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Word count:	9998		

Democracies and compellence

Why democracies are less successful at compelling other states

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Abstract:

More than twenty years ago, Fearon (1994; 1997) has argued that democracies are more likely to successfully compel a target state than nondemocracies. However, empirical evidence suggests that this is not the case (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012; Downes & Sechser, 2012; Sechser, 2018, 335). Consequently, a new understanding of the relationship between regime type and compellence outcomes is needed (Gartzke & Lupu, 2012). I argue that democratic leaders have more incentives to keep the costs of conflict low. Consequently, they will want to prevent disputes from escalating. Hence, they are more likely to not mobilise their troops or to mobilise air troops during a conflict. These options have a lower risk of escalating the conflict than the mobilisation of land or naval troops (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016; Post, 2019a). By choosing the careful option, democratic leaders will not be perceived as resolved by the target state (Fearon, 1994; Fearon, 1997; Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016; Post, 2019a). As a result, compellent threats issued by democracies will have a lower chance to be successful in comparison to threats issued by nondemocracies. I have tested this hypothesis by the Militarised Compellent Threat (MCT) database (Sechser, 2011b).

Introduction

In 1991, the United States (U.S.) Secretary of State James Baker told his Iraqi counterpart that the U.S. would use force if Iraqi forces did not leave Kuwait peacefully (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016, 158). Iraq had invaded Kuwait six months earlier and tensions had been rising since. Iraq chose not to comply with the demand. In the short war that followed, U.S. forces managed to quickly expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). This case is a clear example of compellence: a demand that is meant to change the status quo and is backed by a threat to use military action if the demand is not met (Morgan, 2003; Sechser, 2011a; 2013; Art & Greenhill, 2018). The state that issues the demand is called the challenger and the state that is being threatened is called the target state.

Compellence is considered successful if the target complies with the challenger's demand without the challenger having to execute the threat (Downes & Sechser, 2012; Post, 2019a). The U.S. threat to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait is considered unsuccessful, because Iraq refused to comply with the U.S. demand. Eventually the U.S. got what it wanted, but only after it had to take military action (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). Since the purpose of the threat is that you do not have to execute it (Downes & Sechser, 2012, 475), this example of compellence cannot be considered as a success (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016).

Compellence is distinguished from deterrence, which is meant to preserve the status quo (Morgan, 2003; Art & Greenhill, 2018). An example of deterrence is the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in which the U.S. have deterred China from invading Taiwanese islands (Tyler, 1996; Global Security, n.d.). In practice, the distinction between compellence and deterrence may not always be clear-cut (Art & Greenhill, 2018). In this thesis, I will focus on compellence.

A growing body of literature has tried to explain why compellent threats succeed in some cases and fail in other (e.g., Sechser, 2011a; Downes & Sechser, 2012; Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017; Sechser, 2018; Post, 2019a). Some scholars have argued that democracies are able to make more credible threats than nondemocracies (Fearon, 1994; 1997; Schultz, 2001; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001). Backing down from a threat, can cost a democratic leader voters. Therefore, he or she will only issue a threat if he or she is willing to carry it out (Fearon, 1994). Other scholars have found no evidence for this causal mechanism and conclude that it needs "serious reconsideration" (Downes & Sechser, 2012, 486).

In this thesis, I will fill this gap by studying the effect of the regime type of the challenger on compellence outcomes. In doing so, this thesis will advance our understanding

of compellent threats issued by democracies. The research question is: what is the effect of the regime type of the challenger on the likelihood of successful compellence? In this thesis, I will focus on the challenger, because a recent study (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018) has already focussed on the target state.

Understanding the effect of regime type on the likelihood of successful compellence will advance our understanding of the factors affecting compellence outcomes. Furthermore, the hypothesis that democracies are able to make more credible threats has been used "as an explanation for the democratic peace" (Gartzke & Lupu, 2012, 391). Therefore, the results of this research may have implications for the democratic peace.

Moreover, the results may have important implications for interstate conflict in general. This knowledge could be used by policymakers. If democratic leaders are better able to make credible threats, they may be able to make successful threats more often (Fearon, 1994; Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). If this is the case, policymakers in democracies may be tempted to resort to militarised compellent threats more often. If, on the other hand, democratic leaders are less able to make credible threats, then they may want to refrain from using militarised compellent threats to achieve their policy goals.

This thesis starts by examining the literature on compellence and democratic credibility. Then, I will introduce the research design and discuss the Militarised Compellent Threat (MCT) database (Sechser, 2011b). Next, I will analyse the data and will discuss the results and alternative explanations. Finally, I will conclude and discuss avenues for future research.

1.   Explaining variation in compellence outcomes

Scholars have researched various factors that could affect compellence outcomes. The five most important factors are: (1) relative power (Sechser, 2018), (2) reputation-building (Sechser, 2018), (3) resolve (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016), (4) troop mobilisation (Post, 2019a) and (5) regime type (Schultz, 2001; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001; Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012; Downes & Sechser, 2012).

1.1.   *Relative power*

First, some authors have argued that more powerful challengers are able to compel more successfully (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016, 3; Art & Greenhill, 2018). A state is considered powerful if it possesses a lot of military power, which "is based largely on the size and strength of a state's army and its supporting air and naval forces" (Mearsheimer, 2014, 56). More powerful states are able "to threaten especially severe punishment for noncompliance" (Sechser, 2010, 627). Furthermore, a powerful challenger can execute the threat at relatively lower cost than a weak challenger (Morgan, 2003; Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). However, empirical evidence suggests that powerful challengers are less likely to successfully compel a target state (Sechser, 2018). Moreover, compellence is more likely to be successful when the target state is more powerful than the challenger (Sechser, 2018). Some authors have argued that reputation-building can explain why target states resist demands by more powerful states (Schelling, 1966; Fearon, 1995; Sechser, 2018).

