

Strategies of Domination: Local Institutional Strength and the Politics of Foreign Rule

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Abstract

While many have illustrated the poor track record of armed institution-building projects abroad, few have asked why powerful states choose to employ this costly strategy given its inherent drawbacks. If institution-building strategies frequently fail to achieve their objectives, why do powerful states ever engage in the calamitous practice? This article answers this question by exploring the determinants of a foreign ruler's choice of strategy following armed intervention. I argue that pre-existing institutional strength of local territories largely guides major powers strategic choices following armed intervention, regardless of the foreign ruler's prior goals and preferences. Only once the foreign ruler's military intervenes into the foreign territory can the foreign ruler assess the strength of the local institutions in the territory and their suitability for meeting their goals. Using an integrative mixed-method research design combining original data gathered on 160 cases of foreign rule since 1898 and an in-depth case study of Wilsonian foreign rule in Mexico, this article illustrates the crucial importance local institutional strength plays in determining an intervening power's foreign rule strategy.

Prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, American military planners were confident in their ability to win a decisive victory and oust Saddam Hussein in relatively short order. However, “disagreements about the postwar plan remained unresolved. They arose from differing assessments of prewar conditions in Iraq and what the consequences of deposing Saddam would be.”¹ While the initial planning focused on maintaining current institutions, when the Coalition Provisional Authority took sovereign authority over the Iraqi state and surveyed the post-invasion local landscape it became clear that simply changing leaders in Iraq would not succeed as they had hoped. American planners had “assumed that the most senior levels of ministry leadership...could be replaced without substantially undermining the work of the ministries... As Condoleezza Rice expressed the concept, ‘we would defeat the army, but the institutions would hold.’”² However As Undersecretary of Defense Feith claimed, “the changing situation on the ground led us to a different analytical conclusion.”³ In order to achieve their political goals, the US needed to build new, stronger institutions, a mission that the American foreign rule mission did not initially intend.⁴

Thus, as Bremer and the CPA took sovereign authority, it became clear that, rather than a strong bureaucratic state existing in Iraq, an institution-building strategy in Iraq was necessary for American foreign rulers to achieve their political goals. The tentative prewar planning that assumed a functioning bureaucratic state was completely inadequate for the situation the American foreign rulers found once arriving into the territory. Finally, with the signing of CPA orders Number 1 and Number 2, which disbanded the Iraqi military and ordered de-ba’athification, the lengthy institution-building mission was fully underway.

The difficulties associated with the foreign rule operation in Iraq highlights a crucial puzzle behind armed interventionism and foreign rule missions across time more broadly. While the United States’ foreign rule mission in Iraq had created a particularly large set of

¹Bowen 2009, 4.

²Dobbins 2009, 107-108.

³Dobbins 2009, 57.

⁴Prior to the invasion and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told OHRA head Jay Garner that “if you think were going to spend a billion dollars of our money over there, you are sadly mistaken.” Bowen 2009, 42.

negative externalities, the Iraq foreign rule operation is not as unique as many would like to think. Foreign rulers have engaged in lengthy institution-building missions with surprising regularity since 1898. Over 160 cases of foreign rule have occurred since 1898, and yet the track record for foreign rule missions using institutional strategies over this time period is quite poor.⁵ Thus a puzzle remains where it seems that rational states should be resistant to using institution-building strategies given their costly nature and ineffectiveness, and yet major powers continue to use these strategies frequently in various foreign rule missions across time and different geographic contexts.⁶ As the scholarly evidence concerning the difficulties surrounding armed institution-building missions continues to grow, one must ask why major powers would ever pursue such strategies, given the likelihood of failure? If major powers pursue rational objectives, why would states ever attempt to build new institutions in their foreign dependencies given the high cost in both blood and treasure? Given the empirical track record of these missions, the regular recurrence even after major powers commit to never engaging in institution-building again is striking. Thus there must be a sound explanation for the regular recurrence of institutional foreign rule strategies, even when states are resistant to and have natural preferences to avoid foreign institution-building.

Hence reflecting on American choices in 2003, a deceptively complex question emerges: What determines a a major power's choice of a strategy when engaging in foreign rule following armed intervention? I argue that the strength of local political institutions in the dominated territory is the key determinant of a major power's foreign rule strategy. The pre-existing institutional strength of local territories largely guides the strategic choices made by states following armed intervention, regardless of the interveners prior goals and preferences. I contend that the capacity and resistance potential of potential local agents determines whether delegation through a leadership strategy is a viable strategy for the foreign ruler, or whether institutional strategies are mandated by the weak nature of the institutions in

⁵As Lake states, "The fact is that the failure of statebuilding is overdetermined." Lake 2016, 16. See Coyne 2008, Edelstein 2008, Grävingholt, Leininger and von Haldenwang 2012.

⁶See Downes and Monten 2013, Downes and O'Rourke 2016, Lake 2016, Peic and Reiter 2011.

the local territory. Only once a foreign ruler has landed on the ground in a territory can the foreign ruler assess the local institutional context and recognize whether a leadership or institutional strategy is required.

Local Institutional Strength and Foreign Rule Strategy

When foreign rulers intervene in a foreign territory, they are not arriving in a location with a blank slate. Local institutions already exist in the territory. Foreign rulers, however, are required to decide if they will maintain current institutions or change them to suit their political goals. I contend that rational foreign rulers will typically prefer leadership strategies where they can replace leaders and use local institutions to achieve their goals, as it is more cost effective.⁷ That being said, this rational preference is conditioned by the local institutions and the local conditions in the territory, and foreign rulers must navigate this institutional context in order to achieve their political goals. I argue that local institutional strength makes the choice of strategy contingent on local factors present in the territory, more so than the goals and desires of the foreign ruler. The importance of local institutional strength operates through two main causal mechanisms: agent capacity and armed resistance. Local institutional strength determines whether the local territory has agents with sufficient capacity to achieve the foreign ruler's goals and also the level of armed resistance the foreign ruler is likely to face, reducing the available strategic options. Only after assessing the strength of local institutions will foreign rulers be able to select the strategy required to achieve their goals.

Definitions and Conceptualization

Before I can continue I must define some key terms that drive my analysis. First, Foreign rule is the relationship that powerful states engage in so as to govern territory outside its

⁷I define rational states in the same vein as Kirshner. See Kirshner 2015.

sovereign jurisdiction through armed military force. Formally, I define foreign rule as a hierarchical relationship in which a foreign state, group of states, or international body uses military force to impose itself as the *de facto* sovereign authority of a territory, while making no permanent claims to include the territory as part of the foreign ruler's home state. This includes concepts that are traditionally considered separate phenomena, namely military occupation, mandate and trust territories, foreign-imposed regime change missions (FIRCs), international territorial administration, and modern UN peacekeeping missions where the mission assumes *de facto* sovereignty of the territory.

Foreign rule strategy is the means by which a foreign ruler attempts to achieve their policy goals when acting as the *de facto* sovereign of a foreign ruled territory. Specifically, foreign rule strategy is the means through which the foreign ruler structures their relationship with the foreign ruled territory to achieve their political ends. As foreign rulers always have some policy goal (or end) they are trying to achieve when placing a territory under foreign rule, the strategy is the means they are attempting to use to achieve that goal.⁸ Further, following Saunders, Downes and Monten, and Downes and O'Rourke, I contend that over time two main varieties of foreign rule strategy have emerged; those focused on political leaders and those focused on political institutions.⁹ I term these ideal type foreign rule strategies leadership and institutional strategies. In practice, foreign rulers can use elements of both leadership and institutional strategies. However, focusing on two ideal type strategies serves to show two distinct forms of foreign rule and how foreign rulers make choices over how to attempt to advance their interests in their dependencies.

Leadership strategies are foreign rule strategies that emphasize changing or maintaining a specific leader in power while maintaining current political institutions. I define leadership strategies as foreign rule strategies where the foreign ruler governs the local territory by appointing preferred leaders to rule through current governmental institutions and ensuring the preferred leader remains in power. This includes strategies where the foreign ruler replaces

⁸Frieden 1999, 45-47.

⁹Downes and Monten 2013, Downes and O'Rourke 2016, Saunders 2011.

non-preferred leadership with new leaders, reimposes recently deposed leaders the foreign ruler preferred, and the foreign ruler maintaining leaders in power that would otherwise be deposed. Institutional strategies are foreign rule strategies where the foreign ruler replaces and reshapes local political institutions distinct from the current local institutions. Institutional strategies emphasize building, maintaining, and ruling through political institutions. Institutional strategies focus on creating and developing political institutions that ensure the foreign ruler achieves their goals and promotes their interests. While institutional strategies often include changes in leadership as a byproduct of the new institutional structure, the focus of an institutional strategy remains on the political institutions of the local territory.

Finally, I use a minimalist definition of local institutional strength that largely refers to whether local political institutions can carry out the policies and goals of the central sovereign authority when tasked. This view of institutional strength is similar to the concept of infrastructural power, or “the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm.”¹⁰ It is the actual ability of local institutions to implement policies dictated by the sovereign authority is the defining feature of local institutional strength. The type of local institutions, their organization, and their political attributes are of no consequence. Rather, only whether they can “implement logistically political decisions throughout the” territory defines the strength of local institutions. If local political institutions can, for instance, impose and collect a new tax on the population, then they possess institutional capacity. However if the local government calls for mandatory public schooling, and no children actually go to school, then the territory lacks institutional strength. If they cannot administer these projects, at least in terms of carrying out the type of project they are charged with, then they lack institutional capacity.

¹⁰Mann 1984, 189.

Agent Capacity

Local institutional strength drives the choice of foreign rule strategy through two theoretical mechanisms. First, agent capacity refers to the capacity and level of institutional strength required to allow local agents to achieve the demands of the foreign ruler. Agent capacity informs whether the foreign ruler can achieve their goals through delegation. I assume that rational foreign rulers always prefer to use local agents as an extension of the rational preference for ruling in a cost-effective manner, with delegation to local institutions being the cheapest option. Problematically, the ability to achieve this form of cost-effective foreign rule is predicated on the availability of effective agents. The drive for cost-efficient agents leads states to always prefer to utilize existing institutions and simply substitute new leaders when possible, rather than building new institutions. Without strong institutions that allow for the effective use of agents in the local territory, some form of institution building needs to take place. When foreign rulers intervene abroad, they initially attempt to work with local officials to manage the foreign rule mission and carry out their preferred policy goals. Rephrased, foreign rulers always seek local agents to work with and to help govern the territory. However, while some local agents almost always exist in the territory who are willing to work with the foreign ruler to help achieve the latter's goals, it is the capacity of these agents, driven by local institutional strength, that defines the ability of foreign rulers to actually delegate to these agents.

