Support from Above: International Organizations and Leadership Survival

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Abstract

While existing literature indicates a variety of political consequences caused by IO membership, little attention has been paid to IOs' impact on leaders. This paper argues that IO membership has a positive effect on leadership survival, because IOs carry information and can be a shield to cover leaders' unpopular activities. The beneficial effect of IOs on leadership survival, moreover, is stronger for authoritarian leaders than for democratic leaders. Using data on leader turnover and IO membership, this paper shows that while in general IO membership has a negative effect on leader change, this effect is stronger in non-democracies. Using data on IO functionality, this paper also finds that political or technical IOs are only rewarding to non-democratic leaders, whereas economic IOs benefit all leaders.

1 Introduction

Recent decades have witnessed a remarkable growth of international organizations (IOs), with purportedly several hundreds of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in existence. Despite the responsibility and financial burdens imposed, countries are generally interested in becoming members to various IOs. In October 2013, for example, China proposed to initiate the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), an international financial institution that is aimed to provide infrastructure lending to developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Soon after its initiative, many countries expressed their interest in participating in the AIIB. The burgeoning of IOs and countries' eagerness to join IOs suggest that there should be some advantages of being IO members. What are the consequences of IO membership? While existing literature shows that membership in IOs generates a variety of favorable outcomes, such as a higher level of democracy and less frequent intrastate conflicts, the impact on the leader—oftentimes the decision-maker who decides whether to join an IO—is rarely studied.

This paper argues that special attention should be paid to leaders, because, as self-interested actors, leaders may select to join IOs that help their political power, such as those privileging their supporters. Even though IO membership is inherited, the beneficial effect of IOs on leaders still continues because IOs signal to the domestic audience the leader's legitimacy and resolve to stay in power. Therefore, this paper hypothesizes that IO membership has a positive effect on leaders' political tenure. This effect, moreover, is dependent on a member country's regime type. Authoritarian leaders benefit more from IO membership than their democratic counterparts because they are more capable of manipulating the information disseminated by IOs and also because they can distribute the gains from IO membership to their small winning coalition.

Using data on leadership turnover and IOs on 144 countries from 1965 to 2005, this paper finds that IO membership has a negative effect on leader change, meaning that joining IOs helps political leaders survive. Moreover, the helpful effect of IO membership on leader is stronger in non-democracies than in democracies. A two-stage instrument variable analysis shows that the result is not driven by endogeneity. Also, by disaggregating IOs by their functionality, this paper finds that while economic IOs benefit all leaders, political IOs are only rewarding to authoritarian leaders.

Scholars of international relations have different views on IOs. While many believe that IOs mainly reflect stakeholders' interests and are maneuvered by powerful countries to implement their favored policies (see, for example, Stone, 2004; Copelovitch, 2010; Kilby, 2013; Lim and Vreeland, 2013), some point out that IOs are characterized by centralization and autonomy (Abbott and Snidal, 1998; Barnett and Finnemore, 2003), can enhance democracy (Keohane, Macedo and Moravcsik, 2009), and can promote peace (Russett, Oneal and Davis, 1998; Oneal and Russett, 1999). This paper contributes to the literature on the political effects of IOs by introducing another domestic consequence of IO membership—longer leader tenure. This paper also adds to the literature on political survival that considers political leaders as a unique unit of analysis instead of treating a country as a whole.

In what follows, I first review existing literature on leadership survival and the political consequences of IOs. Then I provide my theory on the effect of IO membership on leaders' survival prospect. The section that follows proposes a research design to test the hypotheses. The empirical results are presented in Section 5. The final section concludes.

2 Leadership survival and international institutions

Over the last decade and half, scholars of international relations (IR) and comparative politics have developed an interest in political leaders. By considering political leaders as a unit of analysis, this literature relaxes the conventional IR assumption that the state is a unitary actor. The leader specific punishment theory, for example, argues that states can impose foreign policies that only target the leader instead of a whole country (McGillivray and Smith, 2006, 2008). Leadership survival has also become an important topic of scholarly inquiry. According to the classic selectorate theory developed by Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005), the tenure of political leaders is affected by two key institutional factors: the size of the selectorate and the size of the winning coalition. The former refers to the pool of people who have the ability to choose the leader, and the latter is a subset of the selectorate whose support would enable the leader to stay in power. In other words, leadership survival is basically determined *domestically*.

While leadership survival is essentially shaped by domestic factors, external forces may influence leaders' survival prospect, either directly or indirectly. Leader changes may be imposed directly by foreign governments or by domestic opposition with foreign support, for example the 1953 Iranian coup that deposed the then prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and the removal of the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in 2003. Even without direct foreign efforts to overthrow the leader, the prospect of leadership survival may be indirectly influenced by other outside factors, such as foreign aid (Kono and Montinola, 2009; Licht, 2010), international conflicts (Chiozza and Goemans, 2003, 2004), and foreign remittances (Ahmed, 2012).

Despite this growing attention to external determinants of leadership survival, little is known about how international institutions affect leaders. Existing literature that looks at the effect of international institutions on leaders mainly focuses on bilat-

eral agreements. For example, Hollyer and Rosendorff (2012) find a helpful effect of preferential trade agreements (PTAs) on leadership survival, and Mazumder (2015) indicates a similar effect of bilateral investment treaties. How international institutions in general and IO membership in particular influence leadership survival is rarely explored.

