Supplementary Appendix for "Charismatic Leaders and Democratic Backsliding"

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Contents

A Proofs of Theoretical Propositions

A.1 Characterization of the Subgame Perfect Equilibrium to the Model

The following will characterize the unique subgame perfect equilibrium (SPE) to the model.

As noted in the main text, a SPE will consist of: (1) a mapping from the typespace for L, $\{\underline{\nu}, \bar{\nu}\}$ and κ into I's choice of a high- or low-charisma leader, $c : \mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathbb{R}_+ \to \{\underline{\nu}, \bar{\nu}\}$, (2) a mapping from his value of ν into each possible L's choice to backslide, $a : \mathbb{R}_+ \to \{0, 1\}$, (2) a mapping from a and κ into a I's choice to retain $r : \{0, 1\} \times \mathbb{R}_+ \to \{0, 1\}$.

Preceding via backward induction, we begin with I's retention decision. If, in the first round of play, $a = 0$, I's best response is to retain the incumbent leader (setting $r = 1$). This follows from $\rho(\nu) > \rho(0) \; \forall \; \nu > 0$.

However, if $a = 1$, removing the incumbent forestalls the backsliding episode, sparing I the cost κ. But, such an action also ensures that I goes into the next election with a worsened chance of retaining office $\rho(0)$ as opposed to $\rho(\nu)$. It also implies that I forgoes the opportunity to guarantee that a leader of her preferred type (θ_I) is in power, which happens with certainty when the *autogolpe* succeeds (with probability σ). The cost for being associated with an episode of backsliding exceeds the expected benefit from retaining the leader iff:

$$\kappa \geq D[(1 - \sigma) + \sigma\rho(\nu) - \rho(0)].$$

Notice that substituting $\bar{\nu}$ and $\underline{\nu}$ into this expression gives expressions that appear in Lemma 1. Define the generic threshold in κ given by the above as $\underline{\kappa}(\nu)$.

Notice further that, for $D > 0$, $\sigma \in (0, 1)$ and given the restrictions on $\rho(\cdot, \cdot)$, $\underline{k} \in \mathbb{R}_+$. Hence, for $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\nu)$, I has a dominant strategy of setting $r = 1$; whereas, if $\kappa \geq \underline{\kappa}(\nu)$ I's best response is to set $r = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ if } a = 0 \\ 0 \text{ otherwise.} \end{cases}$. Notice further that, given $\rho'(\nu) > 0$, the RHS of this expression is increasing in ν.

We can now proceed to consider L's decision regarding policy in the first period of play. In any circumstance in which I responds to $a = 1$ by setting $r = 0$, L's attempt at backsliding is bound to fail, and she is removed from power. This leads both to a loss of ego rents and to a reduced probability that a leader of L's preferred type ($\theta_t = \theta_I$) is in power, given $\rho(0) < \rho(\nu)$. So, L will only set $a = 1$ in the event that I will respond with quiescence ($r = 1$). This only occurs if $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\nu)$.

If $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\nu)$, L's best response is to set $a = 1$ for any $\rho(\nu) \leq 1$. Since $\rho(\nu)$ is a probability, this condition is always satisfied. Backsliding is a best response for $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\nu)$ and $a = 0$ otherwise.

We can now turn to I's choice of the type of L, $c \in \{\underline{\nu}, \bar{\nu}\}$. This choice has a direct effect on I's utility insofar as the charisma of the leader translates directly into L's probability of being elected $\rho'(\nu) > 0$. Hence, *ceteris paribus*, L always prefers a higher value of ν.

But, as documented above, ν also has an indirect effect insofar as $\underline{\kappa}'(\nu) > 0$. The minimal cost necessary for the party to credibly threaten L is rising in ν.

Given this monotonicity, $\kappa > \underline{\kappa}(\bar{\nu})$ implies $\kappa > \underline{\kappa}(\underline{\nu})$. For such a value of κ, the party responds to $a = 1$ with $r = 0$ regardless of L's type. Given this, L's best response is to set $a = 0$. Notice that substituting $\bar{\nu}$ into the expression for $\underline{\kappa}(\cdot)$ gives us $\tilde{\kappa}$ from Lemma 1.

Conversely, $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\underline{\nu})$ implies $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\bar{\nu})$. Given this, I responds by setting $r = 1$ regardless of L's choice of a and regardless of L's type. Given this, L's best response is to set $a = 1$.

Substituting $\underline{\nu}$ into the expression for $\underline{\kappa}(\cdot)$ gives us the expression for $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ from Lemma 1.

In both scenarios, the only effect of ν on I's utility in equilibrium is its direct effect on the probability of election in all histories where $B = 0$. So, I prefers to choose a charismatic leader $c = \bar{\nu}$. This then gives us Lemma 1.

But, there is a possibility that the direct and indirect effects of ν on I's utility are at cross purposes. It is possible that $\underline{\kappa}(\bar{\nu}) > \kappa > \underline{\kappa}(\underline{\nu})$. For this configuration of values, I's best response is to set $r = 1$ regardless of a for charismatic types; but to set $r = 0$ when $a = 1$ for dull leaders. Thus, a charismatic leader would backslide and set $a = 1$ in equilibrium; while a dull leader would best respond by setting $a = 0$.

We then must compare I's utility from certain democratic survival with a dull leader, to that of a certain backsliding episode under a charismatic one. I will prefer the former over the latter iff:

$$
\begin{aligned}
[1 + \rho(\underline{\nu})]D &\geq D[2 - \sigma(1 - \rho(\bar{\nu}))] - \kappa \\
\kappa &\geq D[1 - \sigma + \sigma\rho(\bar{\nu}) - \rho(\underline{\nu})].
\end{aligned}
$$

$\hat{\kappa}$, as defined in Lemma 2, is then defined as the value where this expression holds at equality.

Notice that, given the monotonicity of $\rho(\cdot)$, $\tilde{\kappa} > \hat{\kappa}$. So, there always exists a region wherein I appoints dull leaders in the hopes of retaining control.

By contrast, the comparison between the values of $\hat{\kappa}$ and $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ is ambiguous as to which is larger than the other. ($\hat{\kappa}$ exceeds $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ when $\sigma[\rho(\bar{\nu}) - \rho(\underline{\nu})] > \rho(\underline{\nu}) - \rho(0)$.)

If $\hat{\kappa} > \underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ then, for all values $\kappa \in [\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}]$, I prefers a charismatic leader, even if this means a loss of control. I chooses a charismatic type for $\kappa \in [\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa})$, and sets $r = 1$ for all realizations of a. Given this, L sets $a = 1$. For $\kappa \in [\hat{\kappa}, \tilde{\kappa}]$, L chooses a dull type, and sets $r = 0$ in response to $a = 1$ and $r = 1$ otherwise. Given this, L sets $a = 0$.

