

Only Friends Can Betray You: International Rivalry and Domestic Politics

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Abstract This article argues that dramatic political change in State A poses a threat to the interests that other states B share with it. The more salient those interests are to State B, the greater the threat posed by domestic political change within State A. Thus major changes in one state place the leaders of formerly friendly states into a domain of losses, motivating risk-seeking behavior in hopes of reversing these losses. Conversely, the new leaders of the state undergoing domestic political change initiate similarly risk-seeking behavior to defend their new endowments. The conflicts that result sow the seeds of long-lasting enmity (rivalry) between former partners. I test this argument in a dataset of rivalry onset during the period 1950-2005 and find evidence that in the wake of dramatic political change in State A, rivalries are most likely to form between A and its close partners.

Introduction

What causes rivalry? This should be a question of importance to scholars of interstate conflict. The persistence of three conflicts –in Iraq, Syria and Yemen – is frequently attributed to activities of rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia. Similarly, much worry is expressed by policymakers and pundits about the possible resurrection of the rivalry between Russia and the West due to growing Russian influence in the Balkans and the Middle East. Finally, growth in Chinese capabilities and renewed insistence from Beijing regarding Chinese control of the Western Pacific threatens to intensify a number of rivalries in the Pacific. Given this apparent resurgence in antagonism between old and new rivals alike, and the threat rivals pose to global stability, understanding the way in which rivalries form should be one of the primary goals of interstate conflict research. Rivalries make up only 1 to 5% of dyads, but account for 50 to 80% of all interstate wars (Stinnet & Diehl 2001, Colaresi Rasler & Thompson 2007). Unfortunately, research into rivalry formation has identified only few potential causes –large systemic shocks, such as world war or major realignment of capabilities (Diehl & Goertz 2001; Goertz & Diehl 1995); the existence of unresolved issues of contention, such as territorial disputes (Vasquez & Leskiw 2001; Stinnet & Diehl 2001); or the prevalence of power-politics behavior in international disputes (Valeriano 2013).

Importantly, research on the causes of rivalry has focused on explanations at the international level. These arguments fail to explain the emergence of rivalries like those between the United States and Cuba or the United States and Iran, which were not accompanied by international shocks or preexisting disputes. An explanation rooted in changing domestic politics is necessary to explain these relationships. To date, relatively little work has been done to understand the linkages between domestic politics and rivalry formation.¹ Rather, research has turned away from the causes of rivalry to focus on the effects of rivalry (see Con-

¹An exception to this is the literature linking state independence and rivalry formation (Diehl & Goertz 2001; Stinnet & Diehl 2001; Goertz & Diehl 1995).

rad 2011; Findley et al. 2012; Boutton 2014; Haynes 2015). This turn away from exploring the causes of rivalry is surprising, especially given the lack of understanding of the domestic influences on rivalry formation. The causes of any given rivalrous relationship should be expected to influence the behavior of the rivals toward one another. It seems unreasonable to think that we can adequately understand the effects of rivalry –the behaviors of rivals – without a thorough understanding of why states become antagonistic toward one another in the first place. Additionally, rivalrous behavior must, in large part, be driven by the interplay of domestic political interests within the two states engaged in rivalry. If researchers are to develop a thorough understanding of either the causes or effects of rivalry, the effect of domestic politics on rivalrous behavior can no longer be ignored. As such, this analysis seeks to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of rivalry formation by more fully exploring a largely unprobed link between political change within a state and the onset of international rivalry.

In exploring this relationship between domestic politics and rivalry formation, I theorize the existence of a conditional relationship between domestic political change in one state and the interests that state shares with others. When two states share highly salient common interests dramatic change in the domestic politics of one state increases the likelihood of rivalry formation in that dyad. Put bluntly, major political changes can transform friendly states into enemies. I argue that this is the case because changing domestic politics within one state will threaten the interests shared between that state and others with which it interacts, providing incentive for those other states to attempt to reassert the previous status quo. This leads both states to view the other as 'enemy', increasing suspicion of the other state's behavior in all areas and beginning a process of issue accumulation that culminates in long-lasting enmity (Dreyer 2010a; 2010b).

In the remainder of this paper, I test this argument in a dataset of rivalry onset for the period 1950-2005. I find that both revolution in a state and significant change in a leader's

support coalition (SOLS change) are associated with an increase in the likelihood that state enters into a rivalry within the next five years. Further analysis reveals that rivalry onset is most likely to occur between a state undergoing changes to its domestic politics and its friends in the international system –specifically those states B with which it shares a military alliance, significant foreign policy preferences or significant trade. This finding illuminates a previously unknown pathway to rivalry and demonstrates the importance of studying the influence of domestic politics on rivalry formation.

Systemic and Domestic Shocks

Research on the causes of rivalry has focused on interstate level explanations, examining the effect of large international shocks –world wars, the end of colonialism or the re-arranging of the global balance of power –on rivalry formation. Goertz & Diehl (1995; 2001) argue that these dramatic upheavals significantly alter the interests of states. Due to these altered national interests, new sets of states come into conflict, while in other cases, previously contentious issues become less salient. Thus large systemic shocks are expected to lead to the end of some rivalries and the beginning of others (Diehl & Goertz 2001; Goertz & Diehl 1995). Further research has added that a stalemated dispute between two states, representing a disagreement that is not sufficiently resolved by an initial round of conflict, is a primary motivator of rivalry when both states in question continue to work toward victory (Stinnet & Diehl 2001). Valeriano (2013) employs an international-level explanation of rivalry that does not rely on system shocks, but in which rivalries grow from an initial dispute due to states' application of power-politics strategies –alliance building, arms buildups, and escalation of demands –as their primary tool in resolving these disputes.

While a literature exists studying the links between domestic politics and war (Davies 2002; Mansfield & Snyder 1995) relatively little research on the domestic political determinants of rivalry exists. One exception can be found in the argument that domestic political shocks, such as state birth, motivate the formation of many rivalries (Diehl & Goertz 2001;

Goertz & Diehl 1995; Stinnet & Diehl 2001). More recent research has gone on to provide further support for this argument. Colaresi, Rasler and Thompson (2007 p.83) note that roughly half of rivalries that include at least one state that gained independence after 1816 begin within a short period of that independence event. Conrad and Souva (2011) find evidence to suggest that rivalry is unlikely to form between democratic states. Goertz & Diehl (1995), however find no link between regime change and rivalry onset.