This lack of research is particularly curious because the literature shows that membership in IOs has numerous consequences on political regime or state behavior. An important strand of this literature finds that IOs have a democratic effect, i.e., IO membership helps democratic transitions and promotes democratic consolidation (Pevehouse, 2002*a,b*; Keohane, Macedo and Moravcsik, 2009; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015*a*). Another strand of the literature examines the effect of IOs on interstate conflicts, in which the results are inconclusive: While many find that IO membership has a pacifying effect in terms of reducing the incidence or the duration of militarized conflicts (Russett, Oneal and Davis, 1998; Oneal and Russett, 1999; Shannon, Morey and Boehmke, 2010), others contend that IOs may instead stimulate conflicts, at least low severity conflicts in emerging states (Chan, 2005; Fausett and Volgy, 2010).[1]

In addition to promoting democracy and peace, IO membership may produce other beneficial consequences, such as human rights practices (Greenhill, 2010) and improved risk ratings (Dreher and Voigt, 2011). IO membership also leads to positive economic outcomes. Dreher, Mikosch and Voigt (2015), for example, find that investment-related IOs help a country attract FDI. Baccini and Kim (2012) show that membership in IGOs, whether economic IGOs or non-economic, reduces the level

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[1]The mixed findings may be driven by the institutional variations of IOs. Boehmer, Gartzke and Nordstrom (2004), for example, find that whether IGO membership curtails or triggers conflicts depends on the characteristics of IGOs: IGOs that possess quality institutionalized structures and a mandate are effective in promoting peace, but IGOs that create uncertainty may cause conflicts. Shannon (2009) shows that IOs are effective in fostering peace brokering with third party intervention. Haftel (2007) discovers that two features of regional integration arrangements—a wider scope of economic activity and regular high-level officials meetings—lead to reduction in violent conflicts.

of protectionism. While some IO studies implicitly or explicit suggest that IOs help leaders to survive,[2] to the author's knowledge, no study has empirically tested the effect of IO membership on political survival. This paper undertakes this task by systematically examining how IO membership affects leadership turnover.

3   IOs, regime type, and leaders

This paper argues that IO membership has a positive effect on leadership survival, which works through two seemingly contradictory mechanisms. On the one hand, IOs play an informational role and provide leaders legitimacy. On the other, leaders can use IOs as a shield to cover their unpopular activities, thus strengthening their power. This helpful effect on leaders, moreover, works more effectively in non-democracies, because democratic countries enjoy information transparency whereas non-democratic leaders are able to choose which information to disclose.

First of all, an extensive literature suggests that participation in international institutions conveys information to international actors (such as foreign investors) and/or domestic audience (e.g., Keohane, 1984; Stein, 1990; Milner, 1997; Dai, 2002; Simmons, 2000; Chapman, 2007). This informational function is helpful to leaders' survival prospect because it reveals leaders' credible commitment to the citizens. Without perfect information, citizens may not be able to discern whether their leaders are engaging in adverse behavior such as rent-seeking or not. As Mansfield, Milner and Rosendorff (2002) state, "[v]oters...face an informational problem in their attempt to monitor politicians[.]" IOs offer such information to domestic audience because joining IOs signals the leaders' commitment to following international norms or rules.

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[2]Poast and Urpelainen (2013), for example, state that "IOs help the government of a democratizing country improve domestic policy formation, which facilitates political survival in competitive elections."

Citizens who receive this signal thus are more likely to believe that their leaders are doing their job and serving the public interests.

This is especially so for countries under democratic transitions, as the leaders of this type of countries need IOs to signal their commitment to democratic reforms (Mansfield and Pevehouse, 2006, 2008; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015*a*). The signaling effect is also important for authoritarian leaders because they need domestic audience and external actors to believe they are unbiased and reliable (Fang, 2008; Fang and Owen, 2011). So IO membership provides political leaders legitimacy and may enhance citizens' trust in them.

Second, joining an IO means the government is put under international surveillance, but the leaders can actually use this as a shield to cover their power-consolidating behavior. Recent literature finds that while many countries enter an international institution in order to achieve its principal goal, others join this IO to pursue a contrary purpose. For example, Kelley (2008) argues that, to seek legitimacy, cheating governments instead find it rational to invite international election monitors; Hollyer and Rosendorff (2011) argue that autocrats may decide to sign the UN Convention Against Torture to actually signal to the domestic opposition their low costs to repress. This explains the puzzle why cheating/torturing governments are willing to participate in anti-cheating/anti-torturing international agreements. Hurd (2005) also shows how Libya strategically used the legitimacy of UN Security Council to counter the sanctions imposed on it in the early 1990s. In other words, IOs not only play the role of "alarm-sounders" (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984) to help citizens monitor their governments, but also serve as an umbrella under which political leaders can engage in unpopular activities. Leaders that have strong intention to hold power firmly and that are willing to employ repression may join monitoring IOs to signal their resolve. Their chance of survival, therefore, may instead be higher than other leaders.