If, on the other hand, $\underset{\sim}{\kappa} > \hat{\kappa}$, I looses the ability to control L before it looses the desire to do so. I chooses a dull type of leader for all $\kappa \in [\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \tilde{\kappa}]$, and sets $r = 0$ in response to $a = 1$ and $r = 1$ otherwise. Given this L sets $a = 0$. This then completes the proof of Lemma 2 and the characterization of the subgame perfect equilibrium.

Remark 1 follows directly from the definitions of $\hat{\kappa}$ and $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ above. Lemmas 1 and 2 establish that I selects charismatic leaders whenever $\kappa < \max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}$, as well as the fact that, for these sets of values, I's equilibrium strategy is to set $r = 1 \; \forall \; a$. These Lemmas also establish that backsliding never takes place in equilibrium for $\kappa \geq \max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}$. $\square$

A.2 Proof of Proposition 1

Claim:

(a) The thresholds $\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}, \tilde{\kappa}\}$ are all rising in polarization. So is the probability of democratic backsliding and autocratic reversion.

(b) The conditional probability of backsliding given the selection of a charismatic leader $Pr(a = 1|\nu = \bar{\nu})$ is rising in polarization. The probability of backsliding given the selection of a dull leader is fixed and equal to zero for all values of polarization. Therefore, the relationship

between charismatic leadership and backsliding, givne by $Pr(a = 1|\nu = \bar{\nu}) - Pr(a = 1|\nu = \underline{\nu})$, is rising in D.

Proof:

(a) All three thresholds take the form $D[1 - \rho(b) - \sigma(1 - \rho(a))]$ where $a > b$. Given $\sigma \in (0, 1)$ and the monotonicity of $\rho(\cdot)$, this quantity is strictly positive. The partial of this term with respect to D is similarly strictly positive. Hence, all three thresholds $\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}, \tilde{\kappa}\}$ rise in D. From Remark 1 we can see that backsliding takes place in the extended model iff $\kappa < \max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}$. Since both thresholds rise in D, the probability that κ falls below either threshold must be rising in D. $\square$

(b) $Pr(a = 1|\nu = \bar{\nu}) = \frac{Pr(a=1 \cap \nu=\bar{\nu})}{Pr=\nu=\bar{\nu}}$. From the characterization of the equilibrium, above, $Pr(a = 1 \cap \nu = \bar{\nu}) = F_\kappa(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\})$. Whereas, $Pr(\nu = \bar{\nu}) = F_\kappa(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\}) + 1 - F_\kappa(\tilde{\kappa})$.

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial D} \frac{F_\kappa(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\})}{1 - F_\kappa(\tilde{\kappa}) + F_\kappa(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\})} \propto f_k(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\}) \frac{\partial \max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\}}{\partial D}[1 - F(\tilde{\kappa})] + f_k(\tilde{\kappa}) \frac{\partial \tilde{\kappa}}{\partial D} F_k(\max\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}\}).$$

Given that $\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}$, and $\tilde{\kappa}$ are all increasing in D, this expression is greater than zero. This, coupled with the fact that $Pr(a = 1|\nu = \underline{\nu})$ is fixed an equal to zero (from the characterization of the equilibrium above) completes the proof. $\square$

A.3 Proof of Proposition 2

Claim:

(a) All three thresholds $\{\underset{\sim}{\kappa}, \hat{\kappa}, \tilde{\kappa}\}$ are falling in democratic consolidation. Hence, the probability of party personalization, democratic backsliding, and autocratic reversion are falling in σ.

(b) The range of values of κ for which the incumbent party chooses a dull leader is expanding in democratic consolidation.

(c) $\hat{\kappa} - \underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ is increasing in consolidation. In other words, if a backsliding episode takes place in a consolidate democracy, this is more likely to result from the party's deliberate abandonment of its gatekeeping role, than if a backsliding episode takes place in an unconsolidated democracy.

(d) Conditional on the party being able to control a dull, but not a charismatic, leader; the party 'gives up' and nonetheless selects a charismatic leader for a wider range of values of κ as consolidation increases. $\frac{\tilde{\kappa} - \max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}}{\tilde{\kappa} - \underset{\sim}{\kappa}}$ is falling in σ.

Proof:

(a) All three thresholds take the form $D[1-\rho(b)-\sigma(1-\rho(a))]$ where $a>b$. The first partial of this term with respect to σ, $-D[1-\rho(a)]<0$ given $\rho(\cdot)\in(0,1)$ and $D>0$. From Remark 1, we can define party personalization as $\kappa<\max\{\hat{\kappa},\underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}$, and see that backsliding and reversion take place only when κ is in this range. Given $\hat{\kappa}$ and $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ are falling in σ, then so is the probability that κ lies in this range.

(b) The range of values of κ for which I selects a dull leader is defined as $[\max\{\hat{\kappa},\underset{\sim}{\kappa}\},\tilde{\kappa}]$. All three thresholds are falling in σ, and $\hat{\kappa}$ and $\tilde{\kappa}$ fall at identical rates. $\frac{\partial\tilde{\kappa}}{\partial\sigma}=-D[1-\rho(\bar{\nu})]=\frac{\partial\hat{\kappa}}{\partial\sigma}$. So, if $\hat{\kappa}>\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$, this range is invariant.

However, $\frac{\partial\underset{\sim}{\kappa}}{\partial\sigma}=-D[1-\rho(\underline{\nu})]$. This term is strictly less than the first partials for the other two thresholds. Moreover, $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}>\hat{\kappa}$ iff $\sigma[\rho(\bar{\nu})-\rho(\underline{\nu})]>\rho(\underline{\nu})-\rho(0)$. This latter condition can never be satisfied as $\sigma\to 0$. For low values of σ, $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}>\hat{\kappa}$, and this inequality reverses itself as σ rises.

So, for all values of σ such that $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}>\hat{\kappa}$, the bottom threshold of the range for which dull types are selected is falling more rapidly that the top threshold. Hence the region expands. Once $\hat{\kappa}>\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$, the upper and lower thresholds fall at the same rate. So the range of values where dull types are selected expands (weakly) in σ.

(c) $\hat{\kappa}-\underset{\sim}{\kappa}=D[\sigma\rho(\bar{\nu})-\rho(\underline{\nu})(1+\sigma)+\rho(0)]$ The first partial of this term with respect to σ is $D(\rho(\bar{\nu})-\rho(\underline{\nu}))$. Given $\rho(\bar{\nu})>\rho(\underline{\nu})$, this claim hods for all admissible parameter values.

