

Legacies of Violence: Independence Wars and Coup-Proofing in Africa¹

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Abstract:

How does a history of armed conflict during party formation shape the organization of autocratic parties once they come into power? Do strong party institutions emerge out of war? This paper evaluates the thesis that parties emerging out of revolutions and independence wars tend to be more durable by examining autocratic ruling parties in Sub-Saharan Africa. My research strategy capitalizes on the wide emergence of political parties that were formed in the pre-independence period, many of which emerged out of independence wars. In contrast with existing theories, I find no evidence that pro-independence parties that fought in liberation wars are more institutionalized along most dimensions compared with parties that lobbied for independence peacefully. Instead, my findings show that pro-independence parties with a legacy of conflict are significantly more likely to have independent military structures and are much less susceptible to coups.

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“A party’s organizational characteristics depend more upon its history, i.e. on how the organization originated and how it consolidated, than upon any other factor.”
(Panebianco 1982: 50)

Introduction

Although strong ruling parties have been identified as a crucial source of regime stability in authoritarian regimes, why some parties are stronger than others remains under-theorized. Of the existing research, the role of initial conditions in determining later party development has been identified as an important explanatory variable. This paper examines how a history of armed conflict during party formation shapes the organization of autocratic parties once they come into power. Do strong party institutions emerge out of war?

Existing scholarship suggests that parties that originate out of violent conflict have high levels of institutional capacity. Samuel Huntington (1968) argued that party-based regimes that emerge out of sustained revolutionary or nationalist struggles are more durable compared with regimes that came into power without such a struggle. Many recent studies have extended this theory, arguing that parties and elites who face strongly organized enemies – often emerging out of revolutions or liberation conflicts – tend to build strong parties and regimes to manage such threats (Levitsky and Way 2012, 2013; Slater 2010; Smith 2005). Even scholarship on European state-building suggests that interstate conflict can promote the development of strong institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Tilly 1975, 1992). As Tilly famously claimed: “War made the state, and the state made war.”

A number of party-based authoritarian regimes that emerged out of revolutionary conflicts in the twentieth century do seem exceptionally persistent. The *Partido*

Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico, for instance, ruled the country as a one-party regime for 83 years, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) remained in power for 74 years. Ruling parties in China, Vietnam, and Cuba have been in power for 66 years, 62 years, and 57 years, and remain in power today. Not only are these regimes long lasting, their parties are generally considered to be strong organizations with high levels of elite cohesion and durable mass linkages. The Communist Party of China (CPP), for instance, has an extensive hierarchical structure, an estimated membership of 82 million people, and has undergone four successful leadership transitions since taking power in 1949 (Shambaugh 2008).

In addition to Communist revolutionary parties, ruling parties that emerged out of anti-colonial wars appear to be long-lived as well. Pro-independence parties that fought liberation wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, seem much more durable than parties originating out of peaceful independence negotiations. Out of the 34 ruling parties that were formed prior to independence, seven fought liberation wars against European colonizers, white minority governments, or occupation by other African states. Of these seven parties, five remain in power today. In contrast, out of the 27 ruling parties that existed prior to independence but did not originate out of violent conflict, only three of those parties remain in power today. In sum, there seems to be strong empirical evidence and theoretical arguments supporting the notion that party-based regimes that emerge out of armed conflict tend to be more durable.

Despite these seemingly clear trends, however, the relationship between armed conflict and *party building* has not been firmly established. Do parties that originate out of war appear to remain in power for longer periods of time simply because they are

attached to *regimes* that is stronger or more durable? What is the effect of conflict on party organization, independent of other aspects of the regime? In trying to understand how legacies of violence shape the organizational characters of autocratic parties, it is often difficult to untangle the effects of conflict on regime durability from the effects of conflict on party organization. This paper aims to identify the effects of conflict on parties and regimes by examining whether the *organizational structure and levels of institutionalization* of parties with a legacy of violence are systemically different from autocratic parties without origins in conflict.

This paper tackles these questions by examining the formation and development of party organizations around the independence period in Sub-Saharan Africa. My research strategy takes advantage of the wide emergence of parties that were formed during the period of European colonization in Africa, most of which emerged as nationalist pro-independence movements. Importantly, within these pro-independence organizations, only a subset of parties experienced violent decolonization and fought in independence wars, allowing us to compare nationalist movements that lobbied for independence through peaceful means against nationalist movements that fought for independence through protracted wars.

I employ an original dataset of ruling parties in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1960-2005 that includes new indicators of organizational strength and levels of institutionalization. I examine whether parties that fought in independence wars have more hierarchical structures within the party organization and whether rules and procedures governing leadership succession were formalized, allowing me to evaluate the question of whether former rebel group parties are more institutionalized as

organizations. In contrast with existing scholarship, I find no evidence that parties that fought in independence wars are more institutionalized along most dimensions. However, such parties are significantly more likely to have independent military structures and seem much less susceptible to coups.

This paper seeks to contribute to research on authoritarian regimes, civil conflict, and comparative political institutions in the following ways. First, I advance research on authoritarian regime durability by examining the origins of ruling party strength – a topic that has been understudied. A central finding from the recent literature on authoritarian regimes is that ruling parties are an important source of stability in autocracies. Scholars have found that strong ruling parties perform a number of important functions, such as solving commitment problems in elite bargaining (Brownlee 2007, Boix and Svolik 2013, Geddes 1999a, Magaloni 2008), channeling benefits of state power to party elites (Slater 2010, Svolik 2012), creating a forum for rents and policy concessions to be distributed (Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). However, why some autocratic parties are stronger than others is a topic that has been understudied. A small group of scholars have examined the origins of strong parties, pointing to the role of armed conflict as an important explanatory variable (Levitsky and Way 2012, Slater 2010), and this paper provides an initial systematic test of this argument.