While these two mechanisms seem to contradict with each other, they can work in parallel, especially in non-democratic countries. Joining IOs signals a government's commitment to domestic reforms or to the compliance with international norms, and citizens that receive the signal thus trust the government better, whether in democratic or non-democratic countries. A leader, however, will avoid joining IOs that erode the state sovereignty or that hurt the leader's core capacity of controling power. Some IOs are toothless, but some IOs set rules or standards that would constrain their members. Member states that deviate from the rules may be punished or sanctioned, which authoritarian leaders are more sensitive to. As Mansfield and Pevehouse (2008) write, therefore, authoritarian states "have reason to enter IOs only if the prospect of punishment is very low or the likely sanctions for violating rules are mild." Once joining this type of IOs, it appears that authoritarian leaders are constrained, but their room to maneuver actually expands because of the political shielding function of IOs.

In sum, IO membership signals to domestic audience that their leaders have the legitimacy to stay in power, as well as the resolve to strengthen the power. This signaling effect will be channeled into a stronger power base for the leader and thus longer leadership survival. The first empirically testable hypothesis therefore is:

Hypothesis 1: *The more IOs a country participates in, the more likely that the leader of this country will have longer political survival.*

While in general IO membership helps leaders, the helpful effect may not be constant across countries. This paper argues that the effect of IOs on leadership survival depends on the institutional context of a country. Specifically, democratic leaders may be more likely to join IOs than authoritarian leaders, but once joining, the effect of IO membership on political survival is stronger in non-democracies than in democracies

for two reasons. First, the above-mentioned mechanisms, particularly the political shielding mechanism, work more effectively in non-democracies than in democracies. Second, while democratic leaders need to consider winners and losers generated by IO membership, authoritarian leaders can allocate the resources to the ruling elites who are their key supporters.

In general, democratic countries are more transparent, and information is freely flowing in democracies (Hollyer, Rosendorff and Vreeland, 2011). The information disseminated by IOs may help assuage criticisms on leaders of democratic countries, but it may not necessarily be translated into stronger support for the leader. The pubic choice approach of IOs argues that politicians tend to let the "dirty work" conducted by international agencies and shirk responsibility if domestic dissatisfaction is caused (Vaubel, 1986). Vreeland (2003), for example, points out that governments may blame the IMF conditionalities when unpopular policies are implemented (Vreeland, 2003, 13). Mansfield, Milner and Rosendorff (2002) also argue that leaders sign trade agreements to demonstrate to their constituents that economic downturns are not a result of their rent-seeking behavior. In other words, IOs can be a scapegoat for democratic leaders when unpleasant outcomes are present. This scapegoating function provides an explanation as to why democratic leaders join IOs in the first place. But when IO membership is inherited, the ability to influence the survival of democratic leaders is limited.

In non-democracies, on the contrary, leaders prefer to obfuscate information because transparency increases the risk of mass movements (Hollyer, Rosendorff and Vreeland, 2015). Authoritarian leaders, nevertheless, may benefit from some forms of openness, and therefore tend to manipulate and disclose information in the way that helps their survival (Hollyer, Rosendorff and Vreeland, 2014; Chen and Xu, 2015). The information revealed by IOs signals to the populace and the ruling elites, two groups

of people who may threaten the authoritarian rule (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). To the populace, active participation in the international society enhances a country's international visibility and thus citizen's feelings of national pride. They thus lack incentives to create or participate in mass movements. To the ruling elites, who are the decisive winning coalition in an authoritarian regime, international cooperation signals the external endorsement of the leadership. They therefore hesitate to engage in activities that aim to topple the leader.

The other, perhaps more important, reason why IO membership benefits authoritarian leaders is because of the distributional consequences of IOs, particularly economic IOs. Accession to economic IOs usually generates winners and losers in a country, so the decision to enter such IOs is oftentimes an outcome of domestic political compromise. Domestic interest groups or businesses may lobby or influence the government to join an IO that will serve their interests, whether in democracies (Chase, 2003) or in non-democracies (Jiang, 2010). In general, democratic countries are more likely to enter economic IOs because economic openness increases their *average* social welfare. Hollyer and Rosendorff (2012), for instance, show that the effect of PTAs on leadership survival is stronger in democracies because PTAs lead to reduced policy uncertainty which in turn enhances support for the leader.

In authoritarian countries where the winning coalition is small, leaders only need to take care of a small group of people and supply private goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005). Choosing whether to join an IO is therefore easier for authoritarian leaders than for democratic leaders who need to meet a broader set of interests. Authoritarian leaders only need to assure that their patrons (for example domestic business elites) are the winners generated by membership in IOs, but democratic leaders have to think about how to compensate the losers (who may determine their chance of being re-elected). The economic gains received by the privileged groups will be trans-

lated into crucial support for the authoritarian leaders, and thus increase their political tenure. In other words, IO membership enables authoritarian leaders to strengthen the political base by distributing the benefits to their core supporters.

