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Consolidation-measures of authoritarian leaders against internal threats:

what circumstances affect a leader's choices?

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CONTENT

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I. Introduction

Under the rule of Pol Pot in Cambodia in the 1970's, 1.5 million people were killed and many others were displaced (Kiernan 1996, 442, 460; Becker 1998), making it unsurprising that the regime is mainly remembered for ruling with violence. In China, a similar situation arose, where many deaths occurred during a transition to communism. The violent actions of both regimes - both of which are considered to be revolutionary, due to the massive political upheaval that they instigated - are deeply rooted in Chinese and Cambodian memory. However, what is less known is that the mass violence inflicted upon the respective populations of these two states occurred simultaneously with purges and violence committed against members of the regime itself (Van der Maat 2017, 2). Despite their ostensibly unshakable power, it is less known that the leaders of these communist regimes experienced not only threats from opposition or rebels in society, but also from enemies within their own ranks.

The greatest threats to authoritarian tenure is not rebellion or popular uprising, but the possibility of a coup or attack from within the government (Svolik 2012; Roessler 2011). Coups tend to be "immediate and unpredictable": since coup-plotters are located inside the government, they are capable of using the state apparatus in order to reach their own goals (Roessler 2011, 308).

Svolik (2012) refers to these potential coup-plotters as the '*ruling coalition*': "a set of individuals who support a dictator and, jointly with him, hold enough power to guarantee a regime's survival" (Svolik 2012, 6). The ruling coalition can consist of high placed army-leaders, ministers, members of the same political party or local high-ranking officials that may be divided over the country (Svolik 2012). An authoritarian leader therefore shares its power with this ruling coalition, as their power and influence is necessary for the survival of the regime (Svolik 2012, 57). Svolik refers to this phenomenon as "*the problem of authoritarian power-sharing*" (Svolik 2012, 2).

Typically, power-sharing suffers from seemingly inherent problems. The authoritarian leader has a desire for more power and needs to accomplish this to guarantee both their own survival and the survival of the regime, but this is usually at the expense the leader's rivals, the ruling coalition (Svolik 2012, 54). For a leader to survive in such a competitive

environment, it would be necessary for them to strengthen their support-system. However, this only leads to more competition, which in turn, decreases the security of the leader. The result is a problem of commitment: because both the leader and the ruling coalition will be more secure without the other, they cannot ignore the idea of planning a coup or purging the other party (Van der Maat 2017, 10). The ruling coalition's fear of being removed may even ultimately result in rebellion, which can result in coups (Svolik 2012, 58).

Authoritarian leaders use several measures to consolidate their power against the potential threats of the ruling coalition. Firstly, leaders can adopt preventive measures, such as rotating rivals between positions within government, or filling these positions with co-ethnics (Roessler 2011, 309). Second, leaders can also use more violent measures, such as mass killings or interstate war. Although very different, these mechanisms aim to remove the support system of the rivals with the ultimate objective of eliminating them (Valentino 2000; Chiozza & Goemans 2011, Van der Maat 2017).

Currently, as this thesis will argue, literature on the subject is lacking on these extremely violent mechanisms that authoritarian leaders use. While the mechanisms are mentioned in literature (Roessler 2011; Chiozza & Goemans 2011; Van der Maat 2017), the underlying reasons why leaders choose to adopt one measure of consolidation over the other remains unclear. It is known that rivalry within the ruling coalition pushes leaders to adopt measures, such as preventive coup-proofing techniques, mass killings or interstate war to consolidate their power. However, what specific circumstances lead to mass killings or interstate war? Assuming that leaders make rational decisions, what drives leaders to pursue one type of consolidation-measure? And where do leaders find the support to pursue these consolidation-measures when the threat of the ruling coalition is the reason to adopt these measures? The research presented in this thesis will explore and explain the various factors within dictatorships that influence which type of consolidation-measure is chosen. Therefore, the research question is as following: *What circumstances cause authoritarian leaders to choose interstate war or mass killings as consolidation-measure against threats of the ruling coalition?*

The contribution of this study to academic literature is twofold. Firstly, I argue that although revolutionary regimes have indeed strong military representation in the state

apparatus, they are not as resistant to rivalry as argued in Levitsky and Way (2013). Secondly, I argue that the location of the rivals in the state apparatus is not as important as argued by Chiozza and Goemans (2011) and Van der Maat (2017). As revolutionary regimes are typically supported by a strong military, rivals to the leader tend to have their own support-system in the army. Since revolutionary leaders have not all used the same consolidation-measures, the location of the rivals is less important than is emphasised in the above two texts.

The following chapter elaborates on existing literature regarding the phenomenon of revolutionary (rebel) regimes and the consolidation-measures that the respective authoritarian leaders use against the threats posed by the ruling coalition. This study continues with case studies of the regimes of Pol Pot in Democratic Kampuchea (nowadays known as Cambodia) and of Mao Zedong in the People's Republic of China, which respectively utilised mass killing and interstate war as measures of consolidation. Furthermore, I use the case of the regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba as a negative case, one which involves internal rivalry, but did not involve mass killings nor interstate war as a consolidation-measure against its ruling coalition.

II. Revolutionary regimes and consolidation-measures for authoritarian leaders

Authoritarian consolidation and the causes of the consolidation-measures is a somewhat underappreciated field of research. As mentioned above, this study focuses on the reasons why leaders pursue one specific consolidation-measure over the other. Both this topic and the broader topic of authoritarian consolidation in the case of rivalry has, as of yet, not received widespread attention.

Revolutionary regimes

Levitsky and Way describes revolutionary regimes as "those which emerge out of sustained, ideological, and violent struggle from below, and whose establishment is accompanied by mass mobilization and significant efforts to transform state structures and the existing social order." (Levitsky & Way 2013, 5). This study will apply this definition as well.

According to Levitsky and Way (2013), revolutionary regimes are extremely resilient when it comes to internal and external threats. There are four underlying reasons: 1) revolutionary regimes have the opportunity to destroy the former power centers, such as the former military powers; 2) revolutions result in strong ruling parties; 3) revolutionary regimes seem resistant against coups; 4) revolutionary regimes possess "greater coercive capacity" (Levitsky & Way 2013, 11).

However, as this study argues, all authoritarian leaders – including revolutionary ones - experience rivalry within the ruling coalition. In both China and Cambodia, the respective authoritarian leaders experienced rivalry from the ruling coalition and did not shy away from purging their rivals. Mao Zedong removed the high-placed regional leader Gao Gang in 1954 and Minister of Defense General Peng Dehuai in 1959 (Teiwes 1990; Dittmer 1987, 219). In Cambodia, Pol Pot removed large parts of his close allies by the time the regime collapsed in 1979 (Kiernan 1996; Hinton 2005). Apparently, these leaders perceived these rivals as a threat to their own reign. This is not completely consistent with the argument of Levitsky and Way, which contends that revolutions result in strong ruling parties and are resistant against coups (Levitsky & Way 2013, 11). Although revolutionary regimes might indeed be resilient - regimes in both China and Cuba have proven to be extremely durable - this does not undermine the fact that rivalry exists between the leader and the ruling coalition and that leaders tend to adopt certain consolidation-measures.

