods maps on fairly closely to a regime breakdown between democracy (larger coalitions and more public goods) and autocracy (smaller coalitions and more private goods). Even in democratic systems, however, leaders are able to use contracts, geographically or demographically targeted programs, or pork-barrel spending to help key supporters (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1997; Shugart 1999). The lucrative nature of membership can also vary in step with coalition size, as the narrow stream of private goods in small-coalition regimes means that exclusion from the winning coalition will cut off most if not all benefits. In states which rely on public goods provision, even being outside the winning coalition does not preclude receiving those goods and benefits. In most cases, supporters in small-coalition states are thus more loyal, as the per-person benefits of membership are greater. Supporters of democratic leaders who lose office may see their preferred leaders gain power again, but autocrats who lose power often face imprisonment, exile, or death. The greater loss of benefits and higher risk of not receiving them again leads to higher loyalty among supporters in small-coalition states (Heger and Salehyan 2007).

Selectorate theory thus predicts that leaders will prioritize survival by providing a mix of public and private goods depending on the size and makeup of the affiliated winning coalition. These goods can include policies favorable to the winning coalition, though in many cases policies that might ensure long-term success are less of a priority than those that guarantee (or are thought to increase the likelihood) of immediate survival. A related formulation of this argument is the *predatory state model* (e.g. Levi 1989, Young 2013), which assumes that both the polity and the state are made up of rational individuals, but that their preferences do not necessarily match. Survival is not treated as the primary goal, but rather as the most salient constraint states face in seeking their primary goal: maximizing revenue. Whether survival is the end goal or the necessary condition for the end goal, leaders must prioritize dealing with threats to that survival.

Young adds to the predatory state model, arguing that a leader's *job insecurity*, or "expectations about maintaining office in the future," affects the decision making process (2012:518). All else equal, leaders would prefer to adopt less risky or less costly policies to maintain their position. In cases where survival is threatened, however, leaders may be willing to adopt policies that will ensure (or are thought to ensure) survival in the short term even if

those policies could have detrimental long-term consequences for political survival. Civil conflict in a neighborhood does not present a uniform level of threat to state leaders, and thus its effect on survival calculus and decision making can vary. Civil war violence nearby can affect leader survival in multiple ways. Whether the domestic conflict across the border presents a high risk of direct contagion or not, nearby instability can be a source of concern for a leader's winning coalition and thus the regime leadership. Even if a conflict does not directly threaten a leader's goals, it can still cause concern or disruption for segments of the population whose levels of support and policy influence can threaten a leader's survival.

Consider these ideas in relation to an ongoing civil war nearby. Leaders desire to maintain their political survival, and doing so requires responding to the demands of key domestic actors, particularly in cases where those actors are able to impose a high degree of constraint on leader decision making or otherwise affect leaders' political survival. In situations where civil conflict nearby causes domestic pressure, leaders can either attempt to satisfy the domestic audience through policy change or consolidate their own power to reduce the overall threat from key domestic actors. This second option shows the possible opportunity that civil conflict can provide.

Where political survival is either not threatened highly or can be secured by regime action, neighboring conflict and instability may present an opportunity for increasing regional influence, exporting norms, acting as a balancing agent in a conflict, acquiring material resources, or otherwise gaining political advantage from the neighboring unrest. While a leader may not fear immediate threats to political survival from the conflict, the conflict may present opportunities to consolidate power or support and in other ways strengthen the leader for future political struggles. Referring back to the Saudi Arabia example, it does not appear that any single conflict or dissent event in the region could have led to the downfall of the Saudi regime. A string of revolutions or less violent episodes of leader turnover among critical allies could have threatened the regime's ability to seek desired policies regarding Iran and in other issues, however. External interventions into Egypt (financial), Bahrain (military/security), and Yemen (large-scale military) sought to maintain the political status quo in those states, while domestic policies of repression, messaging, and social service provision sought to stave off challenges at home. Both types of response were seen as necessary due to the unique threats presented by nearby instability and civil conflict, a topic I discuss in the following section.

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Civil War Externalities and Domestic Threats

The disruptive and devastating human, institutional, and economic costs of civil war violence within the country in conflict have been a frequent topic of study in political science and other disciplines. In recent decades, scholars have begun to study the externalities of civil war violence also, considering the effect of that violence on the conflict state's immediate neighbors, the surrounding region, and the international community. In many studies of civil war externalities, scholars consider conflict contagion the primary threat to neighbors. Leaders in neighbor states may fear that a conflict nearby will spread into their country, either drawing them into the conflict (and thus "internationalizing" the civil war) or spurring a separate (but causally related) civil war between the neighbor state regime and its own domestic armed groups.

I will use the term "contagion" in this chapter and throughout the dissertation to describe the perceived and actual threats of instability posed by neighboring conflict, but it is worth explaining in some detail what is meant by this term in the context of civil conflict externalities. In the broadest sense, there are many *transnational influences* on domestic stability in a given state. Some of these may affect the likelihood of instability or conflict in a neighbor state "without the originating country necessarily experiencing conflict itself" (Weidmann 2015). More narrowly, mechanisms of conflict *contagion* describe certain factors occurring in the context of a civil conflict that make conflict in a neighboring country more likely. Contagion, in this sense, is a diffusion mechanism, or one in which outcomes or processes in one country affect the likelihood of an outcome or process occurring in another country even though the policy choices or political phenomena are not necessarily controlled or instigated by the same actors or forces.[9] Elkins and Simmons (2005) call this *uncoordinated interdependence*.

This narrow definition of contagion, referring to instances where a conflict in a nearby state *causes* conflict in a second state, is often used to describe the key worry of both immediate neighbors and the international community regarding civil conflict. Interventions and other policy responses are often intended to manage or remove the threat of conflict spillover or hostilities spreading to new regions. Studies typically consider as contagion episodes where

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[9] Stricter definitions of "contagion" require that the new conflict be a direct outgrowth of the old one, simply joined by new actors or expanded to a new location. I do not use that strict definition here.

conflict onset occurs in a state which is contiguous to a state currently experiencing conflict itself (e.g. Beardsley 2011; Braithwaite 2010; Kathman 2010,2011), though some consider the possibility of contagion between non-contiguous states (Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008; Fox 2004). Many studies of conflict contagion do not require that the two conflicts be causally linked. As Black explains in presenting a new dataset on substate conflict contagion, this is problematic because there are at least three possible reasons why we observe conflicts that cluster temporally and spatially: "actual contagion (one conflict contributing to the onset of another), spatial clustering of other explanatory variables that cause conflict, or pure coincidence" (Black 2013:752). Prior research has found that many of the same variables that explain the onset of civil conflict (e.g. levels of economic development, political institutions, larger populations, and ethnically heterogeneous countries) also exhibit spatial clustering (Gleditsch 2007). If a combination of these factors leads to a higher likelihood of conflict, conflicts could co-occur without one *causing* the other to occur.

The transnational influences that can make conflict more likely in a neighbor state can have an effect whether or not the "origin" state is currently involved in a conflict. Looking at dyadic linkages, Gleditsch (*ibid.*) finds that transnational ethnic linkages increase the likelihood of civil war while economic and political linkages decrease the risk. Among other factors found to increase the risk of conflict onset are transborder sanctuaries for rebel groups (Salehyan 2007), refugee inflows and refugee presence (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), and the presence of transnational ethnic groups (Weiner 1971; Cederman et al. 2009; Cederman et al. 2013).

Civil war externalities can certainly increase the risk of conflict contagion, but even a relatively secure neighbor that is unlikely to see an outbreak of civil war is likely to feel threatened by the instability that a nearby conflict can produce. States located in conflict-prone neighborhoods, as noted above, are often economically underdeveloped or unstable, saddled with weak political institutions, and contain potentially contentious ethnic or religious divisions in the population. With conditions already ripe for instability of various sorts, nearby conflict can exacerbate an already fragile situation. The same risk factors for conflict onset, including the transnational ethnic groups, crossborder sanctuaries, and refugee issues mentioned above, can increase domestic pressure on regime leaders even if a civil war is unlikely to break out over the ongoing situation.

The conceptual framework of opportunity and willingness (Most and Starr 1989) applied to civil war contagion refers first to the possibilities available to disaffected groups within the neighbor state for rebellion and second to the process of choice undertaken by potential rebel actors as they select among possible alternatives. In other words, diffusion mechanisms that lower the barrier to anti-regime action provide an opportunity to rebel. Mechanisms that increase the incentive of domestic groups to rebel regardless of changes in feasibility provide willingness. At lower levels of violence, the same opportunity and willingness framework can explain why neighbor-state leaders are concerned about domestic pressure in response to nearby civil war violence.

Though nearby civil war's effect on the perceptions and uncertainty of both state leaders and the general public will play a role in this theory, it may be helpful to start with more concrete mechanisms of conflict or instability diffusion. Scholars typically differentiate between 1)resource or demographic flows and 2)information flows (Lake and Rothchild 1998). In the most basic sense, this attempts to distinguish between cases where physical objects cross a border and where they do not, though of course there are few cases where only one type of flow occurs unless the countries in question are not contiguous. For the purposes of this chapter, I will consider the actual or possible transfer of physical objects across borders as *direct spillover* and information flows as *indirect spillover*.[10] I broaden the second category to include other destabilizing elements that do not directly cross a border, such as economic consequences of nearby civil wars. Mechanisms which could plausibly lead to conflict contagion can also spur neighbor-state policy response because of a concern over lower-level instability, an opportunistic desire to benefit in some way from the nearby conflict, or other factors.

Neither direct nor indirect spillover phenomena are inherently or universally more destabilizing for a neighboring regime. The key factor in any context is how the externality changes the

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[10] Individual researchers use the term "spillover" from civil wars differently. I do not use spillover to mean direct conflict contagion or diffusion (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). Instead, I mean a more general sense of the negative externalities that a neighboring conflict produces (Buhaug and Lujala 2005; Byman and Pollack 2007; Murdoch and Sandler 2002). Phillips (2015) finds a middle ground, using "spillover" to refer to "the spread of violence and other security-related issues from the conflict country to its neighbors" (*ibid.,* 428), thus including both civil war contagion and the spread of other forms of instability.

likelihood and ability of key domestic constituencies to pressure regime leaders, how it changes the threat or opportunity a leader faces, or both. In the most immediate cases of conflict contagion, spillover is a threat to neighbor-state leaders because it increases the chances of civil war breaking out within the neighbor state. Civil wars, whether for complete state control or territorial independence for a part of the state, directly threaten the political position and/or legitimacy of the ruling government.

Even in cases where regime survival is not highly threatened, the inability of a sitting government to deal with negative externalities from a nearby conflict can be a source of public discontent. Regardless of regime type, all leaders need the support of key domestic actors, and spillover that damages or is perceived to damage those actors' interests jeopardizes political survival. Going further to assume that survival is guaranteed, it is hard to imagine a situation in which the spillover either does not threaten even a single subordinate goal (i.e. a goal beyond mere political survival) or afford leaders a chance to consolidate or expand power in response to the conflict across the border. Because there are many factors that go into how and why a neighbor state responds to nearby conflict, I will begin by discussing some of the most salient direct and indirect spillover effects, the role of uncertainty in a context of neighboring conflict, and how constraints on executive action affect each of those factors.

Direct Spillover

Despite the possibility of indirect spillover being as dangerous as direct spillover, there are reasons to believe that in general neighbors will respond more visibly and more dramatically to direct spillover, even if that spillover is anticipated rather than experienced at the time policy choices are made. The presence of direct spillover effects is often difficult to hide or minimize for domestic actors, particularly when those domestic groups live in regions near the shared border with the civil war state. If direct spillover from a nearby conflict leads domestic groups to perceive regime weakness, neighbor-state leaders have an incentive to respond very visibly in order to reassure or remind locals where the power lies. Kathman (2010:993) argues that military interventions can serve as a signal to potential rebels or agitators within the state, indicating "a willingness to pay costs in pursuit of stability." Among others, Kathman cites the example of Turkey's 2008 incursion into Iraq as a signal of resolve to Turkey's own Kurdish population.

Three of the most visible direct spillover effects of nearby conflict are the movement of refugees, soldiers (rebel or government), and arms/equipment across a shared border. Each of these three demographic or resource flows affects neighbor-state policies and stability in various ways, but for the purposes of this chapter I will focus on their effects on conflict contagion, domestic pressure on leaders to act, or other areas where leaders' survival or subordinate goals are threatened. The key mechanism tying nearby instability or conflict to regime response is the effect of that conflict on a domestic population's opportunity and/or willingness to challenge the regime. A conflict's direct threat to leaders' subordinate goals is important, but the primary concern both for leaders and for this section is the effect of conflict externalities on domestic pressure.

The presence alone of refugees in a country has been found to increase the likelihood of civil war onset (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), and the presence of such refugees can have particular effects on domestic actors. Refugees may increase the level of grievance for local populations as the refugees compete (or are perceived to compete) for jobs and scarce governmental resources, upset a fragile ethnic balance, or otherwise spark a political crisis (Weiner 1992). Though there are cases where refugees can actually increase economic activity in a host state, there is a key difference between voluntary migrants and those driven out of their home country by current or looming conflict. Conflict refugees are not "selected" based on particular economic skills or with perceived opportunities in a destination country, and thus are less likely to lead to increased economic activity (Cortes 2004).

In the case of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, the relative enthusiasm with which local residents received refugees in their communities has waned in some cases once competition for increasingly scarce resources ramped up. Original government plans to provide agricultural land rights to incoming refugees have had to be scaled back somewhat or done away with entirely as both the number of refugees and their concentration among increasingly upset local populations have increased.

The relationship between refugees and ethnic or other groups in both the civil war state and the neighbor state can also affect pressure on the neighbor-state regime. If the refugees have a particularly strong stake in the outcome of the conflict, which is even more likely if they share group membership with actors still present in the civil war state, they can pressure host

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governments to get involved or take it upon themselves to supply arms, funding, or troops to militant groups across the border (Salehyan 2009). If the refugees share ethnic, religious, or other ties with a politically powerful group in the neighbor state, this also increases pressure on the government to provide services and support to the refugees, affiliated actors in the conflict state, or both.

Multiple studies have also found that refugee populations are a major factor in the transmission of disease and other negative public health outcomes (e.g. Ghobarah, Huth, and Russet 2003; Iqbal 2010; Tabbaa and Seimenis 2013). For example, the conflict in Syria has destroyed health care infrastructure, driven out health care professionals, and created serious setbacks for vaccination programs. Both populations within Syria and destination countries for refugees have seen marked increases in the incidence of poliomyelitis, measles, and other infectious diseases (Shahara and Kanj 2014). Speaking generally, an influx of refugees may be overburden local and national health care resources, increase the likelihood of an epidemic, or hinder the provision of public services by taxing the economy of the neighbor state. Keeping in mind that neighbor states often suffer from poor economies and weak institutions already, a restive public may blame the government for neglecting its own citizens in favor of refugee populations.[11]

Refugee populations can also affect the likelihood of conflict in a host state directly through mobilization. Refugees with grievances toward their countries of origin (or the host state) may have stronger reasons to mobilize, on top of which they face few opportunity costs to joining an armed group (Zolberg et al. 1989). Though the proportion of refugees which radicalize and become violent is usually very small, conditions in camps or centers coupled with host-country treatment can encourage militarization (Milton et al. 2013). In certain cases, host states use this possibility strategically, facilitating refugee mobilization in order to further domestic or international goals (Stedman and Tanner 2003; Camarena Working Paper). Alternatively, the regime can label refugees as a threat and use them as an excuse for repression or targeted

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[11] This is not meant to imply that the local population will always resent refugees or respond negatively. As the case of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda demonstrates, host communities often willingly and generously welcome refugees. However, even in cases where local populations are supportive (and possibly even directly invested in the survival of the refugee population in cases of ethnic or religious ties), it seems likely that pressure on the government would increase to improve the provision of services and goods to the local population, to the refugees, or both.

violence. For example, President Conté of Guinea issued a public call to expel refugees in 2000, stating that refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia were aiding local rebels. Even where refugees themselves are not militarized, violence can increase through terrorist attacks targeting the refugees or the aid workers sent to assist them (Choi and Salehyan 2013).

Rebel movement across the border into a neighbor state can also threaten regime survival and thus prompt a regime response. Rebels often seek foreign sanctuaries to avoid government troops, and the resource advantage conferred by these bases is one factor hypothesized to make civil wars in border regions last longer and spread to more territory (Salehyan 2009, Buhaug and Gates 2002. Buhaug et al. 2009). As Phillips (2015) explains, whether the regime supports the rebels or the government in the neighboring conflict, the presence of rebel troops can increase the likelihood of domestic or international conflict, both of which tend to threaten leader survival. Neighbor regimes sympathetic to the rebels may still need to modify policy to thwart anticipated civil war-state reprisals while regimes antagonistic to the rebels worry about direct attacks from the rebel troops or their presence stirring up domestic discontent or imitation.

As rebels and government troops battle near a neighbor's border, the possibility of government incursion into the neighbor's territory increases, particularly if rebels cross first. Government troops may intentionally or unintentionally cross a border in pursuit of rebel actors, especially where the neighbor state government is unable or unwilling to deprive rebel actors of cross-border sanctuaries (Salehyan 2008). These violations of territorial sovereignty may require strong policy responses as a signal to both domestic actors as well as the civil war-state government and other international actors that future violations will not be tolerated. States have incentives to cultivate a reputation for resolve that signals to both international and domestic audiences that the state in question is both able and willing to respond to threats. This proclivity toward reputation building through visible policy actions is increased in states which anticipate future conflict (Sechser 2018). The increased possibility of military buildup and troop movement to secure a border is one of the reasons that civil wars and the movement of troops across borders can lead to interstate conflict between neighbors (Salehyan 2009).

All of these factors (the movement of refugees, rebel forces, and government forces) are seen in the case of Rwandan refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the mid-

1990s. Rwandan refugees in those camps, mingled with perpetrators of the 1994 genocide, were seen as a threat to Rwandan state security, particularly with the border as porous and insecure as it was during this unstable time. Among other factors, these camps were a major driver of the Rwandan decision to intervene the conflicts. On the domestic front, Rwanda responded to the aftermath of the genocide along with the presence of refugees and genocidaires across the border with prosecutions, tribunals, and a careful campaign of information control.

Neighboring civil war violence can also increase the flow of weapons, ammunition, and other materials which could support or maintain a violent campaign of action. Much of this transfer is related to the flows of refugees and government or rebel soldiers mentioned above. The presence of large refugee populations or rebel sanctuaries make it much more difficult for neighbor states to contain the flow of arms (Salehyan 2009). The problem of containment is amplified for states with low levels of state capacity, which is often the case for states located in conflict-prone neighborhoods (Braithwaite 2010). Current research on the effect of arms flows is hampered by data scarcity, but case studies and small-scale analysis leads to a few conclusions on the effect of arms on conflict. Scholars argue that the lower cost of arms (monetary or otherwise) in combat regions increases the opportunity for disaffected groups within a neighbor state to violently oppose the regime (Forsberg 2014). Others argue that mountainous borders should make these transfers more difficult, and thus decrease the likelihood of conflict diffusion (*ibid.*). Conversely, a long shared border, with the concomitant difficulty of monitoring and policing the border region, is thought to make the transfer of militants and arms easier (Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008). Neither of these last two propositions has thus far found empirical support.[12]

A neighbor state currently experiencing domestic unrest with the existence or possibility of violence is likely to perceive a high level of threat from the movement of arms or rebels across the border if disaffected domestic actors have access to those weapons and/or a connection with the rebels. In 2012 the Turkish foreign minister accused the Syrian regime (already

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[12] These studies do not measure arms flows directly, but rather assume that they (along with other flows) are more or less likely based on border characteristics. Other factors could explain the lack of findings, and of course it is not possible to conclude from individual studies the effect (or lack of effect) of arms on conflict diffusion.

involved in civil war by this point) of arming both the Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), both of which are Kurdish groups pressing for increased rights and a possible independent Kurdish state. As arms and expertise flowed from the Syrian government-supported PYD to the PKK, leaders in Turkey decried the effect this would have on PKK activity within Turkey. Although the situation along the Turkey-Syria border involves many other actors and issues, the direct flow of refugees, troops, and arms across the border into one of Turkey's more vulnerable regions was (and remains) deeply worrisome to the regime. Turkey's political leaders face threats not only related to the possibility of domestic conflict, but also threats to political survival by electoral means and coup attempts if they are seen to be mismanaging the situation.[13] As was mentioned earlier, Turkey also has a history of conflict intervention in order to signal resolve or capability, in addition to or beyond other goals (Kathman 2010).

Indirect Spillover

Some aspects of a nearby conflict do not include physical transmission across a border, but still have very direct effects on instability in neighboring states. One of the clearest examples of this is the economic impact of nearby civil wars. States engaged in a civil war often see their level of international trade reduced (Bayer and Rupert 2004). Though this is clearly detrimental to the civil war state itself, it also serves as an economic hardship for neighbors that rely heavily on trade with that country. Murdoch and Sandler (2002, 2004) find that civil wars reduce both short-term and long-term economic growth prospects not only in the civil war state itself but also in states in the surrounding area. A later study by de Groot (2010) challenged some of these findings, showing evidence that civil wars had negative effects on growth for directly contiguous states, but "secondary" neighbors, or those in the region but not directly bordering the conflict state, actually saw some economic benefits.[14] I believe that since a variety of economic effects can occur, partly dependent on conflict dynamics that may not be apparent to neighbor-state audiences and leaders in the moment, the uncertainty around economic outcomes should increase when neighbor states face nearby conflicts.

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[13] Turkey's domestic political situation, with the 2016 coup and Erdogan's ongoing attempts to consolidate power in the executive, is very complex. Civil wars in the region are certainly a cause of instability, but it is difficult (if not impossible) to tease out the relative influence of the various factors threatening the regime.

[14] This study covered only a sample of countries in Africa from 1960-2000. The effects were also strongest for higher-severity conflicts.

Civil war neighbors, many of which already suffer from poor economic prospects, are vulnerable to the economic shocks that can occur in relation to nearby violence. As countries become more integrated into regional and global economic networks, their economies become more interdependent and thus more susceptible to negative economic externalities arising from nearby conflict (Carmignani and Kler 2016). This growing interdependence is not uniform across all states, however, and the threat of nearby conflict to economic stability should be highest for those states most dependent on the stability of nearby neighbors.[15]

Multiple cross-national studies have found that negative economic conditions decrease the chance of an incumbent and/or political party remaining in power (e.g. Marinov 2005; Williams et al. 2013). Thus, poor economic outcomes threaten the survival of leaders by increasing pressure from key domestic groups to enact policies that will address the economic issues. Even if reduced trade, reduced economic growth, or other issues do not directly affect the interests of key constituencies, a leader's subordinate interests may still be threatened. Many leaders, particularly autocratic ones, hold large personal stakes in public or private businesses and organizations that might suffer from a nearby conflict.[16]

Another major indirect spillover effect from civil wars is information. The basic assumption behind information flows as a mechanism of conflict diffusion is that local actors update their beliefs in response to the onset and management of violence abroad. Actors receiving information may adapt their views on which political claims are legitimate, possible government responses to these claims, strategic or tactical choices in seeking policy change, and the probability of successful outcomes. (Lake and Rothchild 1998).

Many studies of information flows and conflict diffusion focus on ethnic conflict (e.g. Kuran 1998, Forsberg 2008, Bakke 2013), but information transmission can serve as a diffusion mechanism in other types of conflict as well. Considering a range of such studies, Weidmann

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[15] This includes states that trade (or traded) heavily with civil war states, but also landlocked or otherwise constrained states whose economic fortunes depend heavily on neighbor cooperation.
[16] A possible example would be the (purported) stake that Vladimir Putin holds in various natural resource and arms companies within Russia. Putin denies these ties, but if they exist and were to be threatened by a civil war (or other event), Putin might act to protect those interests despite a lack of popular interest in the issue.

(2015) identifies three ways in which information can lead to the spread of conflict. First, information about a neighboring conflict can make ethnic divisions more salient among a local population, as well as lead to increased claims made on the basis of ethnicity. In non-ethnic conflicts, it seems plausible that other identity divisions may also become more salient after neighboring conflict brings previously irrelevant or dormant grievances to the surface. Second, observation of a nearby conflict can provide tactical information to potential rebels within the neighbor state. Third, observation of a successful actor with which a group identifies in some way in the civil war state can lead a domestic actor to update beliefs about the likelihood of success and adjust demands accordingly.

Though I have discussed direct and indirect spillover threats to a neighbor state's regime separately, the two are not mutually exclusive. In fact, if direct threats (movement of people or materials) are occurring, it is hard to imagine a situation in which there is not some economic threat or learning process also occurring. Complicating the matter further, I believe that a large amount of the disruption caused by nearby civil conflict can arise in the absence of ongoing direct spillover. This is due to the high amount of uncertainty that these conflicts engender both for regime leaders and the key domestic groups whose support is vital for regime survival. This uncertainty, both in terms of what effect nearby instability will have and what domestic actors will do about it, serves as the jumping-off point for the theory presented in Chapter 2.

Looking Ahead

The remainder of the dissertation will proceed as follows. In Chapter 2, I introduce a theory of how the uncertainty and constraints facing leaders of neighbor states interact to produce a unique threat environment when nearby states experience civil war. I will also expand on the introduction's discussion of conflict neighborhoods to clarify why neighbor states already face a variety of threats and constraints that exposure to civil war externalities only exacerbate. The implications of this threat environment for leader survival, response options involving consolidation or expansion of political power, and choosing sides in a nearby conflict lead to hypotheses for each of these three sections. I will explain the logic for each set of hypotheses, which will be tested empirically in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 describes the research design for my study. Though my sub-groups of hypotheses related to the three key questions of the dissertation necessitate different empirical approaches

and different data/variables, there is enough overlap that I take time in this chapter to discuss the scope of my analyses and explain key variables shared across chapters. Chapter 3 also includes some more in-depth discussion of the creation and properties of particular variables in more detail than I can adequately give in each individual empirical chapter. I save the explanation of unique independent, dependent, and control variables for each chapter for the corresponding section.

Chapter 4 considers the question of how nearby civil war threatens leader survival. Continuing from the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, I examine the effect of nearby conflict on leaders losing office or facing coup attempts. I discuss both the statistical and substantive significance of my results, which in brief show that leaders are more likely to lose office when a nearby conflict involves a group with shared ethnic ties to the neighbor-state leader. I also find that conflict occurring on a shared border, rather than in more distant locations in a nearby state, increase the probability of a coup attempt.

Chapter 5 takes a similar approach to consider the effect of nearby conflict on coup proofing policies undertaken by neighbor-state leaders. After a discussion of how nearby conflict makes coup attempts more likely but also provides an opportunity to consolidate power with a possibility of less domestic pushback, I test the relevant hypotheses from Chapter 2. I again display and discuss the statistical and substantive significance of my findings. Though various measures of nearby conflict show evidence for an increased likelihood of coup proofing, there is a key difference between cases where the violence does or does not reach the shared border. I briefly discuss the implications of these findings in Chapter 5 before returning to that topic in the conclusion.

Chapter 6 again looks at domestic responses to nearby conflict, but unlike the narrow focus on coup proofing from Chapter 5, here I consider broad indicators of cooperative or conflictual policies in relation to the conflict state. Neighbor states may have an interest in supporting a particular side during a nearby civil war but wish to avoid the risk of direct intervention. Chapter 6 looks at the drivers of domestic policies or pronouncements that signal support for one side or the other in a nearby conflict, finding that a dominant ethnic group with co-ethnics also in power across the border leads to a higher likelihood of cooperation with civil war states. Other findings from this chapter are more mixed.

Finally, in Chapter 7 I give a summary of the findings from each empirical chapter along with a discussion of how to interpret those findings as a whole. In this discussion I also cover future research topics in this area, limitations of this study methodology, and the implications of my findings for policy and academic work in this area.

Chapter 2: A Theory of Threats and Opportunity from Nearby Civil War

This chapter argues that civil wars and lower-level conflicts in a country's neighborhood present direct and indirect threats to leader survival, and that a better understanding of the interaction between those threats and a leader's political constraints can help scholars and policymakers predict and interpret the effect of civil war violence and uncertainty on state decision making. Leaders have a multitude of political and personal goals, and holding office can be both a prerequisite and an advantage in accomplishing some of those goals. Leaders are primarily constrained by domestic institutional and political factors in achieving their goals, and nearby conflict and unrest can have varying effects on leader survival and decision making based on factors related to the conflict, the leader, the relevant constraints, or a combination of the three.

The layout of this chapter is as follows: I first introduce a theory of how the uncertainty and constraints facing leaders of neighbor states interact to produce a unique threat environment when nearby states experience civil war. Following the sections on uncertainty and constraints on executive decision making, there are three separate sections which correspond to the three empirical chapters of the dissertation. In each section I present a series of hypotheses related to different aspects of threats to political survival and leader response. The "sub-theories" and hypotheses for subsequent chapters in the dissertation consider how threats to leaders vary, how autocratic leaders specifically can respond by consolidating or expanding their power through coup proofing, and how domestic demand to support a particular side in a nearby conflict can lead to both domestic and foreign policy responses.

Uncertainty and Nearby Civil War

I consider uncertainty about a nearby conflict as roughly analogous to indirect information spillover, by which I mean that it can exist whether or not there is direct movement of resources or people. Because uncertainty plays such a key role in the theory presented below, I first lay out what I mean by this term, which aspects of neighboring civil war produce uncertainty, and how it is likely to be experienced by different actors in a neighbor state.

Though this uncertainty is experienced by actors in the conflict state as well as internationally, the two critical groups experiencing the uncertainty are neighbor-state leaders and the

domestic population in that state.[17] For either of those two groups, nearby conflict generates uncertainty in a variety of ways which will be covered in more detail below. To frame this discussion, consider the following vectors of uncertainty when facing a nearby conflict. First, both groups will find it difficult to predict the victor in a nearby civil war, making it difficult if not impossible to predict future policy decisions by a regional actor. If a neighbor state is not yet experiencing many (if any) ill effects from conflict externalities, there is uncertainty over the likelihood of those externalities beginning to spill over, as well as uncertainty over the exact effects of refugees, arms, disease, and other specific conflict consequences. If the exteranlities are already having negative effects, there is uncertainty over whether the situation is likely to improve or deteriorate in the future, and on what timetable.

Even this description of the uncertainty generated by a nearby civil war is still treating leaders and domestic groups alike as passive receptacles of conflict consequences. Domestic groups face uncertainty over what leaders will do in response, as well as whether those responses are likely to make the situation worse or better. Leaders have reasons to be uncertain about the appropriate response as well, particularly because they cannot accurately predict not only whether the response will "work" but also how the domestic groups will respond regardless of policy success.

Some of the specific factors that lend a high degree of uncertainty will be discussed later, but to give a brief example of why it can be difficult to predict the consequences and outcomes of nearby civil wars, consider again the case of South Sudan's current conflict. What restarted in 2013 as a roughly straightforward, two-party conflict divided along ethnic lines between President Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar has evolved into a highly fractionalized, multi-party conflict. Beyond the main government and rebel forces, over 40 militias are now involved in a conflict that includes disputes over grazing and land rights, civilian targeting by actors on both sides, and instances of intra-tribal violence.[18] The flow of refugees, weapons, contraband, and other direct (or indirect effects) of the conflict already make for an unpredictable situation for South Sudan's neighbors, but without a clear sense of how the

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[17] Under the umbrella of "domestic groups" there are important distinctions between how civilian and military actors might consider possible threats and opportunities related to conflict uncertainty, but those will be covered in more detail in the relevant sections below which discuss particular threats or policy resopnses.

[18] http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/07/31/prospects-for-peace-in-south-sudan/

conflict might end or who might rule South Sudan afterward, uncertainty for leaders and domestic audiences alike increases. Even if neighbor-state leaders know how various concrete civil war externalities might affect their own chances of political survival, accurate prediction of those externalities with any level of confidence is difficult if not impossible. This impossibility of prediction makes selecting the appropriate policy response difficult as well, as neither leaders or domestic groups are likely to be able to fully anticipate how the other group will respond.

More generally, the likelihood of leader survival is a difficult prospect to estimate under any circumstances. When scholars attempt to quantify a level of job insecurity for leaders, studies have focused on observable indicators like time in office, previous patterns of leader turnover, economic growth, leader age, and regime type (Cheibub 1998, Conrad and Ritter 2013). Beyond these domestic characteristics, outside events, shocks, and crises also have implications for leader survival. When looking at the ability of outside actors to accurately estimate the likelihood of leader survival, scholars generally start from the assumption that a state leader him/herself has a better estimation of that probability than outside observers (Spaniel and Smith 2015). Still, uncertainty about survival can exist even for leaders, and there are cases where loss of political office can come as a surprise both to outside observers and the leader in question. The 2016 electoral defeat of incumbent president Yahya Jammeh in the Republic of The Gambia seemed to be unforeseen even by Jammeh himself, who had ruled as a highly authoritarian leader since 1996. He did not appear to have a plan in place in the event of an electoral defeat, as he moved erratically from concession to defiance to flight into exile within two months.[19]

Gauging resolve and predicting survival likelihood is even harder for neighbor-state leaders when trying to predict the character, policy choices, and likely survival of successive leaders (Wolford 2007). This lack of reliable information about other sides in a dispute is a major driver of bluffing and conflict (Fearon 1994), and even if a civil-war state is not a likely candidate for a bilateral dispute or conflict, the lack of certainty about its leader's future can destabilize a neighbor state. These drivers of uncertainty are likely to be intensified in a civil war context where a neighbor state would first have to gauge the likely victor and then consider likely successors. For rebel groups, if political structures exist at all outside or exist alongside military

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[19] http://www.reuters.com/article/us-gambia-politics-idUSKBN15505N

or military-style power structures, they are not likely to mirror traditional political parties or authoritarian ruling groups. The non-traditional makeup of these rebel-affiliated political organizations is likely to make predicting the future behavior of its political actors very difficult.