1.2.   *Reputation-building*

Second, some authors have argued that reputation-building is an important factor in explaining compellence outcomes (Schelling, 1966; Fearon, 1995; Sechser, 2018). According to this logic, target states resist demands if they expect to face further demands in the future (Schelling, 1966; Fearon, 1995; Sechser, 2018). Standing firm and resisting the demand may prevent the challenger from making more demands in the future (Sechser, 2018). The fear of future demands is especially large when the demand is made by a powerful neighbour that has behaved aggressively in the past (Sechser, 2018). For example, between 1928 and 1937, China has resisted 15 out of 19 threats made by Japan (Sechser, 2011b). This example illustrates that a target state is likely to resist a demand from a powerful neighbour. Furthermore, it illustrates that a powerful neighbour may make more demands in the future. By contrast, when a challenger is distant and weak, the target state should be less worried

about future demands (Sechser, 2010; Sechser, 2018). For example, the United Kingdom (U.K.) had little to worry about future demands when Iceland made two military compellent threats during the Cod Wars (Sechser, 2011b; Britannica, 2020).

Empirical evidence from Sechser (2018) supports this logic of reputation-building. He has shown that challengers with higher total military expenditures have a lower chance of successfully compelling a target state. Furthermore, challengers have a higher chance of successful compellence when a body of water (other than a river) separates the challenger from its target. These findings are in line with the reputation-building hypothesis, which states that target states want to deter future demands by powerful neighbours (Sechser, 2018).

1.3 Resolve

A third factor that could affect compellence outcome is resolve (Fearon, 1994). "Resolve consists of three […] components: the willingness to initiate military action, the willingness to persevere in war despite mounting costs, and the willingness to inflict violence on the opponent" (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016, 12). A resolved state will not yield, even though it suffers severe punishment. For example, North-Vietnam did not capitulate during the war with the U.S., even though it has suffered severe punishment (Reich & Lebow, 2014). A state may wish to avoid getting dragged into a conflict with a resolved state. Therefore, if a state observes that the other state is resolved, it may decide to back down (Fearon, 1994).

The problem is that a state's level of resolve is difficult to observe (Fearon, 1994). Moreover, each state has an incentive to misrepresent its level of resolve in order to get the other state to back down (Fearon, 1994). According to Fearon (1997), a challenger can credibly communicate resolve by making a costly signal. By incurring some costs, a challenger can show that it is not bluffing and is genuinely resolved to prevail in the dispute. For example, a challenger can show that it is resolved by displaying a small level of force. It is possible to distinguish between actions that are costly to take, but that do not incur costs when backing down (sunk costs), and actions that only incur costs when backing down (tying hands) (Fearon, 1997).

1.4 Troop mobilisations

Troop mobilisations typically fall in the category of sunk costs (Fearon, 1997). However, not every type of troop mobilisation is likely to be perceived as a credible signal (Fearon, 1997; Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016; Post, 2019a). There are three different types of troop mobilisations: air, land and naval (Post, 2019a). Air mobilisations are considered the cheapest

type of troop mobilisations and they have the lowest risk of escalating the conflict. First, they are financially cheaper and less riskier to execute than the deployment of ground troops and naval troops (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016, 31; Post, 2019a). Second, air mobilisations have a lower risk of escalating the conflict. Since air troops cannot conquer territory, they are likely to be perceived as less threatening and as a result will provoke less escalating reactions (Mearsheimer, 2014; Post, 2019a). Additionally, when a military air plane is shot down, there will be less casualties than when a military ship is sunk or when a battalion of ground troops engages in battle (Post, 2019a).

Due to the fact that air mobilisations are the cheapest type of troop mobilisation, they might also be less effective in communicating resolve in comparison to land or naval mobilisations. There is empirical evidence that supports this claim (Post, 2019a). Post (2019a) has found that land and naval mobilisations significantly increase the likelihood of successful compellence. However, the use of air mobilisations does not significantly increase the likelihood of successful compellence (Post, 2019a).

1.5 Regime type

Another way to credibly communicate resolve is by tying hands. Tying hands means that a challenger takes an action that would incur costs if it backs down (Fearon, 1997). The typical example is issuing a public threat. When a leader has issued a public threat, his or her credibility will be damaged if the threat is not carried out. This is called audience costs. Audience costs are political costs related to a leader's reputation (Fearon, 1994). Backing down during a crisis may not only invite other states to initiate future crises, but it might also erode domestic political support for the leader (Fearon, 1994). Fearon (1994) has argued that democratic leaders are particularly sensitive to audience costs, because they rely on the support of voters to stay in office. Therefore, public threats issued by democratic leaders should be more credible than public threats issued by nondemocratic leaders. In turn, this would mean that democracies can communicate resolve more credibly and be more successful in compelling a target state (Fearon, 1994).

Initially, empirical studies (Schultz, 2001; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001) have found support for Fearon's (1994; 1997) claim that democracies are more successful at compellence. However, a more recent empirical study (Downes & Sechser, 2012) has found no empirical evidence for the audience cost hypothesis. Moreover, Downes and Sechser (2012) have shown that earlier empirical studies (Schultz, 2001; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001) make use of

databases that are not well suited to test the audience cost hypothesis, because they contain a lot of cases that do not involve the use of threats.

Case study research has found no evidence of audience costs affecting the decision-making processes of leaders (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012). Instead, they show that leaders prefer to maintain flexibility instead of putting their credibility on the line (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012). In other words, leaders do not tend to make specific ultimata. Instead, they make vague threats that cannot hurt their credibility, because the leader can always claim that the target state has not crossed a 'red line' (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012). For example, Trachtenberg (2012, 12) notes that during The Eastern Crisis (1877-1878) British threats "gave no clear sense for the terms Britain would insist on; there was no precise commitment that Disraeli [Britain's Prime Minister at the time] could be blamed for not honouring." Furthermore, leaders prefer to maintain flexibility regarding the punishment to be inflicted. For example, during the Iran hostage crisis, U.S. president Carter "warned of "grave consequences" if the hostages were harmed or put on trial" (Snyder & Borghard, 2011, 447). According to Snyder and Borghard (2011), subsequent threats from Carter remained vague. Carter could have chosen to mention a specific punishment in order to scare the Iranians. Instead, he chose to maintain flexibility by not mentioning a specific punishment. In addition, leaders seem to be able to evade audience costs (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012). For example, in 1878 the Russian Tsar was able to evade audience costs by blaming the Russian ambassador to Britain for the failed policies (Trachtenberg, 2012, 13).

