Justifying Power:
When Autocracies Talk About Themselves and their Opponents

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Abstract

It is commonly understood that authoritarian regimes attempt to legitimize their rule and de-legitimize opponents. What is less clear is the intensity with which they do so, whether (de-)legitimation varies by institutional structure, and whether and how this intensity varies in times of crisis. To address these questions, this article focuses on the types of messages that autocracies disseminate, how they vary across autocratic regime types, and how they change when confronted with system-challenging movements. The article tests expectations using quantitative events data on government statements, movements, and state repression. It also examines a "typical" case of a single-party regime faced with a widespread protest movement, namely China in 1989, to investigate whether the quantitative findings manifest themselves in the dynamics of a particular episode. The article finds evidence that autocratic regimes regularly disseminate messages to legitimize their rule and de-legitimize opponents and that single-party regimes generally engage in more (de-)legitimizing rhetoric than other autocratic regime types both during ordinary times and times of regime crisis. In general regimes scale up their (de-)legitimation efforts when they face a major system-challenging movement as well as when they choose to repress such movements.

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Introduction

Legitimation is often understood as one of the three "pillars" of authoritarian rule along with co-optation and repression (Gerschewski, 2013). Autocracies give reasons, narratives, and/or ideological or procedural justifications for why they are entitled to rule. Doing so entails amplifying the status of the government and/or discrediting opposition groups or non-government entities seen to be threatening. In times of crisis or threat, such as when a violent or nonviolent movement seeks to displace incumbent elites, authoritarian governments typically repress the threatening groups, behaviors, and/or individuals (Davenport, 2007a). Empirically we know that dictatorships "talk" and they repress; this article is about how much they talk, whether different types talk more or less, and whether they talk more when they confront and repress threats. The aim is to advance understanding about an underlying paradox: if authoritarian regimes can repress challenges using their often-overwhelming force or co-opt opponents using their resource advantage, why do they need to bother with legitimation tactics at all? More specifically, the article aims to explain why and how authoritarian regimes amplify their legitimation practices in different ways at different times.

The central premise is that legitimation is a key ingredient of autocratic stability. Messages that augment the status of the government and denigrate opposition groups make it more difficult for skeptics of the autocracy to gain traction. To explore variation in this relationship, the article establishes the links between authoritarian governments and the type and frequency of messages they use when speaking about political actors and institutions. It focuses on, firstly, the relationships between authoritarian regime characteristics and the quantity of messages that aim to legitimize the government and de-legitimize the opposition. Secondly, it analyzes legitimation dynamics during periods in which there is violent or nonviolent contention and/or repression.

In doing so, the article clarifies the conditions under which the intensity of authoritarian legitimation varies. The article finds that all autocracies legitimize themselves and de-legitimize opponents to some degree but that the frequency of messages varies by regime subtype, with single-party authoritarian regimes tending to legitimize their rule and de-legitimize opponents more intensely than other autocratic regime types. Across regime types, legitimation efforts intensify when there are major violent or non-violent systemic challenges and when the government represses major protest movements. However, for smaller protest events – even when they are repressed – dictatorships appear to favor a quieter approach, perhaps to avoid drawing attention to minor challenges.

In addition to quantitative analysis, the article selects an out-of-sample case to qualitatively examine an authoritarian regime faced with a major systematic challenge. The well-known case of the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement and crackdown in China was an instance of a long-lived single-party dictatorship confronting an existentially-challenging nonviolent movement. The analysis lends credence to the statistical findings by showing that the Chinese leadership did indeed aim to bolster its own legitimacy and discredit the protest movement in systematic ways.

While the legitimation strategies used by authoritarian regimes are understood to vary by content (von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017), institutional structure (Kailitz, 2013), their effects on target audiences (Josua, 2017), and over time in particular cases (Maerz 2018; Morgenbesser, 2015; Holbig, 2013), there have been few systematic cross-national examinations of how intensely authoritarian regimes amplify their own legitimacy and discredit opponents. We establish this general relationship, assess how these dynamics vary across regime subtypes, and use multiple methods to investigate patterns when a regime is faced with major challenges from the population.

Legitimation, Regime Type, and Systemic Threats

Legitimation is among the strategies that authoritarian leaders use to maintain power (Gerschewski, 2018). Elites construct legitimation claims on any number of foundations, including performance, procedures, nationalism, utopian ideologies, and/or the personal characteristics of the leader (von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017). Typically, a distinction is drawn between "legitimation" and "legitimacy" where the former consists of the claims themselves while the latter refers to the capacity of those claims to actually instill a belief or following (von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017; Dukalskis and Gerschewski, 2017). This article deals primarily with legitimation behavior and sets aside deeper questions about the population's belief in specific claims. The dependent variable is firstly the volume (or amount) of legitimation and de-legitimation messages that a regime produces and secondly the type of (de)legitimation messages disseminated.[1]

Studying the volume, or amount, of authoritarian legitimation is theoretically important for three main reasons. First, more intense legitimation efforts can be seen as an attempted signal of regime power. The ability of an authoritarian regime to compel the population to consume its propaganda may not persuade the population of specific claims, but it can still convince the population that the government is too powerful to fruitfully challenge (Huang, 2015). One reason that authoritarian regimes might ratchet up the "volume" of their rhetoric is therefore to signal the regime's unassailability.

Second, varying intensity of legitimation in the face of crises suggests that regimes are adaptable and responsive to challenges. A well-established scholarly literature details how governments dynamically weigh the costs and benefits of repressing collective challenges (e.g.

[1] This article focuses on rhetorical legitimation in the form of specific messages or symbols. It does not conceptualize performance or policy as legitimation, so if an autocracy presided over economic growth, this would not be an instance of legitimation as such. However, if the government highlighted its positive record in public statements, then this would be an example of legitimation.

Davenport 2007a). Repression is meant to suppress the immediate challenge, but governments can rhetorically magnify repression in the hopes that it plays a deterrent function. Alternatively, they can rhetorically downplay it in the hopes that they can keep it from public view and thereby prevent further opposition inspired by the original challengers.

Third, more intense legitimation efforts can frustrate the ability of citizens to mount collective challenges in the first place. The "louder" an authoritarian regime is the more difficult it is to "talk over" it. In her study of Syrian authoritarianism, Wedeen (1999: 6) argued that the ever-present personality cult "clutter[ed] public space with monotonous slogans and empty gestures, which tire[d] the minds and bodies of producers and consumers alike." The ubiquity of legitimation messages can skew public discourse and help to foster apathy and resignation to the status quo (Dukalskis, 2017).

However, not all authoritarian regimes behave the same. This section first discusses the theoretical reasons for why we would expect variation in (de)legitimation messages across regime subtypes. Since there are cross-cutting theoretical predictions for each regime subtype we do not elaborate hypotheses for each individual subtype. Rather, the more general concern is with testing whether there are indeed differences between types of autocracies. The second part discusses how a system-threatening crisis may influence (de)legitimation patterns.

(De)Legitimation & Variation Across Regime Subtypes

A strong legitimation foundation helps autocrats remain in power (Kailitz and Stockemer, 2017), in part because it may catalyze the other elements of authoritarian survival. For example, providing public goods may help an autocracy satisfy some of its citizens, but legitimation can amplify those public goods by highlighting them via state media channels to show that it is meeting

citizen demand (Cassani, 2017; von Haldenwang, 2017). Likewise, if the state co-opts groups into the ruling structure, such as when the Chinese Communist Party welcomed capitalists, its legitimation formula (i.e. Jiang Zemin's "three represents" theory) can help justify the policy and signal standards of appropriate elite behavior (Holbig, 2013). Legitimation of the government and de-legitimation of opponents complements other survival strategies and mitigates their potentially harmful side effects.

Given that autocracies vary in their institutional structure, it is reasonable to expect that they display different patterns of (de)legitimation behavior. Different types of autocracies exhibit varying outcomes in a range of domains, including media censorship (Stier, 2015), state repression (Davenport, 2007b), policy performance (Croissant and Wurster, 2013), and response to international pressures (Escriba-Folch and Wright, 2015). There are therefore good reasons to think that different autocratic regime types differ in their usage of (de)legitimizing messages

For the main analysis, the article draws on the widely used regime classification of Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) and reports findings about (de)legitimation intensity in single-party, personalist, monarchical, and military autocracies. This typology is subject to a number of critiques in terms of conceptualization and classification (e.g. Wilson, 2014; Wahman et al., 2013). The typology has been criticized for not dealing well with hybrid types of autocracies or electoral authoritarian regimes. Nor do the institutional arrangements apparent in the typology necessarily capture underlying behaviors of authoritarian institutions, power distributions, or bargains in society (Wahman et. Al 2013; Pepinsky 2014). However, despite its limitations the typology is appropriate for this analysis because it captures transitions well and balances effectively between minimalist objective coding and richer context-dependent subjective coding. Nevertheless, in recognition of the ongoing debates about regime subtype classifications, this article reports in an

appendix (Table A4) results of robustness checks and alternative specifications using different classifications.

In the following paragraphs we present theoretical reasons for why one might expect higher or lower amounts of (de)legitimation messages in each of the main subtypes. However, given conflicting theoretical expectations, we do not present specific hypotheses for each. Instead, we are interested more generally in testing one main hypothesis regarding subtypes:

H1: Autocracies vary systematically in the volume of (de)legitimation messages across autocratic regime subtypes.