Civil wars create uncertainty on multiple levels and across multiple actors. In the "purest" civil war case, with a single rebel actor fighting a government in an environment with no outside support for either party, the likelihood of victory can be estimated with some level of confidence given relative military strength, support in the population, and other factors.[20] Civil conflicts do not always take this path, however. Conflicts often include multiple rebel groups fighting against a government that may or may not be supported by domestic militia groups or other internal actors. The greater the fractionalization in a conflict, the more difficult it becomes for all actors involved (or observing) to accurately update beliefs about the likelihood of victory for one group or another (Cunningham 2010). In addition, both the civil war government and outside actors have a difficult time estimating the likelihood of a government or rebel victory in cases where external support is present or anticipated (Sawyer et al. 2017). In South Sudan, this difficulty is illustrated by the large number of armed groups participating in the conflict in conjunction with the ongoing and possible intervention on the part of the United Nations and regional actors. Even if the relative military capabilities of government and rebel forces was available (to the actors themselves or to an outside audience), these other factors make prediction of a victor difficult.

There does not seem to be a reason to believe that neighbor states would be any better at estimating probable outcomes than the civil-war state leaders themselves. This uncertainty can affect the political survival of neighbor-state leaders both by influencing their own policy responses as well as through its effects on the perceptions of key domestic actors in the neighbor state. There is some evidence that revolutions tend to bring personalist leaders with aggressive foreign policy into office (Colgan and Weeks 2015). Even if relations between the neighbor and civil-war states have been cordial enough in the past, the prospect of a more aggressive leader arising out of the conflict may have negative implications for future relations.

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[20] Uncertainty can still arise from an inability to predict the effect of various conflict externalities, but the uncertainty over future leadership of the civil-war state would be at its lowest in this hypothetical.

Neighbor-state leaders faced with an uncertain conflict environment are likely to have decreased confidence in accurately predicting their likelihood of political survival even in the (probably rare) cases where a neighboring conflict can be beneficial in limited ways. Even if the conflict is weakening a rival, allowing a regime access to increased market share in a shared industry, or giving additional regional influence, there is no guarantee that the political fortunes of the leader will improve. Despite potential benefits that accompany the negative conflict externalities, key domestic groups could decide that leaders had mismanaged or squandered these opportunities and push for changes in leadership.

Leaders can also face uncertainty in regards to domestic groups' true levels of support for the current regime, particularly in highly authoritarian states. Kuran (1991) describes a phenomenon of "preference falsification" whereby individual members of an authoritarian society have incentives to publicly support the regime even if their private preferences favor revolution or some other method of leader turnover. Individuals have a threshold for counter-regime action, and if a catalyzing event or crisis encourages members of society to oppose the regime, seemingly loyal members of the population may reveal their true preferences. Leaders thus face uncertainty not only about the likely effects of nearby conflict, but also about the loyalty of domestic groups critical to their own political survival. Though the original theory was used to explain the "surprising" revolutions at the end of the Cold War, more recent work discusses how authoritarian pressure helped mask the true size of opposition movements in both the Arab Spring countries and Ukraine (Goodwin 2011; Dahl et al. 2014)[21] The implications for this uncertainty and its interaction with policy responses will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Domestic groups in a neighbor state deal with the same uncertainty over current and future conflict externalities as leaders, but added to this is the uncertainty over what exactly their own leaders will do about it. This is problematic because in any political system, a group's decision to support a leader depends in large measure on its ability to accurately assign credit for successful policy choices and blame for unsuccessful ones. In a crisis, this attribution process

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[21] Authors such as Patel (2013) and Dahl et al. (2014) focus on the importance of public gathering places for opposition protests (Tahrir Square and the Maidan, respectively). The ability of individuals who oppose the regime to gather in central locations can give leaders an opportunity to gauge changing levels of opposition by observing variation in attendance at these focal points of protest.

becomes more difficult for domestic groups and potentially more consequential for regime leaders because citizens expect clear and unambiguous direction (Rast and Hogg 2016). This clear direction is expected to reduce uncertainty, and a leader's political survival often depends on their ability to successfully and decisively deal with crises (Haller and Hogg 2014). The chaotic and unpredictable character of many civil conflicts is likely to make it difficult for leaders, even well-intentioned ones, to offer "clear and unambiguous" policies. Success is difficult to gauge when many of the conflict dynamics are out of the control of regime leaders. The limits on media and other forms of information sharing in many authoritarian regimes can increase this uncertainty even further.

As noted earlier, nearby civil wars negatively affect economic growth throughout a region. If the civil war state is (or at least had been) a key trading partner, neighbor states will suffer greatly from decreased revenue if other sources of bilateral trade are not available as substitutes. A previous study has demonstrated that unsettled territorial disputes can lead to "economic opportunity costs in the form of foregone bilateral trade" (Simmons 2005, 823), and while a nearby civil war does not necessarily concern the neighbor state as directly as an ongoing dispute, the unsettled situation and uncertain future can create economic hardship for leaders and people alike.

Crises and unstable situations do provide opportunities for state leaders to consolidate power as well. This high-risk, high-reward scenario affords leaders a chance to centralize state authority in the executive if they can convince a concerned public that such an approach will provide increased security (*ibid.*). In the literature on state building, Tilly (1985) argued that states centralize and increase power and capacity through four primary activities. (1) *War making* protects the public from external threats, (2) *state making* does the same for internal threats, and (3) *protection of citizens* ensures that agents of the state meet the basic needs of the population. All of this depends on the successful development and management of a (4) *system of extraction.* In high-threat environments, domestic groups concerned about the fundamental values of security and safety are more likely to support higher levels of extraction in the service of the other state activities. Leaders may be able to convince domestic groups that increased extraction, decreased protection for civil liberties, or other measures will provide additional security in a time of crisis. The opportunity afforded to autocratic leaders in such

situations to push for power consolidation in the form of coup-proofing policies is the subject of the second set of hypotheses below and of Chapter 5 in this project.

In studies focusing on external territorial threats, leaders can increase state capacity both through increased funding granted to the executive and an increase in popular support for executive leaders (Gibler and Miller 2014). The salience of territorial threats gives leaders more latitude to centralize authority because territorial threats concern such a large share of the population (due to historical and cultural significance in addition to practical concerns) that domestic groups are willing to sacrifice for security (Gibler and Braithwaite 2012). Studies have typically focused on the outcome of centralization of power in response to such threats, but survey research has also shown an increased willingness by individuals to support unconstrained authority for leaders in the context of an external territorial threat (Miller 2015). Civil wars are not equivalent to external territorial threats, but I argue that the environment of uncertainty coupled with the possibility for destabilizing negative externalities from the conflict can afford neighbor-state leaders with a similar degree of latitude for centralizing power under certain circumstances.

Additionally, civil conflict can lead to the escalation of territorial disputes, particularly when warring parties in the civil conflict make use of the disputed territory as a pathway of retreat of for strategic advantage. Israel and Syria maintain a shaky ceasefire line in the disputed territory of the Golan Heights, but violence between Syrian government and rebel forces from 2012-2014 in the Quneitra Governate spilled over into the demilitarized zone and prompted clashes between Israeli and Syrian forces. Violence in the Kashmir region's civil conflict has also led to broader involvement by Indian and Pakistani forces over the disputed territory there.

Uncertainty over externalities and political consequences is only one part of the picture. Both the severity of the threat and the ability of a regime to respond are also affected by the influence of key domestic groups and the level of constraint on executive power in the neighbor state. For a threat to matter to leaders, either the civil war nearby must directly threaten political survival or subordinate goals, or it must pose a real or perceived threat to domestic groups in the neighbor state. Even if domestic groups are threatened, they must be willing and able to compel the leader to act, either through electoral or other means. I now turn

to the political constraints and regime characteristics that act as a bridge between threats to domestic groups and effective pressure on leaders.

Executive Constraints, Regime Type, and Nearby Civil War

If political survival is the *sine qua non* of leader priorities, the way in which domestic groups hold leaders accountable will affect both the threat posed by nearby civil war and the response strategies of threatened leaders. There are various formal and informal mechanisms of accountability, but it is useful to start with considering the regime type of a state and its relationship with nearby conflict. In a democracy, a leader's major concern is maintaining popular support as well as defending national security interests by minimizing externalities from the instability. In authoritarian countries, the concern is still for political survival and the minimization of externalities, but political support generally comes from a much narrower slice of the population. Due in no small measure to the events of the Arab Spring and other large-scale public demonstrations, the common view of authoritarian overthrow today often involves mass uprisings and protest against an unpopular regime. Despite this widespread view, Svolik (2012) explains that in cases of non-constitutional leader exit in autocracies, popular overthrow accounts for less than 1/3 of the events. The modal category for non-constitutional authoritarian exit is a coup event, and thus authoritarian leaders are likely to be most concerned about how any nearby instability affects the interests of the military and/or political elite.

This general concern of leaders (how the selectorate/key domestic actors will respond to the neighboring conflict as well as how those actors will respond to policy choices including inaction) serves as a backdrop to view the current findings on regime type and conflict, both at home and in the immediate region. Some research on susceptibility to civil conflict takes a binary view of regime type, arguing that democracies are less likely to experience civil war onset than autocracies (the "democratic civil peace" hypothesis, e.g. Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000, 2002; Walter 2004). Other studies consider variation within regime types, claiming that both established democracies *and* autocracies are resistant to civil war, while mixed regimes face the highest risk.[22] Regimes that are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic lack the grievance management mechanisms of democracy and the coercive capacity/repressive control of authoritarianism (Buhaug 2010). When domestic groups press for concessions or

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[22] These regimes are also known as anocracies, hybrid regimes, competitive authoritarian regimes, etc.

policy changes, democracies can work grievances through institutional channels and autocracies can repress effectively, but a state with only quasi-democratic institutions has likely already conceded as much as possible to public pressure without threatening a leader's political survival (Corbetta 2014).

Moving to threats of contagion or other negative externalities from civil wars, differences in regime type can still matter for threat sensitivity and response. Why might regime type, and its accompanying difference in the political importance of particular constituencies, matter for assessing leader survival in the context of a nearby civil war? A leader with fewer constraints on power and reliance on a smaller pool of supporters has two potential advantages. First, the negative consequences of nearby conflict can be diffused throughout the population without affecting the interests of the elite as directly. For example, a greater proportion of the diminished economic revenues can be distributed among the elites, leaving the general population to bear a greater burden. This parallels the situation where external sanctions on a country, particularly an authoritarian one, end up hurting the general population more than the leaders and elites who can push the costs and sacrifices off onto others (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2010).[23]

Second, the types of goods needed to placate supporters will differ. In democracies and autocracies with large winning coalitions, leaders find it necessary to provide public goods to maintain support. In the context of a neighboring civil war, these public goods can include general economic health, border security, and other provisions for society at large. In regimes with smaller winning coalitions, leaders can substitute more narrowly targeted private goods to satisfy coalition members. Many authoritarian leaders also act to tie the fate of their elite supporters to their own through selective promotion along kin or ethnic lines, or forced complicity in divisive policies.[24] These characteristics might allow less constrained and more insulated leaders to weather the storms of civil war externalities more securely than their more constrained counterparts. Though the context was not a neighboring civil war, research has shown that sanctions against the North Korean regime tend to harm the population instead of

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[23] Evidence on "targeted" or "smart" sanctions that attempt to directly threaten the interests and resources of elites is mixed (Bapat and Kwan 2014).

[24] e.g. participation in repression or violence against the population that gives the complicit elites incentive to ensure the survival of the leader rather than face the antagonized population or other groups.

elites as the Kim family simply redirects money and resources from the general population to key supporters during times of increased international pressure (Byman and Lind 2010). This strategy only works in the context of nearby civil war if the negative externalities take the form of easily transferable costs. As discussed in Chapter 1, civil war externalities are rarely if ever as direct and compartmentalized as external sanctions, and the addition of general uncertainty makes the likelihood of pushing this cost off onto a segment of the domestic population unlikely to succeed.

Though research on insulation against domestic threats does not usually deal with civil war externalities directly, there is evidence that leaders of small-coalition states are less vulnerable to political shocks of various kinds (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Within types of authoritarian regimes, personalist leaders face less risk of losing office in the face of negative policy outcomes up to and including losing a war than those risks faced by non-personalist autocrats and democratic leaders (Weeks 2012). The weakened ability of domestic groups to hold personalist leaders accountable serves to protect them from political threats that would unseat other leaders. It may be true generally that democracies care more about public opinion and autocracies focus on elite interests, but there is variation within regime types. For both types, there is variation both in the level of constraint placed on individual leaders as well as the general preferences of those in power regarding conflict behavior. Weeks (2012) argues that authoritarian regimes can be broken down into four subtypes based on the sources of support (civilian or military) and the level of personal power and autonomy (personalist or non-personalist) of the leader. The four ideal types of authoritarian regimes are machines (civilian non-personalist), juntas (military non-personalist), bosses (civilian personalist), and strongmen (military personalist).

Of these, Weeks argues that machine regimes face similar levels of domestic accountability and constraint to democratic regimes in terms of conflict and military policy. Domestic audiences in machine regimes are not likely to be much more forgiving of policy missteps than are democratic audiences, and the consequences of failure can be severe enough to deter rash action from leaders. The remaining three types have a higher willingness to engage in aggressive military policies either because of institutional and conditioned preferences for

military solutions (juntas), understanding of the necessity of force to acquire and maintain power coupled with a lack of constraints (bosses), or both (strongmen).[25]

Levels of constraint and political preferences (both of leaders and domestic groups) can both play a role in determining responses to threats. Higher levels of executive constraints coupled with policy transparency make it easier to predict the decisions that democratic states will make, and is one factor used to explain why we see lower levels of conflict escalation in democratic neighborhoods (Gleditsch 2002). States can respond more proactively and with more confidence to potential instability if there is a higher degree of confidence that certain policy responses, either during a conflict or in advance to stave off conflict altogether, will be effective. As I have outlined above, however, neighbor states are unlikely to be in stable democratic neighborhoods, and the uncertainty associated with nearby civil wars affects states regardless of regime type. Some scholars argue that democracies might actually be more vulnerable to conflict contagion, as open borders and other policies make them more vulnerable to spillover, both physical and informational (Maves and Braithwaite 2013).

Both democratic and autocratic leaders face constraints on their abilities to intervene directly in ongoing conflicts, though some of the reasons differ. Even if conflict externalities are threatening their political survival, democratic leaders may hold off on intervening because their reliance on multiple, broad-based domestic constituencies makes it politically problematic to do something that narrowly benefits only a subset of the population (Aydin 2012). As I will explain in more detail below, this implies that a threat that is salient to a large enough proportion of the population may overcome the democratic hesitancy to get involved. For autocratic leaders, the need to use regime troops and resources to maintain domestic order may render external engagement too risky. In many authoritarian countries, military and police forces are not separate, and the use of security forces for one task (repression or external military action) may leave too few for the other (Wright 2014). The risk is not only one of resource management, as autocratic leaders find it difficult to engage in coup-proofing *and* external military involvement also (Aydin 2012). If the goal of coup-proofing is to de-legitimize

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[25] These build off of Geddes' (most recent data citation is Geddes et al. 2014) regime classifications for autocratic regimes, but Weeks adds logic and coding rules for monarchies and non-consolidated autocracies, as well as updating the measure. The two measures are similar, but conceptualization and coding rules lead to differences in particular regime type classifications as well.

the military in the eyes of the public to avoid a coup, using the same military resources in an administration-sanctioned external effort might send a contradictory signal to crucial domestic groups. If the goal of coup-proofing is to weaken the military to reduce its ability to threaten the state leadership, it may be difficult to effectively use military force to intervene externally unless the reduction in force strength was carefully targeted and managed. These factors making external engagement less likely lead to some of the predictions in the third subsection below as well as in Chapter 6.

From these two sections, it is clear that both the uncertainty arising in the context of a nearby conflict and the political constraints imposed by different political systems affect both the threat leaders face and the pool of responses available in response to that threat. The following three sections will lay out how the interaction of these two factors influence leader survival, power consolidation, and signaling support. I begin with the effect of nearby civil war on leader survival.

Leader Survival under Uncertainty: Theory and Hypotheses

Prior research on leadership survival in international relations has focused on war outcomes and regime-type effects in relation to the political survival of regimes (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, Chiozza and Goemans 2004, Colaresi 2004, Debs and Goemans 2010). Domestic winning coalitions punish leaders who are unsuccessful in international conflict with removal from office, either by procedural/electoral means or irregular methods such as coups. Research by Debs and Goemans (2010) shows that war outcomes affect leadership survival in autocracies more directly than in democracies, despite the general assumption that democratic institutions and audiences hold leaders more accountable for policy failures. The authors explain this with references to the selection effects of conflict involvement in democratic states. Democratic leaders are likely to only choose conflict with weak enemies and/or where the odds of negative electoral consequences are low (Slantchev et al. 2005). In either case, there would be little negative effect of international conflict on leadership survival for democratic leaders.

There are marked differences between a situation in which state leaders elect to go to war and the context of interest in this dissertation, that of a state finding itself bordering a civil war. One recent study that comes closer to this sense of external threat without direct involvement looks

at the effect of transnational terrorism on leader survival (Park and Bali 2015). Transnational terrorism is an external security threat, and the authors find that terrorist attacks increase the likelihood of exit from power, though mainly for autocratic leaders. Leaders who cannot provide basic security in the face of terrorism are at risk of ouster from domestic audiences tired of foreign policy failures. Democratic audiences, on the other hand, might be more amenable to rally-round-the-flag efforts or other forms of leader support in the face of external threat.

While this terrorism study draws a closer parallel to neighboring civil war in that it focuses on external threat, it is still not a perfect analogue to a bordering civil war. Leaders facing a civil war on the border may not have as direct a line of accountability for externalities and conflict outcomes as leaders who elected to enter an interstate war through conscious policy choices. Terrorist attacks may seem further from the domain of control for a regime, but even in that case the regime actors are expected to respond directly to a targeted threat within the state. Civil war violence on the border can have multiple negative effects on a state without any direct choice by the regime to get involved or by external groups to target the state. In brief, civil war externalities can decrease the likelihood of political survival by highlighting perceived policy failures, motivating leaders to overreact in unpopular ways, and creating negative economic outcomes for actors in the neighbor state.

Poor economic outcomes and other externalities can hurt leaders directly by cutting into personal wealth or affecting prestige and credibility, but when the losses affect key domestic actors who have the ability to constrain executive decision making, pressure on the leader to minimize the effect of civil war externalities is likely to increase. Concerns about instability can have other effects as well, as the population in a neighbor state is likely to consider the likelihood of conflict spillover and how the regime will respond when choosing whether or not to support the regime. When faced with a neighboring war, leaders are likely to face additional scrutiny and pressure from political actors within the state. Unlike in cases of direct involvement in a war, where victory might garner additional popular support, the multitude of possible externalities from a neighboring civil war make it difficult to "solve" all the problems faced by political actors within the country. Furthermore, there is less of a chance to produce a rally-round-the-flag effect when regime leaders do not have a single, focused threat to direct public attention to. With so many chances to fail and few to visibly and decisively succeed, leaders faced with this situation should have a decreased chance of remaining in office.

General Threats to Survival

This domestic pressure to respond "decisively" is complicated by the previously discussed uncertainty which pervades many civil conflicts. Neighbor-state leaders often cannot be confident of which side in a civil war may prevail, how offers to negotiate or intervene will be received, how policy efforts to mitigate externalities will be received by domestic actors, and so on. Domestic groups, particularly in cases where current or perceived externalities are negative and severe, are not likely to ease up the political pressure simply because the situation is complicated. Rather than wait things out and see if current leadership is able to manage or improve the situation, domestic groups are likely to take action to push for changes in leadership.

- **H1a**: in periods when neighbor states are involved in a civil war, leaders' chance of removal from office will increase.

Many leaders face threats to their survival and survive, however, so removal from office may be too high a bar to set when testing the effect of nearby civil war violence on leader survival. President Erdogan in Turkey weathered a parliamentary election challenge in 2015 and a coup attempt in 2016 without losing office, and if anything his power has since increased with the April 2017 referendum on expanding presidential powers. Pressure has come from both political and military actors in part over his handling of the Syrian civil war and its associated externalities, but thus far Erdogan has maintained his hold on power.

As this dissertation project looks in a more general way at how leaders respond to civil war externalities and threats to their survival, it should not be surprising if some such leaders are more successful in maintaining or even increasing power in the face of these nearby conflicts. Removal from office is a strong indicator of threat to political survival, but there are many such threats or challenges that are either too small to result in removal, or successfully countered by regime or outside action despite the size of the threat.

Even as some threats are survivable, I still expect to see the general relationship between nearby conflict and challenges to a leader's survival in office. Even in cases where leaders are more likely to survive in office, the tendency of civil war externalities to highlight policy failure

and to motivate domestic constituents to demand leader responses should lead to an increase in direct challenges to a leader's regime, even if leader manages to stay in office. These challenges can take different forms, but a general pattern of anti-government action is expected.

- **H1b**: in periods when neighbor states are involved in a civil war, domestic challenges to a leader should increase.

In addition, the severity of the conflict externalities should lead to more pressure on leaders to act to remedy the situation. While leaders may not realistically be able to do much about many of the civil war externalities, key groups in society may not be as aware of political, military, and economic constraints compared to capabilities, and may still expect decisive action. The worse the consequences of the conflict, the more pressure placed on the regime to do something about it -- and the more opportunities to fall short. Many of those conflict externalities are the same factors that predict civil war onset in the neighboring country, and as the severity of those conditions increases, I argue that there is likely to be a concomitant rise in domestic pressure against the regime.

The severity of conflict externalities is not necessarily synonymous with the severity of the conflict itself, as different factors of location and the type of violence could actually have a conflict be very severe for participants in it but remain relatively contained. Because my argument hinges on the uncertainty and perceived threat generated by nearby conflict, the severity of externalities can either be directly experienced by key domestic groups or anticipated to occur in the near future. In either case, domestic actors concerned about the scale of changes brought about by conflict externalities are likely to pressure the regime to act, and to punish them if such action is seen as insufficient or ineffective.

- **H2a:** leaders' chance of removal from office in periods when neighboring states are involved in a civil war should increase as the severity of civil war externalities increase.
- **H2b:** domestic challenges to a leader should increase when neighboring states are involved in a civil war should increase as the severity of civil war externalities increase.

Executive Constraints and Threats to Survival

As mentioned above, regime type and levels of executive constraint have implications for leadership survival in times of crisis and political upheaval. Many studies of regime type and its effects focus on the propensity to initiate conflict. In the case of responses to civil war externalities, however, the choice to intervene externally or not, in addition to the choice of how to adjust domestic policy, does not necessarily follow the same logic. Constraints and preferences for policy solutions will still have an effect on regime behavior, but since the regime is not (at least initially) an active disputant, the conflictual tendencies of certain regimes may be borne out in other areas.

The variation within both democratic and autocratic regimes in the level of constraint faced by leaders means that predicting which leaders should be most vulnerable to removal in the context of a nearby civil war will not break down cleanly along regime-type lines. As leaders of small-coalition states are more likely to weather shocks of all kinds, it seems that the key mechanism linking political survival to civil war externalities is the ability of key domestic groups to hold leaders accountable for policy decisions. The research cited above finds that in most cases, democratic leaders are better able to survive challenges to their rule arising from negative external events, but nearby civil war is a different phenomenon. Effectively constrained leaders facing civil war externalities, regardless of whether the leader in question is constrained by electoral mechanisms or a powerful authoritarian support group, face a higher risk of removal from office. The uncertainty inherent in facing a civil war across the border makes decisive, visible success difficult while the constraints make removal and domestic challenges more plausible and attractive for domestic groups.

- **H3a**: leaders' chance of removal from office should increase when levels of domestic constraint on the executive are higher.
- **H3b**: domestic challenges to the leader should increase when levels of domestic constraint on the executive are higher.

This relationship between executive constraints and political survival should hold for general threats perceived by domestic groups, but certain characteristics of the nearby conflict may insulate or threaten some leaders more than others. Neighboring civil wars vary in more ways than intensity, and the existence of ties between groups in the civil-war state and important

political audiences in the neighbor state may lead to higher stakes for neighbor regime leaders. Under certain circumstances, such as the existence of close ties between populations in both states (ethnic, religious, etc.), the regime may face additional pressure to respond to the conflict, possibly even by intervening to help one side or the other. While the existence of costly externalities makes a conflict more salient by directly imposing costs on the population, even relatively costless conflicts (in terms of externalities) can have high salience if groups within the neighbor state have a vested interest in the conflict outcome for relational reasons. Increased pressure to act, at least when applied by a politically important group within the domestic population, will also raise the stakes for neighbor regime leaders.

This pressure does not depend entirely on the size of the group with shared ethnic ties. Israel's Druze population, which makes up less than two percent of the total population, still pressures the Israeli leadership to intervene more aggressively in the current Syrian conflict to protect the Druze living on the Syrian side of the border. Israel's 2018 resolution declaring itself a Jewish nation state has angered some Druze citizens of Israel, who now pressure the Israeli government not only to secure the dangerous border to protect their co-ethnics but even call for support of Assaad in order to stabilize the situation. Israel is unlikely to go that far, but it cannot afford to fully ignore even such a small ethnic group. In Turkey, the existence of Kurds on both sides of the border also pushes Turkey to respond to the conflict in Syria more than it might if such ties did not exist between an external population and a key domestic group, albeit one that is a strong opponent of the Erdogan regime.

It could be argued that the existence of ethnic ties could actually provide leverage to intervene more effectively into a nearby civil war, as the domestic members of the group could serve as a conduit for both material and nonmaterial means to influence the outcome. As discussed above, however, the diffuse nature of the threats and externalities from a nearby civil war and the uncertainty faced by leaders and groups alike are likely to make it difficult to satisfy domestic demands for decisive, effective action. These demands are likely to be particularly severe where relational ties exist between a key domestic group and a group in the civil-war state.

- **H4:** the negative effects of neighboring conflict on leader survival should increase when politically important groups within the neighbor state share ethnic ties with groups in the civil war state.

The above hypotheses are all presented to consider the effect of nearby conflict on leader survival. As the purpose of this dissertation stated, however, leaders are not passive actors simply waiting for the consequences of nearby violence to arrive. Rational leaders understand the threat that civil war poses, and should act to mitigate the threat or even expand their power in response to the opportunities presented by that conflict. I turn to this idea of power consolidation in the next section, where I consider the use of coup-proofing by authoritarian leaders in response to nearby civil war.

Power Consolidation: Theory and Hypotheses

As I discussed earlier in this dissertation, authoritarian leaders' modal category of exit from office is overthrow from elites within the country. The instability and negative consequences arising from nearby conflict may threaten elite interests and shake faith in leaders' competence enough that powerful domestic groups within a state may believe that removing a leader will improve the situation. Leaders recognize this danger, which does not exist only in situations where neighboring states are engaged in conflict, and have policy options to attempt to stave off such challenges from political or military elites within the state.

In early November, 2017, an anti-corruption committee in Saudi Arabia led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) arrested more than 200 Saudi citizens, including 11 princes along with many former government ministers, political deputies, and businessmen. The public rationale behind the arrests was the endemic corruption among political and business elites in Saudi Arabia, but another effect of this sweep was the consolidation of military power under MBS. Some analysts claim that another goal of the anti-corruption sweep/purge (if not the key goal) was to provide a distraction from ongoing foreign policy failures.[26] Between the inability of the Saudi regime to bring about desired regime change in the Syrian conflict and its worsening situation in Yemen, a relatively popular domestic policy such as an anti-corruption movement can help bolster popular support and keep the focus off of external failures.

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[26] https://www.dw.com/en/saudi-arabia-has-the-ritz-carlton-corruption-crackdown-achieved-its-goals/a-42373697

With the arrest of Prince Mutaib bin Abdullah, minister of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG), all three branches of the Saudi military are now controlled by individuals loyal to MBS. SANG's mission is unique among military branches, as it is primarily concerned with domestic stability and is composed of tribal units loyal to the Saud family.[27] SANG is also unique in the sense that it is the only branch of the military both directly under the control of and tasked with protecting the royal family. Its role in the intervention into the neighboring Yemeni civil war up to this point has been limited to action on the Saudi side of the border, the better to preserve its ability to protect the royal family from coup attempts and other domestic threats.[28] MBS only became the crown prince in June 2017, but his rise to the top of the power structures of Saudi Arabia is years in the making. The civil war in Yemen is only one instance of regional conflict, but it showcases how such instances of instability can serve as both threats and opportunities for state leaders.

The consolidation of power by MBS is not limited to the military or political sphere alone. As noted earlier, another key domestic actor in Saudi Arabia is the group of key religious leaders and clerics who influence public opinion about a variety of subjects, including the advisability of intervention into nearby conflicts. The Sahwa religious movement in Saudi Arabia has been active since the 1960s, and in recent decades has been critical of Saudi-led initiatives including the hosting of US troops in the Kingdom and the military rule following Egypt's brief government by the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2019, however, a key cleric in that movement distanced himself from it to show support for MBS and the Saudi regime - another sign that pressure from the government is leading to power consolidation across the spectrum of power in Saudi Arabia.[29] Dissent will not be tolerated, whether the group in question is religious, economic, or even members of the royal family.

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[27] Information in this section comes from the following sources:
https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21731021-muhammad-bin-salman-has-made-himself-sole-face-saudi-policy-saudi-arabias
http://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-arabia-prince-muhammad-bin-salman-may-seal-fate-with-purge-2017-11
[28] http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/11/saudi-national-guard-prepping-for-new-deployment-to-yemen-border/
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-government-defence-newsmaker/saudi-prince-relieved-from-national-guard-once-seen-as-throne-contender-idUSKBN1D40VG

[29]https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/04/how-is-mohammads-consolidation-power-affecting-oppositional-saudi-clerics/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.db05324b1a19

Authoritarian leaders face a tradeoff between effective military strength and minimizing the risk of coups and other internal disputes over power. Too many resources and too much autonomy devoted to the military can be risky if actors within the military structure decide that they would be better off putting themselves in charge. Commit too few resources, and you risk both external and internal predation on your power. The tension between granting a military branch power to deal with a threat and the possibility that the increased power will make the military itself a threat to regime survival is described by McMahon and Slantchev (2015) as "the guardianship dilemma", a problem which

> *"arises because of a mismatch between the military's strength and the threat it is supposed to deal with—if the military is underfunded, it will be loyal but deficient, and if it is overfunded, it will be effective but potentially disloyal—and the mismatch itself is caused by the divergent beliefs about the seriousness of the threat among the political and military leaders. This divergence can be a product of the military's specialization in dealing with threats, which entails access to superior intelligence and information processing when it comes to estimating potential dangers to the polity. The closer the rulers get to the military's own estimates about the threat, the narrower the belief gap, and the weaker the dilemma."* (298)

In other words, military actors are least likely to take action against a regime when both parties agree on the severity of the threat. If both recognize that the threat is low enough that neither side is particularly concerned, the regime can provide low funding and support without worrying about consequences of external predation. If the threat is mutually recognized as high, the regime sees the necessity of additional material support for the military, and the military understands that it would be imprudent to overthrow the regime only to need to fight the same external conflict with diminished resources. Two recent studies find that coups are less likely when a country is engaged in a war (Piplani and Talmadge 2015) or even a militarized crisis (Arbatli and Arbatli 2014). McMahon and Slantchev (2015) consider their formal model of civil-military relations with these empirical findings to predict that coups are most likely when a country is at peace, less likely when a crisis exists, and least likely in times of war. The existence and increasing severity of the threat are likely to bring regime and military actors into agreement.

Agreement on the scope of a threat does not necessarily lead to agreement on the best policy response, however. Years of distrust and disagreement between elements of the Turkish military and Erdogan's government preceded and may have precipitated the coup attempt in 2016. Presumably, both the military and the government understand the serious nature of neighboring conflicts and the contemporaneous domestic conflict with elements of the Kurdish population. Despite this mutually recognized threat, elements within the military apparently thought that past regime policy and prospects and/or prospects for future success were enough of a reason to attempt a coup.

This relationship between crises and coups is related to external threats, not domestic conflict. In fact, recent research on civil wars and coup attempts finds that an ongoing civil war increases the likelihood of a coup attempt (though not a coup success) in the civil war state, particularly when the state is facing a relatively strong rebel opponent (Bell and Sudduth 2017). Before discussing how the threat of a nearby civil war might increase the actual or perceived threat of a coup in a neighbor state and leaders' possible responses, I will consider the traditional explanations of first, why coup attempts occur and succeed, and second, when and why states adopt coup-proofing policies.

Coup Attempts and Coup-proofing

The traditional framework for understanding and predicting coup attempts focuses on two key aspects related to potential coup instigators - capacity and disposition (Bell and Sudduth 2017).[30] Capacity refers to the ability that plotters have to successfully plan and carry out a coup, while disposition refers to how dissatisfied the plotters are with the current status quo and with the incumbent leaders in particular. High levels of dissatisfaction may lead to plotters undertaking coup attempts even when the likelihood of success is lower (i.e. low capacity) because the idea of remaining under the status quo is so intolerable. The coup attempt by a small fraction of military actors in Venezuela in April and May of 2019 may be an example of this type of attempt. Capacity is a concept that relies on understanding more than the military or economic strength of potential plotters, however.

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[30] To return to the opportunity and willingness framework referenced throughout this project, capacity is equivalent to opportunity and disposition to willingness.

Coup plotters' capability depends in part on their organizational affiliation and role within that organization, as well as the degree of access they have to state leadership. Prior research into coup attempts also finds that the capability and confidence of plotters can be increased by general military strength (Powell 2012) and promises of support from external actors (Thyne 2010). Higher levels of public dissatisfaction with the regime, either due to poor economic performance or some other driver of perceived regime failure and/or illegitimacy, can also increase capability, as even momentarily successful coups can be reversed if military or public actors do not support the coup (Lindberg and Clark 2008). Other factors increasing the likelihood of success (and thus the likelihood of an attempt in the first place) include a shorter tenured incumbent or a history of military rule in the country (Powell 2012).