Foreign rulers always prefer to delegate to local agents when possible. Maintaining local institutions allows the foreign ruler's military to leave the foreign territory quickly, and rely on local institutions to carry out the foreign ruler's mission. As a result, this the military can achieve the foreign ruler's goals more cheaply. Utilizing current political institutions also allows foreign rulers to focus on the political goals they wish to seek, rather than spending costly resources on creating new infrastructure. Additionally, the destruction of current institutions to create new ones incurs large costs in terms of resources, and requires lengthy military presence to maintain and rebuild the Weberian bureaucracy inside the foreign terri-

tory. The destruction of local institutions to allow the foreign ruler to build new institutions produces strong negative externalities that foreign rulers prefer to avoid, if possible. Reduced capacity of institutions creates conditions for long periods of high investment and replacement of bureaucratic capital that is difficult. As Gerring et al. explain, “the benefits of preserving preexisting political institutions are considerable, while the opportunity costs of destroying them may be quite high.”¹¹

Thus, the foreign ruler must first determine whether the local territory has the capacity to permit agents to serve the foreign ruler’s interests before they have the luxury of worrying about how to control their installed agents. When major powers engage in foreign rule, they always want to install a pliant agent, but, more importantly, the agent requires the capacity to actually carry out the foreign ruler’s preferred policies.¹² However, capable local agents are not always available. Often the existing political institutions do not possess the capacity required and this precludes the availability of local agents that can achieve the goals of the foreign ruler. Thus, the determination of agent capacity overrides the foreign ruler’s natural preference for leadership strategies. Instead of focusing on the preferences of the foreign ruler, understanding decisions of foreign rule strategies requires examining the capacity of local agents to carry out the foreign ruler’s interests.

The process through which foreign rulers institute a foreign rule mission highlights the role of local institutions and agent capacity. First, upon initiating the foreign rule mission, foreign rulers typically embrace a temporary leadership strategy to determine whether local institutions possess the capacity required to delegate fully to them. As the foreign ruler works with local agents, they will assess whether they are able to carry out the political goals given to them by the foreign ruler. If the foreign ruler finds that the local territory already possesses relatively strong local institutions, then there are capable agents in the territory and the foreign ruler will employ a leadership strategy, which is the rationally preferred

¹¹Gerring, Ziblatt, Van Gorp and Arevalo 2011, 385.

¹²Some argue this point when they argue that democratic regimes prefer to install authoritarian leaders because they are more likely to be pliant to their wishes and enact their preferred policies. See Bueno De Mesquita and Downs 2006.

strategy. The foreign ruler recognizes that the territory's current political institutions will allow for their installed agent to carry out their wishes, and the foreign ruler only needs to depose the recalcitrant leader and install a pliant leader to achieve their goals. With such a leader in place, the foreign ruler moves the territory towards their preferred outcome.

On the other hand, if the foreign ruler finds the territory possesses relatively weak local institutions, then a leadership strategy is not available to them. If the local territory possess weak institutions, then the political ends the foreign ruler is seeking will not be attainable with the current institutions in place, and they will be forced to create new and stronger ones. The foreign ruler will recognize that imposing a new leader will not accomplish the mission, and instead the foreign ruler needs to engage in institution building. The local institutional bureaucracy will have to be strengthened, reformed, and rebuilt to create the conditions for the foreign ruler to succeed. Foreign rulers are reluctant to engage in institutional strategies when there are local institutions present they can utilize to meet their needs. Thus, even though foreign rulers prefer to simply install new leaders, weak institutions compel institutional strategies, often against the pre-intervention preferences of the foreign ruler.

Egypt's foreign rule mission in Yemen is an emblematic example. President Nasser and the Egyptian military initially believe that they would be able to quickly establish a foreign rule mission in North Yemen, re-install and bolster their preferred leaders in Sana'a, and establish a leadership strategy that used minimal resources.¹³ The military leaders were so confident in their mission to Sana'a that they did not even bring maps of the full Yemen Arab Republic with them.¹⁴ Upon arrival in the capital, however, the Egyptian military quickly recognized that the republican government instituted in the capital did not have the capacity to carry out their political goals.¹⁵ Institutional reforms in Yemen were not strengthening local institutions, and the newly created republican government was not able

¹³Dawisha 1975.

¹⁴Witty 2001, 409.

¹⁵Dawisha 1977.

to establish unified political institutions that could achieve the government's political policies beyond a very limited geographic range.¹⁶ The Egyptians quickly attempted to turned to an institutional strategy, pushing to rebuild Yemeni local institutions in an attempt to create a strong institutional basis on which to win the civil war against the royalist factions. Agent capacity had to be built before the Egyptians could achieve their goal in Yemen.¹⁷

Agent capacity is thus a key mechanism driving foreign rule strategy, as capable agents and the institutional strength they require is a pre-requisite to setting up a typical principal-agent relationship. It is only through the capacity of local institutions that the foreign ruler can achieve their political goals. The choice of strategy requires knowledge of the local political context and how institutional strength effects the foreign ruler's goals. Only once foreign rule is established can the foreign ruler take stock of the the local institutional context, determine whether capable agents exist, and which strategy to implement.

Armed Resistance

The second causal mechanism of local institutional strength is the likelihood of armed resistance. Local institutional strength matters in helping to determine the probability of armed resistance against the foreign ruler. Higher levels of local institutional strength makes replacing institutions more costly by increasing the likelihood of armed resistance. Replacing institutions reduces aggregate infrastructural power, making resistance against state control easier. Additionally, If local institutions are relatively strong, replacing them with new institutions engenders stronger resistance against foreign ruler. The residual capacity inside the pre-existing political institutions is transferred to the resistance movement, and the new institutions often do not possess enough capacity to defeat these resistance movements. Just as agent capacity can constrain foreign rulers, only allowing for institutional foreign rule strategies in some cases, armed resistance can often work in the opposite direction to bind

¹⁶Witty 2001, 419-420.

¹⁷In fact, some have argued that Egypt's actions in this foreign rule operation directly contributed to their weak performance in the 1967 war with Israel. See Ferris 2013.

foreign rulers to leadership strategies due to preferences to avoid costly missions when possible. When territories placed under foreign rule possess stronger local institutions, replacing those institutions increases the probability that the foreign ruler will face armed resistance against the military operation. However, if local political institutions are weak, the current institutions in place cannot suppress insurrections, and thus foreign rulers are required to build new institutions.¹⁸

Local institutional strength helps determine the likely level of post-intervention armed resistance as replacing political institutions in a state reduces state power and state strength as new institutional capacity is rebuilt over time.¹⁹ Further, in order to maintain the legitimate monopoly of violence over the territory and defeat resistance movements, foreign rulers and their proxies require sufficient institutional strength to ensure that rebellions are defeated. When the state does not possess the capacity with its institutions to quash resistance to their rule, rebellion and insurgency are more likely to occur.²⁰ If replacing institutions leads to a temporary reduction in institutional strength, then resistance movements that possess sufficient organizational strength will flourish. Foreign rulers, recognizing this fact and fearful of the cost that defeating resistance movements would impose, push to work with local institutions that are sufficiently strong through leadership strategies. The likelihood of armed resistance affects the cost calculus that foreign rulers operate under, and pushes foreign rulers to prefer leadership strategies.

Foreign rulers must also consider what will happen to the deposed institutions when they use an institutional strategy. Building new institutions “requires the destruction, or at the very least, the neutralization of the existing political order. There cannot be two governments side by side... Thus, the destruction of political order is a cosmic event, with repercussions that are often far-reaching and always difficult to anticipate; spillover is common, for such

¹⁸It is not surprising that armed resistance and local political institutions are linked, given the extensive literature on military occupations and resistance. See Edelstein 2008, Ferwerda and Miller 2014, Hechter, Matesan and Hale 2009.

¹⁹Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates and Gleditsch 2001, Peic and Reiter 2011.

²⁰Fearon and Laitin 2003, Goodwin 2001.

events are difficult to contain.”²¹ The destruction of the current local institutions requires foreign rulers to ascertain what will happen to those who are deposed. If they retain the organizational ties that held them together inside the government’s bureaucracy, then armed resistance capacity is higher. On the other hand, destroying weak institutions does not meaningfully create additional capacities to rebel, and make it more likely that armed resistance will emerge.

Alternatively, if the foreign ruler assesses the situation and sees relatively weak local institutions, then it is often the case that organized resistance can already operate against current local institutions. Reducing state institutional strength is not a concern, as there is no current capacity to fight resistance movements at this moment, and the foreign ruler must build new institutional strength in order to combat the rebellion. The foreign ruler is compelled to engage in institution building to quash any prospective resistance against political rule in the state. Replacing the current leadership through leadership strategies will simply allow the resistance movement to continue unaffected by the change in leadership. Thus, local institutional strength can crucially determine resistance capacity and contribute to the foreign ruler’s calculation of how best to achieve their goals with minimum resistance.

The German foreign rule mission in Norway perfectly encapsulates how this mechanism plays out. After dissolving the parliament and attempting to force the King to abdicate and abolish the monarchy, German commissioner Josef Terboven soon found that Norway’s strong local institutional capacity produced a higher level of armed resistance than he expected.²² Recognizing this, Terboven decided against his initial preferences to delegate power to a new Norwegian government governed by Vidkun Quisling and the fascist Nasjonal Samling party, using a leadership strategy to prevent further resistance that would harm the ability for the Germans to achieve their political goals.²³ Rather than continuing with the initial brief attempt to change local institutions, Terboven and the German foreign rulers in Norway

²¹Gerring, Ziblatt, Van Gorp and Arevalo 2011, 384.

²²Dahl 1999, 229-250.