Single-party regimes are thought to be durable because they are able to manage elite conflict, regularize succession, and co-opt potentially threatening elites (Brownlee, 2007). Such regimes are thought of as being well organized and able to effectively mobilize human capital to pursue regime goals (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010). Single-party regimes often manifest themselves in specific forms thought to enhance their duration due in part to their legitimation, such as "revolutionary regimes" (Levitsky and Way, 2013) and communist regimes (Kailitz and Stockemer, 2017). Due both to the institutional underpinnings of single-party regimes and their empirical manifestation as revolutionary or communist-type governments, it is therefore plausible that single-party regimes will be better organized both institutionally and ideologically to disseminate larger volumes of (de)legitimation messages. However, it could also be the case that single-party regimes are so institutionally secure that they do not need to be as talkative as other regime types.

In personalist regimes power is organized around one person and s/he has the ultimate say on important decisions. Non-monarchical personalist regimes are thought to have precarious legitimation foundations for durable rule (Kailitz and Stockemer, 2017). Personalist rule is notoriously brittle because the charisma of the leader is difficult to transfer to other individuals or institutions. However, personalist regimes are sometimes accompanied by a personality cult. In terms of the volume of legitimation messages, the theoretical expectation can thus cut both ways: a personality cult may mean that personalist regimes disseminate a high volume of messages to praise the personalist ruler, or it may mean that these regimes are so institutionally weak that they struggle to disseminate messages with the same efficiency as more institutionalized regime types.

Monarchical regimes are able to draw on traditional and/or religious sources of legitimacy to justify their rule (Kailitz, 2013; Bank et al., 2015). Monarchical governments often have a built-in mechanism to solve the "succession problem" that plagues personalist regimes, and perhaps for this reason they tend to be relatively long-lasting (Hadenius and Teorell, 2007). Complicating matters, many contemporary monarchies are oil-rich states in which the government co-opts threats and keeps the population quiescent through largesse thus potentially decreasing the necessity to amplify the legitimacy of the government on a regular basis. They are often strategically important states with large amounts of foreign support, which may undermine incentives to build stronger foundations of legitimation at home (see Tansey, 2016). Thus, while monarchies have symbolic resources at their disposal, it may be the case that they need to communicate them less given alternative foundations for their resilience.

Military regimes are typically understood to have shorter durations than their single-party and monarchical counterparts (Geddes, Frantz, and Wright, 2014; Hadenius and Teorell, 2007). In terms of legitimation, military regimes often frame themselves as national saviors. Usually these

justifications are understood as temporary and contingent upon eliminating the perceived threat, which means that military regimes may have shaky foundations on which to build long-lasting autocratic rule (Kailitz, 2013). Given that previous research has found that military regimes repress personal integrity rights more than they do civil liberties rights (Davenport, 2007b), it may be the case that military regimes use a strategy of violent repression rather than legitimation to maintain their rule. However, repression and legitimation are not mutually exclusive and repression itself often becomes the subject of (de)legitimation messages (Edel and Josua, 2018).

Finally, it may be the case that there is no systematic variation in the (de)legitimation strategies of different autocratic regime types. This would suggest that autocratic regimes rely on similar volumes and repertoires of (de)legitimation messages regardless of their institutional configuration. This may be due to a reliance on institutional characteristics being a flawed way to categorize regimes because institutions are epiphenomenal of other underlying structures (Pepinsky, 2014).

(De)Legitimation & Systemic Challenges

Thus far the discussion has assumed that autocratic regimes are facing "normal" times and not acute threats. In general, authoritarian leaders can be thought of as facing three kinds of threats to their rule: vertical, lateral, and external (Schedler, 2013: 35). Vertical threats emanate from the population and generate pressures on the government. Lateral threats consist of divisions within the government itself and external threats have their sources abroad. Repression can target any of these threats by, for example, cracking down on a protest (vertical), purging members of the party or military (lateral), or closing civil society organizations linked with foreign donors (external). An underappreciated aspect of the maintenance of authoritarian rule consists in how the regime

communicates its power in the face of such threats. Rhetorical messages can ameliorate lateral threats by highlighting regime unity (Schedler and Hoffmann, 2016), dampen vertical threats by communicating regime power to the population (Huang, 2015), and reduce the gravity of external threats by promoting rally-around-the-flag sentiment (Grauvogel and von Soest, 2014).

The analysis below focuses on how patterns of (de)legitimation may change when governments face a serious "vertical threat". When confronting a large violent or non-violent movement, an incumbent regime faces difficult choices about repression (Chenoweth et al., 2017; Nepstad, 2011). Widespread repression may squelch a threatening movement but can undermine the resonance of a regime's legitimation messages because it demonstrates that violence is the foundation of its rule. Incumbents would therefore prefer to avoid resorting to repression. Given the importance of framing and counter-framing in the success of social movements (Benford and Snow, 2000), autocracies may calculate that they can drain challengers of support before having to repress by legitimizing the government and de-legitimizing challengers. Thus:

H2: The intensity of (de)legitimation messages will increase when a regime faces a major system-challenging movement.

Once a state elects to violently repress a movement, it faces a dilemma: it is compelled to repress the movement if the movement threatens the political order, but the very act of repression can engender moral outrage that strengthens anti-regime forces. In a "repressive backfire" scenario, if repression is perceived as unjust and if information about it is effectively communicated to broad enough audiences then repression can generate corresponding pressures on the government (Nepstad, 2011; Chenoweth et al., 2017). Therefore, if a state does repress a

movement it must implement a legitimation strategy that mitigates further mobilization (Edel and Josua, 2018). It is compelled to reinforce its own legitimacy and undermine the legitimacy of its challengers in order to justify its use of violence. Thus:

H3: During and after violent repression of a major system-challenging protest movement the government will increase its (de)legitimation messages.

Data and Research Design

For the main dependent variable of (de)legitimation, we use events data from the public version of the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) (Boschee et al., 2016). This is appropriate because rhetorical (de)legitimation messages are communicated through the public statements of governments and their associated actors. Like most events data, these record "who did what to whom" across a wide range of behaviors that make them ideal for measuring the frequency of public statements and the intended audience (e.g. Murdie and Davis, 2012). Crucially, these data categorize various communication and symbolic acts observed between source and target actors which makes it possible to measure quantities of (de)legitimation. Because ICEWS includes 300 international and national news sources across three languages, it provides a wider scope and more detail than other globally focused events data.[2]

The legitimation variables are designed to measure the quantity of statements made by government actors relevant to regime behavior. For messages to count as legitimation, they must

[2] In our data from 1995-2006, there are a minimum of 44 publishers in our yearly data files, with a maximum of 188. A tabulation of all publishers by year is available on request.

originate from a government-affiliated actor and consist of statements where actors make appeals, rally support, or verbally defend themselves.

We generate three versions of this count dependent variable. First, *Domestic Legitimation* incorporates all relevant statements about domestic government or non-government actors designed to amplify the legitimacy of the government. For example, when Chinese leader Xi Jinping touts China's scientific advances and his government's role in facilitating them, this would be coded as a domestic instance of "praise or endorse" (ICEWS 051). The idea of domestic legitimation has strong roots in literature on comparative authoritarian legitimation and is an empirically common type of authoritarian legitimation claim (e.g. Holbig, 2013; von Soest and Grauvogel 2017; Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017; Dukalskis 2017; Gerschewski 2018).

Second, *International Legitimation* focuses on statements sent by governments about civilians, organizations, or governmental actors that exist outside the generating government's borders. For instance, if Iranian leaders called on people to support Hezbollah in Lebanon this would be considered an international version of "rally support on behalf of" (ICEWS 053). A nascent literature has begun to study the international dimensions of authoritarian legitimation (Holbig, 2011; Hoffmann, 2015; Del Sordi and Dalmasso, 2018). Perhaps the most well-known example was the tendency for communist regimes to highlight their roles in the international communist movement and to legitimate themselves relative to international actors or ideas even as they situated communism in their domestic contexts (Dukalskis and Gerschewski, 2018). By linking themselves to internationally respected movements, communist governments hoped to gain domestic legitimacy. The more general point is that referring to, defending, or praising international actors can serve domestic legitimation functions for a government. Third, *Combined Legitimation* is the summed count of events across domestic and international levels.

De-legitimation is designed to account for negative statements made by government sources about domestic civilians and non-governmental organizations. These messages work to undermine the claims and legitimacy of opposition actors in order to prevent their acquisition of support. For example, messages by Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban and his government against organizations funded by George Soros run the gambit from "accuse of crime" (ICEWS 1121) to "rally opposition against" (ICEWS 113) to "accuse of espionage/treason" (ICEWS 1125) and so on. Table A1 in the appendix shows all of the relevant ICEWS codes with brief descriptions.

Data for autocratic regime types are taken from the time series, cross-sectional version of the Autocratic Regimes Data Set, provided by Geddes, Frantz, and Wright (2014). We include the dichotomous indicators *Single Party, Military,* and *Monarchy* as they are observed in the GWF data.[3] Given our dichotomous variable specification, we include only regime-years that are recorded as autocracies. Under this specification, personalist regimes are left out as the reference category.[4]

To test the effects of large scale, system challenging, opposition movements on (de)legitimation intensity, we use the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Data Project, Version 2.0 (Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013). We supplement NAVCO with data from ICEWS to generate measures of protests and riots even if they occur only on a small scale. Using both sources allows us to determine whether (de)legitimation changes in the face of any organized dissent, or only movements that are sufficiently large to challenge regime survival.

We measure resistance movements in two ways. First, we include two dichotomous indicators for *Peaceful Movement* and *Violent Movement,* derived from the NAVCO data. They

[3] Table A4 in the appendix contains a robustness test using data from the Authoritarian Regime Dataset (Wahman et al 2013).
[4] Table A5 presents results showing patterns of (de)legitimation in autocracies where non-authoritarian states are used as the reference category.

take a value of one if the country year is observed as experiencing a predominantly peaceful or violent resistance movement, respectively. These are major resistance movements, so we can test how (de)legitimation behavior changes for the largest events that are likely to gain the most attention and pose the greatest threat to a government's survival. Second, we use yearly counts of *Protests* and *Riots.* These are taken directly from event types in ICEWS and cover any observation of such events regardless of size, thus capturing small events that may not elicit changes in a government's overall (de)legitimizing behavior.