By focusing on changes to the international system to explain rivalry, most analysts fail to account for the pre-existing relationships between states and how domestic political change threatens these relationships. Prior to some form of domestic shock in one state, that state and others are already engaged in various and diverse relationships. These heterogeneous preexisting relationships set equally heterogeneous incentives that other states face when responding to political shocks within the initial state. Thus, it seems necessary that the effect of a large political change in one state upon its relationships with other states must be conditional upon the character of those preexisting relationships. States that are enemies may see their disputes resolved by a change in the domestic politics of one, as was found by Bennett (1997; 1998). States that share deep interests with one another, however, should be particularly effected by dramatic changes in the domestic politics of a close partner. I argue below, that these deeply interconnected states are likely to move from a state of friendship to one of rivalry due to major changes in the domestic political makeup of one.

The literature on revolution and civil war provides some additional insight on the role of domestic political change in international conflict. Scholars in the realist tradition (Walt 1996; Maoz 1989) argue that revolutions alter the balance of power and perceptions of aggressive intent, creating a two-way pressure toward conflict. Revolutions often weaken the revolutionary state and encouraging outside actors to prey upon it during its moment of weakness (Walt 1996, 331-333). The existence of these predatory incentives also contribute to spirals of suspicion that motivate revolutionary leaders to wage preemptive wars

in hopes of holding off perceived external enemies while consolidating power (,334). A second strain of research focuses on the characteristics of revolutionary leaders. Jeff Colgan (2010; 2012; 2013) argues that participation in a revolutionary movement selects for aggressive and ambitious personalities, meaning that the leaders who are installed by revolutions will be especially likely to initiate conflict against neighbors. Colgan and Weeks (2015) add to this that revolution is especially likely to lead to paternalistic forms of government that cannot constrain leaders aggressive ambitions. Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz (2008) point out that civil wars can lead to international conflict when outside states intervene to influence the outcome of the conflict.² While each of these arguments posits a link between revolution and international conflict, they imply that revolutionary regimes should be equally likely to come into conflict with any of their neighbors. They provide little understanding of why some relationships with post-revolutionary regimes turn hostile while others do not.

Domestic Political Change & Policy Change

In the following section, I lay out my argument regarding the effect of changing domestic politics in one state –State A –upon the relationship between that state and others –States B. *Domestic political change* refers to change in the policy preferences of the support coalition upon which a state’s leader relies to maintain office. This change can occur in two general ways. It is possible that the composition of the support coalition remains unchanged but that the policy preferences of its members change in response to the natural evolution of problems and opportunities facing a society. This sort of domestic political change is relatively commonplace, occurring within most regimes as time progresses. A second form of domestic political change is that which brings new elements of society and their interests into the support coalition while excluding other groups that previously held power. I argue that changes to the composition of the support coalition represent a more significant level

²As discussed in the empirical section below, I explicitly rule out that intervention in civil war drives the findings of this analysis by dropping all cases in which one state in a dyad intervenes in the other state’s civil war.

of change in aggregate preferences than does incremental creep.

I use the term *radical domestic political change* to refer to domestically driven events that lead to a near complete replacement of one support coalition by another. This can include coups, revolutions and other forms of sweeping government replacement. Changes to the structure of domestic politics are likely not, of themselves, sufficient to cause rivalry with a neighbor. If a new regime were to come to power and follow precisely the policies of the previous regime, there is no *ex-ante* reason to expect this regime change to cause conflict³. However, radical domestic political changes are likely to result in actual change in foreign and domestic policies pursued by the state. These radical changes wipe away the former political structure and bring an entirely new support coalition to power that holds a different set of preferences as compared to the previous coalition, thus providing a new leader with significant incentives to reform the policies followed by the state.

Policy Change and the Ex-Ante Relationship

I argue that domestic political change drives change in policies pursued by states, and because of this, can motivate states to engage in rival behavior when they did not previously. Whether a given state's change of domestic politics serves to motivate rivalry is dependent upon the *ex-ante* relationships between that State A and those States B with which it interacts. When two states are "friendly," –when states hold many trade, security or other interests in one another –sufficiently large changes in the domestic politics of one state of the pair establish an expectation that major policy changes will follow, which may be a threat to those interests that the opposite state possesses in it.

In such an environment, domestic political actors in State B who hold economic interests in State A will feel these interests to be under threat. Given these fears, if even minor detrimental policy change follows the change in State A's domestic politics, these elites will

³Thyne and co-authors provide an example. They attribute the stability of the Egypt-Israeli relationship following Egypt's 2013 coup to the immediate pledge by coup-leaders to maintain previous defense policies (Thyne et al. 2018).

pressure their own government to intervene to protect their interests at this first sign of danger. Similarly, major political change in a state that is important to the opposite state's national security is likely to cause publics in State B to experience an increase in perceptions of threat and insecurity. This will motivate calls for the government to intervene to protect the security of its people. Thus, the leadership of State B will fear a loss of domestic support if they fail to take action to restore the status quo.

For their part, the leadership of State A prioritizes maintaining a grip on their recently-won power. This requires that the leadership maintain its domestic support coalition. To the extent that the support coalition backing the new leadership is different from that of the old leadership, we would expect that the new leaders will be required to respond to a different set of preferences. Thus, a leader's desire to change policy will be determined by the difference between their supporting coalition and the previous leader's coalition. Further, having recently supplanted a leader or regime that failed to cater to the demands of society should serve to make the new leadership wary of suffering the same fate. That one leader or regime has been recently replaced suggests that important elements of society desire major change in government policies. If the new leadership fails to provide this policy change by acquiescing to foreign demands, this allows room for other members of the reform movement or counter-revolutionary elements to replace the new leadership before it can consolidate its hold on power.

Domestic Political Change and Rivalry

Prospect theory, formulated by Kahneman and Tversky (1979), provides an understanding as to how domestic political change ultimately leads states into rivalry. According to prospect theory, actors make choices in a process consisting of two phases.⁴ In the first *editing* phase, actors organize and simplify the available options for later evaluation. Framing effects, are argued to significantly affect the succeeding evaluation process. While Kahneman

⁴See Levy, 1992; 1996 for a thorough discussion of prospect theory and its implications for IR research.

and Tversky discuss a number of specific framing effects that occur during the editing process, for purposes of this discussion, the most relevant aspect of the editing phase is coding of the location of an actor's reference point. Decision-makers define the value of outcomes in terms of gains or losses from a reference point –generally the status quo –rather than in terms of the absolute value of the outcome.