²³Mazower 2008, 104-105.

decided that maintaining current institutions in Norway with a leadership strategy was the best way to decrease the level of prospective armed resistance and work towards consolidating their political objectives.²⁴

Thus, the second causal mechanism central to the relationship of local institutional strength and foreign rule strategy is the threat of armed resistance. When a local territory possesses strong political institutions, the high resistance capacity makes foreign rulers wary of engaging in institutional strategies, as institutional strategies will encourage higher levels of armed resistance and make the mission much more costly. Foreign rulers will be concerned about the prospective resistance they could face, and will consider whether they can achieve their goals with leadership strategies instead. When the local territory possesses weak political institutions, its resistance capacity is less than in the areas with strong political institutions. Thus, institutional strategies are easier to implement in these territories, as the armed resistance will not be as large and overwhelming for the nascent political institutions set up by the foreign ruler.

Alternative Arguments

Beyond my theory, there are some alternative arguments that produce contrasting empirical predictions.²⁵ The first alternative argument centers on the goals of the initial armed intervention. Some have argued that the reasons for initial intervention influence the subsequent choice of foreign rule strategy.²⁶ The general argument is that armed interventions undertaken for economic, humanitarian, or security reasons will produce different strategies of foreign rule that correspond to the goals the foreign ruler wishes to achieve. While this argument might make initial sense, if there is variation in foreign rule strategies among cases with similar intervention goals, I contend that the goals of the foreign rule mission are not

²⁴Norway however still did have a resistance effort during the foreign rule period, but evidence that this would've been heightened by further institutional strategies is clear.

²⁵While my theory makes strong claims at times, it is a probabilistic theory. It focuses on how local institutions constrain the strategic choices of the foreign ruler, but there can be other factors that might affect the choice of strategy.

²⁶Sullivan 2007.

sufficient to explain the selection of strategy. Rather, intervention goals are an important in the initial intervention decision, and can set the stage for how foreign rulers think about the political goals necessary for success.

The next set of alternative explanations focus broadly on domestic features of the foreign ruler and contend these features determine the strategy the foreign ruler will utilize. Problematically, these arguments largely assume that the domestic political character of the foreign ruler leads to consistent strategies across different types of foreign rule. But given the wide variety of foreign rule strategies that we see among the same foreign ruler, these arguments are not compelling. First, regime type arguments posit that democratic or authoritarian regimes will have consistent preferences for foreign rule strategies over time, regardless of the situation in the local territory. Some would argue that liberal and democratic regimes should prefer institutional strategies, whereas authoritarian regimes prefer to pursue leadership strategies.²⁷ Others argue that foreign rulers are more likely to impose institutions in territories that have institutions that are dissimilar to their own.²⁸ This holds that more democratic foreign rulers should use leadership strategies in more democratic territories, whereas more authoritarian foreign rulers should use institutional strategies in more democratic territories. The converse could also be true. Another argument focuses on the leadership style and preferences of individual leaders when carrying out foreign rule.²⁹ Different leadership styles or beliefs could conceivably impact different strategies used by the leader. However, if leaders use different strategies in different foreign rule missions, then other factors must logically drive strategy formation.

It could also be the case that military organizations that have recently engaged in foreign rule in a similar or the same territory have better information about the territory, and are more likely to choose strategies quickly based on that prior knowledge.³⁰ Thus, when the

²⁷Doyle 2005, Kegley and Hermann 1996.

²⁸Desch 2007, Owen IV 2010.

²⁹One example is Saunders who argues that leaders who perceive threats emanating from local institutions will follow ‘transformative’ intervention strategies, whereas leaders who perceive threats emanating from external behavior of states prefer ‘non-transformative’ strategies. Saunders 2011.

³⁰Etheredge 1985, Levy 1994.

military has engaged in similar foreign rule missions in recent periods, or have previously intervened in the territory that is now under foreign rule, it could mean that the previous assessment of and learning about the local territory can carry over to future time periods, due to organizational learning processes.³¹ Additionally, noting that institutional strategies often require higher levels of military force and cost, it might mean only relatively stronger foreign rulers have the opportunity to attempt institutional strategies. If strong foreign rulers prefer to use institutional strategies (or if only strong foreign rulers use institutional strategies), then we should see more powerful foreign rulers using institutional strategies more frequently than weaker foreign rulers.

Finally, there are a few features of the local territory itself that could impact the choice of foreign rule strategy. First, the size of the local territory could make it more difficult and costly to engage in institution building, making leadership strategies appear more attractive.³² Similarly, the ruggedness of the territory might also contribute to the difficulty of imposing new institutions to all parts of the foreign ruled territory.³³ Thus, institutional strategies might prove more difficult to carry out in territories that are more rugged, in addition to being larger. Additionally, the geographic distance between the foreign ruler and the local territory under foreign rule might also impact the choice of strategy given the difficulties in establishing communication and supply lines with the local territory. Distance could conceivably affect the ability of the foreign ruler to project force, limiting the potential strategies available to leadership strategies, where institutional strategies would only be attempted in areas that are close to the foreign ruler's home territory.

³¹This type of argument is popular and contentious in discussions of counterinsurgency and how military organizations learn from previous experiences to update organizational practices. See Catignani 2014, Jackson 2008.

³²As some argue, it is more difficult and costly to extend infrastructural power across larger territories. See Herbst 2000.

³³Fearon and Laitin 2003, Shaver, Carter and Shawa 2016.

Research Design and Quantitative Testing

To test my theory, I employ an integrative multimethod research design where the quantitative results build initial causal claims that confirm my broad theoretical story, and then select an on-the-line case to trace my causal mechanisms through.³⁴ Rather than simply re-confirming the same propositions through multiple methods, an integrative multimethod design tasks each different method to answer and test unique propositions that complement and build on each other, making each method necessary in confirming the entire theoretical story. My theory combines hypotheses that are best tested quantitatively, with other hypotheses that involve decision-making processes and are best tested through case studies. Only by combining these two methods in an integrative multimethod research design can I fully test my theory and adjudicate among various alternative arguments. I select an on-the-line cases to determine whether the quantitative results are actually driven by the hypothesized causal variables, which fits with Goertz’s call to select cases in multimethod research that focus on causal mechanisms.³⁵ An integrative multimethod research design combines the complementary benefits of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to confirm different aspects of my causal story, while working together to find unified support for the complete theory.

Data Collection

To test my theory quantitatively, I first constructed an original dataset of all 160 foreign rule cases and the strategies used from 1898 to 2015.³⁶ The full cases list is listed in Appendix I. Figure 2 presents the distribution of cases across time. The histogram shows a steady trend of foreign rule across all time periods since 1898, with large punctuated spikes where

³⁴Seawright defines integrative multimethod research designs as “multimethod designs in which two or more methods are carefully combined to support a single, unified causal inference. With such a design, additional methods are used to test or reframe the assumptions behind the central causal inference potentially opening the door to an improved overall causal inference.” Seawright 2016, 47.

³⁵Goertz 2017. For a description of on-the-line cases, see Lieberman 2005.

³⁶Documentation of how this case list was constructed is included in Appendix II.

we would expect them, namely the World War periods and a small rise during the post-Cold War years.

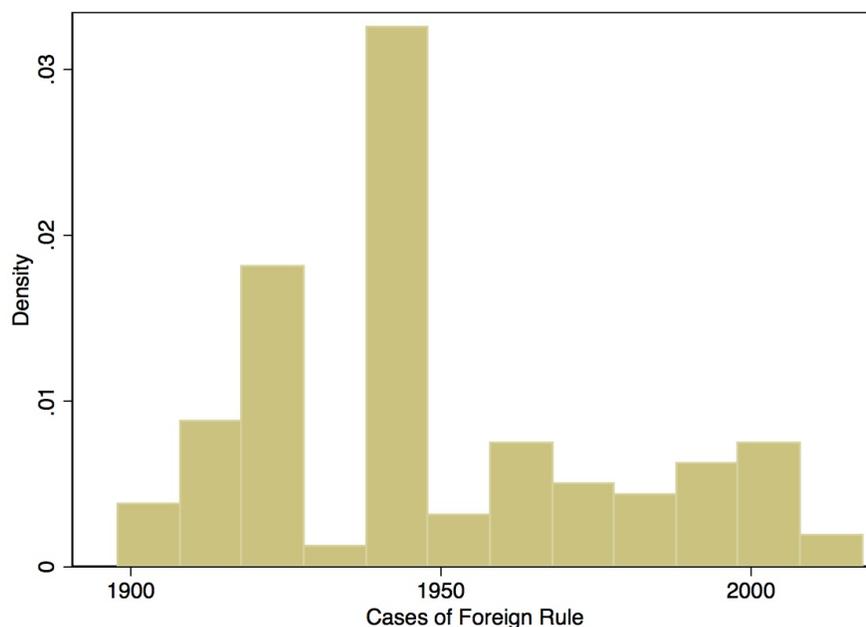


Figure 1: Distribution of Foreign Rule Cases Across Time

The dependent variable of interest, foreign rule strategy, is coded zero (0) for a leadership strategy, and one (1) for an institutional strategy. Cases where the foreign ruler directly imposed new institutions were coded as institutional strategies regardless of the foreign ruler's initial goals. Similarly, where the foreign ruler directly imposed new leaders and did not impose new institutions then the strategy was coded as leadership. Figure 2 above highlights the distribution of foreign rule strategies across time, with noticeable spikes during the World War periods and the post-Cold War period as noted above. The largest spike of leadership strategies, perhaps predictably, occurs during the World War II and Post-World War II period.