Since we expect (de)legitimation to increase in the course of justifying state repression, *Protest Repression* counts the events in ICEWS where a protest was met with the use of force from government actors. It represents the direct use of repression against dissenting movements. To test whether (de)legitimizing behavior varies based on the presence of resistance movements, the type of regime, and the use of state repression, we include interaction terms containing our regime variables and the presence and repression of resistance movements.

To further isolate the effects of the independent variables on the use of (de)legitimation we control for several regime characteristics and state behaviors that may influence its use. *Regime Duration*, taken from the GWF data, is a yearly count of how many years the regime has been in power. *Failure Year* indicates if the autocratic regime ended that year.

Our models include several controls to measure alternative means of maintaining political power and repressing dissent. These variables are all yearly counts derived from individual ICEWS event codes where government-affiliated actors targeted domestic groups or individuals. *Legal Sanctions* account for within-system judicial or criminal punishments, such as bringing a politically motivated lawsuit. *Administrative Sanctions* accounts for restrictions on the political activity of organizations, such as banning a political party. Both of these are common means that

governments use to maintain control via "soft repression". Various physical integrity violations used to suppress opposition outside of direct repression of a specific protest movement are included using counts of *Assaults, Abductions, Deadly Assaults, Torture,* and *Mass Killings*. Table A2 in the appendix summarizes the independent variables taken from the ICEWS data.

To mitigate reporting bias stemming from the news reports used to generate ICEWS data, we include *Event Count* consisting of a country-year count of events recorded for each country in our sample. This accounts for changes in the dependent variable that result from one country simply having greater reporting coverage or event observation in our data. Therefore, we can ensure that our results are not driven by over-representation of some countries in the event data.

Although ICEWS records events at a daily level from 1995-2018, we aggregate our models to the country year given the yearly observations present in the autocracy data. Our time series runs from 1995 to 2006; determined at its lower bound by the earliest available ICEWS data and the latest available NAVCO 2.0 data. ICEWS codes events from all countries, but we focus entirely on autocratic states as observed in the GFW data. This focus results in a sample of 687 country-years.[5] Our dependent variables consist of country-year event counts, while dispersion tests indicate that negative binomial models are better suited for these data than Poisson. We handle issues of heteroscedasticity with Huber-White standard errors and issues of temporal dependence a with a single year (*t-1)* lag of the dependent variables.[6]

Analysis & Discussion

[5] In our sample, we have 345 single-party, 47 military, 88 monarchy, and 298 personalist country-years.
[6] Tables A6 and A7 present negative binomial estimations of the same models presented in Tables 1 and 2 with dummy variable country fixed effects following Allison and Waterman (2002). Additionally, models using yearly dummies to control for temporal dependence were tested, but yielded results identical to the lagged dependent variable models presented here.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results for our estimations of the volume of (de)legitimation used by various autocratic regime types compared to the reference of personalist regimes. Table 1 uses ICEWS events data for the protest and riot variables (thus capturing even small events) while Table 2 uses NAVCO data for resistance movements (thus focusing on major systemic challenges). These tables show that in general autocratic governments do indeed engage in (de)legitimation activity, and that there is significant variation by regime subtype. There is thus initial support for hypothesis 1.

When we consider legitimation across domestic and international levels (Models 1-3 and 5-7), single-party governments consistently engage in more (de)legitimation than their personalist counterparts. These results are robust across all specifications and these regimes are the most active autocratic subtypes when it comes to legitimizing their rule. Single-party regimes also generally appear to be the most frequent users of delegitimizing messages (Models 4 and 8).

Personalist regimes generally are quieter than other regime types. Military regimes disseminate more overall legitimation messages in Table 1 than their personalist counterparts and this is driven entirely by domestic legitimation. In Table 2, which considers major resistance challenges, military regimes are not statistically distinguishable from personalist regimes. Military regimes delegitimize domestic opponents more than personalist regimes in Table 1 (model 4) but these results disappear in Table 2 (model 8).

Monarchies emphasize international legitimation so strongly that this drives significant results for combined legitimation in both models. We can conclude that monarchies are reliably more active in disseminating legitimation messages than are non-monarchical personalist regimes, but in terms of de-legitimizing opponents there are no significant differences between the two regime types.

Taken together, the results presented so far indicate that there is support for hypothesis 1 because there is indeed significant variation in legitimation and de-legitimation patterns by regime subtype. However, it is interesting to note that across regime types legitimation decreases the longer regimes are in power. This suggests that as autocracies consolidate, they may rely less on (de)legitimation and perhaps more on habit or settled expectations. All subtypes also appear to increase their (de)legitimation in the face of violent movements and repression of protests.

*****Table 1 around here*****

*****Table 2 around here*****

Table 2 lends general support to hypothesis 2 insofar as major, system-challenging violent and nonviolent movements lead authoritarian regimes to amplify their overall (de)legitimation messages. When the message types are disaggregated, there is one intriguing exception: autocracies do not appear to delegitimize domestic actors more in the face of a major peaceful movement (model 8). Instead, autocracies appear to focus more on bolstering their own legitimacy when confronted with these challenges.

Digging deeper, Tables 3 and 4 present results from our estimation regarding the conditional effect of resistance movements on the use of (de)legitimation in autocracies. As above, Table 3 uses ICEWS data for resistance events while Table 4 uses NAVCO data to focus on major challenges. Two effects are apparent from these results (Models 9-16). First, in general pre-resistance patterns of (de)legitimation carry over to periods during which the population mobilizes. In other words, single-party regimes are still active in terms of (de)legitimation in the presence of

large or small resistance movements, while military regimes still focus on the domestic realm and monarchies still emphasize international claims. Across regime subtypes widespread systemic challenges, particularly violent ones, still drive an intensification in the use of legitimation messages.

Second, for the most part, the interaction effects between regime type and various measurements of resistance yield weaker results.[7] As a result, qualifications can be added to the general support for hypothesis 2. Autocracies generally appear to intensify their legitimation when faced with widespread challenges but not smaller challenges. They also tend to focus more on violent movements. Conditional effects for different regime subtypes are weak or non-existent.

*****Table 3 around here*****

*****Table 4 around here*****

Turning to hypothesis 3, Table 2 shows that in general the repression of a major protest movement drives an intensification of (de)legitimation. When autocracies repress, they appear to aim to contain backfire by amplifying their (de)legitimation messages, but not consistently or in dramatically larger amounts. Table A3, reported in the appendix, shows that repression of protests only leads to mildly increased combined legitimation. However, when interacted with autocratic subtypes, the repression of a resistance movement has no relationship with the level of legitimation or de-legitimation.

[7] Marginal effects plots showing the substantive effect of these results are contained in Figures A1-A6.

In sum, autocratic regimes engage in measurable levels of (de)legitimation, and consistent with hypothesis 1, there is systematic variation across regime subtypes. Single-party regimes tend to be the loudest and most consistent users of (de)legitimation messages. Regarding autocratic regime subtypes, these results present evidence that single-party authoritarian regimes frequently engage in legitimation and de-legitimation behaviors with greater intensity than other authoritarian subtypes. They are the most consistent users of messages designed to bolster their legitimacy and undermine their opponents. Personalist regimes generally use less (de)legitimation than other regimes. Monarchical regimes and military regimes use intermediate levels of (de)legitimation, although with interesting patterns when disaggregated at the domestic and international levels.[8]

In general, consistent with hypotheses 2 and 3, major system-challenging movements and repression of major movements intensify (de)legitimation messages. However, these findings reveal nuance and should be qualified. When considering the conditional effects of resistance movements and repression in autocratic subtypes, these events largely have no effect on the use of (de)legitimation. For larger system-challenging movements and the repression of such movements, autocracies do appear to amplify their (de)legitimation messages, although not consistently or in dramatically larger amounts. The amount of these messages largely remains unaffected by these events when they are minor and only mildly so when the events are major. When faced with peaceful and/or minor resistance movements, many regimes may calculate that a strategy of censorship and concealment is preferable to engaging in a more active and public "debate" with opposition groups. These results could indicate that governments do not wish to draw attention to events that might otherwise elude the public consciousness.

[8] As shown in the appendix (Table A4), results for monarchies and military regimes are also quite sensitive to alternative specifications.

An Illustrative Case Study of 1989 China

This section illustrates some of the quantitative findings by providing a case study of the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement and crackdown in China. The case was chosen as a "typical" or "on-lier" case (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). Typical cases are by definition representative insofar as they appear conform to previously specified large-N relationships (ibid.: 297), which in this case consist of regime type, presence of a system-challenging movement, state repression, and the usage of (de)legitimation messages. China in 1989 is a case of a single-party autocracy facing and ultimately repressing a major protest movement, all while communicating messages to the population through government-controlled press. Analytically this "on-lier" case facilitates deeper exploration of the large-N relationship and in particular allows for (dis-)confirmation of established cross-case relationships (ibid.). Given that the quantitative results revealed that single-party autocracies are highly likely to spend time and resources legitimizing themselves and delegitimizing opponents, this is an appropriate case for such a confirmatory exploration. If no (de)legitimation is found in this case, then there are strong reasons to doubt the quantitative results. Alternatively, if (de)legitimation messages are found and change with the movement and repression then one can have additional confidence in the quantitative results and can probe them in a more nuanced fashion for new hypotheses and further research questions.