Once the available options have been edited, an evaluation phase begins in which the decision-maker selects the option with the highest value as determined by the product of a *value function* and a *probability weighting function*. These functions combine to provide several expectations about decision-making under conditions of risk. Most important of these for purposes of this analysis is an observed tendency for actors to be risk-seeking in a domain of losses and risk averse in a domain of gains (Tversky & Kahneman 1992). When contemplating certain losses, actors are likely to over-estimate the value of a risky gamble that offers only a moderate chance of reversing those certain losses, even if the gamble risks significant additional losses.

The behavioral expectations provided by prospect theory serve to explain why domestic political change in a "friendly" dyad will lead to conflict⁵. Following radical political change in a friendly state, State B is likely to suffer a loss in terms of economic interests, alliance benefits⁶, cooperation in foreign policy, or all of the above. This policy change harms the leadership of State B in two ways. First, the loss of an allied government or economic partner damages the security interests and prestige of State B in the international environment, placing the leadership of State B in a domain of losses in foreign affairs. Similarly, loss of an ally or trade partner harms the interests of domestic political and economic elites in State

⁵While the usefulness of prospect theory for explaining political phenomena has been questioned (Levy 1997), it has been usefully applied to choices made by leaders in a number of crisis situations such as those of Kennedy and Khrushchev during the Cuban missile crisis (Haas 2001), Carter during the Iranian hostage crisis (McDermott 1992) and Bush during the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War (McDermott & Kugler 2001). The arguments put forward in this analysis are similarly centered around crisis decisions made by state leaders, thus prospect theory is applicable and provides for interesting insights.

⁶see Morrow (1991) for a discussion of alliance benefits.

B, which drive demands for action by the leader of State B and threatens to undermine the leader's tenure should demands not be met. That the loss of an ally or economic partner can place the leader of a state in a domain of losses across a number of dimensions is vital to a prospect-theory centered explanation of conflict. The losses suffered by a leader must be sufficiently grave as to make him or her unwilling to accept the new status quo as the reference point from which deviations will be evaluated (McDermott 1992). Given these losses, we should expect the leadership of State B to prioritize re-establishing the previous status quo, even if this means undertaking risky behaviors that threaten significant additional losses, so long as these behaviors also provide a reasonable chance to avoid paying the certain cost of accepting a revised status quo. Practically, this loss-aversion manifests itself in actions such as supporting counter-revolutionaries (as in the Bay of Pigs invasion), aiding third parties in trying to overthrow the new regime (as with the significant Western support for Iraq during the Iraq-Iran war), or direct military action. These attempts at loss aversion establish enmity between the states and cement enemy images in the minds of policymakers and the populace of both states. Once this perception of hostility on the part of the other has taken root, issue disputes tend to accumulate between the two states, cementing rivalry (Dreyer 2010).

An example of the process described above can be seen in the relationship between the United States and Cuba around the Cuban revolution. Before the revolution, the United States and Cuba shared a defensive alliance through the Organization of American States. They also participated in a strong trading relationship in which American nationals possessed a great deal of property within Cuba. Estimates suggest that as much as 65% of the Cuban sugar industry was under United States ownership and some 95% of Cuban exports were bound for the United States market (Fitzgibbon & Thomas 1972, 335-337). In the immediate wake of the Cuban Revolution, these economic ties remained intact. However, the policy goals of the Castro regime differed significantly from those of the Batista government, ensuring that a period of economic and social upheaval would follow the success of

the Cuban Revolution.

American property interests came under threat in May of 1959 when Fidel Castro began to implement a policy of land reform that would result in the seizure of much American-owned property (Snyder 1999, 273). Further, throughout the first few years of the reform process, some 600 American firms were nationalized (Snyder 1999, 276). The Cuban Revolution inflicted humiliation and economic losses on the United States through the removal of the Batista regime with which the United States government had close security ties and also throughout the following several years as the reform process increasingly put United States economic interests in Cuba at risk.

I contend that it was the threat posed to United States interests by Castro's reforms that sowed the seeds of rivalry between the United States and Cuba. The Cuban land reforms of 1959 motivated President Eisenhower, in March of 1960, to authorize agents of the Central Intelligence Agency to begin arming and training Cuban exiles to build a paramilitary invasion force. This represents a very risky endeavor that, if failed, would cause foreign and domestic political losses for the president, but if successful would restore the pre-existing status quo. This risky decision would ultimately culminate in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and would go on to motivate further hostility between the two states. Not until December 2, 1961 – after the beginning of Cuba/United States hostilities – did Castro align with the Soviet Union and declare Cuba a Communist country (Bain 2011, 112). Thus, while Cuba's alliance with the Soviets certainly sustained the rivalry between Cuba and America by making it a part of the Cold War competition, the order of events suggests that the American threat to Cuba caused Cuba to seek out Soviet protection, rather than the other way around. Once this initial hostility took root in the minds of the people and policy-makers of both countries, every action of the other state was viewed through a lens of suspicion, and issues of contention began to accumulate quickly over ideological and positional concerns (Dreyer 2010a). Long-lasting enmity was the result.

I argue that the initiation of rivalry between Cuba and the United States is in no way a unique occurrence. Rather, I argue that the United States/Cuba relationship is illustrative of the process that a number of other dyads have undergone on their way to a rivalrous relationship. Tables 3 and 4 in the online appendix display two lists of rivalries that were initiated within five years of a major domestic political change as well as a summary of the major *ex-ante* interest shared between those states.⁷ Between 23% and 31% of all rivalries initiated during the 1950-2005 time period seem to follow the pattern of the United States/Cuba example.⁸

Given the expectations discussed above, I derive the following hypotheses regarding the conditional effect of shared interests between states on radical policy change, which I then test empirically.

Hypothesis 1: The effect of radical policy change upon the probability of rivalry formation in the dyad should be zero in the absence of shared interests between states.

Hypothesis 2: The effect of radical policy change upon the probability of rivalry formation should be positive in the presence of significant shared interests between two states.

Theories rooted in rational choice have difficulty explaining this conditional relationship. From a bargaining perspective, rivalry onset is akin to conflict onset, thus there must be a mechanism that triggers bargaining failure. A change in domestic politics or policy preferences does not lead to a large and rapid shift in power or other credible commitment problem. To the extent that these changes could exacerbate information problems, there is little reason to think this would be more likely between former allies than between formerly

⁷In Table 3, this radical domestic political change is a revolution. Table 4 displays rivalries following within five years of a change in source of leader support as drawn from the CHISOLS dataset.