Measuring local institutional strength is difficult as local institutional strength is not directly observable. While many have argued that strong local institutions are an important facet of politics and governance, there is not one defined measure that is accepted to directly correspond to the capacity of local institutions. Depending on one's conception, different

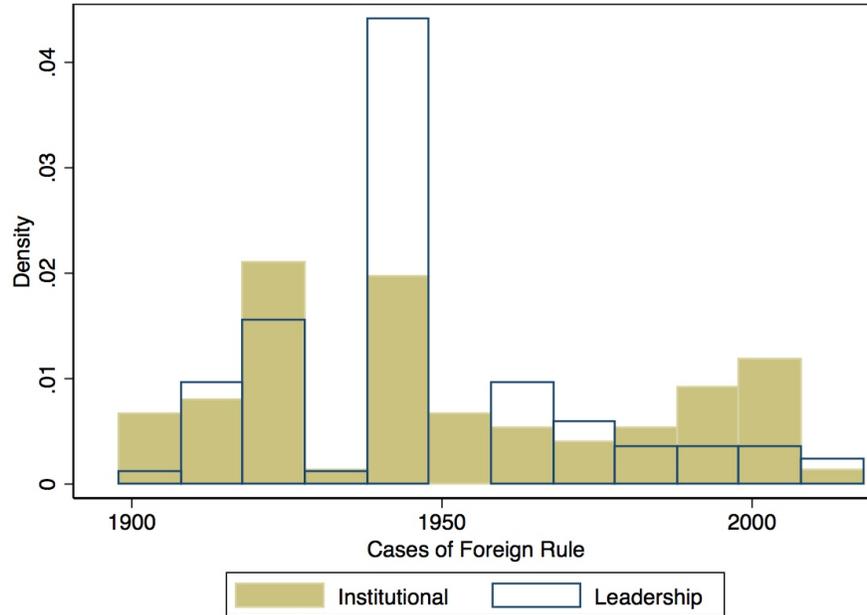


Figure 2: Distribution of Foreign Rule Strategies Across Time

measures might correspond to different aspects of local institutional strength or capacity.³⁷ In addition, many existing measures of local institutional capacity are only coded for the post-Cold War era and do not code institutional capacity beyond 1960. I employ two distinct strategies to rectify this deficiency and estimate values of local institutional strength: using a portfolio of proxy variables and then using latent variable modeling to confirm results that local institutional strength is driving my results and not the choice of measure for the concept.

Initially, I code and utilize five possible proxy variables for local institutional strength that extend back to 1898: tax ratios, primary education rates, urbanization, railroad length, and state antiquity. The rationale for choosing these five proxies and the full data collection is documented in Appendix II.³⁸ Different scholars have argued that each of these variables

³⁷Hendrix convincingly shows how different conceptions of state capacity can lead to different indicators and meanings of the concept. His use of factor analysis to test these different assumptions and measure the latent characteristics of capacity is a good approach to follow. Hendrix 2010.

³⁸The data for these measures come from: For tax ratios, Macmillan 2013 and *Global Financial Data* 2010. For primary education enrollment, Barro and Lee 1996, UNESCO 2016, and Coppedge et al. 2018. For urbanization, Coppedge et al. 2018. For railroad length, Comin and Hobijn 2009 and Coppedge et al. 2018. Finally for state antiquity, Bockstette, Chanda and Putterman 2002.

can serve as a proxy for local institutional capacity, and represent the capacity of local institutions to carry out various goals of the centralized power in the territory. Rather than trying to take a defined stance in the debate over which variables are the best proxy for local institutional strength, I instead opt for a portfolio approach, where I look to use a host of variables to help provide stronger evidence that local institutional strength predicts foreign rule strategy, regardless of the proxy variable chosen. This should provide good evidence that my results are not driven by the selection of a specific proxy variable, but by the underlying local institutional strength in a territory. Overall, Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the portfolio of proxy variables I use to measure local institutional strength.³⁹

Table 1: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Tax Ratio	12.153	8.298	0.103	47.611	131
Railroad Length (% of Area)	3.276	4.81	0	20.302	158
Urbanization	0.332	0.201	0.011	0.882	156
Primary School Enrollment	57.42	32.662	1.696	100	142
Historical Stateness	0.455	0.261	0.01	0.981	141

In addition to the portfolio approach described above, I use latent variable modeling to construct an index of local institutional strength that can capture the underlying latent variable based on the values of the proxies. Many have previously used different types of latent variable models to construct indexes of state capacity, institutional strength, and other related concepts.⁴⁰ To construct my latent variable measure, I use exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to create an index of local institutional strength, combining the portfolio of proxy variables to capture the dimensions in which they are similar.⁴¹ After using EFA with principal components factors on the five proxy variables listed above, two factors had a eigenvalue over 1, with an eigenvalues of 2.55 and 1.13 respectively. After using orthogonal varimax

³⁹It is important to note that there are many other possible variables that some scholars have posited might proxy local institutional strength. This includes both proxy variables, such as military expenditures as a percentage of GDP or postal deliveries, and indexes, such as the relative political capacity dataset or the ICRG bureaucratic quality index. For an extensive list of possible data sources that do not cover the period of interest of this study, see Hanson and Sigman 2013, Hendrix 2010.

⁴⁰See Arbetman-Rabinowitz and Johnson 2008, Hanson and Sigman 2013, Hendrix 2010.

⁴¹Fabrigar and Wegener 2011.

rotation, the variance of the components was 2.49 and 1.22. Table 3 presents the rotated component scores, and illustrates the loadings that comprise my latent local institutional strength index. Component 1 is largely comprised of loadings from the tax ratio, primary school enrollment, and urbanization variables, indicating it is a component corresponding to institutional strength. The second component, on the other hand, is largely comprised of loadings from the state antiquity and railroad length measures, indicating a component of state legacy. Thus, I argue that Component 1 largely corresponds to institutional strength, my main independent variable of interest, and Component 2 corresponds to state legacy and history. Table 4 below describes the two resulting latent variables and the summary statistics to illustrate the distribution throughout the data.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis, Rotated Factors

Variable	Component 1	Component 2	Uniqueness	KMO Value
Tax Ratio	0.6265	-0.5385	0.3176	0.7408
Primary School Enrollment	0.8692	0.0398	0.2430	0.7483
Urbanization	0.8535	0.1225	0.2566	0.7410
Railroad Length (% of Area)	0.7557	0.4319	0.2424	0.7344
State Antiquity	0.1978	0.8536	0.2322	0.6017

Table 3: Summary of Factors

Factor	Eigenvalue	Proportion	Cumulative	Minimum	Maximum
Factor 1	2.5528	0.5106	0.5106	-1.6684	2.7327
Factor 2	1.1306	0.2311	0.7416	-3.3705	1.7212

Control Variables

To test the alternative arguments described above, I also included control variables. Area of the local territory is simply the total size of the territory controlled by the foreign ruler.⁴² I use the total square kilometers (measured in thousands of square kilometers). Ruggedness is a measure of how inhospitable the territory under foreign rule may be. I use the ruggedness measure from Shaver, Carter and Shawa which measures the elevation change in every 1 kilometer grid in the territory to illuminate how inhospitable the local terrain is. Following their practice, I use the standard deviation of the ruggedness measure for the local territory to proxy how inhospitable the area is for both the local government and the foreign ruler's troops.⁴³ To control for distance, I use Gleditsch and Ward's database of geographic distance.⁴⁴ I also include regional dummy variables in certain models to test whether there are any regional effects in the strategies that foreign rulers employ. In addition, this can also control for any region-wide effects in the development of institutional strength.

For the local territory's level of democracy I use the V-Dem measure of electoral democracy that codes for all periods of limited sovereignty for all territories since 1900.⁴⁵ Utilizing the same V-Dem measure, I also include the democracy level of the foreign ruler to test whether more democratic foreign rulers have different preferences for foreign rule strategy than less-democratic foreign rulers.⁴⁶ In addition, I also include the absolute value of the difference between the foreign ruler's and local territories level of democracy to test whether foreign rulers prefer institutional strategies when the difference in governing ideology is high.

To control for the material power alternative argument, I include the Correlates of War national material capabilities index (CINC), where higher CINC scores indicate higher levels

⁴²Haber and Menaldo 2011.

⁴³Shaver, Carter and Shawa 2016.

⁴⁴Gleditsch and Ward 2001.

⁴⁵Coppedge et al. 2018.

⁴⁶Since including both the foreign ruler's level of democracy and the democracy difference between the foreign ruler and local territory is co-linear, I can only include one as a control in the models at a time. In Appendix III I include multiple models where the level of democracy of the foreign ruler replaces the democracy difference variable.

Table 4: Control Variable Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Area (1000s of Sq. Kilometers)	767.465	2676.569	0.021	22100	160
Ruggedness	133.366	80.008	9.343	365.54	159
Democracy (V-Dem)	0.231	0.195	0.012	0.883	148
Democracy (Foreign Ruler)	0.482	0.292	0.071	0.959	160
Democracy Difference	0.339	0.255	0.002	0.848	148
CINC (Foreign Ruler)	0.113	0.104	0	0.381	158
Distance (km)	3374.456	3202.618	136	14478	149

of material strength.⁴⁷ In some models I also include dummy variables for certain foreign rulers throughout history, namely the United States and the Soviet Union, along with a dummy variable for a UN-led operation. This is to test whether there are certain effects specific to a particular foreign ruler. Lastly, noting that a time trend might exist in the prevalence of certain foreign rule strategies, I include the year the foreign rule mission started as a control variable.⁴⁸ This could also help control for historical trends in terms of what strong institutions looks like in 1905 compared to 1995. It also could correspond to trends in foreign ruler preferences where certain strategies are preferred in different time periods. Table 4 presents the summary statistics for the non-categorical control variables included in the following models and quantitative tests.

Quantitative Testing

As my dependent variable is binary, I use logistic regression with robust standard errors.⁴⁹ Positive coefficients indicate that an increase in the value of the variable make leadership strategies less likely and institutional strategies more likely. Negative coefficients, conversely, indicate that increases in the variable make leadership strategies more likely and institutional strategies less likely. As the models below illustrate, I find strong evidence across a variety

⁴⁷Singer 1988.

⁴⁸I normalize this variable to 0 at 1898 and 117 at 2015 to keep the coefficients easier to interpret.

⁴⁹Long 1997. Given that I have fewer than 500 cases of foreign rule, I also run ordinary least squares regression as a robustness check in Tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B. On why OLS regression can function as well as logistic regression in this setting, with more intelligible coefficient estimates, see Hellevik 2009.

of model specifications that the relationship between local institutional strength and foreign rule strategy is robust.