(d) $\frac{\tilde{\kappa}-\max\{\hat{\kappa},\underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}}{\tilde{\kappa}-\underset{\sim}{\kappa}}=\min\{1,\frac{\rho(\underline{\nu})-\rho(0)}{\sigma[\rho(\bar{\nu})-\rho(\underline{\nu})]}\}$. Trivially, this expression is falling in σ for all values of $\hat{\kappa}>\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$. □

A.4 The Returns to Charisma

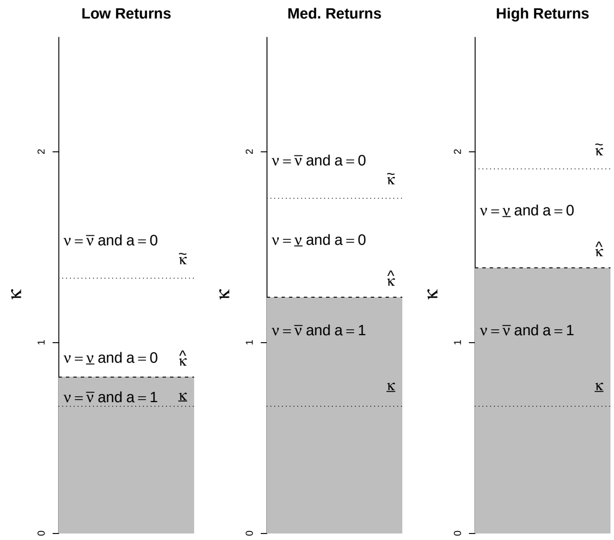
Proposition 6. *In the extended model, the thresholds $\{\hat{\kappa},\tilde{\kappa}\}$ are strictly increasing, and increasing at the same rate, in the electoral returns to charisma $\rho(\bar{\nu})$. The threshold $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ is constant in this term. Hence, the probability of democratic backsliding and autocratic reversion strictly rise in the returns to charisma.*

Proof: $\frac{\partial\tilde{\kappa}}{\partial\rho(\bar{\nu})}=D\sigma=\frac{\partial\hat{\kappa}}{\partial\rho(\bar{\nu})}$. Whereas $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}=D[(1-\sigma)+\sigma\rho(\underline{\nu})-\rho(0)]$ is invariant in this term.

Given that Remark 1 finds that backsliding takes place iff $\kappa<\max\{\hat{\kappa},\underset{\sim}{\kappa}\}$, the fact that $\hat{\kappa}$ is rising in $\rho(\bar{\nu})$ indicates that the probability of autocratic reversion also rises in this term. □

The results of Proposition 6 are presented graphically in Figure A1. $\hat{\kappa}$ and $\tilde{\kappa}$ both rise. The returns to charisma do not affect the party's ability to control dull leaders; however, the threshold $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ is invariant.

Figure A1: Comparative Statics: Returns to Charisma



Plots of the parameter space in the extended model where $D = 2$, $\sigma = 0.9$, $\underline{\nu} = 0.3$, and $\rho(\cdot)$ is a gamma density with shape and scale parameters 1. In the leftmost plot, $\bar{\nu} = 1$; in the middle plot, $\bar{\nu} = 2$; and in the rightmost plot, $\bar{\nu} = 3$. Regions marked with vertical lines depict instances in which backsliding takes place $a = 1$ in equilibrium, and democracy probabilistically collapses (with probability $1 - \sigma$).

One implication is that as $\rho(\bar{\nu})$ increases, so too does the size of the parameter space where the party voluntarily forsakes control. The party chooses to elevate a charismatic leader, despite the risks to democracy, in instances where the party would be able to control a dull type. Not only does an increase in the returns to charisma increase the risks to democracy, it also increases the range of values of κ where this is a *choice* adopted by the party.

A.5 The Incumbent Party's Popularity

Proposition 7. *The thresholds $\tilde{\kappa}$ and $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ are both falling in the incumbent party's popularity independent of its leader $\rho(0)$. $\hat{\kappa}$ is invariant in this term. This then implies:*

- *The probability of backsliding conditional on the nomination of a charismatic candidate is falling in $\rho(0)$.*
- *The range of values in κ for which a party nominates charismatic leader who will backslide rather than a dull leader it can control is rising in $\rho(0)$.*

Proof: From Lemma 1, we have $\tilde{\kappa} = D[1 - \sigma + \sigma\rho(\bar{\nu}) - \rho(0)]$ and $\underset{\sim}{\kappa} = D[1 - \sigma + \sigma\rho(\underline{\nu}) - \rho(0)]$. Clearly both terms are decreasing in $\rho(0)$.

From Lemma 2, $\hat{\kappa} = D[1 - \sigma + \sigma\rho(\bar{\nu}) - \rho(\underline{\nu})]$. This term is clearly invariant in $\rho(0)$.

This then gives us the first portion of the proposition. Note further, from the definition of the equilibrium, that the probability a charismatic leader is nominated is $1 - F_\kappa(\tilde{\kappa}) + F_\kappa(\max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\})$.

Whereas, the probability that $a = 1$ is given by $F_\kappa(\max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\})$. Hence the conditional probability of backsliding given the nomination of a charismatic leader is $Pr(a = 1|c = \bar{\nu}) = \frac{F_\kappa(\max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\})}{1-F_\kappa(\tilde{\kappa})+F_\kappa(\max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa}\})}$. Given that $\tilde{\kappa}$ is falling in $\rho(0)$, $1 - F_k(\tilde{\kappa})$ is rising in $\rho(0)$. Given that $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ is falling in $\rho(0)$, and $\hat{\kappa}$ is invariant, $F_\kappa(\max\{\hat{\kappa}, \underset{\sim}{\kappa})$ is either falling or constant in this term. Hence, $Pr(a = 1|c = \bar{\nu})$ is falling in $\rho(0)$. This then completes the second portion of the proposition.

Finally, the space $\hat{\kappa} - \underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ defines the range of realizations of κ for which I sets $c = \bar{\nu}$ knowing that this will result in $a = 1$, despite the fact the party could credibly control a dull leader. This space is given by $D[\sigma\rho(\bar{\nu}) - \rho(\underline{\nu})(1 + \sigma) + \rho(0)]$, which is clearly expanding in σ. □

A.6 Model Extension: Electoral Costs from Backsliding

We now turn our attention to alternative parameterizations of the costs to backsliding. We first consider the possibility that the electorate punishes the incumbent party for backsliding episodes that go unchecked. We treat this punishment as electoral. So, in any history in time $t = 2$ where democracy survives ($B = 0$), we now assume the probability that I is reelected is now given by $[1 - ar\lambda]\rho(\nu \times r)$. $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ captures the extent punishment for backsliding, which is only suffered following a backsliding episode $a = 1$ in which I retains the incumbent $r = 1$.