The analysis shows that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP or "party") attempted to forestall the Tiananmen movement and contain its spread after repressing it by (1) emphasizing the CCP's effective performance; (2) chastising the protesters for interfering with the order so necessary to that performance; (3) attributing the movement to the work of a few unsavory characters manipulating impressionable students; (4) lauding the martial law troops as patriotic

defenders of the public interest; and eventually (5) blaming foreigners for attempting to use the Tiananmen bloodshed to undermine China.

The messages of legitimation and de-legitimation that China's party institutions disseminated echo much of the coding found in the ICEWS typology employed above. In the remainder of this section, messages that correspond to the coding of the ICEWS dataset will be noted in parentheses to highlight congruence between the quantitative and qualitative portions of this article. Since China 1989 is an out-of-sample case, these actual messages are not coded in the ICEWS dataset and so the examples rely on the authors' estimations. This approach has the advantage of bolstering the external validity of the quantitative analysis.

China 1989: Tiananmen Movement and Repression

The events of 1989 at Tiananmen Square in Beijing are well known except, ironically, within China itself. The party has gone to extraordinary lengths to manage the memory of the most serious collective challenge to its rule since the Mao era (Lim, 2014). Today information about the repressed uprising is censored in nearly all media platforms and if it is referred to at all in state-controlled media is called the "Tiananmen Incident" as in a 2009 *Global Times* article or a "myth" propagated by the Western media as in an unattributed 2011 *China Daily* opinion article (ibid.: 96-97) (ICEWS 016, deny responsibility).

The movement arose in the context of China's reforms during the 1980s (Baum, 2011). As China opened economically the party became concerned with the increasing influence of Western values and with citizens testing the limits of free expression (ibid.). Student unrest in 1985 and 1986 over a variety of issues, including material grievances like poor quality campus

accommodation as well as higher order aspirations like democracy and personal freedom, reached a pinnacle in December of 1986 with protests in over 150 colleges and universities in seventeen cities with somewhere between 20,000 and 75,000 students demonstrating (ibid.: 393).

By January 1987 the security forces had reasserted control at the urging of top leader Deng Xiaoping and his allies (Pantsov with Levine, 2015: 399-402). CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang, who had been seen as a liberal within the Party and relatively permissive of the protests, was forced to resign by the Party leadership on 16 January 1987 (ibid.: 402). The Politburo dismissed Hu because he was too liberal and tolerant of Western ideas, made errors in economic policy, political affairs, and foreign relations, and frequently expressed his opinion publicly "without authorization from the Central Committee" (Baum, 2011: 396-398).

The events of 1986-87 gained renewed significance when Hu died on 15 April 1989. Students mobilized to honor his memory and the gatherings rapidly turned into politically salient demonstrations. By April 21st there were 100,000 students in Tiananmen Square and quickly thereafter the Beijing Autonomous Federation of Students was formed to help organize the movement. Protests continued throughout the next month with more than 1 million people marching in Beijing by May 17th. Martial law was declared in Beijing on May 20th and troops began their advance from the outskirts of Beijing toward the square but were blocked by ordinary citizens for several days and were forced to withdraw on May 23rd. Protests intensified with hunger strikes and a thirty-foot high "Goddess of Democracy" statue adding dramatic images to the events. The events in Beijing inspired similar protests in cities throughout China, although much less is known about what transpired outside the capital (Lim, 2014).

On the night of June 3rd People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops again advanced toward Tiananmen with instructions to clear the square by dawn. This time they opened fire on civilians

who blocked their path. In total, at least 241 people by the official count and potentially up to 1,000 were killed with thousands more wounded in Beijing alone (Lim, 2014).

Before repressing the movement, the CCP attempted to quell the protests via an April 26 editorial in the party-run *People's Daily* newspaper titled "It is Necessary to Take a Clear-Cut Stand Against Disturbances" (ICEWS 113, rally opposition against; ICEWS 1052, demand end to political dissent). This was the party's first major response to what was quickly becoming a widespread protest movement. Discussions between Deng Xiaoping and Premier Li Peng on April 25th formed the basis of the editorial (Nathan, 2002), which cast the students as being governed by their emotions and manipulated by "an extremely small number of people with ulterior purposes" (ICEWS 1123, accuse of initiating hostilities) (this and all subsequent editorial quotations from *People's Daily*, 1989). This small group, according to the editorial, "spread rumors, attacked party and state leaders by name, and instigated the masses" with the intent to "poison and confuse people's minds" in order to "to sow dissension among the people, plunge the whole country into chaos and sabotage the political situation of stability and unity" (ICEWS 1123, accuse of initiating hostilities). The movement was neither spontaneous nor genuine, according to the CCP, but rather "a planned conspiracy and a disturbance" (ICEWS 1125, accuse of espionage/treason). The editorial highlighted the disorder apparently wrought by the protesters, noting the "serious incidents in which some lawbreakers carried out beating, smashing, looting, and burning" (ICEWS 1121, accuse of crime). If the protesters were allowed to achieve their ostensible aims of sowing disorder, then "a China with very good prospects and a very bright future will become a chaotic and unstable China without any future" (ICEWS 051, praise or endorse).

However, the editorial backfired. Students saw it as an affront and it revealed the apparent tone-deafness of those at the top of the party hierarchy (Zhao, 2001: 155-156; Pantsov with Levine,

2015: 410). The next day, April 27th, saw renewed and much larger student protests at Tiananmen Square met with a more conciliatory stance by the party. Dialogue sessions between the government and students along with less strident official rhetoric over the next week helped to convince most students to demobilize (Zhao, 2001: 159-161) (ICEWS 0252 appeal to end political dissent). However, student hunger strikes reinvigorated the movement and as noted above, attempts at repression in late May failed only to see the CCP redouble its efforts and finally succeed at repressing the demonstrations by June 4th.

On June 5th and 6th the government referred to the protesters as "rioters" and the protests as a "counterrevolutionary rebellion" (ICEWS 1121, accuse of crime; ICEWS 1125, accuse of espionage/treason) (Baum, 2011: 459; Pantsov with Levine, 2015: 417). Deng Xiaoping's speech on June 9th to the martial law units that suppressed the movement was his first public appearance since the crackdown. Deng situates the movement in the broader political context by speaking at length about how the CCP's reforms have been successful in raising people's standard of living (ICEWS 051, praise or endorse). The current party line of "reform and opening" had not been implemented perfectly, Deng acknowledged, but in its basic elements it was the correct policy and must be continued (ICEWS 052, defend verbally). Deng did not appeal to overarching ideas of communist solidarity or Marxism, but rather relied on performance legitimation by touting the CCP's successful stewardship of the economy in the previous decade (ICEWS 051 praise or endorse).

Deng cast the protesters themselves as "ordinary people who are unable to distinguish between right and wrong" (ICEWS 018, make empathetic comment) who were being manipulated by "a rebellious clique and a large number of the dregs of society, who want to topple our country and overthrow our party" (ICEWS 1125, accuse of espionage/treason) (these and subsequent

quotations in this paragraph from Deng, 1989). To deal with ordinary protesters, Deng recommended increased political education to promote "plain living and [an] enterprising spirit" (ICEWS 053, rally support on behalf of). The leaders were appropriately repressed by the PLA, which for Deng showed itself to be "truly a great wall of iron and steel of the party and state…the defender of the country, the defender of socialism, and the defender of the public interest" (ICEWS 051, praise or endorse). For the "cruel" enemies who opposed the PLA, the party "should have not one bit of forgiveness for them" (ICEWS 113, rally opposition against). Comments of this sort are designed to trumpet the unity and power of the party-state. They may also be a tactic that aims to delegitimize protests while not stoking backlash: if ordinary people are not cast as the enemy then the government's messages authorize and legitimize repression against a small group.

To demonstrate the connection between the PLA and the people, the CCP had soldiers who participated in the June 3-4 crackdown remain in Beijing for up to two months to visit local schools and residential committees in order to tell their stories (Lim, 2014: 28). Soldiers were given a wristwatch and a medal with the words "Defender of the Capital" written on it and the government published a book titled *The Defenders of the Capital* (ibid.: 29-30) (ICEWS 017, engage in symbolic act; ICEWS 051, praise or endorse). The effort to portray the martial law troops as heroes, in other words, extended from the very top in the form of Deng's June 9th speech to the local level via school visits and imagery on personal effects.

In contrast to the initial public affirmations of PLA heroism the party concealed information and justifications for arrests and executions in the several weeks and months after June 4th. At least 1,600 people were arrested in the aftermath of the initial repression according to official sources with some estimates putting the number in the tens of thousands (Baum, 2011: 459.). The human rights group Asia Watch documented arrests in the aftermath of Tiananmen and

noted that the "Chinese authorities have made strenuous efforts to conceal the scope of the crackdown" (Asia Watch, 1990). Further arrests and intimidation of movement participants was likely done under a more general crackdown on crime in the following months. Asia Watch reported that at least 49 people were executed, 45 of whom were workers and four of whom were peasants. No students or intellectuals were executed although several hundred were arrested. The explicit justification for this kind of repression, if revealed at all, was to punish "rioters," "thugs," or "black hands" associated with June 4th (ICEWS 1121, accuse of crime; ICEWS 1125 accuse of espionage/treason).

The de-legitimizing of protest leaders as criminals and unpatriotic rioters was meant to marginalize them and their cause and to justify the repression visited upon them. Later, themes associated with the blaming of foreigners became more prominent. A *People's Daily* editorial six months later, on 11 January 1990, argued that "international reactionary forces are bent on subjugating our country" (ICEWS 112, accuse) meaning that the party "should deal a timely and forceful blow at the sabotage by hostile forces" (cited in Munro, 1990: 3-4) (ICEWS 113, rally opposition against). Several leaders in the CCP understood that Tiananmen was motivated at least in part by student's sympathy for ideas of democracy and free expression (Shambaugh, 2008: 42-45), which in turn made those ideas suspect and individuals or groups associated with such ideas targets for punishment. This is consistent with Deng's advice on 9 June 1989 to squelch movements before they start: "As soon as a trend emerges, we should not allow it to spread" (Deng, 1989) (ICEWS 113, rally opposition against).