First, Table 5 presents the first six logistic regression models, including each of the portfolio of proxy variables for local institutional strength alone, as well as a horse race model to determine which variable seems to best predict foreign rule strategy, I find strong support that tax ratios, primary school enrollment, and urbanization all confirm my hypotheses that the foreign rule strategy implemented by the foreign ruler is correlated with local institutional strength. This implies that when tax revenue capacity, primary education infrastructure, and the level of urbanization are low, then the probability that a foreign ruler will use an institutional strategy is greatly increased.⁵⁰ The railroad length and state antiquity variables were not significant in any of the models, indicating that the legacy of state-like organizations in a territory and the length of railroad infrastructure in a country were not predictors of foreign rule strategy.⁵¹ When including all of the proxy variables in Model 1, only the tax ratio variable retained its significance, indicating that tax revenue capacity might be the best proxy for local institutional strength.⁵²

The only control variable that is significant in any model is the distance between the foreign ruler and the local territory, indicating that foreign rulers are more likely to use leadership strategies in territories in their near abroad, whereas they are more likely to use institutional strategies in their far away missions. One possible interpretation of this result is that it indicates the foreign ruler's ability to carry out foreign rule missions far from home, which implies a higher level of power projection capacity. The amount of resources it takes to undertake an armed intervention at great distance from home is quite high, indicating that this could be a good proxy for military power and perhaps only powerful states are more capable of carrying out institutional strategies.

⁵⁰When I replaced urbanization with GDP per capita measure in the models run in Table A7 (Appendix III), GDP per capita was never a significant predictor of foreign rule strategy.

⁵¹In Appendix III, I similarly find the gross railroad length is not significant.

⁵²As Lieberman describes, tax revenue is the ideal proxy as "tax collection is ultimately the product of policy making, the monitoring of economic activity, the administration of complex laws, and judicial and punitive enforcement." Lieberman 2002, 92.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Results (Robust Standard Errors)

	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tax Ratio	-0.1314** (0.0504)	-0.1487*** (0.0433)	–	–	–	
Railroad Length	0.0069 (0.0904)	–	-0.1210 (0.0656)	–	–	–
Primary Education	-0.0110 (0.0146)	–	–	-0.0278** (0.0096)	–	–
Urbanization	-1.4960 (2.5117)	–	–	–	-3.0767* (1.5457)	–
Historical Stateness	-0.6830 (1.3008)	–	–	–	–	-1.1866 (0.8628)
Democracy (V-Dem)	-0.6131 (1.9394)	-1.8302 (1.2315)	-1.7466 (1.2373)	0.1462 (1.4338)	-1.3720 (1.2662)	-1.9921 (1.1695)
Democracy Difference	-1.4506 (1.2617)	-0.5542 (1.0672)	-1.4540 (0.9075)	-1.7502 (1.0324)	-0.9591 (0.9291)	-1.6383 (0.9165)
Ruggedness	0.0028 (0.0044)	0.0031 (0.0029)	0.0020 (0.0024)	0.0032 (0.0026)	0.0023 (0.0025)	0.0048 (0.0026)
CINC (Foreign Ruler)	0.1638 (2.9357)	-1.5077 (2.3999)	-2.6112 (2.3239)	-1.1176 (2.5428)	-2.7987 (2.5780)	-4.0709 (2.2700)
Year	0.0149 (0.0144)	0.0107 (0.0104)	-0.0031 (0.0082)	0.0135 (0.0097)	0.0034 (0.0090)	-0.0036 (0.0092)
Area	-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)
Distance (km)	0.0003**	0.0002*	0.0002**	0.0003***	0.0003**	0.0004***

Table 5: *Continued*

	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	0.8481 (1.3035)	0.3482 (0.9640)	0.3326 (0.6889)	-0.3896 (0.7999)	0.3774 (0.7166)	-0.0681 (0.8257)
Observations	103	115	133	122	131	125
Pseudo R^2	0.305	0.238	0.162	0.210	0.182	0.171

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

While the results of these models are interesting, the coefficients themselves are largely meaningless. To illustrate the substantive effects of the variables above, I calculate the marginal effects of the variables and plot the changes in the probability of using an institutional strategy based on changes in local institutional strength.⁵³ In Figure 6, I present the marginal effects of the portfolio of proxy variables.⁵⁴ The results indicate that, as we expect, changes in the local institutional strength proxy variables greatly impacts the probability of engaging in an institutional strategy. Looking at Model 2 for instance, in a local territory that has a tax ratio of 5%, there is an over 60 percent probability of a foreign ruler using an institutional strategy, but when the tax ratio is 20 percent, the probability drops to 20 percent. Similar results hold for urbanization and primary school enrollment. It is important to note, however, that even when the tax ratio and local institutional strength is high, there is still a 10 to 20 percent probability that a foreign ruler might use an institutional strategy.

⁵³These are calculated using the margins package in Stata and hold all other variables at their means when testing the marginal effect of each variable included in the plots below.

⁵⁴The marginal effects plot for Model 1 uses the tax revenue variable to illustrate that when all proxy variables are included the tax revenue variable still has similar marginal effects on the probability of foreign rule strategy.

This is a reminder that my theory is probabilistic, and even when a certain strategy is most likely to occur, other factors might cause a foreign ruler to select a different strategy.

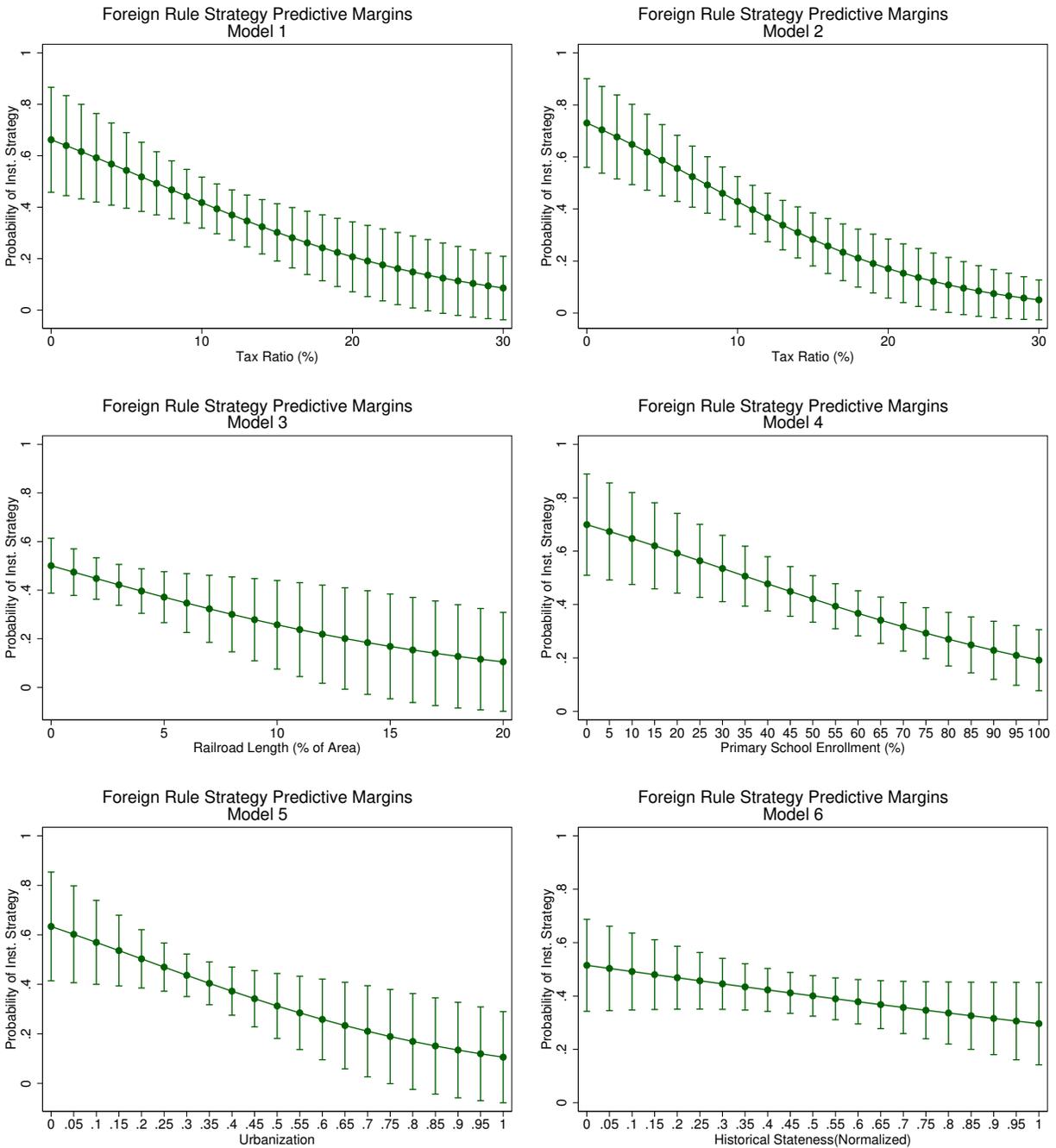


Figure 3: Marginal Effects of Local Institutional Strength Proxies

Given the strong initial results between the portfolio of proxy variables and foreign rule strategy, next I turn to use the local institutional strength index. Table 6 presents the

results of similar logistic regression models, along with results from a variety of additional specifications that help confirm the impact of institutional strength on foreign rule strategy. In all five of the models presented, the institutional strength index is strongly significant and negative. This indicates that as the level of institutional strength increases, the likelihood of enacting an institutional strategy decreases. The marginal effects plots in Figure 7 confirm this. For instance, moving from an institutional strength level of -1 to 1 would reduce the probability of engaging in an institutional strategy from over 80 percent to under 20 percent. Taken together, this indicates that local institutional strength is a good predictor of foreign rule strategy. State legacy, the second component from my EFA model, is not significant in any model specification, as expected. This indicates that legacy of state institutions in a territory is less important than the capacity of those institutions at the time of the foreign rule mission.

Additionally, given the number of cases from the World War II period, I test whether World War II involved a unique set of circumstances that are impacting my results. To do this, I separate all cases from the World War II period and its immediate aftermath. I then have two models, one that includes only the World War II cases of foreign rule (Model 10), and one with all of the non-World War II cases (Model 11). In both models, the significant and positive coefficient for the institutional strength latent variable index means that foreign rulers were more likely to use institutional strategies when the level of local institutional strength was low, and more likely to use leadership strategies when local institutional strength was high for both the World War II period and in all other time periods since 1898. This is evidence that the World War II period is not unique, and evidence that my quantitative results are not solely driven by the World War II period.