Although several studies indicate that being a democracy does not have an effect on compellence outcomes (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012; Downes & Sechser, 2012), a recent study shows that there may be an indirect effect of regime type on compellence outcomes (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). Viskupic and Atkinson (2018) have shown that democratic targets are more likely to resist threats made by a powerful neighbour that has behaved aggressively in the past. The reason is that democratic leaders rely on the provision of public goods, such as security to stay in office (Valentino, Huth & Croco, 2010). Giving in to a demand from a powerful neighbour decreases the ability of the leader to provide security in the long run. Therefore, democratic leaders are more likely to engage in reputation-building than nondemocratic leaders (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018).

2.   Theory: a new hypothesis on regime type and compellence

The audience cost hypothesis states that democracies are more successful at compellence (Fearon, 1994, 1997; Schultz, 2001; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001). Subsequently, evidence from case studies (Snyder & Borghard, 2011; Trachtenberg, 2012) and empirical evidence (Downes & Sechser, 2012) suggests that the audience cost hypothesis cannot be confirmed. However, new empirical evidence from Viskupic and Atkinson (2018) suggests that the regime type of the target state does affect the likelihood of successful compellence. In this section, I hypothesise how the regime type of the challenger could affect the likelihood of successful compellence.

2.1.   Hypothesis 1

Democratic leaders have more incentives than their nondemocratic counterparts to keep the costs of war low (Valentino, Huth & Croco, 2010). The reason is that democratic leaders rely on the support of a large winning coalition to stay in office (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson & Smith, 1999; Valentino et al., 2010). I will explain this logic in more detail below.

In order to be elected, democratic leaders have to win the support of a large number of voters (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson & Smith, 1999; Valentino et al., 2010). They do so by providing public goods, such as security or health care (Valentino et al., 2010). Fighting a war costs money, time and human lives. If these resources are spend on fighting a war, they cannot be spend on the provision of public goods. Moreover, citizens have to pay for the costs of war via higher taxes or accept that other budgets (such as the health care budget) have to be cut (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). Therefore, the costs of war decrease the ability of a democratic leader to provide public goods and win the support of voters. In a democracy, the costs of war are borne by all citizens, via higher taxes or the cuts of budgets. It is not possible for a democratic leader to divert the costs of war to members of the losing coalition (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018).

Nondemocratic leaders, on the other hand, rely on the support of a much smaller winning coalition. They maintain the support of the winning coalition by providing them with private goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Valentino et al., 2010). Since the winning coalition of a nondemocratic leader is much smaller, a nondemocratic leader is better able to shield members of the winning coalition from bearing the costs of war (Valentino et al., 2010; Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). Nondemocratic leaders can send members of the losing coalition to fight the war. Moreover, as long as the nondemocratic leader provides private goods to

members of the winning coalition, he/she may be able to maintain their support (Valentino et al., 2010; Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018).

There is more evidence that suggests that democratic leaders want to keep the costs of war low. Pfundstein Chamberlain (2016, 37) writes that "Since the end of the Second World War, the United States has gradually adopted several strategies to insulate the bulk of its population from the burdens of war." These strategies include abolishing conscription, financial contributions from allies to finance wars and deficit spending to finance wars (to avoid raising taxes). To maintain public support, the U.S. has also made effort to limit casualties on all sides (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). European states display a similar trend. In Europe, conscription was gradually abolished after the Second World War (Sheehan, 2007). Furthermore, violence has diminished and European states have decreased the share of the annual budget dedicated to military spending (Sheehan, 2007). This suggests that leaders of the U.S. and Europe, which are democratic, have made efforts to lower the costs of war and the military. These saved costs could be used to provide public goods and maintain the support of their citizens.

All in all, the evidence suggests that democratic leaders want to maintain public support in order to stay in office. They try do so by providing public goods and keeping the costs of war low (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Valentino et al., 2010). Nondemocratic leaders, on the other hand, rely on the support of a much smaller winning coalition. They maintain support by providing members of the winning coalition with private goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Valentino et al., 2010). Being at war diminishes a leader's ability to provide public goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). Therefore, democratic leaders have more incentives than their nondemocratic counterparts to keep the costs of war low (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Valentino et al., 2010).

Viskupic and Atkinson (2018) have applied this logic to militarised compellent threats. Their results suggest that democratic leaders are more likely to resist a threat if that improves the future security of their citizens (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). Since security is a public good, this result implies that democratic leaders value the provision of public goods more than nondemocratic leaders do. This can be explained by the logic that democratic leaders need to provide their citizens with public goods in order to maintain their support and stay in office. These results suggest that the dynamics outlined earlier do not only apply to situations of war, but are applicable to other situations as well. Furthermore, the findings suggest that regime type does affect compellence outcomes (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018).

I argue that democratic leaders do not only want to keep the costs of war low, but the costs of conflict as well. Therefore, they are less likely to escalate conflicts since escalating the conflict would mean escalating costs in terms of money and human lives. In order to prevent the conflict from escalating, democratic leaders are likely to choose cheap instead of costly types of troop mobilisation. As explained earlier, cheap types of troop mobilisations are less likely to escalate conflicts, are cheaper to execute and risk fewer human lives (Post, 2019a).

Hypothesis 1: Democracies are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation.

To be sure, democracies will not always use cheap types of troop mobilisation. If the stakes are high, democratic leaders can be willing to pay the costs associated with the use of costly types of troop mobilisation (Valentino et al., 2010). If a democratic leader decides to use costly types of troop mobilisation, despite the incentives to keep the costs low, the threat may actually be more credible than a threat by a nondemocratic leader. For example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the stakes for the U.S. were high and president Kennedy responded with a naval blockade (Snyder & Borghard, 2011). However, my point is that democratic leaders will more often than not use cheap types of use troop mobilisation, i.e. the Cuban Missile Crisis is an exception.