One example is Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia and its economy is heavily reliant on the export of commodities with petroleum accounting for 70% of the total export. Openness is therefore beneficial to its economy and to the ruling elites. The Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has been in power since Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, has actively proposed to create a Eurasian Union, which was partly realized by the foundation of the Eurasian Economic Community in 2000 (later evolving into the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015) (Bohr, 2004).[3] Regional economic integration of Central Asia, particularly the connection with Russia, has helped the Kazakh economy to grow and enabled Nazarbayev to further secure his power.[4] Nazarbayev's relatives have owned huge business interests in Kazakhstan, including in the oil sector, and even blamed for cronyism and corruption, Nazarbayev won nearly 90% of the vote in the most recent election. Aware of the benefits of accession to economic IOs, Kazakhstan also applied to join the WTO in 1996 and became a full member in November 2015.

While a large portion of the economic IOs are established to promote economic liberalization, some economic IOs, especially those formed to manage commodities, create cartels that are aimed to control the market. Members of these IOs enjoy economic gains due to market oligopoly. Unlike democracies in which government spending is open to public surveillance, leaders of authoritarian countries that are members of these IOs can spend the money secretly in building coercive capacity to prevent anti-government activities, which in turn prolong their survival. The OPEC is a clear

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[3]The Eurasian Economic Community has five members: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. The Eurasian Economic Union also has five members, including Armenia but not including Tajikistan.

[4]Russia is Kazakhstan's largest import partner and fourth largest export partner.

example. OPEC members receive huge and stable economic benefits due to market oligopoly and the quotas on oil production (Khusanjanova, 2011). The majority of them are stable authoritarian countries which have experienced relatively little domestic unrest.

In brief, IO membership benefits authoritarian leaders more than democratic leaders because the former are more capable of manipulating information and also because they tend to distribute the gains from IOs to their small winning coalition. It should be noted that this is not to say democratic leaders never spend money in power consolidation, but authoritarian leaders have more incentives to and are better equipped to expend the money in ways that would help their survival than their democratic counterparts. So, other things being equal, IO membership has a larger positive effect on leadership survival in non-democracies than in democracies:

Hypothesis 2: The effect of membership in IOs on political survival is stronger for leaders of authoritarian countries than for leaders of democratic countries.

4   Research design

This section proposes a research design to test the hypotheses. I first discuss the data and variables, and then introduce the statistical model.

Outcome variable

To test whether IO membership affects leaders' political survival, the outcome variable is whether there was a leadership change in a country in a given year. The unit of analysis is country-year.[5] The data are from the Archigos data on political leaders

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[5]I do not use leader-year as the unit of analysis because most of the covariates are country-level variables. There are some country-years in which more than one leader change occurred, and I code

(Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009), and I exclude the cases in which leaders left power due to natural death. The time period under investigation is from 1965 to 2005, and the sample includes 144 countries. A list of countries that are included in the analysis can be seen in Table 4 in the Appendix.

Explanatory variable

The key explanatory variable is the number of IOs to which a country is a member in a given year. The data are taken from the International Governmental Organization (IGO) Data (Wallace and Singer, 1970; Pevehouse, Nordstrom and Warnke, 2004), which provides information on IGO membership from 1815 to 2005. An IO is defined as an IGO when it has at least three member states and possesses indication of institutionalization such as a headquarter or permanent staff (Pevehouse, Nordstrom and Warnke, 2004).

To test the second hypothesis, I disaggregate countries into democracies and non-democracies using the dichotomous measure in the Democracy and Dictatorship dataset compiled by Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010). A country is classified as a democracy when it has elections and elected legislature, and legally allows multiple parties. Figure 1 displays the average numbers of IOs to which democracies and non-democracies are members from 1965 to 2005. As can be seen, in general, countries have joined more and more IOs over these four decades. Democratic countries, moreover, have constantly possessed a higher number of IO memberships than non-democratic countries.[6]

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them into 1.

[6]The question as to why democratic countries are more likely to join or form IOs is beyond the scope of this paper. But one explanation is that democratic countries are more interested in international cooperation. The other is that IOs, once formed, are more likely to accept democratic countries as members.
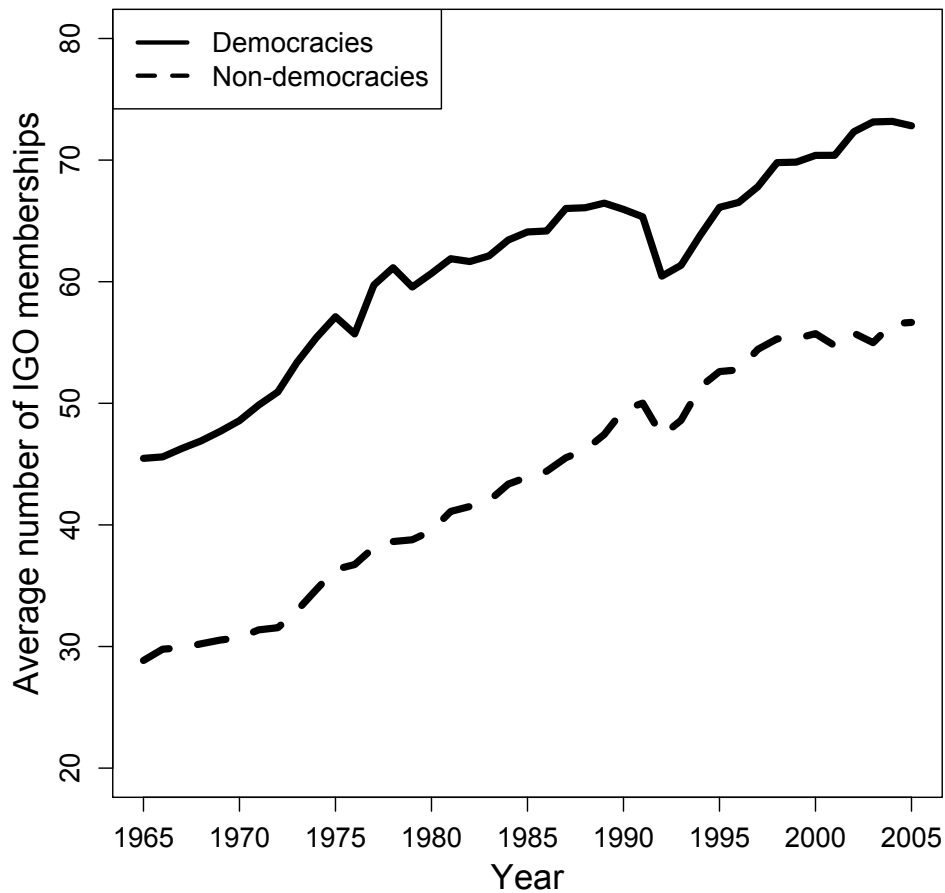
Figure 1: Average numbers of IOs to which democracies and non-democracies are members

