

Leader Age, Death, and Political Reform in Dictatorships

Sarah J Hummel
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

December 12, 2017

Does political reform follow the death of dictators? Although death presents a potential opportunity for liberalization, this potential is rarely realized and only under very particular circumstances. Regime elites, wishing to regain power in the aftermath of death, work to engineer smooth transitions from one leader to the next, by force if necessary. Consequently, transitions following the natural death of dictators rarely generate much political change. I use cross-national data to demonstrate that the relationship between dictator death and political liberalization is remarkably weak, even under the most favorable circumstances. Indeed, leader death only correlates positively with political liberalization in economically developed countries with older dictators. The rarity of post-death reform implies that waiting for dictators to die is not an effective strategy for promoting political liberalization.

[Word Count: 9062]

“...and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people. And so long as men die, liberty will never perish.”

- Charlie Chaplin, in The Great Dictator (1940)

Dictators cannot coexist with democracy. For this simple reason, a dictator’s departure represents a moment in which liberal reform appears suddenly more possible. In 2006, the chairman of the Erk opposition party of Uzbekistan, Muhammed Salih, briefed the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. He stated “...there is no state in all of Central Asia that

depends on the will of just one person like Uzbekistan does. But on the other hand, this is what makes a dictatorship so weak. By replacing one person, you can change not only the situation in Uzbekistan, but indeed the entire region. As [former President] Karimov himself likes to say, ‘No man, no problem’ ” (Salih, 2006). In other words, precisely because so much political power is concentrated in the hands of one person, the removal or departure of a dictator makes change, including dramatic changes such as democratization, possible.

As dictators age, their departure - through death, if through no other means - becomes an increasingly real possibility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that would-be reformers often wait to pursue political liberalization, believing the path may be easier after their dictator dies. For example, writing about 72-year old Yoweri Museveni, one journalist explained “In my home of Uganda, I continually hear people say, ‘Let’s just wait until the old man dies’ ” (Wilmot, 2017). This position has a clear rationale. Why engage in costly political action now, if transition will be easier and more natural after the current dictator dies?

However, the logic of waiting for a dictator to die rests on the assumption that reform is, in fact, easier in the period following death than it is at other times. In this article, I assess the plausibility of this assumption by examining whether dictator death ever provides an opportunity for political liberalization and, if so, under what conditions. I find that authoritarian regimes are remarkably resilient in the aftermath of leader death. Powerful interests within these regimes benefit from stability and thus have an incentive to coordinate smooth transitions to very similar-looking governments. In general, death has no systematic effect on political liberalization.

In addition, I evaluate the effect of death in two circumstances that might make political liberalization more likely to occur. First, I argue that citizen-driven reform is most likely if there is both latent demand for democratization and reformists have the opportunity to plan their post-death challenges. The death of young or middle-aged dictators typically catches potential reformers flat-footed. At some age, however, it becomes clear that the dictator’s death is imminent and reformers may start to plan strong post-death challenges. Consistent with this, the death of aging dictators in economically developed countries correlates positively with subsequent political liberalization. Second, I examine whether personalist dictatorships

are particularly vulnerable to post-death challenges. Although these regimes typically lack institutionalized succession rules and thus face more uncertainty at the time of transition, I argue that regime elites still typically ‘solve’ the succession problem, either through informal means or by preemptively removing the dictator from power. The relationship between leader death and political liberalization is no stronger in personalist regimes than non-personalist ones.

This article speaks to literatures on authoritarian regimes, democratization, and modernization. In addition, the findings have clear real-world implications. I highlight the remarkable stability of dictatorships, even during periods when we might expect them to be vulnerable. Indeed, dictator death is only positively related to the likelihood of political liberalization under very specific, and relatively rare, conditions. The evidence thus suggests that waiting for dictators to die is not an effective strategy for achieving political liberalization. This is an important finding for would-be reformers who are deciding whether to launch a challenge before or after the death of an aging dictator.

1 Dictator death and political liberalization?

There are at least two reasons why political reform might follow the death of a dictator. First, incumbent regimes are particularly vulnerable to challenges from pro-reform outsiders during periods of transition. Heightened uncertainty makes coordination among regime elites more challenging and it is harder for them to present a united front against a reformist challenge. Furthermore, dictators who die in office tend to have long tenures; indeed, the average tenure of such dictators is 15.23 years, compared to the 5.85 years of a dictator who leaves office through other means.¹ As Svobik (2012) argues, dictators are more likely to become “established” over time and, consequently, dictators with longer tenures are, on average, harder to remove from power. This is an argument about selection: since leaders who are not strong will be removed from power early on, leaders who remain in power are, therefore, likely to be strong. Consistent with this, Bienen and Van de Walle (1991) find that time in office is the single best predictor of staying in power. A dictator who takes power after death is more vulnerable, on average,

¹These tenures are calculated using the Archigos dataset. A dictator is defined as any country with a Polity score less than zero at the time of exit.

than his better-established predecessor. Second, new dictators may themselves be more open to reform than their predecessors. This argument follows the same logic as above: since leaders who reform early will no longer be dictators (but, rather, democrats), dictators who remain in power are, therefore, less likely to be reformers.

It is easy, however, to overstate the size and significance of these vulnerabilities. Strong forces within dictatorships work to stabilize the system during the periods surrounding death. Dictatorships contain a core group of privileged citizens.² These are the individuals who support the dictator at the highest levels, carry out his orders, implement his policies, and work to uncover plots against him. In return, they receive patronage in the form of handouts, government positions, and - in some cases - control over policy decisions.³ During the dictator's life, the well-beings of regime insiders are tied to his continuation in power. This generates an intense degree of loyalty, especially in those dictatorships in which elites are considered 'replaceable' (Beuno De Mesquita et al., 2003). However, although some regime insiders die before the dictator, others will certainly outlive him. Given that elites generally hope to survive politically (and physically) after the death of their erst-while leader, it behooves them to plan for the death of even beloved dictators.

From the perspective of regime insiders, a successful succession is one in which "...the larger ruling coalition around the absolute leader remains intact" (Carapico, 2002, p. 109).⁴ Regime insiders prospered under the old dictator and, consequently, prefer to maximize continuity between the old and new regimes. In their ideal world, the old dictator leaves, a new one is installed, and the regime continues on much as before. To accomplish this, regime insiders make plans that help them negotiate periods of transition as smoothly as possible. While this kind of maneuvering is difficult to observe or document, it has important implications for what happens after death: if regime insiders agree on a successor or a mechanism for selecting an acceptable successor prior to the dictator's death, then we should expect continuity to be the rule rather than the exception.

This kind of stable succession is in the interests of regime insiders, even if they must give

²For example: Beuno De Mesquita et al. (2003); Egorov and Sonin (2011); Svoboda (2012).

³For example: Gandhi and Przeworski (2007); Magaloni (2008); Arriola (2009); Boix and Svoboda (2013).