2.2.   Hypothesis 2

Cheap types of troop mobilisation are associated with a lower likelihood of successful compellence (Sechser, 2011a; Post, 2019a), because cheap types of troop mobilisation are not costly signals and therefore do not signal resolve (Fearon, 1994; Fearon, 1997; Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). In other words, a target state observes that the challenger chooses a cheap type of troop mobilisation. The challenger could have chosen a costly type of troop mobilisation, but has chosen not to do so. Therefore, the target concludes that the challenger is half-hearted of unresolved and decides to resist the demand (Fearon, 1997).

Hypothesis 2: The use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of successful compellence.

2.3.   Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 1 states that democracies are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. In turn, the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation leads to a lower likelihood of successful compellence (hypothesis 2). If both hypotheses are correct, I expect to find that democracies are less likely to successfully compel a target state. This correlation could then be explained by the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation.

> *Hypothesis 3: Democratic challengers are less likely to successfully compel the target state.*

If the hypotheses are correct, there would be a mediation effect, which could be graphically described like in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that all three variables are related to each other: (1) democracy leads to a lower chance of successful compellence; (2) democracy leads to the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation, and; (3) the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation leads to a lower chance of successful compellence.
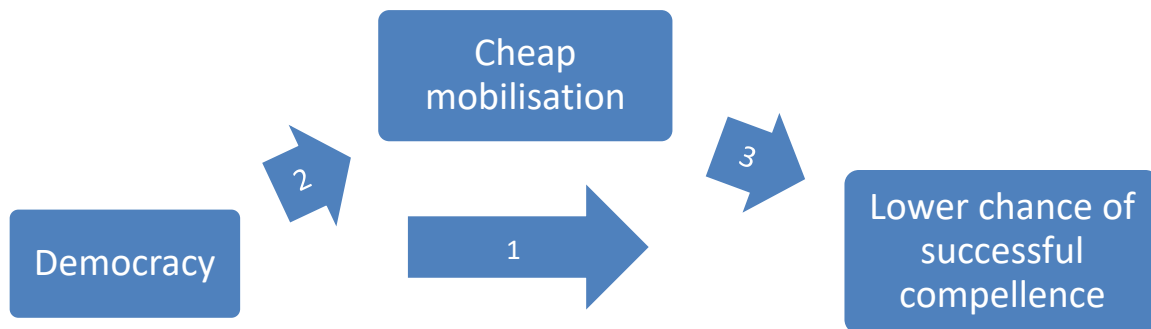

Figure 1 Graphical representation of a mediation effect

To summarise, my hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1: Democracies are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation.

Hypothesis 2: The use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of
successful compellence.

Hypothesis 3: Democratic challengers are less likely to successfully compel the target   state.

3.   Method

The unit of analysis is a militarised compellent threat (Sechser, 2011a). Militarised compellent threats are understood as "*interstate demands to change the status quo* which are *backed by the threat of military force*" [emphasis in original] (Sechser, 2011a, 379). I will make use of data from the Militarised Compellent Threats (MCT) database (Sechser, 2011b) to test my hypotheses. Alternative databases such as the Militarised Interstate Dispute (MID) database or the International Crisis Behaviour (ICB) datasets are not suitable to test my hypotheses, because these databases include cases in which no demands were made (Downes & Sechser, 2012).

The MCT database only contains cases that (1) "contain a demand for a material change in the status quo" (Sechser, 2011a, 380), (2) "involve an assurance of future military action if the demand is not met" (Sechser, 2011a, 380), and (3) are "made from one state to another" (Sechser, 2011a, 380). This restricts the cases to (1) cases of compellence and excludes cases of deterrence, (2) military threats and excludes threats to impose economic sanctions, and (3) interstate threats and excludes threats that involve non-state actors. The scope of this database is relatively limited, because only threats that have explicit demands are included (Sechser, 2011a). One could argue that demands are often implied by state actions (such as troop mobilisations) and that the MCT database should also contain cases of implicit demands. However, when a demand is implicit, one can only speculate when the demand is met and when the threat can be considered successful (Sechser, 2011a). Moreover, the public nature of the militarised compellent threats is helpful in testing the audience cost hypothesis, because implicit threats are more difficult to observe by domestic audiences (Downes & Sechser, 2012). The MCT database contains 242 cases (Sechser, 2011b).

3.1.   Dependent variable

The dependent variable is compellence outcome. To construct this variable, I make use of two variables from the MCT database: (1) compliance, and (2) target fatalities. Compliance denotes whether the target state has met none (coded as 0), some (coded as 1), or all (coded as 2) of the challenger's demands (Sechser, 2013). Target fatalities denotes whether there have been 100 or more military fatalities on the target's side related to the compellent threat (coded as 1) or not (coded as 0). Compellence is considered successful (coded as 1) if the target complies with some or all demands (Post, 2019a). Furthermore, if the target has suffered 100 or more military fatalities related to the compellent threat, compellence is considered

unsuccessful (coded as 0) regardless of whether the demands are met (Downes & Sechser, 2012). The reason is that a threat cannot be considered successful if the threat has to be executed to get what you want (Downes & Sechser, 2012). The threshold of 100 military fatalities needs to make sure that the challenger has not used large-scale violence to force the target into compliance (Sechser, 2011a, 385). Small scale violence is allowed, since it is considered as showing resolve to the target state (Sechser, 2011a, 384). Using this definition, the MCT database contains 105 cases (43,4 percent) of successful compellence (Sechser, 2011b; Post, 2019b).