Second, this paper contributes to research on how political institutions develop during and after civil war. A number of existing studies have addressed the question of how armed groups are transformed into political parties in the aftermath of civil conflict (de Zeeuw 2007, Manning 2004, Reilly and Nordlund 2008) and mechanisms linking conflict settlement to democratization (Fortna and Huang 2012). Other scholars have

focused on why we see variation in the institutional control and fragmentation of rebel groups during war (Staniland 2014, Weinstein 2006). However much less attention has been paid to factors and processes that link rebel group structure and conflict settlement to post-war authoritarian *governance*.² This is a surprising omission, as autocratic governments often come to power through the barrel of the gun. In fact, upon taking power, every former rebel group in postcolonial Africa first ruled as an authoritarian power. This paper, to my knowledge, is the first study that provides systematic evidence on the relationship between armed conflict and parties *as organizations*. As Blattman and Miguel (2010) note, “we have little systematic quantitative data with which to rigorously judge claims about the evolution of institutions during and after civil wars” (42).

Finally, this paper advances existing research on comparative political institutions by examining how initial party formation influences later institutional development. Existing theories on how parties form and evolve has centered largely on party systems in industrialized democracies (Aldrich 1995, Sartori 1976), and existing research on parties in developing and nondemocratic countries has focused little on party formation.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section outlines existing theories of conflict and party durability, highlighting areas of potential concern and remaining questions. Section 3 discusses the logic of party building in autocracies. Section 4 explains my empirical approach and presents original data on party organizations in 34 African countries. Section 5 presents my results and provides a discussion of the findings. The final section concludes.

Theories of Conflict and Party Durability

² With the exception of Lyons (2016).

Existing theories on the origins of strong autocratic parties has focus primarily on the organizational advantages of ruling parties that form as opposition movements, armed groups, or revolutionary movements. These studies generally posit that the conditions under which ruling parties are formed have an effect on later party strength. Smith (2005) argues that autocratic leaders who face organized domestic opposition groups or foreign colonial powers and armies are more likely to build up their own party institutions in order to mobilize their constituencies against external challenges. Similarly, Panebianco (1988) posits that parties that originate as opposition groups tend to develop stronger organizational structures because they lack easy access to public resources during periods of consolidation.

A large body of this scholarship centers on how origins in warfare build strong party institutions. Civil conflict has been credited with creating modern state structures and strong central institutions through territorial expansion and interstate wars in early Europe (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Tilly 1992). Looking specifically at authoritarian regimes in the twentieth century, Huntington (1968) claims that one-party regimes emerging out of revolutions are more stable than systems that come to power after a “brief and easy” struggle. Lyons (2016) examines how civil war termination influences authoritarian rule and proposes several mechanisms linking rebel group victory to a strong post-war authoritarian system. He argues that successful insurgent groups often benefit from high levels of elite solidarity, organizational structures developed during war-time, legitimacy from winning the conflict, and the use of transitional processes (such as post-conflict elections) to consolidate power.

Levitsky and Way (2012, 2013) argue that armed conflict, usually taking the form of revolutionary struggles or independence wars, provide ruling parties with a crucial source of cohesion that facilitates stable autocratic rule. They theorize that violent conflict creates enduring partisan boundaries that provide both a non-material sense of attachment for elites as well as heightened costs of defecting. They also argue that violent struggle creates militarized structures and hierarchies during the war which persist after the party takes power. Moreover, such parties tend to have a strong coercive apparatus that can be used to repress regime opponents. Finally, they theorize that armed conflict produces revolutionary leaders with “extreme legitimacy and unquestioned authority” that can impose unity and cohesion on the party and regime. Through these mechanisms, they argue that parties that originate in conflict are less prone to elite defection.

In contrast with this dominant view, some scholars suggest that organizations that are built for fighting and coming to power are not necessarily well equipped to govern. In his discussion of independence parties in Africa, Welch (1970) asserts that the guerilla style tactics and organization of parties that were engaged in anti-colonial activities became considerably less effective for creating a self-governing state after independence. Zheng (1997) makes a similar case for the CCP in China, arguing that the party’s ability to win a civil war did not automatically suggest that it would be successful in rebuilding the state without further party building. In fact, Lyons (2016) notes that insurgent groups are often violent, fractious, and support all-or-nothing policies, all characteristics that make them unlikely candidates for successful peacetime regimes” (2-3). As Slater points out “revolutionary parties tend to fragment once their shared enemy is vanquished –

especially when that enemy is a departed colonial power, as in Burma or Indonesia” (2010, 52).

In fact, detailed case studies of mass-based independence movements in Africa suggest that even during the height of independence struggles, many organizations were plagued with weak organizational structures. Mulford (1967), who details the creation and organization of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia argues that the party had “almost no funds and lacked sufficient numbers of able and dedicated prepared to devote themselves to the laborious task of party organization” (143). Bienen (1970) observes similar organizational weakness in Tanzania, noting that “TANU’s rapid growth into a mass movement in the 1960’s was characterized by an absence of central direction, due largely to the fact that there existed neither a central staff nor a firm base for central finances” (43).

These organizations were also frequently strung together by temporary goals of gaining independence that were soon replaced by challenges of how to distribute patronage and implement power sharing in the new regime. Bienen notes that a central problem facing the Nyerere, the first leader in Tanzania after independence, was that not all party elites from the pre-independence era could be afforded top government positions – a source of dissatisfaction that his opponents could exploit. “It was one thing for TANU to organize and become the dominant national movement; it was quite another to establish an effective government over many small-scale and dispersed communities after independence...overcoming parochialisms for the sake of organizing a national movement is very different from ruling a society” (1970, 43). In sum, these studies cast some doubt on the claim that all revolutionary or pro-independence organizations were

strong, well organized, and fully capable of dealing with the challenges of governing postcolonial states.