Importantly, since the electorate only punishes when a backsliding leader is retained, this punishment is shared by *both* the incumbent party I and the guilty leader L.

We can then proceed to characterize the subgame perfect equilibrium to this interaction, which closely follows the characterization in Section A.1. As there, we begin with I's decision to retain. Clearly, it is a best response to retain following $a = 0$. Following $a = 1$, the relevant expression for when I prefers to respond with $r = 0$ is now given by:

$$\kappa \geq D[(1 - \sigma) + \sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\nu) - \rho(0)]$$

which allows us to redefine the threshold in Section A.1 as $\underline{\kappa}(\nu, \lambda)$, which is a monotonic decreasing function in λ. For all $\kappa \geq \underline{\kappa}(\nu, \lambda)$, I's best response to $a = 1$ is to remove (set $r = 0$); for κ less than this value, I will retain for any choice of a.

As before, L's best response in any setting where I's strategy involves removal following $a = 1$ is to set $a = 0$. *But*, in this setting, it is possible that the leader is unwilling to backslide even if he knows no punishment will be forthcoming from the party. This will take place if the electoral sanctioning from the populace is sufficiently strong (λ is sufficiently high).

L's best response is to set $a = 0$ even when $\kappa < \underline{\kappa}(\nu, \lambda)$ when:

$$[1 + \rho(\nu)](\phi + D) \geq [1 + \sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\nu) + (1 - \sigma)](\phi + D)$$
$$\lambda \geq \frac{[1 - \rho(\nu)](1 - \sigma)}{\sigma\rho(\nu)}.$$

Define this threshold in λ as $\bar{\lambda}(\nu)$. Substituting $\bar{\lambda}(\nu)$ into the expression for $\underline{\kappa}(\nu, \bar{\lambda})$ yields $\kappa > D[\rho(\nu) - \rho(0)]$. Given $\rho(\nu) > \rho(0)$ and $D > 0$, there exist values $\kappa \in \mathbb{R}_+$ such that this inequality fails to hold. It is possible for vertical accountability to constrain L even where horizontal accountability fails.

Notice further that, given $\rho'(\nu) > 0$, $\bar{\lambda}'(\nu) < 0$. The higher L's charisma, the more he has to loose from electoral punishment. So, the more effective vertical accountability. It therefore follows that if dull candidates are constrained by vertical accountability $(\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\underline{\nu}))$, so too are charismatic candidates $(\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu}))$

We now must characterize I's choice of dull or charismatic leader. We begin with the following lemma:

Lemma 1. *If $\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, I will always choose a charismatic leader $c = \bar{\nu}$. Given $\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, this leader will set $a = 0$, and will be retained.*

Proof: Trivially, from the above, if $\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\underline{\nu})$, both dull and charismatic leaders are constrained by vertical accountability. Given this, their best response is to set $a = 0$, and I will respond by retaining on the equilibrium path (for any value κ). Given this, the choice of leader only affects I's utility through the direct effect on the probability of election – which is always rising in the leader's charisma. So, I always sets $c = \bar{\nu}$.

However, it remains to establish I's best response when $\bar{\lambda}(\underline{\nu}) > \lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$. Clearly, if κ is sufficiently high that the party will check any move by dull candidates to set $a = 1$, the equilibrium is unaffected. $a = 0$ for both types in equilibrium – the charismatic types are checked by the electorate, the dull by the party – and the party prefers to set $c = \bar{\nu}$ for electoral gain.

If κ is sufficiently low that the party won't check backsliding by the dull leader, however, L's planning is more complicated. If it selects a charismatic type, $a = 0$ and it will face the certainty of an election. If it selects a dull type, $a = 1$ and there will be a backsliding episode. We need to establish that I prefers the former to the latter, which will be the case if:

$$D[1 + \rho(\bar{\nu})] \geq D[1 + \sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\underline{\nu}) + (1 - \sigma)] - \kappa$$

which will hold $\forall\ \kappa$ if:

$$\rho(\bar{\nu}) \geq \sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\underline{\nu}) + (1 - \sigma).$$

The RHS of this expression is monotonic and falling in λ. We have assumed $\lambda \in [\bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu}), \bar{\lambda}(\underline{\nu})]$. Substituting the minimal value in this range the inequality above and simplifying, we are left with $\rho(\bar{\nu}) > \rho(\underline{\nu})$, which is true by assumption.

So, in all settings where $\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, I prefers to appoint a charismatic leader. $\square$

Given Lemma 1, we can complete our characterization of the equilibrium by noting that if $\lambda \geq \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, in equilibrium, $c = \bar{\nu},\ a = 0$ and, on the equilibrium path, $r = 1$. For values of $\lambda < \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, equilibrium behavior corresponds precisely to that in the baseline.

Moreover, since the expression $D[(1 - \sigma) + \sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\nu) - \rho(0)]$ is strictly positive for all values of $\lambda < \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, our comparative static results examining the movement of $\tilde{\kappa},\ \underset{\sim}{\kappa}$ and $\hat{\kappa}$ with respect to D and σ are unchanged. Given that these thresholds are all monotonic and decreasing in λ, a simple envelope theorem result indicates that our comparative static predictions could be extended to this alternative cost parameter.

A.7 Model Extension: Party Elite Cost to Autocracy

We now turn our attention to another potential cost, this unique to the party I: The party elite may suffer some cost to democratic breakdown $\chi > 0$. That is, members of the elite gain from having their preferred type of leader in office (D), but, they suffer a cost from the loss of their prerogatives under strongman rule.

Let I's utility then be given by:

$$u_I = D[1 + E + B(1 - E)] - B\chi - ark.$$

All other aspects of the extension are identical to that in our earlier extension above.

Proceeding via backward induction, I (as always) prefers to retain L after a choice of $a = 0$. After $a = 1$, I prefers to remove L if:

$$\kappa \geq D[\sigma(1 - \lambda)\rho(\nu) - \rho(0)] + (1 - \sigma)(D - \chi).$$

Notice that the threshold value of κ such that this expression holds at equality is monotonic and decreasing in χ.

Moreover, for all values of $\lambda < \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$ as defined above, the threshold value of κ such that this expression is satisfied at equality is monotonic and increasing in D. Hence, we could redefine this expression as a threshold in χ and find that this threshold is monotonic and increasing in D. As this expression is the basis for our threshold values $\tilde{\kappa}$, $\underset{\sim}{\kappa}$, and $\hat{\kappa}$, our claims in Proposition 1 translate directly into the extended model.