One could also argue that compellence is only successful if all demands are met (Sechser, 2011a). Using this definition, only 93 cases (38,4 percent) are considered successful. There are two reasons for considering compliance with some demands as successful compellence. First, if a target complies voluntarily with some demands, the challenger has reaped some benefits at relatively low cost. The challenger did not have to use large scale violence in order to get what it wants. So even though the benefits from the threat may not be enormous, the costs were also low. Therefore, compellence may still be considered as successful by the challenger. Second, considering compliance with some demands as successful allows me to compare my results to Post's (2019a) results.

3.2.   *Independent variables*

There are three independent variables: (1) the regime type of the challenger, (2) the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation, and (3) an interaction term of these two. First, for regime type, I will use the Polity IV Project dataset (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002). The Polity IV Project has developed a twenty-one-point scale to indicate whether a state is considered to be an autocracy (-10 to -6), a closed anocracy (-5 to 0), an open anocracy (1 to 5), a democracy (6 to 9) or a full democracy (10) (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002). Like other scholars (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018; Post, 2019a), I will measure democracy as having a score of 6 or higher in the year that the militarised compellent threat was made. Using this definition of democracy, 88 out of the 242 challengers (36 percent) in the MCT database are considered to be a democracy (Sechser, 2011a, 388; Sechser, 2011b; Post, 2019b).

The United States, United Kingdom and France are responsible for 61 of the 88 threats (69 percent) made by democracies (Sechser, 2011b; Post, 2019b). These three states are considered powerful states. The average CINC score of democratic challengers (0,08285) is higher than the average CINC score of a nondemocratic challenger (0,05249) (Sechser,

2011b; Post, 2019b). This might affect the results. Therefore, I will control for the relative power, measured in CINC scores, in each dyad.

Second, I have argued that the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of successful compellence. The distinction between cheap and costly types of troop mobilisations is important, because it determines whether the challenger signals resolve. Previous research has indicated that the use of costly types of troop mobilisation significantly increases the likelihood of successful compellence, whereas the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation does not (Post, 2019a). Post (2019b) has recorded information on troop mobilisation. She distinguishes between no mobilisation, air mobilisations, naval mobilisations and land mobilisations (Post, 2019a). Her results suggest that the use of air mobilisations decreases the likelihood of successful compellence, because air mobilisations are not perceived as a costly signal (Post, 2019a). Furthermore, research by Sechser (2018, 335) suggests that not mobilising troops decreases the likelihood of successful compellence.

I define cheap types of troop mobilisation as cases where the challenger has (1) not mobilised troops, (2) has mobilised air troops, or (3) has mobilised air troops in conjunction with land or naval troops. One might argue that the last category should be considered as a costly type of troop mobilisation. However, there is empirical evidence that when air mobilisations are used in conjunction with other types of troop mobilisations, the likelihood of successful compellence is decreased (Post, 2019a). Therefore, I have chosen to consider this category as a cheap type of troop mobilisation. The MCT database contains 131 cases of cheap types of troop mobilisation and 111 cases of costly types of troop mobilisation (Sechser, 2011b; Post, 2019b).

Third, I will include an interaction term of democratic challenger and the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation as an independent variable. This will allow me to compare the effect of a democracy using a cheap (or costly) type of troop mobilisation to the effect of a non-democracy using a cheap (or costly) type of troop mobilisation (Field, 2013). As noted in the theory section, democratic leaders have more incentives to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. When a democratic leader uses costly types of troop mobilisation despite incentives to keep the costs of conflict low, he or she may signal more resolve than when a non-democracy uses costly types of troop mobilisation. To control for this possibility, I will include the interaction term of democratic challenger and the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation.

3.3.   Control variables

I will use several control variables, all based on existing literature (Vasquez, 1993; Huth, 1998; Sechser, 2011a; 2018; Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017; Post, 2019a). First, I will use two variables to control for the reputation-building hypothesis: contiguity and relative power (Sechser, 2018). According to the reputation-building hypothesis, target states are more likely to resist demands from powerful neighbours (Sechser, 2018). Contiguity is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the challenger and target share a land border (coded as 1) or not (coded as 0) (Post, 2019a). Relative power is measured by using Composite Indicator of National Capability (CINC) scores. CINC is a composite indicator, consisting of six measures of material power: (1) iron and steel production, (2) military expenditures, (3) military personnel, (4) energy consumption, (5) total population and (6) urban population (Singer, Bremer & Stuckey, 1972). The variable relative power indicates "the proportion of material capabilities controlled by the initiator in each dyad" (Post, 2019a, 881). It can be calculated by dividing the challenger's CINC score by the sum of the challenger's and the target's CINC score (Post, 2019b). Hence, a value close to 1 indicates a large power gap in favour of the challenger. A value around 0,5 indicates power parity. And a value close to 0 indicates a large power gap in favour of the target.

One could argue that CINC scores do not accurately measure a state's power (Beckley, 2018). Beckley (2018) has argued that CINC scores overestimate the power of poor, populated states. He has proposed a new indicator to power of states. This indicator can be calculated by multiplying the GDP of a state by the GDP per capita of a state. I have chosen to use CINC to measure relative power for two reasons. First, the indicator proposed by Beckley (2018) is relatively new. It has not been systematically applied by researchers. As a result, its predicting value is still unclear. Second, using CINC allows me to compare my results to the results of other studies (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018; Post, 2019a). Using another indicator may influence the results. If I would then arrive at different results than other studies (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018; Post, 2019a), I would not know what would cause the difference. Nevertheless, for future research it would be interesting to follow the developments of Beckley's (2018) indicator and use it to test its effect on the likelihood of successful compellence.

Second, I will control for the type of demand. Some authors have argued that territorial disputes are more prone to war than other types of disputes (Vasquez, 1993; Huth, 1998). If this is the case, we may expect a lower chance on successful compellence in cases with a territorial demand. The MCT database contains five types of demands that may affect

the likelihood of successful compellence (Sechser, 2011a). A challenger can demand (1) territory, (2) monetary reparations or other concessions, (3) removal of a person from the target's government, (4) policy changes or (5) something else. These types of demand are labelled territory, reparations, leadership, policy and other respectively. These categories are non-exclusive, meaning that a challenger can make several types of demands (Sechser, 2011a; 2013). The MCT database contains five dichotomous variables to indicate which demands were made in each dyad. A score of 1 indicates that the type of demand was made and a score of 0 indicates that the type of demand was not made (Sechser, 2011b). The MCT database contains 143 (59,1 percent) cases of territorial demands, 17 (7 percent) demands for reparations, 28 (11,6 percent) demands related to the leadership of the target state, 110 (45,5 percent) demands for policy changes and 51 (21,1 percent) other types of demands (Sechser, 2011b).