Before discussing what leaders can do to stave off coup attempts or deal with them when they occur, how might the context of a nearby civil war influence these drivers of coup attempts? As I have discussed previously, neighbor states are threatened by both the ongoing and potential externalities of a civil war in the region. The actual negative effects of the conflict on key domestic groups may be compounded by the concern over potential externalities in the future, particularly in cases where the nearby conflict is more severe or more proximate, or thought to become so. If these concerns about negative externalities are blamed at least partially on leaders, as I argue they are likely to be in the earlier part of this chapter, potential coup plotters should have an increased level of dissatisfaction with state leaders. As for capacity, an ongoing civil war nearby would not seem to universally increase or decrease plotter capacity, but rather would depend on factors largely under the control of neighbor state leadership. In short, a nearby civil war should increase plotters' disposition to attempt a coup, but will not have a uniformly positive or negative effect on their capacity to do so successfully. One area where capability may be affected is in the realm of public support for a coup. Successful coups require at least some level of support from the public, which itself faces negative externalities from the nearby conflict. These externalities, whether current or perceived to be likely, should make the public less supportive of the leader, and thus more likely to tolerate a non-constitutional mechanism of leader turnover. This possible public support would increase the military's confidence in its ability to successfully carry out a coup.

This leads to a discussion of the standard explanations of the conditions under which leaders choose coup-proofing strategies or policies. Leaders in authoritarian or newly democratized

states (which more frequently find themselves facing externalities from nearby civil wars) face many internal and external threats to their rule. Forcible removal by elites through a coup is both one of the most common of these threats (Svolik 2009, 2012) and also an event likely to end in the death, imprisonment, or political exile of the leader in question (Goemans 2008). Given this risk, leaders can employ a variety of coup-proofing strategies (discussed below) to decrease the likelihood that such coup attempts will be made in the first place or succeed once they have begun.

Studies on coup-proofing have generally argued (or taken as a given) that an increased coup risk will be associated with a higher likelihood of coup-proofing policies. A recent study by Jun Koga Sudduth (2017) challenges this claim. Sudduth argues that leaders have the incentive to increase their power relative to the military or other elites, and that coup-proofing policies are a key way of doing so. Military leaders do not want to see their power diminished relative to political leadership, however. Preferring the status quo level of power to a level more favorable to political leadership, military actors have incentives to stage a coup if they either experience the early stages of coup proofing or if they perceive that the chances of coup proofing in the future are high enough.

In other words, while leaders might want to engage in coup-proofing policies when the risk of a coup is high, the very act of taking such measure could be the event that increases the military's disposition toward a coup enough to actually precipitate a coup. Sudduth finds strong support for her argument, showing that the coup-proofing policies are less likely when the risk of a coup is higher. Leaders thus are more likely to engage in coup proofing when the risk is temporarily lower, such as when the economic fortunes of the state are positive or shortly after a previous coup attempt (successful or not). Under such circumstances, the military is both less likely to have serious grievances against the regime and less likely to gain public support for a coup. When coup risk is high, leaders can either choose inaction or choose to "spoil" the military by providing benefits in an attempt to decrease the disposition toward a coup. Buying off the military carries its own risks, however, as it increases military actors' capacity to successfully carry out a coup. This leads to the "coup trap" spoken of in literature of coups, where leaders are left with no good options in the face of a possible coup.

Coup Proofing and Nearby Civil War

The uncertain environment of a nearby civil war and its attendant externalities may or may not directly influence the likelihood of a coup attempt in a given moment, but rational leaders may consider coup proofing as a protective measure to ward off such attempts anyway. Speaking generally, coup proofing policies can take one of two forms: reduce the military's opportunity/capacity to engage in a coup attempt or reduce its willingness/disposition to do so. The second option, described above as paying the military off through increased funding, is seen as risky because it simultaneously empowers the military, possibly to the point that military actors believe that they can successfully stage a coup even though immediate grievances with the regime may have lessened in accordance with the increased funding.

Reducing military opportunity through direct cuts to spending or troop levels is dangerous for the regime, particularly in a conflict-prone neighborhood or where military forces are also used for suppression of domestic dissent. Instead of direct cuts, military opportunity can be reduced by short-circuiting the general pathways to coup attempts through reshuffling military officers, creating parallel forces to safeguard the regime (such as SANG in Saudi Arabia or the transition of the Janjaweed militias in Sudan into the Rapid Support Forces), or by purging key military leaders who are seen as threats to regime survival. Any of these coup proofing measures could presumably be used to reduce the likelihood of a coup in the situations described above that relate to the guardianship dilemma.

However, the situation of being located in a civil war neighborhood is not directly analogous to the findings mentioned earlier about coup likelihood during periods of international crisis or war. The description of the guardianship dilemma is focused mainly on contexts in which there is a direct military threat to the state in question, such as in cases of militarized disputes or war with the state as a target. In cases of neighboring civil war the threat is usually much less direct. Neighbor state leaders observing nearby instability may have reason to worry about being targeted by hostile forces, but the immediate concern of both state and rebel actors across the border is usually each other, not attacking bordering states. Either side in the civil war would need to have sufficient resources and motivation (opportunity and willingness) to initiate a dispute against the neighbor state despite being currently engaged in civil conflict of their own.

On the other hand, there may be a worry that once the neighboring conflict has ended, changes in the status quo arising from the conflict may lead to a higher probability of international conflict. Colgan and Weeks (2015) argue that revolution tends to bring aggressive, personalist leaders into power. Such leaders are more likely to have few checks on their power and instigate conflict after consolidating their authority following a civil war. Neighbor state leaders may be worried about just such a possibility and wish to prepare military for it.

The threat to a neighbor state regime does not only have to be external, however, and leaders may be most concerned about contagion effects from the local conflict leading to domestic unrest and possibly war at home. If contagion risk from a nearby conflict is high, the regime is placed in a particularly thorny dilemma. Increased military funding may be required not only to stem the flow of spillover from a neighboring conflict, but also to prepare for repressive activities to decrease the risk of civil war at home. At the same time, if the military's loyalty cannot be guaranteed, this funding may prove the regime's downfall directly should the military attempt a coup or side with domestic opposition forces. Leaders may risk their political survival through action and inaction both, as the "coup trap" describes.

Not every neighboring civil war presents this problem, however. If the regime is more concerned with refugee flows, economic consequences, or other matters that do not concern the military as directly, different concerns related to military funding may appear. The military will not require as much direct funding for coercive activities, but McMahon and Slantchev would also argue that this time without an immediate military threat will also lead to the highest information asymmetries between each group. Though the military may have a reduced role if the major threat comes from refugee flows or economic crisis, it may also be more willing to take control if the regime is thought to be failing in its job of providing private goods to military elites or others in the selectorate.

One possible way to examine the military threat posed by a nearby war is to consider its location within the neighboring state. Of note, Phillips (2015) found that the relationship between neighboring civil war and increased military spending only held when the civil war violence reached a shared border. Under such circumstances, not only would the possibility of civil war externalities be higher, but both military and regime leaders would be likely to agree

on the magnitude of the threat and be willing to increase military funding in response. As long as the military is engaged in critical action to safeguard the state (or at least perceives itself to be doing so), its leaders may choose not to use the increased capacity to launch a coup. This preoccupation of military leaders on the crisis at the border may provide just such a low coup-risk opportunity to engage in coup proofing that Sudduth (2017) predicts, however, as regime leaders may wish to consolidate power in the face of military leaders who are often the primary threat to leader survival in autocratic states.

The presence of a nearby civil war presents both threats and opportunities to a regime. Externalities can increase both military and public dissatisfaction with the regime, but the nearby threat can also give regime actors clear rationale and justification for consolidating executive power to maintain security. In uncertain times, leaders may act to ensure the loyalty of military forces by placing co-ethnic, co-religious, or otherwise affiliated individuals in key military positions or in competing military branches. This requires either removing existing leaders who stand in the way of power consolidation or strengthening alternative military organizations, as seems to have been the case with MBS and Prince Mutaib bin Abdullah. As coup-proofing strategies can be seen as a response to both threats and opportunities, my first hypothesis predicts that regimes finding themselves in such a position will engage in those strategies.

- **H5:** Leaders facing a neighboring civil war are more likely to engage in coup proofing than leaders not facing such a threat.

Coup proofing may ensure loyalty (or at least it is meant to do so), but it carries its own risks in terms of military efficacy. I thus consider two additional hypotheses related to the conflict or a regional threat environment which can influence the likelihood of coup proofing. First, conflicts that are either intense, located close to the border region, or both, are most likely to induce the highest fear of spillover and are thus most likely to spur responses of military buildup and intervention. However, if leaders simultaneously face a credible and large domestic threat (restive population, an adversarial minority population that shares ties with a group in the bordering conflict, etc.), authoritarian leaders may be less able than democratic leaders to both intervene externally and internally simultaneously (Wright 2014). Regime actors have an opportunity to engage in particular forms of coup proofing more often in these cases of

immediate or extreme threat, as military actors are not likely to stage a coup. Thus an immediate threat can increase the likelihood of coup proofing by temporarily reducing the likelihood of a coup attempt because the military may need to be ready to respond and opportunistic political leadership may take advantage of that preoccupation.

- **H6:** Coup proofing is more likely as the severity of civil war externalities increases.

Second, regime leaders are likely to be more willing to risk military effectiveness the lower the threat from the neighboring conflict. Leaders of neighbor states do not face the threat of civil war externalities in a vacuum, and many of these regions have multiple civil conflicts either overlapping in time or within a small range of years. Neighbor regimes must concern themselves not only with their capability relative to the civil war state, but also to other states in the region to determine whether the military risk associated with purges and other forms of coup proofing is advisable given the risks of spillover or entanglement in current or anticipated interventions or conflicts. The stronger a state is relative to its neighbors, the more likely it is to risk the possible period of military inefficiency related to coup proofing.

- **H7:** Coup proofing is more likely where the relative capacity of the state facing a neighboring civil war is higher in relation to all other states in the region.

Signaling Support: Theory and Hypotheses

Political science scholarship in recent decades has shown an increased amount of attention on third-party intervention into civil wars around the world. While neighbor states account for 1/3 of all interventions into civil conflicts, and do so for unique reasons when compared to more distant interveners, they still intervene in a small fraction of the cases where such a policy is possible (Kathman 2010). Studies that look at intervention, particularly those that treat intervention as a binary choice, consider all non-intervention policies together as roughly equivalent. Intentionally or not, this may give the impression that the alternative to direct intervention is doing nothing. As discussed in this project already, states have other policy options, both foreign and domestic, to respond to civil war externalities, and this section considers one particular area of these policy responses.

As an example of why direct intervention is both rare and an overly simplistic dichotomy given the situation of civil war neighbors, consider the policy choices of some of Syria's neighbors since the outbreak of civil war in 2011. Even those countries that have adopted direct military intervention into the crisis often did so only after years had passed after the outbreak of violence. Of the two most powerful neighbors,Turkey's direct intervention began in 2016, while Israel's military involvement has been limited to missle strikes, which were only admitted to in 2017 (actual start date unclear). The militarily less powerful neighbors Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq have participated to various degrees, but large-scale direct intervention for such states is either materially difficult, politically inadvisable, or both. As I have discussed in this project, domestic pressure on leaders to respond to a crisis is not likely to abate simply because capabilities to respond externally are low, so what can state leaders do instead?

In this section I consider one particular area of response, that being the ability that state leaders have to signal support for one side or the other in an ongoing nearby conflict without necessarily risking direct military involvement. I will first use previous research to explain when states intervene into civil wars and on what side (government or rebels), and then connect it to my theory of externalities, uncertainty, and domestic pressure to consider the implications for leaders who wish to respond to key domestic actors but not risk external entanglement in a conflict.

Civil War Intervention and Joining Behavior
When a third party considers whether or not to intervene in an ongoing conflict, the driving factors behind such a decision can span a wide range, from humanitarian reasons to more self-interested goals, not that the two are mutually exclusive. Research on third-party intervention looks at attempts to end the ongoing conflict (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000, Regan 2000) or more specifically attempts to affect the specific outcome in favor of either the government or the rebels (Gent 2008; Findley and Teo 2006). One of the most common definitions of conflict intervention policy is "convention-breaking military and/or economic activities in the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structures of the government with the aim of affecting the balance of power between the government and opposition forces" (Regan 1998, 756).

If the goal of intervention is influence over the conflict, potential interveners consider both their own capability/opportunity to make a difference and the likelihood that intervention will reduce the threat posed by the ongoing conflict (Kathman 2010). For civil war neighbors, the desire to reduce threats certainly exists, particularly when conflict externalities lead to domestic pressure to respond in some way, but the opportunity is not always available or politically advisable. Still, I will briefly review some of the logic behind civil war intervention and joining behavior to show how it applies (or does not apply) to a case where a neighbor state is more concerned about domestic pressure than the specific act of intervention.

Beyond humanitarian reasons, interventions can attempt to offset the current or projected intervention of a rival state, and the strong relationship between rival activity and a state's own intervention holds even beyond the Cold War context (Blach-Lindsay and Enterline 2000, Findley and Teo 2006, Gent 2007). Other factors include democratic interests (Peceny 1999), major power or colonial power status (Lemke and Regan 2004), and alliances (Findley and Teo 2006). More broadly, potential interveners consider a wide range of potential costs and benefits to intervention, including conflict-specific factors like duration and intensity as well as the domestic responses to intervention (Kathman 2010, Regan 2000).

When considering which side to support in a conflict, research focuses on either economic relationships or affinity ties. Strong economic relationships predict intervention, though traditional studies that assume that such a relationship will always predict intervention on behalf of the government side may miss certain situations, such as supplies of easily lootable resources held by rebel groups, that could lead to intervention on behalf of those rebels (Findley and Marineau 2014). When a potential intervener has ethnic, security, religious, or ideological ties to one side or the other in a conflict, intervention is more likely (Carment and James 2000; Davis and Moore 1997; Lemke and Regan 2004). In terms of ethnic ties, any existing ethnic ties have been found to increase the likelihood of intervention, but for the purposes of this project I want to look more closely at the nature of those ties and the direction of intervention.

Martin Nome (2013) looks at transnational ethnic groups and their influence on intervention decisions overall as well as decisions on which side to support. First, he considers the typology of dyadic relationships that can exist based on the relative importance of a

transnational ethnic group to each state's politics. Ethnic groups are classified either as dominant or marginal based on their position as in or out of power in a state. From the point of view of a potential intervener, both dominant-dominant and marginal-marginal pairings are more likely to lead to intervention on behalf of the government, either to help the shared dominant group win or to teach the shared marginal group a lesson by helping its opponents in a nearby conflict respectively. The earlier example of Turkey intervening in 2008 against Iraqi Kurds to demonstrate strength to its own Kurdish population is an example of a marginal-marginal pro-government intervention. Concerns about domestic unrest or even secession could lead a state to weaken its own marginal population's co-ethnics in a nearby conflict.

On the other hand, dominant-marginal ties (from the point of view of the potential intervener) predict pro-rebel intervention, as an intervener may submit to political pressure from its own politically dominant ethnic group to assist co-ethnics who are on the rebel side of a nearby conflict. The case for marginal-dominant dyads is not as strong, but if there are concerns about possible irredentism drawing in a marginal group within your country due to a nearby conflict, state leaders might consider intervening on behalf of rebels to prevent the dominant foreign, co-ethnics from assisting the domestic, marginal ethnic group within the state. Nome finds little evidence for any of these pairings other than marginal-marginal dyads being associated with pro-government interventions.

Civil Wars, Domestic Pressure, and Signaling Support
Intervention is a costly, risky policy choice for state leaders. As noted earlier, states in conflict-prone neighborhoods often suffer from the same fragility and risk that the civil war states themselves do, and risking a military intervention is unlikely. Still, pressure from domestic actors to act in support of or opposition to government or rebel forces can still exist. If leaders wish to respond to such pressure without going the route of intervention, what options remain and how can they address domestic demand for policies in a particular direction?

As this project lays out, leader response to civil war externalities may not be sufficient to ensure political survival, but leaders in desperate situations are likely to attempt to respond anyway. Last-ditch interventions, particularly if they require the use of military forces that are often a key component of maintaining stability, could conceivably leave the regime worse off

than before. While there are a variety of domestic policy responses that state could take, I want to focus on the possible value of signaling support for one side or the other in a nearby conflict.

The uncertainty generated by civil war externalities may prevent both leaders and domestic actors alike from accurately selecting appropriate policy responses or evaluating their likelihood of success, but certain dyadic factors between the neighbor state and the civil war state can pressure states to respond visibly to show that it takes a conflict seriously or that it supports a particular side, even if that support is not or can not be as direct or substantial as the domestic audience might care for it to be. Where uncertainty makes specific policy responses unlikely to fully address the problems that externalities present, a visible, confident response may stave off enough domestic pressure to be a stopgap for a regime looking to maintain political survival.

I will explain how the concept of visible signals of support is conceptualized and operationalized in more detail in Chapter 6, but a brief discussion here will help clarify what I mean by this type of signaling behavior. Leaders are able to signal support for external conflict actors in a variety of ways, not all of which require changes in formal policy or the passing of legislation. Statements of support or condemnation for one side or the other can indicate a preference for a particular conflict outcome even where direct intervention on behalf of a preferred side is too risky. There are many other actions which can indicate support, which I cover more completely in Chapter 6.

I do not argue here that the domestic signaling is actually likely to make a large difference in securing the survival of a regime leader, as the value of appearing to do something in response to a crisis is of limited use to an embattled leader whose population faces conflict externalities. Still, leaders may include such visible signals of support as part of an effort to stave off challenges to their rule or shore up a shaky coalition of domestic actors on whose support they rely. For example, President Abdul Hamid of Bangladesh has spoken out on numerous occasions to officially petition the international community to put pressure on Myanmar to accept Rohingya refugees to return despite the ongoing conflict. Pressure on Hamid to respond to the crises arising from the nearby conflict comes both from non Rohingya residents of Bangladesh who are concerned about economic and other effects of over one million refugees as well as the Rohingya themselves, who are a large enough group by this

point to have some voice (in a small way) in Bangladeshi policy. Whether Hamid is taking the side of the rebels for reasons beyond national self-interest or not, the ongoing conflict has led to domestic policies and pronouncements against Myanmar's government.

Where a civil war state is (or recently was) a strong economic partner, the ongoing conflict either is causing a disruption in the economic life of neighbor-state actors or could be perceived as likely to do so in the near future. While it is possible that a rebel victory could lead to even better economic ties, it seems likely that in most cases neighbor states have an incentive to stabilize the situation with an important trade partner. Regime leaders tend to prefer status quo relations, and this combined with the general likelihood governments winning due to greater strength than rebel forces (Koga 2011), leads to the following hypothesis. I predict that neighbor-state leaders who want to demonstrate that they are taking decisive action in the face of the nearby crisis can do so (albeit in a limited way) through domestic responses short of intervention.

- **H8:** Leaders are more likely to send visible signals in support of the government side in a nearby conflict when there are stronger economic ties between neighbor states and civil war states.

Research on intervention on behalf of one side or the other due to ethnic ties found only weak support (Koga 2011), but I believe that could possibly be because intervention is a high threshold for a regime to cross, both in terms of political and military risk. If there is a way short of intervention to signal support for one side or the other in order to appease or suppress a domestic ethnic group, these patterns may appear in cases of nearby civil war. Dominant ethnic groups in a neighbor state can pressure the regime to intervene in support of ethnic kin. Marginal groups cannot generally apply such pressure, but regime actors may choose to signal support for a particular side if doing so sends a clear message to the marginal group that the status quo is likely to stay. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- **H9a:** When a dominant ethnic group in a neighbor state has co-ethnics involved in a civil war across the border, neighbor-state leaders are more likely to take visible domestic actions that signal support of those co-ethnics.

- **H9b:** When a marginal ethnic group in a neighbor state has co-ethnics involved in a civil war across the border, neighbor-state leaders are more likely to take visible domestic actions that signal opposition to those co-ethnics.

Finally, even though domestic policy signaling support for one side or the other is not as risky as direct intervention, conflict-state regime actors who view clear displays of support for rebel forces in their country may remember that both during and after the conflict and adjust relations with a neighbor state accordingly. The more concerned that a neighbor state is about possible confrontations with the conflict state either during or after the ongoing civil war, the more likely it is to signal support for the government during the conflict. States which are less secure relative to their neighbors fall into this category, and this leads to the last hypothesis for this chapter:

- **H10**: The lower the relative capabilities of a neighbor state to a conflict state, the more likely it is to take visible domestic actions that signal support of the conflict state regime.

Looking Ahead

Each section of hypotheses above corresponds to one of the empirical chapters in this dissertation. Before turning to these chapters (Chapters 4-6), I first discuss data and research design issues in Chapter 3. That chapter will consider the scope of my study, operationalization of variables, testing strategies, and related information.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter lays out the research design which I will use to test the hypotheses which came out of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. The first section of the chapter explains how this project defines and conceptualizes the key concepts of "neighbors" and "civil conflict", and how different approaches to these concepts influence the scope and framing of this project. Further discussion of the temporal scope of the project will be presented in a later section, as different empirical chapters rely on data with different temporal availability. The second section of the chapter deals with the operationalization of key theoretical concepts into the shared independent variables which I will use to test the hypotheses from Chapter 2. Independent variables that are unique to one empirical chapter as well as dependent and control variables will be discussed in the chapter where they first appear. I will then briefly introduce the empirical models which will be used in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6.

Each of the later empirical chapters considers a different aspect of civil war neighborhoods and responses to threat, so the models and testing approach in each chapter differ in minor or major ways. With this is mind, this chapter does not attempt to cover every aspect of the empirical models for each successive chapter, as specific details relevant only for each chapter's approach to hypothesis testing are left to those chapters specifically. Thus, when aspects of a model are only applicable for a certain set of hypotheses, they can be discussed in that context.

Case Selection: Operationalizing Neighbors and Civil Conflict

I will explain how different variable availability constrains the scope of each chapter's analysis below in more detail, as well as in each chapter itself, but to provide context for the information discussed here and elsewhere, I will first give a brief overview. For Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 I use country-year data to consider leader exit and coup proofing on a yearly basis. Chapter 6 uses a directed dyad approach, which allows me to consider the response of a state to government or rebel groups in a neighbor state specifically.[31] In Table 3.1 below, I display the

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[31]See footnote 51 in Chapter 6 for a discussion of the relatively small number of cases for a directed dyad approach.

format of the data sets for each chapter along with the scope of the data, its form, and the number of cases included in analyses.[32]

Table 3.1

Data overview

Chapter/Hypotheses/Outcome	Domain	Type of data	N
Ch. 4: H1, H2, H3 (leader exit and coup attempts)	All regimes (1950-2006)	Country year	6,227
Ch. 4: H4 (leader exit and coup attempts)	All regimes (1950-1999)	Country year	5,253
Ch. 5: H5, H6, H7 (purges)	Autocratic regimes (1968-2003)	Country year	3,291
Ch. 5: H5, H6, H7 (pro-government militia)	All regimes (1981-2007)	Country year	2,643
Ch. 6: H8, H9, H10 (cooperative or conflictual policies)	Civil war neighbors (1979-2006)	Directed dyad year	2,243

Throughout this dissertation project I use the term "neighbor state" or some variation of it to describe states located near an ongoing civil conflict which are either at immediate risk of conflict spillover or found in such an environment that such risks are anticipated in the near future. Both the terms "neighbor" and "civil conflict" are not in and of themselves specific enough to immediately indicate what I envision empirically by the use of those terms, so I will begin by discussing how I operationalize concepts and how that affects the scope of my data.

Neighbor States

At its core, my dissertation project is concerned with the effect of actual or perceived conflict externalities on the politics of "neighbor states". As discussed in the first two chapters of this project, externalities can be direct or indirect, and in both cases they do not absolutely require

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[32] In each chapter I include bivariate association tables that may have a higher N than that reported here. The number of cases in Table 3.1 reflects those left once all relevant independent and control variables are included in the models, which can reduce the number due to data availability.

that a state share a land border with the state in conflict for the effects to reverberate inside a state. For example, direct externalities arising from refugees of civil conflict who flee from their home country do not necessarily stop only in immediate neighbors. Syrian refugees have certainly most immediately impacted Syria's regional neighbors, but countries throughout the Middle East and Europe have been affected whether or not they share a direct border with Syria.

Indirect externalities such as economic consequences or the flow of information certainly are not restricted to neighbors with shared borders either. As referenced in Chapter 1, civil wars have economic effects both for immediate neighbors as well as more distant states, though whether those effects are uniformly negative or may have some positive benefits is not fully clear (Murdoch and Sandler 2002, 2004; de Groot 2010). Another study specifically looked at communication between co-ethnics, finding that ethnic conflict in a state's major communication partner increased the risk of domestic ethnic unrest even for distant states (Weidmann 2015).

Though both direct and indirect effects do not really on immediate contiguity to a conflict state, I do not believe any of these studies or approaches have demonstrated that non-proximate states are at a higher level of risk than immediately proximate states. Thus, for the purposes of this project I believe the most valuable operationalization of the concept of "neighbor" is to restrict the definition to states which share a land border with a state in conflict, a characterization often described as direct contiguity.[33] Alternative measures are likely to either generate a large number of low-value cases, lead to validity problems, or both.

One possible alternative measure would be to consider all states in a region as "neighbors" to a conflict state. States tend to fixate most closely on relationships with other states in their region for a variety of reasons, including the likelihood of externality severity and the ability to respond (Stewart-Ingersoll and Frazier 2012). Some states consider their role as major regional players when deciding on policy responses to conflict, and such a self-selected role does not necessarily restrict itself to immediate neighbors. Iran has strong interests in ongoing conflicts

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[33] The commonly used definition of "politically relevant dyads" also generally relies on direct contiguity, though it also includes major powers as politically relevant for every other state in the system due to their ability to project power and influence globally.

both in Syria and Lebanon despite not sharing a land border with either state, and its broader regional goals make it sensitive to changes in the conflict environment of both. Despite the possible value of considering states as members of regional neighborhoods, clearly defining regions will always lead to arbitrary outcomes that privilege some relationships more than others. Rather than rely on previous conceptualizations of region or create my own, I avoid such a broad measure at all.

Another alternative measure of "neighbor states" could look instead at positive or negative affinity in the way of alliances, rivalries, or more general shared interests. Such ties might lead a state to care about conflict externalities through increased susceptibility to indirect externalities such as those affecting trade ties or co-ethnics in the conflict state. States do not require shared land borders to retain interests in a conflict state, as the above example of Iran demonstrates. For another example, research on diasporas has shown that such populations can affect policy both in the originating and the destination state including economic policy, conflict resolution and termination, and identity formation (Shain 2007). Still, measures of affinity can suffer from their own issues of arbitrary measurement or selective inclusion, so I avoid this more extended definition of "neighbor state" as well.

To measure direct contiguity, I rely on The Correlates of War Project data. Specifically, I use Direct Contiguity version 3.2 (Stinnett et al. 2002), which uses a five-point scale which indicates whether two states share a land or river border for any distance (land contiguity) or water contiguity at a distance of 12, 24, 150, or 400 miles. Some studies of neighbor response to conflict, such as Kathman's 2010 and 2011 studies on direct intervention, include as neighbors any pair of states who are found at any level of contiguity. This makes more sense when the primary concern is the ability to mobilize and project force even at a (relatively) short distance over water, but when the concern is perceived and actual threat from an ongoing conflict, including water contiguity is not as a clear of a choice.

To illustrate why including even the shorter measures of water contiguity might lead to low-value cases, consider the distance between the United States and Russia. Each state possesses one of the Diomede Islands, the pair of which are only four kilometers apart. Even at the least permissive distance of the first category of water contiguity, this would consider the United States and Russia as neighbors and thus at a risk of spillover from a civil conflict in

either state. It is hard to imagine the scope of a civil war in either country that would threaten its "neighbor" under this slightly more permissive definition. In a hypothetical civil conflict in either state, fighting would be unlikely to reach northeastern Siberia in a Russian conflict or western Alaska for the US case due to the lack of population density and domestic strategic importance for either state's government. Without direct combat operations likely, the chances of direct spillover are remote enough to border on absurd.

This is of course an extreme example, and there may well be cases where states separated by some body of water still fear spillover from a conflict. In order to be maximally confident in the validity of my cases, however, I choose to use only the measure of land contiguity to try to avoid problematic situations like the one described here. This is the basic conceptualization of neighbors for this project, though I will explain in a later section how this is modified to consider other possible sources of threat.

Civil Conflict

Throughout this project I refer to civil war states or civil conflict states to indicate a state which experiences an armed conflict between the government and at least one rebel group. When considering which conflicts do or do not meet this definition, scholars consider the following two points, among others. First, is the conflict only between a government and rebel group(s), or do external actors provide support to one or both sides (internationalized civil war)? Second, does the conflict produce enough casualties at a consistent enough rate to meet a particular definition of civil war? Keeping in mind that my project is primarily concerned with actual and perceived threat from a nearby conflict, I will briefly discuss my answer to both of these issues here.

In the discussion in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of civil war externalities, few if any of the negative consequences of such a conflict depend on the number of actors involved, either within the state or from outside. Conceivably, the threat to a neighbor-state regime and its population could be higher in the case of an internationalized civil war because the added resources and uncertainty arising from external support could lead to more disruption and a higher possibility of conflict spillover. Conversely, an external intervention could contain the situation (as is often the goal of such an intervention), leading to fewer externalities. Since general uncertainty and

the possibility of spillover are key mechanisms in my theory, I include civil wars whether or not external actors are involved in a given year.

When considering the magnitude of the conflict, conventional measures of civil war tend to adopt either a 1000 battle deaths/year threshold or a lower 25 battle deaths/year threshold. Even if a firm casualty number is agreed on, there are a host of issues involving accurate reporting, missing data, and casualties relative to population size, among others, that make accurate estimation of conflict severity difficult (Sambanis 2004). Assuming that conflicts that reach a certain casualty level are inherently more disruptive, especially in regards to a country's neighbors, can be problematic.

Consider the following two currently ongoing civil conflicts: the internal conflicts in Myanmar and the Central African Republic (CAR). By some measures the Myanmar conflict is the world's longest ongoing civil conflict, with its onset dated to 1948. The CAR conflict (or at least this iteration of it) is much younger, dating back only to 2012. Looking at casualty figures alone, both conflicts seem roughly equal in severity, with over 2000 battle deaths/year in each conflict. Myanmar's population (~53 million) is approximately 11.5 times the size of that of CAR (4.6 million), however. Both are listed as ongoing civil wars under the 1000 battle deaths threshold, but that may be only a very rough proxy for the disruption that such conflicts cause for their neighbors.

Because my project is concerned with ongoing and potential disruption from nearby conflict that does not neatly correlate with a particular threshold of casualties, I generally use the lower, 25 battle death/year threshold to indicate episodes of civil conflict in a nearby state. Setting the threshold higher would risk excluding situations where even a low-level conflict has a large effect on refugee flows, economic development, or other regional outcomes that concern neighbor states. Uncertainty and a sense of threat are also not dependent on raw casualty counts. By including some conflicts that may not actually pose much of a threat, I believe that I am presenting harder tests for my theory.

There is some evidence that even the lead up to a conflict can create a situation with effects similar to those experienced in a conflict environment, as Regan and Meachum (2014) find that a heightened risk of civil war actually increases the likelihood of some types of intervention

even before hostilities break out, and in some cases where hostilities do not end up occurring at all. This may be worth exploring in the future, but for now I measure the existence of a nearby conflict using UCDP/PRIO data on armed conflict (version 18.1; Petterson and Eck 2019, Gleditsch et al. 2002) to identify civil conflicts that reach the 25 battle death/year threshold whether or not external parties become involved.

Independent Variables: Threat from Nearby Conflict

The hypotheses from Chapter 2 rely in large measure on operationalizations of concepts of nearby civil war and externality severity, though additional hypotheses unique to each of the empirical chapters also require additional unique independent variables. Some of these variables will be discussed in those individual empirical chapters, but in this section I will briefly cover the operationalization of nearby conflict and externality severity, as those measure in one way or another are involved in each chapter's hypothesis testing.

Naive Proximity

As a first test of hypotheses involving a relationship between nearby civil war and an outcome of interest, I rely on a binary measure of *naive proximity.* Using the armed conflict data referenced above, I create a yearly dichotomous measure that indicates if a state either had no immediate neighbors with an ongoing civil conflict (0) or at least one such state (1). I also include a count measure of nearby civil wars to see if nearby civil conflicts beyond the first one have added effects on the relevant dependent variable. Even with this modification, this is (purposefully) a simple measure of nearby conflict, and it does not indicate the severity of externalities in any way.

Because this measure of conflict sets a very low bar in terms of casualties, the proportion of cases in my data where neighbor states have at least one nearby state engaged in civil conflict is fairly high, with 3983 country years with no *naive proximity* (56.9%) and 3016 (43.1%) country years with *naive proximity* in the 1950 to 2006 time period which covers the bulk of the empirical analysis in this dissertation. Direct spillover effects from this naive measure of conflict proximity may be fairly low, as cases that have a score of 1 on this measure include the United States in 1994 due to the Zapatista uprising in southern Mexico that year. This is not to say that there was no effect on US public opinion or policy from this event, but the likelihood of direct

conflict spillover was vanishingly small. For additional insight into conflict severity or its effect on domestic political climate, I turn to two additional measures of conflict threat.

Externality Severity: Immediate Proximity and Neighborhood Conflict
As Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 lay out in detail, there is a broad range of possible conflict externalities that state leaders may see as a direct or indirect threat to their rule and policy priorities. Rather than focus on a particular type or set of externalities, I focus instead on conflict situations which are likely to increase either the total level of conflict externalities or the perception of those externalities as a current or future threat. Certain leaders in certain domestic political situations are likely to be more or less concerned about or threatened by economic upheaval, the presence of refugees, or other specific types of conflict spillover. Operationalizing and measuring such externalities directly would make sense if my theory was concerned with the effects of those externalities directly, but here I am more concerned about perceptions of the general conflict environment. With this in mind, I consider two additional measures of nearby conflict that will address the question of externality severity.