Table 6: EFA Logistic Regression Results (Robust Standard Errors)

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10 (Non-WWII)	Model 11 (WWII)
Institutional Strength (Factor 1)	-1.5876*** (0.3086)	-1.9667*** (0.5109)	-2.0001** (0.6149)	-1.7861*** (0.4935)	-1.7550** (0.6334)
State Legacy (Factor 2)	0.4710 (0.2809)	0.5664 (0.4475)	0.4513 (0.4936)	0.4159 (0.3342)	1.1453 (0.8313)
Democracy (V-Dem)	-0.3812 (1.2138)	-0.8655 (1.5071)	-0.7243 (1.9142)	1.8061 (2.2698)	-0.3987 (2.2146)
Democracy Difference	-0.2280 (1.0673)	1.2340 (1.2235)	-0.3080 (1.5877)	1.0057 (1.3836)	-3.0499 (1.9183)
Ruggedness	-0.0014 (0.0033)	-0.0075 (0.0046)	-0.0083 (0.0052)	0.0011 (0.0045)	-0.0081 (0.0072)
CINC (Foreign Ruler)	5.9343* (2.3458)	2.7110 (3.3698)	-0.5519 (4.0354)	8.4299* (3.8489)	-0.3202 (4.7485)
Year	0.0289** (0.0096)	0.0396** (0.0151)	0.0209 (0.0163)	0.0308** (0.0103)	0.4826 (0.3138)
Area	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0003 (0.0003)	-0.0003 (0.0003)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0009 (0.0012)
Latin America	–	0.8332 (1.1321)	-0.6031 (1.6365)	–	–
Africa	–	-1.9770 (1.6552)	-1.7960 (1.7565)	–	–
Middle East	–	-2.3490* (1.1765)	-1.5510 (1.2124)	–	–
Asia	–	2.7325	2.8759	–	–

Table 6: *Continued*

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10 (Non-WWII)	Model 11 (WWII)
		(1.7560)	(1.8529)		
US	–	–	2.1765 (1.3402)	–	–
Soviet	–	–	0.6900 (1.0054)	–	–
UN	–	–	2.4698* (1.0235)	–	–
Constant	-2.3215* (0.9091)	-1.7266 (1.1230)	-0.7286 (1.1372)	-4.1269** (1.4070)	-20.3424 (14.1443)
Observations	112	108	108	72	41
Pseudo R^2	0.242	0.366	0.421	0.277	0.395
Standard errors in parentheses					
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$					

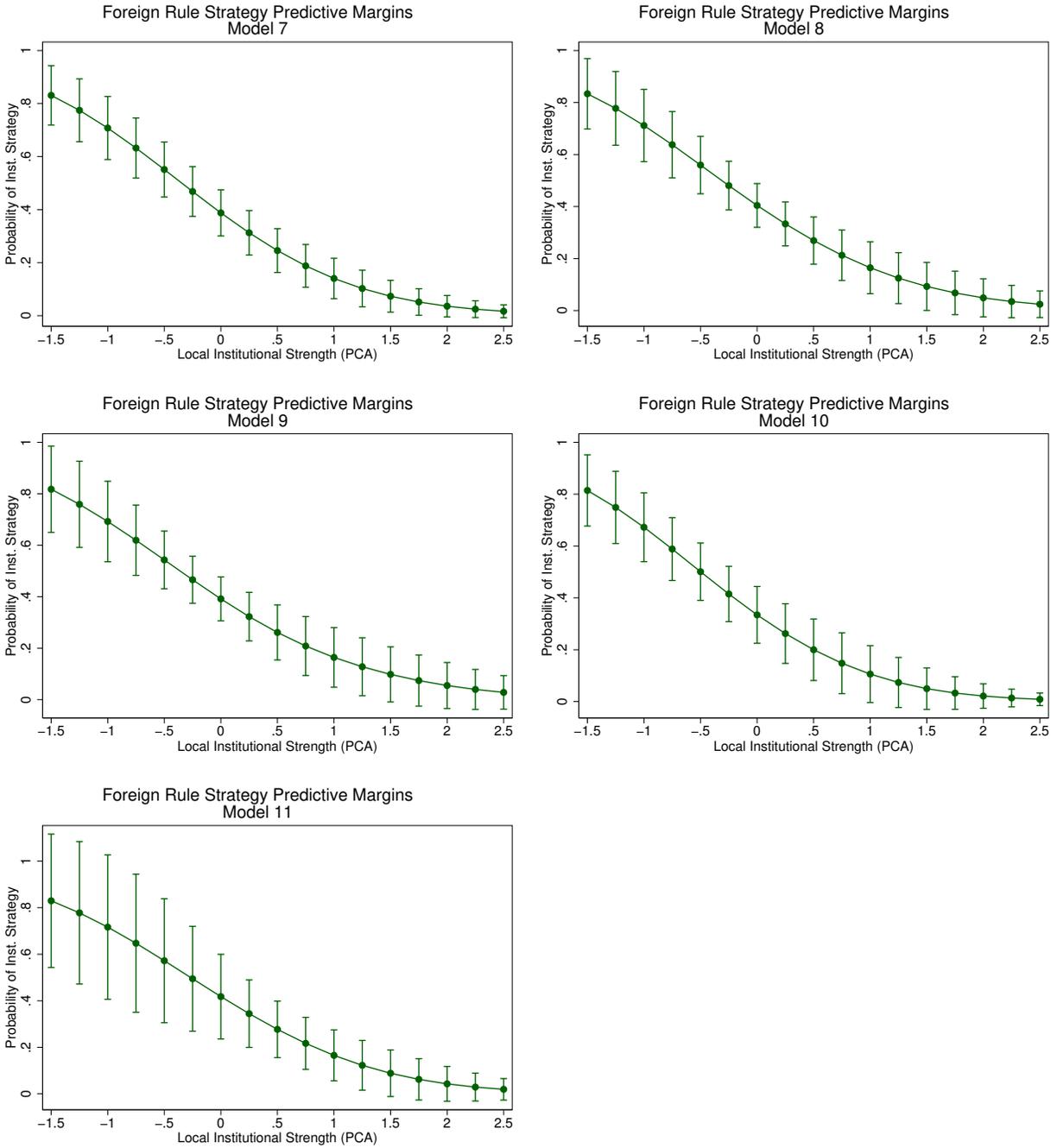


Figure 4: Marginal Effects of Local Institutional Strength Index- EFA Models

The control variables in these five models have some interesting differences from those in the previous models. In addition to the control variables from before, I also included a few regional and foreign ruler specific dummy variables, to see if there is a direct effect of the region in which the foreign rule mission took place, or a foreign ruler specific effect. Distance was not included as a control in these models, as region and foreign ruler dummies are collinear with distance. The material power of the foreign ruler is a significant predictor in two of the models, presenting weak evidence that institutional strategies are more likely to occur when there are powerful states present. When regional and foreign ruler specific dummies are included, however, this result goes away and only remains in the non-World War II model. However, since distance between the foreign ruler and local territory is not included in this set of models, this could provide more evidence that power projection capability creates more opportunities to use institutional strategies.

Similarly, a major difference in the previous models and this set of models is the year variable. It is positive and significant in three of the models included here, indicating that as foreign rule missions occur more closely to the modern period, they are more likely to use institutional strategies. While the relationship between institutional strength and foreign rule strategy is still robust in these models, the significant coefficient on the year variable might indicate that foreign rulers are more likely to launch foreign rule missions in weak institutional environments in more modern eras. For the regional variables, only the variable for the Middle East is positive and significant. This means that cases of foreign rule in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have largely had the same probability of a foreign ruler using a leadership or institutional strategy as European missions of foreign rule. For the Middle East however, the positive and significant coefficient indicates that compared to other regions, foreign rule missions more likely to feature institutional strategies.

Finally, for the US, USSR, and UN variables, the United States and Soviet Union are not more or less likely than other countries to use institutional strategies. On the other hand, the results here indicate that UN missions are much more likely to use institutional

strategies than other foreign rule missions. This is not surprising, given UN interventions typically target explicitly weak institution environments in the modern era when they do engage in foreign rule.⁵⁵ However, since the institutional strength index remains significant in this model, it gives me confidence that there is not a UN selection effect driving the overall results of the model.

Combined, the results of both the proxy and latent variable models confirm that no matter what model is used, the relationship between local institutional strength and foreign rule strategy holds across a variety of geographic and temporal contexts.⁵⁶ Taken together, these results consistently indicate that with different model specifications, different proxy variables for local institutional strength, different methods for dealing with missing data, and throughout different time periods since 1898, there is a strong, robust relationship between local institutional strength and foreign rule strategy.⁵⁷ However, simply noting this relationship is robust across time and place is only the first step in confirming my overarching theoretical story. Thus, I integrate these results a case study selected based upon them, namely the US mission of Foreign Rule in Mexico under President Wilson. Doing so will not only confirm the results presented here, but bolster my causal argument.⁵⁸

Wilsonian Foreign Rule in Mexico

Since the beginning of the Mexican revolution in 1910, the United States closely monitored how the growing instability affected their security and economic interests. This reached its apex ten days prior to Woodrow Wilson's presidential inauguration, where Retired General Victoriano Huerta and his conservative co-conspirators launched a military uprising against

⁵⁵Fortna 2004.

⁵⁶Data availability concerns for some of the cases of foreign rule causes them to be dropped from the above models. In Appendix II, I illustrate through multiple imputation and other methods that this does not affect my results.

⁵⁷There are a few additional model specifications that I have not discussed that are included in Appendix III. However, these results largely show that regardless of the model chosen, the relationship between local institutional strength and foreign rule strategy is robust across all contexts.