Party Building in Authoritarian Regimes

If origins in conflict do not explain the emergence of strong and durable ruling institutions, when and why does party building occur in authoritarian regimes? A growing literature has begun to examine the conditions under which autocratic leaders commit to building strong institutions after taking power. The general consensus is that elites have an incentive to build strong institutions when they face serious threats that challenge their ability to remain in power. Therefore the development of strong institutions is a *strategic* response through which autocratic leaders endogenously respond to threats.

Boix and Svolik (2013) show through a formal model that an autocrat will construct power-sharing institutions (such as parties or legislatures) only if regime elites can credibly threaten to launch a rebellion against the leader. If a leader has enough resources or coercive capabilities to rule alone or if other regime elites are unable to credibly threaten rebellion as a result of collective actions problems, then the leader never has an incentive to institutionalize joint rule. Slater (2010) argues that ruling elites construct powerful and cohesive ruling parties when they face violent internal contention that seems “endemic and unmanageable.” Such circumstances eliminate collective action problems and allow ruling coalitions to band together and support the ruling party.³

³ Though these studies share a similar logic, Boix and Svolik focus on tensions between an autocratic leader and other regime elites while Slater focuses on tensions between the regime coalition (including the leader) and domestic challengers from outside the regime.

Building on these arguments, I claim that autocratic ruling parties are strengthened when they are *institutionalized*. Party institutionalization is defined as the creation of set rules and procedures that structure the way in which power and resources is distributed within the organization. Institutionalization depersonalize the ways in which the party organization is run. Since institutions are especially prone to predation by leaders in autocratic settings, institutionalization strengthens ruling parties by implementing rules, procedures, and structures that promote organizational autonomy and permanence. When we think about the *quality* of parties in autocratic regimes, the extent to which there are structures and procedures in place to guard against personalist rule and perpetuate the survival of the party organization are of critical importance.

Institutionalization is a key mechanism in which ruling parties can be strengthened because the process requires autocratic leaders to voluntarily bind their own hands by implementing rules, procedures, and structures. In other words, party institutionalization is a costly way for leaders to *convince* other elites that they will receive a steady stream of benefits in exchange for their support. Institutionalization helps solve underlying commitment problems in elite bargaining by reducing uncertainty about future distributions of materials resources and power within the party structure.

I argue that only weak leaders who lack a strong basis of support among other elites have an incentive to institutionalize their ruling parties. Institutionalization is a costly way for leaders to convince other elites that they will receive a steady stream of benefits in exchange for their support. Strong leaders who do not face a credible risk of being deposed can always afford to buy off other elites and do not need to institutionalize their parties to stay in power. Weaker autocrats who face high likelihoods of being

removed or challenged by other elites, need to create a system of credible power and resource sharing with other elites in order to remain in power.

In the context of post-colonial Africa, the leaders of liberation wars and revolutions emerged in the independence period as extremely influential figures with high levels of legitimacy and popularity. Importantly, many of these leaders had consolidated their authority by the time they came into power, allowing them to take power having already eliminated threats to their rule (Boone 2014, Levitsky and Way 2012, Mamdani 1996). In their study of African leaders Bienen and van de Walle (1989) argue that first leaders have a special legitimacy and enjoy mass support during their tenure. Moreover, autocrats who lead independence movements benefit from the prestige they accumulate from the anticolonial struggles (Jackson and Rosberg 1982).

The logic of party institutionalization suggests that we should *not* expect parties that emerge out of conflict to be highly institutionalized after coming into power because war produces strong leaders. In contrast to viewing liberation leaders as a stabilizing force, I argue that the very fact that war and violent struggle often produce leaders with “extreme legitimacy and unquestioned authority” is a serious *liability* for party building in post-conflict autocracies.

Empirical Approach

I present an empirical test of this argument by examining differences in party organizations that emerged around the independence period in Sub-Saharan Africa. I focus on the wide emergence of nationalist pro-independence parties that were formed during the final decades of colonial rule.

A number of these nationalist parties fought in liberation wars in order to gain independence against European colonizers, white minority governments, or occupation by other African countries. The *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA) in Angola and *Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique* (FRELIMO) in Mozambique fought against Portuguese colonization and gained independence in 1975. The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in Zimbabwe fought against the white minority government that resulted from mass European settlement, which itself had declared independence from Britain. The South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia fought against occupation by South Africa, following German colonization.

On the other hand, many pro-independence parties did not take up arms to fight in liberation wars. Instead, they took the form of organized opposition groups that pressured for independence. The *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* (RDA), for example, was a coalition of pro-independence parties formed in 1946 in French West Africa that lobbied for independence through constitutional negotiations. Each participating French colony also had its own pro-independence party that was a branch of the RDA. Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the leader of the RDA and first president of Cote d’Ivoire, founded the *Parti Democratique de la Cote d’Ivoire* (PDCI) in 1946 as a platform to run for seats in the French National Assembly as well as an organization that would mobilize support from the masses. After gaining independence in 1960, the PDCI controlled 100 percent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, and Houphouet officially declared the Ivory Coast a *de facto* one party state under the PDCI (Zolberg 1969). Similarly, in 1949 Kwame Nkrumah formed the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in Ghana to campaign for

independence from Britain. The CPP developed hundreds of branches in rural villages and towns and obtained mass support for rapid independence. A number of these parties also participated in pre-independence elections (Collier 1982). The CPP, for instance, dominated the Ghanaian parliament, obtaining a majority in all pre-independence elections (Austin 1964, Cohen 1970).