Third, I will control for the possession of nuclear weapons (Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017). Some authors argue "that the possession of nuclear weapons enhances a state's international influence" (Gartzke & Kroenig, 2009, 159) or that "the mere presence of nuclear weapons may exert a powerful coercive role in low-level militarized disputes" (Horowitz, 2009, 251). I will use information from Sechser and Fuhrmann (2017, 4) to code which states possess nuclear weapons in each year.[1] I have created two variables to control for the possession of nuclear weapons. The variable nuclear challenger indicates whether the challenger possesses nuclear weapons while it issues a threat (coded as 1) or does not (coded as 0). The variable nuclear target denotes whether the target state possesses nuclear weapons while it is being threatened (coded as 1) or does not (coded as 0). In 51 cases (21,1 percent), the challenger possessed nuclear weapons while issuing a threat (Sechser, 2011b; Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017). A state that possesses nuclear weapons has only been threatened twelve times (5 percent) (Sechser, 2011b; Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017).

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[1] Sechser and Fuhrmann (2017, 4) have not indicated in which year exactly South Africa has dismantled its nuclear arsenal. This only creates a possible problem for the coding of one case: a threat made by South Africa in 1994 (Sechser, 2011b). Since South Africa had already dismantled or begun to dismantle its nuclear arsenal at the time the threat was made, I have coded this case as if South Africa did not possess nuclear weapons at the time.

Table 1 Descriptive table

Variable	Number of observations	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	Standard deviation
Territory	242	0	1	0,59	0,493
Reparations	242	0	1	0,07	0,256
Leadership	242	0	1	0,12	0,321
Policy	242	0	1	0,45	0,499
Other	242	0	1	0,21	0,409
Relative power	242	0	1	0,674	0,309
Democratic challenger	242	0	1	0,36	0,482
Democratic target	242	0	1	0,24	0,425
Nuclear challenger	242	0	1	0,21	0,409
Nuclear target	242	0	1	0,05	0,218
Contiguous	242	0	1	0,49	0,501
Cheap mobilisation	242	0	1	0,54	0,499
Successful threat	242	0	1	0,43	0,497
Verbal threat	242	0	1	0,24	0,43
Air mobilisations	242	0	1	0,3	0,458
Naval mobilisations	242	0	1	0,28	0,45
Land mobilisations	242	0	1	0,63	0,484
Target fatalities	242	0	1	0,24	0,428
Compliance	242	0	2	0,84	0,96

4. Empirical results

In this section, I test my hypotheses. I start by researching whether democratic challengers use cheap types of troop mobilisation more often than nondemocratic challengers. Finally, I will use logistic regression analyses to test if the regime type of the challenger has a significant effect on the likelihood of successful compellence.

4.1. Hypothesis 1

In the previous section, I hypothesised that democratic leaders have more incentives than nondemocratic leaders to keep the costs of conflict low. As a result, they would have more incentives to use cheap types of troop mobilisation in order to prevent conflicts from escalating. Table 2 shows that 73,9 percent of the democratic challengers choose to employ cheap types of troop mobilisation instead of costly types of troop mobilisation. For nondemocratic challengers, this percentage is remarkably lower: 42,9 percent. This suggests that democratic challengers choose to use cheap types of troop mobilisation more often than nondemocratic challengers. Cheap types of troop mobilisation consists of two categories: no mobilisation and troop mobilisations involving air mobilisations. Table 3 shows that democratic challengers use both components of cheap types of troop mobilisations relatively more often than nondemocratic challengers.

Table 2 Crosstable of regime type and cheap/costly mobilisation

	Nondemocratic challenger		Democratic Challenger	
	Frequency	**Relative frequency**	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**
Cheap mobilisation	66	42,9%	65	73,9%
Costly mobilisation	88	57,1%	23	26,1%
Total	154	100%	88	100%

Table 3 Crosstable of regime type and types of mobilisation

	Nondemocratic challenger		Democratic Challenger	
	Frequency	**Relative frequency**	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**
Verbal	31	20,1%	28	31,8%
Air with Land and/or Naval mobilisation	35	22,7%	37	42,0%
Land and/or Naval mobilisation only	88	57,1%	23	26,1%
Total	154	99,9%	88	99,9%

Table 4 shows the results of two logistic regression analyses, with the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation as a dependent variable. Model 1 only includes the democratic challenger variable while in Model 2 control variables are added. Table 4 shows that democratic challengers are more likely to make use of cheap types of troop mobilisation. This result is statistically significant. When adding control variables, the effect remains significant (see Model 2). In sum, Tables 2 through 4 provide support for hypothesis 1, which states that democracies are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation.

Table 4 Logistic regression analysis of cheap mobilisation

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	-0,288	-0,083
	(0,163)	(0,541)
Democratic challenger	1,327***	0,835*
	(0,292)	(0,341)
Territory		-0,412
		(0,347)
Reparations		-1,055
		(0,633)
Leadership		-0,789
		(0,496)
Policy		-0,092
		(0,319)
Other		-0,225
		(0,394)
Relative power		0,628
		(0,514)
Democratic target		0,258
		(0,341)
Nuclear challenger		1,424**
		(0,490)
Nuclear target		-1,049
		(0,712)
Contiguous		-0,404
		(0,307)
-2LL	311,444	285,246
Cox and Snell's R^2	0,088	0,182
Nagelkerke's R^2	0,118	0,243
N	242	242

Note: binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.
***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

These results are an interesting elaboration of Post's (2019a) research. She has shown that the use of air mobilisations decreases the likelihood of successful compellence (Post, 2019a), but she has not investigated which states are more likely to use air mobilisations. Tables 2 through 4 show that democratic challengers are more likely to use air mobilisations or not mobilise at all. Furthermore, Table 4 shows that challengers that possess nuclear weapons are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. Future research can dig deeper into the question which states use cheap types of troop mobilisation. My results indicate that this is not random, but dependent on attributes of the challenger.