However, the threshold value of κ such that the above expression holds at equality is monotonically decreasing in σ only if $\chi < D[1-(1-\lambda)\rho(\nu)]$. Define $\bar{\chi} = D\{1-[1-\bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})]\rho(\underline{\nu})\}$. Note that for $\lambda > \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})$, the thresholds in κ are irrelevant, since – from the above – $c = \bar{\nu}$ and $a = 0$ on the equilibrium path regardless of I's punishment strategy when λ exceeds this value. Moreover, the expression $D[1 - (1 - \lambda)\rho(\nu)]$ is strictly falling in ν. So, if $\chi < \bar{\chi} = D\{1 - [1 - \bar{\lambda}(\bar{\nu})]\rho(\underline{\nu})\}$ the first partial with respect to σ is negative for all relevant portions of the parameter space – our comparative statics from Proposition 2 are unchanged.

B Empirical Illustration: Additional Results

B.1 Descriptive Graphs for Hypothesis 2

Figures B1 and B2 assess descriptively our expectations in hypothesis 2 for, respectively, party anti-pluralism and personalism. The graphs plot these variables against the *Person of the Leader* variable (net of country and year fixed effects), separately in polities with below-average political polarization (panel a) and above-average polarization (panel b). In both figures, the positive association with leader charisma is stronger in more highly polarized societies.

Figure B1: Leader Charisma and Party Anti-Pluralism, by Political Polarization

(a) Below-Average Polarization (b) Above-Average Polarization

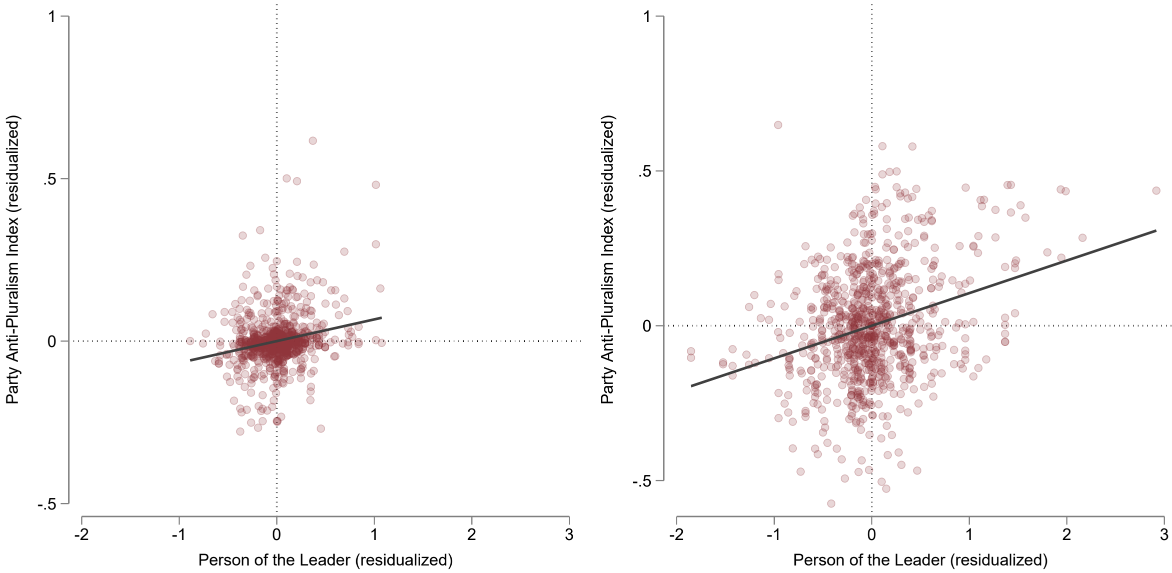
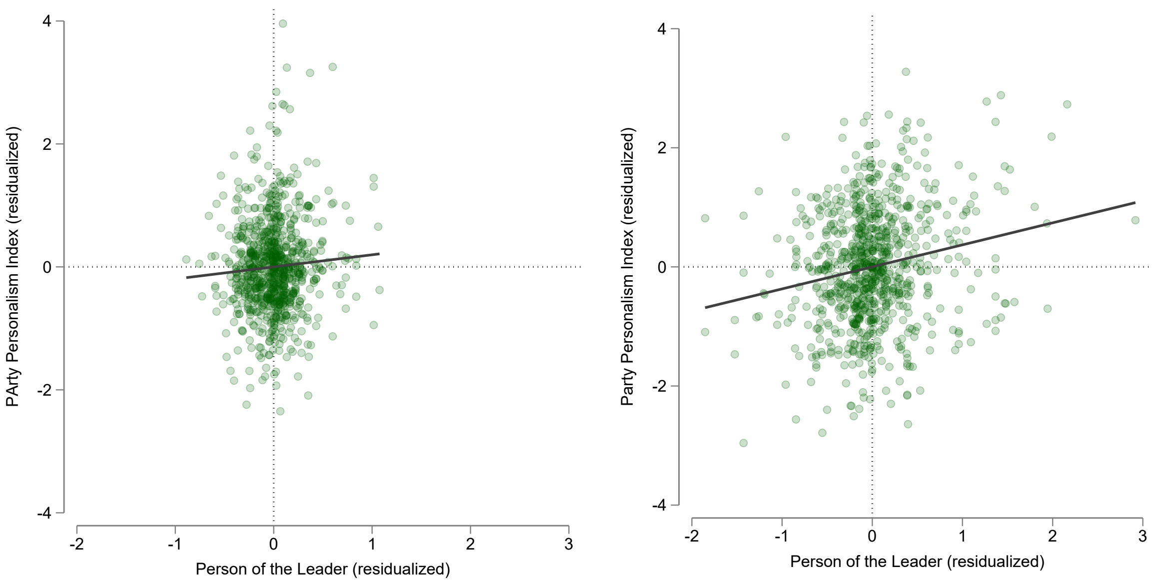


Figure B2: Leader Charisma and Party Personalism, by Political Polarization

(a) Below-Average Polarization (b) Above-Average Polarization



B.2 Tables Accompanying the Descriptive Plots

Table B1 shows the results of parametric analyses accompanying Figure 2 in the paper. Column 1 gives estimates from a Cox model of the probability of an autogolpe (with non-autogolpe democratic breakdowns as a competing hazard). In addition to leader's charisma, we include the other key factors from our models—polarization and democratic stability. We account for democratic stability by stratifying the Cox model by the number of previous breakdowns (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn, 2002). We also account for several potentially important confounds identified by the prior literature (Boix, 2003; Cheibub, 2007): GDP per capita, leader's military background, type of leader entry (regularly through elections, or in some other way), and any dynastic ties to a previous leader.