In sum, the case of China in 1989 reflects many of the quantitative findings of this article, which suggests that the statistical results have plausibility when applied to out-of-sample cases. The CCP actively legitimized itself and de-legitimized a subset of its perceived opponents during

and after the Tiananmen movement. However, the case study not only supplements the quantitative results but also complicates them and suggests future avenues for research in at least two areas: audience and timing. First, the analysis illustrates the different audiences in the CCP's legitimation messages more clearly than do the cross-national quantitative results. The April 26th editorial and Deng's June 9th speech, for example, had different primary audiences. Similar themes appear in both texts but there are differences in tone and content.

Second, the case study illustrates the dynamic relationship between repression and legitimation. The tactics of authoritarian survival appeared to work in a substitution pattern: as legitimation and co-optation failed to stop the movement violent repression became the preferred strategy but then required (de-)legitimation messaging in the aftermath of repression. This suggests two key follow-on questions: when do authoritarian leaders "give up" on legitimation and resort to repression of large-scale movements? And once they do repress, what mixture of censorship and legitimation do they employ to contain the possibility of repressive backfire? These questions reveal how the case study compliments but also complicates the quantitative findings While the cross-national findings constitute a "bird's eye" view of (de-)legitimation in autocracies, the case study reveals the fluid, complex, and sometimes contradictory messages that governments disseminate.

Conclusion

This article has contributed to the burgeoning literature on autocratic legitimation. It found that while authoritarian regimes generally legitimize their rule and de-legitimize their opponents, different autocratic regime subtypes vary in their usage of (de)legitimation messages, with single-party regimes being the most intense communicators. Autocracies generally amplify the quantity

of (de)legitimation messages when faced with major systemic challenges but usually remain quieter when confronted with smaller-scale opposition. The quantitative findings received additional support from our illustrative case of (de)legitimation messages used by the CCP before, during, and after the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement and crackdown.

This research has important implications for our understanding of authoritarian legitimation and state repression. First, given that single party regimes generally tend to be thought of as more resilient than many other autocratic regime types, this research suggests that legitimation is part of the explanation. In addition to the distinctive content of single-party legitimation formulas (Kailitz and Stockemer, 2017) as well as the intra-elite cohesion they can promote (Levitsky and Way, 2013), single-party regimes also appear more vociferous in their efforts to legitimize themselves and de-legitimize their opponents.

Second, the article adds to our understanding of the relationship between repression and legitimation, which is thought to be a particularly crucial interaction for autocratic resilience (Gerschewski, 2013). Our findings suggest that when faced with smaller movements, dictatorships often remain relatively quiet. This is consistent with research suggesting that authoritarian regimes tolerate a surprising amount of protest so long as it does not become system-threatening (Schedler, 2018). However, some movements are too large to conceal or co-opt. The "necessity" of repressing a large movement calls into question the effectiveness of the legitimation strategy prior to the movement. If a dictatorship's legitimation messages were resonating, then a large-scale challenge to regime rule would seem less likely. When that legitimation is unable to forestall a movement, an autocracy may choose to repress, such as in 1989 China. Dictatorships attempt to justify their repression, but they do so selectively by also employing censorship and concealment tactics.

Third, our findings suggest several interesting hypotheses and avenues for further research. For example, it appears that authoritarian regimes generally employ (de)legitimation messages less as they survive longer. This raises at least two questions: under what conditions are dictatorships able to instill taken-for-granted quality about their rule among the population? And do legitimation strategies stagnate? Furthermore, underlying our analysis is the question of the resources available to autocracies as they craft (de)legitimation messages. It may be that some regimes are blessed with better material from which to build legitimation formulae (e.g. traditional authority or excellent performance) while others have less to work with. Understanding how autocracies leverage what they have might reveal that some over- or under-perform in implementing their legitimation strategies.

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Table 1: (De)Legitimation in Autocracies, ICEWS Protests and Riots

	(1) Domestic Legitimation	(2) International Legitimation	(3) Combined Legitimation	(4) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party	0.431***	0.421***	0.471***	0.260**
	(0.087)	(0.081)	(0.076)	(0.102)
Military	0.444***	0.077	0.224**	0.331*
	(0.133)	(0.104)	(0.095)	(0.177)
Monarchy	0.025	0.522***	0.383***	-0.033
	(0.157)	(0.140)	(0.132)	(0.188)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	-0.005**	-0.005***	-0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Failure Year	0.407**	-0.425**	-0.089	0.114
	(0.172)	(0.190)	(0.164)	(0.190)
Legal Sanctions	0.040**	0.028***	0.035***	0.032**
	(0.020)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Administrative Sanctions	0.024	-0.010	0.007	0.051**
	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.020)
Assaults	0.043*	-0.000	0.025	0.039
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.025)
Abductions	-0.005	-0.114***	-0.087***	-0.010
	(0.044)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.025)
Deadly Assaults	-0.110	-0.030	-0.018	0.014
	(0.100)	(0.111)	(0.098)	(0.112)
Torture	0.012	-0.019	0.030	0.078**
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.037)
Protest Repression	0.028	0.051	0.035	-0.000
	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.037)
Mass Killings	0.016	-0.059	-0.065	0.012
	(0.070)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.079)
Protests	-0.002	-0.003	-0.005	0.006
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Riots	0.081***	0.026	0.058***	0.095***
	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.023)
Event Count	0.00003*	0.0002***	0.0001***	0.000008
	(0.00001)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00001)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.020***	0.002	0.001	0.059***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Constant	1.662***	2.391***	2.806***	0.661***
	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.083)
N	687	687	687	687

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2: (De)Legitimation in Autocracies, NAVCO Resistance Movements				
	(5) Domestic Legitimation	(6) International Legitimation	(7) Combined Legitimation	(8) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party	0.524***	0.454***	0.536***	0.348***
	(0.089)	(0.082)	(0.077)	(0.105)
Military	0.260	-0.021	0.074	0.183
	(0.164)	(0.119)	(0.112)	(0.192)
Monarchy	0.150	0.576***	0.472***	0.097
	(0.156)	(0.139)	(0.131)	(0.188)
Peaceful Movement	0.363*	0.308**	0.320***	0.289
	(0.186)	(0.140)	(0.114)	(0.186)
Violent Movement	0.484***	0.204**	0.344***	0.347**
	(0.126)	(0.101)	(0.098)	(0.149)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	-0.005***	-0.005***	-0.008***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Failure Year	0.631***	-0.436**	0.029	0.537***
	(0.178)	(0.184)	(0.168)	(0.205)
Legal Sanctions	0.036**	0.029***	0.033***	0.033**
	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.016)
Administrative Sanctions	0.022	-0.013	0.004	0.051***
	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.019)
Assaults	0.054***	0.000	0.028	0.057**
	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.023)
Abductions	-0.031	-0.123***	-0.102***	-0.022
	(0.043)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.024)
Deadly Assaults	-0.111	-0.026	-0.019	-0.025
	(0.098)	(0.111)	(0.097)	(0.101)
Torture	-0.011	-0.034	0.007	0.060
	(0.037)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.042)
Protest Repression	0.106***	0.067**	0.079***	0.104***
	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.029)
Mass Killings	-0.026	-0.073	-0.089*	-0.025
	(0.067)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.077)
Event Count	0.00004**	0.0002***	0.0001***	0.00002
	(0.00002)	(0.00003)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.019***	0.002	0.002	0.057***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Constant	1.575***	2.365***	2.752***	0.609***
	(0.085)	(0.087)	(0.082)	(0.088)
N	687	687	687	687

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: (De)Legitimation Conditioned by ICEWS Protests and Riots

	(9) Domestic Legitimation	(10) International Legitimation	(11) Combined Legitimation	(12) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party*Protest	0.004	0.002	0.0003	-0.004
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Single Party*Riot	-0.078*	-0.039	-0.023	0.003
	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.051)
Military*Protest	0.035	-0.046*	-0.027	0.077***
	(0.034)	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Military*Riot	-0.131	0.081	0.025	-0.255***
	(0.080)	(0.050)	(0.047)	(0.065)
Monarchy*Protest	-0.013	-0.001	-0.003	-0.008
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.020)
Monarchy*Riot	0.008	0.047	0.036	-0.030
	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.056)	(0.085)
Single Party	0.471***	0.435***	0.482***	0.272**
	(0.100)	(0.086)	(0.083)	(0.112)
Military	0.444***	0.127	0.282**	0.285
	(0.160)	(0.119)	(0.114)	(0.181)
Monarchy	0.050	0.493***	0.367***	0.008
	(0.169)	(0.150)	(0.142)	(0.201)
Protests	-0.006	-0.005	-0.005	0.007
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Riots	0.122***	0.034	0.064**	0.110***
	(0.035)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.042)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	-0.005**	-0.005***	-0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Failure Year	0.358**	-0.420**	-0.097	0.061
	(0.180)	(0.194)	(0.170)	(0.203)
Legal Sanctions	0.040**	0.028***	0.034**	0.033**
	(0.020)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Administrative Sanctions	0.026	-0.005	0.010	0.043**
	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.018)
Assaults	0.046**	-0.001	0.023	0.039
	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.025)
Abductions	0.002	-0.124***	-0.094***	-0.002
	(0.051)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.030)
Deadly Assaults	-0.129	-0.034	-0.020	0.022
	(0.103)	(0.112)	(0.098)	(0.115)
Torture	0.009	-0.015	0.033	0.073*
	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.038)
Protest Repression	0.037	0.054	0.038	0.012
	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.040)
Mass Killings	0.030	-0.074	-0.074	0.041
	(0.073)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.079)
Event Count	0.00002	0.0001***	0.0001***	0.000003
	(0.00002)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00001)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.020***	0.002	0.001	0.060***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Constant	1.639***	2.374***	2.792***	0.651***
	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.092)
N	687	687	687	687

