Online Appendix for The Rush to Personalize

Robustness check 1 - Purges do not drive the results.

Purges are known to occur after failed coups (Sudduth 2017; Easton and Siverson 2018). To make sure purges are not driving the results for personalization after failed coups, we rerun our analysis using the eight constitutive measures in Wright's (2021) latent personalism score. These are dichotomous measures except for item 4 (*milmerit_pers*), which is ordinal:

1. personal control over the security apparatus (*sectyapp_pers*),
2. personal control over appointments to high office (*officepers*),
3. the dictator creates a paramilitary group (*paramil_pers*),
4. appointments are made exclusively on the grounds of loyalty (*milmerit_pers*),
5. military purges (*milnotrial*),
6. exclusive control over appointments to the party's executive committee (*party exec committee*),
7. the leader creates a support party (*createparty*); and
8. the party's executive committee is absent or merely rubber-stamp (*rubberstamp).*

Note that these variables are positively correlated but moderately so –the highest Pearson's r coefficient is 0.492 and the lowest is 0.099.

We use the same model specifications as in Table 1, models (b) and (g) in the main manuscript. Table A1 shows the results for the four constitutive measures of civilian (party) personalization. The effect of Appointments to High Office is strong and statistically significant at the 0.05 level in both the COLPUS and P&T specifications. Dictators also are more likely to create a new party after a failed coup, but the effect is only significant at the 0.1 level. Neither control of party of executive nor party rubberstamp are significant. Table A2 shows the results for the four constitutive measure of security personalization. As expected, the effect of a failed coup on military purges is strong and statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Appointments on loyalty are, in fact, the strongest outcome after a failed coup, with the largest coefficient as well as the strongest level of statistical significance. There is also some evidence for creating paramilitary forces using COLPUS data, but the

effect is weaker. All other coefficients are positive. These results validate those in Table 1 and rule out the possibility that only one personalization dynamic is driving the results.

	PT				COLPUS			
	Creation of Party	Appts. to High Office	Control of Party Exec.	Party Rubberst.	Creation of Party	Appts. to High Office	Control of Party Exec.	Party Rubberst.
Failed Coup	0.066*	0.124**	−0.002	0.057	0.072*	0.099**	−0.031	0.016
	(0.037)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.047)	(0.040)	(0.048)	(0.088)	(0.053)
GDPpc	−0.005	0.062	0.027	0.118	−0.096	0.110	−0.074	0.187
	(0.036)	(0.056)	(0.047)	(0.096)	(0.099)	(0.086)	(0.165)	(0.136)
Growth	0.001	−0.002	−0.001	−0.005*	0.002	0.000	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.003)
Oil	−0.003	0.019	0.041	0.083**	0.012	0.154***	0.210***	0.160***
	(0.006)	(0.041)	(0.049)	(0.037)	(0.019)	(0.052)	(0.047)	(0.055)
Miliary Spend.	0.100	−0.133	−0.009	−0.315	0.729	−2.224*	5.355**	4.750***
	(0.156)	(0.136)	(0.289)	(0.262)	(0.832)	(1.241)	(2.603)	(1.460)
Constant	−1.231	0.091	−0.669	−1.991**	−8.693	26.607*	−69.940**	−1.465**
	(1.761)	(0.569)	(0.551)	(0.780)	(10.050)	(15.423)	(32.658)	(0.579)
Observations	2434	2434	2434	2434	2537	2537	2537	2537
Overall R^2	0.926	0.818	0.842	0.839	0.921	0.861	0.805	0.851

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table A1: Effect of Failed Coups (PT and Colpus) on Different Components of Party Personalization.

	PT				COLPUS			
	Military Purges	Appts. on Loyalty	Creation of Paramilitary	Security Apparatus	Military Purges	Appts. on Loyalty	Creation of Paramilitary	Security Apparatus
Failed Coup	0.076**	0.160***	0.037	0.098	0.160**	0.235***	0.067*	0.087
	(0.036)	(0.056)	(0.030)	(0.071)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.040)	(0.074)
GDPpc	−0.007	0.011	−0.012	0.036	−0.163*	−0.185*	−0.035	−0.049
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.023)	(0.046)	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.044)	(0.092)
Growth	−0.000	−0.001	−0.000	−0.002	−0.005**	−0.007***	−0.002	−0.006**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Oil	0.030	0.008	0.002	0.016	0.153**	0.120**	−0.006	0.139*
	(0.040)	(0.022)	(0.005)	(0.044)	(0.071)	(0.059)	(0.014)	(0.075)
Miliary Spend.	0.031	0.044	0.030	−0.097	0.132	0.155	−0.087	0.375
	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.049)	(0.183)	(0.271)	(0.336)	(0.125)	(0.328)
Observations	2434	2434	2434	2434	2537	2537	2537	2537
Overall R^2	0.911	0.864	0.948	0.819	0.874	0.853	0.931	0.828

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table A2: Effect of Failed Coups (PT and Colpus) on Different Components of Security Personalization.