Consolidation-measures

For the purpose of this study, three types of consolidation-measures are distinguished: preventive coup-proofing strategies, mass killings, and interstate war.

The first type of consolidation-measure distinguished – preventive coup-proofing strategies – has been researched to a great extent, by among others, Roessler (2011), Belkin & Schofer (2013), Powell (2014) and Sudduth (2017). While Roessler (2011) mainly focuses on the type of coup-proofing strategies authoritarian leaders can resort to, Belkin and Schofer concentrates on the strategies of leaders to decrease the ability of members of the ruling coalition to initiate a coup.

Roessler (2011) mentions several coup-proofing measures for authoritarian leaders to consolidate their power: the rotation of officials in key positions – such as security services, ministries and the army - prevents these officials from gaining too much power within their position and ministries (Roessler 2011, 309). Additionally, filling positions with co-ethnics results in higher loyalty, while "information exchange ... makes plotting more difficult" due to the social networks that co-ethnics share (Roessler 2011, 309).

One of the findings of Sudduth (2017) is that leaders are less likely to enforce coup-proofing measures (such as rotation) when the risk of a coup elevates, as this might encourage rivals to progress plans to throw a coup more rapidly (Sudduth 2017, 4). This is also called the "coup-trap phenomenon": moving forward with preventive coup-proofing measures increases the risk of a coup, but a failure to act against the risk will leave leaders in the same precarious position (Sudduth 2017, 14). This implies that leaders who are on the edge of losing power through of a coup cannot resort to these preventive coup-proofing methods anymore and become trapped in the same circle. Therefore, when the risk of a coup becomes too high, authoritarian leaders are compelled to resort to other measures, such as interstate war or mass killings.

Valentino (2000) suggests that leaders use mass killings in order to achieve "certain radical goals, counter powerful threats or solve difficult military problems." (Valentino 2000, 29). Van der Maat (2017) builds upon the notion of strategy outlined by Valentino by explicitly stating that mass indiscriminate violence and/or mass killings are measures taken by leaders to consolidate their power when experiencing rivalry from the ruling coalition. On the basis of quantitative data, Van der Maat comes to the definitive conclusion that, at times of high rivalry, the chances of mass indiscriminate killings/genocide also become higher (Van der Maat 2017, 40).

The authoritarian leader uses mass indiscriminate violence against an 'outgroup': a religious, ethnic or other group in society (Van der Maat 2017, p.14). This violence serves two purposes: firstly, it provides the leader with the opportunity to develop ties with certain parties that also benefit from the violence against this outgroup. Second, the killings indirectly remove part of the support-system that the ruling coalition relies on. Not all of their supporters are willing to risk their own lives by opposing the violence initiated both by

the leader and by supporting their allies in the ruling coalition. Although some might adopt a passive attitude against the violence, other local officials might turn and show their support to the authoritarian leader (Van der Maat 2017, 16). While their support-system falls apart, the rivals find themselves in a vulnerable position and are forced to secede power by the threat of violence instigated by the leader. Ultimately, the authoritarian leader recognizes the rivals of the ruling coalition as traitors and inflicts selective violence towards them (Van der Maat 2017, 17). Straus (2006) partly supports this theory: in his research on the Rwandan genocide, Straus argues that the Hutu hardliners faced internal opposition and that the mass killings were, in fact, a convenient opportunity to get rid of rivals (Straus 2006, e.g. 75, 84).

Chiozza & Goemans (2011) elaborates on how leaders use interstate war as a consolidation-measure. Two mechanisms are distinguished: *fighting for survival* and *gambling for survival.* Both mechanisms consist of international conflict as a tool of defeating the domestic threat from inside the government. *Fighting for survival* entails that, by initiating interstate conflict, leaders can choose the circumstances of the conflict (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 5). For instance, by sending away your rivals (or the support-system they rely on) in order to die for the country simply moves the problem away from the leader, rather than eliminating them entirely. Additionally, sending away the coup plotters in an interstate war would "disrupt a planned invasion by rebels" (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 196). *Gambling for survival* the trend for leaders to attempt to increase their legitimacy by initiating an international conflict. This is, however, a gamble, as the legitimacy is only affirmed in the case of victory. A defeat in conflict only increases the risk of losing office (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 31).

However, the theories of both Van der Maat (2017) and Chiozza and Goemans (2011) do not elaborate on the exact reasons why authoritarian leaders choose these specific consolidation-measures, but suggest instead that the answer might be in the location of the rivals within the state apparatus.

Van der Maat (2017) mentions that not all leaders have the possibility to adopt mass killings as a means to consolidate power. When the ruling coalition controls too much of the military forces, the leader must look for other forces that are free of their control. Therefore,

leaders that adopt the strategy of mass killings often rely on "militias and parallel security structures" (Van der Maat 2017, 41). Additionally, Van der Maat suggests that the size of the group of the ruling coalition might be of influence on the type of consolidation that is chosen. He argues that the larger the group, the higher the chances are that leaders will use mass killings to purge the rivals (Van der Maat 2017, 41). Verwimp (2006) argues that authoritarian leaders indeed rely on forces other than the military when the rivals are located in the army or control too much of the military forces. He points out that the Rwandan government actively supported certain militias by providing them weapons (Verwimp 2006, 7), supporting the argument of Van der Maat that authoritarian leaders may seek help from militias, in order to fuel and carry out the mass killings. (Van der Maat 2017, 13).

However, as argued in Levitsky & Way (2013), revolutionary regimes often hold stable armies that rarely overthrow their leader, as leaders and 'revolutionary rebels' share the same ideology and interests, succeeding on the basis of mutual objectives or on the basis of enmity (Levitsky & Way 2013, 10). Such strong and stable armies could have two effects: firstly, when the rivals are not located in the army, but elsewhere, the leader can command the army to pursue mass killings in order to eliminate the rivals. On the other hand, when there are rivals located within the military, it has to either look for other forces to carry out the mass killings or resort to other consolidation-measures, such as interstate war. Therefore, one could argue that revolutionary regimes arguably have a strong and stable military that does not attempt to overthrow the leader, thus needing militias to carry out the violence, or other measures to consolidate power. Nevertheless, as historical examples prove, a strong army does not necessarily mean that revolutionary regimes do not experience rivalry in the military.