⁴Also see Tullock (1987) for an overview of the succession problem.

up the possibility of becoming the dictator themselves. As Brownlee (2007) argues, “[w]hen given the choice between low-intensity conflicts over policy issues and high-intensity struggles for the top posts in the regime, elites tend to avoid the second kind of conflict” (p. 606). Regime insiders have a lot to lose from giving up their vaunted status and are unlikely to risk it on the small chance they might end win a power struggle. In general, these elites willingly exchange their uncertain chance of becoming the new dictator for the certainty of continued insider positions in the regime.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that no changes will occur after a dictator’s death, but rather that the scope of those changes will be limited. Some differences will follow from the fact that the new leader is younger (Truett, 1993; Horowitz, McDermott and Stam, 2005), or perhaps better educated (Besley, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2011; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). However, since regime insiders prefer successors who resemble their predecessors, they have a strong incentive to support a successor who promises as much continuity as possible. In line with this, Carnes and Lupu (2015) survey changes to GDP growth, unemployment, inflation, inequality, frequency of strikes and deaths from interstate war following the death of a leader, and find remarkably few differences before and after death.

Contrary to popular perception, therefore, political liberalization is unlikely to follow the death of a dictator. Succession will, in general, proceed smoothly. Furthermore, successors will be similar to their predecessors along many important dimensions, including their views on political reform. My first hypothesis follows from these observations:

H1: The death of a dictator is not systematically related to political liberalization.

Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016) advance a similar hypothesis. They argue the death of dictators is less likely to lead to political instability (either democratization or regime collapse) than other kinds of leadership turnover. Other types of exit, such as coups, protests, and removal by foreign powers, are politically motivated. They are thus more likely to lead to power-grabbing or a fundamental shift in the distribution of power in the country that will change “how things are done.” The death of a leader, on the other hand, does not result from

discontent on the part of the elites and there is less likely to be change.

Despite the similarities, my argument goes further than that of Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016). I compare the political situation following leader death with the political situation following a year in which the leader did not die and did not exit in any other way. This is the difference between asking “Is leader death as destabilizing as other forms of exit?” and “Is leader death destabilizing at all?” Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016) argue that the answer to the former question is ‘no’; Hypothesis 1 suggests the answer to the latter question is also ‘no’. By comparing the chances of political liberalization before and after a leader dies, my approach also emphasizes regime-specific continuity. In any given year, there is a latent “risk” of political liberalization. I hypothesize that this risk is no higher in the immediate aftermath of death than it is in a regular year of the dictator’s rule; however, this baseline risk may vary across countries. Finally, since natural death is not politically motivated, I hold the motivations for exit constant across all my cases. This allows me to compare across cases to identify factors that might make death particularly likely to cause political liberalization, given that death itself is not politically determined. I address these in the following sections.

2 Economic development and leader age

As discussed above, there are both stabilizing and destabilizing forces in the aftermath of leader death. Generally speaking, I anticipate that stabilizing forces will dominate. However, it is reasonable to question whether this is universally true or whether there are certain circumstances under which political reform will triumph. In this section I identify two conditions that together constitute a “most likely” case for political reform.

In a recent article, Treisman (2015) argues that democratization is most likely to occur if (1) economic development is high, and (2) a leader exits office. Following classic modernization theory, he argues that economic development increase demand for reform (Lipset, 1959; Boix and Stokes, 2003). Democratization can either occur directly through mass revolution or because the threat of revolution gets large enough that autocratic elites have no choice but to allow transition to democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000; Boix, 2003). The second condition

- a change in leadership - ensures there is the opportunity for development to cause democratization. Like much of the literature on leaders, Treisman's argument focuses on selection: since reformers are selected out of dictatorships, a new leader is - on average - more inclined to reform than his or her predecessor. This may be especially likely as economic development increases.

I argue, however, that the emergence of reformist vs. non-reformist leaders is not random. Furthermore, the distribution from which new leaders are drawn is almost certainly influenced by the form of exit. For instance, as Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016) note, the death of a leader reflects neither discontent on the part of regime insiders nor the new ascendancy of regime outsiders. Indeed, as I argued above, the desire for stability and continuity on the part of regime elites is never so great as it is during these tumultuous moments of transition. These elites circumscribe the distribution of insider-approved candidates for power following the death of a leader, preventing reform-minded candidates from becoming serious contenders.

However, while regime insiders rarely challenge the status quo in the aftermath of death, some deaths may provide an opportunity for political challenges from regime outsiders. In addition to the increased uncertainty and vulnerability associated with transition, death can provide a focal point for pro-democracy challenges that helps overcome the coordination problems associated with collective action (Schelling, 1960; Chong, 1991). These post-death challenges are strongest when would-be reformers "expect" the dictator's death, allowing them to organize more cohesive campaigns. The most effective pro-democracy challenges take time and effort to coordinate (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), even in the modern twitter reality (Tufekci, 2017). The more well-organized the challenge, the greater the likelihood of success, either by directly toppling the regime or by convincing regime elites to take the threat of revolution seriously.

When might pro-reform outsiders plan for the death of dictators and thereby increase their chances of success against anti-reform insiders? To some extent, death is never expected. However, stakeholders use the available information about (1) the dictator's age and (2) the dictator's health in order to form expectations about the likelihood of death. For example, we can say with reasonable confidence that a 90-year-old dictator is more likely to die in the next five years than a 50-year-old dictator. We can also be reasonably sure that a 60-year old

dictator in good health will survive longer than a 60-year-old dictator who is suffering from cancer. Thus, information about both health and age contribute to expectations about death.

Regime insiders possess privileged information about the health of the current leader. This gives them a clear advantage over regime outsiders when it comes to preparing for death. Furthermore, they will seek to protect this advantage by limiting the flow of information to those outside the inner circle. The consequence is a notable degree of secrecy surrounding the health of autocrats (Bueno De Mesquita and Smith, 2012).

Crucially, however, the importance of information about health declines as dictators age. Elderly dictators are expected to have health problems, while this is not the case for their younger counterparts. Consequently, the quality of information held by those inside and outside the dictator's inner circle converges as dictators age. Since an old dictator must die soon, the pro-democracy opposition faces a greater incentive to plan for a post-death challenge than it did when the dictator was young.

Faced with the prospect of a strong post-death challenge, reform may occur even without the realization of this challenge. Franco's Spain illustrates this dynamic. The Spanish economy developed dramatically under Franco's tenure. However "no serious steps to liberalize the Franco regime were taken until after the dictator's death in 1975" (Encarnacion, 2008, p. 29). After he died, however, political leaders both inside and outside the regime forged a democratic compromise. Democratization occurred quickly, with free and fair parliamentary elections in 1977 and a new democratic constitution in 1978. In this case, the threat of a pro-democracy revolution was sufficient for regime insiders to agree to political reform.

In sum, political liberalization may occur when dictators die at an old age in economically developed countries. These circumstances maximize both the desire and the opportunity required for pro-reform movements to mobilize. This leads to the second hypothesis of the article:

H2: The death of an old dictator will be positively associated with political liberalization in economically developed countries.

3 Personalism and preemptive “solutions”

As I argued above, regime insiders work to ensure stability during periods of transition. However, their success depends on their ability to “solve” the succession problem. Certain circumstances may make this more or less difficult. In this section, I explore how the degree of uncertainty surrounding succession influences the likelihood of post-death political reform and argue that regime-insiders are well equipped to deal with even difficult succession problems.

In his review of how dictators deal with succession, Herz identifies four potential strategies: the creation of constitutional provisions, nomination by the current dictator in line with the dictates of the existing constitution, the creation of new rules to govern this particular succession, and the nomination (or not) of a successor without regard to formalized institutions (Herz, 1952). Each of these possibilities rely on current dictators choosing, or at least acknowledging, their successor. However, doing so can be very risky. As Burling notes:

“A man or an office with an unambiguous second position, however, is as rare as an unambiguous first position is usual. This is because anyone who gains a clear second position poses an immediate threat to the man on top” (Burling, 1974, p. 256).