Robustness check 2 - Yearly Data.

Tables A2 and A3 below shows the results using data at the yearly level. The results mirror those in Tables 1 and 2 in the main paper.

	COLPUS					P&T				
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Failed Coup	0.085***	0.073**	0.115***	0.080**	0.071**	0.075***	0.079***	0.094***	0.081***	0.079***
	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.029)
GDPpc		−0.040	−0.044	−0.060	−0.074		0.030	0.030	0.025	0.027
		(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.061)	(0.067)		(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.030)
Growth		−0.004*	−0.004**	−0.004*	−0.004*		−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Oil		0.106	0.107	0.109	0.112*		0.030	0.029	0.032	0.030
		(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.066)	(0.063)		(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.022)	(0.030)
Miliary Spend.		0.349	0.433	0.293	0.316		−0.038	−0.016	0.008	−0.015
		(0.301)	(0.305)	(0.198)	(0.294)		(0.097)	(0.096)	(0.113)	(0.095)
Constant	−0.000	−4.973	−6.140	−0.247	1.379***	0.147***	0.022	−0.267	−0.547	−0.252
	(0.000)	(4.135)	(4.190)	(0.306)	(0.351)	(0.024)	(1.109)	(1.120)	(1.295)	(1.103)
Observations	360	236	236	236	236	359	253	253	253	253
Overall R^2	0.859	0.853	0.863	0.853	0.729	0.889	0.897	0.899	0.873	0.766

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table A3: Immediate effect of failed coups on latent personalization 2 years before and after a failed coup, using Powell-Thyne and Colpus. Data at **yearly** level.

	COLPUS					P&T				
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Failed Coup	0.124***	0.047	0.045	0.054	0.046	0.132***	0.046	0.048	0.063*	0.057*
	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.031)
t		0.014	0.040***	0.008***	0.009***		0.022**	0.039***	0.008***	0.009***
		(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.002)		(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.002)
GDPpc		−0.047*	−0.028	−0.024	−0.024		−0.020	−0.026	−0.022	−0.022
		(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.019)		(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Growth		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		−0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Oil		0.031*	0.004	0.002	0.004		0.024	0.005	0.004	0.005
		(0.017)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)		(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Miliary Spend.		−0.011	0.008	0.008	0.009		0.016	0.009	0.008	0.010
		(0.066)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)		(0.075)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Constant	0.543***	0.303	1.643***	0.295*	0.537***	0.543***	0.212*	1.587***	0.284*	0.519***
	(0.000)	(0.968)	(0.368)	(0.162)	(0.110)	(0.000)	(0.110)	(0.379)	(0.167)	(0.117)
Observations	3940	849	2600	2600	2600	3940	825	2600	2600	2600
Overall R^2	0.852	0.855	0.902	0.803	0.629	0.853	0.869	0.903	0.797	0.627

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4: General effect of failed coups on latent personalization, general model using full and restricted samples from Powell-Thyne and Colpus. Data at **yearly** level.

Probing the argument - Failed assassination attempts.

Our main argument and hypothesis hinge on the specific informational dynamics created by failed coups, which, by reshaping intra-elite bargains, create both incentives and opportunities for dictators to personalize power. A crucial part of the argument thus has to do with the unique opportunities that emerge in a post-coup environment.

One way to further probe the argument and mechanisms proposed in our theory is to use failed assassination attempts as the main independent variable potentially causing increases in personalism levels. This allows us to exploit key differences between both types of attacks that can inform us about the underlying mechanisms connecting failed attempts and personalism. If a failed attempt to topple the ruler, be it a coup or an assassination, is interpreted as simply a *pretext* to repress and personalize power, we should then observe substantial increases in personalism after both types of events, not only coups.

This is not what we expect, however. Our argument suggests that failed coups and failed assassinations differ in substantial ways that allow us to probe the plausibility of the causal mechanisms explained in the article. First, a failed assassination does not reveal as much information about the the number and identity of inside rivals as coups do. Assassination plots are a more precarious and almost desperate rebellion technology that require considerably fewer conspirators as well as less organizational resources and coordination than a coup. Such conspirators are typically outsiders (such as alienated lone-wolves or small dissident groups), or sometimes include one or a handful of disgruntled insiders acting without the backing of ample factions and unable to plan and coordinate a full seizure of power. Second, a failed assassination does not necessarily reveal the dictator as a strong type as the outcome of such attacks is most often the result of randomness or lucky breaks (Jones and Olken 2009). Consequently, it is also less likely that it substantially tilts the underlying balance of power in favor of the leader. Third, and related to the previous point, an assassination attempt, by specifically targeting the leader, and, hence, putting the position of other elites less directly at risk, is less likely to increase loyalty of remaining elite members. Personalization is thus less likely to be seen as an acceptable response by the ruling coalition.