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: (De)Legitimation Conditioned by NAVCO Resistance Movements				
	(13) Domestic Legitimation	(14) International Legitimation	(15) Combined Legitimation	(16) De-Legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party*Peaceful Movement	-0.312	0.024	-0.130	-0.179
	(0.423)	(0.235)	(0.242)	(0.403)
Single Party*Violent Movement	-0.466**	-0.173	-0.378*	-0.204
	(0.237)	(0.205)	(0.219)	(0.415)
Military*Peaceful Movement	-0.340	-0.242	-0.240	-0.653
	(0.660)	(0.447)	(0.498)	(0.568)
Military*Violent Movement	-0.939**	-0.198	-0.520	-0.946**
	(0.431)	(0.364)	(0.337)	(0.439)
Monarchy*Peaceful Movement	-0.433	-0.224	-0.346	-1.002**
	(0.520)	(0.333)	(0.363)	(0.444)
Monarchy*Violent Movement	0.301	0.719	0.620	0.214
	(0.905)	(0.570)	(0.641)	(0.606)
Single Party	0.581***	0.458***	0.566***	0.382***
	(0.101)	(0.090)	(0.086)	(0.114)
Military	0.784**	0.117	0.382	0.761**
	(0.357)	(0.289)	(0.262)	(0.348)
Monarchy	0.167	0.557***	0.466***	0.114
	(0.164)	(0.147)	(0.138)	(0.202)
Peaceful Movement	0.582*	0.331*	0.436*	0.484
	(0.350)	(0.190)	(0.224)	(0.303)
Violent Movement	0.724***	0.244*	0.474***	0.526***
	(0.167)	(0.139)	(0.132)	(0.183)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	-0.005***	-0.005***	-0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Failure Year	0.575***	-0.435**	-0.001	0.474**
	(0.195)	(0.192)	(0.177)	(0.227)
Legal Sanctions	0.035**	0.029***	0.032***	0.032**
	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Administrative Sanctions	0.021	-0.013	0.004	0.046***
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.017)
Assaults	0.060***	0.004	0.032*	0.064***
	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.023)
Abductions	-0.048	-0.137***	-0.118***	-0.030
	(0.051)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.024)
Deadly Assaults	-0.104	-0.022	-0.012	-0.010
	(0.094)	(0.109)	(0.095)	(0.102)
Torture	-0.009	-0.034	0.007	0.054
	(0.040)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.044)
Protest Repression	0.099***	0.057**	0.068***	0.097***
	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.030)
Mass Killings	-0.002	-0.071	-0.082*	-0.004
	(0.070)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.077)
Event Count	0.00003*	0.0001***	0.0001***	0.00001
	(0.00002)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00002)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.019***	0.002	0.002	0.057***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.007)
Constant	1.547***	2.364***	2.738***	0.581***
	(0.086)	(0.089)	(0.083)	(0.093)
N	687	687	687	687

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Appendix

Table A1: ICEWS Events for Legitimation and De-legitimation			
Variable	ICEWS/CAMEO Codes	Description	Example[9]
Legitimation	016	Deny responsibility	"The government of Liberia denied…"
	020	Unspecified appeal/request	"…called on the protesters…"
	0252	Appeal to end political dissent	"…leaders appealed to followers for an end to…"
	017	Engage in symbolic act	"Chancellor Angela Merkel awarded…"
	018	Make empathetic comment	"Secretary-General…expressed condolences…"
	051	Praise or endorse	"A top U.S. official today praised…"
	052	Defend verbally	"…leader…defended against Western criticism…"
	053	Rally support on behalf of	"Saudi Arabia has mobilized pressure groups…"
De-legitimation	111	Verbal expression of protest	"Saddam Hussein protested…"
	112	Accuse	"Robert Mugabe accused the United States…"
	113	Rally opposition against	"…official Syrian newspaper called…to united against…"
	1121	Accuse of crime (allegation)	"accused of misusing public funds…"
	1122	Accuse of human rights abuse	"Amnesty International accused…"
	1123	Accuse of initiating hostilities	"accused rebels…"
	1125	Accuse espionage/treason	—
	1052	Demand end political dissent	"Iranian authorities pressuring…"

Table A2: ICEWS Events for Independent Variables		
Variable	ICEWS/CAMEO Codes	Description
Legal Sanctions	115	Bring lawsuit against

[9] Full language for the example verb statements comes from the Annotation Guidelines provided with the ICEWS event files (Boschee et al. 2015). Legitimation statements originate from a government-affiliated actor and consist of statements where actors make appeals, rally support, or verbally defend themselves. Appeals to end political dissent imply that the political system is legitimate, and that dissent is not warranted. Empathetic comments reveal actors and/or behaviors that the government approves of. Verbally defending or denying responsibility imply the government's stances toward the legitimacy of the action in question, namely that it is legitimate in the former and not legitimate in the latter. They therefore are important because they serve to show the behaviors and actors that the government is willing to associate itself with. De-legitimation statements are those that undermine opponents or threatening behaviors.

	116	Find guilty
Administrative Sanctions	171	Seize property
	172	Impose admin. Sanctions
	1721	Restrict political freedom
	1722	Prevent activity of party
	1723	Impose curfew
Assaults	182	Physical assault
Abductions	181	Abduct, hijack, take hostage
Deadly Assaults	1823	Kill by physical assault
Torture	1822	Torture
Protest Repression	175	Use repression
Mass Killings	202	Engage in mass killing
Protests	141	Demonstrate
	1411	Protest for leadership change
	1412	Protest for policy change
	1413	Protest for rights
	1414	Protest for institution change
	144	Block/obstruct
	1442	Block/obstruct policy change
	1443	Block/obstruct rights
	1444	Block/obstruct institution change
Riots	145	Protest violently
	1451	Riot leadership change
	1452	Riot policy change
	1453	Riot rights change
	1454	Riot institution change

Table A3: (De)Legitimation in the Context of Repression				
	(17) Domestic Legitimation	(18) International Legitimation	(19) Combined Legitimation	(20) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party*Repressed Protests	-0.040	-0.139**	-0.079	0.010
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.054)	(0.074)
Military*Repressed Protests	-0.084	-0.114*	-0.088	-0.073
	(0.126)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.071)
Monarchy*Repressed Protests	0.044	0.034	0.048	0.007
	(0.175)	(0.105)	(0.110)	(0.095)
Single Party	0.441***	0.461***	0.492***	0.256**
	(0.093)	(0.084)	(0.079)	(0.109)
Military	0.486***	0.132	0.268***	0.374**
	(0.142)	(0.110)	(0.099)	(0.187)
Monarchy	0.005	0.500***	0.359***	-0.037
	(0.159)	(0.145)	(0.136)	(0.199)
Repressed Protests	0.050	0.118**	0.073*	0.005
	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.041)	(0.054)
Protests	-0.003	-0.004	-0.006	0.006
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Riots	0.082***	0.026	0.059***	0.098***
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	-0.005**	-0.005***	-0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Failure Year	0.379**	-0.450**	-0.113	0.094
	(0.174)	(0.187)	(0.162)	(0.192)
Legal Sanctions	0.040**	0.028***	0.035**	0.032**
	(0.020)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Admin. Sanctions	0.027	-0.005	0.010	0.052**
	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.021)
Assaults	0.042*	0.002	0.025	0.035
	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.026)
Abductions	-0.008	-0.120***	-0.092***	-0.008
	(0.050)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.027)
Deadly Assaults	-0.117	-0.056	-0.030	0.017
	(0.102)	(0.112)	(0.099)	(0.113)
Torture	0.013	-0.017	0.031	0.079**
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.037)
Mass Killings	0.012	-0.070	-0.071	0.010
	(0.071)	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.079)
Event Count	0.00003*	0.0002***	0.0001***	0.000009
	(0.00002)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00001)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.020***	0.002	0.002	0.059***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Constant	1.652***	2.356***	2.787***	0.659***
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.085)	(0.088)
N	687	687	687	687

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A4: (De)Legitimation in Autocracies, Using HTW Regime Data