For personalist rulers, this problem looms particularly large. There are no norms or precedents that prevent the second-in-command from becoming a threat. As a consequence, personalist leaders rarely announce their chosen successors until much later in life, and sometimes never. This dramatically increases the degree of uncertainty surrounding succession in personalist dictatorships.

We can contrast this experience with that of non-personalist regimes. Monarchies, by definition, are characterized by familial succession, formalized through some kind of institutional arrangement (Hadenius and Teorell, 2007). Although the successor is typically known from birth, both the generational divide and familial loyalty hinder pre-emptive claims to the throne (Burling, 1974; Brownlee, 2007). More recent scholarship also highlights the success of single-party regimes at negotiating succession (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010; Ezrow and Frantz, 2011). China, in particular, has demonstrated its ability to engineer smooth successions, even before

the death of erstwhile leaders (Nathan, 2003), and the Soviet Union successfully survived the deaths of five leaders. Finally, while the fitness of military regimes for solving the succession problem is a little more ambiguous, power typically lies with the junta (Gandhi and Prezeworski, 2007). Like the party elite, juntas are accustomed to collective leadership, which is an advantage when it comes to negotiating succession.⁵

The uncertainty surrounding succession in personalist regimes raises the possibility that insider elites will be unable to achieve a smooth transition, even if this is their ultimate aim. However, elites in regimes with unclear or untried succession rules can choose one of at least two strategies to prevent a succession crisis in the aftermath of death.

On the one hand, regime elites can coordinate succession in advance, even if their plan is not formalized. For example, on December 21, 2006, President Niyazov of Turkmenistan died at the age of 66. Constitutionally, the speaker of the Mejlis should have taken control as acting President. However, in deeply personalist Turkmenistan, this succession rule was new and untested. In a very quick and coordinated move, the speaker was arrested on “vague charges” (Nichol, 2007), and deputy prime minister and health Minister Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov took over as acting President. These announcements came the morning of Niyazov’s death, indicating significant coordination among the elites and, likely, prior knowledge of President Niyazov’s ill-health. Soon after, the constitution was changed to legalize Berdimukhammedov’s rule, which continues to this day. As this example illustrates, succession plans do not have to be written down to exist.

On the other hand, elites may take a more proactive approach, especially if the prospects for informal resolution are dim. As the dictator becomes ill or old, regime insiders feel more pressure to plan for the future and competing factions will be increasingly willing to risk a coup attempt if it is their best chance of installing their preferred candidate. Complementing this is the fact that a leader’s grip on power may loosen as death becomes imminent. Bueno De Mesquita and Smith (2015) argue that a downturn in health increases the likelihood of a coup because sickly leaders care less about future rewards and are, subsequently, less willing

⁵Since military regimes may arguably lack formal or well-established informal succession rules, I report the same statistical analyses for these as for personalist regimes in the Appendix and show that death has no greater an effect in military regimes than other regime types.

to purge. The natural aging process may also make leaders less willing or, as discussed by Bienen and Van de Walle (1991), less able to take the means necessary to maintain power in the face of such a threat. If succession is not already settled through informal or formal means, both the will and the opportunity for a “preemptive” coup thus increase as death becomes more likely. The case of King Idris of Libya illustrates this dynamic (see Herb, 1999). In 1969, King Idris was around 80 and his anointed successor was not well liked. Before the King could die, General Qaddafi launched a preemptive coup. There was also strong evidence that one of King Idris’ most trusted confidants, Abdalaziz al Shalhi, was in the process of planning his own preemptive coup. As this example illustrates, the occurrence of such coups represent a failure on the part of elites to either coalesce around a formally-named successor or to agree informally on who will take power following the current dictator’s death. The implication is that a personalist dictator - or any other dictator, for that matter - will only die peacefully in power if elites are confident they can engineer a smooth post-death transition.

Furthermore, we should not expect the stark informational dynamics described in the previous section. Most succession squabbles are among those with access to privileged information about the regime, including any available information about the leader’s health. Although the death of some dictators may be a surprise, regime insiders will usually know when to prioritize post-death planning, regardless of age. This leads to my third and final hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Death will not be associated with political liberalization in personalist regimes, regardless of the dictator’s age.

4 Methodology

The main independent variable is lagged leader death, taken from the Archigos 2.0 dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009). I restrict attention throughout to the occurrence of natural death, excluding both suicide and retirement due to illness. Suicide has a different logic to natural death, since it is unrelated to age and is almost certainly tied directly to the politics at

hand. Many instances of retirement are similar to death, especially if the leader chooses to retire as the result of a real downturn in health. However, elites can also push an undesirable leader into retirement. For example, Roberto Viola was president of Argentina for a short while in 1981. He officially retired due to ill health, but many observers believe he was actually ousted in a coup (Tedesco, 1999). To avoid conflating deaths with what are essentially coups, I exclude retirements from the analysis.

Since the theory does not necessarily predict full democratization, I use the Polity IV score to construct the main dependent variables (Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr, 2011). There is some debate in the literature about how immediate we should expect liberalization to follow a precipitating event.⁶ Since it is plausible that changes to the level of democracy may take more than one year, I use 1-, 5- and 10-year averages of Polity as dependent variables. Most models also include the lagged level of Polity.⁷

Following the literature, I use the natural log of lagged GDP per capita (*The Maddison Project*, 2013) to measure the level of economic development, which serves as a proxy for latent demand for democratization. To identify personalist regimes, I use an indicator variable that takes a value of 1 if the country was classified as personalist in the previous year and 0 otherwise. The classifications for this are available from Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014) for the post-World War II period. Data on leader age and tenure in office are drawn from the Archigos 2.0 dataset.

The sample spans the time period 1876-2009 and is as global as data availability allows, although I restrict attention throughout to “dictatorships.” I take a pragmatic, and relatively broad, approach to defining dictatorship. In models that do not include the personalist variable, I restrict attention to those countries with a (lagged) Polity score below 0. In models that include the personalist variable, I instead restrict attention to those countries coded as autocratic by Geddes, Wright and Frantz. Since this variable is only available for the post-World War II period, the sample for these models is significantly smaller.

In all cases, I remove observations in which another leader died during the period covered by the dependent variable: for the one-year variable, I remove instances in which another death

⁶For example, Treisman (2015) discusses this dilemma.

⁷This is usually a two-year lag to avoid capturing any changes associated with a death at time $t - 1$.

occurred in the year following the original leader's death, for the five-year variable, I remove cases where a second death occurred in the five years following a leader's death, and for the ten-year variable, I remove cases where a second death occurred in the following ten years.

5 Main Results

The first hypothesis predicts there will be no systematic relationship between death and political liberalization. Figure 1 depicts the Polity IV score before and after all 238 instances of leader death, including those in democracies. The vast majority of cases of leader death fall on the diagonal, meaning the Polity score was the same the year after death as it was the year before death. There are very few countries that experience liberalization in the aftermath of death (i.e. observations above the diagonal), and the number experiencing movement away from democracy is roughly equal (i.e. observations below the diagonal).