Columns 2-4 show estimates from two-way (country-year) fixed effects OLS models of, respectively, backsliding, anti-pluralism, and personalism, on the charisma proxy and the other variables. In all columns, standard errors are clustered (by democracy spell, leader, and party, respectively).

Table B1: Leader Charisma and Democratic Survival, Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism—Regression Results

	Breakdown	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Person of the Leader	0.732**	0.045**	0.081**	0.277**
	(0.280)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.067)
Political polarization	0.540*	0.044**	0.046**	0.102^{+}
	(0.236)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.061)
GDP per capita	-0.493^{+}	-0.046**	-0.022	0.071
	(0.285)	(0.013)	(0.033)	(0.162)
Leader's military background	0.916*	0.015^{+}	0.046**	0.212**
	(0.441)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.078)
Leader's irregular entry	1.165	0.065**	-0.033	-0.286
	(1.003)	(0.017)	(0.094)	(0.369)
Family ties to previous leader	-0.460	0.013	0.022	0.006
	(0.493)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.120)
Number of previous breakdowns		-0.050**	-0.083*	0.039
		(0.011)	(0.042)	(0.150)
Seat share			0.130**	1.051**
			(0.039)	(0.223)
Constant		1.721**	0.456	-3.191^{+}
		(0.131)	(0.336)	(1.677)
Observations	3972	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

The regression results conform with the descriptive patterns in Figure 2 in the main text. The point estimates indicate that conditioning on the country and leader characteristics, the *Person of the Leader* higher by one unit (or by about two-thirds of a standard deviation) is associated with approximately a doubling of the hazard rate of autogolpe (column 1), a one-fifth standard deviation lower quality of democracy (column 2), a one-third standard deviation higher incumbent party illiberalism (column 3), and a one-fifth standard deviation lower party personalism (column 4). All correlations are precisely estimated ($p < .01$). The coefficient on polarization is also consistent with Proposition 1(a) and (b). The coefficient on democratic stability is largely consistent with Proposition 2(a): backsliding and anti-pluralism are lower in more stable democracies (but not party personalism).

Table B2 shows the results of parametric analyses where the models from columns 2-4 of Table B1 are augmented by an interaction between leader charisma and political polarization. The results are generally in line with hypothesis 2 and Figures 3, B1, and B2, in that higher polarization increases the positive association between leader's charisma and both the polity-level (column 1) and party-level backsliding (column 2). The results are less clear for party personalism, as the estimate of the interaction term is positive, but statistically noisier.

Table B2: Leader Charisma and Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism, by Polarization—Regression Results

	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Person of the Leader	0.040**	0.077**	0.265**
	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.067)
Political polarization	0.058**	0.063**	0.155*
	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.071)
Person of the Leader × Political polarization	0.012**	0.018*	0.053
	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.035)
GDP per capita	-0.050**	-0.024	0.064
	(0.013)	(0.033)	(0.162)
Leader's military background	0.016+	0.045**	0.208**
	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.078)
Family ties to previous leader	0.011	0.023	0.008
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.120)
Leader's irregular entry	0.064**	-0.035	-0.292
	(0.017)	(0.101)	(0.378)
Number of previous breakdowns	-0.051**	-0.081+	0.046
	(0.010)	(0.044)	(0.153)
Seat share		0.117**	1.011**
		(0.039)	(0.228)
Constant	1.764**	0.488	-3.094+
	(0.128)	(0.331)	(1.663)
Observations	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}$p$<$0.1; *p$<$0.05; **p$<$0.01.

Table B3 shows the parametric results accompanying Figure 4 in the main text. Following the literature on autocratic survival (e.g. Wright, Frantz and Geddes, 2015), we model stability flexibly with a cubic polynomial in the length of the ongoing democratic spell, and report the overall association with charisma, controlling for the same covariates as in the previous specifications (except country fixed effects, which are mechanically correlated with stability). There is a statistically precise negative association between charismatic leadership and democratic stability, as predicted by Proposition 2(b).

Table B3: Democratic Stability and Leader Charisma—Regression Results

	(1)
Current democracy spell duration	-0.115**
	(0.027)
Political polarization	0.204**
	(0.029)
GDP per capita	-0.551**
	(0.048)
Leader's military background	0.297**
	(0.102)
Family ties to previous leader	0.028
	(0.156)
Leader's irregular entry	-0.043
	(0.148)
Observations	936

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

B.3 Proxy for Charisma and Electoral Outcomes

We believe that the *Person of the Leader* variable plausibly captures the *outcome* of charismatic politics, even though it does not necessarily disentangle whether that outcome is induced by a leader's charisma or an institutional environment that makes charismatic appeals particularly effective. Nonetheless, we have modeled charisma as a source of party support driven by a particular leader's appeal—and the resulting relationship with her followers—rather than her party's label, and as separate from other institutions. Therefore, if *Person of the Leader* is to capture that notion of charisma, we should observe that it positively correlates with a party's electoral support. That is, a party's success should wax when it assumes incumbency with a charismatic compared to a less charismatic leader, and wane when such a leader leaves the chief executive office.

Column 1 of Table B4 shows that after netting out party and year fixed effects, a governing party's (or coalition's) electoral support is indeed positively associated with *Person of the Leader*: a one-unit (or about two-thirds of a standard deviation) higher value in *Person of the Leader* is associated with a 1.3 percentage point (or about 7.5%) higher vote share ($p < .06$). Of course, the obvious endogeneity problem is that this association may be driven by a party's strategic behavior, such that charismatic leaders are more likely to not be renominated when a party's popularity is falling. To try to circumvent this possibility, in Column 2, we instrument *Person of the Leader* with a variable capturing whether a leader left office through retirement due to poor health or death, or not.[1] Column 2 shows that the correlation remains with this IV approach.[2]

In columns 1-2, the comparisons are of vote shares for governing parties or coalitions with

[1]We gathered the information on the type of leader exit from various sources (Gerring et al., 2019; Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009; Li, Xi and Yao, 2020; Nyrup and Bramwell, 2020; Shi, Xi and Yao, 2022). Of 936 leaders for which we have data, 40 leaders (4.3%) ended their tenure in this manner, which is positively associated with *Person of the Leader* in the first stage.

[2]Because the health-related exits are temporally sparse, we omit year fixed effects in this specification.