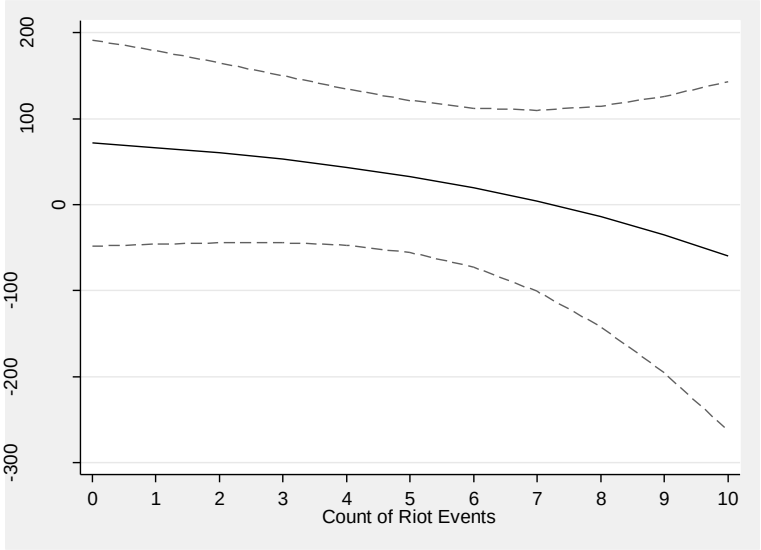
	(A1) Domestic Legitimation	(A2) International Legitimation	(A3) Combined Legitimation	(A4) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party	0.396***	0.511***	0.466***	-0.041
	(0.124)	(0.099)	(0.101)	(0.131)
Multiparty	0.127*	0.094*	0.092*	0.051
	(0.066)	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.068)
Military	0.509***	0.223***	0.341***	0.122
	(0.093)	(0.070)	(0.066)	(0.121)
Monarchy	-0.378***	-0.093	-0.170*	-0.848***
	(0.126)	(0.098)	(0.095)	(0.160)
Regime Duration	-0.007***	0.007***	0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Legal Sanctions	0.019	0.014**	0.021*	0.020
	(0.015)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Administrative Sanctions	0.065***	0.008	0.037***	0.066***
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Assaults	0.019	-0.026**	-0.004	0.021
	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.018)
Abductions	0.031*	-0.036***	-0.012	0.080***
	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.024)
Deadly Assaults	-0.041	0.011	-0.012	0.023
	(0.054)	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.068)
Torture	-0.018	-0.034	-0.008	0.011
	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.030)
Protest Repression	0.028	0.044**	0.031	0.025
	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.029)
Mass Killings	0.045	0.015	0.031	0.084**
	(0.033)	(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.043)
Protests	0.006	-0.003	-0.000	0.014**
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)
Riots	0.021	0.004	0.019	0.025
	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.019)
Even Count	0.00008***	0.0002***	0.0001***	0.00005***
	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.015***	0.002	0.003***	0.036***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.005)
Constant	1.620***	2.026***	2.548***	0.704***
	(0.073)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.075)
N	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

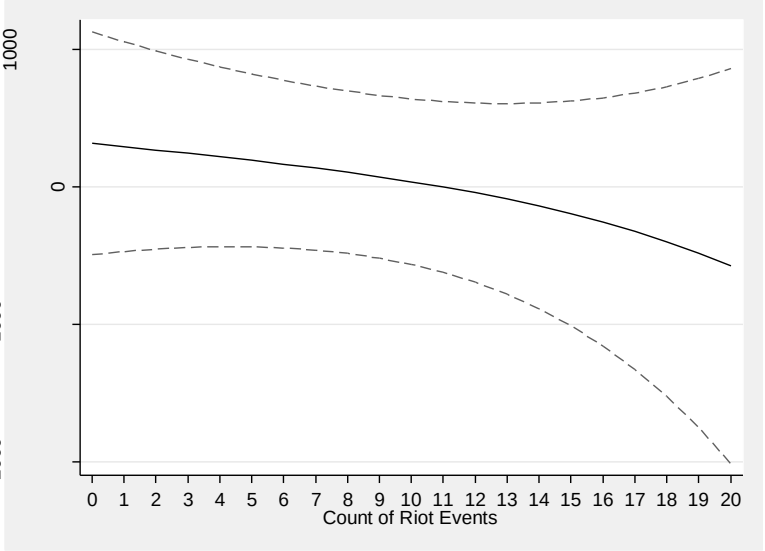
Table A5: (De)Legitimation Across All Regime Types				
	(A5) Domestic Legitimation	(A6) International Legitimation	(A7) Combined Legitimation	(A8) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Personalist	-0.229***	-0.255***	-0.264***	-0.264***
	(0.077)	(0.069)	(0.067)	(0.067)
Single Party	0.252***	0.069	0.133**	0.133**
	(0.065)	(0.056)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Military	0.144	-0.170*	-0.070	-0.070
	(0.106)	(0.095)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Monarchy	-0.305**	-0.047	-0.140	-0.140
	(0.127)	(0.100)	(0.097)	(0.097)
Regime Duration	-0.004***	0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Failure Year	0.339**	-0.433***	-0.121	-0.121
	(0.132)	(0.146)	(0.126)	(0.126)
Legal Sanctions	0.013	0.010***	0.017**	0.017**
	(0.011)	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Administrative Sanctions	0.058***	0.007	0.033***	0.033***
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Assaults	0.018	-0.021*	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Abductions	0.033**	-0.044***	-0.019	-0.019
	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Deadly Assaults	-0.025	0.016	0.002	0.002
	(0.049)	(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Protest Repression	0.032	0.037*	0.027	0.027
	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Torture	-0.019	-0.042**	-0.014	-0.014
	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Mass Killings	0.025	-0.016	0.002	0.002
	(0.033)	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Protests	0.007	-0.002	0.000	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Riots	0.013	0.003	0.016	0.016
	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Event Count	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
(De)Legitimation$_{t-1}$	0.013***	0.002	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	1.928***	2.635***	3.056***	3.056***
	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.066)	(0.066)
N	1,628	1,628	1,628	1,628

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure A1: Expected Number of
Domestic Legitimation Statements across Riots

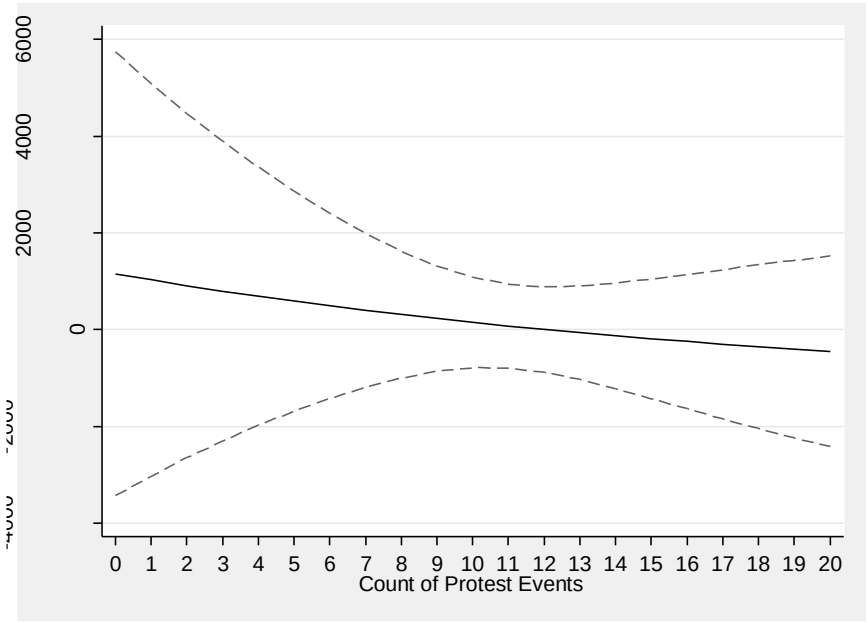


(A): Single Party Regimes



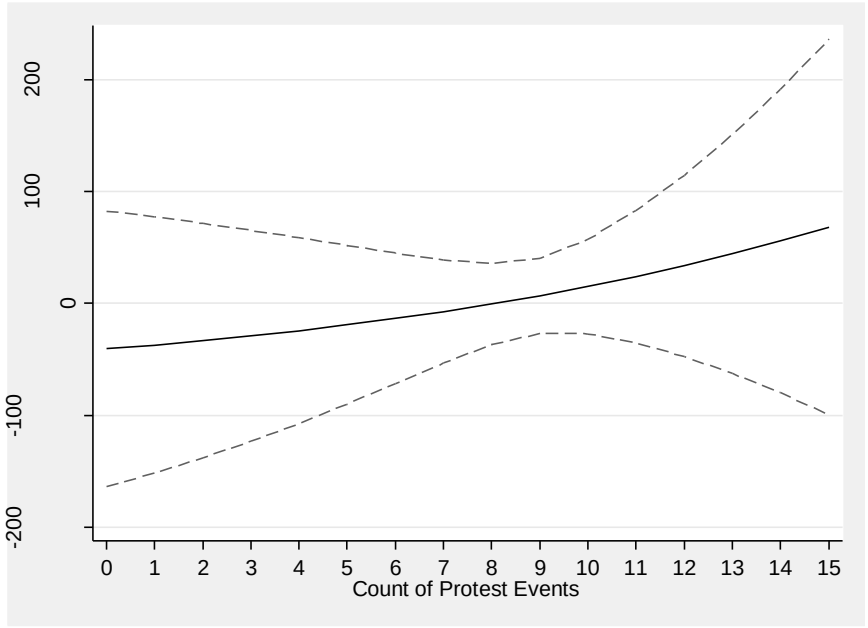
(B): Military Regimes

Figure A2: Expected Number of International Legitimation Statements across Protests