⁸I note that, at least in the time period under analysis, it appears that the results presented below are driven by a relative handful of particularly belligerent states. Egypt, Libya, Iran, Uganda, the United States, Sudan and Saudi Arabia all become involved in multiple rivalries during this period, with Iran being especially prevalent. Given this, I include Table 18 in the appendix in which I replicate the main findings of this paper in a sample where I have dropped all dyads containing Iran. The results of the primary analysis hold in this sample.

neutral states. Similarly, while theories rooted in expected utility might suggest that these changes bring new actors to power who may then become a security threat to other states, this perspective cannot explain why the new threat operates in the conditional manner I have hypothesized. The rational response to revolution in a state would seem to be one of guarded neutrality meant to avoid the additional costs of conflict. Only an argument based on loss aversion is able to explain how large changes of domestic politics push two formerly friendly nations past neutrality into enmity.

Radical Change and Outside Intervention

If future change in policy within State A threatens the interests of the opposing state, why does State B allow the domestic political change in the first place? Why does B not act to preserve the initial government of A, thus preserving the *ex-ante* status quo? In many cases, this is exactly what does occur. Witness the long history of outside interventions by one state to prop up the government of another (Butler 2003; Saideman 2001; Pearson 1974). There are, however, at least five reasons for which a state may not intervene in another state to preserve its own interests.

First, states may possess insufficient capabilities to ensure victory to an allied government in their civil war. Second, when states have the capability to support an allied government, third party support of the rebels may still lead to the downfall of the allied government.

In either of these cases, State B's inability to prevent a change of government in A does not imply that B prefers that this change occur. While B may not be able to remove the new government of A, hostility between the two is likely.

Third, potential intervening states may lack the political will to support a friendly government even when they possess the capabilities. A leader may face negative domestic consequences for intervening in the allied state that are sufficient to make intervention politically unacceptable.

Fourth, it is also possible that militarily potent third parties miscalculate the cost of

regime change in the ally. A rebel movement fighting against an allied state can be expected to hold an ideology that is unfavorable to the third party. However, international relations often make for strange bedfellows. There is no immutable law that the third party could not work to achieve good relations with a victorious rebel group. Thus the third party may not see the rebel group as a sufficient threat to their interests, only to realize their error after the group assumes power and begins implementing its policy reforms. Rebel and revolutionary groups are aware that allies of the regime must make this calculation when contemplating an intervention to support the regime, and sometimes work to conceal their true ideological stance or the extent of their policy goals to induce uncertainty over the cost that a third party will pay for failing to intervene (Werner 2000). However, when the victorious rebel group implements its preferred set of policy reforms, this uncertainty is resolved. To the extent that these new policies damage the interests of the third party, conflict is likely to result.

Fifth, and finally, it is entirely possible that State B does not appreciate that major changes are occurring in State A. Not all radical changes are the result of protracted civil war. The South Korean April Revolution of 1960 spanned only fourteen days from the outbreak of protests on April 11 to the resignation of Syngman Rhee on April 26 (Kim & Kim 1964). Most states would be hard pressed to recognize that the protest movement represented a genuine threat to the regime and to then mount a major military operation on a timeline of 14 days.

In any of these cases we should see that State B does not act to preserve the *ex-ante* status quo even though its interests are at risk. However, once radical change has come to pass, State B will suffer damage to the interests that it shared with State A and will enter a domain of losses as discussed in the previous section.

Research Design

Unit of Analysis and Scope

I construct a dataset consisting of dyad-year observations during the period 1950-2005 for all politically relevant dyads in which both states have population 500,000 or more.⁹ The argument presented above centers around rivalry that stems from dramatic political change within an existing state rather than rivalry stemming from state birth. Thus, I drop all dyad-years from the sample in which one or both members of the dyad are new entrants to the system –along with the attendant rivalry-onsets. This procedure should ensure that findings presented below result only from dramatic political change within existing states rather than from state birth. This provides a sample of 43,144 observations.¹⁰ I fit a series of logistic regression models on this sample, which are presented in the next section.¹¹

Operationalization

Rivalry Onset: I adopt a conceptualization of rivalry put forward by William Thompson (Thompson 1995; Thompson & Dreyer 2011). Thompson’s conceptualization emphasizes that rivals must mutually believe themselves and their interests to be under threat due to the existence and activities of the other state (Thompson & Dreyer 2011, 2). Thus, while the existence of a hostile relationship between states is necessary to the formation of rivalry in this conceptualization, there exists no set threshold of militarized action that defines the start-point of a rivalry. Rather, Thompson examines historical records and primary sources for evidence that policymakers in both states in a dyad view the other as threatening, and that both states believe a military confrontation to be likely, and thus take steps to prepare for conflict (Thompson & Dreyer 2011, 3).

The dependent variable is the initiation of rivalry within a dyad. The variable *Rivalry Onset* is coded using the inventory of rivalries developed by Thompson and Dreyer (2011),

⁹Lags of trade data begin in 1950 and lags of the main revolution variable run out in 2005.

¹⁰6,271 observations are lost due to missing data on Joint U.N. voting. 19 observations are lost due to missing V-Dem data.

¹¹In the appendix, I include a replication of this main analysis using the Rare Events Logit (King & Zeng, 2001). Coefficients for the interaction terms remain positive in all cases. The interaction between trade dependence and revolution, however, fails to achieve statistical significance at conventional levels in the RE-Logit.

and takes the value "1" in the dyad-year in which a rivalry was coded to have begun, and "0" otherwise.¹² There are fifty-five cases of rivalry initiation in the sample under investigation. Observations in which rivalry is ongoing are dropped from the dataset because no new rivalry-onset is possible.

In ten cases, a rivalry is coded to have begun in the same year a change in domestic politics is coded to have occurred. In these instances I consult the narratives constructed by Thompson and Dreyer to determine which came first: political change or rivalry. To ensure temporal precedence, I examine the narratives for these ten rivalries to see if Thompson and Dreyer make a note that the state not undergoing revolution intervened in any way during the revolutionary event or civil war leading to regime change. If Thompson and Dreyer note that one state intervened in another prior to both the political change and the formation of the rivalry, the dependent variable is coded "0" to limit the possibility that cases of reverse causality influence the findings of this analysis. In three of the ten cases so examined, the second state in the dyad intervened in the other prior to the political change event. Thus, for these three cases, *Rivalry Initiation* is coded "0".