Control variables

I include a battery of control variables that may affect leadership turnover. The logged value of GDP PER CAPITA is used to test whether economic development helps prolong a leader's survival. ECONOMIC GROWTH is the growth rate of annual GDP, which measures the short term economic performance. GOVERNMENT SPENDING is the total government expenditures as a percentage of GDP. Leaders may gain support and secure their power by spending more on social welfares or public service. Foreign aid may serve as external support for the incumbent (Kono and Montinola, 2009;

Licht, 2010), so I control for FOREIGN AID, which is the logged value of net official development assistance and official aid received by a country in a given year. All the data for the above variables are from the World Bank's World Development Indicator (WDI), and I lag these variables for one year since we do not expect the effect of these economic variables on leadership change to be immediate.

INTERNAL THREAT is a weighted sum of eight forms of domestic conflicts: assassinations, strikes, guerrilla warfare, government crises, purges, riots, revolutions, and anti-government demonstrations. This variable is very important since a leader's survival can be in serious danger when such anti-government activities prevail. The data are from the Cross-National Time-Series (CNTS) Data Archive (Banks and Wilson, 2014). I also control for OIL PRODUCTION, as both oil revenues and foreign aid represent unearned income to the leader that helps maintain regime stability (Morrison, 2009). The data on oil production (in thousand barrels, logged) are from the BP Statistical Review of World Energy.[7] A leader's AGE is also controlled to test whether seniority affects leader change. Lastly, a time period indicator POST-COLD WAR is included because during the Cold War superpowers may grow or support certain country leaders due to geopolitical concerns. Table 5 in the Appendix provides the summary statistics.

Statistical model

The outcome variable is a dichotomous indicator of leadership change, and I utilize a logit model with country fixed effects. To model temporal dependence, I include the cubic polynomials for the number of previous years in office, which makes this model a grouped survival model (Beck, Katz and Tucker, 1998; Carter and Signorino, 2010). A negative coefficient means that a leader turnover is less likely to occur, which also

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[7]Available at `http://www.bp.com/statisticalreview`.

means that the leader is more likely to survive that year.

5 Results

Table 1 presents the results. In Model 1, the main explanatory variable is the number of IOs to which a country is a member. As its results show, the coefficient for IO membership is negative and statistically significant at the 95% level. It suggests that the more IOs a country joins, the less likely that the leader will be replaced, or the more likely that the leader will survive a year. Other things being equal, an additional IO membership makes the leader 1.6% more likely to stay in power. This finding lends support for the first hypothesis.

In Models 2 and 3, countries are partitioned into democracies and non-democracies. Model 2 presents the results for the sample of democracies and Model 3 is the results for the sample of non-democracies. As can be seen, the coefficients for IO membership remain negative and statistically significant at the 90% level in both models. In Model 3, moreover, the coefficient (in absolute value) is larger than that in Model 2. This suggests that the effect of IO membership on leadership survival is stronger for non-democracies, supporting the second hypothesis.

In addition to the impact of IO membership, Table 1 indicates some factors that are important determinants of leadership turnover. Economic development is positively associated with leader changes, particularly in non-democracies. This suggests that leaders generally stay in power longer in less wealthy countries. The level of internal threat is positively related to leadership turnover in both types of regime, which makes a lot of sense since leaders are much more likely to be deposed when domestic political discontent is strong. The leader's age has a positive effect, meaning that a leader's chance to leave power increases as s/he gets older. Lastly, leadership

Table 1: IO Membership, Political Regime, and Leadership Survival (1965–2005)