First, I consider conflicts that are not only located in a neighboring state but where the active combat operations and incidents reach the shared border between the two countries. Before describing the nature of this measure, I will briefly describe how this modifies the ideas of *naive proximity* to consider more immediate threats to leaders and the domestic population alike. In extreme cases, a civil war state may be so large that conflict in one area of the country is very unlikely to spill over into certain neighbor states which are located far away and thus not a significant source of domestic concern or pressure. Ukraine's ongoing civil conflict in the Donbas region has created spillover effects for all of Ukraine's neighbors, but direct effects are limited almost exclusively to Russia, which borders the region where fighting is ongoing. Western neighbors such as Hungary and Poland are certainly interested in the outcome for a variety of reasons, but worries about refugees, flows of fighters, or other direct effects are minimal if they exist at all. Thus, a measure that determines whether the fighting is adjacent to a shared border presents a better measure of threat.

In addition, consider Phillips' findings on military spending, which indicated that non-OECD countries (the focus of the study) only increased their military spending when nearby civil conflict reached a shared border. Increased military spending is one indicator of a level of

concern sufficient to lead to policy change, and it appears that more distant conflict is not sufficient to mobilize that level of spending. Furthermore, conflict that reaches a shared border is associated with an increased risk of direct contagion (Braithwaite 2010). Relating this to my hypotheses for Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the increased threat from an immediately proximate conflict is likely to both increase domestic pressure and allow the regime to enact more drastic policy changes. Using data from Phillips (2015), I have a three-part measure of *immediate proximity* where each country year takes a value of 0 if a state has no neighbors in conflict, 1 if at least one neighboring conflict exists but fighting does not reach the shared border, and 2 if at least one conflict exists *and* fighting reaches the shared border.

Using the same 1950 to 2006 time range as above, the breakdown of this *immediate proximity* measure is as follows: 4133 country years have a score of 0, meaning that there no conflicts in any neighboring states (60%). 892 country years have a score of 1, indicating that at least one nearby state had an ongoing civil conflict but violence did not reached the shared border (12.9%). 1872 country years have a score of 2, showing that not only did at least one nearby country have an ongoing conflict, but that fighting reached the shared border between the neighbor state and the civil war state (27.1%). In situations where a state has nearby conflicts, the majority of those cases also include fighting that reaches a shared border, and thus a higher level of threat. This distinction will influence some of the results in later empirical chapters.

Both *naive proximity* and *immediate proximity*, though calculated at the 25 battle death/year threshold, still only indicate when there is an active conflict in a nearby state. The effects of conflict, particularly the uncertainty that can arise from the anticipation of conflict externalities, do not only begin when a conflict officially begins (or reaches a certain threshold) and do not automatically end when a conflict ends. Using the concept of a "conflict environment" from Myrick et al. (2015)[34], I consider a measure of *neighborhood conflict* that considers the more general environment in which neighbor state leaders and domestic actors find themselves in when considering responses to nearby instability.

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[34] See the article for a full discussion of the measure.

While immediate threats are the most pressing for neighbor-state actors, especially when they reach a shared border, more distant threats can still inform the way those actors evaluate policy decisions and likely consequences of future regional developments. Additionally, conflicts that recently ended still influence the degree of uncertainty faced by domestic actors, both because conflicts may recur as well as because of the effect it can have on the general consciousness of society in a neighbor state. As Myrick et al. explain:

> *"A highly conflictual neighborhood institutionalizes violence, making it harder to forgive and forget, increasing the likelihood of conflict spillover, and priming actors to think of force as a legitimate form of discourse. When a state's or society's consciousness is shaped by years of nearby instability, the domestic environment in which decisions are made is much different, and much more conflict-prone, than one that is dominated by the view that civil war is a rare and isolated event"* (*ibid*, page 8).

This understanding of how particular countries or regions can begin to see violence as an expected method of addressing political problems can explain why actors are more willing to accept extra-legal methods of leader removal, coup proofing on the part of leaders, and other extreme policies. It also fits the logic of certain regions being "conflict traps" (Sambanis et al. 2003) or "conflict hot spots" (Braithwaite 2010).

The measure from Myrick and her colleagues uses distance-sensitive weights that decrease as conflicts are more distant from a neighbor state and a time-sensitive weights that decrease as the time since the conflict ended increases. A state would receive a score of 0 in a year where none of its neighbors within 950 kilometers are engaged in a civil conflict or have been in the recent past, while higher scores would indicate a combination of more proximate, more recent, and more numerous conflicts. The highest scores in the data belong to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the late 1990s and early 2000s when both it and many of its neighbors were involved in simultaneous intra- and interstate conflicts related to the Great Lakes conflicts of that time period.

In my data, the overwhelming majority of country years have very low *neighborhood conflict* scores, as is illustrated in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 below. Figure 3.1 displays all values of the measure for the 1950-2006 range. This shows the relative rarity of high scores on this measure. In nearly 19% of cases (1319 out of 6999 country years), the score takes a value of zero, and over 94% of cases have a score of less than 1. Figure 3.2 displays a histogram with counts of

all *neighborhood conflict* scores (broken into bins of 0.1 width), while Figure 3.3 displays the same data starting with scores over 0.05 for visual clarity.

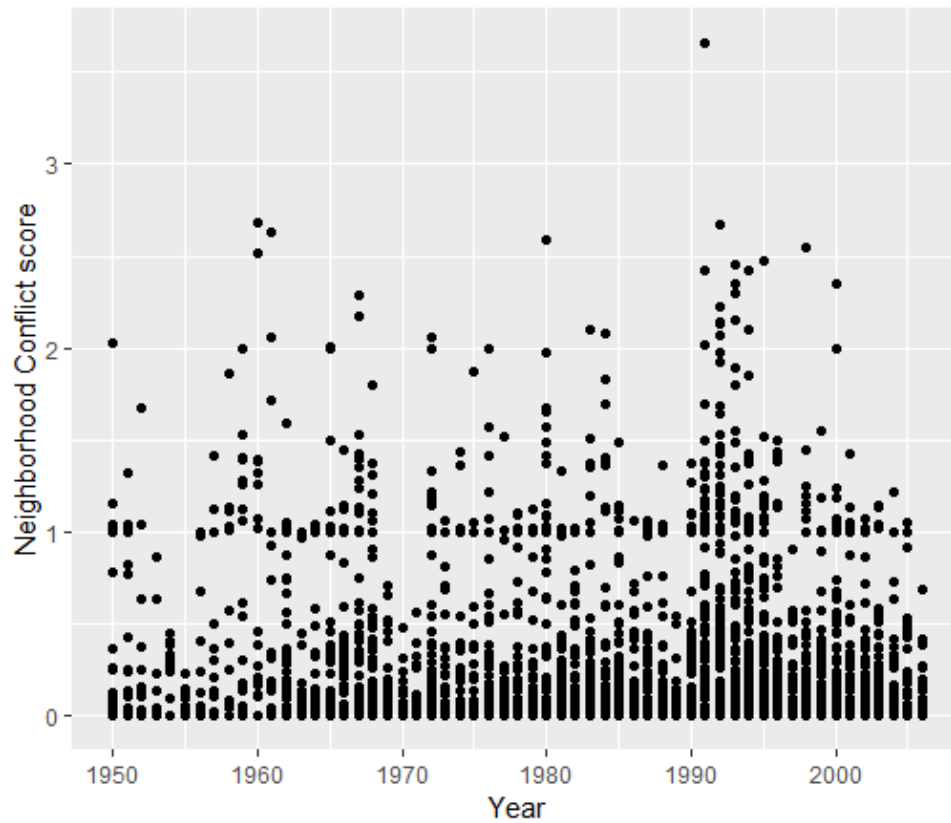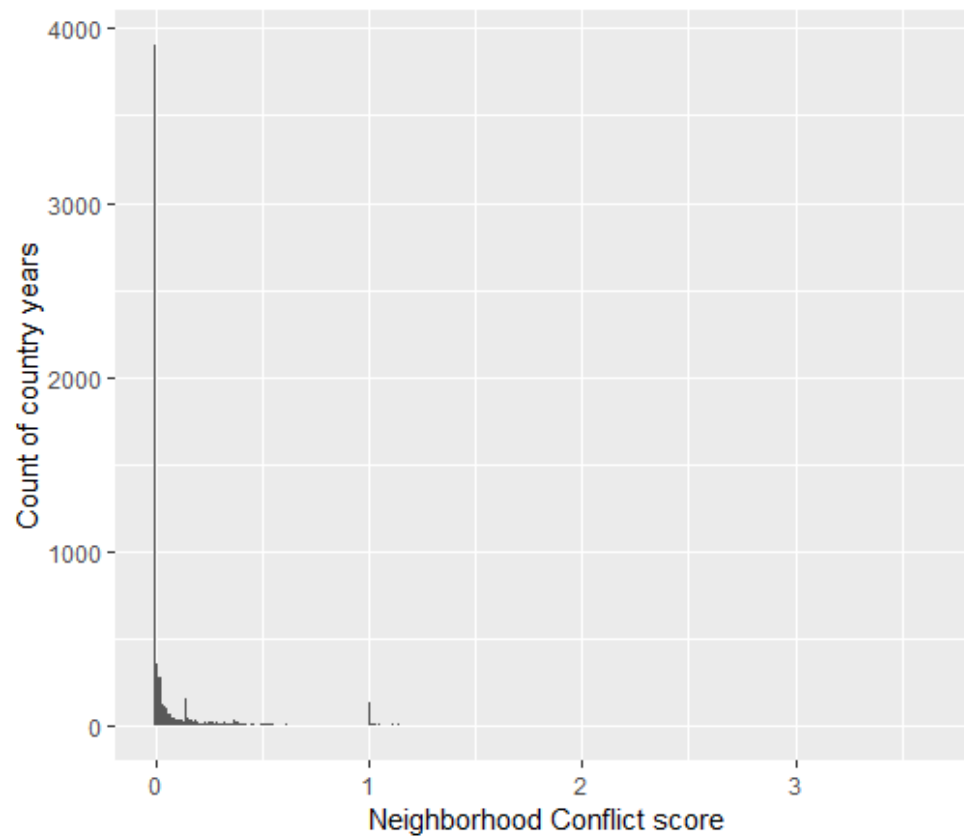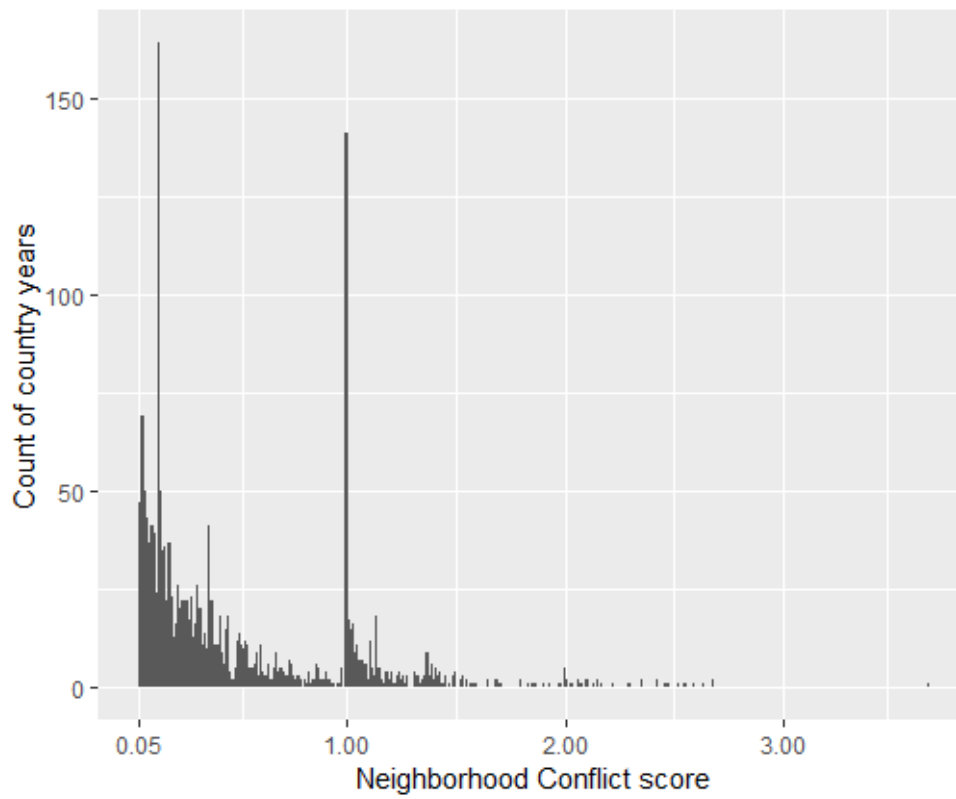**Figure 3.1**: *Neighborhood conflict* scores by year, 1950-2006

Figure 3.2: Count of *Neighborhood conflict* scores, 1950-2006

Figure 3.3: Count of selected *Neighborhood conflict* scores

Model Selection

I will discuss the specific outcome variables for each chapter in the chapter itself, but for each of the three chapters, the selection of a statistical model to investigate the relationships described in Chapter 2 depend on the dependent variable of interest. Outcomes for Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 both take the form of dichotomous response variables (whether or not there was a threat to survival and whether or not there was coup proofing, respectively), and this motivates the choice of logistic regression, taking the following form:

$$f(x) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \dots$$

For this project, I am interested in the independent effect of the various explanatory variables on threats to leader survival or coup proofing, so a model testing Hypothesis 1 (threats to leader survival in response to nearby conflict) takes the following form:

$$f(exit) = \beta_0 + nearby conflict + constraints + controls$$

The directed dyad approach in Chapter 6 necessitates a different dataset, different independent and dependent variables, and a different approach to statistical modeling. As much of this will be clearer in the context of that chapter, I leave the discussion of those factors to Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This chapter briefly lays out the scope of the data and the operationalization of shared explanatory variables common to all three empirical chapters. Later chapters will describe additional data and modeling details relevant for each set of hypotheses as well as the statistical tests and discussion of results for each set. Chapter 4 will test hypotheses related to leader survival, Chapter 5 those related to coup proofing, and Chapter 6 those related to signaling support for armed sides in an ongoing conflict.

Chapter 4: Empirical Chapter I, Leader Survival

Within a 48-hour period beginning on June 23, 2018, the world saw the following headlines:

- "Blast rocks Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa's rally"[35]
- "Did someone try to assassinate Ethiopia's new prime minister?"[36]
- "Erdogan wins sweeping new powers after Turkish election victory"[37]

From assassination attempts to electoral challenges, modern leaders face a host of threats to their political (and sometimes physical) survival. In each of these three states, political crises provide a host of contributing factors that can lead to challenges to a leader. Often these challenges stem from simmering domestic discontent, as seems to be the primary cause of the attacks in Zimbabwe, but these domestic factors can be magnified by disruption and uncertainty from external conflicts nearby.

Prior to the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as the new prime minister of Ethiopia in early 2018, protests and challenges against the regime focused largely on opposition to a highly repressive 2009 anti-terrorism law. Originally justified as a response to both domestic terror groups as well as violent actors based in Somalia and other nearby states, the law came to be used as a tool to deter domestic groups from engaging in anti-regime protests, imprison journalists critical of the regime, and generally stifle dissent. Reports in the aftermath of the June attack considered it likely that government actors unhappy with the reforms instituted by Ahmed were behind the attempt, and five suspects were charged with terrorism in September. Leaders in Ethiopia have faced domestic challenges both when they reacted strongly to actual or perceived external threats with repressive policies, but also when they relaxed those same policies. This example shows how challenges can come from both the general population as well as a country's elites. The ongoing conflict in Somalia may not directly lead to domestic pressure, but military and criminal policy changes in response to a conflict can have long-lasting, unpopular effects.

Turkey, with its proximity to ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Syria, houses over five million refugees, many of whom come from those nearby conflict zones. As was briefly discussed in

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[35]https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/explosion-rocks-zimbabwe-president-emmerson-mnangagwa-rally-180623132642102.html
[36]https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/06/26/did-someone-try-to-assassinate-ethiopias-new-prime-minister-heres-what-you-need-to-know/?utm_term=.65b5a100f8a9
[37]https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election/erdogan-wins-sweeping-new-powers-after-turkish-election-victory-idUSKBN1JL0CN

Chapter 2, Turkish President Recep Erdogan has recently survived a 2015 parliamentary challenge to his rule, a military coup in 2016, and the June 2018 election which cemented his position as president with increased executive powers under a series of constitutional amendments which passed by referendum in 2017. The 2018 election was hotly contested on a variety of issues, but of particular interest for this project was the role of debates over the handling of the Syrian civil war, the economic and political impact of Syrian refugees, and other issues related to regional conflict.

While only around 50,000 Syrian refugees have been granted Turkish citizenship and had the right to vote in the 2018 elections, the presence of over three million Syrian refugees in a country of eighty million people had a large effect on the conduct of the race. Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) are popular among refugees, in large part due to the openness and generosity with which Turkey accepted refugees from Syria, particularly in the early years of the conflict. Many people within Turkey, however, see the refugees as a drain on economic resources and a contributing factor to rising inflation and costs of living. Further opposition to Erdogan arose from pro-Kurdish parties which do not approve of his handling of the situation on both sides of the shared border with Syria involving Kurdish political parties and armed groups.[38]

Leaders in conflict-prone regions face challenges to holding onto power from both domestic and international sources. This chapter focuses on the hypotheses related to the first key question of this dissertation: what effect does nearby civil war violence have on leaders' political survival in a neighbor state? As I have discussed in Chapter 2, unrest and uncertainty in a neighbor state's region can have effects on popular and elite support for incumbent leaders. More specifically, mismanagement of civil war externalities or concern about future mismanagement can lead key domestic groups to challenge the regime. These challenges can be regular (e.g. elections, votes of no confidence, etc.) or irregular (e.g. popular unrest, coup attempts, etc.). In the case of Turkey's recent history, Erdogan has faced threats of both types. Erdogan's example also demonstrates that leaders can weather challenges to their authority

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[38] Information from this and the preceding paragraph came from the following sources:
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election/erdogan-wins-sweeping-new-powers-after-turkish-election-victory-idUSKBN1JL0CN
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-syrians/syrian-refugees-in-spotlight-in-turkeys-election-in-june-idUSKCN1J023X

successfully, and in some cases (like Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia in addition to Turkey), the presence of an external threat can provide leaders with the motivation and justification to further centralize power in the executive in response to a perceived or actual crisis. This consolidation of power will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Leader survival and threats from conflict

The challenges to survival faced by leaders can come under a variety of conditions related to conflict across the border, and leaders face these challenges to their rule with varying degrees of success. With this in mind, this chapter looks at leader survival under a range of conditions, and it also considers survival in terms of exit from office as well as challenges that do not result in leader exit. Traditional studies of leader survival look simply at whether or not a leader retains his or her position in office following some particular event in the country (e.g. losing an interstate conflict or suffering transnational terror attacks). In the introduction to this project, however, I explained that leaders do not simply react to the externalities which are currently affecting either their primary (survival) or secondary goals directly or through domestic political pressure. Leaders also anticipate how civil conflict and unrest in the region might lead to disruption or public pressure, and in some cases they may act to preempt those threats. While this chapter does not consider policy responses, I broaden the definition of civil conflict to include situations where leaders might anticipate and preempt externalities even if the current level of conflict across the border or in the region is currently low.

As discussed in Chapter 3, different types of unrest in a state's region can influence a leader's perception of threat. Though severe levels of violent conflict occurring on (or even crossing over) the border are the clearest sign of danger, lower-level conflicts or situations that could plausibly turn violent in the future may also be seen as a threat. Whether refugees are currently streaming across the border, disruption in a neighboring country is currently confined to regions further away, or the situation merely seems to be heading in a dangerous direction, leaders and domestic actors react to regional events. In the introduction to this dissertation I discussed the effect of nearby conflict on learning and emulation, including how domestic actors can update their expected probability of success in challenging a leader as a result of events occurring nearby. My theory of nearby conflict leading to threats to leader survival contends that even if the events nearby do not directly relate to the threat posed by domestic

groups, the preoccupation of leaders and the diversion of government resources to handle this threat make domestic challenges both more likely to occur and more likely to succeed.

In brief, this chapter uses logistic regression models to empirically test the propositions in the first three hypotheses. Where applicable, each hypothesis will be tested using the three measures of exposure to nearby externalities discussed in Chapter 3 (*naive proximity*, *immediate proximity,* and *neighborhood conflict*). In a later section I will explain how each hypothesis will be tested, and which variables from Chapter 3 (independent, dependent, and control) are applicable in each case and why.

Theory Recap

Rational leaders see the threats posed by civil war externalities, including the effect these externalities have or might have on domestic support, and take action to solidify their hold on power. As the example of Erdogan in Turkey illustrates, this means that many leaders survive challenges to their rule even in times of public or elite pressure. This survival in the face of increased domestic pressure means that a simple, binary measure of "exit" vs "no exit" may not pick up true levels of domestic discontent with leaders' actions (or lack of action). From this, I presented the following hypotheses:

- **H1a**: in periods when neighbor states are involved in a civil war, leaders' chance of removal from office will increase.
- **H1b**: in periods when neighbor states are involved in a civil war, domestic challenges to a leader should increase.

I test these hypotheses using the measures of external instability described below as independent variables, and I consider outcome variable that indicate a loss of political office (**H1**) as well as threats to political survival whether or not they are successful (**H2**).

Just as "leader exit", when collapsed to a binary outcome, can oversimplify a wide range of challenges to incumbent rule, splitting the states of the world using a binary measure of "neighbor state or not" by considering simply whether they share a border with a conflict state also glosses over a wide range of exposure to conflict externalities. As discussed in Chapter 3, direct contiguity to a civil-war state is not a guarantor of higher exposure to destabilizing externalities. Sharing a border with a civil-war state is a good basic measure of "neighbor"ness, but the main mechanism determining challenges to leader survival in Chapter

2 was the exposure of key domestic groups to civil war externalities for which the government either has or is perceived to have no clear policy solutions with a likelihood of success. From this, I presented the following hypotheses, which build off of **H1** and **H2**:

- **H2a:** leaders' chance of removal from office in periods when neighboring states are involved in a civil war should increase as the severity of civil war externalities increases.
- **H2b:** domestic challenges to a leader in periods when neighboring states are involved in a civil war should increase as the severity of civil war externalities increases.

The ability of leaders to unilaterally respond to threats is also related to the likelihood of facing challenges. Lower levels of accountability to domestic actors, whether those be the voting public or powerful elites, will decrease the likelihood of both leader exit and domestic challenges. Less-constrained leaders have a wider range of constitutional and non-constitutional policy options available to preempt, circumvent, or directly overcome threats to their survival. Assuming that the lack of constraints on executive power is at least generally known to relevant domestic audiences, this should also decrease domestic actors' willingness to challenge the leader in the first place, all else equal. This leads to the following related hypotheses:

- **H3a**: leaders' chance of removal from office should increase when levels of domestic constraint on the executive are higher.
- **H3b**: domestic challenges to the leader should increase when levels of domestic constraint on the executive are higher.

Finally, it is important to consider the context of the nearby conflict, as conflicts in which neighbor-state domestic actors have greater interest in the outcome are likely to lead to increased pressure on neighbor-state leaders. Two conflicts with similar levels of threat from externalities may nonetheless cause domestic actors to challenge leaders in different ways when there are salient interests among those domestic groups. Whether the key domestic actors support an active participant in the conflict or not, ties to groups in the conflict country are likely to increase the pressure on leaders to act, but not necessarily to increase the ability of leaders to act effectively. This idea leads to the final hypothesis for this chapter:

- **H4**: the negative effects of nearby conflict on leader survival should increase when politically important groups in the state share ethnic ties with groups in the civil war state.

Research Design

Dependent Variables

Many studies of leader survival rely on a binary measure that indicates whether or not a leader leaves office in a given year, with some studies including a marker of whether or not the exit was by regular or irregular means. The problems with this binary exit/no exit approach are twofold. First, typical measures of regular exit do not differentiate between leaders who leave office after losing power in an election and those that step down willingly in accordance with constitutionally mandated term limits. In other words, a leader who leaves office because the state constitution bars him or her from running again appears identical to a leader who lost a fairly contested election. This is problematic for my empirical testing of leader survival hypotheses, because levels of domestic group dissatisfaction with that leader may not be equivalent, so using those exits as evidence for or against my hypotheses would potentially lead to biased results.

Additionally, typical measures of exit do not include an indicator for leaders who exit office only to have a clear successor take their place, which is hardly a repudiation of the previous leader's policy. In such a case, as when the incumbent party or group remains in power, considering a leader to have exited power is not likely to be an accurate comparison with cases where leaders are more likely to have been punished for mismanagement or the general condition in the country during a period of nearby conflict. If key domestic groups are truly dissatisfied with the direction things are going, removing one leader only to replace him or her with an ally does not seem to accomplish the group's goals of changing the course of a state's policy responses to the nearby conflict.

If we expect, as I argue, that leaders are held accountable for the general conditions or specific threats associated with neighboring civil war, there may be a more general repudiation of the political groups that support that leader or the regime overall. This level of repudiation would likely be visible not only in a leader losing office, but particularly in a more substantial change in the base of political power in the country, as domestic actors become fed up with

the direction the country is moving, or at least perceived to be moving. This change may be manifest in a change of party control (in democracies and hybrid regimes), a change of government institutional structure (e.g. an authoritarian regime moving from a single-party to a military dictatorship), or in other ways. Thus, I test whether leaders leave office due to domestic pressure rather than simply testing if a leader loses office at all.

Therefore, I test Hypothesis 1 using the modified Archigos data (Goemans et al. 2009) to code *pressured exit*, which is an annual observation of leader exit in a given country, coded 1 if the leader left office due to domestic pressure and 0 otherwise. As there are cases in the data where more than one leadership change occurs in a given year, I consider only the first such change and lag all independent variables by one year to account for possible endogeneity between leader exit and the complement of independent variables.

For hypotheses related to challenges to leader survival that may be weathered by the leaders in question, I use Cline Center data on attempted coups (Nardulli et al. 2013). With the thought that multiple coups in a given year are likely to have more to do with the previous coup than civil war externalities directly, I once again create a binary dependent variable that is coded as 1 if any coup attempts were made in the previous year, and 0 otherwise. I choose to use coup attempts rather than successful coups to measure challenges to leader survival, though there are pros and cons to both choices. Using a measure of successful coups would present evidence of stronger challenges, but my theory predicts increased challenges even among states that are able withstand the pressure and keep leaders in power. By aggregating both unsuccessful attempts and large-scale, successful coups together, I risk conflating two very different types of behavior, but hopefully this captures even those cases where the regime was relatively secure (or lucky), but opposition forces were still willing to challenge the regime.

Independent Variables
The concept of nearby war is operationalized in two ways to consider different ideas of nearby conflict. The first key independent variable, *naive proximity*, is a binary measure that is coded as 1 if there is at least one ongoing conflict in a country that is contiguous to the neighbor state in a given year and 0 otherwise. For this I use the 25 battle death/year cutoff to include conflicts with low levels of current intensity, as even low-level conflict is likely to create actual, perceived, or anticipated instability. This is a very rough measure of nearby conflict, as it does

not take into account situations in which there are multiple conflicts in the immediate neighborhood or conflicts outside the range of contiguity. As an additional check, I use a count variable that still only considers the existence of bordering conflict, but is measured to include a cumulative count of ongoing conflicts in neighboring states (*cumulative naive proximity)*.

As an alternative measure of conflict, I also include a variable named *neighborhood conflict*. The threat environment perceived by a state leader would look very different in a context where there is a single, isolated conflict in a region than in a situation where civil war externalities either come or are expected to come from a multitude of conflicts in a region. Even if there are not ongoing conflicts, a history of conflicts in the region is also likely to influence the decision calculus of domestic groups and leaders. See Chapter 3 for more details on this measure from Myrick et al. (2015).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b require operationalizing the concept of externality severity, the difficulty of which is discussed in Chapter 3. As the multitude of conflict externalities are difficult to accurately measure and test in a comprehensive geographic or temporal fashion, I rely on the proximity of the ongoing conflict action as a proxy for externality severity. Regardless of the type of externality that civil conflict can cause, the effects are likely to be heightened if the actual fighting occurs in the immediate border region. Consider again Phillips' (2015) finding that military spending only increased in neighbor states when conflict reached the shared border. With this in mind, I use Philips' measure of conflict reaching a shared border, here called *immediate proximity* to consider only those conflicts where violence reaches the border of the leader's state. This is a variable coded 0 if a state has no neighbors currently undergoing a civil conflict, 1 if a state has at least one neighbor with an ongoing conflict but the violence is not located at the shared border, and 2 if at least one neighbor is engaged in a civil conflict and the violence reaches the shared border.

To test Hypotheses 3a and 3b, I use the *executive constraints* variable from the Polity IV data as (Marshall et al. 2017). Executive constraints are "institutionalized constraints on the decision making powers of chief executives... imposed by any 'accountability groups'" (Marshall et al. 2017:24). I take this measure of *executive constraints* from the Polity IV dataset, where a value of 1 represents an executive with near unlimited authority and a value of 7 represents situations

where "Accountability groups have effective authority equal to or greater than the executive in most areas of activity" (*ibid.* 25).[39]

As an alternative measure and robustness check, I also use the Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al. 2018) measure of *aggregate accountability* that includes measures of vertical accountability (ability of citizens to hold leaders accountable), horizontal accountability (ability of other government branches or institutions to hold leaders accountable), and diagonal accountability (ability of media and civil society to hold leaders accountable).[40] The argument here is that executive constraints are a better fit than regime type to consider leader survival, not that the effect of those constraints is necessarily conditional on the presence of a nearby conflict. In future work I intend to consider the conditional effects of executive constraints under different conflict conditions, but here I consider the effects additively with the other independent variables discussed.

To test Hypothesis 4, I once again use both *pressured exit* and *coup attempts* as possible outcomes. Rather than add *ethnic ties* to prior models, I run the analyses separately for the following two reasons. First, data availability limits the *ethnic ties* variable to the 1950-1999 period, which limits the scope of those models. Second, because of the way my other independent variables are aggregated from a variety of conflict situations, combining them with *ethnic ties* directly does not fit neatly into a particular explanation of exposure to externalities and concern over nearby co-ethnics. Remember that for *immediate proximity* a country year in the data can receive a score of 1 as long as at least one nearby country has a civil war, and a score of 2 if fighting reaches a shared border. Because one country can border multiple conflicts in the same year, that same country year could have a score of 2 on *ethnic ties*, but there is not currently a way to tell whether that shared ethnic group is involved in the conflict that reaches a shared border or is involved in a different conflict where the fighting does not reach the border. I consider possible interactions and relationships in my discussion of future research topics in Chapter 7.

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[39] As an illustration of what these extremes can look like, countries with a score of one in recent years include Syria under Assad, North Korea under Kim Jong Un, and Uzbekistan under Karimov. Functioning democracies tend to receive scores of 7 except in times of political instability or crisis.
[40] Results in the appendix.

Bivariate Assessments

Before introducing model specifications and control variables, I first present tables of bivariate associations between my key independent and dependent variables. This will display an overview of the basic trends in neighboring conflict and leader survival. The descriptive statistics explained below are meant as an introduction to the phenomena of interest. For all tables below, I use the lower casualty threshold measure of conflict described in Chapter 3.

Naive Proximity

I begin by describing patterns of leader survival and coup attempts using the measure of *naive proximity* to separate countries with nearby conflicts from those without. Using data from 1950 to 2006, I first split country-years into those during which states bordered at least one country that was engaged in a civil war and those that did not border any such states. The *pressured exit* variable refers to the phenomenon described above where a leader loses office either by irregular or regular means, but the exit is considered a result of domestic or foreign pressure on the leader to leave. The *coup attempt* variable includes both successful and unsuccessful attempts, as both show domestic discontent and pressure.[41]

The tables presented below include a percentage calculated by column. In other words, the percentage in parentheses after a value below indicates the percentage of cases in which the outcome occurred within a particular set of countries as indicated by the column title. In the "no conflict" column, the percentage after *pressured exit* shows that this type of leader exit occurred in 9% of country years where there was no bordering conflict. Subsequent tables can be interpreted the same way. I present tables for *pressured exit* and *coups attempts* below for the various measures of neighboring threat.[42]

For each of the tables below, I also ran Chi-Squared tests to see whether the patterns observed between the categorical variables have a statistically significant association. You can find the full results for these tests below each table. In every case except Table 4.1 and Table

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[41] Both measures are binary, and if a second pressured exit or coup attempt occurred within a single country year, the variable remains a 1 to indicate that at least one such event took place.
[42] The number of cases in different tables differs slightly because of data availability differences between the variables for leader exit and coups.

4.3 the p-value for the Chi-Squared test was smaller than .05, leading me to reject the null hypothesis that there is no association between the variables.

Table 4.1

Naive proximity and pressured exits

	No conflict	Neighboring conflict	Total country years
No pressured exit	(4552) 91%	(3396) 90%	(7948) 90.7%
Pressured exit	(450) 9%	(366) 10%	(816) 9.1%
Total country years	(5002)	(3762)	(8764)

X-squared = 1.2789, df = 1, p-value = 0.2581

Table 4.2

Naive proximity and coup attempts

	No conflict	Neighboring conflict	Total country years
No coup attempt	(4625) 92.5%	(3401) 90.4%	(8026) 91.6%
Coup attempt	(377) 7.5%	(361) 9.6%	(738) 8.4%
Total country years	(5002)	(3762)	(8764)

X-squared = 11.538, df = 1, p-value = 0.0006819

Rates of leaders exiting due to domestic pressure, either by regular or irregular means, seem to be fairly comparable in cases both with and without at least one neighboring conflict. There do appear to be more coups or coup attempts when neighbors are in conflict, though the difference is modest.

Because the *naive proximity* category contains countries that have a single conflict on the border as well as those facing several such conflicts, I also considered whether an increasing number of bordering conflicts had an effect on the likelihood of pressured exits or coups. The tables below consider the total number of conflicts bordering a state in a country year (labeled as cumulative proximity).