⁵⁸Appendix V presents the full case selection metrics and rationale for choosing this case.

liberal reformer President Francisco Madero and usurped power and assassinated Madero with the backing of the Mexican military elite.⁵⁹ In light of this coup, President Wilson broke diplomatic protocol and refused to recognize Huerta as the legitimate ruler of Mexico. As he explained in a circular to all the European powers, “Usurpation like that of General Huerta menaces the peace and development of America as nothing else could. They not only render the development of ordered self-government impossible: they also tend to set law entirely aside...It is the purpose of the United States, therefore, to discredit and defeat such usurpations whenever they occur.”⁶⁰ Rather than consenting to his legitimacy as a ruler, President Wilson was committed to never having the United States government recognize President Huerta as the legitimate ruler of Mexico, and to hopefully find a way to help remove him from power.⁶¹ As he said in his private correspondences, “Our friend Huerta is a diverting brute” who is “so full of bravado, the bravado of ignorance...One moment you long for his blood, and the next you find yourself entertaining a sneaking admiration for his nerve.”⁶² Wilson took up a strategy of “watchful waiting” to buy time and consider what next steps would be required to ensure Huerta was removed.⁶³

From his inauguration forward, the Wilson administration considered many different plans for how to oust Huerta, ranging from diplomatic negotiations to marching to Mexico City to impose entirely new liberal institutions.⁶⁴ There was no pre-ordained decision for intervention, and no off-the-shelf strategy for how to impose US wishes on Mexico following any armed invasion.⁶⁵ Instead, the strategic options and choices were left open as Wilson continued to seek more information about local conditions.

⁵⁹Grieb 1972, 21-30. For more on the *La decena trágica*, see Ross 1955, 276-329; Katz 1981, 95-115.

⁶⁰The Secretary of State to Chargé O’Shaughnessy, 24 November 1913, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS], 1914. 443-444.

⁶¹Woodrow Wilson, “Annual Message to Congress,” 13 December 1913, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 29, ed. Arthur S. Link, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 3-11.

⁶²Woodrow Wilson, “To Mary Allen Hulbert,” 24 August 1913, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 28, 216-218.

⁶³Link 1956, 379.

⁶⁴Katz 1981, 183-184.

⁶⁵There was however a general war plan, called War Plan Green, that had been updated by the United States Army War College since the 1848 Mexican-American war. However, this plan was never implemented in 1914 even though it called for a landing in Veracruz and a march to Mexico City. See Ross 2013, 117-127.

As Huerta cemented Wilson's commitment to armed intervention and regime change, Wilson looked for local opposition movements that might be able to support his goals in Mexico. Wilson and his advisers proposed to revolutionary Constitutionalist leader General Venustiano Carranza that coordinating a intervention with his faction of revolutionaries could prove a useful endeavor for both parties.⁶⁶ The Constitutionlists never sent clear signals about their intentions and goals, worrying Wilson and leading him to send a message to the Constitutionlists explaining that any potential future intervention was out of friendship, not against Constitutionalist interests.⁶⁷ This left Wilson wondering whether Carranza could serve as a suitable agent in Mexico and would work with the United States on reforming the Mexican states, or whether he would work against American interests. By April 1914, after not being able to exercise the desired level of control over the revolutionaries, conservative land owners, or any real player in Mexico, Wilson committed to using US military action to influence events on the ground. He just needed an excuse to launch his intervention.⁶⁸

In 1914, a small incident in Tampico gave Wilson and the Americans an excuse to escalate their military pressure and compel the end of the Huerta regime. On April 9th, 1914, eight crew members of the American naval cruiser *Dolphin* went ashore at Tampico to secure fuel for their vessel, whereby they were mistakenly arrested by the local detachment of the Mexican government military police. After the Americans were released and the local Mexican General apologized, the American admiral in command of the *Dolphin*, Henry Mayo, was not satisfied with this response and demanded further restitution: a formal apology, the arrest of the officer who accosted the American crew members, and most contentiously, a 21-gun salute to the American flag.⁶⁹ The Mexican general arranged for the apology and

⁶⁶Katz 1981, 195. The only agreement reached was for the US to remove the arms embargo on the Constitutionlists, allowing legal arms sales from the United States with the intention of making the Constitutionlists a threat to Huerta. Woodrow Wilson, "To William Jennings Bryan, with Enclosure," 31 January 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 29, 206-208.

⁶⁷As Wilson said in his dispatch to Carranza on the prospective likelihood of an American armed intervention, "the Constitutionlists would not question the good faith or motives of the President if he should so act. They would know that he had done so because he deemed it an imperative duty." Woodrow Wilson, "To Venustiano Carranza," 19 January 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 29, 143.

⁶⁸Katz 1981, 196.

⁶⁹Admiral Mayo to General Zaragoza, 9 April 1914, FRUS, 1914, 448-449.

arrest of the officer in Tampico, but could not fire the 21-gun salute without approval from President Huerta. Insulted by the refusal, Wilson derided this event as a sign of disrespect to the United States and demanded the Mexican government respect the American flag in a sign of contrition.⁷⁰ After Huerta confirmed the refusal of an unconditional salute of the American flag lead to Wilson to obtain congressional approval for armed intervention against Mexico on April 20th and on April 22nd Rear Admiral Fletcher had launched an intervention on the strategically valuable port of Veracruz.⁷¹

By the evening of April 22nd, Fletcher's forces had completely occupied the town of Veracruz.⁷² However, after completing the invasion, Fletcher and the American forces had no plan for the next stage of operations after landing and taking the city, largely unsure of what foreign rule strategy to follow.⁷³ Once Fletcher controlled Veracruz, he showed an initial preference for maintaining local institutions and using a leadership strategy as they further assessed the local conditions in Veracruz. Immediately upon occupying the city, Fletcher announced that he wished "the civil officials of Vera Cruz continue in the peaceful pursuit of their occupations" and that the occupying force had no intention "to interfere with the administration of the civil affairs of Vera Cruz."⁷⁴ Fletcher was left alone to decide how best to manage the occupation and provide assessments of how the situation was unfolding. Indeed, in first days following the invasion, Fletcher informed the municipal government of Veracruz that if "they failed to establish a government themselves, I would be obliged to establish one for them."⁷⁵ And Fletcher was pleased to see the Mayor of Veracruz and the rest of the city's civil administration agreeing to stay in their posts and not have to rely on his troops governing the city.⁷⁶

⁷⁰Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to Congress on the Mexican Crisis," 20 April 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 29, 471-474.

⁷¹Consul Canada to the Secretary of State, 20 April 1914, FRUS, 1914, 477.

⁷²Katz 1981, 197.

⁷³Langley 1983, 102.

⁷⁴Consul Canada to the Secretary of State, 21 April 1914, FRUS, 1914, 480-481.

⁷⁵Sweetman 1968, 139.

⁷⁶Sweetman 1968, 139-140. The management of the city under American control and the maintenance of order in the city by the municipal government was quite boring for the American authors dispatched to chronicle the invasion. American author Jack London was quite disappointed when there was not much more

While initial reports of the landing and occupation that Washington received were positive, the invasion did not go as smoothly as Wilson anticipated. Resistance in Veracruz was not overwhelming, but Huerta's forces did muster some opposition and protected their retreat back to defend the capital. Beyond Huerta's forces, the revolutionary bands reacted negatively to Wilson's intervention, although they stopped promoting armed action against American forces if they did not enter the territory controlled by them. Carranza himself announced to the American invasion force that "the invasion of our territory, the station of American troops in the port of Veracruz, the violation of our rights as a sovereign, free, and independent state could provoke us to an unequal by just war, which we wish to avoid."⁷⁷ While Mexican opinion was turning against Wilson's action, greater information about the capacity of Mexican bureaucrats and revolutionary bands were being communicated to both Wilson and the American forces present in Veracruz. As the fog of intervention began to clear, the capacity of the bureaucrats in Veracruz and the information communicated by Carranza caused Wilson to continue with the leadership strategy that proved successful in the city and focus on implementing that strategy in his mission to oust Huerta.

After the initial intervention in Veracruz, Wilson and his administration eventually determined that local conditions mandated employing a leadership strategy to carry out this foreign rule mission. They determined that working to oust Huerta and replacing him with Carranza would best serve American interests. Given the choice of a leadership strategy, how did local institutional strength lead to the selection of strategy? Initially, the American landing party in Veracruz focused on assessing the quality of the local bureaucrats and determined that they were capable of working towards American political goals. From the onset of military government in Veracruz, military forces monitored the effectiveness of local institutions and the responses of the various revolutionary factions. In each report back to Washington, the American military commanders on the ground constantly commended the local bureaucrats as to their ability to carry out the goals, even as Huerta's forces aban-

fighting in the city, and the governing of the city was well maintained. Sweetman 1968, 154-155.

⁷⁷Katz 1981, 197.

doned the city.⁷⁸ While the American military government took control of many governance functions in the city, most of the bureaucrats in the city helped the military forces to open schools, deliver mail, and enforce health codes, among other functions.⁷⁹ The assessment process focused on a few infrastructure projects that helped determine the capacity of local institutions to carry out American edicts. In this case, the Veracruz bureaucrats and military government collaborated on a few sanitation and health code projects to help improve the public health infrastructure of the city. In each of these projects, the military government reported success back to Washington and commended the local elites for their efforts and ability to work with American goals, indicating an ability to use local institutions to benefit American plans for Mexico.

At the same time in Washington, Mexico's capacity for armed resistance was also under assessment. Upon instituting foreign rule in Veracruz, Washington was most interested in learning how Carranza and the Constitutionals would view their actions in Veracruz. Some in Washington had hoped Carranza would welcome the landing at Veracruz and encourage a further US military push towards Mexico City. Their hopes were for Carranza to want to work with American forces to depose Huerta and rebuild Mexico in America's image. To this faction's dismay, however, Carranza and all other Mexican revolutionary factions resoundingly condemned the American foreign rule mission as an affront to Mexican sovereignty.⁸⁰

Contemporaneously, Carranza and the Constitutionals were starting to achieve battlefield success against Huerta as they marched from their strongholds in northern Mexico towards Mexico City.⁸¹ This showed Washington the capacity for the Constitutionals to effectively resist an institutional strategy, but also illustrated their capacity for ruling effectively. This should not surprise us, given Carranza's history serving as governor of Coahuila; still, the increased evidence of Carranza's ability to serve as a capable agent, coupled with his

⁷⁸Sweetman 1968, 156.