Based on these critical differences, compared to failed coups, we do not expect failed assassination attempts to exert a significantly positive effect on personalism levels. In other

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words, if our arguments are true, and the differences between failed coup and assassination attempts are relevant, we should not observe significant increases in personalism after the latter as compared to the former.

To test the effect of failed assassination attempts, we use new data on assassination attempts in dictatorships collected by Chin et al. (Forthcoming). According to them: "an assassination attempt occurs whenever perpetrators take concrete illegal actions to kill an incumbent regime leader. A successful assassination attempt results in the regime leader's death, whereas regime leaders survive following a failed assassination attempt" (p. A-4). Their coding is very careful at distinguishing assassinations that are part of coups (and are thus coded as coup attempts), and those which are not (and are thus coded as assassination attempts). While "Coup makers attempt to seize power for themselves by replacing the incumbent leader or regime. Assassins simply try to kill the regime leader. Coup attempts and assassination attempts can co-occur, but this is rarer than one might assume" (p. 15).

Figure 1 shows the level of personalism before and after a failed assassination attempt (the model is the same as in Figure 2 in the main article). The sample includes only regimes in which at least one failed assassination attempt and no successful assassination attempts occurred. On average, after the failed attempt, personalism decreases sharply in the short term and then increases slowly.
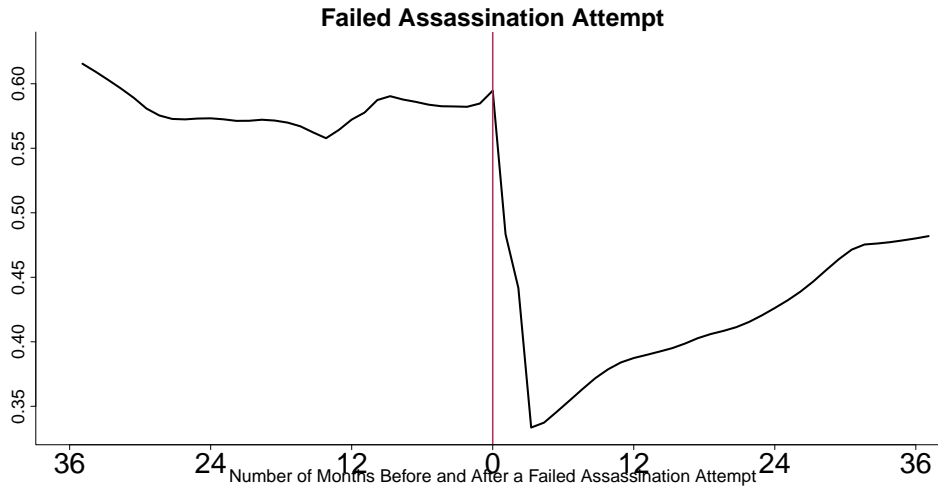

Figure 1: Predicted Personalism Before and After a Failed Assassination Attempt.

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Probing the argument - Civil Wars.

To further show that other violent events do not cause the same spikes in personalism as failed coups do, we use civil war onsets as a placebo test. Civil wars are a technology of rebellion involving regime outsiders, not insiders that mount a violent challenge against the incumbent regime (Roessler 2011). They thus do not reveal information about the preferences of regime insiders and, if anything, they might signal regime weakness, increase the ruler's reliance on (and, hence, the power of) the military forces, and possibly increase the likelihood of coups (Bell and Sudduth 2017). Consequently, we do not expect such events to exert a positive, significant effect on personalism. Figure 2 shows that levels of personalism decrease slightly after a civil war onset, and then recover to previous levels. The general trend in personalism remains similar three years before and after the onset of civil war.
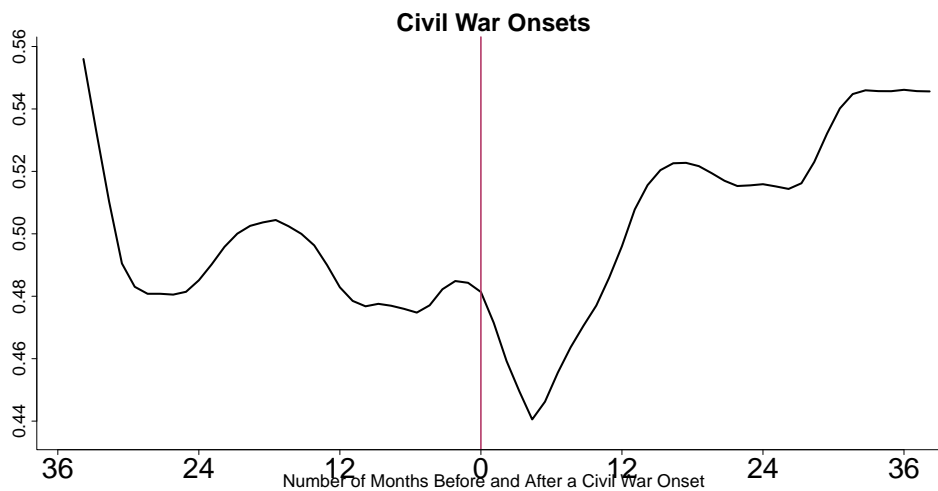