Therefore, the alternative for mass killings, interstate war - and more specifically the fighting for survival-mechanism developed in Chiozza and Goemans (2011) - is likely to be used when the rivals or coup plotters are located in the military. This is most probably the case in revolutionary regimes, due to the prominent place of armies in such regimes. The reason for this is that – as mentioned above – the fighting for survival-theory implies that rivals and their support-system are sent away to fight in an interstate war. Therefore, when

the rivals are located in the military and they are send away to fight an interstate war, the threat of these rivals is removed (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 20).

Linking this argument back to Van der Maat (2017), who mentions that not all leaders are able to carry out mass killings, because the rivals control (large parts) of the military, we observe a pattern. While leaders cannot adopt mass killings to remove their rivals when they control the military, this is less important regarding interstate war: when the ruling coalition controls the military, or are located within the military, leaders would still be able to send away rivals and their support-systems to fight an interstate war. While not able to purge the rivals through mass killings, interstate war could provide the solution.

To conclude, as mentioned above, certain scholars have speculated on the circumstances that influence an authoritarian leader's choice for a specific type of consolidation-measure instead of the other. However, these perceptions are only suggestions derived from literature, and are therefore not specifically tested. To what extent these circumstances actually play a role in practice will be assessed during this study.

III. Methodology and limitations

This thesis employs a within-case study to determine why authoritarian leaders choose for either interstate war or mass killings to consolidate their power against threats from the ruling coalition. Threats from political opposition or from within society such as popular uprisings are not the subject of this study.

The cases explored are selected on the basis of several criteria: firstly, revolutionary/civil wars that have been won by rebels who subsequently succeeded in establishing (in some shape) a new government have been researched. These new governments are commonly referred to as 'revolutionary regimes'. New regimes that came to power during a coup have been excluded from research, as these cannot be marked as revolutionary regimes. However, selectivity also has its limitations. The chosen are all revolutionary regimes, but on the other hand, these cases also all involve specifically communist regimes. Although not a vast variety of revolutionary regimes have selected, revolutions by definition are almost identical: as Kroeber (1996) argues, they all pursue some

kind of ideology and radical change in society (Kroeber 1996, 37). this study still offers prescriptive insight into the topic of the tendencies of dictators, as the results of the chosen consolidation-measures can be applied to other revolutionary regimes.

Second, in order to maximize the availability of source material, the time frame of this thesis has been limited to the period from the end of the Second World War to the present. The third criteria for the selection of case studies has been the appearance of, violence, (interstate war, mass killings) that erupted within the first five to ten years after the revolutionary regime came to power. This is because the first years of a new regime are the most insecure times and are therefore suited to explain why violence does or does not occur.

Three types of cases have been selected: cases with rivalry and mass killings, cases with rivalry and interstate war, and cases with rivalry but no mass killings or interstate war. A negative case is added as a control to confirm or contradict the findings of the case studies that experience mass killings or interstate war (Patton 1999, 1192). While it might confirm or contradict earlier findings, this thesis offers to answer the question of why some revolutionary regimes have no need to use mass killings or interstate war as a consolidation-measure. Furthermore, this may give insight in other (non-violent) consolidation-measures leaders use, such as preventive coup-proofing techniques.

Cases			
	Country	Years	Leaders
Mass killings	Cambodia	1975 onwards	Pol Pot
Interstate war	China	1949 onwards	Mao Zedong
Neither	Cuba	1959 onwards	Fidel Castro

In the analysis, an inductive approach is used to unravel the underlying reasons why leaders use mass killings or interstate war as a consolidation-measure. Process tracing is the most appropriate mechanism to unravel the circumstances surrounding the chosen mechanisms. The variables and observable implications that are already found in the literature play a role in this process, but process tracing in inductive research also enables finding new variables and causal factors (Mahony 2015, 216).

Since all of these regimes no longer exist - at least not under the rule of these leaders - a large part of this study consists of historical explanation. The "causes of outcomes that have already occurred" (Mahoney 2015, p. 202) will also be explained: these being, the the causes for the decision of leaders to choose for either mass killings or interstate war to consolidate their power.

Both the analysis of the case of China and Cambodia, regarding interstate war and mass killings, and the analysis of Cuba - which did not involve mass killings or interstate war – have the same structure. The analysis starts with a description of how these regimes work: who is the leader, how does the central government function and who are the rivals in the ruling coalition. Additionally, what or who constitutes the support system of the rivals is determined. This is important in relation to how leaders will use their consolidation-measures.

The analysis follows with the question of whether such leaders experience rivalry. To measure this, I look at several circumstances, such as coup attempts, purges and information provided by certain historical analysis' will be explored. Powell and Thyne (2011) provides data on successful coups and coup attempts. Information will also be drawn from the databank of Banks and Wilson (2012), which contains data on purges.[1] Furthermore, the historical analysis' contained with Jackson (1989), Becker (1998), Hinton (2005), Teiwes (1990) and Kiernan (1996) also provide information on specific events that point to rivalry, such as purges.

The analysis continues with an assessment of certain circumstances that could influence the decision of a leader to choose for either mass killings or interstate war in order to consolidate its power. The most important observable implication seems to be the location of the rivals, as Van der Maat (2017) contends, when the rivals are not located in the military but elsewhere in the state apparatus, mass killings become more likely (Van der Maat 2017). When the rivals are located in the military, the possibility to adopt interstate war as a consolidation-measure becomes more appropriate (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 20). Another possibility would be that the leaders seek support with militias and therefore opt for mass

[1] Since the databank is not completely open-access, all data cannot be relied upon on, and therefore its use is limited.

killings as a consolidation-measure (Van der Maat 2017, 41). Another observable implication is the (group) size of the rivals: the larger the group, the more convenient mass killings are (Van der Maat 2017, 41). It must be conceded, however, that more important circumstances and variables might arise that are not covered by this particular research design. Additionally, during the assessment of the circumstances that affect a leader's choices to adopt mass killings or interstate war, it is important to establish whether these measures were actually employed in the named case-studies.

IV. Mass killings in Cambodia

In 1975 the country that is nowadays referred to as Cambodia became Democratic Kampuchea, a communist state ruled by a regime that implemented comprehensive collectivization on all Cambodian property. Rights such as the freedom of press and the right to free movement disappeared. Daily life changed rapidly: in the period of a week all Cambodians were driven to the countryside. Family life and education did not have place in the new society, where everyone had to work on the land to accomplish the objectives of the 'Four-year plan' of the new regime. Saloth Sar, better known as Pol Pot, became its leader (Chandler 2000).