⁷⁹Langley 1983, 102-103.

⁸⁰Special Agent Carothers to the Secretary of State, 22 April 1914, FRUS, 1914, 483-484.

⁸¹The Secretary of State to the Special Commissioners, 2 June 1914, FRUS, 1914, 522-524.

capacity for resistance, painted a stark picture for the Wilson administration.⁸² Washington recognized that Mexican bureaucrats were capable, but a march to Mexico City would not guarantee a quick and successful outcome. Rather, Wilson recognized that Carranza could act as a suitable agent in accomplishing American goals, namely stabilizing Mexico and honoring fair American business interests. While Carranza might not serve as an absolutely reliable American agent in terms of every goal of the Washington elite, his willingness to work with broad American interests made him suitable, and the institutions made him a capable agent. Thus, Wilson decided upon continuing to think of ways to work with the Constitutionalist to ensure that Huerta was defeated, even in light of their condemnation, and eventually turned to ensuring Carranza replaced Huerta in power.

Finally at a mediation conference held at Niagara Falls, Wilson was able obtain the regime change he sought with Huerta stepping down after it was clear the Americans would not accept any other outcome.⁸³ From the outset of negotiations, Wilson utilized the occupation of Veracruz and the threat of a Mexico City invasion as a means to depose Huerta and install Carranza. As they stated, “we can deal only with the facts in Mexico as they now stand,”⁸⁴ and telling Huerta “the success of the Constitutionalist is now inevitable. The only question we can now answer without armed intervention on the part of the United States is this: Can the result be moderated; how can it be brought about without further bloodshed...If we do not successfully answer these question, the settlement must come by arms, either ours of those of the Constitutionalist.”⁸⁵ Huerta and the Americans reached an agreement where the Americans would vacate Veracruz after ensuring all local citizens were protected, and Huerta agreed to leave office. Huerta agreed to step down as President on July 15th, less than three months after Wilson gave the order to land in Veracruz.⁸⁶

To ensure that there was a smooth transition to the Carranza regime and that American

⁸²For Carranza’s experience as governor of Coahuila, see Richmond 1983.

⁸³The Secretary of State to the Mediators, 25 April 1914, FRUS, 1914, 489.

⁸⁴Secretary of State to the Special Commissioners, 24 May 1914, FRUS, 1914, 505-506

⁸⁵Secretary of State to the Special Commissioners, 27 May 1914, FRUS, 1914, 509-510

⁸⁶The Brazilian Minister to Mexico to the Secretary of State, 15 July 1914, FRUS, 1914, 563.

interests were protected, Wilson and the United States refused to end the occupation of Veracruz until after Huerta's resignation and a successful implementation of the new Carranza regime. Once Carranza took power, Secretary of State Bryan relayed that the United States would continue to assess the progress of the Constitutionalist and track the transition. He intimated that "every step taken by the Constitutionalist leaders from this moment on...must of necessity, therefore, play a very important part in determining whether it will be possible for the United States to recognize the government."⁸⁷

Wilson and his advisers continued to assess whether Carranza and his institutions were fulfilling the goals of the United States before committing to removing the American military presence from the country. Secretary Bryan subtly intimated to the Constitutionalist that "the success or failure of the Constitutionalist cause is to be determined now."⁸⁸ The implicit threat offered by Secretary Bryan and others was that if Carranza did not appear to have sufficient control over Mexican institutions and reforms, an institutional strategy was still possible to enact. By August 22nd, however, Carranza was fully in control of the Mexican government and the Americans were sufficiently pleased with Carranza's ability to manage Mexico's governmental institutions so as to promote stability and modest reforms. Carranza publicly praised President Wilson for his policy in Mexico, thanked Secretary of State Bryan for his help, and generally seemed appreciative of American support and receptive to American suggestions on how to transition to a stable government.⁸⁹ Thus three months after Carranza's march to Mexico City and the imposition of his new regime, the American occupation force withdrew from Veracruz, pleased with Carranza's policies and his control of government, and successfully completed the foreign rule operation.⁹⁰

⁸⁷The Secretary of State to Vice Consul Silliman, 23 July 1914, FRUS, 1914, 568-569.

⁸⁸The Secretary of State to Vice Consul Silliman, 31 July 1914, FRUS, 1914, 576-577.

⁸⁹The Brazilian Minister to Mexico the Secretary of State, 17 August 1914, FRUS, 1914, 588. This culminated on the official celebration of Mexican independence with a cheer for Wilson. "In the name of Hidalgo, of Morelos, of Guerrero, of Juarez, of Madero, and of Bolivar and of Washington...let us give a hearty cheer for Professor Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America." Vice Consul Silliman to the Secretary of State, 16 September 1914, FRUS, 1914, 598.

⁹⁰While this marked the end of the American foreign rule mission in Mexico, Wilson and Carranza's relationship would strain in subsequent years. For more on this relationship breaking down see Katz 1981, 493-503; Gilderhus 1977, 53-71; Richmond 1983, 189-218.

In the end, with regards to agent capacity, when it was clear that the bureaucrats in Veracruz could enact the military government's new sanitation and public health policies, and Carranza could ensure he would aid in propelling American reforms and interests forward, only then was the United States confident that a leadership strategy would prove successful. Carranza's ability to maintain a level of stability upon taking control in Mexico City and the capacity he showed for governing the northern regions of Mexico under his control provided evidence that he could serve as a capable agent to promote American interests.

Additionally, after landing in Veracruz the assessment of the likelihood of armed resistance to further American action was a key deterrent preventing the United States from marching into Mexico City. The likelihood of future resistance from current bureaucrats, revolutionary factions, and other elements in the state played a large role in helping the United States determine that deposing current institutions would be a mistake. Given the desire for increased stability in Mexico, an institutional strategy would have made American political goals harder to achieve. Wilson reassessed his plans and reaffirmed his belief in what he called a Mexican solution for Mexico, namely a leadership strategy.⁹¹ Replacing relatively strong state institutions with weaker new institutions that could not compete with the capacity of the Constitutionalists and other rebel groups would have made American goals harder to obtain.

Alternative Explanations

The case of Wilsonian foreign rule in Mexico also provides evidence against the alternative arguments. First, this case cast doubt on the national leader alternative argument. Given that Wilson is traditionally treated as having a uniform preference for institutional-type strategies, this case provides strong evidence that those preferences were not uniform. This illustrates that while Wilson's personal preferences for liberal democratic institutions drove many foreign policy decisions, they did not impact strategic decision-making following the

⁹¹The Secretary of State to the Special Commissioners, 3 June 1914, FRUS, 1914, 522-524.

imposition of foreign rule. The assessment process after landing in Veracruz constrained this decision, and pushed President Wilson to turn towards a leadership strategy by working to impose Carranza as President of Mexico.

Second, the evidence shows that the goals of the intervention are also not sufficient to explain the variation in foreign rule strategy imposed following the armed intervention in Mexico. If goals of the intervention mattered, we should have seen more concrete discussion of the post-intervention phase and the role foreign rule would play in pursuing foreign policy goals before military operations were launched. Instead, we have evidence that strategy determination was left to ground commanders, to whom Washington delegated decisions concerning how best to achieve the goals laid out by the Wilson administration. This provides evidence that the goals did not pre-emptively determine the content of foreign rule strategy. Goals matter for the decision to engage in foreign rule in the first place, while local conditions drive the strategy chosen to implement those goals.

This case also provides evidence against the alternative argument focused on organization learning. Prior to intervention, there is scant discussion of how experiences with the Mexican-American war and other Latin American missions of foreign rule reflect on the future strategic choices facing the United States. If prior experiences and organizational learning guided assessment of institutional strength and the selection of strategy, the military commanders in Veracruz should not have needed to consistently ask for the strategy from Washington and should not have had to undergo an assessment process.

Finally, some might argue that Mexico's larger size contributed to the decision to use a leadership strategy. While Mexico is indeed a large country, the functional distance that American foreign rulers considered for carrying out an institutional strategy was around 390 kilometers, the distance from Veracruz to Mexico City. This was the distance American troops covered to capture Mexico City in the 1848 Mexican-American War, and this was largely the distance they would have needed to control in order to carry out an institutional strategy. The reasons for not marching to Mexico City were not logistical, as the US had

already done so from Veracruz in 1848, and the military on the ground was willing and eager to continue the invasion. Instead the local institutional conditions, not logistical issues, drove the choice. Thus, there were not concerns over the size of Mexico as something that inhibited the decision over strategy, as the quantitative results have illustrated.

Examining both the quantitative and qualitative evidence, it becomes clear that while some alternative arguments may help provide evidence for certain observable outcomes, none of them can adequately explain both the quantitative results and the casual story traced here. Only my theory of institutional strength can explain the outcome and causal process across all observable implications. This is not to say that alternative explanations do not explain other facets of American foreign policy in the region at this time period. To be clear, other factors beyond local institutional strength impacted the strategic decision-making process that led to the strategies imposed in Mexico. In particular, the initial decision to use military force and intervene were driven by the preferences, goals, personalities, and interests of the Wilson White House. Once military commanders are forced to decide how best to achieve goals that Wilson laid out, local conditions and contexts matter greatly and inhibit the choices available to foreign rulers.

Conclusion

After examining the American foreign rule mission in Mexico, it is clear that the uncertainty the United States faced prior to the imposition of foreign rule forced their strategy to only coalesce after local forces assessed the strength of current institutions. The importance of agent capacity and the probability of armed resistance had tangible impacts on the strategy foreign rulers selected. Combined with the logistic regression results, the evidence for the importance of local institutional strength and the role uncertainty and information problems play in strategic decision is striking. In all, I illustrate that states pursuing their rational interests can often end up pursuing lengthy and costly institution building missions when

they had no prior plans to pursue them in the first place. Thus it is local institutional strength that drive the selection of a foreign strategy. Overall, my argument shows that once foreign rule has been instituted, it is difficult to guide the foreign rule mission on preferences and goals alone. Instead, local conditions prompt foreign rulers to use strategies to impose their domination they may not intend. This illustrates that while today we can plan for the foreign rule period following intervention, until intervention or invasion occurs, it is a gamble as to what strategy the local conditions will mandate.

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