Figure 2: Predicted Personalism Before and After the Onset of a Civil War.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Miltary exp.	0.372	2.234	0	31.79	20904
Oil Income	2.872	3.254	0	10.636	18048
Latent Personalism	0.48	0.272	0	1	20904
t	168.886	145.778	0	731	20904

Table A4: Descriptive statistics, continuous variables.

Variable	0	1	2	N
Failed Coup, Colpus	20,728	176	-	20,904
Failed Coup, PT	20,765	139	-	20,904
Failed Coup, before/after	6,036	14,868	-	20,904
Party execuive	13,488	7,416	-	20,904
Appts. to High office	6,252	14,652	-	20,904
Support Party	17,316	3,588	-	20,904
Military Purges	10,992	9,912	-	20,904
Paramilitary	10,788	10,116	-	20,904
Security Apparatus	7,272	13,632	-	20,904
Appts. on Loyalty	4,356	5,388	11,160	20,904
Total	117,993	79,887	11,160	209,040

Table A5: Descriptive statistics. Frequencies for categorical variables.

Predicted personalism before and after

Figure 3 plots the marginal effects of the two Failed Coups variables from Table 1 in the main article. Mean personalism is 19.6 percent higher in observations after a failed coup (0.518) than before (0.433), and the difference is strongly significant in statistical terms. Substantively, this implies going from below-average levels of personalism to above-average levels (mean = 0.48). In fact, a failed coup accounts for an increase in the personalism score by almost half of a standard deviation, which is a large increase considering the other factors that may affect regime personalization over time.
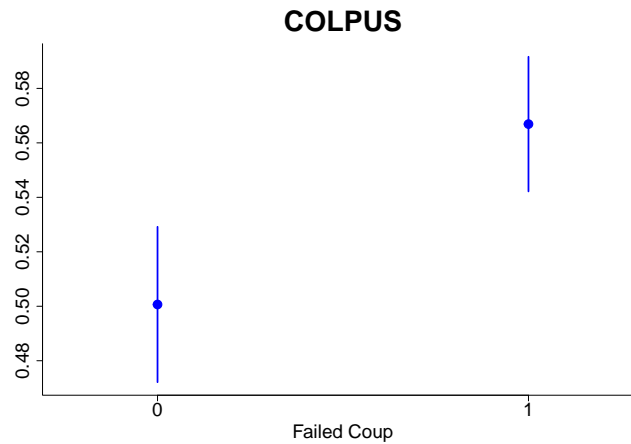

Figure 3: Predicted Personalism Before and After a Failed Coup, from Table 1, model (c) using Colpus.

Table with lags and leads

We introduce one final robustness to check for reverse causality. Table A6 lags and leads the failed coups variable 1, 2 and 3 years. If personalism increases *after* a failed coup, the coefficient for failed coups should be statistically and substantively significant in the lagged models, but not in the models with leads. This is exactly what we find, as the effect is statistically and substantively significant in all lagged models but not in the models with leads. This confirms that failed coups indeed precede personalism increases, not the other way around.

	3-Year		2-Year		1-Year	
	Lag	Lead	Lag	Lead	Lag	Lead
Failed Coup	0.203*	0.037	0.088*	0.012	0.066**	0.024
	(0.104)	(0.023)	(0.047)	(0.017)	(0.029)	(0.019)
GDPpc	−0.051	0.007	−0.003	0.008	−0.020	−0.002
	(0.039)	(0.057)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.055)	(0.060)
Growth	−0.002**	−0.002	−0.003**	−0.003*	−0.005**	−0.006**
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Oil	0.055	0.067	0.069	0.100*	0.120*	0.132*
	(0.042)	(0.064)	(0.045)	(0.054)	(0.062)	(0.071)
Miliary Spend.	−0.202	0.078	0.786**	0.848***	0.670***	0.606**
	(0.150)	(0.257)	(0.315)	(0.202)	(0.254)	(0.243)
Constant	2.605	0.000	−10.626**	−0.017	−9.376***	−8.801**
	(2.070)	(.)	(4.312)	(0.299)	(3.536)	(3.445)
Observations	2155	1738	2122	1802	2181	1969
Overall R^2	0.866	0.779	0.885	0.836	0.871	0.854

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table A6: Lags and leads for failed coups, using Colpus.

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