The results in Table 1 provide further support for this hypothesis. These models compare the Polity score before death with the Polity score after death, using both 1-year and 5-year average variables. In each case, I include specifications that control for age and those that do not. While leader death is often treated as exogenous in the case of economic variables,⁸ age is very likely to be correlated with death and plausibly has an independent effect on Polity. The first four models are simple logit models, while the last four also incorporate country and year fixed effects. *Death* fails to reach statistical significance in any specification. In addition the sign is inconsistent across specifications. I conclude, therefore, that there is no systematic correlation between death and political liberalization.

⁸For example, Jones and Olken (2005).

Figure 1: Polity Score, Before and After Death

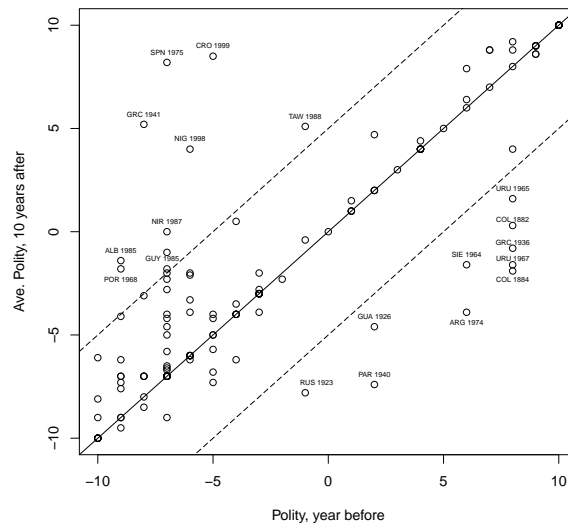
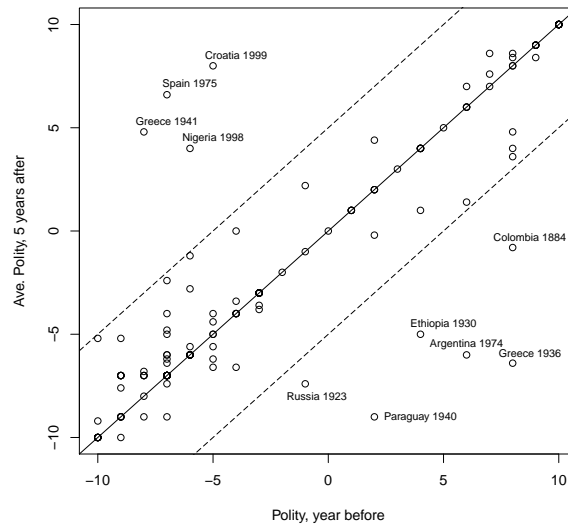
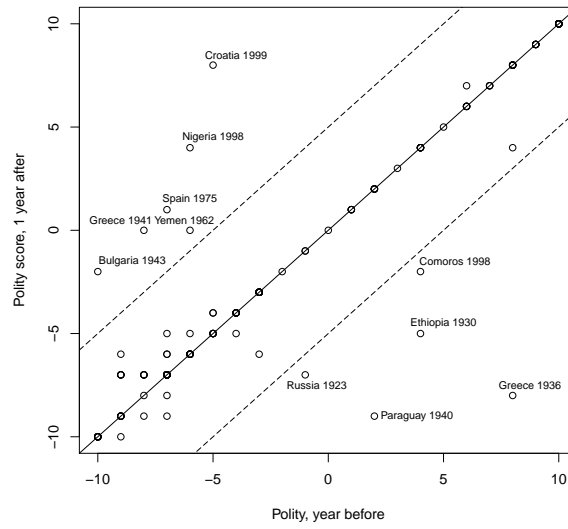


Table 1: Effect of Leader Death on Polity Score

	1-yr		5-yr Ave		1-yr		5-yr Ave	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Death _{t-1}	0.135 (0.229)	0.017 (0.230)	0.168 (0.334)	-0.197 (0.335)	0.272 (0.220)	0.269 (0.223)	0.199 (0.291)	0.079 (0.296)
Age _{t-1}		0.012*** (0.002)		0.036*** (0.004)		0.001 (0.003)		0.011*** (0.004)
Polity _{t-2}	0.956*** (0.012)	0.956*** (0.012)			0.888*** (0.016)	0.889*** (0.016)		
5-yr Ave Polity _{t-2}			0.672*** (0.016)	0.677*** (0.016)			0.427*** (0.018)	0.432*** (0.019)
10-yr Ave Polity _{t-2}	0.152* (0.081)	-0.506*** (0.152)	-1.392*** (0.107)	-3.301*** (0.219)	-2.211*** (0.506)	-2.241*** (0.522)	-5.644*** (0.662)	-6.084*** (0.684)
Fixed effects	None	None	None	None	Both	Both	Both	Both
N	5821	5818	4827	4824	5821	5818	4827	4824
R-squared	0.529	0.531	0.265	0.280	0.600	0.600	0.503	0.504

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

'Both' means country and year fixed effects. All models are OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the country.

The second hypothesis focuses on the effect of leader death when circumstances are particularly favorable for liberalization. Demand for democracy is greater in countries with higher levels of economic development and would-be reformers are more likely to wait for death as their leaders age. To evaluate whether the death of an old dictator correlates positively with political liberalization in economically developed countries, I examine the interaction between death, leader age, and economic development.

All of the models in Table 2 use the five-year average Polity as the dependent variables (the 1- and 10-year versions are included in the Appendix). I control for the previous year's Polity score and the leader's tenure in office in all specifications. Given the triple interaction term, these results are particularly difficult to interpret. Therefore, I plot their predicted effect on Polity in Figure 2. This figure illustrates the interaction between age and economic development in cases of death. The predicted change in Polity following the death of an 85-year old dictator close to zero in economically undeveloped countries, but positive in economically developed ones. This suggests that the possibility of political liberalization emerges when old dictators die in economically developed countries, providing support for Hypothesis 2.

In addition, Figure 2 shows that political liberalization is less likely following death of a relatively young dictator in more economically developed dictatorships than it is following the death of a relatively young dictator in less economically developed dictatorships. This is also consistent with the theory. While potential reformers outside the elite cannot predict the death of young dictators, elites may possess inside information that enables them to plan for death. Furthermore, elites in countries with higher latent demand for democracy will feel extra pressure to negotiate smooth transitions because, if they fail, they face the very real threat of removal from power. It is precisely in these situations that they will work the hardest to ensure a smooth transition and prevent political liberalization.

Interestingly, neither the interaction between death and development nor the interaction between death and age is significant in the absence of the triple interaction term. This suggests that neither having an old dictator nor being economically development alone is enough for death to result in political reform. Rather, it is the satisfaction of *both* these conditions that make death an opportunity for liberalization.