Measuring Domestic Political Change: I employ two measures of domestic political change in this analysis. In the main analysis I use a measure derived from Jeff Colgan's (2012) revolutionary leader dataset as an indicator of radical political change within one state. To determine whether a revolution has occurred, Colgan begins with ARCHIGOS leader transitions (Goemans et al. 2009), then consults historical records for evidence of change within seven different policy domains. These seven policy areas include measures of changes to executive selection and power; property ownership laws; the relationship between state and religion; the official ideology of the state; protections for ethnicity or gender; the official state name; or the establishment of a revolutionary council or committee (Colgan

¹²For purposes of robustness testing, I also fit a series of models on a dataset including only rivalries that appear in both Thompson & Dreyer's 2011 dataset and Klein, Goertz & Diehl's 2006 inventory. Results follow those of the main analysis and can be found in Table 16 in the online appendix.

2012). The variable *Revolution* is coded a "1" for a dyad in any year in which a new leader comes to power in at least one of the two states who institutes major policy changes in at least three of these seven categories.¹³ This measure is useful for the current analysis because it accounts for not only change in regime or sources of leader support, but also directly measures the extent of subsequent change in domestic policies.

Note that, while this variable is coded using Colgan's 2012 data, the variable constructed for this analysis is not identical to Colgan's variable. Colgan's measure covers the entire tenure of a leader –thus taking the value "1" for any year in which that leader remains in office (Colgan 2010, 675). I am interested only in the initiation of major political change in a state, thus I focus on the year in which a new leader comes to power. Further, I am concerned primarily with the initial revolutionary event rather than the behavior of revolutionary leaders. Thus, I also do not include the start of subsequent terms of office of a revolutionary leader, nor do I include normal transitions from one leader of the revolution to another. I construct a variable that takes the value "1" only for the first year in a leader's tenure. Thus, Colgan's radical ideology variable takes the value "1" for Chile for years 1973-1989 (Pinochet's tenure), the *Revolution* variable employed in this analysis takes the value "1" for Chile only in 1973. Further, Colgan's measure includes Ferrer's second term in Costa Rica (starting in 1953) when I do not. Thus Costa Rica is coded, in my data, as undergoing a revolution only at the start of Ferrer's first term in 1948.

A second measure of political change is used in robustness tests. This variable is coded using the Change in Source of Leader Support (CHISOLS) dataset (Mattes, Leeds & Matsumura 2016). *SOLS Change* takes the value of "1" for any dyad-year in which one state is coded in CHISOLS to have undergone a change in the source of leader support that *did not*

¹³While the selection of a threshold of three areas of policy change is arbitrary, Tables 12-14 in the appendix display the robustness of the findings discussed below to the use of alternate thresholds.

result from a peaceful democratic election.¹⁴

Between 1950 and 2005, there are 80 Revolutions and 330 instances of SOLS change in my sample.

Shared Interests: The argument presented above centers on the behavior of states that share a close relationship following a major domestic change in one. I use three measures of shared interest. First, I use the existence of a defense pact between two states in a dyad. The signing of a defense pact between two states is an observable signal on behalf of each state that it possesses an interest in preserving the status quo in the other. Usefully, this interest in preserving the allied state may result from a number of factors such as defense concerns, economic interdependence, or shared ideology. We should expect that the existence of a publicly declared defense pact is an observable indicator of a range of shared interests that may be put at risk due to changes in the domestic policy of the allied state. Further, it seems reasonable to expect that states will only act upon interests that their leaders or powerful domestic groups recognize as salient, thus, using the declaration of a defense pact—a clear signal of a recognition of important shared interests—provides for an appropriate test of the hypothesis. The variable *Alliance* is coded using the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset (Leeds, Ritter & Mitchell 2002). This variable takes the value "1" for any year in which a defensive alliance exists between the states in a dyad and "0" otherwise.

I also employ a measure of shared interests based upon trade ties. To measure *Trade Dependence*, I use data taken from the Gledditsch (2002) "Expanded Trade and GDP Data." *Trade Dependence* is a continuous variable constructed using the weak-link procedure. For

¹⁴SOLS changes resulting from peaceful democratic election indicate only a change in the political party holding the executive office. The theory offered above claims that *major* political change is necessary to trigger rivalry initiation. It seems unlikely that a change as commonplace as the peaceful hand-off of power from one party to another would represent a radical change in domestic politics. Thus, to ensure that this measure matches the concept discussed above, peaceful electoral transitions are coded a "0" in this measure of policy change.

each State A in a dyad I sum the total value of imports to and exports from State B, and then divide this sum by State A's GDP, thus creating a ratio of State A's trade with State B to State A's total domestic output.¹⁵ I repeat this procedure reversing states A and B, then keep the lowest value of the two –the weak link. This raw measure ranges between 0 and 0.21. Thus, I normalize the variable between 0 and 1 to make coefficient estimates more easily comparable across variables.

Third, I use a measure of shared foreign policy interests that is derived from roll call votes in the United Nations General Assembly (Bailey Strezhnev and Voeten 2017). The source dataset provides a spatial measure of voting in which each value represents a state's ideal point. Thus, as two state's values draw closer together this represent more congruent foreign policy preferences. To construct my measure of foreign policy similarity, I first take the absolute difference between dyad members' ideal points. I then normalize these values between 0 and 1 to make estimates more easily comparable across variables. Finally, I subtract the resulting value from 1 to invert it. This procedure results in a continuous variable such that a value of "1" represents the maximum and "0" the minimum congruence between two states' U.N. General Assembly voting record.

Finally, I also use these measures of shared interest to construct a latent variable *Shared Interests* to more thoroughly account for the multiple aspects of states' shared interests in a single model and also to better account for unobservable aspects of shared interests. This latent variable is built using linear structural equation modeling and ranges between –0.46 and 0.72 with mean 0.000 and standard deviation 0.14. This latent variable has high face validity. Among the fifty relationships with the fewest shared interests, all are observations that include the Unites States and a Warsaw Pact member state, and all occur during the 1950's, at the height of the Cold War. Among the fifty most aligned observations, forty-one are observations of the relationship between Belgium and the Netherlands –arguably the

¹⁵This is expressed as $\frac{Import_{BtoA} + Export_{AtoB}}{GDP_A}$.

closest interstate relationship in the world. The remaining nine most-aligned observations are split between Belgium-Luxembourg and France-Germany observations during the 1980's. This measure also tracks changes in shared interests well. The United States-Iran relationship in 1978 prior to the Iranian revolution, for example, scores above the 90th percentile in terms of shared interests. In 1980, one year after the revolution, United States-Iran shared interests have fallen to the bottom 5 percent.