Table 4.3

Cumulative naive proximity and pressured exit

	No conflict	1 conflict	2 conflicts	3 conflicts	4+ conflicts	Total country years
No pressured exit	(2858) 88.7%	(1542) 87.3%	(663) 90.6%	(212) 88.3%	(80) 93%	(5355) 88.6%
Pressured exit	(364) 11.3%	(225) 12.7%	(69) 9.4%	(28) 11.7%	(6) 7%	(692) 11.4%
Total country years	(3222)	(1767)	(732)	(240)	(86)	(6047)

X-squared = 8.3529, df = 7, p-value = 0.3025

Table 4.4

Cumulative naive proximity and coup attempts

	No conflict	1 conflict	2 conflicts	3 conflicts	4+ conflicts	Total country years
No coup attempt	(2930) 90.9%	(1562) 88.4%	(638) 87.2%	(204) 85%	(78) 90.7%	(5412) 89.5%
Coup attempt	(292) 9.1%	(205) 11.6%	(94) 12.8%	(36) 15%	(8) 9.3%	(635) 10.5%
Total country years	(3222)	(1767)	(732)	(240)	(86)	(6047)

X-squared = 23.585, df = 7, p-value = 0.001348

As with the naive measure of proximity to conflict, the patterns for cumulative proximity seem to show no particularly noticeable difference for pressured exit, but a fairly clear pattern of more exposure to neighboring conflict being related to an increase in the frequency of coups or coup attempts. This pattern may suggest that leaders face threats due to exposure to conflict externalities, but at least some of the time they weather the political storm and maintain their hold on power. As was discussed earlier in this dissertation, countries which find themselves in civil war neighborhoods also are likely to have other characteristics or face other situations that would increase the risk of domestic discontent, so this basic pattern of increased coup attempts is not meant to prove any particular hypothesis. The regression models presented below will attempt to control for some of the other factors which predict coup attempts.

Immediate Proximity

Responding both to Phillips' (2015) finding that military spending only increases when a neighboring conflict includes violence that reaches a shared border, as well as the idea from Chapter 2 that more immediate threats will prompt different responses both from leaders and domestic audiences, I next consider the relationship between *immediate proximity* and leader survival. As discussed in Chapter 3, *immediate proximity* is a categorical measure that separates country years into those where there is no nearby conflict, those where there is a neighboring conflict but violence does not reach the shared border, and those where the violence does reach the shared border.

For these tables, I separate country years further to show the difference between country years with no bordering conflict, those with at least one conflict occurring away from the border but none reaching the border, and those where violence occurs directly in border regions.

Table 4.5

Immediate proximity and pressured exit

	No conflict	Conflict not at border	Conflict at border	Total country years
No pressured exit	(5282) 91.7%	(810) 87.9%	(1689) 88.6%	(7781) 90.1%
Pressured exit	(476) 8.3%	(111) 12.1%	(217) 11.4%	(804) 9.9%
Total country years	(5758)	(921)	(1906)	(8585)

X-squared = 25.18, df = 2, p-value = 3.406e-06

Table 4.6

Immediate proximity and coup attempts

	No conflict	Conflict not at border	Conflict at border	Total country years
No coup attempt	(5372) 93.3%	(841) 91.3%	(1643) 86.2%	(7856) 91.5%
Coup attempt	(386) 6.7%	(80) 8.7%	(263) 13.8%	(729) 8.5%
Total country years	(5758)	(921)	(1906)	(8585)

X-squared = 92.813, df = 2, p-value < 2.2e-16

With the usual caveat that these are bivariate associations only, it is interesting to note that any conflict in a neighboring state seems to be associated with an increased risk of pressured exit, but the risk for coups seems to increase most under conditions where violence reaches the border.

Neighborhood conflict

Binary measures of whether or not a country shares a border with a civil war state and whether that violence reaches the shared border are a useful starting point, but I also want to consider the more general conflict environment faced by states and whether that affects challenges to leader survival by looking at *neighborhood conflict*. Because this measure has a continuous range, I present descriptive statistics for the prevalence of pressured exit and coup attempts across ranges of the measure below.

As described in Chapter 3, the measure of *neighborhood conflict* is not evenly distributed across the range of possible values. Though the measure ranges from 0 to over 3.5, fewer than half of country years in the data have values greater than 0.1, and approximately 94% of the country years have values of 1 or lower on the measure of neighborhood conflict. You can see a figure with the distribution of this measure across country years in Chapter 3. I thus break the measure into bins as follows: country years with a score of 0, scores between 0 and 0.1, scores between 0.1 and 1, and scores above 1. The table will also indicate the relative scarcity of cases at the high end of the measure, as such scores indicate a state more or less surrounded by ongoing or recently terminated conflicts.

Table 4.7

Neighborhood conflict (NC) and pressured exit

	NC = 0	0 < NC <=0.1	0.1 <NC <=1	NC > 1	Total country years
No pressured exit	(1187) 94%	(2998) 87.7%	(1487) 88.4%	(616) 88.8%	(6288) 89.1%
Pressured exit	(75) 6%	(420) 12.3%	(196) 11.6%	(78) 11.2%	(769) 10.9%
Total country years	(1262)	(3418)	(1683)	(694)	(7057)

X-squared = 39.765, df = 3, p-value = 1.195e-08

Table 4.8

Neighborhood conflict (NC) and coup attempts

	NC = 0	0 < NC <=0.1	0.1 <NC <=1	NC > 1	Total country years
No coup attempts	(1140) 90.3%	(3118) 91.2%	(1504) 89.9%	(603) 86.9%	(6365) 90.2%
Coup attempt	(122) 9.7%	(300) 8.8%	(179) 10.1%	(91) 13.1%	(692) 9.8%
Total country years	(1262)	(3418)	(1683)	(694)	(7057)

X-squared = 14.008, df = 3, p-value = 0.002895

Keeping in mind the limitations of descriptive statistics at this basic level, it appears that both pressured exits and coup attempts occur with higher frequency in cases where states either are or were recently affected by nearby conflicts. The sharp increase in the prevalence of *pressured exit* between the first two categories of neighborhood conflict is interesting, particularly since it represents such a small difference in the scores.[43]

Executive Constraints

I now consider the relationship between *executive constraints* and leader survival. I display the results below for states at every level of *executive constraints*.

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[43] See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of what *neighborhood conflict* scores represent.

Table 4.9

Executive constraints and pressured exit

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total country years
No pressured exit	(1465) 93.2%	(656) 96.2%	(1463) 93%	(179) 91.3%	(713) 90%	(503) 89.5%	(2115) 86.9%	(7094) 90.1%
Pressured exit	(107) 6.8%	(26) 3.8%	(110) 7%	(17) 8.7%	(83) 10%	(59) 10.5%	(318) 13.1%	(720) 9.9%
Total country years	(1572)	(682)	(1573)	(196)	(796)	(562)	(2433)	(7814)

X-squared = 89.784, df = 6, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 4.10

Executive constraints and coup attempts

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total country years
No coup attempts	(1334) 84.9%	(633) 92.8%	(1368) 87%	(185) 94.4%	(728) 91.5%	(544) 96.8%	(2367) 97.3%	(7159) 91.6%
Coup attempt	(238) 15.1%	(49) 7.2%	(205) 13%	(11) 5.6%	(68) 8.5%	(18) 3.2%	(66) 2.7%	(655) 8.4%
Total country years	(1572)	(682)	(1573)	(196)	(796)	(562)	(2433)	(7814)

X-squared = 262.49, df = 6, p-value < 2.2e-16

As a fully unconstrained leader is likely to be able to insulate himself or herself from domestic pressure, the surface relationship between *executive constraints* and *pressured exit* in Table 4.9 is unsurprising. The necessity of domestic actors to engage in illegal methods like coups to unseat unconstrained leaders makes sense, though a more detailed discussion of these trends will appear following the regression models below.

Shared Ethnic Ties

As a final descriptive trend, I look briefly at the relationship between shared *ethnic ties* and leader survival. Chapter 6 will include a more nuanced view of ties between various groups in the neighbor state and in civil war states, but here I look simply at whether or not the leader of a neighbor state shares ethnic affiliation with at least one group involved in a civil war in a nearby state, whether that group is a member of the government or rebel side. The measure *ethnic ties* comes first from Koga (2011) data which indicates whether or not a leader shares ethnic identity with at least one combat actor in a civil war. I combine this with my aggregated, country year data to produce a three-part measure similar to *immediate proximity* which takes a value of 0 if there are no border conflicts, a value of 1 if a neighbor state has at least one conflict on its border but there are no ethnic ties between combatants and the neighbor-state leader, and a value of 2 if at least one conflict exists in which there are shared ethnic ties.

Chapter 6 will discuss possible connections between ethnic groups across countries in more detail, including situations where key populations in a country share ethnic identities across borders even if leaders do not. Here, I am primarily concerned with whether or not leaders share that connection in part because leaders' winning coalitions are often comprised primarily if not exclusively of co-ethnics, but also because how a leader responds to perceptions of co-ethnics in danger from nearby civil wars can affect the likelihood of challenges to their survival.

In 1981 the coup attempt in Gambia against President Dawda Jawara stemmed from a variety of economic and governance factors. Additionally, the presence of ethnic ties to both government forces and separatist groups in neighboring Senegal's Casamance conflict exacerbated the situation by providing both additional pressure on government performance through conflict externalities and uncertainty as well as the specter of outside help from sympathetic forces in Senegal. In the end, the Senegalese government intervened to prop up

President Jawara, but questions of territorial sovereignty and cross-border instability continued to plague the region and contributed to the 1994 coup that ousted Jawara in the end.

Table 4.11

Ethnic ties and pressured exit

	No conflict	Conflict, no shared ethnic group	Conflict, shared ethnic group	Total country years
No pressured exit	(3134) 89.4%	(1517) 88.5%	(591) 85.5%	(5242) 88.7%
Pressured exit	(373) 10.6%	(198) 11.5%	(100) 14.5%	(671) 11.3%
Total country years	(3507)	(1715)	(691)	(5913)

X-squared = 8.5366, df = 2, p-value = 0.01401

Table 4.12

Ethnic ties and coup attempts

	No conflict	Conflict, no shared ethnic group	Conflict, shared ethnic group	Total country years
No coup attempt	(3181) 89.2%	(1488) 90.7%	(606) 87.7%	(5275) 89.9%
Coup attempt	(326) 9.3%	(227) 13.2%	(85) 12.3%	(638) 10.8%
Total country years	(3507)	(1715)	(691)	(5913)

X-squared = 20.436, df = 2, p-value = 3.651e-05

The relationships between *ethnic ties* and the two measures of leader survival are not large on the surface. A preliminary look at these tables actually shows that *pressured exit* is slightly more likely in cases of shared *ethnic ties* between neighbor state leaders and groups in combat in nearby conflicts, while *coup attempts* are actually less likely. The relationship between regional ethnic ties and coup attempts is beyond the scope of this project, but I speculate that cross-border ethnic ties may affect coup attempts (and possibly coup proofing) because leaders can openly or covertly rely on the support of co-ethnics in the region to protect against coups. At the same time, military leaders, especially in autocracies, often share ethnic affiliation with leaders (and thus cross-border populations) as well, so coup plotters might also seek outside support. A more detailed discussion of ethnic ties will be saved for Chapter 6, while possible future research on regional ethnic ties and various responses to nearby conflict will be covered in Chapter 7.

Analysis

Models and Control Variables

In studying the effect of nearby civil war on challenges to leader survival, I follow the lead of recent studies of the effects of economic sanctions (Marinov 2005; Escriba-Folch and Wright 2010) and terrorism (Park and Bali 2015) on leader survival. Based on the argument that time-series cross-sectional data with a binary outcome variable are equivalent to event-history data, these studies use logistic regression with a count of years in office and the additional functional term of cubic splines on that count. The unit of analysis is the country year, and the temporal domain for this study is from 1950 to 2006 for all hypotheses except **H4**, whether they look at *pressured exit* or *coup attempt*.[44] This is the time period where both independent and dependent variables are jointly available. As noted above, availability of the *ethnic ties* variables restricts those models to the 1950-1999 time period.

Previous studies of political survival find a number of other external and internal factors that affect survival, so I include a number of control variables related to that phenomenon. First, I include *own.interstate* a measure of whether or not a country was involved in an interstate war as taken from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002). This is a binary indicator that takes a value of 1 if a country was involved in a given year and 0 otherwise.

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[44] It might be helpful to write out the model specification here, though there are several versions so I'm not sure if I'd want to include them all.

Interstate wars are highly visible and involve high stakes for leader survival, as defeat or even victory with less-than-ideal outcomes can be seen as a reason for domestic groups to attempt to remove a leader from power.

I also control for the presence of external sanctions, which have been found to affect leader survival as well. Using the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions data (v. 4.0 by Morgan et al.i (2013)), I code *sanctions*, which takes the value of 1 if a country was the target of sanctions in in a given year and 0 otherwise. While the actual effect of sanctions on the economic welfare of groups within the state varies widely, previous studies have found that the likelihood of leader survival does decrease in the presence of externally imposed sanctions (Marinov 2005; Escriba-Folch and Wright 2010).

As for internal characteristics, I begin with a dummy indicator for a country's involvement in a civil war of its own, *own.civil*, once again using data from UCDP/PRIO. I also control for capability, wealth, and economic growth, all of which are correlated with stability and thus leader survival due to vulnerability to external threat. I include *capability* using the Correlates of War Composite Index of National Capability data and *wealth* and *growth* from Gleditsch's (2002) expanded GDP data (v.4.1). *Wealth* is the natural logarithm of GDP per capita and *growth* is the percent change in GDP per capita between the current year and the previous one. Finally, I include a measure of a leader's time in office, *office year*, as well as a leader's *age*, as both have been found to relate to likelihood of survival in office. All else equal, older leaders and leaders who have been in power longer may have cultivated resources or relationships that allow them to prolong their rule. Both of these measures come from the Archigos data. To account for possible temporal dependence, I use the cubic spline method of Beck et al. (1998) with the data on *office year* and use four knots.

Analysis

Statistical Significance

In each of the models below, I include the *executive constraints* variable to test Hypotheses 3a and 3b under a variety of conflict conditions, but I keep the conflict conditions separate to get a first look at the effect of externality severity. I begin by running logit models to test Hypotheses 1a, which states that leader exit is more likely when nearby states are engaged in civil conflict. To test Hypothesis 1a I employ a logit model which regresses *pressured exit* on

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naive proximity, *executive constraints*, the full battery of control variables, and the cubic splines. I then rerun the analysis using *neighborhood conflict* in place of *naive proximity* but otherwise maintain the same specification. In Table 4.13 , I present the results of these two models, but I do not display the results for the control variables.[45] The left column shows the results of the *naive proximity* specification, and the right column shows the *neighborhood conflict specification*.

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[45] To be clear, the control variables are included in the model, but are not displayed here.

Table 4.13: *Pressured exit* regressed on *naive proximity*, *neighborhood conflict*, and *executive constraints*

	Dependent variable:	
	Pressured Exit	
	(1)	(2)
Naive Proximity	0.125	
	(0.088)	
Weighted Neighboring Conflict		0.202
		(0.127)
Executive Constraints	0.124***	0.124***
	(0.022)	(0.022)
Constant	−2.802***	−2.455***
	(0.343)	(0.355)
Cubic Splines	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes
Observations	6,227	6,103
Log Likelihood	−2,003.017	−1,965.620
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,034.034	3,959.240
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

While both the measures of *naive proximity* and *neighborhood conflict* have effects in the predicted direction, neither meets the standard threshold of statistical significance. The measure of *executive constraints* is positive and statistically significant, meaning that leaders who face higher levels of constraint on their decision making abilities are more likely to be removed from office in response to domestic pressure. This is not a particularly surprising or unintuitive finding, so it will be discussed in light of other findings in a later section.

Results from the models in Table 4.13 fail to find support for the basic hypothesis that general exposure to nearby civil war externalities (or concern over future externalities) increases a leader's risk of losing office to domestic pressure. I turn now to leader survival in the face of more severe or immediate threats. I test Hypothesis 2a using logit regression and regressing *pressured exit* on *immediate proximity*, *executive constraints*, and the battery of control variables. I present these results in Table 4.14. As described above, *immediate proximity* takes a value of 0 if no conflict is ongoing in any bordering state, 1 if conflict exists but fighting does not reached the shared border of the leader's state, and 2 if conflict exists and fighting reaches the border. In the table below, the reference category is country years where no conflict is ongoing in a neighboring state.

Table 4.14: *Pressured exit* regressed on *immediate proximity*, and *executive constraints*

	Dependent variable:
	Pressured Exit
Conflict, not at border	0.220*
	(0.123)
Conflict, at border	0.139
	(0.104)
Executive Constraints	0.125***
	(0.022)
Constant	−2.827***
	(0.343)
Cubic Splines	Yes
Controls	Yes
Observations	6,227
Log Likelihood	−2,002.039
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,034.077
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Results for country years where conflict exists in neighboring states whether or not it reaches the border are both in the expected direction, but only the result for conflict that does not reach the border is statistically significant (and substantively larger), and then only at the slightly more permissive 10% threshold. This difference between conflict that reaches a border and conflict that does not may indicate something analogous to a "rally round the flag" effect, but the test presented above cannot give evidence one way or another. Results for *executive constraints* are again statistically significant and show constraints increasing the likelihood of leader exit.

Turning to Hypotheses 1b and 2b, I now consider the effect of *naive proximity*, *neighborhood conflict*, *immediate proximity*, and *executive constraints* on coup attempts. Following the model specifications laid out above, I substitute *coup attempt* for *pressured exit* and present the results for the three models in Table 4.15 and Table 4.16.

Table 4.15: *Coup attempt* regressed on *naive proximity*, *neighborhood conflict*, and *executive constraints*

	Dependent variable:	
	Coup Attempt	
	(1)	(2)
Naive Proximity	0.047	
	(0.092)	
Weighted Neighborhood Conflict		0.005
		(0.134)
Executive Constraints	−0.270***	−0.277***
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Constant	0.901**	1.092***
	(0.355)	(0.374)
Cubic Splines	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes
Observations	6,227	6,103
Log Likelihood	−1,805.315	−1,754.312
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,638.629	3,536.624
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 4.16: *Coup attempt* regressed on *immediate proximity*, and *executive constraints*

	Dependent variable:
	Coup Attempt
Conflict, not at border	−0.120
	(0.142)
Conflict, at border	0.263***
	(0.100)
Executive Constraints	−0.262***
	(0.024)
Constant	0.870**
	(0.356)
Cubic Splines	Yes
Controls	Yes
Observations	6,227
Log Likelihood	−1,800.526
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,631.051
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

For *naive proximity* and *neighborhood conflict* (Table 4.15, Hypothesis 1b) we see a similar pattern when compared with *pressured exit*. Both results are in the expected direction, but neither reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. Results for *immediate proximity* (Table 4.16, Hypothesis 2b) show an interesting pattern. Conflict that does not reach a shared border appears to make a coup attempt less likely, though the results are not statistically significant. Once fighting reaches a shared border, however, coup attempts are more likely, and the results are statistically significant. In all three models, *executive constraints* are associated with a lower risk of coup attempts, which is likely due to the other options for influencing leader decision making available to domestic actors in those states.

As was discussed in Chapter 2 on the determinants of coups and coup-proofing behavior, the guardianship dilemma posits that visible and generally agreed upon threats should actually decrease the risk of a coup, as both government and military actors can agree that mutual cooperation in the face of the immediate threat is the best approach. The results in Table 4.15, however, indicate that a more immediate threat actually increases the risk of coup attempts, which does not seem to fit with the guardianship dilemma logic. As far as coups represent one type of domestic challenge, this appears to provide some support for Hypothesis 2b, but a further discussion of the logic behind coups and coup proofing in regards to nearby conflict will continue in Chapter 5.

Finally, I test Hypothesis 4 on both *pressured exit* and *coup attempts* and present the results in table 4.17 below for both outcome variables. Recall that this data is limited to the 1950-1999 period due to the availability of the *ethnic ties* variable, which is why there are fewer cases.

Table 4.17: *Pressured exit* and *coup attempts* regressed on *ethnic ties* and *executive constraints*

	Dependent variable:	
	pressured exit	coup attempt
	(1)	(2)
conflict, no ties	0.088	0.061
	(0.098)	(0.098)
conflict, ethnic ties	0.301**	0.167
	(0.134)	(0.147)
executive constraints	0.127***	−0.267***
	(0.022)	(0.024)
Constant	−2.770***	0.913**
	(0.345)	(0.357)
Cubic Splines	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes
Observations	6,227	6,227
Log Likelihood	−2,001.536	−1,804.769
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,033.072	3,639.538
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Similar to results above, I find a that *executive constraints* make *pressured exit* more likely and *coup attempts* less likely. There is no statistically significant relationship between *ethnic ties* and *coup attempts*, but there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between a conflict where the neighbor state leader shares an ethnic identity with one of the parties in conflict and the likelihood of *pressured exit*. This may relate to the pressure a leader feels from co-ethnic constituents in his or her own state to respond to a conflict where important populations in the civil war state are under threat.

An example of a pressured exit (which also happens to be a successful coup) influenced by co-ethnics involved in conflict in a nearby state is the 1999 forced resignation of President Sharif of Pakistan. Pakistan's involvement in the ongoing Afghanistan civil war between Taliban and government forces was controversial, as Pakistani military leaders supported co-ethnic Taliban fighters despite the suggestion (and sometimes direct orders) of Sharif's government. The perceived or actual lack of support by Sharif of foreign groups important to his domestic constituents was a key factor (in addition to mismanagement of the Kargil conflict, economic woes, and other issues) in his eventual political downfall.

Substantive Effects

Though logistic regression is the appropriate choice for analyzing data that includes a dichotomous dependent variable, extra steps are required to properly interpret the substantive effect of the explanatory variables on the outcome in question. To this end, I compute predicted probabilities using parameters from each model above, though here I will only present the substantive effects of *immediate proximity* on *pressured exit* and *coup attempt*.

These probabilities are calculated first by holding all other covariates at their mean value and then moving the explanatory variable of *immediate proximity* from 0 to 2 (inclusive). Thus, the predicted probabilities show the likelihood of a pressured exit or coup attempt in the "average" country year where the only variation comes in whether or not a neighboring state had an ongoing conflict, and whether or not that conflict reached the shared border. In Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 below, I display the predicted probability of each outcome (along with 95% confidence intervals) at the three values of *immediate proximity* (no conflict, conflict that does not reach border, conflict that reaches border).

Figure 4.1: Predicted probability of *pressured exit* based on *immediate proximity*
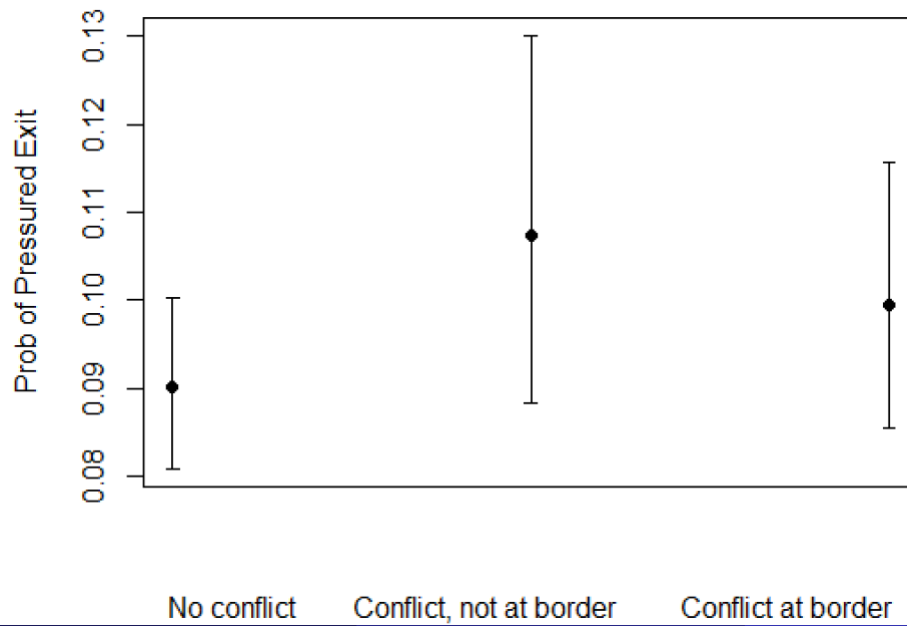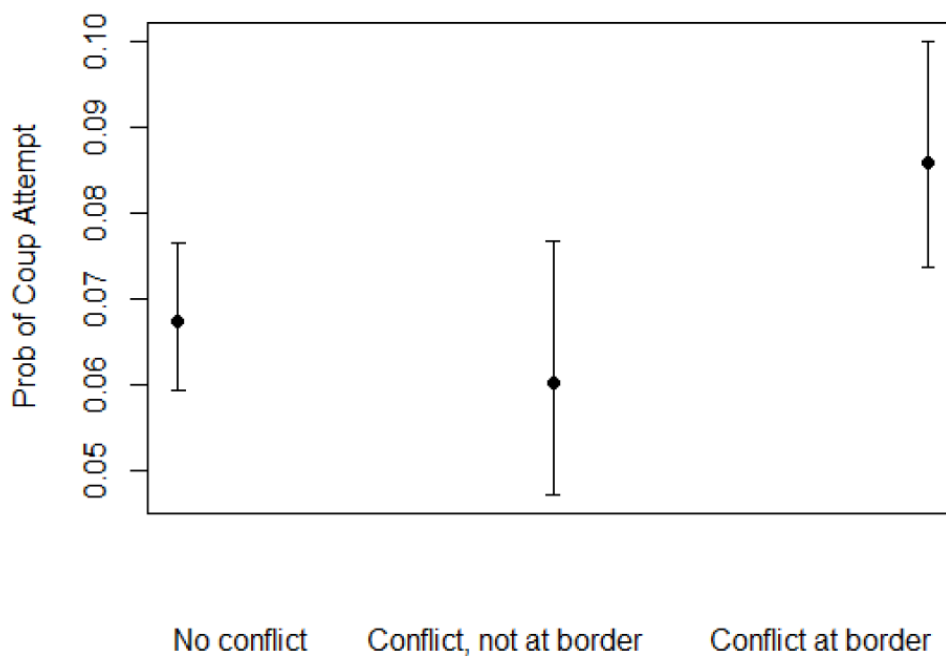

No conflict   Conflict, not at border   Conflict at border

Figure 4.2: Predicted probability of *coup attempt* based on *immediate proximity*

No conflict   Conflict, not at border   Conflict at border

As seen in Table 4.12 and Figure 4.1, only non-immediate conflict has a statistically significant effect on *pressured exit*, and the substantive effect of such conflicts is minimal (the probability of a pressured exit increases from approximately 9.0% to 10.7% when the conflict is non immediate and then decreases back to 10.0% if fighting reaches the shared border.) For *coup attempts* (Table 4.14 and Figure 4.2), the baseline probability of 6.7% decreases to 6.0% with non-immediate conflict and increases to 8.6% when fighting reaches the shared border. Though these are once again relatively rare events, coups are 43% more likely to occur when fighting reaches the border than when it does not.

Though I do not display a figure here, the baseline probability of *pressured exit* in a condition of no nearby conflict is 9.1%, which increases to 9.6% when a nearby conflict exists but is not ethnic in nature and increases again to 11.5% when the nearby conflict is an ethnic conflict. As before, these are rare events, but *ethnic ties* lead to a 26% increase in the likelihood of a *pressured exit*.

Conclusions

As noted above, only weak support was found for hypotheses that nearby conflict alone negatively affects leader survival, while moderate support was found for the hypothesis that conflict severity/proximity makes challenges to leader survival (in the form of coup attempts) more likely. When the nearby conflict involves co-ethnics of the leader, however, there is an increased chance of a forcible exit for the leader. Some of the pressures from civil war externalities may need to be "activated" by issues like conflict proximity or the existence of affinity ties, both of which could make spillover effects more likely, more salient, or both. The finding on coup attempts does not match some of the conventional theories on coup attempts in the face of threat, and it is also important to note that coup attempts are far from the only form of domestic challenge to leaders. There are also important ways in which coup attempts differ from other domestic challenges, and these differences may account for some of the findings above.

Rational leaders are likely to recognize the threat that nearby conflicts pose to both their political survival and their broader policy agenda, and they are thus likely to take actions both to preempt and to respond to such threats. This may explain the weak results for some measures of threats to leader survival seen in this chapter. Actions that will insulate leaders

against those threats are the focus of the following two chapters. Chapter 5 will address some of these issues in its discussion of coup proofing behavior in response to nearby threats. Chapter 6 will look in more detail about the relationship between co-ethnic participation in civil war violence and leader response to threat.

Chapter 5: Empirical Chapter II, Power Consolidation

Around 4:00pm on October 12, 1999, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced the forced retirement of General Pervez Musharraf from his post as Chief of Army Staff due in part to Musharraf's performance and policy positions in the Kargil War which had occurred earlier that year. By 8:00pm that evening, Musharraf had ousted Sharif in a coup. Musharraf would serve the next nine years as the chief executive and then president of Pakistan, while Sharif was sentenced to exile from Pakistan, forfeiture of property, and a fine. The military's original push for a death sentence was only dropped after external pressure from Saudi Arabia, the United States, and others.

State leaders seeking to retain office have to consider the policy preferences of military leaders, and this is especially true in autocratic regimes. As discussed in Chapter 2, the most common mechanism of leader exit in autocracies is a coup (Galetovic and Sanhueza 2000, Svolik 2009). Political survival is not a guarantee under any circumstances, but living in the shadow of a coup and its often attendant results of imprisonment, exile, or death can lead state leaders to attempt to fortify their political position relative to military leaders in their own country. In the earlier discussion on coup proofing in Chapter 2, I covered how this can either take the form of reducing potential coup plotters' a) willingness to stage a coup through resource or policy power allocation to the military or b) opportunity to stage a coup through structural changes such as purges, paramilitary groups, or military counterbalancing. The unique conditions posed by facing conflict and instability on their borders may make the plight of autocratic leaders in conflict neighborhoods particularly dire.

Sharif faced domestic pressure from both military and civilian actors in 1999 that contributed to his desire to consolidate power through the removal of General Musharraf. The Kargil War was originally described by Pakistan as largely the work of independent Kashmiri militants, and thus would have more or less resembled a civil war situation on the Indian side of the line of control. Later first-hand evidence from Pakistani leaders as well as external sources showed that there was active participation from regular Pakistani military forces under the direction of General Musharraf.[46] Sharif's eventual decision to retreat from the Kargil district of Kashmir

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[46] https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/02/weekinreview/the-world-unthinkable-eyeball-to-eyeball-and-blinking-in-denial.html?mtrref=www.google.com

after serious diplomatic pressure was seen as weakness both by the military and the domestic population.

Sharif also faced public pressure related to the government's handling of the ongoing civil conflict in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan's attempts to develop economic relationships with the nearby and newly independent Central Asian states was hampered by the Afghanistan conflict between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Landlocked Central Asian states were relying on the promised oil and gas pipelines, along with other economic developments, that were to run through Afghanistan and Pakistan (Ahmed 2012). Facing an unsatisfied military and domestic population, Sharif's efforts to consolidate his power by removing General Musharraf triggered the coup that would keep Sharif out of Pakistani political office for over a decade. In his efforts to shore up his position against the military, and even possibly prevent a military coup, Sharif triggered the very event he sought to avoid.

This chapter focuses on the hypotheses related to the second key question of this dissertation: which domestic policy responses do neighbor-state leaders select in response to the opportunities and threats presented by nearby conflict? In particular, this chapter explores how the relationship among threats from nearby conflict, political constraints on leaders, and policy goals can be used to explain how the coup-proofing decisions of neighbor-state leaders relate to the threats posed by conflict externalities. The consideration of power consolidation in this chapter will focus on coup-proofing behavior, while Chapter 6 will consider domestic policy responses more broadly (both in terms of the policies covered and the states/leaders studied).

Coup Proofing and Nearby Civil War

State leaders concerned about ongoing or potential spillover from a neighboring conflict may face pressure by the military leadership or other domestic groups to bolster military strength to head off conflict externalities. At the same time, committing resources to the military may also empower it to pose a more serious threat to regime survival. Funding or providing other resources to the military is not the only option, however, as it may be possible to commit additional resources to protect against spillover from neighboring instability without

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The situation bears a passing resemblance to Russian military incursion into Ukraine in 2014. Both conflicts were labeled as civil wars (by Pakistan and Russia, respectively), but the externalized nature of the conflicts right from the start makes accurate definition difficult.

empowering a hostile military faction at home. A regime may be able to fund one part of the military against another in an attempt to coup-proof its institutions, or alternatively fund militias and other state-backed groups outside the traditional military structure. Furthermore, regimes with smaller bases of support or fewer constraints on executive power (often but not always authoritarian regimes) can use gains from intervention to help provide private goods for its power base, while democracies or more constrained states intervening have to do so in order to bolster general security, usually seen as a public good.

Though the different hypotheses tested in this chapter look at different aspects of coup-proofing strategies and the conflict environment, the underlying relationship is based on the idea that coup-proofing behavior can be a response to both the threats and opportunities provided by nearby conflict. Leaders who wish to prevent military coups or other unwanted military influence in executive policy have a range of options, but the necessity of maintaining some minimally acceptable level of military strength prevents them from weakening the military too much. Among the different coup-proofing policies discussed in Chapter 2, some may result in larger or smaller effects on military effectiveness, and thus will be more or less likely under different threat situations.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, types of coup proofing related to reducing military opportunity to stage a coup fall into two general areas. First, coup proofing can set up a force within or outside the traditional military structure which has as one of its chief goals the protection of regime actors from military leaders (counterbalancing through paramilitary or militia activity). The Saudi Arabian National Guard is an example of this type of force. Second, coup proofing can attempt to weaken ties between military leaders and reduce effectiveness directly through purges of key leaders. In uncertain times, leaders may act to ensure the loyalty of military forces by placing co-ethnic, co-religious, or otherwise affiliated individuals in key military positions. This first requires removing existing leaders who stand in the way of power consolidation, as seems to have been the case with MBS and Prince Mutaib bin Abdullah.