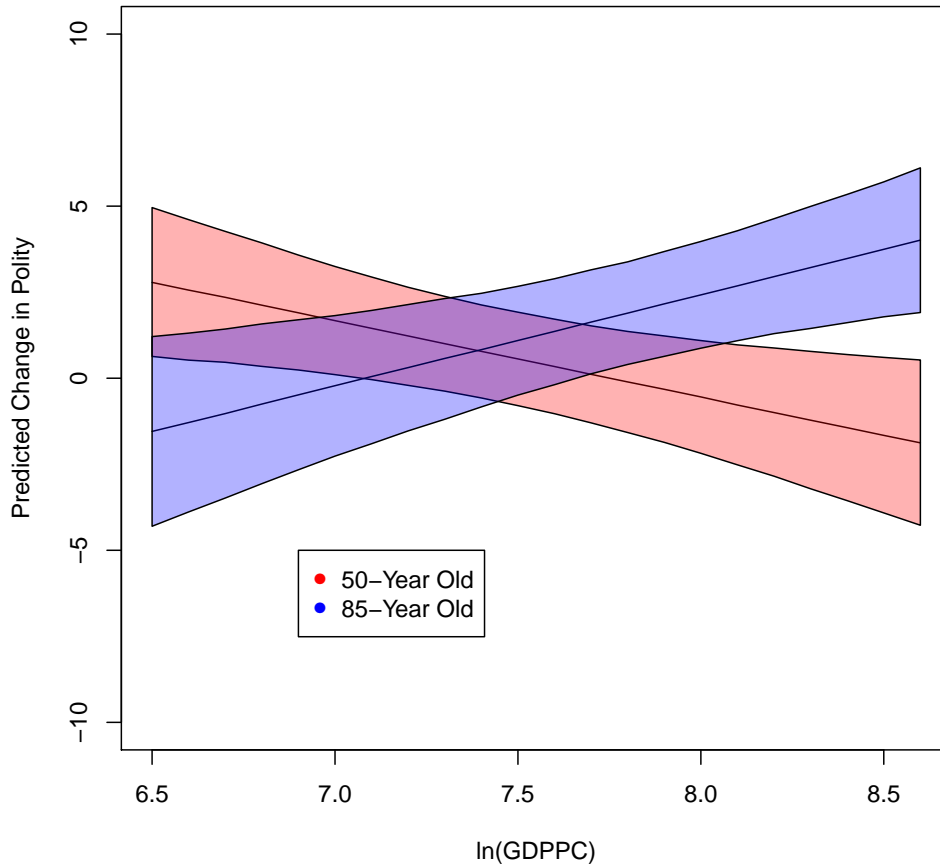
Table 2: Age, Economic Development and the Death of Autocrats

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Death _{t-1}	-0.229 (3.537)	-0.078 (2.284)	63.448*** (22.960)	-0.743 (3.019)	-0.480 (1.942)	39.499** (19.603)
Polity _{t-1}	0.917*** (0.022)	0.917*** (0.022)	0.918*** (0.022)	0.691*** (0.027)	0.691*** (0.027)	0.692*** (0.027)
Tenure _{t-1}	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.007)	0.004 (0.008)	0.004 (0.008)	0.005 (0.008)
Age _{t-1}	0.032*** (0.005)	0.032*** (0.005)	-0.099** (0.043)	0.008 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)	0.065 (0.049)
ln(GDPPC) _{t-2}	0.184*** (0.066)	0.184*** (0.065)	-0.802*** (0.331)	0.698*** (0.173)	0.700*** (0.173)	1.109*** (0.407)
Death _{t-1} x ln(GDPPC) _{t-2}	-0.017 (0.456)		-8.374*** (3.030)	0.084 (0.389)		-5.288** (2.586)
Death _{t-1} x Age _{t-1}		-0.004 (0.034)	-0.929*** (0.341)		0.006 (0.029)	-0.609** (0.291)
ln(GDPPC) _{t-2} x Age _{t-1}			0.018*** (0.006)			-0.008 (0.007)
Triple interaction			0.121*** (0.045)			0.081** (0.038)
Constant	-2.574*** (0.523)	-2.575*** (0.520)	4.665* (2.445)	-9.600*** (1.508)	-9.610*** (1.506)	-12.686*** (3.145)
Fixed effects	None	None	None	Both	Both	Both
N	3699	3699	3699	3699	3699	3699
R-squared	0.341	0.341	0.345	0.580	0.580	0.581

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

‘Both’ means country and year fixed effects. All models use the 5-yr version of the DV and are OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the country. The ‘triple interaction’ is Death_{t-1} x Age_{t-1} x ln(GDPPC)_{t-2}.

Figure 2: Effect of Death, Age, and Economic Development on Polity



Based on Model 3 in Table 2. GDP Per Capita ranges from the 0.1 to 0.9 percentiles. All other variables are held at their means. Shaded areas illustrate the 95% confidence intervals.

This finding contradicts the evidence presented by Treisman (2015) that death does in fact lead to political reform in economically developed countries, regardless of age. However, Treisman’s main findings concerning leader death rely on his sample selection: he includes all observations when looking at the effect of development on Polity following death, but omits observations in which either death occurs in the next 10 years or any turnover occurs in the next 10 years when looking at the effect of development on Polity in years of no death. I replicate his results in the Appendix and show that they are significantly less supportive of his claim if I use the same sample rules to compare years of death with years of no death. Furthermore, I use interaction models to show that the difference between the effect of economic development on

Polity in the case of death is not significantly different than the case of no death. These findings are consistent with Kendall-Taylor and Frantz's (2016) claim that death differs on average from other forms of leader exit. While, as Treisman claims, most forms of leader exit provide the opportunity for political liberalization, my results suggest that this is only true of death if the dictator is old and his or her exit can be anticipated.

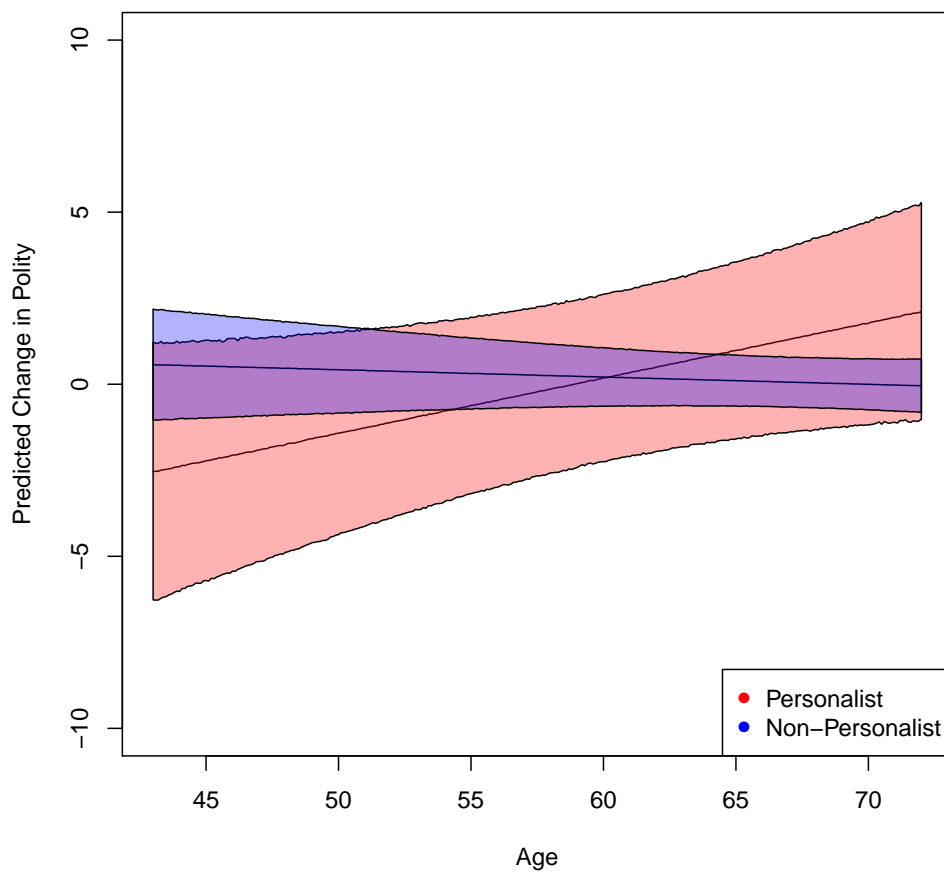
Next, I turn to the hypothesis concerning the occurrence of reform in personalist dictatorships. Dictators only die in office if elites are confident in their ability to solve the question of succession, either formally or informally. Consequently, I expect that political liberalism is unlikely to follow death even in personalist regimes and, further, that this will not depend on the dictator's age (Hypotheses 3).