Interaction Terms: Finally, I code interactions between the aforementioned measures of shared interests and the measures of policy change discussed above. For purposes of this analysis, I consider a five-year period of time following political change within one state in a dyad. I expect that a new leader who comes to power with the hope of implementing a radical policy program will have managed to consolidate power and implement a sufficiently large subset of the planned reforms for other states to gauge their ultimate extent. Thus, it is during this five-year period that other states would judge the threats to their interests, and I would expect to see any conflict motivated by the revolution to occur within this period of time. As such, the primary independent variables of interest –the interactions between measures of shared interests and measures of policy change –take a non-zero value during the five years $t_1 - t_5$ following a policy change event, representing the five-year transition period after a change in policy t_0 , and "0" for all other observations.¹⁶

I also employ a number of control variables in hopes of mitigating the possibility of spuriousness or omitted variable bias influencing the findings. All covariates are lagged six years to ensure that no covariate value for any year during a five-year observation window is taken from a post-revolutionary time period.

Contiguity: Contiguity of borders is known to contribute to the likelihood of conflict, including rivalry (Stinnet & Diehl 2001; Lemke & Reed 2001) and should be expected to

¹⁶In robustness testing I examine the effect of using observation windows of different lengths. Tables 7-9 in the appendix display the results of analyses using observation windows of 2-8 years.

influence alliance formation and trade as well. Further, controlling for contiguity has been shown to be necessary for avoiding omitted variable bias in studies positing a positive association between alliances and conflict behavior (Ray 1995). This variable is coded "1" if the states in a dyad share a land or river border according to the Correlates of War Direct Contiguity V3.2 dataset (Stinnett et al. 2002), and "0" otherwise.

Military Capability Disparity: Thompson and Dreyer argue explicitly that some level of competitiveness in military capabilities is necessary to rivalry formation (2011, 3). Additionally, evidence suggests that the balance of capabilities affects the likelihood that defense pacts are signed between states (Walt 1985). Thus, as with shared borders, we must control for the distribution of military capabilities in a dyad to reduce the likelihood that any effects found in our analysis are spurious.

To account for military capabilities, I construct a variable using the Composite Indicator of National Capabilities (CINC) (Singer, Bremer & Stuckey 1972). This variable takes a value equal to the greater of the two capability scores in the dyad divided by the sum of both capability scores.¹⁷ This measure provides a ratio of the military capabilities possessed by the more powerful state in the dyad as compared to the total military capability present in the dyad (Gleditsch et al. 2008).

Joint Democracy As with the other controls discussed above, the level of jointly democratic institutions in a dyad have been shown to influence the interests shared between states (Leeds, Ritter & Long 2002), as well as the likelihood of rivalry formation in the dyad (Conrad & Souva 2011), and thus must be controlled for.

Democracy is constructed using the V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index (Coppedge et al. 2018) and is a continuous variable ranging between 0 and 1. I use a weak-link procedure, taking the lesser of the two Electoral Democracy Index scores in the dyad as a measure of the overall level of democracy in the dyad.

¹⁷This is expressed as $\frac{MaxCapability}{MaxCapability+MinCapability}$.

Systemic Shock Shocks to the international order, such as world wars, decolonization and the end of the Cold War have been shown to re-balance power between states and contribute to rivalry onset (Rider & Owsiak 2015; Diehl, 1995). I control for systemic shocks using the procedure introduced by Diehl (1995). This variable takes the value "1" for a 10-year span following the end of the Cold War or any significant changes in the territory of major powers. I draw the specific measure used in this analysis from Rider and Owsiak's (2015) replication data due to its longer temporal span.

Ongoing Territorial Dispute The existence of ongoing territorial disputes has commonly been found to contribute to rivalry (Rider & Owsiak, 2015; Vasquez, 2009; Hensel, 2001). I control for the existence of an ongoing territorial dispute using data drawn from the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) (Frederick et al., 2017).

Civil War The existence of a civil war prior to revolution allows for the possibility that an external state provides support to the government forces and thus effectively initiates conflict with a rebel group before it gains power. Thus, to prevent the possibility that external support for the regime explains findings regarding domestic political change and rivalry onset, I control for the occurrence of a civil war antecedent to revolution or SOLS change. I take data on civil war from the Correlates of War Intrastate Wars dataset V4.0 (Dixon & Sarkees, 2015).

I also include a control for the Cold War which takes the value "1" for years 1950-1989. The Cold War was a time period in which both rivalry across blocs, and alliances and alignment of policy and trade within blocks was the rule.

Finally, I control for the temporally dependent nature of conflict by using a cubic polynomial of the years since the end of the last rivalry in a dyad as suggested by Carter and Signorino (2010).

Results

I begin testing the argument above by first assessing the relationship between revolution

and rivalry onset. Table 1 displays the simple bi-variate relationship between a dyad's experience of a revolution within the last five years and subsequent onset of rivalry. The table displays observed frequencies without parentheses as well as the frequency that we would expect to observe if there were no systematic relationship (inside parentheses). In this bi-variate analysis we note a strongly significant relationship between revolution and rivalry. Just over three times as many rivalries begin in the immediate wake of a revolution in one of the states than would be expected by chance.¹⁸ Further, over one quarter of rivalries (27%) that begin during the 1950-2005 time period do so within five years of a revolution within one state in the rival pair.¹⁹ ²⁰ This relationship is worth noting on its own. It conforms with previous research on rivalry in that it shows that major domestic political shocks seem to be associated with subsequent rivalry onset (Goertz & Diehl 1995). However, where previous studies have only found support that state birth or independence (Goertz & Diehl 1995, Stinnet & Diehl 2001, Colaresi et al. 2007) but not regime change (Goertz & Diehl 1995) have an effect on rivalry, the current study demonstrates that major changes to the structure of domestic politics within an existing state can also provide an important spark to ignite rivalry.