Sample	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democracies	Model 3 Non-democracies
IO membership	−0.016	−0.017	−0.025
	$(0.007)**$	$(0.010)*$	$(0.013)*$
Development	0.757	0.602	1.138
	$(0.239)***$	(0.397)	$(0.396)***$
Growth	−0.017	−0.002	−0.006
	$(0.009)*$	(0.023)	(0.015)
Government spending	0.024	0.023	0.015
	$(0.013)*$	(0.014)	(0.020)
Internal threat	0.182	0.091	0.334
	$(0.017)***$	$(0.022)***$	$(0.033)***$
Foreign aid	0.063	0.009	0.028
	$(0.027)**$	(0.034)	(0.042)
Oil production	−0.029	0.004	−0.043
	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.041)
Leader's age	0.034	0.020	0.058
	$(0.006)***$	$(0.008)**$	$(0.011)***$
Post Cold war	0.423	0.067	0.592
	$(0.161)***$	(0.204)	$(0.349)*$
t	0.184	0.395	−0.020
	$(0.047)***$	$(0.090)***$	(0.084)
t^2	−0.117	−0.193	−0.011
	$(0.039)***$	$(0.107)**$	(0.067)
t^3	0.019	0.039	0.006
	$(0.008)**$	(0.032)	(0.014)
Number of observations	4,404	1,987	2,417
Number of countries	144	88	107
Log likelihood	−1534.298	−931.5987	−493.0031
AIC	3380.597	2063.197	1224.006
BIC	4377.479	2622.636	1913.050

Notes. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p< .1; **p< .05; ***p< .01.

turnover is more frequent in the post-Cold War period, especially in non-democratic countries. This suggests that leaders survived longer during the Cold War period, probably because these leaders gained support from powerful countries out of their geopolitical concern or because fewer developing countries democratized before the end of the Cold War.

Two-stage instrumental variable analysis

The studies of IOs or international agreements more broadly encounter two inter-related issues: endogeneity and the selection bias. Countries may selectively enter international agreements that do not require dramatic policy changes and that they are more likely to comply with (Downs, Rocke and Barsoom, 1996). As argued previously, leaders may also select IOs that can potentially help their survival. Moreover, unstable countries are less likely to participate in the global society, so the finding in Table 1 could be driven by the fact that long-ruling leaders are more likely to engage in international cooperation. To deal with this issue, I use a two-stage instrumental variable approach. While a valid instrument for IO membership is hard to find, I use one that is used by other scholars: the number of total IOs in the region subtracted by the number of IOs a country participates in. Many IOs are formed by countries in the same region, and a country tends to comply with international treaties when other countries in the same region do so (Simmons, 2000). So the number of IOs to which other countries in the region are members has a diffusion effect on the number of IOs to which a country is a member. Also, there is little reason to expect that the IOs that other countries join have a direct effect on the leadership survival in a country.

Table 2 presents the results of the two-stage instrumental variable analysis. Model 1 includes leadership turnover as the outcome variable and the instrumental variable, IO membership for other countries in the region, as the explanatory variable. This

Table 2: IO Membership and Leadership Survival: Instrumental Variable Analysis

Outcome variable	Model 1 (leader turnover)	Model 2 (IO membership)	Model 3 (leader turnover)
IO membership			−0.020
			$(0.008) **$
IOs in the region	−0.028	0.576	
	(0.019)	$(0.031) ***$	
Development	0.641	1.477	0.826
	$(0.231) ***$	$(0.264) ***$	$(0.250) ***$
Democracy		0.095	
		$(0.016) ***$	
Growth	−0.016		−0.017
	$(0.010)*$		$(0.010)*$
Government spending	0.021		0.023
	(0.013)		$(0.013)*$
Internal threat	0.183		0.183
	$(0.017) ***$		$(0.017) ***$
Foreign aid	0.058		0.061
	$(0.027) **$		$(0.027) **$
Oil production	−0.033		−0.029
	(0.020)		(0.020)
Leader's age	0.033		0.034
	$(0.006) ***$		$(0.006) ***$
Post Cold war	0.342		0.498
	$(0.167) **$		$(0.183) ***$
t	0.179		0.183
	$(0.046) ***$		$(0.047) ***$
t^2	−0.115		−0.118
	$(0.039) ***$		$(0.039) ***$
t^3	0.019		0.019
	$(0.008) **$		$(0.008) **$
Number of observations	4,386	4,386	4,386
Number of countries	143	143	143
Log likelihood	−1531.933		−1530.157
AIC	3373.866		3370.314
BIC	4363.723		4360.170
Excluded instrument F-test		$341.92 ***$	
Adjusted R-squared		0.9633	

Notes. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p< .1; **p< .05; ***p< .01.

is simply to show that the instrumental variable does not directly influence leadership survival. Model 2 is the first-stage OLS model, in which the outcome variable is the number of IO memberships. I include the instrumental variable and two control variables that are expected to affect a country's tendency to join IOs: economic development and the level of democracy. I also include regional dummies and a linear time trend (to capture the burgeoning of IOs), although the coefficients are not shown due to space constraints. As can be seen, IOs in the region has a positive effect on the number of IOs to which a country is a member, and is statistically significant at the 99% level. The *F*-test of the excluded instrumental variable is 342, which far exceeds the conventional threshold of 10 (Sovey and Green, 2011), indicating a strong instrumental variable.

In Model 3, the fitted values of Model 2 that serve as an instrument for IO membership enter to be the explanatory variable. In this second-stage model, other control variables are also included. As the results show, instrumented IO membership has a negative and statistically significant effect on leader turnover. This confirms that IO membership has a helpful effect on leaders and shows that the finding in Table 1 is not driven by endogeneity.