To evaluate this prediction, I split the sample into personalist and non-personalist regimes. I then examined the effect of death, as well as an interaction between death and age for each sample. Table 3 displays these results for personalist dictatorships (the results for non-personalist regimes are in the Appendix). As above, I use the 5-year average Polity score as the dependent variable, reserving the 1- and 10-year dependent variables for the Appendix. I also control for lagged Polity and tenure in every specification. These models show that neither death nor its interaction with age are statistically significant in any specification. Furthermore, Figure 3 illustrates the predicted effect of death in personalist and nonpersonalist regimes, and shows that although the slopes differ, the confidence intervals consistently overlap, both with each other and zero. Based on these findings, I conclude that personalist dictatorships are unlikely to liberalize after the death of a dictator, regardless of age.

6 Supplementary Results and Discussion

In this section, I delve deeper into the main results presented in the previous section. I begin by looking at the effect of death on several alternative dependent variables. Perhaps death and some other kind of political change are related? ?? demonstrates that this does not appear to be the case. First, I use the democracy and dictatorship indicator (DDI) variable from Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) to determine whether countries became "democracies" in the sub-

Figure 3: Effect of Age on Impact of Death, by Regime Type



Based on Model 2 in Table 3 and Model 2 in Table 7 of the Appendix. Age ranges from the 0.1 to 0.9 percentiles. All other variables are held at their means. Shaded areas illustrate the 95% confidence intervals.

Table 3: Age and the Death of Personalist Autocrats

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Death _{t-1}	-0.762 (1.245)	-7.918 (5.246)	0.237 (1.220)	-7.598 (5.114)	0.445 (1.098)	-0.950 (4.541)
Polity _{t-1}	0.739*** (0.036)	0.739*** (0.036)	0.701*** (0.038)	0.700*** (0.038)	0.516*** (0.042)	0.516*** (0.042)
Tenure _{t-1}	0.062*** (0.018)	0.059*** (0.018)	0.013 (0.018)	0.009 (0.018)	-0.010 (0.023)	-0.011 (0.023)
Age _{t-1}	0.042*** (0.012)	0.041*** (0.012)	0.057*** (0.011)	0.056*** (0.011)	0.059*** (0.017)	0.059*** (0.017)
Death _{t-1} x Age _{t-1}		0.119 (0.085)		0.130 (0.083)		0.023 (0.073)
Constant	-3.237*** (0.641)	-3.162*** (0.642)	-4.469*** (1.242)	-4.391*** (1.242)	-5.461*** (1.700)	-5.446*** (1.702)
Fixed effects	None	None	Year	Year	Both	Both
N	788	788	788	788	788	788
R-squared	0.396	0.397	0.510	0.512	0.678	0.678

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

'Both' means country and year fixed effects. All models use the 5-yr version of the DV and are OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the country.

sequent five years. Second, I use a measure of regime change based on the classification by Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014). This captures whether the country switched between the four main types of dictatorship - monarchy, party, personalist, and military within the five year period following death. Finally, I use the absolute change in Polity IV score to test whether leader death causes instability, rather than directional change.⁹ Interestingly, while death has no effect on either regime change or the absolute change in polity, it has a negative and significant effect on full democratization (captured by the DDI measure). However, this effect is not statistically significant in models that use either the 1-year or 10-year versions of the dependent variable (see Appendix).

Second, I turn to the results concerning Hypothesis 2. The main findings in Table 2 could be driven by two related, but different dynamics. It could be the case that the death of old autocrats in economically developed countries is associated with an increased probability of *transition* to democracy, or that it is associated with an increased probability of more minor

⁹For the models using the democracy/dictatorships indicator, I include all countries categorized as dictatorship in the previous year. The samples for the other models follow the same rules before.

kinds of liberalization. In the former case, the result would likely depend on a relatively small number of democratic transitions; in the latter case, there would be a greater number of smaller liberalizations. Table 4 presents results using the binary democracy variable described above, which takes a value of 1 if the country becomes democratic in the following 5- or 10- years. Those models test the hypothesis that the death of an old autocrat increases the likelihood of democratic transition, not just liberalization. As is evident from the results, the death of old dictators in economically developed countries is not systematically related to democratic transition. While elites in these countries might grant a degree of liberalization as a concession to pro-democracy movements, post-death challenges do not generally result in a full transition. Furthermore, these concessions appear to be short lived. I re-ran the models in Table 2 using 1-year and 10-year versions of the dependent variables (see Appendix). While the results hold for the 1-year version, they are much weaker for the 10-year version, suggesting that increases in political liberalization do not last in the long-term.

Finally, I explore the third hypothesis in greater depth. While regime insiders also incorporate information about the dictators health into their calculations, the need to solve the succession problem in personalist dictatorships gets more pressing, on average, as dictators age. Sometimes this can be accomplished informally. Other times, it will require elites to take matters into their own hands and launch preemptive coups. To evaluate the plausibility of this mechanism, I look at the effect of leader age on the occurrence of coups. The main dependent variable for these models is the occurrence of at least one coup or coup attempt, as coded by the Cline Center Coup D'Etat Project (Nardulli et al., 2013). I include attempted coups because the theory concerns elite motivation, rather than their capacity. A coup is not guaranteed to succeed, even when the theory predicts it will be attempted. However, I exclude conspiracies, since their seriousness cannot be ascertained definitively. I also control for the lagged count of attempted or successful coups in the previous 10 years, since a history of past coups is a very strong predictor of future attempts (Belkin and Schofer, 2003).

Figure 4 illustrate the results of a Cox Proportional Hazard model in which the occurrence of a coup or coup attempt is considered a “failure.” I define time relative to the leader’s first year in office. The figure shows that coups are more likely in personalist dictatorships than non

Table 4: Age, Economic Development and the Death of Autocrats (Democratization)

	5-Yr Ave	10-Yr Ave	5-Yr Ave	10-Yr Ave
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Death _{t-1}	142.387** (61.146)	15.854 (21.279)	137.815 (116.542)	4.679 (54.833)
Polity _{t-1}	0.062** (0.028)	0.044 (0.031)	0.186*** (0.027)	0.057* (0.030)
Tenure _{t-1}	-0.022 (0.019)	-0.020 (0.020)	0.017 (0.015)	0.039** (0.017)
Age _{t-1}	-0.104 (0.100)	-0.129 (0.123)	-0.032 (0.104)	-0.019 (0.119)
ln(GDPPC) _{t-2}	-0.698 (0.807)	-1.007 (0.996)	3.124*** (0.910)	3.773*** (1.021)
Death _{t-1} x ln(GDPPC) _{t-2}	-19.727** (8.565)	-1.950 (2.866)	-19.624 (18.242)	-0.322 (7.497)
Death _{t-1} x Age _{t-1}	-2.091** (0.948)	-0.271 (0.308)	-1.950 (1.475)	-0.275 (0.919)
ln(GDPPC) _{t-2} x Age _{t-1}	0.017 (0.013)	0.021 (0.017)	0.014 (0.014)	0.015 (0.016)
Triple interaction	0.281** (0.128)	0.032 (0.041)	0.268 (0.226)	0.030 (0.124)
Constant	2.459 (6.028)	4.935 (7.282)		
Fixed effects	None	None	Country	Country
N	3438	2857	3438	2857
R-squared			0.086	0.123

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

'Both' means country and year fixed effects. Models 1 and 2 are a logit model with robust standard errors clustered at the country. Models 3 and 4 are conditional logistic regressions.

personalist ones, which is consistent with the findings of Frantz and Stein (2017). However, coups are more likely to be launched against young dictators than old ones in non-personalist dictatorships. This distinction does not exist in personalist dictatorships: being old is not an advantage for personalist dictators. Furthermore, although the interaction between personalism and leader age is only statistically significant at the 0.1 level, this plausibly follows from the fact that health - an equally important part of the elites' calculation as age - is not captured by the main independent variable. This provides evidence for the occurrence of preemptive coups.