By focusing on parties that emerged during the pre-independence period in Africa, I am able to compare parties that lobbied for independence peacefully against parties that fought for independence, while keeping macro-conditions constant.⁴

Data

My sample includes yearly observations from 34 Sub-Saharan African countries from 1960 to 2005. Because I am most interested in explaining the durability of ruling parties in authoritarian regimes, I limit my sample to country-years that are coded as non-democracies. For my coding of autocratic countries, I refer to the Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited dataset (Cheibub et al. 2010), which codes all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa as authoritarian immediately following independence. As soon as a country is coded as a democracy by Cheibub et al. (2010), as many African countries democratized in the early 1990s, it drops out of my sample.⁵ My sample is also limited to yearly observations for which an autocratic country in Sub-Saharan Africa had a ruling party in power, which is defined as the party of the executive leader. For my coding of ruling parties, I referred to the Europa Yearly Handbook (Europa Publications), cross-

⁴ A summary table of the cases are included in Appendix Table 1.

⁵ If there has never been a transfer of power to another party, then the regime is not considered democratic – even if the ruling party participates in elections that are considered competitive. Therefore countries such as Tanzania and Mozambique remain in my dataset for the entire period.

referenced with Beck et al. (2001) and Svobik (2012). Finally, I also restrict my sample to ruling parties that predate independence – that is, every party in my dataset was formed prior to decolonization. To summarize, my sample includes all authoritarian regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa immediately following independence that had a (already existing) ruling party.

Dependent Variables

My main dependent variable is ruling party institutionalization. Party institutionalization is defined as the degree to which the party organization is governed by impersonal rules and procedures. To operationalize this variable, I collected historical data on executive ministerial positions and state constitutions, for which I had comprehensive records for every country and year in my dataset. From these records, I document the creation of hierarchical positions and implementation of rules and procedures that structured the distribution of power. I argue that these variables can act as measures of party institutionalization due to the tight overlap between party and state in this particular sample of countries.

Single-party regimes in post-independence Africa dominated politics in the majority of newly independent states following European colonization. In these regimes, the president and ruling party controlled virtually all aspects of the executive, the state, and the constitution.⁶ Without exception, the president of the state and president of the ruling party were always the same person, and all cabinet ministerial positions were filled by party elites. State constitutions were frequently drafted by the party central committee and included provisions about the authority of the ruling party over all decision making.

⁶ When discussing my data from Africa, I sometimes refer to autocrat leaders as “presidents.”

The constitution of Angola, for instance, included the following provision: “The MPLA shall be responsible for the political, economic, and social leadership of the nation.”

Similarly, the constitution of Guinea-Bissau included the following provision: “The Constitution states that the party that fought against Portuguese colonialism, the PAIGC, shall be the leading political force in society and in the State. The PAIGC shall define the general cases for policy in all fields.” Importantly, opposition parties were either banned or had no access to important state positions during this period. Because ruling parties were fused with the state, rule and procedures governing the executive can serve as proxies for ruling party institutionalization. In the absence of direct cross-sectional time-series data on party organizations during this period, we can exploit the close overlap between party and state to create indirect measures of party institutionalization.

For every party-year observation, I document the name of the president, the name of the vice-president or prime minister if one had been designated. For my first measure of party institutionalization, I record whether a vice president or prime minister position existed and was filled by a party elite. The designation of a “second in command” position represents the creation of a hierarchical structure within the party as well as a distribution of authority to other elites. Designating a second in command, a very visible national position, casts another elite as a potential foci of power and possible successor to the executive. In fact, we can even think of the act of naming a potential successor as the autocrat solving the collective action problem for other elites as an alternative leader to rally around. 41 percent of presidential successors in my sample held the position of vice-president or prime minister prior to ascending to the presidency. The creation of these

positions, therefore, reduces the party's reliance on a single autocrat and promotes the survival of the organization past the tenure of the first leader.

Additionally, I document whether the person in the vice president or prime minister position remains fairly constant over time, or whether the person in this position is rotated very frequently. If, for instance, a president creates a vice president position, but changes the person who fills this position every year, then this would be interpreted as a lower degree of institutionalization compared with a president who creates a vice president position and keeps the same person in the position for the entire term. In order to determine the stability of the second in command position, I create a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the person in the vice president or prime minister position is the same person as the previous year. Cases where this is more frequently true can be interpreted as having higher degrees of party institutionalization.

I also examine the creation of rules and procedures within constitutions. Albertus and Menaldo (2012) argue that autocratic constitutions provide an important mechanism for establishing rules and procedures in a public way that holds autocrats accountable. Constitutions promote “mutual expectations and impose self-enforcing limits on executive authority” (280). I record whether a constitutional amendment specifying rules of leadership succession exists. The Kenyan constitutions, for instance, has an amendment that reads: “If a President dies, or a vacancy otherwise occurs during a President's period of office, the Vice President becomes interim President for up to 90 days while a successor is elected.” The transfer of power from Jomo Kenyatta to Daniel arap Moi during the 1978 presidential succession in Kenya illustrates the importance of succession rules. Near the end of Kenyatta's rule, a faction within the ruling KANU party

tried to contest the authority of then vice president Moi on the grounds that he was not a member of the dominant ethnic group. Moi and his supporters were able to effectively dispute their claims by pointing to the policy governing presidential succession outlined in the constitution (Tamarkin 1979, 21-26).

If succession rules do exist, I also distinguish whether the procedures specify *who* would succeed the president, or if the amendment only provides vague rules about nominating a successor. Unlike the Kenyan constitution, which specifies that the vice president should become the interim president, the constitution of Angola provides guidelines that are much more vague. It states: “In the case of the death, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the president, the Central Committee shall designate from among its members the person who shall provisionally exercise the duties of the president of the Republic.”

