

Autocracy 2.0: Subverting Democracy in Modern Africa: Annotated Table of Contents

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Part I. Life as a Modern Autocrat

Chapter 1. New Challenges, New Constraints

The dissertation's introductory chapter situates the project in the broader study of autocratic politics. It identifies the new challenges and new constraints confronted by Africa's post-Cold War autocrats. To do so, it draws from two papers included in the writing sample: "Elections, Protests, and Focal Moments" and "Repression and Foreign Aid in Autocracies."

Chapter 2. The Rise, Fall, and Rise of Denis Sassou Nguesso

Congo's history, like that of most autocracies, has been written by the victors. To provide context for the story that follows, this chapter clarifies Sassou Nguesso's rise to power in 1979, his removal in 1992, and his role in provoking the 1997 civil war that ended with his return to power. The chapter is based on archival research and key informant interviews in Congo and France.

Part II. Elite Compliance and Betrayal

Since World War II, nearly 70% of autocrats removed by non-constitutional means – *coups d'état* and assassinations – have fallen to regime insiders: the elites to whom they delegate authority. Africa's modern autocrats must prevent elite conspiracies without the easy recourse to violence enjoyed by their predecessors. More, they must also prevent frustrated elites from defecting to the opposition during moments of crisis. Regular elections – however flawed – render these moments more common. Part II features four chapters that explore Sassou Nguesso's efforts to foster elite compliance.

Chapter 3. Recruitment and the Politics of Hope

This chapter argues that Africa's modern autocrats populate their regimes based on the interests of those outside looking in. During the Cold War, autocrats relied on single party regimes to credibly define the pool of candidates for senior positions. Deprived of a single party, Sassou Nguesso created an "in-group" based on geography. In so doing, he fashioned a "politics of hope" that

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induces loyalty from those elites who are members of the in-group but currently excluded from the regime. Sassou Nguesso's in-group, this chapter shows, consists of elites born within an 85 mile radius of his home village. It then presents a range of statistical evidence that in-group members engage in less anti-regime activity *even when* excluded from the regime.

Chapter 4. Guarding the Guardians

With his governing coalition fixed, the autocrat must decide whether to form a parallel government: informal advisors who shadow formal appointees, creating competition for the autocrat's favor. This chapter argues that, for parallel governments to foster elite competition, paired formal and informal appointees must eagerly report each other's malfeasance; moreover, by doubling the regime's wage bill, they are available only to affluent autocrats. After mapping Sassou Nguesso's parallel government apparatus and identifying ethnic or family cleavages between all possible elite pairs, the chapter shows that cleavages between elites increase the probability of pairing. The chapter then shows that the size of Sassou Nguesso's parallel government increases with oil revenue.

Chapter 5. Social Institutions and the Politics of Stigma

By affirming the possibility of a post-regime future, regular elections foster elite defections from the coalition. To prevent them, this chapter finds, Africa's modern autocrats build social institutions. By forcing elites to join an institution with no policy making authority and no pretense to public service – an institution that citizens know exists only to advance the autocrat's personal interests – autocrats identify potential defectors as collaborators in the eyes of citizens and compromise their post-regime political careers. Sassou Nguesso's social institution takes the form of a freemasonry lodge, created just before he seized power in 1997. After providing evidence that social institution members are drawn from high level appointees, the chapter shows that lodge membership compels elites to engage in less anti-regime behavior.

Chapter 6. To Shuffle or Not to Shuffle

Scholars often believe that autocrats arbitrarily shuffle elites among government posts to consolidate authority. In contrast, this chapter argues that shuffling marks autocratic weakness: By shortening elite time horizons, shuffling strengthens incentives for elite malfeasance. Autocrats who can secure elite compliance with other techniques – such as parallel governments and elite social institutions – incentivize elite loyalty by rewarding competence with tenure. Conditional on superior monitoring techniques, appointees to the regime's most sensitive positions are granted longer tenures than their counterparts, since an autocrat has a particular interest in their loyalty. After pairing elites who are similar in all respects save the importance of their post to Sassou Nguesso's hold on power, the chapter employs a matching estimator to measure the causal effect of the high level appointment on an elite's expected tenure in office.

Part III. Popular Suppression Without Violence

In post-Cold War Africa regular elections constitute “focal moments, when the citizenry is engaged,

discontent is palpable, and frustration quickly coalesces into protest. By sanctioning human rights violations, Western creditors force Africa's autocrats to survive this recurrent opportunities for collective action without easy recourse to violence. Part III features three chapters that explore how Sassou Nguesso suppresses unrest without employing violence.

Chapter 7. Electoral Alliances, Fraud, and Focal Moments

Congo's opposition politics are marked by two puzzles. First, despite easy recourse to fraud, Sassou Nguesso forms costly electoral alliances with opposition parties, consummated with ministerial posts that could otherwise reward loyalists. Second, virtually all Congolese citizens contend "there is no true political opposition," despite the opposition's strident criticism. These twin puzzles, this chapter argues, share a common solution: Autocrats employ costly electoral alliances not to generate popular support, but to undermine opposition parties with the greatest capacity to mobilize violent protests. After establishing that Sassou Nguesso targets ethnically homogenous political parties for electoral alliances, the chapter employs a matching estimator to demonstrate that these alliances cause co-opted parties to be undermined by splinter parties of frustrated dissidents.

Chapter 8. Barons, Patronage, and Local Elections

Elections are dangerous for autocrats, in part, because they enable candidates to build patronage networks among the local population. Autocrats know this, and, this chapter argues, they organize elections accordingly. When an autocrat believes his blessing is more important for politicians' careers than popular support, the autocrat organizes fair elections in which his loyalists compete to out-mobilize the population on his behalf; in turn, the popular goodwill generated by campaign handouts creates a veneer of popular support for the autocrat and renders popular uprisings less likely. When popular support is more useful for elite career advancement than the autocrat's blessing, the autocrat organizes elections in which a single loyalist candidate's victory is guaranteed with fraud, generating less popular goodwill for both the candidate and the autocrat. The chapter assesses these hypotheses with a dataset of each of Congo's 404 parliamentary elections since 1997.

Chapter 9. Making Violence Credible and Local Policy Effective

Given the extent of media coverage and the international community's focus on human rights, popular suppression is more difficult now than ever. Citizens in autocracies know this, and are emboldened. How do autocrats render suppression credible? This chapter argues that autocrats confront a trade-off when appointing regional executives: native sons produce superior policy, while foreign born executives more eagerly suppress popular protests. Employing a dataset that records biographic and professional data for 12,000 members of the security apparatus, the chapter finds that regions historically friendly to Sassou Nguesso are more likely to be governed and policed by native sons.

Part IV. The Way Forward

The manuscript concludes with a pair of chapters that consider autocratic succession and future directions for research.

Chapter 10. Of Succession and Hostages

The most successful autocrats must countenance their own succession. Yet for two reasons the problem of autocratic succession is even more difficult than scholars recognize. First, the sovereign national conferences of the early 1990s bequeathed to contemporary African autocrats nominally democratic constitutions, which include presidential term limits; the process of amending a constitution provides another “focal moment” for popular unrest. Second, insofar as an autocrat’s hold on power depends upon a small number of regime insiders, these insiders can essentially take the autocrat hostage: to force him to remain in office long after he prefers to vacate, with all the personal risks doing so entails. This chapter argues that autocrats are particularly likely to be taken hostage when the regime is factionally divided and property rights are insecure.

Chapter 11. Conclusion

The dissertation’s conclusion proposes a range of topics for future research.