The rivalry within the regime started immediately after Pol Pot's Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) seized power. Pol Pot's paranoia of being removed from office by his rivals led to an ongoing flow of purges over the years (Jackson 1989). One specific example of Pot's obsession with being deposed by his supposed allies was the disagreement within the party over its founding date. Whereas some believed that the founding date should be declared as 1951, Pol Pot believed it to be in 1960. Everyone who supported the earlier date, was regarded as collaborator with the Vietnamese (Jackson 1989). However, his fears may, in fact, have been grounded in reality. Rumors surfaced about several coup-attempts in the period 1975 and 1976, when a group of officials under lead by Vietnam attempted to overthrow the regime. Allegedly, Pol Pot was poisoned in 1976, which could explain his sudden leave of absence in September and October 1976 (Jackson 1989; Hinton 2005). Furthermore, data provided in Powell & Thyne (2011) shows that a failed coup attempt took

place in May 1978. Again, this coup was orchestrated by Cambodian officials under Vietnamese influence (Jackson 1989).

The leadership of the Khmer Rouge consisted of several figures that remained unchanged through the reign of the Khmer Rouge: Prime minister Pol Pot, his right hand Nuon Chea, minister of Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary, Minister of Defense Son Sen and head of state Khieu Samphan. Other high-ranking officials did not live long enough to see the end of the Khmer Rouge regime (Jackson 1989). Minister of Economy Vorn Vet was murdered in 1978 in S-21 (Jackson 1989; 92) and Sao Phim, regional leader of the Eastern Region, committed suicide in 1978, fearing capture (Hinton 2005; Becker 1998). Hu Nim, Minister of Information and Propaganda, was tortured and executed in 1977 for collaboration with the enemy (Chandler, Kiernan & Boua 1988). Nhim Ros, leader of the Northwestern Region, was also executed for the same reasons (Becker 1998). Documents show that between 1976 and 1978, more than two hundred high-level officials were killed. The lists consist of "two party central committee members, four zone Party secretaries, 24 secretaries of party regional committees, four ministers, five deputy ministers, nine leadings officials of ministries, eight political commissars and deputy political commissars of divisions." (De Nike, Quigley & Robinson 2000, 528). In 1979, when Cambodia was invaded by Vietnam and the regime of Cambodia was overthrown, "over half of the highest-ranking members of the communist Khmer regime had been purged" (Van der Maat 2017, 17).

Two 'waves' of purges can be distinguished: the first wave took place between September 1975 and September 1976 and focused primarily on purging citizens and officials that were affiliated with the former regime of Lon Nol. The second wave lasted until the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, focusing on rivals that were within the regime and citizens that were disloyal (Chandler 1999, 4). As this study focuses on the rivalry within the ruling coalition, it focuses on the second wave of purges and rivalry from September 1976 onwards. One of the most well-documented examples is the fall of regional leader Sao Phim, who came under suspicion after other rivals accused him of disloyalty. Sao Phim was fourth in line in the regime and regional leader of the Eastern Zone, and he was labelled as a traitor by Pol Pot and died in 1978 (Hinton 2005, 138; Chandler 1999, 64).

In respect of this study, a model is produced explaining how Pol Pot facilitated the fall of Sao Phim. The question arises of how Pol Pot handled the supporters of Sao Phim, located mainly in the Eastern Region. The following analysis shows that Sao Phim's support system consisted of mainly military leaders and officials (Kiernan 1996; Hinton 2005). In the light of the theory of mass killings as a consolidation-measure, this could imply that Pol Pot was not able to rely on the army to carry out the mass killings (Van der Maat 2017).

Friend or foe: Sao Phim

Sao Phim, a member of the party's Standing Committee and leader of the Eastern Zone, was purged in May 1978 and committed suicide when he feared capture (Hinton 2005; Becker 1998). In early 1976, he was one of the highest leaders of Cambodia: he was named *First Vice Chairman of the State Presidium,* which positioned him second-in-command after head of state Khieu Samphan. Additionally, the Eastern Zone was regarded as one of the most successful and secure zones and up until then escaped purges and other interference from the Central government (Becker 1998).

However, in the middle of 1976 the first signs of distrust towards Sao Phim and the Eastern Zone were signaled. While he was out of the country, members of Sao Phim's network were arrested and purged. The 170th Division, the "military foundation of Eastern Zone influence in Phnom Penh" was among them (Kiernan 1996, 324). Also, Chhouk, leader of Region 24 in the Eastern Zone, was arrested and later executed (Kiernan 1996). Whereas Sao Phim initially cooperated with these purges because he believed in the accusations of the Party and Pol Pot, he soon realized that the Eastern Zone was deliberately targeted by Pol Pot and tried to halt the execution of Chhouk, in which he failed (Kiernan 1996, 330, 334). Nevertheless, he accepted Pol Pot's interference and hoped that, with his cooperation, he had regained the trust of Pol pot. Unfortunately for Sao Phim, he failed to realize that these were the first signs that Pol Pot was turning against him.

According to Kiernan (1996), Sao Phim showed moderate Khmer Rouge behavior and there is no real evidence that he shared the same ideology as the Central Government in Phnom Penh. On the other hand, there is also no evidence that Sao Phim was aligned with the Vietnamese - something that was later used by Pol Pot as an excuse to purge him and

large parts of the Eastern Zone (Becker 1998, 298). He proved to be loyal and put trust in Pol Pot's decision that it was necessary to purge large parts of his divisions in 1976 (Becker 1998, 299). However, regardless of Sao Phim's real beliefs and intentions, Pol Pot had reason to believe that Sao Phim was not loyal, partly originating from the confessions in S-21 (Hinton 2005, 138; Chandler 1999, 64).

As mentioned above, in 1978, while Sao Phim had left the Eastern Zone to receive medical treatment elsewhere, Pol Pot started to purge larger parts of the Eastern Zone. Upon his return in April 1978, Sao Phim found "that hundreds of his officials" from the Eastern Zone had been arrested or executed. (Hinton 2005, 167; Kiernan 1996, 293). When Sao Phim was summoned by Pol Pot to come to Phnom Penh, he warned his loyal Eastern Zone officials to wait three days with the resistance. He had hoped to have returned by this time, but when he did not, several regions rebelled against the forces of Pol Pot (Kiernan 1996, 397).

The purges of April-May 1978 did not only target the Eastern Zone officers, but all Cambodian citizens living in that area. Pol Pot linked the Eastern Zone with its enemy, Vietnam (Kiernan 1996). While in earlier stages Pol Pot targeted all kinds of groups - ethnic minorities and religious groups - from April 1978 onwards, he focused on the 1.5 million Cambodian citizens living in the Eastern Zone who were affiliated with the Vietnamese and were meant to be 'purified', in a similar manner to the Eastern Zone officials (Kiernan 1996, 393). Pol Pot ordered all Cambodians - both loyal military officials and citizens - to 'purify' the country of Vietnamese traitors. The Eastern Zone was targeted, because it was located along the Vietnamese border and was therefore rife with people that had Vietnamese blood or other ties with the Vietnamese. (Kiernan 1996).