4.2.   Hypotheses 2

I have argued that the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of successful compellence (hypothesis 2). Furthermore, I have hypothesised that democratic challengers are less likely to successfully compel the target state (hypothesis 3). The dependent variable (successful compellence) is dichotomous. Therefore, a logistic regression should be used to empirically test hypotheses 2 and 3 (Field, 2013).

The results of several logistic regression analyses are shown in Tables 5 and 6. Models 1 through 4 are displayed in Table 5. Models 5 and 6 are shown in Table 6. Model 1 includes only the independent variable cheap mobilisation. Model 2 includes the variable cheap mobilisation and control variables. Model 3 only includes the independent variable democratic challenger. Model 4 includes the variable democratic challenger and control variables. Model 5 includes both independent variables and the interaction term. Model 6 includes all independent variables, the interaction term and the control variables.

Model 1 reports that the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation is negatively correlated to the likelihood of successful compellence. This means that the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of successful compellence. This result is statistically significant and holds when controlling for control variables (see Model 2). These results support hypothesis 2, which states that the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation decreases the likelihood of successful compellence.

My results elaborate on Post's (2019a) findings. She has shown that the use of air mobilisations decreases the likelihood of successful compellence (Post, 2019a). She has hypothesised that this was because air mobilisations are not perceived as a costly signal by the target state (Post, 2019a). My results show that this logic holds for not mobilising troops as well. Therefore, future research can distinguish between simply distinguish between cheap and costly types of troop mobilisation. In other words, future research can distinguish between

types of troop mobilisation that increase the likelihood of successful compellence and types of troop mobilisation that decrease the likelihood of successful compellence.

Table 5 Logistic regression analyses of compellence success

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Constant)	0,383*	0,854	-0,182	0,132
	(0,193)	(0,575)	(0,162)	(0,546)
Cheap mobilisation	-1,241***	-1,274***		
	(0,272)	(0,325)		
Democratic challenger			-0,233	0,071
			(0,271)	(0,344)
Democratic target		0,769*		0,593
		(0,359)		(0,342)
Democratic challenger x cheap mobilisation				
Territory		-0,592		-0,378
		(0,352)		(0,344)
Reparations		-0,062		0,150
		(0,575)		(0,576)
Leadership		2,061***		2,142***
		(0,567)		(0,562)
Policy		0,030		0,112
		(0,324)		(0,320)
Other		-0,382		-0,231
		(0,398)		(0,390)
Relative power		-0,474		-0,740
		(0,518)		(0,514)
Contiguous		-0,205		-0,007
		(0,309)		(0,306)
Nuclear challenger		-0,530		-0,911*
		(0,461)		(0,445)
Nuclear target		1,811*		1,927*
		(0,808)		(0,781)
-2LL	309,416	271,711	330,501	288,033
Cox and Snell's R^2	0,086	0,218	0,003	0,164
Nagelkerke's R^2	0,116	0,292	0,004	0,219
N	242	242	242	242

Note: binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.
***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

4.3. Hypothesis 3

I have hypothesised that democratic challengers are less likely to successfully compel the target state (hypothesis 3). Model 3 shows that the independent variable democratic challenger has no statistically significant effect on the likelihood of successful compellence. This suggests that the regime type of the challenger is not directly correlated to the likelihood of compellence success. This result holds when controlling for other factors (see Model 4). This means that hypothesis 3 can be rejected. There can also be no mediation effect, because that would require a correlation between the variables democratic challenger and successful compellence (Field, 2013). These results are in line with findings from previous studies (Downes & Sechser, 2012; Sechser, 2018).

Although hypothesis 3 can be rejected, there is empirical evidence suggesting that there is an indirect effect of democratic challengers on the likelihood of successful compellence. My results offer support for hypothesis 1 and 2. This means that democracies are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation, which in turn leads to a lower likelihood of successful compellence. So even though there is no direct effect of democratic challengers on the likelihood of successful compellence, the results suggest that there may be an indirect effect.

The regime type of the challenger does not have a direct effect on the likelihood of successful compellence. Instead, it has a more nuanced effect. This result is in line with findings from Viskupic and Atkinson (2018). They have shown that the regime type of the target state does not have a direct effect on reputation-building. However, the regime type of the target state does have an effect on reputation-building when the variable relative power is taken into account (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018). My findings are somewhat similar: I have found that the regime type of the challenger is only relevant when explaining what causes the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation.

4.4. Interaction term

Model 5 shows that the interaction term has no statistically significant effect on the likelihood of successful compellence. This result holds when controlling for other factors (see Model 6). This means that for the likelihood of successful compellence there is no significant difference between a democratic challenger using cheap types of troop mobilisation and a nondemocratic challenger using cheap types of troop mobilisation. Furthermore, the difference between the -2LogLikelihoods of Model 1 and 5 is only 1,28. This difference is not statistically significant, which means that Model 5 is no significant improvement over Model 1. This result holds

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when adding control variables (see Models 2 and 6). The difference in -2LogLikelihoods between Model 2 and 6 is only 0,972. This is also not statistically significant, meaning that Model 6 is no significant improvement over Model 2. We can conclude that the effect of the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation on the likelihood of successful compellence is not dependent on the regime type of the challenger.