In brief, this chapter uses linear and logistic regression to test the second group of three hypotheses. As seen in Chapter 4, each hypothesis will be tested using the various measures of exposure to conflict externalities that apply to each argument. As in Chapter 4, I will introduce the basic research design including independent and dependent variables, consider

bivariate analyses of those variables, and then introduce the models and control variables used in the larger statistical analyses for this chapter.

Theory Recap

State leaders facing the threat of a nearby conflict can take the opportunity such a salient event provides to engage in coup proofing. The risk of a coup is likely to be low, if only temporarily, as military attention is likely to be focused on the nearby conflict rather than on securing executive power through a coup. The immediacy of the threat is likely to bring regime and military actors' views in line, thus addressing the guardianship dilemma discussed in Chapter 2. With temporary protection from a coup, the regime may engage in coup proofing to consolidate its power. This leads to the first hypothesis of this chapter, which considers the general relationship between nearby conflict and coup proofing. I predict that the decision to engage in coup proofing is more likely in cases of a nearby civil war.

- **H5:** Leaders facing a neighboring civil war are more likely to engage in coup proofing than leaders not facing such a threat.

Not all civil conflicts present the same level of actual or perceived threat to political leaders, military actors, or the general public. Higher levels of threat, whether anticipated or current, are likely to make coup proofing more likely in several ways. Regime actors will want to consolidate power in a tense and political pressurized time, and coup proofing is one way to strengthen loyal armed forces which can help in multiple ways to address the externalities from a nearby conflict. Military actors confronted with a greater threat from a nearby conflict may be dissatisfied with a leaders' policy positions regarding the conflict, but as the severity of the threat increases the military's unwillingness to disrupt state power through a coup is likely to increase. The public, confronted by the uncertainty and negative externalities of an ongoing conflict, may be more willing to accept dramatic policy proposals like coup proofing when they are couched in terms of public safety. This leads to the following hypothesis:

- **H6:** Coup proofing is more likely as the severity of civil war externalities increases.

A counter-argument to this claim could be that as the severity of externalities, and thus the threat, from the nearby conflict increases, the desire to engage in coup proofing should decrease. Weakening the military at such a critical time could be dangerous. I agree that the danger exists, but argue that it can be minimized by engaging in "safer" methods of coup proofing that attempt to reduce military actors' ability to stage a coup without drastically

reducing military effectiveness overall. Additionally, state leaders take those possible external threats into account when engaging in coup proofing, as addressed in the next hypothesis.

In addition to domestic threats to survival, leaders of neighbor states also must contend with external actors who might seek to benefit at their expense when said leaders are preoccupied with the consequences of a nearby conflict. Coup proofing can consolidate power domestically, but it may leave a country weaker militarily in cases of external predation. The stronger a state is relative to its neighbors, the less concerned it is likely to be about reducing its own military effectiveness in the short term with the goal of maintaining domestic control.

- **H7:** Coup proofing is more likely where the relative capacity of the state facing a neighboring civil war is higher in relation to all other states in the region.

Dependent Variables

In my discussion of coup proofing policies in Chapter 2, I covered how different types of coup proofing behavior are likely to have lesser or greater effects on general military efficacy as well as the likelihood of triggering a counter coup in response to the disruption of military power. As explained by Sudduth (2017), leaders need to reduce the threat of coups without acting so harshly that military leaders, faced with no other options, launch a counter coup in return. Some methods of coup proofing are greater or smaller immediate threats to sitting military leaders, so for these hypotheses I use two dependent variables to capture variations in this threat.

The first dependent variable, *PGM* activity, is a binary measure indicating whether a militia which supports the government was active in a given year (activity can involve training, military operations, etc.). A value of 0 indicates no *PGM* activity, while a value of 1 indicates activity. Militias are a form of parallel military forces which do not immediately reduce the military's absolute power, so they may not be seen as the same immediate threat as would the creation of a parallel military branch by siphoning off current service members. Both paramilitary and traditional parallel forces are forms of counterbalancing, but paramilitary forces may have lower threat in addition to the higher loyalty that often comes with their composition from ethnic or religious group identities shared by regime leaders. This measure is globally available from the 1981-2007 time period (Carey et al. 2013).

The second dependent variable is *purges*, and is also a binary measure. A value of 0 indicates that no purge of military officers occurred in that year, while a value of 1 occurs when a purge is carried out by regime leaders. A purge is a more direct challenge to military actors, as it involves the forcible removal or dismissal of key figures within the military establishment. This more direct threat to the military should lead to a higher risk of counter coups, but the uncertain and unpredictable nature of civil war neighborhoods may have state leaders risk purges anyway. Unlike defunding or de-arming the military to reduce the threat of a coup, purges may reduce military efficacy less directly by decreasing continuity in leadership or by promoting less experienced leaders. This may still leave the military relatively capable to deal with external threats, and thus be seen as an acceptable tradeoff by state leaders. The *purges* variable is only available for autocratic regimes, and covers the 1968-2003 time period (Sudduth 2017). Because the two measures cover different countries, results from models below will not be directly comparable to determine whether civil war nearby has a greater association with militia activity or purges.

Independent Variables

I use the same variables for nearby war and conflict severity as I did in Chapter 4. For ease of reference, I repeat the description of those variables here with additional details as they relate to the models in this chapter. Each independent variable is lagged by one year.

The concept of nearby war is operationalized in three ways to consider different ideas of nearby conflict and the likely severity of conflict externalities. The first independent variable, *naive proximity*, is a binary measure that is coded as 1 if there is at least one ongoing conflict in a country that is contiguous to the neighbor state in a given year and 0 otherwise. For this I use the 25 battle death/year cutoff to include conflicts with low levels of current intensity, as even low-level conflict is likely to create actual, perceived, or anticipated instability. This is a very rough measure of nearby conflict, as it does not take into account situations in which there are multiple conflicts in the immediate neighborhood or conflicts outside the range of contiguity. As an additional check, I use a count variable that still only considers the existence of bordering conflict, but is measured to include a count of ongoing conflicts in neighboring states (*cumulative naive proximity*).[47]

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[47] Results found in the appendix.

Both as an alternative measure of conflict and an attempt to consider the severity of conflict externalities, I also include a second independent variable indicating nearby conflict named *neighborhood conflict*. The threat environment perceived by a state leader would look very different in a context where there is a single, isolated conflict in a region than in a situation where civil war externalities either come or are expected to come from a multitude of conflicts in a region. Even if there are not ongoing conflicts, a history of conflicts in the region is also likely to influence the decision calculus of domestic groups and leaders. I again use the measure from Myrick et al. (2015) which may more accurately represent the threat environment faced by state leaders in conflict-prone regions than a simple dichotomous measure.

Hypothesis 6 requires operationalizing the concept of externality severity directly, the difficulty of which is discussed in Chapter 3. As the multitude of conflict externalities are difficult to accurately measure and test in a comprehensive geographic or temporal fashion, I rely on the proximity of the ongoing conflict action as a proxy for externality severity. Regardless of the type of externality that civil conflict can cause, the effects are likely to be heightened if the actual fighting occurs in the immediate border region. Consider again Phillips' (2015) finding that military spending only increased in neighbor states when conflict reached the shared border. With this in mind, I use Philips' measure of conflict reaching a shared border, here called *immediate proximity*, as a third measure of nearby conflict to consider only those conflicts where violence reaches the border of the leader's state. This is a variable coded 0 if a state has no neighbors currently undergoing a civil conflict, 1 if a state has at least one neighbor with an ongoing conflict but the violence is not located at the shared border, and 2 if at least one neighbor is engaged in a civil conflict and the violence reaches the shared border.

Finally, to test Hypothesis 7 I include a measure of *relative regional capacity* built from National Material Capabilities data (version 5.0) from the Correlates of War project (Singer et al. 1972). To create a measure of *relative regional capacity*, I consider each state relative to those with whom it has direct land contiguity. For each country year, the CINC score of the primary state (the potential coup proofer) is divided by the cumulative CINC scores of the entire grouping (the primary state and all its immediately contiguous neighbors). Thus, the *relative regional capacity* score is the proportion of capabilities in the vicinity held by the primary state. A state with a high value on this measure will be more powerful in relation to its neighbors, and thus

better able to withstand the instability or military spillover from nearby conflicts even with a weakened military after coup proofing efforts are undertaken. I argue that higher levels of capability relative to neighbor states should predict increased likelihood of coup proofing generally, not only in the context of an ongoing nearby conflict. State leaders seeking to consolidate power should be more confident of their ability to do so safely when the possible decrease in military efficiency is less risky whether or not there is an immediate threat of conflict spillover. I will consider the conditional effect of capacity under different conflict conditions in future research, but here the effect is considered additively.

By considering each state's capabilities as a proportion of the total capabilities of itself and its immediate neighbors, this measure can theoretically range from 0 (if a state possesses no material capabilities) to 1 (if a state possesses the only military capabilities of any of the immediate neighbors).[48] States are of course concerned about more than just their immediate neighbors when considering threats, but alternatives such as a share of the system's capabilities would go too far in assuming the scope of threats that state leaders are concerned about.

Bivariate Associations

As I did in Chapter 4, I provide tables of bivariate associations before discussing control variables and model specifications for this chapter. Once again for all tables below, I use the lower casualty threshold measure of conflict described in Chapter 3. Similar patterns were found when using the higher-threshold *civil war* variable.

Naive Proximity

Using the same measure of *naive proximity* to separate countries with nearby conflicts from those without, I look at its relationship with counterbalancing and purges. The pro-government militia (*PGM*) variable refers to the dichotomous measure described above where a 1 indicates observed action by a pro-government militia in a given year and 0 indicates no action. This measure is an example of the type of counterbalancing that attempts to guard against coups by supporting alternative forces. Data availability for the *PGM* variable limit these tables (and the relevant regression analysis) to the 1981-2007 period.

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[48] See the appendix for a note on handling island states with no immediate neighbors.

The *purge* variable is only available for authoritarian regimes, and only for the 1969-2003 period. This variable takes a value of 1 in a year where a purge of military personnel occurred, and a 0 otherwise. I begin by presenting tables for *PGM* and *purges* below for the various measures of neighboring threat. As in Chapter 4, the percentage displayed after a value in the table indicates the percentage of cases in which the outcome occurred within a particular set of country years as indicated by the column title. For example, in the "No conflict" column below, the percentages show that in the 2012 country years that had no neighboring conflict (as measured by *naive proximity*), 1760 country years (87.5% of the total no-conflict country years) had no PGM activity while 252 country years (12.5% of the total) had PGM activity. Subsequent tables are structured the same way.

For each of the tables below, I also ran Chi-Squared tests to see whether the patterns observed between the categorical variables have a statistically significant association. You can find the full results for these tests below each table. In every case except Table 5.10, the p-value for the Chi-Squared test was smaller than .05, leading me to reject the null hypothesis that there is no association between the variables.

Table 5.1

Naive proximity and pro-government militia (PGM) activity

	No conflict	Neighboring conflict	Total country years
No PGM activity	(1760) 87.5%	(1487) 69.9%	(3247) 78.4%
PGM activity	(252) 12.5%	(640) 30.1%	(892) 21.6%
Total country-years	(2012)	(2127)	(4139)

X-squared = 187.64, df = 1, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 5.2

Naive proximity and purges

	No conflict	Neighboring conflict	Total country years
No purge	(1064) 92.2%	(1495) 88.4%	(2559) 89.9%
Purge	(90) 7.8%	(196) 11.6%	(286) 10.1%
Total country-years	(1154)	(1691)	(2845)

X-squared = 10.491, df = 1, p-value = 0.001199

States facing a neighboring conflict have much higher rates of pro-government militia activity, as well as a more modest increase in the frequency of military purges. Countries that are found in conflict regions are likely to have other characteristics that are related to *PGM* activity or purges, but the large increase is still interesting to note. Differences in data coverage related to the authoritarian-regime restriction on the *purges* data prevent me from making any direct comparisons about the two tables above.

The *naive proximity* variable once again includes countries that have a single conflict on the border as well as those facing several such conflict, so below I present tables on the relationship between increasing numbers of bordering conflicts and coup proofing policies.

Table 5.3

Cumulative naive proximity and pro-government militia (PGM) activity

	No conflict	1 conflict	2 conflicts	3 conflicts	4+ conflicts	Total country years
No PGM activity	(1394) 85.4%	(910) 76.5%	(329) 65.0%	(96) 54.2%	(33) 37.1%	(2762) 76.9%
PGM activity	(238) 14.6%	(279) 23.5%	(177) 35.0%	(81) 45.8%	(56) 62.9%	(831) 23.1%
Total country-years	(1632)	(1189)	(506)	(177)	(89)	(3593)

X-squared = 266.71, df = 7, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 5.4

Cumulative naive proximity and purges

	No conflict	1 conflict	2 conflicts	3 conflicts	4+ conflicts	Total country years
No purge	(1009) 91.6%	(838) 89.5%	(391) 86.9%	(121) 82.9%	(58) 86.6%	2417 89.5%
Purge	(92) 8.4%	(98) 10.5%	(59) 13.1%	(25) 17.1%	(9) 13.4%	(283) 10.5%
Total country-years	(1101)	(936)	(450)	(146)	(67)	(2700)

X-squared = 17.712, df = 7, p-value = 0.01334

The frequency of *PGM* activity shows a dramatic, linear increase as the number of bordering conflicts increases. For purges, the increase is not fully linear, as it increases up to the point where a state has three conflicts on the border, but decreases again slightly when there are four or more such conflicts. The relatively small number of country years where states find themselves in these extreme situations do not lead to general statements about coup proofing and exposure to conflict externalities. States in conflict-prone neighborhoods are likely to differ in fundamental ways related to domestic pressure, military attitudes toward regime leaders, and so on.

As an example of why the "4+ conflicts" category should not be used to make general statements about conflict and coup proofing, consider which the types of situations these rows in the dataset represent. China (1989-2006) accounts for more than 20% of the country years with 4+ bordering conflicts, due more to its size and the number of states with which it shares a border (particularly in the post-Soviet era of instability in Central Asia) than to some inherent quality of states which are found in conflict-prone neighborhoods. Over 30% of the country years in this category are either the Democratic Republic of the Congo/Zaire or countries in its immediate vicinity during the time of widespread conflict in Central Africa in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since much of the pattern in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 is driven by a small number of localized cases, the regression models will control for other factors these cases have in common that could also be driving coup proofing behavior.

Immediate Proximity

The immediacy of a threat from a neighboring conflict prompts contradictory pressures for a regime seeking to insulate itself both against the external threat and possible coups simultaneously. As Phillips (2015) finds, nearby conflict is related to increased military spending, showing that threats incentivize military spending to guard against potential spillover. At the same time, strengthening the military too much can have its own risks, and nearby conflict may also provide an opportunity to engage in policies that reduce military opportunity to stage a coup without triggering a counter coup in response, since the military also recognizes the looming threat on the border.

As in Chapter 4, the tables below separate country years into those with no bordering conflict, those with at least one conflict but violence does not reach the shared border, and those where violence occurs directly in border regions.

Table 5.5

Immediate proximity and pro-government militia (PGM) activity

	No conflict	Conflict not at border	Conflict at border	Total country years
No PGM activity	(1858) 86.3%	(528) 80.0%	(839) 64.5%	(3225) 78.4%
PGM activity	(294) 13.7%	(132) 20.0%	(462) 35.5%	(888) 21.6%
Total country years	(2152)	(660)	(1301)	(4113)

X-squared = 229.83, df = 2, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 5.6

Immediate proximity and purges

	No conflict	Conflict not at border	Conflict at border	Total country years
No purge	(1127) 92.2%	(391) 92.4%	(1017) 86.5%	(2535) 89.9%
Purge	(95) 7.8%	(32) 7.6%	(159) 13.5%	(286) 10.1%
Total country years	(1222)	(423)	(1176)	(2821)

X-squared = 25.337, df = 2, p-value = 3.149e-06

The frequency of *PGM* activity increases even when conflict does not reach a shared border, and then increases further in cases where violence occurs in border regions. Leaders facing possible spillover effects from nearby conflict may be calling upon these militia forces to provide physical security against external military threats, but during times of nearby conflict and the resultant domestic pressure, militias can also provide a counterweight to restive military forces which might attempt a coup.

When looking at the pattern of *purges* as a coup proofing tool, there is no clear difference between cases with no bordering conflict and those where conflict does not reach the border, but there is a notable increase in the frequency of purges when conflict reaches the shared border. Perhaps the risk of a purge triggering a counter coup is too high except in cases where the immediate threat is so visible to the military establishment that they are not likely to launch a coup even when some leaders are removed from power.

Neighborhood conflict

Civil-military relations are affected by more than immediate conflicts and their location relative to state borders, so I also want to consider the more general conflict environment faced by states and whether that predicts coup proofing behavior. For tables 5.7 and 5.8, I once again use the time and distance weighted measure of *neighborhood conflict* discussed in Chapter 3. A history of conflict in a region is likely to inform how leaders, military actors, and the general public respond to coups and coup proofing behavior, and this measure begins to address some of that environmental reality.

The different data limitations due to the *PGM* and *purges* variables mean that the relative proportion of cases that fall within each bin of the *neighborhood conflict* measure differs somewhat from that found in Chapter 4. Once again, there is a relatively scarcity of cases at the high end of this measure, as few countries are found in regions with a sufficient density of ongoing or relatively recent border conflicts. For example, almost every case at the high end of the *neighborhood conflict* measure is a state in the Great Lakes region of central Africa from approximately 1999 to 2004.

Table 5.7

Neighborhood conflict (NC) and pro-government militia (PGM) activity

	NC = 0	0 < NC <=0.1	0.1 <NC <=1	NC > 1	Total country years
No PGM activity	(348) 99.4%	(1800) 83.2%	(782) 71.8%	(273) 56.6%	(3203) 78.4%
PGM activity	(2) 0.6%	(363) 16.8%	(307) 28.2%	(209) 43.4%	(881) 21.6%
Total country years	(350)	(2163)	(1089)	(482)	(4084)

X-squared = 284.02, df = 3, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 5.8

Neighborhood conflict (NC) and purges

	NC = 0	0 < NC <=0.1	0.1 <NC <=1	NC > 1	Total country years
No purge	(244) 88.4%	(1129) 91.5%	(752) 90.5%	(371) 84.1%	(2496) 89.7%
Purge	(32) 11.6%	(105) 8.5%	(79) 9.5%	(70) 15.9%	(286) 10.3%
Total country years	(276)	(1234)	(831)	(441)	(2782)

X-squared = 20.209, df = 3, p-value = 0.0001536

As the prevalence of conflict in a region grows, so does the frequency of *PGM* activity, and from these bivariate relationships alone the increase seems quite dramatic. The pattern seen in *purges* is interesting, as the likelihood of a purge is highest in cases with the strongest regional influence or history of conflict, but the second highest frequency is found in those cases where there is basically no ongoing or recent conflict in a region. Perhaps regimes in those circumstances have so little to worry about in terms of external security that they can afford to purge key military officials without fear of retribution because the domestic population would not support a coup given the lack of clear motivation. Of course, there are additional factors related to coup proofing and coup risk that would correlate to regional conflict, and the regressions below control for some of these.

Relative Regional Capacity

As a final bivariate trend, I now consider the relationship between *relative regional capacity* and coup proofing behavior. Chapter 2 explained how the immediate threat from a conflict and its effects on coup risk incentivize leaders to engage in coup proofing. Leaders who are relatively more secure from nearby threats due to relative power advantages may be more willing to risk the loss of military efficacy that can accompany coup proofing policies. For the purposes of these bivariate associations, I break the data into four bins, as seen in Table 5.9 and Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.9

Relative regional capacity (RRC) and pro-government militia (PGM) activity

	RRC < .05	.05 < RRC <= 0.15	0.15 <RRC <= 0.4	RRC > 0.4	Total country years
No PGM activity	(1559) 84.7%	(697) 72.8%	(371) 60.5%	(137) 74.5%	(2764) 76.9%
PGM activity	(281) 15.3%	(261) 27.2%	(242) 39.5%	(47) 25.5%	(831) 23.1%
Total country years	(1840)	(958)	(613)	(184)	(3595)

X-squared = 165.84, df = 3, p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 5.10

Relative regional capacity (RRC) and purges

	RRC < .05	.05 < RRC <= 0.15	0.15 <RRC <= 0.4	RRC > 0.4	Total country years
No purge	(1167) 91.1%	(715) 88.3%	(447) 88.5%	(84) 85.7%	(2413) 89.6%
Purge	(114) 8.9%	(95) 11.7%	(58) 11.5%	(14) 14.3%	(281) 10.4%
Total country years	(1281)	(810)	(505)	(98)	(2694)

X-squared = 6.8355, df = 3, p-value = 0.07733

From the bivariate tables alone, the relationship between *relative regional capacity* and *purges* is not large, though it is in the expected direction (countries with a greater share of regional military capacity are more likely to purge military leaders). The effect of capabilities on PGM activity is larger, though there is a slight dip at the highest level of *relative regional capacity*. As with other bivariate trends, these patterns will be explored in greater detail below.

Analysis

Models and Control Variables

As both *PGM* activity and *purges* are dichotomous outcome variables, I use logistic regression to test my hypotheses on the relationship between nearby conflict and coup proofing behavior. The unit of analysis is again the country year, and the temporal domain depends on whether the model in questions looks at *PGM* activity (1981-2007) or *purges* (1968-2003). The *purges* models are also restricted to authoritarian countries only, due to the purge data only be collected for those countries.

Previous scholarly work on coup proofing find that other factors are associated with those policies, so I include control variables that should also predict coup proofing behavior. All of these control variables are lagged one year. First, I include *own.interstate*, which is a binary measure of whether or not the neighbor state was engaged in an interstate conflict in a given year. This is once again taken from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002). Protracted interstate conflicts are found to decrease the risk of coups because they preoccupy military leaders with the ongoing conflict and shut down some of the common pathways by which leaders carry out coups (Piplani and Talmadge, 2015).

For internal characteristics of the neighbor state, I begin with the dichotomous variable *own.civil*, which indicates that a country is engaged in a civil war of its own. Sudduth (2017) finds that counterbalancing still occurs even when a country is engaged in a civil war, meaning that leaders are willing to risk the decreased military efficacy in order to consolidate power through coup proofing. Additional internal factors including wealth, years since last coup, and regime type are covered in Sudduth's (2017) latent *coup.risk* variable, so I do not include those factors in an attempt to avoid collinearity.

The latent variable can be interpreted as the likelihood that a coup occurs in a given year considering the various background factors that predict coup attempts. It is important to remember Sudduth's claim that coup proofing is most likely when the risk of a coup attempt is temporarily low, so factors that relate to coup risk should also be related to the likelihood of coup proofing. My theory predicts that the threat from a nearby civil war, while it does increase the risk of a coup, is a unique enough type of threat that draws military leaders' attention that coup proofing may still be seen as a viable strategy by regime leaders.

Finally, I also include a lagged version of each dependent variable (*PGM.lag* and *purges.lag*) in the appropriate model, as coup proofing efforts in a previous year are likely to affect similar efforts in the current year. Repeated interference in the military may create a political climate in a state that is permissive of further such action. One of the best predictors of future coups is previous coup attempts, and a similar pattern is likely to hold for preventative measures.

Statistical Significance

In each model below I include the measure of *relative regional capacity* to test Hypothesis 7 under a variety of conflict conditions. I run separate models for each conflict condition to consider the effect of different levels or conceptualizations of externality severity. To test Hypothesis 5, which states that a nearby conflict should lead to more coup proofing, I first regress *PGM* activity on *naive proximity*, *relative regional capacity*, and the full battery of control variables. I rerun the model using *purges* as the dependent variable but otherwise maintain the same specification. I present the results of the two models in Table 5.11, including the results for the control variables. The *PGM* model is found in the left column, and the *purges* model in the right column.

Table 5.11: *PGM* activity and *purges* regressed on *naive proximity*.

	Dependent variable:	
	PGM	Purge
	(1)	(2)
naive proximity	0.509***	0.268*
	(0.167)	(0.140)
relative regional capacity	1.058**	0.751*
	(0.465)	(0.426)
own.interstate	0.866*	0.605**
	(0.451)	(0.263)
own.civil	1.567***	0.325**
	(0.180)	(0.148)
coup.risk	2.583	3.283***
	(1.731)	(1.230)
PGM lag	4.697***	
	(0.159)	
purge lag		1.177***
		(0.158)
Constant	−3.906***	−2.821***
	(0.167)	(0.140)
Observations	3,291	2,643
Log Likelihood	−623.815	−842.248
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,259.629	1,696.497
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Results for country years where conflict exists in neighboring states whether or not it reaches the border are positive and significant for both *PGM* activity and *purges*, though the *purges* variable only achieves statistical significance at the more permissive 10% threshold. Having a conflict of any kind in a neighboring state increases the likelihood of both types of coup proofing policy that I include here. It is interesting to note that *coup.risk* variable is positive in both model specifications, though only reaches statistical significance in the *purges* model. Sudduth's (2017) argument holds that coup proofing occurs during times of lowered coup risk, but these findings indicate otherwise. Results in Chapter 4 pointed toward an increased risk of coups during times of nearby conflict, but leaders seem willing to risk implementing coup proofing anyway. The *relative regional capacity* variable also has a positive, statistically significant relationship with both outcome variables (though only at the 10% threshold for *purges*), indicating that leaders are more likely to engage in coup proofing when they are in a more advantageous military position in the region overall.

Turning to Hypothesis 6, I now consider the effect of *neighborhood conflict* and *immediate proximity* on both measures of coup proofing. Table 5.12 includes results for both dependent variables regressed on *neighborhood conflict* (and controls), while Table 5.13 has results for them regressed on *immediate proximity* (and controls).

Table 5.12: *PGM* activity and *purges* regressed on *neighborhood conflict*.

	Dependent variable:	
	PGM	Purge
	(1)	(2)
neighborhood conflict	0.345***	0.164**
	(0.122)	(0.081)
relative regional capacity	0.925**	0.727*
	(0.464)	(0.428)
own.inter	0.897*	0.586**
	(0.458)	(0.264)
own.civil	1.559***	0.282*
	(0.181)	(0.153)
coup.risk	2.623	3.447***
	(1.722)	(1.228)
PGM lag	4.706***	
	(0.159)	
purge lag		1.168***
		(0.158)
Constant	−3.729***	−2.721***
	(0.140)	(0.115)
Observations	3,291	2,641
Log Likelihood	−624.337	−841.943
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,260.674	1,695.885
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 5.13: *PGM* activity and *purges* regressed on *immediate proximity*.

	Dependent variable:	
	PGM	Purge
	(1)	(2)
conflict, not at border	0.149	−0.107
	(0.223)	(0.218)
conflict, at border	0.554***	0.379***
	(0.179)	(0.144)
relative regional capacity	1.142**	0.835*
	(0.474)	(0.433)
own.inter	0.864*	0.586**
	(0.465)	(0.265)
own.civil	1.584***	0.304**
	(0.180)	(0.148)
coup.risk	2.093	3.126**
	(1.762)	(1.237)
PGM lag	4.697***	
	(0.159)	
purge lag		1.158***
		(0.158)
Constant	−3.818***	−2.798***
	(0.159)	(0.136)
Observations	3,291	2,643
Log Likelihood	−623.538	−839.247
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,261.077	1,692.495
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

When conflict severity is measured by *neighborhood conflict*, as severity increases, the likelihood of coup proofing increases for both *PGM* activity and *purges*. The results for *neighborhood conflict* are positive and significant for both dependent variables, providing evidence to support Hypothesis 6. This suggests that some aspect of life in a more conflict-prone neighborhood gives state leaders the opportunity and incentive to engage in coup proofing in ways that are not available otherwise. State residents may be more willing to accept more centralized rule and unorthodox policy solutions in the interest of national security. In a particularly conflict-prone neighborhood, with its attendant history and norms of military policy, coup proofing policies may not even seem to be particularly unorthodox. This may also help explain why one of the strongest predictors of coup proofing behavior is previous coup proofing behavior. Yesterday's executive reach may become today's political norms.

Turning to the results for the *immediate proximity* model, there is an interesting division between cases of nearby conflict that do not reach the border and those that do. Neither the results for *PGM* activity or *purges* reach conventional levels of statistical significance when looking only at conflicts that do not reach the border, though results for *purges* are actually in the negative direction, suggesting that if any association exists between nearby (but not bordering) conflict and this particular form of coup proofing, it may make it less likely. Once conflict reaches the shared border, however, results are positive and significant for both *PGM* activity and *purges*. The immediacy of the threat may preoccupy the military's attention enough that state leaders are willing to risk coup proofing to consolidate power.

For both model specifications, the *relative regional capacity* variable has a positive, significant relationship, in line with the model in Table 5.11. Under each specification of threat from a nearby conflict, leaders seem to be more willing to engage in potentially risky coup proofing behaviors when they do so from a position of relative regional strength.

Remember from Chapter 4, however, that immediate threats also seem to increase the risk of coup attempts. The models in these two chapters cannot show whether coup proofing occurs and then a counter coup, or whether those cases where coup attempts occur would have had such attempts whether or not coup proofing was instituted. Perhaps leaders simply underestimate the likelihood of a coup, miscalculate their popular support, or otherwise err in their judgment regarding the appropriate time to risk coup proofing policies. Sharif's

miscalculation in Pakistan may be such an event, where he may have thought that he had sufficient popular support and opportunity to consolidate power. Coup attempts are relatively rare, and the slight increase in the likelihood of such an event may be a relatively small risk for leaders who are facing pressure from various domestic audiences who anticipate or currently experience negative conflict externalities.
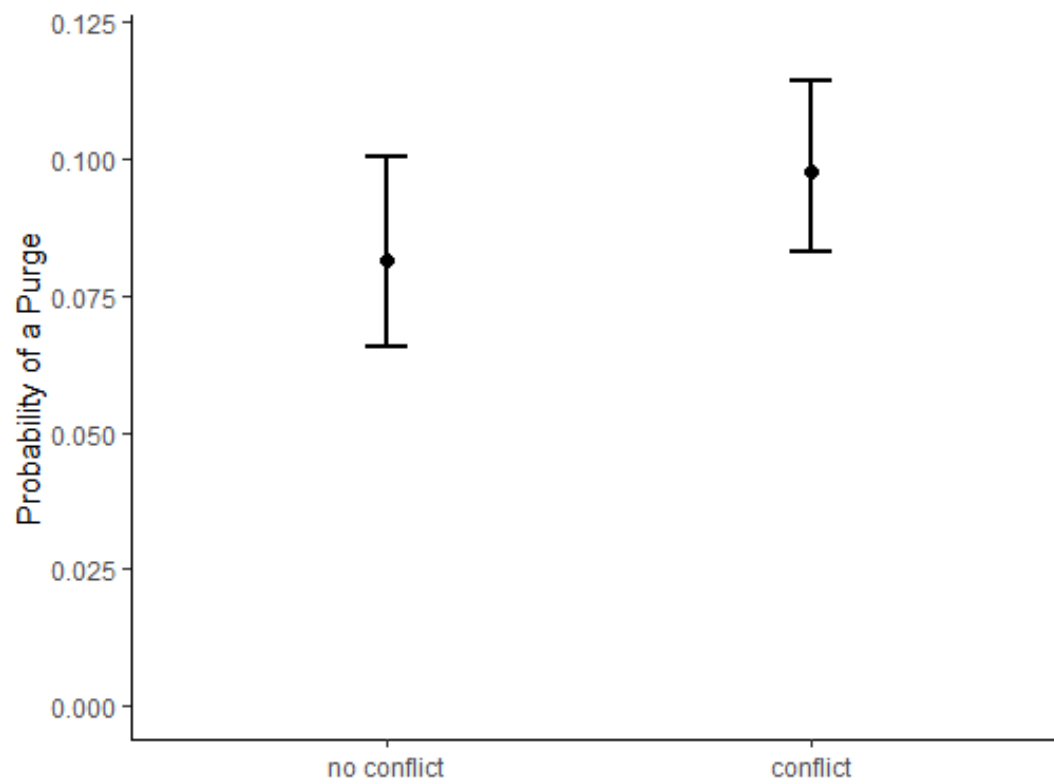
Substantive Effects

As noted in Chapter 4, the regression coefficients from a logistic model are not immediately intuitive as concerns the substantive effects of the different independent variables on coup proofing decisions. I will display predicted probabilities for each dependent variable across the range of each independent variable (*naive proximity*, *neighborhood conflict*, and *immediate proximity*).

These probabilities are calculated first by holding all other covariates at their mean value and then moving the explanatory variable from 0 to 1 for *naive proximity*, to the four preset bins used above (in the bivariate associations section) for *neighborhood conflict*, from 0 to 1 to 2 for *immediate proximity*, and to the four preset bins used above for *relative regional capacity*. Thus, the predicted probabilities show the likelihood of militia activity or a purge in the "average" country year where the only variation comes in whether or not a neighboring state had an ongoing conflict (*naive conflict*), levels of *neighborhood conflict*, whether or not a conflict reached a shared border (*immediate proximity*), or a state's relative capacity in its regions. In Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below, I display the predicted probability of each outcome (along with 95% confidence intervals) at the two values of *naive proximity* (no conflict, conflict in a neighboring state).

Figure 5.1: *Naive conflict* and predicted probability of *PGM* activity

Figure 5.2: *Naive conflict* and predicted probability of *purges*

Both *PGM* activity and *purges* are relatively rare events, but even looking at the naive measure of nearby conflict, having such a conflict on the border increases the likelihood of pro-government militia activity by approximately 59% and of a purge of military officers by approximately 28%. As the other independent variables consider more nuanced conflict situations, I now present predicted probabilities for those. Figure 5.3 and 5.4 correspond to the models of coup proofing regressed on *neighborhood conflict*.