To carry out the mass killings of the 'Vietnamese Cambodians' Pol Pot relied on the loyal forces of the Central Zone and Southwestern Zones (Hinton 2005, 167; Kiernan 1996). Both the Northern Zone and the Northwestern Zone had suffered from large scale purges and mass killings and were therefore not as loyal, and refused to pursue this endeavor in other regions (Hinton 2005, 161; Jackson 1989, 105). The mass killings destroyed entire communities in the Eastern Zone, with thousands of civilians either killed or driven into the jungle. The fact that large parts of the Eastern Zone citizens left the area and fled into the

jungle, complicated the possibility of the Central Government consolidating its power in the Eastern Region (Kiernan 1996). At the end of summer 1978, around 250.000 thousand officers and civilians in the Eastern Region had been executed (Hinton 2005, 167).

Analysis

The first question that rises is whether the consolidation-measure of mass killings pursued by Pol Pot fits in the framework developed in Van der Maat (2017). The purges of the Eastern Zone occurred simultaneously with the mass killings that were inflicted upon large parts of the citizens in the Eastern Zones who were accused of being Vietnamese collaborators (Kiernan 1996; Hinton 2005). The purges of the officials of the Eastern Zone started in April 1978 and the purges of the high-officials in the first weeks of May of the same year (Kiernan 1996). While it is unknown when the mass killings in the Eastern Zone exactly started, the Party Center called for purifications of the Cambodians in the Eastern Zone with Vietnamese blood, relatives or links, on the 10th of May 1978 (Kiernan 1996, 393). This undoubtedly shows that the mass killings and the purges of high officials in the Eastern Zone happened simultaneously in the first weeks of May.

When Sao Phim was summoned to Phnom Penh at the end of May, his "chain of command" was weakened by all the purges (Kiernan 1996, 395). A combination of "party discipline" and the lack of knowledge "of the full extent of the massacre" led to the failure of Sao Phim's Eastern Zone to successfully launch a resistance (Kiernan 1996, 395). As Van der Maat (2017) mentions, pursuing mass indiscriminate violence increases the risk of rebellion (Van der Maat 2017, 25). The loyal forces of Sao Phim indeed rebelled after he was accused of treason and ultimately killed, although they ultimately failed (Kiernan 1996).

What does the above analysis tell about the role of the military during mass killings as a consolidation-measure? The argument that mass killings become less likely and interstate war more likely when the rivals are located in the military is not completely proven.

Although the general command of the army was in the hands of Pol Pot, the regional leaders simultaneously had authority over their armies (Becker 1998, 234). This is one of the weakest features of the Cambodian army: the military forces were decentralized, while the majority of political power lay in the hands of the regional (military) leader. These regional

leaders were able to determine "military strategy" and "wielded a great authority in the areas they controlled" (Hinton 2005, 134). Additionally, that the military forces of Cambodia were divided and differed in loyalty was probably a result of the ongoing mass killings and purges over the years. When the Northern Zone (Hinton 2005, 161) and the Northwestern Zone (Jackson 1989, 105) had already been purged in earlier stages, the Eastern Zone of Sao Phim was targeted in 1978. By that time, Pol Pot had lost control over the regions he had already purged and could only count on the Central Zone and Southwestern Zone to carry out its mass killings (Hinton 2005, 167; Kiernan 1996). The Eastern Zone was still loyal to its regional (military) leader Sao Phim and therefore providing him with a large support-system within the military forces. Both Pol Pot and Sao Phim had a support-system in the military on which they could rely.

In this respect, the involvement of militias or other security forces should be highlighted. While Van der Maat argues that authoritarian leaders rely on militias and other security forces to carry out the mass killings (Van der Maat 2017, 41), the above information clearly disputes this assumption. Surely, the fact that Pol Pot found support in (part of) the military, facilitated his possibilities to pursue mass killings and lowered the need for militias to pursue it.

Additionally, the fact that Pol Pot orchestrated such a high number of purges of high officials indicates that the group of rivals was substantial and therefore informs the conclusion that the chance of mass killings becomes higher when the group of rivals is large (Van der Maat 2017, 41). When the regime of Pol Pot fell, "over half of the highest-ranking members of the communist Khmer regime had been purged" (Van der Maat 2017, 17).

V. Interstate war in China

When the People's Republic of China was officially established in 1949, the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Mao Zedong, became its leader and would rule for nearly three decades. Compared to Cambodia, China had relatively little rivalry within the ruling coalition, especially in the years from its establishment in 1949 until 1956 (Teiwes 1987). Nevertheless, the data provided in Banks (2017) demonstrates that more than a dozen

(minor) purges were conducted in the years between 1949-1955. Indeed, historical analyses show that the ruling coalition was at odd with the regime, and formed factions, although it is believed that their shared ideological beliefs tempered the rivalry (Teiwes 1987, 1990).

Although the Party pursued the idea of "collective leadership", Mao Zedong was seen as the only rightful leader, especially in the period between 1949 and 1956 (Teiwes 1987, 60). The CCP consisted of the highest leaders of China, but was centralized in the Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee. The composition of the Politburo barely changed in the first few years (Mackerras & Yorke 1991, 61).

One of the high-placed officials that fell in the early stages of the new regime was Gao Gang. From 1949 until 1952 he was the regional leader of Northeastern Region, and before the revolution he had a role in the Northwestern Region (Teiwes 1990, 20, 22, 105). He was moved to Beijing in November 1952 by orders of Mao Zedong and became the leader of the recently established State Planning Committee (SPC) (Teiwes 1990, 20). However, his political life ended in early 1954 during what is known as the 'Gao-Gang-affair' (Teiwes 1990; Sheng 2011).

In respect of this study, describing how Mao Zedong planned and shaped the fall of Gao Gang is valuable. The question arises of how Mao Zedong handled the faction that supported Gao Gang. The following analysis demonstrates that Gao Gang's support system consisted of mainly military leaders and officials (Sheng 2011, 88). This could support the theory expounded in Chiozza and Goemans (2011) that when the rivals and their support system are located in the military, the leader is more likely to pursue interstate war to eliminate them. The interstate war that China was involved in was the Korean War, from 1950 until 1953.

The 'Gao Gang-affair'

The former regional leader Gao Gang moved to the capital Beijing in December 1952 on the orders of Mao Zedong and became head of the SPC (Teiwes 1990, 20). During the Gao Gang-affair - known as the first "inner-party conflict" (Sheng 2011, 67) - his political life became suddenly destabilized and ultimately led to his suicide (Teiwes 1990; Sheng 2011).