Table 6 Logistic regression analyses of compellence success

Variable	Model 5	Model 6
(Constant)	0,274	0,733
	(0,215)	(0,591)
Cheap mobilisation	-1,107**	-1,296**
	(0,344)	(0,395)
Democratic challenger	0,552	0,441
	(0,502)	(0,580)
Democratic target		0,770*
		(0,363)
Democratic challenger	-0,604	-0,141
x cheap mobilisation	(0,631)	(0,723)
Territory		-0,548
		(0,357)
Reparations		-0,125
		(0,583)
Leadership		2,116***
		(0,573)
Policy		0,073
		(0,332)
Other		-0,314
		(0,405)
Relative power		-0,578
		(0,530)
Contiguous		-0,124
		(0,321)
Nuclear challenger		-0,598
		(0,479)
Nuclear target		1,827*
		(0,840)
-2LL	308,136	270,739
Cox and Snell's R^2	0,091	0,221
Nagelkerke's R^2	0,122	0,297
N	242	242

Note: binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.
***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

4.5. Other results

When looking at the control variables, we see that the variables leadership and nuclear target are statistically significant across all models (see Tables 5 and 6). The variable leadership indicates that the challenger has demanded that the target state removes or replaces one or more individuals from its government (Sechser, 2013, 3). Leadership is positively related to the likelihood of successful compellence. This means that this particular type of demand has a higher chance of being successful than other types of demand. Apparently, removing or replacing an individual from government is considered an acceptable price to pay in order to avoid military punishment (Viskupic & Atkinson, 2018, 441).

Nuclear target is also positively related to the likelihood of successful compellence. The effect is statistically significant across all models (see Tables 5 and 6). This means that threatening a state that possesses nuclear weapons increases the likelihood of successful compellence. This seems contra-intuitive at first. States that possess nuclear weapons are more often than not powerful states (Sechser and Fuhrmann, 2017). Therefore, it seems unlikely that nuclear powers can be easily bullied by other states. There are two possible explanations for why threats against nuclear powers are more successful. First, this result may be explained by the logic of reputation-building (Sechser, 2018). When a nuclear power gives in to a demand, this will probably not reduce its ability to provide security for its citizens.[2] After giving into the demand, the nuclear power is probably still able to defend itself with conventional and nuclear weapons (Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017). Therefore, most nuclear armed states hardly have to worry about future demands. Second, there may be a selection bias (Danilovic, 2001). Since nuclear weapons are a powerful tool for deterrence (Morgan, 2003; Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017), nuclear armed states are not being threatened frequently. The MCT database only contains twelve cases in which a nuclear armed state has been threatened (Sechser, 2011b). It could be the case that states are reluctant to challenge a nuclear power, i.e. nuclear powers are good at general deterrence (Danilovic, 2001; Morgan, 2003). However, if a challenger decides to threaten a nuclear power, it probably has good reasons to do so. For example, it could have high stakes in the dispute, it could have allies in the dispute, or it could feel like it has no other option (Danilovic, 2001).

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[2] The exception is of course giving into demands that make the state give up their nuclear arsenal or conventional weapons. However, it is unlikely that any state would give into such demands, since that would greatly reduce its security.

Conclusion

My research question was: what is the effect of the regime type of the challenger on the likelihood of successful compellence? I have hypothesised that democratic leaders will want to keep the costs of conflict low. In order to do so, they are more likely to choose cheap types of troop mobilisation. In turn, cheap types of troop mobilisation lead to a lower likelihood of successful compellence. The results of this study support hypothesis 1 and 2. I had also expected to observe that democracies have a lower chance on successful compellence, precisely because they use cheap types of troop mobilisation more often. However, there is no empirical evidence to support hypothesis 3. Therefore, it should be rejected. In sum, the results suggest that there is no direct effect of the regime type of the challenger on the likelihood of successful compellence. Instead, the regime type of the challenger is important in determining which types of troop mobilisation (cheap or costly) the challenger will employ. In turn, the type of troop mobilisation employed has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of successful compellence.

This research has contributed to the debate on the effect of regime type on the likelihood of successful compellence. The regime type of the challenger does not have a direct effect on the likelihood of successful compellence. Instead, the effect is indirect, via the use of cheap types of troop mobilisation. Furthermore, this study has advanced our knowledge of which states choose to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. This is a question that has not been asked before. My results suggest that democracies and states that possess nuclear weapons are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. Furthermore, my results suggest that democratic leaders do not only want to keep the costs of war low (Valentino, Huth & Croco, 2010), but the costs of conflict in general.

This last finding may be particularly interesting for policymakers, since we know that cheap signals (such as cheap types of troop mobilisation) decrease the likelihood of successful compellence (Pfundstein Chamberlain, 2016). Pfundstein Chamberlain (2016) has found that U.S. leaders have domestic political incentives to keep the costs of conflict low. My results suggest that these incentives not only apply to the U.S., but to other democracies as well. Bearing in mind that cheap signals decrease the likelihood of successful compellence, policymakers may be able to better predict the outcome of compellence situations. They can use this knowledge to assess the situation and weigh the domestic political incentives against the risk of unsuccessful compellence.

This research was restricted to interstate militarised compellent threats (Sechser, 2011a). That means that the conclusions of this study will not necessarily hold for other types

of threats. Future research will have to confirm whether my findings also apply to threats that involve non-state actors. Moreover, the conclusions of my study seem particularly limited to military threats instead of for example economic threats. The mobilisation of military troops can be used to back up military threats, but does not seem fit to back up other types of threats. For example, it is hard to imagine that the mobilisation of military troops can be used to render an economic threat more credible. Another limitation of this study is the limitation to compellent threats as opposed to deterrent threats. Deterrence and compellence differ in several respects (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003). Therefore, knowledge about deterrence does not always apply to compellence and vice versa (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003; Art & Greenhill, 2018).

This thesis has advanced our understanding of the relationship between regime type and compellence outcomes. In doing so, it has advanced our understanding of the factors affecting compellence outcomes. I have also taken a first step to identify which states are more likely to use cheap types of troop mobilisation. Future research may elaborate on this first step. The most important conclusion of this research is that the regime type of the challenger does indirectly affect the likelihood of successful compellence. Hopefully, future research will elaborate on my results and continue to advance our knowledge of compellence.

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