Robustness analysis

I also perform additional analyses to test the robustness of the results. First, I use the Change in Source of Leader Support (CHISOLS) data to measure leader exit (Mattes, Leeds and Matsumura, 2016). The CHISOLS data provide information on whether a leader change is based on changes in the support of different societal groups. The outcome variable is a dichotomous measure of changes in the "source of leader support," which occur less frequently than leader changes. Second, IOs vary substantially in their functions. Mansfield and Pevehouse (2008) distinguish between standards-

based, economic, and political IOs, and argue that democratizing countries tend to join the first two. Ingram, Robinson and Busch (2005) classify IOs into general, political, economic, and social ones. Poast and Urpelainen (2015*b*) provide a detailed classification of IO functionality, which contains three broad categories: political, economic, and technical. To see whether the beneficial effect of IOs on leaders is driven by a particular type of IOs, I use the data on Poast and Urpelainen (2015*b*) and simply classify IOs into political ones (including technical IOs) and economic ones.

Table 3 reports the results of the robust analyses. In Models 1-3, the outcome variable is a change in the source of leader support. Model 1 includes all countries, and Models 2 and 3 include democracies and non-democracies, respectively. As can be seen, IO membership has a negative effect on the change in the source of leader support across three models, but it achieves statistical significance only in Model 3. This means that the helpful effect of IO membership on leaders is stronger in non-democracies, where it leads to a reduction not only in leader transitions, but also in changes in the leader's support base.

In Models 4-6, IOs are disaggregated into political and economic ones. Model 4 includes the number of economic IOs as the explanatory variable, and the results show that economic IOs have a negative effect on leader exit. As previously argued, membership in economic IOs, especially some lucrative IOs such as free trade agreements, may increase the average social welfare, so the economic gains will be translated into support for the leader, whether in democracies or in non-democracies. Model 5 includes the number of political IOs as the explanatory variable, and it shows that the effect of political IOs on leader turnover is also negative, although it fails to achieve statistical significance. As argued previously, the political shielding function of IOs is more effective in non-democracies, so I further split the sample into democracies and non-democracies. Model 6 reports the results for non-democracies. As can been seen,

Table 3: IO Membership and Leadership Survival: Robustness Checks

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Sample	All	D	ND	All		ND
Outcome variable	(Change in source of leader support)			(Leadership turnover)		
IO membership	−0.012	−0.016	−0.066			
	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.020) ∗∗∗			
Economic IOs				−0.025		
				(0.011) ∗∗		
Political IOs					−0.023	−0.052
					(0.016)	(0.031)∗
Development	0.595	0.914	0.770	0.714	0.692	1.134
	(0.301) ∗∗	(0.465) ∗∗	(0.619)	(0.234) ∗∗∗	(0.238) ∗∗∗	(0.396) ∗∗∗
Growth	−0.021	−0.016	−0.021	−0.017	−0.016	−0.005
	(0.011)∗	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.009)∗	(0.009)∗	(0.015)
Govt spending	0.033	0.013	−0.004	0.024	0.021	0.014
	(0.016) ∗∗	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.013)∗	(0.013)	(0.020)
Internal threat	0.154	0.066	0.428	0.183	0.182	0.333
	(0.021) ∗∗∗	(0.025) ∗∗∗	(0.057) ∗∗∗	(0.017) ∗∗∗	(0.017) ∗∗∗	(0.033) ∗∗∗
Foreign aid	0.095	0.025	0.105	0.060	0.060	0.029
	(0.042) ∗∗	(0.039)	(0.099)	(0.027) ∗∗	(0.027) ∗∗	(0.042)
Oil production	−0.012	−0.005	0.004	−0.028	−0.033	−0.046
	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.062)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.041)
Leader's age	0.016	0.007	0.032	0.034	0.033	0.058
	(0.007) ∗∗	(0.009)	(0.016) ∗∗	(0.006) ∗∗∗	(0.006) ∗∗∗	(0.011) ∗∗∗
Post Cold war	0.577	0.105	1.326	0.375	0.318	0.514
	(0.199) ∗∗∗	(0.236)	(0.524) ∗∗	(0.151) ∗∗	(0.157) ∗∗	(0.336)
t	0.145	0.388	−0.200	0.182	0.181	−0.024
	(0.061) ∗∗	(0.105) ∗∗∗	(0.128)	(0.046) ∗∗∗	(0.046) ∗∗∗	(0.084)
t^2	−0.078	−0.214	0.140	−0.116	−0.116	−0.008
	(0.055)	(0.128) ∗∗	(0.108)	(0.039) ∗∗∗	(0.039) ∗∗∗	(0.067)
t^3	0.010	0.050	−0.027	0.019	0.019	0.005
	(0.012)	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.008) ∗∗	(0.008) ∗∗	(0.014)
# of observations	4,334	1,926	2,408	4,404	4,404	2,417
# of countries	142	86	106	144	144	107
Log likelihood	−1081.42	−741.80	−237.07	−1534.53	−1535.96	−493.38
AIC	2470.84	1679.61	710.13	3381.06	3383.93	1224.76
BIC	3452.47	2224.80	1392.94	4377.94	4380.81	1913.80

Notes. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p< .1; **p< .05; ***p< .01.

when the sample is restricted to only non-democratic countries, the effect of political IOs on leader turnover is negative and statistically significant. The results for the democracy sample (not shown here) indicate no particular effect of political IOs. In other words, while in general IO membership benefits leaders, authoritarian leaders are more likely to take the advantage of political IOs.