The Gao Gang-affair revolves around the anti-Party tendencies and ambition to reach for more power that Gao Gang seemed to show (Teiwes 1990; 163). These aspirations came to light in the summer of 1953 during a conference, where both Gao Gang tried to blame Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai for failing policies regarding the new tax system. This meeting, meant to discuss policy shortcomings, provided the perfect opportunity for him "to intensify inner-Party struggle" and to put emphasis on the factions at the Center that indeed had emerged (Teiwes 1990, 163). He seized the opportunity to blame Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai for certain mistakes regarding the current policies, and argued that these were not minor mistake, but systematic shortcomings (Teiwes 1990, 163).

From the perspective of today, it is clear that Mao Zedong only brought Gao Gang to Beijing to outmaneuver the group of rivals that was managing the economic decisions, as he mainly served as a puppet in Mao's game to gain control over this group (Sheng 2011). Unfortunately, Gao Gang did not realize this, and vicariously helped Mao to reach his goals. Mao Zedong on the other hand, was also not completely aware of the double agenda that Gao Gang had, since he wanted the position immediately under Mao Zedong: the position that was in the hands of Liu Shaoqi (Sheng 2011, 87).

In December 1953, Mao Zedong started to distrust the intentions of Gao Gang after was seen speaking to Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping: members of the elite that Mao Zedong wanted to control (Sheng 2011, 86). In the months of September and October of 1953, Gao Gang had tried to seek allies all over the country, who would support him to replace Liu Shaoqi. He made it seem as he had the support of Mao, which in fact, he did not. Mao was, in fact, using Gao Gang to spark tensions between the factions by making it seem that the position of Liu Shaoqi was available and thereby securing its own position (Teiwes 1990; Sheng 2011, 68).

Gao Gang thought he had found important allies in Chen Yun (Chairman of the GAC Financial and Economic Committee + Vice-premier), Lin Biao (Leader of Central-South) and Li Fuchun (Member of GAC Financial and Economic Committee and former Heavy Industry min). Gao Gang also found some support in Peng Dehuai, at that time the leader of the Northwestern Region and the future minister of Defense. The ties between them came to light around 1950, when Peng Dehuai had a leading role in the Korean War. At the time,

Gao Gang was still the leader of the Northeastern Region, and when Peng Dehuai needed troops for the Korean war, Gao Gang was able and willing to provide those (Teiwes 1990, 105).

Surveying the evidence give above, it is clear that Gao Gang had important ties with military leaders, and this worried Mao Zedong, especially because these ties were ubiquitous in China (Sheng 2011, 88). It is estimated that he received support in at least 75 percent of the largest regions in China (Teiwes 1990). However, in December 1953, around the time that Mao Zedong started to distrust Gao Gang, this support system seemed to fade away. In February 1954, investigations started - curiously enough, led by Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai - and Gao Gang was put under house arrest in order to be 'educated'. Ultimately, he was betrayed both by Mao Zedong and his support system, he committed suicide in August 1954 (Sheng 2011).

The question arises of how Mao Zedong was able to purge Gao Gang without jeopardizing his own position, especially since purges might provide rivals with the incentive to move forward with a coup (Roessler 2011). On the other hand, Mao did not secure its position by sending the support system of Gao Gang to the Korean War. Mao's motives to intervene in the Korean War seemed far removed from political consolidation to counter the threats of the ruling coalition and more specifically, of Gao Gang. While the theory expounded in Chiozza and Goemans (2011) focuses on interstate war as a measure to consolidate political power, the motives to intervene in the Korean War focus on the role of the USA in Asia. By intervening in Korea, China hoped to stop the expansion drift of the USA in the area by diverting its troops to another territory and thereby securing its own territory (Zhang 1995, 54).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Mao Zedong's motives to intervene in Korea might not constitute political consolidation against threats of the ruling coalition, this does not imply that he did not use the war for this purpose. Mao Zedong was able to weaken the factions within the army during the Korean War in a different manner. Instead of weakening its rivals by sending their support system to the frontline, he used the mechanism of rotating military officials. The legacy of the former regime remained in the regulation that the army consisted of five separate armies that were loyal to their own (regional) leader who they

served for years. Obviously, Mao's goal was to unite these armies into one that was loyal to himself. When the Korean War started, Mao picked certain units from the five separate armies to fight in the war. When they returned to China, they were rotated to other armies and did not return to their former stations. The rotation led to the unity within the Chinese army, but ultimately, also enabled Mao Zedong to remove the "personal power" of four army leaders (Tullock 1989, 29; Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 22).

Analysis

The question rises whether the consolidation-measure of interstate war pursued by Mao Zedong fits in the framework developed by Chiozza and Goemans (2011).

When the Korea War started in 1950, Gao Gang was the leader of the Northeastern Region and was not yet part of the Central Government. Therefore, Mao Zedong could not have initiated their involvement in the Korea War to weaken the support system of Gao Gang as there was no suspicion against him. On the contrary: two years later he would summon Gao Gang from the Northeastern Region to Beijing to become the Chairman of the SPC and help him with his plan to weaken the faction of certain elites (Teiwes 1990).

It would later transpire that, during the war, Mao Zedong would use the war to weaken Gao Gang. However, the suspicion against Gao Gang started around the time the Korean War had ended, in 1953. China's intervention started in October 1950. Although it did not withdraw its forces until 1958, the fighting ended after a truce was negotiated and signed in July 1953. Mao Zedong did not have the opportunity to use the Korean War to his advantage by weakening the support system of military leaders and officials that Gao Gang relied on.

However, the fact remains that, although Mao Zedong used the Korean War to consolidate his power, his motives for intervening in the Korean War were completely different. Therefore, it is possible that the Korean War simply provided the opportunity to smoothly rotate his rivals: a preventive coup-proofing technique used instead of interstate war as a last resort. Furthermore, the rotation of the military officials during the Korean War could have had a long-term effect on how Mao Zedong handled his rival Gao Gang. Although Gao Gang and his support-system were not dealt with by using interstate war, Mao's

position was apparently strong enough to even spark tensions between the rival factions themselves (Sheng 2011).

VI. The apparent solid regime of Cuba

The regime of Cuba is not known for involving mass killings nor interstate war as a consolidation-measure and therefore, this case-study is employed in parallel with the Cambodian and Chinese cases in order to unravel the question of how Fidel Castro was able to consolidate his power against threats of the ruling coalition. How did Fidel Castro avoid resorting to mass killings or interstate war, or in other words: how was he able to consolidate his power? While the Cambodian and Chinese regimes are both known violent behavior towards certain groups of citizens, the Cuban has demonstrably contrasting characteristics. The absence of these measures does not mean, however, that there was no rivalry in the Cuban government, nor does it prove that Castro did not have to take measures to consolidate his power.