Table 1 about here

Table 2 displays the results of a series of logistic regression models that test the hypothesis discussed above. Robust standard errors are clustered at the dyad level. Figures 1 and 2 display average marginal effects for the interactions of greatest interest. Model one demonstrates the correlation between revolution and rivalry onset. Models 2-4 display

¹⁸Table 5 in the appendix displays a similarly significant relationship between CHISOLS SOLS changes and revolution. 83% more rivalries form in the wake of a SOLS change than would be expected by chance.

¹⁹A list of rivalries that begin within five years of a revolution can be found in Table 3.

²⁰For SOLS change, the figure stands at 31% of rivalries forming within 5 years.

the interactive effect of revolution conditional upon the three measures of shared interests between states that are discussed above.

Table 2 about here

As we would expect given the bi-variate correlations seen in Table 1, Model 1 indicates that there remains a positive relationship between revolution within the last five years and the beginning of a subsequent rivalry even while controlling for other commonly theorized causes. However, as predicted in the hypothesis presented above, we see that this relationship is reduced in magnitude and statistical significance and may disappear entirely when accounting for the effect of shared interests in a dyad. In Model 2, *Revolution* takes on a negative sign and approaches significance ($P > |Z| = 0.13$). The models including individual measures of shared interest provide mixed support for the hypothesis that revolutions should not lead to rivalry. However, Model 5 presents the findings when modeling the effect of unobservable latent interests on rivalry formation. In Model 5 we see the predicted relationships between revolutionary change, shared interests and rivalry onset. When accounting for this more thorough latent measure of shared interests, revolution has no discernible independent effect on rivalry formation. The interaction of latent shared interests and revolution, however, takes a positive and strongly significant coefficient. This effect is equivalent to a 10-fold increase in the probability of rivalry onset over the baseline. This seems to indicate that while revolution is positively associated with rivalry onset, these post-revolutionary rivalries do not form at random. Instead, they are determined by the *ex-ante* relationship between the revolutionary state and the friends and allies of the old regime. Given the findings presented here, it may *only* be when two states share close ties *ex-ante* that the occurrence

of a revolution will drive them into conflict *ex-post*.²¹ This finding provides support for both hypotheses discussed in section 2. Revolutionary states appear to find themselves drawn into conflict because revolution threatens to destroy existing relationships between states, thus inflicts losses upon those states that share valuable ties with the revolutionary state. This begins an intractable antagonistic relationship between the new regime and states aligned with the old regime giving birth to rivalry.

It should be noted that, while marginal effect sizes are small in absolute value, they represent a substantive increase over the base probability of rivalry onset in the sample (0.001). Figure 1 displays that a revolution in a dyad that is maximally aligned in terms of foreign policy interests leads to a six-fold increase in the probability of onset as compared to a dyad that is minimally aligned (an increase of 0.0066).²² Similarly, revolution in one state of an allied pair leads to an increase of double the base probability of rivalry onset after revolution as compared to a non-allied dyad (an increase of 0.0023). This effect is even more pronounced when observing the marginal effects associated with the latent Shared Interest variable –displayed in Figure 2. In this case, movement from minimum to the 99th percentile of shared interest²³ is associated with an increase of an order of magnitude (0.011) in the probability of rivalry onset across those values distinguishable from 0.²⁴ Further, these marginal effects are larger than those associated with the occurrence of a systemic shock (0.00025) and are of a similar magnitude to the effect associated with an ongoing territorial

²¹The models presented here are insufficient to assess whether high levels of shared interest are a necessary condition for revolution to result in rivalry. I include in the appendix to this paper a test of necessary conditions devised by Braumoeller and Goertz (2000) as well as a discussion of the findings. It seems likely that high levels of shared interests are indeed necessary for domestic political shocks like revolution or regime change to lead to rivalry onset.

²²Moving from the first to third quartile in foreign policy similarity reduces the effect to a doubling of the base probability or 0.0023, similar to the effect size found for an alliance.

²³As discussed above, this measure ranges between -0.46 and 0.72 with mean 0.000 and standard deviation 0.144 , however, 99% of values fall below $.4$. Thus, making predictions for values of *Shared Interest* above the 99th percentile would be irresponsible due to lack of data to support prediction over a relatively large range of values.

²⁴When moving from first to third quartile, an increase of 140% the base rate (0.0014) is seen.

dispute (0.0069)²⁵ –two of the most widely noted causes of interstate rivalry (Rider & Owsiak 2015, Colaresi et al., 2007; Hensel, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Vasquez & Leskiw, 2001; Stinnet & Diehl, 2001; Lemke & Reed, 2001; Goertz & Diehl, 1995).

Figures 1-2 about here

While rivalry onsets are rare, rivalries account for a large majority of interstate wars. Additionally, the extreme competition between rivals such as Saudi Arabia and Iran over regional influence can destabilize entire regions. This competitive behavior between rivals can ignite and exacerbate interstate conflict between the rivals themselves and can contribute to both interstate conflict in the region, as well as intrastate conflict in nearby states. Thus, the extreme consequences associated with rivalry ensure that it cannot be ignored as a subject of study, despite its rarity.

Discussion

The findings presented above have several interesting implications for research on rivalry as well as research on the conflict-proneness of revolutionary states. First, revolution is one clear pathway to rivalry that has not been adequately explored by previous analyses that focus primarily on systemic shocks and state birth. Major shifts in the domestic political landscape of a state have important implications for rivalry formation. Future research should seek to determine the extent to which rivalries born from revolution are comparable to other rivalries in terms of behavior and other characteristics, and also how significant the extent of political change within a state must be before it motivates outside powers to intervene.

²⁵Both of these are marginal effect sizes derived from Model 1

Second, previous research has offered a number of explanations for the empirical regularity that post-revolutionary states seem to engage in conflict at a disproportionate level. The finding presented here casts doubt on some of these arguments and complicates others. Post-revolutionary conflict does not seem to be driven by opportunistic predatory behavior on the part of either the revolutionary state or enemy states hoping to capitalize on the moment of weakness that occurs due to revolution (Maoz 1989). Rather, it seems to be driven by disruptions of pre-revolutionary interdependent relationships. Additionally, if the process of fighting a revolution selects for aggressive risk-seeking personalities in post-revolutionary leaders (Colgan 2010), it also seems that it provides those leaders with incentives to engage in aggression specifically toward friends and allies of the old regime rather than opportunistic aggression toward weaker targets of opportunity. Further explanation of the motivations behind a given revolution may provide more clarity as to why this is the case.