Finally, I document whether the president kept the Minister of Defense portfolio for himself for every party-year observation. The defense portfolio is an especially important ministerial position because it represents control of military force, which is often used to overturn autocrats. In fact, coups were the most common way in which African leaders were deposed during this time period. Ghana, for instance, experienced 13 coups from independence through 2005. As such, defense is the most commonly kept portfolio by the president in my sample. Whether the president delegates this position to someone other than himself is thus of critical significance.

To summarize, my dataset produces the following five indicators that serve as measures of party institutionalization. Each variable is coded as party-year units and takes the form of a dummy variable.

1. *Second named*: Was a vice president or prime minister named?
2. *Second same*: Was the second in command the same person as the year before?
3. *Succession (weak)*: Was there a constitutional amendment specifying the rules of succession?
4. *Succession (strict)*: Was there a constitutional amendment specifying exactly *who* would succeed the president in the case of his death?
5. *Independent defense*: Did someone other than the president hold the Defense portfolio?

Independent Variables

For my main independent variable, *Rebel Group* is a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 1 if the party was a former rebel group that participated in a liberation war and a 0 if the party was formed prior to decolonization but did not partake in armed conflict (non-rebel group party). For my coding of rebel group parties and independence wars, I refer to Clodfelter (1992) and the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gledditsch et al. 2002). I refer to the UCDP definition of conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (Gledditsch et al. 2002).⁷

As a proxy for leader strength, I document whether the leader was the first post-independence leader of the country. *Founder* is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the leader was the first post-independence leader, and 0 for all successors.

⁷ Countries with rebel group parties include: Angola, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Countries with non-rebel group parties include: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Finally, I consider a number of control variables to account for alternative sources of regime durability. *GDPpercapita* and *oilpercapita* (both are lagged by a year) account for economic factors and also tap into issues of state capacity (from Fearon 2003, Wimmer 2009). A measure of ethnic fractionalization, *ethnic frac*, (from Alesina 2003) and *population*, the log of the population size (from Fearon 2003) are also included as proxies for social and ethnic divisions. I also included the number of years the party was in power, *years in power*, in order to control for survival bias.

Analysis

Since my main explanatory variables are time-invariant, I collapse my panel data of party-year observations into cross-sectional party-leader observations.⁸ I require that a leader must be in power at least 3 years in order to be included in the analysis.⁹ The resulting cross-sectional dataset has 46 party-leader observations, 13 of which have a rebel group background and 33 of which do not.

For my measures of party institutionalization that are dummy variables, I calculate the percentage of years for which the leader implemented a dimension of institutionalization. The resulting scores range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating higher levels of institutionalization. For instance, an autocrat who was in power for 20 years and named a vice-president for 10 of those years would score a .50 on the first dimension of institutionalization. A score of 1 would be interpreted as the leader having a second in command the entire time he was in power, while a score of 0 would be

⁸ For my control variables, I take the mean value over the course of the party-leader's tenure.

⁹ This restriction drops three leaders from my dataset: Armando Guevuza of Mozambique and Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia, both of whom had only come into office in 2005, and Abdirashid Shermarke of Somalia who had only been in office for two years before being assassinated in 1969.

Table 1
Summary statistics and t-test results

	Rebel group party	Non- rebel group party	p-value
Second named	.691 (.118)	.627 (.070)	.646
Second same	.510 (.106)	.510 (.060)	.999
Successor (weak)	.256 (.111)	.328 (.072)	.607
Successor (strict)	.135 (0.86)	.199 (.059)	.570
Indept Defense	.929 (.044)	.454 (.069)	.000
N	12	34	

interpreted as the leader *never* having a second in command the entire time he was in power. Formally, the scores are calculated as follows:

$$\text{percent years with institutionalization} = \frac{\sum \text{years with institutionalization}}{\sum \text{years in power}}$$

I first conduct simple t-tests on the cross-sectional data to assess average differences in levels of party institutionalization between rebel group parties and non-rebel group parties. Table 1 reports mean values of my various measures of party institutionalization for the two groups, as well as the p-value of a difference-in-means test.¹⁰

On average, rebel group parties and non- rebel group parties do not appear to differ significantly across the first four dimensions of party institutionalization. In fact, rebel group parties are generally *less* likely formal policies governing succession, though these differences are not statistically significant. Rebel group parties are significantly more likely to have an independent minister of defense, and the difference between the

¹⁰ Summary statistics and t-test results are reported for founders versus successor as well as control variables in Appendix Tables 2 and 3.

two groups is quite stark. On average, rebel group parties have an independent minister of defense 93 percent of the years they are in power, while non-rebel parties have an independent minister of defense only 45 percent of the years they are in power.

I then conduct regression analysis using my measures of party institutionalization that allow me to add country and leader specific controls. I estimate the following general equation:

$$party\ institution_i = \alpha + \beta rebel\ group_i + \theta founder_i + \gamma X_c + \epsilon_i$$

where $party\ institution_i$ is my measure of party institutionalization for party-leader i . These measures are calculated using the formula above, and each of the five measures is estimated separately. $rebel\ group_i$ is a dummy variable taking a value of 1 if the party has a rebel group background, and 0 otherwise. $founder_i$ is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the leader was the first post-independence leader and 0 otherwise. X_c is the set of country specific controls, and ϵ_i is an error term. Results are reported in Table 2.