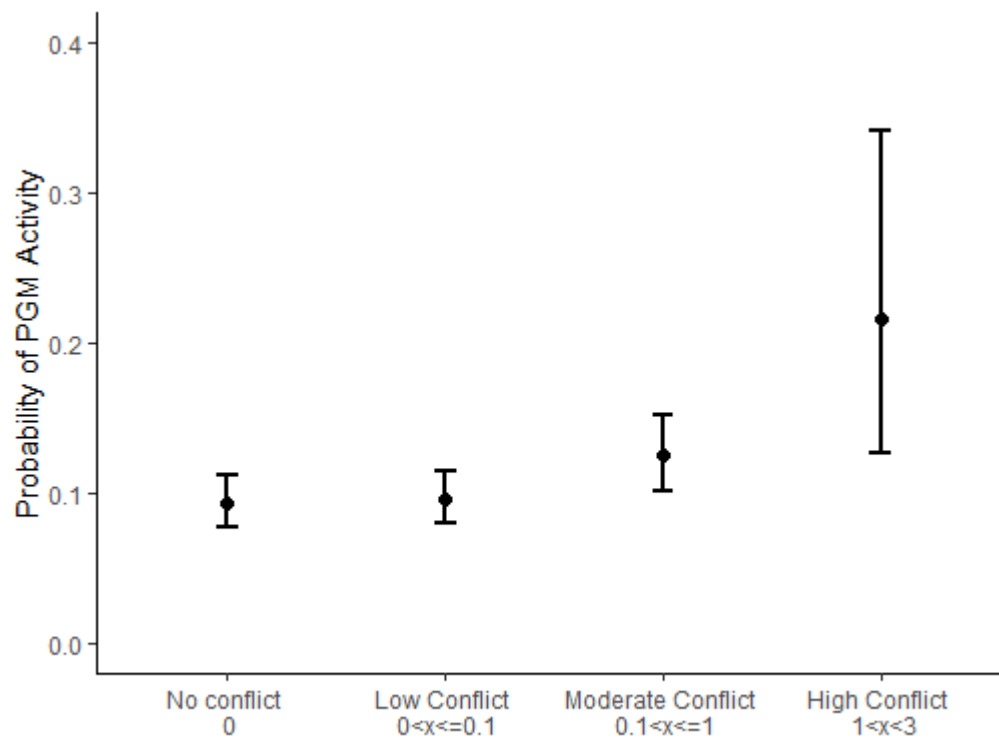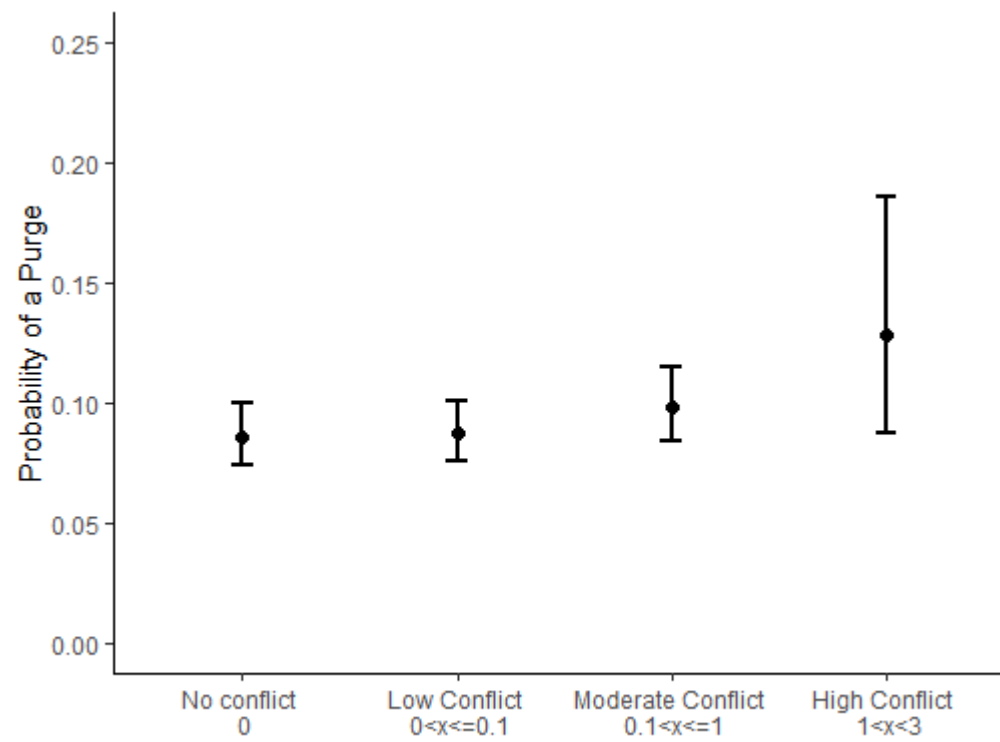**Figure 5.3**: *Neighborhood conflict* and predicted probability of *PGM* activity

Figure 5.4: *Neighborhood conflict* and predicted probability of *purges*

The figures above show the predicted probability of the respective coup proofing activities at the following values of *neighborhood conflict*: 0, .1, 1, and 3. Recall from the discussion in Chapter 3 that the *neighborhood conflict* variable is not evenly distributed across its entire range. High values of the variable are extremely rare. Though the maximum value is over 9, the only country years which are greater than 5 are 1999-2002 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As this extreme level of neighborhood conflict is not particularly representative of other situations in the world, I choose the value of 3 to compare the increased probability of pro-government militia activity or military purges under different levels of nearby conflict (ongoing and recently ended).

For illustration purposes, the country-year of Angola-2000 scores close to three on this measure. This was during a period of relatively intense conflict in the DRC as well as lower level conflict in the Republic of the Congo related to a recent turnover in power (both situations saw Angolan involvement). Both ongoing and recent conflicts in the nearby area go into the measure, though at decreasing weight as time and distance increase. As you can see from the figures above, holding all other factors constant, a country in a high-conflict neighborhood has a 131% greater chance of *PGM* activity and a 63% greater chance of *purges*.

I next present the predicted probabilities for each outcome variable under the *immediate proximity* condition in Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.5 *Immediate proximity* and predicted probability of *PGM* activity
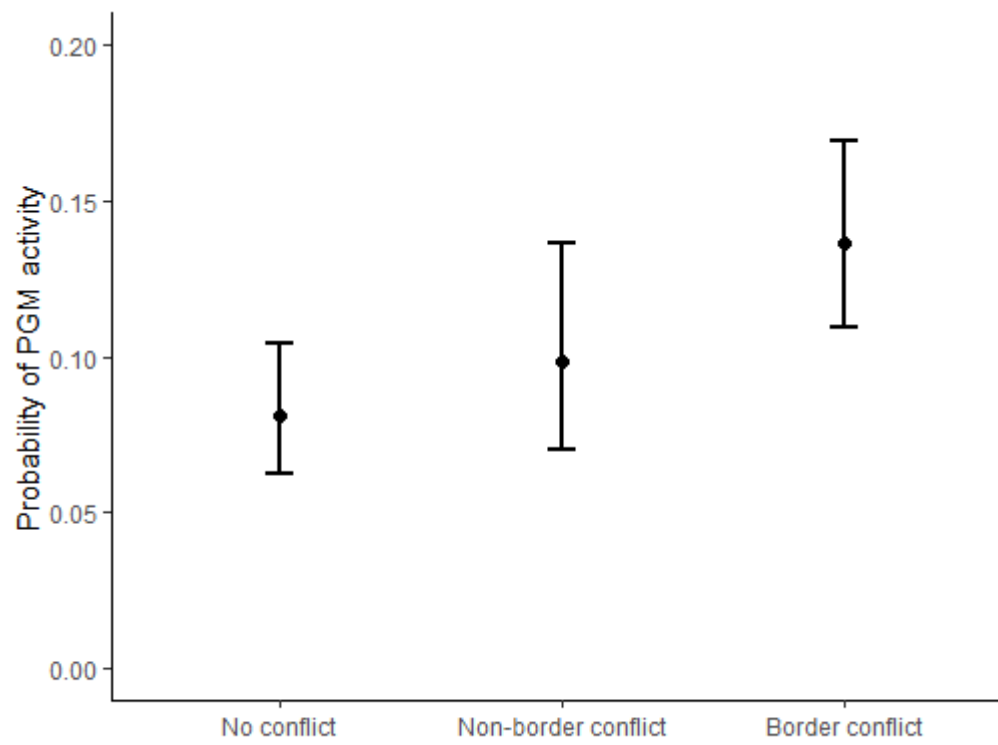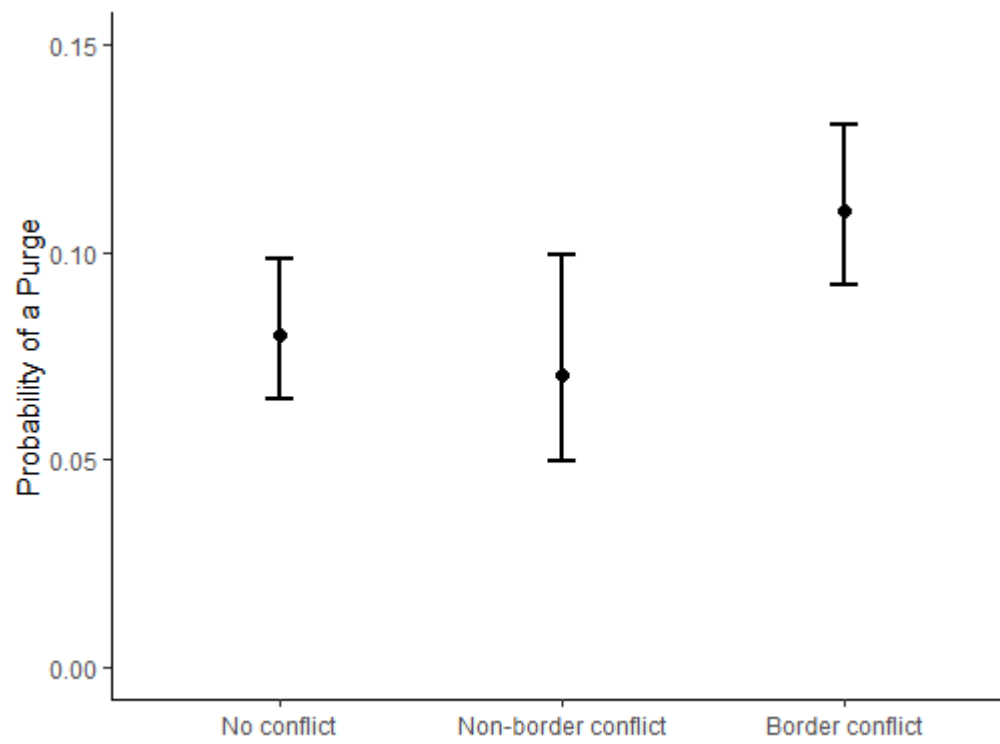
Figure 5.6 *Immediate proximity* and predicted probability of *purges*

The figures above show the predicted probability of a coup proofing event where there are no conflicts in neighboring states, where there is at least one conflict but it does not reach the shared border, and where at least one nearby conflict reaches the shared border. Moving from a situation where there are no nearby conflicts but all else is held constant to a similar situation where conflict exists *and* reaches a shared border increase the likelihood of pro-government militia activity by 64% and a military purge by 38%. As noted in the different conditions above, these events remain fairly rare, but each measure of exposure to conflict externalities shows an association with increased likelihood of coup proofing. These results provide support for Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6.

Finally, I present predicted probabilities of *PGM* activity and *purges* under the different levels of *relative regional capacity* used in the bivariate section above.[49]

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[49] Calculating predicted probabilities requires selecting a model specification. I present the predicted probabilities here that are obtained under the model specification that looks at *neighborhood conflict*. Specifications using other independent variables measuring threat from nearby conflict show similar results.

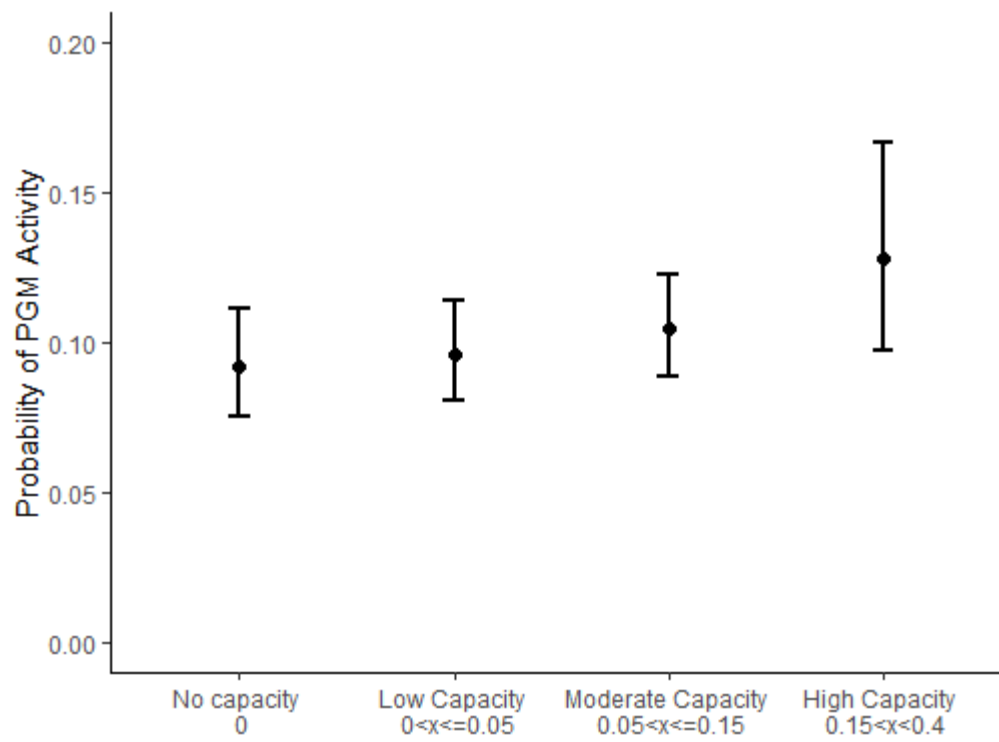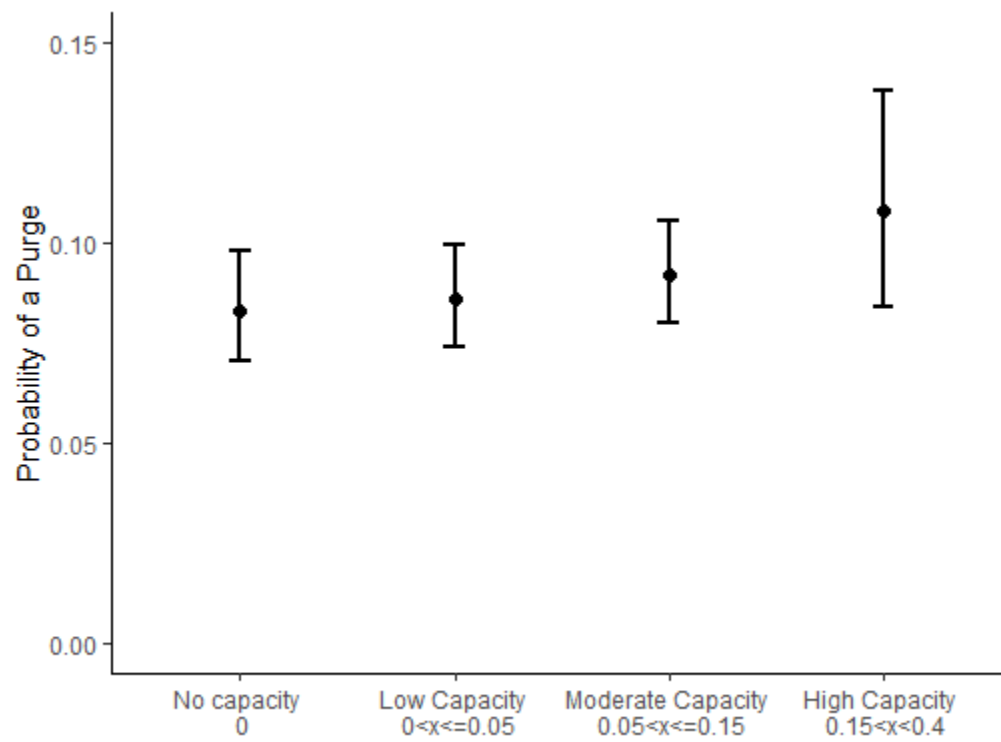**Figure 5.7** *Relative regional capacity* and *PGM activity*

Figure 5.8 *Relative regional capacity* and *purges*

As the statistical significance findings showed earlier, *relative regional capacity* only predicts a difference in behavior at the 0.1 level, and this explains the overlapping confidence intervals when considering 95% confidence intervals in the charts above. Still, these results suggest that capability is a predictor of coup proofing when considered relative to the strength of nearby countries in the region. Moving from a situation where a country has no military capability to speak of to a situation where its capabilities make it a regional power (40% of more of the total capacity among its neighbors) leads to a 39% increase in the likelihood of *PGM* activity and a 30% increase in the likelihood of a *purge*.

Conclusions

Taking into account the findings here and in Chapter 4, it does appear that nearby conflict presents a unique threat and opportunity environment for state leaders seeking to maintain political survival in the face of domestic opposition. Leaders are faced with a difficult choice when facing civil war violence across a border, but that choice is rarely, if ever, made in isolation from other threats. Particularly for leaders who rely on the support of military actors to remain in power, the uncertainty from a nearby conflict may leave them with few good options. There is pressure to provide additional resources to the military to protect against conflict externalities, but the general negative effects from the nearby conflict (along with their attendant uncertainty) may cause those same military actors to be dissatisfied enough with current leader policy to consider a coup. Results in this chapter suggest that leaders are willing to undergo some loss of military efficiency (and risk a counter coup) in response to nearby civil war violence, but why?

In line with my theory of responses to nearby civil conflict, I see three potential reasons (not mutually exclusive) for coup proofing policies. First, military leaders may be focused enough on the threat from a nearby conflict that even a purge or pro-government militia activity that threatens their monopoly on force is not enough to cause them to attempt a coup that might distract or destabilize the military at a critical juncture. Leaders, recognizing this legitimate preoccupation on the part of military leaders, are willing to take the risk of military inefficiency or insufficiency to consolidate power. Sudduth's (2017) finding that leaders are willing to engage in coup proofing behavior even while fighting their own civil war may fall in line with

this logic, as military actors may be unwilling to risk losing the civil war to stage a counter coup.

Second, regime leaders may be in such desperate circumstances that the risks of coup proofing pale in comparison to the concerns about losing office due to domestic dissatisfaction either from civilian or military actors. Any method of power consolidation, no matter how risky, may seem like a worthwhile gamble. Nearby conflict, particularly when the externalities are severe and blamed primarily on leader action or inaction, can put a leader in just such a precarious position. Though the causes of the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey (discussed at greater length in a previous chapter) are many, some analysts put the majority of the blame on Erdogan's foreign policy, and specifically on his handling of ongoing conflicts and crises in the region.[50] The coup proofing in that case was minor before the coup, though the added justification of the recent coup allowed Erdogan and his allies to drastically ramp up policies to consolidate power.

Third, and quite possibly operative in either of the other two situations, leaders may simply misjudge and underestimate the risk of a coup or counter coup when considering whether or not to engage in coup proofing policies. Sudduth (2017) argues that coup proofing is likely to occur when the risk of a coup is at least temporarily low, as otherwise military actors will strike back, as was the case in Pakistan in 1999. A civil war neighborhood environment, for the reasons discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, holds a multitude of factors that may make accurate estimation of these risks difficult.

In fact, Sudduth's recent findings about the relationship between coup risk and coup proofing do not seem to hold once nearby conflict is taken into account, meaning that these nearby conflicts may affect the power dynamics and expectations between military leaders and regime leaders in ways that have not been adequately covered in the literature to this point. State leaders need to respond to both the military and other domestic groups in a variety of ways, and Chapter 6 will address some of those other options in its discussion of how leaders can signal support to warring parties in a nearby state without risking direct involvement.

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[50] https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/15/erdogan-has-nobody-to-blame-for-the-coup-but-himself/

Chapter 6: Empirical Chapter III, Signaling Support

United States and coalition military action in the two main theaters of the War on Terror was substantial enough to draw in almost every one of Afghanistan's and Iraq's neighbors in one way or another. Particularly in the early years of the conflict, all but one of Afghanistan's neighbors participated on the side of the coalition/the Northern Alliance, either through direct troop involvement or logistical support (Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan). Pakistan, or at least certain elements in the Pakistani government and military, had a vested interest in the survival of the Taliban as a governing body, and various forms of overt and covert support were provided to that regime. Iraq's neighbors were almost universally opposed to the 2003 invasion, with only Kuwait clearly in support. Public opinion in Iraq's other neighbors (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran) was largely against the invasion, though some amount of logistical support was given by a few. The scope of the international involvement in each conflict, especially in the early years, drew much of regional and global attention to external involvement.

As both conflicts evolved, however, so did the responses of Iraq and Afghanistan's neighbors. Contemporaneous with and continuing after the more external involvement, neighbors also enacted a variety of more or less formal domestic policies and public statements in an attempt to show support for a particular side in the conflict in order to satisfy domestic political goals or important political groups. External intervention can be the most visible or dramatic form of response to nearby conflict, but as was noted in Chapter 2, most neighbor countries do not take this option. Even where direct military, economic, or diplomatic intervention does occur, there are still domestic responses to nearby instability that neighbor state regimes take to minimize the severity of conflict externalities or insulate themselves against domestic pressure. Chapter 5 discussed coup proofing as one specific type of response to nearby conflict, and in this chapter I will discuss and test hypotheses related to signaling support for one side or another in an armed conflict. Reasons for signaling support can include economic interests, regional security concerns, and ethnic or religious ties to conflict actors.

Since at least 2007, Iran has refused to allow incoming refugees from Afghanistan to register as asylum seekers with very few exceptions. There are over one million Afghans with refugee status in Iran, but at least that many more live in the country with no such status for a variety of reasons. This act of non-cooperation with Afghanistan could naively be seen as a sign of

support for rebels, but it is clear from Iran's other actions that a stable border and closer economic ties are both in Iran's interest and its regional strategy. Iran has avoided direct intervention for a variety or reasons which include US troop presence, a small Shia population in Afghanistan, and pressure from other outside actors. This has not stopped Iran from pursuing its regional goals through other means.

Kuwait's response to the ongoing civil strife in Iraq in the years since the US invasion again showcases the importance of security and economic concerns that in many ways can take precedence over ethnic or religious ties. Kuwait quite clearly has a fraught history with Iraq given the first Gulf War, but due to its long shared border and demographic/military capability disparity, Kuwait has a strong interest in a stable and secure Iraq as a neighbor. Economic and political ties between the country offer enough advantages Kuwait has largely been willing to support the Shia-dominated government of Iraq in its conflict against various rebel and extremist groups.

This chapter considers the third key question of this dissertation: If neighbor-state leaders want to show support for one side or another in the neighboring conflict, which do they choose and how active (i.e. external) is that support? Specifically, this chapter considers how the relationship between economic interdependence, regional security concerns, and ethnic ties influence the likelihood of conflictual or cooperative policies in relation to a civil-war-state regime.

Nearby Civil War and Signaling Support

Given the high potential for spillover effects from nearby conflict, neighbor states' first priorities are insulation from externalities, and where possible, containment or resolution of the conflict to reduce or eliminate those externalities. As regime actors in the civil war state are usually stronger than rebel groups and also more familiar to neighbor state leaders (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of the uncertainty that comes from leader turnover), neighbor state leaders are likely to prefer cooperation with the regime over rebel groups barring a particularly strong motivation to do otherwise. Even ethnic or religious ties can take a backseat to more immediate concerns of continued or improved economic or political relations, as the complex motivations of Iran and Kuwait above demonstrate. The existence of external intervention by major powers can also change the motivations of neighbor state regimes.

As was noted in Chapter 2, studies on civil war joining tend to focus on large factors that would drive states to support either the government or rebel sides such as ethnic or religious ties, economic benefits including the presence of lootable resources, or security concerns. Considering that many neighbor states are either unable or unwilling to directly intervene in a conflict, there are ways in which visible signals of support for one side or another are both a lower and higher bar than direct intervention. Because visible signals are not as immediately risky as committing financial or military resources to a conflict, those signs of support may be more palatable to neighbor-state leaders needing to reassure or placate key domestic actors.

At the same time, while external support is costlier in terms of actual resources as well as potential blowback from the civil war state or other engaged parties, it also has a higher chance of actually "affecting the balance of power between the government and opposition forces", as Regan's definition of intervention states (1998, 756). Affecting the balance of power is more likely to lead to outcomes favorable to the intervening state, and domestic policy changes alone are unlikely to shift that power in any large way, much less the more informal and "cheap" signals of support provided by statements or press conferences. Iran's policies of refusal and forcible repatriation of Afghan refugees, for example, may affect the availability or motivation of possible rebel or government fighters, but this is unlikely to have more than a marginal direct effect on the overall conflict. If visible signals have both a lower likelihood of affecting the dynamics of the conflict as well as a lower chance of visibly appearing to be indicators of decisive action on the part of the regime, those policies may have little chance of appeasing key domestic actors. These visible signals are not as risky as full-scale intervention, but the accompanying likelihood of little to no effect on conflict dynamics means that these domestic decisions are not likely to follow all of the same logic that predicts direct intervention.

For example, previous findings on biased intervention show that intervention on either side is more likely when rebel and government forces are at relatively parity in terms of their military capabilities (Cunningham et al. 2009, Koga 2011) because that is when external assistance is most likely to mean the difference between victory and defeat. Since domestic policy changes alone are unlikely to sway the results of the conflict, rebel capabilities are unlikely to matter here. Similarly, the presence of easily lootable resources (Findley and Marineau 2014) in the conflict state would not have a clear motivation toward domestic policy one way or the other,

as other factors are likely to weigh more heavily than future economic gain from the eventual victor. Previous or ongoing interventions are also unlikely to sway things one way or the other in every case (Findley and Teo 2006). Since domestic policy changes do not carry the same risk as external intervention, the neighbor state both does not have to worry as much about possibly blowback from a powerful intervener with strong interests in the outcome and can not count on the support of the powerful intervener either. When the domestic action taken is not even a formal policy or law, but rather a statement, the risk of blowback is likely to be lessened further as audiences may discount such statements as cheap talk.

If these factors are unlikely to sway visible signals short of intervention one way or the other, what will? Threats to economic stability will affect regime leaders directly as well as indirectly through pressure from key domestic groups harmed by the conflict. Even if the domestic actions are not likely to solve the economic problems that can arise when a conflict state is a key trading partner, visible responses can still be a signal to restive domestic groups that the regime is responding to the situation. Rational neighbor-state leaders might assume that economic relationships with the civil-war state are most likely to be maintained if the government wins, while the uncertainty that could arise from a rebel victory might lead to an unanticipated and possibly negative change in trading relationships. This leads to the first hypothesis for this chapter:

- **H8:** Leaders are more likely to send visible signals in support of the government side in a nearby conflict when there are stronger economic ties between neighbor states and civil war states.

In certain cases of nearby civil war, domestic groups with the ability to put pressure on leader survival might have a vested interest in the victory of one side or the other. Though ethnic ties are far from the only sign of affinity between key groups at home and actors in the conflict state, ethnicity is a strong basis for policy preferences both domestically and internationally. Dominant ethnic groups in a neighbor state are likely to pressure the government to signal support for co-ethnics across the border. A politically marginal ethnic group with its associated threat to the neighbor-state regime or the interests of its key constituents might trigger policies signaling opposition to co-ethnics either to reduce the likelihood of those co-ethnics winning and support secession or irredentism in the neighbor state or simply to signal to the marginal group that the status quo is likely to continue. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- **H9a:** When a dominant ethnic group in a neighbor state has co-ethnics involved in a civil war across the border, neighbor-state leaders are more likely to take visible domestic actions that signal support of those co-ethnics.
- **H9b:** When a marginal ethnic group in a neighbor state has co-ethnics involved in a civil war across the border, neighbor-state leaders are more likely to take visible domestic actions that signal opposition to those co-ethnics.

Pressure one way or the other can be tempered by a neighbor state's willingness to risk good relations with the civil war state, however. Consider Georgia's position relative to Russia's Chechen conflicts in the 1990s and 2000s. Georgia relied heavily on Russia for trade, with bilateral trade with Russia accounting for over 20% of Georgia's total trade in the mid '90s. Relations between the countries were tense in relation to the Abkhazia conflict of a few years prior as well as continued disagreements over border security and possession/control of different territories. Georgia might have wanted Chechnya to succeed relative to Russia to distract Russia from putting additional pressure on Georgian military and economic affairs. Russia's overwhelming military and economic advantages made it very risky to do anything but signal support for the Russian side in the civil war, however. Georgia did so through a series of statements of support and formal agreements. If a neighbor state is concerned about future tensions with a civil war state, either political or military, it is less likely to risk displaying support for rebel actors in a civil war. This problem is heightened in the case of a civil war neighbor, as tensions can immediately spillover across the border. This leads to the following hypothesis:
- **H10**: The lower the relative capabilities of a neighbor state to a conflict state, the more likely it is to take visible domestic actions that signal support of the conflict state regime.

Research Design
Structure and Scope

To test these hypotheses, I use an approach similar to those taken by studies of third-party intervention into civil conflicts. Specifically, I construct a directed dyad data set to identify every directed dyad year in which a neighbor state faces a conflict across its border. Due to data restrictions this data set covers the time period from 1979 to 2006 or from 1979 to 1999 for a few analyses. Most analyses are run on the dataset with 2,243 cases referenced in

Chapter 3.[51] Because some states border more than one civil conflict in a given year, a state can appear multiple times in the data set per year, but only once per unique dyad. For example, from 1979 into the 1990s Honduras appears two or more times per year since at various times its contiguous neighbors of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua were engaged in civil conflict. As in previous chapters, I only consider as neighbors those states with immediate land or river contiguity. I include one observation per neighbor per year rather than one observation per neighbor per conflict for two reasons. First, observations on some of the independent variables change over time, which would be especially problematic for longer conflicts. Second, changes in visible signaling behavior can occur to greater or lesser degrees at different points in the conflict, and this allows those changes to appear in the data.

Dependent Variable

The outcome of interest for this chapter is domestic policies or events that signal support for either the government or the rebels in a nearby conflict, which for this chapter I label *visible signals*. Traditional studies of biased intervention look at military, economic, or political intervention that clearly targets one side or the other. Domestic policy changes are not always as clearly pointed in one direction or the other, but for this chapter I work under the assumption that a signal that supports the government of a nearby conflict state can be interpreted both by the conflict state leaders and the domestic population of the neighbor state as a signal of support in the conflict. Policies or statements that directly support an opposition group are a signal of support for that side, but even policies that oppose the sitting government, even if not directly related to the ongoing conflict, may also be seen as leaning a particular direction.

This still leaves the question of how to operationalize *visible signals*. From my theory, the intent of such signals must be to satisfy domestic demands for action, so the particular policy or action taken by the government must be visible to those domestic groups. This removes the

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[51]Directed dyad approaches typically provide a much larger number of cases than in the table below (2,243), but many studies using this approach consider all possible pairs in the global system. Restrictions on data availability for my outcome variable (*visible signals*) and data on two independent variables (*naive proximity* and *immediate proximity*) limit the analyses to the 1978-2006 time period. For this range of years and only looking at contiguous states (land contiguity only), the dataset begins at 16,256 observations. My theoretical and empirical approach lead me to only consider directed dyads where the "target state" is engaged in a civil conflict at the 25 battle deaths/year threshold in a given year, which reduces the number to 2,872 directed dyad years. While civil wars are the modal form of conflict in the modern era, they are still the exception rather than rule in domestic politics. Further limitations on the availability of the *visible signals* variable leads to the final count of 2,243 cases.

possibility of using something like covert action as a measure of signaling support, as action that is hidden from the world is likely to be hidden from key domestic audiences as well unless the audience in question consists entirely or military actors privy to that information. To identify policies and actions that are both visible and taken in support of either the government or opposition side in a civil war, I rely on event data from news articles.

If a government action of a neighbor-state regime is public enough to be reported on in a major journalistic outlet, I assume that the action is also visible to the domestic groups in that state. I then need to identify particular events that originate from a government actor and are targeted and government or opposition forces in the conflict state. Pulling directed events from news broadcasts fulfills the two major requirements for this dependent variable: the events are visible to key domestic audiences (since they are visible enough to be reported on in the news) and they are directed in support of one side or another in a conflict state. As a measure for my dependent variable, support for a side in a nearby conflict, I use data on cooperative and conflictual events from the Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data (Althaus et al. 2017).

These event data are computer coded from the British Broadcasting Corporation's Summary of World Broadcasts, which provides an aggregation of foreign-language sources through human translators to cover thousands of news outlets from around the world (Nardulli 2014). These events are generated using PETRARCH software and assigned event codes using the Open Event Data Alliance ontology.[52] Individual codes indicate the type of event, which can then be mapped onto a Goldstein conflict-cooperation scale to show whether that event was indicative of conflict or cooperation between two actors, as well as the magnitude of the conflict or cooperation.

For each event identified from that data, the software identifies a source actor, a target actor, and a particular event or policy, among other information. For the purposes of my analysis, I keep the focus on policies under the control of a country's leader, so I restrict events to those in which the government is the key source of the event.[53] I further restrict events to those that

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[52] http://openeventdata.org/
[53] There are certainly cases when businesses are the key source actor but are acting on behalf of the regime, as is often the case with oil and gas companies in countries like Russia that are not fully owned by the government, but are clearly influenced by it. This is not always the case, so I disregard events with any other source but the executive branch or affiliated actors.

target either the civil-war state government or an opposition group in that state.[54] In some cases more than one of the same event is listed as occurring on the same day, which may be because an event was actually repeated but may also occur because multiple news sources report on it. Rather than keep such events in as a measure of increased support for one side or another, I remove all duplicate events.