Table B4: Person of the Leader and Party Vote Shares

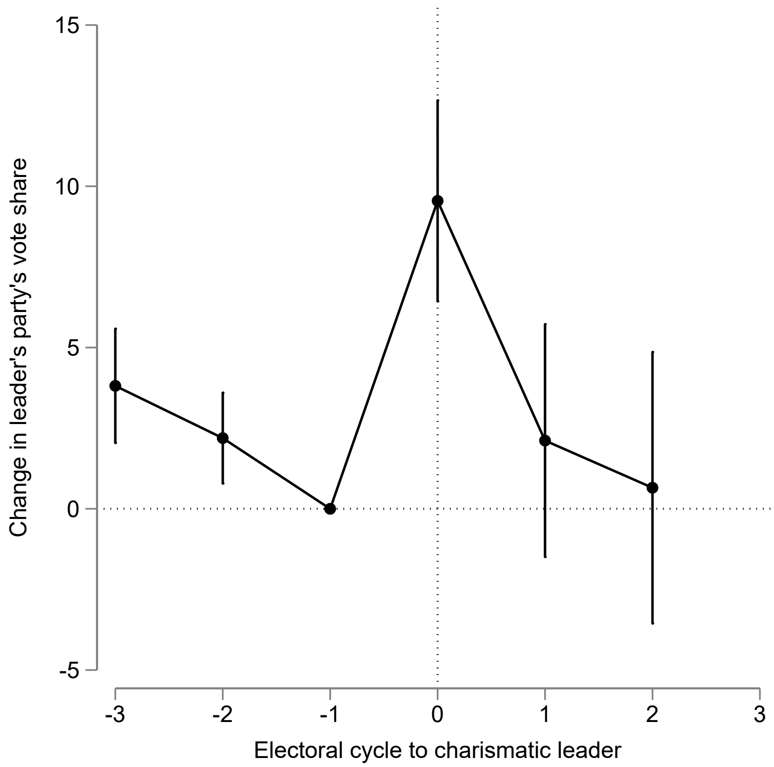
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Person of the Leader	1.268^{+}	5.961*	
	(0.665)	(2.840)	
Low-charisma new leader			5.158**
			(0.320)
High-charisma new leader			8.370**
			(1.392)
Constant	17.490**	11.401**	10.784**
	(3.970)	(2.270)	(2.179)
Observations	1607	1367	2974

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

a more or less charismatic leaders only in elections when they win or retain the chief executive office. In column 3, we add the elections when these parties/coalitions do not obtain executive power. Since *Person of the Leader* only refers to leaders occupying the chief executive office, we do not have a measure of charisma for these observations. However, we can make an (admittedly strong) assumption that a party in opposition is always lead by a less charismatic leader, which allows us to estimate the difference in a party's vote share when occupying the chief executive with a charismatic leader (second row in column 3) vs. a less charismatic leader (first row), relative to being out of power (omitted category). To simplify, we code as charismatic the leaders with a value of *Person of the Leader* above the 90th percentile. The results still suggest a possible charisma premium: winning the chief executive is associated with a higher vote share of about 5.2 percentage points (or about 48% relative to the vote share when not winning the chief executive); winning with a charismatic leader provides an additional boost of 3.2 percentage points, or about a 78% higher vote share compared to the baseline (the difference between the two estimates is significant at $p < .03$).

Figure B3 reestimates this latter quantity in an event study setup. We estimate the vote share during electoral cycles resulting in a charismatic chief executive to prior and subsequent electoral cycles (combining into the 'control' group both holding power with a non-charismatic chief executive and being in opposition). Similar to the results in Table B4, compared to the most proximate prior electoral cycle, parties on average improve their vote share by about 9.5 percentage points when they have a charismatic chief executive ($p < .01$). When such a leader leaves office, a party's vote share in the most proximate subsequent electoral cycle drops on average by nearly as much—about 7.4 percentage points ($p < .01$). These results thus make it plausible that *Person of the Leader* captures—at least to a degree—the popularity of the party as derived from a leader's *own* appeal.

Figure B3: Person of the Leader and Party Vote Shares—Event Study Approach



B.4 Results with Outsider Proxy for Leader Charisma

Tables B6-B8 show the results evaluating hypotheses 1-3, respectively, using an alternative proxy for charisma (and otherwise identical specifications as in our main analyses)—leader's outsider status. This measure is motivated by a common observation that charisma often entails a meteoric rise in politics. For example, El Salvador's Nayib Bukele never served in a national political office and served less than three years as mayor of the capital before winning the presidency. Hollyer, Klašnja and Titiunik (2022) demonstrate theoretically that parties may prioritize the nomination of charismatic candidates who are less motivated by party-centric effort over their less charismatic but more disciplined and programmatic colleagues. By virtue of being politically inexperienced, outsiders are less likely to have risen to the chief executive position because of their willingness to toe the party line, and more likely due to other qualities such as charisma. Hollyer, Klašnja and Titiunik (2022) also demonstrate the validity of outsider status as a proxy for charisma in mayoral elections in Brazil.

We define as outsider a chief executive who did not hold previous leadership positions atop national government: the cabinet, national legislature, other key central government institutions (central bank, special prosecutorial offices), the constitutional court, and in federal states, chief executive positions in the highest federal unit (such as governorship). To code the outsider status, we compile the biographical and career information on leaders for the period 1950-2020 from a number of sources (Gerring et al., 2019; Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009; Li, Xi and Yao, 2020; Nyrup and Bramwell, 2020; Shi, Xi and Yao, 2022).

Examples of outsiders perceived as charismatic abound, from businessmen like Donald Trump and Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, sporstmen like Liberia's George Weah and Mongolia's Khaltmaagiin Battulga, to entertainers like Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Guatemala's Jimmy Morales. We do not claim that insiders cannot be charismatic. Examples include leaders such as Barack Obama, Jair Bolsonaro, Narendra Modi, and Recep Erdogan, all of whom served in legislatures or other prominent positions (such as Modi's stint as the Chief Minister of Gujarat). We merely argue that while not all charismatic politicians are outsiders, outsiders are more likely to be charismatic than not, and thus outsider status should positively correlate with charisma even if it does not uniquely capture it.

Indeed, much like the *Person of the Leader* proxy in the previous section, Table B5 shows that, using the same approaches and specifications as in Table B4, *Outsider* is also positively correlated with party vote shares, suggesting that outsiders provide an electoral premium possibly on account of their charisma.[3]

Table B5: Outsider Leaders and Party Vote Shares

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Outsider leader	2.748^{+}	51.346^{+}	
	(1.498)	(29.801)	
Insider new leader			5.284^{**}
			(0.327)
Outsider new leader			7.184^{**}
			(1.178)
Constant	6.650^{**}	6.650^{**}	10.772^{**}
	(0.226)	(0.177)	(2.228)
Observations	1408	1367	2974

Note: $^{+}p<0.1$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$.