Conclusion

In recent years, attempts to understand rivalry appear to have turned away from examining the causes of these particularly dangerous relationships. Instead, most research into interstate rivalry now appears to focus on the ways in which rivalries influence other aspects of the international system. I argue that this is problematic. Attempting to explore the effect of rivalry without first understanding its causes will contribute to significant theoretical and empirical problems. Most research designs require the scholar to have a clear understanding of the underlying process that generates observed data sufficiently well as to be able to identify and account for spurious relationships between the independent variable –existence of a rivalry–and our dependent variable –the behavior of rivals. Without developing a better understanding of the causes of rivalry, it is difficult to believe that we can achieve this.

In this paper I have attempted to address our collective lack of understanding of the causes of rivalry, at least in part, by deriving and testing a new argument regarding the root causes of rivalry formation. As discussed above, this argument centers around the general

logic that, when one state undergoes extreme changes to its domestic politics, this endangers its shared relations with other states. Those states are motivated to intervene in the affairs of their straying partner in order to restore the previous status quo and avoid the certain cost of allowing reform in the partner state. These interventions lead to rivalry.

This is a novel and valuable insight. However, this investigation represents only a first, if promising, attempt to better understand a very complex relationship between states, and illuminates only one process by which states can fall into this relationship. As such, much additional research is required. Further, the logic of the argument presented here goes beyond the narrow test presented. We should expect that the types of interests discussed here are not the only ones that can motivate rivalry in the wake of radical political change. Additional research should expand upon the insight developed in this investigation by examining these various other forms of shared ties to determine which may be salient enough to motivate conflict when threatened by the activities of the states they tie together, and how significant an event of domestic upheaval must be before it motivates conflict.

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Main Tables and Figures:

Table 1: Bivariate Relationship - Revolution and Rivalry Onset (All dyads 1950-2005)

| | No Revolution-Last 5 Years | Revolution-Last 5 Years | Total |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| No Rivalry Onset | 48,807 (48,795.6) | 4,118 (4,129.4) | 52,925 |
| Rivalry Onset | 43 (54.4) | 16 (4.6) | 59 |
| Total | 48,850 | 4,134 | 52,984 |
| Pearson chi2 = 30.6364 Pr = 0.000 | | | |
| Note: Cells display the observed frequency over the expected frequency (in parentheses.) | | | |

Table 2: Logistic Regression of Rivalry Initiation 1950-2005

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Revolution | Foreign Policy | Alliance | Trade | Latent Interests |
| | b/se | b/se | b/se | b/se | b/se |
| Revolution | 1.977*** (0.523) | -4.497 (2.901) | 0.868 (0.703) | 1.843*** (0.539) | 0.578 (0.912) |
| Revolution × Policy | | 7.266* (3.143) | | | |
| Revolution × Alliance | | | 3.612* (1.442) | | |
| Revolution × Trade | | | | 18.464+ (11.127) | |
| Revolution × Shared Interest | | | | | 10.388** (3.629) |
| Shared Interest | | | | | -2.122 (2.351) |
| Alliance | -0.349 (0.543) | -0.376 (0.546) | -2.565* (1.264) | -0.352 (0.539) | |
| Policy | 3.068+ (1.811) | 1.018 (1.746) | 3.114+ (1.790) | 3.099+ (1.796) | |
| Trade | 1.643 (4.172) | 2.384 (4.185) | 4.637 (4.613) | -2.086 (7.428) | |
| Civil War | 0.639 (0.770) | 0.587 (0.783) | 1.029 (0.750) | 0.657 (0.780) | 0.794 (0.707) |
| Capability Disparity | -4.588* (2.246) | -4.457* (2.173) | -4.451* (2.236) | -4.477* (2.266) | -4.304+ (2.214) |
| Democracy | -2.899* (1.249) | -2.934* (1.266) | -2.615* (1.256) | -2.797* (1.318) | -2.609* (1.128) |
| Contiguity | 0.346 (0.876) | 0.469 (0.911) | 0.381 (0.923) | 0.346 (0.885) | 0.881 (1.024) |
| Cold War | 0.374 (0.879) | 0.320 (0.920) | 0.215 (0.862) | 0.363 (0.883) | -0.008 (0.836) |
| Systemic Shock | 1.172 (0.936) | 1.180 (0.959) | 1.159 (0.938) | 1.167 (0.934) | 1.005 (0.902) |
| Ongoing Territorial Dispute | 2.686** (0.923) | 2.838** (0.952) | 3.371** (1.088) | 2.703** (0.939) | 2.872** (1.060) |
| Constant | -6.625+ (3.988) | -5.022 (3.711) | -6.478+ (3.782) | -6.697+ (4.011) | -4.084 (2.740) |
| Observations | 36854 | 36854 | 36854 | 36854 | 35829 |

Robust standard errors clustered on the dyad –in parentheses

Cubic polynomial of years of peace included in model but not reported

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 in 2-tail test

Figure 1: Effect of Revolution conditional on Policy Similarity

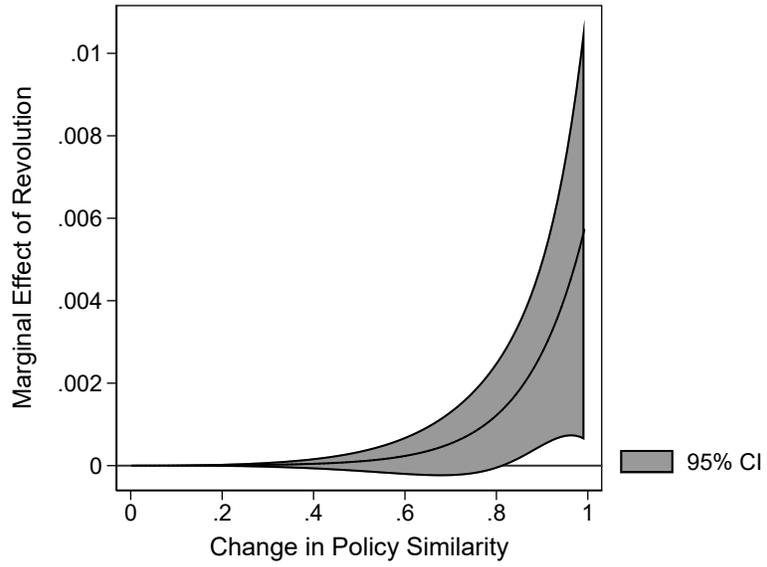


Figure 2: Effect of Revolution conditional on Shared Interests