Finally, it may be that instability, rather than political liberalization, follows the death of dictators in personalist regimes. Table 5 uses the *absolute* change in Polity as the dependent variable. These models test the hypothesis that the dictator's death causes some kind of change in the level of democracy, but not necessarily in the liberalizing direction. However, there does not appear to be a relationship between death and political instability in personalist regimes.

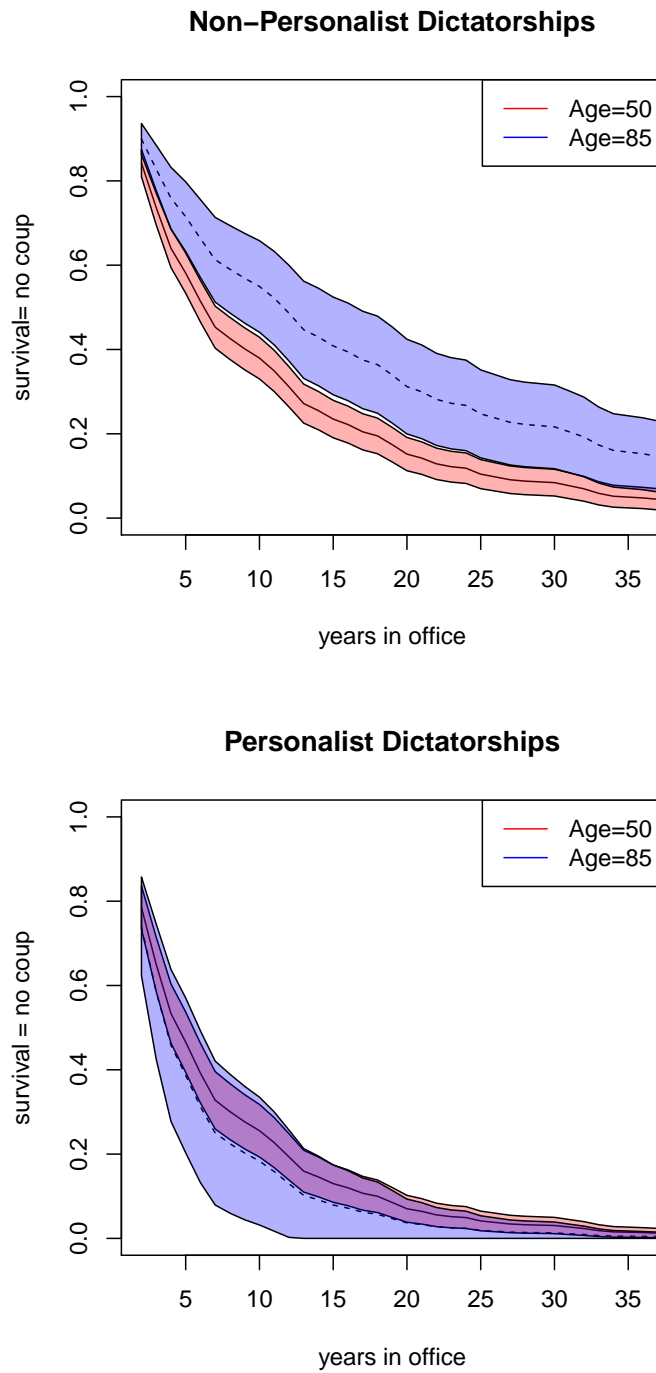
Table 5: Age and the Death of Personalist Autocrats, Absolute Polity Change

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Death _{t-1}	0.143 (1.517)	-7.813 (6.392)	1.053 (1.491)	-6.584 (6.251)	0.173 (1.432)	-1.432 (5.921)
Polity _{t-1}	0.145*** (0.044)	0.145*** (0.044)	0.255*** (0.047)	0.254*** (0.047)	0.266*** (0.055)	0.266*** (0.055)
Tenure _{t-1}	0.021 (0.022)	0.017 (0.022)	0.002 (0.022)	-0.001 (0.022)	0.027 (0.030)	0.026 (0.030)
Age _{t-1}	0.063*** (0.014)	0.063*** (0.014)	0.081*** (0.014)	0.080*** (0.014)	0.108*** (0.022)	0.108*** (0.023)
Death _{t-1} x Age _{t-1}		0.133 (0.104)		0.127 (0.101)		0.026 (0.095)
Constant	-0.091 (0.780)	-0.008 (0.783)	-1.051 (1.518)	-0.975 (1.518)	-1.502 (2.216)	-1.486 (2.218)
Fixed effects	None	None	Year	Year	Both	Both
N	792	792	792	792	792	792
R-squared	0.058	0.060	0.231	0.232	0.424	0.424

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

'Both' means country and year fixed effects. All models use the 5-yr absolute change in Polity as the DV and are OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the country.

Figure 4: Age, Personalism, and the Occurrence of Coups



Based on Model 2 in Table 13 of the Appendix. Shaded areas illustrate the 95% confidence intervals.

Table 6: Age and the Death of Non-Personalist Autocrats, Absolute Polity Change

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Death _{t-1}	0.368 (0.459)	-0.248 (2.545)	0.470 (0.458)	0.041 (2.536)	0.085 (0.408)	-0.780 (2.256)
Polity _{t-1}	-0.059*** (0.008)	-0.059*** (0.008)	-0.066*** (0.008)	-0.066*** (0.008)	-0.0005 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.014)
Tenure _{t-1}	-0.029*** (0.009)	-0.029*** (0.009)	-0.040*** (0.009)	-0.040*** (0.009)	0.006 (0.010)	0.006 (0.010)
Age _{t-1}	-0.009* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)	0.009 (0.006)
Death _{t-1} x Age _{t-1}		0.009 (0.037)		0.006 (0.037)		0.013 (0.033)
Constant	2.584*** (0.288)	2.593*** (0.291)	1.981*** (0.584)	1.987*** (0.585)	-0.900 (0.735)	-0.887 (0.736)
Fixed effects	None	None	Year	Year	Both	Both
N	4699	4699	4699	4699	4699	4699
R-squared	0.015	0.015	0.043	0.043	0.288	0.288

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

'Both' means country and year fixed effects. All models use the 5-yr absolute change in Polity as the DV and are OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the country.