While novel, and in our opinion useful, this measure is limited by the fact that our definition makes outsiders rare: of the 936 leaders in our data, only 79 (8.4%) are classified as outsiders. Thus, the results with this measure should be viewed with some caution.[4] Even so, the results are similar to those in the text, with the exception of weaker results for hypothesis 2. Because of space constraints, we only show the coefficients for the charisma proxy and polarization, but all the specifications include the same covariates as in our main analyses.

B.5 Results with Programmatic Linkage Proxy for Leader Charisma

While the patterns in the previous two sections suggest that *Person of the Leader* and *Outsider* may plausibly capture leader charisma, they may miss properties of the electoral environment

[3]The 2SLS estimate is large because the denominator in the Wald estimator is very small—outsiders are rare (only 4.6% of observations in our party electoral returns data).

[4]Because of this, and the fact that we have outsiders in less than half of elections in our party-level analysis, we omit country fixed effects for regressions with party anti-pluralism and personalism as dependent variables.

Table B6: Outsider Leaders and Democratic Survival, Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism

	Breakdown	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Outsider leader	1.679^{**}	0.018^{+}	0.106^{**}	0.413^{*}
	(0.575)	(0.011)	(0.041)	(0.207)
Observations	3974	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}p<0.1$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$.

Table B7: Outsider Leaders and Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism, by Polarization

	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Outsider leader	0.019^{+}	0.108^{**}	0.435^{*}
	(0.011)	(0.041)	(0.198)
Political polarization	0.054^{**}	0.066^{**}	0.358^{**}
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.047)
Outsider leader × Political polarization	0.016	-0.036	-0.554^{+}
	(0.010)	(0.058)	(0.321)
Observations	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}p<0.1$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$.

Table B8: Democratic Stability and Outsider Leaders

	(1)
Current democracy spell duration	-0.026^{**}
	(0.009)
Observations	936

Note: $^{+}p<0.1$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$.

that make *voters* become devoted followers of a charismatic leader. Here, we therefore examine another proxy that is possibly more closely related to voter behavior. Ideally, this proxy would be based on micro-level evidence such as voter surveys, and would focus on how much voters care about programmatic issues as opposed to particular candidates. Unfortunately, surveys cover only a limited sample of countries over a limited period of time (typically, the last two decades), giving us insufficient sample size to work with. The closest analog we could find is the *Party Linkages* variable (`v2psprlnks`) from V-Dem (Coppedge et al., 2022), which captures expert coders' perceptions of the type of 'good' that parties predominantly offer in exchange for political support and participation. Higher values indicate that linkages are primarily programmatic, whereas lower values indicate particularistic—and presumably more personalistic—linkages. While not directly derived from voter preferences, this measure possibly captures that when linkages are mainly programmatic in nature, they are at least in part so because voters care about programmatic issues rather than personal appeal of candidates (and vice versa). If this logic holds, then we should expect this variable to be associated with our outcomes of interest in the *opposite* direction from our results so far. That is, programmatic linkages should be negatively associated with democratic breakdown and backsliding (at the polity and party level) and party personalization (hypothesis 1); this negative association should be stronger where ideological polarization is higher (hypothesis 2); and programmatic linkages should be positively associated with democratic stability (hypothesis 3). Tables B9-B11 show that the data are largely consistent with those expectations, except for the association with party personalization. For space considerations, we only show the coefficients for the linkage variable and polarization, but the specifications include the same covariates as in the previous analyses.

Table B9: Programmatic Linkages and Democratic Survival, Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism

	Breakdown	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Party linkages	-0.465*	-0.023*	-0.060*	-0.165
	(0.229)	(0.009)	(0.024)	(0.111)
Observations	3974	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}$p$<$0.1; *p$<$0.05; **p$<$0.01.

Table B10: Programmatic Linkages and Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism, by Polarization

	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Party linkages	-0.024*	-0.064**	-0.169
	(0.009)	(0.024)	(0.113)
Political polarization	0.065**	0.090**	0.194*
	(0.006)	(0.015)	(0.083)
Party linkages × Political polarization	-0.010**	-0.028**	-0.032
	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.040)
Observations	936	1483	1484

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

Table B11: Democratic Stability and Programmatic Linkages

	(1)
Current democracy spell duration	0.065*
	(0.026)
Observations	936

Note: $^{+}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

B.6 Results with Polarization Based on Issue Position Distance

The measure of polarization used in the paper captures how polarized the social groups are. Our model focuses on polarization of political elites in parties. While the two presumably are closely related, here, we utilize data from V-Party (Lindberg et al., 2022) on parties' ideological positions on several dimensions (the economic left-right, immigration, religion, minority rights, and cultural issues) to construct a measure of the ideological distance between the ruling party (or coalition) and the opposition. In particular, using variables on the economic left-right (`v2pariflef`), immigration (`v2paimmig`), religious principles (`v2parelig`), minority rights (`v2paminor`), and cultural issues (nationalism, `v2paculsup`; and LGBT rights, `v2palgbt`), we calculate the absolute distance between the incumbent party (or coalition) and the opposition. We then take the average across the issue-specific distances. Higher values indicate greater polarization. While hewing closer to our theoretical conception of polarization, this measure is available for a shorter period of time (mostly from 1980s to 2020) than the societal polarization measure used in the text (1950-2020).[5] Nonetheless, the results, shown in Tables B12- B14 are rather similar. For space considerations, we only show the coefficients for the charisma proxy and polarization, but the results include the same covariates as in our main analyses.

[5] For this reason, we again omit country fixed effects from party-level analyses, where we already have a more limited sample.

Table B12: Leader Charisma and Democratic Survival, Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism

	Breakdown	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Person of the Leader	0.500*	0.060**	0.063**	0.279**
	(0.214)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.056)
Party polarization	1.017*	0.006	0.054**	0.215*
	(0.398)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.090)
Observations	2921	697	1450	1451

Note: $^{+}$p$<$0.1; *p$<$0.05; **p$<$0.01.

Table B13: Leader Charisma and Backsliding, Anti-Pluralism, and Personalism, by Polarization

	Backsliding	Anti-Pluralism	Personalism
Person of the Leader	0.053**	0.019	0.088
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.088)
Party polarization	0.013	0.100**	0.415**
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.129)
Person of the Leader $\times$ Party polarization	0.006	0.042**	0.182**
	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.068)
Observations	697	1450	1451

Note: $^{+}$p$<$0.1; *p$<$0.05; **p$<$0.01.

Table B14: Democratic Stability and Outsider Leaders

	(1)
Current democracy spell duration	-0.167**
	(0.040)
Party polarization	0.310**
	(0.088)
Observations	697

Note: $^{+}$p$<$0.1; *p$<$0.05; **p$<$0.01.

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