In January 1959, Fidel Castro and his guerilla movement were able to overthrow the government of Batista, enforcing a communist revolution in the country in the following years (Padula 1993). Some time passed before Castro's political party took form: according to CIA documents it took two and a half years for a "formalized national political organization" to emerge (CIA 1969, 2).

Information collected by the CIA confirms that Fidel Castro purged large parts of his regime. In 1962 - two years after he seized power - he completely reconstructed the party and purged the so-called "old guard members" (CIA 1969, 2). The rivalry mainly existed between the 'old' communists and the 'new' communists. In early 1962, Fidel Castro purged Anibal Escalante and his followers, who were suspected of collaborating with the Soviet Union (CIA 1962, 3; Blight & Brenner 2002; 90). The purges of the 'old' communists in particular have similar characteristics to the 'first wave' of purges that occurred in Cambodia: both groups of officials were regarded as threatening, but were also left-overs from the former regime. Although these officials were part of the new regime for some time,

they were probably always regarded as outsiders and thus, were not really part of the ruling coalition.

Fidel Castro found his support-system mainly in the *26th of July Movement* officials, who held the top positions in the military and security forces. The estimation is that approximately two thirds of the central government consisted of the military officials of the *26th of July Movement* (CIA 1969, 3). Therefore, his support-system can be regarded as extensive. An example of a fellow *26th of July Movement*-official is Fidel Castro's brother, Raul Castro, who was Minister of the Armed Forces (CIA 1968, 2).

The 26th of July Movement consists of the group of soldiers that fought a guerrilla-war for years against the government of Batista, until it was eventually overthrown in 1959 (Encyclopedia Britannica 2017). After the old regime was overthrown, these individuals became officials in the new regime (CIA 1968, 2). It is no surprise that the top positions of the military forces in Castro's regime were taken by members of the (former) 26th of July movement: more specifically, these were seasoned military officers. These officials however, do not only controlled the security forces, but also the administrative functions and were therefore, responsible for the implementation of policies (CIA 1974, 90).

Although there is a lack of information on the rivalry between Fidel Castro and the ruling coalition, the composition of the government and the support-system of Fidel Castro confirm that indeed, the military played a large role within the regime and that it had a large place in his support-system. Nevertheless, the lack of information on how Fidel Castro orchestrated the purges within his regimes prevents a proper analysis between Cuba and the case studies of Cambodia and China.

VII. Analysis of the different circumstances of consolidation-measures

Levitsky & Way (2013) argues that "revolutionary regimes almost never experience coups" partly because the military officials involved in the revolutionary war believe they were partners in the same struggle, which results in "elite cohesion", and partly because revolutionary regimes are able to "build the armed forces from scratch, fill the officer corps with revolutionary combatants", which in turn results in loyal armed forces (Levitsky and Way 2013, 10, 9, 11). The regimes of the three case-studies that are researched here -

Cambodia, China and Cuba – were not overthrown by a coup, however, rumors of coups and coups-attempts still surfaced. Especially in Cambodia, there was unrest: Cambodia experienced a failed coup attempt in May 1978 (Powell & Thyne 2011), and rumors circulated about other attempts in 1976 (Jackson 1989; Hinton 2005). There seems to be no specific data about Cuba and China that suggests that there were coup attempts in the first years after the regime emerged, nonetheless the above analysis shows that also these countries experienced rivalry within the ruling coalition and are thus not as strong and stable as Levitsky & Way (2013) argues. This shows that the amount of 'elite cohesion' is slightly overrated. The following section further shows that although the armed forces have a prominent place in revolutionary regimes, they are not always as loyal and may in fact themselves become rivals.

Location of the rivals

One hypothesis of this study is that the location of rivals within the state apparatus is an important factor for leaders to determine which consolidation-measure they use. When rivals are located in the military forces, a leader is able to send rivals away to fight in an interstate war, thereby weakening the support system of the rivals (Chiozza & Goemans 2011). Pursuing mass killings would be more complicated, as the leader needs other security forces than the army to carry out the killings. However, when the rivals are not located in the army - but for instance in a wide spectrum of government functions - mass killings become a more desirable option for leaders (Van der Maat 2017). This analysis will look at the military: what is the influence of the military in the regime, what was the relationship between the authoritarian leader and the military, and did this influence the chosen consolidation-measure? The following analysis shows that these factors are not as determinative as anticipated.

All three countries had gone through a civil war in which the rebels won and established a new revolutionary regime. This is inherent to revolutionary regimes: their similar legacy is that these regimes are all either formed of mainly military leaders, or find great support in the military. The armed struggle for power leaves them with experienced military officials in leading roles in the new regime. The cases of both Cambodia and China

demonstrate this. The leaders of China and Cambodia found their support in (regional) military leaders and officials who have a strong rule in their own regions (Kiernan 1996; Teiwes 1990), while the government of Cuba was formed of military leaders (Dominguez 1978). The military therefore plays especially in revolutionary regimes an important role (Levitsky & Way 2013, 10). The above information shows, however, that not only the leader but also the rivals in Cambodia and China had a support-system that found its roots in the military (Teiwes 1990; Kiernan 1996).

Despite the factionalized military forces in Cambodia, Pol Pot's control over parts of the military forces was enough to pursue mass killings against the civilians in the Eastern Zone - and Sao Phim's military officers - and thereby weakening Sao Phim. On the other hand, while Pol Pot relied on the support of the Southwestern and Central Zone, Sao Phim had a strong support-system within the Eastern Zone division, which sparked resistance among the Eastern Zone officials against the forces of the Pol Pot (Kiernan 1996). The construction of the army in China is somewhat comparable to that of Cambodia: the Chinese army also consists of regional zones with their own military leaders, who can count on strong support of that region. Around the time the Gao-Gang affair started to develop, Gao Gang held the support of approximately 75 percent of the regional leaders in China (Teiwes 1990).

However, for some reason these forces were more loyal to Mao Zedong than to Gao Gang. The rotation of the military officials that Mao Zedong used in the Korean War could be fundamental in this perspective. Mao Zedong was able to form a united army by interstate war and rotating the support system of the rivals to other places. Ultimately, he was able to purge four generals (Tullock 1989, 29; Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 22) Also, Gao Gang was taken from his position as a regional leader, and therefore lost his strong connection to the regions in which he was a military leader. When Mao eventually become suspicious of Gao Gang's activity, he was not able to rely on the (military) support-system he once had (Teiwes 1990; Sheng 2011).

This leads to the conclusion that while the consolidation-measures used by both leaders are different, the structure and level of support that the leaders enjoyed in the army were similar. Applying the theory expounded in Chiozza & Goemans (2017) and Van der Maat (2017), the most logical path for both Pol Pot and Mao Zedong to consolidate their

power would be through interstate war, as their rivals - Sao Phim and Gao Gang - found their support system both in the military. As argued, the practice of mass killings becomes more difficult when rivals are located in the military, as the leader wishing to execute them must look for additional security forces to carry out the violence (Van der Maat 2017). Yet, the evidence here shows that Pol Pot was still able to rely on part of the military, which was sufficient to execute the strategy of mass killings.