Each event is assigned a Goldstein conflict or cooperation score based on Table 1 in King and Lowe (2003). Positive scores indicate cooperation and negative scores indicate conflict, though the scores are flipped if the target is an opposition group because helping the opposition is the same as opposing the government under these assumptions. Some of the events (and the corresponding event codes) indicate direct external intervention, either in support of or opposition to the government or rebel forces. Because these events are both the type of external action I am not concerned with in this chapter and because their greater magnitude (in terms of their Goldstein scores) would drown out the effects of other events, I remove all such events from consideration.

To illustrate what the process looks like up to this point, consider the following example. The PETRARCH software identifies a news story in which a country's government promises aid to another country's government and assigns this event a code using the OEDA ontology to designate the type of event as "Express intent to provide material aid" followed by a sub-coding if the type of aid is specified.[55] This is then mapped onto a Goldstein score matching the "promise material support" category with its appropriate positive score. If the target of the promised (not delivered) aid were a rebel or opposition group, I flip the score to a negative value to indicate conflictual signals toward the civil war state. This would be one of many data points of events indicating cooperation or conflict with a civil war state in a given year.

A count of cooperative or conflictual events or a sum of the individual scores would overrepresent or privilege dyads with more news coverage. Instead, I follow the method of Mattes and Rodriguez (2014) in creating yearly measure of the average level of cooperation or

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conflict in a dyad year. I sum the Goldstein scores over a year for each dyad and then divide by the number of events in that year. For example, if a state denounces (-3.4), makes a complaint (-1.9) and suspends sanctions (2.9) in a given year, the yearly conflict/cooperation score would be -0.8 (-2.4/3). The measure ranges from -10 to 8, which are the minimum and maximum values of conflict and cooperation for a dyad year. The mean of the scores is 1.88 with a standard deviation of 2.21.

For comparison, Mattes and Rodriguez's measure, which uses different event data and only looking at cooperation found a mean value of 0.21 (and a standard deviation of 0.8).. Their measure considers every possible dyad, not just neighbors. Even when including conflictual policies, Immediately contiguous neighbors may have a higher baseline level of cooperation, which is not surprising given the higher likelihood and necessity of cooperation when both threats and opportunities are likely to be shared across borders. When looking at the results later in this chapter, this baseline expectation of cooperation makes individual conflictual events less likely to sway overall levels of cooperation. Consider again the Georgia-Russia example. Particularly in cases where a conflict state is significantly more powerful in economic and military terms, even factors that might normally lead a state to push back against the conflict-state government may be trumped by more immediate priorities of economic and political survival.

Independent Variables

To test the effect of economic interdependence on conflict and cooperation policies for Hypothesis 8, I use Correlates of War Trade data (Barbieri and Keshk 2009; version 4.0). The measure of *trade dependence* is calculated as follows. I take the measure of total bilateral trade flows for a dyad in a given year and then divide it by a country's total trade in that year. The resulting measure is a percentage of total trade that comes from a particular target in a dyad, with higher percentages indicating a higher reliance on that one particular trade partner relative to overall levels of trade. For all directed dyad years from 1979-2006, the measure has a mean value of 0.035 and a standard deviation of 0.085. A few high values skew the measure, as the median value is only 0.0055. The only dyad years that have a *trade dependence* score over 0.65 are Mexico or Canada in relation to the US in the early 2000s, Iraq with Turkey in

1991, and Belarus with Russia in 1994.[56] Most neighbors profit from trade, but rarely is it the key source of economic revenue. Many countries in civil war neighborhoods are economically fragile, but so are the other countries nearby, so trade often occurs (when it does at all) with more distant partners.

For Hypotheses 9a and 9b, I use the Ethnic Power Relations data from Vogt et al. (2015). This data identifies politically relevant ethnic groups along with their level of access to executive power. Where a group rules alone or shares power, I code them as a dominant ethnic group, while groups that are excluded from power are coded as marginal ethnic groups. Following the approach in Nome (2013) I then create four dichotomous variables indicating the existence of ethnic ties between groups in a neighbor state and groups in a conflict state. *Dominant-Dominant* ties exist where a group is politically dominant in both states. With the same pattern of neighbor to conflict state, I also include dichotomous variables for *Dominant-Marginal*, *Marginal-Dominant*, and *Marginal-Marginal*. As a single dyad year can include a pair of states that have multiple shared ethnic groups at varying levels of access to political power, these categories are not mutually exclusive.[57] The reference category is thus countries with no ethnic ties.

For Hypothesis 10, I use a measure of *relative capability* from the National Material Capabilities data (version 5.0) from the Correlates of War project (Singer et al. 1972). I measure the material strength of a neighbor state relative to the conflict state by first taking the neighbor state's CINC score and dividing it by the sum of the dyad's CINC scores. The mean score for this measure is 0.43 with a standard deviation of 0.3. This indicates that the average neighbor in my data is materially weaker than the conflict state across its border. Several hundred dyad years have neighbor states possessing more than 90% of the dyad's total capacities, with recent examples including China, Pakistan, and Iran in relation to Afghanistan (the conflict state) and Russia in relation to Georgia (in the early 2000s during the latter state's internal conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia).

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[56] The US appears in the data as having a civil conflict in the 2000s due to terrorist attacks on US territory during that time.

[57] Some dyadic pairings actually include multiple groups that fit a particular kin dyad type, but I collapse each measure here to a dichotomous indicator.

Control Variables and Models Specification

As noted above, much of the logic of biased external intervention does not fit a situation of signaling support through domestic events and policy choices. Instead, determinants of these types of policies are more likely to follow theories of international cooperation, as general determinants of cooperative behavior are likely to drive behaviors in support of the government side in conflict unless conflict dynamics push hard enough in the other direction. Additionally, I include control variables that may affect the salience of the nearby conflict and thus the likelihood of economic, ethnic, or capability-related factors contributing to cooperative or conflictual policy.

Using UCDP-PRIO data on armed conflict (version 18.1; Petterson and Eck 2019, Gleditsch et al. 2002), I include a dichotomous variable for *ethnic conflict* which indicates whether or not the key issue of contention in the civil conflict was ethnicity or major divisions were made on ethnic grounds. The existence of ethnic ties may only influence cooperative or conflictual policies to a meaningful degree if the stakes of the conflict reflect those differences. On a similar note about conflict salience, I include the dichotomous variable for *immediate proximity* used in previous chapters as well. I control for the presence of an *alliance* using a dichotomous variable from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions data (Leeds et al. 2002) to show the presence of at least one formal alliance agreement between the two states in a dyad. States with formal cooperative agreements are likely to already be in positions where cooperation is an expectation or pattern of behavior.

I include a measure of *shared regime type* using Democracy-Dictatorship data (Cheibub et al. 2010) to code a value of 1 where both states are democracies or both states are dictatorships, and 0 otherwise. Finally, I control for the presence of ongoing external support by the neighbor state into the conflict state using dichotomous measures of *external government support* and *external opposition support* created from the UCDP External Support data (Högbladh et al. 2011). States which are currently involved in the nearby conflict through troop provision or logistical support for one side or the other are likely to differ in their decision making regarding visible signals when compared to states with no external involvement.

Because my outcome variable is a continuous measure of conflict or cooperation on a yearly basis, I specify an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model which regresses the yearly

measure on my independent and control variables. Each independent variable is lagged by one year.

Bivariate Associations

As I did in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, I first present tables of bivariate associations to explore the general pattern of cooperation and conflict in relation to two of my variables of interest: *trade dependence*, and *relative capacity*. I do not present this information for the categories of ethnic ties because as noted above, a single dyad year can fall into multiple categories. This would lead to quite a few possible categories to display for a table of associations, as it would require separate cells for each individual ethnic tie measure and all possible combinations for which cases exist. For example, consider the Belarus-Russia dyad in the mid 1990s (included in the data because of the Russian civil conflict in Chechnya). Belarus has a score of 1 on the measures of *Dominant-Dominant* (ethnic Russians), *Dominant-Marginal* (ethnic Belarusians), and *Marginal-Marginal* (ethnic Poles) for that year.[58]

Trade Dependence

Countries in my data set have levels of trade dependence ranging nearly from 0 to 0.83 (indicating no trade with a conflict state to almost complete reliance on that trade as a proportion of total trade), but the majority of cases rely on the conflict state for less than 4% of their total trade. In Table 6.1 below I present the mean value of the yearly Goldstein score for conflict/cooperation at four possible ranges of values of *trade dependence*.

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[58] This also highlights a possible issue with this measure: it considers ethnic ties whether or not that ethnicity is the one engaged in a civil conflict in the conflict state. In the Belarus-Russia example, ethnic Chechens are not a reference category for shared marginal group ties. I use all possible ethnic group identities here because I assume that co-ethnics will be concerned about the possible effects of a civil conflict on their ethnic kin even if they are not primary combatants.

Table 6.1

Trade dependence and yearly Goldstein score

Trade dependence (x)	N (%)	Mean Goldstein score (SD)
0 >= x < 0.01	1416 (58.61)	1.81 (2.23)
0.01 >= x < 0.05	504 (20.86)	2.07 (2.05)
0.05 >= x < 0.15	322 (13.33)	2.01 (2.37)
0.15 >= x < 1	174 (7.20)	1.92 (1.83)
	Total dyad years: 2416	Overall mean: 1.88 (2.21)

As *trade dependence* increases, there is a positive association with increased cooperation as indicated by the increased value of the Goldstein score, but the effect is quite small. It is possible that the effects of *trade dependence* on domestic cooperative or conflictual policies will be more apparent when the effect of other variables are taken into account, but it is also possible that trade dependence itself does not strong affect the likelihood of action one way or the other. Assuming that a high level of *trade dependence* is most likely to exist when the conflict state also relies heavily on the neighbor state economically, it might be the case that the shared economic reliance allows neighbor states to be more critical or unsupportive of conflict-state regimes because of the increased latitude given by that reliance. I will discuss these points further following the statistical tests below.

Relative Capacity

In Table 6.2 below I present the mean values of the Goldstein scores for four ranges of values on the *relative capacity* measure. The presentation of the values follows the pattern from Table 6.1 above, though I break at different values of the variable to illustrate the behavior of states at different levels of relative power to their neighbors.

Table 6.2

Relative capacity and yearly Goldstein score

Relative capacity (x)	N (%)	Mean Goldstein score (SD)
0 >= x < 0.25	973 (37.70)	1.88 (2.11)
0.25 >= x < 0.50	555 (21.50)	1.79 (2.30)
0.50 >= x < 0.75	536 (20.77)	1.98 (2.23)
0.75 >= x < 1	517 (20.03)	1.88 (2.27)
	Total dyad years: 2581	Overall mean: 1.88 (2.21)

Results for *relative capacity* show no definite pattern as a state's capabilities relative to the conflict state increase. As noted above, this is possibly because other factors also need to be present before capacity has an effect, but it is also possible that capacity itself is not a good predictor of cooperative or conflictual behavior given the many other drivers of these types of policies. Further discussion will follow the statistical tests below.

Analysis

Unlike previous chapters, the hypotheses for signaling support here are all tested on a single outcome variable, so I present the results for only two models here. First I present a linear regression of Goldstein scores on the three independent variables of interest, and then on the same variables with all controls included. The results are presented below in Table 6.3 and Table 6.4.

Table 6.3: *Goldstein score* regressed on *relative capacity*, *ethnic ties*, and *trade dependence*

	Dependent variable:
	Goldstein score
relative capacity	0.201
	(0.155)
trade dependence	0.582
	(0.553)
dominant-dominant	0.511***
	(0.144)
dominant-marginal	−0.150
	(0.154)
marginal-dominant	−0.105
	(0.136)
marginal-marginal	−0.141
	(0.100)
Constant	2.168***
	(0.094)
Observations	2,244
R^2	0.008
Adjusted R^2	0.006
Residual Std. Error	2.067 (df = 2237)
F Statistic	3.169*** (df = 6; 2237)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6.4: *Goldstein score* regressed on *relative capacity*, *ethnic ties*, *trade dependence*, and *controls*

	Dependent variable:
	Goldstein score
relative capacity	0.244
	(0.164)
trade dependence	0.434
	(0.562)
dominant-dominant	0.411***
	(0.150)
dominant-marginal	−0.165
	(0.154)
marginal-dominant	−0.128
	(0.137)
marginal-marginal	−0.106
	(0.100)
ethnic conflict	−0.263**
	(0.103)
immediate proximity	−0.078
	(0.095)
alliance	0.139
	(0.094)
shared regime	−0.103
	(0.092)
intervention, gov side	−0.128
	(0.196)
intervention, opp side	−0.156
	(0.138)
Constant	2.406***
	(0.167)

Observations	2,243
R^2	0.015
Adjusted R^2	0.009
Residual Std. Error	2.064 (df = 2230)
F Statistic	2.748*** (df = 12; 2230)

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In both model specifications, the only independent variable that has a statistically significant relationship with the cooperation/conflict measure is *dominant-dominant* ethnic ties. The relationship between *trade dependence* and the dependent variable is in the expected direction, and the relationship between *relative capacity* and the dependent variable is actually in the opposite direction as that predicted by Hypothesis 10, but neither relationship is statistically significant. For *dominant-dominant* ties and considering all other factors (Table 6.4), the existence of such ties (moving the variable from 0 to 1) is associated with an expected increase of 0.411 on the Goldstein score. This shows that more cooperation is expected between a neighbor state and a civil war state when both countries share an ethnic group with a strong role in executive government policy. The civil war state ethnic group is involved in a conflict that threatens at the very least its hold on territory, political power, or both. The group in the civil war state may either take cooperative action directly if group members have political power, or pressure the regime to do so on its behalf.

Looking more closely at cases where a *dominant-dominant* ethnic tie are connected to high levels of cooperation, it becomes apparent that this measure of affinity suffers from some key limitations. For example, during the low level fighting in the early 2000s in the aftermath of the larger Algerian civil war, Libya signalled its intention to cooperate more closely with Algeria, leading to the signing of formal agreements and other indicators of alignment. This was a change from Ghaddafi's support of rebels in the Algeria conflict in the 1990s, but the same ethnic ties existed during both eras. Ethnic ties alone cannot explain why Libya supported the rebels at one point and then pivoted to closer cooperation with the government once the conflict died down, as pragmatic security and economic concerns seem to be a much more important factor than ties between Arabs or various tribes as ethnic groups *per se*.

It is possible that visible domestic actions are such a broad category that low-level conflicts in nearby states may not be a clear enough threat to domestic groups to lead to pressure on government actors to respond. With this in mind I re-run the model from Table 6.4 on a subset of the data where directed-dyad years are only included if the nearby conflict reaches the 1000 battle deaths/year threshold indicating a higher severity conflict. Results for this model are found below in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: *Goldstein score* regressed on *relative capacity*, *ethnic ties*, and *trade dependence* plus *controls* - case selection based on 1000 battle/deaths threshold

	Dependent variable:
	Goldstein score
relative capacity	0.268
	(0.187)
trade dependence	0.264
	(0.624)
dominant-dominant	0.327**
	(0.163)
dominant-marginal	0.019
	(0.181)
marginal-dominant	−0.099
	(0.147)
marginal-marginal	−0.224**
	(0.110)
ethnic conflict	−0.500***
	(0.120)
immediate proximity	−0.085
	(0.107)
alliance	0.123
	(0.107)
shared regime	−0.181*
	(0.105)
intervention, gov side	−0.186
	(0.206)
intervention, opp side	−0.136
	(0.152)
Constant	2.717***
	(0.195)

[Table 6.5 continued]

Observations	1,841
R^2	0.025
Adjusted R^2	0.018
Residual Std. Error	2.077 (df = 1828)
F Statistic	3.842*** (df = 12; 1828)

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

As before, results for *relative capacity* and *trade dependence* do not reach levels of statistical significance, but the marginal-marginal category of *ethnic ties* is significant and negative. This is actually in opposition to **H9b**, which predicts that a marginal group sharing ties with a marginal group in the conflict state should lead to policy choices against that group, which in this case would be policies in support of the regime. More direct intervention tends to take this route, such as when Turkey intervenes against Kurds in Iraq or Syria to send a signal to its own restive Kurdish minority, but at least here the relationship with domestic signaling does not follow that pattern.

Conclusion

Because general cooperation is not nearly as dramatic an event as direct intervention, in some ways it is not surprising that the decision to cooperate or not with a nearby conflict state does not show as clear a relationship with ethnic ties or the other independent variables. Even when considering interventions, both Koga (2011) and Nome (2013) find that while ethnic ties generally increase the likelihood of any type of intervention, the results are weaker or nonexistent when trying to predict the direction of that intervention, whether in support of rebels or the government. Transnational ethnicity can be a powerful force in both international domestic politics, but as treated here in its relatively static form, its effects on cooperation with a nearby conflict state is not apparent. I will return to this question in the next chapter, where I will discuss the importance of considering how various factors of threat and affinity connect to each other in determining responses to civil conflicts.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

My major goal in this project was to provide some insight into the threat environment faced by states in conflict neighborhoods. As I discuss at length in Chapter 1, civil wars have meaningful consequences not just for the states engaged in them, but also for neighboring states who are affected by conflict externalities. Such states are not picked at random from the international system, as many of the same factors that make civil conflict in nearby states more likely also affect the neighbor states themselves. This clustering of sources of conflicts can lead to clusters of conflicts themselves, leading certain regions of the world to experience a disproportionate share of civil wars and lower level conflict (Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008, Gleditsch 2007). Even if direct contagion is not a high risk for neighbor states, spillover from nearby conflicts can be the proximate cause of instability or unrest when conditions permit. The existence of transnational ethnic, political, and economic linkages all contribute to the risk of diffusion of violent conflict across borders.

Even in cases where the risk of conflict diffusion may not be high, civil war spillover and the attendant uncertainty it creates can lead to political pressure in a neighbor state. In Chapter 2 I presented a theory of the risks from conflict externalities, whether real or perceived, affect leader survival, power consolidation in the form of coup proofing, and domestic actions that signal cooperation or conflict with a nearby conflict state.

Summary of Findings

A key element in my theory of threat and opportunity from nearby civil conflict is uncertainty. Civil conflict outcomes themselves are uncertain, and that uncertainty bleeds into the decision making of a variety of political, military, and civilian actors in a neighbor state. This uncertainty and the diffuse nature of civil war externalities leave neighbor-state leaders in a difficult situation regarding their ability to appease key military and civilian actors, leading to the first key question of this dissertation project: what is the effect of nearby conflict on leader survival? The expectations here were that nearby conflict and the severity of its externalities would lead to higher likelihood of forcible exit and coup attempts against leaders, particularly in cases where constraints on executive decision making were high.

The empirical models used to test this argument in Chapter 4 found that forcible exit was more likely either when a nearby conflict was ongoing but the fighting did not reach a shared border

or when the nearby conflict was waged on grounds of ethnicity. Coup attempts were instead more likely when violence did reach a shared border as compared to cases where there was no civil conflict at all nearby or such a conflict existed but did not reach the shared border. What does this tell us about the nature of threat and its relation to the immediacy of conflict? For one, it confirms past findings on the different types of threat presented by proximate versus more distant conflict (Phillips 2015).

Leaders are held accountable for their actual or perceived mismanagement of the consequences of nearby conflict, but in some cases a more immediate threat may actually provide leaders with some degree of insulation from traditional challenges to their rule. Conflicts occurring right on the border, with the consequently increased risk of direct spillover, may provide a greater source of threat for domestic actors but they concurrently provide regime leaders an opportunity to respond in a focused way to a more specific threat. Domestic groups, even when they are unsatisfied with leaders' response to externalities generally, may be unwilling to upset the political system during such a fraught period. Military actors contemplating a coup, however, may take just such a moment to strike given the immediacy of the threat and the possibility of mismanagement of the security situation by political leaders.

The argument and findings related to threats to leader survival led directly to the second question of interest for this project: how do leaders respond given the increased likelihood of challenges to their political survival in periods of neighborhood conflict? Nearby conflict creates increased risk of domestic challenges to leaders, but it also leads to opportunities to shore up executive power in ways that might not be as palatable to domestic audiences under less critical circumstances. This led to the predictions that leaders are more likely to engage in coup proofing when they border a civil war state, when the severity of externalities is increased, and when the state's military situation is relatively secure vis-a-vis its neighbors. All else equal, leaders would always prefer to secure their position relative to key military and civilian actors. Even though nearby conflict actually increases the risk of coup attempts, leaders seem to either attempt to head these off or underestimate the risk when choosing to engage in coup proofing.

The logistic regression models to test these expectations in Chapter 5 found support across the various measures of exposure to conflict externalities as well as in relation to regional

capability. Whether leaders accurately predict that military leaders will be too preoccupied with the nearby conflict to stage a counter-coup, are desperate enough to risk coup proofing despite the specter of military reprisal, or misjudge the situation, it seems that the unique threat environment of a nearby civil war runs counter to standard explanations of coup proofing.

The third question of this dissertation related to signals of support for one side or another in a nearby conflict, particularly when such signals are meant to appease domestic groups without the direct risk of intervention. The main expectations from the argument in this area were that trade ties, relative capacity, and ethnic ties would all influence the likelihood of visible domestic signals in support of one side or the other in a nearby conflict. Of these, only ethnic ties between dominant ethnic groups in both states found support, with such ties leading to a higher likelihood of cooperation-signaling policies on the part of the neighbor state. If neighbor-state leaders do respond to nearby conflict with policies meant to appease domestic groups with a vested interest in the conflict outcome, alternative approaches to testing this relationship will need to be found.

Implications

Stated simply, the findings in this project show that nearby civil wars present unique threats and opportunities. When considering both vulnerability to civil war externalities and responses to them, neighbor-state leaders' experiences do not follow the same patterns as those of more distant political actors. Even among neighbor-state experiences, the immediacy of the threat matters. These findings add to a growing body of research that shows the importance of differentiating between immediate neighbors and more distant states when considering both the threats from and responses to regional instability (Kathman 2010,2011; Phillips 2015; Danneman and Ritter 2014). Neighbor states' unique vulnerability to civil war externalities and unique range of response options warrant a closer look in their interactions with conflict states.

If leader turnover, coup attempts, and coup proofing are all phenomena of interest to scholars and policymakers interested in understanding and promoting political stability, considering the experience of conflict neighbors can provide valuable insights. The findings across chapters on the differing effects of conflict whether or not it reaches a shared border seem to fall in line with Kathman's argument that "proximate violence has a way of focusing a state's attention" (2010, 1009). Furthermore, it seems to focus domestic audience attention as well, sometimes

to prevent threats to leader survival by reducing the likelihood of a *pressured exit* but at other times increasing the likelihood of a *coup attempt*. Moving to leader responses, the findings from Chapter 5 do not seem to fit the standard logic of leaders' coup proofing decisions (Sudduth 2017), showing again that proximate conflict leads to different responses than other contexts. Understanding general drivers of instability and response is valuable, but future studies should consider the downsides of assuming that state leaders considering particular policies or facing threats are in homogenous situations.

With the global increase in violent conflict and forcibly displaced populations since 2010, increased academic and policy focus is being placed not just on predicting conflict, but preventing it (United Nations and World Bank, 2018)[59]. Among other factors related to the prevention of conflict are perceptions of good governance, corruption, and regime legitimacy, particularly as they relate to the provision of public services (Mcloughlin 2014). Domestic groups are particularly concerned with whether or not the regime can provide security. The findings in this project seem to indicate that domestic groups do pressure governments to respond to the spillover from ongoing crises, which is made all the more urgent given the relatively precarious state of all countries in a conflict neighborhood. Not every neighbor state is at equal risk of having its own civil war, but the various spillover effects can lead to disruptions that if left unchecked can destabilize the state.

Some scholars and policymakers argue that the world is in the midst of an authoritarian resurgence, with erosions of democratic norms around the globe and over 40% of the world's population (and a third of states) living under a form of authoritarianism (Frantz 2018). The findings in Chapter 4 on executive constraints and in Chapter 5 on purges in dictatorships showcase the importance of understanding the effects of relatively unconstrained executive power on leader turnover and civil-military relations. As the recent protests and uprisings against authoritarian leaders, whether successful (Sudan, Algeria) or unsuccessful (Nicaragua, Venezuela) demonstrate, understanding the role military actors play in propping up or overthrowing such leaders is vital (Kandil 2016). The results from Chapters 4 and 5 together

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[59] See also: https://www.un.org/pga/70/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2016/01/Conflict-and-violence-in-the-21st-century-Current-trends-as-observed-in-empirical-research-and-statistics-Mr.-Alexandre-Marc-Chief-Specialist-Fragility-Conflict-and-Violence-World-Bank-Group.pdf

provide a valuable insight into drivers of coups and coup proofing which are not picked up in studies of those phenomena more broadly.

Future Research

This project contributes to our knowledge of threats and opportunities presented by nearby conflict, but it also highlights possible areas for future research. Some of this relates to refinements of analyses presented here as well as extensions indicated by this project's results.

The arguments in this dissertation are founded on the assumption that externalities from conflict cause domestic pressure to be placed on leaders, but the project does not test for either the presence of those externalities directly or the magnitude of public opinion about those externalities. Instead, it assumes that certain conflict conditions are likely to lead to externalities and then tests hypotheses based on those conflict conditions rather than the externalities directly. One could make the argument that this pattern is followed in other studies, but I justify this decision based on the core role of uncertainty and perceived threat in this projects theoretical arguments.

With that being said, focusing on particular externalities could still benefit academics and policymakers alike. If research finds that particular externalities are more likely to lead to domestic turmoil in a neighbor state than others, third-party interventions could be more carefully targeted to address those particular spillover effects in an attempt to curtail political instability before it starts.

Specific externalities such as refugee flows, the movement of weapons, or particular levels of economic disruption could be used to measure externality severity, but there is no guarantee that such phenomena are equally threatening to domestic audiences in different political and regional contexts. This also highlights another possible limitation of this study - the almost exclusive focus on regime action and not on the decision making of civilian or military actors.

If domestic actors are truly reacting to the presence of nearby civil conflict, particularly when fighting reaches a shared border, future research should consider studying the public's responses more directly. Removing a leader from office or staging/supporting a coup are both

fairly rare behaviors, and when civilian or military actors either try unsuccessfully to do so or do not try at all, that does not mean that they are doing nothing. To assume a simple binary choice of "remove leader" or "nothing" would fall prey to the same limitation found in studies of third-party intervention that consider only the choice to intervene or not without considering alternatives. When domestic groups do not directly challenge a leader through traditional electoral or irregular means, what else can they do to express their displeasure with the regime's handling of nearby conflict? Supplemental studies using public opinion, protest events, or other indicators of domestic dissatisfaction could give additional insight into the domestic response to conflict externalities.

On the note of immediate proximity, if domestic actors and regime leaders respond differently to nearby conflict when it reaches a shared border, it seems likely that domestic actors themselves respond differently based on their proximity to the violence. Studies of precinct-level voting data or regional public opinion polling could be used to consider the different responses of the domestic population based on their relative proximity (and thus exposure) to civil war externalities.

On a related note, the domestic policy responses of state leaders could also be expanded for future studies. In this project, the policy responses are either very specific (coup proofing in Chapter 5) or very broad (cooperative behavior in Chapter 6). When leaders wish to respond to civil war externalities, there are other possible policy responses not considered in this study that could be used for future research. Other possible responses to nearby conflict could include changes to border policy, declarations of a state of emergency, or other means of either containing the external or internal threat arising from the civil conflict across the border. A lack of global data on this type of measure could be approached either through focused data collection or a smaller, case-study approach which could examine how the dynamics of threat and response operate in particular civil war neighborhoods.

The other major refinement and expansion that could benefit this project is to consider the dynamic process of threat and response. In this dissertation I present logical connections between the threat experienced by leaders and the responses they take, but my analyses do not show whether or not the coup proofing measures or other policies actually work in staving off domestic pressure from civilian or military actors. In future research I intend to consider the

timing of coups and coup proofing as well as the success of the latter to gain insight into why leader survival is threatened in some cases and not in others. By looking at each outcome in isolation I can not explain why some domestic policy "solutions" to nearby conflict seem to work better than others. This question of timing of threat and response could be addressed by more dynamic approaches to the theoretical and empirical modeling of civil war externalities as well as the use of focused case studies to consider domestic political dynamics in response to conflict spillover. The findings here demonstrate connections between nearby conflict and both threats to leader survival and opportunities for power consolidation, but the more complete story of how those two interact on the ground in neighbor states requires more research.

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Appendix: Robustness Checks and Notes on Variables

I first present robustness checks from Chapter 4, and then a brief note on the construction of the *relative regional capacity* variable.

Robustness Checks using aggregate accountability *in place of* executive constraints

The tables below show the results for Chapter 4 models using the accountability measure from Vdem in place of the *executive constraints* variable.

Table A.1 - Naive Conflict with VDem

	Dependent variable:	
	exitpress	anycoup
	(1)	(2)
anyconflict1	0.201**	0.116
	(0.084)	(0.087)
account1	0.286***	−0.587***
	(0.049)	(0.053)
age1	0.010**	−0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)
tenureplus1	−0.234*	−0.383***
	(0.126)	(0.116)
cinc1	−4.733**	−4.372
	(2.274)	(3.435)
growthv1	−0.021	−0.019
	(0.049)	(0.063)
loggdp1	0.065**	−0.155***
	(0.027)	(0.029)
owncivil1	0.337***	0.671***
	(0.108)	(0.104)
owninter1	−0.302	0.101
	(0.248)	(0.225)
sanctions1	0.222	0.301*
	(0.141)	(0.172)
Constant	−2.215***	0.042
	(0.332)	(0.337)
Observations	6,704	6,704
Log Likelihood	−2,207.940	−1,993.129
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,443.880	4,014.259

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.2 - Neighboring Conflict with VDem

	Dependent variable:	
	exitpress	anycoup
	(1)	(2)
neighboring conflict1	0.261**	0.039
	(0.117)	(0.125)
account1	0.275***	−0.587***
	(0.048)	(0.053)
age1	0.010***	−0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)
tenureplus1	−0.264**	−0.406***
	(0.126)	(0.116)
cinc1	−4.676**	−3.739
	(2.292)	(3.442)
growthv1	−0.038	−0.035
	(0.063)	(0.091)
loggdp1	0.048*	−0.170***
	(0.027)	(0.029)
owncivil1	0.325***	0.681***
	(0.109)	(0.105)
owninter1	−0.313	0.130
	(0.250)	(0.225)
sanctions1	0.245*	0.299*
	(0.141)	(0.174)
Constant	−1.882***	0.315
	(0.344)	(0.354)
Observations	6,567	6,567
Log Likelihood	−2,166.920	−1,944.210
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,361.840	3,916.421
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A.3 - Immediate Proximity with VDem

	Dependent variable:	
	exitpress	anycoup
	(1)	(2)
conflict, not at border	0.242**	−0.043
	(0.118)	(0.135)
conflict, at border	0.248**	0.337***
	(0.098)	(0.094)
account1	0.291***	−0.570***
	(0.049)	(0.053)
age1	0.010**	−0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)
tenureplus1	−0.235*	−0.385***
	(0.126)	(0.116)
cinc1	−4.624**	−4.734
	(2.268)	(3.452)
growthv1	−0.021	−0.020
	(0.049)	(0.066)
loggdp1	0.067**	−0.154***
	(0.027)	(0.029)
owncivil1	0.328***	0.636***
	(0.108)	(0.104)
owninter1	−0.317	0.071
	(0.248)	(0.225)
sanctions1	0.228	0.294*
	(0.140)	(0.172)
Constant	−2.235***	0.035
	(0.332)	(0.338)
Observations	6,704	6,704
Log Likelihood	−2,206.618	−1,986.675
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,443.236	4,003.351
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

As you can see in the tables above, substituting *aggregate accountability* for *executive constraints* in the models for Chapter 4 produces similar results of increased likelihood of *coup attempts*. Interestingly, it actually moves some of the results for *pressured exit* to standard measures of statistical significance as well. Because my theory does not consider the different aspects of accountability (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal) used in this measure or the conditional effects of exposure to nearby conflict, I do not draw any conclusions about this change here. Considering the interplay between different aspects of accountability and leader survival in the context of a civil war neighborhood remains a goal for future research.

Robustness checks for cumulative naive proximity *in place of* naïve proximity

Table A.4 - Cumulative Conflicts with Executive Constraints

	Dependent variable:	
	exitpress	anycoup
	(1)	(2)
cumulative1	0.037	0.071
	(0.053)	(0.050)
exconst1	0.127***	−0.253***
	(0.024)	(0.025)
age1	0.007	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)
tenureplus1	−0.190	−0.431***
	(0.139)	(0.127)
cinc1	−8.762***	−5.752
	(2.961)	(4.842)
growthv1	−0.104	−0.322
	(0.110)	(0.214)
loggdp1	0.094***	−0.161***
	(0.031)	(0.033)
owncivil1	0.224*	0.629***
	(0.122)	(0.116)
owninter1	−0.349	0.140
	(0.276)	(0.248)
sanctions1	0.232	0.312*
	(0.155)	(0.184)
Constant	−2.686***	0.839**
	(0.366)	(0.369)
Observations	5,545	5,545
Log Likelihood	−1,782.504	−1,687.850
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,593.007	3,403.700
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Note on relative regional capacity *measure*

Because *relative regional capacity* considers a state's material capabilities relative only to its neighbors with which it shares a land or river boundary, every island state in my data has a score of 1 on this measure (having no neighbor states to add to the denominator value). Because these island states are also not at risk of civil war spillover in the same way as states that have direct contiguity with conflict states (or at least the possibility of direct contiguity), I drop them from my analyses in Chapter 5. This removes the following states:

- Bahamas
- Cuba
- Jamaica
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Barbados
- Malta
- Cyprus
- Iceland
- Cape Verde
- Madagascar
- Comoros
- Mauritius
- Bahrain
- Taiwan
- Japan
- Bangladesh
- Sri Lanka
- Maldives
- Philippines
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Solomon Islands
- Fiji

This is not to say that island states have neither the risk of a coup attempt or incentives to engage in coup proofing. However, island states that are more immune to direct spillover

effects from conflict (or the specter of such effects) are not directly comparable to states with the possibility of contiguous borders, so I leave them out of these analyses.