6   Conclusion

Existing literature indicates a variety of political consequences caused by IO membership, but little research has been devoted to studying the leaders. In this paper, I argue that IO membership has a positive effect on leadership survival because IOs can provide information to citizens and can signal the leaders' resolve to consolidate the power. While IOs' functions vary from one to another, as rational actors, leaders would not select to enter IOs that hurt their political survival. Instead, they will choose IOs that benefit their patrons or supporters, that provide them visibility and legitimacy, and that help their popularity to grow. As a result, membership in IOs leads to longer leadership survival.

This beneficial effect, moreover, varies across regime types. Authoritarian leaders are more able to censor and manipulate information, and they can also allocate the benefits from IO membership to their key supporters. Therefore the signaling effect of IOs is stronger in authoritarian countries than in democratic countries. This is particularly the case for political IOs because authoritarian leaders can utilize political IOs as a shield to cover their unpopular activities.

To test the hypotheses, I draw upon data on leadership turnover, IO membership, and IO functionality. Using a grouped survival model, I find that the more IOs a country participates in, the longer the leader will stay in power. After countries are

partitioned into democracies and non-democracies, the findings show that the beneficial effect of IO membership on leader tenure is stronger in non-democracies than in democracies. I also disaggregate IOs into economic ones and political or technical ones, and find that while the former in general help leaders, the latter only benefit authoritarian leaders.

The findings of this paper contribute to the literature on IOs and provide important implications. While research on IOs is extensive, the effect of IOs on political leaders is understudied. This paper fills this gap by examining how collectively IO memberships help leadership survival. The findings provide an answer to the question raised in the beginning of the paper: why may leaders be keen to form or join IOs even if the cost is high? One reason is because IO membership has a helpful effect on leadership survival. The good news to the international society is that the potential beneficial effect of IOs on leaders may incentivize government leaders to participate in IOs, thus promoting international cooperation. Joining IOs, however, may also empower authoritarian leaders and thus hinder democratic development.

7 Appendix

Table 4: List of Countries Included in the Empirical Analysis

Albania	Algeria	Angola	Argentina
Armenia	Australia	Austria	Azerbaijan
Bahrain	Bangladesh	Belarus	Belgium
Benin	Bhutan	Bolivia	Bosnia
Botswana	Brazil	Bulgaria	Burkina Faso
Burundi	Cambodia	Cameroon	Canada
Central African Republic	Chad	Chile	China
Colombia	Comoros	Congo Brazzaville	Congo Kinshasa
Costa Rica	Croatia	Cuba	Cyprus
Czech Republic	Denmark	Djibouti	Ecuador
Egypt	El Salvador	Equatorial	Guinea
Eritrea	Estonia	Ethiopia	Fiji
Finland	France	Gabon	Gambia
Georgia	Ghana	Greece	Guatemala
Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Guyana	Haiti
Honduras	Hungary	India	Indonesia
Iran	Ireland	Israel	Italy
Ivory Coast	Jamaica	Japan	Jordan
Kazakhstan	Kenya	Korea South	Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan	Laos	Latvia	Lesotho
Liberia	Lithuania	Macedonia	Madagascar
Malawi	Malaysia	Mali	Mauritania
Mauritius	Mexico	Moldova	Mongolia
Morocco	Mozambique	Namibia	Nepal
Netherlands	New Zealand	Nicaragua	Niger
Norway	Oman	Pakistan	Panama
Papua New Guinea	Paraguay	Peru	Philippines
Poland	Portugal	Qatar	Romania
Russia	Rwanda	Saudi Arabia	Senegal
Sierra Leone	Singapore	Slovenia	South Africa
Spain	Sri Lanka	Sudan	Swaziland
Sweden	Switzerland	Syria	Tajikistan
Tanzania	Thailand	Togo	Trinidad
Tunisia	Turkey	Turkmenistan	Uganda
Ukraine	United Kingdom	United States	Uruguay
Uzbekistan	Venezuela	Zambia	Zimbabwe

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Leadership turnover	0.15	0	0.36	0	1
Membership in IOs	52.08	50	20.75	4	129
Membership in economic IOs	24.36	23	10.52	1	60
Membership in poli/tech IOs	26.12	25	9.84	1	65
Regime type	0.41	0	0.49	0	1
Level of democracy (Polity score)	0.41	0	7.52	−10	10
GDP per capita (logged)	7.37	7.21	1.58	4.06	11.02
Economic growth	3.92	4.07	5.41	−51.03	106.28
Government spending/GDP	15.63	14.41	6.80	2.29	76.22
Foreign aid (logged)	9.52	11.94	5.57	−13.78	17.05
Oil production (logged)	4.80	0	8.30	0	22.14
Internal threat	3.28	0	3.61	0	10.85
Leader's age	56.98	57	11.19	18	93
Post-Cold War	0.41	0	0.49	0	1
Time in office	7.35	5	7.56	0	49

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