Models (1) through (8) show that rebel group parties do not appear to be significantly more institutionalized across the first four dimensions of party institutionalization. Rebel group parties are not significantly more likely to name a second in command, such as a vice president or a prime minister, and they are not significantly more likely to keep the person in this position stable. Models (5) through (8) suggest that rebel group parties may in fact be *less* likely to implement formal succession rules compared with non- rebel group parties, but these results are not statistically significant. Despite not performing significantly better on most dimensions of institutionalization, the most striking result reported in Table 2 is that rebel group parties

Table 2
Dependent Variable = Indicators of Party Institutionalization

	Second Named		Second Same		Succession (weak)		Succession (strict)		Independent Defense	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Rebel group party Founder	.069 (.128)	.020 (.153)	.003 (.098)	.025 (.105)	-.068 (.147)	-.286 (.244)	-.061 (.106)	-.123 (.174)	.472*** (.096)	.355** (.116)
Founder	-.275* (.122)	-.114 (.170)	-.178 (.116)	-.113 (.183)	-.185 (.121)	.041 (.112)	-.163 (.105)	-.050 (.094)	.106 (.117)	.226* (.108)
Controls?		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
R-squared	0.110	0.196	0.059	0.155	0.053	0.221	0.063	0.188	0.273	0.439
N	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

are significantly more likely to maintain independent ministries of defense (models (9) and (10)).¹¹

These findings remain consistent over a number of robustness checks. One possible concern is that rebel group parties may *start out* more institutionalized then gradually become less institutionalized over time as the “effect” of war fades. Levitsky and Way, for instance, argue that the effects of origins in conflict degrade over time; especially after leaders from the liberation struggles die or cease to dominant the party (2012, 872). Slater similarly claims that parties that serve as “protection pacts” for elites may gradually lose its protective logic if initial threats start to subside (2010, 19). I reran the regressions reported in Table 2 on a subsample of the data that includes only the first ten years in which the first post-independence leader was in power (or fewer if the first leader died or was deposed before the ten-year mark). For instance, Jomo Kenyatta served as the first leader of Kenya after independence for 14 years. This subsample would only include the first ten years in which Kenyatta was in power. Maurice Yameogo was the first leader of Burkina Faso after independence, but stepped down from

¹¹ The main results remain robust to the inclusion of an interaction term (rebel_group*founder).

office six years after taking power – this subsample would only include the six years in which Yameogo was in power. Results from these regressions are reported in Appendix Table 4. The findings remain consistent for the ten-year subsample. In other words, it appears that rebel group parties are not more institutionalized on most dimensions when they first come into power. Consistent with prior findings, rebel group parties are significantly more likely to maintain an independent minister of defense.

Second, I wanted to ensure that my results were not being driven by differences in colonizer identities or the presence of large European settler populations. I reran the regressions controlling for colonizer identity by creating dummy variables for French, British, and Portuguese colonies (coded from Morrison et al. 1989) as well as the density of European settler populations in 1900 (data from Easterly and Levine forthcoming). The findings, which are reported in Appendix Table 5, remain consistent with previous findings. Former British colonies are significantly more likely to have stable second in command positions, complementing existing work arguing that British colonies inherited stronger institutions (Hayek 1960, La Porta et al. 1998, Landes 1998, North et al. 1998). The presence of large European settler populations does not seem to be strongly correlated with party institutionalization. This provides an interesting contrast to the argument put forth by Acemoglu et al. (2001) who argue that colonies that were dense with European settlers tended to have stronger institutions because the settlers themselves did not want to live under exploitative conditions.

As an additional robustness check, I reran my results on a subsample that dropped all Portuguese colonies. One potential concern is that political activity was heavily repressed under Portuguese rule and all Portuguese colonies had to partake in liberation

wars in order to gain independence. Parties in Portugal therefore may be weaker as a result of state weakness or heavy political repression. The results, reported in Appendix Table 6, remain consistent from before and alleviate the concern that the findings are mainly being driven by Portuguese colonies. In fact, model (3) shows that rebel group parties are significantly less likely to have succession policies in place for the subsample that excludes Portuguese colonies.

Finally, I wanted to know whether the intensity of conflict had an effect on rebel group institutionalization. I reran the main regressions while controlling for the number of rebel groups and duration of war. I counted the number of years that fighting took place, which serves as a proxy for the intensity of fighting. In cases of multiple rebel groups, I also document the number of other groups that fought but did not take power. The Angolan War of Independence, for instance, was carried out by three rebel forces - the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the MPLA, and the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA). Following negotiations with Portugal and infighting within the three groups, the MPLA took control of the government. The results, reported in Appendix Table 7, remain consistent and suggest that there is not a significant relationship between the intensity of conflict and party institutionalization.

Discussion

The empirical analysis reveals that although rebel group parties do not appear to be more institutionalized on most dimensions compared with non-rebel group parties, they are significantly more likely to have an independent minister of defense. In other

words, presidents of rebel group parties are significantly more likely to distribute the defense portfolio to elites.

The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia, for instance, maintained an independent defense minister every single year from the time the party came into power until the end of the dataset in 2005. President Samuel Nujoma, who was in power from independence until 2004, did not simultaneously hold the position of the Minister of Defense at all throughout his 15-year tenure. Moreover, the position of Minister of Defense was held by three different individuals over a period of fifteen years, suggesting some stability in the appointment – the minister holding the defense portfolio was not constantly rotated every year. Similarly, an independent member of ZANU-PF was appointed as the Minister of Defense for 25 out of 26 party-years in Zimbabwe, and President Pereira of PAIGC in Cape Verde never held the position of Minister of Defense during his 14-year tenure.