7 Conclusion

Political liberalization rarely follows the death of dictators. As I have argued, elites have a strong incentive to engineer smooth transitions from one dictator to another. This is even true in personalist dictatorships, where succession is more uncertain. In such countries, regime elites use informal arrangements for succession or preemptive coups to ensure smooth transitions. Personalist dictators, like non-personalist ones, only die in office if elites have solved the problem of succession through one of these means. For this reason, political liberalization - or any other kind of political change - is unlikely when they actually die.

The picture becomes modestly more optimistic when we restrict our attention to the circumstances under which citizen-driven reform poses the greatest threat. As dictators age, regime insiders lose their informational advantage over regime outsiders. In situations where this is coupled with latent demand for democracy, would-be reformers may wait until dictators die to launch pro-democracy challenges. Either the actual occurrence of such challenges or the threat they will occur, makes political liberalization modestly more likely in the aftermath of death.

However, this result does not hold for the occurrence of “full” democratic transition, nor does even limited liberalization seem to last in the long-term. This suggests that post-death reforms are relatively narrow in scope and that death rarely heralds radical change even under the most favorable circumstances.

As the findings in this article highlight, the mere fact that a dictator - and particularly an old dictator - is allowed to die in office indicates that regime insiders are reasonably confident in their ability to navigate the transition. The occurrence of autocratic death is therefore not random. Regimes in which dictators die in office are fundamentally different from regimes in which they are not. In addition, information asymmetries among regime insiders and outsiders suggest the death of an old dictator may not have the same effect as the death of a young one. This underscores the need for caution when using the exogeneity of leader death as an identification strategy. For example, Jones and Olken (2005) examine instances of leader death to identify whether leaders affect economic growth. In the case of death, they write that “the *timing of the transfer* from one leader to the next was essentially random, determined by the death of the leader rather than underlying economic conditions” (p. 836). In short, they argue that economic performance does not affect the timing of death. As my findings imply, this approach overstates the exogeneity of death in nondemocratic contexts. While the death of a young and healthy dictator is exogenous to factors like economic performance, this may not be the case for the expected death of an aging dictator. Regime elites who are concerned with solving the succession problem will account for the fact that the economy is weak when deciding both (1) whether or not to allow the dictator to die in office rather than taking a more proactive approach to succession, and (2) if so, who the successor should ultimately be. Economic performance does not explain the time of death *per se*, but can still influence whether death occurs at all and who takes power in the aftermath.

In addition to highlighting the distinction between expected and unexpected death, the article provides practical - albeit pessimistic - advice to would-be democrats in nondemocratic countries. Death is not a golden opportunity for change; in most cases, regime elites ensure that transitions are smooth and unremarkable. Under certain circumstances, the threat of post-death mobilization can generate concessions, but lasting change remains unlikely. The empirical

record therefore suggests that waiting for dictators to die is unlikely to be an effective strategy for promoting political liberalization in erstwhile authoritarian regimes.

References

- Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2000. "Democratization or Repression?" *European Economic Review* 44:683–693.
- Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(10):1339–1362.
- Belkin, Aaron and Evan Schofer. 2003. "Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47(5):594–620.
- Besley, Timothy, Jose Montalvo and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2011. "Do Educated Leaders matter?" *The Economic Journal* 121:205–227.
- Beuno De Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson and James Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bienen, Henry and Nicolas Van de Walle. 1991. *Of Time and Power: Leadership Duration in the Modern World*. Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press.
- Boix, Carles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Boix, Carles and Milan Svolik. 2013. "The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics* 75(2):300–316.
- Boix, Carles and Susan Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics* 55:517–549.
- Brownlee, Jason. 2007. "Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies." *World Politics* 59(4):595–628.

- Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce and Alastair Smith. 2012. "In Sickness and in Health: Why leaders keep their illnesses secret." *Foreign Policy* September 18.
- Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce and Alastair Smith. 2015. "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* pp. 1–37.
- Burling, Robbins. 1974. *The Passage of Power: Studies in Political Succession*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Carapico, Sheila. 2002. "Successions, Transitions, Coups and Revolutions." *Middle East Policy* 9(3):109–110.
- Carnes, Nicholas and Noam Lupu. 2015. "What Good is a College Degree? Education and Leader Quality Reconsidered." *The Journal of Politics* 78(1).
- Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi and James Raymond Vreeland. 2010. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 143:67–101.
- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Egorov, Georgy and Konstantin Sonin. 2011. "Dictators and Their Viziers: Endogenizing the Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9(5):903–930.
- Encarnacion, Omar. 2008. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Ezrow, Natasha and Erica Frantz. 2011. "State Institutions and the Survival of Dictatorships." *Journal of International Affairs* 65(1):1–13.
- Frantz, Erica and Elizabeth Stein. 2017. "Countering Coups: Leadership Succession Rules in Dictatorships." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(7):935–962.
- Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11):1279–1301.

- Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright and Erica Frantz. 2014. "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2):313–331.
- Goemans, Henk, Kristian Gleditsch and Giacomo Chiozza. 2009. "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders." *Journal of Peace Research* 46(2):269–283.
- Hadenius, Axel and Jan Teorell. 2007. "Pathways From Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 18(1):143–156.
- Herb, Michael. 1999. *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Herz, John. 1952. "The Problem of Successorship in Dictatorial Regimes: A Study in Comparative Law and Institutions." *The Journal of Politics* 14(1):19–40.
- Horowitz, Michael, Rose McDermott and Allan Stam. 2005. "Leader Age, Regime Type, and Violent International Relations." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(5):661–685.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, Benjamin and Benjamin Olken. 2005. "Do Leaders Matter? National Leadership and Growth Since World War II." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120(3):835–864.
- Kendall-Taylor, Andrea and Erica Frantz. 2016. "When Dictators Die." *Journal of Democracy* 27(4):159–171.
- Lipset, Seymour. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy." *American Political Science Review* 53(1):69–105.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2008. "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(4/5):715–741.
- Magaloni, Beatriz and Ruth Kricheli. 2010. "Political Order and One-Party Rule." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13:123–143.

- Marshall, Monty, Keith Jagers and Ted Gurr. 2011. "Polity IV Project: Dataset Users' Manual." *Center for Systemic Peace: Polity IV Project* .
- McCarthy, John and Mayer Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82:1212–1241.
- Nardulli, Peter, Michael Martin, Michael Slana, Sina Toosi and Joseph Bajjalieh. 2013. "The Coup D'etat Project." *Cline Center For Democracy* .
- Nathan, Andrew. 2003. "Authoritarian Resilience." *Journal of Democracy* 14(1):6–17.
- Nichol, Jim. 2007. "Turkmenistan's Political Succession: Developments and Implications." *CRS Report for Congress* pp. 1–6.
- Salih, Muhammad. 2006. "Speech at the US Congress on problems in Central Asia." *Washington, DC* .
- Schelling, Thomas. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Tedesco, Laura. 1999. *Democracy in Argentina: Hope and Disillusion*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- The Maddison Project*. 2013. <http://www.ggdc.net/maddison/maddison-project/home.htm> .
- Treisman, Daniel. 2015. "Income, Democracy, and Leader Turnover." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(4):927–942.
- Truett, K.R. 1993. "Age Differences in Conservatism." *Personality and Individual Differences* 14(3):405–411.
- Tufekci, Zeynep. 2017. *Twitter and Tear Gas*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Tullock, Gordon. 1987. *Autocracy*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Wilmot, Phil. 2017. "Why Africans Can't Just Wait for Dictators to Die." *Waging Nonviolence* .