(A): Military Regimes

Figure A3: Expected Number of De-Legitimation Events in Military Regimes



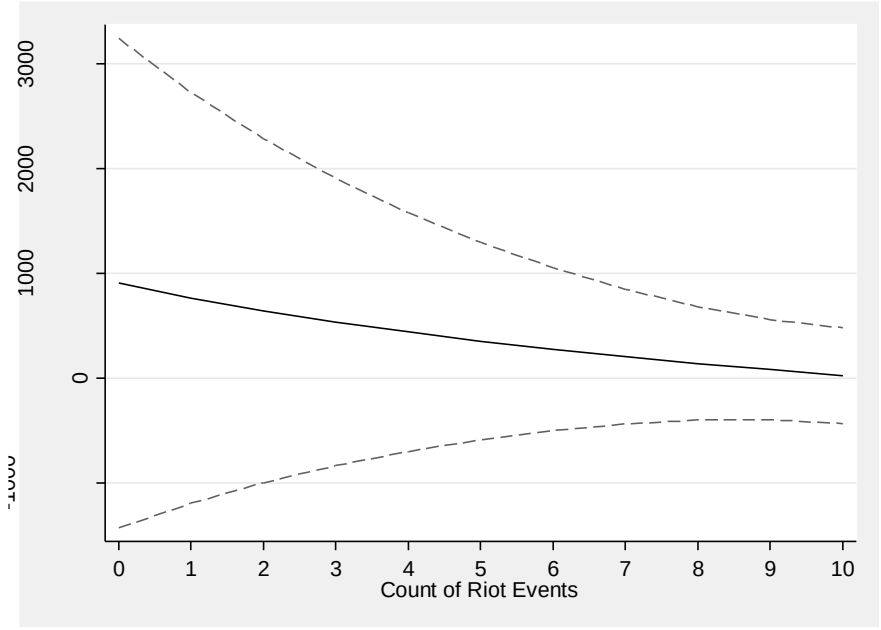


Figure A4: Expected Number of Domestic Legitimation
During Large Violent Events

(A): Single Party Regimes

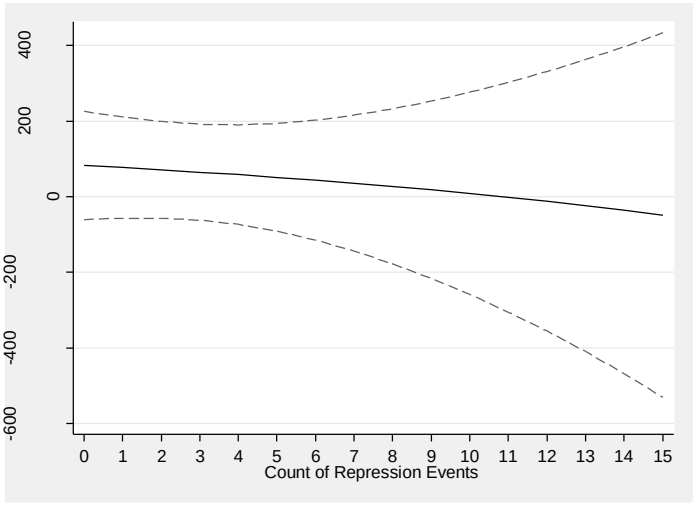
(B): Military Regimes

Figure A5: Expected Number of Domestic De-Legitimation
During Large Movements

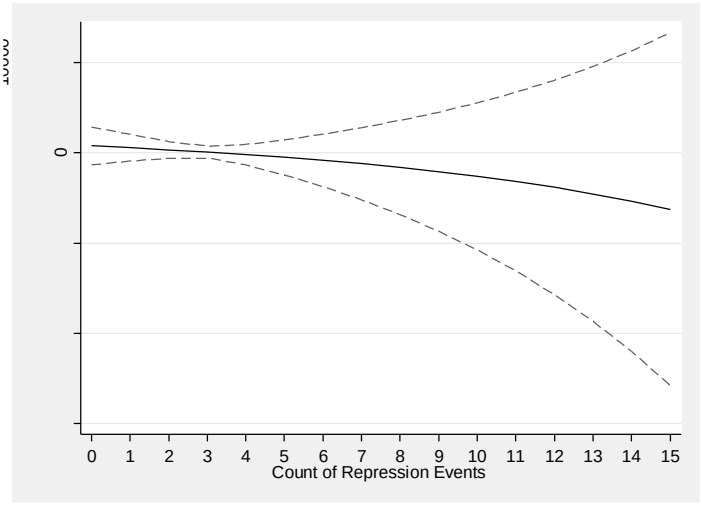
(A): Military Regimes

(B): Monarchist Regimes

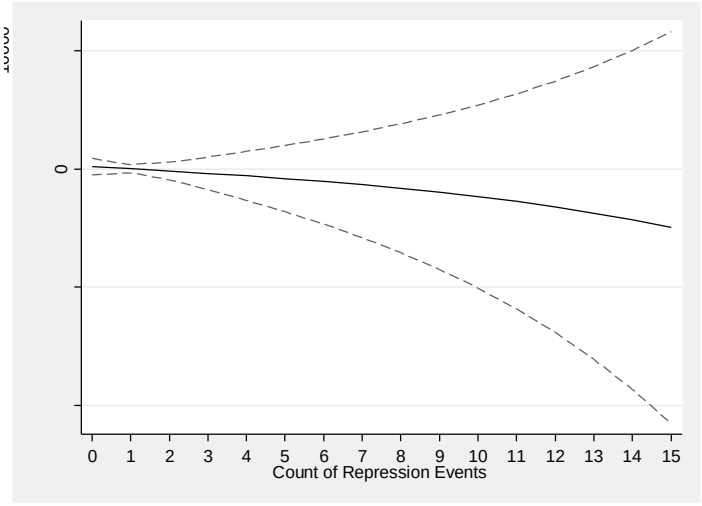
Figure A6: Expected Number of Legitimation Statements During State Repression



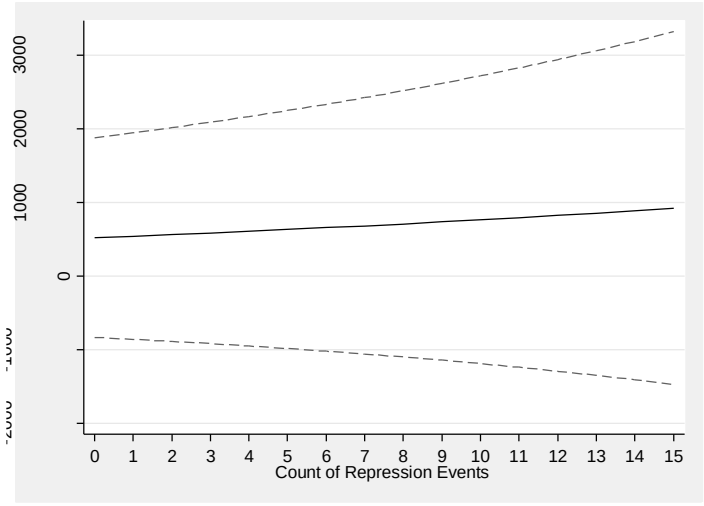
(A): Domestic Legitimation in Single Party Regimes



(B): International Legitimation in Single Party Regimes



(C): International Legitimation in Military Regimes



(D): Combined Legitimation in Single Party Regimes

Table A6: (De)Legitimation in Autocracies with Country Fixed Effects				
	(A9) Domestic Legitimation	(A10) International Legitimation	(A11) Combined Legitimation	(A12) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party	-6.102***	-5.669***	-5.909***	-5.764***
	(0.584)	(0.540)	(0.454)	(0.866)
Military	4.101***	1.386	2.560***	2.286**
	(0.890)	(0.850)	(0.604)	(1.127)
Monarchy	-1.675***	-2.107***	-1.879***	-2.259**
	(0.650)	(0.594)	(0.519)	(0.898)
Regime Duration	0.125***	0.111***	0.119***	0.095***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Failure Year	0.568***	0.093	0.344**	0.227
	(0.178)	(0.148)	(0.140)	(0.184)
Legal Sanctions	0.001	0.008	0.006	0.015
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Administrative Sanctions	0.022*	-0.001	0.007	0.019
	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Assaults	0.025*	-0.009	0.000	0.017
	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Abductions	0.005	-0.004	-0.001	0.017
	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.019)
Deadly Assaults	-0.062	-0.007	-0.023	-0.060
	(0.072)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.074)
Protest Repression	0.018	0.007	0.006	0.026
	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.027)
Torture	-0.016	-0.008	-0.006	-0.002
	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.021)
Mass Killings	0.005	0.028	0.007	0.036
	(0.059)	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.062)
Protests	0.011**	0.003	0.005	0.008*
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Riots	0.011	-0.007	0.005	0.036**
	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.018)
Event Count	0.000**	0.000***	0.000***	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.567***	4.628***	4.885***	3.384***
	(0.512)	(0.498)	(0.408)	(0.817)
N	766	766	766	766

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A7: (De)Legitimation in Autocracies during Civil Resistance Movements with Country Fixed Effects

	(A13) Domestic Legitimation	(A14) International Legitimation	(A15) Combined Legitimation	(A16) De-legitimation (Domestic)
Single Party	-6.255***	-5.734***	-6.018***	-5.998***
	(0.589)	(0.539)	(0.454)	(0.877)
Military	4.070***	1.465*	2.592***	2.368**
	(0.880)	(0.815)	(0.587)	(1.119)
Monarchy	-1.473**	-2.074***	-1.797***	-2.091**
	(0.653)	(0.590)	(0.515)	(0.904)
Peaceful Movement	-0.032	0.027	0.053	-0.099
	(0.196)	(0.159)	(0.152)	(0.195)
Violent Movement	-0.360**	-0.255**	-0.341***	-0.187
	(0.162)	(0.128)	(0.123)	(0.169)
Regime Duration	0.121***	0.108***	0.115***	0.096***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Failure Year	0.714***	0.086	0.392***	0.518***
	(0.171)	(0.140)	(0.133)	(0.167)
Legal Sanctions	0.003	0.009	0.007	0.015
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Administrative Sanctions	0.028**	0.000	0.009	0.024**
	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Assaults	0.030**	-0.010	0.002	0.026*
	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Abductions	0.015	0.001	0.006	0.023
	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.020)
Deadly Assaults	-0.060	-0.002	-0.021	-0.054
	(0.073)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.075)
Torture	-0.021	-0.007	-0.009	-0.007
	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.021)
Protest Repression	0.039	0.004	0.013	0.064***
	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.024)
Mass Killings	0.021	0.033	0.013	0.044
	(0.060)	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.063)
Event Count	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.877***	4.815***	5.161***	3.611***
	(0.529)	(0.505)	(0.416)	(0.827)
N	766	766	766	766

Robust standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1