Non- rebel group parties on the other hand exhibit strikingly different patterns of military authority. While rebel group parties maintained independent Defense Ministers an average of 92 percent of party-years while in power, non- rebel group parties maintained independent defense ministers only 48 percent of party-years while in power. President Dawda Jawara of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in Gambia, for instance, also served as the Minister of Defense from independence in 1965 until 1992. Similarly, President Hastings Banda of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) held the Defense portfolio his entire tenure, from independence in 1964 until 1993. In sum, autocratic leaders of former rebel group parties seem much more willing to delegate military authority to other party elites. Leaders of pre-independence parties without a history of

armed conflict, on the other hand, exhibited much more reluctance in entrusting the Ministry of Defense to other elites.

How should we interpret these differences? On one hand, allowing other elites to serve as the defense minister could simply be a sign of confidence: the leader feels so secure in his position of authority that he does not worry about the possibility of being deposed if he were to delegate military authority to another elite. On the other hand, the distribution of the defense portfolio could represent meaningful power sharing: the leader must institutionalize joint rule in order to *decrease* the probability of being deposed by dissatisfied elites.

To gain insight into this question, I collected biographical information about the elites who served as Minister of Defense in rebel group parties to assess whether they were influential elites who could pose a credible threat to the leader or whether they were relatives or cronies. I found that in general elites who served as the Minister of Defense were influential leaders and co-combatants from the liberation wars, rather than relatives or cronies of the president.

In Cape Verde for instance, Silvino da Luz was appointed as the Minister of Defense from independence in 1975 until 1981. He had been the commander of the armed wing of the ruling PAIGC and was a ranking committee member of the party who had participated in secret negotiations during the war. Henrique Teles Carreira was appointed as the first Minister of Defense in Angola post-independence and remained in that position throughout the entire tenure of the first president. Carreira had been the head of security during the independence war. In Eritrea, Petros Solomon was appointed as the first defense minister following independence. Solomon had been a leading figure during

the armed struggle. He was one of three members of the party's military committee, the head of the military intelligence unit, and a member of the political bureau of the party's Central Committee.

Was the strategy of institutionalized power sharing with military elites effective in deterring coup attempts? Were rebel group parties indeed more secure compared with non-rebel group parties? As Roessler (2011) notes coups accounted for almost 60 percent of leadership removals in postcolonial Africa and posed the greatest threat to incumbent leaders. Using data from Powell and Thyne (2011), I counted the number of failed coup attempts, successful coup attempts, and cumulative (successful and failed) coup attempts for all parties in my sample. I estimate the following equation, maintaining the cross-sectional format:

$$\text{number of coup attempts}_i = \alpha + \beta \text{rebel group}_i + \theta \text{founder}_i + \gamma X_c + \epsilon_i$$

where *number of coup attempts*_{*i*} is the total number of coup attempts that took place for party-leader *i*. *rebel group*_{*i*} is a dummy variable taking a value of 1 if the party has a rebel group background, and 0 otherwise. *founder*_{*i*} is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the leader was the first post-independence leader. *X_c* is a set of country specific controls, and ϵ_i is an error term. Results are reported in Table 3.

The results show that rebel group parties are significantly less likely to be deposed by coups, and they are also significantly less likely to face failed coup attempts. In fact, out of the seven rebel group parties, none were ousted from power via coups. If we contrast this against pre-independence parties that did not experience violent decolonization, 16 out of 26 non rebel-group parties were removed from power, following a coup. Every non-rebel group party except for the (BDP) in Botswana and

Table 3
Dependent Variable: Coup Attempts

	All attempts		Failed attempts		Successful attempts	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rebel group party	-.389** (.132)	-.285* (.131)	-.088^ (.049)	-.064 (.048)	-.300* (.118)	-.220^ (.113)
Founder	.093 (.161)	-.027 (.161)	.005 (.075)	-.033 (.082)	.088 (.128)	.006 (.127)
Controls?		✓		✓		✓
R-Squared	0.096	0.199	0.024	0.068	0.089	0.193
N	46	46	46	46	46	46

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05. ^p<.10. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

(TANU) in Tanzania faced at least one coup attempt, and many of these parties faced multiple coup attempts. Moreover, rebel group parties faced a total of 3 coup attempts (PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau and Frelimo in Mozambique), while non-rebel group parties faced a total of 157 coup attempts.

Conclusion

This paper considered how a history of armed conflict during party formation shapes the organizational durability of autocratic parties once they come into power. In evaluating existing theories, I aimed to unify literature on authoritarian institutions, civil conflict, and revolutionary regimes – three strands of research that have, in large part, developed independently of each other. Moreover, by introducing new ways to measure various dimensions of party institutionalization, this paper provided a new empirical test of existing theoretical arguments and mechanisms.

My empirical analysis compared parties that fought in independence wars against pre-independence parties without a history of armed conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. I found that rebel group parties do not score better than non-rebel group parties on most

dimensions of institutionalization. However, I do find that parties with a legacy of armed conflict are significantly more likely to establish an independent minister of defense and seem much less vulnerable to coup attempts. This suggests that the strength of regimes emerging out of liberation conflicts is more of a result of control over coercive power, rather than having a highly institutionalized ruling party.