Although the question remains why the position of Mao Zedong was inherently more secure in comparison to that of Pol Pot – since both of their rivals had their support-system in the military – it leads to the careful conclusion that the location of the rivals (military or elsewhere in the state apparatus) has less influence than anticipated on which consolidation-measure is chosen by the authoritarian leader.

Group size of rivals

Another important factor that possibly plays a role regarding the choice of consolidation-measure is the amount of rivals a leader desires to purge. As Van der Maat (2017) argues, the larger the group of rivals, the more incentive a leader has to use mass killing as a measure to consolidate their power. In a period of merely four years, Pol Pot eliminated more than half of the party's high officials (Van der Maat 2017, 17). Compared to China this is drastically higher: in the first years of Mao Zedong's reign the amount of rivalry and the subsequent purges are relatively low, especially among the high officials (Teiwes 1990; Banks 2017). Indeed, the purges of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi - co-conspirator of Gao Gang (Teiwes 1990, 44) - were the only purges of high officials in the early years of the regime. When the group of rivals is larger, the position of the leader is possibly more insecure. Although Gao Gang had a large support-system in the military, Mao Zedong ultimately received widespread support, even among supporters of Gao Gang. However, if the group of rivals had been bigger - such as in the case of Pol Pot in Cambodia - Mao's position would have been less secure and the rotation of his rivals - which he partly conducted during the Korean War - would not have been sufficient to secure his position. It is possible, therefore, that Mao was forced to send Gao Gang and his rivals away to fight the interstate war, or pursue mass killings. He ultimately would have had to use interstate war as a last-resort, instead of a preventive

measure. Although further research should determine to what extent the group size is a relevant factor, this study cautiously shows that it the group size of rivals could indeed play a role.

Opportunities

A different factor is that the choice of consolidation-measure is partly reliant on the opportunities that present itself. In China, the opportunity of interstate war in Korea presented itself, which gave Mao the perfect chance to rotate his rivals, despite the fact that the initial motives to intervene in the Korean war were not connected to consolidation against the threats of his rivals. In Cambodia, there were also rivals in the military forces, but the opportunity for interstate war did not surface. Furthermore, it may also have been unfeasible due to such an endeavor proving too costly to start one for the sole purpose of eliminating rivals of the ruling coalition. Mass killings were already a part of the violent regime of Cambodia and were therefore a 'convenient' solution for Pol Pot, whereas interstate war would require a completely different strategy, which would ultimately have the same result as mass killings.

VIII. Conclusion

Building upon the argumentation of Chiozza and Goemans (2011), and Van der Maat (2017), the main hypothesis of this study was that the location of the rivals is important in relation to the consolidation-measure that an authoritarian leader would chose. When rivals are located in the military, interstate war is the most likely consolidation-measure, and when the rivals are located elsewhere in the state apparatus, mass killings become more likely.

This study shows, however, that the location of the rivals within the state apparatus is less important than considered before, therefore giving evidence to disprove this hypothesis. The case studies of both Cambodia and China show that different consolidation-measures are pursued when the rivals and/or their support-system are located in the military. Pol Pot used mass killings against his rival Sao Phim, even while Sao Phim had a strong support-system in the Eastern Zone division (Kiernan 1996; Hinton 2005). The rivals

of Mao Zedong were also located in the military, but interstate war was instead chosen as a preventive measure to rotate his rivals (Tullock 1989). This leads to the conclusion that while both leaders faced rivals with similar support-systems that were located in the military, they applied different consolidation-measures. The location of the rivals is thus, not a circumstance which is of importance for leaders when they chose a consolidation-measure.

Additionally, as argued in Van der Maat (2017), this study has determined that the group size of the rivals may also play a role. A comparison between the case studies of Cambodia and China shows that when the group of rivals is larger - as is the case in Cambodia - mass killings are pursued, whereas interstate war is used in China when the group of rivals is significantly smaller. Although large-N analysis is probably a more suitable research method to establish a link between group size of rivals and the choice for mass killings, this study provides the first basis for the assumption that the group size is of significance.

This study contributes to the theory of authoritarian consolidation in cases of rivalry in the ruling coalition. The field of authoritarian consolidation is an underappreciated field of research – especially in cases of rivalry within the ruling coalition - and this study has contributed to the explanations of consolidation, by researching what drives leaders to pursue a certain consolidation-measure. Nevertheless, this study was limited by only looking at whether the location of the rivals and the size of the group of rivals were of importance. The evidence shows that especially the location of the rivals is not as determinative as argued. Thus, this study has not provided a conclusive answer to the research question as to what circumstances drives leaders to pursue consolidation-measures.

The limitations of this study are mainly related to the selection of the case studies. The case of Cuba was intended to serve as a negative case, but the lack of information hindered a proper comparison between Cuba on the one hand, and Cambodia and China on the other hand. The same applies to the case of China. Aspects of the Gao Gang-affair have been particularly emphasized, since other aspects of rivalry within China's ruling coalition are not documented or not published. The lack of available information on both regimes is possibly related to the continuation of Cuba's and China's regimes up until today, since the current regimes are reluctant to release information on their predecessors, whereas Cambodia's regime was ended in 1979. A different selection of case studies could avoid this

problem. Additionally, although this analysis clearly shows that the type of consolidation-measure that is chosen is not clearly linked to the position of the rivals - either in the military or somewhere else in the state apparatus - it is unclear whether this also applies in non-revolutionary regimes. Inherent to revolutionary regimes is the association with a strong military force at the disposal of state apparatus. However, non-revolutionary regimes with a weaker military control may also experience different results. When the rivals are not located in the military – for the simple reason that the military does not have a strong position - the measure of interstate war becomes useless for removing rivals, and the 'choice' for authoritarian leaders may become less complex.

Additional research is required to determine what other circumstances play a role or do not. For instance, whether the initiative for interstate war is used to consolidate power, or whether interstate war is only used as a consolidation-measure when the opportunity presents itself, like the situation in China. Additionally, large-N analysis could confirm whether the results found in this small within-case study design - for instance whether the location of rivals within the state apparatus is indeed of less importance – apply on a larger scale, for instance on all revolutionary regimes or regimes that cannot be marked as revolutionary.

In sum, while the location of rivals within the state apparatus does not seem to be a contributing factor to decision of leaders to use a certain consolidation-measure, the choices that authoritarian leaders make are considered as well calculated and far from random and the violent measures authoritarian leaders use have played and will continue to play a role in the future.

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