This study also contributes to an important literature examining the effects of anti-colonial conflict and subsequent levels of democratization in Africa. In a recent paper Wantchekon and Garcia-Ponce (2016) find that countries that experienced rural insurgencies tend to be much more authoritarian in the post-1990 period. This paper offers a complementary explanation of why post-conflict liberation regimes remained resilient after gaining independence, and these effects lasted into the post Cold War period. Future studies can consider whether these same dynamics exist for revolutions and colonial conflicts outside of Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1
Cases included in analysis

Country	Ruling party	Leader	Origins in conflict
Angola	MPLA	Neto dos Santos	Yes
Botswana	BDP	Khama Masire Mogae	No
Burkina Faso	UDV	Yameogo	No
Burundi	UPRONA	Micombero	No
Cameroon	UC/CPDM	Bagaza Ahidjo Biya	No
Cape Verde	PAICV	Pereira	Yes
C.A.R.	MESAN	Dacko Bokassa	No
Chad	PPT	Tombalbaye	No
Cote d'Ivoire	PDCI	Houphouet-Boigny Bedie	No
Eritrea	PFDJ	Afewerki	Yes
Gambia	PPP	Jawara	No
Ghana	CPP	Nkrumah	No
Guinea	PDG	Toure	No
Guinea-Bissau	PAIGC	Cabral Vieira	Yes
Kenya	KANU	Kenyatta Moi	No
Madagascar	PSD	Tsirana	No
Malawi	MCP	Banda	No
Mali	US	Keita	No
Mozambique	FRELIMO	Machel Chissano Guebuza	Yes
Namibia	SWAPO	Nujoma Pohamba	Yes
Niger	PPN	Diori	No
Rwanda	PARMEHUTU	Kayibanda	No
Senegal	PS	Senghor Diouf	No
Sierra Leone	APC	Tejan-Sie Stevens Momoh	No
Somalia	SYL	Osman	No

South Africa	ANC	Shermarke Madela	Yes
Tanzania	TANU/CCM	Mbeki Nyerere Mwinyi Mkapa	No
Uganda	UPC	Obote	No
Zambia	UNIP	Kaunda	No
Zimbabwe	ZANU-PF	Mugabe	Yes

Appendix Table 2
 Summary statistics and t-test results

	Founder	Successors	p-value
Second named	.549 (.078)	.822 (.074)	0.028
Second same	.448 (.068)	.626 (.069)	0.101
Successor (weak)	.245 (.066)	.431 (.117)	0.142
Successor (strict)	.125 (.047)	.290 (.107)	0.109
Indept Defense	.618 (.070)	.504 (.116)	0.379
N	12	34	

Appendix Table 3
 Summary statistics and t-test for control variables

	Rebel group party	Non- rebel group party	p-value
GDP per capita	2.151 (.623)	1.360 (.273)	.190
Oil per capita	.348 (.231)	.018 (.014)	.015
Population	8.791 (.418)	8.477 (.157)	.391
Ethnic fractionalization	.731 (.034)	.660 (.047)	.411
Years in power	13.750 (2.209)	14.617 (1.270)	.731
N	12	34	

Appendix Table 4
Ten-year Subsample

Dependent Variable = Indicators of Party Institutionalization

	Second Named		Second Same		Succession (weak)		Succession (strict)		Independent Defense	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Rebel group party	.125 (.155)	.038 (.159)	.042 (.149)	-.087 (.121)	.159 (.154)	.033 (.195)	.101 (.117)	.124 (.174)	.419*** (.109)	.325* (.153)
Controls?		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
R-squared	0.026	0.225	0.003	0.312	0.063	0.380	0.047	0.306	0.291	0.337
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses. Sample includes only the first post-independence leaders and only the first ten years in power (or fewer if the first leader died or was deposed before the ten year mark).

Appendix Table 5
 Controlling for colonizer identity/ settler population

Dependent Variable = Indicators of Party Institutionalization

	Second Named (1)	Second Same (2)	Successor (weak) (3)	Successor (strict) (4)	Independent Defense (5)
Rebel group party	.143 (.146)	.043 (.143)	-.317* (.154)	-.121 (.098)	.572*** (.146)
Founder	-.207^ (.110)	-.120 (.113)	-.130 (.129)	-.139 (.113)	.112 (.124)
French	.258 (.161)	.242* (.115)	.187 (.158)	.086 (.091)	.270 (.318)
British	.724*** (.129)	.574*** (.095)	.248^ (.140)	.168^ (.086)	.051 (.296)
Portugal	.398^ (.227)	.369* (.169)	.531* (.245)	.203 (.190)	-.013 (.215)
Settlers1900	-.012^ (.007)	-.009 (.007)	.009 (.010)	.000 (.006)	.004 (.006)
R-Squared	0.321	0.329	0.119	0.09	0.332
N	46	46	46	46	46

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, ^p<.10. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Appendix Table 6
 Dropping all Portuguese colonies

Dependent Variable = Indicators of Party Institutionalization

	Second Named (1)	Second Same (2)	Successor (weak) (3)	Successor (strict) (4)	Independent Defense (5)
Rebel group party	.135 (.187)	.030 (.140)	-.209* (.086)	0.122 (-.084)	.522*** (.088)
Founder	-.280^ (.137)	-.200 (.121)	-.256^ (.136)	-.227^ (.121)	.098 (.138)
R-squared	0.110	0.076	0.133	0.141	0.199
N	39	39	39	39	39

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, ^p<.10. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Appendix Table 7
Controlling for conflict intensity

Dependent Variable = Indicators of Party Institutionalization

	Second Named (1)	Second Same (2)	Successor (weak) (3)	Successor (strict) (4)	Independent Defense (5)
Rebel group party	.288 (.262)	.070 (.205)	-.072 (.239)	.094 (.208)	.372** (.128)
Founder	-.260* (.125)	-.174 (.119)	-.182 (.127)	-.156 (.112)	.102 (.120)
Conflict duration	-.017 (.018)	-.004 (.015)	-.004 (.008)	-.008 (.007)	.004 (.003)
Other rebel groups	.006 (.098)	-.034 (.088)	.163 (.114)	.007 (.057)	.102 (.072)
R-Squared	0.128	0.062	0.083	0.090	0.284
N	46	46	46	46	46

Notes: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05. OLS regression used. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.